

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Annual Report 2011



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FOREWORD



Councillor
Frank Kilbride,

I am pleased to present on behalf of Longford County Council the Annual Report for 2011.

The Annual Report contains details of the activities of Longford County Council during the past year.

The continuing economic downturn presents a challenge to elected members and staff alike in maintaining high quality services to customers and clients. Despite the very difficult financial situation both at national and local level, the Council continued in its efforts to deliver quality services with fewer staff and greatly reduced income. The progress made in advancing the various infrastructural projects including roads, water, sewerage and housing is detailed elsewhere within the body of the Report and includes the completion of the new Edgeworthstown 3 Bay Fire Station and the selection of a site for the proposed new Fire Station in Lanesboro; commencement of work on the completion of the Teemore Business Park and the surfacing of the Barrack Lane development; the construction of the N5 Longford Bypass which commenced in April 2011; the commencement of the Water Conservation (Network Rehabilitation Contract) in May 2011 and construction works on the Ballymahon Rural Water Supply Scheme in August 2011 and, also, the commencement of work on new Waste Water Treatment Plants in Legan and Keenagh.

Day to day operational costs continued to be an area of focus in 2011 with efforts being made to achieve efficiencies and savings across all areas of council activity including procurement and energy use.

The Annual Report also highlights the ongoing commitment of the Council to promote social inclusion and encourage participation in the development of cultural and environmental programmes.

The achievements outlined in this Annual Report could not have been accomplished without the collective input of the Elected Members, Chairpersons and Members of the Strategic Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy Committee, Area Committees, Management Team and Staff together with the many voluntary and community organisations with whom the Council engages on a frequent basis.

By continuing to deal as a team with the current formidable resource challenges the best possible outcome can be achieved for the people of County Longford.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Kilbride". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Frank Kilbride
Mayor

INTRODUCTION



Tim Caffrey,
County Manager

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report 2011 for Longford County Council.

The Annual Report is presented in the context of another year of severe financial contraction in central government funding and an increasingly difficult debt management environment for the Council. The financial situation arising from the economic downturn combined with the reduction in staff numbers again provided serious challenges for the delivery of services to the public during 2011 requiring the organisation to effectively manage and respond to priorities in a flexible manner. The continuing constraints dictate that Longford County Council strives to achieve further progress in enhancing efficiency, improving co-ordination of service delivery and reducing costs without negatively effecting service to the customer.

Notwithstanding these constraints Longford County Council continued to focus on key priorities and undertook the following projects during 2011:

- Commencement of construction works on the Longford N5 Bypass project
- Commencement of construction works on the Ballymahon Rural Water Supply Scheme in August 2011 which are due for substantial completion in 2012
- Commencement of the Water Conservation (Network Rehabilitation Contract) in May 2011
- Progression of construction works on new Waste Water Treatment Plants in Legan and Keenagh under the Small Public Water and Sewerage Schemes project
- The advancement of a number of low-cost Road Safety Remedial Schemes which are at various stages of completion
- The construction of a footpath/cycle path on the N63 at Farneyhoogan and cycle shelters at various locations in Longford under the Smarter Travel Capital Programme funding for 2011
- The selection of a site for the proposed new Fire Station in Lanesboro
- Commencement by Cluid of the 2nd Phase of the Regeneration of St. Michael's Road, Longford through its association with the Voluntary Housing Sector
- Completion and official opening of Ballymahon Community Library.

The Annual Report also highlights many areas of community activities through the Library, Arts and Heritage programmes, Sports development and Environmental awareness.

The ongoing commitment of both elected members and staff to the management of this sustained period of difficult financial and organisational adjustment is acknowledged and appreciated.



Tim Caffrey,
County Manager

MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Ballymahon Electoral Area



Mark Casey



Sean Farrell



Paddy Belton



Mick Cahill



Larry Bannon



Barney Steele

Drumlish Electoral Area



John Duffy



Luie McEntire



Martin Mulleady



Gerry Brady



Granard Electoral Area



Thomas Victory



Frank Kilbride



Micheál Carrigy



P.J. Reilly

Longford Electoral Area



Alan Mitchell



Denis Glennon



Mae Sexton



Padraig Loughrey



Paul Connell



Victor Kiernan



Peggy Nolan

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 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

HOUSING, PLANNING AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



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INFRASTRUCTURE AND 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.

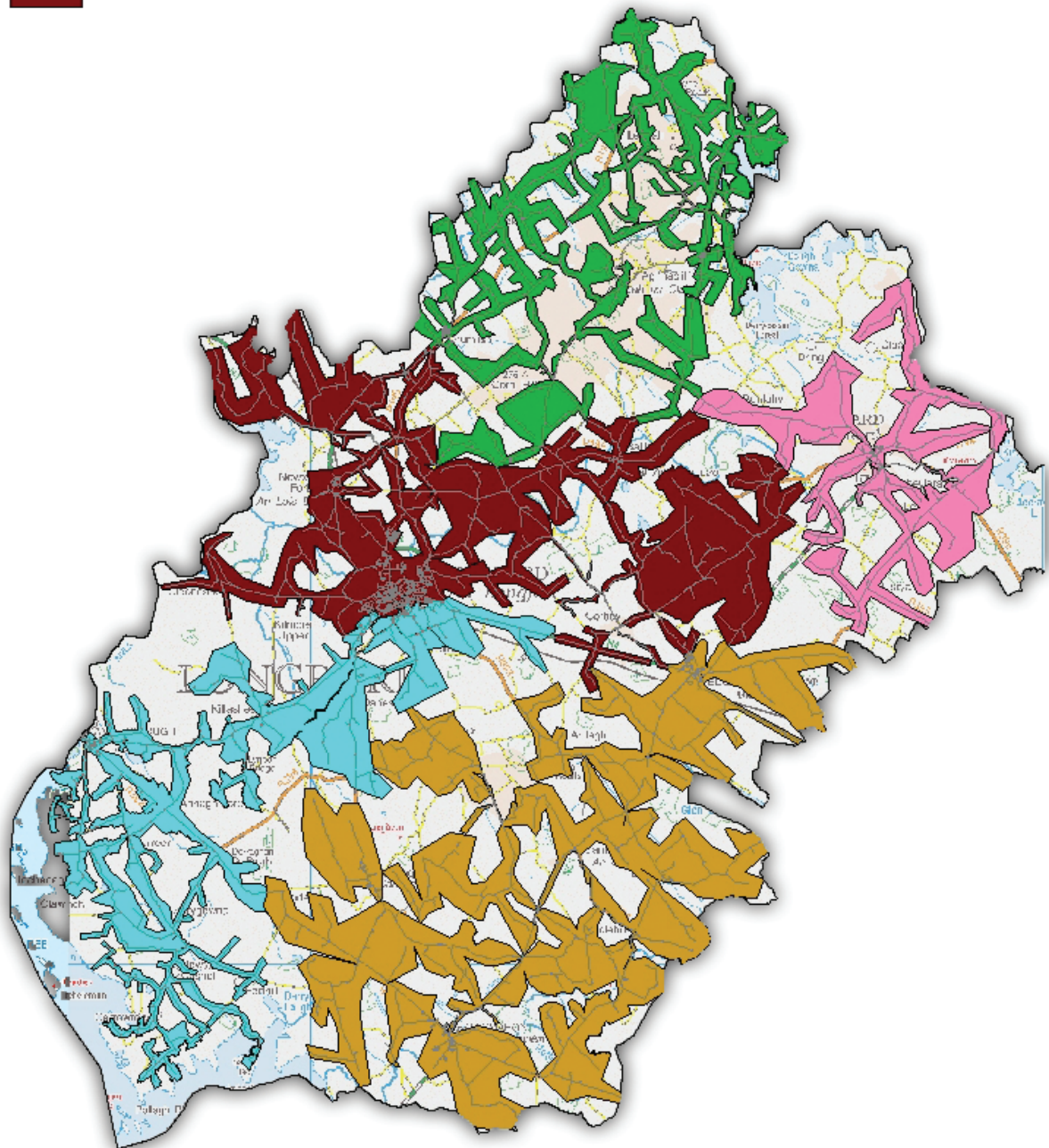
Drinking Water Quality is monitored by the Health Services Executive on an agency basis for Longford County Council in accordance with the current Regulations, which include Drinking Water Regulations, 2007- S.I. No. 278 and the Water Services Act, 2007. Under the Drinking Water Regulations, the Environmental 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, Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon Wastewater Treatment Plants. License and certificates of authorisation applications have been made for the remaining locations.

REGIONAL WATER SCHEMES

-  BALLYMAHON
-  GOWNA
-  GRANARD
-  LANESBORO
-  LONGFORD CENTRAL



WATER SERVICES CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Longford County Council continued to progress the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) 2010 – 2012 throughout 2011 as per the Table below.

WSIP 2010- 2012 CONTRACTS COMMENCED PRIOR TO 2010	PROJECT VALUE €
<p><i>Longford - 5 Villages Sewerage Scheme</i> Ardagh/ Ballinalee/ Aughnaclyffe Sewerage Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Construction works completed September 2010. Design Build Operate (DBO) Contract to follow 	2,405,000
WSIP CONTRACTS TO START 2010 - 2012	PROJECT VALUE €
<p><i>Granard/Ballymahon Rural Water Supply Scheme</i> Contract 3 - (Water Treatment Plants Upgrades)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works commenced August 2011 	3,000,000
<p>Contract 4 - (Ballymahon RWSS to Keenagh)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works commenced April 2011 	4,000,000
<p><i>Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme</i> Contract 3 - (Network & Reservoir)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DECLG approval to appoint contractor received and it is envisaged that construction work will commence in 2012 	7,000,000
<p>Contract 4 - (Water Treatment Plant Upgrade - Lough Forbes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works substantially completed December 2011 	2,000,000
<p><i>Longford Towns & Villages (5) Sewerage Scheme Bundle</i> Contract 2 - (Wastewater Treatment Plant - DBO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DECLG approval to appoint contractor received and it is envisaged that construction work will commence in 2012 	6,000,000
<p><i>Water Conservation Stage 3 Works</i> Watermains Rehabilitation Project Phase 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction works commenced May 2011 	1,850,000
WSIP SCHEMES AT PLANNING STAGES 2010 - 2012	
<p><i>Lanesborough Regional Water Supply Stage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting DoECLG approval for Preliminary Report 	
<p><i>Longford Sewerage Scheme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief to appoint consultants submitted to DoECLG for approval 	

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 commenced in 2011 and is planned to be substantially complete in 2012.

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 a new rising main and distribution main between Lough Forbes WTW and Prucklish Reservoir; construction of a distribution main between Lough Forbes WTP and Drumlish and the construction of a new rising main between Glannagh Pumping Station and Lisnanagh Reservoir. Construction works are programmed to commence in 2012.

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 were substantially completed in 2011.

Construction work on the provision of the Treatment Plants for the Five Villages Sewerage Scheme (Ardagh, Aughnaclyffe, Ballinalee, Drumlish and Newtownforbes) under the DBO Contract is envisaged to commence in 2012.

Preliminary report for Lanesborough Regional Water Supply Scheme has been completed and submitted to the DECLG for approval. 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 2011 indicates an average of 300 litres per kilometre of watermain per hour. This 2011 value indicates lower losses than the 2010 value and this decrease is due mainly to the ongoing active leakage control.

Stage 3 Phase 1 Network Rehabilitation Contract which focused on construction works in Longford Town Area commenced in 2011 and will be completed in 2012. Site investigation and design work for Stage 3 Phase 2 is programmed to commence in 2012.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

Group Water/Sewerage Schemes

In February 2011, the DoECLG advised Longford County Council of a Block Grant Allocation of €455,000 for the year 2011 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 2011- Annagh GWS and Glenoghill GWS.

Works were carried out on the following Schemes to progress the Local Authority taking over the Scheme:- Elfeet GWS, Stonepark GWS, Monascallaghan GWS, Aughnasilla GWS, Gaigue GWS, Esker/Cloncowley GWS, Freehalman/Clonahard GWS, Tullyvrane GWS, Cartron GWS, Cloonmacart GWS, Clonellan GWS, Ballagh GWS, Bunlaghy/Shannagh GWS, Drumhaldry Hill GWS, Ballinagall GWS and Corneddán GWS.

The Longford Rural Water Monitoring Committee met twice during 2011 to review progress on the implementation of the Rural Water Programme. The Committee was 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 4 no. group water schemes at its meeting of 20th April 2011 and 10 no. group water schemes on 7th September 2011.

The Council submitted proposals to the DoECLG for Block Grant funding for 2012 totalling €663,000 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 February 2011, Longford County Council was advised that the Block Grant Allocation under the Rural Water Programme Small Schemes measure was €896,000.

Substantial works were carried out in 2011 under this measure. Work progressed well on the construction of new Waste Water Treatment Plants in Legan and Keenagh. Works were carried out on the Keenagh Waste Water Network to identify locations where surface water is entering the Network and this work is ongoing. A new watermain and upgraded waste water network was installed at Killashee Street and Breadens Lane in Longford town to cater for future development of this area.

Works on new booster pumps at Glannagh have been completed which should result in savings in maintenance of the booster facility and energy efficiency for pumping.

As a result of EPA audits at Granard WTP in May 2010 and at Kenagh and Newtowncashel spring well supplies in October 2010, upgrade works have been carried out at each of these plants to comply with the recommendations for each. At Newtowncashel spring well and Granard WTP the work is still ongoing.

Works were carried out at Lough Forbes, Smear, Granard, Abbeyshrule WTPs and Lanesboro ESB Borehole site to comply with the requirements of HSA audits in 2010.

At Longford WWTP energy monitoring SCADA has been installed to monitor Longford County Councils second biggest energy user. This will help control the energy usage at the plant.

The Council submitted proposals to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for Block Grant funding for 2012 totalling €1.932 million in respect of Small Public Water

& Sewerage Schemes. This submission included funding for completion of new Waste Water Treatment Plants at both Legan and Keenagh.

Group Water Scheme Subsidies and Individual Well Grants

Longford County Council processed eight applications for subsidies towards the operational costs of group water schemes. The total amount paid out was €22,314.04.

Ten applications were received for grants for individual water supplies. Approval was given for nine applications and one application was refused. Grant payments totalling €7,328.33 were made to four 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 public 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 Kilometres	103.139	155.476	1339.655	1598.270

Finances available to the Council in 2011 were as follows:

1. NATIONAL ROADS (NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY GRANTS)	
Major Planning & Design	€9,050,000
Other Improvement Works	€2,710,000
Safety Measures	€165,000
Maintenance	€529,022
Total	€12,454,022
2. NON-NATIONAL ROADS (DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS)	
Specific Improvement Works	€450,000
Restoration Improvement Works	€3,701,644
Restoration Maintenance Works	€988,000
Discretionary Maintenance Works	€908,780
Low-cost Safety Improvement Works	€131,500
Local Improvement Schemes	€153,000
Winter Maintenance	€163,846
Training Programme	€29,799
Total	€6,526,569
3. NON-NATIONAL ROADS (COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION)	
	€900,000
Total Budget	€7,426,569

N5 LONGFORD TOWN BYPASS

Construction on the N5 Longford Bypass commenced on the 7th April 2011. The contract duration is 18 months giving an expected completion in early October 2012. The main Contractor is Wills Bros. Ltd. from Foxford, Co. Mayo.

When the project is completed it will result in reduced traffic congestion, improved safety and an enhanced quality of life for the local community.



The N5 Sod Turning Ceremony attended by Minister Leo Varadkar – 7th April 2011

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

A total of 10 Local Improvement Schemes were completed in 2011.

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. The Local Authority now has an expanded role in promoting road safety by developing more initiatives at local level such as:

- Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee 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 and Members of Longford Fire Services.
- In conjunction with the Sports Facilitator and Green Schools a Safer Cycle Initiative was introduced to a number of National Schools throughout the county in the months of April, May and June 2011. Cycle training was provided in Colehill National School, Abbeylara National School, Dromard National School, Newtowncashel National School, St. Mary's National School and Columba's National School
- Co-ordination with the Road Safety Authority – advertising, promotions, and media campaigns.
- Promotion of Beep Beep Day at all Childcare Facilities in County Longford in October 2011.
- Promotion of Road Safety in Secondary Schools through the “Drive for Life Programme” from January 2011 to December 2011.
- Pilot for Road Safety Pack for Primary Schools in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority.
- The Junior School Warden Service is designed to provide safe crossing facilities for children in the vicinity of primary schools in provincial towns and villages. The Roscommon/Longford/Westmeath Regional Final was held in Longford this year and 11 schools participated in the event. Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes won the Regional School Warden Competition which was held in June 2011. Longford County Council has three Schemes in operation at Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes, Melview National School and St. Mary's National School, Drumlish. An adult warden is provided at Lanesboro National School.
- Longford County Council and the Health Service Executive launched a Road Safety Initiative aimed primarily at cyclists and pedestrians.
- Road Safety awareness was promoted in National Schools throughout the county.
- Promote Street-Smart in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority which is a new initiative from the Road Safety Authority which aims to bring issues of road safety to life for young schoolchildren. The activities have been designed for three distinct age groups: 4-5, 5-8, and 8-12. There are different hazards for each age group and different responses are required for the various dangers highlighted.



THE DECADE OF ACTION FOR ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

The Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 was launched globally on the 11th May 2011. Longford County Council in conjunction with HSE, Longford County Childcare Committee and An Garda Síochána decided to hold a walking school bus with the help of our local primary schools. The walking school bus was held on the 11th May and a number of primary schools in the county participated. It was a very successful event. St. Mary's National School, Drumlish continue to have a walking school bus every Wednesday to their school.

As part of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, Road Safety Officers from City & County Councils throughout Ireland coordinated a national awareness campaign with all local, regional and national radio stations throughout Ireland. This campaign was called a '*National One Minute 'eerie Sound of Silence'*' and was launched at **11.59am on Wednesday 11th May 2011**. Shannonside Radio Participated in this event.

Also as part of this launch members from the Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee met with the Editor Sheila Reilly from the Longford Leader and set up a partnership where the leader provides space in the paper on a fortnightly basis for an article on road safety issues. This campaign has been very successful to-date.

NATIONAL BIKE WEEK

In conjunction with the Sports Co-ordinator and the Environmental Awareness Officer the **National Bike Week** was launched and ran from 18th to 26th June 2011. 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, 23rd June and a total of 150 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.

For the second year running staff from Longford County Council took part in a Bike to Work Day on Friday, 24th June 2011. Offering an alternative form of commuting to work, staff from the Council and other local businesses took part in a lunchtime spin around the bypass reporting the initiative as "a great idea".

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 and Regulation
- Environmental Awareness
- 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.

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 Litter/ Traffic Wardens.

In 2011 Longford County Council initiated 8 prosecutions for littering offences. Of the 10 cases heard in court last year, 9 resulted in convictions with penalties and costs awarded to the council.

RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The EU Water Framework 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. 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

STREET SWEEPING

The Council continued its regular programme of street sweeping and servicing of litter bins in the county's towns and villages in accordance with the County Longford Litter Management Plan. The budget for this service in 2011 was €300,000.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2005–2010

The Midlands Waste Management Plan 2005-2010, as adopted, sets out a framework for the sustainable management of waste within five Local Authority areas (Offaly, Laois, Longford, Westmeath and North Tipperary). 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. During 2011, the Council phased out smaller wheelie-bin style sites and replaced them with standard bulk containers. This has increased capacity and streamlined collection operations.

522 tonnes of glass and 18 tonnes of aluminium cans were collected from the bring banks sites.

ENFORCEMENT

The Council's Waste Enforcement Team deals with areas such as Waste Permit and Producer Responsibility Regulations in addition to the investigation and, where necessary, prosecution of unauthorised waste activities. During 2011, 1,264 waste and litter complaints were investigated and resolved and 1,524 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 website at www.longfordcoco.ie

The Council operates a "Litter Complaints Hotline". Anyone observing the illegal dumping of waste may report the matter, in confidence, by calling **1850 434 450**.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

This aspect of the departments work includes:

- National Spring Clean
- National Tree Week
- Large Goods and Hazardous Waste Collections
- Green Schools
- Green Christmas

NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

Thirty three groups and schools took part in National Spring Clean 2011 in County Longford. Approximately 4.9 tonnes of litter and waste was collected. Litter pickers, gloves, bibs and colour-coded bags were provided for the community clean-ups.

NATIONAL TREE WEEK

March 6th to 12th was designated National Tree Week during which the Council, Coillte and the Tree Council of Ireland offered Community Groups, Schools and other organisations in the county the opportunity to obtain young trees for their school or community free of charge.

LARGE GOODS/HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTIONS

Two general large goods collections and two waste paint collections were held this year. General and recyclable waste amounted to 5.5 tonnes while 3.7 tonnes of waste paint were collected.

GREEN SCHOOLS

Longford was once again very successful in increasing activity in Green Schools. The participation of schools in the programme increased with 99% of national schools and 100% secondary schools registered at the end of 2011. During 2011 one new school was awarded the Green Flag and 14 more schools renewed their flags. This brings the total number of schools with Green Flags in County Longford to 29.

GREEN CHRISTMAS

The Council provides a central drop off point in Longford where householders can deposit their trees for shredding free of charge.

ANTI LITTER AWARENESS GRANTS

This scheme continued in 2011 with a grant of €19,000 received from the Department of the Environment. Additional funding of €5,000 was received for Civic Responsibility Week aimed at promoting the country's image during the state visits of Queen Elizabeth and President Obama. The Anti-Litter and Anti Graffiti Awareness Grants are used to support clean up initiatives, fund advertising campaigns and school recycling projects and provide materials support to local community clean-up initiatives.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Council received an initial allocation of €6,000 under this scheme and also secured additional funding of €1,200 later in the year. The Council provides matching funds to support innovative, community-based environmental projects.

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. Longford County Council's cemetery support scheme, under which local groups undertaking cemetery maintenance receive a grant from the Local Authority, is an important element of the maintenance programme.

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, pigs and goats were processed in small local slaughterhouses in County Longford in 2011. 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 2011 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 consulting with our service and becoming involved in the sector.

The year 2011 also saw a further 40% 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 previously 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 2011 with the County Veterinary Officer completing graduate cert training.

Activities relating to the disposal of Animal By-Product continued to be an important area of work in 2011.

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 a Dog Shelter at Little Water Street in Longford town. Fees are charged for the accommodation of impounded animals. The Service dealt with 467 cases of unwanted/stray dogs in 2011, an increase of 33% on the previous year. Of these, 127 were re-homed, 75 were reclaimed by their owners and unfortunately 265 were euthanised. There was a 30% increase to 46 dogs classified as restricted breeds impounded by Longford County Council in 2011. 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 for subsidised neutering for dogs and it has also formed a strategic alliance with Dogs Trust. The County Veterinary Officer served on the Working Group to advise the Department of the Environment and interested stakeholders on the Dog Breeding Establishment Act.

In 2011, 1,985 individual Dog Licenses were issued. Longford County Council continued to promote the need for owners of dogs to purchase a Dog Licence. Currently a Dog Licence costs €20 and can be purchased from any Post Office. Purchasing a Dog Licence is an important aspect of responsible dog ownership.

HORSE CONTROL

Longford County Council dealt with 19 cases of horses found stray and wandering in 2011.

OVERVIEW OF ENERGY USAGE

As a local authority which provides services across a broad spectrum of activities, Longford County Council is a significant energy consumer. Some of the more significant activities which involve the consumption of energy are the operation of the Council's Public Water Supplies and Waste Water Treatment Systems, the provision of public lighting and the operation of the Council's various offices. The operation of the Longford Leisure Centre and the Public Library network also involve the use of large amounts of electricity and other fuels. The operation of the Fire Service and the operation of the Council's vehicle fleet also results in the use of large volumes of fuels and oils.

ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

In 2011 Longford County Council undertook a range of initiatives to improve energy performance in relation to its activities. An Energy Management Committee was established which includes representatives from all Departments within the Council. The provision of training for the committee members commenced. A number of audits were undertaken at various locations in order to establish baseline figures for energy consumption. In a number of cases, steps were taken which have resulted in a reduction in the amount of energy being consumed.

The range of activities that the Council is involved in and the complex nature of billing systems and recording systems makes it difficult to quantify consumption and the savings that have been achieved to date. Efforts are being made to improve the methods of recording data which it is hoped will result in it being possible to provide appropriate data in respect of energy consumption in the future.

HOUSING, PLANNING AND 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. A statutory assessment of housing need was undertaken in 2011. The next housing needs assessment is due to be carried out in 2014. At present Longford Local Authorities have in the region of 1,190 housing applications.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Approximately €720,000 was spent on the Housing Construction Programme in 2011. This included turnkey developments, purchase of individual houses and the construction of single rural cottages.

SCHEMES COMPLETED

The following Schemes were completed at the end of 2011:

- Church Quarter, Granard – 6 houses
- 1 individual house was purchased and 1 rural house was completed
- Since 1st January 2011 there were 125 allocations of tenancies

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

In 2011, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) introduced the 2011 Tenant Purchase Scheme for long standing applicants. Under the scheme tenants were allowed discounts up to a maximum of 45% (15 years at 3% per year). The final date for accepting applications was December 31st, 2011, with transactions to be completed by 31st December, 2012. The 1995 Scheme which allows a maximum discount of 30% (10 years at 3% per year) is still available. In 2011, five tenant purchases were completed i.e. sales closed (four were under the 2011 Scheme and one was under the 1995 Scheme). At the end of 2011 there were a further 44 tenant purchases pending (offer letters issued) under both the 2011 and 1995 schemes.

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 6 valid applications were received in 2011 with 3 loans approved and 3 advanced. This 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 2011, Cluid Housing Association commenced work on the second phase of the regeneration of St. Michael's Road, Longford. A total of 37 units will be refurbished or built under CAS and CLSS.

MAINTENANCE AND REFURBISHMENT

In 2011, a sum of €675,000 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 during 2011. Compulsory pre-tenancy courses are attended by all new tenants.

BETTER ESTATES AWARDS

The "Better Estates Awards" were held again in 2011 with a record 30 Estates taking part. The winners were:

SMALL ESTATE	
1st Prize	Slí Na Móna, Ballymahon
2nd Prize	Cois Na hAbhainn, Ballinalee
3rd Prize	River Crescent, Ballinalee.
MEDIUM ESTATE	
1st Prize	Curraghua, Lanesboro
2nd Prize	Smithfield Crescent, Legan
3rd Prize	Foxhall Crescent, Legan.
LARGE ESTATE	
1st Prize	Church View, Lanesboro
2nd Prize	Camlin Meadows, Longford
3rd Prize	St. Matthew's Park, Ballymahon
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTION	
1st	Pairc Mhic Giollabride, Edgeworthstown
Joint 2nd	Canálach Le Chéile, Longford & Springlawn, Longford
Best Estate Over 20 Years Old	Smithfield Crescent, Legan
Best New Entrant	Cúirt Shanmullagh, Ballinamuck
Most Improved Estate	Foxhall Crescent, Legan
Best Feature	Cois Na hAbhainn, Ballinalee.

Certificates of Merit were awarded to Hazelwood, Colehill, Páirc Mhic Giollabhride, Edgeworthstown, Wood View, Newtownforbes and Corry Park, Newtownforbes.

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 2011, a combined total of 342 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 280 grants were paid out and this amounted to €1,348,529. This figure includes 1 Disabled Persons Grant totalling €1,000 – i.e. a grant which was 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.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME (RAS)

At the end of 2011, there were 274 RAS tenancies in place. Twenty seven (27) 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.



Smithfield Crescent, Legan

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 10 to 20 years, or short term RAS type leases for properties over a 4 year term. There were 18 short term RAS Type leases in place at the end of 2011.

REMEDIAL/REGENERATION WORKS

In 2011 proposals were advanced to carry out Remedial Works at Tromra Road, Granard. The estimated cost of this project is €1.6 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. Seventy five (75) inspections were completed in 2011 and landlords were advised of non compliance issues. Many of these properties were inspected as part of the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

ENERGY RETROFITTING SCHEME

In 2011, Longford County Council received funding from the DoECLG in the amount of €425,000 as part of the above programme. Major works were carried out on 18 properties.

PLANNING

Significant activities undertaken by the Planning Department in 2011 are outlined below together with a broad planning outlook for 2012. 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. There was a substantial quantity of new legislation and guidelines produced in 2011 which has increased the workload of the Planning Section at a time when resources have been substantially reduced.

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.

Application numbers continued to decline through 2010 and into 2011, reflecting economic trends and the downturn in the construction industry at all levels. There were 290 planning applications in 2011, eighty of which were extensions of duration of planning permission. There were 54 Commencement Notices submitted in 2011. The decrease 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. Staff resources have declined significantly in the period putting a serious strain on the section. 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.

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, Community and Local Government (DoECLG).

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, decreased to 101 in 2010 and increased again to 120 in 2011. Pre-planning meetings are now recorded digitally to facilitate consistency, transparency and seamless integration with the decision-making process.

Licence 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 three 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 2009-2011 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.

UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES

Background

The legal background to 'Unfinished Housing Estates' is the Planning & Development Act, 2000, Part VIII (Enforcement) & Section 180 (Taking in Charge of Estates).

In general terms, an 'Unfinished Housing Estate' is one which has not been finished in accordance with Planning Permission within 5 years of the date of grant of that Permission.

Due to identification by the Council of an emerging issue of 'Unfinished Housing Estates' in County Longford, the Management Team set up a pro-active, focused project team to manage the problem and avoid potential problems and excessive costs for residents, developers and the Council into the future. The team works closely with the Infrastructure Departments of the Council, DoECLG and all other stakeholders including developers, banks/receivers/liquidators and residents.

There are 113 unfinished housing estates in the Longford County Council area with planning permission granted for a total of 3,398 housing units within those unfinished 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. National guidelines have been published featuring a Longford case study which draws heavily on the Longford experience. The work of the unfinished estates team continues to make substantial progress despite the lack of resources.

The Work of the Unfinished Housing Developments Team is to:

- Compile and maintain the Register of Unfinished Housing Developments (including mapping on GIS)
- Create a file on each estate which would include key contact information for developers, site owners, company details, company directors, bond providers, financial institutions involved, etc.
- Provide a single point of contact for the key stakeholders – such as the developers, financial institutions, receivers, residents, etc.
- Prioritise action on the estates (based on bond expiry dates)
- Carry out technical inspections on the estates and to liaise with other agencies such as the HSA
- Work with developers and financial institutions to resolve difficulties
- Take enforcement action where necessary to ensure compliance with conditions.
- Ensure that securities are maintained until taken in charge

Unfinished Housing Estates and Public Safety Initiative

A fund provision of €5m has been made available to local authorities to deal with immediate safety issues on unfinished housing developments around the country. Longford County Council has 30 estates - called Category 4 estates - which it considers would meet the criteria for such funding.

Funding has already been approved for 23 estates valued at €587,080. Work is ongoing in preparing the applications for funding for the remaining 7 estates.

Once public safety works are approved a Statutory Notice is served under the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act, 1964 on all interested parties. The Statutory Notice specifies the public safety works to be undertaken.

The works may be carried out by the developer/receiver or by Council staff.

Works Carried Out under the Public Safety Initiative



Before



After



Before



After

Taking In Charge

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 and it also requires a specialised, dedicated cross-directorate team.

Work in this area is ongoing with substantial progress made over the 2010-2011 period. There are currently 26 taking in charge applications being assessed.

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 Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), Route Corridor Studies and other projects from local to national level.

No progress was made in Forward Planning in 2011 due to the lack of resources. This has resulted in an increased workload for 2012.

The following summary outlines the main projects which need to be addressed in 2012.

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 a 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

All work on Local Area Plans has been put on hold due to lack of staff resources.

OTHER PROJECTS

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

- All plans and projects must be screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (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 AA 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 natura 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.

All forward planning projects and Council works projects in 2012 will need to be assessed for the above.

STATISTICS AND RETURNS

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

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 DoECLG 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 Office of Public Works (OPW) and due for completion in 2012. Individual Flood Risk Assessments may be required as part of the development management process. The Planning Section will have to prepare a Flood Risk Assessment for Longford in 2012 subject to resource availability.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) 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 County 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 will be a significant element of work in the Forward Planning Section for 2012.

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 feature of the work of the Planning Section.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

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

The year 2011 saw a continuation of the issuing of warning notices to 43 in number, a similar number of enforcement notices with a drop in legal proceedings to 11. The significant drop in enforcement notices issued and legal proceedings instigated over the period 2010-2011 points toward greater success in negotiation and resolution at warning letter stage. A number of very difficult cases, however, have proceeded to Court with a good level of success on the Council's behalf.

There has also been a substantial number of various planning queries and freedom of information requests which uses up a substantial amount of the Planning Section's very scarce resources.

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 primary schools were visited and talks given to third class.

The Fire Department assessed Fire Safety Certificates, Planning Applications and Court Licence Application Referrals. Fire Safety Inspections of commercial premises were carried out also. Longford County Council was the Lead Agency for Regional Major Emergency Management during 2011, chairing both the Regional Steering Group and the Regional Working Group.

The Longford town Fire Station extension went out to tender in 2009. We are currently awaiting approval from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to proceed to award this contract. If approval to construct is sanctioned the project will need to be re-tendered as the 2009 tenders will be out of date and thus invalid.

An alternative site has been identified for the new Fire Station in Lanesboro. Part 8 Planning has been obtained for this new site. The sum of €800,000 has been approved for the total cost of the provision of this Fire Station. Killian Consulting Engineers have been appointed as Lead Consultants for the project. It is envisaged that this project will go to tender in the Spring of 2012 and construction will begin in the Summer of 2012.

Work has been completed on the new Edgeworthstown 3 Bay Fire Station. The Station will be officially opened in early 2012.

In March members of the Longford Town Fire Brigade took part in the Third Rescue Organisation Ireland National Challenge Competition and finished in 2nd Place in the overall competition.

Longford Fire Service was sanctioned approval for a new Class B appliance as part of a shared procurement process with Kildare and Wicklow Fire Services. The tendering process has been completed for these vehicles and it is envisaged that they will be built in 2012. The Class B appliance will be located in Edgeworthstown Fire Station.

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 2011 were:

- 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.
- Four members qualified to Emergency Medical Technician level.
- A number of courses were run based on Radiation Monitoring, Searching and Communications.
- The Civil Defence boat crew took part in the annual training seminar in Sligo in connection with avian flu.
- Civil Defence assistance was provided at almost 40 local community and sporting events.
- A second-hand 4x4 Mitsubishi Pajero was purchased as further backup for severe weather call outs.
- A policy to improve vehicle visibility and to install reversing cameras as required was initiated.
- A new Garda Vetting Policy was put in place and work was commenced on the population of the new national volunteer register.

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



Cllr. Martin Mulleady,
Chairperson of
Economic Development
SPC



Mr. Frank Sheridan,
Director of Services

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Longford economy is enduring unprecedented challenges as the national economy continues in recession. Reduced consumer spending and diminishing construction activities negatively impacted on the local economy. The diverse nature of the main local employment sectors has, in spite of the difficult adverse global economy, remained steady with small net employment gains during 2011. Longford County Council in co-operation with the main state agencies and local development support agencies and in particular the County Enterprise Board continues to collaborate and identify innovative ways to stimulate and sustain employment in Longford.

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

There are 28 members on the County Development Board (CDB) drawn from four Sectors:

SECTOR	MEMBERS
Local Government (7 Members)	Cllr. A. Mitchell (Chairperson) Mayor F. Kilbride Cllr. V.Kiernan (Longford County Council) Cllr. M. Mulleady (Longford County Council) G. Brady (Longford County Council) Cllr. F. Flood, (Granard Town Council) Mr. T. Caffrey, (Longford County Manager)
Local Development (7 Members)	Mr. Adrian Greene, (Longford Community Resources Ltd) Mr. Pat O'Rourke (Longford Community Resources Ltd) Dr. Ruth Mc Grath (Environment Pillar) Mr. Michael Nevin, (Longford County Enterprise Board) Ms. Beatrice Cunningham (Longford County Enterprise Board) Ms. Josephine Stroker (Longford Acorn Project) Ms. Alice Connell (Longford County Childcare Committee)



SECTOR	MEMBERS
State Agencies (9 Members)	Supt. Denis Shields (Garda Síochána) Mr. Damien Brennan (Fáilte Ireland) Ms. Chris Forde (IDA Ireland) Mark Atterbury (Enterprise Ireland) Ms. Grainne Nic Gabhainn (Health Service Executive) Mr. Michael Kearney (Department of Social Protection) Mr. Peter Egan (FÁS) Mr. Oliver Burke (Teagasc) Ms. Rosemary Killian-Johnston (County Longford VEC)
Social Partners (5 Members)	Mr. George Shedwell (Irish Congress of Trade Unions) Mr. Rory Duncan, Ms. Brenda Quinn (Community & Voluntary Sector) Mr. James Brady (Farming Sector) Ms. Karen Clabby (Business Sector)

BOARD CHANGES IN 2011

Local Government - Mayor Frank Kilbride replaced Cllr. Paul Connell

State Agencies – Damien Brennan replaced Kevin Kidney (Failte Ireland), Chris Forde replaced Gillian Maunsell (IDA), Peter Egan resigned - no replacement to date.

Local Development – Alice Connell replaced Patricia Harrison. Josephine Stroker of Longford Acorn Project resigned as they were amalgamated with LCRL.

Social Partners – Rory Duncan replaced Pavrez Butt who replaced Kate Keegan.

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD ACTION PLAN

During 2011, Longford County Development Board Action Plan continued to focus on a limited number of priorities in its Action Plan 2009-2012. The main emphasis of the Plan is on interagency co-operation and the need for sharing resources to ensure efficiencies and value for money. The Board continue to engage agencies at all levels and is committed to the concept of 'interagency work'.

ENDORSEMENT OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY PLANS BY THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

A key role of the 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

The Traveller Interagency Group operates as a subcommittee of the CDB and oversees the implementation of the Longford Traveller Interagency Action 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. The priority areas of the plan are health, education, employment, conflict resolution and community development. In 2011, each lead agency in consultation with other agencies, carried out a number of actions including training and capacity building.

LONGFORD COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY FORUM

The year 2011 has brought many changes to the Community & Voluntary (C&V) Forum. The recruitment of the Forum's new Development Worker combined with the new direction provided by the newly elected Management Committee and Steering Group has led to the Forum undertaking a Community Review using a three phase strategy:

1. **Listening/Learning phase which has two parts:**
 - a) Steering Group members underwent an extensive **Listening Exercise with the groups they represent in their areas** finding out:
 - What they saw as the main issues/difficulties affecting their electoral area?
 - What they saw as the main issues/difficulties affecting the community and voluntary groups in their areas?
 - What gaps in services were in their areas?
 - How the Community & Voluntary Forum could best support the groups in their areas?
 - b) Community Network Meetings with the Community & Voluntary Groups throughout the county – The Forum is currently hosting meetings across the county with the following aims:
 - Information: To advise Community/Voluntary Groups in Co. Longford:
Who County Longford C&V Forum is and how it works?
How the Forum can support your groups?
 - Research: To hear from the groups about the issues they face on the ground
 - Networking: To provide your groups with networking opportunities
2. **Research phase** – based on the findings of Phase 1 the Forum intends to develop a picture of existing services and gaps in service provision.
3. **Implementation phase** – As a result of this Community Review the Forum intends to implement the findings of its research.

LONGFORD TOURISM STRATEGY

The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2012 – 2015 was completed in 2011 and will be launched in early 2012. The Action Plan focuses on identifying a number of positive actions that can be implemented over the short, medium and long term in order to deliver results. The actions fall under 4 key areas; product development, marketing development, people development, structure and funding. A Tourism subcommittee of the Council was established in 2011 to support the work of the County Tourism Committee.

LONGFORD COMHAIRLE NA nÓG

Longford Comhairle na nÓg is a County Development Board Project initiative. In 2011, the Community and Enterprise department secured funding from the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to enhance Comhairle na nÓg. The Comhairle is supported by Foroige and provides an opportunity for structured input into decision – making by young people in the development of local services and policies. The year 2011 was a very productive one in the restructuring of the Comhairle na nÓg. Links with other groups around Longford have ensured that the Longford Comhairle has become a firmly embedded structure and key consultative/participative forum for young people. The young people on Longford Comhairle na nÓg are committed to improving the lives of young people in the county and continue to focus on issues affecting young people in today's society.

Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee

Longford Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Local Authority. The main focus of the meetings is on developing members' skills and on how to influence policy. There are currently twelve members on the Comhairle Steering Committee and it is hoped to expand this membership in 2012.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting took place on Thursday, 22nd October 2011 in the Backstage Theatre, Longford. The overall day was a huge success with 86 young people attending from the post primary schools and youth groups around the county. Five workshops were held on the day on issues affecting young people in today's society. They were decided upon by the current Longford Comhairle na nÓg committee and the workshops included:

- “The Importance of Self Image for teenagers in today's Society”
- “The Link between addiction to technology and young people's social exclusion”
- “Educational Reform for Junior Cycle and Transition year students”
- “The negative effect of drinking culture on Longford's teenagers”
- “Health and wellbeing of young people in today's society”



Young people whom participated in Comhairle na nÓg AGM pictured with Laura Mc Phillips, Longford County Council and Jim Maher, Foroige.

From these workshops eleven young people were elected onto the Comhairle na nÓg for 2011/12. This brings the total number of young people including those who are remaining on the committee for a second term to twenty one. A question and answer panel was present on the day which was made up of local youth workers and HSE representatives. The young people were given an insight into the work of youth workers and what is available to young people in Longford.

Meetings of Comhairle na nÓg

Longford Comhairle na nÓg met seven times from January 2011 – July 2011 in the Council Chambers of Longford County Council. The group worked on issues such as health and well being and on young people's reliance on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Longford Comhairle Mental Health Project 2011

The group wanted to focus on promoting positive mental health with young people and researched and designed a mental health leaflet for teenagers in County Longford. One thousand copies of the leaflet were printed and distributed to schools and youth groups throughout the county. Longford Comhairle na nÓg held a launch of their mental health leaflet entitled "A healthy Mind – A healthy Future" on June 28th in the Council Chambers. The Launch was attended by Longford Mental Health Association, HSE, Councillors and Mayor Frank Kilbride.

Longford Comhairle na nÓg Trip to The Dáil

Longford Comhairle na nÓg travelled to a sitting of Dáil Eireann on May 10th, 2011. Sixteen members of Longford Comhairle as well as the Co-Ordinator and two members of the steering committee travelled to Dublin and were greeted by Mr. James Bannon, TD, Longford/Westmeath. Deputy Bannon welcomed the group to the Dáil and the group received an in-depth tour of Leinster House as well as attending a Dáil sitting. Members also travelled to the National Wax Museum on the day. A very informative and interesting day was had by all.

Dáil na nÓg

Five young people from Longford Comhairle na nÓg represented Longford in this year's Dáil na nÓg on Friday 18th November 2011 in Croke Park. Training around Dáil na nÓg was provided for the participants in Dublin on Tuesday 1st November 2011 prior to the event. The national Dáil council representative will be elected at the next meeting and will be attending national council meetings on a monthly basis in Dublin.

NATIONAL PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION 2011

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.



Mayor Frank Kilbride and Barry Lynch, Head of Finance making a presentation to Mary Kennedy and Ann Howard of Longford Mental Health Association.

In 2011, Longford County Council nominated two entrants across a number of categories to represent County Longford: Lanesboro Tourism Co-op and Longford Mental Health Association. Judging took place in July 2011. 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 Gorey, County Wexford on the 5th November 2011.

LONGFORD/WESTMEATH CHILDRENS SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) established the Children's Services Committees (CSC) in 2007 with the purpose of improving outcomes for children and families at local and community level. CSC's do this through interagency collaboration, joint planning and coordination of services. Longford Westmeath CSC was established to address children's well being and services through one co-ordinated interagency structure across two counties. During 2011, a number of meetings took place to collate information, to agree and complete a Children's and Young People's Plan for 2011-2013.

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEES

Joint Policing Committees (JPC's) were established in co-operation with An Garda Síochána in the three Longford Local Authorities in accordance with guidelines issued in September 2008. A Steering Group was established to co-ordinate the three committees. During 2011, Granard JPC held 5 meetings, the 11th January, 12th April, 12th July, 11th October and the 8th November. Longford Town JPC held two meetings on the 9th of March and the 28th of October and Longford County Council JPC held 2 meetings on the 11th of March and the 11th of November.

CONNOLLY BARRACKS COMMITTEE

A subcommittee was established by Longford Local Authorities in response to the closure by the Department of Defence of 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. A delegation of Longford Town and County Council representatives met with the Minister for Justice, Deputy Alan Shatter and obtained the Minister's support for the acquisition of the former barracks by the Local Authorities.

COMMUNITY SMOKE ALARM SCHEME 2011

Community and Enterprise secured funding from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to equip 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 ARTS OFFICE

The following is a list of projects completed or substantially completed in 2011.

Music

The announcement of the Music Generation funding for the establishment Music Schools throughout the country in 2010 had the effect of releasing a tremendous amount of energy around music and music education in County Longford.

The County Arts Office is anxious to encourage and sustain that creative energy and community commitment to music development in the county, and to achieve this end we are pursuing a number of concurrent developmental streams.

Music Generation

Longford Music Education Partnership. Established the Partnership with County Longford VEC as lead partner the Partnership in turn established the **Longford School of Music**. The County Arts Office carried out the research, drafted the first application under the music generation guidelines for funding for the Longford School of Music.

1. Windsong School of Music

Supported the establishment and consolidation of the Windsong School of Music through programming performances and organising advertising and promotion.

2. Supported Longford County Choir

Continued to provide support to the Longford County Choir.

3. The Saturday Club

The Saturday Club is an excellent multi-instrumental music school run by Pauline Flood in The Green in Edgeworthstown every Saturday. The County Arts Office provided financial support to this excellent initiative in 2011.

4. Rath Mhuire Music School, Granard

This is a newly established school of traditional music which the Arts Office is delighted to have supported through 2011. We look forward to consolidating this initiative and helping it to grow to educate many emerging traditional musicians in North Longford in 2012.

Literature/Creative Writing

Longford has, per head of population, the largest number of creative writers in Ireland. Therefore the development of creative writing has always been a high priority for the County Arts Office. This has resulted in a number of significantly successful projects and programmes throughout the years.

At the moment there are five active writers groups in Longford. This compares with one writers group between Cavan and Meath combined. Longford has had a Writer in Residence which resulted in the 1st anthology of creative writing "Heartland" with which we scored a notable national first by publishing the anthology in book and also in multi-media digital format, followed by a second anthology "Loose Leaves". We were one of the first counties in Ireland to produce a collaborative novel called "Goldsmith's Ghost" and we were the very first county to produce a children's collaborative novel called "All Because

of a Toothbrush". We were the first county in Ireland to devise a dedicated children's creative writing development policy entitled From Beatrix to Harry but it is in the area of the use of multi media digital technology in the development of literary arts that county Longford has had the greatest success and leads the rest of the country.

Longford County Council was the first County Council in Ireland to develop a web-based resource for the development of the literary arts. The website www.virtualwriter.net was the first Irish literary development website. The objective of the site was to promote Longford writing by giving Longford writers a 'shop window' to show their work to the world and the operative side of the site provided multi-media workshops and instruction in the technical aspects of writing. Along with producing an audio-visual edition of "Heartland" the Arts Office has produced a DVD of the creative writing tutorials given on line on our website by the Longford poet Noel Monahan and the Laois novelist Pat Boran entitled *The Awakened Life*.

1. **Website Development.**

The Arts Office continued the development www.virtualwriter.net as a cutting edge resource for the development of literature in Longford.

2. **Promotional Events**

We organised and supported public events to highlight the success of creative writing in Longford such as the launch of Belinda McKeon's novel "Solas" at Backstage Theatre.

3. **Readings/Workshop**

We supported an active programme of literary events throughout the county and in particular in association with festival committees.

4. **Writers Groups**

We provided whatever assistance necessary to our five writers groups in particular to Ballymahon Writers Group, Lanesborough Writers Group and Granard Writers Group.

5. **Bursaries**

The Arts Office provided Creative Writing Bursaries to the Dingle School of Writing.

Visual Arts

1. **Photography Website**

Re-structured the photography website: www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie enabling the greater use of audio visual tools to assist in the creative and technical development of local photographers.

Providing a facility to display the output of the students participating in the Longford Schools Photography Programme.

Providing a platform for the exhibition of the work of local photographers and an information point for local camera clubs.

The results of these efforts may be viewed at the above address.

2. **Established the Longford Schools Photography Programme**

To develop the visual awareness, critical skills and technical capacities of Longford secondary school students. The progress of this programme will be exhibited at the above address throughout 2011.

3. **Photography Courses**

Delivered a wide range of photography and photography related courses through The Midland

College of Photography in partnership with County Longford VEC Adult Education Services to students from Longford, Westmeath, Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon.

4. **Art Groups**

Supported workshops for various Longford Art Groups by sourcing facilitators, providing financial support and assisting with advertising and promotion. Assisted in staging two large-scale local art exhibitions in association with two local festivals in July and September.

5. **The Longford Town Public Art Placement Survey**

The County Arts Office commissioned two experienced sculptors and academics to carry out a detailed survey of Longford town for the purposes of deciding the most suitable sites for the location of public art pieces and to provide recommendations as to what type of art feature would be most suitable to the specific locations. The survey which was completed at the end of January had two specific purposes; to provide the Commissioning Committee with useful recommendations and information and to ensure that the art commissioned under our current programme visually enhances the town and supports the efforts of Longford Tidy towns committee to the optimum.

Drama

1. Supported Nomad production in partnership with Backstage Theatre.
2. Supported Backstage Youth Drama Group
3. Established a new amateur drama group the Latin School Players in north Longford.
4. Supported Canal Studio Project production of "Philadelphia Here I Come" in partnership with Backstage Theatre.

Midland Arts Officers Collaborative Projects

1. **Midlands Arts & Culture Magazine**

Since its inception this project has proven to be a success on a number of levels; it has provided an excellent platform upon which to display the amount of creative activity in the midlands and it has provided a useful conduit for the communication of information to artists and crafts people.

2. **Professional Development Master Classes**

Professional master classes are among the most effective means for Arts Offices to provide professional development support to artists developing their careers. Our collaborative master-classes have received very positive responses since their inauguration. Longford had a hundred percent take-up for its photography master classes held in September

HEALTH & SAFETY

The past year has seen many changes in the area of health and safety for the Local Authorities. The Health and Safety Technical Group appointed by the County and City Managers Association continued to drive the Major Change Programme for the delivery of safety management system support and performance management tools which will have an impact on every employee and all work activities within the Local Authority.

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

REGULATORY INSPECTIONS

A total of three correspondences were managed with the Health and Safety Authority in 2011. No prohibition or improvement notices were issued by the Health and Safety Authority during 2011. This is a positive reflection on the way in which health and safety is managed within the organisation.

SUMMARY OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENTS REPORTS FOR 2011

Thirty four accidents and incidents were reported during the year 2011. Two of the accidents were reportable to the Health and Safety Authority (more than three days lost from work). A total of one hundred and twenty eight days were lost as a result of accidents at work. During the year 2010, fifteen accidents/incidents were reported and three were reportable to the Health and Safety Authority. The 50% increase in reports related mainly to the increase in the level of violence and aggression directed at employees which may be a reflection of the current economic climate. The increase in reports should not be viewed as a negative statistic as it also reflects the increased awareness of health and safety and the need to report all accidents/incidents that occur. The Infrastructure Directorate reported 82% of the accident/incidents. This is an understandable statistic as many of the high risk activities take place within the roads and water services sections.

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.

SAFETY STATEMENT/RISK ASSESSMENTS

As part of the restructuring of the Safety Statements and Risk Assessments for Longford Local Authorities, all existing risk assessments were reviewed and new risk assessments completed for activities carried out across all sections within the organisation with the development of a Risk Assessment Manual. The Risk Assessment Manual will continue to be developed throughout 2012. The Risk Assessment Manual was developed in conjunction with the midland counties and in consultation with employees of Longford Local Authorities. The Safety Statements currently in existence will be replaced with one Safety Statement for the local authority in 2012.

SITE INSPECTIONS

A total of eighty two safety inspections were conducted by the Health and Safety Officer 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 thirty four safety inspections were conducted through the safety inspection programme within the libraries and the main office buildings. Fourteen safety inspections were carried out by the Infrastructure Section. The Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee meetings will be used as a mechanism for tracking compliance with the Annual Programme of Inspections for 2012.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

Training is a key element of promoting a positive safety culture and developing good safety procedures on the job. Sixty two health and safety training courses were held during 2011 providing 432 man days of training. The training courses held included IOSH Managing Safely in Construction, IOSH Supervising Safely in Construction, First Aid Refresher, Driver CPC, Chlorine Handling, Chainsaw, Automated External Defibrillator, Slinger/Signaller, Roller, Signing, Lighting and Guarding, Confined Space, Fire Safety and Roof training. The internal Manual Handling Instructors completed Manual Handling training throughout the course of the year. Personal Safety Training was completed with sixty people as a result of an increase in the number of incidents reported regarding violence and aggression.

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 four times during the year to address issues raised at the Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings and monthly safety reports and updates were provided to the Management Team. On site communication sessions and toolbox talks within the Infrastructure Section were 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 2012 for the provision of Health and Safety Information.

CONTRACTORS

One hundred and thirty nine contractor assessments were conducted during the year 2011 in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2006. At the present time, a total of two hundred and forty seven contractor assessments have been carried out for works at Longford Local Authorities. The contractor assessment records are available on the Intranet.

During the month of April Longford Local Authorities in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority and the Construction Industry Federation hosted a seminar on the Safety Management Pack for 20 or less employees. The aim of the workshop was to provide guidance and assistance to such contractors in establishing and maintaining an effective safety management system through the use of the Safety Management Pack. Thirty Six companies availed of the provision of the seminar.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

As part of a national approach to develop a system of excellence in managing health and safety across all local authorities, a number of inputs were required from Longford Local Authorities:

1. One Health & Safety Policy and procedure for implementation nationally was developed by the Health & Safety Officer.
2. A total of 64 National Policies and procedures were distributed across all sections of the organisation for consultation.
3. Longford Local Authorities participated in the development of the Safety Inspections toolkit by piloting the toolkit in the Infrastructure Section and Corporate Section.
4. The Health & Safety Officer attended Lead Auditor Training which will initiate the commencement of a health and safety auditing programme for Longford Local Authorities.

In 2011, a total of 55 workplace deaths were reported to the Health and Safety Authority according to figures released on the 4th of January 2012. This represents a 15% increase on the 48 workplace deaths reported in 2010. During 2011 there were 22 killed while working in Agriculture compared to 25 in 2010. There were 8 fatalities in the Transport and Storage sector, an increase from 3 in 2010. In the Construction sector there were 6 deaths, the same number as reported in 2010. This equates to more than 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 Local Authorities 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 2012.

Following on from this annual report, the Health & Safety Programme of Works will be compiled for 2012 for discussion at the Safety Management Team Meeting in March 2012.

The 2012 Programme of Works will take cognisance of this Annual Report, the Draft National Policies and Procedures, the Health and Safety Programme of Works for 2011, the development of a Safety Management System and Auditing programme for OHSAS 18001 accreditation at Smear Water Treatment Plant.

LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

BOARD OF LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

The Board of Longford Sports Partnership (2011) comprised of representatives from statutory, voluntary and sporting organisations:

SECTOR	MEMBERS
Longford County Council	Cllr. Michael Carrigy, Chair
Longford County Council	Cllr. Brendan Gilmore
Longford County Council	Cllr. John Duffy
Longford County Council	Frank Sheridan, Director of Services
Health Service Executive	Clodagh Armitage
Longford Community Resources Ltd.	Sean Hannon
Vocational Education Committee	Padraig Slowey
County Development Board	Ursula Hussey
County Longford Youth Services	Mark Noble
Longford Leisure Centre	Mary Killane
St. Christopher's Services Ltd.	Oonagh Flynn
Community & Voluntary Forum	Sheila Shiels
Sporting Representatives	Fabien Walsh
Sporting Representatives	Eileen Farrell
Sporting Representatives	Peter O'Reilly
Sporting Representatives	Sean Dempsey
RAPID	Rose Kane
RAPID	Frank Horne

CORE PROGRAMMES

Fifteen primary schools in County Longford received **Buntús Generic** training with approximately 23 teachers and 379 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.

Three **Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport** (Child Protection) workshops were held throughout the year. Over 47 volunteers and coaches were certified by the Irish Sports Council following the training and over 11 sports represented. Courses will continue to run on a regular basis.

The **Sports Club Grant Scheme 2011** administered by the 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. Successful clubs attended a gala evening in April which saw guest speaker Gerry Duffy regale the crowd with tales of his Deca Ironman achievements.

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, Moyne Community School and Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard, Mean Scoil Mhuire, Longford.

As part of our **Communities in Action** programme, a Gaelic4Girls initiative was run in Ballymahon and Lanesboro/Ballyleague with approximately 60 participants. This was run in conjunction with Ladies GAA and local clubs have continued to support these young players.



Girls On The Move

June was a month for cycling with national **Bike week** running. 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 Cycle safe in schools which was run in conjunction with Longford County Council and the RSA.



National Bike week

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 N.S., 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.



Playground Markings Initiative

The LSP supported national **Recreation Week** and **Play Day** contributing to various events including a soccer blitz, intercultural family day, a battle of the bands competition, a mural and an outdoor adventure day for young people. This was done in conjunction with local youth agencies.

Longford Cycling Tour took place on a wet September Sunday, with approximately 150 participants enjoying the choice of two routes around North Longford 15km, 50km. The tour was run in partnership with Mid West Road Club and plans are afoot for another tour in the summer of 2012.

Over 30 participants took part in the Operation Transformation Walk on 14th January and an additional 100 plus people took part in the Longford Walking Festival in September/October.

COMMUNICATIONS

The LSP now has a Facebook page in addition to its website which received 3395 hits during 2011. Our facebook page is www.facebook.com/longfordsportspartnership
Staff received training in this area throughout the year.

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY, ARCHIVES & HERITAGE SERVICE

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

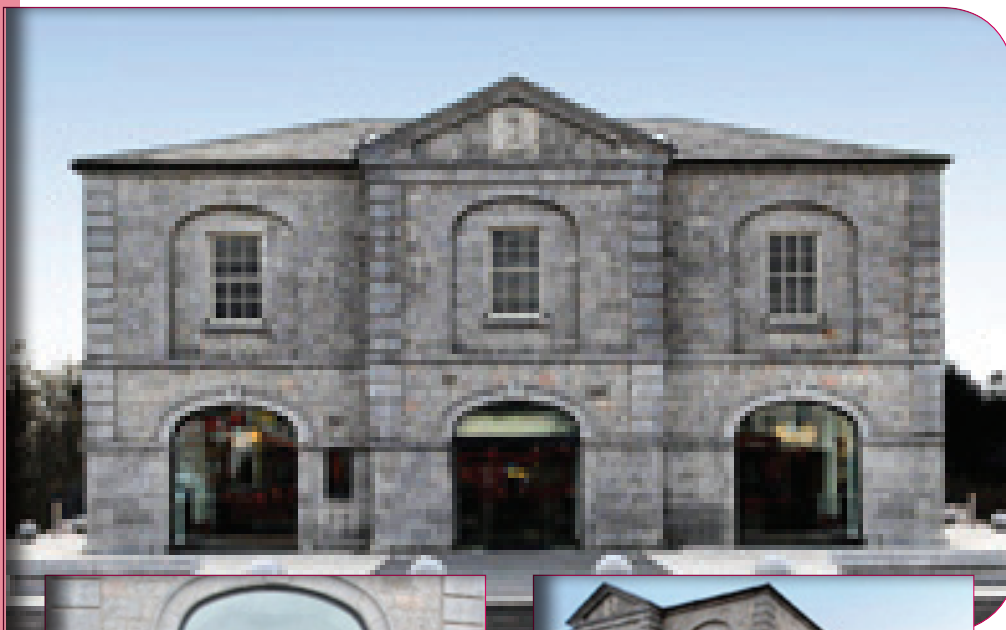
Our vision is to be a flexible, responsive, inclusive public service which helps to enrich and enhance the lives of individuals and communities through the provision and promotion of a wide range of high-quality library and information services.

2011 - A YEAR OF PROGRESS

The year 2011 was a very busy one for the library service in County Longford. Library membership this year grew by 32.9% and over 184,459 visits have been made to libraries throughout County Longford representing an increase of 33,368 on 2010. This is the highest increase ever recorded in membership and usage in one year in Longford.

OPENING OF THE NEWLY REFURBISHED BALLYMAHON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

A major contributing factor to the growth in usage of our libraries has been the long awaited opening of the newly-refurbished Ballymahon Community Library. The library was officially opened jointly by the Mayor of County Longford, Cllr. Paul Connell and Deputy Peter Kelly TD on 18th February 2011. In ten months the library has registered 1,792 new members who have borrowed over 30,751 books and other items from the library. Every other library in the county also showed a growth in usage with the exception of Drumlish Library which experienced a high number of closure days due to staff shortages. The new library was shortlisted for the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Public Choice Award and received a commendation in the Conservation from the RIAI. In June 2011, the Goldsmith Room on the first floor of the Library was the location for the monthly meeting of Longford County Council. The library played host to many other events in Ballymahon throughout the year. One of the library highlights was the inaugural Heritage & Market Day held on the 24th August in the town which was organized in partnership with Ballymahon Traders Association to celebrate Heritage Week.



The newly refurbished Ballymahon Community Library officially reopened by Deputy Peter Kelly, TD and Cllr. Paul Connell, Mayor of County Longford.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

With the successful completion of the Ballymahon Library project, the refurbishment and extension of Granard Library is a number one priority and the grant application for funding under the Libraries Capital programme is being vigorously pursued with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. A possible partnership project with Edgeworthstown Community Cooperative is being explored as a solution to delivering a modern library facility for the community in Edgeworthstown.

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS: “OUR LIBRARY - A WELCOMING SPACE FOR ALL”

The library continues to build key partnerships with other statutory and community service providers. The agencies we have worked with in the past year include: Longford VEC, Longford Community Resources Ltd., Longford Women’s Link, County Longford Primary and Secondary schools, Longford Older Persons’ Network, Longford Mental Health Association, Longford Integration Network, Longford ICA, St. Christopher’s, Longford Citizens Information Services, Irish Writers’ Centre, Poetry Ireland, Granard Resource Centre, Ballymahon Traders Association and FÁS. We have become a community hub for providing information and promoting the wide range of services. We provide a space to meet for Polish Mothers and Toddlers Group, Longford County Childcare, Writers’ and Readers’ groups, Longford Gardening Club, Longford Environmental Alliance, HSE Triple-P, East Meets West, Headway (Acquired Brain Injury) Ireland, and the Longford Secondary School Retired Teachers Association, among others.

OUTREACH EVENTS

An ongoing events programme took place that supported reader development, literacy and learning was rolled out for adults and children throughout the year. Numerous exhibitions were held in partnership with a number of agencies including the Attic Youth Café, St. Mel's College, Longford Chamber of Commerce, Royal Canal Amenity Group, ICA, local art groups etc. Irish, French and Spanish language classes were held in Longford, Lanesboro and Ballymahon libraries.



Claire Keegan reading from her works



Launch of Anne Skelly's "Foolish Pride"



The launch of the "The deMontfort Family from c.1700 – 2010"



Kieran Furey and the Lanesboro Writers Group at the launch of their anthology



RTÉ's Midlands Correspondent, Ciarán Mullooley at the launch of the Lanesboro Writers Group anthology.

LITERATURE

Creative writing classes took place in Longford and Granard. Inspiring writers and reader evenings in partnership with the Irish Writers' Centre were held in Granard, Ballymahon, Lanesboro and Longford with distinguished Irish writers such as Dermot Bolger, Nuala Ní Chonchuir, Kevin Power, Clare Keegan and Peter Sheridan. The library also hosted book launches by local authors and writers groups, including: Kieran Furey, Anne Skelly and Martin Morris. Lanesboro and Ballymahon Writers' Groups also launched anthologies of their work. A collaborative poetry project for secondary schools promoting Midland Writers was launched in partnership with Poetry Ireland and Offaly and Westmeath County libraries.

BEALTAINE

The annual festival celebrating creativity in older people has become one of the most popular events of the year for active age groups in this county. The 2011 programme co-ordinated by the library in partnership with Active Age Groups, the VEC, and the Community Gardaí was one of the most successful yet. Over 1,000 older people from all over the county participated in a wide range of events from writing memoirs, painting and crafts, historical walks, school days revisited, drama, and an Afternoon Tea Dance and modern dance performance by *Cois Céim* in Backstage Theatre.

CHILDREN'S EVENTS

- **March:** Storytelling, talks and quizzes were held as part of World Book Day and Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- **April:** A session on "Caring For Your Pets" with the County Veterinary Officer, Michael King, with a special appearance by Tiny the Fallabella pony and other animals.



Attendees at the "Caring for Your Pets" Day held in Longford Library

- **July:** Children's Summer Festival - *Design a Treasure Chest, Pirate Storytelling, magic shows, and Become an Archaeologist* as well as a Summer Reading is Fun programme. In all, over seven hundred children attended summer events in all branches.

- **October:** Children's Book Festival: Primary and Secondary schools were involved in creative poetry workshops with Dr. Fred Freeman, bi-lingual storytelling with internationally acclaimed author Ré Ó Laighléis, creative writing workshops with the newly-published children's author Alan Early. The month culminated with the

Hallow'een fancy dress storytelling show with Chris Thompson which was attended by over one hundred children.

- **December:** a Nativity Play and Christmas storytelling was the held in Longford.

ICT REPORT

During 2011, Longford County Library continued to invest in ICT as a means of developing a high-quality information and ICT infrastructure. The most significant of these developments was the introduction of our downloadable eBooks and eAudio Books service. The eBook format has proved in recent years to be a very popular and convenient technology for many book lovers. Now via our website, www.longfordlibrary.ie, our customers can browse, checkout and download a range of eBooks and eAudio books, to their PC, eBook reader, iPad, or phone. This downloadable service enhances our library service as a “virtual library branch” as titles may be downloaded 24/7 from within the library or from home. The library also launched a Facebook page and Twitter account.

BALLYMAHON LIBRARY ICT FACILITIES

Our newly refurbished Ballymahon Library re-opened in February with enhanced ICT services and facilities to the local community. Fast broadband and WiFi services are available on 8 new “high-spec” public access PCs with an internet booking and print management system. A full range of Microsoft Office options, including Word and Excel, are also available for public use. There has been a great demand for our internet service and internet classes.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Library Management System (LMS) was upgraded to the latest release Horizon 7.5 resulting in enhancements for both staff and library customers. LMS Hardware was also upgraded in our main Library, Longford Branch during 2011.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The Longford Library Service continued to support and participate in the Inter- Library Loans Service delivered nationally to other libraries through the Borrow Books Website.

FÁS ELEARNING AT THE LIBRARY

This successful initiative between Longford County Library Service, An Comhairle Leabharlanna and FÁS continued during the year, with many people availing of the technology and expertise in our libraries to enhance their IT skills. Basic internet classes, including social media and networking were also delivered in Granard, Lanesboro, Longford and Ballymahon throughout the year.

STAFF RETIREMENTS

This year we said farewell to Carmel Murtagh, Staff Officer who retired in September. She was a very valued colleague who made a great contribution to the library service in the HR Section of Library HQ and also served for a short while in the new Ballymahon Library.

CHALLENGES FOR THE LIBRARY SERVICE

One of the main challenges facing the library service over the next few years will be managing, maintaining and developing high quality library services with considerably reduced financial and staff resources. Our staff have responded very well to this challenge by prioritizing frontline services and by increased flexibility in opening hours. We continue to fully exploit technology as a very efficient and effective method of delivering high quality library services.

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY STATISTICAL REPORT 2011

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP/ REGISTRATIONS 2011

Branch	Adult	Junior	2nd Level Student	3rd Level Student	Other	Total	Total 2010
Longford	1,593	2,039	644	536	58	4,870	4,892
Ballymahon	704	896	117	62	13	1,792	125
Granard	206	363	139	45	41	794	663
Lanesboro	176	344	145	103	11	779	403
Drumlish	54	164	31	18	15	282	344
E'town	74	228	20	9	8	339	229
TOTALS	2,807	4,034	1,096	773	146	8,856	6,663

NUMBER OF ITEMS BORROWED IN LONGFORD LIBRARIES 2011

Branch	Adult Fiction	Adult Non Fiction	Children's	Teens	Audio	Foreign Language	Total 2011	Increase/ Decrease on 2010
Longford	21,980	18,289	26,443	1,655	4,850	722	73,939	+2,166
Ballymahon	3,271	1,592	6,402	188	257	32	11,742	+3,651
Granard	3,165	1,636	3,566	281	85	109	8,842	+580
Lanesboro	1,115	538	2,557	48	31	74	4,363	+1,599
Drumlish	843	382	3,835	129	122	0	5,311	+494
E'town	6,633	5,050	16,651	1,145	912	260	30,751	+28,076
TOTALS	37,107	27,487	59,454	3,446	6,257	1,197	134,948	+33,368

VISITOR STATISTICS FOR LONGFORD LIBRARIES JANUARY -DECEMBER 2011

Branch	No. of Visits Jan - Sep 2011	No. of Visits Oct -Dec 2011	Total 2011	No. of Visits Jan - Dec 2010
Longford	90,081	31,322	121,403	121,074
Ballymahon	26,652	6,663	33,315	Refurbishment period
Granard	8,623	2,693	11,316	10,470
Lanesboro	9,516	3,017	12,533	13,009
Drumlish	1,666	864	2,530	3,754
E'town	2,513	789	3,302	2,774
TOTALS	139,051	45,348	184,309	151,081

INTERNET STATISTICS FOR LONGFORD LIBRARIES JANUARY -DECEMBER 2011

Branch	Internet PC Jan -Sep	Internet Oct -Dec	WIFI Jan - Sep	WIFI Oct - Dec	Total
Longford	8,870	2,594	1,528	321	13,313
Ballymahon	4,109	1,837	206	95	6,247
Granard	1,583	349	163	40	2,135
Lanesboro	2,295	622	179	33	3,129
Drumlish	230	127	2	0	359
E'town	284	67	31	15	397
TOTALS	17,371	5,596	2,109	504	25,580

Longford Library Website www.longfordlibrary.ie "hits" January -December 2011 = 19,945

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE

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

This is being achieved through:

1. The establishment and management of the County Longford Heritage Forum and its commitment to achieving the goals of the current *Longford Heritage Plan*
2. The co-ordination and implementation of the *Longford County Heritage Plan* and the delivery of additional projects to further the protection and appreciation of the cultural and natural heritage of County Longford
3. Supporting the heritage-related work of Longford Local Authorities, national bodies, local heritage and community groups and individuals.

These aims were furthered in 2011 through the undertaking of the following:

SURVEY OF INVASIVE SPECIES IN COUNTIES CAVAN & LONGFORD – PHASE 1

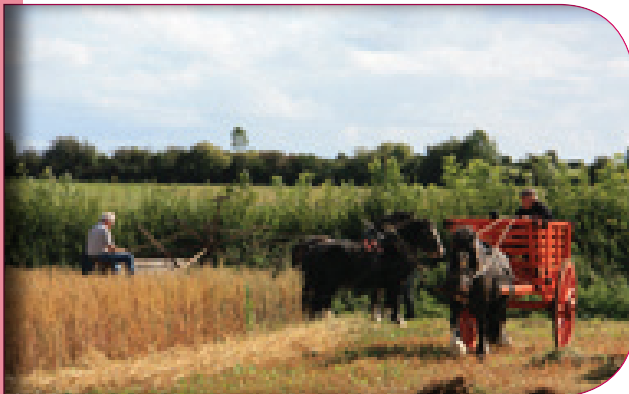
The first phase of a comprehensive survey of invasive species in Longford and Cavan was carried out in 2011 in partnership with the Cavan County Council Heritage Office and with funding from the Heritage Council. Invasive species have the potential to cause a severe negative impact on biodiversity and infrastructure and there was limited information as to the nature and scale of the issue in the county. In 2011, Lough Gowna, Derragh Lough and Lough Kinale were surveyed and a comprehensive list of terrestrial and aquatic species was drawn up and mitigation measures recommended to help contain this potential issue. This is an ongoing problem and it is intended to continue this work into future years using a combination of survey approaches.

HERITAGE WEEK 2011 PROGRAMME

The year 2011 saw a continued and growing interest in the National Heritage Week programme which took place from the 20th - 28th of August. Events were organised by local groups throughout the county with new organisations participating such as the County Longford Harvest Festival and the Ballymahon Historical Society to name but a few. A range of events was organised for adults, children



The Innyside Singers entertaining the crowd at the John "Leo" Keegan Casey Celebration, Ballymahon Library



Traditional farming practices on display at the County Longford Harvest Festival



Rolly Read of the National Museum gave a fascinating talk on the Faddan More Psalter, its conservation and links to Coptic Egypt.

and families from children's workshops to fascinating lectures on subjects such as the conservation of the Faddan More Psalter. One of the most successful events was the inaugural Ballymahon Heritage & Market Day, organised in partnership with the Ballymahon Traders Association which saw the whole Main Street of the town step back in time to celebrate its history and cultural heritage. That evening, a celebration of local writer John "Leo" Keegan Casey was held in the Goldsmith Room of the Ballymahon Library.

GRANARD PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

The Longford town of Granard has a unique historical, architectural and archaeological character. Work continued on developing a Public Realm Strategy to better integrate the needs of the town's population with its public spaces. A draft plan was produced and presented and is on track for final publication in 2012.

BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS

The Longford Heritage Office supported a number of national biodiversity initiatives in 2011. This included organising a venue to train volunteers and promote the Irish Newt Survey coordinated by the Irish Wildlife Trust, as well as the annual Daubenton's Bats Survey organised by Bat Conservation Ireland. The Heritage Office also supported the national Bat Atlas compiled by Bat Conservation Ireland.

The Heritage Office also undertook a series of habitat survey workshops with primary schools in Killoe and Killasonna whereby pupils of the school investigated the natural habitat of their school and developed their recording, identification and photography skills.

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 2011.
- Participation in the setting up of Wetlands Heritage Ireland, a locally-based organisation which aims to further the awareness of the cultural heritage and biodiversity of our wetlands and peatlands.
- Provision of guidance and advice on architectural conservation and heritage matters to Local Authority staff and departments e.g. traditional stonework in bridge repairs; Protected Structures and conservation or biodiversity and the its relevant legislation.
- Assessments of relevant Planning Applications for the Longford Local Authorities Planning Section.
- Providing ongoing support to the Planning Section and to the Diocese of Ardagh & Clonmacnois in relation to the conservation and repair of St. Mel's Cathedral.
- Assistance to and liaison with community groups and local heritage organisations in researching and promoting their heritage projects.

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

LONGFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

The year 2011 was one of the busiest for Longford County Archives Service. There were a large number of outreach and educational activities undertaken and a significant number of new archival collections acquired.

COLLECTIONS DEPOSITED

The collections deposited were as follows:

- A parliamentary report on endowed schools, 1855
- A poor rate collector's book, Longford E.D., 1869
- A small quantity of personal items from the late Michael Farrell, Brickeens, Longford
- A collection of Department of Agriculture information leaflets
- Registers, roll books, daily report books and other items from Colehill National School (1887-2007); Clonfide National School (1915-1969); Moyne National School (1865-2001); Legga National School (1869-1975); Edenmore National School (c. 1915-1975); and Drumlish National School (1913-1999).



Acquisition of the school archives for Dromard with (from left to right): Martin Morris, County Archivist; Mary Carleton Reynolds, County Librarian; Mary Farrell, Principal of St Patrick's N.S., Dromard; and Fr Eamonn Corkery P.P., Dromard.

The acquisition of the schools' archives is particularly important and will assist in the preparation of future outreach and educational activities.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Archivist helped to prepare an exhibition on the history of Ballymahon and its Market House for the opening of Ballymahon Community Library on 18th February 2011. He also delivered talks and facilitated visits to the library as follows:

- 8th March: pupils from Colehill National School
- 23rd March (a special open day at the library): a talk on history of Ballymahon
- 30th March: pupils from Tang National School
- 12th April: pupils from St Matthew's National School Ballymahon and Ballycloghan National School
- 25th August (Ballymahon Heritage and Market Day): a walking tour of Ballymahon and a talk on the history of the town.

Other educational activities during the year included:

- 14th February: 'An introduction to archives' for first year students in Moyne Community School
- 4th April: a visit to library headquarters by pupils from Ballinalee National School
- 11th May: a walking tour of Longford town with pupils from St John's National School, Longford
- 26th May: a visit to library headquarters by pupils from St Thérèse's National School, Killoe
- 14th July: a walking tour of Longford town with children as part of the Longford County Library Summer Festival

- 19th September: walking tours of Longford town with transition year classes from Scoil Mhuire, Longford
- 19th September: a workshop on family history with transition year students in Moyne Community School
- 28th September: a walking tour of Ardagh village with the 'East meets West' Group
- 30th September: a visit to Library Headquarters by transition year students from Moyne Community School.
- 14th November: a visit to library headquarters by pupils from St Joseph's National School, Longford.

ST MEL'S CATHEDRAL EXHIBITION

The Archivist contributed to the preparation of further information panels on St Mel's Cathedral.

ARDAGH HERITAGE CENTRE

The Archivist co-ordinated works for the re-opening of Ardagh Heritage Centre in August including organising the storage of artefacts in the centre.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Archivist undertook work on records in the Corporate Services section of Longford County Council.

CORPORATE SERVICES

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2011

A total of 24 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were received by Longford County Council during 2011 from a mixed source of business, clients, staff and other persons. This figure includes five requests for internal review. No appeal was made to the Information Commissioner.

FRANCHISE

A person must be at least 18 years of age on the day the Register comes into force (15th February) and must be ordinarily resident at the address at which he/she wishes to be registered on the 1st September preceding the coming into force of the Register. A person may be included on a Supplement to the Register if the person reaches 18 years of age on or before Polling Day and meets the requirements in relation to residence.

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 2011/2012 Register of Electors were as follows:-

Local Electoral Areas	No. of Electors
Ballymahon	8,841
Drumlish	6187
Granard	5701
Longford	9097
Total	29826

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2003

In July 2008, Longford Local Authorities agreed a three year Irish Language Scheme under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act, 2003 with the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The third year expiry date of the implementation of the Scheme was the 30th May 2011. A second Irish Language Scheme will be agreed on completion of a satisfactory audit by the Office of the Coimisinéir Teanga.

The end of Scheme report from the Office of the Comisinéir Teanga was largely positive. It is the opinion of the Coimisinéir Teanga that Longford County Council is making satisfactory progress in implementing its Irish Language Scheme. The Office is satisfied that the Irish Officer has an important role in the delivery of the Scheme and in helping to create a space for Irish in the proceedings and activities of the organisation. The Office especially welcomed the progress by the Irish Officer in relation to the development of a basic Irish Course for Council employees which was delivered during October/ November 2011.

However, in spite of the diligent efforts made a limited number of commitments were not completed at the time of the review. These related to the Council Websites and translation of Application Forms.

With regard to the websites and the commitment to translate 30% of their “static content” during the life of the Scheme, it was the considered view of the Council that this commitment had been achieved through the publication of reports as Gaeilge, the inclusion of online bilingual registration forms and the inclusion of the bilingual online library catalogue. However, it was explained at the compliance meeting that this interpretation of “static content” did not agree with the interpretation which is generally taken from the term. Accordingly, it was agreed that the Council would ensure that 30% of the static content will be made available in Irish by the end of May 2012.

In relation to the translation of Application Forms this commitment remained unfulfilled due to an understanding mid-Scheme that bilingual versions would be made available to all local authorities as a result of a national initiative involving a pilot local authority. This did not take place and consequently the Council has now identified 30 of the most commonly used forms for translation. It has been agreed that bilingual versions of these forms will be made available before the end of May 2012.

The implementation of the above two remaining commitments of the Scheme will continue to be monitored and reviewed during 2012.

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 four times during 2011. The Chairperson presented the 2010 Annual Report of the Audit Committee at the County Council meeting held in March 2011. 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.

HUMAN RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

The Human Resources department is primarily responsible for:

- Recruitment and deployment of staff
- Staff Training and Development
- Attendance Management
- Performance Management
- Human Resources Policies and Procedures
- Administration of Employee Schemes
- 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 2011 this work continued to be heavily influenced by Government Policy decisions in relation to Public Services.

Continued cuts in funding, reducing employee numbers, incentivised leave/pension schemes and the moratorium on recruitment and temporary filling of vacant posts has affected the key work areas of the Human Resources Department. The impact of these measures has resulted in a reduction of approximately 5% of the overall workforce of Longford Local Authorities since 2010 and a reduction of approximately 10% since 2009.

The Human Resources Department's work programme is focussed on 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.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Given the current economic climate the statistics below show a much reduced level of recruitment activity in 2011. The HR Department follows nationally implemented procedures, referring requests to fill a limited number of identified posts to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government as exceptions to the moratorium on filling of public service posts.

Recruitment Statistics 2011

Number of Competitions Advertised	8
Number of Interview Days	5
Number of Applicants invited for interview	42
Number of Applicants who attended for interview	40
Number of employees appointed	2 Permanent 10 Temporary

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2011 the HR Department focussed on delivery of Health & Safety training to ensure our mandatory obligations were fulfilled in this regard.

A total of **96** training programmes were delivered over **144.4** days with training delivered to **522** participants across all disciplines. The table below outlines some of the areas of training provision.

IOSH Managing Safety in Construction – Full Course & Refresher Course

Litter Warden Training

Safepass

First Aid Refresher

Manual Handling – Full Course & Refresher

Driver CPC - Module 2

Personal Safety Training

Security Awareness Training

Chlorine Handling

Irish Language Training

Safety Rep Refresher Training

Energy Efficiency in Water Services

Water National Skills Certificate – FETAC

Retirement Planning

Signing, Lighting & Guarding

Roller Training

Training Programme for Assessors in Water & Wastewater

Roof & Wall Sheeting/Cladding

Built up Roofing - Bituminous

Environmental Legislation Seminar

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Wastewater National Skills Certificate – FETAC Level 5

Toolbox Talks – General Safety Requirements for Roadworks

Trench Support Training

Fire Safety Training

Site Dumper

C2 Confined Space Training for Supervisors

C3 Confined Space Training for Operatives

AED - Remediation

Emergency Chainsaw

Training for Lead Auditors

Capital Appraisal Training

Drinking Water Sampling

The Human Resources Department strives to achieve maximum value for money through cost-effective and good quality training for the employees of Longford Local Authorities.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Industrial relations relates to the collective relationship between employers and employees. The organisation continues to maintain good industrial relations through active engagement with all stakeholders. The key challenge in 2011 was to progress the local action plan in accordance with the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014

The local action plan has focussed discussions between management and employee representative bodies. Both parties have approached the process in a constructive manner to ensure the delivery of quantifiable savings. Engagement at local level continues with ongoing implementation of efficiencies and productivity measures.

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. Following national tender the agreed system was the CORE HR System. The system offers an integrated ICT solution to the management of our human resources; time & attendance, payroll and superannuation records. Significant progress was made in the implementation of the system in Longford Local Authorities in 2011.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The Project Team built on the successful implementation of the HR, Superannuation, Outdoor Time & Attendance, Departmental Returns, Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Payroll modules and accordingly commenced implementation of the Indoor Time & Attendance module while the CSO module was further enhanced for Longford County and Town Councils.

All the above modules are now fully operational and maintained by the relevant sections. The implementation has facilitated a shared service for Payroll, Superannuation, Indoor and Outdoor Time & Attendance and HR between Longford County and Town Council.

PARTNERSHIP

Workplace Partnership is a 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.

Due to industrial action and the national withdrawal of the Unions from the Partnership process in 2010, the work of the local Partnership Committee had been severely restricted. However in 2011 the Partnership Committee of Longford Local Authorities met on three separate occasions and provided an effective communications forum between management, employees and union representative.

FINANCE AND 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/Non-Principal Private Residence (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 2011.

Total amount of interest penalties:

Longford Co. Council	€216.62
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

The Student Support Act, 2011 became law in February 2011 and provides legislative basis for the reform of student grants. The key provision of the Act is the consolidation of the four student grant schemes into a single unified scheme, the establishment of a single grant awarding authority and an independent appeals board. The single grant awarding authority will commence operation for the 2012/13 academic year.

The grant scheme for the 2011/12 academic year is governed by:

- Student Support Act, 2011
- Student Support Regulations, 2011 [S.I. 301 of 2011]
- Student Grant Scheme 2011 [S.I. 305 of 2011]
- Student Support (Amendment) Regulations, 2011 [S.I. 381 of 2011]

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS - ACADEMIC YEAR 2011 - 2012	TOTAL
Number of new awards issued	117
Number of renewals issued	213
Total number of students in receipt of Higher Education Grants	330
Number of students attending Irish colleges	318
Number of students attending UK colleges (including Northern Ireland) and EU colleges	12

EXPENDITURE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – SECTION 142 EXPENDITURE	TOTAL
Mayor and Other Allowances	€69,000
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	€9,120
Representational Payments, Expenses of Members and Representation at Conferences	€547,468
Total	€625,588

INCOME GENERATION UNIT

The Income Generation Unit was established in September 2010. The rationale in setting up the unit was to consolidate the main revenue collection functions, to pool available staff resources and provide a more effective and efficient revenue collection for the Council. A fall off in the collection of revenue income was identified in 2010 and the unit was charged with addressing this issue.

1. Commercial Water Charges

Difficulties in collection of commercial water charges were identified as a priority in 2011. Action was taken to improve collection rates and reduce the level of water charges arrears. Collection rates have increased, arrears have been reduced and a water disconnection procedure for non-payment has been put in place.

Period	Opening Balance	Water Charges Invoiced	Receipts	Write-offs due to leaks etc.	% Collected	Closing Balance
2009	1,233,982.67	1,626,791.25	-1,448,384.29	-92,980.61	52.30	1,320,871.22
2010	1,320,871.22	1,837,764.27	-1,657,701.18	-196,490.98	55.97	1,304,073.33
2011	1,304,073.33	1,816,346.29	-1,732,251.22	-164,612.84	58.61	1,223,555.56

The Local Government Efficiency Review (July 2010) has outlined significant changes in local government funding. Domestic water charges have been highlighted as a revenue stream for local authorities as has the need to improve debt collection of commercial water customers. The Government announced in 2011 that domestic water customers would be metered by 2014. A government decision is awaited on the format of new water utility "Irish Water. This will have a significant impact on the role of local authorities in water provision.

2. Residential Property Charges

NON PRINCIPAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE CHARGE (NPPR)

This charge was introduced in 2009 on residential property which is not the owner's principal place of residence. NPPR collection reports show that the gross amount collected in 2011 (€525,000) had decreased from 2010 (€589,200). The charge is based on self assessment by the property owner and there are substantial late payment charges and fines for non-compliance.

HOUSEHOLD CHARGE

The Local Government (Household Charge) Act, 2011 introduced a further charge on all residential property of €100 per property. This charge is intended to help fund essential local government services. Preparations were made to facilitate collection of the charge in 2012.

3. Rates

The economic downturn has caused significant difficulty for many commercial rate payers and this is reflected in the rates collection figures for 2011. The Council facilitated businesses with cash flow problems in 2011 through monthly instalment arrangements.

Inspection of almost all vacant rateable premises was undertaken in late December 2010 and January 2011 with a view to improving the accuracy of the Council's rates list. In addition, details of a significant number of new buildings, not previously rated, were sent to the Valuation Office for valuation.

Period	Rates Invoiced	Receipts YTD	% Collected
2009	3,958,704	3,589,771	87.5
2010	3,861,091	3,631,606	85.3
2011	4,705,596	3,642,088	80.6

4. RENTS AND LOANS

The Income Generation Unit is responsible for dealing with loan and rent accounts that are in arrears. The setting of rent and adjustments to rent accounts is done by the Housing Department. During 2011, rent collection levels were maintained. The Council continues to promote payment by standing order and the Household Budget Scheme operated in conjunction with An Post.

Number of Rent Customers	Year	Opening Balance	Rent Charged	Receipts	% Collected	Rent Arrears
1,702	2009	398,990.21	3,900,396.15	-3,668,815.48	85.76	608,991.45
1,750	2010	608,991.45	3,820,020.89	-3,832,610.50	86.74	585,747.80
1,758	2011	585,747.80	3,700,689.34	-3,755,677.62	87.79	522,547.25

The collection of housing loan repayments continued to be challenging in 2011. The general economic downturn and reduction in income of many loan customers led to an increase in the level of loan arrears. The Council continues to work with loan customers in arrears and adheres to the Department of Environment guidelines in dealing with customers in arrears.

Year	Opening Balance	Loan charges	Receipts YTD	% Collected	Loan Arrears
2009	199,182.68	1,146,652.57	-1,177,395.39	87.48	168,439.86
2010	168,439.86	1,272,671.94	-1,094,409.83	75.94	346,701.97
2011	346,701.97	1,137,138.30	-1,037,543.25	69.91	446,467.02

MOTOR TAX

Policy changes in relation to the taxation of small goods vehicles were implemented during 2011. A government decision was also taken to centralise the issue of driving licences. It is envisaged that this will be completed during 2013.

MOTOR TAX STATISTICS 2011

Motor Tax Transactions	No of Transactions	€
Vehicle Licences (Discs)	31,997	6,135,840
Driver Licences	5,197	91,835
Road Worthiness Certificates	3,484	25,327
Trade Licences	72	21,729
Miscellaneous Receipts	691	11,660
Total	41,441	6,286,391

In addition 10,791 vehicle licences were issued by Motor Tax Online Service during 2011. These vehicle licences are issued directly from the Vehicle Registration Unit in Shannon, Co. Clare.

Drivers Licences issued 2011	€
1 year Driving Licences	55
3 year Driving Licences	745
10 year Driving Licences	2478
Provisional Driving Licences	1503
Duplicate Driving Licences	416
Total Driving Licences Processed	5197

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

KEY FUNCTIONS OF ICT DEPARTMENT

Longford Local Authorities ICT Department provides and supports the following ICT Systems:

- Electronic mail, Internet, Intranet and Extranet
- Web based Applications
- 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
- Internal bespoke applications for Housing, Planning, Infrastructure, Environment and various support applications
- Database management and administration
- Systems backup and security

NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

Longford County Council IT 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 via wireless, fibre optic and DSL links.

There are twelve sites in total - seven in Longford town and five outlying Library sites.

SYSTEM UPGRADES

The newly refurbished Ballymahon Library was opened in 2011 and a full IT infrastructure of computers, printers, network devices for both public and staff were installed. A secure connection for staff back to the main council network was facilitated by the installation of a new Firewall in the library.

Support and assistance was also provided to the County Library in preparation work and testing for the new eBook download service which will go live in 2012.

Virtualisation readiness and feasibility assessments were carried out on all our servers during the year in preparation for consolidating a large number of our existing servers onto as few as 3 servers, which would result in better utilisation of processing power to produce annual savings in energy, administration and maintenance costs while also allowing for easier business continuity in the event of system failure.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

During 2011, Longford County Council facilitated three information evenings throughout the county regarding the rollout of the Rural Broadband Scheme. These events provided information to citizens about the scheme and provided supporting literature to assist them in submitting their application.

As a follow on to the above we also worked with Midlands Regional Authority to produce a document titled "A Guide to Broadband" which gives an overview of the types of broadband available in the region. This document is available on all local authorities in the midlands region.

INTERNET & INTRANET

Longford County Council continued to expand our online content during 2011. All notices of public concern are published on our websites which are widely used. In 2011 we also played an active part in the development of the midlandsireland.ie website and continue to remain involved in its ongoing development.

In September 2011 we also launched our Twitter social networking service. Notices such as roadworks and road closures, water outages along with all other notices of general public interest are published on the Twitter feed. To date we have over 70 followers, a figure which is continually rising.

Our Staff Intranet continues to be of strategic importance in the sharing of information among staff while also providing access too many of our most commonly used applications.

WEBSITE VISITS DURING 2011

Website	Number of Hits 2010	Number of Hits 2011
longfordcoco.ie	59,917	51,817
longford.ie	48,785	51,148
longfordtowncouncil.ie	7,170	6,957
virtualwriter.net	5,080	3,286
longfordlibrary.ie	18,684	19,945

IT SUB COMMITTEE

The IT sub Committee met on a number of occasions during 2011 under the Chairmanship of Councillor 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.



APPENDIX 1

MEMBERSHIP OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2009 - 2014

The statutory basis for establishment of Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) 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.

Social Housing, Planning and Building Control Strategic Policy Committee

County Council Members

V. Kiernan
M. Carrigy
P. Nolan
P.J. Reilly
D. Glennon
P. Connell

Town Council Members

T. Flaherty

Sectoral Representatives

Development and Construction

Kevin Hughes

Community and Voluntary

Charlie Harrison

(Paula O'Connor Oct 2011)

Helena Doyle

Mary Lillis

Total

11

Chair

Chair – First Term

Cllr. V. Kiernan

Transportation, Road Development and Road Safety Strategic Policy Committee

Water Services and Environmental Strategic Policy Committee

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

County Council Members

A. Mitchell
J. Duffy
M. Cahill
L. McEntire
M. Casey

County Council Members

G. Brady
P. Belton
S. Farrell
P. Loughrey
T. Victory

County Council Members

M. Mulleady
B. Steele
F. Kilbride
L. Bannon
M. Sexton

Town Council Members

M. Kilbride-Harkin

Town Council Members

J. Maguire

Town Council Members

J. Keogh

Sectoral Representatives

[Agriculture and Farming](#)
John Farrell
[Trade Union](#)
Kieran Woods
[Environmental](#)
Tara Keegan

Sectoral Representatives

[Agriculture and Farming](#)
Sean Reilly
[Environmental](#)
Ray Hogan
[Community and Voluntary](#)
Noreen McLoughlin
(Rory Duncan Dec 2011)

Sectoral Representatives

[Business and Employers](#)
Fintan McGill
[Community and Voluntary](#)
Alan O'Toole
(Reina Flower June 2011)
[Cultural](#)
Terry McKenna
(Tess Murphy June 2011)

Total

9

Total

9

Total

9

Chair

[Chair – First Term](#)
Cllr. A. Mitchell

Chair

[Chair – First Term](#)
Cllr. G. Brady

Chair

[Chair – First Term](#)
Cllr. M. Mulleady
[Second Term Nominee](#)
Cllr. B. Steele (July 2011)

APPENDIX 2

REPORT ON WORKING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES DURING 2011

WATER SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee held four meetings in 2011 on the following dates:

- 2nd February 2011
- 11th May 2011
- 28th November 2011
- 7th December 2011

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

- Overview of functions of the Environment Department, Water Services Department and Water Conservation
- Bye-Laws for Cemeteries
- Policy on Cemetery Provision & Maintenance
- Policy on Water Conservation
- Energy Management
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment – Public Consultation Stage
- Publication of the Water Services (Amendment) Bill, 2011

TRANSPORTATION, ROAD DEVELOPMENT AND ROAD SAFETY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee met four times during 2011. Meetings were held on the following dates:

- 13th April 2011
- 23rd June 2011
- 6th October 2011
- 14th December 2011

The main items for discussion and consideration were:

- Policy in relation to Hedge-Cutting on Public Roads
- Public Lighting
- Progress of N5 Longford Bypass
- Policy on Traffic Calming

- Local and Regional Road Bridges
- Winter Maintenance Plan
- Identification of Policy for development in 2012

SOCIAL HOUSING, PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee held three meetings in 2011 on the following dates:

- 28th March 2011
- 7th June 2011
- 8th November 2011

The main issues considered by the Committee in 2011 were:

- Revised Tenancy Agreement – Longford Local Authorities
- 2011 Tenant Purchase Scheme
- Update on Planning Policy/Planning Act 2010
- Draft Allocation Scheme of Priorities for letting of dwelling houses
- “Taking in Charge” Policy

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

The Strategic Policy Committee for Economic & Community Development, Corporate & Cultural Services and Human Resources held meetings on the following dates in 2011:

- 9th February 2011
- 25th May 2011
- 13th October 2011
- 29th November 2011

The priority areas for discussion at the meetings were:

- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Connolly Barracks
- Social Inclusion initiatives
- Sports Development
- Library Services
- Heritage Plan and the Arts Plan

APPENDIX 3

COMMITTEES OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	MEMBERS
Association of County and City Councils	Councillors L. McEntire, P. Connell and F. Kilbride
Local Authority Members' Association	Councillor A. Mitchell
Director on Board of Failte Ireland East & Midland Region	Councillor M. Carrigy
Lough Oughter, Gowna and River Erne Joint Drainage Committee	Councillors J. Duffy and V. Kiernan
Longford Leisure Ltd	Councillors A. Mitchell, V. Kiernan and P. Loughrey
Midland Regional Authority	Councillors M. Cahill, P. Belton, L. Bannon, V. Kiernan and M. Carrigy
EU Operational Committee of the Midland Regional Authority	Mayor, Councillors P. Nolan and M. Carrigy
Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor L. Bannon
Longford County Enterprise Board	Councillors P.J. Reilly, P. Connell, P. Belton and F. Kilbride
Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd	Councillors T. Victory, P. Nolan and A. Mitchell
Longford Community Resources Ltd	Councillors D. Glennon, S. Farrell and J. Duffy
Appointment of nominee of Longford County Council to attend annual meeting of Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd	Councillor P. Nolan
Rural Water Monitoring Committee	Councillors M. Mulleady, J. Duffy and M. Carrigy
Steering Committee for the promotion of the Irish Language	All members of the Council
Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	Councillors P. Loughrey, T. Victory, G. Brady, V. Kiernan, F. Kilbride and A. Mitchell. Chairperson, Mayor P. Nolan

COMMITTEE	MEMBERS
County Longford Vocational Education Committee	Councillors B. Steele, L. McEntire, S. Farrell, G. Brady, M. Carrigy, J. Duffy, V. Kiernan, A. Mitchell and M. Sexton
Longford County Council Internal Audit Committee	Mr. Seamus Butler and Councillor A. Mitchell
Sports Partnership Committee	Councillors M. Carrigy and J. Duffy
Longford County Joint Policing Committee	Councillors M. Mulleady, M. Cahill, T. Victory, P. Loughrey, M. Casey, M. Carrigy, P. Nolan, G. Brady, P. Belton, J. Duffy, L. Bannon and F. Kilbride Chairperson, Councillor S. Farrell
Shannon River Basin District Advisory Council	Councillors P. Connell and S. Farrell
North Western International River Basin District Advisory Council	Councillors G. Brady and V. Kiernan
Health Service Executive Regional Health Forum, Dublin-mid Leinster	Councillors P.J. Reilly, P. Belton and G. Brady
County Longford Heritage Forum	Councillors D. Glennon and M. Carrigy, Chairperson, Councillor S. Farrell
Midlands Energy Agency	Councillors G. Brady and P. Belton
Tender Committee	The Mayor and any two members to be present at the opening of Tenders.

APPENDIX 4

MEETINGS OF LONGFORD 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 in the Park House Hotel in Edgeworthstown on 20th June 2011. Councillor Frank Kilbride was elected Mayor and Councillor John Duffy was elected Deputy Mayor.

Monthly Meeting – 16th February 2011

Mayor Paul Connell presented Michael Tighe, Joe Ganley, Vinnie Ford, Sean Dowler, Patrick Devlin and the family of late Dominic Flaherty with a commemorative scroll to honour Irish soldiers, with a Longford connection, who served in Ireland's first ever UN Overseas Mission 1960 – 1964.

Special Meeting – 13th April 2011

A Special Meeting of the Council was held on the 13th April 2011 to consider Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 and the Tenant Purchase Scheme 2011.

Monthly Meeting – 20th April 2011

Senator David Norris addressed the meeting. He asked the members for their support when he seeks their nomination to run for the office of President of Ireland.

Mr. Enda Brazel, Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd. updated the members on insurance issues.

Monthly Meeting - 18th May 2011

The May Monthly Meeting was held in the newly refurbished Ballymahon Branch Library.

Special Joint Meeting of Longford County Council and Longford Town Council - 26th May 2011

Mr. Brian Hayes, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Finance, addressed the meeting regarding flood relief measures.

Special Meeting – 27th September 2011

The members nominated Ms. Dana Rosemary Scallon as a candidate in the Presidential Election.

Monthly Meeting - 19th October 2011

Mayor Frank Kilbride presented the following Groups with a cheque and a Co-operation Ireland Certificate to mark their entry in the National Pride of Place Competition 2011.

- Ms. Bernadette Clancy from Lanesborough Tourism Co-operative Society
- Ms. Ann Howard and Ms. Mary Kennedy from *Longford Mental Health Association*

Monthly Meeting - 16th November 2011

Presentation to Longford Ladies Football Team - Winners of the Leinster and All Ireland Ladies 'Under 16' Championship 2011.

Mayor Frank Kilbride presented the following teams with a commemorative scroll –

- Longford Ladies Football Team who won the Leinster and All Ireland Ladies 'Under 16' Championship 2011
- Meán Scoil Mhuire Football Team who won the Ladies Gaelic Football Post Primary Schools All Ireland Junior 'A' Championship 2011

Restoration Project: Royal Canal Basin, Longford

Mr. Noel McGeeney, Longford Branch of the Royal Canal Amenity Group; Mr. John Mulligan, Author and Journalist and Mr. Nick Sweeney, Architect made a presentation regarding the Royal Canal Basin Longford - Restoration Project.

Budget Meeting – 19th December 2011

The Budget for 2012 was adopted by the members at the statutory Budget Meeting held on the 19th December 2011.

Monthly Meeting - 19th December 2011

Strategic Policy Committees – Chairpersons

The members agreed to the following changes to the posts of Chairpersons of the Strategic Policy Committees from the 1st January 2012:

Social Housing, Planning and Building Control Strategic Policy Committee

Chairperson:
Councillor Micheál Carrigy

Transportation, Road Development and Road Safety Strategic Policy Committee

Chairperson:
Councillor John Duffy

Water Services and Environmental Strategic Policy Committee

Chairperson:
Councillor Paddy Belton

APPENDIX 5

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

DATE	CONFERENCE	COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE
13th-14th Jan	Intensive Course on Planning Law	Cllr.A.Mitchell
14th-16th Jan	European Legislation on Human Rights in Housing Matters	Cllrs.P.Connell, F.Kilbride, A.Mitchell, B.Steele
21st-23rd Jan	Volcanic Ash, Major Flooding, Freezing Spells - Crises Impacts on Ireland	Cllrs.M.Cahill, T.Victory
21st-23rd Jan	Planning and Professional Indemnity Insurance and Bonds	Cllrs.M.Casey, P.Connell, F.Kilbride, B.Steele
26th Jan	NESC Seminar Re-finding Success in Europe	Cllrs.L.McEntire, PJ.Reilly
28th-29th Jan	Economic Seminar for Councillors	Cllrs.P.Belton, G.Brady, P.Connell, V.Kiernan, F. Kilbride, P.Loughrey
28th-30th Jan	Local Authority Water Supply	Cllr. PJ.Reilly
4th-6th Feb	Longford London Association Dinner	Mayor P.Connell
4th-6th Feb	Renewable Heat Incentive	Cllr.PJ.Reilly
4th-6th Feb	A Practical Guide to Media Skills	Cllrs.G.Brady, M.Casey, L.McEntire
18th-20th Feb	Charities Act 2009, Implications for the Voluntary Sector	Cllrs.P.Belton, G.Brady, P.Connell, V.Kiernan, F.Kilbride, P.Loughrey, B.Steele
4th-6th Mar	Employment Law and insurance issues, the consequences for you and your Local Authority	Cllrs.M.Cahill, PJ.Reilly, B.Steele, T.Victory
11th-13th Mar	The Local Government Planning Service	Cllrs.L.Bannon, P.Connell, F.Kilbride, P.Nolan, PJ.Reilly, B.Steele
18th-20th Mar	Equal Status Legislation and its effect on Service Provision in Local Authorities	Cllrs.PJ.Reilly, B.Steele
23rd Mar	Launch of Midland Region	Cllrs.P.Connell, PJ.Reilly
1st-3rd Apr	How to be an Effective Chairperson	Cllr.M.Casey
2nd Apr	Longford Association in Dublin	Cllrs.P.Connell, L.McEntire, PJ.Reilly
7th-10th Apr	20th Annual Kerry Environmental Conference	Cllrs.G.Brady, L.McEntire, PJ.Reilly, T.Victory
15th - 17th Apr	The Good Friday Agreement Local Government North and South	Cllrs.P.Nolan, PJ.Reilly, B.Steele

DATE	CONFERENCE	COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE
29th–30th Apr	LAMA Spring Conference	Cllrs.P.Belton, M.Cahill, J.Duffy, A.Mitchell, T.Victory
13th–15th May	European Influences on Local Government in Ireland	Cllrs.M.Cahill, T.Victory
13th-15th May	Public Speaking & Promotional Literature	Cllrs.G.Brady, M.Casey, P.Connell, F.Kilbride, P.Nolan
19th May	Community Foundation for Ireland	Cllr.M.Casey
19th May	HRM Queen of England Visit to Ireland	Mayor P.Connell
20th-22nd May	A Guide to Getting the Right Work Done	Cllr.P.Nolan
20th-21st May	National Public Policy Making and the Councillor	Cllrs.F.Kilbride, A.Mitchell
27th-29th May	Procurement Expenditure and Revenues in Local Government	Cllr.L.Bannon, M.Cahill, T.Victory
27th-29th May	Exploring Local Government Reform	Cllrs.M.Casey, PJ.Reilly
3rd-5th Jun	Renewable Energy, Local Government can make a Difference	Cllrs.M.Casey, P.Connell, F.Kilbride, P.Nolan, B.Steele
10th-12th Jun	Elected Member's Responsibilities	Cllrs.P.Connell, J.Duffy, P.Nolan
16th Jun	AGM Irish Public Bodies	Cllr.P.Nolan
17th-19th Jun	The Challenges and Opportunities facing Local Government	Cllrs.L.Bannon, P.Belton, M.Cahill, J.Duffy, V.Kiernan, P.Nolan
08th-10th Jul	Effective Representations through Radio, TV, Press, Facebook and Twitter	Cllr.M.Mulleady
15th-17th Jul	Leadership Development Skills	Cllr.M.Carrigy
18th-19th Jul	The Effect on Local Government of Employment Equality Legislation	Cllr.M.Mulleady
24th-29th Jul	Patrick MacGill Summer School	Cllrs.P.Belton, V.Kiernan, F.Kilbride, M.Mulleady
25th-27th Jul	A Briefing for Local Authority Members, Current Issues in Education	Cllrs.P.Connell, P.Loughrey, P.Nolan, B.Steele
29th-31st Jul	Local Government Health & Safety, Risk Assessment and Insurance	Cllrs.P.Connell, P.Loughrey, A.Mitchell, M.Mulleady, P.Nolan, B.Steele
12th-14th Aug	Legislation for the Reform of Local Government	Cllrs.L.Bannon, M.Mulleady
12th-13th Aug	The Local Government Planning Service	Cllr.L.McEntire

DATE	CONFERENCE	COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE
19th-21st Aug	Local Government Promoting Renewal Energy	Cllrs.G.Brady, M.Carrigy, M.Mulleady
2nd-4th Sep	Personal Development Skills	Cllrs.L.Bannon, M.Cahill
8th-10th Sep	AMAI Annual Conference	Cllr.L.McEntire
21st Sep	Irish Public Bodies Meeting	Cllr.P.Belton
23rd-24th Sep	LAMA Autumn Seminar	Cllrs.L.Bannon, P.Belton, M.Cahill, A.Mitchell, T.Victory
23rd-25th Sep	Effective Representation for your Constituents	Cllrs.G.Brady, V.Kiernan, P.Loughrey
29th Sep	TASC Income Seminar	Cllr.L.McEntire
30th Sep-2nd Oct	European Waste Water Laws	Cllrs.L.Bannon, M.Carrigy, J.Duffy
7th-9th Oct	New Government Regulations and how they affect the Domestic Home	Cllrs.M.Carrigy, J.Duffy, P.Loughrey, M.Mulleady
14th-15th Oct	Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011	Cllrs.M.Carrigy, J.Duffy, M.Mulleady
21st-23rd Oct	Optimising Taxation Allowances and Benefits	Cllr.L.McEntire
21st-23rd Oct	Role of the Regional Authority in the Operation of and Policy Making in Local Government	Cllrs.M.Carrigy, J.Duffy
4th-6th Nov	Local Government Powers to Create/Abolish Rights of Way	Cllr.J.Duffy
18th-20th Nov	Modern Alternatives to Fossil Fuels	Cllrs.P.Belton, M.Casey, V.Kiernan
18th-20th Nov	Local Authority's Role In Preventing Water Pollution	Cllr.M.Carrigy
23rd Nov	DLA Conference	Cllrs.L.Bannon, G.Brady, A.Mitchell, B.Steele
24th Nov	National Radon Forum	Cllr.L.McEntire
25th-26th Nov	Clare Tourism Conference	Cllr.L.Bannon
25th-26th Nov	Transforming Ireland into a highly energy-efficient, low Carbon Economy	Cllrs.M.Carrigy, A.Mitchell
9th-11th Dec	Proposed Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy	Cllr.M.Carrigy
16th -18th Dec	Local Government (Charges) Act 2009	Cllrs.M.Carrigy, A.Mitchell, M.Mulleady, T.Victory

APPENDIX 6

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN 2010-2014

INFRASTRUCTURE AND 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 2011. Construction on the N5 Longford Bypass commenced on the 7th April 2011. The contract duration is 18 months giving an expected completion in early October 2012. The Main Contractor is Wills Bros. Ltd. from Foxford, Co. Mayo. When the project is completed it will result in reduced traffic congestion, improved safety and an enhanced quality of life for the local community. Land negotiations were ongoing throughout 2011 with all but one case settled.

Pavement overlays were carried out on the N4 at Kilsallagh and Newtownforbes as well as on the N63 at Killashee and Lanesboro.

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 Improvement Grant Schemes were advanced at the following locations:

- Bridge 19, Smear Pulladoey
- R198 at Gaique Cross
- Bridge 114 at Soran/Esker South
- Bridge 288 at Curry/Culloge
- Bridge 433 at Knockawalkey/Derryharrow
- Bridge 255 at Kiltybegs/Killeenatruan
- Lisnamuck, Longford
- R392 Ballymahon-Forgney

Road Safety and Traffic Management

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

- Church Car Park, Edgeworthstown
- Muckerstaff National School
- R194 at Ballinalee
- Signs and Lining at Caldragh, Newtownforbes
- Lower Main Street, Longford
- Ballycloghan National School
- L-1102 and L-5187 at Legan
- R393 at Agharra

Road safety recommendations relating to Planning Permissions are ongoing.

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.

Current Policies

Quality road design standards were promoted for implementation.

Access for the disabled was promoted in accordance with recommended guidelines in consultation with stakeholders.

As part of the Government's Job Initiative a fund of €4m was made available to finance in 2011 only a special **Smarter Travel Capital Programme** specifically targeted at counties outside the Greater Dublin Area. Longford County Council received funding under this Job Initiative and Cycle Stand/Shelters were installed at various locations in Longford Town. A Footpath/Cycle Path was constructed at the N63 Farneyhoogan. Footpaths were, also, constructed in Lanesboro and Granardkille, Granard.

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, Community and Local Government, 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 County Longford continued to be met through a range of housing options. The last statutory assessment of housing need was undertaken in 2011 and the next one is due to take place in 2014.

Longford County Council's Housing Programme continued throughout 2011. One individual house was purchased and one rural house was completed. There were 125 allocations of tenancy during the year.

Housing Maintenance / Refurbishment

In 2011, a sum of €675,000 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 2011. Tenancy enforcement was ongoing during the year.

Voluntary Housing

The Council continued its association with the Voluntary Housing Sector.

Tenant Purchase Schemes

In 2011, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) introduced the 2011 Tenant Purchase Scheme for long standing applicants. In 2011, five tenant purchases were completed i.e. sales closed (four were under the 2011 Scheme and one was under the 1995 Scheme). At the end of 2011 there were a further 44 tenant purchases pending (offer letters issued) under both the 2011 and 1995 schemes.

Loans/Grants

A total of six valid loan applications were received in 2011 with three loans approved and three advanced. This amount does not include applications refused or withdrawn.

In 2011, there was a combined total of 342 applications received under the three Grant Schemes. A total of €1,348,529 was paid out in respect of 280 grants.

Traveller Accommodation

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

Rental Accommodation Scheme

At the end of 2011 there were 247 RAS tenancies in place. The RAS Scheme and the associated operational and administrative costs are self financing in Longford.

Long Term Leasing Arrangements

There were 18 RAS Type leases in place at the end of 2011.

Remedial/Regeneration Works

In 2011, 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.

Energy Retrofitting Scheme 2010

In 2011, Longford County Council received funding from the DoECLG in the amount of €425,000 as part of this Scheme.

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

Core Objective: *“Longford County Council will in collaboration with the appropriate agencies lead the economic development of County Longford”*

Economic Development

Longford County Council continues to collaborate with relevant bodies in supporting local industries in 2011. Despite the difficult economic environment a number of local companies achieved market growth and marginally increased their employment numbers.

- In 2011, a Tourism Subcommittee of Longford County Council was established to enhance and support the work of Longford County Tourism Committee.
- Funding was secured under the Leader Programme to produce a Tourism Strategy for County Longford. The Tourism Strategy 2012-2015 was completed towards the end of year.

Social Development

- Longford County Development Board held three meetings in 2011. Agencies continued to implement the CDB Action Plan 2009-2012.
- The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group held three meetings in 2011 to share information and network in order to prioritise areas of work with a number of target groups identified in the Anti Poverty Strategy.
- The Travellers Interagency Group held three meetings during 2011 where they continued to implement a number of priority actions in the areas of health, education, employment and training and in the prevention of crime and conflict.
- Longford Westmeath Children’s Services Committee and substructures were established and a Children’s and Young Person’s Plan 2011-2013 was developed.
- Funding was secured from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to develop and enhance the Comhairle na nÓg. The Comhairle na nÓg held monthly meetings throughout 2011 and their project for the year was creating awareness of mental health issues among young people in County Longford.
- County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum held their AGM in April and 10 Steering Group meetings were held in 2011. A number of information sessions were held in the electoral areas for community and voluntary groups. The Forum employs a support worker to provide support services to the members of the Forum.

Cultural Services

- 2011 was a very busy year for the library service in County Longford. Library membership grew by 32.9% and over 184,459 visits have been recorded to libraries throughout County Longford, an increase of 33,368 on 2010.
- The newly refurbished Ballymahon Community Library was opened on 18th February. In 10 months the library has registered 1,792 new members, who have borrowed 30,751 books. The library was shortlisted for the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Public Choice Award and received a special award in the Conservation category.

- The library service has continued to invest in ICT as a means of developing a high-quality information and ICT infrastructure for customers. All six branches now have high-speed broadband and wifi. A new downloadable eBooks and eAudio Books service has been introduced. This new service enhances access for library members as books may be downloaded 24/7 from the library website www.longfordlibrary.ie. The library is now also on Facebook and Twitter.
- **FAS eLearning at the Library:** This successful partnership between Longford County Library Service, An Comhairle Leabharlanna and FÁS continued during the year, with many people availing of the expertise technology in our libraries to improve their IT skills. Basic internet classes were also delivered in Granard, Lanesboro, Longford and Ballymahon throughout the summer.

Recreation & Amenity

In 2011, Longford Sports Partnership reached the midway point in the delivery of its sports strategy for Longford, *Developing Sport Together 2010-2012*. An independent mid-term review concluded that ‘the organisation is fit for purpose’ and has shown that the LSP has functioned as envisaged:

- It has driven sports development in the county
- It has fostered a partnership approach
- It has promoted inclusion
- It has promoted minority sports
- It has a strong profile

Financially, 2011 was a strong year for the Partnership having secured €146,915 in funding from the Irish Sports Council. This was to support core programmes such as Buntus training for schools and for education and training programmes which include child protection and first aid training. It also covered the salary costs of two full-time staff and €6000 was allocated to provide financial support to sports clubs in Longford.

Funding of €17,700 was also secured from the Office of the Minister for Integration and €11,000 from the HSE for programmes targeting men over 35.

The work of the Partnership continues to be guided by a multi-agency Board that meets a minimum of four times per year. In 2011, the Board met six times and were also involved in specific areas of work by way of sub-committee. The Board comprises of sporting representatives, as well as statutory and non-statutory representatives and partnership working remains an important element of the LSP’s day to day activities.

Target groups were reached through a varied programme of events in 2011. People with disabilities, men aged 35+, new communities, women, older people, disadvantaged youth and the unemployed are some of the groups that participated in events run by the LSP. Such activities included the Longford Cycle Tour, the Girls On The Move programme, Longford Walking Festival, Recreation Week and Communities in Action; fifteen programmes in total. There were also additional meetings, forums and workshops that took place with sporting groups.

APPENDIX 7: SERVICE INDICATORS

F: FIRE SERVICE

F1: Fire Service Mobilisation	2010	2011
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	6.15	6.13
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	6.48	6.20
F.2 Percentage of attendances at scenes		
A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes	35.93	34.23
B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	48.75	54.36
C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes	15.32	11.41
D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes	39.47	38.24
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	46.05	51.47
F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes	14.47	10.29
F.3 Fire Prevention		
A. Total number of fire safety certificate applications received	31	26
B. Total number of fire safety certificate applications processed (including cases deemed invalid)	40	23
C. Total number of applications deemed invalid	9	2

CP: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

CP.1 Participation in local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Óg scheme		
Percentage of local schools and youth groups involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Óg scheme	76.19	96
CP.2 Groups registered with the Community and Voluntary Forum		
Number of groups registered with the Community and Voluntary Forum	161	158

C: CORPORATE ISSUES

C.1 Working Days lost to Sickness		
A. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through certified leave	5.09	5.38
B. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through uncertified leave	0.47	0.56
C.2 Staff Training and Development		
Expenditure on Training and Development as a percentage of total payroll costs:	5.4	5.66

E: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

WATER		
E.1 Unaccounted For Water	2010	2011
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	48.86	48.72
Total volume of water supplied (m ³ /per day) under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for	19100	18000
Volume of unaccounted for water (m ³ /per day) under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for	9332	8769
E.2 Drinking Water Analysis		
A. Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to public schemes	98.85	97.10
B. Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to private schemes (where appropriate)	100	98.10
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	96.77	97.10
B. Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for organics	27.06	30.09
E4: Housing Waste Sent for Recycling		
A. Percentage of household waste collected from kerbside, which is sent for recycling	50.38	51.92
B. Tonnage of household waste collected from kerbside, which is sent for recycling	4327.2	3933.61
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)	1107.13	1390.56
E5: Household Waste Sent for Landfill		
A. The percentage of household waste collected which is sent to landfill	49.62	48.08
B. The tonnage of household waste collected which is sent to landfill	4261.44	3643.18
E6: Recycling Facilities		
The total number of Bring Sites in the local authority area	26	00
The total number of Civic Amenity Centres in the local authority area	2	2
Glass		
A. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	26	26
B. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
C. The total number of facilities for recycling	28	28
D. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	4.07	3.59
Cans		
E. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	26	26
F. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
G. The total number of facilities for recycling	28	28
H. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	4.07	3.59

Textiles	2010	2011
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	0.51
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	0.26
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	0.13
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	0.26
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	0.38
D. Number of on-the-spot fines issued	458	311
E. Number of on-the-spot fines paid	200	110
F. Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	20	8
G. Number of prosecutions secured in cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	16	8
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)	20	8

E7: Litter Prevention and Enforcement	2010	2011
J. Total number of prosecutions secured (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)	16	8
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)	1671	1640
B. Number of complaints investigated	1650	1681
C. Number of complaints resolved where no further action was necessary	1399	1561
D. Number of enforcement procedures taken	479	320
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	1903.75	1909.75
B. The total number of dwellings, excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects	1853	1864.5
C. The overall percentage of dwellings that are empty (excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects)	3.24	4.29
D. The percentage of empty dwellings unavailable for letting	65.83	93.44
E. The percentage of empty dwellings available for letting	34.17	6.56
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	9.58	14.43
The average time taken (in weeks) from the works (above) being completed to the date of the first rent debit	1.2	1.59
H3: Housing Repairs		
Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received	95.78	96.63
H4: Traveller Accommodation		
Total number of traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme	125	92.86
Number of Traveller families accommodated	10	13
Target number of Traveller families to be accommodated in the year, as set out in the local Traveller accommodation programme	8	14

H5: Enforcement of standards in the private rented sector	2010	2011
A. Total number of registered tenancies	1915	1934
B. Number of dwelling units inspected	124	57
C. Number of inspections carried out	232	114
D. Number of dwellings inspected as percentage of registered tenancies (i.e. B as percentage of A)	6.48	2.95
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	4.06	2
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	7.2	4
H7: Pre-Tenancy Familiarisation Courses		
A. Total number of new local authority tenants	117	146
B. Percentage of new local authority tenants who have been offered pre-tenancy familiarisation courses	100	81.51
L: LIBRARY SERVICES		
L.1 Library Public Opening Hours		
A. Average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	37.4	35.97
B. Average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)	14.4	16.81
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	3268.3	4463.69
Total number of visits to full-time libraries	112400	173950
L.3 Library Stock		
A. Annual expenditure on stock per head of population (county/city wide)	2.39	2.04
B. Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for books	2.8	3.30
C. Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for other items	0.16	0.16
L.4 Internet Access through Libraries		
Number of Internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	670.84	656.40
Total number of Internet sessions provided	23071	25580

M: MOTOR TAXATION

M.1 Number of Motor Tax Transactions	2010	2011
A. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with over the counter	33179	32549
B. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with by post	3876	3525
C. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	9231	10791
D. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with over the counter	71.68	69.45
E. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with by post	8.37	7.52
F. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	19.94	23.02
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	3806	2869
B. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the second or third day from receipt of the application	33	618
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	18
D. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) in over five days from receipt of the application	37	20
E. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the same day as receipt of the application	98.19	81.39
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	0.85	17.53
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	0.51
H. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) in over five days from receipt of the application	0.95	0.57
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	449	436
B. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the second or third day from receipt of the application	912	266
C. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the Fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	813	359
D. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with in over five days from receipt of the application	3351	4229
E. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the same day as receipt of the application	8.13	8.24
F. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the second or third day from receipt of the application	16.51	5.03
G. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	14.71	6.79
H. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with in over five days from receipt of the application	60.65	79.94
M.4 Public opening hours		
Average number of opening hours per week	30.77	30.71

P: PLANNING

P.1 Planning Applications - Decision Making	2010	2011
Individual Houses		
A. Number of applications decided	131	99
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	87	37
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	44	62
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	67.34	67.89
F. Percentage of applications granted	80.92	73.74
G. Percentage of applications refused	19.08	26.26
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	100	100
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	0	0
New Housing Development		
A. Number of applications decided	13	18
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	9	11
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	4	7
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	75.58	67.71
F. Percentage of applications granted	69.23	72.22
G. Percentage of applications refused	30.77	27.78
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	0	
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	100	
Other: not requiring Environment Impact Assessment		
A. Number of applications decided	117	116
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	81	69
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	36	47
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	73.16	72.43
F. Percentage of applications granted	92.31	87.07
G. Percentage of applications refused	7.69	12.93
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	70	83.33
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	30	16.67

Other: requiring Environment Impact Assessment	2010	2011
A. Number of applications decided	117	116
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	81	69
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	36	47
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	73.16	72.43
F. Percentage of applications granted	108	101
G. Percentage of applications refused	9	15
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	7	5
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	3	1
P.2 Planning Enforcement		
A. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were investigated	141	74
B. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were dismissed	14	9
C. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations	18	36
D. Number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters	106	50
E. Number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices	30	32
F. Number of prosecutions	11	11
P.3 Planning Public opening hours		
Average number of opening hours per week	33.32	32.55
P.4 Pre-Planning Consultation		
A. Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held	105	60
B. Average length of time (in days) from request for consultation with local authority to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation	5.77	8.57
P.5 New Buildings inspected		
Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	12	13.21
Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority	100	53
Number of new buildings notified to the local authority that were inspected	12	7

REC: RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Rec.1 Children's Playgrounds	2010	2011
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	0.35	0.31
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	12	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	3113.81	2753.37
Number of visitors to local authority-facilitated leisure facilities	107087	107299

REV: REVENUE COLLECTION

Rev 1: House Rent	2010	2011
A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from House Rent	87.11	88.20
B. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 4 weeks old	6.08	6.06
C. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 4-6 weeks old	5.13	4.49
D. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 6-12 weeks old	7.52	6.41
E. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are more than 12 weeks old	81.27	83.04
Rev 2: Housing Loans	2010	2011
A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from Housing Loans	84.07	77.16
B. Percentage of arrears on House Loans that are 1 month old	3.15	2.10
C. Percentage of arrears on House Loans that are 1-2 months old	6.37	3.98
D. Percentage of arrears on House Loans that are 2-3 months old	4.45	4.48
E. Percentage of arrears on House Loans that are more than 3 months old	86.03	89.44
Rev 3: Commercial Rates	2010	2011
Amount collected at year-end as a percentage of amount due from Commercial rates	79.43	74.99
Rev 4: Refuse Charges	2010	2011
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	2010	2011
Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due for Non-Domestic Water Charges	55.97	58.73

R: ROADS

R1: Road Restoration Programme	2010	2011
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads improved and maintained under the Restoration Programme per annum	58.41	55.44
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads constructed under the specific improvement grants scheme per annum	1	0.6



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE AN LONGFOIRT
Longford County Council

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