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# Candidate Information Booklet

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

## GRADUATE PLANNER

### 3 Year Fixed-Term Contract

*Competition Reference: GP/0126*

**This is a rolling competition.**

**There will be no closing date for receipt of completed application forms.**

**Applications will be processed in order of receipt of completed applications. Interviews will be held as positions arise.**

***Longford County Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.***



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Longford County Council is one of 31 Local Authorities in the Republic of Ireland. The Council has responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services which are necessary to the physical, economic, social and cultural life of County Longford, with a focus on making Longford an attractive place to live, work and invest.

The following comprise the areas of service delivery in Longford County Council:

- Economic & Community Development
- Local Enterprise
- Planning
- Cultural & Recreational Services
- Infrastructure
- Water Services
- Housing
- Fire & Emergency Services
- Environment
- Finance
- Information Services
- Corporate Services
- Human Resources

This is an opportunity to gain employment in the role of **Graduate Planner** with Longford County Council.

Longford County Council is committed to a policy of open and fair recruitment, in line with good practice, recruitment & selection standards, employment legislation and relevant circulars from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

This Candidate Information Booklet is intended to provide information on the post of **Graduate Planner** and the selection process and candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the detailed information in advance of submitting their application.

Candidates should satisfy themselves that they are eligible under the Qualifications to apply for the post of **Graduate Planner**.

Where a candidate provides false or misleading information or has deliberately omitted relevant information on their application form this may result in their disqualification from the competition.

## GRADUATE PLANNER

### THE ROLE

Graduate Planners work within the planning section. The section works broadly under four headings as follows: Forward Planning, Development Management, Enforcement and Public Realm. Local Authorities also pay a key role in supporting economic development and enterprise promotion at a local level.

- The Graduate Planner will work under the direction and management of a Senior Planner or other employee designated by the Director of Services as appropriate.
- The Graduate Planner will be required at times to work on their own initiative as circumstances demand on a broad range of projects. They will be required to work as part of a multi-disciplinary project team in the Councils busy Planning Department.
- The role requires good administrative, interpersonal, communication and other particular skills depending on assignment.
- The successful candidate will be expected to carry out the duties in a manner that enhances public trust and confidence and ensures impartial decision making.

### DUTIES

The duties of the office are to give the local authority and;

- (a) Such other local authorities or bodies for which the Chief Graduate Officer, for the purposes acts is Manager, and;
- (b) To any other local authority or body with which an agreement has been made by the local authority or by any of the authorities or bodies mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) or this paragraph under the direction and supervision of the appropriate officer, such planning or ancillary services of an advisory, supervisory or Graduate nature as may be required by any local authority or body hereinbefore mentioned in the exercise and performance of any of its powers, functions and duties including the duty of assisting the Senior Planner, or other appropriate professional officer, in the supervision of the planning or ancillary services of any of the forgoing local authorities or bodies, and when required to do so, to perform the duty of acting for the appropriate professional officer of higher rank during the absence of such officer of higher rank.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Planner will include:

- To write reports and make recommendations on planning matters as assigned;
- To complete site inspections as part of his or her case load;
- Preparing responses to preplanning requests and holding preplanning discussions with prospective applicants;
- Preparing responses to appeals of Planning Decisions;
- Preparing recommendations on compliance with Planning Conditions;
- Carrying out survey work, research and analysis, drafting policies and proposals, preparing written statements and maps and other work as required on the agreed Forward Planning work programme;

- To answer phone and email queries, dealing with members of the public in a courteous, prompt and efficient manner;
- To participate in continued professional development and training provided by the County Council;
- To provide assistance to other work colleagues; and liaise with other departments as required;
- To maintain such records and produce such reports as may be required.
- Providing a high level of service to elected representatives, including attendance at and presentations to the relevant Strategic Policy Committee and meetings of the Council, including at Municipal District Level;
- To respond to reasonable requests for assistance by other bodies/members of the public;
- Incorporating the use of IT and efficiencies into work practices;
- To ensure that the provisions of the Health and Safety legislation are complied with;
- Participate & take part in the duties as required as part of the Organisational response to Climate Action and Just Transition to promote & ensure capacity building, empowering change and delivering action

These duties are indicative rather than exhaustive and are carried out under general guidance.

**The ideal candidate should have an ability to demonstrate competence in the following areas; -**

- Knowledge of planning legislation and the principles, practices and techniques of planning;
- An ability to work in a multi-disciplinary team;
- Good knowledge of local government functions, services and activities particularly in relation to planning and development;
- Communication/presentation and interpersonal skills;
- Report writing skills and IT skills;
- Time Management and organisational skills - an ability to achieve delivery of competing demands within prescribed timelines and deadlines;
- Identifying Problems and Contributing to Solutions;
- Awareness of and management of Health, Safety and Welfare in the workplace;
- Operating ICT systems, in particular word processing, presentation and GIS systems;
- Prioritising of work effectively;
- Acting on own initiative;
- An ability to work under pressure and maintain a solution-oriented mindset.

## COMPETENCIES

Key competencies for the post of **Graduate Planner** are given in the table below. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate sufficient evidence within their application form of their competence under each of these headings. Please take particular note of the competencies listed as any shortlisting or interview processes will be based on the information provided by the candidate in their completed application form.

<b>DELIVERING RESULTS &amp; COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans work and uses resources effectively.</li> <li>• Implements high quality service and customer care standards.</li> <li>• Demonstrates effective verbal and written communication skills.</li> </ul>
<b>PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists the team or work area to achieve corporate objectives.</li> <li>• Works as part of a team to ensure delivery of plans and schedules.</li> <li>• Has a strong team ethic of co-operation and mutual support.</li> <li>• Show visible commitment to the purpose, mission and vision of the Organisation</li> </ul>
<b>PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes initiative and is open to taking on new challenges or responsibilities.</li> <li>• Manages time and workload effectively.</li> <li>• Maintains a positive and constructive and enthusiastic attitude to their role.</li> <li>• Understands and implements change and demonstrates flexibility and openness to change.</li> </ul>
<b>KNOWLEDGE EXPERIENCE &amp; SKILLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory technical knowledge of Irish Planning legislation and key relevant European Directives, including associated procedures.</li> <li>• Appreciation &amp; understanding of Health &amp; Safety issues.</li> <li>• Knowledge &amp; understanding of the role of Graduate Planner in Local Government</li> <li>• Knowledge &amp; understanding of the role of Local Government</li> <li>• Knowledge of current local and national issues &amp; awareness of likely effects of these issues on Local Government policy</li> </ul>

## Graduate Planner QUALIFICATIONS

### 1. Character

Candidates shall be of good character.

### 2. Health

Each candidate must be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

### 3. Citizenship

Candidates must, by the date of any job offer, be:

- (a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- (b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
- (c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- (d) A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or UK or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 visa: or
- (e) A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4 visa or
- (f) A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or the UK or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 visa

### 4. Education, Training and Experience etc.

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms:

hold an honours degree (level 8 in the National Framework of Qualifications) in Planning.

## **PARTICULARS OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **1. The Post**

The post is wholetime (i.e., 35 hours per week) 3 year Fixed-Term Contract.

### **2. Location**

Longford County Council reserves the right to assign the successful candidates to any premises in use by the Council, now or in the future.

The person appointed will be required to report to their place of work by their own means of transport and at their own expense.

### **3. Commencement**

Longford County Council shall require a person to whom an appointment is offered to take up such appointment within a period of not more than one month and if they fail to take up the appointment within such period, or such other longer period as the Council in its absolute discretion may determine, Longford County Council shall not appoint them.

### **4. Working Hours**

The current working hours are 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday. Longford County Council reserves the right to alter the hours of work from time to time in line with Government Circulars.

All hours worked are subject to and recorded in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, and the Organisation of Working Time Regulations, 2001. Longford County Council requires employees to record their hours using a Clocking system.

### **5. Reporting Arrangements**

**Graduate Planners** report directly to the appropriate supervisor in the Section or to any other employee of Longford County Council as the Director of Services or other appropriate employee may designate for this purpose.

A system of regular appraisal will be operated during employment, which will involve discussions between the employee and the line manager regarding performance and conduct.

### **6. Probationary Period of Employment**

There shall be a period after appointment during which the appointee will hold the position on probation. The period of probation will be prescribed by the Chief Executive. Employment may be terminated during the probationary period should service be deemed by the Chief Graduate to be unsatisfactory. Employment may be terminated at the end of the probationary period unless the Chief Graduate has certified that the employee had satisfactory service. Tenure of employment following probation will be subject to satisfactory service.

## 7. Remuneration

The current salary scale for the post of **Graduate Planner** is **€39,846 - €50,447** gross per annum (**Circular EL 02/2026**), the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government Circulars.

On appointment successful candidates will be placed on the first point of the point of the salary scale. Appointment to a higher point of the salary scale may apply to candidates employed elsewhere in the public service, subject to verification of service history.

Remuneration is paid fortnightly by PayPath directly to the employees nominated bank account. The current wage pay cycle may be revised during the period of employment.

Remuneration is subject to all statutory deductions, e.g. P.A.Y.E. and P.R.S.I. Increments are paid annually subject to satisfactory attendance, conduct and performance and national agreements. Increments may be withheld if performance, attendance and/or conduct are not satisfactory.

## 8. Superannuation & Retirement

A person who becomes a pensionable employee of a local authority who is liable to pay the Class A rate of PRSI contribution will be required in respect of superannuation to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 1.5% of pensionable remuneration plus 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children).

A person who becomes a pensionable employee of a local authority who is liable to pay the Class D rate of PRSI contribution will be required in respect of his/her superannuation to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 5% of pensionable remuneration.

A person paying Class D rate of PRSI who becomes a pensionable employee of a local authority will be required in respect of the Local Government (Spouses and Children's Contributory Pension) Scheme to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 1.5% of pensionable remuneration in accordance with the terms of the scheme.

A person paying Class A rate of PRSI who becomes a pensionable employee of a local authority will be required in respect of the Local Government (Spouses and Children's Contributory Pension) Scheme to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 1.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children).

Employees are admitted to the Superannuation Scheme in accordance with the terms of the Local Government Superannuation (Consolidation) Act, 1998 and the Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004, with effect from date of appointment. This scheme is contributory and provides pension, retirement and death gratuities.

In order for a new entrant to the scheme to qualify for a pension, he/she must have served a minimum of two years employment in a local authority.

For new entrants under the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, effective from 1st January 2013, superannuation contributions are as follows: 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration and 3% of pensionable remuneration. Pension and retirement lump sum will be based on career-average pay; pensions will be co-ordinated with the State Pension Contributory

The retirement age applicable to an employee is determined in accordance with the rules governing the relevant Superannuation Scheme to which they belong.

## **9. Annual Leave**

The current annual leave entitlement for **Graduate Planner** is **24** days per annum, in accordance with the Council's Annual Leave Policy.

The Chief Graduate of Longford County Council retains autonomy with regard to office closures, (e.g., Christmas Office Closure), any days arising from such closure will be reserved from the employee's annual leave entitlement. Proposed office closure days will be reviewed and advised to all employees each year.

## **10. Driver's Licence & Insurance**

Longford County Council employees may on occasion be required to use their car on official business. In such situations the employee must hold a current clean driver's licence and have available adequate means of transport.

It is the responsibility of the employee to arrange the appropriate car insurance cover for business use and to indemnify Longford County Council with the indemnity specified on your insurance certificate under the heading "Persons or classes of person who are covered". Documentation to confirm the appropriate insurance cover will be required to be supplied to the Council on an annual basis.

## **11. Code of Conduct/Organisation Policies**

Employees are required to adhere to all current and future Longford County Council codes of practice including Code of Conduct of Employees and all current and future organisational policies including, but not limited to Health and Safety, Communications, Data Protection, Equality, Staff Mobility, Attendance Management and Use of Electronic Equipment.

## **12. Training**

Employees are required to attend and participate fully in training programmes as may be decided by the Council from time to time and to apply their learning in the course of their daily working activities.

## **13. Health and Safety Regulations**

Longford County Council as an Employer is obliged to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work of all of its employees. Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the County Council has a legal duty to exercise all due care and take all protective and preventative measures to protect the Safety, Health and Welfare of its employees.

All employees also have a legal obligation under Safety and Health legislation to co-operate with management and not engage in any improper conduct or behaviour or do anything, which would place themselves or others at risk. Employees must not be under the influence of an intoxicant at the place of work.

Employees must comply with all Safety and Health rules and regulations and attend all required Safety and Health Training.

## SELECTION PROCESS

### 1. How to Apply

Only fully completed application forms will be accepted.

Please ensure that:

1. your application is made on the official application form only and sent via email in pdf format to [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie) – do not attach or include your CV

*NOTE: your CV will not be accepted as an application or as part of your application.*

2. you fully complete all sections of the application form and include all relevant, detailed, and accurate information. Ensure that your application form is completed in **typed format**.

**NOTE:** any offer of employment is subject to the information given on your application form being true. False/misleading information or deliberate omissions may result in termination of employment.

3. you include a copy of your educational certificates as part of one pdf application.

Forward your completed application form via email to [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie) :

- **Applications submitted after the closing date will not be accepted**
- **Application forms must be submitted by email in pdf format**
- **Applications submitted by hand, post or fax will not be accepted**
- **Claims in relation to the late receipt of application forms will not be entertained.**

Admission to this competition, or an invitation to take tests or to attend for interview does not infer that you fulfil all the requirements for appointment.

If you do not receive an “acknowledgement-of-receipt” of your application within seven working days of application - please contact Longford County Council’s HR department by phone: (043) 334 3356 / 043 334 3396 or by email: [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie)

Longford County Council may need to contact you during the competition’s selection process. It is important that the contact details (i.e. your postal address, email address and phone number) given on your application form are correct and accessible by you.

Longford County Council will not accept responsibility for communication not accessed or received by you. It is the responsibility of each applicant to provide accurate contact details on their Application Form. Correspondance in relation to all aspects of this competition will be primarily via email.

Changes to your contact details that occur during this recruitment campaign should be notified by email to [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie)

## 2. Selection Process

### Stage 1 – Submission of Application Form via email

Candidates interested in applying for the position of **Graduate Planner** should submit their completed application with supporting documentation form via email in PDF format to [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie)

Each completed application must include a copy of all educational qualifications declared in the application form.

Failure to submit a completed application form, with all required supporting documentation, by the specified deadline will result in the application being deemed invalid and it will not be permitted to proceed any further in the selection process.

### Stage 2 – Initial Screening

All completed application forms received by the stated closing date & time will be screened to ensure that they meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the position of **Graduate Planner** in accordance with the declared Qualifications (as given on **page 6** of this booklet).

Candidates who demonstrate that they meet the required eligibility criteria, their application will progress to Step 3 of the selection process.

Candidates who fail to demonstrate that they meet the minimum eligibility criteria required, their application will be deemed invalid and will not progress any further in the selection process.

### Stage 3 – Shortlisting

Longford County Council reserves the right to shortlist applications, it is very important therefore, that candidates provide accurate, clear, and comprehensive information in their completed application forms.

Shortlisting may take the form of:

1. a desktop-shortlisting process, where a board will be assigned to examine the information provided by the candidate and assess it against criteria required for the position, and/or
2. an online shortlisting interview.

Candidates who are shortlisted may have their application scored and ranked in order of merit. Based on the score awarded their application may progress to Step 4 of the selection process.

For candidates who are not shortlisted, their application will not progress any further in the selection process.

## Stage 4 – Interview

On completion of Stage 3 of the selection process, successfully shortlisted candidates may be invited in batches, to attend for interview.

An independent interview board will be established by the Chief Graduate of Longford County Council. The board will comprise a Chairperson and two other members, who will have expert knowledge in the relevant field. The objective of the board is to establish the applicant's suitability for the post and to rank the successful candidates in order of merit for appointment.

The interview will be the candidate's opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the required competencies, knowledge, skills, and experience. The objective of the board is to assess the candidate's responses against agreed criteria and to identify the candidates who best meet the competencies required.

Longford County Council will issue advance notice of the date and time of the interview. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make themselves available for interview on the date and time notified and to ensure that they are able to successfully connect to the online interview if required.

Requests to reschedule notified interview dates or times cannot be accommodated.

Candidates who do not attend/connect for their interview at the time and on the date advised will be deemed to have withdrawn their application from the competition and their application will receive no further consideration. Expenses incurred by candidates in attending for interview will be the responsibility of the candidate.

Candidates who are successful in the online interview process will be qualified for appointment in order of merit and placed on a panel. This panel may be used to fill both permanent and temporary **Graduate Planner** vacancies that may arise during the life of the panel.

It should be noted that placement on a panel may not necessarily lead to a job offer. The selection process is not concluded until sought references are received and all other clearance checks, e.g. Garda Vetting, occupational health, verification of education qualifications, etc, have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Council.

Candidates on the **Graduate Planner** panel who satisfy all the requirements for the post may be offered employment subject to:

1. Their place, in order of merit, on the panel
2. The requirements of Longford County Council.

Should a candidate decline an offer of employment or having accepted an offer of employment relinquish it prior to commencing in the post, they will be deemed to have withdrawn their application from the competition.

## 3. Feedback

Candidates shall be notified of the outcome of each stage of the selection process as soon as possible. If, following the interview, a candidate is placed on a panel they shall be informed of their position on the panel. Details of marks attained in the interview process will be provided upon receipt of written request.

#### **4. Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn**

Candidates who do not attend for testing and/or interview when and where required by Longford County Council and/or the Testing Company, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as required by Longford County Council within the specified timeframe, regarding any matter relevant to their candidature, will be deemed to have withdrawn their application from the competition.

#### **5. References**

Applicants are required to advise the names of two responsible persons to whom they are well known but not related.

In advance of any offer of employment, Longford County Council reserves the right to seek both written and verbal references from current and previous employers, educational institutions, or any other organisations with which the candidate has been associated. Longford County Council reserves the right to determine the merit, appropriateness and relevance of such references and referees. Information sought from referees shall be structured around the requirements of the job and the job description, person specification and/or competency profile provided.

#### **6. Verification of Education Qualifications**

Prior to appointment, the candidate will be required to present the original parchment of their certificate, diploma and/or degree and any other supporting documentation required by the Council\*, to the Human Resources department in order to verify their qualifications.

\* *Non-Irish Qualifications must be accompanied by a determination from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to establish their comparability against the Irish National Framework of Qualifications, overseas qualifications must also be accompanied by a translation document.*

#### **7. Pre-Employment Medical**

Prior to appointment the candidate will be required to complete a Health Declaration and to undergo a medical examination, at their own expense, by a qualified medical practitioner nominated by the Council. On taking up employment the expense of this medical examination will be refunded.

#### **8. Garda Clearance**

Garda Vetting will be sought in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and the applicant will be required to fully cooperate with this process.

#### **9. Canvassing**

Any attempt by a candidate, or by any person(s) acting at the candidate's instigation, directly or indirectly, by means of written communication or otherwise influence in the candidate's favour, any member or employee of the Council or person nominated by the County Council to interview or examine applicants, will automatically disqualify the candidate for the position being sought.

## **10. Confidentiality**

Longford County Council, in its recruitment and selection procedures, has appropriate measures in place to protect the confidentiality of all applicants. All enquiries, applications and other aspects that form part of the recruitment formalities are treated as confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside of those directly involved in the recruitment process - subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997-2014.

Records created, maintained, and stored by Longford County Council as part of the recruitment and selection process are subject to a range of legislation, including Freedom of Information and Data Protection. Longford County Council shall comply with the National Records Retention Policy (2001) and any other relevant records retention policies.

# FAQ

## Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers)

### 1. Who can I contact if I have a query in relation the Recruitment Campaign for Graduate Planner?

The Candidate Information Booklet provides comprehensive information relating to the selection process for this recruitment campaign. However, if after reading this information booklet you require any additional/further information - please forward your query by email to: [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie)

### 2. I have submitted my application form. What happens next?

Longford County Council will carry out an eligibility check on all application forms to ensure that they meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the post as set out by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. If you do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements for the post, based on the information given in your application form, you will not be invited to interview.

Depending on the number of candidates remaining at this stage of the competition it may be necessary to hold a shortlisting process. The shortlisting process may take the form of either a desktop exercise (based on the information contained in the application forms) or a shortlisting interview.

### 3. What happens on completion of the shortlisting process?

Longford County Council will contact all applicants advising them of the results of the shortlisting process. Candidates who are shortlisted at this stage will be invited to attend for interview. It is your responsibility to attend for interview on the date and time notified. An alternative dates and times cannot be facilitated.

### 4. What happens after undertaking the final interview?

Candidates who are successful in the interview process will be placed on a panel and ranked in order of merit. This panel may be used to fill both permanent and temporary vacancies for the post of **Graduate Planner**, that may arise during the life of the panel.

Please note that being placed on a panel is not a guarantee that you will be appointed to the position of **Graduate Planner**.

### 5. If I am offered employment where will I be based?

The management of Longford County Council reserve the right to assign employees to any premises or business section as required in accordance with the business needs of the organisation.

### 6. How will Longford County Council communicate with me throughout the Recruitment and Selection Campaign?

Longford County Council may contact you by phone, email or post at various stages throughout the selection process. Any change to the contact details provided that occur during this recruitment campaign should be notified by email to [hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:hrrecruitment@longfordcoco.ie)