

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

20
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CONTENTS



FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR PAUL CONNELL, MAYOR	4
INTRODUCTION – MR. TIM CAFFREY, COUNTY MANAGER	5
MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL	6
MEMBERSHIP OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES	8
REPORT ON WORKING OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES	9
KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	11
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	12
HOUSING, PLANNING & EMERGENCY SERVICES	24
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE & CULTURAL	
SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES	34
FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	62
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN (2010-2014)	66
SERVICE INDICATORS	70

FOREWORD

COUNCILLOR PAUL CONNELL, MAYOR



“importance of creating local employment opportunities for our inhabitants”

It gives me great pleasure as Mayor to introduce Longford County Council's Annual Report for 2010. The Annual Report provides an opportunity to highlight the wide range of services provided by the Council and I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of my fellow Elected Members and all the staff in delivering these services.

It was a great honour to be elected as Mayor of Longford County Council in June 2010. The night I was elected I said that I realised that we lived in tough economic times but that I would do everything in my power working with my fellow Members, the County Manager and the County Council staff, to make Longford a County where all our inhabitants would be proud to live and work.

I want to thank, in particular, the County Manager Tim Caffrey and his Management Team who continue to ensure that services are delivered in a cost effective and efficient manner. This would not be possible of course, without the dedication and commitment of all the staff, both indoor and outdoor, who work tirelessly dealing with a wide variety of stakeholders, always in a professional and courteous manner.

Notwithstanding the very difficult strategic and operational environment in which we found ourselves in 2010, the scale and diversity of work carried out by the various Departments is evident in this Report. Several noteworthy projects continue to move forward under my tenure including, the agreement to complete the N5 Bypass of Longford Town, the reopening of the Royal Canal at Clondra, the upgrading of Edgeworthstown Fire Station and Ballymahon Library, and a proposal to open the old Harbour in Longford Town. Proposals are also being developed to upgrade the Fire Station at Lanesboro and provide an extension to Longford Town Fire Station. Through my work as a member of the General Council of County Councillors and Longford County Enterprise Board, I know full well the importance of creating local employment opportunities for our inhabitants and this is an area that will continue to get my full attention during 2011.

I know, with modern technologies, that reports such as this one can easily be accessed and read by Longford people all over the globe. I trust that anyone with Longford connections will continue to act as an ‘ambassador’ for our County and that they can see, reflected in this Report, the innovative and committed approach our Council is taking in maintaining delivery of its services in these challenging times.

I want to assure everyone that myself and my fellow Elected Members will continue to do our best for County Longford at all times and I conclude by commending this Report as a fair overview of the Council's activities in 2010.

Paul Connell
Mayor

INTRODUCTION

MR. TIM CAFFREY, COUNTY MANAGER



“together, we will respond positively to the many and varied challenges”

I am pleased as County Manager to present this, Longford County Council's Annual Report for 2010.

This Report reflects the high level of outputs from the organisation in an extremely difficult operating environment, where reduced resources, both financial and human presented real challenges to management, staff and elected representatives. The recruitment embargo and increased requirement of regulatory and compliance legislation place an onerous burden on reduced human resources. The commitment of staff in responding to these additional demands has enabled continued service delivery and the completion of a number of projects highlighted below.

- ~ Official opening of the new 10,000 M³ Reservoir at Knockahaw, Longford.
- ~ Progression of the Five Village Sewerage Scheme, with the completion of the Network Contract for Ardagh, Aughnacliffe and Ballinalee.
- ~ Continuation of the N5 Longford Town Bypass Project.
- ~ Completion of housing developments in Ballinamuck and Kenagh.
- ~ Commencment of the new Edgeworthstown Fire Station in January 2010.
- ~ Completion and Official Opening of the Clondra Harbour Development.
- ~ Commencment of refurbishment works on the Ballymahon Library project, with a Time Capsule Laying Ceremony in May and the handover of the building in December.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of employees and Elected Members for their commitment during the year. The demands placed on all of us in 2010 brought about by the continuing challenges of the economic climate and the Transforming Public Services Agenda look set to continue for the coming year and I am confident that together, we will respond positively to the many and varied challenges.

Tim Caffrey,
County Manager

MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

BALLYMAHON MEMBERS



Larry Bannon



Paddy Belton



Mick Cahill



Barney Steele



Sean Farrell



Mark Casey

DRUMLISH MEMBERS



John Duffy



Gerry Brady



Luie McEntire



Martin Mulleady

GRANARD MEMBERS



Micheál Carrigy



P.J. Reilly



Frank Kilbride



Thomas Victory

LONGFORD MEMBERS



Alan Mitchell



Denis Glennon



Mae Sexton



Victor Kiernan



Padraig Loughrey



Paul Connell



Peggy Nolan

MEMBERSHIP OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2009-2014

The statutory basis for establishment of Strategic Policy Committees is contained in Section 48 of the Local Government Act 2001. The formation of Strategic Policy Committees is intended to afford an opportunity to various sectoral interests to influence the development of policies by the Council.

The Strategic Policy Committee Scheme and membership of the Committees was formally adopted by resolution of the Members of Longford County Council at a meeting held on 20th January 2010.

Strategic Policy Committee	County Council Members	Town Council Members	Sectoral Representatives	Total	Chair
Social Housing, Planning and Building Control Strategic Policy Committee	Councillors - V. Kiernan - M. Carrigy - P. Nolan - P.J. Reilly - D. Glennon - P. Connell	Councillor Tony Flaherty	Development & Construction - Kevin Hughes Community and Voluntary - Charlie Harrison - Helena Doyle - Paddy Howe	11	Chair - First Term Cllr. Victor Kiernan Second Term Nominee Cllr. Micheál Carrigy
Transportation, Road Development and Road Safety Strategic Policy Committee	Councillors - A. Mitchell - J. Duffy - M. Cahill - L. McEntire - M. Casey	Councillor Maura Kilbride-Harkin	Agriculture and Farming - John Farrell Trade Union - Kieran Woods Environmental - Tara Keegan	9	Chair – First Term Cllr. Alan Mitchell Second Term Nominee Cllr. John Duffy
Water Services and Environmental Strategic Policy Committee	Councillors - G. Brady - P. Belton - S. Farrell - P. Loughrey - T. Victory	Councillor John Maguire	Agriculture and Farming - Sean Reilly Environmental - Ray Hogan Community and Voluntary - Noreen McLoughlin	9	Chair – First Term Cllr. Gerry Brady Second Term Nominee Cllr. Paddy Belton
Economic Development, Urban Renewal, Rural Re-organisation, Educational, Cultural and Recreational Development Strategic Policy Committee	Councillors - M. Mulleady - B. Steele - F. Kilbride - L. Bannon - M. Sexton	Councillor James Keogh	Business and Employers - Fintan McGill Community and Voluntary - Alan O'Toole Cultural - Terry McKenna	9	Chair – First Term Cllr. Martin Mulleady Second Term Nominee Cllr. Barney Steele
TOTAL	21	4	13	38	

REPORT ON WORKING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES DURING 2010

WATER SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The following are the dates that the SPC meetings were held:

- ~ 3rd March 2010.
- ~ 5th May 2010.
- ~ 1st September 2010.
- ~ 3rd November 2010.

The main items for discussion and consideration at these meetings were:

- ~ Consideration of Key Recommendations of IPA's Review of the operation of SPC's.
- ~ Overview of functions of the Environment Department, Water Services Department and Water Conservation.
- ~ Consideration of Litter Management Plan.
- ~ Consideration of the Draft Fire Service Operations Plan 2011-2015.
- ~ Policy on Invasive Species.
- ~ Policy on Cemetery Provision and Maintenance.
- ~ Policy on Textile Banks.

TRANSPORTATION, ROAD DEVELOPMENT AND ROAD SAFETY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee met four times during 2010 with a core objective of ensuring that infrastructural transportation policies and investment assist the economic and social development of County Longford, and preserve and improve the particular attractiveness of the County and its background environment.

The dates of the meetings were:

- ~ 10th March 2010.
- ~ 8th June 2010.
- ~ 8th September 2010.
- ~ 26th November 2010.

The main items for discussion and consideration were:

- ~ Consideration of Key Recommendations of IPA's Review of the operation of SPC's.
- ~ Overview of functions of the Roads Department.
- ~ Policy on Pothole repair.
- ~ Policy on road accident reporting.
- ~ Hedge cutting on Public Roads.
- ~ Policy on Roads Winter Maintenance (Salting & Gritting).
- ~ Identification of Policy for development in 2011.

SOCIAL HOUSING, PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Housing & Social Policy, Planning & Building Control Policy SPC met three times during 2010.

The dates of the meetings held were as follows:

- ~ 7th April 2010.
- ~ 14th June 2010.
- ~ 16th September 2010.

The following is a list of the main issues considered by the Committee in 2010:

- ~ Heating & Insulation of Local Authority Houses.
- ~ Rent Arrears Recovery Policy.
- ~ Draft Differential Rent Scheme.
- ~ Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, URBAN RENEWAL, RURAL RE-ORGANISATION, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee held three meetings in 2010.

The dates of the meetings held were as follows:

- ~ 11th February, 2010.
- ~ 13th April, 2010.
- ~ 30th September, 2010.

The Committee discussed the following policy issues:

- ~ Industrial Development.
- ~ Business Parks.
- ~ Connolly Barracks.
- ~ Joint Policing Committees.
- ~ CCTV.
- ~ Tourism.
- ~ County and Village Signage.
- ~ Library Development Programme.
- ~ County Longford Museum.
- ~ Heritage.
- ~ Longford Swimming Pool.
- ~ Community & Voluntary Forum.
- ~ Broadband.
- ~ Comhaire na nÓg.
- ~ National Pride of Place Competition 2010.
- ~ Sports Partnership.

KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

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

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

HOUSING, PLANNING & EMERGENCY SERVICES

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE & CULTURAL SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

FINANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Cllr. Alan Mitchell,
Chairperson of
Transportation SPC



Cllr. Gerry Brady,
Chairperson of Water
Services & Environmental SPC



Mr. Ciaran Murphy
A/Director of Services

WATER SERVICES

Core Objective: To provide, improve and maintain the necessary water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the County to ensure an adequate supply of good quality water and to maximise the protection of the environment in order to promote the social and economic development of the county.

WATER SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE OPERATIONS

There are five Regional Water Schemes serving County Longford and it is estimated that 85% of the population receives a piped water supply treated by Longford County Council Water Treatment Plants. These five Schemes are: Ballymahon, Lough Gowna, Lanesboro/Newtowncashel, Longford Central and Granard.

Drinking Water Quality is monitored by the Health Services Executive on an agency basis for Longford County Council in accordance with the current Regulations, which include Drinking Water Regulations 2007 S.I. No. 278 and the Water Services Act 2007. Under the Drinking Water Regulations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the supervising authority for Public Water Supplies. Local Authorities must report any non-compliance to the EPA immediately and may be directed to develop and implement Action Plans under direction from the EPA. Under these Regulations the Local Authority is the supervising authority for Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Small Private Supplies (SPS). These requirements have greatly increased the responsibility level and regulatory role for Longford County Council.

There are eleven Public Sewerage Schemes in the County: Ballymahon, Kenagh, Lanesboro, Longford, Newtownforbes, Drumlish, Granard, Edgeworthstown, Legan, Abbeyshrule, and Clondra. Discharges from the Treatment Plants are sampled and monitored by Longford County Council. Under the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, all Water Services Authorities' sewerage discharges require licensing by the EPA. The Regulations and the associated licence requirements have placed a very significant compliance responsibility on Longford County Council.

Longford County Council has received EPA licences with strict conditions for the Longford and Ballymahon Wastewater Treatment Plants. License applications for the Wastewater Treatment Plants in Ballymahon, Granard, Edgeworthstown, Drumlish, Newtownforbes, Kenagh, and Abbeyshrule also have been prepared in-house and submitted for EPA license approval.

County Longford Regional Network Map

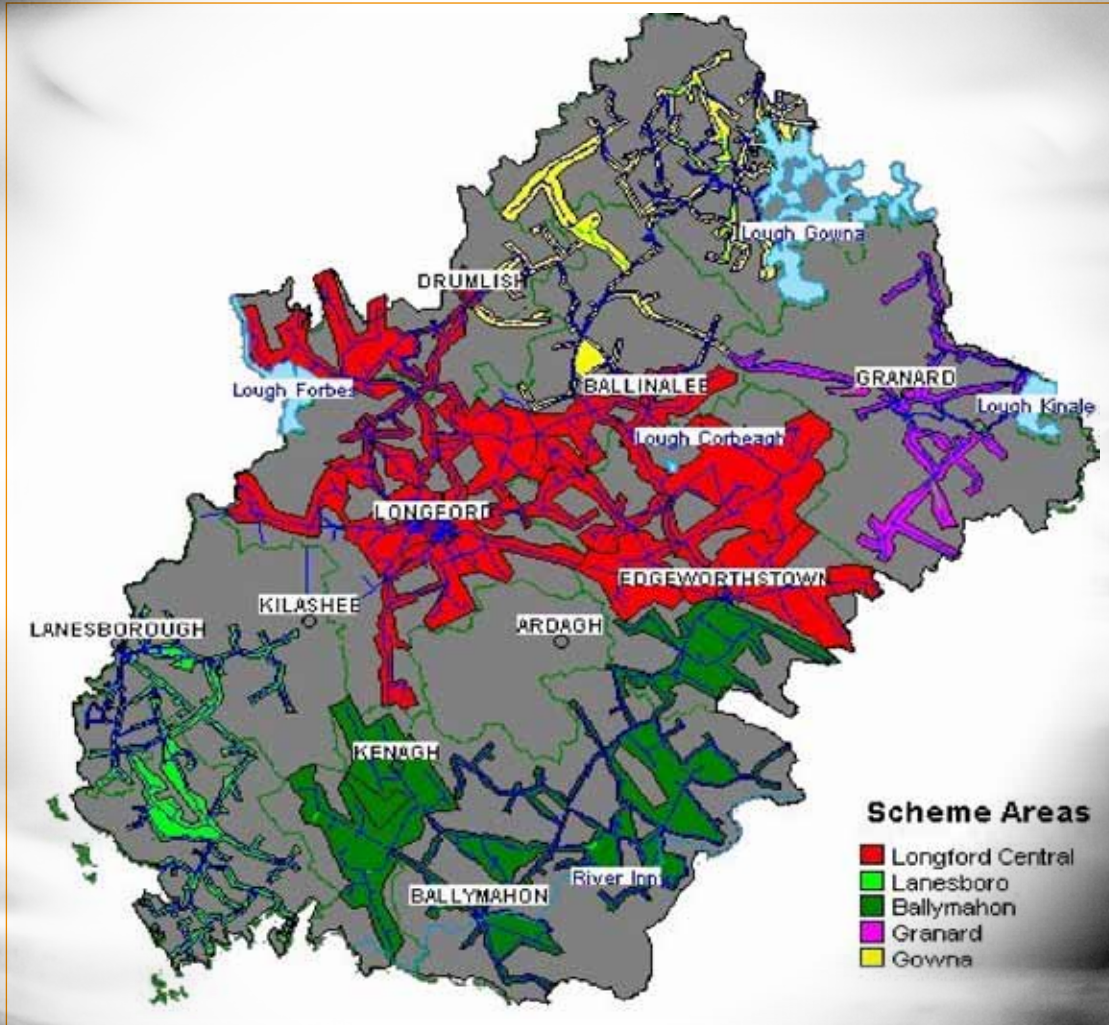


Figure 1:
County Longford Regional Network Map

WATER SERVICES CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Longford County Council continued to progress the new Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2012 throughout 2010.

Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2012	
Contracts at Construction	Project Value
Longford - 5 Villages Sewerage Scheme	
Ardagh/ Ballinalee/ Aughnaclicke Sewerage Schemes	2,405,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Network Construction works completed September 2010. Design Build Operate (DBO) Contract to follow	
Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme	
Stage 6 (Network & Reservoir)	11,552,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Construction works completed March 2010	
Contracts to Start 2010 - 2012	
Granard/Ballymahon Rural Water Supply Scheme	
Contract 3 - (Water Treatment Plants Upgrades)	3,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">DoEHLG approval to appoint contractor received and it's envisaged that construction work will commence in early 2011	
Contract 4 - (Ballymahon RWSS to Keenagh)	4,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">DoEHLG approval to appoint contractor received and it's envisaged that construction work will commence in early 2011	
Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme	
Contract 3 - (Network & Reservoir)	7,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tender documents for contract being finalised	
Contract 4 - (Water Treatment Plant Upgrade - Lough Forbes)	2,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Construction works commenced November 2010	
Longford Towns & Villages (5) Sewerage Scheme Bundle	
Contract 2 (Wastewater Treatment Plant - DBO)	6,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awaiting DoEHLG approval to appoint contractor	
Water Conservation Stage 3 Works	
Watermains Rehabilitation Project Phase 1	1,850,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awaiting DoEHLG approval to appoint contractor	
Schemes at Planning Stages 2010 - 2012	
Lanesborough Regional Water Supply Stage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Preliminary Report being finalised	
Longford Sewerage Scheme	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brief to appoint consultants submitted to DoEHLG for approval	
Water Conservation Stage 3 Works (Phase 2)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awaiting DoEHLG approval to commence SI and design work	

The Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme Stage 6 – Reservoir & Pipelines contract was completed in 2010. This Scheme has provided a new 10,000 m³ reservoir at Knockahaw to serve Longford Town and environs, a new watermain to connect it to the existing service reservoir at Prucklish and some new distribution mains in Longford Town.

Work has progressed on the Five Villages Sewerage Scheme (Ardagh, Aughnaclicke, Ballinalee, Drumlish and Newtownforbes). Drumlish and Newtownforbes network contract was completed in 2009 and Ardagh, Aughnaclicke, and Ballinalee network contract was completed in 2010. The provision of the Treatment Plants will follow by Design, Build and Operate Contract with construction works envisaged to commence in 2011.

The proposed works on Ballymahon RWSS and the Granard RWSS have been combined and divided into Contract 3 - Water Treatment Works Upgrades and Contract 4 – Pipelines. Contract 3 provides for the upgrading of Abbeyshrule WTW and Lough Kinale WTW which supplies Ballymahon RWSS and Granard RWSS respectively.

Contract 4 works consist of a new trunk main to link the Ballymahon and Keenagh Schemes, a new trunk main to Ballymahon Tower, a new rising main between Lough Kinale WTW and Rathcronan Reservoir as well as replacing existing cast iron watermain in Abbeylara. Construction on both Contracts is programmed to commence in 2011.

The proposed works for the Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme have been divided into Contract 3 – Pipelines & Reservoirs and Contract 4 – Upgrading of Lough Forbes WTW. Contract 3 provides for the construction of two reservoirs at Prucklish and Lisnanagh to provide additional storage capacity on the Scheme. It will also involve the construction of new rising main and distribution main between Lough Forbes WTW and Prucklish Reservoir and the construction of a new rising main between Glannagh Pumping Station and Lisnanagh Reservoir. Construction works programmed to commence at the end of 2011.

Contract 4 provides for short term/operational upgrade at Lough Forbes WTW in order to relieve overloading of the existing Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) tank. Construction works commenced in 2010 and are programmed to be completed in 2011.

Preliminary report for Lanesborough Regional Water Supply Scheme is to be completed and submitted to the DoEHLG for approval in 2011. The area included under the Scheme includes the towns of Lanesborough, Newtowncashel, Killashee and Derraghan.

WATER CONSERVATION

Works continued on the Water Conservation Project Stage 2. A total of 78 District Meter Areas (DMAs) have been set up and telemetry for monitoring flows have been installed. Leak detection and associated repairs was also continued. The Unaccounted for Water (UFW) for this year indicates an average of 330 litres per kilometre of watermain, per hour. This 2010 value indicates higher losses than the 2009 value and this increase is considered to be due mainly to damage in the distribution network caused by the unprecedented severe weather.

A Stage 3 Phase 1 Network Rehabilitation Contract due to commence in 2010 was delayed and it is now envisaged that construction work will commence in 2011. These works are focussed on the Longford Town Area. Application for Stage 3 Phase 2 rehabilitation works has been submitted for approval to the DoEHLG.

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



RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

Group Water/Sewerage Schemes

In April 2010, the Department for Environment, Heritage and Local Government advised Longford County Council of a Block Grant Allocation of €115,000 for the year 2010 for New Group Water Schemes, Upgrading of Group Water Schemes and Takeover of Group Water Schemes.

Design and/or construction work took place on the following New Schemes in 2010:- Dooroc GWS, Cartrongolan GWS and Aughacordrinan GWS.

Works were carried out on the following Schemes to progress the Local Authority taking over the Scheme:- Ballincurry GWS, Derawley GWS, Ballinagall GWS, Curryline GWS, Cloonmacart GWS, Drumure GWS, Grillagh/ Derryadd GWS and Aughnasilla GWS.

The Longford Rural Water Monitoring Committee met twice during 2010 to review progress on the implementation of the Rural Water Programme. The Committee were advised on the current work programme and commitments under the various measures. The E.C. Drinking Water Regulations 2007 were discussed, as were applications for the take-over of Group Water Schemes and Water Conservation/Rainwater Harvesting.

Longford County Council formally approved the takeover of 2 no. group water schemes at its meeting of 10th March 2010 and 2 no. group sewerage schemes on 20th October 2010.

The Council submitted proposals to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for Block Grant funding for 2011 totalling €1.015m under the Rural Water Programme in respect of new and ongoing works for group water / sewerage schemes, as well as group water scheme upgrades and proposals for taking group water schemes in charge.

Small Public Water And Sewerage Schemes

In March 2010 Longford County Council were advised that the Block Grant Allocation under the Rural Water Programme Small Schemes measure was €500,000.

Substantial works were carried out in 2010 under this measure. Tenders were received for Legan and Keenagh Waste Water Treatment Plants and are currently being assessed to determine the most economically advantageous tender. Subject to funding, both these Schemes will progress in 2011. A Gravity Sewer was installed in Legan, connecting the existing network with the proposed new treatment plant. Works were carried out on the Keenagh Waste Water Network to identify locations where surface water is entering the Network. Other major projects included the Watermain Replacement at Dooroc and Cartrongolan. A new watermain and replacement waste water network was installed at Breadens Lane in Longford town to cater for future development of this area. As part of the road reconstruction programme at Deanscurragh, Water Services installed a new watermain to minimise the potential for repairs/replacement of the new road due to burst watermain. Preliminary works for new booster pumps at Glannagh have been completed.

The Council submitted proposals to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for Block Grant funding for 2011 totalling €4.335m in respect of Small Public Water & Sewerage Schemes. This submission included funding for construction of new Waste Water Treatment Plants at both Legan and Keenagh.

Group Water Scheme Subsidies And Individual Well Grants

Longford County Council processed nine applications for subsidies towards the operational costs of group water schemes, total amount paid out was €24,238.50.

Ten applications were received for grants for individual water supplies. Approval was given for eight applications, one is pending and one application was refused. Grant payments totalling €11,124.63 were made to six individuals.

ROAD SAFETY, ROADS & TRANSPORT

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

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

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

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

Classification	National Primary	Regional	Local	Total
North Area (km)	36.004	59.910	712.512	808.426
Mid-Area (km)	41.816	45.365	249.739	336.920
South Area (km)	25.319	50.201	377.404	452.924
Total Kilometers	103.139	155.476	1339.655	1598.270

FINANCES AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL IN 2010 WERE AS FOLLOWS:

1. National Roads (National Roads Authority Grants):

• Major Planning & Design	€804,000
• Other Improvement Works	€1,425,000
• Safety Measures	€190,000
• Maintenance	€602,500
Total:	€3,021,500

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

• Specific Improvement Works	€450,000
• Restoration Improvement Works	€3,165,000
• Restoration Maintenance Works	€988,000
• Discretionary Improvement Works	€100,000
• Discretionary Maintenance Works	€740,000
• Low-cost Safety Improvement Works	€143,000
• Local Improvement Schemes	€153,000
• Regional Road Signposting	€25,000
• Footpath Provision	€44,000
• Training Programme	€29,799
Total:	€5,837,799

3. Non-National Roads (Council Contribution)	€1,000,000
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TOTAL BUDGET:	€6,837,799
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In addition Planning Development Funded Schemes to the value of €591,600 were selected for 2010 for works on footpaths, public lighting and traffic management projects throughout the county.



Design of National Road Infrastructural Projects has progressed with the assistance of the National Roads Authority Regional Design Office as follows: N5 Longford Town Bypass

- ~ Tender Competitions were completed for the Consultant Engineers and Legal Services for the N5 Longford Town Bypass Road Project.
- ~ The N5 Legal Services Contract was awarded in May 2010.
- ~ Consultant Engineers (Phases 5–7) were appointed in September 2010.
- ~ The Design Build Contract was tendered by 5 pre-qualified Tenders in September 2010.
- ~ Tenders were opened in December 2010.
- ~ Tender Assessment will be completed in the first quarter of 2011.
- ~ Advance accommodation works were agreed.
- ~ Preconstruction mammal survey was conducted.
- ~ Utility Diversions Contracts were completed.
- ~ Land negotiations were ongoing throughout 2010 with a number of cases settled.

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

The Preferred Route for the N4 Longford (Roosky) to Mullingar Bypass was announced at a special meeting of Longford County Council on Monday the 30th June 2010. The National Roads Authority has indicated that due to funding restrictions the detailed design of the Scheme is suspended.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

A total of 9 schemes were completed.

ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION & SCHOOL WARDEN SERVICE

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

- ~ Working Together Committee was set up and meets on a quarterly basis. Agencies involved are the National Roads Authority, Road Safety Authority, Health Service Executive, Longford County Council Sports Co-ordinator, An Garda Síochána, Longford County Council Road Safety Officer, Longford County Childcare Member, Councillor Mark Casey, Members of Longford Fire Services.
- ~ Working Together Committee Road Safety Strategy 2010 – 2013 was launched. This strategy was developed with the aim to “Promote road safety for all road users and help reduce road user fatalities and injuries”.
- ~ Co-ordination with the Road Safety Authority – advertising, promotions, and media campaigns.
- ~ Promotion of BEEP day at all Childcare Facilities in County Longford.
- ~ Launch of Salmon and Friends to Pre-School Children in conjunction with Road Safety Authority and Longford Childcare Committee.
- ~ Promotion of Road Safety in Secondary Schools through the “Drive for Life Programme”.
- ~ Launch of Road Safety Initiative aimed primarily at cyclists and pedestrians in conjunction with Roscommon/ Longford Garda Division, Longford County Council and the HSE.
- ~ Promotion and launch of the ‘Be Safe’ Curriculum in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority for Primary Schools.
- ~ The Junior School Warden Service is designed to provide safe crossing facilities for children in the vicinity of primary schools in provincial towns and villages. Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes came second in the Regional School Warden Competition held in Boyle in June 2010. Melview National School joined the Junior School Warden Service in September 2010.
- ~ Launch of Longford County Council’s ‘Safe Cross Code’.
- ~ Longford County Council and the HSE launched a Road Safety Initiative aimed primarily at cyclists and pedestrians.
- ~ Road Safety awareness was promoted in National Schools throughout the county.
- ~ A Safer Cycle Initiative was introduced to a number of National Schools throughout the county in the months of April, May and June 2010.

In conjunction with the Sports Co-ordinator and the Environmental Awareness Officer the National Bike Week was launched. This ran from 13th to 20th June 2010. Longford County Council celebrated the initiative with a Bike to School Day and a Bike to Work Day.

Primary schools throughout the County were invited to Bike to School on Thursday, 17th June and a total of 200 pupils participated from five local primary schools. Children received cycle packs including reflective clothing and lights as part of the day. Many children reported brothers and sisters as well as other family members joining them on the cycle to school.

Meanwhile staff from Longford County Council took part in a Bike to Work Day on Friday, 18th June 2010. Offering an alternative form of commuting to work, the staff also took part in a lunchtime spin around the bypass reporting the initiative as “a great idea”.

The Local Authority is responsible for the introduction and operation of the Junior School Warden service with the co-operation of the Gardai, School Boards of Management, Teachers, Parents and Children. The Road Safety Authority provides assistance with the initial organisation of the schemes. Longford County Council has 2 schemes in operation at Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes and Melview National School. Adult School Wardens are provided at Lanesboro National School.

‘The Leading Lights Award’ recognises the extraordinary contribution of people across Ireland to make road use safer for everyone. The Awards honour the outstanding efforts of people from local community groups, media, schools and businesses nationwide to improve safety on Irish Roads and allows us to recognise the extraordinary work being done by ordinary people throughout the country to help keep all of us safe on the roads.



‘The Leading Lights’ Awards ceremony was held by the Road Safety Authority in Dublin Castle on Wednesday 13th October 2010 and Mary Claire Grealy, Head of News, Shannonside Radio, received the ‘Local Broadcast Media’ Leading Light Award. Mary Claire decided to broadcast an awareness campaign throughout the month of December to promote road safety.

Shannonside Radio featured at least six items on road safety per day for the entire month of December. Each specific item was broadcast during a radio programme which was targeted at a specific audience. Each programme was contributed to by An Garda Síochána, the local authorities, the fire services, ambulance service, doctors, the families of road death victims and more. During the period of December 2009, no road deaths were reported in the Roscommon/Longford area. This campaign was solely funded by Shannonside Radio.



ENVIRONMENT

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

POLLUTION CONTROL AND WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT
LITTER MANAGEMENT AND STREET CLEANING
WASTE MANAGEMENT
BURIAL GROUNDS
VETERINARY SERVICES AND FOOD SAFETY
DOG CONTROL

POLLUTION CONTROL AND WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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

RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The Water Framework Directive was introduced in December 2000 in an attempt to address concerns that existed relating to a decline in water quality that was evident across Europe. The Directive provides the framework for the management of Ireland’s waters for the foreseeable future. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Community (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 under which a number of River Basin Districts were established. Longford is involved in both the North Western River Basin District and the Shannon International River Basin District.

An overall objective has been set which is intended to result in a progressive improvement of water quality over the period to 2015. The aim is that by 2015 the quality of all waterways will at a minimum have to be categorised as being good. Monitoring programmes have been developed to categorise the current quality of water in rivers and lakes. Over time it will be possible to measure improvements that occur in water quality. River Basin Management Plans were drawn up for both the River Basin Districts with which Longford has an involvement and these plans were adopted by Longford County Council in 2010.

ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY

The County Council Environment Laboratory is located at Park Road, Longford. In 2010 three employees provided support to the Water Services and Environment Sections of the Council. The principal areas of activity are:

- ~ *Water Pollution Monitoring and Control.*
- ~ *Monitoring discharges from Council Wastewater Treatment plants.*
- ~ *Landfill monitoring.*
- ~ *Monitoring industrial effluent discharges.*
- ~ *Water Quality Monitoring in rivers and lakes.*

LITTER MANAGEMENT

Enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 – 2009 is one of the key mechanisms in tackling the litter pollution problem in County Longford. Litter Control is conducted primarily by the Council’s Litter Wardens assisted by the Longford Town Council’s own Litter/ Traffic Wardens.

In 2010 Longford County Council initiated 16 prosecutions for littering offences and was successful in over 80% of such cases heard in court last year.

STREET SWEEPING

In 2010 the Council carried out a regular programme of Street Sweeping in the towns and villages of County Longford. This involved using mechanised equipment as well as manual sweeping of litter and servicing of litter bins in accordance with the County Longford Litter Management Plan. Total expenditure on street sweeping during 2010 was €312,000.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2005–2010

The Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region 2005-2010, as adopted, sets out a framework for the sustainable management of waste within the five local authority areas (Offaly Co. Council, Laois Co. Council, Longford Co. Council, Westmeath Co. Council and North Tipperary Co. Council) and covers all non-hazardous waste arising in the region. In addition, Local Authorities must take account of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan in the implementation and revision of regional and local Waste Management Plans.

PROVISION OF FACILITIES

There are currently 26 bring bank sites in County Longford. Green, brown and clear glasses as well as aluminium cans are accepted at all sites. Dunnes Supermarket Dublin Road, Longford, kindly agreed to the establishment of a bring facility in their car park and this became operational last autumn.

In 2010, 488 tonnes of glass and 21 tonnes of aluminium cans were collected from the bring banks sites.

ENFORCEMENT

Longford County Council has an active Waste Enforcement Team, combining both technical and administrative disciplines. The Enforcement Team deals with areas such as Waste Facility Permits, Collection Permits, enforcement of a wide range of Producer Responsibility Regulations and all unauthorised waste activities. During 2010, 1,278 waste and litter complaints were investigated and resolved and 1,738 routine litter patrols/investigations carried out. Inspections are also undertaken in relation to water pollution, effluent discharge licences, hazardous waste, etc. Longford County Council's "Enforcement Policy on Illegal Waste Activity" can be viewed on the Council's web-site at www.longfordcoco.ie

The Council operates a "Litter Complaints Hotline". Anyone who witnesses illegal dumping or who becomes aware of waste that is being dumped is asked to report the matter to the Council by calling the hotline number which is **1850 434 450**.

Under the Longford County Council Waste Management (Storage, Presentation, Segregation and Collection of Household Waste) Bye-Laws 2009, householders are obliged to separate bio-waste at source where a door to door collection service for the collection of such waste is provided. Such a service commenced in 2010 within a designated area around Longford town.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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

- ~ *National Spring Clean.*
- ~ *National Tree Week.*
- ~ *Large Goods Collections.*
- ~ *Green Schools.*
- ~ *Hazardous Waste Collections.*
- ~ *Green Christmas.*

ANTI LITTER AWARENESS GRANTS

Anti Litter initiatives which were funded by a grant of €19,000 were facilitated by the Council in 2010. Funding was allocated to a variety of projects and organisations throughout the county. Tidy Towns Committees received assistance and a Graffiti Removal Scheme was also assisted. Cinema, Radio and Billboard advertising was funded and the Schools Waste Recycling Competition received a contribution that partly met the cost of conducting the competition. Assistance was also provided to groups that carried out cleanups at some Litter Black Spots. Litter pickers, bags, and gloves were provided to many community groups that conducted clean-ups in towns, villages and rural areas.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FUND

Funding of €5,822 was provided by the Department of the Environment in 2010 to support innovative, community-based environmental projects. The Council contributed matching funding and as a result a total fund of €11,644 was allocated to a number of groups and individuals who had submitted applications in respect of projects that were intended to result in a benefit to the environment.

The following groups and individuals were the beneficiaries:

Mc Eoin Park Residents Association, School Book Exchange, Andy Booth, Kenagh National School, John Crossan, Ardagh Tidy Towns, Natasha Kalvas, Irish Wildlife Trust, Voice.

NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

The National Spring Clean campaign 2010 was a great success with 35 groups and organisations taking part in the town and county areas. Approximately 4.2 tonnes of litter and waste was collected as well as 500 kg of metal. Litter pickers, gloves, bibs and colour-coded bags were provided for the community clean-ups.

LARGE GOODS COLLECTIONS

Two temporary Civic Amenity Collections were organised during the Autumn months of 2010 and a total of 13 tonnes of waste and recyclables were collected. These took place in Longford and Lanesboro.

GREEN SCHOOLS

Longford was once again very successful in increasing activity in Green Schools. The participation of schools in the Green Schools programme increased with 99% of national schools and 100% secondary schools registered at the end of 2009. During 2010 six new schools were awarded the green flag and six more schools renewed their flags. This brings the total number of schools with Green Flags in County Longford to 28.



BURIAL GROUNDS

Maintenance of cemeteries is carried out by a combination of County Council and Rural Social Scheme staff, supplemented by the efforts of the local community. The Council's cemetery support scheme, under which local groups undertaking cemetery maintenance receive a grant from the local authority, has grown in popularity and is likely to become a more important element of the maintenance programme in future.

Funding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as part of the National Disability Scheme, enabled the Council to continue providing wheelchair-accessible facilities at designated burial grounds.

The extension to Aughafin Cemetery, Edgeworthstown, was completed this year.

PROJECTS FUNDED BY DEVELOPMENT LEVIES

The following works were completed last year under the Development Levy Plan 2008 – 2010.

Cashel cemetery car parking, Drumlish and Clondra village enhancements, Newcastle walk, Ardagh playground, Richmond Harbour Clondra, and signage at Killenatruan, Ballinalee.

VETERINARY SERVICES, FOOD SAFETY AND ANIMAL CONTROL

The Veterinary Section of Longford County Council services a contract between the Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland with regard to food safety and veterinary public health issues.

The small slaughterhouses and low throughput meat manufacturing establishments in the county are statutorily supervised with a view to ensuring that there is full compliance with food safety legislation.

Locally produced cattle and sheep continued to be processed in small slaughterhouses in County Longford in 2010. Each animal that was slaughtered was ante-mortem and post-mortem inspected by a Veterinary Inspector. A sampling programme which is intended to detect harmful substances such as chemicals and hormones in meat is carried out. The Local Authority Veterinary Service ensures that animal health and welfare is maintained in accordance with current legislative provisions.

During 2010 the low throughput meat manufacturing establishments and slaughterhouses in County Longford continued to work to EU approved standards. The meat products produced in the county are safe and are of high quality. The Local Authority Veterinary Service regulates and, at the same time, affords appropriate flexibility to low throughput premises. While there are changes occurring on an ongoing basis within premises, the level of activity is being maintained and new entrants are also becoming involved in the sector.

2010 also saw a significant increase in pig slaughtering in Local Authority supervised abattoirs in the county. This helped the sector to increase the amount of processing in County Longford and is in keeping with our Corporate Plan for promoting enterprise and development in this important area of commercial activity. Longford also ensured inclusion for its local abattoirs in the LEADER supported branding and marketing pilot programme for locally produced beef and lamb in the North-West.

Continuing Professional Development and training in food safety and animal health and welfare continued in 2010 with the County Veterinary Officer undertaking graduate cert training.

Activities relating to the disposal of Animal By-Product continued to be an important area of work in 2010.

Meetings of the Regional Zoonosis Committee provide the forum for formal liaison between Longford County Council Veterinary Public Health Service and other agencies e.g. Department of Agriculture and HSE.

DOG CONTROL

Longford County Council provides a full time Dog Service in County Longford. The Council employs a Dog Warden and operates the Dog Shelter at Little Water Street in Longford Town. Pound fees are charged for the accommodation of impounded animals. The Service dealt with 361 cases of unwanted/stray dogs in 2010. Of these, 109 were re-homed, 45 were reclaimed by their owners and 204 were euthanised. 35 dogs classified as restricted breeds were impounded by Longford County Council in 2010.

In many cases the dogs which were re-homed were selected by their new owners with the aid of the Council's "Save a Dog" web page which can be accessed at www.longfordcoco.ie.

In order to combat the problem of unwanted dogs, Longford County Council continues to advocate responsible animal ownership and operates a scheme in cooperation with Longford SPCA for subsidised neutering for dogs. It has also formed a strategic alliance with Dogs Trust in 2010.

In 2010, 1869 individual Dog Licenses were issued. Longford County Council continued to promote the need for the owners of dogs to purchase a Dog License. Currently a Dog Licence costs €12.70. Dog Licences can be purchased from any Post Office. The purchasing of a Dog Licence is an important aspect of responsible dog ownership.

HORSE CONTROL

Longford County Council dealt with 29 cases of horses found wandering in 2010.

HOUSING, PLANNING & EMERGENCY SERVICES



Cllr. Victor Kiernan,
Chairperson of Housing
& Planning SPC



Mr. Jack Kilgallen
Director of Services

HOUSING

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The housing needs of County Longford continued to be met through a range of housing options. The last statutory assessment of housing need was undertaken in 2008. The next housing needs assessment is due to be carried out in March 2011. At present Longford Local Authorities have in the region of 1480 housing applications.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Approximately €2.4m was spent on the Housing Construction Programme in 2010. This included a number of turnkey developments, purchase of individual houses and the construction of single rural cottages.

The following Schemes were in progress at the end of 2010:

Church Quarter Granard (6), Rural cottages (1)

The following Schemes were completed in 2010:

Ballinamuck (16), Kenagh (12). 7 individual houses were purchased and 2 rural houses were completed. Since the 1st January 2010 there were 152 allocations of tenancies.

HOUSING LOANS

Approval and advancement of housing loans continues as in previous years. Affordability levels as a result of the economic downturn have had a huge impact on the amount of applications being approved. A total of 11 valid applications were received in 2010 with 3 loans approved and 7 advanced. This amount does not include applications refused or withdrawn.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING

Longford County Council has a long association with the Voluntary Housing Sector and a substantial contribution has been made by the Voluntary Housing Sector in the provision of Social Housing in County Longford under the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) and the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). In 2010, Respond completed the construction of its development at Townspark, Longford comprising of 109 units. In 2010, Cluid Housing Association received provisional approval from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) to proceed with the second phase of the regeneration of St. Michael's Road, Longford. In a call for proposals under CAS, St. Christopher's Housing Association was successful in securing funding to purchase and adapt 5 units at Battery Court, Longford.

MAINTENANCE AND REFURBISHMENT

In 2010, a sum of €750,000 was provided in the Budget for the maintenance and repair of Local Authority Housing. This area is continuously examined to ensure that best practice and value for money is achieved at all times.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Housing Liaison Officer and Estate Manager continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations throughout 2010. Compulsory pre-tenancy courses are attended by all new tenants.

The “Better Estates Awards” were held again in 2010 and the winners were as follows:

Small Estate – 1st Prize (Joint Winners) – River Crescent, Ballinalee & Slí Na Móna, Ballymahon.

Medium Estate – 1st Prize – Páirc Mhic Giollabride, Edgeworthstown.

Large Estate – 1st Prize – Church View, Lanesboro.

Community Development Section - Páirc Mhic Giollabride, Edgeworthstown won 1st Prize.

Estate in Bloom went to River Crescent, Ballinalee.

Best Estate Over 20 years old went to Smithfield Crescent, Legan.

Best New Entrant was awarded to Cois Na hAbhainn, Ballinalee.

Certificates of Merit were awarded to Hazelwood, Colehill, Wolfetone Court, Edgeworthstown, Marian Terrace, Ballymahon and Cartron Road, Kenagh.

Small Estate Joint Winner – River
Crescent, Ballinalee



A new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy was drawn up to incorporate recent changes in legislation. Tenancy Enforcement was ongoing with a number of cases going before the courts. Community development was also ongoing with a number of new Residents Associations being set up across the County. The Estate Management Team continued to work closely with the Community Gardai and all other relevant agencies and outreach clinics were held on some estates.

HOUSING GRANT SCHEMES

In 2010, a combined total of 293 applications were received under the three grant schemes; the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme and the Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme.

A total of 219 grants were paid out and this amounted to €1,111,049. This figure includes 4 Disabled Persons Grants totalling €75,545. These were grants which were approved in previous years prior to the introduction of the above mentioned three new grant schemes.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 continues to be followed by Longford County Council. The programme sets out the 4 year strategy in relation to the programme and type of accommodation to be provided for Travellers. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee meets on a quarterly basis and will monitor the progress achieved in relation to targets set out in the plan. It is expected the works will commence this year on the Willow Park Halting Site Refurbishment.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME (RAS)

At the end of 2010, there were 286 RAS tenancies in place. 29 tenancies ceased during the year – these tenants were either housed in Local Authority Housing, transferred to RAS properties in other parts of the country or they housed themselves from their own resources. Eligibility for the Scheme depends on applicants being in receipt of rent supplement for more than 18 months and also eligible for Social Housing. The RAS Scheme and the associated operational and administrative costs are self financing in Longford.

LONG TERM/RAS TYPE LEASING ARRANGEMENTS

The main features of the Scheme involve the Local Authority agreeing long term leases for single or multiple housing units with developers/owners of private rented properties over ten to twenty years, or short term RAS type leases for properties over a 4 year term. Arrangements for long term leasing of 4 units under the scheme in the Ballymahon area are at an advanced stage. There were 5 RAS type leases in place at the end of 2010.

REMEDIAL/REGENERATION WORKS

In 2010 proposals were advanced to carry out Remedial Works at Tromra Road, Granard. The estimated cost of this project is €4 million. This Project has been prioritised as Priority 1 by the Council.

PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS

The Local Authority is responsible for implementation and enforcement of accommodation standards in the rental sector. Funding is made available to the Local Authority based on the number of inspections carried out. 142 inspections were completed in 2010 and landlords were advised of non compliance issues. Many of these properties were inspected as part of the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

NEW RENTED STANDARDS 2010

€125,000 was received from the DoEHLG in respect of the above. Funding was used to carry out necessary electrical works on approximately 50 houses.

ENERGY RETROFITTING SCHEME 2010

In 2010 Longford County Council received funding from the DoEHLG in the amount of €213,559 as part of the above programme. Works including attic and cavity insulation were carried out on approximately 180 dwellings.

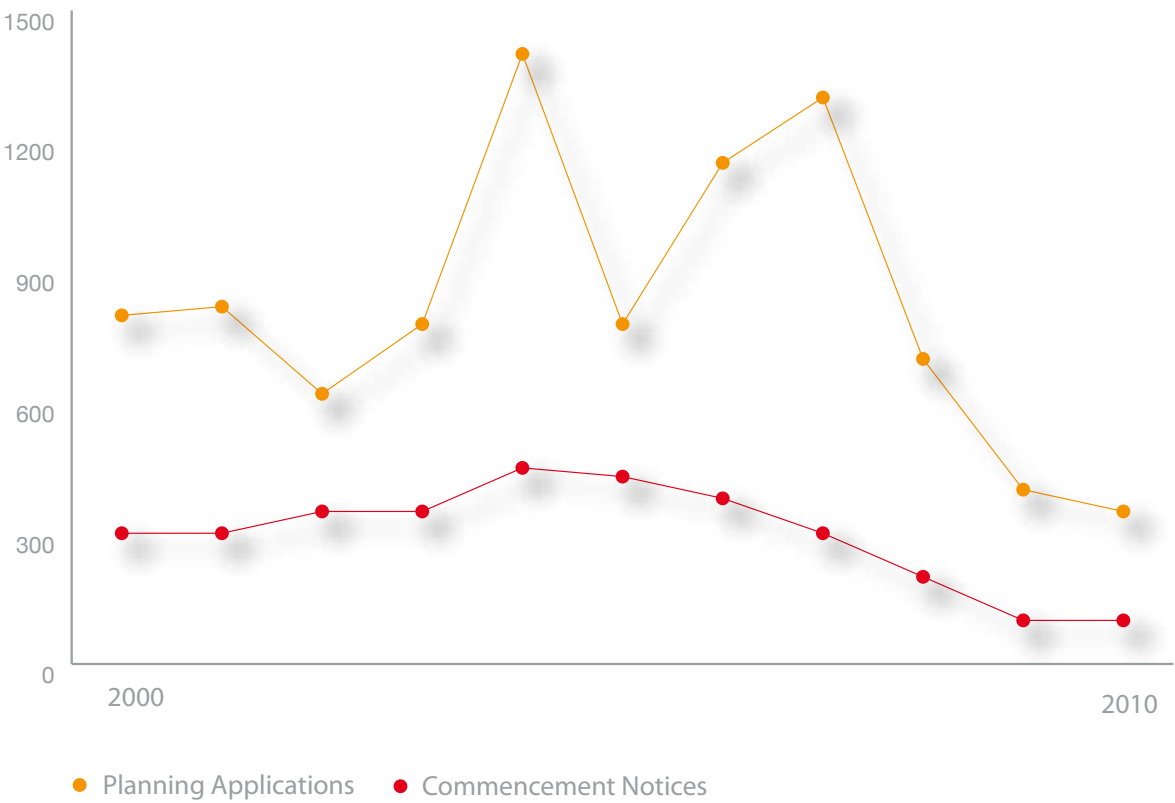
PLANNING

Significant activities undertaken by the Planning Department in 2010 are outlined below together with a broad planning outlook for 2011. New legislation, guidelines and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 in particular, create challenges and further refine the planning process and its alignment with sustainability and transparency.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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

Planning Application & Commencement Notices 2000-2010



The above chart indicates the numbers of applications and commencement notices received over the last 10 years. Peaks in 2004 and 2007 can be attributed to the rural renewal scheme and grant-aid for agricultural buildings respectively.

While lower numbers of applications were experienced in 2003 and 2005, those received contained high numbers of complex applications, requiring significant personnel hours to address at all stages in the process from validation and assessment through to completion and compliance. 2008 witnessed a substantial change in the number and complexity of planning permissions lodged, with a significant number of applications for modifications of existing permissions granted, one-off houses and smaller developments in general.

Application numbers continued to decline through 2009 and into 2010, reflecting economic trends and the downturn in the construction industry at all levels. This has been balanced by an increase in demands in other areas of the planning system, most notably in terms of taking in charge, unfinished housing estates and the forward planning workload at a local and regional level. The additional work required under environmental legislation and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 will also require significant resource investment over the coming years.

It is interesting to note the trend in commencement notices in the same period which exhibits a considerably more stable pattern and is perhaps a better indicator of how applications physically translate onto the ground.

Planning applications and Part VIII proposals are now screened for appropriate assessment as required by the Habitats Directive and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Pre-Planning consultations are an integral part of the Development Management process and are utilised on an ongoing and increasing basis. These meetings are held to provide a higher quality and more transparent planning service to the general public. In 2008 over 96 pre planning meetings were held to facilitate discussion with potential applicants on the issues associated with their proposals. This number increased to 110 in 2009 and 101 in 2010. Pre-planning meetings are now recorded digitally to facilitate consistency, transparency and seamless integration with the decision-making process.

License applications under Section 254 of the Act, principally for roadside signage, have also become a regular feature of the work carried out in the past 3 years, representing a substantial increase in workload over the previous years.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

The primary objectives of the Development Contribution Scheme are to:

- ~ *Provide a mechanism by which developers and others can contribute to the cost of providing public infrastructure and facilities that benefit development in their area.*
- ~ *Increase flexibility for local authorities in relation to the range of projects that could be funded from this source, by allowing authorities to fund public infrastructure provision without necessarily tying it to a specific development.*
- ~ *Introduce greater transparency into the way in which development contributions are levied and applied (so that developers would be able to establish in advance what levy should apply to them).*
- ~ *Ensure that Local Authorities can manage and maintain growth by providing key infrastructure to support local economies.*

The Development Contribution Scheme has had a very positive impact on the delivery of infrastructure in Longford since its introduction. It has generated funds for a wide variety of infrastructure, including the acquisition of land, provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities, amenity and landscaping works, roads, car parks, footpaths, water and waste water facilities.

Significant progress has been made in this area over 2009-2010 in the collection of outstanding monies, particularly given the difficult economic conditions. This process is ongoing with resolution and agreement in many instances, others remaining under consideration and others currently in litigation.

TAKING IN CHARGE

On identification of an unfinished housing estate, preliminary inter directorate reports are prepared. The developer is then informed in writing of the items of unfinished works and non-compliance with planning conditions in the estate. The technical report is also forwarded to the financial institution with a request for an extension of the Bond or to call in the Bond to allow for completion of the estate to standard.

To date, despite current unfavourable economic circumstances, this process has been relatively successful in relation to Bonds. The process of completion of the estates will take much longer and require considerable input from the Council in terms of staff resources.

The process of taking in charge is a lengthy one, requiring input across directorates and the allocation of a cross-disciplinary and dedicated team in order to run efficiently. The process involves the following main steps:

- ~ *Identification of full planning history of housing estate – this may be a complicated process where several permissions may exist on a site, possibly spanning a broad timescale.*
- ~ *Survey and inspection must be carried out to determine level of compliance with permission granted.*
- ~ *The developer responsible must be approached and negotiations held in order to determine how compliance is to be achieved.*
- ~ *Bonds and contributions must be determined in terms of amounts, phasing of payments and legal arrangements.*
- ~ *Failsafe monitoring systems must be established and maintained in order for the system to operate successfully.*
- ~ *Where enforcement action is unavoidable, this initiates an additional process with which staff must be familiar, also requires a specialised, dedicated cross-directorate team.*

Work in this area is ongoing with substantial progress made over the 2009-2010 period.

UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES

Steady progress has been made in the area of unfinished housing estates in the County. An acknowledged nationwide issue, Longford has been to the forefront in developing best practice guidelines to satisfactorily address unfinished developments. A section has been set up specifically dealing with unfinished estates, working closely with the Infrastructural Departments, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and all other stakeholders including developers, receivers and residents to create safe and appropriate living environments in areas affected by the economic downturn. National guidelines have been published in draft form featuring a Longford case study and the final document is to be released shortly which will draw heavily on the Longford experience.

FORWARD PLANNING

The Forward Planning Section is responsible for the research, preparation and production of all Development Plans, Local Area Plans and forward looking initiatives. The economic downturn and slowdown in the construction industry does not affect the forward planning work schedule which is governed by the 2000 Act and ongoing implementation of national and EU legislation in the planning and environmental arena. In addition, the Forward Planning Section is regularly involved with other projects that require substantial time allocation such as CPOs, Route Corridor Studies and other projects from local to national level.

The following summary outlines the main projects addressed in 2010 and looks forward to the 2011 schedule.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT 2010

There are several significant legislative provisions in the Act which will transform planning over the next number of years, in particular with regard to quarries, an element which has yet to be commenced.

One of the most significant elements of the Act on the Forward Planning schedule is the introduction of the requirement for each County Development Plan to contain a Core Strategy. This is a specifically defined central foundation statement that outlines the existing and proposed population distribution and settlement hierarchy for the County. The aim is to produce as transparent evidence-based approach to land zoning and spatial designations clearly informed by and in accordance with ministerial guidelines and higher tier plans such as the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. The strategy must also align zoning provisions with the provision of supporting infrastructure and in accordance with other considerations such as housing and settlement strategies. Each County Development Plan must be reviewed accordingly within one year of the adoption of the relevant Regional Planning Guidelines. In the case of Longford County, this deadline is July 2011.

MIDLAND REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted in July 2010. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 places a much stronger statutory emphasis on the regional planning tier, particularly in terms of ensuring that lower level plans comply with the provisions of the regional guidelines. This requirement must be addressed within one year of the guidelines adoption and is addressed further above.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

The Southern Environs Local Area Plan (SELAP), a joint project between Longford Town and County Councils was adopted by Longford Local Authorities in January 2010.

Work commenced on Clondra and Lanesboro Local Area Plans in 2009. Further work, including that on Carrickglass, Cooleeney and Foynes Court/Clonrollagh Local Area Plans have been put on hold due to lack of staff resources.

OTHER PROJECTS

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- ~ All plans and projects must be screened for SEA – public display and consultation element in each case.
- ~ Where required and carried out – in tandem with plan process- systems must be developed maintained and implemented to monitor indicators as set out in SEA.
- ~ Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening is required for all statutory and non-statutory plans - Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects in Ireland – Guidance or Planning Authorities DoEHLG 2009.
- ~ Circular SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08 – necessity to undertake Appropriate Assessment of land use plans in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive – any plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the natural site (SPA, cSPA, SAC, cSAC) concerned but is likely to have a significant effect on it, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects is to be authorised only if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

STATISTICS AND RETURNS

The Planning Section is required, at regular intervals, to provide statistical information to the Midland Regional Authority, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Central Statistics Office. Some of these returns have a significant time input, notably the annual housing land availability survey, submitted each September to the DoEHLG.

Statistics are regularly compiled by the Planning Sections for other departments within the Council to facilitate the functioning of the organisation as a whole. This includes the provision of population and application data for studies on the provision of water and waste water services and infrastructure reports for Heritage, Environment, Roads and Housing projects.

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government will require significant input from the Planning Section. Detailed, County level provisions will be addressed following the preparation of the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Management Study, currently underway by the OPW and due for completion in 2012. Individual Flood Risk Assessments may be required as part of the development management process.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographical Information Systems are an essential tool in the planning system, allowing ease of access to information internally between different Council departments. It also facilitates the transfer of spatial information to the public over the internet or at information points located in the Council buildings.

GIS is also used to acquire information such as statistical returns and for monitoring, such as the rural mapping required under the Corporate Development Plan and ongoing SEA monitoring.

The system is only as good as the information that it receives, which must be maintained and updated on a regular basis. This is a significant element of work in the Forward Planning Section.

MISCELLANEOUS

The day-to-day workings of the Planning Section require that plans, amendments and variations are prepared, sometimes at short notice. These require strict adherence to the relevant legislative provisions, forming a specific set of consultative processes that the Forward Planning Section are continuously streamlining and refining in order to provide an inclusive, effective and efficient service.

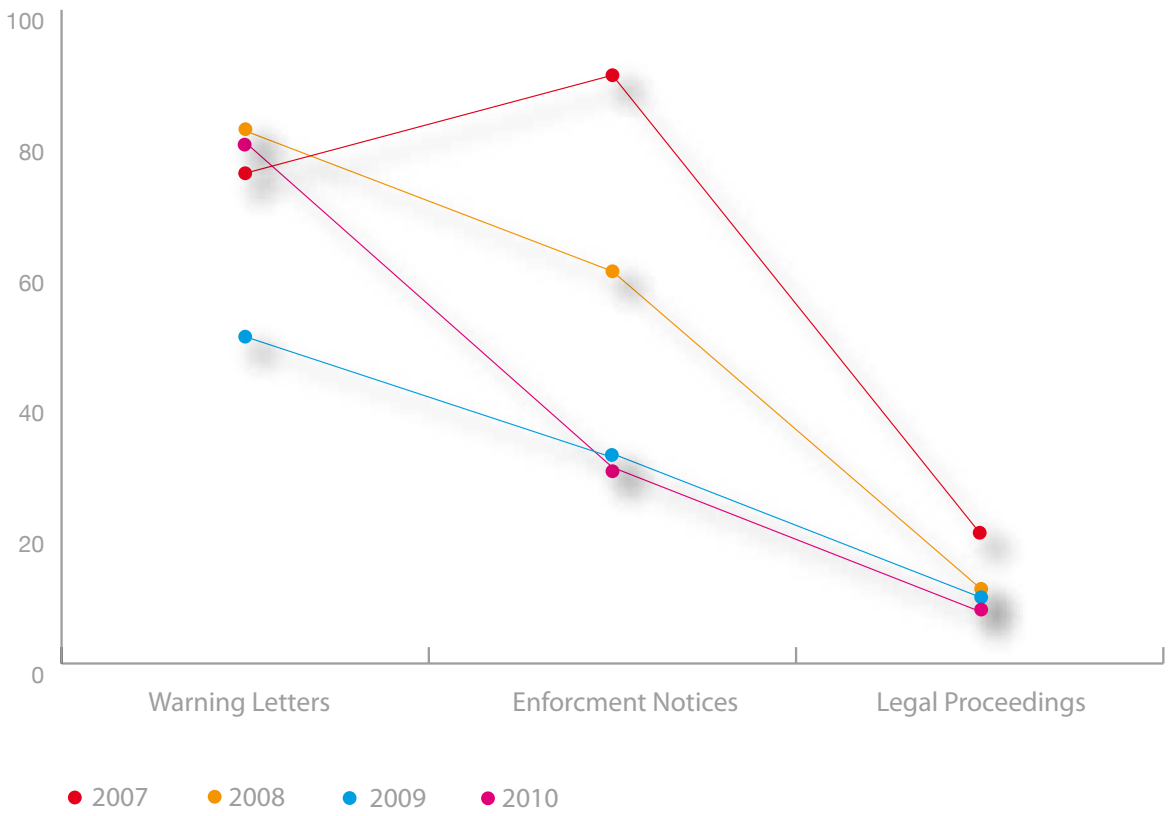
The management of Part VIII processes and the preparation of reports to facilitate County Council developments (including AA and SEA as appropriate) are a regular requirement of the Planning Section staff.

ENFORCEMENT

In 2009, 52 warning letters were issued, along with 28 enforcements and 13 cases referred for legal proceedings.

2010 saw an increased number of warning notices to 80, a similar number of enforcement notices with a drop in legal proceedings to 11. These trends are graphically represented on the chart below. The significant drop in enforcement notices issued and legal proceedings instigated over the period 2009-2010 points toward greater success in negotiation and resolution at warning letter stage.

Enforcement Action 2007-2010



FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

These stations are manned by 48 retained fire-fighters who respond to both fire and rescue incidents. The Fire Department was active in promoting fire safety throughout the year. Such activities included the Fire Safety in Schools Programme where all primary schools were visited and talks given to third class students. The department worked on the Halloween Festival Committee with the H.S.E. and Gardai promoting safety at bonfires and on the use of fireworks.

The Fire Department processed Fire Safety Certificates, Planning Referrals and Court Licence Application Referrals. Inspections of places of entertainment and residential type premises were carried out during 2010.

The Longford town fire station extension has been tendered in 2009. We are currently awaiting approval from the Department of Environment to proceed to award this contract.

A site has been secured in 2002 for a new Fire Station in Lanesboro. Part VIII Planning has been obtained for the site. €800,000 has been approved in principle for the construction of this project. Approval has been sought form the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to appoint Consultants for this Project on the 21st July 2010.

Michael O'Reilly joined Granard Fire Brigade in November 2010. William Connaughton joined Edgeworthstown Fire Brigade in July 2010 and Eamonn Farrell joined Lanesboro Fire Brigade also in July 2010.

Mr. Paddy Madden retired from Longford Fire Brigade in October 2010 after 28 years of service.

In March members of the Fire Brigade took part in the Second Rescue Organisation Ireland National Challenge Competition and finished in 2nd Place in the overall competition. In addition Station Officer Pauric Cullen was awarded second place in the Command Management category and Driver Mechanic Rory Kelly and Fire Fighter Fergal Dempsey were placed second in the Technical Skills category. Longford Fire Service won the 20 minute scenario exercise.

Longford along with Carlow and Meath represented Ireland in the World Rescue Organisation Games which were held in Cork in September 2010. Longford finished 16th in this world competition (the highest Irish placing) competing against Full-time Fire Fighters from around the world.

Work commenced on the new Edgeworthstown 3 Bay Fire Station in January 2010. The Main Contractor for this project is Adston Ltd, Belturbet, Co. Cavan. The Lead Consultants are John Killian Consultancy Engineers, Athlone. The total cost of the project is approximately €1.1 million. The project is expected to be completed by mid March 2011.

CIVIL DEFENCE

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

The main activities, programmes, events and developments during 2010 were:

- ~ Over 50 call outs to help assist in the severe weather by the Health Service Executive and Longford Local Authorities.
- ~ A number of First Aid courses were run during the year including BLS/AED (Basic Life Support/Automated External Defibrillation), CFR (Cardiac First Response), OFA (Occupational First Aid), EFR (Emergency First Response) and Basic Community First aid courses for members of the public, new recruits and existing members. 18 Members passed their EFR exams which is a tribute to themselves and their Instructor.
- ~ 2 members qualified to Instructor level at a course in the Civil Defence College, Roscrea.
- ~ 4 members began Emergency Medical Technician training.
- ~ A number of courses were run based on Radiation Monitoring, Searching and Communications.
- ~ Garage accommodation was rented for 7 vehicles and 2 boats.
- ~ The boat crew took part in the annual training seminar in Sligo in connection with avian flu.
- ~ Assistance provided at 48 local community events.



ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE & CULTURAL SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES



Cllr. Martin Mulleady,
Chairperson of Economic
Development SPC



Mr. Frank Sheridan,
Director of Services

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The local economy faced continuing challenges in 2010. The unprecedented financial downturn adversely impacted on consumer spending and contributed to further shrink the construction sector. Although the diverse nature of the local manufacturing base helped the local economy the closure of B2 Cables and loss of over 100 jobs had a significant impact. The effects of the economic downturn are evident in increased emigration of our educated youth resource. Longford County Council in cooperation with state development support agencies and in particular the County Enterprise Board continue to work in an innovative manner to sustain employment in Longford.

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (7 Members)

Cllr. Alan Mitchell, Chairperson of the Board, Mayor Paul Connell, Cllr. Victor Kiernan, Cllr. Martin Mulleady, Cllr. Gerry Brady, Longford County Council. Cllr. Fintan Flood, Granard Town Council, Mr. Tim Caffrey, Longford County Manager.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (7 Members)

Mr. Adrian Greene, Mr. Pat O'Rourke, (Longford Community Resources Ltd). Dr. Ruth Mc Grath, (Environment Pillar) Mr. Michael Nevin, Ms. Beatrice Cunningham, (Longford County Enterprise Board). Ms. Josephine Stroker, (Longford Acorn Project) Ms. Patricia Harrison, (Longford County Childcare Committee).

STATE AGENCIES (10 Members)

Supt. Denis Shields (Garda Síochána), Mr. Kevin Kidney (Fáilte Ireland), Ms. Gillain Maunsell (IDA Ireland), Vacant (Enterprise Ireland), Ms. Grainne Nic Gabhainn (Health Service Executive), Mr. Michael Kearney (Department of Social Welfare), Mr. Peter Egan (FAS), Mr. Oliver Burke (Teagasc), Ms. Rosemary Killian Johnston (County Longford VEC), Mr. Eugene Rafferty (Department of Education & Science).

SOCIAL PARTNERS (5 Members)

Mr. George Shedwell (Irish Congress of Trade Unions), Ms. Kate Keegan, Ms. Brenda Quinn (Community & Voluntary Sector), Mr. James Brady (Farming Sector), Ms. Karen Clabby (Business Sector).

BOARD CHANGES IN 2010

Local Government - Mayor Paul Connell replaced Cllr. Peggy Nolan.

State Agencies - Ms Rosemary Killian Johnston replaced Ms Josephine O'Donnell (County Longford VEC). The Dept. Education and Science no longer have a representative on the Board.

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD ACTION PLAN

Longford County Development Board Action Plan focuses on a limited number of priorities and actions over a three and a half year period from mid 2009 to end 2012. The main emphasis of the Plan is on interagency co-operation and the need for sharing resources to ensure efficiencies and value for money to meet the needs of the relevant client groups. The Board are continuing to engage agencies at all levels and are committed to the concept of ‘interagency work’.

ENDORSEMENT OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY PLANS BY THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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

INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

A Traveller Interagency group operates as a subcommittee of the County Development Board and oversees the implementation of the Longford Traveller Interagency Plan. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum for discussion on priority issues related to Travellers and to identify co-operative lines of action to deal with these issues. Given the current economic climate it is recognised that there is a greater challenge in delivering actions and interagency working is more important than ever in these circumstances. In this context in 2010, the County Development Board were asked to review their plans and to highlight a number of key actions which will demonstrate and support increased interagency actions.

A number of meetings were held in 2010 to formulate an Action Plan for the period 2010-2013. The Action Plan describes additional actions on Traveller issues arising specifically from the formation of the interagency group. The plan does not detail the range of actions that the agencies are involved with on an ongoing basis. The priority areas of the plan are health, education, employment, conflict resolution and community development. It is the responsibility of each lead agency in consultation with other committed agencies to carry out the actions and provide feedback at the Traveller Interagency Group meetings.

LONGFORD COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY FORUM

2010 was a busy year for the Forum where it has counted among its many achievements:

- ~ Representing the Community and Voluntary sector at the County Development Board.
- ~ Representing the Community and Voluntary sector on Strategic Policy Committees in Longford County Council.
- ~ Representing the Community and Voluntary sector on local development agency boards.
- ~ Supporting and initiating an array of community interest projects.
- ~ Organising computer training for community and voluntary groups across the County.
- ~ Three planning sessions facilitated by Martin Kennedy where key issues were identified for Forum's 2011 work plan.

Co. Longford Community & Voluntary Forum has recruited a Development Officer to support the work of the Forum.

LONGFORD TOURISM STRATEGY

A multi agency group consisting of representatives from Longford County Council, Longford Town Council, County Enterprise Board, LCRL, Fáilte Ireland and Longford Tourism are working collaboratively to develop a Tourism Strategy for the County. An audit was completed and will be used for strategic planning coupled with extensive consultation in the sector.

REDEVELOPMENT OF RICHMOND HARBOUR, CLONDRA

Tourism in Longford received a major boost with the opening of the Royal Canal on the 1st of October 2010. The official ceremony took place in the redeveloped Richmond Harbour in Clondra and generated great national interest. The resplendent harbour with additional floating jetties is an important addition to the tourism infrastructure in Longford. The challenge of placing this product in a different tourism market will require collaboration between all interested parties. The redevelopment of Clondra Harbour is an excellent example of the benefit of agencies working together in delivering a project that could not happen without this co-operation.



Minister Pat Carey and Mayor Paul Connell at the opening of the Royal Canal.

LONGFORD COMHAIRLE NA nÓG

Longford Comhairle na nÓg is a County Development Board Project in partnership with Foróige and Longford County Council. Funding was secured from the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to develop and enhance the Comhairle na nÓg. An expert advisory group has been established, which is made up of key state agencies and relevant non government agencies that link in with Comhairle na nÓg to ensure that the voices and opinions of young people are included in their strategies and policies. With the support of the advisory group it is envisaged that the issues identified by the young people in Longford can be met. By identifying theses issues the Youth Council can then strive to effect positive changes for the youth of County Longford.

STRUCTURE OF COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

Longford Comhairle na nÓg is made up of young people aged between 12 and 18 years of age, replicating the 21 seat representation of Longford County Council. Young people must be elected onto the Council which takes place at the AGM. Candidates take up a term of office of two years on the Council. They meet monthly in the chambers of Longford County Council to discuss and work on youth issues raised by young people in County Longford. The meetings are youth led whereby the young people set the agenda and chair the meeting themselves. Young people are elected as chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and PRO for a term of one year. Following training the elected officials take up their roles immediately. Four young people from Longford Comhairle na nÓg represent Longford on the National Dáil na nÓg and one of these young people Darina Birsanu was elected onto the National Dail na nÓg committee and attends meetings on a monthly basis in Dublin.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

The Longford Comhairle na nÓg Annual General Meeting took place in the Backstage Theatre on Thursday the 21st of October 2010. Young people from all around the county were invited to attend, to express their views on topics deemed important by them. The Longford Comhairle na nÓg provides a forum for young people to discuss local and national issues of relevance to them. On the day of the AGM, 75 young people were present, making it the highest turn out to date with representatives from 9 Post Primary Schools, 5 youth clubs /organisation and 1 Youth Reach training centre in County Longford.



Mayor Paul Connell and Jim Maher
Co-ordinator at the AGM of Longford
Comhairle na nÓg.

MODULE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 2010, Mayor Peggy Nolan, officially launched a new Transition Year Resource for schools. The purpose of this resource is to raise awareness about the place of Local Government in the democratic system and to educate young people about the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority.

This module was inspired by discussions held at the Comhairle na nÓg when it became evident that young people did not understand the roles and functions of the Local Authority. This lack of awareness and understanding militated against many young people becoming actively involved in the democratic process. In response to this need, the Community and Enterprise Department secured funding from the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs under the ‘Enhanced Programme of Activity’ for the Comhairle na nÓg. Dr. Philip Byrne provided the initial material in consultation with a number of Transition Year Co-ordinators. The material was then developed into this module by Mr. Paddy Mc Phillips, and piloted in Moyne Community School.



From left to right:
Laura McPhillips, Administrative Officer,
Longford County Council, Frank Sheridan,
Director of Services, Longford County
Council, Mayor Peggy Nolan, Tim Caffrey,
County Manager, Longford County
Council, Paddy McPhillips, Vice Principal
Moyne Community School.

NATIONAL PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION 2010

Pride of Place is a competition, which is directed towards recognising improvements by local communities to create civic pride in their area. The aim of the “Pride of Place” competition is to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for all. The nomination process to the all island competition is undertaken through the Local Authorities.

In 2010 Longford County Council nominated three entrants across a number of categories to represent County Longford: Longford Women’s Link, Aisling Children’s Arts Festival and Longford Acorn Project Limited. Judging took place over three days in August 2010. Each group was required to make a presentation highlighting the range of activities and projects they had undertaken. The National Award Ceremony was held in Trim, County Meath on the 13th of November 2010 at which Aisling Children’s Arts Festival were runners up in the Community Arts category and Longford Women’s Link won the Pride of Place Special Category, Community Response to unemployment; a great honour for County Longford and the committee.



Members of Longford Women’s Link
pictured with the County Manager and
Mayor Paul Connell at the National Pride
of Place Awards Ceremony 2010.

SOCIAL INCLUSION WEEK 18TH – 22ND OCTOBER 2010

Longford Local Authorities joined other Local Authorities across the country to participate in a Social Inclusion Week to mark the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Inclusion. The official launch by Mayor Paul Connell was held on Wednesday the 20th of October in Longford County Council. A range of events were held during the week including an exhibition in the atrium on ‘Longford Local Authorities -Delivering Modern Local Services’. Other events included an; Open Day in Longford County Council for Active Age Groups, ‘One Book One Town’ Project to promote family literacy, Comhairle na nÓg AGM, workshops were held for after schools clubs in preparation for the Longford Halloween Dead of Night Festival, an open day was held in St Martin’s Community Centre and photography workshops were held in St. Mel’s Traveller Training Centre and Youthreach Centres. The week was very successful and highlighted the range of social inclusion initiatives undertaken by the Local Authority.



The handing over of a cheque for €1000 to
Longford Older Persons Network as part
of Social Inclusion Week by Mayor Paul
Connell.

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEES

Joint Policing Committees were established in co-operation with An Garda Síochána in the three Longford Local Authorities in accordance with guidelines issued in September 2008. Longford Town Council held their inaugural meeting on the 8th December 2008. A Steering Group was established to co-ordinate the three committees. Granard JPC held 4 meetings in 2010, Longford town JPC held 2 and Longford County Council held 2.

CONNOLLY BARRACKS COMMITTEE

A subcommittee was established by Longford Local Authorities in response to the closure by the Department of Defence of the Connolly Army Barracks. The joint sub committee consists of the Mayors and representatives of Longford Town and County Council, the CEO of County Longford VEC and the Superintendent of Longford Gardai. In 2010 a Feasibility Study was undertaken of the site to help identify the most appropriate uses for the former military barracks for the benefit of the Community. Written submissions from interested parties and groups were sought as part of the consultation process.

BALLOON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2010

The All Ireland Hot Air Ballooning Championships were hosted in Ballymahon in September 2010. Over 40 balloons took off from the grounds of Newcastle House to mark the opening of the event. Ballymahon town and its environs are steeped in ballooning history with the town having been the first in Ireland to host the prestigious event back in 1971. A schedule of events took place during the week including balloon rides from Ardagh, Granard, Abbeyshrule and Ballymahon as well as a host of fun filled family events and lots of musical entertainment. As well as offering a great free day out for all the family to see balloons of all shapes and sizes, the Irish Hot Air Balloon Championships was an important tourist event for County Longford.

COMMUNITY SMOKE ALARM SCHEME 2010

Community and Enterprise secured funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to equip 1000 private households with “Home Smoke Alarms”. This is a unique initiative targeted at vulnerable households who might not have existing fire alarm systems. In particular, the scheme will focus on the elderly, people living with a disability, people living alone, people living in isolation, people living in rural areas and households who have previously never had a Smoke Alarm system. The smoke alarms are being installed by the Rural Social Scheme attached to Longford Community Resources Ltd.

LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

BOARD OF LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

The Board of Longford Sports Partnership (2010) comprised of representatives from statutory, voluntary and sporting organisations: Cllr. Michael Carrigy, Cllr. Brendan Gilmore, Cllr. John Duffy, Mr. Frank Sheridan, Longford County Council, Ms. Clodagh Armitage, HSE, Mr. Sean Hannon, LCRL, Mr. Phadraig Slowey, VEC, Ms. Ursula Hussey, County Development Board, Mr. Mark Noble, County Longford Youth Services, Ms. Mary Killane, Longford Leisure Centre, Ms. Oonagh Flynn, St. Christopher’s Services Ltd., Mr. Terry McKenna, Community & Voluntary Forum, Mr. Fabien Walsh, Ms. Eileen Farrell, Mr. Stephen Coy, Mr. Sean Dempsey, Ms. Rose Kane and Mr. Frank Horne, RAPID.



Members of Longford Sports Partnership Board

CORE PROGRAMMES

Fifteen primary schools in County Longford received *Buntús Generic* training with approximately 100 teachers and 1720 students benefiting from the programme. The programme provides teacher training, a bag of equipment and resource cards, all of which are free to the schools.

Buntús Start, the equivalent programme for pre-schools has seen 8 centres and 22 providers trained. Approximately, 200 children will have access to quality physical activity provision as a result.

Nine *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport* (Child Protection) workshops were held throughout the year. Over 125 volunteers and coaches were certified by the Irish Sports Council following the training and over 37 sports represented. Courses will continue to run on a regular basis.

The *Sports Club Grant Scheme 2010* administered by the Longford Sports Partnership (LSP) assisted fourteen clubs in the County. Projects that were supported include junior club development, coach education and training and project which increased community usage of facilities.

Teachers participating in Buntus Generic Training



TARGET PROGRAMMES

Girls On The Move, a programme targeting inactive teenage girls was run in five secondary schools in the County. They were Ballymahon Vocational School, Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon, Moyne Community College and Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard.

Communities in Action is a RAPID funded programme targeting young people aged 13-18. Activities to date have included Gaelic4Girls which saw over 100 local girls train weekly and put their skills to the test at a regional blitz day in June. Also, a soccer blitz was held in conjunction with An Garda Síochána. Over 40 boys took part. Finally, two schools in Longford Town are running a Walking Bus project, St. Josephs National School and St. Emer’s National School.

June was a month for cycling with national *Bikeweek* running from the 13th to 20th June 2010. The LSP supported this national initiative through a number of events and projects. These include a Cycle to School Day, Bike to Work Day and Cyclesafe in schools, which was run in conjunction with Longford County Council and the RSA. Longford Sports Partnership in conjunction with the HSE is currently facilitating the *Playground Markings Initiative* which is being rolled out in primary schools in Longford. Scoil Samhthann National School, Ballinalee is the first school in the County to avail of the Scheme.

Stencil Packs (stencils and games booklet) which enable schools to put down playground markings are being offered FREE to all primary schools in Longford to encourage greater physical activity in young children through Play in the school setting.

The LSP supported national *Recreation Week* and *Play Day* contributing to various events including a soccer blitz and intercultural family day.



Run in conjunction with Westmeath Sports Partnership and the HSE, Longford LSP trained 26 Physical Activity Leaders (PALs). These older adults plan and lead physical activity and sports in their communities, which make programmes more sustainable.

Longford Cycling Tour took place in June, with 150 participants enjoying the choice of three routes around North Longford, 10km, 30km and 50km. The tour was run in partnership with Mid West Road Club and plans are afoot for another tour in the summer of 2011.



COMMUNICATIONS

Developing Sports Together: A Sports Strategy for Longford 2010-2012 was launched by CEO of the Irish Sports Council, Mr. John Treacy in July 2010. Five strategic areas were identified:

- ~ Sports Infrastructure.
- ~ Increasing Participation.
- ~ Leadership, Education and Training.
- ~ Communications.
- ~ Governance of the Partnership.

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY, ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE SERVICES

OVERVIEW

The six branch libraries are located at Ballymahon, Lanesboro, Edgeworthstown, Drumlish, Granard and Longford town. The year 2010 has been a very successful one for the library service in Longford with a further increase in usage again being recorded this year. An increased demand for the service has been shown in every branch library in the county resulting in an overall membership increase of 6%. Particularly noteworthy is the high level of usage coming from the unemployed, jobseekers and those wishing to improve their job prospects through upskilling and continuing education. It is a great tribute to all the library staff that despite cutbacks in funding, there has been minimum disruption in service to our customers and our visitor numbers and membership has increased again this year.

BALLYMAHON LIBRARY

The year got off to a great start with the contractors Purcell Construction moving on site to start refurbishment works on the old Market House building on 2nd February 2010. The project team set up to oversee the project included Mr. Sean Harrington Architect, Mr. Ronan Moore, Purcell Construction and representing Longford County Council were Ms. Máiréad Ní Chonghaile, County Heritage Office, Mr. Milo Lowry, Clerk of Works, Mr. Frank Sheridan, Director of Services, Ms. Mary Reynolds, Ms. Paula Mulry and Mr. Willie O Dowd, Longford Library; Mr. Michael Jordan and Mr. Rioch Lennon, IT and Ms. Nora O Farrell, HR. The work progressed very well with a

The handing over of the Ballymahon time capsule by Mayor Peggy Nolan to Sean Harrington Architect in the presence of local councillors Sean Farrell and Barney Steele.



Time Capsule Laying ceremony taking place in May and the building being handed over in December. The library is due to open at the end of February 2011. The overall cost of the project is approx. €1.4 million with €900,000 being provided by Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the remainder coming from the Local Authority.

ST. MEL'S CATHEDRAL

The year 2009 closed on a very sad note with the terrible fire which almost completely destroyed the beautiful St. Mel's Cathedral and Diocesan museum on Christmas Eve. Fortunately the Heritage Office had in 2008 commissioned an inventory of all the artefacts in the museum which was of great assistance to the Cathedral as they tried to assess the value of what had been lost in the fire. In addition the library was able to provide a temporary home to a number of Community groups whose meetings were held in a Community Hall situated in the grounds of the cathedral and was closed for a number of months after the fire. In July the Library, Heritage and Archives Service hosted a major exhibition telling the story of the Cathedral from the beginning right up to the present day, including the work that has been happening after the fire. This was officially opened by Bishop Colm O'Reilly in the presence of the Mayors of Longford town and county. It ran for six weeks and had a huge attendance from the local community and the Longford diaspora home on holidays.

LIBRARY INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

During 2010 Longford County Library continued to invest in modern ICT as a means of enhancing access to our services. The most significant of these developments are:

SMS Texting: Extension of this service to all our customers to provide enhanced communication with them on a variety of library related matters including book requests, renewals, overdue, exhibitions, classes etc.

FÁS eLearning at the Library: This partnership initiative between FÁS and Longford County Library Service is now in its 3rd cycle and has proved very successful to date. There is a continuous intake to the facilitated workshops and 230 people have registered with the programme which is running in 3 libraries, Longford, Granard and Lanesboro. It is hoped to roll it out to our new library in Ballymahon during 2011. Due to the success of this project in libraries nationwide the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) provided funding to Local Authorities through the Public Libraries Access and Services Improvements Support Scheme with matched funding from Longford County Council, which allowed us to increase our PC capacity thus reducing waiting times for course participants.

Public Access Internet Upgrade: During the year we upgraded our Internet Booking System at Longford Branch Library to facilitate the introduction of a new Print Management System - a cost effective solution to jointly manage internet bookings and internet printing service.

Website Developments: A number of features were added to our website, www.longfordlibrary.ie during the year including access to our online book catalogue as Gaeilge, a new web interface to promote online resources as well as a newly designed web interface for children on our Children's PC's in Longford Branch. We have also extended our social networking facilities to include Twitter as well as other web media such as Facebook and Flickr.

National Initiatives: Continued support and participation in national ICT library initiatives such as Inter-Library Loans through the Borrow Books website.

OTHER LONGFORD LIBRARY EVENTS

The library hosted a number of exhibitions, readings and launches throughout the year: There were four new Longford publications launched this year:

- ~ On 24th February 2010 an exhibition on the work of Fairtrade was held to mark the start of Fairtrade week.
- ~ On 24th May, the "Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Longford", the companion guide to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage for Longford, was launched by Minister John Gormley.
- ~ On 17th June the eagerly awaited Royal Irish Academy Longford Historic Town Atlas edited by Martin Morris, Sarah Gearty and Fergus O' Farrell was launched by County Archivist Martin Morris.
- ~ On 21st June an exhibition on St. Mel's Cathedral and its history was opened. This exhibition continued throughout the summer and provided a fascinating insight into one of Longford's best known landmarks.
- ~ Throughout August/September an exhibition on Longford's stained glass by the Longford Historical Society was run as part of Heritage Week.
- ~ On 4th October an exhibition on the Holocaust, by the Holocaust Education Trust, was launched. This included a series of talks by Holocaust survivor Ms. Suzie Diamond to second level schools in Longford.
- ~ On 12th October Mr. Michael Lynch and Mr. Enda Flynn launched a new Historical Townlands Map of County Longford.
- ~ On 12th November, St. Christopher's hosted an art exhibition for Ms. Maureen O'Reilly.
- ~ On 7th December Traveller Pride Week was launched with a special guest from Pavee Point.
- ~ On 15th December a comprehensive new book on County Longford Longford: History and Society edited by Martin Morris and Fergus O' Ferrall was launched by Thomas Pakenham, Earl of Longford.
- ~ On 16th December local Arts group Reflections launched their annual Christmas Show with music from Celtic Legends.

CLASSES AND TALKS

During February and October conversational classes in French, Irish, Italian and Spanish were held in Longford, Lanesboro and Granard Libraries. A Comra Gaeilge group also meets weekly in the library.

FÁS E-learning classes continued throughout year and on 29th September 2010, certificates were presented to those who had successfully completed the course.

During October a series of talks were given to local Writers and Readers groups by well known Irish authors Claire Kilroy, Brian Leyden, Carlo Gebler and Lia Mills.

CHILDREN AND OLDER PEOPLE

BEALTAINE

The month of May has been designated as a month to encourage creativity in older people. Longford Library, in partnership with LCRL, Longford VEC and Longford Older Person's Network organised a diverse and exciting programme of events including the launch of the festival with an Arts and Crafts Exhibition and music, song and story in St. Joseph's Day Care Centre, quizzes and creative writing classes in Granard, walks in Tullyally Castle gardens, Learn how to Text in partnership with local secondary schools in Granard and Lanesboro, bumper bingo and an afternoon tea dance in Ballymahon.



Events in Longford Library in 2010
(top row, left to right):
Launch of the Longford - Irish Historical Towns Atlas, No. 22 in June; Suzie Diamond with Lynn Jackson of the Holocaust Education Trust and students from the Convent of Mercy.



(Bottom row, left to right):
A selection of the contributors to Longford: History and Society at its launch in November; the launch of the Historic Townlands of Longford map in October.

CHILDRENS EVENTS

From 5th to 17th July, the annual Children's Summer Festival took place. Events this year included magic shows with magician Mr. Christophe Lombardi, storytelling and arts and crafts sessions with Ms. Chris Thompson and design a wall mural in the library with Ms. Eimear Walsh. In addition the Summer Reading challenge proved immensely popular again this year.



October has been designated Children's Book Month and a wide variety of events were held throughout our branch network. These included talks on Scottish poet Robert Burns by internationally renowned expert Dr. Fred Freeman, a series of talks on her own work by poet Aine Ni Ghlinn, storytelling sessions with younger children by Chris Thompson and a talk to local secondary schools by Holocaust survivor, Suzie Diamond. The month culminated in what has become one of the highlights of our year our Hallow'een Show which was attended by over a hundred very scared children all in fancy dress!

ONE BOOK ONE TOWN PROJECT in partnership with St. Michaels's and St. Joseph's primary schools. The chosen book was Tom Crean Great Irish explorer.

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS: ‘OUR LIBRARY A WELCOMING SPACE FOR ALL’

Longford library works very successfully in cooperation with Longford Community and Enterprise Department, Longford VEC, Longford Community Resources Ltd., Longford Women’s Link, Longford primary and secondary schools, Longford Older Persons Network, Longford Environmental Alliance, Longford Mental Health Association, Longford Integration Network, St. Christopher’s, Longford Citizens Information, Irish Writers Centre, Poetry Ireland. It has become a community hub for raising awareness, providing information and promoting the services being provided by many agencies in Longford. It is also a meeting place for Polish Mothers and Toddlers Group, Longford County Childcare, Writer’s and Reader’s groups, Longford Gardening Club, Longford Environmental Alliance, East meets West, Headway (Acquired Brain Injury) Ireland, Longford Secondary School Retired Teachers Association.

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY STATISTICAL REPORT 2010

LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP FIGURES 2010

Branch	Adult	Junior	2nd Level Student	3rd Level Student	Other	Total 2010	%Inc/Dec on 2009
Longford	1,634	2,041	540	532	82	4,829	-1.4%
Granard	219	275	97	47	25	663	+44%
Lanesboro	180	168	37	13	5	403	-4.8%
Drumlish	85	189	29	16	25	344	+10.2%
E’town	79	180	21	14	5	299	-1.9%
*Ballymahon	53	55	5	7	5	125	-60 %
TOTALS	2,250	2,908	729	629	147	6,663	+6.1%

NUMBER OF ITEMS BORROWED 2010

Branch	Adult Fiction	Adult Non Fiction	Children’s	Teens	Audio	Foreign Lang.	Total 2010	% Inc/ Dec On 2009
Longford	22,603	18,897	22,867	1,669	4,828	909	71,773	+15.9%
Granard	2,416	1,409	3,850	131	198	87	8,091	+9.7%
Lanesboro	2,979	1,647	3,151	200	100	185	8,262	+5.1%
Drumlish	1,322	627	3,820	143	36	14	5,962	+25.1%
E’Town	1,112	678	2,729	134	164	0	4,817	+1.7%
*Ballymahon	1,489	201	909	54	9	13	2,675	-51.8%
TOTALS	31,921	23,459	37,326	2,331	5,335	1,208	101,580	+7.6%

*Note: Ballymahon Library moved to temporary accommodation during 2010 to facilitate refurbishment of Market House Library with reduced opening hours also during this time.

INTERNET USAGE STATISTICS 2010

Branch	No. of PC Sessions Used	No. of WIFI Sessions Used	Total 2010	%Inc/Dec on 2009
Longford	14,745	1,406	16,151	+8.5%
Granard	1,983	186	2,169	+25.4%
Lanesboro	2,846	185	3,031	+19.9%
Drumlish	602	7	609	-12.5%
E’Town	562	5	567	+2.1%
*Ballymahon	544	----	544	-32%
Total	21,282	1,789	23,071	-3.97%

NO. OF LIBRARY VISITORS 2010

Branch	No. of Visitors	% Inc/Dec
Longford	121,074	+2.1%
Granard	10,470	+92%
Lanesboro	13,009	+20.2%
Drumlish	3,754	-5.3%
E’Town	2,774	3.9%
*Ballymahon	n/a	
Longford Local History Room	366	+15%
Total	151,447	+4.8%

LONGFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

Longford County Archives Service had another busy and successful year in 2010.

PROCESSING AND ACCESS

The Rainsford Papers were catalogued and are now available to researchers. This collection includes some important items on the early history of Methodism in Ireland, including two letters written by Reverend John Wesley.

ACCESSIONS

The following archives were deposited:

- ~ The minute book of Ennybegs I.C.A. Guild, 1994-2007.
- ~ A collection of Dáil loan receipts, 1920.
- ~ Items including photographs of an Edgeworth family in the U.S.A., early 1900s.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Archives Section of the website www.longfordlibrary.ie was extensively updated with much new information added.

The Archivist prepared a panel for an exhibition on council services in Áras an Chontae on October.

Other public and educational events:

- ~ 2nd March: guided walking tour of Longford Town with retired second-level teachers.
- ~ 30th April: talk on ‘Sources for local history’ at a seminar for Tidy Towns committees, organised by Longford County Heritage Office.
- ~ April-June: member of a working group that organised an exhibition on St Mel’s Cathedral, which opened in Longford Library on 21st June.
- ~ 9th July: guided visits to the Famine graveyard in Longford Town and Newcastle House as part of the Lough Ree Environmental Summer School and Arts Festival.
- ~ 30th September: guided walking tour of Longford Town with transition year students, Scoil Mhuire, Longford.
- ~ 22nd October: talk on ‘The Ballinamuck Land War, 1839’ at a meeting of Monaduff Social Club, Drumlish Library.
- ~ 15th November: guided walking tour of Ardagh Village with teachers on Comenius exchange programme.
- ~ 16th November: guided walking tour of Longford Town with Comenius group.

PUBLICATIONS

The Archivist was a co-author of *Longford, Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No. 22*, published by the Royal Irish Academy and launched in Longford Library on 17th June.

The Archivist also co-edited and contributed to the book *Longford: history and society. Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county*, launched in Longford Library on 15th December.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Archivist continued to advise council staff on recordkeeping and authorised the destruction of some files in Corporate Services.

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE

In 2010 a number of significant projects were undertaken to further the aims and objectives of the Longford Heritage Plan with the support of the Heritage Council. These comprised:

COMMENCEMENT OF A PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY FOR THE TOWN OF GRANARD

The Longford town of Granard has a historical, architectural and archaeological character unique in County Longford and indeed the surrounding counties. A Public Realm Strategy has been commissioned to better integrate the needs of the population of Granard from their public realm and the protection and visual enhancement of this historic town. The Strategy intends to feed directly into future plans and reports by the Local Authority and other community groups and organisations in the town. A comprehensive analysis of the town, its heritage potential and consultation with the local community commenced in 2010 and will be completed in 2011.

HERITAGE TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Two separate programmes of Heritage training for community groups and practitioners were organised by the Heritage Office in 2010.

In April, a seminar aimed at Tidy Towns committees and local area groups from Longford and surrounding counties has held in Longford town, titled “Maximising the Heritage Potential of your Tidy Town”. Speakers on a range of subjects from biodiversity to built heritage to researching local history delivered practical guidance to the attendees. Longford has a long tradition of success in the National Tidy Towns competition and the purpose of this seminar was to guide communities in the development of the character of their locality.

In May, two one-day “Introduction to Traditional Stone and Lime” workshops with, stonemason and author Pat McAfee, were held in Granard. This was aimed at community groups and voluntary employment schemes in particular to learn about the basics of traditional Irish stonework and the principles behind using lime mortar. This knowledge was to support groups in undertaking necessary repairs to older structures in their area, such as walls, using the correct materials and techniques. The workshop included a practical session in the town’s old Buttermarket.

This workshop was supplemented by a further workshop on traditional hedgerows and hedgelaying in November, lead by Neil Foulkes of the Hedge Laying Association of Ireland. The workshop was held on a historic townland and barony hedgerow in Lislea/Glenmore, Kenagh. This was again aimed primarily at community groups and Tidy Towns groups, who may be maintaining hedgerows within their town or village. The twenty attendees were given a history of hedgelaying, typical plants saw well-maintained examples from Britain in the mobile education unit, and engaged in practical hedgelaying techniques.

MONUMENT RECORDING AT THE GRAVEYARDS AT ABBEYDERG AND ST. GEORGE’S COFI, KENAGH

Continuing an ongoing programme of recording gravemarkers and monuments in Longford’s historic burial grounds, the graveyards at Abbeyderg and St. George’s in Kenagh were surveyed in 2010. The graveyards were comprehensively mapped, photographed and the memorials transcribed. The findings were placed on a FileMaker Pro database which may be opened from multiple computer operating systems. An accompanying report giving sound conservation advice was also compiled.



HERITAGE WEEK 2010 PROGRAMME

A wide range of well-attended events were organised by community and heritage organisations in Longford as part of Heritage Week, from the 21st to 29th of August. These events were coordinated by the County Heritage Office and included an exhibition on stained glass with the Longford Historical Society, vintage car displays, walks, talks and children’s workshops. As 2010 was the International Year for Biodiversity, natural heritage dominated the week with workshops, walks and talks taking place throughout the county and at the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre in particular. In 2010, to celebrate 100 years of the Irish Countrywomen’s Association, the ICA federations in Longford, in partnership with the Fáilte Festival, held events during the week, including a 1910 day, flower show and traditional skills demonstrations which were attended by an enthusiastic multitude.

BUILT HERITAGE PROJECTS

At the ruins of the former Cistercian monastery in Abbeyshrule, essential repointing and grouting took place to three pointed arches located to the west of the abbey chapel. These arches were supporting a considerable soil overburden which was endangering the stability of the feature. An archaeologist monitored the removal of the soil, during which some human and animal bones were discovered. No burials were found in this location and it is thought that they were placed there for safekeeping from another interment or cemetery cleanup in the 19th or 20th centuries. The stone arches were then repaired using traditional methods and it is hoped to continue the stabilising works in the near future.



The Heritage Office also contributed to the major conservation and renovation project which took place on the Ballymahon Library, ensuring that the built heritage of this important Protected Structure was maintained and enhanced.

Heritage Week events in 2010 (top row): Ugly Bug Ball at Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre; a section of a flower arrangement inspired by Granard at the ICA Flower Festival; Pat Newman of Kenagh at the Kenagh Royal Canal Celebration at Mosstown Harbour. (Bottom row): Members of the Longford Federation of the ICA with Paddy Egan at their traditional skills demonstration at the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre. The launch of Heritage Week 2010 in Longford Library.



BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS

2010 was declared the International Year for Biodiversity by the United Nations. To celebrate this, a number of events for children and schools were carried out throughout the year to promote awareness and appreciation of our natural heritage and biodiversity.

During Biodiversity Week in May 2010, a local aquatic ecologist, Noreen McLaughlin introduced classes from Colehill National School to the varied wildlife living in the nearby River Inny at Newcastle Woods. David Fallon of Bord na Móna then hosted children from Cloontagh National School at the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre where they engaged with the plants and animals alive in the bog.

Working with the Longford Environmental Alliance, a competition for National Schools was held for two schools to win a “Biodiversity Corner” which would contribute enormously to their Green Flag efforts. A runner-up prize of a set of colourful, child-friendly field ecology guides was given to a third school, whilst each school that entered received one of the series of the field guides.



OTHER HERITAGE AWARENESS

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

- ~ *Promotion of Longford's mythological heritage through storytelling in schools during Seachtain na Gaeilge.*
- ~ *Promotion of the county's natural heritage through the sponsorship of the Hedge Laying Association of Ireland's demonstration stand at the Longford County Agricultural Show in July 2010.*
- ~ *Having input into committees, groups and events to further the awareness and protection of Longford's varied heritage including a proposed Wetlands Heritage Project for Longford and the Rural Development Programme.*
- ~ *Having input into national policies and strategies in relation to heritage.*
- ~ *Providing guidance and advice on heritage matters to Local Authority staff and departments, e.g. traditional stonework in bridge repairs; Protected Structures and conservation; or biodiversity and the legislation surrounding protected plant and animal species.*
- ~ *Assisting Longford Library & Archives Service and the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois in the compilation of the successful St. Mel's Cathedral exhibition.*
- ~ *Liaising and assisting community groups and local heritage organisations in researching and promoting their heritage projects.*
- ~ *Working with the Longford Historical Society in commissioning and delivering an inventory of stained glass in Longford's churches.*

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

LONGFORD ARTS OFFICE

The following is a list of projects completed or substantial completed in 2010.

VISUAL ARTS

- ~ *Midland College of Photography continued to expand the course offer of the MCP adding courses in Portraiture/ Landscape/Still life.*
- ~ *Organised a series of field trips, lectures and master classes.*
- ~ *www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie re-structured and upgraded the photography website adding audiovisual packages to enable site to undertake an innovative interactive educational role.*
- ~ *Included a platform for the exhibition of the work of the students participating in the Longford Schools Photography Programme.*
- ~ *Engaged a Photographer in Residence to facilitate the Schools Photography Programme in Moyne Community School, Cnoc Mhuire Granard, Templemichael Community College, St. Mel's College Longford, Mercy Convent Ballymahon.*
- ~ *Researched the feasibility of establishing a Midland Regional Photography Festival.*
- ~ *As part of the Midland Arts Officers Master Class Programme, organised a series of master classes in various photography techniques.*

PERCENT FOR ART PROGRAMME

- ~ Assisted in the establishment of a Percent for Art project at the Black Bridge, Knockahaw Longford.
- ~ Commenced work on Centenary Square Public Art Feature.

ARTS GROUPS

- ~ At any given time Longford has between four and six active painting groups. The Arts Office supported visiting workshop facilitators, gallery visits and other art form development initiatives.
- ~ The County Arts Office supported, in partnership with the Westmeath VEC Arts Education Officer, an “Artist Atelier Project” involving the artist Kevin Flood and the art student of Moyne Community School.

DRAMA

- ~ Actively supported Backstage Theatre in their involvement in this year’s award winning Nomad production of “Philadelphia Here I Come”.
- ~ Was actively involved in Backstage Theatre Group’s efforts to stage the 2009 National One Act Drama Festival.
- ~ Supported Backstage Theatre group’s annual production the Beauty Queen of Inis Mean.
- ~ Supported the Backstage Youth Group’s annual drama production and pantomime.
- ~ Provided organisational, programming and financial support to Boglane Theatre Ballymahon.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

- ~ Worked with Midlands Arts Officers to produce three editions of the Midland Arts & Culture Magazine.
- ~ Worked with Midland Arts officers to deliver a series of visual arts Master Classes.
- ~ Co-operated with the Midland Arts Organiser to deliver a visual arts project in Moyne Community College.
- ~ Worked with County Longford VEC to develop and run the Midland College of Photography.

CREATIVE WRITING

- ~ Ran a Creative Writers Mentoring Programme involving poetry and prose writer from Longford Roscommon and Westmeath and facilitated by the poet Noel Monahan and prose writer Caroline Barry.
- ~ Recorded a series of audio-visual creative development packages for www.virtualwriter.net.
- ~ Updated and maintained www.virtualwriter.net.
- ~ Offered a creative Writing Bursaries to the Listowel Writers Week.
- ~ Provided support for Longford Writers Groups.
- ~ Supported Longford Literary Festivals.
- ~ Launched the Longford Literary anthology “Loose Leaves” in partnership with Granard Writers Group.

MUSIC & DANCE

- ~ Provided on-going support to the Arts Office sponsored Longford County Choir.
- ~ Supported the rapidly expanding Kindermusik programme throughout the county in Ballymahon, Kenagh and Longford.
- ~ Supported the Edgeworthstown traditional music project, the Saturday Morning Club.
- ~ Assisted the Midlands Musicians Club in the delivery of the educational element of their annual programme.
- ~ Supported the establishment of the Annaly School of Dance.
- ~ Supported the Shawbrook School of Dance sponsored performance by Fidget Feet Dance Company as part of the Longford Dance Festival.

Researched drafted and published The Longford County Council Arts Development Strategy 2009 - 2014



CORPORATE SERVICES

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2010

A total of 29 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests was received by Longford County Council during 2010 from a mixed source of business, clients, staff and other persons. Three requests for internal review were received and no appeal was made to the Information Commissioner.

FRANCHISE
CONDITIONS FOR REGISTRATION

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

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

The numbers registered to vote on the 2010/2011 Register of Electors were as follows:

Local Electoral Areas	No. of Electors
Ballymahon	8,650
Drumlish	6,119
Granard	5,627
Longford	9,248
Total:	29,644

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2003

The provisions of the Official Languages Act, 2003 require Local Authorities to prepare and publish an Irish Language Scheme. This Scheme was accordingly published by Longford Local Authorities and commenced on the 1st July 2008. The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish.

A number of objectives and targets as set out in the Irish Language Scheme and scheduled for implementation was achieved during 2010 through the work of the Irish Language Development Officer. An extended list of employees were identified as capable of providing services through Irish if requested. A basic 6 week Irish language course was developed by the Irish Language Development Officer for delivery by her to relevant staff in early 2011. Translation of prescribed stationery items continued during 2010 in accordance with the Regulations.

The staff Intranet continues to be developed as a staff resource for the promotion of bilingualism. It is considered that the commitment in the Scheme to make 30% of the static content of the Local Authorities Websites bilingual was reached with the inclusion of bilingual publications and the bilingual library catalogue which went “live” in June 2010.

The commitment to the provision of bilingual signage by developers is strengthened by a condition of planning that developers submit estate names of cultural or historical relevance to the locality. In addition the County Longford Heritage Forum has established a “Placenames Committee” to advise the Council in the naming of new developments. The interest and input of the elected members during 2010 in the Irish Language Scheme is hereby acknowledged.

The effective operation of the Scheme and its implementation plan will continue to be monitored and reviewed during 2011.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee, consisting of five members, has an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of a systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the Council. It is non-executive and is independent in the determination of its work programme and in the formulation of its recommendations.

The Committee met five times during 2010. The Chairperson presented the Annual Report 2009 of the Audit Committee at the County Council meeting held in March 2010. The Audit Committee examined a number of issues within its remit and issued recommendations where appropriate. During the course of the year the Local Government Auditor and senior staff of the Council presented reports to the Audit Committee as requested by the members.

MEETINGS

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

The Annual Meeting of the Council was held on 23rd June 2010.

Councillor Paul Connell was elected Mayor and Councillor Paddy Belton was elected Deputy Mayor.

MONTHLY MEETING - 20TH JANUARY 2010

The Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2009 – 2014 was adopted by the members of the Council and the following members were nominated to the four Strategic Policy Committees:

Social Housing, Planning and Building Control Strategic Policy Committee.

Councillors – V. Kiernan, M. Carrigy, P. Nolan, P.J. Reilly, D. Glennon and P. Connell.

Transportation, Road Development and Road Safety Strategic Policy Committee

Councillors – A. Mitchell, J. Duffy, M. Cahill, L. McEntire and M. Casey.

Water Services and Environmental Strategic Policy Committee

Councillors – G. Brady, P. Belton, S. Farrell, P. Loughrey and T. Victory.

Economic Development, Urban Renewal, Rural Re-organisation, Educational, Cultural and Recreational Development Strategic Policy Committee

Councillors – M. Mulleady, B. Steele, F. Kilbride, L. Bannon and M. Sexton.

SPECIAL MEETING – 10TH FEBRUARY 2010

A Joint Special Meeting of Longford County Council and Longford Town Council was held on the 10th February 2010 to consider Housing and Planning Matters.

SPECIAL MEETING - 15TH FEBRUARY 2010

- A Special Meeting of the Council was held on the 15th February 2010 to deal with the following Report on Flooding in County Longford.
- Presentation by Ms. Stephanie Long from the Radiological Institute of Ireland on Radon.
- Presentation by Longford Women’s Link.

MONTHLY MEETING - 10TH MARCH 2010

- Ms. Karen Clabby, Chairperson of the Longford County Council Audit Committee, presented the Annual Report of Longford County Council Audit Committee.

JOINT SPECIAL “IN COMMITTEE” MEETING OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL AND LONGFORD TOWN COUNCIL - 22ND MARCH 2010

- Representatives from the Health Services Executive addressed a Joint Special “In Committee” Meeting of Longford County Council and Longford Town Council on 22nd March 2010.
- Representatives from the Midland Regional Authority made a presentation to the members of Longford County Council and Longford Town Council on the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010 – 2022.

SPECIAL MEETING - 28TH MAY 2010

- A Special Meeting of the Council regarding the Midland Regional Hospital in Mullingar was held on the 28th May 2010 at which Deputies James Bannon,
- Peter Kelly and Willie Penrose attended.

SPECIAL MEETING - 28TH JUNE 2010

- A presentation was given by representatives from the Westmeath National Roads Design Office on the Preferred Route Corridor and the Route Corridor Selection for the N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky).

JOINT SPECIAL MEETING - 22ND SEPTEMBER 2010

- A Joint Special Meeting of Longford County Council and Longford Town Council was held on 22nd September 2010. Representatives from the IDA, County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland FAS, County Longford VEC and the Chairperson of the B3 Action Committee attended the meeting.

MONTHLY MEETING - 17TH NOVEMBER 2010

- The Mayor made a presentation to Longford Women’s Link who won the “Community Response to Unemployment” category in the National Pride of Place Competition 2010.

BUDGET MEETING - 13TH DECEMBER 2010

- The Budget for 2011 was adopted by the members at Budget Meeting held on the 13th December 2010.

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

- Meetings of the Joint Policing Committee were held on the 22nd March and 7th September 2010.

RECEPTIONS

- A Reception was held on the 15th September 2010 to honour the Irish Countrywomen’s Association on their outstanding achievements during the past 100 years.
- A Reception was held on the 15th October 2010 to honour the County Longford Minor Team who won the 2010 Leinster Minor Championship.

A Reception was held on the 20th October 2010 to honour the following:

- Longford Senior Hurling Team, winners of the Lory Meagher Cup Final 2010
- Longford Ladies Gaelic Football Team, winners of the Leinster Intermediate Final 2010.
- Longford Ladies Rugby Team, winners of the Leinster League Division 3, 2009/2010
- Longford Senior Rugby Team, winners of the Midland League 2009/2010.

PLAYGROUNDS PROVISION

In 2010 a new playground in Ardagh was completed and was officially opened along with the facility in Clondra. These projects bring the number of play facilities in the town and county to eleven playgrounds. Longford Local Authorities continues to lend support and advice to community groups encouraging the establishment of new playgrounds in partnership with other agencies.



Official opening of Clondra playground

DISABILITY STRATEGY

The Disability Act 2005 facilitates the provision of disability specific services and the improvement of access to mainstream public services for people with disabilities.

Longford Local Authorities are implementing on an ongoing basis the Disability Plan which was adopted by the Council in September 2008. Specific proposals were included for measures that are to be taken over the duration of the Plan, to facilitate the provision of improved access by persons with disabilities to information, services, public roads, public places and public buildings in County Longford.

The Council receives annual funding (both Capital and Current) from central government to undertake relevant work.

A total allocation of €138,838 was made available in 2010 by the DoEHLG under the National Disability Strategy towards achieving the actions set out in the Council’s multi annual Plan.

During 2010, this allocation was used to fund the installation of a lift and associated services at Ballymahon Library. In addition the Library Service continued to improve accessibility to its services and information during 2010.

SAFETY HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK

The past year has introduced many changes in the area of health and safety. Changes in health and safety legislation and the introduction of a number of codes of practice by the Health and Safety Authority require continuous review of the management of health and safety. The introduction of the code of practice for three or less employees and twenty or less employees have been hugely beneficial in assisting the smaller contractor with health and safety compliance.

Achieving workplace safety across a business as diverse as Longford County Council is a challenge, managing health and safety can only be accomplished through the commitment of everyone. Longford County Council is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy workplace through continuous improvement and including health and safety as an integral part of business.

REGULATORY INSPECTIONS

A total of thirteen inspections were carried out by the Health and Safety Authority in 2010. Inspections were conducted at the following locations:

- ~ Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- ~ Longford Water Treatment Plant x 2.
- ~ Lanesboro Water Treatment Plant.
- ~ Smear Water Treatment Plant.
- ~ Granard Water Treatment Plant.
- ~ Abbeyshrule Water Treatment Plant.
- ~ Machinery Yard.
- ~ Road Sites x 2.
- ~ Lanesboro Library.
- ~ Longford Library.
- ~ Edgeworthstown Fire Station.

One of the Inspections was conducted as a result of a reportable accident. Each of the inspections focused on regulatory compliance and included a review of Safety Statements and Risk Assessments, the management of Lone Working, Confined Spaces, Traffic Management, Chemical Agents, Maintenance of Equipment, Manual Handling, Ergonomics, Signage, Personal Protective Equipment, Working at Height, Asbestos Management, Site Specific Risk Assessments, Transportation and Chlorine Management. Documentation was reviewed as part of each inspection.

No prohibition or improvement notices were issued by the Health and Safety Authority during 2010. This is a very positive reflection on the way in which health and safety is managed within the organisation.

SUMMARY OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENTS REPORTS FOR 2010

A total of eleven accidents and four incidents were reported during the year 2010. Three of the accidents were reportable to the Health and Safety Authority (more than three days lost from work). A total of two hundred and sixty eight days were lost as a result of accidents at work. The most common cause of accidents were Manual Handling, Slip, Trips, Falls and Plant/Machinery.

The reporting of accidents and incidents is an important element of the safety management system and is used as a tool for identifying areas for continuous improvement.

SITE INSPECTIONS

A total of eighty five safety inspections were conducted by the safety section at both fixed and mobile work locations. These inspections included a review of general site safety conditions, work practices and associated safety documentation.

An additional sixteen inspections were conducted through the area safety inspection programme within the libraries and the main office buildings.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

Training is a key element of promoting a positive safety culture and developing good safety procedures on the job. 33 training courses were held during 2010 and 326 employees attended training. The training courses held included Abrasive Wheels, Chainsaw & Wind blowing, Chlorine Handling, Mobile Access Tower, Site Dumper, Safe Pass and Traffic Management. The internal Manual Handling Instructor completed Manual Handling training with a large number of employees. A number of employees were trained as VDU assessors and now play an important role in the development of the ergonomics programme at Longford County Council. Vehicle drivers also attended the CPC Driver Training (Certificate of Professional Competence) as required by the Road Safety Authority.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings were held in each Directorate on a quarterly basis, this forum allows specific safety issues with each Directorate to be discussed. This is a valuable forum for addressing local issues and giving safety representatives an opportunity to raise safety issues on behalf of their work colleagues.

Safety Management Team Meetings were held during the year and monthly safety reports and updates were provided to the Management Team.

On site communication sessions and toolbox where also held by the Health and Safety Officer and Line Managers. The intranet is used as a communication tool and will continue to be expanded in 2011 for the provision of Health and Safety Information.

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

As part of a National approach for the development of accredited Safety Management Systems within each Local Authority, a total of fifty nine Health and Safety Policies were reviewed for future implementation within the organisation. A number of procedural elements of the current system were reviewed and updated during the year. This included the Health and Safety Policy, Ancillary Safety Statements, Construction Management Procedures, Risk Assessments including Site Specific Risk Assessments and Contractor Management procedures.

In 2010, there were forty seven workplace deaths reported to the Health and Safety Authority. This equates to almost one fatality a week while at work. In these economically challenging times, it is vital to ensure health and safety continues to be a priority. Longford County Council remains fully committed to managing health and safety and will continue to develop the Safety Management System in ensuring a safe place of work for all its employees and members of the public in 2011.

The Safety Management System - A Continuous Cycle of Safety Improvement



HUMAN RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

The Human Resources Department is primarily responsible for:

- ~ Recruitment and deployment of staff.
- ~ Staff Training and Development.
- ~ Performance Management.
- ~ Human Resources Policies and Procedures.
- ~ Equality and Diversity Management.
- ~ Industrial/Staff Relations.
- ~ Workplace Partnership.
- ~ Superannuation.

The work of the Human Resources Department is shaped by the strategic goals and objectives as identified in the Council’s Corporate Plan. In 2010 this work was heavily influenced by Government Policy decisions in relation to Public Services.

The combination of cuts in funding, reducing employee numbers, incentivised leave/pension schemes and a general moratorium on recruitment had considerable effect on the traditional key work areas of the Human Resources Department. The impact of these measures resulted in a 4% reduction of the overall workforce since 2009 and an 18% reduction since 2008.

The work programme for the Human Resources Department was refocused to respond to the challenge of managing and maintaining service delivery with a reduced workforce, achieving efficiencies and providing leadership to employees to assist them in dealing with current and future challenges being faced in a positive manner.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Within the context of the foregoing operating environment, the statistics below show a reduced level of recruitment activity in 2010. The HR Department now follows procedures implemented nationally by referring all staffing request applications to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to obtain sanction to fill the limited number of posts identified as an exception to the moratorium on filling of public service posts.

RECRUITMENT STATISTICS 2010

Number of Competitions Advertised	Number of Interview Days	Number of Applicants invited for interview	Number of Applicants who attended for interview	Number of employees appointed
12	10	39	36	5 permanent 6 temporary

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2010 the HR Department continued with delivery of an annual Training Programme that focused on the delivery of Health & Safety requirements ensuring our mandatory obligations were fulfilled in this regard.

A total of 54 training programmes were delivered over 84 days with training delivered to 375 participants across all disciplines. The table below outlines some of the areas of training provision.

Basic Chainsaw & Windblown Safety Abrasive Wheels Training Mobile Tower Scaffold Driver CPC Water Services Programme Prevention & Management of Agression & Violence AED – Defibrillator Refresher Training Certificate In Local Government Studies Driving for Work Chlorine Handling Excellence in Asphalt Energy Efficiency Sludge Management	Sustaining Urban Draining Systems New Public Works Contracts IOSH Managing Safely in Construction Safe Pass Manual Handling Traffic Management VDU Assessor Training Conditions of Attendance ORP Nutrient Removal Course Leak Detection -Water Conservation – Network Management/Operatives Web-enabled PCS Workshop Exercise Wetlands Preventing & Combating Rent & Mortgage Arrears
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The Human Resources Department continued to focus on achieving maximum value for money through cost-effective and quality training for all employees.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Industrial relations denotes the collective relationship between employers and employees. The first quarter of 2010 was marked by a period of industrial action with a ‘work to rule’ being implemented. This ‘work to rule’ was part of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions’ plan of action to oppose the implementation of Government’s policy decisions impacting on public sector employees. Through communication and engagement with the employee representative bodies the period of ‘work to rule’ was managed in order to minimise disruption to services and to ensure that as far as possible the Local Authority services continued to be delivered to maximum effect.

The national discussions between Government and Unions resulted in proposals being presented that afforded an opportunity to bring stability to public service provision. The proposals provided a mechanism for reform of the Public Service with account being taken of sustainable savings being generated. The proposed Public Service Agreement 2010- 2014 was balloted on and following acceptance was ratified by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on 15th June 2010.

Implementation of this Agreement progressed in the final two quarters with agreement secured on the Local Government Sectoral Plan and the Council's local action plan developed. The local action plan contains a substantive and specific list of identifiable actions in line with the sectoral action plan for delivery at local level. The local action plan was presented for discussion with employee representative bodies. Both parties approached the process in a constructive manner to deliver and co-operate with change inline with the agreement. Engagement at local level continues to progress with implementation of specific actions well underway.

HR PAYROLL & SUPERANNUATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Following a Business Process Review at national level in relation to Human Resource Management, it was recommended that an integrated ICT system be implemented to assist with the efficient execution of the activities within this function. Subsequent to national tender process the agreed system was the CORE HR System. The system offers an integrated ICT solution to the management of our human resources; payroll and superannuation records. Significant progress was made in the implementation of the system in Longford County Council in 2010.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Project Team built on the successful implementation of the foundation modules from 2009 and accordingly implemented the Payroll and related CSO module for Longford County and Town Councils. The initial phase of the payroll implementation was concerned with gathering data for all employees’; salaries, wages, fire fighters, pensioners, councillors and Town Council personnel. Data was also captured about Departments, Grades, Salary Scales, Work Patterns, rosters etc.

This was a massive task and involved extracting data from our existing IT systems and manual files. The Payroll implementation went through a number of steps to ensure a complete implementation. These steps were as follows:

- ~ *Training of Project staff and users.*
- ~ *Application of the nationally agreed common configuration to the system.*
- ~ *Load of captured data onto the system and verification of same.*
- ~ *User Acceptance Testing (UAT): this involves testing the system using local data and predicated scenarios.*
- ~ *Parallel Running: this involves running payroll on the new system and comparing results with the old system.*

The Organisational Structure, Outdoor Time & Attendance, Departmental Returns (HR Side); Superannuation, Payroll and CSO modules (Finance side) are now fully operational and maintained by the relevant sections. The implementation has facilitated a shared service for Payroll, Superannuation, Time & Attendance and HR between Longford County and Town Council.

PARTNERSHIP

Workplace Partnership is the process whereby management, employees and trade unions work together to bring about organisational change in an open and co-operative manner. The Workplace Partnership process is achieved by employee participation and consultation, information sharing and the development of joint objectives.

As a result of industrial action and the national withdrawal of the Unions from the Partnership process during 2010, the work of the Partnership Committee was restricted and as a result met only three times during the year.

The Committee worked with the Local Authority National Partnership Advisory Group (LANPAG) and participated in a national review of workplace partnership. At a local level this review indicated that Partnership Committee in areas had contributed to successful outcomes in areas including:

- ~ *Policy development.*
- ~ *Health and Safety issues.*
- ~ *Discussions on communications issues.*
- ~ *PMDS.*
- ~ *Projects.*
- ~ *Discussions on budgetary & staffing issues.*



FINANCE & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



Mr. Barry Lynch,
Head of Finance

FINANCE

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

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

SERVICES

- ~ *Motor Taxation.*
- ~ *Rates/Water Charges/Housing Rents/NPPR.*
- ~ *Higher Education Grants.*
- ~ *General Office – processing payments to suppliers and payroll.*

PAYMENT PRACTICES

The provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002 applies to Longford County Council and Longford Town Council. Both Local Authorities have systems in place to ensure that interest penalties are not incurred. However, in a small number of cases, late payments occurred in 2010.

Total amount of interest penalties:

Longford Co. Council	€47.20
Longford Town Council	Nil

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

INTERNAL AUDIT

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

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

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

ACADEMIC YEAR 2010/2011

Number of new awards issued	144
Number of renewals issued	201
Total number of students in receipt of Higher Education Grants	345
Number of students attending Irish colleges	326
Number of students attending UK colleges (including Northern Ireland) and EU colleges	19

EXPENDITURE

Local Government Act 2001 – Section 142 Expenditure	☐
Mayor and Other Allowances	69,000
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	6,431
Representational Payments, Expenses of Members and Representation at Conferences	549,835
Total	625,266

MOTOR TAX

Motor Tax Statistics 2010	No of Transactions	Amount
Vehicle Licences (Discs)	31354	6215340
Driver Licences	5738	94615
Road Worthiness Certificates	3436	24548
Trade Licences	75	22875
Miscellaneous Receipts	702	9270
Total	41305	6366648

Vehicle Licences Issued 2010		Drivers Licences issued 2010	
Private	24260	1 year Driving Licences	38
Goods	5280	3 year Driving Licences	833
Cycles	141	10 year Driving Licences	2498
Tractors	822	1 year Provisional	310
PSVs (Bus, Taxi & Hackney)	222	2 year Provisional	1304
Other (including duplicates)	598	Duplicate Licences	426
Free in lieu Vehicle Licences	31	Free in Lieu Licences	329
Total	31354	Total	5738
In addition 9,231 vehicle licences were issued by Motor Tax Online Service during 2010.			
These vehicle licences are issued directly from the Vehicle Registration Unit in Shannon, Co. Clare.			

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT

- Longford Local Authorities ICT Department provides and supports the following ICT Systems:
- ~ Electronic mail, Internet, Intranet and Extranet.
 - ~ Web based systems.
 - ~ Agresso Financial systems that support the local authorities’ financial management information systems and transaction processing.
 - ~ Geographical information systems that provide essential information on roads, water mains etc. in the county.
 - ~ Planning administration systems.
 - ~ Housing administration systems.
 - ~ Various small database systems.

NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

The network is made up of several complex components which require on-going management, maintenance and monitoring. Responsibility for managing the network also includes maintaining a Wide Area Network which connects all off site offices back to Aras an Chontae, using leased lines, wireless and fibreoptic links. There are a total of twelve sites, seven in Longford town and five outlying Library sites.

SYSTEM UPGRADES

The Core System went live in Summer 2010. The IT Department provided support and configuration for the connectivity for all network clients to this application.

The new Phone System was installed and commissioned in January 2010 to resolve ongoing technical issues on the old system and to provide expandability.

The Mail Archive Service was upgraded to SQL 2005.

The Migration of Anti Virus software to McAfee enabled enhanced features along with Anti Virus which strengthens the protection of sensitive data on the Network.

The eHEGs system went live on the 6th August 2010. The existing student grant data was migrated to the new system and integrated with our accounting system Agresso. It is centrally hosted in the Local Government Computer Services Board.

The eHEGs system processes the entire administration and management of higher education student grants. The system was required to manage individual students from initial grant applications through annual re-application and on through their entire third level studies (including post-graduate studies). The system manages every aspect of student interaction with the scheme from capturing eligibility requirements to managing all communications and correspondence to the allocation of monies. One of the key components of the new system was that it has a powerful reporting module.

INTERNET & INTRANET

Longford County Council continued to provide all public information relating to our services via our Council website throughout 2010. An increase in the usage of the site reflects the growing reliance citizens place on the Council’s internet presence for information. In particular we provided a comprehensive twice daily update on services during the severe weather conditions experienced during December. This service was maintained during weekends and periods during which our offices were closed. Our staff Intranet continues to be of strategic importance in the sharing of information among staff while also providing access to many of our most commonly used applications.

WEBSITE VISITS DURING 2010

longfordcoco.ie	59,917
longford.ie	48,785
longfordtowncouncil.ie	7,170
virtualwriter.net	5,080
Longfordlibrary.ie	18,684

IT SUB COMMITTEE

The IT sub Committee was reconstituted during 2010 under the chairmanship of Cllr. Mark Casey. One of the key initiatives of the Committee has been to establish a programme of training for Council Members so that maximum use can be made of the available IT resources.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN 2010-2014

INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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

MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF ROADS

Further important steps were taken in 2010. Tender Competitions were completed and Contracts awarded for the Consultant Engineers and Legal Services for the N5 Longford Town Bypass Road Project. The Design Build Contract was tendered by 5 pre-qualified Tenders in September 2010. The Tenders were opened in December 2010 and their assessment will be completed in the first quarter of 2011. In addition, Preconstruction mammal survey was conducted and Utility Diversions Contracts were completed. Advance accommodation works were agreed and land negotiations were ongoing throughout 2010 with a number of cases settled.

The Preferred Route for the N4 Longford (Roosky) to Mullingar Bypass was announced at a special meeting of Longford County Council on Monday the 30th June 2010. The National Roads Authority has indicated that due to funding restrictions the detailed design of the scheme is suspended.

Pavement repairs were carried out on the N4 route at locations near Newtownforbes, Longford town and Edgeworthstown and on the N63 at Longford town, Rappareehill Lanesboro and Lanesboro town.

The Multi-annual Road Restoration and Surface Dressing programmes for Non National Roads are ongoing with extensive works being completed on a significant number of Regional and Local Roads.

Specific Grant Schemes were advanced at the following roads;

- ~ *R198 at Gaique Cross.*
- ~ *Saints Island Causeway, Newtowncashel.*
- ~ *R392 at Forgney.*

In addition as part of these Specific Grant Schemes important upgrading works was carried out at the The Mill Bridge, Clondra.

ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Low-cost Safety Remedial schemes have been advanced and are at various stages of completion at:

- ~ *L 1058 Bunlahy.*
- ~ *L 1010 Drumlish.*
- ~ *R198 Moyne.*
- ~ *R398 Melview Crossroads.*
- ~ *R 397/R398 Ballinamore, Brickeens.*
- ~ *RI98 Ballycloughan School.*
- ~ *L 3013 Clonard.*
- ~ *R392 Leherly Lanesboro.*

Road safety recommendations relating to Planning Permissions are ongoing.

The implementation of the multi-annual Public Lighting Plan continued with additional lighting added in a number of towns and villages. The Council continued to promote, facilitate and participate with the Gardai, Schools and Road Safety Authority in the operation of Junior School Wardens and Road Safety Campaigns. The Council continued to monitor effective implementation of the EU Commercial Vehicle Regulations in close consultation with the 2 No. authorised test-centres in the county. Implementation of the multi-annual Non-national Road Signage Plan is substantially completed.

CURRENT POLICIES

Quality road design standards were promoted for implementation.

Access for the disabled was promoted in accordance with recommended guidelines in consultation with stakeholders. Participation continued in the Steering and Technical Groups managing the National Roads Authority Regional Design Office.

Appropriate liaison was promoted between transportation development stakeholders such as Public Representatives, Representative Bodies, The general public, The Department of Transport, The National Roads Authority, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Gardai, The Road Safety Authority, Iarnród Éireann, Waterways Ireland, etc.

Implementation of Local Improvement Schemes continued.

HOUSING, PLANNING & EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

SOCIAL HOUSING

The housing needs of Co. Longford continued to be met through a range of housing options. The last statutory assessment of housing need was undertaken in 2008 and the next one is due to take place in March 2011.

Longford County Council's housing programme continued throughout 2010. 7 individual houses were purchased and 2 rural houses were completed. There were 152 allocations of tenancy during the year.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE / REFURBISHMENT

In 2010, a sum of €750,000 was provided in the budget for the maintenance and repair of Local Authority Housing.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Housing Liaison Officer and the Social Worker continued to work with tenants and residents associations throughout 2010. Tenancy Enforcement was ongoing during the year.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING

The Council continued its association with the Voluntary Housing Sector.

LOANS/GRANTS

A total of 11 valid loan applications were received in 2010 with 3 loans approved and 7 advanced. This amount does not include applications refused or withdrawn.

In 2010, there were a combined total of 293 applications received under the three grant schemes. A total of 219 grants were paid out and this amounted to €1,111,049.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 continues to be followed by Longford County Council. This sets out the 4 year strategy in relation to the programme and type of accommodation to be provided for travellers.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME

At the end of 2010, there were 286 RAS tenancies in place. The RAS Scheme and the associated operational and administrative costs are self financing in Longford.

LONG TERM LEASING ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements for Long term leasing of 4 units under the scheme in the Ballymahon area are at an advanced stage. There were 5 RAS Type Leases in place at the end of 2010.

REMEDIAL/REGENERATION WORKS

In 2010, proposals were advanced to carry out Remedial Works at Tromra Road, Granard.

PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS

The local authority is responsible for implementation and enforcement of accommodation standards in the rental sector.

NEW RENTED STANDARDS 2010

€125,000 was received from the Department in respect of the above.

ENERGY RETROFITTING SCHEME 2010

In 2010 Longford County Council received funding from the Department in the amount of €213,559 as part of the above programme.

CORPORATE PLAN

2010 – 2014



Longford County Council

SERVICE INDICATORS



Longford Local Authorities 2009 & 2010		2009	2010
F: FIRE SERVICE			
F1: Fire Service Mobilisation			
A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire		No full time fire station in Longford	
B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire		5.06	6.15
C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other emergency incidents		No full time fire station in Longford	
D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other emergency incidents		5.49	6.48
F2 Percentage of attendances at scenes			
A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes		47.68	35.93
B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes		44.27	48.75
C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes		8.05	15.32
D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes		37.33	39.47
E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes		48	46.05
F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes		14.67	14.47
F3 Fire Prevention			
A. Total number of fire safety certificate applications received		35	31
B. Total number of fire safety certificate applications processed (including cases deemed invalid)		36	40
C. Total number of applications deemed invalid		11	9
CP: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION			
CP.1 Participation in local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Og scheme			
Percentage of local schools and youth groups involved in the local Youth Council/ Comhairle na n-Og scheme		81.25	76.19
CP.2 Groups registered with the Community and Voluntary Forum			
Number of groups registered with the Community and Voluntary Forum		167	161
C: CORPORATE ISSUES			
C.1 Working Days lost to Sickness			
A. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through certified leave		4.99	5.09
B. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through uncertified leave		0.63	0.47
C.2 Staff Training and Development			
Expenditure on Training and Development as a percentage of total payroll costs:		6.26	5.4
E: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES			
WATER			
E.1 Unaccounted For Water			
Unaccounted for water (UFW) as a percentage of total volume of water supplied under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for		45.3	48.86
Total volume of water supplied (m3/per day) under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for		18500	19100
Volume of unaccounted for water (m3/per day) under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for		8381	9332
E.2 Drinking Water Analysis			
A. Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to public schemes		Information provided directly by Environmental Protection Agency	
B. Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to private schemes (where appropriate)		Information provided directly by Environmental Protection Agency	
WASTE MANAGEMENT			
E.3 Waste Segregation			
A. Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for dry recyclables		84.17	96.77
B. Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for organics		0	27.06
E4: Housing Waste Sent for Recycling			
A. Percentage of household waste collected from kerbside, which is sent for recycling		45.43	50.38
B. Tonnage of household waste collected from kerbside, which is sent for recycling		3885	4327.2
C. Tonnage of household waste recycled, which arises from waste collected from recycling facilities (i.e. bring banks, civic amenity centres, transfer stations and other recycling facilities)		1930.42	1107.13
E5: Household Waste Sent for Landfill			
A. The percentage of household waste collected which is sent to landfill		36.25	49.62

B. The tonnage of household waste collected which is sent to landfill	3100	4261.44
E6: Recycling Facilities		
The total number of Bring Sites in the local authority area	25	26
The total number of Civic Amenity Centres in the local authority area	2	2
Glass		
A. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	25	26
B. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
C. The total number of facilities for recycling	27	28
D. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	3.93	4.07
Cans		
E. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	25	26
F. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
G. The total number of facilities for recycling	27	28
H. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	3.93	4.07
Textiles		
I. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	2	2
J. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
K. The total number of facilities for recycling	4	4
L. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.58	0.58
Batteries		
M. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	0	0
N. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
O. The total number of facilities for recycling	2	2
P. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.29	0.29
Oils		
Q. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	0	0
R. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	1	1
S. The total number of facilities for recycling	1	1
T. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.15	0.15
Other materials		
U. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	0	0
V. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
W. The total number of facilities for recycling	2	2
X. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.29	0.29
Litter		
E7: Litter Prevention and Enforcement		
The following indicator is presented in the service indicators report:		
A. Number of full-time litter wardens	3	3
B. Number of part-time litter wardens	0	0
C. Number of litter wardens (both full- and part-time) per 5,000 population	0.44	0.44
D. Number of on-the-spot fines issued	541	458
E. Number of on-the-spot fines paid	281	200
F. Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	21	20
G. Number of prosecutions secured in cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	25	16
H. Number of notices issued (under sections 9, 15, 16, 17 and 20 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997)	0	0
I. Total number of prosecutions taken (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)	25	20
J. Total number of prosecutions secured (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)	28	16
K. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are unpolluted (i.e. litter-free)	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System	
L. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are slightly polluted with litter	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System	
M. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are moderately polluted with litter	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System	
N. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are significantly polluted with litter	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System	

O. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are grossly polluted with litter		Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System	
E8: Environmental Complaints and Enforcement			
A. Total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)		1331	1671
B. Number of complaints investigated		1331	1650
C. Number of complaints resolved where no further action was necessary		1258	1399
D. Number of enforcement procedures taken		595	479
E9: Percentage of schools participating in environmental campaigns			
A. Percentage of primary schools participating in environmental campaigns		100	100
B. Percentage of secondary schools participating in environmental campaigns		100	100
H: HOUSING			
H1: Housing Vacancies			
A. The total number of dwellings in local authority stock		1872.75	1903.75
B. The total number of dwellings, excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects		1848.25	1853
C. The overall percentage of dwellings that are empty (excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects)		4.41	3.24
D. The percentage of empty dwellings unavailable for letting		69.33	65.83
E. The percentage of empty dwellings available for letting		30.67	34.17
H2: Average Time Taken to Re-let Available dwellings			
The average time taken (in weeks) from the date of vacation of dwelling to the date when all necessary repairs are carried out which are deemed necessary to re-let the dwelling		7.07	9.58
The average time taken (in weeks) from the works (above) being completed to the date of the first rent debit		7.35	1.2
H3: Housing Repairs			
Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received		92.97	95.78
H4: Traveller Accommodation			
Total number of traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme		21.43	125
Number of Traveller families accommodated		3	10
Target number of Traveller families to be accommodated in the year, as set out in the local Traveller accommodation programme		14	8
H5: Enforcement of standards in the private rented sector			
A. Total number of registered tenancies		1983	1915
B. Number of dwelling units inspected		109	124
C. Number of inspections carried out		222	232
D. Number of dwellings inspected as percentage of registered tenancies (i.e. B as percentage of A)		5.5	6.48
H6: Grants to adapt housing for the needs of people with a disability			
A. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt of a valid application to the date of decision on the application		5	4.06
B. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt, to the date of decision on the application		5	7.2
H7: Pre-Tenancy Familiarisation Courses			
A. Total number of new local authority tenants		345	117
B. Percentage of new local authority tenants who have been offered pre-tenancy familiarisation courses		100	100
L: LIBRARY SERVICES			
L.1 Library Public Opening Hours			
A. Average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries		39.3	37.4
B. Average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)		16.8	14.4
C. Percentage of full time libraries that have lunchtime openings		100	100
D. Percentage of full time libraries that have evening openings		100	100
E. Percentage of full time libraries that have Saturday openings		100	100
L.2 Library Visits			
Number of visits to full time libraries per 1,000 population		4400.86	3268.3
Total number of visits to full-time libraries		151350	112400
L.3 Library Stock			
A. Annual expenditure on stock per head of population (county/city wide)		2.43	2.39
B. Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for books		2.62	2.8

C. Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for other items	0.13	0.16
L.4 Internet Access through Libraries		
Number of Internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	664.27	670.84
Total number of Internet sessions provided	22845	23071
M: MOTOR TAXATION		
M.1 Number of Motor Tax Transactions		
A. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with over the counter	34503	33179
B. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with by post	4658	3876
C. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	8246	9231
D. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with over the counter	72.78	71.68
E. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with by post	9.83	8.37
F. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	17.39	19.94
M.2 Time Taken to Process Motor Tax Postal Applications		
A. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the same day as receipt of the application	4570	3806
B. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the second or third day from receipt of the application	65	33
C. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	0	0
D. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) in over five days from receipt of the application	23	37
E. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the same day as receipt of the application	98.11	98.19
F. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the second or third day from receipt of the application	1.4	0.85
G. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	0	0
H. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) in over five days from receipt of the application	0.49	0.95
M.3 Time Taken to Process Driving Licence Applications		
A. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the same day as receipt of the application	544	449
B. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the second or third day from receipt of the application	2708	912
C. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the Fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	671	813
D. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with in over five days from receipt of the application	192	3351
E. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the same day as receipt of the application	13.22	8.13
F. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the second or third day from receipt of the application	65.81	16.51
G. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	16.31	14.71
H. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with in over five days from receipt of the application	4.67	60.65
M.4 Public opening hours		
Average number of opening hours per week	32.44	30.77
P: PLANNING		
P.1 Planning Applications - Decision Making		
Individual Houses		
A. Number of applications decided	151	131
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	90	87
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	60	44
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	1	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	77.6	67.34
F. Percentage of applications granted	74.17	80.92
G. Percentage of applications refused	25.83	19.08
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	33.33	100
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	66.67	0
New Housing Development		
A. Number of applications decided	9	13
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	2	9
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	7	4
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	80.14	75.58

F. Percentage of applications granted	77.78	69.23
G. Percentage of applications refused	22.22	30.77
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	42.86	0
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	57.14	100
Other: not requiring Environment Impact Assessment		
A. Number of applications decided	203	117
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	139	81
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	64	36
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	77.48	73.16
F. Percentage of applications granted	92.12	92.31
G. Percentage of applications refused	7.88	7.69
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	83.33	70
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	16.67	30
Other: requiring Environment Impact Assessment		
A. Number of applications decided	203	117
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	139	81
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	64	36
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	77.48	73.16
F. Percentage of applications granted	187	108
G. Percentage of applications refused	16	9
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	5	7
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	1	3
P.2 Planning Enforcement		
A. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were investigated	97	141
B. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were dismissed	20	14
C. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations	24	18
D. Number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters	73	106
E. Number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices	33	30
F. Number of prosecutions	17	11
P.3 Planning Public opening hours		
Average number of opening hours per week	37.13	33.32
P.4 Pre-Planning Consultation		
A. Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held 104 105		
B. Average length of time (in days) from request for consultation with local authority to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation	6.93	5.77
P.5 New Buildings inspected		
Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority 15.73 12		
Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority	89	100
Number of new buildings notified to the local authority that were inspected	14	12
Rec: RECREATIONAL SERVICES		
Rec.1 Children's Playgrounds		
The following indicator is presented in the service indicators report:		
A. Number of children's playgrounds per 1,000 population directly provided by the local authority	0.29	0.35
B. Number of children's playgrounds per 1,000 population facilitated by the local authority	0	0
A. Number of children's playgrounds directly provided by the local authority	10	12
B. Number of children's playgrounds facilitated by the local authority	0	0
Rec.2 Local Authority-Facilitated Leisure Facilities		
Number of visitors to local authority-facilitated leisure facilities per 1,000 population	5420.75	3113.81
Number of visitors to local authority-facilitated leisure facilities	186425	107087

Rev: REVENUE COLLECTION		
Rev.1 House Rent		
A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from House Rent 86.41 87.11		
B. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 4 weeks old	N/A	6.08
C. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 4-6 weeks old	5.92	5.13
D. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 6-12 weeks old	10.86	7.52
E. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are more than 12 weeks old	76.76	81.27
Rev.2 Housing Loans		
A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from Housing Loans	87.13	84.07
B. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are 1 month old	9.39	3.15
C. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are 1-2 months old	N/A	6.37
D. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are 2-3 months old	3.09	4.45
E. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are more than 3 months old	83.7	86.03
Rev.3 Commercial Rates		
Amount collected at year-end as a percentage of amount due from Commercial rates	83.67	79.43
Rev.4 Refuse Charges		
Percentage of households paying refuse charges (including waivers) at year end	Not Applicable as privatised in Longford Local Authorities	
Rev.5 Non-Domestic Water Charges		
Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due for Non-Domestic Water Charges	52.3	55.97
R: ROADS		
R1: Road Restoration Programme		
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads improved and maintained under the Restoration Programme per annum	62.28	58.41
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads constructed under the specific improvement grants scheme per annum	2.09	1

eRETURNS		
Local Government Computer Services Board / An Bord Seirbhísí Ríomhaire Rialtaís Áitiúil		
R: ROADS		
R1: Road Restoration Programme		
The following indicator is presented in the service indicators report and in order to compile this information, local authorities should submit the following data:		
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads improved and maintained under the Restoration Programme per annum	79.13	
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads constructed under the specific improvement grants scheme per annum	1.7	