



Annual Report 2019

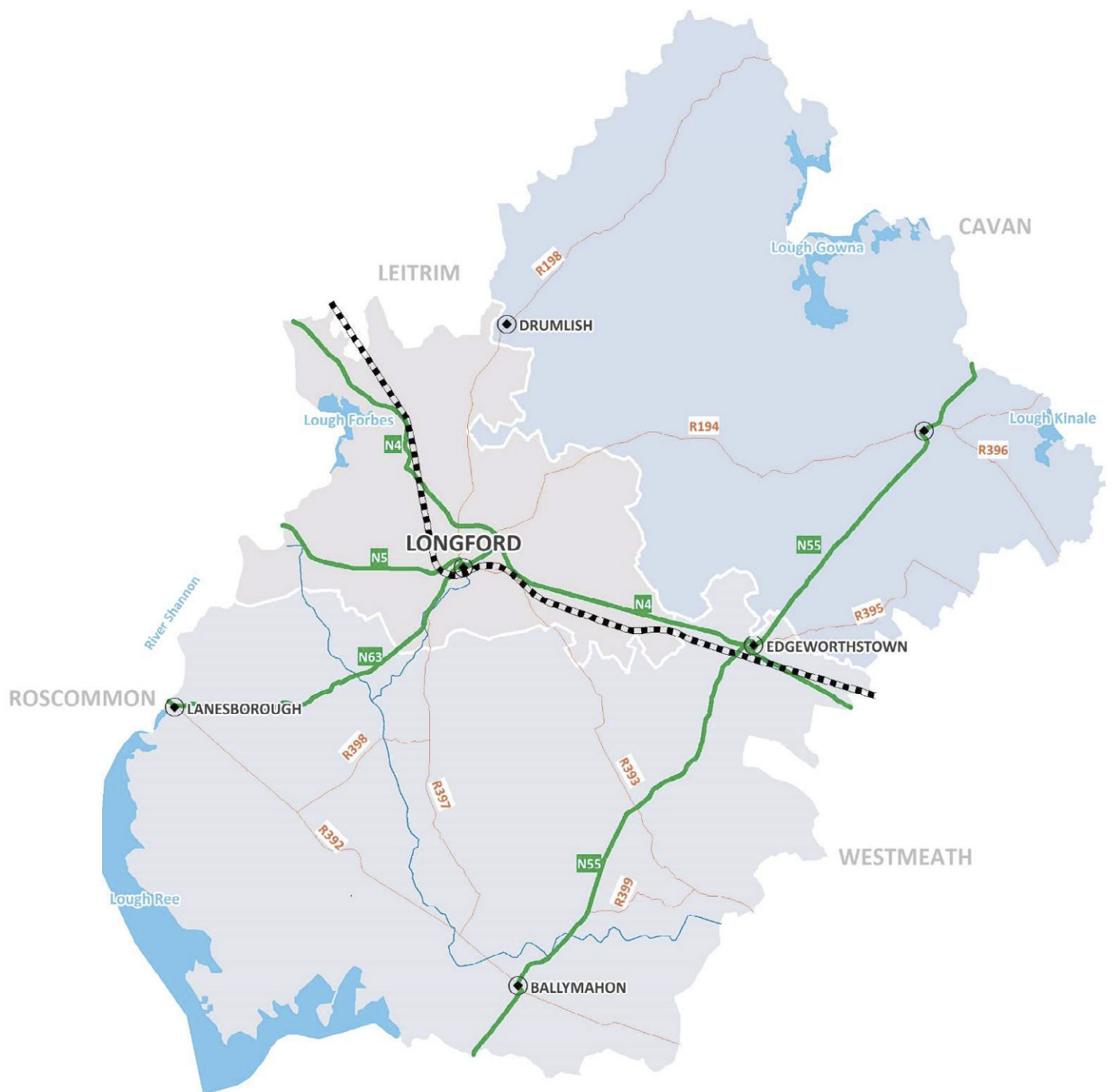


TABLE OF CONTENTS

ELECTED MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL.....	4
INTRODUCTION FROM AN CATHAOIRLEACH AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE	5
KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	6
BALLYMAHON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT	7
GRANARD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT	9
LONGFORD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT	10
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES (2014-2019) REPORTS	13
COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE	17
Community Development and Participation	17
Joint Policing Committee	20
Longford Economic Development Committee	22
Public Participation Network	28
Longford Sports Partnership	30
Economic Development and Enterprise	40
Local Enterprise Office	41
Tourism Development	42
Longford Arts Office	43
Corporate Services	46
Human Resources	54
Library, Cultural, Heritage and Archives Services	55
SUPPORT SERVICES	64
Finance	64
Information Systems	67
Regeneration.....	71
Health, Safety and Welfare at Work	77
STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE ACTION	81
Housing	81
Planning	84
Environmental Services.....	87
Fire and Emergency Services	91
Civil Defence	92
Roads, Transportation and Road Safety	94
Veterinary Services	97
Water Services	99
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Corporate Plan (2015 – 2019) Report	101
Appendix 2: Council Membership on Committees.....	102
Appendix 3: Conferences attended by Elected Member	103
Appendix 4: Schedule of Election Results.....	105
Appendix 4: Election Expenditure Statements	108

ELECTED MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

BALLYMAHON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr. Mick Cahill
Fianna Fáil



Cllr. Mark Casey
Non Party



Cllr. Gerard Farrell
Fine Gael



Cllr. Colm Murray
Fine Gael



Cllr. Pat O'Toole
Fianna Fáil



Cllr. Paul Ross
Fine Gael

GRANARD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr. Paraic Brady
Fine Gael



Cllr. Micheál Carrigy
Fine Gael



Cllr. Turlough McGovern
Non Party



Cllr. Garry Murtagh
Fine Gael



Cllr. P.J. Reilly
Fianna Fáil

LONGFORD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr. John Browne
Fine Gael



Cllr. Seamus Butler
Fianna Fáil



Cllr. Joe Flaherty
Fianna Fáil



Cllr. Gerry Hagan
Fine Gael



Cllr. Martin Monaghan
Fianna Fáil



Cllr. Peggy Nolan
Fine Gael



Cllr. Gerry Warnock
Non Party

INTRODUCTION FROM AN CATHAOIRLEACH AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We welcome the publication of Longford County Council's Annual Report 2019. The Annual Report outlines the scale and diversity of the activities within the Council and demonstrates Longford County Council's commitment to serving, representing and leading the communities of our County.

2019 was a significant year in the economic, political and social development of our County. Major projects, which had been planned and discussed for years were approved for funding. With the support of the Elected Member, an increase in the Local Property Tax facilitated the Local Authority in sourcing loans to provide the resources for match funding for these projects. Work started on major strategic projects in Edgeworthstown, including the new Library, Granard and Longford Town. Work also began on the planning process for the N4 Dual carriageway route from Rooskey to Mullingar and the natural gas network was extended to Ballymahon.

Longford also experienced a major focus on tourism in the county with the opening of Center Parcs in July and the development of a network of greenways and walkways throughout the county, all helping Longford become the place to be in 2019.

Following the decision by the ESB to cease operations in the Lough Ree Power Station at the end of 2020, Longford joined the front line in the response to Climate Change in 2019. Longford County Council, having adopted our Climate Adaptation Plan and signed the Climate Charter in 2019, fully recognises the leadership role we are required to perform in responding to this challenge. We are committed to working with the newly appointed Just Transition Commissioner to address the significant challenges which the region, county and communities will face.

The local elections in May saw us lose three Councillors - Luie McEntire, Martin Mulleady and Mae Sexton. Best wishes to Luie, Martin and Mae and thank you very much for your dedicated service to the communities of Longford over many years. We also gained three new Councillors - Turlough McGovern, Martin Monaghan and Garry Murtagh and we would like to welcome our new Elected Members and wish you the very best in the years ahead. Also, in 2019 Councillor Mick Cahill was elected President of the Association of Irish Local Government, a great honour for Mick and for Longford County Council.

During 2019, Longford County Council, in collaboration with Government Departments and agencies, continued to focus attention and resources on promoting local, community and economic development. Working closely with our communities we continued to build capacity within communities and provided support to enhance quality of life, health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Through our Local Enterprise Office, the Council worked with business and industry to support them in adapting to the uncertain, changing and challenging economic environment in which they are operating, support training, upskilling and jobs creation opportunities and promote the county as a place to invest and do business. We continue to connect people and places to create opportunities for continued sustainable development in our county.

It is very important to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the Elected Members and the employees of Longford County Council who work together in partnership to ensure that we perform to our best potential.

At the end of 2019 Longford County Council adopted our Corporate Plan for 2019 to 2024. This plan sets out the vision we have for our County and the actions we are committed to put in place to make Longford a safe vibrant and prosperous place to be. The spirit of partnership, ambition and commitment that is evident throughout Longford County Council will allow us to move forward with confidence in the years ahead.



KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The principal services of Longford County Council are provided within the following Directorate Structure. The three Directorates cover the areas of -

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE



*Barbara Heslin
Director of Services,
with responsibility for*

- Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Development
- Community Development
- Libraries, Culture and Heritage
- Human Resources
- Corporate Services
- Ballymahon Municipal District

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE ACTION



*John Brannigan
Director of Services,
with responsibility for*

- Housing and Building Control
- Roads
- Water Services
- Environmental Services
- Planning
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Granard Municipal District

SUPPORT SERVICES



*John McKeon
Head of Finance,
with responsibility for*

- Finance
- Information Systems
- Procurement and Compliance
- Health and Safety
- Regeneration
- Facilities Management
- Longford Municipal District



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BALLYMAHON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

The Ballymahon Municipal District was formed following the 2014 Local Government Elections. Six members were elected to Longford County Council to represent the Municipal District. Following their election these members simultaneously became members of both Longford County Council and Ballymahon Municipal District.



Cathaoirleach

At the Annual General Meeting of Ballymahon Municipal District held on 17th June 2019, Councillor Pat O'Toole was elected to the position of Cathaoirleach and Councillor Colm Murray was elected to the position of Leas Cathaoirleach. These positions are filled until the Ballymahon Municipal District Annual Meeting in 2020.



Meetings Held

During 2019, meetings were held on 24th January, 15th February, 14th March, 17th June, 25th July, 26th September, 24th October and 9th December.

Items discussed at these meetings included:

- General Municipal Allocation 2020 including Tourism and Town Twinning
- Community Grant Support Scheme 2019
- Special Projects fund
- Schedule of Municipal District Works 2019
- Funding of Burial Grounds and to Cemetery Committees
- Report on Cemeteries from the Environment Section, Longford Co Co
- Nominations to Committees
- Nominations for 2019 Cathaoirleach Awards
- Correspondence regarding funding towards footpath repairs and the car park at Edgeworthstown Train Station

Presentations made to the Ballymahon Municipal District in 2019 included:

- Broadband Connection Points
- Provision of EV Charging Point in Edgeworthstown

Estates taken in Charge

The following housing estate was taken in charge during the year:

- "Sli na Moinear", Moydow, Co. Longford

Ballymahon MD agreed to declare roads at Lyneen, Killashee, to be Public Roads.

Items Adopted

Chief Executive Report, in accordance with Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations, was adopted in respect of the following developments:

- Construction of c.2.32 km path linking Ballymulvey to Newcastle Woods.
- Upgrading and alteration of the existing public realm, to include footpaths, tree planting, street furniture and lighting, undergrounding of public wires, tabletop pedestrian crossing, revisions and alterations to car parking, signage and all associated site works. The proposed development forms an integral part of a wider regeneration plan to provide a focal point within the town centre, improving pedestrian accessibility, connectivity and amenity within Edgeworthstown overall.

Community Grant Support Scheme 2019

Grants totalling €49,375 were allocated to sixty-five Community Group applications supporting activities/projects for the Active Elderly, Arts, Community Involvement, Environment, Festivals and Events including Intercultural, Heritage, Sport and Recreation and Tidy Towns.

GRANARD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

The Granard Municipal District was formed following the 2014 Local Government Elections. At 2019 Local Elections, five members were elected to Granard Municipal - Councillor Michael Carrigy, Councillor PJ Reilly, Councillor Paraic Brady, Councillor Garry Murtagh and Councillor Turlough Mc Govern.



Cathaoirleach

At the Annual General Meeting of Granard Municipal District held on 17th June 2019, Councillor PJ Reilly was elected to the position of Cathaoirleach and Councillor Garry Murtagh was elected to the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

Meetings Held

The Members of Granard Municipal District held meetings on the following dates during 2019 - 22nd January 2019, 22nd March 2019, 17th June 2019, 23rd July 2019, 24th September 2019, 22nd October 2019 and 4th December 2019.

Items Adopted

The Members of Granard Municipal District adopted the following during the year:

- The Schedule of Granard Municipal District Works 2019
- 2019 Community Grant Support Scheme
- Speed Limit Review
- 2020 General Municipal Allocation

Presentation was given on the following

- Broadband Connection Points

Other items that were highlighted and discussed by the Members were

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • 2019 Cathaoirleach Awards | • Playgrounds |
| • Granard Public Art Features | • "Garden" on the Hill in Granard |
| • Granard Motte | • Funding for Sensory Playground |
| • Broadband Connection Points | • Rehabilitation of Tip area in Ballinamuck |
| • Driver Feedback signs | • Car Parking |
| • Footpaths | • Traffic Calming |
| • Low Cost Safety Schemes | • Noxious Weeds |
| • Signage | • General Sean McEoin Monument |
| • Irish Water Works | • Property Marking Machine |
| • Cleaning of Rivers | • Fencing in Housing Estates |
| • Cutting of Trees and Hedges | • Village Enhancement Measures |
| • Speed Ramps | • Pedestrian Crossings |
| • Bridges | • Amenities |
| • Ballinamuck/Essert Twinning 2019 | |

LONGFORD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

The following Members were elected to Longford Municipal District after the Local Elections which were held on 24th May 2019 - Cllr. Seamus Butler, Cllr. John Browne, Cllr. Joe Flaherty, Cllr. Gerry Hagan, Cllr. Martin Monaghan, Cllr. Peggy Nolan and Cllr. Gerry Warnock.



Cathaoirleach

At the Annual General Meeting of Longford Municipal District held on 17th June 2019, Councillor Seamus Butler was elected to the position of Cathaoirleach and Councillor Peggy Nolan was elected to the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

Meetings Held

The Members of Longford Municipal District held meetings on the following dates during 2019 - 23rd January, 27th February, 27th March 17th June (AGM), 24th July 24th September, 23rd October and 27th November.

Items Adopted

The Members of Longford Municipal District adopted the following during the year -

- The Municipal Works budget for 2019
- Municipal District GMA Allocation
- Funding for capital expenditure in amenities
- Appointment of Community Warden (Fixed term contract)
- Part VIII industrial Unit at Lisnamuck
- Locations for additional CCTV cameras in Longford
- Community Grants Support Scheme
- Free parking in off Street Car Parks Christmas 2019
- Nominations for Cathaoirleach Awards
- Voluntary Contributions and Community Grants
- Funding for St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and Longford Summer Festivals

Estates taken in Charge

The following housing estates were taken in charge during the year –

- Castlepark Newtownforbes
- Clonguish Court, Newtownforbes

Works Completed

- Disabled and Age Friendly Parking bays relined
- Pavement resurfacing and upgrade of Public Lighting in the Longford Centre Carpark

Footpath Rehabilitation Programme

New Footpaths were constructed at the following locations

- Demesne Estate
- Athlone Road
- Blind Man's Walk
- Annaly Park

- Shannonvale
- Knockmartin Lane

Road Strengthening works were carried out in the following locations

- Cooleeney N4
- Tomiskey Roundabout N4
- Ballykenny Br. to Kilmore Lower
- Cartrongeeragh to Churchlands
- Tully to Lisanurland
- Aughareagh to Cartrons
- Earl Street
- Demesne Estate
- Stonepark to Lisduff
- Cahanagh to Killenatruan
- Clonbalt to Minard
- Ferefad to Derrymore

Road Maintenance Works were carried out at the following locations

- Currygranny to Cloonageeher
- Derryharrow
- Edercloon to Clooncolligan
- Ferefad
- N63 at Farneyhoogan
- Road drainage works at Teffia Park, Richmond Street, Tully and Stonepark

Low Cost Safety Scheme

- Curryline Newtownforbes
- Junction realignment at Ballymacormack Cemetery

Other Works

- Maintenance works at Ballymacormack Cemetery
- Resurfacing of pathways in the Albert Reynolds peace Park (ongoing)
- Grass Cutting Programme
- Christmas Lighting
- Street Cleaning programme
- Hedge Cutting and Grass verge maintenance programme
- Paved Walkway and Public Lighting at canal from Churchlands to Knockmartin lane (ongoing)
- Lighting of 3 Bridges over Camlin river

Items that were highlighted and discussed by the Members were:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Register of Electors | • Additional locations for CCTV cameras |
| • Improvement works on the N63 Majors Well Road | • Town and Village renewal scheme |
| • Salting of Footpaths in Longford Town | • Primary School Digital Project |
| • Paid Parking | • Making Longford an Age Friendly Business Town |
| • Relocation of salt barn | • Public Lighting at Demesne Lane, Midara Gardens, Longford Retail Park, Athlone Road and Lamagh Newtownforbes |
| • Footpath rehabilitation programme | • Solar Energy generating at the LIADH building |
| • Cycle lane and Footpath at Abbeycartron Lane | • Identifying suitable sites for construction of houses under the Service Site Initiative |
| • Roundabout on Battery Road a junction with Camp Road | • Road Safety issues on approach roads to Newtownforbes |
| • Right turn on Battery Road to Abbeycartron | |
| • Condition of Longford Retail Park off Athlone Road, Longford | |
| • Famine Graveyard adjacent to Mount Carmel, Dublin Road, Longford | |

- Parking of commercial vehicles in Grian Ard Estate
- Broadband connections
- Speed control signs at various locations within Longford Municipal District
- Filter lane on Dublin Road at entrance to the Convent and St. Josephs N.S and Whiterock Lane
- Renaming of street adjacent to the Longford Centre Carpark
- Bringing back Vacant properties into use
- Footpath from Drumlish to Mulleady's Factory
- Speed Surveys at Bannon Terrace Lower, Glack and Chapel Street

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2014-2019 REPORTS

The statutory basis for establishment of Strategic Policy Committees is set out in the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

Strategic Policy Committees have a major role in assisting and advising the Council in relation to functions of a strategic statutory nature. They also have functions in other areas including the establishment of priorities for particular services.

The Strategic Policy Committee system is intended to give councillors and relevant sectoral interests an opportunity for full involvement in the policy-making process from the early stages and provide elected members with external views as they discharge their strategic role in the development of the local authority.

Strategic Policy Committees have a major role in assisting and advising the Council in relation to functions of a strategic statutory nature. They also have functions in other areas including the establishment of priorities for particular services.

While the role of each Strategic Policy Committee is to assist the Council in the formulation and development of policy, the final policy decisions rest ultimately with the full Council.

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

COUNCILLORS

Seamus Butler (Chair)
Joe Flaherty
Colm Murray
Peggy Nolan
Pat O'Toole

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Fintan McGill (Business/Employers)
Louise Lovett (Community & Voluntary)
Ray Hogan (Environmental/Conservation)
Mona Considine (County Tourism Committee)

The SPC met once during 2019, on 28th January. The following items were considered at the meeting:

- Business Incentive Scheme
- LEO plan 2019
- Diaspora Strategy
- Economic Fora plans 2019
- Regeneration plan, funding and projects
- LIADH building
- Camlin Quarter Master Plan
- Ballyminion Master Plan

Housing Services SPC

COUNCILLORS

Gerry Warnock (Chair)
John Browne
P.J. Reilly
Paul Ross
Martin Mulleady

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Eileen Finan (Social Inclusion)
Stephanie Igoe, Tess Murphy (Community & Voluntary)

Only two meetings of the SPC were convened in 2019 due to the fact that the Local Elections were held on May 24th, 2019. These meetings took place on February 4th 2019 and on April 8th 2019.

The issues discussed at the meetings included:-

- the length of time that it takes to re-let homes
- the conduct of a Housing Needs Assessment
- conduct of a Differential Rent Review

The targets that had been set in relation to the delivery of Social Housing were also examined and discussed. The general view expressed was that there was a need to have regard to the fact that there was an increasing demand for

two-bedroom houses and that the demand for three-bedroom houses would probably be satisfied from the Council's existing stock of houses.

No SPC Meetings were held in the second half of the year as the process of forming the new committee, following the 2019 Local Elections was only completed in December.

Infrastructure & Environment SPC

COUNCILLORS

Michael Carrigy (Chair)
Mick Cahill
Gerry Farrell
Luie McEntire
Gerry Hagan

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Andrew McHugh (Agriculture and Farming)
Teresa Kearney (Community & Voluntary)
Michael Spillane (Trade Union)
Niamh Moran (Environment/Conservation)

The members of the SPC held meetings on 20th February 2019 and 9th April 2019.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Members of the SPC adopted the following during the year: -

- Policy on decorative paving and the reinstatement of footpaths

Other items that were discussed: -

- Notice of Motion referred from January meeting of Longford County Council – Collection of Refuse - Councillor S. Butler.
'That Longford County Council will move to seek framework tenders for the collection of refuse from its tenants, as Limerick Local Authorities have done.'
- Disability Awareness
- Derelict Sites Levies
- Report on Graveyard Survey
- Pollinator Framework
- Derelict Sites Levies
- Update regarding the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Peggy Nolan at November meeting of Longford County Council -
"That Longford County Council install industrial standard metal brackets on the map posts in the centre of Longford. The purpose of these brackets will be to support the display of professionally produced individually distinct banners".

ENVIRONMENT

A range of policy changes were discussed and agreed by the committee including the topics of Graveyards and Derelict Sites. At the 9th April Meeting following consultation with various groups including Funeral Directors, Headstone / Monument Erectors, Volunteer Graveyard Caretakers the following was agreed by the SPC in relation to the operation of Council owned Graveyards;

- In general, there is sufficient Graveyard capacity in the County however some smaller parishes have limited capacity and grants are being provided to assist local groups to provide required additional capacity in their area.
- Currently the Bye-Laws contains a requirement which does not allow advance purchase and reservation of burial plots. The SPC recommended that this provision should not be altered.
- Funeral Undertakers and Headstone Erectors while working in Council owned Graveyards should comply with the requirements of PSDP and PSCS as set out in Health and Safety legislation.
- That the council move to update its administrative process in relation to Graveyards, including the use of electronic communications in the process e.g. with regard to the issuing of "Right of Burial" Certs/ Permits etc in accordance with The Byelaws.
- Given the increasing use of Crematoriums, to consider if there is a need to make changes in the burial process to meet this changing social trend, e.g. is there a need for a Memorial Wall in the county to accommodate crematorium ashes.

- The ownership of many of the officially closed Cemeteries around the County is legally unclear however there is a view that the Council may have some residual responsibility with regard to some of these locations. It is now proposed where appropriate to encourage community groups to become involved in the care and maintenance of these locations with the benefit of grant aid from various sources including the Municipal District.

In addition, the meeting agreed that the next SPC meeting should consider the following;

- To review of the prices charged for new grave plots in Council owned cemeteries.
- To consider whether the current Cemetery Byelaws should be altered so as to reduce the maximum height of headstone permitted.

With regards to Derelict Sites Levies, the following amendment to current policy was agreed at the 9th April meeting; *“The owners of properties that are entered in the Register of Derelict Sites may be liable to pay an annual levy to the Council. The Council may decide not to impose a levy on a derelict property, in instances where it is deemed that the cost of imposing such a levy would potentially out-weigh the financial benefit accruing from the levy.”*

Planning and Development and Cultural SPC

COUNCILLORS

Mark Casey (Chair)
Mae Sexton
Paraic Brady
Gerry Farrell
Gerry Warnock

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Pat O’Rourke (Agriculture and Farming)
Noreen McLoughlin (Environment/Conservation)
Patricia Murphy, Paddy Howe (Community& Voluntary)

A meeting of the Planning and Development and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee was scheduled to be held on 1st April 2019. Unfortunately, as there was not a quorum available for the meeting, Councillor Mark Casey, Chairperson of the SPC, requested that the meeting be cancelled.

Items which were included on the agenda for the SPC meeting included:

- Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
- County Development Plan
- ePlanning Project Update
- Regeneration - Plan, Funding and Projects
- Creative Ireland 2019 – Update on Programme and Funding
- Proposed Outline for 'A Discussion On.... Arts, Heritage and Culture - An Economic Driver'
- Update on Competition for Amateur Photographers

In developing the Draft Strategic Policy Scheme and considering how the Strategic Policy Committees can most effectively be established and operated for the period 2019 – 2024 the Corporate Policy Group considered:

- the manner in which the Strategic Policy Committees have operated to date in County Longford
- feedback from the PPN
- various guidelines issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

The recommendation of the Corporate Policy Group to approve a draft for public consultation was approved by Longford County Council at its meeting on 11th September 2019.

This adopted draft Strategic Policy Scheme 2019-2024 was published to afford opportunity for comment or observations in relation to same with submissions accepted up to October 24th.

During the public consultation period the Council received seven comprehensive submissions. Each submission was fully considered, and the Elected Council formally adopted a revised Strategic Policy Committee Scheme for County Longford for 2019 – 2024 at its meeting on 11th December 2019.

The adopted Strategic Policy Committee Scheme is the framework within which the Strategic Policy Committees will operate.

Four Strategic Policy Committees were established with inaugural meetings scheduled for January 2020.

- Climate Action and Planning Strategic Policy Committee
- Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee (to include Economic Development and Enterprise)
- Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee
- Governance Strategic Policy Committee

Comhairle na nÓg

The Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee held three meetings in 2019. Comhairle na nÓg members held 32 meetings, where they organised numerous events and participated on a number of committees at local and national level representing the voice of young people from County Longford. The Comhairle AGM was officially opened by Cathaoirleach Michael Carrigy on 24th October 2019 in the Longford Arms Hotel. Cllr. Colm Murray Chairperson of Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee welcomed everyone to the event with over 110 young people representing all nine secondary schools, youth reach centres and youth services throughout the County. Workshops on the day were designed and facilitated by Comhairle members. A survey was conducted to young people to identify workshop topics for the AGM. The topics prioritised were Drugs and Alcohol, Homelessness, Education, In your Area and Climate. Comhairle member, Eliza Jane Pearman Howard spoke on the day about her journey to climate activism and her role in spearheading the 'Fridays For Futures' climate strikes in Longford. Anna D Atkinson spoke about sustainable ethical living and the Sustainable Development Goals. The AGM also serves as a way of selecting new members to Longford Comhairle na nÓg and to the National Dail na nÓg.



Longford Intercultural Strategy

Longford Intercultural Working Group held three meetings and one training programme for members during 2019. The primary purpose of the Working Group is to provide a Forum to share information, to promote interagency co-operation and co-ordination in the delivery of local services. Throughout 2019 the Community Department, in co-operation with the PPN, supported new groups to emerge and develop through a variety of sports and community activities. An example of some activities include support given to three intercultural events around music, food and dance in each Municipal District in conjunction with the Longford Comhairle na nÓg and the Family Resource Centres. Support was also offered to a campaign by the Primary schools in the Longford town to encourage and promote an awareness among new communities of the importance of attending school. The initiative was launched by the Cathaoirleach Michael Carrigy on 5th November in Longford Library. Longford County Council also work in conjunction with the PPN to support a Migrant Forum which held a number of meetings in the offices of Longford County Council during 2019.



Longford County Council organised a training course entitled ***Building Cultural Competence and Diversity Awareness in the Workplace*** for frontline staff in key agencies and in the community/voluntary sector working with new communities. The course was delivered by the Immigrant Council of Ireland. 22 participants attended the training which took place on Monday the 25th of November in the Longford Arms Hotel. ***Group who attended 'Building Cultural Competence and Diversity Awareness in the Workplace' Training Course***

Playgrounds 2019

The children in Killashee were asked to take part in an art competition to paint and draw their ideas for a new playground. A playground committee was set up to work with Longford County Council to choose a suitable design. The new playground was officially opened by Councillor Louie McEntire in May 2019 and is proving to be very popular.

Cullyfad Community Development received CLÁR funding for a new playground. The community garden was selected for the site. Longford County Council worked with a local playground committee to pick a design that could be incorporated into the garden. The playground was opened in June 2019.

Under the Healthy Ireland Fund a number of playgrounds had additional inclusive play equipment installed.

Green Flag Award 2019

Longford Mall (Albert Reynolds Peace Park) retained the Green Flag Award in 2019, an international standard benchmark recognized throughout the world for publicly accessible parks and green spaces and managed in Ireland by An Taisce. The Green Flag Award Scheme was introduced in Ireland in 2015 and rolled out nationally in 2016.

This Award was achieved thanks to Longford Town Suburbs Ltd. who manage the Mall in partnership with Longford County Council. Thanks also to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Community Employment Supervisor and all the participants whose hard work was vital to gaining this Award. An Taisce chose the Mall as the location to run its national judges training event. There is now a strong emphasis on encouraging biodiversity in the park and creating a habitat for pollinating insects.

Longford 'Dead of the Night' Halloween Festival

On Halloween evening, the dark streets of Longford came alive with a riot of colour, music and noise as the 14th Annual 'Dead of Night' festival swung into action. Unfortunately, it was a wet night but there was a fantastic turnout for the parade. This year again there were some terrific floats that came from Castlerea Festival Committee, which gave a real carnival atmosphere to the event. The parade made its way down St. Mel's School Avenue and up New Street. A very large number of children took part in the parade with their self-made lanterns. There was a great attendance again with lots of fun stalls, entertainers and large inflatables. The Halloween evening festival is the final part of the bigger 'Dead of Night' project which joins the resources, manpower and expertise of Longford County Council, An Garda Síochána, Longford Volunteer Centre, Longford Tidy Towns and includes safe talks in schools, art competitions and lantern making.

Turning on the Lights 2019

Santa arrived in Longford on Friday 29th November and travelled in a vintage Rolls Royce, he likes old cars. He visited local childcare centres and called into the school in St Christopher's where he got a great welcome. Santa could not be kept in the car and jumping out and dropping into local businesses. He then arrived by sledge to a packed Market Square. He was welcomed by the Chair, Cllr Seamus Butler and Members of Longford Municipal District. Santa with the help of local children turned on the lights at 7pm. he sang loads of Christmas songs and had the whole crowd singing along. Santa stayed late having his photo taken with all the children in a brand new grotto built by the County Council staff.

The Christmas Lights were organised by Longford County Council and supported by Longford Chamber of Commerce, The Longford Volunteer Centre, Longford Tourism Office, Community Garda unit, Longford Tidy towns, Longford Civil Defence.

CLÁR 2019

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small-scale infrastructural projects in areas that experience disadvantage. CLÁR aims to support sustainable development in identified areas by attracting people to live and work there.

Under the CLÁR programme for 2019, the Department of Rural and Community Development approved ten applications in County Longford for funding totalling €283,284. Seven of these were approved under Measure 1: Support for Schools/Community Safety Measures; one was approved under Measure 2: Schools/Community Play Areas (including MUGAs – Multi-use Games areas); together with two approved under Measure 3(c): Sensory Gardens

- “These gardens are designed to stimulate the senses and can be of particular benefit in enhancing the quality of life for people with a diverse range of life challenges.”

Longford County Council will fund 5% towards the estimated cost of the approved projects under Measures 1 and 2, and 10% towards those under Measure 3(c). Work has commenced on these projects and all are expected to be completed in Q1 2020.

The Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is a body established under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to serve as a forum where local authority representatives, Oireachtas members and community and voluntary interests work together with senior Garda Officers to discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the County. Councillor Seamus Butler was elected as Chairperson of County Longford JPC at the Committee's meeting on 29th July 2019, succeeding Councillor Gerry Warnock in the role. Councillor Paul Ross is the Vice-Chairperson.

Meetings Held

The Committee held meetings on 4 occasions in 2019 - 4th March, 29th July, 30th September and 2nd December with a public meeting also being held on 18th November 2019.

Issues Considered

At each meeting the members were updated on Garda activities in the county which included –

- public safety and community engagement
- public order and anti-social issues
- statistics on crime levels in Longford

The members were also briefed in relation to various Garda operations throughout the year including Operation Stola which involved a high level of proactive policing engagements as part of efforts to curb a major upsurge in violence between feuding families. The members welcomed the improved success rates of Gardai in tackling crime. The members discussed many other issues including Road Safety, the Text Alert Scheme, the supply and sale of drugs, illegal dumping, operation of the Criminal Assets Bureau, community policing and increased Garda visibility at events. The JPC noted that additional resources were required for the provision of an appropriate service to the community. The Chairperson advised that he had written to the Assistant Commissioner to request that the Garda authorities are sufficiently resourced so that permanent patrols are provided in Longford town. The members were briefed on possible improvements to Garda stations in the Granard and Longford Districts as well as the proposed operational changes arising from the establishment of new Garda divisions. as well as the new Garda Divisions.

The Joint Policing Committee was also updated at each meeting on local authority matters including details of various funding schemes that became available during the year as well as updates on various community projects. Progress was noted in relation to other areas including the Council's Regeneration programme, Longford Sports Partnership, the Age Friendly Programme, the Intercultural Strategic Plan and the Resettlement Programme. Members also received a briefing in relation to the Council's activities in relation to Planning and Environmental issues.

CCTV continued to be an ongoing topic of discussion during the year. The members noted that while grants were available towards the capital costs associated with the establishment of local community CCTV systems, communities experienced difficulties in achieving the required matched funding. It was agreed to request the Minister for Justice and Equality to establish a National Fund for the provision of CCTV cameras.

Joint Action Plan – Ardnacassa Area

At each meeting the members were updated on progress in relation to the Joint Action Plan for the Ardnacassa/Palace Crescent/Grian Ard areas of Longford town. The members welcomed the ongoing focussed approach and ongoing improvements in the area particularly in relation to Public Lighting, CCTV, litter/dumping issues, dog control/animal welfare, neighbourhood watch, estate clean-up day and management of vacant houses.

Property Marking Machine

The Property Marking Machine was launched in May 2019 following a recommendation from the Joint Policing Committee. Longford Co. Council agreed to provide funding for the purchase of the equipment and training. The Scheme involves marking property with the owner's Eircode number, which is a unique identifier. The Property Marking Machine is available on loan to local community groups free of charge working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and Longford County Council.

Certification of Commendation

A Certificate of Commendation was presented to Mr. Denis McGrath at the December meeting of the JPC. Mr. McGrath was commended for his courageous action in coming to the assistance of a young woman who was subject to an assault.

Public Meeting

Cllr. Seamus Butler hosted a public meeting of Longford Joint Policing Committee (JPC) in Granard Community Library on 18th November 2019 in relation to matters affecting the policing of the county with “Crime Prevention” as the theme.

Chief Superintendent Tony Healy referred to recent successful Garda operations which involved a policy of high visibility, pro-active speedy investigations, strict monitoring of bail conditions and the seizure of criminal assets. He welcomed the re-assignment of additional Garda personnel to the division and advised that the Gardai would continue their plan to increase visibility in the community. Superintendents Seamus Boyle from the Granard District and James Delaney from the Longford District highlighted statistics showing increased Garda detections and successful prosecutions. The high visibility approach adopted in a recent policing initiative had resulted in a significant reduction in the level of criminal activity in the county. The community policing model, in particular, its work with local and voluntary groups was very effective in helping the Gardai to combat crime and build confidence and trust in the community. Sergeant Paul McDermott, the Crime Prevention Officer for the Roscommon/Longford division gave simple and practical advice on how to protect homes and businesses from crime.



Other speakers included Ms. Eileen Finan, Manager of the Lús na Gréine Family Resource Centre, Ms. Heather Mc Kenna of Longford Women's Link, Ms. Carmel Broughan in relation to HSE Adult Safeguarding services and Ms. Claire Gavigan from Foroige who referred to the positive benefits of the Garda youth diversionary project for young people in Longford. Mr. James O'Neill from Property Marking Ireland complimented Longford Co Council and the JPC on the success of the Property Marking initiative.

Cllr. Butler chaired a discussion in response to issues raised by members of the public both at the meeting and submitted in advance of the meeting in relation to crime prevention and different aspects of policing in Longford. He referred to the importance of law and order in society and assured the audience that the JPC in conjunction with the Gardai would work tirelessly to tackle crime and ensure that communities throughout Longford would have a better quality of life.

Ms Barbara Heslin, Deputy Chief Executive of Longford Co. Council concluded the event by thanking the speakers and members of the public for their valuable input. In summarising the contributions from the individual speakers, she stated that by working together in consultation and collaboration with the Gardai, the local authority and other agencies, the community could look forward to ensuring that Longford would be a safe place to live, work and grow old in.



LONGFORD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meetings

Seven meetings were held in 2019:

Dates	12th Feb	09 th Apr	18 th June	30 th July	08 th Oct	12 th Nov	10 th Dec
Numbers in attendance	17	10	11	14	12	15	12

Membership

There are 19 Members on the LCDC with the following changes to membership during the year –

- **Local Authority Elected Members** – Cllr. Michael Carrigy replaced Cllr. Joe Flaherty, Cllr. Paraic Brady replaced Cllr. PJ Reilly.
- **Other civic society or local community interests** – The vacant position from the resignation of Mr. Ray Hogan (PPN – Environmental) was filled by Ms. Francesca Pawelczyk, Ms. Eileen Finan replaced Mr. Joe Murphy (PPN – C&V) following his resignation and Mr. Sean Donohoe replaced Mr. Oliver Cassidy (Granard Traders Association) following his resignation.
- **State Agencies** – Ms. Valerie Hand replaced Ms. Anne Naughton as the HSE representative.

Public - Statutory Interests 9		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Local Authority Elected Members	Cllr. Micheál Carrigy	Longford County Council
	Cllr. Colm Murray	Longford County Council
	Cllr. Seamus Butler	Longford County Council
	Cllr. Paraic Brady	Longford County Council
Local Authority Officials	Paddy Mahon	Longford County Council (<i>Chief Executive</i>)
	Michael Nevin	Longford County Council (<i>Head of Local Enterprise Office</i>)
State Agencies	Valerie Hand	Health Services Executive
	Áine Bohan	Dept. Social Protection
	Shauna Doherty	Longford Westmeath Education & Training Board
Private - Non Statutory Interests 10		
Local & Community Development	Adrian Greene	Longford Community Resources Clg.
Social Inclusion	Seamus Orr	(PPN) Springlawn Residents Group
	Louise Lovett	(PPN) Longford Women's Link
Community & Voluntary	Tess Murphy	(PPN) Ballinamuck Community Enterprise Society
	Eileen Finan	(PPN) Community & Voluntary
Environmental Interests	Francesca Pawelczyk	(PPN)
Other civic society or local community interests	Niamh Donlon	Business/Employers sector
	Sean Hannon (IFA)	Farming/Agriculture sector
	Seadna Ryan	County Longford Tourism
	Sean Donohoe	Granard Traders Association
Total No. of Members	19	

Support Staff

Mr. Ciaran Murphy is the Chief Officer of the LCDC. Ms. Laura McPhillips, Ms. Michelle Shanley, Ms. Linda Higgins, Ms. Karena Connolly and Ms. Jacqueline McKeon provide administrative support to the LCDC, including meetings administration and financial management. The Support staff also manage the day to day operations of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the LEADER Programme, the Healthy Longford Programme as well as other issues as they arise on behalf of the LCDC.

Programme Oversight and Management Activities

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

SICAP provides funding to tackle poverty and social inclusion at local level through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The LCDC awarded Longford Community Resources clg the contract to implement the Programme in County Longford. Their task as Programme Implementer (PI's) is to use the Programme funding to target the most disadvantaged using a community development approach to strengthen communities and improve people's lives

The Department of Rural and Community Development channels funding to the LCDC as the contracting authority through the Local Authorities. The Programme budget for 2019 was €511,559.00 which was paid to the Programme Implementer. The budget is broken down between administration costs and action costs. Pobal acts as an agent of the Department with respect to the national management and oversight of the Programme. Their main functions include monitoring programme data and preparing progress reports for the Department. Pobal carry out technical checks as part of performance reviews and the annual planning process.

The LCDC established a SICAP Monitoring Subcommittee to monitor the implementation of the Programme and to make recommendations on the Annual Planning and Performance Reviews. The Subcommittee held five meetings during 2019.

Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014-2020

The LEADER Programme is administered by the Local Action Group (LAG) i.e. Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in partnership with the Financial Partner (Longford County Council) and the Implementing Partner (Longford Community Resources Clg).

In Longford the progress of applications in Longford in 2019 was as follows:

Targeted Calls 2019

There was one Targeted Time Limited Call (TTLC) in 2019 and five Expressions of Interest (EOIs) received. The TTLC was for EOIs for a community renewable energy project and also for business projects in the renewable energy sector which have the potential to create employment. All EOIs were approved for progression to application stage with a closing date of 29th May 2020. In mid 2020, these applications will be forwarded to the LEADER Independent Evaluation Committee for recommendation and subsequently to the LAG for funding decision/approval.

Rolling Call EOIs received (No. of eligible and no. of ineligible) 2019

During 2019, 69 EOIs were received by Longford LCDC. One of these EOIs was deemed ineligible, and six withdrew from the process – some finding other sources of funding or not being able to raise the required private match funding. Some of the remaining EOIs progressed to Application Stage prior to year-end.

In late 2018/early 2019 an 'open call' was held for EOIs from Sporting Organisations. Community groups could apply for projects or activities that have a specific community focus, or that will assist in the increase of participation from minority/disability groups/social inclusion. EOIs for standalone Carparks or Floodlighting were ineligible. 22 EOIs were received and all EOIs were allowed to progress to application stage.

No. of Applications received

During 2019, 32 applications were received.

Project Funding

During 2019, 39 projects were approved by Longford LCDC at a total value of €1,986,610.33. Following payment by the Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD) Longford County Council processed LEADER grant payments totalling €798,665.50 to 32 Promoters in 2019.

Cooperation Projects

Rural Working Hubs

Longford LCDC in conjunction with the Regeneration Team of Longford County Council were approved for LEADER funding of €8,899.38 to conduct a report, which will be the final output from this project which will be used to inform the development of future rural working hubs across County Longford.

This project aims to identify best practice in the development of Rural working hubs in other Countries which will inform the approach to future development of a network of hubs throughout County Longford. The ultimate aim will be the future development of rural working hubs throughout County Longford and a network built around them. This will have the impact of reducing the numbers of people commuting to Dublin on a daily basis. The report on Rural Working Hubs is due for completion in the Summer of 2020.

The Shannon-Erne Pilgrim Way Baseline Study

Longford Community Resources Clg. are working on a cooperation project (The Shannon-Erne Pilgrim Way Baseline Study) with 13 other partners, being led by West Limerick Resources. Longford LCDC approved funding of €€5,537.39 towards this cooperation project in 2017. The Baseline Study was completed in by SLR Consulting in 2019.

West Limerick Resources and its partners commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the potential for an innovative Pilgrim Way along the Shannon and Erne inland waterway corridor, traversing thirteen counties on a cross-border journey from County Kerry via Fermanagh to County Donegal. The proposed route of the Pilgrim Way is focussed on Early Medieval ecclesiastical and Viking sites situated within 10km of the Shannon Erne waterway, thus creating a sinuous 20km corridor of investigation along its 656 km length, from the mouth of the Shannon Estuary, across the Shannon-Erne Waterway to the mouth of the River Erne at Ballyshannon.

The ultimate aim is to develop a route that will inspire both domestic and overseas visitors to journey along the Pilgrim Way, immersing themselves in Ireland's spiritual history, while building an understanding of the lives and stories of Early Medieval Christian monks and Viking voyagers.

It is envisaged that the Pilgrim Way will drive economic opportunities in provision of visitor services in food, accommodation, activities, guiding, recreation and interpretation for the multiple local villages and enterprises along the route. It will aim to revitalise and sustain activities in local communities that will enrich lives and transform rural communities economically, socially and recreationally.

Community Enhancement Programme 2019

The Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area.

Under the CEP 2019, Longford LCDC approved grant aid of €132,385 to 57 community projects under the general allocation, and under the Men's & Women's Shed fund a further €7,853 was approved towards 7 projects. These projects include the development/renovation of community facilities, purchase of equipment, public realm improvements/street scaping and energy efficiency type projects.

National Community Weekend 2019 "The Big Hello"

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Mr Michael Ring, TD, announced the launch of a National Community Event, to be held for the first time over the May Bank Holiday weekend, 2019. Local communities were asked to come up with ideas for events in their areas. Events could be centred round food, sport, the environment or health and culture.

The event was a celebration of the great spirit of community that exists across the country and an effort to help people who share communities to come together, get to know each other and deepen the sense of community in their area.

Longford LCDC received €10,000 to allocate to local community groups in Longford for events over the May Bank Holiday Weekend. Twenty five events were organised by groups throughout the County over the weekend and they received funding from €100 up to €500 towards their events.

Healthy Ireland

Healthy Ireland is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.



It has come about because of concerns that the current health status of people living in Ireland – including lifestyle trends and health inequalities – is leading us towards a future that is dangerously unhealthy, and very likely unaffordable.

In 2016 the Government approved the creation of a Healthy Ireland Fund to establish and support the implementation of Healthy Ireland programmes and projects in a variety of settings. The primary aim of the fund is to support innovative, cross-sectoral, evidence-based projects and initiatives that support The implementation of key national policies in areas such as obesity, smoking, alcohol, physical activity and sexual health.

Round 3 of the Healthy Ireland Fund has been allocated and runs from 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2021 with a total allocation of €246,050. This allocation is set out as follows:

Action 1 Mental Health	Teen Support Service Longford Women's Link €32,000 (2yrs)	Establish an affordable subsidised dedicated Counselling Service for local teenagers. The service will be undertaken by a qualified Teen Counsellor in a dedicated Counselling Unit
Action 2 Mental Health	Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Employment development and information centre €12,000 (1 yr)	Employment Development Information Centre will deliver a broad reaching programme of health & Wellbeing including healthy eating, physical activity, mindfulness, safe talk & drugs and alcohol talk.
Action 3 Spaces & Places for health & wellbeing	Holistic Wellbeing programme for Young People Foroige/Attic House. €30,000 (2 yrs)	Foroige & Attic House will deliver multiple health wellbeing programme for young people including those from disadvantaged areas. Programmes will include mental health and well being, obesity, smoking, alcohol, physical activity and sexual health.
Action 4 Mental Health	Health & Wellbeing Targeting Area of Disadvantage LCRL €8,000 (2yrs)	Longford Community Resources will deliver a programme of health & wellbeing courses. 1. Target women living in MacEoin and surrounding estates in Longford Town 2. Targeting young unemployed ages 18-25 Courses will include personal development, healthy eating and fitness.
Action 5 Physical Activity	Longford County Council Health & Wellbeing Initiatives €18,000 (2yrs) €9,000 (1yr)	Sports Inclusion Programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking Leader Training including disability awareness training for volunteers and coaches Opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to take part in cycling by developing skills through Balance ability Programme over 6 weeks Equestrian Programme for children with disabilities and adults

	<p>€35,000 (2yrs)</p> <p>€10,000 (1yr)</p>	<p>Community Connect Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sportshall Athletics Programme over 8 week period 600 children receiving training from Athletics Ireland Tutor involving 12 schools • 8 week holistic health programme for unemployed and isolated men through Men's Sheds in Longford. • Older Adults- Physical Activity Leaders (PALS) 2/3 people from active retirement or community groups <p>Accessible Public Amenity Areas Review of public amenities and the purchasing of outdoor gym equipment with disability friendly equipment included.</p> <p>Development of Walking & Cycling IT Platform- development of an APP/IT Platform for information on walking, cycling routes in Longford.</p>
Community Engagement Action	<p>Involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Merchandising, - Community Radio, - LSP Community Connect programme, - Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, - Longford Athletics <p>€30,000 (2 yrs)</p>	<p>Activities planned in Year 1 to promote community engagement in Healthy City/County Initiatives. To include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development of Healthy County/City Merchandise for distribution as per the guidelines. 2) Creation of a page on the local authority Website
Community Mental Health Fund (CMHF)	<p>CMHF Small Grant Scheme</p> <p>€30,000 (2 yrs)</p>	<p>Delivery of a CMHF Community Small Grant Scheme to the value of €30,000. Outputs to be agreed between the local authority and grantee for each small-grant awarded. Pobal requests that agreed outputs are provided at the first progress report and reported on at the end of programme monitoring return.</p>
CMHF Action	<p>Community Mental Initiative (in conjunction with formal mental health & suicide mental health services)</p> <p>€32,050 (2 yrs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a co-ordinated Mental Health Initiative for Longford. • Setting up of a Working Group • Compile Information & data to ascertain gaps in areas and target groups • Formulate a programme of mental health initiatives and identify co-ordinators for various initiatives • Delivery of mental health activities.

Property Marking Scheme

Property theft is one of the biggest security challenges in Ireland today. Every year within every community in Ireland, households and small businesses experience the trauma of being a victim of theft or burglaries. In addition, every year hundreds of thousands of euros worth of stolen property is recovered from the hands of criminals, but all too often there is no way of identifying the rightful owners.

At a Longford Joint Policing Committee (JPC) meeting a decision was taken to acquire a Property Marking Machine, which was purchased by Longford County Council and is being rolled out through the County of Longford by An Garda

Siochana and Longford County Council. The Property Marking Scheme was launched on 15th May 2019 in the Longford County Council Offices.

The scheme involves marking property with the owner's Eircode number, which is a unique identifier and there will be an option of displaying a sticker or sign on the premises to show that property marking is in operation. The Property Marking Machine is available on loan to local community groups free of charge working in conjunction with An Garda Siochana. Longford County Council has rolled out a number of training days for members of An Garda Siochana and text alert groups and further training will be arranged. An Garda Siochana has also arranged a number of events around the Property Marking Schemes to encourage and provide information on the Scheme.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK



In 2019, an additional 78 new community groups registered with the County Longford Public Participation Network (PPN) bringing the total membership to 378. The Secretariat consisting of 9 voluntary members, held eight monthly meetings in relation to the PPN Workplan and 2 workplan review meetings. The Financial subgroup met seven times to oversee the PPN budget and financial transactions.

Key Achievements during 2019 were:

- Facilitated member groups to develop Election Mandates in each Municipal District in February. Mandates were designed, published and circulated to each member group.
- Facilitated and funded one to one Environmental Clinics with Tidy Towns Groups in each Municipal District in March.
- Organised and funded four Biodiversity Workshops (day & evening sessions) for the wider PPN membership in April
- Facilitated Community Representative Elections for the following committees:
 - Longford Community Resources clg – March/ June
 - Local Community Development Committee – March
 - Longford Sports Partnership – March
 - PPN Secretariat 1x C&V member – May
 - Longford County Childcare Committee – June
 - Edgeworthstown Town Team – 10 reps – February
- Organised and funded the following training for Reps and Members:
 - How to use data to underpin Community Wellbeing Visions – June
 - Salesforce training – May
 - 4 Good Governance Training (Introductory x 2 sessions September, Advanced x 2 sessions, October)
 - Induction training delivered to new reps and groups by the PPN Development Officer Jan–Nov 2019
- PPN Development Officer established PPN Intercultural Forum – March
 - 4 Meetings held
 - Supports provided to non-national groups
- PPN Development Officer collaborated with FAI and organised and accompanied 60 Polish members to attend under 21's Euro cup final in Tallaght stadium - March.
- PPN Support Worker recruited in conjunction with LCC. Start date June 12th
- Designed & Published Community Wellbeing Booklet
- Designed & Published PPN Info leaflets
- Maintained PPN Disability Network – 6 meetings held
- PPN Development Officer and LCC PPN Liaison Officer completed Dept Annual Plan 2018 and secured 2019 funding
- PPN Development Officer supported numerous PPN's around the country in the development of their Community Wellbeing Vision Statements
- Linked groups to numerous supports and services e.g. LEO, LSP, FAI, LEADER etc.
- Dev Officer represented Longford PPN on Age Friendly Alliance committee & Intercultural Agency committee
- Dev Officer made numerous presentations to groups and agencies around the county
- Development Officer participated as a Judge in the Love Leitrim Community Awards in July
- Supported March/May
 - African/Asian women's Info day
 - Eco Conference
 - Ulster Bank scamming & Fraud info evening
- Facilitated County Plenary and Municipal District Meetings throughout the year
- Development Officer attended Latvian Embassy Inline Hockey Cup final as Guest Speaker in June. A two day sporting event saw over 200 clubs visit Longford town

- Organised weekend Sustainable Living and Wellbeing event in the Temperance Hall in conjunction with LEO and Chamber of Commerce. 25 workshops and demonstrations were held ending with an ethical market
- Launched the PPN Sustainable Development Goal Community Engagement and Education Programme in September

Committees and Number of PPN Representatives

Committees	Number PPN representatives
Longford Sports Partnership	4
County Heritage	1
Longford Volunteer Centre	1
County Longford Childcare Committee	1
County Longford Drug and Alcohol Forum / Midlands Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force	1 (same person for both committees)
Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	5
Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee	2
Housing Strategic Policy Committee	3
Infrastructure & Environment Strategic Policy Committee	3
Planning and Development and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee	3
Joint Policing Committee	1
Older Persons Council	2
Longford Community Resources Ltd	2
County Longford Tourism	3
URBACT Local Group	5
LEADER Evaluation Committee	2

- PPN Development Officer supported groups with filling out funding applications
- Bi-monthly newsletters were circulated in 2019 as part of the PPN Communication Strategy as well as growing PPN social media followers
- County Longford PPN has established itself as the main hub around which information is distributed and received e.g. groups activities/events, training/workshops, consultations, funding opportunities etc.



Latvian Embassy Inline Hockey Cup Winners



Siobhan Cronogue presenting Wellbeing Vision booklet to Seamus Hogan



Participants at PPN Climate Action workshop, Granard

LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP



In 2019, Longford Sports Partnership supported 152 initiatives, 407 programmes under those initiatives and 27,401 people participating in this wide range of sports and physical activity programmes. The Longford Sports Partnership has 4 strategic pillars:

1. Creating Opportunities
2. Strengthening Resources
3. Increasing Awareness
4. The Structures of Sport

Creating Opportunities

Delivery of LSP Programmes

The LSP core staff ran 81 initiatives, and a total of 250 programmes with 21,105 people taking part in these. Some highlights are detailed. 2019 kicked off with *Operation Transformation* walks in Longford Town, Edgeworthstown, Leeban Park Aughnaccliffe and Lus na Greine Granard with 485 people from around the county taking part.



There was a total of 4005 participants benefiting from our athletics programmes in 2019. *The Sports Hall Athletics Programme* was rolled out with schools with training being given and packs being loaned out and this culminated to in 5 days of competitions with over 412 pupils taking part Longford. From this 36 pupils went on to represent Longford in the *Sports Hall Athletics Final* in AIT, with St Michaels getting 3rd Place in their category. We also had 12 schools participating in *The Daily Mile* and Ray Flynn even came to do some promotional work leading up to the *Ray Flynn Mile*. Garda Community Sports day is a multi-agency effort with 640 children taking part from across the county.



Under the Urban Outdoor Adventure Initiative Longford LSP chose to develop the sport of Parkour through funding from Dormant Accounts. In 2019 there was an official launch of the programme and 13 local coaches qualified as level 1 Parkour coaches through Parkour UK. Indoor equipment was purchased to compliment the Ireland's First Outdoor Parkour Park in Longford and create further opportunities for the sport to grow in Longford. We ran Schools taster session, Parkour Programme Launch, Parkour Summer Camps and Parkour Weekly Sessions – 658 people have participated in this programme in 2019.



Pony Riding, Welfare and Control Programme saw 36 young people from within the travelling community and participants from low income backgrounds learn about horses, further careers and importance of horse responsibility in this six week programme. This was ran in association with the Department of the Agriculture and Longford County Council.



438 people took part in activities as part of national *BikeWeek*. Activities during the week included a Family Cycle, Cycle to Work, Cycle Sports Day, Cycle to School/Cycle Safe Training - Melview NS, Killen NS, Granard, Kenagh NS, a Bike Service, Bike Repair Workshops, Longford Cycle Tour, Bikers Brunch and the Tarmonator.



The LSP in 2019 increased their participation for older adults, with training in *Go for Life Games*, attending a *Go for Life Regional Blitz* and sending a team to the *National Go for Life Blitz* in DCU.



Sports Inclusion Disability Programme

This year as part of the SIDP, Longford ran 26 initiatives, in which 733 people participated. These programmes were supported by the HSE and Healthy Ireland. Included in these programmes was training for 52 coaches, leaders and/or volunteers, workshop in *Autism in Sport* and *Disability Inclusion Training*.

The initiatives to highlight in 2019 included *Horse Riding for People with Disabilities*, this programme was two phase with suitable venue and inclusion officer identified, training was then provided to inclusion officer and staff. Following training the 6 week programme was delivered to 12 participants which was suitable to all abilities. It was amazing to see the difference in confidence and ability of all participants. Karen (participant) said “I just love it, I cannot wait to come back every week”. A number of participants have returned for further sessions and the centre is open and accessible to everyone.



In December, we hosted a *Boccia Blitz and Championship*. This involved 2 Competitions with 4 Disability Services taking part an impressive 32 games played in a busy day. In total 106 people took part in this day participating and volunteering. We implemented many other initiatives for pan disabilities including cycling programmes, Pilates, green gyms, Catch me if you can, Football for all and much more.



Football in the Community

Graham Kane, FAI Development Officer who is supported by Longford County Council ran 25 participation initiatives to 2529 children, disadvantaged communities, older men, and people with disabilities. In 2019, we would like to highlight the training completed with volunteers and coaches. We ran 16 courses or workshop with 248 people taking part. These courses included PDP1, PDP2 and for the first time in Longford PDP 3 Coach Education Courses. We also provided training in *Referee Education, 7v7 Coach Education Course and Club Development workshops*.



Rugby Community Coaching

In 2019, Dylan Quinn, Club Community Rugby Officer ran 10 initiatives in Longford with 2927 people benefiting. The *mini's programme* was ongoing in 15 schools with over 1704 children benefiting since September. In October there was a *Blitz day* held with over 200 children attending from around Longford. There was a *summer camp* held for everyone and 91 children enjoyed the sun while playing rugby, this is an increase of 66% on previous years. *Youth programme* also took place in 5 secondary schools with 405 young people involved.

One of the highlights of 2019, was that *Moyne Community School* participated in National Competitions for the first time. Dylan, Development Officer and Coach said "I was very proud of the achievement of the Moyne Community School. This was an unbelievable for some boys who had never played rugby before, to learn all the skills, train every week and go to represent their school in National Competition in Donnybrook. As a result, a number of the boys are now playing with the club, which is what it is all about"

GAA Community Partnership

Ciarán Mac Eochaidh is the Games Promotion Officer with Leinster GAA. This post is supported by Longford County Council. In 2019, Ciaran delivered 41 programmes from 16 initiatives with 1943 participants benefiting. The main goal is develop the local club of Longford Slashers and increases its membership. He also delivers initiatives throughout the county. Training was also provided to coaches parents and participants in the areas of coaching, nutrition and strength and conditioning.





2019 highlight initiative was the completion of *The 5 Star School's Programme* in St. Michael's BNS and Melview NS. Similar to the Active Schools Flag the 5 Star Flag is awarded for completing a number of Gaelic Games hours throughout the year. The schools mentioned above passed with flying colours in 2019 and have even encouraged others around the county to take part in 2020. Ciaran says "It is brilliant to see the children who may never got involved in a sports club coming down to Slashers and participating, our number from in all ages categories from U6 to U12 have hugely increased. St. Joseph's NS in Longford Town have also signed up to take part which is brilliant to see considering the demographic of pupils in the school."

A summary of the LSP and Sport Ireland target groups engaged during this period:

Unemployed people	Disadvantaged Communities
Children of primary school age	Women aged 18-50
Men aged 18-50	Sports club volunteers
Coaches	Youth at risk
People with mental health difficulties	Migrant communities
People with a physical disability	Secondary school girls
People with a sensory disability	Secondary school boys
People with an intellectual disability	

Strengthening Resources

To maximise existing infrastructure 2019, 18 initiatives were implemented in the beautiful natural resources that Longford has to offer with 2761 people benefiting. These included *Paddles Up*, *Women on the Water*, *10K Blueway Event*, *Day Time Walking Groups*, *Women on Wheels* and more.

Community Sports Hub

The *Community Sports Hub* in Edgeworthstown funded by Dormant Accounts has certainly made a significant difference in its local community by purchasing functional gym equipment and making this a useable space, getting floor covering and much more. The numbers of people into the community centre has remarkably increased. 724 people benefited from 24 initiatives and 37 programmes ran under this. Some programme included *Operation Transformation Programmes*, *Couch to 5km*, *Active Age Activities*, *Yoga*, *Martial Arts* and *Friday/Monday Workout of the Day*, and much more. One of our goals is to support clubs and organisations to get their initiative established and they continue to run themselves the initiatives themselves.



Operation Transformation Programmes, Couch to 5km, Active Age Activities, Yoga, Martial Arts and Friday/Monday Workout of the Day, and much more. One of our goals is to support clubs and organisations to get their initiative established and they continue to run themselves the initiatives themselves.

Supporting our coaches and volunteers in 2019, the LSP delivered training and education courses, workshops and seminars to 451 people. These included nine Safeguarding 1 courses, two Safeguarding 2 and for the first time one Safeguarding 3. Community Coaching was delivered in the Sports Hub, with 52 people taking part in training included First Aid Response, Disability Inclusion, Athletics, Basketball, Safeguarding, Active Leadership and much more. Ten Youth Leadership courses were provided to 186 TY students throughout Longford. These number represents a 400% increase in the number benefiting in training programmes from last year.



In 2019, the highlight is *Club Development*. This included creating awareness around Badminton, a programme was delivered to introduce the sport to new members creating pathways and assisting the local club to increase its membership. At the time the club were struggling and are now prospering. Last year we chose to develop Pickleball as a sport, as it is suitable for all ages, it is a cross between Badminton and tennis. This initiative included training leaders, taster day with Pickleball Ireland running programmes to introduce, create awareness and publicity around the sport in Edgeworthstown. We are currently in the process of establishing a club. Laura our coordinator says "it is such an addictive sport and fantastic that I can play with my Dad and daughter. I would love to see this sport grow and become established in our community of Edgeworthstown. We are looking forward to having members from Longford competing in the Irish Open in June"



Encouraging the Champions, the *Ganly's Longford Sports Star Awards 2019* took place. Darragh Greene was crowned overall 2019 winner, with sixteen other awards given on the night, including Volunteer of the Year. The results were dominated by female and junior athletes across several minority sports. The partnership with the Longford Leader and Ganly's ensured great publicity.





Longford County Council for the first time gave *six Sports Bursaries* totalling €5000. The bursaries were given to acknowledge previous achievements and future potential, Darragh Greene, Cian Mc Philips, Ellen Murphy, Michael Nugent, Yemi, and Nevin App.



In supporting not for profit organisations, we had a *Club Development and Participation Grant*. Through our funding work, the LSP supported 14 clubs in securing grant aid to support their junior structures, coach and education initiatives and target group programming benefiting 7613 participants.

Ballinamuck Foroige Juniors Youth Club	Lough Ree Athletic Club
Carrickedmond GAA	Longford Minor Ladies Club
Longford & District Schoolboy/Girl League	St Helen's LGFC



Sean Connollys Ladies	Mothers & Others Killashee
Lanesboro Triathlon Club	Longford Community Games
Clondra Canoe Club	Karate Club
Football Stars	UCL Harps FC

Other club development work included support in relation to committee roles, governance and child protection issues. We also loan our *Race Packs* for Running Events to clubs who may need them and *Playground Markings* to school.

Increasing Awareness

The LSP continues to use its social media platforms, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to communicate with clubs and groups in the County, enjoying a strong following on both. Our website is updated regularly, links to all are on the back page of this document.

Longford Sports Partnership has a good relationship with sports section of the Longford Leader, with Shannonside, the local radio and distribution lists for schools, sports clubs, local businesses and other agencies. This leads to an increased profile of LSP and increased awareness of sport provisions/programmes/clubs in Longford.

Throughout 2019, the LSP made a number of presentations including Urban Outdoor Adventure Presentation, Older Adults Forum - Presentation and Stand, Horse Riding and Welfare Presentation to Department of Agriculture, Local Physios regarding SIDO, schools presentation and more.

Email - sports@longfordcoco.ie

Website - www.longfordsports.ie

Facebook - www.facebook.com/longfordsportspartnership

Instagram - @longfordsportspartnership

Twitter - @LSPLongford

Youtube - Longford Sports Partnership LSP

Flickr - Longford Sports



Increasing Awareness

The community partnerships with the National Governing Bodies of Sport and the Network of Local Sports Partnership contribute significantly to creating opportunities for sports participation, particularly in areas of disadvantage.

Longford Sports Partnership Staff

Sports Co-ordinator	Sarah Mulligan	0433343494 smulligan@longfordcoco.ie
Sports Administrator	Eileen Sorohan	0433343493 sports@longfordcoco.ie
Sports Inclusion Disability Officer	Orla Dempsey	odempsey@longfordcoco.ie
Community Sports Development Officer	Donal Mulligan	dmulligan@longfordcoco.ie
Sports Hub Coordinator	Laura Doyle	ldoylecommunitysportshub@gmail.com
FAI Development Officer	Graham Kane	graham.kane@fai.ie
Rugby Development Officer	Dylan Quinn	longfordccro@leinsterrugby.ie
GAA Games Promotion Officer	Ciarán Mac Eochaidh	ciaran.maceochaidh.gpo.longford@gaa.ie

Longford Sports Partnership Board

The Board consists of 15 members:

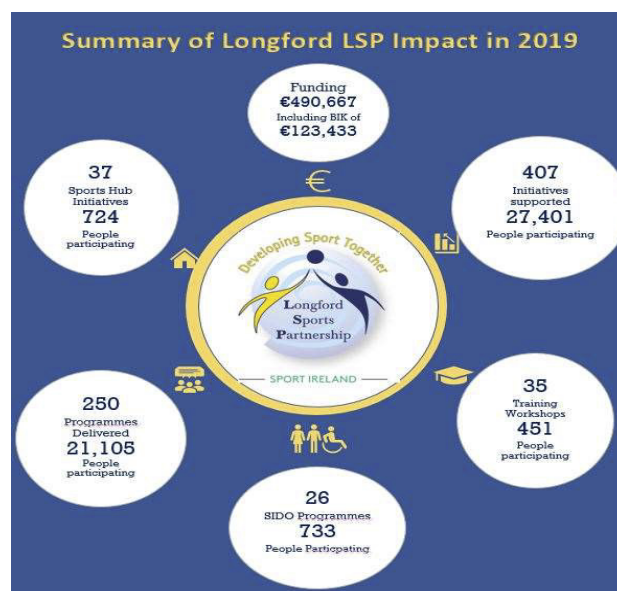
Longford County Council	Paddy Mahon
HSE	Clodagh Armitage
RAPID	Frank Horne
Youth Sector	Bernadette Fagan
Facilities Representative	James O'Brien
Older Adults Representative	Sheila Mulleady
Disability Representative	Barney Steele
Sporting Representative	Tony Headon (IRFU)
Sporting Representative	Susan Murphy (Aquatics)
Sporting Representative	Peter O'Reilly (GAA)
Sporting Representative	John Killane (Minority)
Longford Community Resources Clg	Adrian Greene
Elected Representative	Cllr. Mick Cahill
Elected Representative	Cllr. Garry Murtagh
Elected Representative	Cllr. Peggy Nolan

The LSP works closely with agencies on the planning and monitoring of annual work plans. The LSP continue to work with clubs and groups to build capacity within areas and identify priorities.

As part of our awareness raising and committee work, the LSP had representation on several committees including the Healthy Ireland Steering Committee, Longford Tourism, Intercultural Committee, Sports Hub Steering Committee and Longford Volunteer Manager Forum.

Other working partners over the period included:

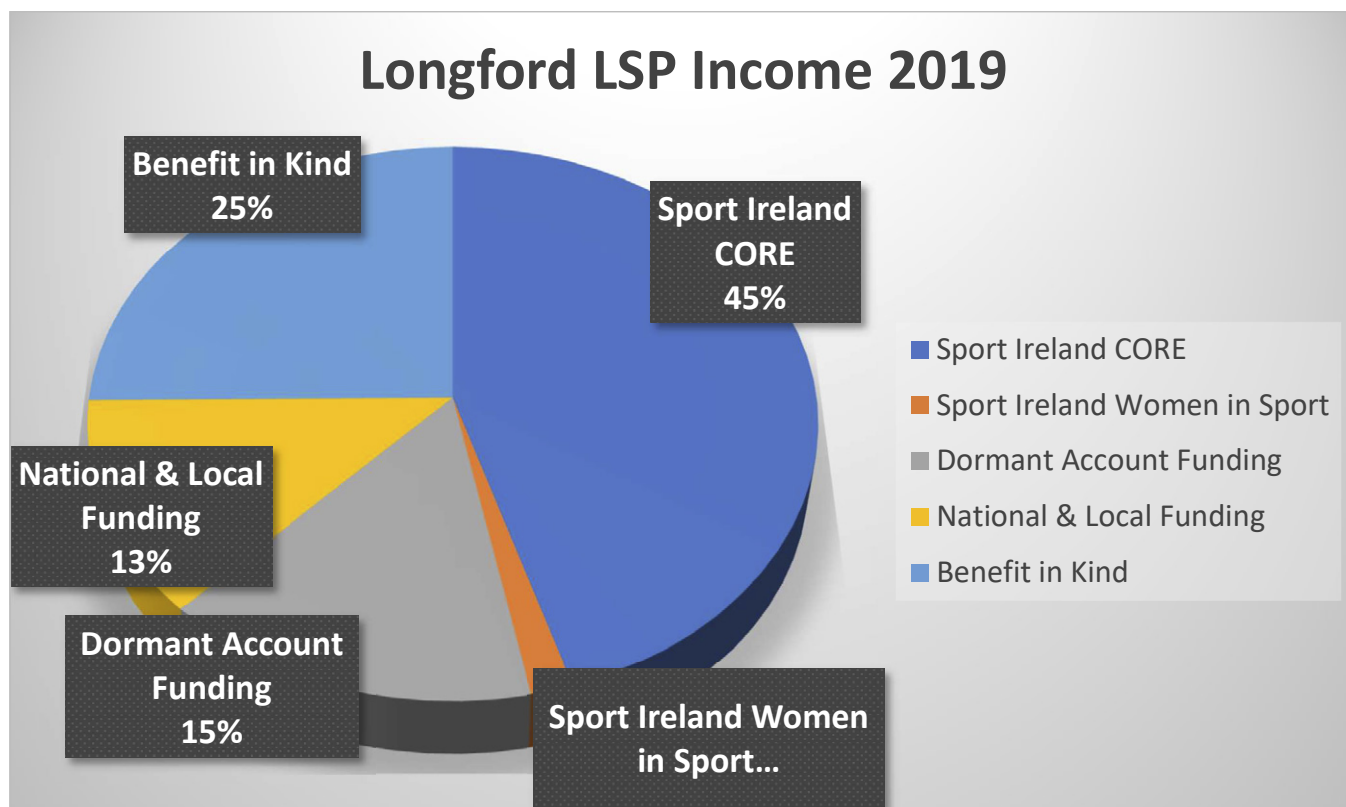
Sporting Organisations	Sport Ireland
Community Organisations	Other LSPs
Disability Organisations	Local Authority
Youth Services Organisations	Age and Opportunity
Primary Schools	HSE
Post-Primary Schools	Government Departments
Public Participation Network	Education and Training Board
Cara Centre	Tourism Agencies
Local Community Development Committees	Pobal/ LEADER/ Area Based Partnerships
Gardaí	



Resourcing & Funding

The LSP was successful in securing €490,667 for sport and physical activity in Longford with €367,234 in direct funding and €123,433 in benefit in kind. This came from a number of providers during 2019:

- Sport Ireland - Core Funding €221,458.00
- Sport Ireland – Women in Sport €8,400.00
- National and Local Funding of €75,860.00 from the HSE, Healthy Ireland, Dept of Agriculture and Food, Age and Opportunity Ireland, Department of Health & Children-Sports, Waterways Ireland, Longford County Council
- Dormant Accounts funding of €61,516.01 for Community Sports Hub/Community Coaching/ Sports Leadership/Urban Outdoor Adventure Initiative
- Benefit in Kind of €123,433 from Longford County Council, Board Members, etc



Longford Sports Partnership continues to be very thankful to Longford County Council, Sport Ireland, HSE, other funders, local agencies and representatives on the Sports Partnership board.

The local economy continued to grow in 2019 on the back of strong performance from many local firms, strong infrastructural spend from the local authority and a growing sense of confidence that the economic outlook for County Longford is very positive.

The only dampener on economic outlook was the whole uncertainty around Brexit, a situation that pertained all through 2019 and made firms cautious about capital investment decisions. This was particularly the case for those firms with international exposure. The Government through its different agencies helped firms prepare for Brexit and while the future impact is still uncertain it is hopeful that through good planning the potentially negative impact on the SME sector can be minimised.

In 2019 County Longford saw the completion of the largest single tourism project in the history of the state, the Center Parcs Resort outside Ballymahon which opened to visitors on schedule for the summer season. This single investment has finally put County Longford on the map as a tourism destination in its own right and should deliver almost 100,000 unique visitors to the County each year. In future years this project will be profiled as a model case study to demonstrate how a large corporation adopting a partnership approach with the local community and the local authority can deliver a project with maximum efficiency.

The Local Enterprise Office continues to support the needs of the micro-enterprise sector and to support the efforts of the economic development unit in Longford County Council in promoting the County as a viable location for business investment.

The Local Authority continued to work closely with neighbouring counties to promote the region as a good place to live work and invest. Working with Westmeath, Laois and Offaly under the Regional Action Plan for Jobs and with Cavan, Roscommon and Leitrim under the UESFE programme the local authority realises that there is strength in collaboration and an agreed approach to bring about economic growth and development to the whole region. Several joint initiatives and events were run during 2019 to support these aims.

The Business Incentive Scheme introduced in 2015 continued to be available to help firms moving into vacant units and the volume of vacant industrial stock greatly diminished during 2019. The local authority also introduced a Shop Front Scheme to support the viability of town centres by assisting retailers to enhance the exterior of their premises.

The Local Authority has been proactive in establishing direct communication channels with its key employers, its business associations and with its economic diaspora. It met with its Dublin based diaspora group and representatives from its New York diaspora during 2019 and that group continues to provide advice and practical supports in the efforts to attract investment to the County.

During 2019, Longford County Council made several successful submissions to National and Regional plans that will determine the future economic shape of rural Ireland and it continues to work in partnership with all the key support and development agencies and this partnership approach to economic growth should reap rewards going forward.



German Ambassador Deike Potez visited Longford County Council on Tuesday 24th January where she met with Chief Executive Mr. Paddy Mahon, Director of Service Ms Barbara Heslin and Head of Enterprise Michael Nevin, Declan O'Rourke MD Tool & Plastic and Frank Hartman, MD Core Components

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) were established in April 2014 as a function of local government. They act as the primary reference point for all queries related to business start-up and small business growth and offer a 'First Stop Shop' service to persons seeking information, advice, guidance or support in relation to micro-enterprise development.

The LEO office works in partnership with a range of other agencies to ensure that people can quickly access the most relevant supports linked to their needs at a particular time and it strives at all times to promote the value of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in helping to grow local economies.

The LEO Longford works closely with its target audience to drive the development of local enterprise, placing local small firms at the heart of job creation. It delivers a diverse range of supports in a focused manner, building close professional relationships that result in clients repeatedly using the LEO office as a resource.

2019 was a constructive year for LEO Longford with proactive engagement with hundreds of small firms across the County. Job numbers in firms supported directly by the LEO Longford office grew by 73. LEO Longford approved 23 projects for direct financial assistance during the year.

LEO Longford ranks high in customer care score and satisfaction ratings surveys and it strives to deliver high quality and multi-varied services and supports to its ever-expanding customer and client base throughout Longford.

The LEO continued to roll-out its range of soft support measures to include training, mentoring and in-company supports. In 2019 over 80 participants availed of mentoring support while 700 participants availed of some form of structured training.

Supports are designed to be delivered in a flexible manner and tailored specifically to meet the needs of new and growing enterprises. Tailored programmes are designed to support target groups such as Back to Enterprise clients, individual sectors such as retail and under-developed sectors such as women in business.

The LEO Longford continued to promote Government initiatives designed to stimulate local enterprise particularly Employer Job Incentive Schemes and Access to Credit Schemes. Of particular importance in 2019 was support offered to small firms concerned about the impact of Brexit. Longford LEO was a key local support channel helping the government to roll out its dedicated range of supports designed to support SMEs through the Brexit process.

In the area of education, the LEO Longford continued to support the Student Enterprise Programme as a primary vehicle for instilling an understanding and appreciation of enterprise into our young people.

It also continued to support the National Enterprise Awards as a high profile opportunity to highlight the achievements of small businesses and entrepreneurs.

The LEO worked closely with all local media to promote local enterprise, to highlight successes and raise concerns that impact on this sector. It continued to promote its services on its dedicated website www.localenterprise.ie/longford and made increasing use of social media to get its message out to its client base.



In 2019 Longford Tourism continued to make positive strides in tourism related infrastructural improvements, in the development of attractions and facilities and in the promotion of Longford as a tourism destination.

Failte Ireland's new brand – Ireland's Hidden heartlands continued to work closely with County Longford through correspondence, attendance at meetings and organised workshops. This new Regional Brand is very positive for County Longford and the surrounding region. The launch of the Hidden Heartlands brand has given the region a timely boost and promotes and markets both Nationally and Internationally which should result in a significant rise in visitor numbers.

All the relevant authorities including Longford County Council recognise the potential for tourism to become a much more significant economic driver for the County. Of course, the opening of the landmark Center Parcs Resort in Longford Forest, Ballymahon in 2019 is proving to have a positive impact and hopefully will automatically give the County destination status. The challenge for everyone involved in tourism is to maximise the potential from the large number of extra visitors expected to visit Center Parcs into the future.



Longford County Council is at the heart of almost all this effort and works closely with County Longford Tourism Committee on the implementation of its strategic objectives for tourism in the County.

The recruitment of two Tourism staff has greatly helped the Local Authority in the implementation of tourism plans and actions. This new resource provides the focal point through which new tourism initiatives and events can be planned and coordinated. It also helps to ensure that our tourism product is presented to the market in an informative, relevant up-to-date manner.

In 2019 all bodies involved in tourism continued to develop infrastructure projects such as the Royal Canal Walkway, cycling trails and community backed projects. The availability of Government funds was a tremendous catalyst for the instigation and progression of different projects and all corners of the County have been able to progress tourism projects during the year. The new community developed Knights & Conquests visitor experience Centre in Granard and the opening of the Maria Edgeworth Centre in Edgeworthstown is a tremendous example of what can be achieved when local groups are supported by Central Government and the Local Authority in their ambition to promote their local area.

The Tourism Committee continued to work on a marketing strategy for the County to increase the County's appeal as a tourism destination to identified target market segments. In 2019 work commenced on revamping the website www.longford.ie to give it a new vibrant, lively and appealing platform for visitors to County Longford. Work also commenced on a series of videos to promote Longford as a Tourism destination. Longford Tourism have an active social media presence, new promotional materials, along with maps and brochures designed to inform and educate visitors on the wide variety of tourism experiences available in County Longford.

As well as acting as a promoter of all local festivals and events, Longford Tourism compile a monthly event guide which will be correlated with the revamped www.longford.ie website.



The Local Authority also continued to work with community and specific interest groups in 2019 on initiatives and events designed to build tourism products. In addition, the LCDC committee has a vital oversight role in the implementation of the current LEADER programme and its associated heavy emphasis on local tourism development.

Drama/Street Theatre/Spectacle

Drama League of Ireland Summer School Bursary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provided financial support to Longford actor to attend the Drama Summer School. ○ Provided support for Director to attend Directors Course. 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
Joint Projects with Backstage Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the development costs of the Dance Artist in Residence, Catherine Young's new work State of Exception in March 2018. ○ Supported the costs of engaging theatre facilitators and production costs of a co-production of a new play 'Beetroot' in collaboration with Backstage Youth Theatre ○ Supported the delivery of school workshops in Creative Writing and the development costs of a stage adaptation of 'The Velveteen Rabbit' by Maisie Lee. ○ Supported the costs of 'Playmaking', a community arts project involving a programme of workshops with children in playwriting, facilitated by Artist in Residence, Maisie Lee, which will culminate in performances of short plays written by the children and performed by professional actors in the Aisling Children's Arts Festival 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
Mide Street Theatre Company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported workshop and performances of this fledgling street theatre company 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young. Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Mide Street Theatre Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanded the Street Theatre Company by establishing a Ballymahon branch 	
Mide Samba Band <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported the ongoing development of the Samba Band 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young. Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Mide Dance Troupe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added a dance troupe to the samba band and the street performance group 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young. Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.

Creative Writing

Longford Writers Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Longford has five active writer's groups. We supported the activities of Longford, Goldsmith, Lasrai, Under the Motte and Lanesborough Writers Groups through the year. 	Promote access to and increased participation in literature.
Literary Evenings/Poetry Slams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported a series of literary events in Backstage Canal Studio, Ardagh Creativity Centre, and Market Bar Longford. See www.virtualwriter.ie 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the writers. Promote access to and increased participation in the Literature. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the literature.
Bursaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduced residential bursaries at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre for Longford Writers 	

Music/Dance

School of Rock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support this innovative initiative for young rock musicians aged 10 to 18 years old 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
Longford Live & Local Recordings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported a series of live music events in various genres to try to re-vitalise the live music scene in Longford 	Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Lassus Choral Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised a recital of internationally renowned choral group Lassus in Longford Cathedral 	Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the Arts.
Ardagh Folk Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised the filming of the national award group for www.longfordmusic.ie 	Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts.
Longford Classical Club <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised classical concerts to raise public awareness 	Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the Arts.
Dance Residency Backstage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported Dancer in Residence in partnership with Backstage Theatre 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
Longford Choral Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported various Longford Choirs 	
Recorded Edgeworthstown Choirs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded both the children's choir and adult folk group for broadcast on www.longfordmusic.ie 	Promote access to and increased participation in the Music. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the Music.
Longford Music Education Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked closely with the newly appointed Music Education Officer 	

Festivals

Cruthu Multi-disciplinary Arts Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the original festival. Funded this year's festival. Worked closely with the committee to deliver this year's programme. Placed special emphasis on a community art project: The Temporary Public Art Project. Engaged seven community groups e.g. Men's Sheds to create seven pieces under the guidance of a professional artist each piece was exhibited in a prominent location in Longford Town during Cruthu. 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the arts. Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Ardagh Fright Fest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Halloween-themed children's arts & fun festival run by Ardagh Creativity Centre. 	Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Aisling Children's Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long established and excellent county-wide children's arts festival. A truly community based festival event both in committee composition, programming, geographical spread and insistence on free events or lowest possible ticket costs to ensure maximum social and economic inclusion. We financially support the committee and work with them at festival time. 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
Edgeworth Literary Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well organised weekend of poetry and prose the contemporary element of which is supported by the A. O. However a heavy emphasis on cultural heritage and tourism objectives means that it is of limited value to the literary development of the county. 	Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.

Lanesborough Lough Ree Monster Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New community festival. Provided Mide to perform and funding towards' Monster' float 	Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Eigse Peter Carberry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked closely with the founding committee on the establishment of this traditional music festival in Lanesborough 	

Visual Arts

Longford Schools Photography Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland's largest and longest running Schools Photography Programme. Involves students in all secondary schools in the county as well as Mullingar and Mohill. Emphasis photography as art developing the student's visual and aesthetic awareness teaches students to view the subject not just as a visual and physical object but also from a conceptual perspective. See: http://www.longforddigitalarts.ie/schools-photography-program/overview 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young
Schools Programme Exhibition, Awards & Project launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSPP culminates each year with an exhibition of students work, awards presentation and the launch of the project for the year usually a publication of the students' work on typical social issues drug abuse, mental illness – depression etc. helped fund, promote and organise the event 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young
Expressions International Portrait Photography Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International art portrait photography competition. 50% submissions Irish 50% international. This year enlarged 50 short listed entries mounted them on all weather material and exhibited them on lamp posts walls and temporary hoardings around the town turning the town into an open air gallery of photography during Cruthu. 	Promote access to and increased participation in photography.
Joint Exhibition Programme with Atrium Gallery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsored and helped to organise exhibition of seven painters and photographers: Phil Atkinson/Angela Tuite/Mary Grey/Lar McGuire/Josephine Guilfoyle/ Mary Reilly/Phil Atkinson/Shelley Corcoran/ Angelika Sowul/Eibhlin Crossan/Alisa Rey/ Sean Considine see: www.visuallongford.ie 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the photographers.
Mercy Convent Ballymahon Public Art Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded imaginative glass art project for the above schools. The students visited the studio of glass artist Michelle O'Donnell where they each designed and help to fashion a unique avian image which was cast in glass and erected as a flight of birds along the wall of the student's canteen. See: www.longfordvisualarts.ie 	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
Stonepark N.S. Public Art Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advised management of Stonepark N.S. on the commissioning of a public art feature for the newly built school. 	

Publishing

Midland Arts & Culture Magazine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published two editions of this popular and successful magazine. 	Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
Children's Short Story Publication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported the publication of a collection of short stories by local children organised through Ardagh Creativity Centre. 	

CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services play an important role in shaping and influencing our organisational strategic priorities and ambitions for the betterment of our county. Our Corporate Services Business unit brings together a range of corporate functions that work collectively and consistently together in delivering the Council's strategic business goals.

We worked closely in 2019 with the political and managerial leadership, our colleagues across all Directorates, external partners from across the public, private, voluntary & community sectors in serving, representing and leading the communities of our county.

A report on activities is detailed hereunder:

Requests for Information

	Number
Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests	102
Number of Internal Reviews on FOI Requests	2
Number of appeals to the Information Commissioner on FOI decisions	0
Number of Information on the Environment Requests	6

Protected Disclosures Act

Longford County Council received one Protected Disclosure during the period from 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019.

The correspondence was anonymous with matters detailed therein relevant to the functions of the local authority. The 'disclosure' was not made in the manner or format prescribed in the Council Policy however the matters raised were examined in accordance with the Council's Protected Disclosure Policy & Procedures.

It was determined following examination there was no wrongdoing and further action was not required.

Official Languages Act

National Developments in relation to the Irish Language

The Official Languages (Amendment) Bill 2019 was published on 13th December 2019

Highlights of the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill 2019 include:-

- An objective for 20% of new recruits to the public service to be competent in Irish.
- A new statutory committee to be introduced which will be known as The Language Services Advisory Committee. This Committee will prepare a new National Plan for the Provision of Irish Language Services.
- Language Schemes to be replaced by Language Standards.

While the Irish Language Commissioner, Rónán Ó Domhnaill, said that the publication of the bill marked an important step forward for the Irish language, it is clear that clarification will be needed in relation to the manner in which this national policy will be implemented.

The Irish Language Officer carried out the following Activities in relation to promote the Irish language during 2019

- A series of six classes in Irish at basic to intermediate level were held in the main branch library during February and March of 2019.
- An Irish language conversational group met once a week for 20 weeks during the year.
- Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated with the holding of quizzes in Irish and the facilitation of Irish storytelling events for local schools in a number of the branch libraries.
- A selection of new Irish language books for both children and adults were purchased during the year with money from the library book budget.

- In May 2019, the Irish Language Officer attended the annual network meeting for local authority Irish Language Officers. She also attended a short general meeting of Irish Language Officers on the occasion of the annual Irish language festival Oireachtas na Samhna in Dublin.
- The Irish Language Officer, supported by the Council, in order to maintain her standard of Irish and carry out Irish Language Officer duties in a competent manner, attended an Irish course from 13th-20th July 2019 at Oideas Gael in Donegal.
- In October 2019, following a competitive application process, the Irish Language Officer secured a grant of €1,800 from Foras na Gaeilge towards funding of Irish Language events for the Children's book festival.
- The Irish Language Officer working with relevant departments ensured that any correspondence received from the Irish Language Commissioner's Office was handled and dealt with.

Investigative Study of the Council Website by the Office of the Irish Language Commissioner

During the second half of 2019, The Irish Language Commissioner's Office undertook a study of the Council Website and Interactive Services in relation to the commitments made in the Council's Irish Language Scheme which has been in operation since 2008. A questionnaire was issued to the Council on the 26th July seeking information on the commitments made in the Council Language Scheme. An additional list of questions was sent to the Council on 5th September. The Office of the Irish Language Commissioner clarified that they would forward a report on their investigations which would include a number of recommendations for future action to the CEO of the Council in early 2020.

Local Elections 2019

The Local Elections 2019 were held in all throughout the country on Friday 24th May 2019, with combined polls for the Local & European Parliament Elections and a Referendum.

The Local Elections took place following the coming into force of the County of Longford Local Electoral Areas and Municipal Districts Order 2018. The effect of this Order was to amend the previous division of County Longford local electoral areas, to fix the number of members of Longford County Council to be elected for each such electoral area and to determine the Municipal Districts for County Longford.

The number of local electoral areas in County Longford remained at 3 and the number of elected members remained at 18. The number of elected members in the Electoral Area of Granard was revised downwards to 5 and the number of elected members in the Longford Electoral Area consequently revised upwards to 7 with the number of elected members in the Ballymahon Electoral remaining as 6.

A total of 39 candidates contested Longford County Councils Local Elections in the three local government electoral areas as follows: Ballymahon - 12 candidates

Granard - 11 candidates

Longford - 16 candidates

The counting of votes in Longford County Council's Local Election took place in the Count Centre "St Mary's Sports Complex, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford during the period from Saturday 25th May to Tuesday 28th May inclusive with a recount in the Ballymahon Electoral Area being held on Tuesday.

The recount in the Ballymahon Local Electoral Area followed Count 6 when two continuing candidates had an equal number of votes credited to them at the end of that count and request for recount was acceded to by the Returning Officer. This recount resulted in no material change to the original count result and was reflective of the high level of accuracy, attention to detail and professional competence of all members of the Council's Election Count Team. The 18 Councillors were duly elected to Longford County Council for a five-year term of office.



Live updates were streamed on the Council social media channels during the Local Election Count and recount. A schedule of Local Election Results and Election expenditure statements are included in the appendices.

Meetings of Longford County Council

The Meetings which are co-ordinated by Corporate Services include Plenary Meetings, Municipal District Meetings for Ballymahon, Granard and Longford, Corporate Policy Group Meetings, Joint Policing Committee Meetings and Strategic Policy Committee Meetings. At the Plenary Council Meetings, the eighteen members of the Council meet to carry out their Reserved functions and consider social, economic and cultural issues critical to the sustained development of the County in line with the Strategic Priorities and Objectives of the Corporate Plan.

The following is an outline of presentations/ proceedings at Council meetings held in 2019:

Special Meeting – 9th January 2019

Representatives from the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly gave a comprehensive presentation to the Members on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Meeting – 8th May 2019

The outgoing Cathaoirleach, Councillor Luie McEntire, spoke regarding his year as Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council. Many tributes were paid to Councillor McEntire for his outstanding service as a public representative over the past forty years.

Tributes were also paid to Councillor Martin Mulleady who did not seek re-election in the 2019 Local Elections.

120th Anniversary of the First Local Elections held in County Longford and the names of the Councillors elected to Longford County Council on the 6th April 1899 were read out at the meeting.

Longford County Council Annual Meeting – 7th June 2019

The first Annual Meeting following the Local Elections was held on the 7th June 2019.
Councillor Micheál Carrigy was elected Cathaoirleach.
Councillor Gerard Farrell was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.

Municipal District Annual Meetings - 17th June 2019

Ballymahon Municipal District

Councillor Pat O'Toole was elected Cathaoirleach.
Councillor Colm Murray was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

Granard Municipal District

Councillor P.J. Reilly was elected Cathaoirleach.

Councillor Garry Murtagh was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

Longford Municipal District

Councillor Seamus Butler was elected Cathaoirleach.

Councillor Peggy Nolan was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.

Briefing Session – 3rd July 2019

A Briefing Session on the services/functions of Longford County Council was held on the 3rd July 2019 for the Elected Members.

Meeting – 11th September 2019

The Acting Co-ordinator of Longford Council Childcare Committee CLG gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the new National Childcare Scheme – a new, national scheme of financial support for parents towards the cost of childcare.

Meeting – 9th October 2019

Mick Cahill – President of the AILG - Congratulations were extended to Councillor Mick Cahill on being elected to the position of President of the AILG.

Meeting – 25th November 2019

The Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2020 was adopted by the members.

Cathaoirleach's Awards Ceremony – 01st April 2019

The Cathaoirleach's Awards were introduced to formally honour unique people who have given outstanding service to their community and to County Longford.

The Awards are a recognition of the exceptional spirit of volunteerism which has been very prevalent in County Longford for many years and the Countywide Award recognises the contribution made to the business and development life of the County. Each Municipal District Cathaoirleach submit a nominee, on behalf of their District, and the Cathaoirleach of the County submits a nominee for the wider County.

The 2019 Cathaoirleach's Awards Ceremony was held on the 1st April 2019 at which the following were honoured -

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| • Ballymahon MD | - | Glen After School |
| • Longford MD | - | Longford Society of St. Vincent de Paul |
| • Granard MD | - | Jimmy Donoghue, Granard |
| • Overall Award | - | Martin Dalby, CEO, Center Parcs |



Civic Receptions

22nd March 2019 – A Civic Reception was held in honour of Most Reverend Bishop Richard B. Higgins, to mark the 50th anniversary of his ordination in Rome in March 1968 and also his role as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese for the Military Services in the US.

3rd May 2019 – A Civic Reception was held in honour of St. Columba's, Mullinalaghta GAA, AIB Leinster Club Senior Football Champions 2018.



6th December 2019 - A Civic Reception was held to recognise Sporting Achievements in County Longford during 2019. Sporting Achievements Recipients:

- Darragh Greene, National Swimming Champion.
- Longford Ladies U16 and U18 All Ireland Winning Teams.
- Longford Slashers U14 Hurling Féile na nGael Winners.
- Clonguish Óg U14 Boys Féile Peile na nÓg Winners
- Clonguish Óg U14 Girls Féile Peile na nÓg Winners
- Michael Nugent, Irish Youth Boxing Champion.
- Clonbroney U18 All Ireland GAA Rounders Champions.
- Longford Athletic Club

The 2019 Longford County Council Sports Bursaries were also announced at the Civic Reception Bursary

Recipients:

- Darragh Greene
- Cian Mc Philips
- Michael Nugent
- Ellen Murphy
- Nelvin Appiah
- Yemi Talabi



Receptions

23rd January & 23rd October 2019 – Longford Municipal District held Receptions in recognition of the Ongoing Work and Commitment by the Longford Tidy Towns Volunteers



Presentations

9th May 2019 – A donation was made to St. Christopher Services Longford from the Members of the Council following the Members' fundraising event which was held in the Longford Arms Hotel on the 2nd February 2019.



A Presentation was also made by the Cathaoirleach and Members to Kevin Hussey, who assisted the Members in their preparation for the Event, and also for his tireless engagement with countless events which have raised significant funding for various charities throughout County Longford.



Presentation to Kevin Hussey



Members of Longford Tidy Towns Volunteers

Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan 2019 -2024 was developed and formally adopted by Longford County Council in 2019. The Corporate Plan was prepared, adopted and published in line with relevant local government legislation and Departmental guidelines.

The preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of Corporate Plan is now an integral and long-standing feature of management practice in Local Authorities. The Council's Corporate Plan is the Council's Strategic framework for action within which Annual Service Plans are formulated over the lifetime of the newly elected Council.

This Corporate Plan 2019 -2024 provides a framework within which the Council can continue to strengthen the way we do vital everyday work. This Corporate Plan 2019 -2024 builds on the achievements of our previous plans and the delivery of key objectives. The Council have a proven record of success in delivering projects in collaboration and partnership with our stakeholders and communities. The Council have achieved national and international recognition for projects and systems.

Our Corporate Plan 2019 -2024 links:

- Policy
- Organisation
- Operation Activity
- Governance
- Performance Management

The Council's Corporate Plan was prepared on an inclusive basis involving wide ranging consultation with all our stakeholders and the participation and engagement of all is acknowledged.

Our Corporate Plan outlines our priorities for Longford and prioritises the issues that our engagement and consultation processes have told us matter to our county and our people.

The Council's Corporate Plan describes the Mission of the Council as follows:
"our mission is to work with our communities and partners to develop Longford as a dynamic, vibrant, safe and prosperous county, celebrating its diversity, culture and heritage and, through strong leadership, build safe, healthy and sustainable communities"

Our Corporate Plan sets out our objectives with three central themes People, Place, and Opportunity to continue to be an engaging, open, connected and innovative Council for all.

- Our objectives for our County are for Longford to be a thriving, safe, greener county and a county for everyone to live, work and do business in.
- Thriving - we want to continue to attract more and better jobs and grow our economy
- Safer- we want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for
- Greener- we want to lead the response to effects of climate change
- County for everyone - we want you to have access to the things you need, enjoy where you live and realise your potential

In publishing the Corporate Plan adopted by the Elected Members on December 11th 2019 the Council presents a clear picture and insight into the strategies and ambitions for the betterment of our county.



Audit Committee

The Audit Committee provides an independent expert review, assessment and advice on financial management and reporting processes, internal control systems and procedures, risk management and audit matters. The Committee's role is primarily an advisory one and the Committee is not vested with any executive powers or any statutory powers of investigation or enquiry. The statutory functions of the Audit Committee are set out in Section 122(2)(a) to (f) of the functions of the Local Government Act 2001 and in S.I. 244 of 2014 entitled Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations, 2014.

The Audit Committee met on the 29 March 2019 and 26 April 2019.

A new committee was elected following the Local Elections in May and they subsequently met on 4 October 2019 and 10 December 2019.

The Committee examined a number of issues within its remit and issued recommendations where appropriate.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources section operates in accordance with the Local Government People Strategy and supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The core functions of the Human Resources section in 2019 were

- Policy Development & Implementation
- Workforce Planning & Succession Planning
- Recruitment & Selection
- Training & Development
- Equality & Diversity, Public Sector Equality & Human Rights Duty
- Employment Law and Compliance
- Industrial Relations
- Employee Contract Management
- Attendance Management
- Statutory Reporting & Departmental Returns
- Record & Document Management
- Health & Wellbeing
- Employee Assistance & Support

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection procedures are operated in an open and fair manner, in line with good practice recruitment and selection standards, employment legislation and relevant Departmental Circulars and guidelines. Statistics for 2019 –

Competitions advertised	Applications Received	Interview Days	Number of Interview Boards	Appointments	Retirements	Resignations
55	572	50	25	41	2	20

One of our colleagues passed away, RIP.

Employee Training & Development

Longford County Council is committed to training and development in order to promote a culture of lifelong learning. In 2019, there was 106 training courses completed with 662 participants attending. The training was delivered by both internal and externally sourced trainers. There were 134.5 days of training conducted.

Some of the courses that took place in 2019 were as follows:

- Competency Based Interviewee Preparation
- Dealing with Violence & Aggression
- Line Manager Training
- Manual Handling
- Temporary Traffic Management Design
- Winter Maintenance
- Contract Management Training
- IOSH Construction Managers Refresher
- Project Supervisor Design Process (PSDP) Training
- Safe Pass

Longford County Council facilitates a learning scheme which provides employees with opportunities to develop their skills and competencies relevant to the service delivery of the organisation. This is facilitated through third-level education to support employee personal and professional development. 16 employees participated in this scheme completing courses in Local Government, Engineering, Environmental Protection and Management.

Branch Libraries in Longford, Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Drumlish, Lanesboro and Granard. Demand for the Library service as a valued community hub in each of our towns continues to grow. In 2019 the number of visits to our branch libraries exceeded 270,000 the highest figure recorded in the past three years.

The key developments in 2019 included

- Progressing the delivery of a new community library in Edgeworthstown towards build phase in October 2019.
- Further investment in ICT infrastructure and the launch of the first of My Open Library in Ballymahon in May.
- The expansion of the role of the library as an essential community service through the delivery of the three national strategic programmes identified in Our Public Libraries 2022: The Healthy Ireland, Work Matters and Right to Read programmes.
- Implementation of actions in the County Longford Culture and Creativity Plan 2018-2022 which sets out the vision and actions to ensure greater community participation and engagement in all forms of cultural and creative activity in the County.
- Support for new and innovative cultural festivals and programmes including the delivery of Longford's first Literary festival in May and Longford's first History festival in November. This year also saw the appointment of successful Longford writer John Connell as Longford's first Literary Ambassador and Dr. Mel Farrell as our first History Ambassador
- The ongoing delivery and expansion of the Creative Ireland programme as set out in the annual service level agreement between Longford County Council and Creative Ireland including the annual Open Call to cultural and community groups for grant applications for the innovative and exciting programme of cultural events and festivals run throughout the year.
- Delivering on commitments made under the national Age Friendly City and County programme and the 5-year Longford Age Friendly Strategy a lot of progress was made working in partnership with Longford older in terms of delivering on actions identified in the Walkability study of Longford town including the first Age friendly Parking spaces and the Crime Prevention Ambassador programme. the coordination of the work programme for Longford Older Person Council including the annual Bealtaine festival in May and Positive Ageing week in September.
- Continuing to support town twinning which is very strong in each of our Municipal Districts We jointly hosted delegations from Noyal Chatillon sur Seiche Longford's twin town and Landevant Ballymahon's twin town in September.



County Librarian Mary Reynolds with author Frank Galligan and Ballymahon School Principal, Herbert Farrell at the opening of a Pushkin Creative Schools event for teachers

Digital Libraries present and Future – ICT Report 2019

The Department of Rural and Community Development has made available grants to Library Authorities to upgrade IT hardware and software. Longford Library has availed of these grants to upgrade and expand our e-services and e-Conferencing facilities which allow us to host many events including Municipal District meetings in Ballymahon and Granard Libraries, LA Broadband Officers meeting in Ballymahon Library and DRCD national Rural roadshow in Granard Library. Some of our new equipment is for our planned new Library in Edgeworthstown including Digital and Interactive Signage, Projectors, 3 D Printer and a Tovertafel “Magic Table” for Dementia sufferers and young people with autism.

PC Upgrade

With the assistance of the IT department a number PC’s both staff and public were upgraded to Windows 10 in preparation for the withdrawal of Microsoft Windows 7 support in early 2020.

My Open Library – Ballymahon Library

The long awaited My Open Library Service in County Longford was launched in Ballymahon in mid-May. This initiative extends opening hours by providing library access to Open Library Members from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Regular staffed hours continue on the normal opening hour schedule to ensure optimum service for everyone. Feedback from the Community, from MOL members and from staff has been very positive.

There were 90 registered members at the end of 2019 with an average of 200 MOL access visits per month. The local community have commented on how it is great to see this community building “lit up” and being used every day of the week including evenings and at weekends.

Below is a copy of an email received by one of our new MOL members: -

“I just wanted to thank Longford Library Service for taking the initiative to provide this extended service to your members. I am currently completing a part-time degree. It has made a huge difference to the quality of my study-time as I can avail of both the internet service and library facilities during off peak times at the evenings and weekends. I am conscious that we live in an area of rural disadvantage and this service has certainly improved my quality of life.”- Nora Fagan

Cathaoirleach of Ballymahon MD, Cllr Gerard Farrell making a presentation to the Ukraine Ambassador to Ireland Olena Shaloput at the official opening of an exhibition on the history of Ukraine in Ballymahon Library



My Open Library – Granard Library

We applied for and were successful in getting grant funding for an Open Library Solution for Granard Community Library in 2019. Work will progress on it during early 2020 and will be ready to open mid-year.



Paddy Mahon, Chair of Longford Age Friendly Alliance making a presentation to Sarah McGuinness Longford's first woman Garda at Positive Ageing Week along with members of Longford Community Gardai

Staff

Following successful DRCD sanction of the Library Services Workforce Plan the following staff appointments were made following competitive interview during the year:

Staff Officer	Patricia Briody, Ballymahon Branch Library
Senior Library Assistants	Eimear Feeney, Ballymahon Library Rosemary Gaynor, Granard Library Helen Sheridan, Edgeworthstown Library
Library Assistant	Carmel Kelly, Longford Branch Library

We wish all our staff every success in their new roles.

The Library Service Workforce Plan interview process will conclude in early 2020 with Open Competition interviews for Assistant Librarian and Library Assistant grades.

COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

The Archives Service had another busy year during which it was involved in a range of projects. As well as continuing with archives management and records management, there were many public events and outreach activities.

Archives Management

Conservation

Repairs and rebinding were completed on the following items:

- Granard Board of Guardians minute book, 1899-1900
- Longford Board of Guardians minute book, 1851
- Dr John Keenan's notebook 'B', 1902-38, and scrapbook, early 1900s
- Nominal roll of active members Longford Local Defence Force
- Charles Webb's damp-press letter book, 1900-08
- Margaret West's rent book, 1839-1886
- James P. Farrell, *History of the County Longford* (Dublin, 1891) with notes by Dr John F. Keenan

Deposits

The following archives were deposited:

- Additional documents and photographs from the late Master Patrick Greene, Ballinalee
- Newspapers relating to the outbreak of the Civil War, 1922
- Bills from Longford town businesses, c. 1900-75
- 'Menu' from Mountjoy Prison, 1920, with signatures of several distinguished inmates
- Photographs owned by the late Philo Kelly, Longford
- Files on Oliver Goldsmith kept by the late NW English, Athlone
- Items relating to John Sullivan, Bunlahy, 1912-13
- Nominal roll, Longford District Local Defence Force, early 1940s
- Several photographs and postcards, many of local scenes, 20th century

- Survey of Edenmore Estate (George McConchy, owner), 1857
- Letter book from Longford Gas Company, 1908-16
- Ballymacormack ICA Guild treasurer's book, 1944-54
- Killashee Dispensary District medical relief registers and vaccination register, 1881-1940
- Petty sessions register (various areas), 1890s
- Items relating to the Eakins, Peyton, McCann and Little families
- Loughill NS register, 1960-65
- Agreements relating to three RIC barracks in Longford, 1867-1914
- School and college books and notes of the late Cathal McWeeney NT
- Photographs of the restoration of St Mel's Cathedral, 2010-14
- DVD of reunion of past-pupils of Aughnacliffe NS, 1988

All of the above were sorted, cleaned and packed in archival materials.

Records Management

Records management continued in sections including HR, Civil Defence, Motor Tax and Economic and Community Development. The organisation of storage in the Eir building proceeded with the assistance of the Facilities Management Unit. There were several requests for the retrieval of files from various departments.

Ongoing Participation in Programmes, Committees and Groups

Decade of Centenaries

The Archivist convened the Decade of Centenaries Working Group, which met three times. He co-ordinated events, as follows:

- 21st January - lecture on the first Dáil Éireann by Dr Mel Farrell (in Longford Library).
- 20th-22nd September - 'Commemorating North Longford and the Irish Revolution, 1919-21', a weekend of events. It included a lecture on the Volunteers/IRA in County Longford by Bernard Sexton; an exhibition of children's work in Ballinalee; a football match in Ballinalee, commemorating the 1919 County Senior Football Final; and a walk of the Clonfin battle site
- November - History Month, including seminars on the War of Independence for primary and second-level teachers; talks on the Revolutionary period to school groups by Dr Mel Farrell; and a History Ireland Hedge School in Backstage Theatre.

Creative Ireland

The Archivist is a member of Culture Team which is overseeing the Creative Ireland Programme. As well as assisting in the administration of the programme, he helped to organise various events, including the Padraic Colum Gathering.

Local Government Archivists and Records Managers (LGARM)

As chairperson of the group, the Archivist undertook the following activities:

- A talk on local authority archives at the conference of the Association of Irish Local Government in Longford on 21st February.
- Co-ordinating the preparation of the 'Celebrating Irish Local Government' exhibition, in partnership with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, to mark the 120th anniversary of democratic local government.
- The completion of the group's policy on access to 'closed' archives.

Outreach

The following events were organised:

- 21st January - 'An introduction to archives' for first year History classes in Moyne Community School.
- 6th March - lecture and opening of exhibition on 'Saints' Island and its manuscripts' by Prof. Padraig Ó Riain, UCC (in Longford Library).
- 10th April - lecture on 'The first local elections and councils in Longford' by Kitty Hughes, with the opening of exhibition in Longford Library, marking 120 years of democratic local government.
- 25th September - 'An introduction to sources for the War of Independence', for senior History students (in Mullingar – in association with the Decade of Centenaries Programme, Westmeath).
- 26th September - facilitated visits to the research room, Library HQ, for transition year classes, St Mel's College.

- 2nd, 4th October - facilitated visits to the research room, Library HQ, for first year History classes, St Mel's College.
- 15th October - facilitated a visit to the research room, Library HQ, for Tourism class, Templemichael College



National Famine Way

The Archivist assisted in the development of the Longford section of the National Famine Way by providing historical information on six specific places, which were chosen as stopping points.

Work placement

The Archivist mentored a student studying for the Diploma in Historical Archives (Maynooth University), who was on placement for two days per week, October-December.

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE

The County Longford continued its programme of works in 2019, to further the aims of the County Longford Heritage Office and to increase our knowledge and awareness of Longford's diverse heritage stock and potential threats to its long-term survival. These included:-

County Longford Heritage Plan 2019-2024

The preparation of the new County Longford Heritage Plan 2019-2024, incorporating the County Biodiversity Action Plan, was completed in 2019 by the Heritage Office and County Longford Heritage Forum. The draft was placed for public consultation in October 2019, and submissions were received up to January 2020. A number of submissions on the draft were received by organisations and individuals and were incorporated into the draft as new policies or amendments to the existing, prior to adoption by the members of Longford County Council at the meeting in January 2020. The plan will be formally published in 2020.

County Longford Wetlands Survey 2019

Wetlands are important ecological sites, that act like filters, intercepting nutrients and pollutants before they enter water-bodies, as well as regulating the release of water into waterways and the surrounding landscape. They are also hugely important habitats, for a variety of animal and insect species, The Longford Wetlands Survey Project 2019, is the second phase of an ongoing research project to assess the extent and nature of sites of potential wetland significance in 2019. This follows on from the Longford & Roscommon Wetlands Survey 2017 – Phase 1 desktop survey, undertaken by Wetlands Surveys Ireland and Dr Peter Foss in 2017. From this desktop survey, sites of potential biodiversity significance were identified for field survey. Non-designated and non-Bord na Móna sites were prioritised, as those already had significant data gathered. Five survey locations were identified: Lough Sallagh (Longford shore only), a significant fishing lake at the border with Leitrim; Black Lough, a largely infilled lake; Currygrane Lough; Killeen Lough Complex which held a number of wetland types, and Ballybrien Wetland.



Longford Wetlands Survey 2019 LF 132 Ballin Lough where marsh fritillary was found

The field survey was undertaken by Wetland Surveys Ireland and provided high-quality ecological data on eighteen individual sites within five locations of potential interest, identified in the 2017 desktop survey, affording us a better understanding of the nature and condition of a variety of wetland types within the county. They were: 1. LF44 Lough Sallagh (LONGFORD), 2. LF53 Black Lough, 3. LF130 Killeen Ponds, 4. LF131 Killeen Lough, 5. LF132 Ballin Lough, 6. LF133 Killeen Bog, 7. LF134 Aghagreagh Bog, 8. LF135 Clonbroney, Bog Woodland, 9. LF136 Cloonfin Lough, 10. LF137 Knockmoody Bog, 11. LF182 Currygrane Wet Woodland, 12. LF183 Currygrane Lough, 13. LF186 Cloonfin South, 14. LF254 Ballybrien Wetland, 15. LF283 Killeen Pond (North) – Ballinlough, 16. LF284 Listraghee Lough, 17. LF288 Ballyreaghan Quarry Pond, 18. LF289 Drummeel Farm Pond North

These were a mix of natural lakes, some with woodlands on their shores, artificial ponds (farm and quarry) and boglands. The survey also identified threats to those wetlands, including invasive species and illegal dumping, which was passed onto the Environmental Awareness Officer immediately for action. Conversely, the survey also provided the first sighting of a rare protected species, the marsh fritillary, (*Eurodryas aurinia*), in two locations, LF132 Ballinlough and LF133 Killeen Lough. The data will add to the overall understanding of Ireland's wetlands and can feed directly into the County Development Plan review.

County Longford Non-Invasive Archaeological Research Project 2019 – Granardkille

Non-Invasive Archaeological Research Project – Granardkille, is the most recent of a series of similar archaeological research projects within the county, primarily looking at medieval and Anglo-Norman sites within County Longford. The purpose of this project was to potentially help identify the lost 12th century town of Granard.

The survey investigated two fields adjacent to the Granard motte-and-bailey castle, in the townlands of Granardkille & Moatfield, located to the south-west of the impressive 12th century motte-&-bailey castle of Granard. This motte-and-bailey castle, one of the most impressive in Ireland, was founded c.1199 by Richard de Tuite, to assist in the Anglo-Norman colonisation of the kingdom of Annally; deTuite founded the Cistercian monastery at Abbeylara, which was previously surveyed. A town was established to service the castle, but this was sacked in 1345 by Edward Bruce, and later rebuilt. There is a long tradition of the historic town being to the south of the castle adjacent to the early medieval church at Granardkille but was not identified NUIG excavations held in 2001 and 2002, led by Dr. Kieran O'Connor. Dr O'Connor has continued to revisit the data and identified a new location to explore, suggesting that perhaps it was closer to the castle.

This non-invasive archaeological survey, blending high-resolution aerial surveys as well as geophysical techniques, is the first step in determining whether this is in fact the case. Dr Kieran O'Connor led the small, targeted team. Dr. Paul Naessens, who also worked on the 2001-2002 excavation undertook the aerial survey, using high-resolution video and photography using drones. John Nichols MSc carried out the ground survey, using a remarkable proprietary ten-channel magnetometer providing far more detail than traditional equipment, and in a fraction of the time. However, the research has provided negative evidence for the 12th century foundation at this location. This may suggest that the current town of Granard may have, in fact, been built on the 12th century town, and would benefit from further review. Nevertheless, some new sites of interest were found, with potential for significant archaeology relating to Granard's history.

This research project was supported by groups within the town of Granard, in particular project partner the Granard Motte Community Enterprise CLG, that opened the Norman-themed Knights & Conquests Heritage Centre in 2018. One of the aims of the project was to provide accurate data to the Granard Motte Community Enterprise CLG for the interpretation of the motte-and-bailey castle and the town in their Knights & Conquests Centre, and in their planned Norman-themed outdoor visitor park. The group also hosted a Heritage Week family event to raise awareness of life in the 12th century town of Granard. The project was also supported by the Granard Area Historical Group and the Granard Mens Shed.

Biodiversity Awareness Programme 2019

This programme commenced in 2017 with support under the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund, and continued in 2019, continuing on the collaborative project took place between Longford County Council, (Ballymahon Municipal District, the Heritage Office and Environmental Awareness Officer) and the Goldsmith Literary Festival Committee and Longford Environmental Alliance at the site of the childhood home of writer Oliver Goldsmith. Practical works were undertaken to make the site more pollinator friendly, including seeding the meadow with native wildflower seed, and

planting local native riparian plants at the edge of the pond in a Heritage Week 2019 public event. Other works to improve access to the site were completed by Longford County Council.

In addition, the Dromard Area Mens Shed came on board as a partner, and a native seed nursery was established at the former Latin School at Moyne. This comprised setting up an appropriate polytunnel and undertaking training with the Hedgelayers Association. The participants began collecting seeds locally in November 2019, and it is hoped that this nursery will provide thoroughly local native shrubs, plants and trees to help improve hedgerows and public spaces in the region.

Heritage Week 2019

National Heritage Week 2019 ran from the 17 to the 25th August, and the theme was 'Past Times: Pastimes', and included the second annual Water Heritage Day on the 25th August. Each year the festival hosts over 2000 events, which attract 450,000 participants.

In Co. Longford, 28 events took place around the county including exhibitions, walks, talks, and family days, as well as a range of events for young and old at the OPW's Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre. Other highlights included a geological visit to the Quarry Park at Newtowncashel with Matthew Parkes, who participated in the Geological Heritage Audit of Co. Longford, an event planting bee-friendly plants at the childhood home of Oliver Goldsmith, and the launch of the community-developed walk at Pullaneis Waterfall in Aughnacliffe to celebrate Water Heritage Day.

Creative Ireland - Longford

The Heritage Office continued to work as part of the Creative Ireland - Longford team, to deliver the objectives and events of the year and assisted community groups and heritage organisations in Longford to produce their own events and projects. This included providing support to the Granard Harp Festival, which took place from the 23-25 August, to coincide with National Heritage Week.



The Lynch family busking at the Granard Harp festival in August

Conservation Grants

The Heritage Office administered two conservation grants on behalf of the Department of the Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht, later the Dept of the Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs: The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2019 (BHIS 2019) and the new Historic Structures Fund 2019 (HSF 2019).

Under the BHIS 2019, County Longford was allocated €60,000 which enabled seven structures to undertake essential and urgent conservation repairs. These buildings were a mix of domestic, agricultural and ecclesiastical, including a previously-vacant canal lock-keepers cottage to be returned to domestic use. This grant generated approximately 580 days of labour, and over €76,000 of private investment in Longford's protected structures.

The HSF 2019, supported two structures in Co. Longford, including the completion of the repairs of the iconic Porter's Lodge entrance gate to Carriglass Demense, designed by architect James Gandon. Also supported was Creevaghmore House near Ballymahon, a remarkable 17th century family home, which the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage has categorised as being of national importance. These projects were supported by the fund to the tune of €41,000, and was supplemented by private investment, creating approximately 200 days of skilled conservation labour. The 2020 schemes were announced at the end of 2019 and applications were sought from the public for repairs in 2020.

Decade of Centenaries/ Longford At War

The Heritage Office provided support to the ongoing national Decade of Centenaries programme. This included the ongoing management of our online database of Longford military personnel on www.longfordatwar.ie. As part of this,

the Heritage Office supported Longford's first History Month held in November 2019, providing support to the History Ireland hedgeschool among others. The Heritage Office itself undertook one event, a lecture on the mysterious Alfred James McHugh, a veteran of the Easter Rising and the only Irish Citizen Army member from Co. Longford.

Other Collaborative Heritage Projects

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

- Providing guidance and advice on heritage matters to Local Authority employees and departments.
- Providing support and advice to private individuals, local heritage and community groups in the care and conservation of their heritage.
- Providing ongoing support to the Planning Section and to owners and occupiers of historic buildings and protected structures and assessing relevant planning applications.
- Maintaining Social Media accounts to promote and advance Longford's heritage, and contributing to the Longford County Council and Longford Libraries social media accounts.
- Providing ongoing support for the Fáilte Ireland *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands* tourism brand, including participation in their training programme.

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

Longford County Library Annual Statistical Report 2019

No. of Library Visits

Library Branch	Jan-Mar	Apr-June	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total 2019	Total 2018
Ballymahon	6,149	7,419	6,347	6,825	26,740	24,868
Drumlish	1,007	1,129	859	737	3,732	4,440
Edgeworthstown	450	455	336	262	1,503	1,584
Granard	3,640	3,654	4,318	4,804	16,416	16,773
Lanesboro	6,078	5,506	6,357	4,045	21,986	19,990
Longford	45,106	51,462	54,723	51,352	202,643	164,873
Total No. of Library Visits	62,430	69,625	73,120	68,025	273,020	232,528

No. of Registered Members

Library Branch	Total 2019	Total 2018	Total 2017
Ballymahon	1,137	1,070	1,227
Drumlish	252	328	315
Edgeworthstown	182	206	278
Granard	752	836	900
Lanesboro	695	830	550
Longford	4,874	4,569	4,328
Total Membership	7,892	7,839	7,598
*Total Dec 2019	125		
Total Membership 2019	8,017		

No. of Book Check-Outs/Issues 2019

Branch	Desk Checkouts	Self Service Checkouts	Total	Total 2018
Ballymahon	12,706	4,662	17,368	18,763
Drumlish	4,378	--	4,378	6,189
Edgeworthstown	1,055	--	1,055	2,943
Granard	4,437	3,509	7,946	8,459
Lanesboro	11,535	--	11,535	11,931
Longford	65,656	1,055	66,711	68,086
Total	99,767	9,226	108,993	116,371

No. of Internet Sessions Used

Library Branch	Internet PC Jan- Mar	Internet PC Apr- June	Internet PC Jul-Sep	Internet PC Oct-Dec	Total 2019	Total 2018
Ballymahon	884	868	933	986	3,671	3,775
Drumlish	90	92	81	75	338	335
Edgeworthstown	82	90	54	22	248	282
Granard	609	597	597	653	2,456	2,538
Lanesboro	945	978	973	757	3,653	3,234
Longford	3,399	3,545	3,378	3,417	13,739	13,746
Total	6,009	6,170	6,016	5,910	24,105	24,008

Online Resources Usage Statistics 2019

Website Stats: www.longfordlibrary.ie	
No of Hits:	47,552

RBDigital Online Magazine	
No. of Checkouts	2,431

Bolinda/Borrowbox	
No. of Loans ebooks	
No. of Loans eAudioBooks	2,245
No of Users	495
No. of Active Users	90

RBDigital Universal Class	
New Registrations 2019	50
New Courses Started 2019	52
No. of Lessons Viewed	969
No. of Lesson Video Watched	640
Student Submissions	540

Mango Languages	
Total Sessions:	371
Total Courses:	366
Mobile Courses:	277
Average session:	17 minutes
Total learning time:	6,310 minutes

Coding Classes	
No of Participants	180

The main functions of the Finance Section 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/Housing Rents/Housing Loan Payments

General Office – processing all payments

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. Systems are in place to ensure that interest penalties are not incurred. Total amount of interest penalties:

Interest Penalties	Nil
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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.

Expenditure

Local Government Act 2001 – Section 142 Expenditure	
Mayor & Other Allowances	€66,000
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	€23,919
Representational Payments, Expenses of Members and Representation at Conferences	€411,669
TOTAL	€504,802

Control & Compliance Unit

Following on from its inception in 2018 in order to combine two integral aspects of the organisation - Internal Audit & Procurement Compliance, this unit has rapidly developed to becoming the main internal enabler of operational and strategic Risk Management throughout Longford County Council.

The unit is led by an Administrative Officer with overall responsibility for the unit, the Internal Auditor, a Procurement Officer and two admin support staff. In 2020 it is envisaged to complement the Internal Audit arm with a second resource to assist the Internal auditor in carrying out their statutory/designated functions and responsibilities within the organisation which include:

- Preparation and implementation of internal audit plans including a strategic plan and annual work plan.
- Planning and performing audit assignments including risk assessments
- Reviewing the adequacy of controls across key departments
- Identifying and recommending improvement in processes and controls
- Risk management
- Conducting special assignments including value for money
- Audit and Compliance reports for external Bodies including the National Oversight and Audit Commission
- Preparation and Presenting of internal audit reports for Audit Committee & Senior Management
- Liaising with external auditors
- Any other duties and responsibilities that may be assigned from time to time

- Review the Internal Audit Charter
- Data Co-ordinator for the Performance Indicators
- Public Spending Code Compliance & Quality Assurance Process
- Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP)
- Article 48 Checks in conjunction with the LEADER Programme.

The Internal Audit section strives to 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.

The centralised Procurement arm of the unit is tasked with procurement compliance and education for the whole organisation, underpinning the Finance team objectives by ensuring as far as possible that value for money is achieved in a manner that is fair and equitable to all vendors.

This is accomplished through a collaborative approach of advising and guiding staff and colleagues as required and providing the necessary assurances to senior management that best practice has been adhered to.

Control & Compliance Unit members continue to follow a comprehensive programme of training and upskilling which reaps a multitude of benefits both for the individual team member and the organisation as a whole, in terms of the provision of assurances and confidence to the organisation on the guidance issued from the unit.

The procurement unit also assists with competition evaluations as required and acts as an independent advisor to all evaluation teams. Monthly reports are compiled for Management Team outlining areas for improvement and highlighting the level of compliance in the organisation.

Income Generation Unit

The Income Generation Unit (IGU) is responsible for the collection of the main income streams for the Council. This includes rates, housing rents, housing loans and RAS rents. The unit also operates the cash desk which facilitates customer payments for Council goods and services. Certificates of compliance are issued by the unit in respect of payment of the Non-Principal Private Residence (NPPR) charge.

Set out in the table below is a summary of our revenue collection performance for 2019 with comparatives for 2018 and 2017.

Category	2019 % Collected	2018 % Collected	2017 % Collected
Rates	88%	89%	89%
Rents	90%	93%	92%
Housing Loans	59%	55%	60%

Rates

Progress continued in reducing the level of arrears owed to the Council by 27% from €1,410,968 to €1,033,827.

Housing Rents and Loans

Income Generation Unit is responsible for the collection of rents and managing rent accounts that are in arrears. The setting of rents and adjustments to rents are the responsibility of the Housing Section.

This unit is responsible for the housing loans function including collection of loan charges, managing loan accounts that are in arrears and processing housing loan applications. During 2019 there were 33 applications received, 13 were approved, 9 were refused and 16 loans were advanced.

Although rent income increased, rent collection percentages reduced slightly due to the rent increase following the rent review which took effect at the end of March.

Tenancy Warning Notices were issued to tenants who were in breach of their rent related obligations to the Council and who were not engaging with the Council to resolve their arrears. In a very small number of cases orders for possession for non-payment of rent were obtained.

The Council implements the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) for loan customers in financial difficulty. This provides a framework for the Council and borrowers to manage loan arrears and restructure their loans in some circumstances.

Motor Tax

There were no significant developments in motor tax legislation during the year. Receipts for motor tax locally were again down from 2018 (€3,494,851). The increase in online motor tax transactions continued during the year and this led to the 9% decrease in motor tax receipts locally in Longford.

Motor Tax Transactions 2019	Number	Amount
Vehicle Licences (Discs)	17,674	€2,986,509
Miscellaneous Transactions (Vehicle Registration Certificates, Trade Plates etc.)	3,648	€ 207,012
Total Motor Tax Transactions	21,322	€3,193,521

The Information Systems Department provides operational and strategic ICT services for the Council. The department is responsible for the ICT infrastructure and also for planning the future ICT requirements of the organisation. In an operations capacity, the department has responsibility for multiple ICT systems spread across the County in a Wide Area Network (WAN) infrastructure.

During 2019 Longford County Council's IS Department delivered several significant infrastructural, digital and software projects and delivered improvements in IS Security and enhancement of the ICT architecture.

A significant investment was made in several key application areas such as Office 365, mobile security, Community CCTV, Corporate WAN, Security Infrastructure, Library Service IT, Local Elections IT, Mobile Voice & Data Services, Mobile Apps, Open Data, GDPR Compliance, Social Media and a new digital strategy for Co. Longford as well as promotion of the National Broadband Plan and other Digital Projects. The ongoing operational support work in IT continued to consume considerable resource time and effort particularly in the area of Community CCTV. The following were the key areas of focus in 2019:

Network Infrastructure – IT Applications and Development

Longford County Council's ICT network is made up of several complex components which require on-going management, maintenance and monitoring. During 2019 the Council began work to implement a hybrid cloud architecture, allowing the organisation to move towards more non-traditional office-based work processes and practices, while also providing scalable on demand additional computing resources as and when required.

Notable projects and work completed during 2019 included:

- Completion and roll out of mobile voice and data tender.
- Establishment of joint Án Garda Síochána and Longford County Council steering group to oversee and provide governance to Longford Town Community CCTV system, 6 meetings were held in 2019 with all overseen and organised by the IS section.
- Bi-monthly updates provided to Longford MD on Community CCTV work.
- Significant update and tidy of server room completed.
- Lead authority in shared procurement with Cavan County Council of Office 365 software.
- Implementation of Office 365 software for the entire organisation over the St. Patricks bank holiday weekend meaning no downtime for majority of business areas.
- Completion of tender for consultants and subsequent implementation of survey and review of existing community CCTV system in Longford Town.
- Commencement of work on Reps System to handle all elected members motions.
- Completion of civil and technical works and installation of new CCTV camera at Oakvale estate.
- Installation of network and related ICT infrastructure at local elections count centre in Edgeworthstown Community Centre.
- Update of WAN through installation of fibre connections at three remote site locations.
- Update and installation of firewalls at three remote locations.
- Tender and rollout of new IT equipment, mobile devices and O365 software for all elected members following May elections.
- Complete review and update of mobile device policies and implementation of updated Mobile Device Management Software.
- Tender and award of internal CCTV system update.
- Structural and foundation survey completed of mast at Connolly Barracks to ascertain its suitability for CCTV system transmission.
- Design and development of IT plans for Edgeworthstown library completed in partnership with library service
- Technical design completed and tender completed for mobile housing inspections app.
- Windows 7 desktop update completed, and forest exit work commenced.

GIS and Database Systems

The Council's GIS System continued to play a fundamental role throughout all business areas in 2019, some notable projects and work completed during 2019 included:

- Development and Implementation of mobile Playground Inspections application for Roads staff.
- Development and launch of Longford County Council's Open Data Portal <http://data-longfordcoco.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Development and implementation of Public Information Interactive Map for the Japanese Knotweed Treatment Program <http://bit.ly/2KQcHN1>
- Design and implementation of a Road Notice Interactive Map to accompany social media posts.
- Design and implementation of map viewer for Regeneration Team which brings together datasets to facilitate informed decision making around regeneration of Lanesborough and Ballymahon.
- Design and development of Derelict Sites mapping application for recording site detail.
- Mapping of CCTV network to support Longford Town CCTV tender and provision of open data.
- Implementation of planning applications dashboard and open data provision.
- Review of SQL licencing and provisioning.
- New mobile Space Engagers app developed and implemented for Regeneration section.
- Validation of Eircodes held in council systems such as iReg and iHouse.
- Development of Road Maintenance Application for recording road maintenance jobs.
- Development of Road Pavement Management System viewing application to show road survey completions and to do surveys.
- Spatial data processing and map production to support data format requirements of the business area.
- Mapping and spatial analysis of electoral areas to support the examination of boundary changes for local election purposes.
- Realignment of road engineering area and municipal area boundaries to reflect changes to electoral boundaries.
- Production of interactive mapping application for the roads winter maintenance program <http://bit.ly/2RpajOw>
- Spatial dataset process supply to nominated consultants to support County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

Digital Projects & Broadband

The Councils IT Section continued to play a major role in the promotion of the digital agenda within the Local Authority and wider County. During 2019, some notable projects and work completed included:

- Implementation of recommendations included in the strategic review of social media and digital communication channels used by the Council.
- Creation and coordination of a central Corporate Facebook page.
- We continued our work on the mobile voice and data problem areas within the County, working with telco operators and local representatives to find solutions to improve coverage in the areas highlighted during our earlier survey.
- Through funding provided by the Dept of Rural and Community Development we created the Longford Primary School's Digital Project, unique to Longford the project assisted Longford children to become engaged and active learners in relation to broadband technology and the National Broadband Plan. At the awards ceremony held in County Hall in April, over 100 children and teachers from 9 schools in Co. Longford received awards from Minister Seán Canney.
- We commenced the tender process to implement our WIFI4EU funding in three towns in the county.
- Extensive social media coverage provided for local elections count in Edgeworthstown Community Centre resulting in over 26,000 engagements over the weekend.
- Provision and operation of eCount software for local elections count centre in Edgeworthstown Community Centre.
- New digital customer and staff information screens implemented in Council buildings.
- Digital Strategy consultation commenced - Internal digital strategy workshop held in the Council Chamber on the 11th June. Digital strategy online consultation/surveys for Citizens, Community Groups and Business completed.

- Digital Futures Breakfast Briefing Workshop hosted by Longford County Council and held in Ballymahon Library on the 22nd October and attended by Minister Canney.
- Twelve high speed broadband connection points identified and submitted to Dept for approval to provide community WIFI in areas with no high-speed broadband available to families or businesses.
- Explore Longford App updated and launched on IOS and Android stores.
- IP Phone system extended to remote sites.
- Significant positive response to Social Media #YourCouncil campaign.
- Presentation of work completed by Longford County Council in relation to the National Broadband Plan and mobile and data coverage, made during the launch of the “Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Implementation Review”. The work of the council was presented to national media and was one of only two Local Authorities who presented on the day.
- We played an integral role in the collection of priorities and views from our elected members through digital tools at the Corporate Plan Workshop held at the end 2019.



Digital Futures Breakfast Briefing Workshop



1st place winners in Longford's Primary Schools Digital Project:



Longford Municipal District – Melview N.S.
Granard Municipal District – Scoil Mhuire N.S., Aughnagarron
Ballymahon Municipal District – St. John's N.S. Edgeworthstown

Data Protection

The 'General Data Protection Regulation' (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 came into effect on the 25th May 2018 and was transposed into Irish Law by way of the Data Protection Act 2018. The Data Protection and Information Compliance Officer helps to ensure the organisation's compliance with all obligations pursuant to the Data Protection legislation.

Works completed during 2019 were:

- Longford Town Community CCTV Policy and Elected Members Representations policy were approved and implemented in 2019, the Elected members representations policy was presented the CPG.
- Consultation on exact reasons for each newly proposed CCTV camera completed and presented and approved by Municipal District.
- Completion of alternative solutions documents for new and proposed CCTV camera locations in Longford Town
- Records of processing exercise was rolled out to all the DPLOs in each section. The exercise has been completed for, Housing, Rent collection, arrears, motor tax and Loans.
- A Full and comprehensive Privacy statement has been published on the website for all data processing activities carried out by the council.
- Implementation of new signage compliant with GDPR at all Community CCTV locations and approach roads into Longford Town.
- Data Protection Impact Assessments were performed on Longford Town Community CCTV, Private rented housing app and Body Worn Camera. The assessment on Longford Town CCTV was presented to the CCTV steering group and actions agreed.
- There were 169 Data Protection queries in 2019 mainly in relation to sharing Personal data internally & externally, employee data, consent, Representations and around transparency.
- Data Processing and Data Sharing Agreements were drafted for various section.
- Training was delivered to ICT team on Longford Community CCTV, Data Breach awareness training delivered to all staff and SEOs and Data Protection awareness training was delivered to the Environment section.
- There was one reportable data breach in 2019, 4 Data Subject Access Requests and 41 CCTV Access Requests.
- The Data Protection & Information compliance officer attended all monthly National DPO meetings and Regional DPO meetings during 2019 and presented Longford's Records of Processing exercise on the Housing section to the National DPO network workshop.
- Various other Data Protection policies were drafted and are currently at consultation stage.

Website Visits

Website	Number of Website Page Views	
	2018	2019
longfordcoco.ie	347,904	572,754
longfordlibrary.ie	72,900	73,446
longford.ie	10,108	50,231
Longfordppn.ie	2,553	4,762



Since the establishment of the Regeneration Unit in 2015, the scope of the Unit has expanded and the impact is visible county wide. The Regeneration Unit works extensively with local communities to enhance their local areas but also focuses on the regeneration of the County from a more strategic perspective, to build on the existing natural assets within the County and to make it a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

The scope of Regeneration was significantly enhanced in 2019, with the structure of the section expanded to reflect the intensive ongoing work programme. This structure consists of a multidisciplinary team of ten, including administrative, technical and professional staff

operating under the Finance directorate. Following the local elections, a regeneration sub-committee was established, with an inaugural meeting held in October 2019 that outlined work to date and the ongoing regeneration work programme. This programme includes ongoing engagement with communities, sourcing of funding in line with established policy and delivery of capital projects to progress identified objectives.

Funding

The regeneration team has had continued success in securing funding for a range of projects of community and County level, addressing enterprise, amenity and tourism development along with public realm improvements and large scale Urban and Rural regeneration. Longford County Council confirmed their commitment to regeneration in the 2019 budget to generate matched funding to secure these initiatives.

A primary focus of the Regeneration Unit is in the securing of funding to enhance existing amenities and develop new ones across the County. The table below details the number of applications submitted by the Regeneration Unit under the various schemes available, as well as the number of successful applications and the value of those funding streams. Funding of **€10,728,834** has been obtained under various schemes. This money will be further enhanced by match funding to be provided by Longford County Council and contributions to be made by communities in certain instances, bringing the total spend on these schemes in excess of €15m.

Funding applications submitted

In 2019, the Regeneration Team submitted applications for funding under a number of funding streams, as detailed Below:

Funding Stream	No. Of Applications Submitted	No of Successful Applications	Value
Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2019	12	6	€454,104
ORIS 2019	12	7	€749,842
Faite Ireland	1	1	€500,000
RRDF 2018	3	2	€4,141,542
RRDF 2019	1	1	€522,265
URDF	2	1	€4,000,000
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	1	1	€361,081
Total	28	16	€10,728,834

The Regeneration team continue to work closely with the local communities in the development and delivery of key projects for the enhancement of our local towns, village and natural amenities. The projects supported through funding announcements in 2019 include:

Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2019

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Ardagh Walk	€69,830	€55,864
Heritage Signage, Drumlish	€26,300	€21,040
Undergrounding of Wires, Keenagh	€168,768.80	€100,000
Car Park, Killashee	€128,374.18	€100,000
Rose Cottage, Ballinalee	€140,000	€100,000
Footpath, Legga	€96,500	€77,200
Total		€454,104

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2019

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Newcastle Woods Perimeter Walk	€24,241.72	€19,393.38
Mosstown Mill	€28,189.83	€20,000
The Mall Walk Upgrade	€24,775.36	€19,820.29
Royal Canal – Killashee to Clondra Upgrade	€24,932	€19,945
Ballinalee Forest Walk	€24,797.50	€19,838
Knappagoue Bog Walk	€210,049.35	€168,039.48
Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park	€603,507.42	€482,805.94
Total		€749,842.09

Failte Ireland Destination Towns

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Entrance to Royal Canal at Rear of Market Square	€923,265.75	€500,000

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2018

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Granard Motte Tourism Project	€3,829,911.44	€2,872,433.58
Edgeworthstown Public Realm	€4,548,794.97	€1,269,109
Total		€4,141,542.58

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2019

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
The Yard, Abbeyshrule	€696,354.28	€522,265.71

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Longford Connected	€4,000,000	€3,000,000

Department of Transport Tourism and Sport

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Longford Greenways	€361,081	€361,081

Work has commenced on the implementation of these projects. 2019 also saw the completion of a number of projects approved funding under the various schemes in 2018. The Regeneration Team are also working on the delivery of a number of capital projects, including Edgeworthstown Library and the Mall Complex. Through the delivery of the projects funded under the various schemes above, the South Longford Greenway is nearing completion, including linking of the Royal Canal Greenway to the towns and villages within the County. This also includes the redevelopment of the Longford Town Royal Canal section, bringing it up to a high standard.

Furthermore, the Regeneration Department secured significant funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for the completion of the Greenway throughout Longford to a high standard, including signage and ancillary infrastructure. Longford County Council have also supported a number of communities in the delivery of tourism projects with Failte Ireland, including the Maria Edgeworth Visitor Centre in Edgeworthstown, which was opened in October 2019 and adds to the tourism infrastructure of our county. The Regeneration team have worked closely with Failte Ireland during 2019, not only in the delivery of the Maria Edgeworth Centre but also in the securing of €630,000 of funding towards the development of the Granard Motte Heritage Park, which was announced in May 2019.

URBACT UrbSecurity

Longford County Council recognised the issue of urban security facing many towns and cities across Ireland, as well as Europe and Longford County Council Regeneration Department recognises the importance of a collaborative approach to seeking solutions to this problem. As part of this approach we have become involved in a European project working with 8 other project partners to plan safer cities. UrbSecurity is a project under the URBACT programme, which intends to analyse strategies and concepts of urban design and planning that could contribute to prevent segregation and anti-social behaviour, and also to improve citizen's quality of life and their perception of urban security and safety. As a network of 9 cities, UrbSecurity aims to implement an integrated and participatory approach to urban security by involving all relevant stakeholders in the process of co-creating an Integrated Action Plan for each participating city.

The project is led by the city of Leiria in Portugal and includes Madrid (Spain), Parma (Italy), Mechelen (Belgium), Pella (Greece), Michalove (Slovakia), Szabolcs 05 Association of Municipalities (Hungary) and the region of Romagna Faentina (Italy) along with Longford. This project is an URBACT project, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

As part of this project, the Regeneration Unit promoted the work of Longford County Council on the European stage, at a number of events hosted by URBACT.

Collaboration Groups/Town Teams

The Regeneration Unit have been working very closely with the local communities to identify what is needed to enhance their areas. In order to support this, support has been provided to the establishment of Collaboration Groups/Town Teams in a number of settlements across the county, namely

- Lanesboro/Ballyleague Collaboration Group,
- Ballymahon Town Team,
- Drumlish/Ballinamuck Town Team and
- Edgeworthstown Town Team.

Each of those areas have developed Local Action Plans, which will inform future funding applications. The Regeneration Team has worked with the Town Teams in the development of a number of projects to date and continues to progress delivery of the action plans, including obtaining funding for the Ballinamuck Visitor Centre, Drumlish to Monaduff walkway and the Drumlish Heritage signs project. Our work with the local communities also involves extensive consultation with the various statutory stakeholders, including the Minister for Rural and Community Development and his department and were delighted to welcome the Minister to Longford on a number of occasions throughout 2019, showing support for the work of the Regeneration Department and the various communities we work with.

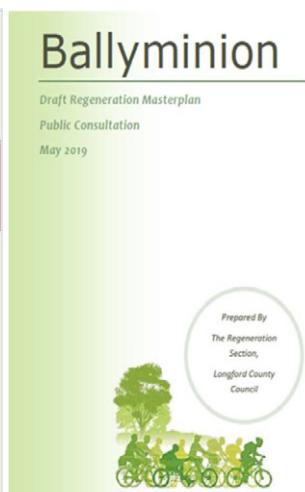
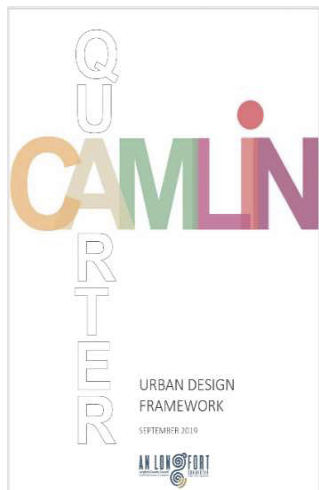
Policy

The Regeneration Section, through application of the various funding streams, continues to promote policy implementation at all levels. Checks are in place to align projects with climate change and sustainability principles and to ensure that community voices are heard in their implementation.

The strategic operation and coordination role of the team provides opportunities to combine projects across the organisation to achieve common objectives. The team provide feedback where appropriate in the preparation of relevant policy documents, such as the Climate Adaptation Plan, adopted in September 2019 and the County Development Plan Review, maximising efficiencies, value for money and avoiding duplication.

Masterplanning

It is recognised by the Regeneration Unit that the regeneration of the County must be plan-led and a strategic focus must be taken. Therefore there are a number of plans completed in 2019 for the Camlin Quarter and Ballyminion areas. With a strong public consultation element, these plans form the basis for the development of these areas:



1. **Ballyminion Masterplan** – incorporated a strong public consultation and ongoing negotiations with landowners and the various sections of the council in support of measures to address long-term issues in Ballyminion.

2. **Camlin Quarter Urban Design and Economic Framework** – this framework document included a strong public consultation element, to develop a framework document that would form the basis for the development of strategic funding proposals.

Furthermore, the Regeneration team have supported the business owners in the Mastertech Business Park who

commissioned a concept plan for the area in 2019. Mastertech represents a strategic link to the south of Longford Town, having a strong influence on appearance and circulation on the Athlone Road and linking greenway and blueway projects on the Royal Canal with enhanced pedestrian facilities through the Farranyoogan residential area on to Ballyminion.

URDF – Longford Connected

Works are underway on the €4m URDF project in Longford town with initial resurfacing carried out to the shopping centre and enabling surveys and design work underway in all project areas. Consultants have been engaged to bring the project to construction tender stage in the second quarter of 2020. It is anticipated that Longford County Council will submit a further application under the second URDF call to coordinate regeneration initiatives and extend these into the Camlin Quarter area.

Vacant Site Levy

In accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, the relevant provisions were incorporated into the planning framework over the course of 2016 to facilitate the application of the Vacant Site Levy and a Register was established in January 2017. In 2018, 5 sites were entered on the register, three of which were issued with notices under Section 11 of the Act, regarding levy application from January 2019. Positive discussions and/or activity has occurred in respect of all sites registered and under consideration for registration, leading to land activation in certain instances. One site was removed from the register in 2019 following its redevelopment. It is anticipated that the VSL will be reviewed and potentially expanded in 2020.

Gas Network Expansion

The Regeneration Section worked closely with Gas Networks Ireland to secure the expansion of the Gas Network across the Inny Bridge to serve Ballymahon. The section continues to work with GNI to progress the further extension of this network to Longford and Edgeworthstown, in support of climate action objectives and aligned with projects proposed under the Just transition initiative.

Projects Completed

Significant work was carried out in the completion of a number of projects during 2019, that have a significant impact on the people and economy of Longford. These include the opening of the White Bridge in Newcastle Woods and the opening of the Maria Edgeworth Centre in Edgeworthstown.

Unfinished Estates

Longford County Council continues to place a high priority on tackling problems and issues associated with unfinished housing developments. Although the majority of the unfinished estates have now been taken in charge, the Unfinished Estates team continue with its programme of work, to ensure that all estates are taken to a sufficient standard to ensure enhanced quality of life for residents. The programme of works include:

- Reducing the number of remaining unfinished developments,
- The process of preparing, overseeing and implementing site resolution plans,
- Pursuing enforcement action where necessary,
- Calling in financial securities and bonds in order to access funding to complete public infrastructure within developments and,
- Taking in charge of completed developments.

There were originally 128 unfinished estates within the county and, to date, 109 have been taken in charge by Longford County Council. The Unfinished Estates team has negotiated Site Resolution Plans for the remaining estates and work will continue on these during the coming year.

Conclusion

The work of the Regeneration Unit has been recognised at national and European level with the work of the team shortlisted for the European Innovation in Politics Institute Awards and also for the Property Industry Excellence Awards. The Regeneration Unit continue to strive for excellence in all elements of its work and will continue to work to support the Executive, the Elected Members and the various communities to ensure that Longford is a great place in which to live, work and visit. All sources of funding will be explored and all work will be carried out to the highest standard.

Welcoming Minister Ring to support work of Regeneration



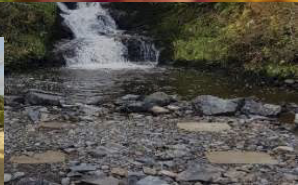
Collaborating with Failte Ireland to enhance Tourism Infrastructure



Welcoming Funding Announcements



Supporting communities to complete projects to enhance local areas



Recognition of the Quality of work of Regeneration Department



Collaborating with European Partners to enhance Longford



HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE AT WORK

Achieving workplace safety across a business as diverse as Longford County Council is a challenge. Managing health and safety can only be accomplished through the commitment of all employees. Longford County Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace through continuous improvement and includes health and safety as an integral part of business.

Certification to OHSAS 18001:2007

In 2014, Longford County Council was awarded certification of registration of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System to OHSAS 18001:2007 by the National Standard Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

OHSAS 18001:2007 is an internationally recognised standard for the management of Occupational Health and Safety. It is intended to assist Longford County Council to:

- Provide a safe place of work for all employees
- Comply with legal requirements and
- Control and manage health and safety risks associated with the work activities of the Council.

Longford County Council is recommended for certification to OHSAS 18001:2007 for cross organisational processes. The following departments were included within the scope of the audit.

- Facilities Management
- Corporate Services
- Housing
- Human Resources
- Libraries
- Roads
- Water Services
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Planning
- Community & Enterprise
- IT
- Finance
- Local Enterprise Office
- Arts
- Rapid
- Sports Partnership



In October 2019, the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) completed a successful recertification audit. This is a very important certification for Longford County Council and demonstrates the commitment to the management and continuous improvement of health and safety to make Longford County Council a safer place for all employees.

Regulatory Inspections

There were no inspections carried out by the Health and Safety Authority in 2019.

Summary of Accident/Incident Reports for 2019

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.

A total of 37 accidents and incidents were reported during the year 2019.

Classification	2019
Violence 7 Aggression	15
Electrical	3
Slip, Trip, Fall	3

Road Traffic	0
Manual Handling	1
Driving for Work	0
Security	5
Plant & Machinery	1
Other	9
TOTAL	37

Reportable to HAS	
Reportable Accident (>3 day absence)	3
Dangerous Occurrence	1

The greatest number of incidents were reported in relation to Violence and Aggression. Training in dealing with violence and aggression was carried out in Q4 2019 and Q1 2020. A seminar on Managing the Risk of Electricity and Mind Safety was held with outdoor staff in March 2019 following a dangerous occurrence.

Safety Statement/Risk Assessments

The Safety Statement is a document that every employer and County Council is legally obliged to have and must specify how the County Council manages health and safety.

The Longford County Council safety statement was updated during 2019 and obtained the 'Plain English' mark from the National Adult Literacy Agency. Plain English is a way of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it. Longford is the first County Council in the country to receive the 'Plain English' mark for the Safety Statement.

Risk Assessments require completion for all work activities and buildings owned and/or operated by Longford County Council employees. A continuous programme for the completion, review, update and communication of risk assessments is in place for implementation within all sections of Longford County Council.

Safety Inspections

In 2019, Longford County Council continued with the Safety Inspection Program which sets out a programme of work for safety inspections to be completed at fixed and mobile work locations. The Inspections are carried out by each Directorate and a report is provided to the Management Team on a quarterly basis. The Inspections are a useful tool for determining compliance with Health and Safety requirements within the organisation. Any non-compliance or issues identified in the Safety Inspections are added to an electronic action tracking system to ensure that all actions identified are addressed and satisfactorily closed by each section. 284 safety inspections were carried out in 2019.

Health and Safety Auditing

In 2019, Longford County Council continued auditing of the health and safety management system. Eight days of auditing were completed in 2019. The NSAI carried out four days of auditing. Auditing is an independent, systematic and thorough review of all elements of the safety management system. This involved an external auditor collecting information to determine the reliability and effectiveness of the safety management system. This is a useful process and assists the County Council achieve its objectives of legal compliance by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to improve the effectiveness of health and safety management through continuous improvement.

Health and Safety Training

Training is a key element of promoting a positive safety culture and developing good safety procedures on the job. The training courses held included Safe Pass, IOSH Managing Safely in Construction, Driver CPS, Chain Saw, Asbestos Awareness, Manual Handling and Locating Underground Services training, Mind Safety, Violence & Aggression.

Communication and Consultation

The Council consults and communicates with employees using the following methods:

- Preparation of Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures
- Monthly safety reports
- Safety representatives

- Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee meetings (in each department)
- Safety Management Committee meetings
- Management Team meetings.

The Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings were held in each Directorate on a quarterly basis. Each Committee is chaired by the Director, and includes elected Safety Representatives, Line Managers and the Health and Safety Officer. This process allows for specific safety issues within each Directorate to be discussed. It is a legal requirement to have this process in place for addressing health and safety 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. This meeting is also used to evaluate compliance with the health and safety legislation and to review progress on the Annual Programme of Works. The intranet is used as a communication tool for up to date content of the Safety Management System.

The Health and Safety Officer attends the Management Team meeting each month and provides an update on accidents and incidents, operational issues and national developments in Health and Safety.

The Safety Report is prepared each month by the Health and Safety Officer and circulated to all employees. This is an effective way of communicating relevant information in relation to Health and Safety matters to all employees and contributes to the development of a positive health and safety culture with all employees.

Contractors

Longford County Council continues to assess Contractors that work on their behalf in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2013. Every Contractor completes a Health and Safety Questionnaire and this is assessed by Longford County Council to determine their competency and compliance with Health and Safety requirements.

2019 – Workforce Fatalities in Ireland

There were 46 people fatally injured in work related accidents last year. Longford County Council remains fully committed to managing health and safety and will continue to develop the Safety Management System to ensure a safe place of work for all its employees and members of the public.

Health and Safety Awards 2019

In 2019, Longford County Council submitted an application for the National Irish Safety Awards (NISO). The Council won the best Local Authority Award and Consistent High Achiever Award, making it the fifth year in a row for Longford County Council to win one of the top prizes.



NISO have held safety awards for the last 28 years and these awards have become very important for all companies in Ireland. This year more than 120 companies entered the awards including three other Councils. To enter the awards, the Council had to make a submission under 11 sections and provide evidence of compliance with each of the sections. There were four categories of awards and the council were short listed for the top category. Winning the award would not have been possible without the commitment and input of all employees.



Annual Health and Safety Programme of Works – 2019

The 2019 annual programme of works takes account of this annual report, accidents and incidents, HSA inspections, outcomes from safety inspections and audits, safety meetings, legal requirements and any documents issued nationally for implementation.

HOUSING

Introduction

The number of applicants who were on the Council's Approved Housing List remained high during 2019. The Housing Department assists those on the list by means of a variety of Social Housing options. The options available include:

- Tenancy of a Council Property
- RAS Leases
- Long Term Social Housing Leases
- Housing provided by Approved Housing Bodies
- HAP (Housing Assistance Payment)



Minister Damien English TD and employees from the Housing Department at the Official Opening of Phase 3 of Mill Race Park, Housing Development in Drumlish

Applicants wishing to be included on the Approved Housing List are assessed to determine if they are eligible. The assessment looks at a range of factors including income and the circumstances of the applicant at the time of application. The number of applicants who were included on the Approved Housing List December 31st, 2019 was 857.

Social Housing Provision

The Council provides accommodation for those on the Approved Housing List by a variety of means. In the year to December 31st, 2019 the following were the numbers of units that were provided under the various categories.

	Number Delivered
Secondhand Property Acquisitions	39
Buy and Renew	6
Social Housing Leases	18
TURNKEY New Build Properties	72
Direct New Build Properties	6
RAS Leases	10
HAP Leases	12

The output figures represent the continued commitment of the Council to delivering for those on the Approved Housing List.

Vacant Housing Repair and Leasing Scheme

This scheme is one of a range of options that it is designed to encourage the owners of vacant properties which may have been vacant for a prolonged period to renovate them and return them to beneficial residential occupation. Owners can avail of a variety of incentives to assist them in doing so. The Council or an Approved Housing Body may pay for the completion of any necessary repairs where a lease arrangement can be agreed for a period of a minimum of 10 years.

Buy Renew Scheme

This scheme is intended to compliment the Vacant Housing Repair and Lease scheme. Under this scheme the Council and Approved Housing Bodies may buy vacant residential properties which are in need of remediation. When the properties have been renovated the tenancy of them can be allocated to persons who are included on the Council's Approved Housing List.

Homelessness

101 persons presented as being homeless in County Longford during 2019. Homelessness is dealt with on a collaborative basis in the Midlands Region. Westmeath County Council is the lead agency for counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. In Longford a dedicated Homeless Action Team has been established and meets regularly to assess the needs of those who are homeless in the county. Advice and assistance is provided to those who present as homeless.

Voluntary Housing

Longford County Council continued to work in cooperation with a number of Approved Housing Bodies in 2019. Approved Housing Bodies are continuing to bring forward proposals for the provision of housing for vulnerable people. The Council will assist and support the Approved Housing Bodies and facilitate the accessing of funding for schemes that receive departmental approval.

Maintenance and Refurbishment

A total of €1,146,002 was provided in the 2019 Budget for the maintenance and repair of Council properties. The Council has a stock of in excess of 2,000 properties which vary greatly in age, standard and condition. While the allocation seems large it is never possible to do everything that is desirable in respect of maintenance. The procedures relating to the carrying out of maintenance and repairs are constantly being reviewed in order to ensure that the best possible value for money is achieved. Repairs and maintenance work are carried out on a prioritised basis with the intention of ensuring that emergency and high priority work is completed in as timely a manner as possible.

Energy Retrofitting Scheme/Windows and Doors

The Council continued to seek funding for the completion of Phase 2 of the Energy Efficiency Programme. The preparatory work to enable the conduct of detailed surveys of some properties was completed in 2019. It is hoped that the completion of the required upgrades to the properties that have been surveyed will be advanced in 2020.

Estate Management

The Housing Liaison Officer and Estate Manager continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations during 2019. All new tenants are required to attend a Pre-Tenancy Meeting before they are given the keys of the property that they are moving into. In 2019 advice and assistance was provided to a number of groups who expressed an interest in forming local groups in their areas.

Housing Grant Schemes

In 2019, 123 applications for Housing Grants, were approved across the three categories of grants that were available to applicants. The three grant categories that are available are:

- Mobility Aids Grant Scheme
- Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme
- Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme

The total value of the grants that were allocated was €683,150.00. 27 of these grants were in respect of people who had a disability and the value of the allocated grants was €304,474.00. A total of 47 Mobility Aid Grants were approved and the value of the allocations was €162,969.00. 49 Housing Aid for Older People Grants were allocated with a value of €215,707.00.

In addition to the works that were carried out on privately owned properties work of a similar nature was carried out on 31 Council owned properties in order to address the medical needs of those living in the properties. The cost of these works was €159,012.00.

Traveller Accommodation

The work required to update the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 continued in 2019. A revised Traveller Accommodation Plan will be adopted in 2020 and will detail the numbers and types of accommodation that will be provided over the period from 2020 to 2023. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee was involved in the drafting of the new Traveller Accommodation Plan and met on a number of occasions throughout the year to discuss the progress that was being made in achieving the targets that had been set out for 2019.

Housing and Disability Steering Group

The Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability in Longford was reviewed on each occasion that the Disability Steering Group met in 2019. The group met on 3 occasions in 2019.

Private Rented Property Inspections

Longford County Council is responsible for implementation and enforcement of standards in the private rental sector. Funding is made available to the Council based on the number of inspections that are carried out. Targets are set each year by the Department of the Environment. The target for 2019 was 428 and the target was achieved as 428 inspections were completed in the year to December 31st, 2019.

The level of planning activity in the County of Longford increased last year in terms of planning applications, enforcement, compulsory purchase orders and the review of the County Development Plan (CDP). The Planning Department are committed to ensuring these all its activities are brought to successful completion within the timeframes as set out by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The implementation of the County Development Plan 2015-2021 in relation to tourism and trails projects is proving very successful and will be an asset in adding to the well-being of the County. New legislation, guidelines and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) have created ongoing challenges which are being successfully dealt with by the Planning Section to date. The setting up of the Office of the Irish Planning Regulator creates a new dynamic and challenge for us all in the review of the CDP. Significant activities undertaken by the Planning Department in 2019 are outlined below.

Development Management

The Development Management Section is responsible for the processing of all planning applications in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations. The size and complexity of individual applications has increased over 2019. This included decisions in a wide mix of areas from residential, agricultural, retail, amenity and employment activities. Ongoing planning meetings and discussions are taking place to successfully implement projects in County Longford.

Planning Statistics 2019	
No. of Applications Received	329
No. Decisions to Grant	261
No. Decisions to Refuse	25
No. of Appeals to An Bord Pleanala	10
No. of Part 8 Applications Advertised	21
No. of Part 8 Applications Adopted	16

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 an informative, higher quality and more transparent planning service to the general public. Planning applications are 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 (DECLG). Licence applications under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, principally for roadside signage and planning questions for LEADER funding, are a regular feature of the work carried out in the Planning Department.

Development Fees & Contributions

Development Contributions are levied in accordance with the Development Contributions 2018-2022 Scheme adopted by the Longford County Council under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Certain planning permissions 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 account of the amount actually due and owing to the Council.

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.

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 forward planning work schedule is governed by the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), and the ongoing implementation of national and EU legislation in the planning and environmental arenas.

National & Regional Planning

The Forward Planning Section has a key role to play in National and Regional Planning and the staff members attend regular national and regional planning working groups. Regular submissions are made to national and regional guidance documents, which in 2019 included a significant number of detailed submissions to the RSES. The Council's submissions to the RSES outlined the many strengths and opportunities that should be explored in order to facilitate the potential of County Longford and its role within the Midlands Region.

County Development Plan

Longford County Council's County Development Plan sets the planning framework for development in the County over the period from 2015-2021. The preparation of a new plan commenced in 2019, following the adoption of the RSES. The review is essentially a two year process with the new plan to be adopted in September 2021.

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 national to local level.

County Longford Diaspora

The Planning Section in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office worked on the preparation of the County Diaspora Strategy 2019-2023.

National Housing Policy

Planning work very closely with the Housing Section in order to identify suitable housing land to be developed under the New Housing Policy. This consisted of completion of site assessments and layout design for a number of sites in terms of the planning merits for potential development.

Tourism & Community & Regeneration Initiatives

The Planning Team worked closely with Fáilte Ireland, the Tourism Committee, LEO, Members and Community Groups on various Plans for Longford including the Hidden Heartlands during 2019, including:

Mid Shannon Wilderness Plan	Covering South Longford, Lough Ree and the Royal Canal. A joint plan has now been prepared with Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly County Councils called Lough Ree at the Spirit Level.
Royal Canal Greenway and potential Blueway Trail	Being developed as a major walking/cycling route from Dublin to Clondra and onto Westport. This route has also been developed as the Famine Way route from Strokestown to the docks in Dublin. Substantial works were carried out on the Royal Canal greenway, the final Longford sections was completed in 2019.
North/South Shannon Pilgrim Way	Being considered for development between Limerick and Fermanagh – Longford will be the key intersection between these 2 major Pilgrim routes.
Literary Trail	Covers Mid Longford and will be centred in Edgeworthstown. Work completed in 2019 included the Goldsmith Car Park in Ballymahon, the Goldsmith festival itself which increased its visitor numbers and funding for various signage and branding promotions for these various trails of National and International significance.
Rebel Longford Trail	Covers the North County from Granard to Ballinamuck including Ballinalee and Longford Town. The signage for this trail has been completed with additional works being carried out in Clonfin in anticipation of the 100 year anniversary in 2021.
Newcastle Wood	Provision of new amenity paths in association with Coillte, completed in 2019.
Corlea Trackway	Assisted Kenagh Co-Op and Wetlands Heritage Ireland to acquire and complete the 70 acres adjoining Corlea Trackway Centre for development as an Amenity and Biodiversity Park in association with Bord na Mona. The next phase of Corlea Bog Amenity Walk was completed in 2019.
Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme 2019	The specific projects that Planning helped deliver in 2019 were the White's Bridge (River Inny Bridge), the Newcastle to Royal canal link, and the Lanesboro to Ballinakill link.

There is no doubt that the development of various Tourism Product initiatives will increase tourism and business in the County. The Planning Team continue to engage with and attend meetings with Fáilte Ireland to explore how best to market Longford and the ‘Mighty’ Shannon region in the future.

Planning Enforcement

The role of the Planning Enforcement Section involves investigating complaints from the public with regard to unauthorised developments and non-compliance with planning permissions. The Section conducts site visits and issues Warning Letters, Enforcement Notices and institutes legal proceedings as appropriate. The Section continues to achieve success through negotiation and resolution at pre-warning letter stage resulting in the minimisation of enforcement notices and legal proceedings.

Unfinished Estates

Longford County Council continues to place a high priority on tackling problems and issues associated with unfinished housing developments. The dedicated team established to specifically deal with the issue of unfinished housing developments in County Longford continues to work through issues on the ground, using an array of technical, procedural, and legislative mechanisms in developing solutions in conjunction with residents, developers, financial institutions, receivers and other relevant stakeholders.

During 2019 the Unfinished Estates Team continued with its programme of works which included:

- Reducing the number of remaining unfinished developments
- The process of preparing, overseeing and implementing site resolution plans
- Pursuing enforcement action where necessary
- Calling in financial securities and bonds in order to access funding to complete public infrastructure within developments
- Taking in charge of completed developments

Overall Unfinished Estates Statistics	
No. of Unfinished Estates Identified	128
No. of Estates Certified Compliant/Taken in Charge to Date	109

The Unfinished Estates team has negotiated Site Resolution Plans for the remaining estates and work will continue on these during the coming year.

Conclusion

The Planning Section looks forward to continuing to work positively and enthusiastically with the Executive, the Elected Members, Stakeholders and various Communities of County Longford to continue to provide its citizens with the superior quality of service and dedication they deserve.

In 2019 the Environment Directorate carried out a wide range of activities under inspection, monitoring and environmental awareness programmes.

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 and Horse Control
- Dangerous structures
- Derelict sites

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, farm inspections, licensing of discharges to waters and the implementation of a monitoring programme for rivers, lakes, septic tanks and closed landfills.

River Basin Management

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. This was altered in 2014 whereby Ireland is now regarded as a one River Basin District. In addition, the EU Policy (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 places new obligations on local authorities in co-ordinating the public participation element of the Water Framework Directive. The new national governance arrangement requires Longford County Council to co-ordinate our work in this area with the newly set up national Local Authority Water Community Office (LAWCO) in Kilkenny. Extensive work was undertaken in one particular catchment to improve water quality. Longford County Council continues to monitor water quality in rivers and lakes in line with the relevant River Basin Management Plans.

Environmental Laboratory

The County Council Environment Laboratory is located at Park Road, Longford. The principal areas of activity are

- Water Pollution monitoring and control
- Landfill monitoring
- Monitoring industrial effluent discharges
- Water Quality Monitoring in rivers and lakes

Litter Management

Enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 – 2009 is one of the key mechanisms in tackling litter pollution in County Longford. Litter Control is conducted primarily by the Council's Litter Wardens.

The Council works closely with local Tidy Towns Committees and acknowledges the great work being done by them throughout the county.

The Council continues to prosecute litter offenders and seek full cost recovery where cases proceed to court. A total of 15 prosecutions were initiated in 2019 for non-payment of fines under the Litter Pollution Act 1997. Fines and costs awarded by the Courts amounted to €5,940 in 2019.

In the course of environmental investigations into illegal dumping, the Litter Wardens oversaw the removal of 62 tonnes of waste from illegal dumpsites around the county during 2019.

Street Sweeping

The Council continued its 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. Expenditure on this service was €499,631 in 2019.

Waste Management Plan 2015–2021

The current waste management plan for County Longford is the Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015–2021, available for viewing at <http://emwr.ie/>. Longford is one of the 12 local authorities affiliated to the Eastern-Midlands Waste Region. Dublin City Council acts as the lead authority for plan implementation. Longford County Council works with the National Waste Enforcement Steering Committee (NWESC) and three Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) on waste enforcement and the implementation of agreed national priorities as identified by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Waste Management Enforcement

Local authorities have a wide range of statutory functions under National and European waste legislation. The work of the Local Authority Waste Enforcement team includes investigating illegal dumping incidents, taking prosecutions and enforcement measures, enforcing producer responsibility regulations for a wide range of wastes (including Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Batteries, End-of-life Vehicles, Tyres, Packaging, Food Waste, Farm Plastic and Construction & Demolition Wastes).

During 2019, 1680 new waste and litter complaints were received and investigated, and 1,774 complaints were resolved (including complaints outstanding from 2018).

In addition, 21 prosecutions were initiated under the Litter Pollution Act and Waste Management Act in relation to illegal dumping incidents. Illegal dumping of household waste in rural areas and on vacant properties remains a significant problem and the Council has had to expand significant resources cleaning up such sites.

RMCEI Plan 2019

Environmental inspections are carried out in accordance with the Council's annual inspection plan, namely the RMCEI Plan (Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections). A mandatory reporting regime to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is in place for all environmental inspections and the Council's environmental inspection plan. The Environment Directorate also has significant reporting obligations and must annually compile an inventory of all waste data for County Longford which is then submitted to the EPA.

During 2019, the Council's routine waste inspections focused on 3 priority areas. These were: -

Waste	1. Illegal dumping and unaccounted for waste 2. Construction and demolition activity 3. Household & commercial waste management compliance 4. Dealing with sites containing illegally deposited waste
Water	5. Improving water status in all waterbodies 6. WFD Inspections addressing 'at risk' water bodies
Air	7. To protect public health and improve and maintain air quality.

In addition, Local Authorities permit and regulate waste facilities, ensure the authorised collection and transport of wastes in their functional areas, appraise planning applications in relation to waste management proposals, oversee the management of wastes in the construction and business sectors and, enforce producer responsibility regulations in relation to several waste streams such as packaging, farm plastics and tyres.

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.

Local Authorities must comply with the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007. Subject to certain exceptions, information relating to the environment held by, or for, a public

authority must be made available on request to any person. Advice and guidance on waste management is provided to members of the public upon request.

Anti-Dumping Initiative 2019

Longford County Council Environment Section implemented an extensive CCTV project in urban areas in 2019. This was an extension of the programme started in 2018. 185 detections have resulted from work in the urban areas in 2019.

Longford County Council undertook a number of clean-ups litter and fly-tipping black spots. A total of 31.52 tonnes of waste material was collected. This work was combined with route surveys and other awareness and preventative measures.

In 2019 Longford County Council conducted an extensive awareness campaign using leaflet drop, cinema advertising and social media on the risks associated with using un-licensed waste collectors.

Waste Management Provision of Facilities

There are currently 25 bring bank sites in County Longford. Green, brown and clear glass, as well as aluminium cans, is accepted at all sites. Total tonnages collected for re-processing in 2019 were 775 tonnes of glass and 24 tonnes of aluminium cans.

Derelict Sites & Dangerous Structures

Longford County Council take a multi-agency approach to tackle indiscriminate vandalism and illegal dumping at abandoned properties. Notification, in writing, is sent to property owners requesting them to secure their properties and remove all waste deposited on site.

Activity under the Derelict Sites Act during 2019 saw a total of six properties placed on the Derelict Sites Register; seven properties removed from the Register; nine property owners issued with a Notice of Valuation.

In October 2019, three derelict properties in a terrace in Longford town were severely damaged by fire. Longford County Council used the provisions of the Dangerous Structures Act to close the street and carry out remedial works in the interest of public safety.

Work continued on the Compulsory Purchase of four properties, using powers under the Housing Act 1966. The C.P.O. process began in October 2018. To date, all four of the C.P.O.'s have been confirmed and the Council has taken possession of one of the properties.

Climate Action

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

In September 2019 Longford County Council adopted its' Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The strategy sets out the actions required by Longford County Council to make sure that it can continue to provide services to the people of Longford in the changing environment caused by Climate Change.

Climate Action Charter

Longford County Councils' Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive signed the Climate Action Charter on the 11th December 2019. The Climate Action Charter demonstrates Longford County Council's commitment to provide local leadership in the area of Climate Action and to support our communities in addressing Climate Change.

Energy

In 2019 Longford County Council continued on course to meet its' 2020 target of 30% reduction in energy usage. Upgrading of public lighting to LEDs is the single largest contributor to the Councils' success in reducing energy consumption.

Environmental Awareness

This aspect of the Department's work includes:

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

- Green Christmas
- Anti-Litter Awareness Grants
- Invasive Species
- Local Environmental Partnership Funding
- Tidy Towns

National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean 2019 took place during the month of April & May. Litter pickers, gloves, bibs and colour-coded bags were provided for the community clean-ups. Over 40 groups and schools signed up and took part in clean-ups across the County.

National Tree Week

National Tree Week “Planting for our Planet” which is organised by the Tree Council of Ireland and supported by Coillte and Longford County Council, took place from 31st March to 06th April 2019. Community Groups, Tidy Towns Organisations, Schools and other organisations in the County were offered the opportunity to obtain young trees. Over 200 free saplings were given out to more than 45 community groups and schools during this week.

Large Goods/Hazardous Waste Collections

Two large goods collections and two hazardous waste collections were held in Newtownforbes & Ballymahon during 2019. General and recyclable waste amounted to 16.86 tonnes while 7.51 tonnes of hazardous waste was collected.

Green Schools

During 2019 ten schools renewed their green flags. The flags cover themes such as litter & waste, energy and water conservation, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship.

Green Christmas

The Council provided two drop-off points in Longford and Drumlish where householders could deposit their trees for shredding, free of charge. Old Christmas cards could also be dropped off at local libraries throughout the County.

Anti-Litter Awareness Grants

Longford received an anti-litter awareness grant during 2019 of €14,000 from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government (DECLG). The Council supplemented this funding by €6,000 bringing the total budget to €20,000. 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 allocation of €8,050 under this Scheme from the DECLG. The Council provided 50% matching funds bringing the total grant funding to €16,100 to support innovative, community-based environmental projects as well as talks and workshops for schools and community groups.

Longford Tidy Town/ Community Groups

Longford County Council had another successful year working with Tidy Towns and Community Groups throughout County Longford and groups received funding through both the anti-litter grants and local environmental partnership grants. Groups were also allocated litter pickers, gloves, and specially coloured bags on request for spring for spring clean events. A regional Tidy Towns forum was held in Meath in February 2019 which was very well attended by groups from County Longford.

Invasive Species

The treatment of Japanese Knotweed continued during 2019 with €21,000 of Local Authority Funding being granted for a countywide treatment programme. Over 263 sites have now been treated with 14 new sites being identified 2019. The treatment of Japanese Knotweed will continue during 2020.

Burial Grounds

Routine cemetery maintenance is largely carried out by Rural Social Scheme staff and local cemetery committee volunteers. Longford County Council makes a direct contribution to Longford Community Resources Ltd, who oversees the Rural Social Scheme. The Council also operates a cemetery support scheme under which local groups undertaking cemetery maintenance receive a grant from the Local Authority.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Fire and Rescue Service have fire stations in 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.

The Fire Department assessed Fire Safety Certificates, Planning Applications and Court Licence Application Referrals. Fire Safety Inspections of commercial premises were also carried out.

		Number
Operations	Total number of Callouts – January to December 2019	318
Building Control	Number of Fire Certificates processed in 2019	19

The new Fire Station Extension in Longford Town was opened by Minister Kevin Boxer Moran in May 2019, providing an extension to the vehicle bay, a training room, an office and a canteen.



An extension to Longford County Fire Service Headquarters was opened in May 2019.

Longford Fire Service cost €2,225,000 to operate for 2019 for both its operational response and mitigation work streams.

Three vacant fire-fighter positions have been advertised a number of times for Granard and Edgeworthstown Fire Brigades and remain unfilled. Two fire-fighter positions have been filled in Longford Town.

Driver-Mechanic Martin Meenaghan retired from Longford Fire Brigade in March 2019 after 36 years of service. Martin's father (also called Martin) had given long service to the brigade too. With Martin's retirement it was the first time in over seventy years that there wasn't a Martin Meenaghan in Longford Fire Brigade! Rory Kelly, another Driver-Mechanic in Longford Fire Brigade resigned after 17 years of service. Fire-fighters Michael Doyle from Edgeworthstown Fire Brigade (16 years of service) and Dean Heffernan from Granard Fire Brigade (6 years of service) also resigned in 2019.

Austin Concannon joined the brigade as Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer, having previously served with Louth Fire Brigade and Dublin Fire Brigade.

The Fire Fighter Training/Drill Programme was completed in accordance with the Fire Service Annual Operational Plan 2019.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Civil Defence is a Volunteer based Organisation that supports the Principal Response Agencies (An Garda Síochána, The HSE & Local Authorities), Government Departments & State Agencies during National, Regional and Local Emergency and Non-Emergency events.

Civil Defence Support these services in dealing with Severe Weather, Flooding, Missing Person Search & Major Accidents. Civil Defence also supports hundreds of Community events during the year.

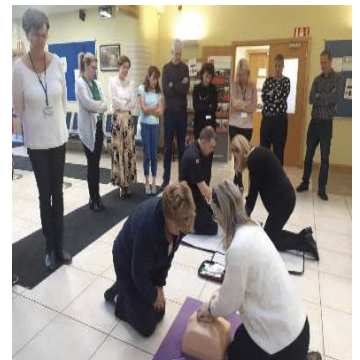
Volunteers are recruited and trained locally and attend the Civil Defence College in Roscrea, Co Tipperary for more advanced training. Civil Defence Volunteers in Longford are trained in areas such as, Medical Response, Missing Person Search, Radiation Monitoring, Severe Weather Emergencies and Communications.

Expenditure on the Civil Defence Function in 2019 amounted to €153,026 and the Civil Defence received a donation from Pieta House following the Darkness Into Light event held on May 11th 2019.

2019 Activities

Longford Civil Defence engaged in 61 operations in 2019 including –

- Local and Community events covered included various charity 5&10k events, Longford Town Soccer Matches, GAA matches, Charity Cycles, Hype Festival, Cruthú Arts Festival, Longford Festival, Local Authority events, Aquathons and Triathlons and Welfare at the Blood Bank Clinics.
- Casualty training nights were held throughout the year.
- 3 Volunteers travelled to Lourdes as part of the 61st International Military Pilgrimage.
- Longford Civil Defence were represented at the Peter Keenan, Longford Branch O.N.E. Remembrance Mass and Remembrance Sunday events.
- Civil Defence visited Longford Women's Link Childcare Facility to talk about Civil Defence and what we do in our Community. Volunteers also visited St Marys NS in Drumlish as part of the school's First Aid Programme.
- Volunteers took part in the European Restart a Heart initiative. CPR demonstrations were carried out in various County Council venues. County Council staff and members of the public were given the opportunity to have a try at CPR.
- A casualty training exercise was held in City Calling Stadium. The objectives of the exercise were to practice safe extrication of Casualties from the pitch and stand areas.
- Civil Defence Volunteers took part in the National Radiation exercise. Soil grass and radiation samples were taken from 2 designated areas. These samples were then delivered to the EPA for analysis. This exercise also allowed Civil Defence to test the National Communication networks.
- Volunteers attended the Annual Blood Bank awards dinner in Claremorris.
- Training Certificates were handed out at a presentation Night held for Volunteers. Over 60 Certificates were given out on the night. Volunteer Marie Hand received her 20 year service medal.



Training

- Risk Assessments, Safety Statement and SOP's were communicated to Volunteers by Amanda Cullen, Health and Safety.
- EMT'S completed the annual privileging process. This allows them to practice as Civil Defence EMT'S for 2020.
- 4 Volunteers undertook EFR (Emergency First Responder) training. This took several Months to Complete. All were successful. 2 Volunteers recertified as EFR's.
- 6 Volunteers Completed People Moving training.
- 10 Volunteers took part in Fire Safety Awareness training.

- Child Protection training was delivered to Volunteers. Volunteers completed the Túsla E-learning Child Protection module.
- Two volunteers received their Missing person Search Instructor Certificates at a graduation ceremony in Roscrea.
- A CFR community course was delivered to Longford District Schoolboy League following their purchase of a Community Defibrillator.
- One volunteer completed their Recognised Prior Learning course for Manual Handling instructing and are now qualified to deliver this training to Volunteers.
- Six volunteers were recertified as Community First Responders and EMT'S received their Community First Responder Advanced upskilling.
- Twelve volunteers attended a Safe Talk training course. This is a suicide awareness course and was provided by the HSE.
- Seventeen volunteers took part in the new Missing person Search responder training course.



Policy

Civil Defence were part of an internal Audit conducted by external company Quadra.

The Civil Defence PHECC licensing issue was resolved following intensive engagement between officials from The Department of Defence, Local Authorities represented by the CCMA and PHECC.

A ballot was held to elect a Volunteer Representative. Civil Defence were included in the external NSAI Audit. An RSA fleet inspection was carried out on Civil Defence Vehicles. Local policies on retention of PCR'S were changed in accordance with the new PHECC Governance Validation Framework.



Marie Hand receiving her 20 year service medal during presentation Night held for Volunteers

ROADS, TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD SAFETY

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. Longford County Council has a network of National, Regional and Local Roads within the County. Currently the breakdown of roads under the authority of Longford County Council is as follows:-

Classification	National	Regional	Local	Total
Ballymahon Municipal District (km)	46	71	519	636
Granard Municipal District (km)	13	59	636	708
Longford Municipal District (km)	37	25	238	300
Total Kilometres	96	154	1393	1643

The following specific works were completed in 2019:

National Road Pavement Improvement Schemes

National Pavement schemes are selected on the basis of recent condition surveys of the network with the following specific works carried out in 2019

Pavement	Work detail
N4 Cooleeny	Resurfacing of Road Pavement over an approximately 2kms section of the N4 National Primary Route from Sraid to Cooleeny. Works included placing new HRA surface course, Road Marking, Road Studs, Drainage, Safety Barrier Installation and Accommodation works

Capital Maintenance Pavement Repairs were carried out at the following locations

Category A (<50,000)

N4 Tomiskey Roundabout
N55 Creevagh Beg
N55 Screeboge
N55 Crossea
N55 Carrickedmund & Corry
N55 Corrabola
N55 Corrabola Junction
N55 Barney
N55 Barney Junction
N55 Carickboy North

Category B (50,000 to 200,000)

N4 Longford Bypass
N55 Fowlards Bridge
N55 Cranlagh Beg

Local and Regional Road Improvement

During the year Local & Regional Roads were improved and maintained under the Restoration Programme. This Grant is in two forms:

- The Restoration Improvement element is designed to meet expenditure on surface restoration and road reconstruction. 51136kms of road was improved under this grant in 2019.
- The Restoration Maintenance aims to protect the structural integrity of the road by way of surface dressing. 55049kms of road was improved under this grant in 2019.

Bridge Rehabilitation Works

- Bridge Rehabilitation Works was carried out at Derryshanoge bridge.
- Bridge Works are near completion at Clonart North, Lislea, and RabbitPark Ardagh.
- Bridge Work has started at Clonbroney and Soran.

Low cost safety Schemes

The Low Cost Safety Improvement Grant enables low cost safety improvement works on Regional and Local Roads. Low Cost Safety Schemes were carried out at the following locations:

- Battery Road / Abbeycartron Lane
- Ballymacormack Crossroads
- Ballynascraw (Howdens) Cross
- R198 Mill Road Drumlish
- Fermoy School road Improvement Works
- Smear Junction
- Newtownforbes Improvement works at Jn of L-1004 and L-5004

Winter Maintenance Programme

The Winter Service plan provides the framework for dealing with Winter Weather conditions on the roads and provides for a planned and co-ordinated response by Longford County Council. The objective of the winter maintenance programme is to provide so far as it is reasonably practical for the safe movement of road users on the National Roads and other strategic routes identified during adverse weather conditions.

Expenditure

National Road Grants are received from Transport Infrastructure Ireland to carry out maintenance works on the National Roads and Bridges in County Longford and State Grants are provided to road authorities to supplement the provision made from their own resources towards a road programme for the improvement, maintenance and management of the regional and local roads network. Expenditure on National and Non National Roads in 2019 was as follows -

National Roads Grants (TII)	
Improvement Works	€1,927,038
NP & NS Maintenance	€330,443
HD Pavement Renewals & Surveys	€117,752
Winter Maintenance	€103,094
Total:	€2,478,327

Non-National Roads (Council's Contribution)	
	€806,617

Non-National Roads Grants (DHPLG)	
Specific Improvement Grant	€1,143,562
Restoration Improvement Works	€3,517,554
Restoration Maintenance Works	€858,756
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	€1,240,675
Low-Cost Safety Improvement Works	€214,346
Drainage	€323,443
Bridge Rehabilitation	€292,369
Training Programme	€24,000
Total:	€7,614,705

TOTAL BUDGET	€10,899,649
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Road Safety Promotion and 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 consists of the following agencies: - TII, Road Safety Authority, Longford County Council Sports Coordinator, An Garda Síochána, Longford County Council Road Safety Officer, Longford County Childcare Member, Councillor Paul Ross and Members of Longford Fire Services.
- Co-ordination with the Road Safety Authority – advertising, promotions, and media campaigns.
- Promotion of “Safe Cross Code”.
- Promotion of Road Safety in Secondary Schools through the “Drive for Life Programme”. In 2019 training took place in Mean Scoil Mhuire Secondary School Longford and St. Mel’s Secondary School.
- The Regional Final of the Junior School Warden Competition took place at St. Mary’s National School in Drumlish on Thursday 13th June. 6 Schools participated: - Scoil Mhuire, Newtownforbes, St. Mary’s National School Drumlish, St. Etchens National School Kinnegad, Coralstown National School Mullingar, Loughlynn National School Roscommon and Scoil na Naingéal Boyle. The standard was very high which made the judging difficult on the day. The overall winners were Loughlynn National School Roscommon, 2nd Prize Coralstown National School Mullingar and 3rd Prize St. Mary’s National School Drumlish. The Junior School Warden Scheme is in operation since 1969 and is celebrating 50 years this year. This scheme has been accident free since it started, and it shows the important work of the junior school wardens who patrol their school crossings each day and ensure that their schoolmates get safely across the road hail, rain or snow. The Regional Final which is hosted year about, by Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon County Council. Judges on the day were Noel Gibbons Road Safety Officer from Mayo County Council and Declan Keogh Road Safety Officer from Kildare County Council.
- Road Safety awareness was promoted in National Schools throughout the county
- Aviva sponsored Virtual Reality goggles for Longford to promote Road Safety Education
- In conjunction with The Road Safety Authority “Check it Fits” visited Davis Super Valu, Longford on the 14th August. Unfortunately, in Ireland, fitting child car seats is still a significant cause for concern and as many as 3 out of 4 child car seats may be fitted incorrectly
- National “Slow Down” Day – 24th May /25th May 2019 in conjunction with An Garda Síochána
- Bike Week was held from 22nd to 30th June with many events organised throughout the County. The following schools participated in Bike week – Killeen National School, Melivew National School and Kenagh National School.
- Cycle training took place in St. Mels National School and Templemichael College, Longford.



Food Safety

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

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

Locally produced cattle, sheep and pigs, deer and poultry were processed in small local slaughterhouses in County Longford in 2019. Each animal slaughtered was ante-mortem and post-mortem inspected by a Veterinary Inspector. A sampling programme which is intended to detect harmful substances such as microbes, chemicals and hormones in meat is carried out. The Local Authority Veterinary Service ensures that animal health and welfare is maintained in accordance with legislative provisions. All owners and staff in small slaughterhouses in Co. Longford now have Certificates of Competence in Welfare at time of slaughter.

During 2019 the low throughput meat manufacturing establishments and slaughterhouses in Co. Longford continued to work to EU approved standards. The meat products produced in the County are under official veterinary controls. The Local Authority Veterinary Service regulates and, at the same time, affords appropriate flexibility to low throughput premises. The County Veterinary Officer is a member of the Interdepartmental Working Group to provide guidance to small food producers and regulators in relation to appropriate flexibility acceptable to national and international auditors. Enterprise and development are continuing within premises and the sector, as businesses react to changing commercial demands. New entrants are encouraged to consult with the Council's service and to become involved in the sector. It is encouraging to report that there was a significant increase of approximately 28% over comparable timeframes in the throughput of small slaughterhouses in County Longford.

The section, through supporting food production in County Longford, is in keeping with our Corporate Plan for promoting enterprise and development in this important area of commercial activity. The Veterinary Section, in cooperation with Longford County Council Local Enterprise Office, assisted individuals with an interest in the sector in 2019.

Professional Development and training in food safety and animal health and welfare continued in 2019 and the Veterinary Service has an Internal Audit System.

Longford Local Authority Veterinary Service carried out internal audit as routinely requested by the national authority in a neighbouring county.

Activities relating to the disposal of Animal By-Product continued to be an important area of work in 2019.

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. Longford County Council Veterinary Service liaised through bilateral meetings with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine locally and nationally in 2019.

Dog Control

Longford County Council provides its own full-time Dog Control Service in County Longford. The Local Authority employs a Dog Warden and operates a Dog Shelter at Little Water Street in Longford Town. Pound Fees are charged. Dog Licenses can now be purchased online at www.licenses.ie or at any Post Office.

The Service dealt with a reduced number of 226 cases of unwanted/stray dogs in 2019. This figure was down 26% in keeping with national trends and indicates general improvement in responsible dog ownership. Of these, 31 were re-homed, 5 were re-claimed by their owners, 181 were transferred to dog welfare groups, 7 were euthanised, and 2 died of natural causes.

There were seven incidences of livestock worrying dealt with by the local authority in 2019.

Longford County Council's policy is to re-home all dogs suitable for re-homing. In many cases the dogs which were re-homed were selected by their new owners with the aid of the Council's Longford Dog Control Service Facebook page. Longford County Council maintained a low number of dogs put to sleep in Longford Dog Pound in 2019. This is as a result of the strategic plan implemented by the Dog Control Service assisted by other stakeholders and volunteers, to whom we are grateful.

In order to combat the problem of unwanted dogs, Longford County Council continues to advocate responsible animal ownership through education and awareness. The Council operates a scheme for subsidised neutering for dogs and has also formed a strategic alliance with Dogs Trust.

Inspections of Dog Breeding Establishments continued in 2019 under the Dog Breeding Establishment Act.

Longford County Council continues to promote the need for dog owners to purchase a Dog Licence. Currently a Dog Licence costs €20 and can be purchased from any Post Office or online at www.licenses.ie. Purchasing a Dog Licence is an important aspect of responsible dog ownership. In 2019, some dog owners also purchased a "Lifetime of Dog" Licence at a one-off cost of €140 and there is an increasing trend in buying dog licences online.

Horse Control

In 2019, 11 horses were seized under the Control of Horses Act 1996. Longford County Council's Control of Horse Bye Laws regularise detention and disposal requirements, as per the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as well as controlling access and activities of horses in public places.

Longford County Council cooperated with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on a plan for an Urban Horse Project, and in addition, had its second Pony Riding and Animal Welfare project for training of young people in responsible horse ownership during 2019. Longford Sports Partnership and LCRL provided great support to the successful education project for 36 young participants from County Longford. The activities may be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_QsCRH6j8g

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) provides for the relationship between Irish Water and Longford County Council with respect to Water/Wastewater operations and maintenance activities undertaken by the Local Authority on behalf of Irish Water. The 2019 Annual Service Plan (ASP) is based on both parties working collaboratively to ensure service continuity to the customer and to work within the approved annual budgets. This will include achieving efficiencies, value for money and continuous improvement in order to meet customer expectations and the targets set by economic and environmental regulators.

Operation & Maintenance

The performance of Longford County Council is measured on a monthly basis to ensure compliance under the SLA agreement in accordance with 17 Key Performance Indicators, 52 Operational Measures and 8 Tracking Measures, falling under the regulation of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These are measured under four key pillars and sub categories within the pillars as follows:

1. Learning and Growth – Health Safety Quality and Environment (HSQE), Transformation and Databook
2. Customer – Interruptions, Notifications, Connection Developer Services, Workflow Work Orders, Hand Held Usage, Workflow Queries
3. Internal Process and Compliance – Leakage Management, Drinking Water Supply, Wastewater Treatment, Capital Projects, Energy Management
4. Financial – Operational, Expenditure, Control, Financial Reporting, Procurement, Meter Reading.

For the year 2019 Longford County Council achieved a score of 95.3% for Q1, 93.5% for Q2, 93.5% for Q3 and 97.3% for Q4. These high scores were achieved mainly due to the efficiency and professionalism of all 45 members of the Water Services team and also the collaborative and professional relationships fostered between Irish Water and Longford County Council over the last number of years.

Significant operational and capital funding investment occurred in our water services infrastructure in 2019 in order to ensure continuity of supply and maintain water quality and maintain our waste and water services county wide. Over €500,000 of capital funding was utilised in the Ballymahon Water Supply Zone to increase the resiliency of the plant to raw water changes and increase the organic removal onsite. Smaller capital upgrade works were carried out on the Ballymahon supply zone network to improve water pressure and maintain supply to areas served on the periphery of the networks. Over €200,000 of capital funding was spent on the construction of a new countywide scada system to allow remote visibility for all of the water infrastructure within the county in 2019.

Find & Fix Programme

Longford County Council in association with Irish Water commenced the **Find & Fix Programme** in 2019. This is a national project aimed at delivering major water leakage savings. In 2019, Longford County Council's directly staffed crew completed the first sweep of Find & Fix works in the District Metered Area's (DMA's) of Ballymakeegan, Killashee Street, Ballymahon and Richmond-Moygh areas of the county where significant progress was made with regards to identifying and repairing leaks in the water network.

Planning for further Find & Fix works to be implemented in 2020 in the Lanesborough Rural, Croshea-Edgeworthstown and Glannagh areas has also taken place.

Capital Works Scheme

In 2019 the Water Services Section of the Council on behalf of Irish Water completed various additional Capital Works Schemes. The following is a summary of the schemes:

1. Water Conservation Advanced Contract (Quigley Contracts) at Drumure and Ballymakeegan North works have been completed. Works at Shroid (N4) and Farrneyhoogan to Mastertech (N63) have also been completed and closed out.
2. Watermain Replacement Works (GMC) have been completed at the following locations:
 - Approximately 2km of problematic watermain replaced at Soran & Derrynacross
 - Ballywillin, Granard
 - Springtown Granard to Granard Town

- ESB Lanesborough
- 3. Backyard Services / Lead Replacement Works
 - Lead replacement/backyard connections replaced at Great Water Street
 - Work is on-going in the Glack/Teffia Park area of Longford Town

The Capital Office of the Water Services Section will continue to identify and prioritise defective areas for improvement within the network during 2020 subject to the necessary funding becoming available.

APPENDIX 1: CORPORATE PLAN (2019-2024) REPORT

Longford County Council continues to progress specific actions to deliver on the 10 Strategic Objectives

1. Support and maintain safe, sustainable and active communities in our County through community engagement and empowerment.
2. Plan, provide and sustain the infrastructural development, the Regeneration Programme and the natural environment of County Longford.
3. Maintain a supportive business environment to support job creation and retention and work with relevant agencies to attract investment to County Longford.
4. Work with our communities to develop sustainable Tourism in the County, based on our quality natural environment, people, heritage and cultural assets.
5. Maintain and the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce and support our employees in realising their potential.
6. Provide strong financial management, risk management, audit, corporate governance and control and compliance systems.
7. Support local democracy including the policy making and representation role of our Councillors and public participation in our decision making.
8. Develop and maintain appropriate internal and external communication channels that makes it easier for the Council to engage with each other, our communities and stakeholders and the outside world.
9. Support a high quality level of customer service by maximising the use of technology and providing the best possible customer experience.
10. Take a leadership role in social inclusion, equality, human rights and universal accessibility.

Longford as a Tourism Location		Maintain an Enhanced Level of Service		Funding Opportunities Maximised	
Addressing Unfinished Estates	National & International Awards		Increased Employment Public & Private Sector		Age Action
New Corporate Branding with Increased Social Media Presence		Climate Change Adaptation Strategy		Open Library & Library Facilities	
Staff Adapted to Change	Improved Staffing Levels		IT & Broadband & Online Services		Social Inclusion
Sports Partnership & Healthy Ireland Programmes		Funding Available for Work in the Community & Flood Relief		Environmental Initiatives including Green Schools	
Improved Road Network	Employee Career Development & Support		Revised Local Government Structures		Gas Pipeline
Regeneration Projects		Local Elections New Council Formation		Albert Reynolds Memorial Lecture	
Housing Programmes	Community Development & Support		Business & Enterprise Support		Promotion of Town & County

APPENDIX 2: COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEES	COUNCILLORS
<i>Appointment of nominee of Longford County Council to attend annual meeting of Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd</i>	Michael Carrigy
<i>Association of Irish Local Government</i>	Mick Cahill, John Browne, Paraic Brady
<i>Board of Backstage Theatre</i>	Director: Colm Murray Members: Peggy Nolan, Paul Ross
<i>Creative Ireland Culture Team</i>	Martin Monaghan, Pat O'Toole, Paraic Brady
<i>County Longford Heritage Forum</i>	Peggy Nolan, Paul Ross, Turlough McGovern
<i>Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly</i>	John Browne, Michael Carrigy
<i>Health Service Executive Regional Health Forum, Dublin-mid Leinster</i>	P.J. Reilly, Paraic Brady, Paul Ross
<i>Joint Policing Committee</i>	Seamus Butler, Pat O'Toole, P.J. Reilly, Martin Monaghan, Joe Flaherty, Turlough McGovern, Peggy Nolan, Paul Ross, Gerry Hagan, Garry Murtagh, John Browne, Michael Carrigy, Gerry Warnock
<i>Local Authority Members' Association</i>	Gerard Farrell
<i>Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)</i>	Seamus Butler, Colm Murray, Michael Carrigy, Paraic Brady
<i>Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee</i>	Michael Carrigy (Chairperson), Martin Monaghan, Joe Flaherty, John Browne, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Warnock
<i>Longford Community Resources Ltd</i>	
<i>Longford County Council Audit Committee</i>	
<i>Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd</i>	Seamus Butler, Joe Flaherty, Mick Cahill, Michael Carrigy
<i>Longford Pool Construction Ltd</i>	Gerry Hagan, Gerry Warnock, Martin Monaghan
<i>Longford/Westmeath Education and Training Board</i>	Pat O'Toole, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Hagan, Garry Murtagh
<i>Longford/Westmeath Rural Community Transport Association</i>	Michael Carrigy
<i>Regeneration Committee</i>	Michael Carrigy, Gerry Warnock, John Browne, Joe Flaherty, Gerard Farrell, Paul Ross, Mick Cahill, P.J. Reilly, Turlough McGovern, Paraic Brady
<i>Midlands Region Drugs and Alcohol Task Force</i>	Colm Murray
<i>Midlands Energy Agency</i>	Colm Murray
<i>County Longford Tourism Committee</i>	Joe Flaherty, Gerard Farrell, Garry Murtagh
<i>Rural Water Monitoring Committee</i>	Seamus Butler, Paul Ross, Garry Murtagh
<i>Comhairle na nOg Steering Committee</i>	Colm Murray
<i>Sports Partnership Board</i>	Mick Cahill, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan
<i>Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee</i>	Paul Ross
<i>Tender Committee</i>	Michael Carrigy, Pat O'Toole, John Browne
<i>Business Incentive Scheme Committee</i>	Seamus Butler, Colm Murray, Michael Carrigy, John Browne

APPENDIX 3: CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY ELECTED MEMBERS

Date	Conference	Location	Attendees
11 th - 13 th Jan	The Finance Act 2018	Carlingford, Co. Louth	Luie McEntire
15 th - 18 th Feb	Longford Association in London	London	Luie McEntire
21 st - 22 nd Feb	AILG Annual Conference	Longford Arms Hotel	Mick Cahill, Colm Murray, Peggy Nolan, Mae Sexton, Paraic Brady, John Browne, Seamus Butler, Michael Carrigy, Mark Casey, Gerry Hagan, Pat O'Toole, P.J. Reilly, Paul Ross, Gerry Warnock
02 nd Mar	Longford Association in New York	New York	Martin Mulleady, Luie McEntire
07 th - 08 th Mar	Lama Spring Training Seminar	Carrick-on-Shannon	Mark Casey, P.J. Reilly, John Browne, Paul Ross, Michael Carrigy, Paraic Brady, Colm Murray, Mick Cahill, Luie McEntire
03 rd April	Irish Public Bodies Meeting	Dublin	Luie McEntire
06 th April	Longford Association in Dublin	Dublin	Luie McEntire
27 th April	Garda Awards	Portlaoise	Luie McEntire
29 th May	National Enterprise Awards	Mansion House, Dublin	Luie McEntire
21 st - 24 th July	Patrick MacGill Summer School	Glenties, Co. Donegal	Peggy Nolan, Gerard Farrell, Paul Ross, John Browne, Paraic Brady, Gerry Hagan, P.J. Reilly
25 th July	Community Policing Meeting	Dublin	Seamus Butler
20 th August	Energy in Agriculture	Gurteen College, Roscrea	Paraic Brady, Paul Ross, John Browne, Colm Murray, P.J. Reilly, Turlough McGovern
11 th - 12 th Sept	AILG Autumn Training Seminar	Monaghan	Gerard Farrell, Michael Carrigy, P.J. Reilly, Mick Cahill, Colm Murray, Turlough McGovern, Paraic Brady, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Hagan, John Browne
04 th October	I.P.I. Autumn Planning Conference	Malahide	Peggy Nolan, John Browne, P.J. Reilly, Paul Ross
17 th - 19 th Oct	Lama Autumn Training Seminar	Ennistymon, Co. Clare	John Browne, Paraic Brady, Mick Cahill, Michael Carrigy, Gerard Farrell, Gerry Hagan, Turlough McGovern, Peggy Nolan, Garry Murtagh, Paul Ross, P.J. Reilly, Colm Murray
24 th October	J.P.C. Meeting	Alexander Hotel, Dublin	Seamus Butler
03 rd - 05 th Nov	Innovation in Politics Awards	Berlin	Seamus Butler
08 th November	Corporate Plan Workshop	Ballina, Co. Mayo	Paraic Brady, John Browne, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Michael Carrigy, Gerard Farrell, Gerry Hagan, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Turlough McGovern, Pat O'Toole, P.J. Reilly, Gerry Warnock
15 th - 17 th Nov	Entitlement to Health Services	Clonkilty, Co. Cork	Michael Carrigy
18 th Nov	JPC Meeting	Granard	Seamus Butler
06 th - 09 th Dec	Irish Social Welfare System	Clonkilty, Co. Cork	Garry Murtagh, Colm Murray, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey

2019 AILG “In Service” Training for Elected Members	
<i>Mullingar, 19th January</i>	Seamus Butler, Peggy Nolan, Paraic Brady, John Browne, Michael Carrigy, Gerry Hagan, P.J. Reilly, Mae Sexton
<i>Arklow, 23rd March</i>	Paul Ross, Peggy Nolan, Paraic Brady, John Browne, Michael Carrigy, Luie McEntire, P.J. Reilly, Mick Cahill, Colm Murray
<i>Mullingar, 11th July</i>	P.J. Reilly, Paul Ross
<i>Tipperary, 13th July</i>	Peggy Nolan, John Browne, Mick Cahill, Gerry Hagan, Turlough McGovern, Paraic Brady, Michael Carrigy, Garry Murtagh
<i>Limerick, 10th October</i>	Paul Ross
<i>Dundalk, 12th October</i>	Turlough McGovern, Michael Carrigy, Paraic Brady, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Hagan, John Browne, Pat O’Toole, Colm Murray
<i>Athlone, 21st November</i>	Pat O’Toole, Paul Ross
<i>Cork, 23rd November</i>	Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, Colm Murray, Paraic Brady, Turlough McGovern, P.J. Reilly, John Browne

APPENDIX 4: SCHEDULE OF ELECTION RESULTS

LOCAL ELECTION - 24 May 2019		TOTAL ELECTORATE					11,204					CANDIDATE(S) ELECTED				
CONSTITUENCY OF		INVALID BALLOT PAPERS					95					PAUL ROSS (F.G.)				
BALLYMAHON LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL		VALID POLL					6,637					MARK CASEY (NON-P.)				
		NUMBER OF SEATS					6					MICK CAHILL (F.F.)				
		QUOTA					• 949					COLM MURRAY (F.G.)				
												PAT O'TOOLE (F.F.)				
												GERARD FARRELL (F.G.)				
NAMES OF CANDIDATES (12 No.) (* Denotes outgoing member)	Gender	First Count	Second Count	Third Count	Fourth Count	Fifth Count	Sixth Count	Seventh Count	Eighth Count							
		Number of Votes	Transfer of ROSS, P's Surplus and Result	Transfer of WALSH, P's Votes and Result	Transfer of CASEY, M's Surplus and Result	Transfer of McMONAGLE, C's Votes and Result	Transfer of RYAN, G's Votes and Result	Transfer of MORAN, T's Votes and Result	Transfer of KENNY, J's Votes and Result							
* CAHILL, MICK (F.F.)	M	746	+61	+18	+5	+25	+18	+65	+86							
* CASEY, MARK (NON-P.)	M	996	-	-	-47	855	873	938	1,024							
DUFFY, BRIGID (F.F.)	F	501	+53	+2	+2	+4	+18	+13	+47							
* FARRELL, GERARD (F.G.)	M	621	+30	+5	+19	+12	+5	+23	+152							
KENNY, JOHN (F.F.)	M	419	+8	+4	+7	+4	+6	+51	-499							
McMONAGLE, CHARLIE (Non-P.)	M	181	+5	+20	+3	-209	-	-	-							
MORAN, TONY (Non-P.)	M	325	+6	+19	+3	+52	+43	-448	-							
* MURRAY, COLM (F.G.)	M	633	+72	+8	+5	+22	+10	+109	+68							
* O'TOOLE, PAT (F.F.)	M	669	+20	+38	+1	+44	+24	+53	+46							
* ROSS, PAUL (F.G.)	M	1,217	-268	949	949	949	949	949	949							
RYAN, GERALDINE (S.F.)	F	196	+8	+7	+2	+11	-224	-	-							
WALSH, P.J. (Non-P.)	M	133	+5	-138	-	-	-	-	-							

Counts 1-8 of 8, Page 1 of 2 Page(s)

LOCAL ELECTION 2019 - BALLYMAHON LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Returning Officer

Date

Don O'Farrell 31/05/19

Non-transferable papers not effective	-	-	+17	-	+35	+100	+134	+100
	-	-	17	17	52	152	286	386
TOTAL	6,637	6,637	6,637	6,637	6,637	6,637	6,637	6,637

PART A - 1 to 8 of 8 Counts.

Counts 1-8 of 8, Page 2 of 2 Page(s)

LOCAL ELECTION 2019 - BALLYMAHON LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Returning Officer

Date

Don O'Farrell 31/05/19

LOCAL ELECTION - 24 May 2019		TOTAL ELECTORATE 10,032					CANDIDATE(S) ELECTED				
CONSTITUENCY OF		INVALID BALLOT PAPERS 104					TURLOUGH 'POTT' MCGOVERN				
GRANARD LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL		VALID POLL 6,593					MICHEÁL CARRIGY (F.G.)				
		NUMBER OF SEATS 5					PARAIC BRADY (F.G.)				
		QUOTA 1,099					GARRY MURTAGH (F.G.)				
NAMES OF CANDIDATES (11 No.) (* Denotes outgoing member)	Gender	First Count	Second Count	Third Count	Fourth Count	Fifth Count	Sixth Count	Seventh Count	Eighth Count	Ninth Count	
		Number of Votes	Transfer of McGOVERN, T's Surplus and Result	Transfer of CARRIGY, M's Surplus and Result	Transfer of CONNELL, V's Votes and Result	Transfer of KILBRIDE, P's Votes and Result	Transfer of KEARNEY, G's Votes and Result	Transfer of DUFFY, A's Votes and Result	Transfer of BRADY, P's Surplus and Result	Transfer of MAGUIRE, M's Votes and Result	
* BRADY, PARAIC (F.G.)	M	867	+14 881	+18 899	+44 943	+82 1,025	+28 1,053	+182 1,235	-136 1,099	1,099	
* CARRIGY, MICHEÁL (F.G.)	M	1,183	- 1,183	-84 1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	
CONNELL, VICTOR (F.F.)	M	266	+8 274	+15 289	-289 -	-	-	-	-	-	
DUFFY, AMANDA (F.F.)	F	296	+6 304	+2 306	+66 372	+14 386	+35 421	-421 -	-	-	
KEARNEY, GRACE (Non-P.)	F	291	+40 331	+7 338	+21 359	+24 383	-383 -	-	-	-	
KILBRIDE, FRANK (F.G.)	M	280	+17 297	+10 307	+27 334	-334 -	-	-	-	-	
MCGOVERN, TURLOUGH 'POTT'	M	1,280	-181 1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	1,099	
MAGUIRE, MARK (S.F.)	M	360	+10 370	+3 373	+14 387	+33 420	+36 456	+30 486	+28 514	-514 -	
MURPHY, JOE (F.F.)	M	390	+7 397	+2 399	+13 412	+12 424	+28 452	+72 524	+41 565	+143 708	
MURTAGH, GARRY (F.G.)	M	730	+17 747	+17 764	+39 803	+73 876	+36 912	+30 942	+38 980	+143 1,123	
* REILLY, P.J. (F.F.)	M	648	+62 710	+10 720	+40 760	+56 816	+141 957	+51 1,008	+21 1,029	+41 1,070	
Non - transferable papers not effective		-	-	-	+25 25	+40 85	+79 144	+56 200	+8 208	+187 395	

Counts 1-9 of 9, Page 1 of 2 Page(s)

LOCAL ELECTION 2019 - GRANARD LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Nora O'Farrell
Returning Officer

31/05/19
Date

TOTAL	6,593	6,593	6,593	6,593	6,593	6,593	6,593	6,593	6,593
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PART A - 1 to 9 of 9 Counts.

LOCAL ELECTION 2019 - GRANARD LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Counts 1-9 of 9, Page 2 of 2 Page(s)

Nora O'Farrell
Returning Officer

31/05/19
Date

LOCAL ELECTION - 24 May 2019		TOTAL ELECTORATE		12,356		CANDIDATE(S) ELECTED				
CONSTITUENCY OF		INVALID BALLOT PAPERS		112		JOE FLAHERTY (F.F.)				
LONGFORD LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL		VALID POLL		6,701		PEGGY NOLAN (F.G.)				
		NUMBER OF SEATS		7		GERRY WARNOCK (NON-P.)				
		QUOTA		838		JOHN BROWNE (F.G.)				
						GERRY HAGAN (F.G.)				
						SEAMUS BUTLER (F.F.)				
						MARTIN MONAGHAN (F.F.)				
NAMES OF CANDIDATES (16 No.) (* Denotes outgoing member)	Gender	First Count	Second Count	Third Count	Fourth Count	Fifth Count	Sixth Count	Seventh Count	Eighth Count	Ninth Count
		Number of Votes	Transfer of FLAHERTY, J's Surplus and Result	Transfer of BREADEN, G's and O'REILLY, J's Votes and Result	Transfer of REILLY, T's Votes and Result	Transfer of SMYTH, B's Votes and Result	Transfer of COONEY, G's Votes and Result	Transfer of GALLAGHER, S's Votes and Result	Transfer of ADEJINMI, U's Votes and Result	Transfer of KEOWN, T's Votes and Result
ADEJINMI, URUEMU (F.F.)	F		+17	+3	+1	+10	+5	+8	-292	
BREADEN, GEORGE (Non-P.)	M	248	265	268	269	279	284	292	-	-
		14	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
* BROWNE, JOHN (F.G.)	M		+14	+1	+5	+3	+31	+21	+46	+41
		692	706	707	712	715	746	767	813	854
* BUTLER, SEAMUS (F.F.)	M		+44	+2	+3	+3	+10	+19	+42	+13
		656	700	702	705	706	718	737	779	792
COONEY, GERARD (F.G.)	M		+4	+1	+9	+2	-149			
		133	137	138	147	149	-	-	-	-
* FLAHERTY, JOE (F.F.)	M		-215							
		1,053	838	838	838	838	838	838	838	838
GALLAGHER, SEAMUS	M		+5	+2	+11	+10	+17	-201		
		156	161	163	174	184	201	-	-	-
* HAGAN, GERRY (F.G.)	M		+18	+1	+4	+2	+33	+36	+9	+9
		730	748	749	753	755	788	824	833	842
KEOWN, TENA (S.F.)	F		+13	+14	+7	+21	-	+7	+19	-437
		356	369	383	390	411	411	418	437	-
MONAGHAN, MARTIN (F.F.)	M		+33	+4	+14	+7	+11	+50	+41	+45
		576	609	613	627	634	645	695	736	781
* NOLAN, PEGGY (F.G.)	F		+22	+2	+11	+3	+17	+12	+33	-
		741	763	765	776	779	796	808	841	841

LOCAL ELECTION 2019 - LONGFORD LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Counts 1-9 of 9, Page 1 of 2 Page(s)

Nora O'Farrell
Returning Officer

31/05/19
Date

O'REILLY, JULIE (Non-P.)	F		+1	-29						
		28	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
REILLY, TONY (Non-P.)	M		+2	+1	-92					
		89	91	92	-	-	-	-	-	-
* SEXTON, MAE (Non-P.)	F		+10	-	+4	+5	+3	+14	+18	+58
		474	484	484	488	493	496	510	528	586
SMYTH, BARBARA (SPBP)	F		+1	+2	+7	-106				
		96	97	99	106	-	-	-	-	-
* WARNOCK, GERRY (NON-P.)	M		+30	+4	+8	+21	+14	+20	+22	+121
		659	689	693	701	722	736	756	778	899
Non-transferable papers not effective				+7	+8	+19	+8	+14	+62	+150
		-	-	7	15	34	42	56	118	268
TOTAL		6,701	6,701	6,701	6,701	6,701	6,701	6,701	6,701	6,701

PART A - 1 to 9 of 9 Counts.

LOCAL ELECTION 2019 - LONGFORD LEA, LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Counts 1-9 of 9, Page 2 of 2 Page(s)

Nora O'Farrell
Returning Officer

31/05/19
Date

APPENDIX 5: ELECTION EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

In accordance with Section 19 of the Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act, 1999 as amended, details of the aggregate local election expenditure incurred by each candidate and details of any donations received by the candidates must be included in the Annual Report. The relevant information is set out hereunder in Electoral Area order:

Candidate		Aggregate Expenses	* Donations Received (Unsuccessful Candidates)
Ballymahon Local Electoral Area			
Cahill	Mick	€1,660.00	N/A
Casey	Mark	€1,050.00	N/A
Duffy	Brigid	€1,764.16	Nil
Farrell	Gerard	€1,020.90	N/A
Kenny	John	€900.00	Nil
McMonagle	Charlie	€900.00	Nil
Moran	Tony	€1,100.00	Nil
Murray	Colm	€1,320.90	N/A
O'Toole	Pat	€1,150.37	N/A
Ross	Paul	€1,800.90	N/A
Ryan	Geraldine	€1,905.00	Nil
Walsh	P.J.	€1321.00	Nil
Granard Local Electoral Area			
Brady	Paraic	€850.00	N/A
Carrigy	Micheál	€2,570.70	N/A
Connell	Victor	€1,294.00	Nil
Duffy	Amanda	€1,586.00	Nil
Kearney	Grace	€2,735.25	€1,714.35
Kilbride	Frank	€1,020.90	Nil
McGovern	Turlough 'POTT'	€6,673.84	N/A
Maguire	Mark	€2,700	Nil
Murphy	Joe	€3,108.40	Nil
Murtagh	Garry	€2,370.90	N/A
Reilly	P.J.	€1,560.00	Nil
Longford Local Electoral Area			
Adejinmi	Uruemu	€1,560.49	Nil
Breaden	George	€125.99	Nil
Browne	John	€2,777.00	N/A
Butler	Seamus	€3,342.72	N/A
Cooney	Gerard	€1,445.90	Nil
Flaherty	Joe	€3,183.72	N/A
Gallagher	Seamus	€2,106.70	Nil
Hagan	Gerry	€2,060.90	N/A
Keown	Tena	€1,760.00	Nil
Monaghan	Martin	€2,614.70	N/A
Nolan	Peggy	€1,320.90	N/A
O'Reilly	Julie	€898.12	Nil
Reilly	Tony	Did not return form	
Sexton	Mae	€894.00	N/A
Smyth	Barbara	€945.45	Nil
Warnock	Gerry	€600.00	N/A
* Successful Candidates - Donations Received			

Each elected member will furnish to the Local Authority not later than the 31st January each year a separate Donations Statement and, if applicable, a statement from a financial institution if a political donations account was opened.

Statements by National Agents/Designated Person/Third Party

Party	Amount
Fianna Fáil (No designated person in Longford, expenditure incurred reflected in National Return to Dublin City Council)	Nil
Fine Gael (Designated Person)	€10,776.03