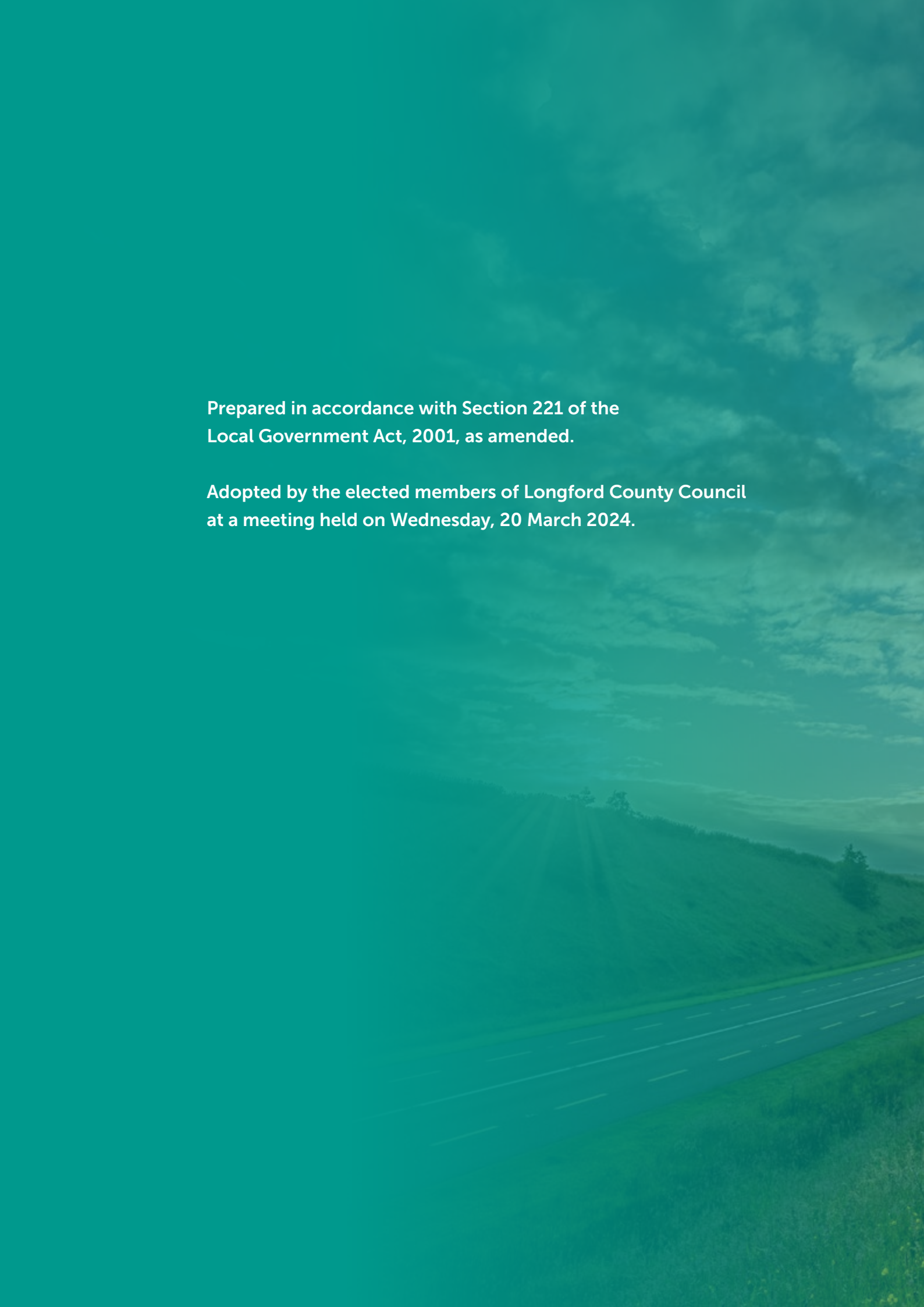




Longford County Council Annual Report 2023



Prepared in accordance with Section 221 of the
Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

Adopted by the elected members of Longford County Council
at a meeting held on Wednesday, 20 March 2024.



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Welcome by Cathaoirleach

Cllr Colm Murray



As Longford County Council Cathaoirleach, I am honoured to welcome this Annual Report for 2023.

The range of activities and achievements outlined in this report illustrates how this local authority puts people and place at the heart of every decision and operation, working to make Longford a better place to live, work, visit and do business.

The year presented a variety of challenges and opportunities for our county. Longford hosted the national launch of the European Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme for Ireland's Midlands 2023-2026 at Corlea Trackway and Visitor Centre – a scheme that has the potential to vastly transform tourism in Longford and beyond.

Work on climate change initiatives moved another step forward with work commencing on valuable Active Travel schemes that will help us to move towards a carbon-neutral future.

Longford was also profiled for a huge international audience with the hosting of the 2023 Rose Tour in August and our county gained significant attention for the fantastic community-led celebrations surrounding the 225th Commemoration of the Battle of Ballinamuck in September.

Life isn't always easy, but the people of Longford have continued to demonstrate their resilience and support for those in difficulty who seek sanctuary. I acknowledge the role that Longford County Council plays in facilitating this, and also our local communities for their willingness to support, welcome and adapt.

Longford is brimming over with new ideas, initiatives and events, both sporting and cultural. Many of these are being delivered directly in our communities through the work of Longford County Council and look set to continue to grow, year on year.

As Cathaoirleach, I acknowledge the commitment of the Chief Executive, management team and employees of Longford County Council who strive to improve Longford as a place to live, work and do business. I also thank my fellow elected members for continuing to put the people of County Longford first in all that they do.

Introduction by Chief Executive

Paddy Mahon

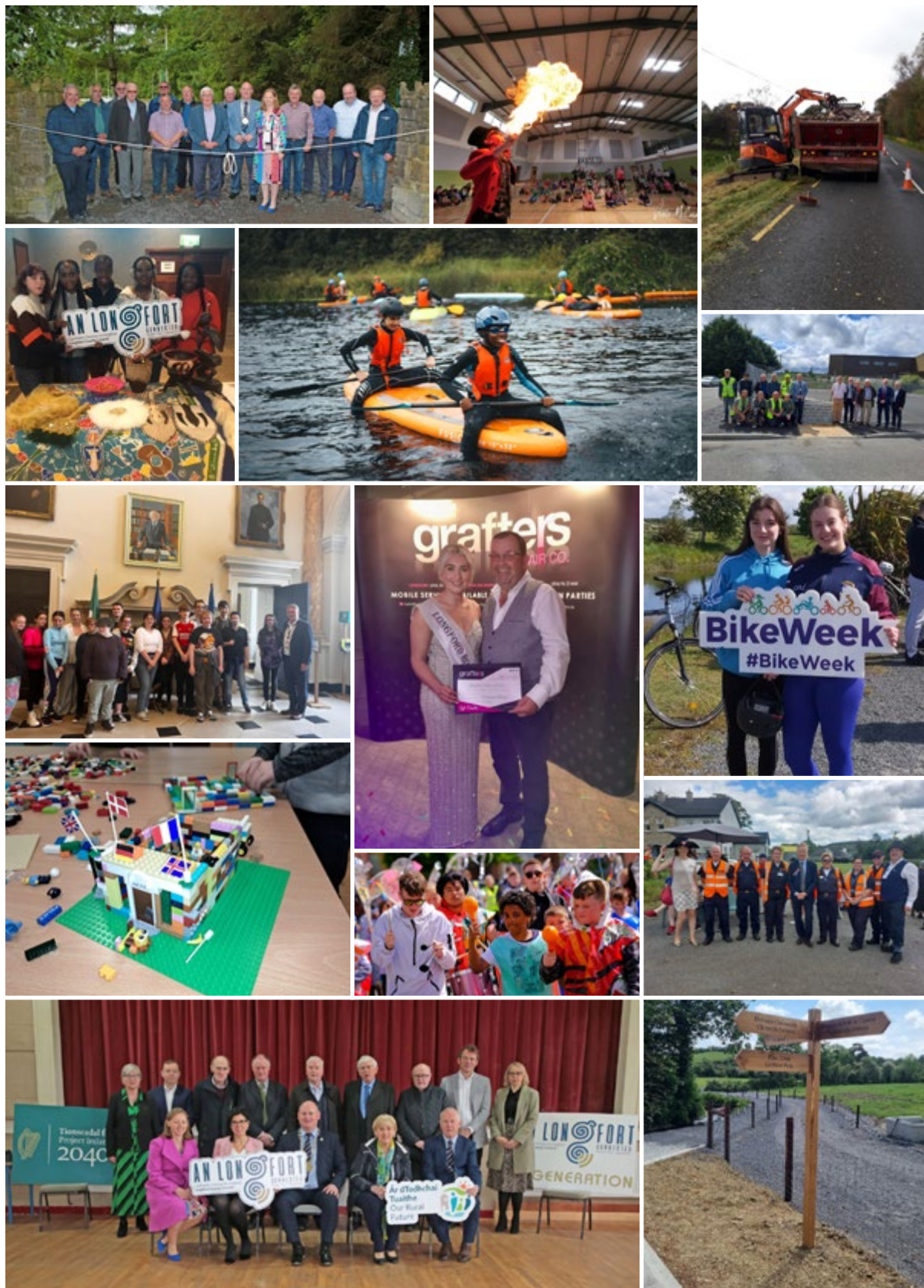


As Chief Executive, I welcome this publication of the Longford County Council Annual Report 2023. It shows that Longford County Council continued to deliver a variety of diverse and excellent initiatives over the year including:

- Longford's Microsoft Dreamspace Showcase
- The 225th Commemoration of the Battle of Ballinamuck
- The Longford Creative Ireland Strategy 2023-2027 was adopted by the elected members
- Delivered on the Roads Programme for 2023 to the value of €17,484,659
- Longford Lights Festival
- Granard leads the way with Ireland's inaugural Booktown Festival
- Contracts signed for new Longford Skatepark
- Local groups and public urged to Register Defibrillator locations
- Taoiseach opens the Rose Cottage War of Independence Centre
- Project Us lights up Connolly Barracks in Longford Town
- Longford hosts wonderfully successful Rose of Tralee Tour
- Longford County Council Employee Appreciation Day 2023
- 400 come out to play for "National Play Day"
- Longford County Council shares Check the Register message
- The most attractive estates in County Longford recognised
- Longford County Council hosts fifth annual Garda Youth Awards
- Plain English Mark for Data Protection policies
- Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029
- Dog Rehoming Campaign
- Dead of Night Festival
- Age Friendly Programme
- All-Ireland Occupational Safety Awards
- National Standards Authority of Ireland Audit
- Aughnacliffe Pride of Place All Island Winners
- Longford Sports Star Awards recognise excellence
- The Gathering of Longford Twinning Committees
- 2023 Cathaoirleach Awards Ceremony
- Longford County Council won the prestigious Public Sector category at the Health and Safety Excellence Awards

I would like to thank all employees for their continued professionalism and dedication to Longford and its people. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray, his predecessor Cllr Turlough McGovern and all of the elected members for their hard work in serving County Longford.

2023 in Pictures



...just some of what we got up to!



Elected Members of Longford County Council

Ballymahon Municipal District



Cllr Mick Cahill



Cllr Mark Casey



Cllr Gerard Farrell



Cllr Colm Murray



Cllr Pat O'Toole



Cllr Paul Ross

Granard Municipal District



Cllr Paraic Brady



Cllr Colin Dalton



Cllr Turlough McGovern



Cllr Garry Murtagh



Cllr PJ Reilly

Elected Members of Longford County Council

Longford Municipal District



Cllr Uruemu Adejinmi



Cllr Seamus Butler



Cllr John Browne



Cllr Gerry Hagan



Cllr Martin Monaghan



Cllr Peggy Nolan



Cllr Gerry Wanock

Ballymahon Municipal District

Meetings: Eight meetings took place, including an Annual General Meeting and a General Municipal Allocation meeting.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr Paul Ross was elected Cathaoirleach, and Cllr Pat O'Toole was elected Leas Cathaoirleach at the Annual General Meeting in June.

€90,000 **General Municipal Grant Allocation**

€88,724.42 in funding awarded under the **Community Grant Support Scheme**

Items Adopted by Members were:

- General Municipal Allocations 2024
- Municipal District Works Programme for 2024
- Community Grants 2023

For project updates, notices of motion discussed by elected members, items highlighted and discussed by members, estates and roads taken in charge, bye-laws adopted, and Ballymahon Municipal District road works programme 2023, **see Appendix 1 on page 180.**

Granard Municipal District

Meetings: Eight meetings took place, including an Annual General Meeting and a General Municipal Allocation meeting.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr Turlough McGovern was elected Cathaoirleach, and Cllr PJ Reilly was elected Leas Cathaoirleach at the Annual General Meeting in June 2023.

€90,000 **General Municipal Grant Allocation**

Presentations were given to the elected members on:

- Healthy Age Friendly Homes Local Coordinator
- Community Climate Action Fund

Items adopted by members were:

- Draft Municipal District Report for inclusion in Longford County Council 2022 Annual Report
- Schedule of Granard Municipal District Works
- Statement of Consistency of the Draft Longford Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 – 2029 with the following:
 - The core strategy and the objectives of the Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027
 - The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019–2031
 - The economic and community elements of the Draft Local Economic and Community Plan are consistent with each other
- Nomination for Cathaoirleach Awards
- Nominations of elected members for the Creative Ireland Culture Team 2023–2027
- Proposed Civic Recognition event in Granard for the Ballymore GAA Ladies
- Consideration of request from Granard Town Twinning Association to hold an Official Welcome for French visitors in September 2023
- Consideration of request from Gaels United FC in relation to Drumlish Christmas Market

Granard Municipal District

- Plaque in memory of General Humbert in the Garden of Remembrance, Ballinamuck.
- Plaque in Memory of Private Patrick Kelly and funding request for same.
- Dring Car Park
- Town Twinning 2023
- Broadband Connection Points costs 2023
- Special projects and discretionary fund 2023
- Community Grant Support Scheme 2023
- General Municipal Allocation 2024
- Proposed dates for 2024 MD meetings

For notices of motion discussed by elected members, Part 8s approved, estates and roads taken in charge, bye-laws adopted, and Granard Municipal District Road Works Programme 2023, **see Appendix 2 on page 186.**

Longford Municipal District

Meetings: A total of 11 meetings took place, including an Annual General Meeting and a General Municipal Allocation meeting.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr Martin Mollaghan was elected Cathaoirleach, and Cllr Peggy Nolan was elected Leas Cathaoirleach at the Annual General Meeting in June.

€90,000 **General Municipal Grant Allocation**

Presentations were given to the elected members on:

- Climate Action

Items Adopted by members were:

- Draft Municipal District Report for inclusion in Longford County Council 2022 Annual Report
- Application for funding under the 2023 Community Grant Support
- Taking in charge "Longford Business and Technology Park" subject to completion of works required to bring it up to standard
- Schedule of Longford Municipal District Works
- 2023 General Municipal Allocation
- Application from Longford Town Twinning

For Part 8s approved, notices of motion discussed by elected members, estates taken in charge, bye-laws adopted and Longford Municipal District road works programme 2023, **see Appendix 3 on page 189.**

Strategic Policy Committees

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) assist policy development and review and help the work of the Council. SPCs are made up of county councillors and sectoral representatives.

Climate Action and Planning SPC

Chair: Cllr Garry Murtagh (February and April), Cllr Gerry Hagan (July and October)

Met: Four times (1 February, 17 April, 19 July and 18 October)

Discussions included: ePlanning project, Development Contribution Scheme, Pollinator Plan, Residential Zoning Land Tax, Local Authority Climate Action Plan, Draft Cemetery Bye-laws, Signage Policy

Policies adopted: Cemetery Bye-Laws, Signage Policy

Strategic Infrastructure SPC

Chair: Cllr Colm Murray (February and April), Cllr Paraic Brady (July and October)

Met: Four times (2 February, 17 April, 20 July and 19 October)

Discussions included: Independent living and co-ordinating provision of housing for disabled people; Roadside Memorial Policy; Affordable Housing Scheme; Active Travel updates; Anti-Social Behaviour Policy; Rent Review; Local Road Safety Plan for County Longford

Policies adopted: Roadside Memorial Policy, Local Road Safety Plan for County Longford

Strategic Policy Committees

Placemaking SPC

Chair: Cllr Paul Ross

Met: Four times (21 February, 10 July, 11 September and 4 December)

Discussions included: Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), Community Grant Support Scheme, playground programme updates, Longford Arts Strategy, County Longford Tourism Strategy (2023-2027), Community Recognition Fund, Vacant Commercial Premises Incentive Scheme

Policies adopted: LECP, County Longford Tourism Strategy (2023-2027), Longford Arts Strategy: Art for People Art for Place (2023–2028)

Governance SPC

Chair: Cllr PJ Reilly

Met: Four times (21 February, 10 July, 11 September and 4 December)

Discussions included:

- 2023 Service Delivery Plan
- Update on the National Review of Freedom of Information (FOI)
- Updated on Protected Disclosure legislation changes
- Longford Digital Strategy
- Format of information published regarding Councillors Expenses
- Members Ethics Declaration
- The Security Allowance for elected members

Policies reviewed: Members IT Equipment Policy



An aerial photograph of a building with a grey roof and white walls, surrounded by lush green trees and a winding path. A small pond is visible in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

Community, Library and Cultural Services, Human Resources and Corporate

Community Development

Longford Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The LCDC is a committee of Longford County Council which brings together local authority members and officials, state agencies and people actively working with local development, community development, and economic, cultural and environmental organisations. The LCDC works to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming.

Eight meetings were held in 2023. The main tasks of the LCDC are to develop and implement the Local Economic and Community plan for the county and coordinate, plan and oversee local and community development funding.

Rural Development Programme (LEADER)

LEADER, a rural development programme, is administered by Longford LCDC as the Local Action Group (LAG) for the LEADER Programme in Longford in conjunction with Longford County Council as the lead financial partner and Longford Community Resources Clg as the implementing partner. In 2023, the main focus of the programme was the completion of the 2014–2020 LEADER programme and the payment of project claims as approved under the programme.

One project was approved for LEADER funding by Longford LCDC in 2023 from a balance of funds of the 2014–2020 programme to a value of €106,250.02.

Following payment by the Department of Rural and Community Development, Longford County Council processed 35 LEADER grant payments in 2023 totalling €1,413,824.17.

The LAG submitted a Local Development Strategy to the Department of Rural and Community Development for the delivery of the LEADER 2023–2027 programme in July 2023. The strategy was approved by the Department and delivery of the 2023–2027 LEADER programme will commence in 2024.

Community Development

Local Economic and Community Plan

The LECP was adopted on 13 December 2023 at the Longford County Council meeting.

Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), sets out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of County Longford. LECPs are the main tool for delivering actions from national and regional strategies at the local level. The LECP is designed to centralise actions and initiatives related to economic and community development in Longford into one strategy.

Longford LECP is available to [view online](#) (at Longfordcoco.ie) or can be viewed physically in any of the library branches throughout the county.

The Longford LECP [implementation plan](#) is also available to read online (at Longfordcoco.ie). This document outlines the initial steps for implementing the Longford LECP 2023–2029. It details the actions planned for the two years from 2024 to 2025, a second implementation plan will be created for 2026 to 2027 and a third for 2028 to 2029. This flexible approach ensures alignment with the LECP's overall vision and goals, allowing for adjustments based on changing circumstances.

Community Support Fund

Under the Community Support Fund (CSF), which is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, Longford LCDC awarded €276,586 to 131 community groups in 2023. The CSF supports groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with their non-pay running costs, for example, utility bills (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges) or other non-pay operating costs for example rental/lease costs or insurance bills. Groups were also able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities and for the purchase of equipment.

Community Development

Healthy Longford

Healthy Ireland aims to create a country where everyone can enjoy good physical and mental health, and wellbeing to their full potential; where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

In 2023, funding of €75,000 was secured for the ongoing delivery of Healthy Longford through Healthy Ireland Fund overseen by POBAL. Healthy Longford through consultation set the following outcomes for the period of Healthy Ireland 2023–2025:

- Increase in the percentage of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines.
- Increase in individual's level of positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index

Under these outcomes, projects that received funding in 2023 were:

- Lús Na Gréine Family Resource Centre
- Bridgeways Family Resource Centre
- Longford Traveller Health Care Project of Longford Community Resources Clg, Longford Women's Link, Longford Sports Partnership, Longford Libraries, Longford Community Safety Partnership and Cuidiú Longford/Roscommon

Period Dignity Initiative

In 2023 the Community department secured funding of €6,000 from the Department of Health for a project to support the implementation of period poverty mitigation measures. The funding allowed Longford County Council to provide free period products across our public buildings and facilities. Services who work with disadvantaged vulnerable groups were also identified and arrangements were made for the provision of free period products in their services.

Community Development

Longford Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo

Community engagement programmes Longford Community Safety Partnership (LCSP), Sláintecare Healthy Communities (SCHC) and Healthy Longford successfully delivered the first-ever Longford Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo on Thursday, 5 October. The event took place in Longford Sports Hub and had more than 600 attendees. The focus on safety and wellbeing was clear with a wide range of stakeholders hosting information stands and engaging participants.

Sláintecare Healthy Communities

Funding of €75,000 was secured for the ongoing delivery of the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme. This second year of the programme, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the people living in Longford Town, continued to develop projects such as the 'Community Garden' initiative, Community Learning Hubs and social exercises initiative. Sláintecare Healthy Communities works alongside Longford Community Safety Partnership to oversee the Community Houses based in Ardnacassa and McEoin Park. Engagement with local communities is progressing well in both areas.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) provides funding to tackle poverty and social inclusion at a local level through engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged groups, individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The LCDC awarded Longford Community Resources Clg the contract to implement the programme in County Longford for the period 2018 to 2023. In 2023, the core SICAP budget received a 3% increase from 2022, bringing the budget up to €602,411. An additional allocation of €90,478 under the Ukrainian Support Fund brought the total to €692,889. Cash in hand of €37,430.97 from 2022 left the total available spend in 2023 at €730,319.97. During 2023, the LCDC conducted a tender competition for the new SICAP programme 2024–2028. Following a tender evaluation process the LCDC awarded the tender to Longford Community Resources Clg.

Community Development

Community Development Programme

This is a pilot programme delivered by Longford Community Resources CLG under the guidance of the Department of Rural and Community Development and the LCDC. The programme aims to develop an autonomous community development project managed and run by members of the Roma community, supporting them to engage directly with decision-making structures and work in partnership with service providers. Longford Community Resources CLG employs one full-time and five part-time development workers on this project. The Department of Rural and Community Development allocated an annual budget of €125,000 plus a carryover from 2022 of €40,532 leaving a total of budget for 2023 of €165,532.

Empowering Communities Programme

This is a pilot programme targeted at smaller areas experiencing challenges. Longford Community Resources CLG deliver the programme in an area in Longford town under the guidance of the Department of Rural and Community Development and the LCDC. In early 2023, €120,000 was allocated to Longford Community Resources CLG who employed a Community Engagement Worker to take a community development approach in supporting the local community. At the end of 2023 Longford Community Resources CLG reported an underspend on the programme of €39,000 which will be deducted from their 2024 allocation to the project.

Community Development

Community Development and Participation

Longford Comhairle na nÓg

Longford Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee held four meetings in 2023. During the year, Comhairle members worked on an autism awareness campaign and mental health projects. A total of 15 members participated in a national Comhairle showcasing event in Croke Park where they presented their work on various initiatives to the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Minister Roderic O’Gorman. Five members took part in an RTE documentary with the Local Community Safety Partnership. Comhairle partnered up with the Autism Awareness Turn Longford Blue where they facilitated a blue sensory zone for autistic children and their families at the St Patrick’s Day parade. Members developed ‘Autism Friendly Youth’ workshop which they delivered in schools, that educated young people on autism and provided a step-by-step list of how to support them in various



Laura McPhillips Longford County Council and Glenda O'Reilly Foróige with Comhairle members at Longford Westmeath CYPSC Event.

Community Development

situations. Other projects involved facilitating a family quiz day to raise money for St Christopher's Services new day school. The Comhairle also participated in Longford County Council's Microsoft Dream Space event in May and in the Longford Westmeath Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) Youth event in December.

Comhairle members have an important role in ensuring the voices of young people are heard and represented on various local and national committees. Comhairle hosted its Youth Conference in the Longford Arms Hotel on Thursday, 9 November. All nine secondary schools, Youth Services and Family Resource Centres were in attendance. The event was opened by Cllr Colm Murray, Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council and proceedings went on into the early afternoon with a mixture of worldly café-style consultations and discussions on issues for young people. In addition, digital games and circus skills workshops provided great entertainment on the day.

Dormant Accounts Funding for LGBTI+ Groups

LGBTI+ Dormant Accounts Funding of €21,562.90 was successfully secured following an application submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development. Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and Lús na Gréine Family Resource Centre will roll out a variety of programmes and initiatives to support the LGBTI+ community in 2024.

Community Development

Intercultural Grants

In 2023, €15,499.71 was drawn down by community groups to assist in running a variety of projects and initiatives to support new communities to actively engage and participate in community life in County Longford.



Longford Comhairle hosted an intercultural event on 28 June with funding secured under the Intercultural Grants scheme.

Africa Day 2023

Africa Day celebrations are organised by Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs in partnership with African embassies in Ireland and local authorities around the country. In recognition of this day, Longford County Council secured funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs on behalf of Longford African Network to organise events for Africa Day. On Saturday, 27 May 2023, Longford Africans Network hosted an event at Longford Slashers GAA Club. In line with the 2023

Community Development

theme – Africa: Opportunities in Challenging Times, a session titled “Working with the Local Enterprise Office” was presented by the Director of Services with Longford County Council with responsibility for the Local Enterprise Office. This was followed by a panel discussion on business and development opportunities for entrepreneurs and trade partnerships between Ireland and African countries. A recognition event was held on the achievements of Africans in Longford in the areas of sports, arts, community, and business as well as acknowledgement of Irish allies. Entertainment by local artists and musicians provided a day of celebrations for all.



Cathaoirleach Cllr Turlough Mc Govern, Cllr Uruemu Adejinmi, Laura McPhillips and Director of Services Michael Nevin of Longford County Council with members of Longford African Network at Africa Day celebrations.

Community Development

CLÁR 2023

In December, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced that six sports clubs in County Longford were approved for funding totalling €118,004 under Measure 1 of the 2023 CLÁR programme. CLÁR is a targeted investment programme for designated rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects. They include upgrading lights, developing or upgrading spectator stands, installing outdoor exercise equipment and creating community gym facilities. Projects are delivered by sports clubs, schools and community groups with Longford County Council also providing up to 5% funding. Further funding announcements relating to community groups and schools are expected in early 2024.

Community Grant Support Scheme 2023

Through the municipal districts, Longford County Council is committed to working in partnership with the community to encourage, develop, support and sustain a wide range of activities or projects (for example, recreational, artistic, cultural, social and community support and business group initiatives) that:

- Make a positive contribution to County Longford
- Promote the development of strong local communities
- Improve the quality of life of our citizens

The Community Grant Support Scheme 2023 was reviewed and approved by the elected members and the grants awarded under the scheme supported activities and projects under the following headings:

- Active elderly
- Arts
- Community involvement
- Environment
- Events
- Heritage
- Intercultural
- Sport and recreation

Community Development

In 2023 funding was awarded to community groups under the Community Grant Support Scheme as follows:

- County Wide Members Fund €50,000
- Longford MD €88,339.03
- Granard MD €69,029.23
- Ballymahon MD €87,935.44.

Please see www.longfordcoco.ie for the list of awarded grants.

Playgrounds

Lanesborough playground had extensive works carried out to the cost of €37,000 with funding from Longford County Council and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Murphy's Playground Services Ltd have been procured to complete refurbishment works in Lanesborough playground by end of November. New equipment installed in the playground and works included:

1. A new natural play area, timber log and boulders
2. A new four people seesaw with backrest and aluminium posts
3. New wetpour surface in selected areas
4. A new gate and posts were installed at the entrance to the junior play area
5. The communication board has been moved to the centre of the playground and made more accessible for children with disabilities and sensory issues
6. A new magic mixer has been added, which will be particularly beneficial for children with disabilities and sensory issues.

Community Development

County Longford Public Participation Network (PPN)

Membership and Representation

County Longford PPN registered 78 new member groups in 2023 bringing the total to 523. Although Longford PPN experienced significant changes in staff throughout the year, the PPN Secretariat continued to meet and oversee the workplan.

- One PPN social inclusion rep was re-elected on to the LCDC in May 2023.
- One PPN environmental rep was elected on to the Secretariat in December 2023.
- One PPN social inclusion rep was elected on to the Local Community Development Committee in December 2023.
- One PPN aqua rep was elected on to Longford Sports Partnership December 2023.
- A total of forty voluntary PPN reps sit on decision-making bodies both inside and outside of Longford County Council.
- Ten disability reps sit on the PPN Disability Forum, and twelve PPN reps sit on the PPN Intercultural Forum.

National PPN Awareness Campaign

Longford PPN was one of six PPN's chosen out of thirty-one to take part in the Department of Rural and Community Development national campaign in February 2023.



Community Development

Operation Blue Light Santa 2023

Longford PPN and Longford Community Gardai rolled out the Blue Light Santa initiative for the third year in a row. The Blue Light Santa book was launched locally in Ballymahon by Garda Emma Kiernan and also at the Little Blue Heroes event in Barberstown Castle, Kildare by Minister for Justice Helen Mc Entee and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris. The initiative raised over €9,000 for two charities: Little Blue Heroes and St Christophers Services, Longford. It was supported by Longford PPN Disability Network and the publication of the book was funded by Longford PPN and Longford Local Community Safety Partnership.



County Longford PPN Plenary Meeting

A well-attended successful County Longford PPN plenary meeting was held in May with keynote speakers including Longford County Council Director of Services for Community, Library and Cultural Services, Corporate and Human Resources Barbara Heslin and Longford County Council Environment Senior Executive Engineer Bernard Shea, Intercultural Forum Consultant Karen Reilly and PPN Disability Rep Maria Keelty.

National Public Participation Network Conference

Minister Joe O'Brien opened the two-day National PPN Conference in Wicklow, October 2023. Four members of the PPN Secretariat and staff attended and participated in the various workshops.

Community Development

PPN Regional Meeting

The PPN Coordinator made a presentation to the Midlands Regional PPN October meeting on "Connecting Women to Local Government". This initiative was a collaboration between Longford County Council, See Her Elected of Longford Women's Link, and Longford PPN which resulted in the production of a booklet and video. This was to encourage women to get involved at local government level and through the use of simple English, to explain the workings of the elected members, local authority government and the PPN. It was also translated into Polish, Lithuanian, Slovak, Latvian and Portuguese.

PPN Intercultural Forum

Members of the PPN Intercultural Forum commenced work with a local artist on a project to be showcased in 2024. The project was funded by Longford County Council and Longford PPN. The project is to enable new communities to work together in a safe environment, build trust and engage new communities at the local government level.

PPN Disability Network

The PPN Disability Network through their Disability Infrastructural Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Rep continued to raise and resolve issues with Longford County Council. A very productive meeting was held with the PPN SPC Reps, Director of Service, Strategic Infrastructure and Climate Change and Executive Engineer in December 2023.

Funding

County Longford PPN was kindly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Longford County Council in 2023.

Community Development

Longford Community Safety Partnership

Longford Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) held five meetings in 2023 with monthly updates shared with its working groups.

The annual report issued to members in June 2023 showed that 65% of the actions of the Community Safety Plan are in progress or substantially complete.

A second staff member was appointed to support the LCSP in November 2023.

Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo, 5 October 2023

Longford LCSP worked with the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme and the Healthy Longford project to host a Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo on 5 October, in the new Longford Sports Hub (Longford Athletics Club). The purpose of the event was to showcase the initiatives of the three programmes but also to highlight all of the services available to communities in Longford and in doing so, help improve a sense of community safety, health and wellbeing.

There were over 40 exhibitors including:

- Civil Defence
- Longford Fire Services
- An Garda Síochána (including Mounted Unit)
- Longford Sub Aqua Club
- Music Generation Longford
- Longford County Council Road Safety Team
- Healthy Food Made Easy
- Longford Sports Partnership
- Longford MABS
- Bridgeways Family Resource Centre
- Esker House Womens Refuge
- Longford Womens Link
- Longford Community Resource

Community Development

There were interactive taster sessions including try an instrument, boxercise, yoga, try CPR and Longford Fire Service gave a demonstration of the dangers of putting water on a grease fire. The hydraulic cutting equipment was also showcased. Longford Sub Aqua Club and Longford Civil Defence also showcased a range of their equipment.

Midland's musician, podcaster and mental health advocate Niall 'Bressie' Breslin gave a rousing keynote speech which highlighted the importance of 'Community'. It also gave the 600 attendees some tips and tools to support mental resilience.

Transition Years from all secondary schools in the county were in attendance as well as members of the public with over 700 in attendance across the day.

The event was a huge success and it is proposed to hold it again in 2024.



Community Development

Longford LCSP Annual Public Meeting and Crime Prevention Expo

The Annual Public Meeting was held on 28 November 2023 in the Longford Arms Hotel. The event was held in partnership with An Garda Síochána who provided a Crime Prevention Masterclass. Information stands from several relevant services were also hosted at the evening.

It was a well-attended event with over 150 members of the public present, with wide representation from communities across Longford (both geographically and in terms of minority groups).

A number of LCSP members were in attendance along with Chief Superintendent Ray McMahon, the Garda Community Engagement Bureau and their Chief Superintendent Padraic Jones.

LCSP Chairperson Martina Moloney addressed the meeting and gave an overview of the event and the work of the LCSP. Superintendent Seamus Boyle opened the Crime Prevention Masterclass which was followed by updates on the Longford Text Alert App, Munitir na Tíre, the Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert Schemes and Longford Age Friendly Healthy Homes. The class was wrapped up by Crime Prevention Officer Sgt Damien Bartley who outlined advice from the 'Lock Up, Light Up' campaign.



Superintendent Seamus Boyle and Sgt Darran Conlon at the Crime Prevention Masterclass

Community Development

The Community Safety Coordinator gave a short update on projects being led by Longford LCSP and outlined the Community Safety Grant Scheme which was open and accepting Expressions of Interest.

Superintendent Seamus Boyle then launched the 'See Something, Say Something' reporting initiative.

Three written questions were submitted in advance and two questions from the floor were addressed on topics including:

- the opening of rural Garda Stations
- tackling street drug dealing
- supporting young people to help prevent anti-social behaviour and falling into crime
- Garda Resources in Longford
- responding to concerns of far-right activity and anti-immigrant sentiment.

This was followed by a cup of tea and an opportunity to network and visit the information stands. Overall, the meeting was extremely positive and the launch of See Something, Say Something was particularly welcomed.



Martina Moloney opens the event and Longford Community Safety Partnership team members supporting the event

Community Development

Dead of Night Halloween Festival with Fire and Shadows Procession

Longford LCSP was once again involved in the running of the Dead of Night Halloween Festival in Longford with an expanded five-day offering for Halloween 2023.

The festival took place over the entire Halloween bank holiday weekend kicking off on Friday, 27 October and concluding with a spectacular Samhain Procession and fire beacon finale in Connolly Barracks on Halloween night Tuesday, 31 October.

Following a successful funding application to Fáilte Ireland, LCSP worked with Longford County Council and the Longford Arts Service to arrange and manage the event, which included family-friendly activities over the weekend.



This Haunted House Experience as part of Samhain Town was definitely a big hit!

Samhain Town – Family Fun in Connolly Barracks 12–5.30pm

Working with local artists and actors, Samhain Town took over Connolly Barracks with two days of spooky family activities including a Pumpkin Patch, Halloween Arts and Craft Tent, and a jump scare or two at the haunted house experience in the old army headquarters. The Big Top was packed out for entertainment, while the climbing wall and archery also kept kids busy.

There was a small charge of €5 per child and tickets were sold online. Once in, all activities were free. The weather over the weekend was good and over 5,000 people attended over the two days.

Community Development



Fire and Shadows Samhain Procession and Fiery Finale

On Halloween night, onlookers were enthralled by the Fire and Shadows Procession. Awe-inspiring creatures stalked the streets of Longford Town, led by fire dancers, the Bula Bula Samba Band and local school children with their Samhain lantern creations. The spectacle culminated with fierce and fiery storytelling at a spectacular fire finale in Connolly Barracks.

Before the procession, local businesses entertained the growing crowd. Torc Café hosted a chocolate workshop, Pig Market Lane offered food, music and stories, and the Ukrainian Craft Centre held a craft workshop. Wicked Windows Competition entrants created a spooky streetscape. In conjunction with Longford Local Enterprise Office, local businesses offered great night-time events, including at Eddie Valentines, PV's, Andy Byrnes and the Tally-Ho. These events were supported by the Longford Local Enterprise Office.

Community Development



Images from the Fire & Shadows Procession held on 31 October 2023 – this featured floats from Spraoi Waterford which were manned by local groups – a great night was had by all, with over 5,000 lining the streets of Longford.

Community Development

The Fire and Shadows Procession was supported by Milestone Inventive and Spraoi Street Theatre. Dead of Night Festival 2023 could not have taken place without the help of Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre in Granard, Mostrim Youth Players, Bea Masterson Legan Amateur Drama Group, Backstage Youth Theatre, Ballinamuck Foróige Juniors; Longford Volunteer Centre, the Ukrainian community in Longford, local artists and makers, An Garda Síochána and Civil Defence.

Longford Local Sports Partnership

Every day in communities across the country, Sport Ireland through its network of Local Sports Partnerships (LSP) helps people to get active by removing barriers to sport and physical activity. Working with trusted professionals and valued volunteers, the LSP network engages communities. LSP delivers inclusive, impactful and sustainable opportunities tailored to local needs, getting Ireland more physically active, and involved in sport, and improving the mental and physical health of the nation. In 2023, Longford Sports Partnership continued to support physical activity and sports participation through a range of initiatives and programmes.



Community Programmes

Twenty-three community programme initiatives were undertaken in 2023, with 3,910 people participating. This included Zero to Tri Beginners Triathlon, water sports initiatives, Longford Trail Run Series, Longford Walking Series, Bike Week and a host of tailored physical activity and sports programmes with community groups, sports clubs and schools,

Community Development

The Zero to Tri Triathlon Programme saw 27 beginner participants take part in three sessions of swim, bike and run each week for 10 weeks leading up to a Try a Tri event where 80 participants took on the challenge of a beginner's triathlon in Coral Leisure Longford and Albert Reynolds Peace Park. Several participants have gone on to join the Longford Triathlon club.

Water sports initiatives included introductory kayaking, paddle boarding and canoeing for primary and secondary school students. Participants could go on to complete Canoeing Ireland Level One Kayaking Proficiency assessments. Hundreds of school children and teenagers took part in these activities at several locations throughout the county, including on the Royal Canal, River Shannon and River Inny. Our "Women on the Water" continued to be a great success with 120 Longford women completing a beginner's kayak programme leading to the level 1 Canoe Ireland certification.

After the success of the first Longford Trail Run Series in conjunction with Longford Tourism in 2022, it returned for a second year with almost 380 participants taking part each week. The series aimed to encourage runners to use local trails in the summer.

Diversity Programmes

In County Longford, our community engagement initiatives have reached a diverse range of individuals, including those from marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Through various programmes, we have successfully engaged with a total of 1,304 people, fostering social integration, promoting fitness, and enhancing overall well-being. We have outlined some of the initiatives that ran throughout 2023.

Travelling Community Fitness

For eight weeks, LSP worked closely with 40 members of the Travelling Community, including 22 men and 18 women. The men participated in fitness classes while the women engaged in aqua aerobics. Additionally, both groups interacted with members of the public during public gym and aqua classes, contributing to community integration efforts.

Community Development

Longford African Dance

Over six weeks, LSP engaged with 20 individuals, primarily from the African community, along with participants from native Irish and Eastern European backgrounds. The Longford African Dance program provided a blend of traditional and contemporary African dance, promoting social integration while improving fitness and coordination.

Sports Introduction Initiative

Our Sports Introduction Initiative spanned eight weeks, offering activities such as horse riding, archery and kayaking to 30 children. Participants hailed from diverse backgrounds including Ukrainian, Traveller, African, Polish, Roma, and Lithuanian origins. This initiative was recognised for its positive impact being shortlisted for the Best Community Health award at the LAMA Awards 2024.

Archery Program

Designed specifically for inactive teenagers from various communities, including LGBTQI+, Brazilian, Roma, Polish, and Traveller communities, our four-week archery program engaged 70 participants. This initiative provided a supportive and inclusive environment for skills development, physical activity, and social connections.

Ukrainian Swim Social Integration Programme

The Ukrainian Swim Social Integration program supported 63 Ukrainian refugees by offering swim sessions at the Longford Sports and Leisure Centre. This initiative not only taught valuable swimming skills but also fostered social integration and community cohesion, aiding in their transition and sense of belonging in the new community.

Community Development

Roma Women Zumba

Over six weeks, LSP conducted Zumba classes for 15 women from the Roma Community. The program aimed to promote fitness, well-being, and a sense of community through dynamic and enjoyable Zumba sessions, fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere.

Sports Inclusion Disability Programmes

Nineteen Sports Inclusion Disability Programmes took place with 331 people with disabilities participating. It was supported by the HSE, Healthy Ireland and Sport Ireland. Activities were run through disability services, schools, and sports clubs.

Programmes for adults in disability services included horse riding, water sports, Pilates, Zumba, seated exercise classes and fishing trips. The services engaged with included St Christopher's, Rehab Care, Irish Wheelchair Association, and the Disabled People of Longford organisation. Activities for children included water sports, inclusive athletics, balance-ability, active games, and Zumba.



Physical Activity for Health Programme

In 2023, Longford Sports Partnership was selected to be one of six pilot sites to host a new Physical Activity for Health Programme. The Physical Activity for Health Officer (PAFHO) role employed within the LSP will work in collaboration with Sláintecare, the HSE, the local authority and other key stakeholders to provide opportunities for those with chronic conditions to get active. The primary aim of the Sláintecare fund is to support innovative and cross-sectoral projects and initiatives that support the implementation of key national policies in areas such as health status, weight, obesity,

Community Development

physical activity, mental well-being, and social connectedness. The Physical Activity for Health Officer initiative under this fund will aim to effectively address physical activity as a risk factor for chronic conditions. Chronic conditions are defined broadly as conditions that last one year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily living or both. In Ireland, 49% of Irish people over 50 years have at least one long-term health condition and 65% of adults over 65 years have two or more. This role is part of the Physical Activity for Health Officer pilot programme that is being funded by Sport Ireland and Sláintecare for the first time.

The pilot programme is designed to:

- create increased opportunities for those with chronic conditions and older adults to be active in ways which fit into everyday lives and which suit individual needs, circumstances, and interests
- remove the barriers which people with chronic conditions or older adults face to being active and encourage these people to participate locally
- facilitate the development of a community physical activity participation stream for people living with chronic disease to support them to re-engage with physical activity, or for those who have completed a structured rehabilitation programme to re-engage with community physical activity.

The PAFHO commenced in Longford in early May 2023. From this, an advisory group has been set up with representation from HSE, local authority, service user advocate and Sport Ireland. Since July 2023, the PAFHO has run 12 initiatives with 172 participants. Programmes included Community Maintenance Pulmonary Rehab, Woodlands for Health, Step for Balance, Aqua Aerobics, Summer Walking Series for Chronic Conditions, Men's Shed Health and Wellbeing Programme, Pilates for Strength and Clondra Active Retirement Health and Wellbeing Programme.

FAI Football in the Community

Longford County Council supports the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) in the Community programme in Longford, managed by Longford Local Sports Partnership. The initiative has four pillars that it works towards: 'Player and Coach Development', 'Football Social Responsibility', 'Participation and Retention' and 'Club and League Development'. This programme was delivered to over 4,000 participants.

Community Development

GAA in the Community and Rugby in the Community

Longford County Council supports the GAA in the Community and Rugby in the Community, both managed by Longford Local Sports Partnership. In 2023 the GAA programme engaged with 3,992 participants, while the rugby programme engaged with 3,320 people taking part.

Drumlish Sports Hub, Sports Hub Edgeworthstown and Longford Sports Hub

Drumlish Sports Hub ran 53 initiatives for 879 participants in 2023. This included Activator Pole Walking, with an ongoing class every Monday to encourage the older adults in the community to engage in an outdoor activity. The long-term goal for the classes is to increase clients' motivation, strength and mobility while improving balance. The class is also a social outlet. Another course included Men's Shed Older Adult Exercise Programme, a six-week exercise class which gradually built up the fitness levels of participants. The programme included relaxation techniques concentrating on breathing, gentle stretching and balance, light aerobic and strength exercises, and a boxing workout. Participants noted increased fitness and confidence, as well as now looking for more challenging exercises. Drumlish Sports Hub has also introduced new initiatives like Rinka Kids Fitness, basketball and badminton.

Sports Hub Edgeworthstown ran 50 initiatives for 1,075 people. This included an Older Adult Exercise Classes with Target Practice. In these classes, approximately 20 participants weight train and take part in target games, which is vital as people get older to help maintain muscle mass and improve mobility. Participants note an increase in their overall fitness.

Longford Sports Hub opened in May 2023 and ran 11 initiatives for 412 participants. This included morning and afternoon functional fitness programmes, working with TY students from secondary schools in Longford town and a Men's Shed Health and Wellbeing Programme. As part of this programme health and wellbeing classes were conducted with multimodal exercise programmes including Tai Chi, line dancing, boxercise, strength and mobility, and mindfulness.

Community Development

Club Development and Volunteer Support Grant

The Club Development and Volunteer Supports Grant supports not-for-profit organisations. In 2023, 50 such organisations secured grants of €30,720 to support their structures, coaching, education, and target group initiatives. Organisations benefitting include many local GAA and football clubs, as well as other sports clubs.

Longford Sports Star Awards

The 2023 Sports Star Awards, in association with Longford Leader, were held on Friday, November 24 in the Longford Arms Hotel. This was a brilliant event which recognised the achievements of Longford's high-performing athletes. Renowned Longford Swimming Club coach Ronan McNevin was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Longford has produced a myriad of top swimmers over the years with Ronan playing an integral role in their development making him a very worthy recipient of the Hall of Fame accolade. Ballymore GAA player, club administrator and groundsman Damien Monaghan was chosen as the Club Volunteer of the Year award winner and the Sports Ability Award was presented to Liam Madden, the



Community Development

long serving Longford Special Olympics Coach. Promising young athlete Emma Brennan enjoyed an incredible 2023 and the Longford Athletics Club and Drumlish Ballinamuck Community Games representative was presented with the Junior Sports Person of the Year award. The Clonguish Óg U18 (Minor) Gaelic football team was selected as the Team of the Year. Clonguish dominated the Longford GAA underage ranks in 2023, while their senior men and ladies also contested football finals and their senior hurlers were crowned county champions.

Resourcing and Funding

Longford Local Sports Partnership secured €779,760 for sport and physical activity with €642,327 in direct funding.

- Sport Ireland Core Funding of €279,655 and Women in Sport Funding of €9,000
- Healthy Ireland funding valued at €35,040.
- Sláintecare funding of €5,000
- Dormant Accounts funding of €182,910 for the three community sports hubs in Edgeworthstown, Drumlish and Longford; Sports Inclusion Disability Projects; Youth Leadership; Urban Outdoor Adventure Initiative; and volunteer supports.

Corporate Services

Customer Services

Customer Services responded to over 10,000 calls during the year. In addition to the calls, there were also walk-in customers and customer emails sent to the dedicated customer services email. These emails were responded to through the Longford County Council customer relationship management system.

Customer Services Charter

Longford County Council's Customer Services Charter, published in 2022, contains the standards of service our citizens, customers and elected representatives can expect. We continuously strive to ensure that customers obtain the highest standard of service. Our Charter contains new feedback and complaint forms, which are available on [Longfordcoco.ie](https://longfordcoco.ie) and in Council offices to enable customers comment or make a complaint if they are not satisfied with the service. This Charter is due for review in 2024.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

No protected disclosures were made to the Council under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 as amended in 2023. The Protected Disclosures Annual Reports are available on the Council website at [Longfordcoco.ie](https://longfordcoco.ie)



Register of Electors

The rolling register that enables people to register to vote online at any time is in place since October 2022. Those aged 16 and 17 can now pre-register online and will be automatically added to the Register when they turn 18.

Corporate Services

Longford County Council processed approximately 2,000 applications received through ChecktheRegister.ie for both new registrations and the updating of existing electors over the course of 2023.

Longford County Council undertook varied publicity initiatives to help inform the public of the revisions to the electoral registration processes. These included school visits, community group visits, an An Post leaflet drop, advertising on social media, communications with employees and elected members, information desks at events around the county, an information desk at the Department of Social Welfare offices and the inaugural showcasing of Check the Register and Longford County Council services at the National Ploughing Championships in Laois. In addition, at these championships, our corporate services employees supported the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage publicity campaign on the revised elector process at the Government stand. Local and national media campaigns ran at various stages throughout the year which resulted in significant increases in applications.



Corporate Services

Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2022

From 1 January to 31 December 2023 public bodies are required, under Section 10A of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, to meet targets relating to advertising placement and spend in the Irish language. Public bodies are also required to furnish a report on these activities to An Coimisinéir Teanga (due by the end of March 2024). Longford County Council is required to place 20% of advertisements, including social media advertising, in the Irish Language or in English and Irish, and to allocate 5% of advertising spend to advertising in Irish language media outlets.

2023 Figures	
Total advertisements placed:	2,634
Irish or bilingual advertisements placed:	807
Percentage of advertisements in Irish or bilingual:	23.8%
Percentage of advertising spend in Irish language media:	4.7%

Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge

Cumann na nOifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge (COFG) is the Irish Language Development Officers Association. Longford County Council's Irish Language Officer attended a meeting organised by COFG in Dublin in May. Topics discussed included the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021; the role of Irish Officers in public bodies, state departments and third level colleges, and the challenges and opportunities associated with that role.

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)	
Freedom of Information requests:	60
Internal review on FOI requests:	1
Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) requests:	15
Internal review on AIE requests:	1

Corporate Services

Council Meetings

Council meetings in 2023 included:		
Longford County Council		12
Ballymahon MD		9
Granard MD		9
Longford MD		11
Finance		2
Strategic Policy Committees		
	Placemaking SPC	4 each
	Governance SPC	
	Climate Action and Planning SPC	
	Strategic Infrastructure SPC	
Corporate Policy Group		12
Meeting with Members of Oireachtas for the Longford Westmeath constituency with Cathaoirleach and Management Team		1
Protocol and Procedures Committee		3

Longford County Council meetings included presentations by:

- Vacant Homes Officer
- Iarnród Éireann
- Just Transition from representative of Fáilte Ireland
- Waterways Ireland

At the Longford County Council Annual Meeting on 29 June 2023:

- Councillor Colm Murray was elected Cathaoirleach
- Councillor Garry Murtagh was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach

Corporate Services

Civic Receptions

Three Civic Receptions held in 2023:

- Civic Reception in honour of Longford Slashers Ladies
- Civic Reception in honour of Junk Kouture World Finalists
- Cathaoirleach Awards on 9 June 2023



Corporate Services

Civic Recognitions and Events

Other civic recognition events held in 2023 included:

- Welcoming event in honour of Granard's East Rouen Twinning Committee
- Welcoming event in honour of Ballymahon's Landevant, Brittany Twinning Committee
- Recognition event in honour of the Ballymore Ladies Gaelic Football Club in Granard



Corporate Services

Communications

In its third year, Longford County Council Communications section continued its work to embed the value of good communication as a responsibility of all employees. It also promoted the important work being carried out by the local authority and the significant voluntary work being undertaken by our local communities.

Internally, the Longford County Council Brand Standards were launched, introducing a consistency of design approach to advertising and all documents published by the Council. It also standardised the approach to the branding of all Council property. A Customer Communications Toolkit presentation was also prepared and uploaded to Metacompliance for employees to access.

Longford County Council's online Rehome a Dog communications campaign, carried out in association with the Environment Section, was recognised at national level by being shortlisted for the Communications category at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards.



Corporate Services

Communications Working Group

Monthly meetings of the Longford County Council Communications Working Group continued in 2023. These meetings are attended by representatives from different sections of the local authority to allow for efficient updates on the work happening on behalf of Longford County Council, especially work that may need Communications support. This has enhanced the planning and preparation capacity of the Communications team.

Press releases and publicity campaigns

Communications issued 85 press releases, statements and publicity campaigns in 2023. These included:

- Inaugural Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase hailed as huge success
- Longford County Council wins at All-Ireland Occupational Safety Awards 2023
- Opening of The Yard Hub Abbeyshrule by Minister Heather Humphreys
- Longford County Council wins prestigious public sector Health and Safety award
- Taoiseach officially opens Longford's Rose Cottage War of Independence Centre
- Longford County Council welcomes 2023 Rose Tour to Longford
- Longford County Council highlights International Women's Day with 'gender flipped-Council meeting'
- Bressie for keynote speech at Longford Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo
- Longford County Council presents digital project at NOAC best practice local authority showcase event
- Longford County Council votes to create County Register of Defibrillators
- Longford's Dead of Night Festival 2023 hailed as a Samhain success story
- Longford County Council shortlisted at All Ireland Community and Council Awards 2023
- Strasbourg Youth Orchestra to play St Mel's Cathedral, Longford
- Longford Town Centre First Plan public consultation underway
- Celebrations as Longford Lights Festival shortlisted in Business to Arts Awards

Corporate Services

Media queries

Communications processed 106 media queries in 2023.

Social Media

Throughout 2023, Longford County Council's corporate social media pages continued to grow:

- **Facebook:** 6,745 (up 11%)
- **Twitter:** 3,517 (up 6%)
- **Instagram:** 1,767 (up 21%)

Efforts were also increased on other social media platforms, including highlighting events such as the Dead of Night on TikTok and more corporate content on LinkedIn.

In 2023, Longford County Council continued to meet its Official Languages Act obligations regarding advertising in the Irish language.

Website

In 2023, Longfordcoco.ie had 127,411 visits with 218,058 page views.

Improvements were made to several sections on Longfordcoco.ie, including Environment, Fire Services, Civil Defence, and several Corporate Services pages. There are also new Governance and Access to Information sections and a new Public Consultation page.

Improvements to LongfordLibrary.ie were also worked through with employees from the Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage sections.

Corporate Services

Communications Training

Media training for the Cathaoirleach and Management Team, as well as for selected employees of Longford County Council took place. Smartphone video training was also held for employees using social media in their work. This has helped with the creation of short video content that is critical for growth and reach on social media.

In addition, Communications employees attended training, literacy and plain English events in support of best practice in the areas of universal design and accessibility.

Events

Communications assisted with the coordination and promotion of many Longford County Council events which took place in 2023. These included supporting the coordination of the visit of Minister Heather Humphreys on multiple occasions, for opening of The Yard Hub, Abbeyshrulë in April; and Longford Skatepark among others. Communications also provided support to key public events in the county including, among others:

- Longford Lights 2023 in February
- the Battle of Ballinamuck 225th Anniversary Commemoration in September
- Longford's Dead of Night Festival at Halloween
- the official opening of Rose Cottage War of Independence Centre by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar in November



Corporate Services

Publications

Communications produces the monthly statutory Chief Executive Report which is presented to elected members to detail the ongoing work of the different sections of Longford County Council.

The section also helps coordinate the preparation of other significant publications on behalf of the local authority. This year, these included, among others:

- Service Delivery Plan
- Annual Report 2022
- County Longford Road Safety Plan 2022 – 2024
- Climate Action Plan
- Litter Management Plan 2024 – 2026
- Gender Pay Gap Report 2023



Corporate Services

Data Protection

5	Data Processing Complaints investigated and closed
5	Data Breaches investigated and closed
11	Data Agreements signed up to (77 in total in place)
9	Data Subject Access Requests received and completed within the statutory deadline
4	Data Protection Impact Assessments reviewed
5	Data Protection policies updated and reviewed
139	Data Protection queries received

Highlights

The Data Protection office was awarded the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) Plain English Mark for its Data Protection Privacy Policy and Service Privacy Notices.

Data Protection also introduced its first quarterly data protection newsletter to keep employees up to date with current Data Protection and GDPR news within Longford County Council.

During 2023, the DPO also introduced a best practice in file management guidance document to the organisation.

Further to this, the DPO introduced top tips on how to protect personal data, sharing this online and through internal communication channels.

Corporate Services

Health and Safety

Certification to ISO 45001:2018

This year Longford County Council continued to maintain certification to ISO 45001:2018 following a four-day recertification audit completed by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). All departments within the council are included within the scope of the audit. The NSAI did not report any audit findings for 2023.

This is a very important certification for Longford County Council and demonstrates the commitment to the management and continuous improvement of health and safety, making Longford County Council a safer place for all employees and the wider community.

Health and Safety Awards

For the ninth consecutive year, Longford County Council won awards at the annual NISO ceremony, winning the 'Local Authority / Council Award' and again being recognised as a 'Consistent High Achiever'. The awards are run by the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) in conjunction with Northern Ireland Safety Group (NISG).



Corporate Services

Longford County Council has consistently been recognised as a top performer at the NISO awards, with successive wins at the awards every year since first entering.

This is a huge achievement and would not have been possible without the commitment and input of all employees to Health and Safety within the organisation.

Summary of accident and incident reports for 2023

Reporting of accidents and incidents is an important element of the safety management system and identifies areas for continuous improvement.

Longford County Council reported one accident to the Health and Safety Authority for 2023 and there were no dangerous occurrences during the year.

There were 35 incidents reported of violence and aggression in 2023 as opposed to 25 in 2022.

Safety statements

Longford County Council and Longford County Fire and Rescue Services safety statements were updated and communicated to employees in 2023 via our training platform Metacompliance. The Longford County Council Safety Statement obtained the 'Plain English' mark from the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA). Longford was the first local authority in the country to receive the 'Plain English' mark for its safety statement.

Risk assessments

Risk Assessments must be completed for all work activities and buildings owned and/or operated by Longford County Council.

Safety inspections

Longford County Council's Safety Inspection Program was carried out by each directorate at fixed and mobile work locations with a total of 258 safety inspections completed in 2023.

Corporate Services

These safety inspections are a useful tool for determining compliance with health and safety requirements. A quarterly report on inspections is provided to the Management Team. Non-compliance or issues identified are added to an electronic action tracking system, ensuring all such issues and actions are addressed, resolved and closed by each section.

Health and safety auditing

In 2023, Longford County Council continued auditing of the health and safety management system.

Ten days of internal auditing were completed in 2023. The audits are completed against the ISO 45001:2018 standard. Findings from audits are logged on the Mirashare system which is a software package that gathers all the corrective actions and tracks them until they are closed.

As well as using local authority employees to complete temporary traffic management (TTM) auditing and inspections Longford County Council also engaged the services of Tobar Segais, an external TTM consultant. Four days of TTM auditing was completed within our Roads and Water Services Sections.

Communication and consultation

Longford County Council consults and communicates with employees, through the preparation of risk assessments and standard operating procedures, health and safety inductions, monthly safety reports, through safety representatives and a steering group. Communication also goes out through the Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee meetings, Safety Management Committee meetings, and the Management Team meetings.

Contractors

Contractors working on behalf of Longford County Council continue to be assessed in line with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2013. Overall, 82 contractors were assessed and approved for 2023. For this, every contractor completes a Health and Safety Questionnaire, and this is assessed by the Council to determine their competency and compliance with Health and Safety requirements.

Human Resources

The Human Resources section operates in accordance with the Local Government People Strategy focusing on three priority areas:

- Workforce of the future
- Capacity and capability
- Effective management

This in turn supports the delivery of the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

During 2023, the Human Resources section continued to evolve and change. Digital technology was utilised to deliver service, engage with employees, and manage change.

Human Resources delivered on work programmes in the following areas:

- Policy development
- Employment law and compliance
- Workforce planning and succession planning
- Recruitment and selection
- Learning and development
- Employee engagement
- Health and wellbeing
- Equality and diversity
- Contract management
- Attendance management
- Performance management and development
- Statutory reporting and departmental returns
- Record and document management
- Employee assistance and support



Human Resources

Employee Appreciation: Past and Present

In December 2023, Longford County Council held its Annual Employee Appreciation Day thanking all employees for their continued service while focusing on motivation. Staff were recognised for the following

- Long Service Recognition Awards
- Mental Health Champions
- Graduates from the Open Learning Scheme for their personal contribution and engagement in the development of a culture of lifelong learning at Longford County Council.

A Christmas get-together of retired Longford County Council staff took place on 12 December 2023.

Recruitment and selection

The Human Resources department of Longford County Council ensures that recruitment and selection procedures are operated in a fair and transparent manner in line with good practice, employment legislation and relevant departmental circulars and guidelines.

The following is a summary of the recruitment programme for 2023.

Competitions advertised	54
Applications Received	924
Interview Days	82
Interview Boards	45
Appointments	57
Promotions	42
Retirements	13
Resignations	27

Human Resources

Learning and Development

Longford County Council enables continuous and lifelong learning.

Organisational and personal development training delivered during 2023 included skill development in areas such as leadership, management and supervisory, business, IT, legislation and governance.

Training for **38** different competencies was delivered during 2023, with **568** attendees.

Statutory health and safety training is required by law or deemed necessary through risk and/or organisational needs assessment. This is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees and others who may be affected by Longford County Council's work activities.

During 2023, training for **20** health and safety competencies was delivered with **239** attendees.

As part of the external audit process of the safety management system the National Standards Authority of Ireland recognised the health and wellbeing programme as a strength within the organisation.

Open Learning Scheme

Longford County Council, through its Open Learning Scheme, aims to support employees who wish to undertake studies in further education building capacity across the organisation.

Seven employees participated in the Open Learning Scheme for the 2022/2023 academic year.

Graduates from the scheme are recognised for their personal contribution and engagement in the development of a culture of lifelong learning at Longford County Council.

Human Resources

Employee Health and Wellbeing

The employee health and wellbeing programme is delivered under four pillars.

- mental wellbeing
- physical wellbeing
- social wellbeing
- financial wellbeing

A total of 45 programmes were designed and delivered through the health and wellbeing programme.

The programme included Couch to 5KM Running and Walking Challenge, Mental Health Champion Training and collaboration with Sports Partnership for summer outdoor activities, and Winter Flu vaccinations.

It supported National No Smoking Day, National Day of Reading, Pride Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness Month through information sessions and sharing of materials.

Statutory Reporting and Departmental Returns

Statutory and Departmental Returns were submitted to the relevant government departments on time during 2023.



Library and Cultural Services

Longford Library Services

This year, Longford Libraries saw an increase in visitor numbers, book issues, and library members when compared with the previous year. While still recovering from the pandemic and trying to achieve the figures set in 2019, progress is being made. There is an outreach action plan for the libraries to build on work to date. The following are some of the activities undertaken in 2023.

New opening hours

Longford Libraries increased opening hours by 9% from August. This was a response to the increase in customer demands for service. These new scheduled opening times will make the library more accessible to borrowers.

Right to Read

The Right to Read programme has four initiatives: Spring into Storytime, Summer Stars, Children's Book Festival, and Family Time at the Library. The programme aims to foster a love of reading supported by the library and its community partners.

Longford Libraries was presented the Right to Read Award for 2022. An action plan was submitted for 2023 with targets for all four initiatives.

All six libraries took part in all four initiatives with huge audiences meeting our 2023 targets. The runaway success story was the Summer Stars with 1,443 children taking part. This is a 46% increase on the target set for this programme.

As part of the programme, all participating children received an FAI and Libraries Ireland Activity Book to celebrate the first Irish women's soccer team that participated in the 2023 World Cup in Australia.

The library ran 18 July provision summer workshops and 48 events over the summer period including storytelling, arts and crafts, dance, and puppet-making workshops with Jay Ryan from RTE, to name a few.

Library and Cultural Services

A special mention for the Santa Letter Workshop in Granard Library. These events were developed and organised with the local post office and four local primary schools. This was a celebration of the wonderful community Christmas magic.

My Little Library Book Bags

My Little Library Book Bags is a free public library programme to help children navigate starting school in 2023. The bag contained three books, a story card about the library, a postcard, and their library card and wallet. The initiative is a collaboration between libraries, the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

As an additional initiative, there was a 'Little Book at Bedtime' with free bedtime story books, library card wallets, and reading tips.

Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Healthy Longford events



Longford Library secured funding of €6,500 to deliver events to promote Healthy living in the community.

Ireland Reads 2023, our National Day of Reading was promoted across the county with thousands of people pledging to read more. Reading is a good habit to reduce stress.

There were 25 events ranging from a talk by life coach Mark Fennell,

Library and Cultural Services

Understanding the Menopause by Ceile Medical, mindfulness art workshops with Angela Tuite and children play therapy sessions with Eleanor Glennon. There were also cookery demonstrations with Fiona Egan from Cloghan Farms, and mindfulness workshop with Pauline Rogers from Bawn Holistic Therapies, Longford.

During the summer, several library branches hosted the Irish Heart Foundation's blood pressure testing mobile unit, the dementia mobile, and breast cancer information sessions. Hundreds of blood pressure, heart monitoring checks and information leaflets were taken across the county.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Fourteen events were hosted as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge in 2023. This included a screening of 'An Cailín Ciúin' in Ballymahon Library, which was very popular with an audience of 80 people.

Longford STEAM

Longford STEAM is a new programme to promote all things: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Maths. There were engineering, tech, biodiversity, and Science Week events.

Lego clubs

Two new Lego clubs were piloted in Granard and Longford with great success.

Beginners coding

Beginners coding for kids with Siobhán Grealy continuing in our libraries. This is funded by Creative Ireland.

Library and Cultural Services

Town twinning events

There were two official welcome receptions hosted in Ballymahon and Granard Library respectively for Landevant and East Rouen Twinning Group as part of the town twinning initiative.



Library and Cultural Services

A Poem for September

A Poem for September is a literacy programme that featured a new poem each day in September featuring both local and international poets.

Black History Month event

Longford Africans Network organised a Black History month which was hosted in Longford Library. Ambassadors and representatives from several African nations attended on the day and donated books to the library written by African writers. The donated books will be catalogued and will become part of the library's book collection and will be available for lending.



Library and Cultural Services



Exhibitions

The library supports local, national, and international artists with exhibition spaces. Exhibitions included a Traveller Pride Week display of paintings, photographs, arts and crafts including a miniature wagon. Another exhibition was commissioned by the Polish Embassy in honour of Count Pawel Strzelecki and local artist Laura Doherty, with all processing donated to the local brain injury unit in Longford.



Book Launches

On 28 November 'En passant and the Purple Jar' was launched. It is by Daire McLoughlin, Elizabete Bolmane, Chloe Cubbon, Culann Fitzgerald, Oliwia Zygmuntowicz, Leo Kelly, Patricija Zeikmane, Keava Whelan, Roberts Brizga and Deividas Jasiunas. The purple jar is a re-print of Maria Edgeworth's short story.

On 16 December, 'More Quirky Tales' was launched. It is written by local authors, illustrated by local children, and funded by Creative Ireland.

Library and Cultural Services

Grant funding

Longford Libraries secured funding of €10,000 from the Department of Rural and Community Development from the Dormant Account Fund for the development of new sensory toys, equipment collection and age-friendly furniture.



Sensory Unit Granard Library

Literacy Friendly Longford

Twenty businesses in Longford town nominated an employee to become a workplace Literacy Friendly Ambassador. For this, Longford Libraries offered a two-day training course in literacy awareness, plain English, digital literacy, and literacy friendly approaches. This training was funded in conjunction with SOLAS and the Longford-Westmeath Education Training Board (LWETB), as part of the Adult Learning for Life Strategy.

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Youth Library Group Conference

On 3 May, Edgeworthstown Library hosted the in-person Youth Library Group National Conference with 100 library employees in attendance. This conference celebrates library success stories from around the country with speakers from Galway, Kildare, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Louth, Meath, and school libraries.

Training

Library employees attended two bespoke training days:

- On 21 August: Personal Safety at Work and Dealing with Aggressive Customers
- On 28 August: Sensory awareness training, AslAm Autism accreditation process, and the introduction of staff-led sensory play programming for each library.

Age Friendly Programme

Age Friendly Programme including six Older Persons' Council (OPC) meetings, four Age Friendly Alliance Meetings, and extensive programming including Bealtaine, Positive Ageing Week, a joint-climate action workshops with Age Friendly Westmeath and facilitated by CARO. There were also Healthy Ireland events, ACORN tablet training, digital skills, and music concerts. There was a collective audience of over 1,500 for these events.



Sweet Memories Dementia Choir Bealtaine Performance Ballymahon Library

Library and Cultural Services



Putting Your House in Order Granard

One of the highlights of these events was 'Putting Your House in Order – Think Ahead' seminar delivered by Irish Hospice Foundation public engagement team in partnership with local solicitors EC Gearty and Co.

This work also included our annual information day held on Monday, 9 October in the Longford Arms Hotel. This year's theme is 'Be Wise and Well' with the tagline 'Health is a choice'. This is a collaboration between Longford Age Friendly and HSE Longford Primary Care Programmes. Our partners provided information stands on their services including Local Links, An Garda Síochána, LWETB, Longford County Council Road Safety section, Longford Local Sport Partnership, Longford Local Community Safety Partnership and much more.

At the OPC annual general meeting, held on 24 October, Kitty Burchill was elected Chair of Longford OPC, replacing Kitty Hughes who has been Chair for the last number of years. Longford County Council Chief Executive and Chair of Longford Age Friendly Alliance, Paddy Mahon made a presentation to Kitty Hughes to acknowledge her valuable contribution to the Older Persons' Council both locally and nationally.

Longford Handy Helps

Longford Handy Helps is a collaboration between Longford Libraries and the HSE senior occupational therapists working in the community. A core collection of useful gadgets and devices were selected and purchased. These items can be borrowed from Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard and Longford Libraries with an adult Longford library card. The collection aims to help people live more independently in their own homes. This is a try before you buy initiative with participating local pharmacies.

Library and Cultural Services

Creativity in the Older Person Creative Ireland Fund

Funding was secured from the Creative Ireland Fund, Creativity in the Older Person for a project called 'Rocking and Bopping around Longford'. These musical-themed events ended in December with over 35 events delivered during the autumn as part of this initiative. An audience of 854 older people took part. The feedback has been very positive with many older people enjoying themselves and local musicians engaging with the audiences.

Age Friendly Achievement Awards

The Rath Mhuire Community Car, which serves the older community in north Longford was shortlisted in the Transport category at this year's Age Friendly Achievement Awards. These awards were hosted by the Wexford Age Friendly Programme on 30 November. Judging for these awards took place in the Dolmen Centre on Tuesday 10 October. Judges were retired Meath County Council Chief Executive, Jackie Maguire; retired Mayo County Council Chief Executive Peter Hynes, and Sylvia McCarthy from National Shared Service Office in Meath County Council. They all visited the Dolmen Centre and were taken on a tour of the rural area served by the community car. The winner of the category was the First Age-Friendly Railway Station (McDonagh Station, Kilkenny).



Sinead Burke in discussion with Rick O'Shea at Granard Booktown Festival

Creative Ireland Longford

On 23 February, the Longford Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 was launched in Farmleigh, in Phoenix Park by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media Catherine Martin TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning Kieran O'Donnell TD.

Library and Cultural Services

A total of 39 initiatives and projects were supported across County Longford through Creative Ireland and Longford County Council in 2023. These included events such as the Granard Booktown Festival, the Maria Edgeworth Festival, the Drumlish Chess Club event, and Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase. Still Voices Film Festival 2023 took place from 15–19 November. This short film competition received 486 films from 67 countries.

Cruinniú

On Saturday, 10 June, Longford Libraries was a hub of activity with 37 free Cruinniú workshops, music classes, slime labs, magicians, storytellers and more. Community partners, Backstage Theatre, Youth Theatre, and Knights and Conquest Heritage Centre also opened their doors and offered free workshops to children of all ages. There were some development projects for teens including acting and play development, music video making and film development via workshops which started in April 2023. The teens were able to showcase their projects in various locations around the county.



Library and Cultural Services

Longford County Archives

The Archives Service had a busy and productive year, with the completion of some projects and the introduction of new initiatives.

Local history book launches

Longford County Archives helped with the following local history book launches:

- **2 February:** 'A Damn Yankee Am I? Thanks!' by Aidan O'Hara
- **18 February:** 'The North Longford Flying Column: The Clonfin Twenty-one' by Bernard Sexton
- **3 April:** 'Mills, Millers and Milling in County Longford' by the late Dr Seamus Mímnagh
- **21 June:** 'Celebrating the Centenary of An Garda Síochána in Longford' by the Centenary Committee and edited by Jim McDonald and Eamonn Brennan.
- **16 September:** 'The Future Is Now' by Ciaran Mullooly
- **19 October:** 'Crossing the Divide' by Seamus McRory
- **27 November:** the latest edition of 'Teabtha' produced by the Longford Historical Society. This edition was edited by Longford County Archivist Martin Morris.
- **12 December:** 'When Stones Speak' by Luke Baxter and Hugh Farrell

Acquisitions

The following archives were deposited:

- St Mary's GAA Club, Granard, has deposited several digital items to the County Longford GAA Archive
- A small quantity of archives has come from the shop of the late Michael Sheahan, a photographer, in Longford town
- some items from a local accountancy business; and an account book from Prunty's shop, Newtownforbes
- The Archives team is currently preparing to receive a collection donated by the family of late Taoiseach Albert Reynolds

Library and Cultural Services

Records management

Completion of the pilot initiative on file architecture and record management in the Corporate Section was completed. Several sessions were held on the best practices in file management on the council network for Longford County Council employees. These sessions were introduced to ensure efficient record usability, accessibility and improved security for employees and their documents. Work has begun on the records management for the Library and Heritage sections.

Padraic Colum Gathering

On Saturday, 7 October, the annual Padraic Colum Gathering took place. The speakers were Professor Christopher Morash MRIA, Dr Patrick Ryan, Longford poet Margaret Nohilly, and local historian Benedict Reid. The performance by the children of St Colmcille's National School in Aughnacliffe was excellent.

The Decade of Centenaries Programme:

The Requiem for the Big House documentary by Dr Charles Lambert and Ronan Daly, commissioned as part of the Decade of Centenary programme in 2022, was selected for screening at the History International Film Festival in Enns, Austria, in August 2023.

The Decade of Centenaries Programme also included:

- Reconciliation-themed postage stamp competition for primary schools
- The changing life of a teenager since Independence intergenerational project for transition students and the local active retirement groups
- The centenary ceremony for the Civil War was held on 14 June in the Remembrance Garden, Longford
- Talk on the 1923 General Election with Dr Mel Farrell, hosted by the Longford Historical Society on 14 August
- Commissioning and Screening of 'The Assault on and Capture of Ballymahon RIC Barracks' produced by Rónán Ó Ceallaigh and Michael Conlan on Saturday, 19 August. The film documentary focused on the capture of Ballymahon RIC barracks in 1920.

Library and Cultural Services

- Lecture entitled 'Ireland and the League of Nations, 1922–46' by Dr Michael Kennedy of the Royal Irish Academy on 19 September.
- Commissioning of a film on the late Robert Wilson produced by Harp Media
- The editing and publication of the memoir of Seán Mac Eoin

Battle of Ballinamuck Commemoration

On 7–10 September, Archives was involved in the commemoration of the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Ballinamuck. Events were funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. These include joint history and art projects with four local schools: Ballinamuck, Drumlish, Granard and Cloone. It also included a twinning project and sculpture commission with artist Kevin Flood, a formal official launch event, with keynote speaker University of Notre Dame Professor Kevin Whelan. There were also traditional craft demonstrations, a poetry reading by Noel Monahan, and music, entertainment from local musicians and the Ukrainian choir.



Library and Cultural Services

Rose Cottage War of Independence Centre in Ballinalee

The Archive section was tasked with the commissioning and verification of the information boards, audio and visual tours located in Rose Cottage, War of Independence Centre.



Library and Cultural Services

Longford County Arts Service

Fergus Kennedy RIP

It is with great sadness that we remember Arts Officer Fergus Kennedy who passed away suddenly but peacefully on Friday, 31 March 2023.

Longford Lights

Over the weekend of the 24–26 February, 11,800 patrons attended the Longford Lights festival in Connolly Barracks to view a charming display of 450 handmade lanterns created by nearly 200 local citizens and local artists. The five-month project was a partnership between Longford Arts Services and artistic director Tom Meskell funded through The Arts Council of Ireland Project Award Grant, Creative Ireland, and Longford County Council.



Library and Cultural Services

Piano For the People

On Monday, 27 March, Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Turlough McGovern, launched a new community piano in Longford Shopping Centre called 'Piano for the People'.



Arts funding

Longford Arts Service secured funding for the following projects in 2023:

Arts Council Creative Places Research Award (€35,000): Edgeworthstown

A research grant project to recommend the best approaches to arts development in the area. The grant aim is rooted in socially engaged arts practice and community development principles and will be a great boost to Edgeworthstown's diverse and growing community.

Arts Council Commission Award (€14,000): A commission for visual artist Caroline Conway and local music composer Niamh Ní Mheara called 'Project US'.

Department of Rural and Community Development (€72,000) under the Community Recognition Fund: Funding for a gig rig operated by Longford County Council to enhance festival and event infrastructure in the county.

Library and Cultural Services

Bursary Awards

Longford Arts Services made €21,000 available for artist development bursaries. The grant process was open to Longford artists and gave priority to new or emerging artists to help support capacity building within the local arts community. Twenty-four applications were received, and 18 awards were offered.

County Longford art collection tour

County Longford art collection was toured in the new digital hubs co:worx in Edgeworthstown and the Yard Hub in Abbeyshrule.

St John's Eve, Granard

On Friday, 23 June, Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre funded and supported by Arts Service held the inaugural St John's Eve event at the Motte and Bailey in Granard. The event comprised of a bonfire on the hill. It was complemented by two fire drawings commissioned by local artists. The event represents a key objective of Longford Arts Services in supporting artists and communities to develop arts festival capacity locally.

Cruthú Arts Festival

This was the tenth year of the Cruthú Arts Festival, which was held from 18–23 July. It celebrated a fusion of art forms and cultural expressions, funded by both Longford Arts Service and Creative Ireland Longford. The highlight event was on closing night with The Strasbourg Youth Orchestra performing in the iconic St Mel's Cathedral followed by a visual circus performance on the steps of the cathedral.

Arts Strategy 2023–2029

County Longford Arts Strategy 2023–2029 was adopted at the September meeting of Longford County Council. This strategy will provide a road map for arts development in the county for the coming years.

Library and Cultural Services

Culture Night 2023

Culture Night 2023 took place on Friday, 22 September. With events of interest for all tastes, the night was a huge success. The Craft Master's Café in Longford town was a highlight, showcasing the crafts of international and local artists organised by Ukrainian artists settled in Longford.

Dead of Night Festival

The five-day Dead of Night Festival took place over the October bank holiday weekend with plenty of free family fun. This is a Longford County Council project funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media as part of the Night-Time Economy initiative. There is also three-year funding from Fáilte Ireland as part of a pilot scheme to reclaim Ireland as the true home of Halloween for the festival. Longford Local Community Safety Partnership and Longford Arts Service, in conjunction with internal and external partners, coordinated the festival. All events had community and public participation at their core.



Library and Cultural Services

Heritage Office

Funding from the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government was secured for 11 community projects from around the county under three separate grants:

- Built Heritage Investment Scheme
- Historic Structures Fund
- Community Monuments Fund

Heritage Week 2023

This year's National Heritage Week, sponsored by the National Lottery, took place between Saturday, 12 August and Sunday, 20 August. This week included barn owl awareness sessions, Melkagh megalithic tomb lecture, events from the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre, a talk on the traditions and folklore associated with native plants and a visit to Inchcleraun (Quakers Island).



Library and Cultural Services

National Heritage Week Awards 2023

Longford was well represented at the National Heritage Week Awards 2023. The Tour of Edgeworthstown by The Maria Edgeworth Centre was announced as the county winner.

Dúchas Beo by Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre was one of the three shortlisted events in the inclusive heritage awards. This award acknowledges the special effort to share heritage with everyone in the community, including those who are new to heritage, those who do not have local roots, and those who have additional accessibility needs and encourage intergenerational activity. The Hunt Museum were the winner in this category.

Both the Tour of Edgeworthstown and the Maria Edgeworth Centre and Dúchas Beo were recipients of the Longford County Council Heritage Week Grants in 2023.



Library and Cultural Services

Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023

Longford Heritage Office was successful in securing funding for five projects under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023. These projects include a 'plant-a-pollinator pot' project, barn owl awareness talks, swift conservation awareness and nesting boxes, hedgerow survey and hedge laying workshops with the Tidy Towns and a nine-county quagga mussel monitoring survey. Thirteen Tidy Towns committees from around the county took part in these projects.

New Longford Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage employees

Longford Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage were delighted to welcome eight new employees in the following positions during 2023:

- **Librarian:** Eimear Feeney, Edgeworthstown Library
- **Creative Community Engagement Officer:** Ciarán Lennon
- **Senior Library Assistant:** Craig Lucas, Edgeworthstown Library
- **Assistant Archivist:** Nathan Fitzmaurice
- **Library Assistant:** Rosie Fay, Longford Library and Sarah Sheridan, Granard Library
- **Clerical Officer:** Patricia Reynolds, Library HQ
- **Branch Librarian:** Karolin Beier Rooney, Lanesborough Library

There was some movement in the library branches with employee transfers which will develop staff and ensure good quality service delivery around the county.

Final Farewell

In November we bid a fond farewell to our friends and colleagues, Mary Kelly and Helen Sheridan, as they retired from the Library Service. They are greatly missed by their local communities in Edgeworthstown and Lanesborough!



AN ISRAID NUA
NEW STREET

Finance and Information Technology

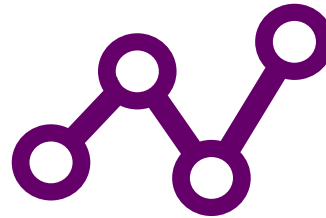


Finance

2023 in Numbers



€64.4m revenue
budget for 2023



87% rates collected
(down 3%)*



89%
rents collected
(no change)*



44 housing loan
applications received,
with 15 approved,
8 refused and 6 loans
advanced

77% housing loans
collected (no change)*



13,484 Motor Tax transactions
valued at **€2,068,164** took place



0 interest
penalties incurred

under the Prompt Payments of Accounts Act, 1997
and the European Communities (Late Payment in
Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002

2024 Budget adopted by
Elected Members



* Subject to change until AFS finalised end March 24 – unaudited figure

Finance

Motor Tax

Motor Tax Transactions	2023 (No)	2023 (€)	2022 (No)	2022 (€)
Vehicle Licence Discs	10,494	€1,878,614	10,069	€1,867,435
Vehicle registration certificates, trade plates and other transactions	2,991	€189,550	2,857	€182,220
Total motor tax transactions	13,485	€2,068,164	12,926	€2,049,655

Payments to Councillors in 2023

Local Government Act 2001 – Section 142 Expenditure	
Mayor and other allowances	€65,820.38
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	€10,830.39
Representational Payments, Expenses of Members and Representation at Conferences	€683,049.44
Total	€759,700

Finance

Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIF)

Introduction

I, Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive (CE) of Longford County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Head of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Longford County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents **fairly the financial position** of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Longford County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Longford County Council overall financial position as of the **31st of December 2023**.

The **Statement of Comprehensive Income** represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Longford County Council.

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The key sources of income for Longford County Council are as follows:

	Current Year (€)	Previous Year (€)
Goods & Services	15,471,381	14,331,042
Grants & Subsidies	34,584,529	30,555,599
Other Contributions (as appropriate)	1,095,540	874,156
Rates	9,256,393	8,723,255
Local Property Tax	9,206,051	9,244,476

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows:

	Current Year (€)	Previous Year (€)
Income	69,613,893	63,728,528
Expenditure	(67,464,193)	(61,416,283)
Transfers to Capital	(2,130,336)	(2,306,868)
Exceptional Item	0	0
Surplus/(Deficit) for	19,365	5,377
Prior Year Adjustment	0	0
Opening Revenue Reserve	365,106	359,729
Closing Revenue Reserve	384,471	365,106

Finance

The **Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)** represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes – mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets – including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities – mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets Longford County Council at the end of 2023 total €1,140,162m and are as follows:

	Current Year (€)	Previous Year (€)
Fixed Assets	1,125,812,460	1,110,279,513
Works in Progress	9,176,531	1,388,838
Long Term debtors	26,835,452	28,153,271
Current Assets	28,371,302	32,519,757
Current Liabilities	20,627,859	21,161,048
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	7,743,443	11,358,709
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	29,106,261	31,318,531
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	1,140,461,625	1,119,861,800

A **Statement of Funds Flow** was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

Finance

System of Internal Financial Controls

As CE of Longford County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Longford County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Longford County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial control environment

As CE of Longford County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

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Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As CE of Longford County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement compliance

Longford County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Longford County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Longford County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Longford County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;

Finance

- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Longford County Council.

Risk and control framework

Longford County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

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The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2023 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2023.

Signed by:

Dated:



28 May 2024

Chief Executive

Information Systems (IS)

The Information Systems department provides operational and strategic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services for Longford County Council while also playing a role in developing digital in our communities. The department is responsible for the ICT infrastructure and 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.

2023 was a challenging but rewarding year for the section, with significant progress made on our County Digital Strategy, cyber security, blended working applications, and maintenance of our hybrid cloud infrastructure.

Time and expertise were dedicated to the maintenance of a blended working infrastructure, with the use of MS Teams and the development of applications accessed through the MS Teams environment. The continued support for blended working and remote meetings by employees and elected members has required

resources. Still, this important work has had a positive impact on our organisation's carbon footprint, providing increased efficiencies and allowing the business of the council to evolve into new ways of working post-pandemic. Electronic submissions such as that used for the Community Activities Fund application process have allowed for increased efficiencies and improved access to services.

Community CCTV continued to be a significant body of work for the IS team during 2023, but approval of the expanded Longford Town system is expected in early 2024, further to the work of the IS team during 2023.



Information Systems (IS)

Network Infrastructure - IT Applications and Development

Longford County Council's ICT network is made up of several complex components which require ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring.

- We extended our Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) implementation to nine additional departments; CRM is now a key tool in managing and measuring email queries from customers.
- Community CCTV upgrade process commenced, and Section 38(3)(c) application submitted and presented to An Garda Síochána CCTV advisory committee.
- Irish Water transition process fully supported with completion of key data migration project.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) major version upgrade completed.
- Participated in Microsoft-sponsored Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) and Security Operation Centre (SOC) trials.
- Firewall replaced and new firewalls installed in a high availability configuration.
- Playground inspections app developed to replace paper-based solution.
- Digital divide project commenced in Q4 and will continue into 2024.
- Virtual desktop infrastructure environment implemented for student placements.
- Migrated all mobile devices to new mobile device management software.
- Additional video conferencing rooms set up to facilitate hybrid meetings and remote working.
- Changes implemented to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of remote working solutions and numerous security improvements implemented on core infrastructure and end user devices.
- SIEM and SOC projects with Local Government Management Agency commenced.
- Windows server 2012 migration project commenced.
- Updated cyber security awareness training plan developed.
- Software upgrades and procurement competitions carried out for licensing and hardware purchases.
- 6,494 IT helpdesk calls or issues resolved.

Information Systems (IS)

GIS and Database Systems

Longford County Council's Geographic Information System (GIS) continued to play a fundamental role throughout all business areas in 2023, some notable projects and work completed included:

- The upgrade of the GIS platform and migration of old applications to the modern platform.
- Support provided to the Planning Department during the preparation of Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) maps through interactive web maps and mobile mapping applications.
- The development and enhancement of GIS web applications within the business areas to facilitate spatial data collection using desktop and mobile applications.
- Supporting Corporate Services in a polling scheme review, including analysis around polling districts and polling station provision.
- Continuing to support the rollout of Longford Text Alert around the county.

Digital Projects

Digital Projects continued to play a fundamental role in how the organisation worked post-pandemic. Some notable projects and work completed during 2023 included:

- Enhancement of the digital blended working applications process.
- Enhancement of the eService Planning, allowing senior staff to digitally enter and review service plans based on the organisation's Corporate Plan
- Enhancement to the ePMDS process which is used by all indoor-based employees for performance management and planning.
- ePlanning project went live on Monday, 27 March. This is an online system through which planning applications can be made.

Information Systems (IS)

Longford Digital Strategy

The updated Longford Digital Strategy took centre stage in 2023 with the successful rollout of the Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase in Edgeworthstown in May. The event ran in partnership with Longford Libraries and saw over 300 primary school children showcase their technology work at a BT Young Scientist-type event. The showcase is a key part of the strategy's aim to see Computer Science a leaving cert option in all nine secondary schools in the county. Placing an interest in technology in our primary school children is key to the achievement of that aim.

The event was strengthened for 2024 thanks to help from the Public Service Innovation Fund 2023, which saw the council secure €44,000 in funding to provide participating schools in 2024 with laptops and Microbits.

We held the first Longford Post Primary Tech Awards in December which saw three Secondary schools with Leaving Cert Computer Science students attend to present projects designed to help solve real-world problems in Longford. The event was also attended by industry giants Microsoft and Ericsson and saw students from Mean Scoil Mhuire scoop the overall award at a very enjoyable evening for students and teachers in Áras an Chontae.



Information Systems (IS)

Broadband Projects

The section continued to play a major role in the promotion of the digital agenda within the wider County. During 2023, some notable projects and work completed included:

Longford Connected Communities “Longford Text Alert”

This project was shortlisted for the All-Ireland Community and Council Awards 2023 under the category Best Communications Initiative.

Grow Remote Longford Chapter

The first in-person Grow Remote Work course took place in co:worx, Edgeworthstown.

Longford pupils successfully completed Scratch Software Ericsson Pilot

170 Longford primary school pupils recently received their certificate from technology giant Ericsson, for completing their INFUSE schools’ programme this year.

The INFUSE (Investing in Future Software Engineers) programme, is a Midlands pilot operating specifically in counties Longford, Laois, Offaly and Westmeath. It offered local pupils the chance to participate in an introductory module on coding software called ‘Introduction to Scratch Software’. Scratch is a visual programming language that makes it easy to create interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art.

In Longford the following primary schools successfully completed the Scratch Module:

- St Teresa’s National School, Killoe
- St Mary’s National School, Edgeworthstown
- Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes
- St Patrick’s National School, Dromard
- Scoil Bhride Killasonna National School, Granard

Information Systems (IS)

Longford schools and club success at the national Microsoft Dream Space Showcase

Local students from Colmcille BCP, St Joseph's NS and Scoil Bhríde Glen won awards at the first-ever national Microsoft Dream Space Showcase which took place at Microsoft Ireland's campus in Leopardstown, Dublin on June 16.

The first-of-its-kind event saw 320 students from across counties Longford, Tipperary and Kildare travel to One Microsoft Place to showcase their Science Technology Engineering Arts Maths (STEM)-based projects.

Having already presented at the local Dream Space Showcase event, the Dublin event gave the primary school children and the local Our Kids Code clubs an exciting opportunity to present and showcase their micro: bit projects to an even wider audience.

The Longford winners awarded prizes were:

- Scoil Bhríde, Glen was awarded the 'Digital Creativity Award',
- St Joseph's National School was named 'Longford's Rural Future Champion', and
- Colmcille BCP Our Kids Code Club won the 'Most Collaborative Project'.

Digital industry giants support pilot filmmaking workshops in Longford primary schools

We supported Longford Libraries to run the 'Mini Motion Pictures', project which took place in Scoil Mhuire, Newtownforbes. This program is unique in its approach, combining upcycled Samsung technology from the Department of Education with existing teaching resources to make this a very eco-friendly fun project for the children.



Information Systems (IS)



Public Sector Digital Transformation Awards 2023

Longford County Council and Tipperary County Council were shortlisted in The Digital Skills /Talent Initiative of the Year category for their pilot project Microsoft DreamSpace.

Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) analytics for 2023:

BCPs are public locations which have high-speed connectivity. Longford has nine BCPs. All BCPs offer external access to high-speed broadband, and some offer internal access. Longford BCPs had 397 new guests and 3,359 returning guests in 2023.





Housing, Planning and Project Delivery

Housing

Social Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023

The Social Housing Capital Investment Programme supports the delivery of social housing. Under this Scheme 74 units were completed as follows:

Project Name	Units Delivered
Woodland Path, Kenagh	4
24 and 25 Congress Terrace, Longford	2
CAS Colmcille Terrace	4
Cluain Rí Ballymahon	12
Creevaghbuí, Creevaghbeg, Ballymahon	4
Forthill, Aughnacliffe	6
Richmond Street, Longford	18
Silver Birches, Stonepark	12
Woodlawn Path, Kenagh	5
2 Woodview Newtownforbes	2
Abhainn Glas Edgeworthstown	4
1A Park Road	1



Housing

Vacant Homes Unit

The Vacant Homes Unit remains committed to executing housing projects outlined in the Vacant Homes Action Plan 2023–2026, aiming to identify and repurpose recoverable vacant properties to enhance housing supply and rejuvenate local communities.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Derelict Sites

The Vacant Homes Unit Team at Longford County Council is actively executing the CPO Activation Program, launched in early January 2023, to swiftly identify and activate vacant and derelict properties across the county. Six properties have been designated for compulsory purchase (CPO) in 2023, to convert them into social housing. Currently, four of these units are progressing well through the initiative. Additionally, proactive measures are being taken to update the Derelict Sites Register (DSR). Notably, this year, the imposition of the Derelict Sites Levy on properties listed as derelict in the register aims to incentivize property owners to address dereliction and take necessary actions.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (CROÍ CÓNÁITHE):

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme remains in place to support property revitalization, offering €50,000 for vacant properties and €70,000 for derelict ones. To date, the scheme has garnered 108 applications in Longford, including five withdrawals and three refusals. Three grants have been successfully disbursed, and 42 applications have received preliminary approval. Furthermore, 19 applications are undergoing revision for approval in principle, while 36 applications are pending additional information.

Energy Retrofitting Scheme

In 2023, under the Midlands Retrofit Programme, works were completed in three Council estates. This included 19 units in Glebe View, Ballinalee, and four in Longford town on the Athlone Road and nine in Radharc an Fiache. Funding was also submitted for 20 houses from our housing stock which included three new acquisitions and houses being refurbished through our “Preletting repairs programme”.

Housing

Maintenance and Refurbishment

In 2023 Longford County Council undertook a major drive to reduce its vacancy rate within its housing stock and by year end the rate had been reduced from 124 units or 5.6% in 2022 to 85 units or 3.84% which will be positively reflected in the 2023 National Service Indicators return. Our Housing stock as of 1 January 2023 was 2,213 units. In 2023, pre-letting repairs were also completed on 91 properties which were tenanted during the year, an increase of 90% on 2022 repairs. These repairs allowed these properties to be brought up to a high standard ahead of new tenants moving in. As part of our maintenance programme more than 2,281 repair requests were responded to in 2023.

Voids Programme

Longford County Council received funding of €1,883,274 for 54 approved properties from the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. This Funding was made available for council properties, with the emphasis of focusing on undertaking minimum refurbishment works to comply with required letting standards.

Housing Grant Schemes

To meet the needs of people with accessibility issues, 181 housing grants valued at €1,046,511.56 were approved across the three categories:

- **Mobility Aids:** €185,373.56 awarded
- **Housing Adaptation:** €312,337.67 awarded
- **Housing Aid for Older People:** €548,800.33 awarded



Housing

A total of 56 adaptation projects were undertaken in 2023 to meet the needs of our tenants, with funding of €532,777 provided by the Department under the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme.

This work included making bathrooms accessible, installation of stair lifts and specialised equipment to accommodate the needs of individuals. This work greatly improved the quality of lives of people.

Living in these properties allowed these individuals to continue to live outside of care settings.

Private Rented Property Inspections

Longford County Council conducted 544 Private Rented Property Inspections in 2023. These inspections help to enforce standards in the private rental sector.

A new IT application +Addjust Asset Management and Private Rental Inspections System is currently being rolled out nationally by the LGMA.

The system is to be rolled out to Longford County Council during 2024 and the system will help to streamline the private rented property inspection process and provide support to the housing department team.

Social Housing Support

Social housing support is provided to people who are assessed as being unable to afford housing from their own resources. From the Approved Housing List, 222 tenancies were allocated social housing supports in 2022. Social housing was obtained through various options including:

- Tenancy of a Council property
- Rental Accommodation Scheme leases
- Long-term social housing leases
- Housing provided by approved housing bodies
- Housing Assistance Payment

Housing



A total of 553 new housing applications were accepted throughout 2023. This is an increase of 14.25% on 2022. The output figures represent the continued commitment of the Council to delivering for those on the Approved Housing List.

Traveller Accommodation

The Longford Traveller Accommodation Plan 2020–2024 was adopted by the Council in 2021. The includes agreed targets for the number and type of accommodation to be provided. Longford County Council continues to exceed targets set for standard LA housing. HAP and RAS targets have proved more challenging in the context of the current housing crisis, and the availability of private rented accommodation.

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee continues to work on progressing the development of a Traveller accommodation group housing project. CENA Approved Housing Body has completed a feasibility study and made recommendations to the LTACC regarding the development of a group scheme and is currently completing a housing needs assessment with the Traveller population in Longford town.

Homelessness

Homelessness is dealt with on a collaborative basis in the Midlands. Westmeath County Council is the lead agency, in partnership with Longford, Laois and Offaly County Councils. Advice and assistance are provided to those who present as homeless to Longford County Council. 154 people presented as homeless to Longford County Council in 2023. Additionally, many other queries were dealt with by phone/email where advice and guidance were provided.

Planning

Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027

A two-year review was prepared under Section 15 (2) and 95(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Chief Executive Report was prepared on the progress achieved in securing the Development Plan objectives; and also a review of the progress achieved in implementing the Housing Strategy over the last two years since its adoption by the elected members on 19 October 2021. This report was sent to the elected members on 5 October 2023.

Longford Town Local Area Plan

Following the preparation of an issues paper which was the subject of public consultation in Q4 2022, work commenced in 2023 on the preparation of a Draft Local Area Plan for Longford Town. This included the procurement and appointment of environmental consultants for the completion of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA), and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) reports.

The preparation of the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan was paused pending the completion of a Local Transport Plan which was required to inform it and which was completed in October 2023. The preparation of the Draft LAP was also paused pending inclusion of the Census 2022 small area statistics which were published at the end of September 2023. All of this new information was then analysed and encompassed into the Draft Local Area Plan which was then being sent to consultants for the completion of the relevant assessments and reports, before commencing the statutory display process.

Submissions and input to other plans and strategies

The Forward Planning Unit made submissions and/or provided input into the preparation of a number of other documents including:

- Longford Town Local Transport Plan
- Longford Town Centre First Strategy
- Draft Climate Action Plan 2024–2029.

Planning

Climate Change and the Lough Ree Biosphere

A bid to UNESCO is currently being prepared to achieve Biosphere Reserve status for Lough Ree. A consortium led by KRC Ecology was successful in last year's tender process to assist and was appointed to assist the steering committee, in preparing the application. The steering group includes representatives from Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon County Councils, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Waterways Ireland. Extensive discussions have taken place between the consultants, the steering committee and the secretariat regarding the boundary requirements and public consultation is due to commence in Spring 2024. The application is due to be sent to UNESCO in September 2024.



Ecologist Framework

In 2023, the Planning section in Longford County Council established a framework of environmental consultants to be used across all sections of the council for any works, big or small, which require the professional expertise of a suitably qualified ecologist. The tender submissions were assessed by representatives from Planning, Roads and Housing, and five companies were admitted to the framework. The framework will be live for three years with an option to extend for an additional year.

Planning

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) is a new tax aimed at increasing housing supply by activating zoned, serviced residential development lands for housing. Greenfield and brownfield land identified and zoned for housing will be potentially subject to tax. The tax is a commitment under the Government's Housing for All plan.

Longford County Council is required to prepare annual draft maps of the land considered to be in scope for the RZLT. Interested individuals or parties may make submissions in respect of land on the annual draft map.

Residential properties, although included on the map, are not subject to RZLT if they are subject to Local Property Tax.

Land appearing on the annual draft maps, unless amended following the outcome of submissions and rezoning requests made, will be included on the annual final map of land showing where the tax applies in the local authority area. This final map will be published on 31 January 2025. This land will be subject to the tax in 2025 unless it is exempt as a residential property, or qualifies for any other exemption, as provided for in legislation.

The administration of the RZLT is a matter for the Revenue Commissioners.

Derelict Sites

Derelict sites can have a detrimental impact on the social, economic, commercial and visual aspects on the surrounding neighbourhood. It is important that they are reported, investigated, and rendered non-derelict.

The Derelict Sites Act requires that the owner and occupier of land ensure that the land or structures do not become or remain a derelict site.

Planning

The Act defines a derelict site as any land which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land in question because of:

- structures which are in a ruinous, derelict or dangerous condition, or
- the neglected, unsightly or objectionable condition of the land or structures, or
- the presence, deposit or collection of litter, rubbish, debris or waste.

The Act imposes duties on the local authority to:

- maintain a Derelict Sites Register
- make the Register available for public inspection.
- serve a notice on the owner/occupier specifying works to be carried out to prevent or stop dereliction
- acquire by agreement or compulsorily any derelict site
- impose an annual levy on any derelict site in an urban area

The Derelict Sites Act and process is being used as a vehicle to minimise dereliction and vacancy in the towns of County Longford.



Planning

Planning Enforcement

The Planning Enforcement Section involves investigating complaints from the public regarding unauthorised developments and non-compliance with planning conditions attached to planning permissions. In 2023, 49 new cases were opened, 30 warning letters were issued and 16 enforcement notices were issued. There were no referrals for prosecution and 34 files were closed.

Part 8 Planning

A Part 8 planning application is when a local authority applies to itself for permission for various projects. Such works can include developments including housing, roads and public amenities. In 2023, 14 Part 8 planning applications were processed.

ePlanning

Part of the Local Government Online Planning portal was designed to streamline the application for planning permission across all local authorities in Ireland. The online portal is easy-to-use and moves the process into an environmentally friendly one that is also user friendly. You can register your own account, submit documents online with your application, and submit further documentation at a later stage if necessary. You can view previously submitted applications on your dashboard, as well as the status of applications quickly and easily. Planning permission in Ireland is moving towards a paperless and environmentally friendly domain where applicants have 24/7 access to their planning applications.

Planning Applications

Planning applications cover different types of developments including residential, employment, retail, agriculture and amenities. In 2023, 299 planning applications were received, 257 were granted, with 17 refused and 12 appeals to An Bord Pleanála.

One of these applications included the granting of a significant extension to Center Parcs Longford Forest which will see a 50% increase in capacity of the holiday village and another significant investment in Longford in terms of tourism accommodation.

Planning

National Housing Policy

The team in Planning works with the Housing section to identify suitable housing land to be developed under the new housing policy. This work includes site assessments and designs for several sites to determine the potential development. Planning also helps to acquire sites, including preparing and implementing compulsory purchase orders.

Development Contributions

The Development Contribution scheme 2023–2027 came into effect from 1 June 2023. Its primary objective is to generate funds for infrastructure, including the acquisition of land, provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities, roads, car parks and footpaths.

Certain planning permissions contain a condition requiring the payment of a relevant development contribution which becomes payable once work on the development commences.

In April 2023, the Government introduced temporary time-limited arrangements for the waiving of local authority development contributions. This applies for one year to all permitted residential development that meets the requested criteria. In 2023, 21 developments successfully claimed this waiver. There are 15 applicants who have yet to apply, having commenced their build in 2023.

There is a process in place allowing the local authority to invoice the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for any development contributions waived so as not to impact on Longford County Council's ability to fund ongoing provisions of necessary infrastructure.

The development contribution team continue to pursue outstanding development contributions by issuing invoices as commencement notices are lodged and by following up on existing accounts to ensure payments are up to date.

Regeneration and Active Travel

Longford Connected Project

Works on Longford Connected were completed in February 2023 with the official opening by Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD in September 2023. This €3.5 million project was the final part of a €5.2million spend at the centre of Longford Town on public realm. This project was 75% funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund and 5% matched funded by Longford County Council.



Pobal le Chéile

The €7.5million Ballymahon Pobal Le Cheile Project continued to be progressed in 2023. It required extensive surveys of existing buildings, and agreement on the schedule of accommodation, design and planning under Part 8, which is due to be published in Q2 2024. It was funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

Camlin Quarter

A preliminary business case with revised costings was submitted to the Department in 2023. Longford County Council is awaiting the business case approval before works can begin. This is expected to be approved in Q1 2024. This project is being funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund.

Regeneration and Active Travel

Abbeyshrule Hub

The Yard Hub, Abbeyshrule – rural working hub and enterprise space officially opened in April by Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD. It was funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

Longford Skatepark

Longford Skatepark is located in the old Greyhound Track on Park Road. This project was funded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme with match funding from Longford County Council. The project is substantially completed with the official opening scheduled for February 2024.

Rose Cottage

Rose Cottage War of Independence Centre in Ballinalee, was officially opened by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar on the 12 November 2023. This project was funded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This cottage served as a column headquarters of General Seán MacEoin during the “Battle of Ballinalee” in 1920 and will be opened by the community group in January 2024 as a coffee shop and a commemoration centre of the War of Independence.



Regeneration and Active Travel

Aughnaccliffe Heritage Trail

Aughnaccliffe Heritage Trail is the development and enhancement of a 4.2km trail connecting the Dolmens and Deserted Village heritage sites in Aughnaccliffe. This project was officially opened by the Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD on 8 September 2023. This project was honoured at the annual Pride of Place community awards on 10 November in Armagh and it was funded under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme.



Lanesborough Anaerobic Digestion (AD) feasibility study

This study was commissioned by Longford County Council to explore the potential for green gas generation through AD to meet its strategic objectives in developing circular economic activities, within the context of Just Transition in County Longford. It has considered the ability of AD to contribute to the social, economic and environmental quality of the county. This study was completed in 2023 and presented at the Climate Action and Planning SPC. It was funded by the EU Just Transition Fund.

Regeneration and Active Travel

Town Regeneration Office

Longford Town Centre First Strategy

Consultants were appointed in September to prepare the Longford Town Centre First Strategy. The Town Centre First Strategy aims to create a town centre that functions as a viable, vibrant and attractive location for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. Their work to date has included detailed analysis of the town, public consultation events and identification of projects that will improve the quality of life for the people of Longford. The Town Centre First Strategy is expected to be completed and in place in early 2024.

As part of the preparation of the Town Centre First Strategy, a Town Team has been set up in Longford Town. The Town Team brings together a group of local residents, businesspeople, community representatives and other stakeholders who come together to make their town a better place to live, work, visit and invest. The Town Team had their first meeting in December and will be working in 2024 to implement the Town Centre First Strategy.

URBACT – UR Impact project

Longford County Council was successful in their application to become part of a new European project under URBACT – the UR Impact project. URBACT facilitates the sharing of knowledge and good practice between cities and other levels of government, promoting integrated sustainable development in cities.

UR Impact aims to prioritise social impact and community-based practices by reimagining the way urban regeneration actions are conducted. This means putting the citizen and their social and ecological well-being at the heart of urban regeneration strategies. The primary focus of this project is on the Ballymahon 'Pobal le Chéile' project, aiming to put the needs of the community at the heart of the delivery of this project. This project will continue over two years with the development of an Integrated Action Plan at the end of the project.

Regeneration and Active Travel

An URBACT Local Group (ULG) has been established as part of the UR Impact project. This group brings together local stakeholders that have an interest in ensuring the social impact of the regeneration project and will co-produce the Integrated Action Plan. As part of this we welcomed the lead expert and lead partner to Ballymahon in November to learn more about the town and to meet the local community.



Regeneration and Active Travel

Active Travel

In 2020, Active Travel funding was announced by the Department of Transport for projects involving walking and cycling in towns and villages. At that time, these projects were delivered by the Municipal Districts. The level of increased funding that followed resulted in the establishment of the Active Travel section in 2021. Since 2020, Active Travel has progressed 21 projects worth a total of approximately €10 million.



Ballinalee Road (NTA)

This project is the construction of a cycle track in the verge along the N63 Ballinalee Road, between the Junction of the Ard Michael estate and the N63/N4 junction for a total distance of approximately 920m. The proposed works will also include junction tightening on both sides along the route; provision of a new controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing point and the planting of native hedge screening and trees; provision of upgraded street lighting; road signage and markings; landscaping; and all ancillary site works. This project progressed well into the end of the December 2023 with substantial completion expected by the end of February 2024.

Regeneration and Active Travel

Battery Road (NTA)

This project is the complete upgrade of existing road carriageway with separate cycle track and footpath on each side. The project also includes for a signalised junction at the entrance to Lisbrack, right turning lane at the entrance to Abbeycartron Demense, and the construction of various pedestrian crossing points. The project commenced in 2023 with expected completion date in Q2 2024.

Ennybegs (NTA)

This project is the construction of the Ennybegs Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement Scheme to include approximately 840m of shared pathway, approximately 3m in width, and ancillary site works along the L-1040-0 from St Teresa's National School to St Mary's Burial Ground at Clontumpher/Aghaboy, Ennybegs, County Longford. The works were completed at the end of October 2023.

Newtownorbes (NTA)

This project is the construction of a school zone and ancillary works at Scoil Mhuire, Newtownforbes, County Longford, along the L-1004-0 Road and the construction of a new controlled crossing on the N4 at Newtownforbes, Co Longford. The project includes the provision of a school bus bay at the front of the school, relocating and upgrading the pedestrian crossing point to a controlled pedestrian crossing, junction tightening and the provision of road signage and marking.





Mainistir Shraithla
ABBEYSHRULE

Cead míle fáilte
Ireland's Tidiest Town 2012
Entente Florale Gold Medal Winners 2012
Ireland Tidiest Village 2012
National Gold Medal Winners.
2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 19

TEXT
ALERT
AREA

A photograph of a paved path lined with trees and a hedge, overlaid with a teal gradient. The path is on the left, leading towards the right. The trees have green and some yellowing leaves. A white horizontal line is positioned below the text.

Infrastructure and Innovation

Roads

Roads Expenditure

Road expenditure for 2023 for County Longford was €17,484,659. In addition, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) contributed €6,863,322 to Longford County Council for national roads in 2023. This included:

Improvement Works	€5,467,344
National Primary and National Secondary Maintenance	€328,126
Highway Design Pavement Renewals and Surveys	€938,847
Winter Maintenance	€129,005

Longford County Council contributed €838,415 to non-national roads in Longford in 2023. The Department of Transport contributed €9,782,922 for non-national roads in County Longford in 2023. This included:

Specific Improvement Grant	€147,881
Restoration Improvement Works	€5,279,160
Restoration Maintenance Works	€1,266,547
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	€1,297,494
Low-Cost Safety Improvement works	€145,924
Drainage	€331,979
Bridge rehabilitation	€475,136
Training Programme	€34,000
Community Involvement Scheme	€248,999
Speed Limit Signage	€6,296
Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Pavement Survey Condition Index Survey Support	€288,255
Pavement Survey Condition Index Survey Support	€11,287
Former National Roads	€ 249,964

Roads

N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky)

The N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) scheme is currently at phase 2 – options selection.

The draft Option Selection Report (OSR) has had to be reviewed on a number of occasions to take into account Government policy changes including the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI), the Climate Action Policy (CAP) and the Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF).

Subject to the outcome of the ongoing reviews, it is anticipated that the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor (EPRC) could be published in Quarter 2, 2024.

National Road Pavement Improvement Schemes

National Road Pavement Improvement Schemes are selected on the basis of recent condition surveys of the network. The following works were carried out under this scheme in 2023:



- **N4 Longford By-Pass Pavement Resurfacing:** Resurfacing of the N4 Longford By-Pass. Overall length 4.6km. Works carried out in two contracts. Works commenced late 2022 with all surfacing works carried out at night from April 2023 to September 2023. The total cost of this project was over €5 million.
- **N63 Aughnaskea (Killashee) Pavement Resurfacing:** Resurfacing of a 600m section of the N63 at Aughnaskea, Killashee. Works were carried out in August and September 2023.
- **N55 Meeltanagh Pavement Resurfacing:** Resurfacing of a 4km section of the N55 between Edgeworthstown and Carrickboy is due to take place in 2024. Advance drainage works commenced in December 2023.

Roads

Defects Maintenance Pavement Repairs

TII Ordinary Maintenance Defects Allocation (Category A) funding for 2023 was used on the following schemes:

- N63 Lanesborough footpaths
- N63 Barnacor (pavement patch repair adjacent to Clonfower junction)
- N63 Killashee (pavement patch repair at Health Clinic)
- N4 Longford Bypass footpath repair
- N55 Patch Repair at Meeltanagh

Regional and Local Roads

2023 was the second year of the Multi-Annual Restoration Improvement Programme 2022–2024 for non-national roads.

An ambitious programme of works was implemented in the Municipal Districts and included the following notable achievements in 2023:



- Regional and local road improvement works to a value of €5,279,160.

A total of 90 regional and local road projects were completed under the Restoration Improvement Programme resulting in over 66.6km of road being improved.

- Restoration maintenance works (surface dressing) to a value of €1,266,547.

A total of 66 regional and local roads were completed under the Restoration Maintenance Programme resulting in over 72.3km being surface dressed.

Roads

Bridge rehabilitation works

Longford County Council received an allocation of €429,500 in 2023 for bridge rehabilitation works. This money was used to carry out on the following bridge improvements in 2023:

- **Ranaghanbaun, Abbeylara:** Rehabilitation of a single span jack-arch bridge over the former Cavan Rail line
- **Ballyduffy, Moyne:** Rehabilitation of a single span masonry arch bridge
- **Cartronbig, Carriglass:** Rehabilitation of a single span masonry arch bridge
- **Tadys bridge, Legan:** Rehabilitation of a single span masonry arch bridge
- **Fostragh, Aughnacliffe:** Rehabilitation of a single span masonry arch bridge
- **Lisnageeragh, Edgeworthstown:** Rehabilitation of a single span masonry arch bridge

Specific improvement grants

Road re-alignment works were carried out on the L-1105 at Drumanure near Colehill and design works were carried out on the R392 Abbeyshrule Road Junction.

Low-Cost Safety Improvement Grants

The Low-Cost Safety Improvement Grants enable low-cost safety improvement works on regional and local roads. Work under this scheme included completion of junction improvement, traffic calming, new footpaths, additional line marking and signage to a value of €223,500. Three schemes were completed in Ballymahon and Granard Municipal Districts each and one in Longford MD as follows:

- **Moor Ardagh:** new footpath
- **Lanesborough:** traffic calming
- **Cloontagh:** additional signage and line marking.
- **Smear/Crott:** completed sightline improvement works at known black spot on the L-1029.
- **R194 Doherty's Cross:** Completed minor works, and additional signage to improve sightline on approaches.
- **R395/L-1082, Lisryan Village:** Completed the construction of a traffic island/build out to regulate traffic flows from regional road to local road in the village.
- **Clondra:** low-cost safety Scheme

Roads

Climate Change Adaption and Rehabilitation

Under a Climate Change Adaption and Rehabilitation allocation, three projects were constructed for Ballymahon MD, four for Granard MD and one for Longford MD. They are:

- **L-1156 Derraghan to Caltragh Beg:** works included embankment stabilised and widening of road
- **Saints Island causeway stability:** works included installing rock armour to prevent the erosion of the causeway road during high water levels on Lough Ree
- **R392 Lanesborough – Ballymahon Rd at Derryad:** works included embankment stabilised and widening of road
- **R198 Tawnagh**
- **L-1048 Aughnacliffe – Ballinalee (Aghacordrinan):** Embankment construction along the verge
- **L-1048 Aughnacliffe – Ballinalee (Carrickadorrish):** Embankment construction along the verge
- **L-1042 Aughnacliffe – Arva (Smear):** Embankment construction along the verge
- **Newtownforbes Storm drainage outfall improvements**

Local Improvement Schemes

The Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) provides funding to help local authorities carry out improvement works on private and non-publicly maintained roads. It is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. In 2023, the Council was allocated €584,701 under the Local Improvement Scheme and 15 schemes were completed across the county.

Community Involvement Schemes

Three approved schemes were completed under the Community Involvement Scheme in 2023. All schemes were in the Granard Municipal District. The schemes included a mix of sightline improvements at junctions, drainage works and new footpath construction. The works were completed in conjunction with local community groups.

Roads

Drainage

Drainage works to the value of €332,089 were carried out at various locations throughout the county.

Public Lighting

Of the 5,984 public lights taken-in-charge by Longford County Council, 4,661 are now upgraded to more energy-efficient LEDs. The Council will continue upgrading public lighting to LEDs in 2024.

Parking Fines

Longford County Council issued 1,332 parking fines, also called fixed charge offence notices, in 2023. These fines help to tackle careless or illegal parking. There were also 511 fines issued for not displaying a of tax disc.

Parking Permits

The Council issued 51 quarterly permits for off-street car parks, 83 resident permits, five over-65s permits and 357 Council employee carpark permits.

Road Opening Licenses

A map road opening licensing system for works by statutory organisations and others through this system is operated by the Council. This supports the improvement of service infrastructure and the rollout of broadband in the county.

Roads

Road Safety

The Longford County Council Road Safety Team coordinated and attended a number of events over the year to promote road safety including the following:

- **Road Safety Week:** 2-8 October 2023 – colouring competition and activity workbooks
- **National Ploughing Championships**
- **Road Safety event in Granard** on Friday, 1 December 2023
- **Longford Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo** on Thursday, 5 October 2023
- **Junior School Warden presentations in July 2023:** Drumlish and Newtownforbes
- **Bike Week 2023:** colouring competitions



Roads

Road Safety Plan

The Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee developed a County Longford Local Road Safety Action Plan, aligned with the national strategy. This committee is made up of representatives from different agencies involved in road safety. It was designed to ensure a coordinated, collaborative and consistent approach to improving road safety for all road users. The committee includes representatives from:

- Longford County Council, including those involved with Road Safety, Road Design, Active Travel, Local Sports Partnership and the Longford County Fire and Rescue Service
- An Garda Síochána
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Road Safety Authority

The committee meets quarterly to discuss road safety. An annual review of the plan will be conducted to monitor its implementation. This process has been completed for 2023 and an annual review report published.

Irish Water Transition

In June 2022, the 'Framework for Future Delivery of Water Services' was agreed and published. The Framework agreement sets out how to ensure a stable operational environment is maintained as the water sector completes the transition to a national water services authority, based on the full integration of public water services within Irish Water.

In July 2023, a Master Agreement was signed between the Council and Irish Water with the agreed date of 25 July for the transition of direct management by Irish Water of Longford County Council Water Service employees.

Pictured on that date, from left to right, are: Uisce Eireann Water Lead John Gavin, Chief Executive Longford County Council Paddy Mahon, Uisce Eireann Regional Operational Manager Mary Husey, Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray, Senior Engineer Water Services Paul Newell, and Uisce Eireann Water Lead David Gibbons.



Environment

Litter and Waste Management and Enforcement

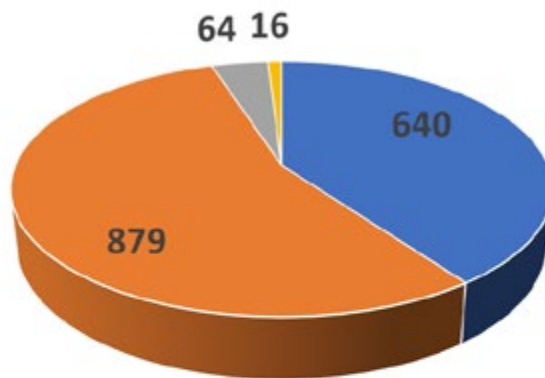
The Environment Section of Longford County Council received 1,599 complaints during the year relating to waste, litter, abandoned vehicles, burning, air, water, and noise.

The majority of complaints related to the illegal dumping of household waste, particularly in and around urban areas.

Longford County Council carried out a total of 1,640 investigations into illegal dumping which led to the removal of 84 tonnes of waste.

Forty-three prosecutions for non-payment of litter fines were initiated in 2023.

Total Number of Complaints received 1599



- Waste Management
- Litter including Abandoned Vehicles, unauthorised Signs and Burning
- Air Water Noise
- Other

Environment

Anti-Dumping Initiative 2023

The active work of the Litter Wardens and Waste Enforcement Officers, in following up complaints from the public, helped identify and locate illegal dumping and waste blackspots.

Longford County Council undertook a large clean-up of a major fly-tipping black spot which resulted in the removal of 7.3 tonne of illegally dumped domestic waste from the roadside.



Longford County Council worked collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to complete a major clean-up of historic waste from a local housing estate, which resulted in the removal of over five tonnes of waste and significantly improved the living environment for the residents.



Environment

Environment

Climate Action	Animal Welfare and Veterinary
Waste and Recycling	Litter Control
Air Quality	Noise Pollution and Noise Action Plan
Water Quality	Rural Water Programme
Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems Inspections	Rural Grounds and Cemetery Support Schemes
Environmental Awareness and Education	Environmental Complaints
Access to Information On The Environment	Privacy Notice
Contact Us	

Online environmental complaints form and update of website

The website of Longford County Council was continually updated to provide timely and accurate information in relation to the services and grants provided through the Environment section.

An online complaint form was developed to facilitate public reporting of environmental and illegal dumping complaints.

The form is available on www.longfordcoco.ie and directly via the following link:
[Online Environmental Complaint Form](#)

Pollution Control and Water Quality Management

Pollution control and water quality management covers water quality, air quality and noise control.

Water Quality

In 2023, Longford County Council completed eight farm inspections in areas identified as Areas for Action by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Local Authority Water Programme Office (LAWPRO). The completed inspections focused on better regulation of the use of fertilisers on land and identifying surface water pathways from farmyards to watercourses.

Longford County Council also undertook septic tank inspections in the high-risk areas identified in the National Inspection Plan to prevent nearby water supplies from being impacted due to effluent from poorly functioning septic tanks. Three applications for upgrade works to wastewater treatment systems were received during 2023. Two grant payments were processed before the year-end.

Environment

Longford County Council completed quarterly surface and groundwater monitoring of three historic landfills in 2023.

Longford County Council monitored fifteen small private water supplies and two group water supplies throughout 2023 and undertook an extensive sampling programme of rivers and lakes outlined in the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan.

The Environment Section of Longford County Council facilitated a focus group comprising representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Teagasc; the EPA; LAWPRO; and other stakeholders. As part of this focus group Longford County Council investigated the causes of high levels of acid herbicide MCPA (2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid) in the Lough Forbes catchment area.



Environment

Air Quality

In 2023 Longford County Council continued its work of increasing awareness and enforcing Solid Fuel Regulations. Longford County Council carried out regular inspections of fuel merchants and other retail premises.

Longford County Council Environment section took part in a Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) monitoring project in conjunction with the EPA to monitor emissions from traffic. Tubes were placed at various locations around Longford town to record emissions within the town centre and approach road as well as two rural control sites. The results of this survey confirm that Longford Town remains within the EU limits – this is a positive environmental outcome.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections Plan (RMCEI)

Longford County Council adhered to the procedures for environmental inspections and mandatory reporting to the EPA. The Environment section compiled an inventory of all waste data for County Longford for timely submission to the EPA.

In 2023, Longford County Council waste inspections focused on three priority areas: waste, water and air. Areas and actions under these priorities included:

- **Waste:** Tackling significant illegal waste activity, household and commercial waste collection, and tracking waste flows.
- **Water:** Farm inspections, monitoring regular private water supplies, septic tank inspections, river and lake sampling programmes, investigation of water pollution complaints and incidents.
- **Air:** Inspections relating to compliance with Solid Fuel Regulations, investigating air and noise complaints, implementation of Petroleum Vapours, Deco Paints and Solvent Regulations.

Environment

Community Warden

Longford County Council's Community Warden successfully worked with local schools, community groups, businesses and agencies to improve the physical environment within the town. The Community Warden maintained a visual presence out and about on the streets, open spaces, parks, and local housing estates, to provide reassurance and to become a point of contact for citizens, businesses, and community groups.

The Community Warden worked closely with An Garda Síochána and the Community Police to promote safety in Longford town. The Community Warden engaged in education and awareness sessions as well as enforcement to support local festivals, sporting and community events and local community groups including Tidy Towns.



Environment

National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean 2023 took place during the months of March and April and supported the collection of over 30 tonnes of waste from across the county. The Council provided litter pickers, gloves, bibs and bags to over 300 community groups, schools and individuals who took part in clean-ups of their local area. Longford County Council collected the waste gathered.



Environment

National Tree Week

Taking place in March, National Tree Week was organised by the Tree Council of Ireland and supported by Coillte and Longford County Council. For this, community groups including Tidy Towns and other organisations were encouraged to plant young trees within their communities. Longford County Council issued 300 free tree saplings to over 50 community groups, schools and individuals.



Environment

Large Goods Collection

To prevent the accumulation of unsightly waste, Longford County Council arranged large Goods collections in September 2023. The collection points were set up in both Longford Town and Granard. The Environment Section were assisted by staff from the Municipal District and coordinated the collection of 15.98 tonnes of bulky goods.



Hazardous Waste Collection

The Environment Section of Longford County Council coordinated the annual Hazardous Waste collection in October 2023 in Longford Town. This resulted in the collection of over eight tonnes of hazardous materials. As the Civic Amenity sites in the county are not registered to collect hazardous waste this is an important day for the community.



Environment

Green Schools

Sixteen schools in County Longford renewed their Green Schools Green Flags in 2023. This recognised the work of these schools to tackle litter and waste, to improve energy and water conservation. The programme helps to raise awareness of the impact of travel, biodiversity and global citizenship on the environment.



Invasive Species

In 2023, Longford County Council continued delivery of a programme to treat Japanese Knotweed with a number of high-priority sites being identified. Over 250 sites were inspected and treated in the county with seven new sites identified during the year. The Council spent over €37,000 to support this programme of work in 2023 which will continue in 2024.

Environment

Other campaigns

The Environment section of Longford County Council worked on several campaigns in 2023 to support community engagement in the maintenance of local areas and to promote effective waste management, the circular economy, climate action and biodiversity initiatives, these included:

- McEoin Park Junior Litter Pick
- Gum Litter Campaign
- Newtownforbes Summer Science Festival
- Microsoft Dream Space
- Biodiversity in Schools
- All-Ireland Pollinator Project
- Longford BEE Hive Project
- Relove Fashion Competition



Environment



Burial Grounds

Longford County Council is responsible for approximately 100 burial grounds in the county of which 40 are currently operational.

Longford County Council provided monetary assistance to Longford Community Resources Limited (LCRL) to assist local cemetery committees with the maintenance of common areas, general clean up and mowing. Longford County Council issued over €8,000 in grants to 24 local community groups during the year to support their work.

Longford County Council completed essential works including emergency tree removal and pruning to reduce wind load at Newtowncashel and Edgeworthstown cemeteries, and the demolition and replacement of circa 100m of deteriorating boundary walls at Clonboney Cemetery.

In 2023, the Environment section of Longford County Council prepared the Draft Burial Ground Byelaws, which were presented to the Climate Action and Planning Strategic Policy Committee in October before being prepared for public consultation.



Environment

Veterinary services

Longford County Council's Veterinary Services focuses on food safety and dog and horse control.

Food safety

Longford County Council Veterinary Service implemented a regular programme of monitoring and inspection of registered meat premises and approved abattoirs in 2023.

The inspections covered general conditions of operational and structural hygiene, verification of Food Safety Management Systems, including Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP), veterinary medicines residue sampling, animal health and animal welfare checks.

To support the introduction of sustainable energy options, the Veterinary Service completed a review of its fleet, intending to replace existing transport with electric vehicles.

Dog Control

In 2023 Longford County Council received over 150 customer service calls relating to lost, missing and stray dogs.

The Council initiated an information and education campaign to promote responsible dog ownership which included the creation of leaflets that were directly distributed to properties throughout the county. An online dog rehoming page was developed on LongfordCoCo.ie. The online communications campaign around this work resulted in Longford County Council being shortlisted at the Excellence in Local Government Awards.



Other initiatives included the installation and regular maintenance of 'Dog Mutt Mitt' dispensers and increasing the number of anti-dog-fouling signs.

Environment

The Dog Warden maintained routine inspections, checking dog licences and working to ensure that dogs were kept under effective control in public.

A total of 184 dogs were in the care and responsibility of Longford County Council in 2023. Of this number, the Council successfully coordinated the re-homing of 117 dogs, 27 dogs were reclaimed by their owners and six dogs remained in the Dog Pound at year-end. The remaining dogs were either euthanised or died. The majority of the euthanised dogs were on the restricted breed list or had been involved in sheep-worrying incidents.

In 2023, the Council's Dog Control Service provided significant assistance to An Garda Síochána, with the control of restricted breeds of dogs. The Council does not rehome restricted breed dogs directly to the public and is reliant on animal welfare charities to accommodate such dogs. Longford County Council is very grateful for the help and support received from those charities.

In 2023, Longford County Council ran a social media campaign to raise awareness of sheep worrying and attacks by dogs on pregnant ewes and their lambs and the resulting impact on the farming community.



Environment

Horse Control

Longford County Council seized seven horses in 2023. Throughout the year, the Council worked with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to plan the annual Urban Horse Project.

The sixth Longford Urban Horse Project took place during the summer months. This project focused on raising awareness of responsible horse ownership and incorporated pony riding and animal welfare elements.

With the collaboration of Longford Local Sports Partnership and Longford Community Resources Limited, we supported this education project aimed at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the County of Longford. The success of the Longford Urban Horse Project resulted in Longford County Council being shortlisted for the Local Government Management Agency Award.



Longford Urban Horse Project was shortlisted at the Local Government Management Agency Awards.

Environment



Climate Action

Longford County Council established its Climate Action Team in 2023 and appointed a Climate Action Coordinator, a Climate Officer, a Community Climate Officer and a Biodiversity Officer.

The Climate Action Team developed the Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 for Longford which was presented to the Strategic Policy Committee and published for public consultation from November to December 2023.

The Climate Action Team commenced work on the installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging points in County Longford in line with the County's Climate Action Plan and in support of the National EV Charging Network Plan.



The Community Climate Action Fund

The Community Climate Action Fund opened for applications on 8 December 2023 with the closing date for receipt of applications being 29 February 2024. The Community Climate Officer is working with local community groups to support their applications.

€328,000 has been made available for climate action community projects in County Longford.

Environment



Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030



Biodiversity

The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030 supports the implementation of actions within the framework of five strategic objectives while addressing new and emerging issues:

- Adopt a whole of government, whole of society approach to biodiversity
- Meet urgent conservation and restoration needs
- Secure nature's contribution to people
- Enhance the evidence base for action on biodiversity
- Strengthen Ireland's contribution to international biodiversity initiatives

To support the delivery of the national plan, Longford County Council's Biodiversity Officer commenced the setting up of a Longford Biodiversity Forum made up of stakeholders, local representatives, and staff to assist in the development of the Biodiversity Plan for Longford which will support the delivery of the national plan at a local level.

The Biodiversity Officer has started preliminary work on the Biodiversity Plan for Longford and this will continue into 2024.

Fire and Emergency Services

Longford County Fire and Rescue Service have fire stations in Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesborough and Longford. These stations are manned by 48 retained fire-fighters who respond to both fire and rescue incidents.

The Fire Department assess Fire Safety Certificates, planning applications and court licence application referrals.

Operations

Total number of callouts – January to December 2023	333
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Building Control

Number of Fire Certificates processed in 2023	40
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Longford County Fire and Rescue Service cost €2,467,000 to operate for 2023 for both its operational response and mitigation work streams. This is lower than the estimated cost for the service due to ongoing fire-fighter vacancies, and lower than predicted number of callouts.

Recruitment of fire-fighters is an ongoing problem both in Longford and nationally. Retained fire-fighters went on strike in 2023 and secured better pay and conditions of employment. Hopefully, these new conditions of employment will attract new personnel into the service.



Fire and Emergency Services



**Longford Fire Service
rope line rescue training 2023**

A new fire equipment transport van costing €48,000 was purchased for Longford Fire Brigade. Capital funding has been provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for this vehicle.

A new class B fire engine was provided to Longford Fire Brigade under the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management capital fund. This vehicle was made operational in November 2023.

The Fire Fighter Training/Drill Programme was completed in accordance with the Fire Service Annual Operational Plan 2023. Crew members in each station attend 40 drill nights throughout the year.



New Class B Fire Engine and Van for Longford Town Fire Brigade

Longford Civil Defence

Civil Defence is a voluntary-based organisation that supports the front-line services, An Garda Síochána, The Health Service Executive and the local authority alongside Government departments and state agencies to assist with the national, regional and local emergency and non-emergency events. The five core services as set out in the 'Towards 2023' policy are: emergency response, search and rescue, medical response, community assistance and radiation monitoring.

Volunteers are recruited and trained locally and attend the Civil Defence College in Roscrea for more advanced training. Training is provided in first aid up to Emergency Medical Technician level and in areas such as manual and people handling, communications, missing person search, severe weather driving, child protection and radiation monitoring. Critical incident stress management is also provided.

Civil Defence supports services in dealing with emergencies such as severe weather events, major emergencies and displaced persons. Civil Defence also supports locally held community events and assists other counties, where required. There are currently 25 volunteers in Longford Civil Defence.



Longford Civil Defence

Activities

Longford Civil Defence completed 77 duties in 2023 and provided 1,795 volunteer hours to the community. These included:

- 24 community events
- 30 sporting events
- 10 welfare taskings
- 13 local authority events

Duties and taskings included transportation and delivery of supplies to displaced persons. Medical cover provided to community and sporting events including Longford Town Football club, Longford GAA, various 5k events, swimming and cycling events, community games, Longford Marathon, Longford Festival, The Battle of Ballinamuck 225th Commemoration celebrations, Bishop Paul Connell's ordination and attendance at Longford's Microsoft Dream Space Showcase event. Administration and welfare were provided at the Irish Blood Transfusion Blood Bank clinic.



Longford Civil Defence

Training

Training provided to volunteers in 2023, including new training and recertification.

Cardiac First Responder	5 volunteers
Cardiac First Responder advanced	6 volunteers
First Aid Responder	5 volunteers
Manual Handling	12 volunteers
Radio Communications	10 volunteers
TUSLA child protection	4 volunteers
Induction training	5 volunteers
Multi-disciplined weekly training	all volunteers
Food Safety and You	10 volunteers
Missing Person Search	8 volunteers

Cardiac first responder training was also provided to Longford Mens shed, Longford Park Run, Longford Vintage Club and Longford Fire Service.

Vehicle fleet

- Statutory inspections took place of all vehicles on a biannual basis.
- The communications vehicle was added to the fleet and an operational guideline booklet issued.
- A 162 ambulance was provided by Civil Defence branch in respect of their agreement with the National Ambulance service.

Longford Civil Defence

Policy and Operations

- An Assistant Civil Defence Officer was recruited and took up the position in June.
- Civil Defence is funded 70% by the Department of Defence and 30% by the local authority. The expenditure incurred by Longford County Council in performing its functions relating to Civil Defence was in the region of €54,000. Grant funding from the Department of Defence came to €86,791.32. Further grant funding of €2,200 was received for the purchase of personal protective equipment.
- The new Volunteer and equipment management system was introduced by Civil Defence branch. This system will help the Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence officer manage volunteer training, duties and equipment. Duty information is sent out to volunteers by way of a portal, and they respond via this new software.
- The Civil Defence Act 2023 commenced in July. The act provides a modern legislative basis for Civil Defence.
- Civil Defence took part in the local authority, NSAI health and safety audit.
- Six volunteers took part in the annual Lourdes Military pilgrimage.
- Volunteers took part in a national radiation exercise. Volunteers took soil, air and grass samples. These were transported to the Environmental Protection Agency. Nationwide communications were also tested on the day.
- Statutory inspections on equipment took place.
- A presentation evening was held for volunteers. They received certificates attained during the year. Two volunteers received 10-year-long service medals.
- Three new recruits joined the unit and are undergoing probationary training.



Ukranian Reponse, Enterprise and Tourism



Local Enterprise Office

Job creation

Over the course of 2023, 50 net new jobs were created in companies who are clients of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Longford.

Local Enterprise Week 2023

Local Enterprise Week is celebrated nationally every March. In Longford, events were held to highlight the LEO supports available to small businesses and to focus on the value of enterprise and entrepreneurship to our local economies.

County and National Enterprise Awards

The County Enterprise Awards are a key feature of Local Enterprise Week. They recognise the achievements of our small business sector. Finalists included local businesses, Mark Cadam Ltd and Pallet Solutions Ltd with the overall prizewinner



Former Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Turlough McGovern, Aidan and Angela Brady of Midland Language Centre and Longford County Council Chief Executive Paddy Mahon

Local Enterprise Office

announced as Midlands Language Centre. This business provides homestay programmes for international students coming to Ireland to learn English. Midland Language Centre went on to represent LEO, Longford at the National Enterprise Awards ceremony in Dublin in May.

National Women's Enterprise Day and Women in Business events

National Women's Enterprise Day (NWED) took place in October. This event was organised by the four Local Enterprise Offices of the Midlands: Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath. The theme for the day was 'Empowering Business Together'. Over 150 businesswomen attended the event which celebrated female entrepreneurs and female-owned businesses.

In addition to NWED, three other Women in Business events were organised by LEO Longford, Leitrim and Westmeath, including an event to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2023.

Delivering business training

Local Enterprise Office, Longford provided 57 business training courses in 2023, with the majority delivered online. A total of 780 employers and employees attended these courses which varied in duration. In 2023, there was a strong demand for courses in finance, digital marketing and productivity.

Financial supports

A total of 19 businesses qualified for €327,669 in financial assistance through the financial supports on offer for new or expanding businesses. Financial support is invested in enterprises that have the ability to create new employment opportunities in Longford.

LEO Longford also assisted six businesses to successfully apply for funding from Microfinance Ireland.

Local Enterprise Office

Longford County Council support schemes

The Business Incentive Scheme incentivises the occupancy of vacant industrial units and the Shopfront Scheme encourages business owners to enhance the front of their properties. Both schemes continued in 2023.

Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2022

Granard was chosen as the qualifying town for the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2022. County Longford got approval of works in February 2023 and all works were concluded by November 2023. Overall, 28 businesses in Granard were supported to enhance the front of their properties under this scheme.

Student Enterprise Programme

The Student Enterprise Programme is run by the network of Local Enterprise Offices. It introduces secondary school students to the real-life skills needed to run their own enterprises.



Minister of State with responsibility for Business, Employment and Retail Neale Redmond TD; Caitlin Morris of Clip Clap Designs from Moyne Community School; Longford County Council Director of Services Michael Nevin and National Network of Local Enterprise Offices Chair John Magee

Local Enterprise Office

In 2023, over 250 students from eight secondary schools participated in the programme. Exceptional quality was seen in the county final which took place in March. From this, three projects proceeded to the preliminary rounds of the National Finals. They are:

- An Crú Capaill from Ardscoil Phádraig, Granard (senior)
- Clip Clop Designs from Moyne Community School (intermediate)
- Big Move 2 Big School from Moyne Community School (junior)

Clip Clop Designs from Moyne Community School made history for Longford by securing first place in the intermediate category at the national finals.

Going Digital, Trading Online Voucher Scheme and Green for Micro

Going digital was launched in 2023 and seven small businesses availed of consultancy support to digitalise their businesses. More businesses are expected to take part in 2024.

Fourteen businesses further developed their online offering with a Trading Online Voucher from LEO Longford in 2023.

Green for Micro delivered consultancy to 13 local businesses. This helped these businesses to create environmentally sustainable business practices.

Start Your Own Business and business mentoring

The Start Your Own Business initiative is a core LEO product. This year, 153 people participated.

Mentoring involves experts from different disciplines offering guidance to individual businesses. In Longford, 101 business owners and managers availed of mentoring during the year.

Local Enterprise Office

Export Development Programme

LEO Longford partnered with Full Circle Management Solutions to deliver a capability building programme to LEO client businesses. Designed to challenge and support small businesses in scaling their export potential, 10 Longford businesses took part.

Connecting our Business Community

LEO Longford hosted a successful 'Connecting our Business Community' event in October. Attended by many businesses from across the county, it included a keynote address by renowned economist and author David McWilliams.

This was followed by a panel discussion with four experienced business leaders: Pat McDonagh (Supermacs), Sarah Adams (Abbott), Barbara Heslin (Longford County Council) and John Kiernan (Kiernan Steel). The event connected large and small businesses across County Longford in an effort to increase local sub-supply opportunities.



Photo (L–R): RTÉ Correspondent Fran McNulty, Longford County Council Director of Services Michael Nevin, John Kiernan of Kiernan Steel, Longford County Council Director of Services Barbara Heslin, Sarah Adams of Abbott, Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray, Pat McDonagh of Supermacs and Longford County Council Chief Executive Paddy Mahon.

Local Enterprise Office

Economic development

LEO Longford supports the wider economic development and promotion of County Longford. For this, LEO worked closely with local and regional stakeholders to promote Longford as a viable location for inward investment.

The Local Enterprise Office represented Longford County Council at director level on the board of co:worx, Premier Lakelands Food Hub, Backstage Theatre and Longford Enterprise Development Company in 2023.

LEO Longford was represented on the Midlands Region Transition Team Steering Group. This group coordinates the administration of Just Transition and Territorial Plan funds. LEO Longford also sits on the Midland Regional Enterprise Plan Committee which implements actions benefiting the midlands.

LEO Longford also successfully delivered several important economic studies for Longford, including one on the possibility of anaerobic digestion and the development of supports for the logistics sector.

LEO Longford also supported the development of the new Local Economic and Community Plan that was launched in 2023. It sits on the Local Community Development Committee that supports the coordination of LEADER and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme.

Tourism

Holiday World

Longford Tourism attended the Holiday World Show in Dublin in the RDS for three days in January 2023 promoting County Longford as a tourism destination. A variety of maps, booklets and videos were made available to the public over the weekend and a new pocket-sized calendar for 2023 was also presented.

This new tourism calendar was also distributed to libraries and community groups throughout County Longford.



Plan your next break in the heart of Ireland!

A tranquil and mainly low-lying county, Longford is renowned for its angling, boating and outdoor sporting activities. Steeped in ancient Irish mythology, the county has many impressive archaeological sites as well as a wealth of historical, literary and musical tradition. The only county in Ireland with three award-winning villages, its accessibility to many of Ireland's other main towns and cities make it a prime location as a holiday base. Center Parcs Longford Forest resort boasts Ireland's biggest water park, 470 lodges and 30 apartments on over 400 acres of woodland, ready for 2,500 guests at a time. The true beauty of County Longford lies in its rural charm, the hospitality of its people and its quiet countryside of farmland, woodland, lakes, rivers and bogs.

2023

CALENDAR

JANUARY

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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APRIL

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MAY

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JUNE

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JULY

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31						

AUGUST

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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SEPTEMBER

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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30	31					

A new public holiday has been introduced in 2023 in celebration of St Brigid. The feast day of St. Brigid is 1 February—marked by a public holiday on first Monday in February, or 1 February if the date falls on a Friday, from 2023 onwards.

Holidays in the Republic of Ireland: Public Holiday St Brigid's Holiday St Patrick's Day Bank Holiday Easter Halloween Christmas



For information on activities, eating out and accommodation visit:

Longford.ie



Town Twinning Event

A representative from Longford Tourism presented at a gathering of the town twinning committees from across County Longford which was held in in Co:Worx, Edgeworthstown in May. The event was attended by the Town Twinning committees from Longford, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Ballymahon and Ballinamuck. Longford Tourism presented ideas around planning events and detailed itineraries for twinning partners for when they come to visit County Longford.

Tourism

Rose of Tralee Festival

Longford County Council was a corporate sponsor for the Rose of Tralee International Festival in 2023 and Longford Tourism as part of Longford County Council, worked with the festival committee organisers to plan an itinerary for the visit of the Rose Tour to County Longford on 14 August 2023.



With 32 Roses representing national and international locations, the tour was a very high-profile event for County Longford, with the itinerary selectively chosen to demonstrate some of the wonderful attractions based here. It included a visit to Center Parcs Longford Forest; a cycle along the Royal Canal Greenway, a viewing of the breath-taking St Mel's Cathedral as well as some high-octane fun at Midland Karting and the Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre in Granard. Highlights of the visit were featured on the RTE broadcast of the event in Tralee.

The Longford Rose for 2023 was Grace Kemple, who was sponsored by Grafters Hair Salon. Grace did herself and her county proud when she represented Longford at the International Rose of Tralee festival.

Tourism

Tourism Office

The Tourism Office on the Market Square continues to provide a valuable service to the public. This is a walk-in office providing tourism information to locals and visitors alike. The office has an updated stock of material to include maps, brochures and guides and visitors are helped to plan itineraries, book attractions and accommodation. The office also maintains the website www.longford.ie and the Longford Tourism social media channels. Its Facebook channel has now amassed 15,000 followers.

Festival Funding

Longford Tourism administered the Fáilte Ireland Regional Festival and Participative Events Fund 2023 for the county. This programme is aimed at supporting festivals and events which drive both domestic and international tourism, helping to increase economic activity within the community. Ten festivals were funded in 2023 to an overall amount of €15,012.



Tourism

Town and Village Signage

In 2023, the Tourism Office began to carry out a review of existing tourism based signage in towns and villages around the county. The purpose of the review is to ensure relevancy and that signage complies with the Official Languages Act. All information has been collated for the relevant towns and new signage should be completed and erected in 2024.

Longford Literary Trail Audio Tour

Work commenced on the production of an audio tour for the Longford Literary Trail. Longford Tourism worked with production company In-hand Guides for the project, which will be launched in early 2024.

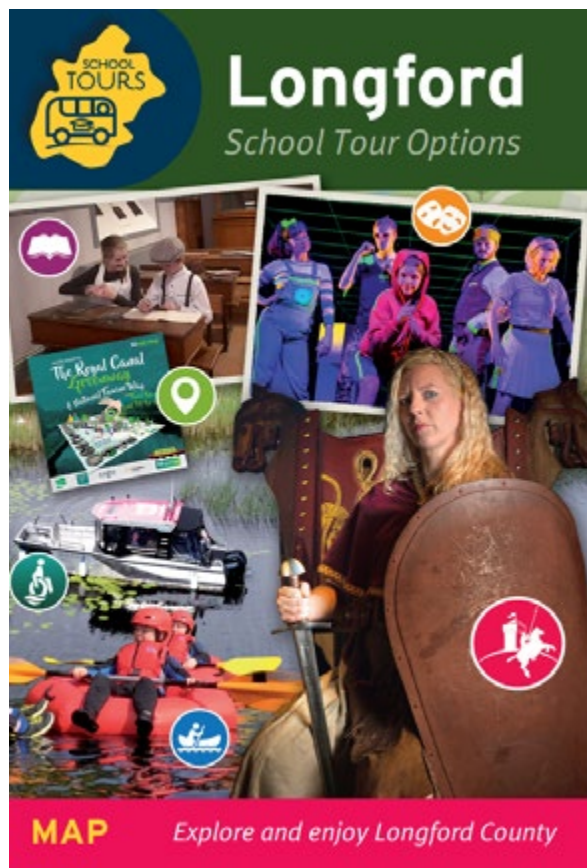
Tourism Strategy

The new 'County Longford Tourism Strategy: Developing a connected sustainable tourism destination' was completed in 2023 and will be launched in early 2024. A wide consultation process took place to allow relevant stakeholders provide input into the strategy.

Site visits

Longford Tourism staff continued their supportive site visits to tourism providers in the county throughout the year. Operators were offered advice and guidance or support with their promotional efforts.

Tourism

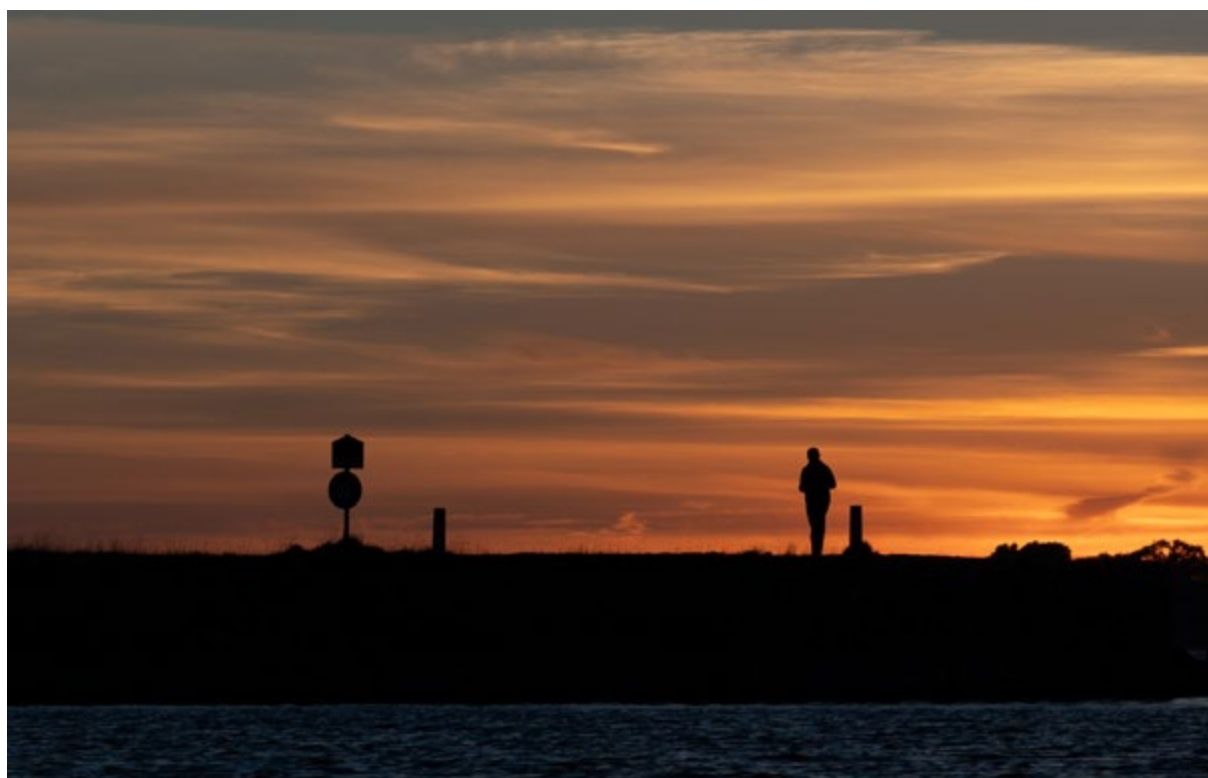


Promotional Materials

Funded by Fáilte Ireland, a new school tour brochure was designed and distributed to all primary schools in counties Longford, Leitrim, Cavan, Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly.

Fáilte Ireland also funded a new video for Clondra, which will be launched in Spring 2024, in preparation for the new season.

Longford Tourism featured in the 2023 edition of 'Go West' Ireland West Airport magazine with a wonderful two page article showcasing some of our best attractions. The magazine has a circulation of over 20,000 across the



Tourism

airport terminal, hotels, tourist attractions and tourist offices throughout the region.

Longford Sports Partnership and Longford Tourism launched several activities which took place over the summer months, including a Trail Running Series and the return of the ever-popular Summer Walking Series.

Longford Tourism designed and printed some new postcards to add to the current collection available in the Tourist Office. They showcase different places of interest in County Longford.



Ukrainian Crisis Humanitarian Response

The Ukrainian Crisis Humanitarian Response team was established in June 2022 under acting Director of Services Michael Nevin. The team is responsible for ensuring a co-ordinated response to the large numbers of refugees from Ukraine who arrived in County Longford since the start of the Russia/Ukraine conflict. Ukrainian refugees were granted 'beneficiaries of temporary protection status' and dispersed to counties all over Ireland, depending on the availability of accommodation to meet their needs. Over 900 Ukrainians were accommodated in County Longford by the end of the 2023. The Ukrainian Crisis Response team in Longford County Council has several areas of responsibility, outlined below.

Community Forum

Longford County Council's Ukrainian Response team is lead coordinator of the Community Forum. This group meets regularly and comprises representatives from all the agencies and volunteer groups that have capacity to support the Ukrainian community in County Longford.

Longford County Council contact for the national response

The Ukrainian Response team is the leading point of contact in County Longford for the Government departments involved in the Ukrainian crisis. These departments particularly include the Departments of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Both departments coordinate the Ukrainian refugee response at the national level.

Ukrainian Crisis Humanitarian Response

Provision of accommodation

The Ukrainian Response team is a conduit for the provision of accommodation solutions for Ukrainians arriving in Longford. This includes vacant and shared property solutions. The team administered the Offer a Home Scheme that secured vacant properties on short-term lease agreements to meet the housing needs of the Ukrainian community. At the end of 2023, over 225 Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection were housed in 75 properties secured by Longford County Council. The Ukrainian Response Team also provided guidance to developers of multi-occupancy centres while also working to deliver multi-occupancy solutions from properties that are owned by Longford County Council. The team also works with the Office of Public Works (OPW) to find local solutions to support the Government's Rapid Build Homes Programme.

Looking forward to 2024

This team considers it a privilege to work with the Ukrainian people who have made County Longford their home. The support and collaboration with all partner agencies has helped greatly to meet the challenges faced by the Ukrainian community. Ukrainians are successfully integrating into our local communities, in schools, employment, local clubs and community organisations. It is hoped that 2024 will bring continued integration.



A photograph of a forest path with a teal overlay. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into a dense forest of tall trees. The teal color is a solid, medium-saturated shade, covering the entire image.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ballymahon Municipal District

Project Updates

Ballymahon Pobal le Chéile Project

Longford County Council appointed Kenny Lyons & Associates Architects for the Ballymahon Pobal le Chéile project on 9 December 2022.

This community hub project will become home to many local services in the heart of the town.

This project involves the renovation of three historic town centre buildings including the vacant former convent building, the old boys' school and the former Dean Egan Library into a co-working space, youth hub and a community centre. The key locations of these buildings will allow a clustering of service providers and increase accessibility to social services for the community. It will also enhance connectivity and the visual presentation of the area.

Works will include the transformation of the former convent building to accommodate Bridgeways Family Resource Centre (FRC), as well as the Convent Day Care Centre. The Dean Egan Library will be home to a youth club. The old boys' school will be renovated for remote working and the Ballymahon Men's Shed. The works will also present the area as a distinct quarter of the town.

Funding of €6.6 million was announced in 2021 for this project under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) through the Department of Rural and Community Development. The funding is administered by Longford County Council.

The project will have a significant and sustainable impact on the social and economic development of the community by delivering a campus of scale that will provide community services and deliver sustainable regeneration.

Following extensive consultation an agreement on the layout of the three buildings, with the various stakeholders/town team, is now complete. It is envisaged to issue Part 8 planning for the project by Q2 2024.

Appendix 1 – Ballymahon Municipal District

Urbact UR Impact Project

Longford County Council has been successful in its application to become a partner in a European project under URBACT. UR Impact has a specific focus on Ballymahon, supporting the delivery of Pobal le Chéile and embedding social impact in urban regeneration projects.

Lanesborough Amphitheatre

Part 8 has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the proposed Lanesborough Amphitheatre.

Notices of Motion discussed by Members were:

- Discussion about Lanesborough Amphitheatre project
- Resurface the road from the four roads at L1168 (Lisreevah road) to the Rathcline Road
- Resurfacing of the Rathcline road in 2023
- Installation of wheelchair accessible parking on Main Street Edgeworthstown
- Signage indicating the location of free car parking in Edgeworthstown
- Drainage issue at O'Brien's Corner Shop, Lanesborough
- Update on progress with retrofitting in the Ballymahon area
- Update on progress with projects in the Lanesborough area
- Inclusion of Parkside Gardens Estate Ballymahon in Retrofitting Programme 2023/24
- Update on the cycleway/walkway from Ballymahon bridge to Newcastle bridge
- Installation of Crash Barriers at Lissard House entrance
- Installation of cycleway/walkway on Ardagh Mountain from Moor
- Seek funds to install a dedicated off-road mountain bike trail in Newcastle Forest
- Feasibility of providing two bus shelters at the bus stops at upper Main Street Ballymahon
- Improvement works at the crossroads known locally as The Plantation Cross, Abbeyderg Kenagh on the L1126

Appendix 1 – Ballymahon Municipal District

- Works at the Bridge at Corlea, Kenagh
- Discussion about installation of pedestrian crossing at St Mary's Church Edgeworthstown
- Off-road mountain bike trail in Newcastle Forest
- Footpaths in Ardagh Village
- Support Twinning Committee in Lanesborough
- Request to appoint a Tourism Activator
- Request for assessment at the junction of the R392 and the L52122 at Forgney
- Installation of high impact signs on N55 Carrickboy to Carrickedmond crossroads
- Reduction the speed limit on the R398-712 At Cloontagh NS
- Consideration of appropriate measures to reduce traffic congestion at school times at Cloontagh school
- Request for provision of slipway for small boats, kayaks and canoes adjacent to the eight-berth jetty at the Red Bridge Ballymahon
- Resurface Main Street, Edgeworthstown
- Extension of footpath on the Ratharney side of Legan to Kelly's crossroads
- Discussion about reinstating the lollypop person at school times in Lanesborough in the interest of child safety
- Request to Irish Water to properly resurface the Bracklyn Road in Edgeworthstown
- Request to apply for a low-cost safety scheme at Crossea, Ardagh on the N55
- Construction of footpath/cycle path from the Silver Birches estate to Stonepark School
- Update on the installation of CCTV in Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon town
- Discussion about a new walking/cycle looped route to be created in Edgeworthstown on the old Dublin Road by C&D back around to the N4
- Revamp Lanesborough Children's Playground
- Replace the footpaths at Knock, Lanesborough
- Provision of new compactor bins for recreational areas in Lanesborough
- Review street lighting in Lanesborough
- Repair/replace footpaths in Knock, Lanesborough
- New bottle bank in Formoyle (Lisnacusha)

Appendix 1 – Ballymahon Municipal District

Items highlighted and discussed by Members were:

- Briefing on the N55 Athlone to Ballymahon preferred route corridor
- Official Welcome for Ballymahon Town Twinning Landevant visitors held in August
- Presentation and consideration of Draft Longford Local Economic and Community Plan 2023–2029
- ESB Community Benefits Package – Just Transition Programme and the Lanesborough local area will be beneficiaries of this package.
- Presentation on Community Climate Action Fund

Estates Taken in Charge were:

There were no estates taken in charge in Ballymahon MD in 2023

Roads Taken in Charge were:

There were no roads taken in charge in Ballymahon MD in 2023.

Bye-Laws Adopted:

There were no bye-laws adopted in Ballymahon MD in 2023.

Appendix 1 – Ballymahon Municipal District

Ballymahon Municipal District Road Works Programme 2023

The Ballymahon Municipal District has responsibility for the maintenance and repair of 70km of regional road, 519km of local road and 46km of national road. The below Road Works Programme 2023 was approved by the MD.

TII Grant

N4LD Edgeworthstown Ped Crossing	€1,000
N55 LD_058.2 Ballymahon – Toome RSIS (HD 15 HD 17)	€5,000
N55 LD_Ballymahon RSIS (HD 15 HD 17)	€10,000
N55 Ballymahon Traffic Management	€500,000 No progress – no expenditure
N55 Ballymahon Street Pavement Strengthening	€1,000,000 No progress – no expenditure
N55 Edgeworthstown North	€480,000
N4 Garryandrew	€700,000 Scheme complete
N63 Agnaskea Bridge	€250,000 Scheme complete
N63 Gowlan	€600,000 Scheme to go to construction in Q2 2024
N63 Lanesborough Pavement	€500,000 Scheme complete

Appendix 1 – Ballymahon Municipal District

Restoration Improvement Grant

Ballymahon Regional Road	€335,340
Ballymahon Local Road	€1,528,470

Restoration Maintenance Grant and Supplementary Restoration Maintenance Grant

Ballymahon Regional Road	€87,423
Ballymahon Local Road	€398,472

Discretionary Grant:

Local Road Maintenance	
includes patching, repair, drainage, verge trimming, culverts road markings	€314,712.33

Regional Road Maintenance	
includes patching, repair, drainage, verge trimming, culverts road markings	€106,593.50

Low-Cost Safety Scheme	€120,000
Bridge Rehabilitation Grant	€53,500
Specific Improvement Grant	€475,000
Drainage Grant Allocation	€110,667
Climate Adaption Allocation	€160,000

Appendix 2 – Granard Municipal District

Notices of motion discussed by members were:

- Winter Maintenance Service Plan – include the road from Aughnacliffe to Aughadowry, and Aughadowry to Esker Cross
- Road markings at Smear Junction and Smear Stores, and road markings at Fr McGee Park
- Write to Permanent TSB to consider opening a branch in Granard town
- Improving road safety near Killasonna National School, Granard
- Speed signs at Drumlish and Ennybegs
- Move speed signs on the Aughkine road in Aughnacliffe and the Granard to Aughnacliffe road
- Possible low cost safety measures on the Aughnacliffe to Arva road
- Request for extension of the public sewage network in Ballinalee
- Installation of public lighting in Teemore Industrial Estate, Granard
- Engagement with Coillte to purchase land near Derrycassin Woods to facilitate a car park
- Road marking of the crossroads at Hagan’s cross in Killoe and up to Killoe NS
- Contact Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to construct a relief road on the N55 at Granard on the Cavan/North side of the town to connect with the Athlone/South side of the town
- Regeneration team to refresh the walkway on Cairn Hill
- Distribution of funding that was allocated in the budget to maintain our walkways
- Repair any damaged road signs in the Killoe, Ballinalee, and Clonbroney areas
- Recruitment and retention of retained fire-fighters and seek an increase in capital investment for County Longford
- Appointment of a Superintendent to Granard Garda Station
- Increase litter fines for reoffending cases.
- Update in relation to the pedestrian crossing in the village of Drumlish
- Request to consider the taking in charge of Ranaghan Lane, Abbeylara
- Erect a sign at Esker Cross and Mallon’s Cross with directions to Cairn Hill
- Refresh the wooden fence and wooden area in Ballinalee Community playground
- Publicise hedge cutting season
- Installation of speed ramps at the entrance to Dring car park

Appendix 2 – Granard Municipal District

- Low-cost safety scheme at Legga Cross
- Upgrade footpath on Market Street, Granard
- Put plan in place for two council-owned derelict buildings in Granard.
- Safety awareness plan for outside Sacred Heart Primary School, Granard on the N55.

Part VIII approved:

- No 112 – Proposed construction of one two-bedroom single storey house, including boundary walls/fences, car parking, entrances, landscaping, on site wastewater treatment system, connection to existing services and associated site works.

Estates Taken in Charge:

There were no estates taken in charge in Granard MD in 2023

Roads Taken in Charge:

Barrack Lane, Granard

Bye-Laws Adopted:

No bye-laws were adopted in Granard MD in 2023

Granard Municipal District Road Works Programme 2023

The Granard Municipal District has responsibility for the maintenance and repair of 59km of regional road, 636km of local road and 13km of national road. The below Road Works Programme 2023 was approved by the municipal district.

Appendix 2 – Granard Municipal District

Department of Transport (DoT) Grants

Restoration Improvement Grant (Extra funding approved during 2023 by DoT)			
Granard Regional Road	€250,878	Final outturn was	€216,500
Granard Local Road	€1,926,402	Final outturn was	€2,104,021

Restoration Maintenance Grant (now includes Supplementary)	
Granard Regional Road	€124,152
Granard Local Road	€443,464

DoT Discretionary Grant:

Local Road Maintenance	
includes patching, repair, drainage, verge trimming, culverts road markings	€251,208.50

Regional Road Maintenance	
includes patching, repair, drainage, verge trimming, culverts road markings	€88,055.50

Low-Cost Safety Scheme	€45,000
Bridge Rehabilitation Grant (Road Design Section manage this)	€291,000
Drainage Grant Allocation	€110,667
Climate Adaption Allocation	€72,500
Own Resources Funding • Patch and Repair	€261,171
Bridges (Small works)	€20,000

Appendix 3 – Longford Municipal District

- Longford Skatepark completed in November 2023: A 750sqm designated skatepark with boundary fence treatment. This forms part of the larger Part VIII No 110 development that includes the Royal Canal Greenway Connection.
- Shared cycleway and pedestrian connection between St Theresa's National School to Aughaboy Cemetery (750m) to include public lighting and native planting.
- Creation of a designated cycle lane with bollards and line painting on either side of Battery Road Lower.
- Fee Court permeability scheme.
- The establishment of a preferred connection from rear of St John's cemetery to the Green Pedestrian Bridge at the rear of Áras an Chontae, between River Front Dental and terrace of existing housing. Scheme to include provision of 3m wide shared pathway, installation of Mill Wheel, raised ramp crossing and public lighting provision.
- Scoil Mhuire NS Newtownforbes: Delivered safe routes to school scheme at the front of national school to include safer pedestrian crossing, and amenity, bus parking, and access to, street animation, N4 pedestrian crossing and increased public footpath provision and public lighting.
- Longford Town Local Transport Plan: A strategic framework for the management, investment, and development of Longford Town's transport system.

Part VIIIs approved:

- No 105 Construction of a school zone and ancillary works at Scoil Mhuire, Newtownforbes, County Longford, along the L-1004-0 Road and the construction of a new controlled crossing on the N4 at Newtownforbes, County Longford.
- No 107 Proposed construction of a 28.7 square metre extension to the existing domestic dwelling at 5 The Hollows, Longford County Longford.

Appendix 3 – Longford Municipal District

- No 108 Construction of the 'Aghafad Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme' to include the provision of a shared walking and cycling pathway from the factories at Aghafad, to link with the existing service road along the eastern boundary of Longford Slashers GAA at Farranyoogan, and thereby provide a connection onto the Royal Canal Greenway.
- No 109 Proposed 160 square meter burial ground extension to the east of the existing St John's Graveyard, Battery Road, Abbeycartron, Longford Town.
- No 111 Construction of a new carpark with roadside fencing and landscaping, installation of 300m of safety barrier along the R198 including landscaping to existing amphitheater site and all ancillary site works through the townlands of Leggagh.

Notices of motion discussed by members were:

- Request TII to delist the N63 as a National Route from the N4 roundabout to the Ballyminion roundabout on the Athlone Road after all the current and pending works are finished on the Longford Town section. The new N63 would then be designated along the N4 and N5 and across Ballyminion. The previous Longford Town section would then convert to 'R' status. This, combined with the HGV prohibition signage, will be a generational change improvement for the betterment of Longford Town.
- That a number of permanent all day taxi rank positions be put in place on Ballymahon Street. The number of spaces should be at least the equivalent of the number reduced on the Market Square by the new build out. Furthermore, they should be clearly marked and policed by both the Traffic Wardens and the Community Warden, as should control of double parking and illicit use of disabled and loading bay spaces generally. Illicit parking has become a chronic problem in Longford Town as it is currently believed that there is no control or penalties, excepting sporadic Garda interventions. The issuing of ticketing fines should not just be confined to unpaid parking.
- Remove the boulders and temporary fence along Great Water Street and clean up the rubbish trapped between the temporary and palisade fences to keep the area tidy.

Appendix 3 – Longford Municipal District

- Purchase compact equipment that cleans and disinfects our open spaces and other areas which are not accessed by the road sweeper machine.
- Commence the Part 8 process to provide for the development of soccer facilities including an eleven-a-side pitch (to cater for senior and youth football to specifications in accordance with FAI Guidelines), changing rooms and dugouts on part of the former Longford Greyhound Stadium site.
- Repair the potholes in the Abbeycarton Lane and repaint the current walkway as it is in poor condition and badly faded in places.
- Review the current taxi ranks in the town.
- Commence the process for the formal “Taking in Charge” of the infrastructural roads, public lighting and storm water services at Palace Crescent, Ardnacassa, Longford.
- Public lighting installed between the Leo Casey Roundabout and the Red Cow Roundabout.
- Place dog poop bins at either end of the Longford Canal Walkway.
- Make it safer for pedestrians accessing Market Square from New Street by implementing a signalised pedestrian crossing at the junction of New Street.
- Contact the Five Star Pizza business owner and the landlord to relocate the bins left permanently on the public access area of Garvey’s Yard. The location of the bins results in rubbish left scattered around them making the area unsightly and a health and safety risk, causing great distress to residents and people accessing the Annaly carpark via Garvey’s Yard.
- Provide shelter and sitting at the bus stops in Longford MD for people waiting to take the bus.
- Have an Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter present at Longford MD meetings to make meetings accessible to a wider audience viewing online or in person.
- Set aside sufficient funds for the Twinning trip to Noyal Chatillon-sur Seiche to cover travel and expenses in June 2023.
- That a speed bump be installed on the main road in Ardnacassa Lawns due to accidents occurring and anti-parking bollards be installed along the main road footpath in Ardnacassa from the entrance of Midara Gardens to the corner at the Dublin Road to prevent HGVs and other vehicles parking on the footpath.
- Resurface the area in front of the train/bus station at Convent Road, Longford.

Appendix 3 – Longford Municipal District

- Install a convex safety mirror at the junction at Annaly Park and Richmond Street (N5). Clear line of sight cannot be achieved on the righthand side when exiting Annaly Park due to a boundary wall, and this represents a potential road safety issue.
- Put line markings and signage in place with immediate effect at Legion Terrace, Longford.
- Carry out road marking reinstatement works on all loading bays in the town. These loading bay markings are worn away and a lot of cars are parking in these loading bays as a result.
- Install flower boxes on the wide footpath on Main Street outside Kenny's Shop. There are a lot of cars and vans parking up on the new path at peak times and this may prevent this from reoccurring.
- Provide road markings and signage at Derryharrow Cross for the guidance of road users.
- Engage with Uisce Eireann to immediately complete the taking in charge of sanitary infrastructure at Cartrun Breac Estate.
- Organise a contractor to carry out maintenance works on the Longford Royal Canal Walkway. Provision was made in the LCC Budget 2023 to do these works, but this has not been advanced. The condition of this well utilised walkway is appalling and has nearly negated the significant capital investment that totally transformed the amenity back in 2019.
- Review of our public infrastructure within The Mall with a view to developing a master plan to include additional carparking, lighting, ramps and installation of public CCTV poles and cameras. Over the last number of years, The Mall has seen a significant increase in footfall in no small part due to the success of the Leisure Centre, the upgrading of the walking trail, Longford Park Run and other running groups, as well as the continued use of the Astro Turf Pitches. This is all hugely welcome, but we need to ensure that our infrastructure is in line with this increased usage as well as being mindful of public safety.
- That the lower green area in the St Emer's Estate requires a surface water drainage scheme to allow the cutting of grass throughout the growing season. I respectfully request that these works are carried out before next year's grass cutting season.

Appendix 3 – Longford Municipal District

- Whereas the Local Government Act 2001 as amended in the 2014 Act, Schedule 14A, subject to Section 131A that it is a reserved function of a Municipal District to make a resolution to determine the manner in which fees for parking shall be disposed of, I hereby propose that the Executive furnish those fees to the October meeting of Longford Municipal District by way of an Agenda item to be voted on by the Members of Longford Municipal District.
- Bicycle stands installed outside the entrances at the Tesco Shopping Centre and at the Public Library.
- Look at repurposing the recreational space in Mac Eoin Park into social housing and green space to prevent further dumping of rubbish, and the associated cost of clearing the rubbish, and antisocial behaviour in the area.
- Mark out by colour pavement and appropriate signage, the designated bus stop adjacent to the Boy Scouts Den within The Mall. There are ongoing issues with people parking there and buses cannot at times access their designated area. This is leading to problems with safe disembarkation of passengers (sometimes children with special needs) and at times altercations between bus drivers and people who incorrectly park there.
- Make provision for temporary parking permits to be issued to individuals performing jury duty in Longford County Courthouse. Such permits can be provided to the Manager at the Court to be issued to confirmed jurors on the day of their attendance in court.
- Reinstate the road markings at Kiernan's forge on Ballinalee Rd, that is, the continuous white line and stop signs at crossroads which are in a very dangerous state at moment.
- Alleviate the flooding at junction at Cullyfad crossroads beside church which is very dangerous and even more dangerous when there is frost.
- Provide disabled car space on Main Street outside Cara All Care Pharmacy, to facilitate elderly people and people with disabilities to access businesses on Main Street.

Estates Taken in Charge:

There was one estate taken in charge in Longford MD in 2023

Appendix 3 – Longford Municipal District

Restoration Improvement Grant

Longford Regional Road	€111,801.87
Longford Local Road	€714,929.81

Restoration Maintenance Grant

Longford Regional Road	€30,671.86
Longford Local Road	€177,035.16

Supplementary Restoration Maintenance Grant

Longford Regional Road	€13,380.00
Longford Local Road	€80,558.75

Discretionary Grant:

Local Road Maintenance	
includes patching, repair, drainage, verge trimming, culverts road markings	€94,344.73

Regional Road Maintenance	
includes patching, repair, drainage, verge trimming, culverts road markings	€ 30,225.95

Low-Cost Safety Scheme	€16,487.94
Bridge Rehabilitation Grant	€98,203.23
Specific Improvement Grant	€0
Drainage Grant Allocation	€ 111,326.00

Appendix 4 – Council Membership of Committees

Committees	Councillors
Appointment of nominee of Longford County Council to attend annual meeting of Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd	Colin Dalton
Association of Irish Local Government	Mick Cahill, John Browne, Paraic Brady
Board of Backstage Theatre	Director: Colm Murray
Members: Peggy Nolan, Paul Ross	
Creative Ireland Culture Team	Martin Monaghan, Pat O'Toole and Paraic Brady
County Longford Heritage Forum	Peggy Nolan, Paul Ross and Turlough McGovern
Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly	John Browne, Colm Murray
Health Service Executive Regional Health Forum, Dublin-mid Leinster	PJ Reilly, Paraic Brady, Paul Ross
Joint Policing Committee	Seamus Butler, Pat O'Toole, PJ Reilly, Martin Monaghan, Uruemu Adejinmi, Turlough McGovern, Peggy Nolan, Paul Ross, Gerry Hagan, Garry Murtagh, John Browne, Colin Dalton, Gerry Warnock
Local Authority Members' Association	Gerard Farrell
Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	Seamus Butler, Colm Murray, Colin Dalton, Paraic Brady
Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	Martin Monaghan, Uruemu Adejinmi, John Browne, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Warnock
Longford Community Resources Ltd	

Appendix 4 – Council Membership of Committees

Committees	Councillors
Longford County Council Audit Committee	
Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd	Seamus Butler, Uruemu Adejinmi, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton
Longford Pool Construction Ltd	Gerry Hagan, Gerry Warnock, Martin Monaghan
Longford/Westmeath Education and Training Board	Pat O'Toole, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Hagan, Garry Murtagh
Longford/Westmeath Rural Community Transport Association	Paraic Brady
Regeneration Committee	Paul Ross, Gerry Warnock, John Browne, Uruemu Adejinmi, Martin Monaghan, Gerry Hagan, Peggy Nolan and Seamus Butler, Gerard Farrell, Paul Ross, Mick Cahill, PJ Reilly, Turlough McGovern, Paraic Brady

Appendix 5 – Conferences attended by Elected Members

Date in 2023	Conference	Location	Attendance
7, 8 and 9 February	Association of Irish Regions – Regions in Focus 2023	Four Seasons Hotel, Co Monaghan	Colm Murray, Peggy Nolan, Garry Murtagh, Colin Dalton, Paraic Brady
23 February	AILG Module 1 Training	Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co Offaly	Uruemu Adejinmi, Paraic Brady, PJ Reilly
25 February	AILG Module 1 Training	Radisson Blu Hotel, Co Limerick	Garry Murtagh, Colin Dalton, Turlough McGovern, Peggy Nolan, John Browne, Paul Ross, Gerry Hagan, Mick Cahill, Colm Murray
2, 3 and 4 March	LAMA Spring Seminar	Westlodge Hotel, Bantry, Co Cork	Paul Ross, Gerard Farrell, Colm Murray, Colin Dalton, Paraic Brady, Garry Murtagh, PJ Reilly, Peggy Nolan, John Browne
25 March	AILG Module 2 Training	Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, Co Louth	Paraic Brady, John Browne, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton, Gerry Hagan, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, PJ Reilly
19 and 20 April	AILG Annual Training Conference	Hotel Kilkenny, College Road, Co Kilkenny	John Browne, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey, Colin Dalton, Colm Murray, PJ Reilly, Paraic Brady, Turlough McGovern, Garry Murtagh, Paul Ross
15 June	AILG Module 3 Training	Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co Westmeath	Uruemu Adejinmi, John Browne, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey, Colm Murray,
17 June	AILG Module 3 Training	Avalon House Hotel, Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny	Peggy Nolan, Paraic Brady, PJ Reilly

Appendix 5 – Conferences attended by Elected Members

Date in 2023	Conference	Location	Attendance
22 July	AILG Module 4 Training	Rasisson Blu Hotel, Co Sligo	Paraic Brady, Colin Dalton, Gerry Hagan, Turlough McGovern, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, PJ Reilly, Paul Ross, Uruemu Adejinmi, John Browne, Mick Cahill, Peggy Nolan
16, 17, 18 and 19 August	MacGill Summer School	Glenties, Co Donegal	John Browne, PJ Reilly, Paraic Brady, Colin Dalton, Gerry Hagan, Peggy Nolan
31 August and 1 and 2 September	Kennedy Summer School	New Ross, Co Wexford	Garry Murtagh, Colm Murray, Paul Ross
13 and 14 September	AILG Autumn Training Seminar	Sligo Park Hotel, Co Sligo	Uruemu Adejinmi, Paraic Brady, John Browne, Gerry Hagan, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Mick Cahill, Colin Dalton, Peggy Nolan, PJ Reilly, Paul Ross
6 October	IPI Irish Planning Conference	Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co Dublin	Paul Ross, John Browne, Paraic Brady, Colin Dalton, Garry Murtagh, Turlough McGovern
19 October	AILG Module 5 Training	Hotel Kilmore, Co Cavan	Uruemu Adejinmi, John Browne, Mick Cahill, PJ Reilly
21 October	AILG Module 5 Training	Rose Hotel, Tralee, Co Kerry	Peggy Nolan, Paraic Brady, Turlough McGovern, Colin Dalton
25 and 26 October	LAMA Autumn Seminar	Ard Ri Hotel, Tuam, Co Galway	Paul Ross, Gerard Farrell, Turlough McGovern, Colin Dalton, Paraic Brady, Garry Murtagh, PJ Reilly, Peggy Nolan, John Browne
18 November	AILG Module 6 Training	Clayton Hotel, Co Galway	John Browne, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey, Colin Dalton, Colm Murray, Gerry Hagan, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, PJ Reilly

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Housing: H1, H2 and H4

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 1/1/2022	2,196
B. Number of dwellings added to the local authority owned stock during 2022 (whether constructed or acquired)	37
C. Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in 2022	28
D. Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished in 2022	0
E. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 31/12/2022	2,205
F. Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a D/HLGH approved scheme at 31/12/2022	0
A. The percentage of the total number of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2022	5.62 %
The number of dwellings within their overall stock that were not tenanted on 31/12/2022	124
A. Expenditure during 2022 on the maintenance of local authority housing compiled from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, divided by the no. of dwellings in the local authority stock at 31/12/2022, i.e. the H1E less H1F indicator figure	€830.26
Expenditure on maintenance of local authority stock compiled from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, including planned maintenance and expenditure that qualified for grants, such as Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) grants for energy efficient retro-fitting works but excluding expenditure on vacant properties and expenditure under approved major refurbishment schemes (i.e. approved Regeneration or under the Remedial Works Schemes).	€1,830,717

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Housing: H3 and H5

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The time taken from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in 2022 when the dwelling is re-tenanted, averaged across all dwellings re-let during 2022	99.48 wk
B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted in 2022, averaged across all dwellings re-let in 2022	€35,925.79
The number of dwellings that were re-tenanted on any date in 2022 (but excluding all those that had been vacant due to an estate-wide refurbishment scheme)	48
The number of weeks from the date of vacation to the date the dwelling is re-tenanted	4,775 wk
Total expenditure on works necessary to enable re-letting of the dwellings	€1,724,437.82
A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2022	
B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2022	202
C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2022 not compliant with the Standards Regulations	93.46 %
D. Number of dwellings deemed compliant in 2022 (including those originally deemed non-compliant)	88
E. The number of inspections (including reinspections) undertaken by the local authority in 2022	265

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Housing: H6

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e. 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2022	69.57 %
The number of adult individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation on the night of 31 December 2022 as recorded on the PASS system	23
The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2022, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months	16

Roads: R1 and R2

Performance Indicator	Value
A. (a) The percentage of Regional road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2022	98.00 %
A. (b) The percentage of Local Primary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2022	99.00 %
A. (c) The percentage of Local Secondary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2022	98.00 %
A. (d) The percentage of Local Tertiary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2022	93.00 %
B. (a.1) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1–4 at 31/12/2022	0.24 %
B. (a.2) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5–6 at 31/12/2022	4.89 %
B. (a.3) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7–8 at 31/12/2022	56.74 %
B. (a.4) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9–10 at 31/12/2022	38.13 %

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Value
B. (b.1) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1–4 at 31/12/2022	0.53 %
B. (b.2) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5–6 at 31/12/2022	11.74 %
B. (b.3) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7–8 at 31/12/2022	46.03 %
B. (b.4) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9–10 at 31/12/2022	41.69 %
B. (c.1) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1–4 at 31/12/2022	1.03 %
B. (c.2) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5–6 at 31/12/2022	15.98 %
B. (c.3) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7–8 at 31/12/2022	44.83 %
B. (c.4) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9–10 at 31/12/2022	38.04 %
B. (d.1) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1–4 at 31/12/2022	5.16 %
B. (d.2) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5–6 at 31/12/2022	15.01 %
B. (d.3) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7–8 at 31/12/2022	31.72 %
B. (d.4) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9–10 at 31/12/2022	45.51 %
A.1 Kilometres of regional road strengthened during 2022	4.3 km
A.2 The amount expended on regional roads strengthening work during 2022	€807,973.00
A.3 The average unit cost of regional road strengthening works per square metre (€/m ²)	€28.81
B.1 Kilometres of regional road resealed during 2022	7.1 km

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Value
B.2 The amount expended on regional road resealing work during 2022	€286,074.00
B.3 The average unit cost of regional road resealing works per square metre (€/m2)	€5.73
C.1 Kilometres of local road strengthened during 2022	56.5 km
C2. The amount expended on local road strengthening work during 2022	€3,883,782.00
C.3 The average unit cost of local road strengthening works per square metre (€/m2)	€17.47
D.1 Kilometres of local road resealed during 2022	63.1 km
D.2 The amount expended on local road resealing work during 2022	€1,116,781.00
D.3 The average unit cost of local road resealing works per square metre (€/m2)	€4.38

Motor Tax: R3

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed and the tax disc is issued) in 2022	78.20 %

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Water: W1 and W2

Performance Indicator	Value
Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements	
The number of registered schemes monitored by each local authority as a percentage of total schemes registered	100 %
The number of registered schemes monitored in 2022	17
Total number of registered schemes in 2022	17

Waste: E1

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The number of households which availed of a 3-bin service offered by a licensed operator at 31/12/2022	4,140
B. The percentage of households within the local authority that the number at A represents (based on agglomerations of more than 500)	79.34 %

Environmental Pollution: E2

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Total number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made during 2022	1,638
A. Number of pollution cases closed from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	1,620
A. Total number of pollution cases on hands at 31/12/2022	66
The opening number of pollution cases carried forward from the year end 2021	48

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Litter Pollution: E3

Performance Indicator	Value
A1. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was unpolluted or litter free	42 %
A2. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was slightly polluted	47 %
A3. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was moderately polluted	10 %
A4. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was significantly polluted	1 %
A5. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was grossly polluted	0 %

Green Flag Status: E4

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The percentage of schools that have been awarded/renewed green flag status in the two years to 31 December 2022	46.81 %
Schools which attained a Green Flag for the first time in 2022	0
Schools which renewed their Green Flag in 2022	12
Schools which held a Green Flag from 2021 and therefore do not require renewal until 2023	10

Energy Efficiency: E5

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The cumulative percentage of energy savings achieved by 31/12/2022 relative to baseline year (2009)	-41.33 %

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Public Lighting: E6

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Total annual consumption of the public lighting system	1745.75 MWh
B. Average wattage of each public light	71.27 W
C. Percentage of the total system that LED lights represent	73.49 %
Number of LED lights in the public lighting system	4292
Number of non-LED lights in the public lighting system	1548

Climate Change: E7

Performance Indicator	Value
1 a) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Coordinator?	Yes
1 b) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Officer?	No
2. Does the local authority have a climate action team?	Yes

Planning: P1

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	12.00 %
Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority i.e. buildings where a valid Commencement Notice was served in the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 by a builder or developer on the local authority	50
Number of new buildings notified to the local authority in 2022 that were the subject of at least one on-site inspection during 2022 undertaken by the local authority	6

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Planning: P2 and P3

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Number of local authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in 2022	4
B. Percentage of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation of the plan) the decision made by the local authority	75.00 %
Number of determinations confirming the local authority's decision (either with or without variation)	3
A. Total number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the local authority in the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 that were investigated	35
B. Total number of investigated cases that were closed during 2022	55
C. Percentage of the cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	49.09 %
D. Percentage of the cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	1.82 %
E. Percentage of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	49.09 %
F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2022	71
Number of cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	27
Number of cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	1
Number of cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	27

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Planning: P4 and P5

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The 2022 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€42.59
AFS Programme D data consisting of D01 – Forward Planning, D02 – Development Management, D03 – Enforcement (inclusive of the relevant Programme D proportion of the central management charge) for 2022	€1,985,977
A. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt	68.42 %
B. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant	31.58 %
The total number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were not withdrawn by the applicant	19
The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of the date of receipt of the application	13
The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within an agreed extended time period	6

Fire Service: F1

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data for 2022 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census figures for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports	€56.01
AFS Programme E expenditure data consisting of E11 – Operation of Fire Service and E12 – Fire Prevention for 2022	€2,611,872

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Fire Service: F2 and F3

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire	
B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	6.45 min
C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	
D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	7.16 min
A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes	29.26 %
B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	56.91 %
C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	13.83 %
D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	32.67 %
E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	56.44 %
F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	10.89 %
Total number of call-outs in respect of fires from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	188
Number of these fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	55
Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	107
Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	26

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Value
Total number of call-outs in respect of all other emergency incidents (i.e. not including fire) from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	101
Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	33
Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	57
Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	11

Library Service: L1

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the local authority area per the 2022 Census	2.86
B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year	97,515
C. Library active members per head of population	
D. Number of registered library members in the year	8,203
Number of visits to its libraries from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	133,502

Library Service: L2

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data for 2022 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€54.24
B. The annual per capita expenditure on collections over the period 1/01/2022 to 31/12/2022	€2.38
A. AFS Programme F data consisting of F02 – Operation of Library and Archival Service (inclusive of the relevant proportion of the central management charge for Programme F) for 2022	€2,529,388

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Value
B. The annual expenditure on new stock acquired by the library in the year	€111,001.56

Youth and Community: Y1 and Y2

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme	100 %
Total number of second level schools in the local authority area at 31/12/2022	9
Number of second level schools in the local authority area from which representatives attended the local Comhairle na nÓg AGM held in 2022	9
A. The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2022 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN	12.90
Total number of organisations included in the County Register (maintained in accordance with section 128 of the Local Government Act 2001) for the local authority area as at 31/12/2022	442
Total number of those organisations that registered for the first time in 2022	49
Number of organisations that opted to join the Social Inclusion Electoral College on whatever date they registered for the PPN	57

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Corporate: C1, C2, C4 and C5

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The wholetime equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2022	356.62
A. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2022	3.56 %
B. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2022	0.24 %
Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2022	3,051.33 day
Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2022	191.5 day
Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of self-certified sick leave days in 2022	0 day
Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of medically certified sick leave days in 2022	169.5 day
If any staff are on long-term sick leave (i.e. a continuous period of more than 4 weeks), include a text note of the number of staff on long-term sick leave	29 staff on long-term sick leave, two of whom have since retired
A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022, divided by the WTE no.	€3,012.03
Total ICT expenditure in 2022	€1,074,151.69
A. All ICT expenditure calculated in C4 as a proportion of Revenue expenditure	1.75
Total Revenue expenditure from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 before transfers to or from reserves	€61,416,283

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Corporate: C3

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The per capita total page views of the local authority's websites in 2022	10.05
B. The per capita total number of followers at end 2022 of the local authority's social media accounts (if any)	1.32
The cumulative total page views of all websites operated by the local authority for the period from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 obtained from a page tagging on-site web analytics service or equivalent	468,614
The total number of social media users who, at 31/12/2022, were following the local authority on any social media sites	61,376
The number of social media accounts operated by the local authority	34
Indicate if there was a change to the cookie policies on the local authority sites and the date this came into effect	No change in 2022

Finance: M1 to M4

Performance Indicator	Value
A. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2018 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€233,046
B. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2019 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€246,348
C. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2020 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€250,963
D. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2021 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€359,729

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Value
E. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2022 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€365,106
F. Cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2022 as a percentage of Total Income in 2022 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	0.80 %
G. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2022	€1,316.99
H. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2022 excluding significant out of county / shared service expenditure	
The 2022 Total Income figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€45,760,797
The 2022 Total Expenditure figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€61,416,283
The 2022 Revenue expenditure excluding county / shared service expenditure for the service providers of HAP, MyPay, DRHE and Dublin Fire Services	
A. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	89.0 %
A. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	93.0 %
A. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	55.0 %
B. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	88.0 %
B. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	90.0 %
B. c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	59.0 %
C. a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	81.0 %
C. b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	89.0 %
C. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	65.0 %

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Value
D. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	84.0 %
D. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	90.0 %
D. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	69.0 %
E. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	90 %
E. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	89 %
E. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	77 %
A. Per capita total cost of settled claims for 2022	€7.86
IPB Insurance: Number of notified claims for 2022	26
IPB Insurance: Number of settled claims for 2022	20
IPB Insurance: Total cost of settled claims for 2022	€366,405.56
Total cost of claims settled under excess for 2022	€0
Self-insured: Number of notified claims for 2022	
Self-insured: Number of settled claims for 2022	
Self-insured: Total cost of settled claims for 2022	
A. Overall central management charge as a percentage of total expenditure on revenue account	16.97 %
B. Total payroll costs as a percentage of revenue expenditure	41.51 %
Overall central management charge from the Local Authority FMS and defined in the Annual Budget	€10,422,714
Total payroll costs from Appendix 1 of the AFS for 2022 (including Salaries, Wages and Pensions)	€25,490,849

Appendix 6 – Performance Indicators

Economic Development: J1 to J5

Performance Indicator	Value
A. The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 per 100,000 of population	186.5592
The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	87.0
A. The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2022 per 100,000 of population	32.1654
B. The number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2022 per 100,000 of population	15.0105
The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2022	15
The number of those trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2022	7
A. The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 per 100,000 of population	197.2810
The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	92
A. Does the local authority have a current tourism strategy?	Yes
B. Does the local authority have a designated Tourism Officer?	Yes
The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2022 per head of population	€123.54
The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2022	€5,761,104.49

Appendix 7 – Corporate Plan Progress Report

Strategic Objective: A Thriving County

Tourism	From Abbott to Center Parcs, the employment base in County Longford continues to expand with several of our key employers announcing further expansion plans in 2023. A recently announced investment of over €100m by Centre Parcs in its Longford Forest resort is a real endorsement of its business model and a boost to the whole county, marking Longford as one of Ireland's key internal tourism destinations with up to 4,000 visitors per week.
	The framework for contractors to construct new homes and renovate existing homes was maintained to local contractors.
Housing	The development of energy-efficient homes supports local businesses to diversify and upskill skills.
Library	The Battle of Ballinamuck 225th Commemoration
Regeneration	The Yard – Abbeyshrule opened in April 2023
IT	The Longford Dream Space showcase was a significant highlight for 2023 with 300 students taking part.
Community	Completion of almost €7m to 150 projects over the lifetime of the LEADER, EURI and Transitional Programmes.
Community	Longford Lights was the new festival in Q1 – a great success.
Regeneration	Longford is part of a Failte Ireland / Just Transition Steering
Regeneration	Longford Connected Project valued at €5.2million completed in February 2023
Finance	The annual revenue budget has been completed
HR	In 2023, LCC advertised on average one competition per week and recruited on average one employee per week.
Finance	Rates, Rents and Loans are billed and the Collection Rates at the end of Q3 2023 were on par or higher than the same time in 2022
Environment	Implemented new technologies (voice messaging systems and solar-powered smart bins) which resulted in a significant reduction in littering in known litter black spots and also in a reduction in complaints from local businesses and households.

Appendix 7 – Corporate Plan Progress Report

Roads	A full programme of works was delivered in each of the Municipal Districts to ensure Longford is well connected and accessible for our businesses, communities and visitors
	Two Active Travel Schemes in progress on the approaches to Longford Town
HR	Seven employees graduated through the Open Learning Scheme for the 2022/2023

Strategic Objective: A Safer County

Health and Safety	ISO 45001:2018 accreditation maintained
Health and Safety	Awarded Safety Excellence Award – Public Sector
	The Community Policing Forum continues to work with communities, groups and individuals on policies and strategies designed to make Longford a safe place for all its citizens. This Community Policing Forum demonstrates the value of close working relationships between the key agencies, relationships that are built on trust and relationships that symbolise the coordinated approach to community development in the County.
	Estate management was maintained to support communities.
Housing	Engagement with Approved Housing Bodies to support vulnerable individuals and families.
Environment	Collections of both hazardous waste and large goods to prevent illegal dumping and to promote awareness of upcycling in support of the circular economy.
Roads	A Road Safety Working Together Committee has been established in Co Longford to co-ordinate road Safety Activities
Corporate	Meeting of OPC taking place. Five-year strategy is being prepared for review by the SPC
Fire Service	Maintained service delivery during strike. –

Appendix 7 – Corporate Plan Progress Report

Audit and Compliance	Internal Audit are completing audits in line with the Annual Plan and presenting to the MT and Audit Committee –
Corporate	Corporate developed a best practice guidance on file management and information compliance –
Audit and Compliance	The Operational Risk registers were reviewed by each section –
HR	One health and wellbeing programme every 1.5 weeks –

Strategic Objective: A Greener County

	Longford Local Authority continues to support the Just Transition Programme which seeks to provide alternative economic opportunities for communities impacted by the cessation of peat harvesting and the closure of the ESB power station. It is working with strategic partners such as Failte Ireland and Waterways Ireland on projects that will bring long-term sustainable benefits to the county.
	Appointment of a dedicated Climate Action Team for County Longford.
	Publication of the Draft Climate Action Plan for County Longford County Council
Environment	Promotion of the Community Climate Action Fund.
	Retrofit works were completed on over 60 properties to improve the energy efficiencies of the homes.
	The delivery of new homes incorporated modern technology to reduce energy consumption.
IT	A number of digital apps were introduced in 2023 which significantly improved efficiency and reduced time and paper amounts invested.
	Regeneration Section have collaborated with Bord Na Móna in relation to trails on their lands

Appendix 7 – Corporate Plan Progress Report

	A number of Town and Village greenways completed in 2023 including Aughnacliffe 4.2km trail honoured at Pride of Place Awards
	Some older vehicles removed from fleet and replaced with new vehicles
	Reviewing energy consumption, with facilities
	Longford Transport Plan completed. This plan will set out sustainable transport options in Longford Town.
Roads	Construction of Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works at various locations

Strategic Objective: A County For Everyone

	Longford County Council played a key role in welcoming and managing the successful integration of Ukrainian refugees in 2023. The Community Forum ensures that agency support to this community is fully coordinated and the local authority has now placed 230 of the 925-strong Ukrainian community into suitable accommodations around the County.
Environment	Engaged in consultation with the Elected Members to support and strengthen local democracy, briefed and updated the members on the Draft Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 and the Community Climate Action fund.
Environment	Provision of burial facilities for people of different faiths in the county to support choice for other religions to observe their funeral rights.
	Significant progress was made in providing affordable housing in the county. With expressions of interest sought from eligible families.
Housing	An additional 73 social homes were delivered to support families in need of housing support.
Community	2023–2029 draft LECP on course for adoption in December 2023.

Appendix 7 – Corporate Plan Progress Report

Roads	Policy Enhancement through SPCs. 3 Community Involvement Schemes delivered.
HR	LCC held the annual Employee Appreciation Day on 5 December focusing on mental health and recognising our mental health champions, our 2022/2023 graduates from the open learning scheme and employees with 20, 25 and 30 years of service.
Corporate Services	Support provided to all Elected and Committee members throughout the year
Community	LCC provided €35,000 in funding in 2023 to supplement allocation by DRCD
Community	Grant of €25,000 notified to support Comhairle na nÓg in 2023. Autism awareness workshops are being rolled out to post-primary schools.
Corporate	Participation in the Government check the register stand, Council's inaugural stand at National Ploughing Championships
	Grants of €262,757 allocated to 131 community groups
Library	Five-year Creative Ireland strategy was adopted and published in February 2023. New library strategy now in place – library is the place. Part of the national programming committee.
	New Sports Hub approved in Longford town
Community	Pilot Community Development Programme extended for a further 12-month period – DRCD funding of €125,000 – delivery by LCRL
	SICAP Programme funding increased to €692,889 in 2023 including ongoing assistance to Ukrainian refugees
	The Pride Flag was raised on the Council building in support of Pride month.

Appendix 8 – Statement of Internal Financial Control 2023

Statement	Response from Director of Finance
1. Annual Financial Statement:* I certify that the financial statements of Longford County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.	I confirm that the financial statements of Longford County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.
2. Financial control environment: As CE of Longford County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegation orders are in place for relevant staff which includes monetary approval limits. <p>The delegation orders are consistent with the approved Procurement Procedures Manual and approval limits held within the Agresso FMS.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every job code within the Agresso FMS is allocated to a Budgetholder to which responsibility for financial management of that job has been assigned. This is underpinned by a Budgetholder Manual, training thereon and reporting by the Budgetholder on a quarterly basis on a predefined set of parameters.

* The financial statements are produced to a high level of detail with Budgetholders, and each member of the Management Team involved in their preparation to an appropriate level.

Appendix 8 – Statement of Internal Financial Control 2023

Statement	Response from Director of Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is achieved through reporting by the Budgetholder on a quarterly basis on a predefined set of parameters. <p>This report is copied to the relevant member of the Management Team in addition to the Budgetholder's line manager.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an Audit Committee in place which as part of its work programme regularly reviews the internal financial control system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is incorporated into the Audit Committee's Annual Work Programme which is submitted to the Council for consideration and approval.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures for all key business processes have been documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures are in place for procurement, purchase-to-pay, debt collection, bank reconciliation, and motor taxation processing. <p>In addition, pre-defined task lists are in place for preparation of the annual budget and the annual financial statement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to financial provisions in the annual budget, responsibility is assigned to relevant Budgetholders for the management and maintenance of Council property.
<p>There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fixed asset register is maintained and, where applicable, is reconciled on an ongoing basis with the insurance register. <p>Insurance values are reviewed regularly and the advice of IPB is taken on board.</p>

Appendix 8 – Statement of Internal Financial Control 2023

Statement	Response from Director of Finance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate procedures are in place in relation to cash handling, end of day balancing and lodgements. There is a focus in ensuring that the bank reconciliation is reviewed and up to date daily. • The work of internal audit includes unannounced cash accounts and checking of motor taxation stock.
3. Administrative Controls and Management Reporting: As CE of Longford County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procedures for key business processes have been documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures are in place for procurement, purchase-to-pay, debt collection, bank reconciliation, and motor taxation processing. <p>In addition, pre-defined task lists are in place for preparation of the annual budget and the annual financial statement.</p>

Appendix 8 – Statement of Internal Financial Control 2023

Statement	Response from Director of Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall approach is guided by the Longford County Council Digital & ICT Strategy 2021-2025. <p>Physical access to servers is restricted to approved staff.</p> <p>Policies and procedures are in place governing, inter alia, access rights and data protection.</p> <p>Contracts are in place with specialists in cyber security which includes the operation of a Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM), firewall support and email security.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisions are made in the annual budget for the management, maintenance, and refurbishment of Council property. A fixed asset register is maintained and, where applicable, is reconciled on an ongoing basis with the insurance register. Appropriate procedures are in place in relation to cash handling, end of day balancing and lodgements. There is a focus in ensuring that the bank reconciliation is reviewed and up to date daily. The work of internal audit includes unannounced cash counts and checking of motor taxation stock.

Appendix 8 – Statement of Internal Financial Control 2023

Statement	Response from Director of Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We operate to the principles laid out in the Public Spending Code (PSC). A capital job code setup is subject to an approval process including vouched confirmation that funding is in place. All major project milestones are subject to monitoring by the relevant member of the Management Team. Decisions regarding additional funding requirements are brought before the Management Team for consideration and approval. An annual quality assurance report is published in accordance with the requirements of the PSC. This reports reflects Longford County Council's assessment of compliance with the PSC.
<p>4. Procurement compliance: Longford County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a Procurement Procedures Manual which addresses these requirements. Training on the manual and advice on procurement compliance is provided by the Procurement Unit on an ongoing basis.

Prepared By:		Date: 28 May 2024
	John McKeon, Director of Finance	
Reviewed By:		Date: 28 May 2024
	Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive	

