

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



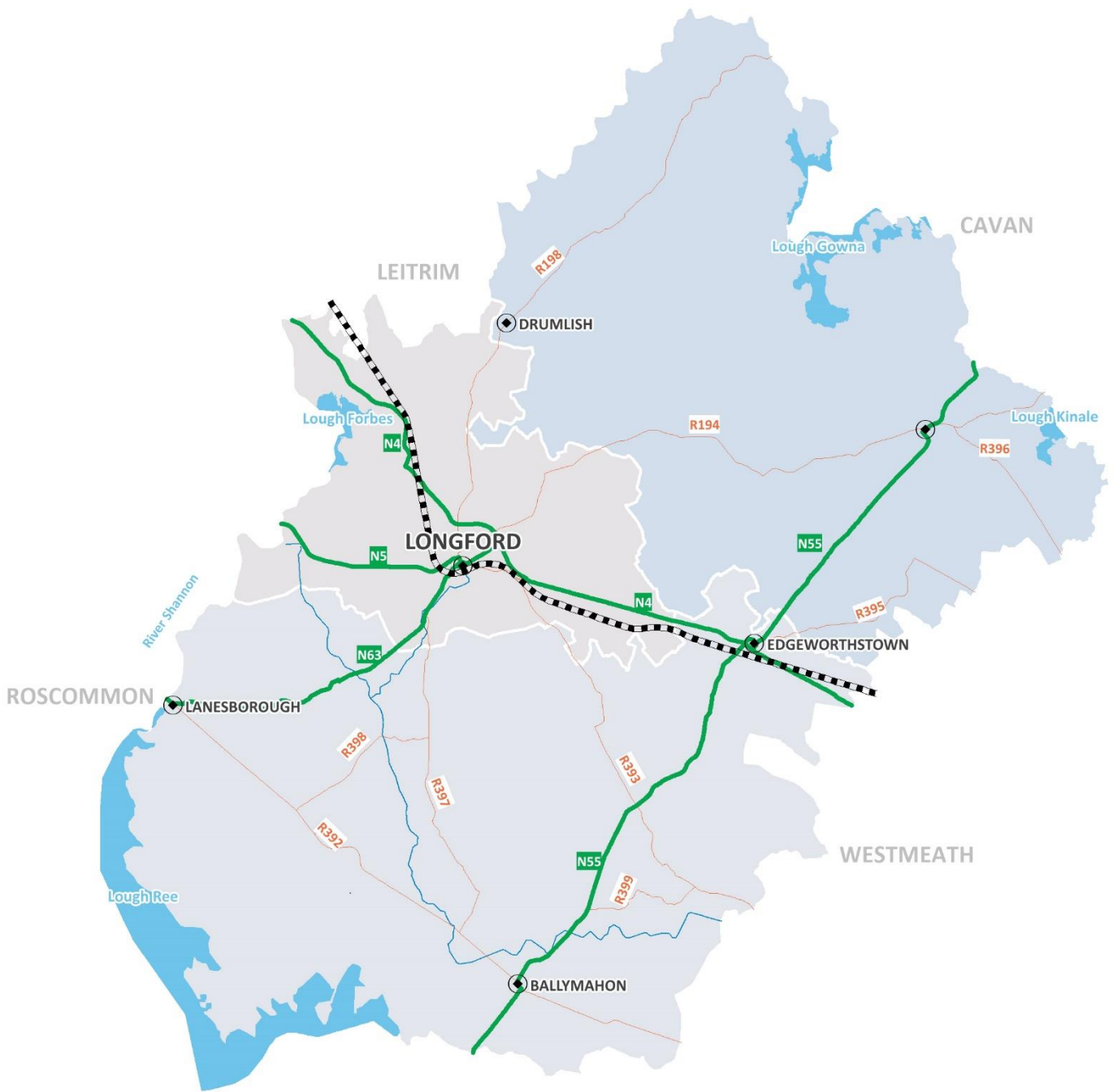


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ELECTED MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

BALLYMAHON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr Mick Cahill
Fianna Fáil



Cllr Mark Casey
Non-Party



Cllr Gerard Farrell
Fine Gael



Cllr Colm Murray
Fine Gael



Cllr Pat O'Toole
Fianna Fáil



Cllr Paul Ross
Fine Gael

GRANARD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr Paraic Brady
Fine Gael



*Cllr Micheál
Carrigy
Fine Gael
(Elected to
Seanad Mar 2020)



Cllr Turlough
McGovern
Non-Party



Cllr Garry Murtagh
Fine Gael



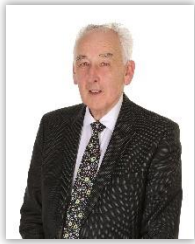
Cllr PJ Reilly
Fianna Fáil



Cllr Colin Dalton
Fine Gael
(Co-opted May
2020)



Granard's Irish Harp



Cllr John Browne
Fine Gael



Cllr Seamus Butler
Fianna Fáil



Cllr Joe Flaherty
Fianna Fáil
(Elected TD
Feb 2020)



Cllr Gerry Hagan
Fine Gael



Cllr Martin
Monaghan
Fianna Fáil



Cllr Peggy Nolan
Fine Gael



Cllr Gerry Warnock
Non-Party



Cllr Uruemu
Adejinmi
Fianna Fáil
(Co-opted Mar
2020)



Royal Canal Greenway Longford Branch

INTRODUCTION FROM AN CATHAOIRLEACH AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE



We welcome the publication of Longford County Council's Annual Report 2020. The Annual Report outlines the scale and diversity of the activities within the Council amidst the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Longford County Council's Corporate Plan, which we adopted in December 2019, expressed the vision that the Council would harness the unique strengths of our communities to make County Longford a safe, vibrant and prosperous place to be.

With the arrival of COVID-19 early in 2020, we at Longford County Council placed the safety, health and wellbeing of our citizens and communities at the heart of our local response to this unprecedented challenge.

This report demonstrates Longford County Council's commitment to serving, representing and leading the communities of our county, illustrating the great leadership of the elected members and staff of the Council throughout the year.

In March, as the first set of government restrictions were introduced, we launched the Community Call for those in Longford who were most in need of support. This was quickly followed by the Keep Well Campaign which targeted the wellbeing of all of Longford's citizens and communities.

Longford Municipal District held the first remote Municipal District meeting in the State in April which was facilitated by the excellent IT resources in place to support the elected members and staff. Very quickly, we became accustomed to meeting and working remotely where possible, as all our services were adapted to reflect the reality of social distancing and the avoidance of unnecessary congregation. Our outdoor staff adapted their work practices too, working safely alongside COVID-19 and carrying out work programmes throughout the county.

In March and May, Councillors Uruemu Adejinmi and Colin Dalton, who were co-opted as replacements for Joe Flaherty TD and Senator Micheál Carrigy, were welcomed to the Council.

In the summer months, as restrictions were eased, we officially opened the Newcastle Woods Greenway, the National Famine Way; we raised the Green flag in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park and we launched the BeeHive Project in Longford Town. Our Enterprise and Finance teams worked closely in supporting our businesses in areas such as the Restart Grant and the Rates Waiver scheme.

Longford County Council ranked fourth nationally in the Local Authorities Satisfaction Survey 2020 carried out by the National Oversight and Audit Commission. Longford County Council's Health and Safety Management System was certified to ISO 45001 and we won awards for Best Local Authority and Sustained High Performance at the NISO awards in October. The Council was also shortlisted in six categories for the Chambers Ireland Awards and was outright winner in the category "Outstanding Initiative through the Municipal Districts."

Cathaoirleach Paul Ross presented two powerful and effective videos. The "Stronger Together - Local Action" theme addressed high levels of COVID-19 in the county in October and a "Shop Longford" campaign was launched in the run up to Christmas.

The achievements outlined in this Annual Report could not have been accomplished without the collective input of the elected members, the Cathaoirleach, the Corporate Policy Committee, Municipal District Committees, members of the Strategic Policy Committees, the Management Team and employees of Longford County Council, together with the many voluntary and community organisations with whom the Council interacts. It is only through their continued commitment that the organisation was able to address the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19 with resilience and confidence. Their support and co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The principal services of Longford County Council are provided within the following directorate structure. The three directorates cover the areas of:

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE



Barbara Heslin, Director of Services with responsibility for

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

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE ACTION



John Brannigan, Director of Services with responsibility for

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

SUPPORT SERVICES



John McKeon, Head of Finance with responsibility for

- Finance
- Information Systems
- Procurement and Compliance
- Regeneration
- Facilities Management
- Ballymahon Municipal District



BALLYMAHON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

Meetings

During 2020, meetings were held on the following dates: 23 January, 14 February, 7 April, 14 May, 18 June, 23 July, 24 September, 29 October and 26 November.

Cathaoirleach

At the Annual General Meeting held on 18 June, Cllr Colm Murray was elected to the position of Cathaoirleach and Cllr Mick Cahill was elected to the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

The following Road Works Programme 2020 was approved by the Members

TII Grant

N55 Ballymahon Traffic Management	€600,000
N55 Ballymahon Street Pavement Strengthening	€865,000
N63 Lanesborough Pavement	€500,000

Restoration Improvement Grant

Ballymahon Regional Road	€275,724
Ballymahon Local Road	€1,256,742

Restoration Maintenance Grant

Ballymahon Regional Road	€77,467
Ballymahon Local Road	€194,625

Supplementary Restoration Maintenance Grant Total County Allocation

Ballymahon Regional Road	€30,291
Ballymahon Local Road	<u>€138,065</u>
	€3,937,914

The Ballymahon Municipal District has responsibility for the maintenance and repair of 70km of regional road, 519km of local road 46km of national road.

Items Adopted

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

- General Municipal Allocation 2021
- Municipal District Works Programme for 2020
- Winter Maintenance programme
- Community Grants 2020
- Funding for Special Projects: €10,000 the Walks Edgeworthstown; €3,000 Commemoration stone at Cloncallow Cemetery
- Part 8 Planning for alterations to rear carpark and entrance at Main Street, Edgeworthstown
- Nominations for Cathaoirleach Awards

Notice of Motions Adopted

- Upgrading to lighting at Newtowncashel Village
- Road widening at Carradoger, Newtowncashel
- Provision of disabled parking bay at the Primary Care Centre, Lower Main Street, Ballymahon
- Improvements to surface drainage at Newtowncashel GAA Pitch
- Widen footpath and erect safety barrier at the Community College Lanesborough
- Widening of R395 road at Aughafin in the interest of safety of children walking to school
- Access to Greenway at Newcastle Bridge to be upgraded to facilitate wheelchair access
- Provision of footpaths from Ardagh Village to GAA pitch
- Improvement works to sightlines around junction at Carrickboy
- Upgrade surface work at new and old cemeteries at Moydow
- Low cost safety scheme at Kilcomick Glebe
- Taking in charge of Dun Áras housing estate in Ballymahon

- Provision of cycleway/walkway along the River Inny from Ballymahon Bridge to Newcastle Bridge
- Provision of electric charging points in Ballymahon
- Provision of signage along the Royal Canal Greenway
- Flashing speed signs on N55 at Ballymahon GAA grounds
- Resurfacing of Shannon Park Estate Edgeworthstown
- Repairs to wall at Abbeyshrule Graveyard
- Footpath restoration at Barry village
- Dangerous bend on R398 road at Clunta School
- Provision of Digital Hub in Lanesborough
- Vehicle activated speed signs for Newtowncashel and Killashee villages
- Repairs to wall at Cloncallow cemetery
- Ducting and cables to be provided in preparation for a CCTV system for Ballymahon
- Increase funding for Christmas lighting in the Ballymahon MD area
- Request Irish Water to extend sewage main on the N63 from the fire station to Barnacor in Lanesborough
- Repairs to footpaths at Casserly's and O'Briens chemist Lanesborough
- Power washing of cobble lock in front of OPD's at Granard Street, Edgeworthstown
- Trees on Main St, Barry to be removed
- Upgrade of playground in Foxhall
- Commence the process of preparing parking bye laws for towns and villages within Ballymahon Municipal District

Other items that were highlighted and discussed by the Members

- The hedge cutting programme
- COVID-19 pandemic relative to Ballymahon MD
- Condition of Goldsmith statue at Pallas, Abbeyshrule
- Audit of road signs within the Municipal District
- Overnight facilities for RUV's and camper vans
- Just Transition funding allocation

Meetings

During 2020, meetings were held on the following dates: 28 January, 13 February, 6 April, 12 May, 23 June, 28 July, 22 September, 27 October and 24 November.

Councillor Colin Dalton was co-opted to Longford County Council in May 2020, following the election of Micheál Carrigy to Seanad Éireann.

Cathaoirleach

At the Annual General Meeting held on 23 June, Councillor Garry Murtagh was elected to the position of Cathaoirleach and Councillor Turlough McGovern was elected to the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

Items Adopted

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

- The Schedule of Granard Municipal District Works 2020
- Speed Limit Review
- 2020 Community Grant Support Scheme
- 2020 Special Projects Fund
- 2021 General Municipal Allocation

Estates Taken in Charge

The following estates were taken in charge during the year:

- Beechwood Park, Granard
- Sráid an Mhuilinn, Drumlish

Other items that were highlighted and discussed by the Members

- 2020 Cathaoirleach Awards
- Ballinamuck/Essett Twinning 2020
- Granard Public Art Features
- Longford Community Call
- Suspension of Commercial Rates during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Tourism Signs
- Overnight facilities for RUVs and camper vans
- Seating at Cairn Hill
- Higginstown Granard
- Granard Motte
- Benches in Ballinalee Sensory Garden
- Pathway in Derrycasson Woods
- County Development Plan
- Féileacáin “Wave of Light” Campaign
- Keep Well Campaign
- Footpaths
- Community Involvements Schemes
- Provision of ‘Build Outs’
- Signage
- Public Lighting Upgrade and Maintenance
- Sightline Improvements works
- Winter Maintenance Plan
- Road Safety Measures
- Low Cost Safety Schemes
- Alignment of the Electoral Areas and Roads Areas
- Bridges
- Public Transport Vehicles – Protective Screens
- Loading Bays
- The Four White Walls
- Low Cost Safety Scheme
- Local Improvement Scheme (LIS)
- Purchase of vacant hotel in Granard for parking
- Active Travel Measure
- Road at Industrial Estate
- Telecom and Electricity Poles
- School Bus Park in Granard
- Drainage of rivers in North Longford
- Inter-county Drainage Scheme
- Improvement Works and repairs at Graveyards
- CCTV – prevention of fly-tipping
- Bottle Banks

Meetings Held

During 2020, meetings were held on the following dates: 22 January, 12 February, 3 April, 22 April, 27 May, 24 June, 22 July, 23 September, 28 October, and 25 November.

Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi was co-opted to Longford County Council in March 2020, following the election of Joe Flaherty to Dáil Eireann.

Cathaoirleach

At the Annual General Meeting of Longford Municipal District held on 24 June 2020, Councillor Peggy Nolan was elected to the position of Cathaoirleach and Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi was elected to the position of Leas Cathaoirleach.

Items Adopted

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

- The Municipal Works budget for 2020
- Municipal District GMA Allocation
- 2020 Cathaoirleach's Award
- Locations for additional CCTV cameras in Longford
- Community Grants Support Scheme
- Free parking in off-street car parks Christmas 2020
- Overnight facilities for RUV's
- Voluntary Contributions and Community Grants
- Part 8 Report amenity trackway through part of the bog in the townlands of Knappogue and Cloonard
- Part 8 reconstruction of existing St Mel's Road Boundary Wall at St Mel's College, Townparks and Deanscurragh

Estates Taken in Charge

The following estate was taken in charge during the year:

- Roads at Mastertech Industrial Estate

Works Completed

Road Strengthening works were carried out in the following locations

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| • Lismoy | • Cahanagh |
| • Minard | • Cloontagh |
| • Clooneen | • Clonrollagh |
| • Kilmacannon | • Connolly Crescent |
| • Feraghfad | • Main Street |
| • Whiterock | • Dublin Road |
| • Clonmacart | • Blindmans Walk |
| • Stonepark | • Cloontagh |
| • Leitrim / Gortenorna | • Ardnacassa Avenue |
| • Ballykenny | |

Road Maintenance Works were carried out at the following locations

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| • Lismore | • Cloonagh |
| • Cartrons | • Leitrim Cross |
| • Lisanurlan | • Ballymacormack |
| • Clonrollagh | • Kilnatraun |
| • Lissardowlan | • Kiltyreher |
| • Drumlish | • Currygranny |
| • Stonepark | • Cloonard |

Low Cost Scheme

- Newtownforbes
- Clontirm
- Clondra

Local Improvement Scheme was carried out at the following location

- Cahanagh

Community Involvement Scheme was carried out at the following location

- Cloonmacart

Active Travel

- Stonepark Footpath
- Mulleadys to Drumlish Footpath

Drainage

- Jetting drains at various locations around the Town
- Lisduff Hill
- Kilmore Upper
- Currygranny
- Melview
- Demesne
- Killoe

Other Works

- Maintenance works at Ballymacormack Cemetery
- Resurfacing of pathways in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park
- Grass Cutting Programme
- Christmas Lighting
- Street Cleaning programme
- Hedge Cutting and Grass verge maintenance programme
- Digital Speed Signs on Ballinalee Rd

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2019-2024 REPORTS

The statutory basis for establishment of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) is set out in Section 48 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by Section 41 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The SPCs

- Assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy;
- Reflect the major functions or services of a local authority;
- Are tailored to the size, membership and administrative resources of the Council; and
- Have one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the work of the Committee.

SPCs have a major role in assisting and advising the Council in relation to functions of a strategic statutory nature. They also have functions in other areas including the establishment of priorities for particular services. The SPC system is intended to give councillors and relevant sectoral interests an opportunity for full involvement in the policy-making process from the early stages, when policy options are more fluid. The SPCs provide elected members with external views as they discharge their strategic role in the development of the local authority, including their policy development and oversight roles within the local authority.

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

Climate Action & Planning SPC

COUNCILLORS

Gerard Hagan
Uruemu Adejinmi
Mark Casey
Garry Murtagh
Peggy Nolan

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Andrew McHugh
Sharon Devlin
Marcella O'Connor
Francesca Pawelczyk
Anna Delaney

The Climate Action and Planning SPC met 3 times during 2020, on 21 January (inaugural meeting), 21 July and 21 October.

The following items were discussed over the course of the three meetings:

- Approval recommended of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy – This Strategy outlines the steps that the organisation needs to take so that it adapts appropriately to the effects of climate change. Patterns of changing weather are starting to become clearer and this gives us an idea of how we need to prepare and make sure we are ready and can keep providing services to the people of Longford in all situations;
- Preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, which had formally commenced on the 26 September 2019;
- Presentation from Irish Energy Storage Association which outlined their objective to seek to exploit upcoming opportunities in the energy storage sector and to explore the possibility of the Lanesborough area being a potential location for such an energy hub;
- A presentation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) most recent Water Quality Report which outlined the situation with regard to the quality of water in our rivers and lakes nationally and the need to seek improvement in this area;
- Approval recommended of proposals with regard to (a) the building of a Columbarium Wall at Ballymacormack Cemetery and (b) pricing for the use of this new facility together with revised pricing for burial plots in council owned cemeteries around the county e.g. the new price for a single grave plot is now €400 which is in line generally with our neighbouring counties;
- Presentation on the Draft County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and the proposed Lough Ree Biosphere Reserve by Donal Mac An Bheatha, Senior Planner.

Placemaking SPC

COUNCILLORS

Colm Murray
Martin Monaghan
Gerard Farrell
PJ Reilly
Paul Ross

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Niamh Donlon
Louise Lovett
Breda Murphy
Matt Farrell
Vincent Fay

Placemaking relates to the interrelationship and connection between people and the spaces they use. It includes how people move around places, the buildings and structures as well as the open space and landscape of an area and place. Placemaking policies aims to improve people's quality of life and create attractive places to live, work, visit and invest.

The SPC focuses on the following key areas:

- Healthy Placemaking - promote people's quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit and study in. It seeks to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of places and to facilitate improvements to human wellbeing and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their environment.
- Economic Opportunity - create the right conditions and opportunities to realise sustained economic growth and employment that ensures good living standards for all.

The Placemaking SPC met 3 times during 2020, on 27 January (inaugural Meeting), 27 July and 19 October.

The following items were discussed over the course of the three meetings:

- Briefing on Service Delivery Areas within the Council
- Business Incentive Scheme and Shop Front Scheme
- Just Transition
- Local Enterprise Office – COVID-19 response and supports for business
- Business Improvement District (BID) – in the core of Longford Town
- Creative Ireland – Longford Programme
- Presentation on Music Generation
- Decade of Centenaries
- Advertising of hospitality businesses in the vicinity of the Royal Canal Greenway
- Presentation by the Chairperson of Longford Older Persons Council – Coping with COVID-19
- Regeneration Programme
 - URDF (Urban Regeneration Development Fund)
 - RRDF (Rural Regeneration Development Fund)
- Community Development
 - LEADER Programme
 - Community Support Grants
 - Community Enhancement Programme

Strategic Infrastructure SPC

COUNCILLORS

Paraic Brady
Colm Murray
Turlough McGovern
Pat O'Toole
Gerry Warnock

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Fiona Fenlon
Maria Keelty
Stephanie Igoe
Damien O'Reilly
Tess Murphy

The Strategic Infrastructure SPC met 3 times during 2020, on 3 February (inaugural meeting), 20 July and 22 October.

The following items were discussed over the course of the three meetings:

- Programme of Works
- Affordable Housing Scheme
- Serviced Site Initiative
- Preparation of draft policy document for consideration by the committee in relation to Speed Ramps
- Winter Maintenance Programme
- Proposed provision of a columbarium wall at Ballymacormack Cemetery
- Arrangements that are in place for the servicing of litter bins throughout the county
- The revised Housing Transfer Application Form to be forwarded to the November Meeting with a recommendation that it be adopted

Governance SPC

COUNCILLORS

Seamus Butler
John Browne
Mick Cahill
Colin Dalton
PJ Reilly

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Fulton Grant
Pamela Martin
Teresa Kearney
Brendan Murtagh
Karie Murray

Governance concerns the systems and processes, manual and digital, by which Local Authorities are directed and controlled. It is concerned with structure and processes for decision making, accountability, control and behaviour within the Local Authority. Governance influences how Longford County Council's objectives are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and addressed and how performance is optimised. It is a core component and measure of success within any successful organisation.

The Governance SPC focuses on the following key areas:

- Corporate Strategic and Operational Planning
- Risk Management
- Performance Management
- Legislative Control and Compliance
- Development of Policies and Procedures

The Governance SPC met three times during 2020, on 29 January (inaugural Meeting), 29 July and 20 October.

The following items were discussed over the course of the three meetings:

- Updated Management Reporting to Longford County Council
- Longford County Council Digital response to COVID-19 crisis
- Budgetary Process within the Local Authority Sector

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PARTICIPATION

Longford Comhairle na nÓg

The Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee held 4 meetings in 2020 while Comhairle members held 36 meetings during the year. Funding of €20,000 was secured from the Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to operate the Comhairle na nÓg in 2020. During the year, Longford Comhairle na nÓg had a representative on the national executive of Dáil na nÓg where the focus of work was on 'individuality in schools'. Comhairle members gave inputs on a number of national consultation forums including the National Youth Justice Strategy, EPA consultation, NYCI workshop on climate change and the National Comhairle na nÓg five-year development strategy.

Comhairle members also ensured the voice of young people was heard on local structures such as the URB security committee, Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board Youth work committee and Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) Youth Forum. During 2020, the three top priority topics were climate change, COVID-19 and mental health issues. In response to the final two issues, the members released a song on social media called 'Stand Tall' and conducted a survey to explore the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions on young people.

The Comhairle AGM was successfully held on Zoom on Friday 13 November with 65 young people present, representing all post primary schools and youth services in the County. The AGM was officially opened by Cathaoirleach Paul Ross who welcomed everyone to the event and Councillor Colm Murray, Chairperson of the Steering Committee, closed the event. Workshops on the day were designed and facilitated by Comhairle members. Further funding of €2,554.99 was secured under the Capital Grant for ICT Hardware Scheme from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to enable young people engage and participate in Longford Comhairle na nÓg, ensuring their voices are heard in matters that affect them.



Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council Cllr Paul Ross presents ICT equipment to Longford Comhairle na nÓg

a programme of work, which included the design of posters and booklets, art work and information workshops for young people, parents, schools and communities.

Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2020- 2022

The Community Department actively participated on Longford Westmeath Children & Young Persons Services Committee (LWCYPSC) and subgroups. In 2020, LWCYPSC achieved the Investing in Children's Award. Longford Comhairle na nÓg are represented on the CYPSC Youth Forum. During 2020, LWCYPSC secured seed funding from the Dept for targeted projects and funding was secured from Healthy Ireland to roll out a number of interagency projects.

Dormant Accounts Funding for LGBTI Groups

The Community Department secured funding of €10,000 from the Department of Rural and Community Development to develop an information and awareness campaign during 2020 in conjunction with LGBTI groups. Granard Youth LGBTI Support Group under the auspices of Lús na Gréine Family Resource Centre and Longford LGBTI Youth Group under County Longford Youth Services successfully developed



Photos of the murals drawn by members of Longford LGBTI Youth Group

Longford Intercultural Strategic Plan

Longford Intercultural Working Group held three meetings during 2020. The primary purpose of the working group is to provide a forum to share information, to promote interagency co-operation and to co-ordinate the delivery of local services. Throughout 2020, the key aim was to provide information and support to migrant groups in accessing essential services. A number of grants for intercultural activities were distributed to engage new communities and to promote integration in local communities. An example of this support was given to the 'Sanctuary Runners' in the form of specially designed running tops bearing the County's unique logo. This initiative focusses on solidarity, friendship and respect between the local community and those asylum seekers living in Direct Provision.



Cathaoirleach of Longford Council Cllr Micheál Carrigy officially handing over the running tops to 'Sanctuary Runners'.

Supporting Women and Diversity in Local Government

In December 2020, the Community Department in conjunction with the PPN and Longford Women's Link, secured funding of €5,000 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to facilitate the delivery of an Information and Capacity Building Programme for women with the ultimate goal of increasing the presence of women and individuals from diverse backgrounds in local government in 2024 and beyond.

CLÁR 2020

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small-scale infrastructural projects in areas that experience disadvantage. CLÁR aims to support sustainable development in identified areas by attracting people to live and work there. In May 2020, the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) invited applications under Measure 1: Support for Schools/Community Safety Measures and Measure 2: Community Recreation Areas.

In November 2020, the Department advised of CLÁR 2020 funding approvals totalling €265,667.70 for County Longford, as follows:

Measure	School Name/Community Facility Name/LDC	Project Description	Amount of CLÁR funding approved
1	Aughnaccliffe Village Colmcille Area Development Group	Construction of access footpath & public lighting	€43,950.00
1	Ardagh NS	Pedestrian crossing, widen footpath, signage	€45,303.30
1	Drumlsh Ballinamuck Community Development Clg	Footpath	€42,480.00
2	The Green - Edgeworthstown District Development Association Clg	Outdoor seating, picnic areas, landscaping, outdoor events space at The Green	€12,542.40
1	Lanesborough Community College	Footpath and railing	€15,118.20
1	Fr McGee Park - Colmcille GAA Club	Car park, footpath, lighting and related works	€46,273.80
1	Carrickedmond GAA	Develop parking facilities	€30,000.00
1	Ballymore GAA	Car park resurfacing	€30,000.00

Longford County Council will fund a maximum of 5% towards the estimated cost of these projects. Work has commenced on these projects and all are expected to be completed in Q2 2021.

Green Flag Award 2020

The Albert Reynolds Peace Park (Longford Mall) retained the Green Flag Award in 2020, an international standard benchmark recognised throughout the world for publicly accessible parks and green spaces and managed in Ireland by An Taisce. The Green Flag Award Scheme was introduced in Ireland in 2015 and rolled out nationally in 2016.

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

A new development was the upgrading of all the foot paths to improve accessibility in the park. This project was rolled out by the regeneration team. There was also additional public lighting introduced.

An extensive tree survey was carried out and a large number of trees were pruned with a view to protecting the park's stock into the future.

Green Gyms and Playgrounds

The outdoor gym equipment was completely replaced in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (Mall) and Longford Sports Partnership have developed an accessibility app for this equipment.

The outdoor green gym equipment in the Fairgeen in Edgeworthstown was replaced and repaired. This was supported by the Healthy Ireland Fund.

The Adventure trail in the Mall was completely refurbished and a zipline was added to the trail. This project was part funded by Dept of Children and Youth affairs.



LONGFORD JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

The Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is a body established under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to serve as a forum where local authority representatives, Oireachtas members and community and voluntary interests work together with senior Garda Officers to discuss and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the County. Councillor Seamus Butler is the Chairperson of the Longford County JPC and Councillor Paul Ross is the Vice-Chairperson.

The Committee held meetings on 4 occasions in 2020 – 2 March, 6 July, 28 September and 7 December. Due to public health restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings in September and December were held online via Microsoft Teams while it was not possible to hold a public meeting.

Garda Activities

At each meeting, the members were updated on Garda activities in the county including roads policing, public safety and community engagement, public order and anti-social issues as well as statistics on crime levels in Longford, including burglaries, thefts, assaults and domestic violence.

The members were also briefed in relation to various Garda operations throughout the year including Operations Fanacht, Thor, Tombola, Stola and Phoenix. They noted that Operation Stola involved a high level of proactive policing engagements to deal with feuding families. The members welcomed Operation Phoenix which is aimed at addressing ongoing anti-social behaviour in the Longford town area and to improve the experience of people while using the centre of the town. The members also welcomed the Garda joint initiative with Longford Women's Link to deal with domestic violence.

At the July 2020 meeting, the members complimented the local Gardai and all who were involved in the successful Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) operation in County Longford earlier in the day.

The members discussed many other issues including race related issues/hate mail, Road Safety, parking at schools, dumping and fly-tipping, consumption of alcohol, the supply and sale of drugs and community policing. The members welcomed the increased pro-active and high visibility involvement of the Gardai in community initiatives and improvements in crime prevention and detection.

At the July 2020 meeting, a vote of sympathy was extended to the family and colleagues of the late Detective Garda Colm Horkan who was murdered in June 2020 in the line of duty.

CCTV

At the September 2020 meeting, Longford County Council's ICT Department gave a comprehensive presentation in relation to existing and additional camera locations for Longford Town CCTV. The JPC approved the planned works for the upgrade of the System and its extension to 11 new locations.

At the December 2020 meeting, the members noted that a consultant's report was being examined in relation to CCTV in Granard and Edgeworthstown.

Joint action Plan – Ardnacassa area

At each meeting the members were updated on progress in relation to the Joint Action Plan for the Ardnacassa/Palace Crescent/Grian Ard areas of Longford town. The members welcomed the ongoing focussed approach and ongoing improvements in the area. The members also welcomed the work on building community capacity, through local community groups.

Local Authority Activities

The Joint Policing Committee was also updated at each meeting on local authority matters including details of various funding schemes that became available during the year as well as updates on various community projects. Progress was noted in relation to other areas including the Council's Regeneration and Tourism programmes, the

Library and Age Friendly Programmes, Longford Sports Partnership, the Resettlement Programme and the Housing programme.

Members were also briefed in relation to the Community Response Forum/ Community Call initiative and supports being provided by Longford County Council and Longford LEO to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, both financial and non-financial.

Property Marking Machine

The members noted that the Property Marking Machine which was launched in 2019 following a recommendation from the Joint Policing Committee continued to be available on loan to local community groups free of charge working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána and Longford County Council.

Longford County Council's Citizen Notification System

Following a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Murtagh calling on Longford County Council to invest in a countywide communication service, the Council's ICT Department gave a comprehensive presentation at the September 2020 meeting on the new County Council Citizen Notification System. The MapAlert system, based on relevant Eircodes, enables Longford County Council to send area related messages to citizens regarding Council related notices and issues for their area e.g. relevant road closures, floods, severe weather, water outages and updates on National Broadband Ireland Fibre rollout.

Monies Confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime Legislation

Following a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Gerry Warnock at the September 2020 meeting of the JPC, it was agreed to write to the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Public Expenditure to make provisions where monies confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime legislation be redirected from central coffers to a local fund where local groups involved in addiction services, youth activities and community initiatives can avail of much needed revenue options to help them in their work to counter the negative impact of criminality on the local stage.

New Member

At the December 2020 meeting, the Chairperson welcomed Ms Amy Faughnan, representative from the Longford Public Participation Network, as a member to replace Ms Emma Kiernan.

Establishment of a Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot

At the December 2020 meeting of the Joint Policing Committee, the Chief Executive briefed the members on the Department of Justice's proposal for the establishment of a Local Community Safety Partnership pilot in Longford which will replace the existing Joint Policing Committee.

LONGFORD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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 to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming.

Meetings

Seven meetings were held in 2020 on the following dates: 11 February, 28 April, 30 July, 13 October, 10 November, 8 December and 17 December.

Membership

There are currently 16 Members on the LCDC following the required statutory resignation of three Public Participation Network (PPN) members, due to the completion of their two-term membership in 2020. It is hoped that these vacant seats will be filled in early 2021.

The following changes to membership also took place during 2020.

- Local Authority Elected Members:
Cllr Colin Dalton replaced Cllr Michael Carrigy in May 2020 following Cllr Carrigy's election to Seanad Éireann
Cllr Colm Murray replaced Cllr Seamus Butler as Chairperson in November
Cllr Seamus Butler replaced Cllr Colm Murray as Vice Chair in November
- Other civic society or local community interests:
The vacant position following the resignation of Mr Seadna Ryan (PPN – Tourism) was filled by Mr Bartle D'Arcy in September
The vacant position following the resignation of Mr Sean Hannon (IFA) was filled by Mr Emmet Duffy in September
- State Agencies:
Ms Grainne O'Donnell replaced Ms Aine Bohan (DEASP) in November

Public - Statutory Interests 9		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Local Authority Elected Members	Cllr Colm Murray (Chairperson)	Longford County Council
	Cllr Seamus Butler (Vice-Chairperson)	Longford County Council
	Cllr Paraic Brady	Longford County Council
	Cllr Colin Dalton	Longford County Council
Local Authority Officials	Paddy Mahon	Longford County Council (<i>Chief Executive</i>)
	Michael Nevin	Longford County Council (<i>Head of Local Enterprise Office</i>)
State Agencies	Valerie Hand	Health Services Executive
	Grainne O'Donnell	Dept Social Protection
	Shauna Doherty	Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board
Private - Non-Statutory Interests 10		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Local & Community Development	Adrian Greene	Longford Community Resources Clg
Social Inclusion	Vacant	(PPN)
	Vacant	(PPN)
Community & Voluntary	Vacant	(PPN)
	Eileen Finan	(PPN) Community & Voluntary
Environmental Interests	Francesca Pawelczyk	(PPN)

Other civic society or local community interests	Niamh Donlon	Business/Employers sector
	Emmett Duffy (IFA)	Farming/Agriculture sector
	Bartle D'Arcy	County Longford Tourism
	Sean Donohoe	Granard Traders Association
Total No. of Members	16 of 19	

Support Staff

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

Programme Oversight and Management Activities

Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014-2020

The LEADER Programme is administered by the Local Action Group (LAG) i.e. Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in partnership with the Financial Partner (Longford County Council) and the Implementing Partner (Longford Community Resources Clg). There were two targeted calls in 2020.

Protection and Improvement of Local Bio-Diversity: This project aims to develop and deliver a comprehensive community-based training programme on the subject of the protection and improvement of local biodiversity in County Longford. One expression of interest (EOI) was received under this call and this was deemed eligible.

Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources: This project aims to develop and deliver a comprehensive community-based training programme on the subject of the protection and sustainable use of water resources in County Longford. The closing date for the targeted calls was 20 March 2020. Two EOI's were received for this project and one was deemed eligible.

These projects progressed to application stage and were approved by the LCDC at their meeting in October 2020 following recommendation by the LEADER Evaluation Committee.

Rolling Call EOI's received (Number of eligible and number of ineligible)

During 2020, 57 EOIs were received by Longford LAG - two of these EOIs were deemed ineligible, and eight withdrew from the process – some finding other sources of funding or not being able to raise the required private match funding. Some of the remaining EOIs progressed to Application Stage prior to year-end.

Project Funding

During 2020, 47 projects were approved at a total value of €2,915,124.41

Following payment by the Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD) Longford County Council processed 32 LEADER grant payments to promoters totalling €1,013,887.30 in 2020.

Co-operation Projects

There was one Co-operation Project approved by the LCDC in 2020.

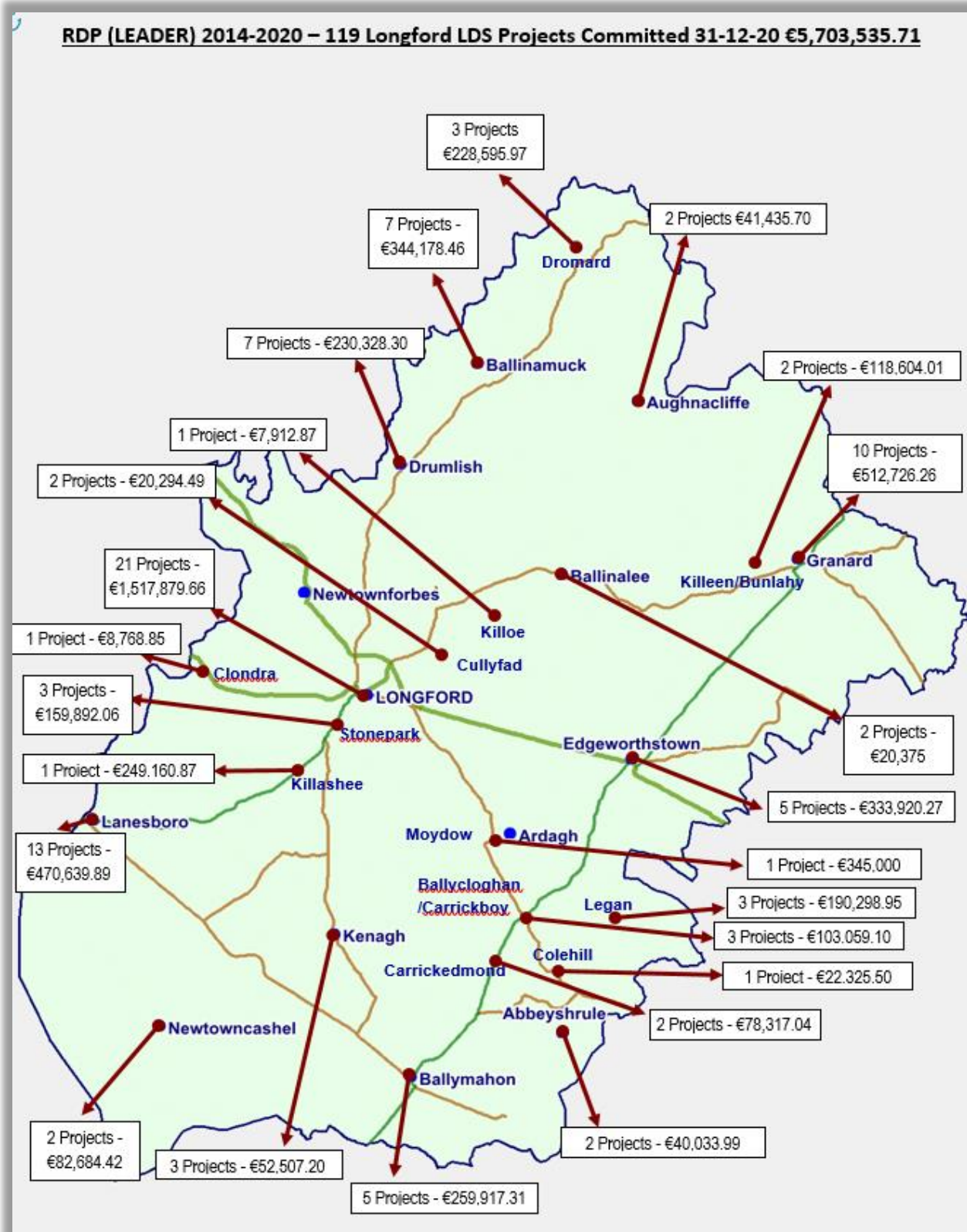
Rapid Electric Vehicle Chargers in Leitrim and Longford Preparatory Project

This is a joint project between Leitrim LCDC and Longford LCDC with Leitrim LCDC as the lead applicant. This project is being developed through the RDP LEADER Cooperation budget to determine the feasibility and to potentially install Electric Vehicle Rapid Chargers in each municipal district across the two counties. To begin this process, it is proposed to appoint a qualified consultant to prepare a technical plan. The purpose of this will be to determine suitable equipment, grid access, planning issues, procurement process etc. If feasible this exercise will allow for a further application to be made for Capital Support to the RDP LEADER Cooperation budget to install the chargers.

LEADER 2014-2020 - end of Programme Summary

At the end of 2020 Longford has fully committed its LEADER budget. A total of 127 projects with grant value of €5,895,525.76 were processed and approved from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020. This included two Co-operation Projects with grants amounting to €14,436.77. Six projects were subsequently withdrawn post approval and a number of projects completed prior to the December 2020 LCDC meeting incurred an underspend, resulting in de-commitments of €177,553.28. The final commitment under the LEADER Programme includes 119 projects to the value of €5,703,535.71 and two Co-operation Projects to the value of €14,436.77.

(Number of Projects per area in County Longford detailed in Map below)



Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) provides funding to tackle poverty and social inclusion at local level through engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The LCDC awarded Longford Community Resources Clg the contract to implement the programme in County Longford. Their task as Programme Implementer (PI) is to use the programme funding to target the most disadvantaged using a community development approach to strengthen communities and improve people's lives. The Department of Rural and Community Development channels funding to the LCDC as the contracting authority through the Local Authority. The programme budget for 2020 was €526,906 which was paid to the PI. The budget is divided into administration costs and action costs. Pobal acts as an agent of the Department with respect to the national management and oversight of the programme. Their main functions include monitoring programme data and preparing progress reports for the Department. Pobal carry out technical checks as part of performance reviews and the annual planning process. The LCDC established a SICAP Monitoring Subcommittee to monitor the implementation of the programme and to make recommendations on the Annual Planning and Performance Reviews. The Subcommittee held four meetings during 2020.

Community Enhancement Programme 2020

The Community Enhancement Programme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each local authority area. The CEP provides funding to communities to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas, as identified in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). Two rounds of funding were announced during 2020.

The programme can fund or partially fund larger scale capital projects to address disadvantage. Some funding is ring-fenced to provide small capital grants of €1,000 or less. This is aimed at assisting small grassroots community projects to get off the ground.

Typical enhancements under the CEP include the renovation of community centres and community amenities, improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces, and the purchase of equipment for community usage. The programme has also supported energy efficiency upgrades, development of community gardens, provision of defibrillators, CCTV and sports and IT equipment. Some capital grants could be used towards the maintenance, improvement and upkeep of community centres and community buildings and adaptations or equipment needed as a result of COVID-19 could also be included. Similar expenditure on other community facilities was also considered. Longford LCDC awarded €55,317 to 51 community group projects under an initial CEP 2020 allocation and a further 52 community projects were approved for funding totalling €109,088 under the second CEP 2020 allocation for community centres/buildings.

Longford Community Response to COVID-19

On Friday 27 March 2020, the Government announced a number of additional restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a requirement that everyone over the age of 70 years and the medically vulnerable should stay at home at all times. All local authorities were requested to immediately operationalise the Framework for Local Authority Community Support and put helplines and support structures in place over the weekend to meet the needs of those cocooning.

Longford Community Response Forum

The Longford Community Response Forum was set up to put appropriate arrangements in place across the county to ensure that the necessary supports were available to those impacted by the cocooning requirements. The first meeting of the forum was scheduled for Monday 30 March 2020 by teleconference.

The purpose of the forum was to lead the co-ordination of COVID-19 community supports and resilience, to help ensure that all vulnerable members of our communities affected by the new arrangements were appropriately supported. This included:

- Enabling all voluntary and statutory agencies to collaborate to ensure that there was a co-ordinated community response
- Working with the HSE, An Post, local community groups and the local Community Welfare Office service to identify vulnerable groups and individuals in each local authority area

- Ensuring delivery of targeted social care supports and assistance to those vulnerable groups and individuals
- Identifying issues arising through Older Persons Council, PPNs, community groups and helpline calls
- Providing assistance to vulnerable individuals in isolation
- Ensuring the resilience of existing community services
- Harnessing offers of assistance
- Collection and mapping of information on services and voluntary groups across the country to help direct requests for assistance and identify gaps in service

The forum was chaired and co-ordinated by the Chief Executive and the membership included:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council • the Cathaoirleach of each Municipal District • the HSE • An Post • Community Welfare Service • An Garda Síochána • Civil Defence • GAA • Public Participation Network • Longford Community Resources Clg • Longford Volunteer Centre • Age Friendly Network • Tusla 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longford Women’s link • Local Link • IFA • Alone • Migrant Forum • Citizen’s Information • Longford Sports Partnership • Community Champion • Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, Ballymahon • Lus Na Greine Family Resource Centre, Granard • Age Friendly Alliance • Longford Library Service
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The Longford Community Response Forum met at regular intervals throughout 2020 and worked together to ensure that vulnerable people benefitted from a coordinated community response to the crisis. The forum relied heavily on voluntary and community groups to arrange supports to vulnerable individuals. The forum also worked together to support the various campaigns introduced by the Government during the year including the “In This Together” and “Keep Well” campaigns.

Longford Community Call

Longford Community Call, a dedicated confidential community support helpline, was established by the COVID-19 Longford Community Response Forum at the start of COVID-19 to help coordinate community activity and provide direct assistance when needed. Longford Community Call provided an immediate and direct help to the elderly, those living alone and the most vulnerable members of our community, making sure all have access to groceries, medicine and fuel. As well as providing non-emergency and non-medical support, the forum also provided advice and support to at-risk members of the community. Reflecting the strength of volunteerism and community spirit in Longford, the helpline received numerous offers of help and support from individuals, groups and organisations.

COVID-19 Emergency Fund 2020

In April 2020, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced a €2.5m COVID-19 Emergency Fund to support community and voluntary groups involved in the delivery of COVID-19 community response efforts, with funding of €58,154 to be allocated by Longford County Council.

In December 2020, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced a second round of funding which was to be administered by Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). This second round had funding of €1.7m nationally with €42,964 of this allocated to Longford LCDC. The Department recommended that LCDCs ring-fence 30 per cent of funding to provide small grants of €1,000 or less.

Applications were invited from not-for-profit community/voluntary groups for funding with a closing date of 25 January 2021. Eligible projects include assisting community groups:

- a) to adapt their services and operations to fit the new COVID-19 reality. Examples of measures supported could be adapting premises to allow for social distancing; offering on-line activities; providing social supports and friendly calls by phone etc
- b) to become more involved in the Government's 'Keep Well' campaign. The grants are aimed at assisting participation in the campaign, in particular with the three themes: staying connected, switching off and being creative, and minding your mood

The grants may also be provided to support groups (including those involved in the community call) with day to day running costs if needed.

An evaluation committee will make recommendations for the consideration of Longford LCDC in February 2021, and successful applicants will then be advised.

Healthy Ireland

Healthy Ireland is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society. It has come about because of concerns that the current health status of people living in Ireland – including lifestyle trends and health inequalities – is leading us towards a future that is dangerously unhealthy, and very likely unaffordable.



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

Round 3 of the Healthy Ireland Fund has been allocated and runs from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021 with a total allocation of €246,050. Due to the effects of COVID-19 this programme has been extended to 31 December 2021. This allocation is set out as follows:

Action 1 Mental Health	Teen Support Service LWL €32,000 (2 years)	Establish an affordable subsidised dedicated Counselling Service for local teenagers. The service will be undertaken by a qualified Teen Counsellor in a dedicated Counselling Unit.
Action 2 Mental Health	Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme EDI €12,000 (1 year)	Employment Development Information Centre will deliver a broad reaching programme of Health and Wellbeing including healthy eating, physical activity, mindfulness, safe talk and drugs and alcohol talk.
Action 3 Spaces and Places for health and wellbeing	Holistic Wellbeing programme for Young People Foroige/Attic House €30,000 (2 years)	Foroige and Attic House will deliver multiple health wellbeing programme for young people including those from disadvantaged areas. Programmes will include mental health and wellbeing, obesity, smoking, alcohol, physical activity and sexual health.
Action 4 Mental Health	Health and Wellbeing Targeting Area of Disadvantage LCRL €8,000 (2 years)	Longford Community Resources will deliver a programme of health and wellbeing courses. Target women living in MacEoin and surrounding estates in Longford Town; Target young unemployed ages 18-25. Courses will include personal development, healthy eating and fitness.
Action 5 Physical Activity	Longford County Council Health and Wellbeing Initiatives €18,000 (2 years)	Sports Inclusion Programme including: Walking Leader Training including disability awareness training for volunteers and coaches; Opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to take part in cycling by developing

	<p>€9,000 (1 year)</p> <p>€35,000 (2 years)</p> <p>€10,000 (1 year)</p>	<p>skills through Balanceability Programme over 6 weeks; Equestrian Programme for children with disabilities and adults.</p> <p>Community Connect Programme Sportshall Athletics Programme over 8-week period 600 children receiving training from Athletics Ireland Tutor involving 12 schools 8-week holistic health programme for unemployed and isolated men through Men's Sheds in Longford. Older Adults - Physical Activity Leaders (PALS) 2/3 people from active retirement or community groups</p> <p>Accessible Public Amenity Areas Review of public amenities and the purchasing of outdoor gym equipment with disability friendly equipment included.</p> <p>Development of Walking and Cycling IT Platform Development of an APP/IT Platform for information on walking, cycling routes in Longford.</p>
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Community Engagement Action	<p>Involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Merchandising, - Community Radio, - LSP Community Connect programme, - Bridgeways FRC, - Longford Athletics. <p>€30,000 (2 years)</p>	<p>Activities planned in Year 1 to promote community engagement in Healthy City/County Initiatives, to include:</p> <p>Development of Healthy County/City Merchandise for distribution as per the guidelines; Creation of a page on the local authority Website.</p>
CMHF	<p>CMHF Small Grant Scheme</p> <p>€30,000 (2 years)</p>	<p>Delivery of a CMHF Community Small Grant Scheme to the value of €30,000. Outputs to be agreed between the local authority and grantee for each small grant awarded. Pobal requests that agreed outputs are provided at the first progress report and reported on at the end of programme monitoring return.</p>
CMHF Action	<p>Community Mental Initiative (in conjunction with formal mental health and suicide mental health services)</p> <p>€32,050 (2 years)</p>	<p>Development of a co-ordinated Mental Health Initiative for Longford; Setting up of a Working Group; Compile Information and data to ascertain gaps in areas and target groups; Formulate a programme of mental health initiatives and identify co-ordinators for various initiatives; Delivery of mental health activities.</p>

Community Resilience Fund

The Department of Health, through the support of Sláintecare approved an allocation of €67,225 to Longford County Council for the delivery of specific actions under the Community Resilience Fund (CRF) and in line with the themes of

the Government’s National “Keep Well” campaign. These actions are to take place between December 2020 and March 2021.

The actions to be developed were based on the allocation method set out in the table below:

Theme	Minimum Allocation	Maximum Allocation
Your County	28%	38%
Switching off/Being Creative	35%	45%
Staying connected (Community Call)	20%	30%

Longford County Council has developed a programme of actions to be rolled out as follows:

Theme 1: Your County

Description of Action (s)	Lead Organisation	Partner (s)	Target Group	Budget Allocation
Information Pack for Older People	Longford County Council	Longford library and Longford Age Friendly Alliance	Isolated and vulnerable older people	€3,000
Good Spirit Hamper	Longford Sports Partnership	Longford Older Persons Council, Public Participation Network, Longford Community Resources clg	Residents of Nursing Homes, People with disabilities, Longford Direct Provision Centres	€10,000
Training programme on health and wellbeing programmes for Community TV.	Longford County Council, Longford Libraries.	Longford Westmeath ETB and Outtake Media	Public Participation Network and Community Call Partners	€4,900
Longford Keep Well Health and Fitness Challenge 2021	Longford Sports Partnership	Sports Clubs.	Local Community	€4,000
Longford Transition Year Skills Challenge	Longford Sports Partnership	Longford Sports Partnership / Schools	Transition Year Students	€2,000

Theme 2: Switching Off and Being Creative

Description of Action (s)	Lead Organisation	Partner (s)	Target Group	Budget Allocation
Christmas Arts and Crafts	Longford Library	Longford Primary Schools	Longford Direct Provision Centre and Nursing homes	€2,500
Art for All including arts, photography	Longford Library, Longford County Council	Longford Older Persons Council	Active Age groups and Family Resource Centres	€3,000

Longford Community TV studio, School Around the Corner	Longford Library, Longford County Council	Longford Libraries, Creative Ireland Longford and local primary schools	Longford PPN, Community Groups, Older Persons and Nursing homes	€9,000
Creative Cooking	Longford Library	Cloughan Farm Cookery School	The Community	€2,000
A series of Minding Yourself Videos.	Longford Library	Longford County Council	The community	€3,000
Switching Off with Music	Longford Library	Longford Older Persons Council, St Christopher's Residential Services.	Older People, Nursing homes people with disabilities	€4,000

Theme 3: Staying Connected (Community Call)

Description of Action (s)	Lead Organisation	Partner (s)	Target Group	Budget Allocation
Local Radio weekly programme of information, song and stories by and about older people.	Longford County Council and Longford Library	Shannonside	Older People / General population	€7,000
Friendly Call Phone Service	Longford Community Resources clg	Longford Older Persons Network	Isolated, vulnerable and older People	€1,000
Longford Womens Link Domestic Violence Service	Longford Womens Link	Longford Gardai	Older people	€1,800
Call for Christmas	Longford County Council, Public Participation Network.	Public Participation Network	Older People	€5,000
Minding Yourself and Building resilience	Longford County Council, Longford Library.	Public Participation	Local Community	€1,000
Age Friendly Communications Directory	Longford County Council	Longford Older Persons Council	Older Persons	€4,000

Property Marking Scheme

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

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

Garda Síochána and Longford County Council. The Property Marking Scheme was launched on Wednesday, 15 May 2019 in the Longford County Council Offices.

The scheme involves marking property with the owner's Eircode number, which is a unique identifier and there will be an option of displaying a sticker or sign on the premises to show that property marking is in operation.

The Property Marking Machine is available on loan to local community groups free of charge working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.

Longford County Council has rolled out a number of training days for members of An Garda Síochána and text alert groups and further training will be arranged. An Garda Síochána has also arranged a number of events around the Property Marking Schemes to encourage and provide information on the Scheme.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

County Longford PPN registered 79 new member groups during 2020 bringing the total network membership to 457. Although 2020 was filled with challenges and having to adapt to a new way of working, Longford PPN successfully delivered all workplan items agreed by the PPN Secretariat and adopted by the full membership. Highlights of this work are outlined below.

Quarter 1:

- Held three successful and well attended Municipal District Plenary Meetings in Longford, Granard and Ballymahon
- Facilitated Committee Rep elections for PPN Secretariat
- Facilitated PPN Disability Network meeting and consultation with RPS consultants
- Facilitated the work of the PPN Intercultural Forum
- Organised and funded training for all PPN Reps elected to the four Strategic Policy Committee's (SPC's) through Social Justice Ireland
- Organised and funded two Sustainable Development Goal Workshops
- Designed new PPN website
- Participated on LCC Intercultural Agency Forum, Age Friendly Alliance and attended regional and National meetings
- Held monthly Secretariat Meetings and Financial sub-group meetings
- Commenced the process of mobilising the community in response to COVID-19



Community Food Appeal 2020

Quarter 2:

- Supported the development of the Community Map for Longford Call Centre
- Represented the wider PPN membership in the Community Response Forum
- Disseminated all relevant information by email to community groups and PPN social media outlets
- Supported Local Response Groups to set up in response to COVID-19 and worked with BHP Insurance so they could avail of free insurance
- Maintained the PPN Disability Network so people with disabilities experiencing isolation and fear could stay linked to each other and the PPN. This included circulating information directly relating to particular types of disabilities, check-ins by phone and visit, doctor follow up calls etc
- Maintained the PPN Intercultural Forum so members of all communities received translated information on COVID-19 and members from different communities could keep in touch by phone and social media
- Worked with Irish Red Cross Co-ordinator to bring Nestle food packages to Longford. Organised the drop off and deliveries with Longford Civil Defence and Lus na Gréine Family Resource Centre, Granard

- Worked with the Longford Community Champion to develop and roll out the HEAR FOR YOU initiative. Flyers delivered to every house in County Longford by An Post. Organised a leaflet to be inserted in every Longford Leader newspaper. Initiative connected people with similar interests, made referrals to doctors, counsellors, Longford Women’s Link Domestic Violence Unit etc
- Rolled out the second phase of HEAR FOR YOU initiative which was Longford Community Food Appeal. Food donations were made by individuals and community groups. Food packages were delivered by Longford Civil Defence
- PPN Meetings moved online through Zoom meeting and MS Teams
- PPN membership re-registration continued
- Funding information circulated to all members. Groups supported through the application process
- MoU updated with PPN Secretariat and Longford County Council PPN Liaison Officer
- Income and Expenditure Report 2019 and Annual Report submitted to Dept Rural and Community Development

Quarter 3:

- Continued to roll out the HEAR FOR YOU campaign
- Presented at the National Environmental Protection Agency virtual call on Wellbeing Vision Statements
- Co-hosted “Make Way Day” virtual call with Longford County Council
- Facilitated the election of two PPN reps from the Youth and New Communities sector to sit on LCC Regeneration ULG
- Continued to pick up/drop off prescriptions/food to the most vulnerable in the community
- Supported groups with funding applications
- Continued to disseminate COVID-19 Health information to all members and supported the most vulnerable to get through lockdowns

Quarter 4:

- Continued to be an active member of the Community Response Forum
- Continued to support the PPN Disability Network and Intercultural Forum
- Organised “A Call For Christmas” initiative as part of the “Keep Well” Campaign under the theme “Stay Connected” in association with all the ICA guilds in the county to help combat isolation over the holidays particularly for those living on their own
- Held a well-attended successful online County Plenary Meeting
- Reviewed workplan and financial reporting
- Continued to provide support to the most vulnerable over the Christmas holidays

Longford PPN in partnership with LCC and other relevant agencies delivered a number of supports and services during 2020. We promoted and supported a strong sense of community amongst our members. The network achieved so much and volunteers went above and beyond to help each other throughout the pandemic. Our motto is “We’re in this together”.



Make Way Day Campaign 2020

LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

In 2020, Longford Sports Partnership (LSP) supported 132 initiatives, 300 programmes under those initiatives, and the 19,728 people who participated in a wide range of sports and physical activities in Longford. The year 2020 has been challenging given the COVID-19 pandemic which in turn had a knock-on effect on the sport and leisure sector. Guidelines issued by the Government early in the year called the 'Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business' and again in September the 'Resilience and Recovery 2020 – 2021: Plan for living with COVID-19' offered a framework for managing COVID-19. This gave the LSP guidance on what programmes could be delivered and saw the team upskilling in the area of online technology to ensure the LSP could deliver programmes in a safe manner especially during the Level 5 lockdown.

The Longford Sports Partnership has four strategic pillars:

1. Creating opportunities
2. Strengthening resources
3. Increasing awareness
4. The structures of sport



Creating opportunities Delivery of LSP Programmes

The year 2020 kicked off with Operation Transformation walks in Longford Town, Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon and at Legan Sarsfield GAA club with 433 people from around the county taking part. Local GAA clubs supported the Ireland Lights in conjunction with Get Ireland Walking and Longford LSP. GAA clubs turned on their floodlights and hosted community walking groups during the broadcast period of the hit RTÉ show.

Unfortunately, in March, the escalation of the COVID-19 situation saw many programmes being postponed or cancelled. Longford LSP had to embrace and adapt to new ways of delivering programmes mainly through online technology. Morning Movers was the first online virtual programme delivered by the LSP Community Sports Development Officer (CSDO), Donal Mulligan, through ZOOM.

Donal developed and delivered many virtual walks throughout the year namely the Longford LSP 2km Family virtual challenge and the LSP Strava virtual 5km challenge. The Walk Your Parish 4 For 4 Community Challenge in partnership with Longford GAA was the largest registered event of the year. This was funded under the Keep Well Campaign with 979 Longford people from the different parishes involved and recorded an incredible 67,916 Km walked!



Youth Programmes

Under the Healthy Ireland fund the LSP delivered the Balance Ability programme to five preschool and childcare services with 255 young children using unique ergonomic balance bikes. We provided the playground markings kit to five national schools benefiting over 597 children.



Overall, 8,030 primary school children were supported in programmes delivered by the LSP, the three Sports Officers and Community Sports Hub Co-Ordinator. A total of 680 primary school youths participated in the Longford Sports Hall Athletics Programme. St Joseph's Primary School was the first school from Longford to take part in the National Diversity Games in Athlone Indoor Athletics Arena and they came away with 16 medals!

Longford LSP continues to deliver the popular Parkour programmes to schools and weekly session in The Attic House, Longford – 1,695 young people have participated in this programme in 2020.



Over 100 secondary school girls participated in the 20x20 campaign which took place on International Women's Day in the Sports Hub Edgeworthstown. The day was full of activity including yoga, dance, pella and functional fitness with all female tutors, teachers and leaders. During the European Week of Sport 210 students took part in the Transition Year Canal Cycle.

Together with LCRL - County Longford Youth Service, the LSP delivered a Horse Riding and Welfare Programme for young children from low income backgrounds to learn about horses, further careers and importance of horse responsibility in this four-week programme. This initiative was supported by the Department of Agriculture and Longford County Council.



The LSP CSDO Donal Mulligan and Sports Hub Co-ordinator Laura Doyle delivered programmes to 176 older adults namely in the Activator Poles, Chair Pilates, Men's Shed Health programmes. The annual Go for Life Regional and National Blitz was postponed, however the LSP continued to support older adults with exercise leaflet support and online exercise classes.

European Week of Sport

The European Week of Sport was one of the major highlights of the year for Longford Sports Partnership. The LSP ran a mixture of online and offline events for European Week of Sport 2020 from 23 to 30 September to cater to the needs of every member of the community making it easy to #BeActive from home and within the local community.



Over 1,165 children and adults participated in events which took place in various indoors and outdoors amenities in Longford permitted within the COVID-19 restrictions at the time. Sport Ireland was the National Co-ordinating Body for European Week of Sport in Ireland. This was a European Commission-led initiative which aimed to increase the level of participation in sport and physical activity in the EU. The focus was on Park Active, encouraging people to use the beautiful parks, walking trails and waterways that Longford has to offer. The Longford events supported the National Fitness Day, National Walking Day and Paddle Day all part of European Week of Sport (EWOS). There were fitness programmes, lunchtime workout classes, Sunrise Yoga and online inclusive programmes for people with disabilities. The National Walking events included a guided walk in Edgeworthstown, Derrycassin and Newcastle Woods. In The Mall we held the Family Mile, introduction to the Outdoor Gym program and Walking with Nordic Poles over the week to catering for all age groups and abilities.



Some 340 people took part in activities as part of national BikeWeek. Activities during the week included: the Canal Family Cycle, Clonguish GAA Social Cycle, Coral Leisure Lunch Spin, Cycle to Work promotion, Longford Triathlon Club Social Cycle, Transition Year Royal Canal Green Way Schools Cycle and Women on Wheels programme.



There were plenty of waterway activities around the county namely the Kids Learning to Kayak, Lads on the Lake, Women on the Water, Blueway 10km challenge (Tarmonbarry to Lanesboro).

The Sports Hub Edgeworthstown had a total of 530 children and adults participate in the various EWOS programmes offered over the week. These included the Come and Try sessions in badminton, chair Pilates, inclusive obstacle course, tennis, table tennis, pickleball, inclusive and online fitness class, volleyball along with the National Walking Day. According to Sports Hub Co-Ordinator Laura Doyle "It was a fantastic week that offered both indoor and outdoor programmes free of charge. It gave people the opportunity to come and try out a new sport or a new class".

Sports Inclusion Disability Programme

This year as part of the SIDP, Longford implemented 22 initiatives, in which 313 people with disabilities participated in regular and online training programmes including boccia, inclusive gym fitness programmes and inclusive Pilates. These programmes were supported by the HSE and Healthy Ireland. In addition, 91 coaches, leaders and/or volunteers completed the Cycle Right Disability Module and CARA'S (Autism in Sport, Disability Inclusion Training and Adventure Outdoor Training) in 2020.



The highlight of the year was the Launch of the L.I.F.T (Longford Inclusive Fitness Trail) programme and the development of inclusive communication QR Codes for the members of CHIME (National Charity for Deafness and Hearing Loss) group. Longford LSP created QR Codes which linked to an inclusive instructional video of the Longford LSP Tutor demonstrating how to use this equipment along with a video of the CHIME Irish sign language interpreter relaying the message. These codes were placed on all outdoor gym equipment in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (The Mall). Participants were shown how to use each piece of equipment, how to access the code, and were given a detailed booklet and map of the park to

access. This programme was supported by the Healthy Ireland and the HSE with the support of equipment supplier OUTFIT.ie and CARA.

Rugby Community Coaching

Dylan Quinn is the Club Community Rugby Officer (CRO) with Leinster Rugby, this post is supported by Longford County Council. In 2020 Dylan ran 20 initiatives in Longford with 3,582 people taking part. Over 2,791 primary and secondary school children benefited from the mini and rugby schools coaching.



One of the highlights of the year was the Granard Convent TY programme where the CRO delivered six weeks of training to both boys and girls by playing games with proper rules where no contact, rucks, lineouts or lockdown were allowed. Leinster Rugby ran summer camps with limited numbers attending within a regulated and safe environment.

The CRO has delivered many social media videos for Longford RFC and the Local Sports Partnership featuring tips and drills that can be done at home. There has been numerous Zoom meetings, seminars, workshops and preparation work conducted during lockdown to keep the rugby members busy. Behind the scenes, preparation and planning work was ongoing for the return to sports in order to support players and teams to be back on the field as soon as it was safe to do so.



Football in the Community

Graham Kane, FAI Development Officer who is supported by Longford County Council, ran 19 participation initiatives for children, disadvantaged communities, older men and people with disabilities. Graham also worked with clubs around club development workshops for them to have better and longer-term structures in their clubs.

The FAI Development Officer delivered a FAI Late Night League to

target social inclusion in the area of Ballymahon which was very successful. As part of the FAI's online engagement through schools, the FAI Officer delivered the intercultural programme called Show Racism the Red Card to raise awareness around racism.

FAI Soccer Sisters Camp online was delivered in conjunction with AVIVA. All clubs in Longford were able to promote this camp to their underage female players. A big emphasis with the FAI / LSP this year has been on our FAI Club Mark programme. This enables clubs to have better structures and strengthen their profile within the community. If we have strong clubs within our communities, it strengthens our community programmes as the clubs bring sustainability to the programmes we deliver within their communities.



The highlights of 2020 include training completed with Longford volunteers and coaches which saw eight Safeguarding courses, PDP1 Course and Club Development workshops around return to train and play protocols [COVID-19].

GAA Community Partnership



Ciarán Mac Eochaidh is a Games Promotion Officer with Leinster GAA. This post is supported by Longford County Council. In 2020, Ciarán delivered 46 programmes from 26 initiatives with 5,798 participants benefiting. The main goal is the development of the local club, Longford Slashers and to increase its player and coach recruitment. He also delivers initiatives throughout the county. Training and workshops were also provided to coaches, parents and participants in the areas of safeguarding, Gaelic Games coaching, developing a player pathway, nutrition and strength and conditioning.

Ciarán's 2020 highlight initiative was the completion of a Youth Leadership Program. This initiative saw nine youth members of the Longford Slashers club aged 16-18 take on a youth coaching program to help at the club that has given them so much.

These nine youth coaches undertook trainings in Child Safeguarding, Foundation Coaching, Child Movement and Nutrition. These individual training initiatives allowed these coaches to work with a children's team alongside already established coaches at various age grades including Under 6, Under 8 and Under 10.

In addition to all the training courses, they were given coaching experience, refereeing experience and individual development experience in what was probably the most challenging year of their lifetime. Following its success, the Youth Leadership Program will now be run annually in the area and will be a huge asset to clubs and will provide great experience for young people who want to work with children.



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

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

Strengthening Resources

To maximise existing infrastructure 2020, 39 programmes were implemented in the beautiful natural outdoor waterways and trails that Longford has to offer with 2,218 people benefiting from these. This included the Kids Learning to Kayak, Lads on the Lake, Women on the Water, Blueway 10km challenge, Day Time Walking Groups, Women on Wheels and more.

Our Women on the Water program gets more popular each year. This year 111 women participated over four evenings for six weeks in July and August. Our Kids kayak and Stand Up Paddle board programme and adult kayak taster sessions in Lebeen park, Aughnaccliffe along with our first Lads on the Lake Kayak programme in Dring all proved extremely popular with demand far exceeding our expectation. These activities lent themselves very well to social distancing and COVID-19 restriction bubbles. There is huge potential for increasing outdoor physical activity in Longford using our lovely inland waterways, rivers and lakes.



The LSP programmes were delivered at various amenities onsite including the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (The Mall), Ballymahon (Royal Canal), Brí Leith (Ardagh Mountain), Corn Hill, Corlea, Clondra, Derrycassin Woods, Dring Amenity, Edenmore Bog Walk (Ballinamuck), Lebeen Park, Lanesborough, Newcastle Woods and the Royal Canal.

Community Sport Hub - Edgeworthstown

In 2020, Sports Hub Edgeworthstown had a total of 1,665 people participating in our various sports and physical activity programmes. The Hub aims to offer as many sporting and physical activity opportunities as possible so that there is something on offer to suit everyone and that they will enjoy. The year got off to a great start with a total of 838 people participating in over 15 programmes. These included Operation Transformation Programmes, Couch to 5km, Active Age Activities, Yoga, Martial Arts, Friday/Monday Workout of the Day, and much more.



The Healthy Meals Made Easy Programme delivered early in the year, gave attendees hands-on experience of prepping and cooking basic healthy and nutritious meals.

Unfortunately, the Hub had to close its doors in March in line with Government guidelines as COVID-19 hit. No indoor sports or gatherings were allowed so the Hub looked at new ways of staying in touch with people

and helping people stay active. The popular Workout of the day was then delivered online via Zoom every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 10am. Daily workouts were posted on the Sports Hub social media platforms so that people could do them in their own time. These workouts were suitable for both kids and adults. Feedback was good and it was a great way to stay connected.

The Community Wall Ball was also completed in 2020 and couldn't have come at a better time really. As no indoor activities were allowed, the Hub encouraged people to stay active outdoors. The



Wall Ball is accessible to all 24/7 and has lots of little targets and goal posts for both children and adults to practice both their football and hurling skills.

We registered for Fit for ALL week that was due to take place on 12-18 October but again, due to restrictions, we could not offer classes during FIT for ALL Week but we are now registered and we aim to increase awareness and enhance inclusive sport and physical activity for people with disabilities at Sports Hub Edgeworthstown. In partnership with the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer, funding was secured to purchase inclusive gym equipment from the Dormant Accounts Sports Hub in Edgeworthstown with a plan to offer Inclusive Fitness Classes and Sport.

Community Sports Hub - Drumlish

Longford LSP put out an Expressions of interest for a new Community Sports Hub in Longford in early 2020 and funding was secured from the Dormant Accounts fund for a five-year period to establish a Hub in Drumlish Community Centre. The aim is to bring together local sports clubs and groups to work together to maximise participation and increase the range of sport and physical activity at community level. This is done by developing links between community, sports clubs, activity groups and schools.

Summer Walk Series

Longford LSP in partnership with Longford Tourism created two fantastic initiatives highlighting the beautiful walkways the county of Longford has to offer. This initiative comprised of two components, firstly a series of community walks following all COVID-19 restrictions and secondly a virtual option where people could walk each trail at a time of their own choosing.



A guide to each walk was created and emailed to each participating prior to the walk taking place. This guide included our onsite system for ensuring COVID-19 compliance, a description of each walk and a video of the trail. 550 registered for one of our summer walking series options. 60 of these registered for our virtual walking option and 52 registered for our “Longford Trail Challenge”. Over 400 people attended walks in person over the four weeks.

As a result, we have seen:

- An increased awareness of participants of safe and scenic outdoor walking venues in Longford
- Greater appreciation by participants of outdoor spaces locally for exercise and physical activity
- Increased motivation and enthusiasm among participants for physical activity and walking
- Increased feeling among participants that they were part of an active community



Supporting our Clubs and Volunteers

The LSP delivered 32 training and education courses, workshops and webinars to 490 people. A total of seven Safeguarding 1 courses, and one Safeguarding 2 course were delivered by the Longford LSP tutors, where a total of 68 Longford club personnel completed these courses.

A Youth Leader course was delivered to secondary schools in the county with 231 Transition Year students taking part.

In the area of Disability Sports there were six workshops provided for 91 Longford Coaches namely the Cycle Right Disability Module and CARA's courses (Autism in Sport workshop, Disability Inclusion Training and the Adventure Outdoor Training).

In December 2020, we delivered five online webinars/ workshops to 100 coaches and volunteers in First Aid and Athletics Ireland Assistant Coach Course and Red-Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport.



Club Development and Participation Grant

In supporting not for profit organisations, we had a Club Development and Volunteer Supports Programme. Through our funding work, the LSP supported 37 clubs in securing grant aid of €17,850 to support their junior structures, coach and education initiatives and target group programming benefiting 10,209 participants.

List of successful clubs	
St Francis	Ballymore GFC
The Acres Pitch & Putt Club	Emmet Og, Killoe, Longford
Longford & District Schoolboy/girl League	Longford Pony Club
Gaels United	Longford Athletics Club
Lough Ree Access For All	Caiseal GAA
Grattan Ladies GFC	Fr Manning Gaels
Mullinalaghta LGFA	St Helen LGFC
Ballymahon/Forney Community Games	Killoe Ladies Gaelic Football
Longford Community Games	Longford Slashers
Lanesborough Triathlon Club	St Brigid's GAA
Clonguish Ladies GFC	Carrickedmond GAA Squash Club
Clonguish Underage Hurling	Dromard GAA Club
Abbeylara Handball Club	Grattan Gaels MFC GAA
Colmcille Ladies GFC	Longford Martial Arts Club
Mullinalaghta St Columba's GFC	Longford Smashers VC
Ballymore Ladies Gaelic Football Club	St Brigid's Gaels LGFA
Sean Connolly's Rounders	St Vincents Minor Club
Longford Ramblers and Hikers	Sean Connollys Ladies Club
	Newtown AFC

COVID-19 Club Small Grant Scheme

The COVID-19 club small grant scheme is part of a programme from the Government of Ireland, implemented through Sport Ireland and its network of Local Sports Partnerships to support the sports sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Longford Sports Partnership managed this fund on behalf of Sport Ireland for sports clubs in Longford and we were successful in being awarded €40,422 in funding for clubs.



List of successful clubs		
Abbeylara Handball Club	Longford Cricket Club	Newtown AFC
Ardagh Girl Guides, Brownies & Ladybirds	Longford Cycling & Racing Club	Rathcline GAA
Ardagh Moydow GAA	Longford Gymnastics Club CLG	Seán Connollys GAA

Ballyboro Football Club	Longford Rugby Club CLG	Sean Connollys Ladies
Ballymore Ladies Gaelic Football club	Longford Slashers Football Club	Spartac soccer club
Clonguish Ladies	Longford Slashers GAA Minor Club	St Brigids GAA Killashee
Colmcille GFC	Longford Slashers Hurling Club	St Francis minor club
Drumlisk Dragons	Longford Smashers VC	St Helens LGFC
Emmet Og, Killoe	Longford Torpedo Basketball Club	St Vincents
Fr Manning Gaels GFC	Longford Triathlon Club	St Marys granard
Grattan Og	Lough Ree Athletic Club	Stonepark F.C.
Kenagh GAA Club	Melview FC	Longford Bowling Club
Longford Athletics Club	Mostrim GAA	Mostrim LGFA

Other club development work included support in relation to committee roles, child protection issues, governance, first aid and the Sport Ireland COVID-19: Return to Sport eLearning Course.

Increasing Awareness

The LSP continues to use its social media platforms, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to communicate with clubs and groups in the County, enjoying a strong following on both. Our website is updated regularly, links to all are on the back page of this document. In 2020 with the nature of the COVID-19 restrictions the Longford LSP conducted meetings/ delivered training/workshops and webinar via Microsoft teams also via Zoom. New sections were added onto the website to create awareness for all members of the community of activities and programmes that can be done at home. Throughout 2020, the LSP printed and delivered numerous resources namely exercise leaflets and booklets for children, adults, older adult and people with disabilities for exercises and activities that can be done at home.

The LSP has a good relationship with the sports section of the Longford Leader and with Shannonside the local radio station. It also has distribution lists for schools, sports clubs, local businesses and other agencies. The use of these outlets leads to an increased profile of the LSP and increased awareness of sport provisions/programmes/clubs in Longford. Our European Week of Sport events feature at National level in RTE guide, Irish Independent, online on European Commission and National Organisations such as Sport Ireland, Active Travel, Canoeing Ireland and much more.

Structures of Sport

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

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

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

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

Governance Code

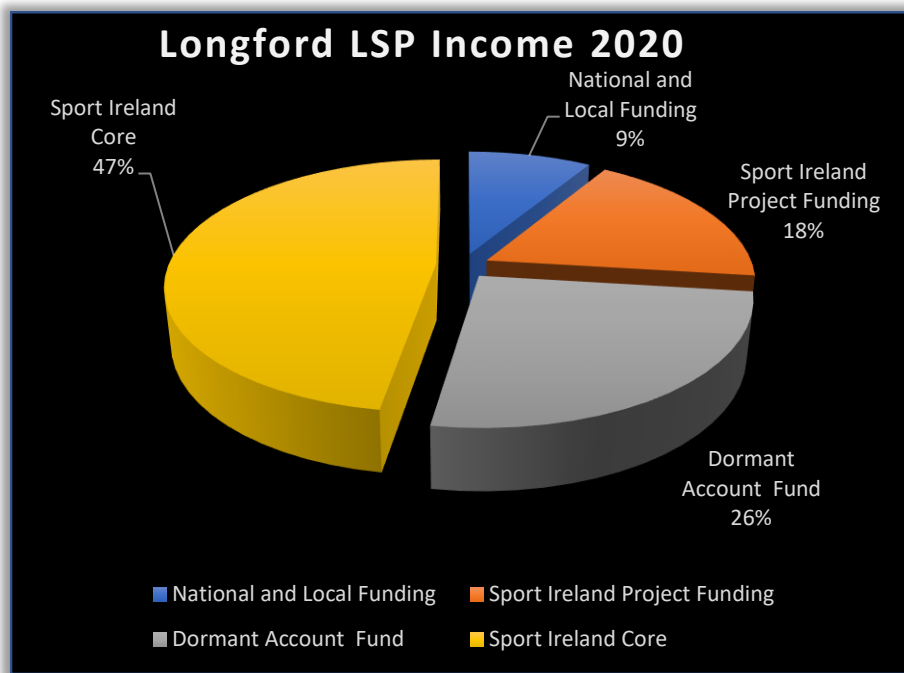
The Government's National Sports Policy, published in July 2018, tasks Sport Ireland with overseeing a process whereby Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) and (NGB) National Governing Bodies of Sport adopt the Code by the end of 2021. The Governance Code asks organisations to agree to operate to key principles in order to run their organisation more effectively in areas such as leadership, transparency, accountability and behaving with integrity. The Longford LSP is committed to adopting the Governance Code and ensuring that the LSP is fully compliant by December 2021.

Resourcing and Funding

The LSP was successful in securing €467,753.07 for sport and physical activity in County Longford. This came from several providers during 2020:

- Sport Ireland Core and project funding: €307,128.62
- Dormant Accounts funding of €119,734 for Community Sports Hub (Drumlish and Edgeworthstown), SIDP Capital, Volunteer Support and Youth Leadership
- National and Local Funding of €40,890.45 from the Age and Opportunity Ireland, Department of Agriculture (Pony Project), Department of Transport, Department of Children & Youth Affairs and Sports Projects funded by the HSE

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



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

County Longford is a small rural county strategically located in the heart of the country offering easy access to all corners of Ireland. Its population is circa 41,000 and it has a strong agricultural base with most of the industrial activity concentrated around Longford Town which has a population of circa 11,000.

The county has some strong industrial sectors to include engineering, medtech and food processing. Each of these sectors has a number of key employers that are national leaders in their fields, and they are supported by a strong micro-enterprise sector where small firms combine sub-supply opportunities with direct consumer facing market opportunities. The micro-enterprise sector in Longford provides much employment but faces challenges going forward in areas such as innovation, environmental sustainability and digitalisation. Provision of quality broadband remains a concern as does the emphasis on traditional manufacturing, but opportunities exist around AgriTech, robotics and eco-tourism that should help County Longford improve the quality of employment.

The county has also become a tourism destination in its own right with the opening of the short-term break holiday village Center Parcs Longford Forest leading to the creation of over 900 direct employment positions.

Unfortunately, after a strong start to 2020, economic activity in the county has suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some sectors including hospitality and tourism were severely affected and it could be the third quarter of 2021 before the economy fully opens up again. Small firms have been hit harder than most, but small business owners are very resilient, and the hope is that very few businesses will be lost to the pandemic. Government expectation is that a strong recovery is expected when everything is back on track and with supports provided by central government, the local authority and the LEO office, the hope is that the local economy in Longford can thrive once again. The local authority was directly responsible for the administration of the Business Restart Grant Scheme and also introduced a rates waiver during the year to support all business affected by the pandemic.

During 2020 the Local Authority continued to work closely with neighbouring counties to promote the region as a good place to live, work and invest. Working with Westmeath, Laois and Offaly under the Regional Action Plan for Jobs and with Cavan, Roscommon and Leitrim under the UESFE programme, the local authority realises that there is strength in collaboration and an agreed approach to bring about economic growth and development to the whole region. Several joint initiatives and events were run during 2020 to support these aims.

The Business Incentive Scheme introduced continued to be available to help firms moving into vacant units and the local authority Shop Front Scheme to encourage retailers to enhance the exterior of their premises continued to roll out during the year.

The Local Authority has been proactive in establishing direct communication channels with its key employers, its business associations and with its economic diaspora.

During 2020, Longford County Council was involved in a lead role on several initiatives designed to support National and Regional Economic Development Plans to include the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan and the Just Transition Plan and it continues to work in partnership with all the key support and development agencies.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The Local Enterprise Office in Longford forms part of an economic unit within Longford County Council that strives to create a positive business environment where firms are supported to locate, grow and prosper in our County. A core focus is to ensure that business needs are met in a responsive and constructive fashion and that businesses receive support at all stages of their development journey.

It has become an integral part of the local government sectors efforts to become more engaged with all its community stakeholders, working proactively with all the different groups including entrepreneurs to create a better society for all its citizens.

The Local Enterprise Office focuses in particular on new and small enterprises, acting as a one-stop-shop for all business-related queries, providing advice and guidance and concrete supports such as financial assistance, mentoring and training.

Supports are designed to be delivered in a flexible manner and tailored specifically to meet the needs of new and growing enterprises.

The last five years was one of sustained growth for the Irish economy except for the period since March 2020 when the global pandemic hit our shores. Until March 2020, the trading environment was strong across all sectors and local small firms were thriving in spite of the worry of the impending Brexit. Since March 2020, the whole business environment has become a lot less certain with some sectors such as tourism and hospitality hit particularly hard and a nervousness on how many businesses might emerge from this current crisis as strong as they were going into it.

In 2020, the Local Enterprise Office continued to deliver important supports to encourage and foster entrepreneurship including its Start your Own Business Programme and its Schools Education Programme. Other programmes evolved during that time to reflect an increased awareness and demand in areas such as, finding efficiencies, developing online platforms and ambition to export.

The year 2020 saw a shift in government priorities with a concentrated focus on climate change and the need to become more environmentally sustainable, on increased digitalisation as consumers become even more tech savvy, on innovation as technology drives change at an ever increasing pace and on exports as progressive small firms seek to penetrate new markets.

The challenge for Local Enterprise Office Longford is to ensure that any firm with ambition to develop is provided with the full range of supports needed.

The Local Enterprise Office collaborates with a wide range of partners both locally and regionally to develop plans and initiatives that will encourage and facilitate economic investment in our region.

As a key voice for the micro-enterprise sector we are aware of our responsibility to ensure that the real value of small businesses to the Irish economy is properly understood and that all small businesses are supported to reach their full potential.

In 2020 the Local Enterprise Office continued:



Vincent English from Sive Global and Michael Nevin at the Bett Expo and Conference

- To roll-out existing and new supports designed specifically to help small business owners meet impending challenges (post-COVID-19)
- To provide relevant training and mentoring interventions to assist businesses to become more efficient and productive
- To help small firms to integrate digital platforms into their everyday business operations enabling them to compete for business in national and international markets
- To work with schools in creating an awareness and an appreciation of the value of entrepreneurs as wealth creators in our local economy
- To support the development of business networks that will help to create possible synergies or partnerships /opportunities to become part of new business value chains.
- To work with internal and external stakeholders interested in promoting County Longford as a viable business location and to ensure that all parties that express an interest in investing in Longford are given the highest priority
- To educate the small firms' sector on the growing importance of environmentally sustainable business practices and to help them meet their obligations in this regard by ensuring they are aware of all the potential supports available to them
- To explore the development of a portfolio of units and serviced landbanks both private and local authority owned that can help to attract and satisfy the needs of potential investors or developers
- To support those firms impacted by Brexit by helping them to address the technical, administrative, logistical and market challenges posed by the new trading relationship with Britain
- To work with other internal stakeholders on the production of digital and non-digital materials that highlight the business supports available through the offices of Longford County Council and the Longford LEO office
- To support the work of County and Regional Committees working on different cooperation projects designed to bring increased prosperity to the region/county
- To continue to support the projects funded under the Just Transition Fund to help those projects to be realised
- To support the efforts of different communities to develop viable workspaces such as digital hubs as a means of both attracting new enterprises and jobs into the county and facilitating remote working for commuters who leave the County each day.
- To deliver specific supports designed to encourage the occupancy of vacant industrial units and enhancement of shop fronts in our main urban centres.
- To act as a First Stop Shop offering information, advice and guidance to anyone connected with an existing small enterprise or interested in establishing a new enterprise in County Longford.



Tracey Tallon from Westmeath LEO and Michael Nevin, Longford LEO at the National Manufacturing & Supply Chain Expo in Citywest

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

In what was a most challenging year for the tourism industry both nationally and worldwide due to COVID-19, Longford Tourism worked in a flexible and enthusiastic manner and used initiative going forward in 2020 to achieve our common objectives and goals.

The collaborations with Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Waterways Ireland and the regional USEFE group continued positively and we continued to market and promote County Longford as a viable tourism destination for visitors from home and abroad.

Work was completed throughout the year on the content for longford.ie which will become the new Tourism website. The revamped website will be launched in the first quarter of 2021 and that will be a valuable information resource enabling us to promote our tourism products in a professional and accessible manner.



Longford Tourism Town and County Brochure launch August 2020

Longford Tourism along with Longford County Council continued to work on the Royal Canal Greenway in conjunction with Waterways Ireland, Kildare, Meath and Westmeath County Councils. Longford will have 11 storyboards, both in English and Irish, along the Longford section of the Canal. 2021 will see the launch of the Royal Canal Greenway as the longest linear greenway in Ireland and this product will be marketed extensively as a key artery to bring walkers and cyclists into the region.

The National Famine Way was launched in September 2020 with photoshoots in Strokestown House and Clondra Harbour (members of Longford County Council and Longford Tourism attended along with Waterways Ireland, National Heritage Trust, National Famine Museum and Strokestown House). There was a major publicity drive, with it featuring in national and regional newspapers, the Famine Way will be another positive visitor experience to bring tourists to Longford and links in with the Royal Canal Greenway.

Longford Town Audio Trail was completed (should be launched for summer 2021). This is an audio version of the existing Longford Town Walking Trail. In Hand Guides are the company who produced this product. It is now completed in English, Irish, French and German and when launched will be available from Longford Tourism and Longford Library. A video is currently being produced from the Audio with old pictures of Longford Town and snippets of the Audio. Overall, this will be an excellent product and very suitable for school tours.

The new Longford Town and County Map launched in August 2020 and was distributed to all primary and secondary schools in Longford county. Two short promotional videos (Longford in Autumn and Longford in Winter) were produced by local company Harp Media and were released during 2020 with great success and feedback. They feature things to do in Longford and two more videos are due to launch in 2021.

Fáilte Ireland still continues to work closely with Longford Tourism, which is in the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand through regular communications and attendance at workshops and meetings. They have also been extremely supportive with provision of COVID-19 supports and grants for the tourism and hospitality industry as a whole.

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

The Tourism Committee continued to work together on initiatives and strategies and held regular online tourism meetings to work on common goals and objectives. The North and South Cycle trail boards are all complete to enhance the cycling experience for visitors to Longford. Three new postcards were designed and are available from the tourism office and advertising campaigns were done with regional newspapers and radio stations to promote the county.

Longford Tourism have an active social media presence, with over 10,000 Facebook followers and new Instagram and Twitter accounts were created during 2020 to help promote the county and show visitors the variety of tourism experiences available in County Longford. Paid advertising campaigns throughout the year on Facebook were extremely successful in achieving more followers and reaching a wider audience for Longford Tourism.

The Local Authority also continued to work with community and specific interest groups in 2020 on initiatives and events designed to build tourism products. In addition, the LCDC committee has a crucial oversight role in the implementation of the current LEADER programme and its strong emphasis on local tourism development.



The White Bridge at Newcastle Woods Walking Trail

LONGFORD ARTS OFFICE

	Project / Programme Area	Activity	Description	Strategic Functional Objectives
1.0	Drama/Street Theatre/Spectacle	<i>Drama League of Ireland Summer School Bursary</i>	Provided financial support to Longford actor to attend the Drama Summer School	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
1.1		<i>Artist-in-Residence Backstage Theatre</i>	Supported the appointment of an artist-in-residence to work with Backstage youth theatre to develop the production entitled; "DNA"	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
1.2		<i>Mide Street Theatre Company</i>	Supported workshop and performances of this fledgling street theatre company	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young. Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
2.0	Music/Dance	<i>School of Rock</i>	Support this innovative initiative for young rock musicians aged 10 to 18 years old	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
2.1		<i>Longford Live & Local Recordings</i>	Supported a series of live music events in various genres to try to re-vitalise the live music scene in Longford	Promote access to and increased participation in the Arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
2.2		<i>Music Development Consultancy</i>	Engage a consultant to carry out the research to enable an application for Music Generation funding and to draft a music development strategy	Promote access to and increased participation in music.
2.3		<i>Longford Classical Club</i>	Organised classical concerts to raise public awareness	Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
2.4		<i>Dance Residency Backstage</i>	Supported Dancer-in-Residence in partnership with Backstage Theatre	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
2.5		<i>Longford Choral Activity</i>	Supported various Longford Choirs	
2.6		<i>Recorded Edgeworthstown Choirs</i>	Recorded both the children's choir and adult folk group for broadcast on www.longfordmusic.ie	Promote access to and increased participation in the Music. Develop public awareness

				and appreciation of value of the Music.
3.0	Creative Writing	<i>Longford Writers Groups</i>	Longford has five active writers' groups. In 2020 we supported the activities of Longford, Goldsmith, Lasraí, Under the Motte and Lanesborough Writers Groups.	Promote access to and increased participation in literature.
3.1		<i>Literary Evenings/Poetry Slams</i>	Supported a series of literary events in Backstage Canal Studio, Ardagh Creativity Centre and Market Bar Longford. See www.virtualwriter.ie	Facilitated creative capacity development among the writers. Promote access to and increased participation in the Literature. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the literature.
3.2		<i>King of the Back of the Hill</i>	Supported the compilation and publication of anthology of non-fiction, poetry, fiction, photography and children's art based on the mythology of the Ardagh area.	Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
3.3		<i>Irish Writers Centre Celebration</i>	Organised an evening of poetry, prose and music in the Irish Writers Centre to commemorate our 20-year relationship in the development of Longford writing.	Promote access to and increased participation in literature.
4.0	Visual Arts	<i>Longford Schools Photography Programme</i>	Ireland's largest and longest running Schools Photography Programme. Involves students in all secondary schools in the county as well as Mullingar and Mohill. Emphasis photography as art developing the student's visual and aesthetic awareness teaches students to view the subject not just as a visual and physical object but also from a conceptual perspective.	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
4.1		<i>Schools Programme Exhibition, Awards & Project Launch</i>	LSPP culminates each year with an exhibition of students work, awards presentation and the launch of the project for the year usually a publication of the students' work on typical social issues drug abuse, mental illness – depression etc. helped fund, promote and organise the event.	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
4.2		<i>Expressions International Portrait Photography Competition</i>	International art portrait photography competition. 50% submissions Irish 50% international. This year enlarged 50 short listed entries mounted them on all weather material and exhibited them on lamp posts walls and temporary hoardings around the town turning the town into an open-air gallery of photography during Cruthú.	Promote access to and increased participation in photography.

4.3		<i>Joint Exhibition Programme with Atrium Gallery</i>	Sponsored and helped organise exhibition of seven painters and seven photographers: Phil Atkinson, Angela Tuite, Mary Grey, Lar McGuire, Josephine Guilfoyle, Mary Reilly, Phil Atkinson, Shelley Corcoran, Angelika Sowul, Eibhlin Crossan, Alisa Rey and Sean Considine.	Facilitated creative capacity development among the photographers.
4.4		Mercy Convent Ballymahon Public Art Project	Funded imaginative glass art project for the above schools. The students visited the studio of glass artist Michelle O'Donnell where they each designed and helped to fashion a unique avian image which was cast in glass and erected as a flight of birds along the wall of the student's canteen.	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
5.0	Festivals	<i>Cruthú Multi-disciplinary Arts Festival</i>	Established the original festival. Funded this year's festival. Worked closely with the committee to deliver this year's programme. Placed special emphasis on a community art project: The Temporary Public Art Project. Engaged seven community groups for example: Men's Sheds to create seven pieces under the guidance of a professional artist each piece was exhibited in a prominent location in Longford Town during Cruthú.	Facilitated creative capacity development among the arts. Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
5.1		<i>Ardagh Fright Fest</i>	Annual Halloween-themed children's arts and fun festival run by Ardagh Creativity Centre.	Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
5.2		<i>Aisling Children's Festival</i>	Long established and excellent countywide children's arts festival. A truly community-based festival event both in committee composition, programming, geographical spread and insistence on free events or lowest possible ticket costs to ensure maximum social and economic inclusion. We financially support the committee and work with them at festival time.	Facilitated creative capacity development among the young.
5.3		<i>Edgeworth Literary Weekend</i>	Well organised weekend of poetry and prose the contemporary element of which is supported by the A. O. However, a heavy emphasis on cultural heritage and tourism objectives means that it is of limited value to the literary development of the county.	Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts.
5.4		<i>Lanesborough Lough Ree Monster Festival</i>	New community festival. Provided Mide to perform and funding towards' Monster' float	Promote access to and increased participation in the arts. Develop public awareness of arts.

CORPORATE SERVICES

2020 was undoubtedly a year like no other for our Corporate Services unit in delivering our functions. As the severity of COVID-19 hit home with government announcing its first round of restrictions on 21 March 2020, we were quick to respond with a remarkably flexible and innovative approach to ensure our service delivery continued to the greatest extent possible.

Our team actively participated in the Council's 'Community Call' response. Working with our elected members we initially moved our Council meetings to different locations to facilitate the continuation of business and in full compliance with public health guidance and this was followed by a move to fully remote Council meetings.

Throughout the year the communications team ensured timely communication of all public health messages and kept our citizens fully informed on service delivery arrangements.

Requests for Information

	Number
Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests	62
Number of Internal Reviews on FOI Requests	2
Number of appeals to the Information Commissioner on FOI decisions	0
Number of Information on the Environment Requests	3

Protected Disclosures Act

No Protected Disclosure Reports were received by Longford County Council during the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Franchise

The 2020/2021 Register of Electors came into force on the 15 February 2020 until 14 February 2021. The numbers registered to vote on the 2020/2021 Register of Electors were:

Local Electoral Area	Number
Ballymahon	11,175
Granard	9,992
Longford	12,367
Total	33,534



During 2020, a Supplement to the Register of Electors was prepared in advance of the Dáil Election held on 8 February 2020.

Social Media Campaign

In September 2020, as part of the preparation work for the Draft Register of Electors 2021/2022, Longford County Council ran a Social Media campaign to raise awareness about the Register of Electors and to encourage voters to use the online "Check the Register" facility to ensure their details were correct. In addition, Longford County Council introduced their first ever online Voter Registration Form which proved very popular.

Official Languages Act

The aim of the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill published in December 2019 was to amend and extend the Official Languages Act 2003 and strengthen the use of the Irish language in the State system.

While the publication of the Bill was welcomed, many interested parties, including the Irish Language Commissioner and Conradh na Gaeilge, insisted that a stronger bill was required. This was recognised by government with a

commitment in the Programme for Government that a stronger bill would be brought forward and enacted before the end of 2020.

The Bill provides for establishment of a statutory Irish Language Services Advisory Committee to increase and improve the provision of public services through the Irish language. The functions of the Advisory Committee as prescribed include the publication of a national plan with the aim of increasing the number of services provided by public bodies through the medium of Irish.

In addition, the number of employees who are competent in Irish in public bodies will be increased with the overall objective that 20 per cent of all new recruits to the public service will have competency in the Irish language.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a system of language standards that will be imposed on all public bodies. These standards will replace the old system of Irish Language Schemes. Longford County Council's first Irish Language Scheme, previously agreed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, following the passing of the Official Languages Act 2003, is still in operation.

It is noteworthy that a particular area of criticism of the Bill when it was published related to lack of deadlines associated with some of the policies. It was also clear that additional powers needed to be given to the Language Commissioner to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Bill.

An effort was made to address these matters with amendments being proposed at Committee Stage and the Bill is currently before the Dáil for debate with approval awaited.

Irish Language Officer Activities in 2020 in relation to the promotion of Irish

- Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated just before the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020 with:
 - A number of local schools attended quizzes in Irish and Irish storytelling events
 - New Irish language books for both children and adults were prominently displayed in the library
 - A very special evening of Irish poetry readings, song and music was held in Longford Branch Library to mark this celebration of Irish culture
- The Ciorcal Comhrá met in the library on a weekly basis during the first three months of 2020
- During the summer months in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic the Council's Irish Language Officer read a number of Irish language books for local children online
- These Irish online readings formed part of a wide-ranging series of online activities for both children and adults available via the Council's Library Facebook page
- The Irish Officer continued to ensure a good selection of new Irish language books for both adults and children were purchased by the library throughout the year
- In November 2020 the Irish Language Officer attended the online Annual General Network Meeting for local authority Irish Language Officers
- One of the main speakers at this meeting was a representative from the Welch Language Commissioner's Office who spoke about the movement from language schemes to the implementation of standards in Wales
- The Irish Language Officer working with relevant departments ensured that all correspondences from and responses to the Irish Language Commissioner's Office were translated and dealt with in a timely manner
- Translations of a number of information signs were displayed on library doors during the year in keeping with our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003

Training

On 25 May three Council employees attended a half-day online Irish course specifically tailored for local authority receptionists and telephonists. This training course was facilitated by Gaelchultúr in conjunction with Foras na Gaeilge and was a very practical course. On completion each employee was provided with access to a series of online notes and exercises available on Gaelchultúr's website.

Data Protection

Commenced the development of best practice to ensure corporate and organisational data protection compliance throughout the organisation through the implementation of our privacy statements, policies, SOPs and guidance

documents during 2020. Enhanced data protection awareness and transparency through delivering training to all employees and development of a data protection page on both the organisations internal and external websites. Contributed to a consistence approach by working closely with the National and Regional Data Protection Officer networks through involvement in working groups and creation of national Data Protection COVID-19 documentation. Demonstrated compliance with the regulation by maintaining records of processing activities under the responsibility of the organisation.

Outline of the activities/work undertaken by the SPC during 2020

Data Protection Presentation to SPC in Jan 2020 – Data Protection Awareness and implementation within the organisation.

Expenditure and particulars in relation to activities undertaken on the promotion of interests of local communities

n/a

Expenditure and other particulars in relation to twinning of Local Authority areas

n/a

Information on expenditure and any other particulars on entertainment and associated expenses of local authorities

€3,450 for Data Protection Awareness Training for all employees of Longford County Council.

Annual progress report in relation to implementation of Corporate Plan

Safeguard the Privacy and Security of Data with Robust preventative measures, policies and processes:

Policies
Data Protection Policy
Data Subject Rights Policy
Personal Data Breach Policy
Elected Representatives Representations Policy
Clean and Clear Desk Policy
Longford County Councils Privacy Statement

Records of Processing Activities Registers completed in 2020
Corporate Services
Planning
Regeneration
Roads
Civil Defence
Library, Heritage and Archives
Finance
Water Services
Sports Partnership
Traffic Management

SOP's
Management of a Personal Data Breach
Management of a Data Subject request to exercise their rights

Training/Awareness
Data Protection Awareness Training delivered to all employees

Bi-monthly Data Protection updates delivered to the Management Team
Data Protection updates delivered to the Senior Officers Group.
Data Protection presentation delivered to CPG on Elected Representatives Representation Policy
Data Protection Awareness and implementation presentation delivered to the Audit Committee

Assessment in relation to implementation of the LECP

n/a

Details of all gifts accepted by the local authority during 2020

n/a

In addition, there are specific provisions in LG Reform Act 2014 in respect of Municipal Districts information that must be included as follows

- Information on the performance of functions by the Municipal District Members: n/a
- An assessment of its delivery of services during the year concerned when compared with its service delivery plan for that year: n/a
- An assessment in relation to the implementation and, where appropriate, review of its local, economic and community plans: n/a

Meetings of Longford County Council

Longford County Council plenary meetings, Municipal District Meetings for Ballymahon, Granard and Longford, Corporate Policy Group Meetings, Joint Policing Committee Meetings and Strategic Policy Committee Meetings.

At the plenary council meetings, the 18 members of Longford County Council meet to carry out their Reserved functions and consider social, economic and cultural issues critical to the sustained development of the county in line with the strategic priorities and objectives of the Corporate Plan.

The following is an outline of presentations / proceedings at Council meetings held in 2020.

Adjourned Special Meeting - 2 March 2020

Filling of Vacancy Occasioned by the Election of Joe Flaherty to Dáil Éireann

Ms Uruemu Adejinmi was elected to the vacancy for the Longford Electoral Area, occasioned by the election of Joe Flaherty to Dáil Éireann.

11 March 2020

Mary-Jane Sweeney, Music Generation Officer, and Dr Jenny O'Connor, Music Education Partnership Support Manager, addressed the meeting regarding the establishment of the Music Generation Programme

COVID-19 Restrictions – HSE Guidelines Regarding Social Distancing

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the need to maintain adequate social distancing, meetings held from May to July 2020 were held in the Sports Hall, Leisure Centre, Albert Reynolds Peace Park, Longford.

Meetings held from September to December 2020 were held in the Function Room in Longford Rugby Club.



Also, a number of Municipal District Meetings, Strategic Policy Committee Meetings, Joint Policing Committee Meetings were held online via MS Teams from May to December 2020.

20 May 2020

Vacancy in the Position of Cathaoirleach: Following the election of Micheál Carrigy to Seanad Éireann on 3 April 2020. Councillor Gerard Farrell was appointed Cathaoirleach until the 2020 Annual Meeting on 26 June 2020

Vacancy in the Position of Leas Cathaoirleach: Following the appointment of Councillor Gerard Farrell, Leas Cathaoirleach, to the position of Cathaoirleach. Councillor Gerard Hagan was elected Leas Cathaoirleach until the 2020 Annual Meeting on 26 June 2020

Filling of Vacancy Occasioned by the Election of Micheál Carrigy to Seanad Éireann. Mr Colin Dalton was elected to the vacancy for the Granard Electoral Area, occasioned by the election of Micheál Carrigy to Seanad Éireann



2020 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held on 26 June 2020. Councillor Paul Ross was elected Cathaoirleach. Councillor Turlough McGovern was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.

Municipal District 2020 Annual Meetings

Ballymahon Municipal District – 18 June 2020

Councillor Colm Murray was elected Cathaoirleach
Councillor Mick Cahill was elected Leas Cathaoirleach

Granard Municipal District - 23 June 2020

Councillor Garry Murtagh was elected Cathaoirleach
Councillor Turlough McGovern was elected Leas Cathaoirleach

Longford Municipal District - 24 June 2020

Councillor Peggy Nolan was elected Cathaoirleach
Councillor Adejinmi was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach

Cathaoirleach's Awards Ceremony

The 2020 Cathaoirleach's Awards Ceremony which was due to be held in June 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Civic Receptions

7 February 2020 - A Civic Reception was held to honour the outstanding service and commitment of Longford Community Games.

Association of Irish Local Government – Annual Conference

Councillor Mick Cahill, President of the AILG 2019/2020, hosted the Annual Conference of the Association of Irish Local Government in the Longford Arms Hotel on 5 and 6 March 2020.

Audit Committee

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

The Audit Committee met on 7 February 2020, 4 September 2020, 16 October 2020, 4 December 2020 and 18 December 2020.

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



Cllr Mick Cahill, President of the AILG 2019/2020 hosting the Annual Conference in the Longford Arms

HUMAN RESOURCES

COVID-19 impacted greatly on the delivery of face-to-face service of Human Resources in particular in the areas of Recruitment and Selection, Learning and Development and Employee Relations.

Nevertheless, COVID-19 also presented new opportunities, allowing for the exploration of methods to deliver our services. The Recruitment team conducted competitions online. The Learning and Development Section delivered training online where possible. Communications with the Employee Representative Bodies moved online. This allowed us to continue to delivery services within the section.

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

The core functions of the Human Resources section in 2020 were:

- Policy development and implementation
- Workforce planning and succession planning
- Recruitment and selection
- Learning and development
- Equality and diversity, public sector equality and human rights duty
- Employment law and compliance
- Industrial relations
- Employee contract management
- Attendance management
- Statutory reporting and departmental returns
- Record and document management
- Health and wellbeing
- Employee assistance and support

COVID-19 Employee Updates

During 2020, Human Resources issued 28 COVID-19 Employee Updates on behalf of the Management Team to keep employees up to date with national updates, including announcements from An Taoiseach, documents prepared locally to assist with the management of COVID-19 and decisions of the Management Team. The updates also provided clarification in relation to queries raised by employees across the organisation.

The Chief Executive and the Management Team held two employee briefings via a digital platform enhancing communications during the COVID-19 pandemic and reaching all employees.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection procedures are operated in a fair and transparent manner in line with good practice for recruitment and selection standards, employment legislation and relevant departmental circulars and guidelines.

In 2020, the normal management of recruitment and selection changed as a result of COVID-19 and from March 2020, all recruitment was carried out through digital medium.

The following is a brief summary of the recruitment programme for 2020.

Competitions advertised	Applications Received	Interview Days	Number of Interview Boards	Appointments	Promotions	Retirements	Resignations
26	1,403	49	19	20	21	8	4

Learning and Development

The table below summarises the general organisational and personal development training delivered during 2020, covering skills in areas such as Leadership, Management and Supervisory, Business, IT, Legislation and Governance. Training for 18 different competencies was delivered during 2020, catering for 666 employees.

Category	Programme
Business	Competency Based Interviewee Preparation
	Preparing Interview Board Members to conduct Competency Based Interviews
	Minute Taking
Employee Health and Wellbeing	Mental Health Early Intervention Training
	Dealing with Aggression and Violence in the workplace
	Preparing for Retirement
Management/ Supervisory	Line Management Programme
Leadership	Essentials of Innovation
	IPA Leadership in Local Government Programme
IT Skills	End User IT Security Training
	Microsoft Excel Basic
	Microsoft Excel Intermediate/Advanced customised
Legislation and Governance	Data Protection Awareness Training (online)
	Freedom of Information Training for Decision Makers
Seminars and Conferences	Co-Operation Ireland – Women in Leadership
	Accident Management and Incident Investigation
Technical Skills	Bridge Inspection and Maintenance
	Temporary Traffic Management Planning & Design

Health and Safety Training

During 2020, priority was given to mandatory training in the area of Health and Safety. The following training courses were scheduled for identified employees and new entrants, or as refresher training to maintain certification. Training for 23 Health and Safety competencies was delivered in 2020, catering for 720 employees.

Programme
Abrasive Wheels
Chainsaw Training for Local Authority Operatives
Commercial Vehicle Road Worthiness Training
COVID-19 Back to work Induction
CSCS – Site Dumper
Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures
Driver CPC Module 1 (CVEDT)
Event Safety Management
First Aid Responder
Health and Safety Briefing (Grey Fleet Drivers)
Hygiene in Water Services
Location of Underground Services (LUGS)
Lorry Driver Induction (New Lorries)
Legionella Awareness Training
Manual Handling Instructor Course QQI Level 6
Manual Handling
Road Opening and Reinstatement Basic
Road Opening and Reinstatement Advanced
Safepass

Safety Rep Refresher Training
Safety Rep Training for new Safety Reps
Signing Lighting Guarding at Roadworks
SLG at Roadworks – Information Update

Open Learning Scheme

Longford County Council, through its Open Learning Scheme, aims to support employees who wish to undertake studies in further education to complement their job responsibilities and contribute to their personal and professional by gaining a recognised qualification. The Open Learning Scheme is administered through the Training and Development Committee and the Scheme is reviewed annually to reflect the organisation’s changing environment. In 2020, briefings on the Open Learning Scheme were held for outdoor employees, reaching 47 employees. Fifteen employees participated in the Scheme for 2020/2021 academic year.

Ceremony of Recognition

An inaugural “Ceremony of Recognition” was held for employees who completed studies through the Open Learning Scheme from 2017 to 2020, where management and work colleagues joined with graduates to celebrate their achievements in further education. Twenty-four employees received a Certificate of Recognition and Award presented to each graduate by the Executive, though a “Virtual” Ceremony held on 2 December 2020.



Employee Health and Wellbeing

Longford County Council is committed to the health and wellbeing of its employees. The aim of the Employee Health and Wellbeing Programme is to support staff to take more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, so they can reach their full potential in the workplace and live healthy and balanced lives.



Health Screenings October 2020

In 2020, additional focus was given to health and wellbeing and programmes to assist employees mind their mental wellbeing, particularly in the extremely challenging environment of the current COVID-19 Pandemic. Thirteen programmes were designed, amounting to 15.67 days of delivery and reaching 481 employees. In October, 182 employees availed of a Health Screening Programme which was carried out by Health and Wellness International on behalf of Longford County Council. Flu Vaccinations were also offered to employees.

Event	Month
2KM Challenge Health and Wellbeing Day	May
GROW Webinar - Managing Stress while working from home	June
Active July - Yoga and Circuit Classes	July
esuicideTALK (learning about suicide)	September
LivingWorks Start programme (learning about suicide)	September
Preparing for Retirement Programme	September
Health Screenings for Employees	October
Flu Vaccinations for Employees	October
HSE Webinar - Keeping Well While Working from home	October
HSE - Stress Control Online Programme	November
Ceremony of Recognition for OLS graduates (2017-2020)	December
Christmas Online Table Quiz	December

COVID-19

This year has been a year like no other with the doors of our libraries closing suddenly on 12 March. Although our doors remained closed for much of the year, our library staff worked tirelessly to ensure that many of our services continued to be delivered in a new and innovative way. Through our branch network they reached out to those who were cocooning, to families, and the most isolated and vulnerable in our community. Over a number of years



libraries have been making a significant investment in Information Communications Technology in order to make our services more accessible and inclusive to all. This enabled us to very quickly pivot to online services and promote the wide range of e-books, newspapers, magazines, audio books, courses etc that are available with a library membership card. Our online usage soared from 7,336 in 2019 to 178,886 in 2020 and there was also a huge increase in our online followers and social media activity. We were very aware of the digital divide and the fact that many of our older citizens wanted to “read real books”. Our staff arranged a housebound delivery service in partnership with Longford Civil Defence and Longford Community Gardaí. Under the National Keep Well programme working with Longford Community Forum on each of the strands: staying connected, switching off and being creative and minding your mood, library staff delivered 205 online events ranging from story time for young children to music, art and gardening for adults and our older citizens. A number of library staff also manned the Community Call helpline which was set up at the start of the pandemic and was initially running seven days a week.

Edgeworthstown Community Library

This project progressed slowly this year due to COVID-19 but we are hopeful that the work will be completed and a new state of the art library will be open in mid to late 2020.

Digital Skills training

ICT has played a pivotal role in fostering resilience and helping communities to stay connected during the many challenges of this pandemic year. The library was successful in getting grant funding to run basic digital skills training primarily targeted at our older citizens who have little or no experience of using technology. The classes ran online in small groups of 4-6 people and were promoted through our Older Persons Council and Older Persons Network. Free beginners coding classes for children were also delivered online through Microsoft Teams on an ongoing basis throughout the year.



**Under construction:
Edgeworthstown Community
Library**

In partnership with our ICT Broadband Officer, funding for an initiative to deliver supports for digitally excluded communities was received. A suite of Acorn tablets suitable for training older people to be digital champions for their peers will be loaned out to participants for the duration of the programme. This programme will be rolled out in 2021.

My Open Library (MOL) - Granard Library

Work was completed on the second MOL for the county in Granard in early 2020 and it is ready to open as soon as our libraries reopen for normal business. Preparations for the new MOL infrastructure which will be incorporated into the new Edgeworthstown Library were completed with a view to opening next year.

Eduroam

Eduroam is a wifi roaming tool for students which enables them to access and engage with their third level college remotely at any time. The library partnered with LCC IT Dept and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to deliver the Eduroam initiative to three libraries in late 2020, Longford, Ballymahon and Drumlish.

Staffing and Remote Working

Library staff have, as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, engaged positively with remote working. We liaised with our IT section to provide staff with laptops and peripherals with access to all programmes including Email, Cisco, Core, Sierra and Microsoft Teams to enable us to continue to work remotely on a part-time basis particularly during the COVID-19 Level 4 and 5 restrictions.

We welcomed two new staff onto the team this year - Catherine Lee as Assistant Librarian and Genevieve Montgomery as Library Assistant. We also recruited additional staff for the new Edgeworthstown Library.

Longford Age Friendly Programme

Keeping people connected! The strong focus of this programme throughout COVID-19 was on keeping our older citizens connected and minding their mental health and wellbeing. Regular telephone calls and a buddy system were promoted where each older person agreed to call at least two other older neighbours on a regular basis for a chat.

Two community newsletters for each MD were distributed by Longford Civil Defence to over 1,500 families through our countywide network of family resource centres, libraries, post offices, garda stations etc.

The Irish Independent featured a Longford couple who were cocooning as part of a series on how our older citizens were surviving in lockdown.

We hosted our first virtual Bealtaine Concert in partnership with Longford Community Gardaí in the grounds of Thomond Lodge Nursing Home, Ballymahon. Much of the programme was recorded in people's homes and gardens and everyone was able to join the concert from the comfort of their own armchairs on Thursday 28 May. The programme brought families together in many different locations around the world and received over 5,000 views on social media.



Virtual Bealtaine Concert in partnership with Longford Community Gardaí at Thomond Lodge Nursing Home Ballymahon

Age Friendly Parking was introduced in nine different locations around the county.

Creative Ireland

Most of the planned annual programme went ahead online although many of the annual festivals had to be cancelled. Cruinniú na nÓg was a great success with a full programme of online events being delivered throughout the day. One of the most popular videos that was produced was a celebration of the great traditional music talent in this county. Thirty-eight children took part from the three Comhaltas groups and the children were filmed playing their instruments at their own homes by local videographer Shane Crossan with assistance from Paul Gurney music studios in Longford. The video was chosen by RTE (one of only four around the country) on The RTE Home School HUB on Wednesday 17 June. Longford also featured on the main RTE Six One News roundup from the Cruinniú day.

The very successful Ballymahon Still Voices Film Festival went ahead online in August with over 150 films being featured and very good audience attendances. Throughout COVID-19 we have kept in contact with our artists and creatives and with Backstage Theatre and have supported them as much as possible in delivering programmes online and using social media. We also highlighted the importance of having an online presence and made them aware of grants available through LEO and the Arts Council. We successfully applied for additional funding for a number of creative projects in partnership with Longford Older Persons Council and Backstage Theatre. We provided bursaries for three professional Longford writers and filmmakers and established a Community TV studio where local people can be shown how to make their own programmes.

An Interim review to examine the effectiveness of the Creative Ireland programme was carried out and Longford was represented on that working group by the County Coordinator for Creative Ireland. The findings of the review were very positive, and this has led to an increase in our funding allocation for 2021 to €145,161 core funding and €15,000 for Cruinniú na nÓg.

LONGFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

The Archives Service had another busy year, despite the pandemic. It was involved in a range of projects.

Archives management

Acquisitions

The following archives were acquired:

- Papers of the Quinn family, Cooleeny, Longford, including the travel diaries of Brigid Quinn (d. 1874)
- Papers and copy audio recordings of the late Anne Byrne, Ardagh
- File relating to the EBS premises, Main Street, Longford, 1967-89
- Minutes of the Longford IRA Memorial Committee, 1979-87
- The Jude Flynn Collection of cassette recordings
- Papers of the Wilson auctioneering business, Longford, late 19th century
- Two Maria Edgeworth letters
- Letter by, and photograph of, Emily Crawford, journalist

Digitisation

The digitisation of the minutes of Longford County Council, Longford Town Council and Granard Town Council was completed.

Beyond 2022

Longford County Library and Archives became a participating institution in the Beyond 2022 Project, which is based in Trinity College Dublin. The project aims to recreate, virtually, the Public Record Office that was destroyed in 1922, and to identify and make available substitute archives for those destroyed in it. Images of the two manuscript County Longford Grand Jury books, 1759-1907, have been submitted to the project.

The Pakenham Papers

A project was agreed in partnership with County Longford Historical Society and the Pakenham family of Tullynally Castle, Castlepollard, County Westmeath. It involves the digitisation of a selection of important archives relating to Longford town, which are in the Pakenham Papers. The historical society funded the work and the images will be made available in Longford County Library and Archives.

Records Management

Prior to the pandemic, file retrievals from storage continued. Throughout the year, the Archivist advised staff in various sections on the retention of records.

The Decade of Centenaries Programme

The Archivist coordinated a programme of commemorations, which were held virtually. The events were as follows:

- A discussion about the mutiny of the Connaught Rangers (Heritage Week)
- Talks on the burning of Granard and the Battle of Ballinalee; a reading about the burning of Granard; and a drama piece on the Battle of Ballinalee (week-long programme, 2-6 November)
- A conference on 'County Longford and the War of Independence' (14 November)
- A talk on the burning of Ballinalee (13 December)



Work was completed on an exhibition on County Longford and the War of Independence, which was deferred due to the pandemic. The research and writing of an education pack for primary schools, relating to the period 1914-23, also progressed.

Creative Ireland

The Archivist is a member of Culture Team which is overseeing the Creative Ireland Programme, and he assisted in the administration of the programme.

Local Government Archivists and Records Managers (LGARM)

The Archivist is an active member of the group. He is also a member of a sub-committee that drafted the brief for a national survey of local authority archives. He represented LGARM in an online doctoral training event, organised by the Irish Humanities Alliance, on 11 December. The session was entitled 'Accessing archives, libraries and digital repositories.'

Tourism projects

The Archivist worked with the Tourism Office on an audio guide to Longford town that was produced by In Hand Guides. He also worked with the Tourism Office and the Heritage Office on the content of a series of maps produced by EZxploring for Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesborough and Longford.

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE

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

County Longford Heritage Plan 2019-2024

The County Longford Heritage Plan 2019-2024 incorporating the County Longford Biodiversity Action Plan, was formally adopted by the Members of Longford County Council at their January 2020 meeting. Works continued in 2020 in forwarding the aims of the plan, in particular via the County Heritage Plan projects supported by The Heritage Council and the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund including the following.

County Longford Wetlands Survey 2020

In 2020, the Longford Heritage Office continued its programme of surveying non-designated wetland sites of potential biodiversity value, based on the Longford and Roscommon Wetlands Heritage Survey 2017. Wetlands Heritage Ireland, prioritised sites in the south of the county as 2019 sites were primarily in the north. Eleven sites were surveyed: Aghnamore Lake, Ballynakill North and South, Carrigeens Turlough (pNHA), Cloondara South, Carrownamanagh, Derraghan Beg, Drum Lough, Ledwithstown South, Cloontirm and Cloonanny Cutover. A number of these sites are significant due to their comparative proximity to important amenity and biodiversity sites, including the Royal Canal Greenway and the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park. Carrigeens Turlough was determined to be of national significance; Derraghan and Drum Lough of county significance and Ledwithstown and Clondra of high local value.



Wetlands Surveys Ireland also created a Wetlands Story Map for County Longford. This highly visual and engaging online resource, published for Heritage Week, sought to increase awareness and engagement with our wetlands.

County Longford Education Heritage Project 2020

The County Longford Education Heritage Project 2020 is a multi-pronged approach to developing engagement and awareness of education heritage in the county. This was achieved by working with community heritage groups within the county on three core elements:

1. **The Latin School Visitor Centre in Moyne**, County Longford in developing exhibition panels interpreting the history of education in this area, and this very special rural classical school. To promote the project during Heritage Week, the Heritage Office commissioned on the history of the Latin School, and memories of the school by former students.
2. **Family-friendly interactive education materials for the Maria Edgeworth Centre**, in Edgeworthstown. Maria Edgeworth, and her father Richard Lovell Edgeworth, are synonymous with the early development of primary education in Britain and Ireland. To this end, developing the education aspect of the visitor centre was important. Two activity sheets for children were developed by artist John Corrigan, encouraging children to explore the visitor centre and The Green park.
3. The Ardagh Heritage & Creativity Centre (Creative Ardagh) through their Scéalta Beo living story programme, developed a series of online video tutorials for children titled “...and where are you from?” to bring a sense of place and pride in local heritage to those who take part. This blended local topographical and cultural heritage, with the work of local historians.

County Longford Industrial Heritage Survey - Phase 2 - Corn & Flour Mills

The County Longford Industrial Heritage Survey 2020 is a continuation of the County Longford Industrial Heritage Survey 2009, a desktop survey that identified potential sites of industrial heritage significance. Mills were prioritised due to their industrial and social heritage value.

In this project, we worked with historian Dr Seamus Mimmagh, who completed his doctoral thesis on corn and flour mills in the county, and Dr Fred Hamond, Ireland’s leading industrial archaeologist.

The project comprised of two parts. The first was a field survey of forty-two corn and flour mills with Dr Hamond, based on Dr Mimmagh’s 2010 analysis, assessing their survival, condition and potential for appropriate reuse. The second element of the project was the development of Dr Mimmagh’s unpublished doctoral thesis as a book, to be published in 2021.



Biodiversity Awareness Programme 2019

This programme commenced in 2017 with support under the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund. The COVID-19 pandemic required adjustment to the project, undertaking biodiversity and awareness measures that could allow social distancing, and reach an online audience. This comprised video projects with the Longford Environmental Alliance, Ardagh Landscapes, Ounamoun Nature Reserve, Longford Beekeepers and Swift Conservation Longford; radio information adverts on Shannonside FM with Roscommon CoCo and the printing of Gardening for Biodiversity and Swifts booklets jointly with the Heritage Officer Network.

The North Longford Native Seed Nursery project, in partnership with the Dromard Area Mens Shed at the former Latin School at Moyne, continued with volunteers propagating seeds collected in 2019.

Heritage Week 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent restrictions, The Heritage Council developed an online community-based project model. Community and heritage groups in County Longford took this opportunity to showcase their local heritage and ongoing projects. These included the Bishop Willam O’Higgins Project, the Granard Mens Shed, St Paul’s Newtownforbes Bicentenary, Dr Kieran O’Conor on ‘The Moat of Granard’ and John Connell on the Camlin among others.



One especially engaging project was Lockdown Longford Lore, a creative initiative based on the folklore collection of Cáit Uí Bhrádaigh of Granard. All of the videos were hosted on social media and attracted large audiences from around the globe, in particular Longford diaspora.

Creative Ireland - Longford

The Heritage Office continued to work as part of the Creative Ireland - Longford team, including contributing a video retelling of the legend of Midir & Etáin by Scéalta Beo to Cruinniú na nÓg.

Conservation Grants

In 2020 the Heritage Office administered four conservation grants on behalf of the Department of the Housing, Local Government & Heritage: The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020 (BHIS 2020), the Historic Structures Fund 2020 (HSF 2020), the July Jobs Stimulus Programme 2020 and the new Community Monuments Fund (JJSP 2020).

Under the BHIS 2019, County Longford was allocated €60,000 which enabled six protected structures, a blend of private, community and educational buildings, to undertake essential and urgent conservation repairs. This grant generated 342 days of labour, and almost €65,000 of private investment in Longford's protected structures.

The HSF 2020 supported two structures in County Longford, including repairs of the remarkable James Gandon-designed stables to Carriglass Demesne, and Creevaghmore House near Ballymahon. These projects were supported by an allocation of €40,000 supplemented by €7,060 private investment, generating 290 days of labour. Both buildings also availed of the JJSP fund, receiving €57,240, supplemented by €10,100 in private investment and creating 125 days of labour.

Conservation repair reports for the tower house at Abbeyshrule Abbey and the Knock Windmill ruin were funded under newly created Community Monuments Fund.

Decade of Centenaries/ Longford At War

The Heritage Office provided support to the ongoing national Decade of Centenaries programme. This included the ongoing management of our online database of Longford military personnel on www.longfordatwar.ie and assisting in the management of the online lecture series.

Other Collaborative Heritage Projects

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

- Providing heritage information booklets for Longford Library, Heritage and Archives Services packs for COVID-19 cocooners.
- Participating in the EZxploring self-guided walking tours initiative with Longford Regeneration, Longford Tourism and Longford Archives.
- Participating in the Oliver Goldsmith Winter Festival online lectures.
- Providing guidance and advice on heritage matters to Local Authority employees and departments.
- Providing support and advice to private individuals, local heritage and community groups in the care, conservation and promotion of their heritage.
- Maintaining Social Media accounts to promote and advance Longford's heritage, and contributing to the Longford County Council and Longford Libraries social media accounts.

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

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

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

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

Services

- Motor Taxation
- Rates/Housing Rents/Housing Loan Payments
- General Office – processing all payments.

Payment Practices

The provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002 applies to Longford County Council. Systems are in place to ensure that interest penalties are not incurred. Total amount of interest penalties:

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

Expenditure

Local Government Act 2001 – Section 142 Expenditure	
Mayor and Other Allowances	€83,850
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	€4,369
Representational Payments, Expenses of Members and Representation at Conferences	€489,137
Total	€577,356

Income Generation Unit

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

Set out in the table below is a summary of our revenue collection performance for 2020 with comparatives for 2019 and 2018.

Category	2020 % Collected	2019 % Collected	2018 % Collected
Rates	81%	88%	89%
Rents	89%	90%	93%
Housing Loans	64%	59%	55%

Rates

The Rates Section implemented and managed the Restart Grant Schemes from late May to November 2020. Grants totalling €6.2million were paid to 664 Restart Grant and 672 Restart Grant Plus applicants. A Commercial Rates waiver scheme was processed in this Section for a nine months period in 2020.

Housing Rent and Loans

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

This unit is responsible for the housing loans function including collection of loan charges, managing loan accounts that are in arrears and processing housing loan applications.

During 2020 there were 33 applications received, 17 were approved, 14 were refused and 12 loans were advanced.

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

Motor Tax

There were no significant developments in motor tax legislation during the year. Receipts for motor tax locally were again down from 2019 (€3,193,521). Due to COVID-19 there was an increase in online motor tax transactions and postal applications received in the office.

Motor Tax Transactions	2020 No. Transactions	2020 Amount	2019 No. Transactions	2019 Amount
Vehicle Licences (Discs)	10,750	€ 1,914,895	17,674	€ 2,986,509
Miscellaneous Transactions (Vehicle Registration Certificates, Trade Plates etc.)	2,787	€ 172,910	3,648	€ 207,012
Total Motor Tax Transactions	13,537	€2,087,805	21,322	€3,193,521

Control and Compliance Unit

The Control and Compliance unit was created in 2018 to combine two integral aspects of the organisation - Internal Audit and Procurement Compliance, this unit has developed successfully into an essential service within Longford County Council.

The **Internal Audit** section within this unit comprises the Internal Auditor and the Internal Audit Assistant. Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function established by Management to objectively examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy of internal controls. Statutory/designated functions and responsibilities include:

- Preparation and implementation of internal audit plans including a strategic plan and annual work plan.
- Planning and performing audit assignments including risk assessments, SICAP, Public Spending Code and reviewing the Internal Audit Charter.
- Reviewing the adequacy of controls within the organisation, identifying and recommending improvements where required.
- Reporting to the Audit Committee, Management Team and to external Bodies including the National Oversight and Audit Commission.
- Data Co-ordinator for the Performance Indicators.
- Article 48 Checks in conjunction with the LEADER Programme.

Internal Audit as part of the overall governance and control environment strives to ensure that adequate internal controls are in operation to safeguard the assets and interests of the organisation and that value for money is achieved across all activities.

The centralised procurement section of the unit is tasked with procurement compliance and education for the whole organisation, underpinning the Finance team objectives by ensuring as far as possible that value for money is achieved in a manner that is fair and equitable to all vendors. This is accomplished through a collaborative approach of advising and guiding staff as required and providing the necessary assurances to senior management that best practice has been adhered to.

On behalf of Longford County Council, the Procurement Officer liaises with the Office of Government Procurement, The Local Government Management Agency and Supplygov regarding all issues relating to Procurement.

Control and Compliance Unit members continue to train and upskill to ensure professional competence and due care, which benefits both the individual team member and the organisation as a whole, in terms of the provision of assurances and confidence to the organisation on the guidance issued from the unit.

The Procurement section also assists with competition evaluations as required and acts as an independent advisor to all evaluation teams. Monthly expenditure reports are compiled for Management Team outlining areas for improvement in procurement and highlighting the level of compliance in the organisation. It is envisaged that during 2021, there will be additional attention placed on reporting to colleagues in other sections throughout the Council, ensuring that action is taken where required.



INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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

2020 will be remembered as a defining year for the use of Information Technology within Longford County Council. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 required us to accelerate the rollout and adoption of digital technologies and has transformed the way we can operate. The rollout of technology in response to the pandemic was achieved in the most difficult of circumstances and its success could be measured by a first ever All Ireland Award for the use of IT by our elected members and Senior Management Team when awarded the Chambers Ireland, Excellence in Local Government Award for *“Initiatives through the Municipal Districts, Embracing Remote Working Technology to Support Community and Voluntary Groups”*, the award was achieved for the rapid introduction of remote working to ensure council meetings and the business of the council could continue regardless of the pandemic.

EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS 2020



A significant investment in time and expertise was dedicated to the adoption of MS Teams and its related collaboration applications. Also, a massive procurement and rollout of devices to facilitate the continuance of local government business within the county was undertaken and successfully completed, ensuring the work of the council continued in a safe and COVID-19 compliant manner throughout 2020.

Community CCTV continued to be a significant body of work for the IS Section, with work on Data Protection measures and community engagement and other related non-IT activities taking a significant amount of resource but allowing the upgrade and extension of Longford Town CCTV to progress.

The following were the key areas of focus in 2020.

Network Infrastructure – IT Applications and Development

Longford County Council's ICT network is made up of several complex components which require on-going management, maintenance and monitoring. During 2020 the Council completed the tender process for a hybrid

cloud architecture, allowing the organisation to move towards more non-traditional office-based work processes and practices, while also providing scalable on demand additional computing resources as and when required.

Notable projects and work completed during 2020 included:

- Completion of the hyper converged tender
- Forest exit project completed
- MDM update completed in addition to upgrade of numerous business applications such as iReg for example.
- Completion of the tender for the upgrade and extension of Longford Town CCTV System
- Completion of all Data Protection and Stakeholder and Community Engagement for the upgrade and extension of Longford Town CCTV System
- Implementation and reporting on, of alternative measures to the introduction of CCTV in Longford Town
- Management and administration of the joint An Garda Síochána and Longford County Council steering group to oversee and provide governance to Longford Town Community CCTV system. Four meetings were held in 2020 and a number of presentations and updates made to the Municipal District and JPC, all overseen and organised by the IS Section
- Preliminary report completed on implementation of CCTV in Granard and Edgeworthstown
- Application for Section 38(3)(c) authorisation for upgrade and expansion of Longford town CCTV system submitted
- Longford town CCTV Stage 1 Community CCTV Grant Aid funding application submitted
- Procurement and rollout of devices to facilitate blended work practices for all employees
- Air Conditioning system completely updated for main server room
- SRFT completed for Managed Print Service OGP mini competition
- Communications infrastructure update undertaken with complete update of switch stack completed
- Office 365 blended working and collaboration tools successfully implemented for full organisation with training provided to all employees and elected members
- Updated security protocols implemented to ensure the confidentiality, Integrity and availability of remote workings solutions
- Major update of internal phone system implemented to facilitate blended working
- Call centre management software created and implemented for COVID-19 emergency Call Centre
- Phone system implemented for COVID-19 emergency Call Centre, the phone system allowed employees take desk phone calls remotely allowing the call centre to work and operate in a safe and secure COVID-19 compliant manner
- Tender completed for mobile housing inspections app using O365 suite applications
- Asset tracking process developed and deployed on existing internal application
- Technology implemented to facilitate Hybrid council meetings
- 6,734 IT helpdesk calls/issues resolved during 2020

GIS and Database Systems

The Council's Geographic Information System (GIS) continued to play a fundamental role throughout all business areas in 2020, some notable projects and work completed during 2020 included:

- COVID-19 Community Response call centre, mapping application and reporting tool to support the effective and safe delivery of services into the communities of County Longford
- The implementation of the digital communication tool MapAlerter to facilitate the issuing of focused service disruption alerts to employees, citizen subscribers and relevant stakeholders in the business areas of Roads, Water and Planning
- The development and enhancement of GIS web applications to the business areas to facilitate spatial data collection and analysis that support more informed and strategic decision making
- Supply of spatial data to third parties to support the County Development Plan and the N4 constraints study
- Embarked on a SQL database migration project to upgrade all business databases from SQL 2008 to SQL 2016
- Implementation and support of the Business Restart Grant system and the Restart Grant Plus system

Digital Projects and Broadband

The Councils IT Section continued to play a major role in the promotion of the digital agenda within the Local Authority and wider County. During 2020, some notable projects and work completed included:

- WIFI4EU tender completed and implementation completed in Longford, Ballymahon and Drumlish providing each area with town centre Community WIFI
- 10 Broadband Connection Points developed throughout the county under the NBP, with 4 going live before the end of 2020, providing rural communities with access to high speed broadband
- Digital Strategy for County Longford completed and implemented with reporting relations established to Corporate Governance SPC
- Students Eduroam network rolled out in County Libraries
- Corporate digital communication tool implemented allowing for targeted notification's on LCC service areas with communities. The tool was also used for internal communication's during the initial stages of the pandemic
- Support provided for Microsoft Team meetings to ensure all users could participate e.g. Community Call Forum, Elected Members MD meetings, LCDC, Age Friendly Alliance, Regeneration etc
- Web form and middleware to link financial systems to grant form developed and implemented for Business Restart Scheme and second Restart Grant Plus Scheme. Training provided to Finance staff to operate system
- Website and all social media channels updated regularly during COVID-19 emergency. Significant following now in place thanks to this work
- Social Media posting in multiple languages English, Irish, Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian
- National Excellence in Local Government Award –the prestigious award for “Outstanding Initiative through the Municipal Districts”. The award recognised Longford County Councils strive for innovation and leadership in adopting digital technology to allow the elected members continue to serve their communities during pandemic

Number of Website Page Views		
Website	2019	2020
longfordcoco.ie	572,754	531,473
longfordlibrary.ie	73,446	65,824
longford.ie	50,231	51,772
longfordppn.ie	4,762	5,318



REGENERATION

In 2015 Longford County Council established a dedicated, cross-sectoral Regeneration team to coordinate the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the entire county in support of an enhanced quality of life for those living, working or visiting County Longford. This structure consists of a multidisciplinary team of eleven, including administrative, technical and professional staff operating under the Finance directorate. As of January 2021, in excess of €16.4 million grant funding has been successfully secured for projects, the implementation and delivery of which has contributed significantly to the local economy, supporting employment and has led to immense improvements to the infrastructure of the county.



White Bridge at Newcastle Forest near Ballymahon

The team works closely and engages with local communities, Elected Members and agencies to identify projects, source funding, guide and advise on project development and implementation to enhance and develop County Longford. The Regeneration Department works extensively with local communities to enhance their local areas but also focuses on the regeneration of the County from a more strategic perspective, to build on the existing natural assets within the County and to make it a more attractive place to live, work and visit. This partnership approach has been supported by the establishment of Collaboration Groups/Town Teams in a number of settlements across the county, namely:

- Lanesborough/Ballyleague Collaboration Group
- Ballymahon Town Team
- Drumlish/Ballinamuck Town Team and
- Edgeworthstown Town Team

The schemes identified for implementation are based on a coordinated strengthening of the three main pillars, Economic, Social and Physical regeneration of the County. The Regeneration Team has worked with the Town Teams in the development of a number of projects to date and continues to progress delivery of the action plans, including obtaining funding for an outdoor covered performance and meeting space in Edgeworthstown, a covered outdoor event space to facilitate outdoor markets and public events in Ballymahon and for the provision of a footpath linking residential areas in Lanesborough town centre. Our work with the local communities also involves extensive consultation with the various statutory stakeholders.

In 2020, because of the Government restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the many upgraded walkways and trails delivered by the Regeneration team provided much needed respite to the citizens of Longford. The development of the recreational infrastructure across the county will also play a key role in our economic recovery from COVID-19 as they form a key part of the tourism offering of the county and the wider Hidden Heartlands.

To date, a number of Masterplans have been prepared, including Ballyminion and Camlin Quarter, while others have been submitted for funding applications and will be progressed in 2021 should they be successful. In 2020 consultants were appointed to prepare Regeneration Strategies for the towns of Granard and Lanesborough/Ballyleague. The aim is to develop and deliver an effective short, medium- and long-term path to enterprise and job creation in these areas, building on existing and planned investment and innovation initiatives. In 2021 further work will be undertaken by the Regeneration team in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders on delivery of the actions highlighted in the Consultants reports.

As part of the regeneration of the county, the Unfinished Estates team continues to make excellent progress in resolving the issues and difficulties of unfinished private estates. Site Resolution Plans have been agreed and are currently being implemented on the remaining estates to bring them to taking in charge standard.

Funding

In 2020 the regeneration team has had continued success in securing funding for a range of projects addressing enterprise, amenity and tourism development along with public realm improvements and large scale Urban and Rural regeneration. Grant funding has been secured under various schemes through the Department of Rural and Community Development, the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, the Department of Tourism, Transport & Sport and Fáilte Ireland. These schemes include Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Rural Renewal Development Fund and Urban Renewal Development Fund. The grants available range from 75 to 90 per cent of project costs and Longford County Council in conjunction with community groups provide the remaining 10 to 25 per cent of funding required for project implementation.



Longford County Council confirmed their commitment to regeneration in the 2020 budget to generate matched funding to secure these initiatives and is committed to allocating financial resources for continued implementation of these positive projects into the future. A primary focus of the Regeneration team is in the securing of funding to enhance existing amenities and develop new ones across the County. The table below details the number of applications submitted by the Regeneration team under the various schemes available, as well as the number of successful applications and the value of those funding streams. Funding of €16,349,778 has been secured to date under various schemes. This money is further enhanced by match funding provided by Longford County Council and contributions to be made by communities in certain instances.

2020 Funding Applications and Announcements

In 2020, the Regeneration Team submitted 48 applications for funding to central government under a number of funding streams, of which 29 were successful and we await announcements on a further 9 submissions as detailed below.

Funding Stream	Applications Submitted	Successful Applications	Grant Awarded
Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020	25	16	€711,061
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	2	2	€593,082
RRDF 2020	1	1	€468,750
Just Transition	4	3	€399,500
ORIS 2020 - Measure 1	7	7	€122,745
Total	39	29	€2,295,138

Funding Stream	2020 Applications Submitted	Successful Applications	Grant Awarded
Fáilte Ireland - Platforms for Growth	1	TBA	TBA
URDF	1	TBA	TBA
Climate Action Fund	1	TBA	TBA

RRDF €500k+ projects	2	TBA	TBA
ORIS M2 & M3	4	TBA	TBA

As of January 2021, the Regeneration team are working on projects totalling €20.5 million which have been completed or are ongoing in 2020/2021 detailed below:

Scheme Name	Project	Project cost
URDF 2018	Longford Connected	€ 3,987,140
RRDF 2018	Granard Motte Project Heritage Tourism Project	€ 3,830,000
Faillte Ireland	Granard Motte Project	€ 627,500
RRDF 2018	Edgeworthstown Library & Public Realm	€ 4,548,794
RRDF 2019	Abbeysrule Project	€ 696,354
RRDF 2020	Enhancement of Attractiveness of Lanesborough as a Tourism Destination.	€ 625,000
DTTAS (Dept Tourism, Transport & Sport)	Gymnasium Extension at the Mall Complex	€ 514,878
DTTAS (Dept Tourism, Transport & Sport)	Funding Round – Carbon Tax 2020 -Mid Shannon Greenway Section	€ 60,000
DTTAS (Dept Tourism, Transport & Sport)	Royal Canal Greenway	€ 533,082
Faillte Ireland Destination Towns	The Royal Canal Spur Gateway Project	€ 923,265
Gas Networks Irl	Ballymahon Gas Network	€ 461,841
ORIS M1 2019	Newcastle Woods Perimeter Walk	€ 24,242
ORIS M1 2019	Kilashee to Clondra Royal Canal Upgrade Works	€ 24,932
ORIS M1 2019	Repair of Mill Races, Mosstown Mill	€ 28,190
ORIS M1 2019	The Mall Walk Upgrade	€ 24,775
ORIS M1 2019	Ballinalee Forest Walks	€ 24,798
ORIS M2 2019	Knappogue Bog Walk	€ 210,049
ORIS M3 2018	Longford Town Royal Canal	€ 592,309
ORIS M3 2018	Lanesborough to Royal Canal Link	€ 242,478
ORIS M3 2019	Mid Shannon Wilderness park Greenway Project 76kms (Corlea Part 2 & Ederra Bog Walk) -6kms	€ 603,507
T&V Renewal 2018	Ballinalee - Rose Cottage renovation & Improvements to Clonfin Memorial Site	€ 127,842
T&V Renewal 2018	Ballymahon - Opening up of back lands with off-street car park	€ 127,200
T&V Renewal 2018	Edgeworthstown - Enterprise Hub fit	€ 125,000
T&V Renewal 2018	Legga - Tourism project, telling the history of education in North Longford -Latin School	€ 94,000
T&V Renewal 2019	Danes Hill, Ardagh - Extension of walkway to link with Ardagh walk and signage	€ 69,830
T&V Renewal 2019	Main Street, Drumlish -Promote heritage and history through provision of signage	€ 26,300
T&V Renewal 2019	Main Street, Keenagh - Village Enhancement, underground, ducting and footpath reinstatement	€ 168,769
T&V Renewal 2019	Aghnaskea, Killashee - Develop a car park beside Royal Canal	€ 128,374
T&V Renewal 2019	Rose Cottage - Ballinalee, 2nd phase of redevelopment, Interpretation and fit out of café	€ 140,000
T&V Renewal 2019	Legga Cemetery - Footpath to link Legga Church and cemetery	€ 96,500
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 1	Aughnacliffe: Construction of footpath to link residential and services areas in village	€ 55,445
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 1	Ballymahon: To create a covered outdoor event space to facilitate outdoor markets and public events	€ 34,425
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 1	Lisryan: Enhancements to village recreational facility to allow use all year round	€ 27,884
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 2	Edgeworthstown: The provision of an Urban Greenway within the town, connecting some residential areas with the town and public amenities.	€ 52,000
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 2	Fit out of 8 Broadband Connection Points.Mullinlaghta, Abbeysrule, Corlea, Aughnacliffe, Granard, Carrickedmond	€ 24,070
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 2	Upgrade and fit out of Aughakine Community Centre, Moydow for use as a Broadband Connection Point.	€ 31,894
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 3	Tier 5 Villages: Provision of seating and cycle stands across various locations	€ 45,000
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 3	Ballinalee: Provision of lighting & seating along newly developed forest walk	€ 34,311
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 3	Newtowncashel: Provision of outdoor seating , tables & planting	€ 13,100
T&V Renewal 2020 Round 3	The enhancement of Breadan's Lane within Longford Town, including new lighting to make the area more usable for the traders and increase connectivity within the town.	€ 45,000
Dept of the Environment, Climate & Communications	Just Transition: Lanesborough Anaerobic Digestion (AD) feasibility study	€ 100,000
Dept of the Environment, Climate & Communications	Just Transition: Lanesborough Tourism Hub	€ 250,000
Dept of the Environment, Climate & Communications	Just Transition: Mid Shannon Wilderness Park	€ 120,000
		20,520,074.96

The Regeneration team continue to work closely with the local communities in the development and delivery of key projects for the enhancement of our local towns, village and natural amenities. In January 2021 funding was announced for the following successful applications under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure (ORIS) and Town and Village schemes and these projects will be delivered in 2021. The projects supported through funding announcements include:

ORIS 2020 Project name	Project Description	Funding Approved	Project cost
Aughnacliffe River Walk	Development of phase 2 at Aughnacliffe	€20,000	€27,845
Knappogue Bog walk Extension	An extension to the Knappogue Bog Walk	€20,000	€28,330
Old Bog Line	The reinstatement of the Bog Line to provide a walking trail for the local community at Culray, Aughnacliffe	€20,000	€28,545
Ballinamuck Signage	The design and provision of signage at Ballinamuck	€2,745.45	€3,051
Commons North walk Upgrade	Maintenance and repairs at Commons North, Lanesborough	€20,000	€24,959
Support of existing walks and trails	The provision of footfall counters on a number of recently developed walks within County Longford to quantify the numbers of users and impact of investment in trails at Corn Hill, Newcastle Woods, Corlea, Derrycassin	€20,000	€29,283
Lough Naback Walk	The enhancement and further development of a trail at Lough Naback, Birrinigh	€20,000	€26,871
Total		€122,745	€168,883

Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020

Town & Village 2020	Town/Village	Project details	Grant funding approved	Project cost
Round 1	Aughnacliffe	Construction of footpath to link residential and services areas in village	€40,000	€55,445
Round 1	Ballymahon	To create a covered outdoor event space to facilitate outdoor markets and public events	€25,000	€34,425
Round 1	Lisryan	Enhancements to village recreational facility to allow use all year round	€25,000	€27,884
Round 1	Cluster of 4 Towns (Ballymahon, Laneborough, Granard, Edgeworthstown)	Development of self-guided walking tour maps, with a "seek and find" challenge which reveals the history of specific features in the main towns in Longford	€14,040	€15,600
Round 2	Edgeworthstown	The provision of an Urban Greenway within the town, connecting some residential areas with the town and public amenities.	€40,000	€52,000
Round 2	Longford BCP's 8 Towns	Fit out of 8 Broadband Connection Points. Mullinlaghta, Abbeyshrule, Corlea, Aughnacliffe, Granard, Carrickedmond	€21,843	€24,070
Round 2	Moydow	Upgrade and fit out of Aughakine Community Centre, Moydow for use as a Broadband Connection Point.	€25,000	€31,894
Round 3	Tier 5 Villages	Provision of seating and cycle stands across various locations: Aughnacliffe, Ballinamuck, Clondra, Drumlish, Ardagh.	€40,000	€44,850

Round 3	Ballinalee	Provision of lighting and seating along newly developed forest walk	€25,000	€34,311
Round 3	Newtowncashel:	Provision of outdoor seating, tables and planting	€11,790	€13,100
Round 3	Longford	The enhancement of Breadan's Lane within Longford Town, including new lighting to make the area more usable for the traders and increase connectivity within the town.	€40,000	€45,000
Main Scheme	Ardagh	The development of remote working facilities in an existing community centre.	€34,117	€37,908
Main Scheme	Edgeworthstown	The development of an outdoor covered performance and meeting space.	€100,000	€119,396
Main Scheme	Lanesborough	The provision of enhanced road signage identifying Lanesborough as a tourist destination; provision of a footpath linking residential areas with the town centre.	€71,820	€79,800
Main Scheme	Barry	The relocation of electricity wires and the upgrading of LED lighting in the village to facilitate the development of the village streetscape.	€100,000	€120,674
Main Scheme	Ballinalee	Enhancement of existing playground amenities in Ballinalee by developing an autism friendly community park. The provision of a walking/cycletrack.	€97,451	€108,279

Projects completed in 2020

Significant work was carried out in the completion of a number of walkway trails during 2020 that have an important impact on the people and economy of Longford. These include the opening of The Newcastle Woods Greenway at Newcastle Woods, Ballymahon in July 2020 and completion of the Longford Town Royal Canal Walkway. The Greenway links Newcastle Woods with the Royal Canal Greenway and allows users travel from Dublin along the Greenway and into Center Parcs. The Longford Town Royal Canal Walkway project involved the upgrade and development of parts of the town paths around the Royal Canal Greenway. It has resulted in the development of a looped walk of approximately 5km, finished to a high standard with a tarmac finish and high-quality lighting and signage. The Regeneration Department secured significant funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for ancillary infrastructure and signage along the Royal Canal.



The Drumlish to Monaduff section of the North Longford Rebel Trail was officially opened in March 2020 by Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Development. The development of this walkway/cycleway from Drumlish to Monaduff sportsgrounds encourages the local community to utilise the footpath and cycleway rather than private cars for accessing the facility and has increased the accessibility of the sports grounds, improving the health and wellbeing of the residents and enhanced the safety along this regional road.

Upgrade works including fencing, street lighting and tarmacadam completed on the entrance trail from St Johns Church Battery Road to The Albert Reynolds Peace Park in Longford town. Due to its proximity to the town centre and accessibility, the area is very popular for walking and running, as well as those involved in organised sports.



Work completed on the repair of a stonework and carpark formation at Mosstown/Limetree Avenue access road. This project is part of a larger plan to connect amenities in the local villages to the Royal Canal Greenway and the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park to encourage users to spend longer in the area. The development of a car park which accommodates 38 car parking spaces adjoining the church in the village of Killashee completed in December 2020. As a result, the safety for users of the carpark and road users at this very busy traffic location is greatly enhanced.

The extension to the indoor gymnasium at The Mall, Templemichael, Longford which consisted of the construction of a single storey gymnasium with a reception area and auxiliary works at the Albert Reynolds Peace Park completed in November 2020. The development completes the facility to regional standard, and it provides a vital asset to the citizens of Longford.

Projects ongoing in 2020

URDF – Longford Connected

Works progressed in 2020 on the €4m URDF project in Longford town with initial resurfacing carried out to the shopping centre and enabling surveys and design work underway in all project areas. The Mel's Road Section of the project commenced in 2020, however, site closure under COVID-19 restrictions has halted progress. These works will improve accessibility, visual appearance and pedestrian amenity along this route linking the Albert Reynolds Peace Park amenity area, St Michael's School, the shopping centre facilities and parking area for tourism associated with St Mel's Cathedral. Consultants have been engaged to bring the remainder of the project at the Shopping Centre and Market Square to construction tender stage in the first quarter of 2021.



Royal Canal Spur Gateway Project

Consultants were appointed to develop and procure design solutions to enhance connections between Longford town centre and the Royal Canal Greenway. Elements of the project include improved walking and cycling facilities from the rear of the Market Square to the greenway and the establishment of a multi-use urban space located on the former harbour, to emphasise the position of Longford as a destination town and improve facilities for locals and visitors alike. It is anticipated that the design will be finalised in early 2021 and issued for construction tender.

Granard Motte Project

The Longford County Council Regeneration team was successful in securing funding of €2.8 million under RRDF for creation of a Heritage Park at the base of Granard Motte. As part of the development, Fáilte Ireland granted €627,500 towards the "Norman Heritage Park". Agreement on the purchase of the 12th century Motte by Longford County Council was finalised in July 2020 and contracts for this Interpretative Centre were signed with DMW Creative Limited. Work continued throughout 2020 with the regeneration department engaging regularly with Granard Motte Community Enterprises Limited (GMCE). This development will greatly enhance tourism in the area and will contribute to the economic and social regeneration of Granard town and surrounding areas for many years to come.



Edgeworthstown Public Realm

In 2020 undergrounding of services completed and new LED street lighting was installed along Edgeworthstown Main Street. Consultant architects were appointed for the public realm works and detailed design completed. Construction work progressed well on the new library despite COVID-19 restrictions. The project is expected to complete in 2021.

The Yard Hub Abbeyshrule

In July 2020 contracts were signed for the appointment of architects de Blacam and Meagher to 'The Yard Hub' project in Abbeyshrule. The Yard Hub project involves the redevelopment of a derelict site in Abbeyshrule village to create space for economic and enterprise development. This facility will provide local people currently facing long commutes the opportunity to work close to home, and it will also bring economic activity to the village centre. The Regeneration department worked closely with our elected members, the local community group and Waterways Ireland in development of this project. The Yard Hub will form part of the network of hubs in County Longford which contributes to the achievement of a low carbon economy and enhances the work/life balance of our citizens.



Contract signing at 'The Yard Hub' project in Abbeyshrule

Enhancement and Attractiveness of Lanesborough as a Tourism Destination

During the year funding was acquired to carry out detailed design and environmental assessments to statutory consent for the development of an Amphitheatre, Visitor Centre and Link road within Lanesborough town which will reposition it as a tourism destination within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Consultants have been appointed to explore preliminary design solutions (and associated environmental assessments) for the development of an Amphitheatre in the lime quarry at Commons North, Lanesborough.

Mid Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway

In 2020 work completed on the construction of a new trail of approximately 2.4km in length accommodating walking and cycling through the Cloonbearla section of the Lanesborough to Clondra Bog walk. This key piece of tourism infrastructure in County Longford will ultimately link the Royal Canal Greenway at Clondra with Lanesborough. The completion of this project has had a significant impact on the delivery of tourism infrastructure within the county and the Hidden Heartlands and is an important element in the delivery of the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway. During the year consultants were appointed to prepare a preliminary design and associated environmental assessments for the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway which consists of approx. 70km of walking and cycling network connecting the Royal Canal, Corlea and other Greenways with the bridge crossing of the Shannon at Kilnacarrow. Their work will complete in 2021.

Rural Working Hubs

The Regeneration team continued to work with our project partners in Leader Aisapari in Finland on the rural work hubs initiative. A successful webinar was held in November to discuss rural working hubs with over ninety participants taking part from across Ireland, Finland and Europe. The discussion provided participants with an insight into the policy context, strategic approach and good practices in the development of rural working hubs, as well as practical experience from a community perspective. Our objective is to develop a network of hubs across the county that will allow people to have a healthier work life balance and help to regenerate our towns and villages.

Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition process is a means to secure the decarbonisation of the Irish economy while protecting those communities that are most affected by the changes required to achieve this. The closure of Lough Ree power station and the cessation of peat harvesting in the midlands lead to the acceleration of the Just Transition process in 2020 and the Midlands Regional Transition Team (MRTT) were established to develop and implement responses in conjunction with the Department of the Communications, Climate Action and the Environment, ESB and Bord na Mona. The Regeneration team were successful in securing funding for the following three projects under this process.

Name of Project	Total Project Cost	Funding Received
Lanesborough Anaerobic Digestion and Circular economy Feasibility	€100,000	€85,000
Lanesborough Tourism Hub	€250,000	€212,500
Mid Shannon Wilderness Park	€120,000	€102,000

Lanesborough Anaerobic Digestion and Circular Economy Feasibility Study

Funding of €85,000 (with an addition matched funding of €15,000 from LCC) was secured for an investigation into the feasibility of the development of Anaerobic digestion and associated circular economic initiatives in the Lanesborough area under strand 1 of the Just transition fund (JTF). Following initial consultation and scoping with key stakeholders, it is anticipated that consultants will be appointed in Q1 2021.

Mid Shannon Wilderness Park

A joint application was submitted with Roscommon County Council for the delivery of the next stage of the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park, to bring the conversion of Kilnacarrow bridge to the next stage and to carry out preliminary design and environmental assessments of the bogs within Roscommon for the continuation of the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway. The delivery of this project will allow for a future application for capital funding for the delivery of the project.

Lanesborough Tourism Hub

As part of the move to a green community, and a drive to promote Lanesborough as a tourism destination of choice and a hub for the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park, it is now proposed to progress a suite of projects to build on the tourism infrastructure in the area and make Lanesborough/Ballyleague a more attractive place to visit. This will result in a tourism hub, with a critical mass of tourism projects to be able to promote slow tourism in the area, encouraging visitors to dwell longer in the area, in line with the offering of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

The funding will allow for the feasibility, detailed design, environmental assessments and preparation of applications for statutory permissions for the provision a museum telling the story of the industrial heritage of the area and the role of the River Shannon in transportation, energy and engineering, access to the islands within Lough Ree from Lanesborough, campervan facilities and a surf wave centre.

Urbact Urbsecurity

Longford County Council recognised that the issue of urban security faces many towns and cities across Ireland, as well as Europe and Longford County Council Regeneration Department recognises the importance of a collaborative approach to seeking solutions to this problem. As part of this approach we have become involved in a European project working with 8 other project partners to plan safer cities. UrbSecurity is a project under the URBACT programme, which intends to analyse strategies and concepts of urban design and planning that could contribute to prevent segregation and anti-social behaviour, and also to improve citizen's quality of life and their perception of urban security and safety. As a network of 9 cities, UrbSecurity aims to implement an integrated and participatory approach to urban security by involving all relevant stakeholders in the process of co-creating an Integrated Action Plan for each participating city. The project is led by the city of Leiria in Portugal and includes Madrid (Spain), Parma (Italy), Mechelen (Belgium), Pella (Greece), Michalove (Slovakia), Szabolcs 05 Association of Municipalities (Hungary) and the region of Romagna Faentina (Italy) along with Longford. This project is an URBACT project, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

As part of this project, the Regeneration Unit promoted the work of Longford County Council on the European stage, at a number of online meetings hosted by URBACT. An URBACT Local Group (ULG) was established with representatives from different sectors within Longford, including An Garda Síochána, the youth, new communities and the business community. The learnings from the European partners is shared with the ULG and good practice examples sought to implement to improve the security and safety in Longford.

Policy

The Regeneration section continues to work with the other departments within Longford County Council, feeding into the policy making process and working towards implementation of Corporate Policy objectives, particularly in the areas of community engagement, quality of life and climate action.

Masterplanning

The adoption of the Camlin Quarter Urban Design and Economic framework in 2019 set the foundations for significant and ambitious applications in 2020 under the URDF and Fáilte Ireland “Platforms for Growth” funding streams, totalling in the region of €30m. These project proposals aim to transform the northern area of Longford Town through the establishment of an appropriate mix of uses in tandem with the regeneration of derelict areas and public realm enhancements to act as regionally important catalysts in the future development of the Town, augmenting and aligning with other projects underway such as Mall improvements and Longford Connected. Announcements on these funding streams are expected in the first quarter of 2021. Improvements in the Ballyminion area continue to focus on collaboration between the Regeneration, Enterprise, Roads and Planning sections of the Council. A crucial step is the designation of the area for “Regeneration” purposes to secure the application of the Vacant site levy and pursue site activation under the relevant legislative provisions.

Granard and Lanesborough Regeneration Strategies

In 2020 consultants were appointed to prepare Regeneration Strategies for the towns of Granard and Lanesborough/Ballyleague. The aim is to develop and deliver an effective short, medium- and long-term path to enterprise and job creation in these areas, building on existing and planned investment and innovation initiatives. In 2021 further work will be undertaken by the Regeneration team in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders on delivery of the actions highlighted in the Consultants reports.

Vacant Sites Levy

In accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, the relevant provisions were incorporated into the planning framework over the course of 2016 to facilitate the application of the Vacant Site Levy and a Register was established in January 2017. In 2018, 5 sites were entered on the register, three of which were issued with notices under Section 11 of the Act, regarding levy application from January 2019. Positive discussions and/or activity has occurred in respect of all sites registered and under consideration for registration, leading to land activation in certain instances. One site was removed from the register in 2019 following its redevelopment. A proposed variation process was carried out by the regeneration section and submitted to planning for Council approval in December 2020. This variation, once adopted, would expand the reach of the VSL to appropriate areas countywide and facilitate a review of the Vacant Site Register in 2021.

Gas Network Expansion

The regeneration section worked closely with Gas Networks Ireland to secure the expansion of the Gas Network across the Inny Bridge to serve Ballymahon, and this project was completed in 2020. An expression of interest under the Climate Action Fund was submitted in March 2020 in conjunction with GNI in support of the extension of the Gas Network to Longford and Edgeworthstown, establish an injection point and explore the potential of Anaerobic Digestion in the context of renewable gas and decarbonisation of agriculture and transport. An announcement of this call is awaited from the Department of Climate Action Environment and communications.

Unfinished Estates

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

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

- Taking in charge of completed developments

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

Conclusion

The work of the Regeneration Department continued to be recognised at national level in 2020. In February 2020 the department was shortlisted by the Irish Planning Institute for Awards under the Planning and Economic Development category. The shortlisting recognised the unique approach of Longford Regeneration in establishing a dedicated, cross sectoral, multi-project regeneration team to deliver projects to improve the quality of life for citizens across the county. In November 2020 the following four of the Regeneration department's projects were shortlisted for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020.

- Putting a heart back into Edgeworthstown in Supporting Sustainable Communities
 - Royal Canal Greenway - Longford Section in Supporting Tourism
 - County Longford Regeneration Initiative in Sustainable Environment
 - Albert Reynolds Peace Park Accessibility and Urban Connectivity initiatives in Enhancing the Urban Environment
- Royal Canal Greenway, Longford Branch*

The Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020 (ELG Awards), sponsored by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government are held to recognise and celebrate the outstanding work being carried out by local authorities all over Ireland.

The Regeneration Unit continue to strive for excellence in all elements of its work and will continue to work to support the Executive, the Elected Members and the various communities to ensure that Longford is a great place in which to live, work and visit. All sources of funding will be explored, and all work will be carried out to the highest standard.

January-December 2020

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

Migration from OHSAS 18001:2007 to ISO 45001:2018

In 2020, Longford County Council was awarded certification to the ISO 45001:2018 Safety Standard by the National Standard Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

ISO 45001 for occupational health and safety management systems that will help organisations reduce this burden by providing a framework to improve employee safety, reduce workplace risks and create better, safer working conditions, all over the world. The standard was developed by a committee of occupational health and safety experts and follows other generic management system approaches such as ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. It takes into account other International Standards in this area such as OHSAS 18001, the International Labour Organisation's ILO-OSH Guidelines, various national standards and the ILO's international Labour standards and conventions.

It is intended to assist Longford County Council to:

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

Longford County Council is recommended for certification to ISO 45001:2018 for cross organisational processes. The following departments were included within the scope of the audit.

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

In October 2020, the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) completed a successful certification audit. This is a very important certification for Longford County Council and demonstrates the commitment to the management and continuous improvement of health and safety to make Longford County Council a safer place for all employees.

Regulatory Inspections

There were no inspections carried out by the Health and Safety Authority in 2020. The Road Safety Authority completed an inspection within the Machinery yard they discussed vehicle testing procedures and the CVRT portal

on the RSA website. They also checked records of preventative maintenance inspections and paperwork relating corresponding repairs. They issued advice in relation to testing and procedures in relation to hire in vehicles.

Management of Change

Management of change is included as an agenda item on all Health and Safety meeting templates forms including safety monitoring meetings and management team meetings. This allows LCC to identify its response in a timely manner to changing environments whether it's the introduction to a new piece of equipment, a change or work practices/ process or how to deal with a worldwide pandemic such as COVID-19.

Longford County Council developed a high level COVID-19 Business Response Plan early in 2020 to outline the measures required to get back to work in a safe manner, taking in to account the most up-to-date public health advice. The LGMA developed a suite of Standard Operating Procedure guidance documents to support local authorities which identified control measures for operational activities to continue safely during COVID-19. These documents were amended into Longford county council risk assessment template, 33 COVID-19 risk assessments were issued and briefed to employees in 2020. An induction course was also developed for employees to raise awareness on the importance of complying with the control measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Employees also completed a return to work form ensuing all employees coming back into the workplace were free of COVID-19.

The Chief Executive assigned responsibility for COVID-19 compliance to the Acting Health and Safety Officer for the duration of the pandemic. The Acting Health and Safety Officer attended regular meetings with Senior Management to report on compliance. Monitoring compliance was completed by ensuring physical distancing, hygiene rules and COVID-19 control measures are been adhered to and maintained in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

The Safety Inspection Programme and Safety Inspection Forms were updated to reflect the changing requirements relating to COVID-19 compliance.

A number of Control measures were implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as

- remote working
- reducing the number of employees within offices by forming teams
- issuing PPE and hygiene gels and stations and
- installing physical barriers
- introducing one-way systems within buildings
- COVID-19 signage and information on notice boards

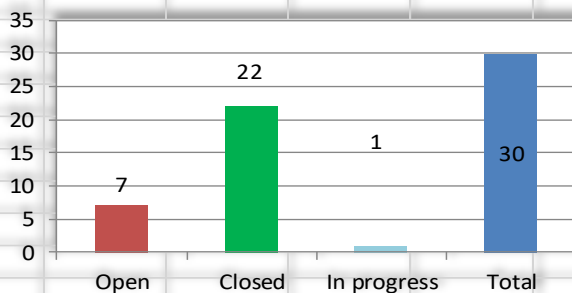
Construction activities which included direct labour and external contractors were requested to comply with Government guidelines which involved completing the CIF induction process and updating safety paperwork and on site process to identify the hazards of COVID-19 and the control measures required to prevent the spread of COVID-19, this was monitored throughout 2020 by the health and safety section to ensure compliance .

Summary of Accident/Incidents Reports for 2020

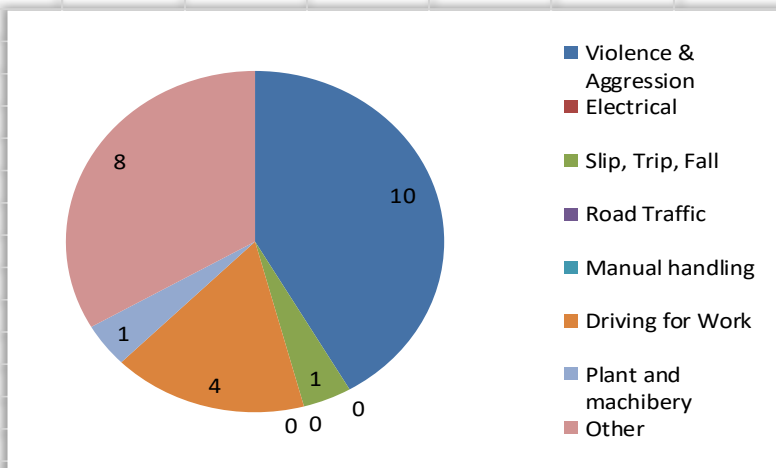
The reporting of accidents and incidents is an important element of the safety management system and is used as a tool for identifying areas for continuous improvement.

A total of 30 accidents and incidents were reported during the year 2020.

Investigation	
Open	7
Closed	22
In progress	1
Total	30



Classification	
Violence & Aggression	10
Electrical	0
Slip, Trip, Fall	1
Road Traffic	0
Manual handling	0
Driving for Work	4
Plant and machinery	1
Other	8



Reportable to HSA	
Reportable	2
Dangerous Occurrence	1
Total	3

The greatest number of incidents were reported in relation to Violence and Aggression and Driving for Work. Training in dealing with violence and aggression was carried out in 2019 and in Q1 2020 further training was completed with 15 library staff on the 27 November 2020 via Microsoft Teams.

Training on grey fleet was completed in Q1 of 2020 with 87 attendees.

Safety Statement/Risk Assessments

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

The Longford County Council safety statement was updated during 2020 and obtained the 'Plain English' mark from the National Adult Literacy Agency. Plain English is a way of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it. Longford is the first County Council in the country to receive the 'Plain English' mark for the Safety Statement.

Risk Assessments require completion for all work activities and buildings owned and/or operated by Longford County Council employees. A continuous programme for the completion, review, update and communication of risk assessments is in place for implementation within all sections of Longford County Council. COVID-19 policy and risk assessments were included in the Safety Statement.

Safety Inspections

In 2020, Longford County Council continued with the Safety Inspection Program which sets out a programme of work for safety inspections to be completed at fixed and mobile work locations. The Inspections are carried out by each Directorate and a report is provided to the Management Team on a quarterly basis. The Inspections are a useful tool for determining compliance with Health and Safety requirements within the organisation. Any noncompliance or issues identified in the Safety Inspections are added to an electronic action tracking system to ensure that all actions identified are addressed and satisfactorily closed by each section. 258 safety inspections were carried out in 2020 as part of the Safety Inspection Programme and a further 72 safety inspections were completed by the management team and health and safety section.

Health and Safety Auditing

In 2020, Longford County Council continued auditing of the health and safety management system. Due to COVID-19 the internal audit programme was not completed as per the scheduled dates agreed at the start of 2020, however, seven days of internal auditing were completed in 2020. The NSAI carried out two days of auditing. One day on site and one day remotely using Microsoft teams. Auditing is an independent, systematic and thorough review of all elements of the safety management system. This involved an external auditor collecting information to determine the reliability and effectiveness of the safety management system. This is a useful process and assists the County Council achieve its objectives of legal compliance by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to improve the effectiveness of health and safety management through continuous improvement

Health and Safety Training

Training is a key element of promoting a positive safety culture and developing good safety procedures on the job. The training courses held included Safe Pass, COVID-19 induction and risk assessment briefings, Event Management Panning, CPS, Chain Saw, First Aid, Manual Handling and Grey Fleet, Safety Representative and Violence and Aggression.

Communication and Consultation

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

- Preparation of Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures
- Monthly safety reports
- Safety representatives
- Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee meetings (in each department)
- Safety Management Committee meetings
- Management Team meetings

The Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings were held in each Directorate on a quarterly basis. Each Committee is chaired by the Director, and includes elected Safety Representatives, Line Managers and the Health and Safety Officer. This process allows for specific safety issues within each Directorate to be discussed. It is a legal requirement to have this process in place for addressing health and safety issues and giving safety representatives an opportunity to raise safety issues on behalf of their work colleagues.

Safety Management Team Meetings were held four times during the year to address issues raised at the Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings. This meeting is also used evaluate compliance with the health and safety legislation and to review progress on the Annual Programme of Works. The intranet is used as a communication tool for up to date content of the Safety Management System.

The Health and Safety Officer attends the Management Team meeting each month and provides an update on accidents and incidents, operational issues and national developments in Health and Safety. During COVID-19 the safety officer also assigned as COVID-19 Compliance officer attended bi-weekly meetings with the Management Team.

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

Contractors

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

2020 - Workplace fatalities in Ireland

There were 52 people fatally injured in work related accidents last year. Longford County Council remains fully committed to managing health and safety and will continue to develop the Safety Management System to ensure a safe place of work for all its employees and members of the public.

Health and Safety Awards 2020

In 2020, Longford County Council submitted an application for the National Irish Safety Awards (NISO). The Council won two awards; Consistent high achiever and Local Authority / Council Award making it the fifth year in a row for Longford County Council to win one of the top prizes.

NISO have held safety awards for the last 29 years and these awards have become very important for all companies in Ireland. This year more than 120 companies entered the awards including three other Councils. To enter the awards, the Council had to make a submission under 13 sections and provide evidence of compliance with each of the sections. There were four categories of awards and the council were short listed for the top category. Winning these awards would not have been possible without the commitment and input of all employees.



Annual Health and Safety Programme of Works 2020

The 2020 annual programme of works described the safety management system three objectives:

1. manage risk effectively,
2. manage safety, health and welfare performance in a proactive way, and
3. ensure that accidents and incidents are reported and investigated, and volumes are reduced over time.

Each objective was assigned goals and tasks within the programme of work for 2020. Updates on the progress and completion of these goals were included in the programme of work under a specific update column. Updates were reported to the management team at each Safety Management team meeting and the Management Review meeting held in September 2020.

The tasks and goals specified in the programme of work relate to accidents and incidents, HSA inspections, outcomes from safety inspections and audits, safety meetings, legal requirements, opportunities for improvements and any documents issued nationally for implementation.

HOUSING

Introduction

The number of applicants who were on the Council's Approved Housing List was high but stable during 2020. The Housing Department assists those on the list by means of a variety of Social Housing options. The options available include:

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

Applicants wishing to be included on the Approved Housing List are assessed to determine if they are eligible. The assessment looks at a range of factors including income and the circumstances of the applicant at the time of application. The number of applicants who were included on the Approved Housing List 31 December 2020 was 864.



Alder Field, Longford

Social Housing Provision

The Council provides accommodation for those on the Approved Housing List by a variety of means. In the year to 31 December 2020 the following were the numbers of units that were provided under the various categories.

	Number Delivered
Secondhand property acquisitions	32
Buy and renew	2
Social housing leases	19
Turnkey new build properties	45
Ras leases	6
Hap leases	111

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

Homelessness

There were 79 persons who presented as being homeless in County Longford during 2020. Homelessness is dealt with on a collaborative basis in the Midlands Region. Westmeath County Council is the lead agency for counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. Advice and assistance are provided to those who present as homeless by the Council's Housing Welfare Officer. The Council works collaboratively with local service providers in order to ensure that it can meet its obligations.

Voluntary Housing

During 2020 Longford County Council continued to work in cooperation with a number of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs). These bodies are continuing to bring forward proposals for the provision of housing for vulnerable people.

The Council will assist and support the Approved Housing Bodies and facilitate the accessing of funding for schemes that receive departmental approval.

Maintenance and Refurbishment

A total of €1,488,302 was provided in the 2020 Budget for the maintenance and repair of Council properties. The Council has a stock of in excess of 2,000 properties which vary greatly in age, standard and condition. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 Restrictions efforts were made to carry out as many repairs as possible throughout 2020. The procedures relating to the carrying out of maintenance and repairs were reviewed and updated in order to ensure that all repair work was carried out in a safe manner. This was done in order to comply with Government guidelines and to afford protection to both customers and employees. When requests to have repairs carried out were received, they were logged and responded to in a prioritised manner. Priority was afforded to matters which were deemed to be either emergency or high priority issues. The aim of attending to emergency repair requests within 3 days was complied with as was the aim of attending to urgent repairs requests within 7 days. More than 2,100 repair requests were responded to in 2020. Pre-letting works on almost 200 properties was also undertaken during 2020. Properties which were being re-let were brought up to a high standard as quickly as possible and were handed over to tenants in the shortest possible timeframe.

Energy Retrofitting Scheme and Windows and Doors Replacement Programme

The Council has been notified that it has been allocated €3.3 million to for the retrofitting of local authority-owned houses in the county. Throughout 2020 the procurement and other processes required to ensure that the retrofitting works could be commenced were being advanced. Condition surveys were carried out in order to identify the type of work that would need to be carried out in order to bring individual properties up to the required standards. The retrofitting of homes in Granard, Longford and Ballymahon Municipal Districts will result in warmer, more comfortable homes. The completion of the proposed work will result in the homes where work is completed being more comfortable and cheaper to heat. There will also be benefits in terms of improved energy performance and reduced carbon emissions.

Estate Management

The Estate Management Team continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations during 2020. The ability to do so was hampered to some degree by the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. There were difficulties relating to the conduct of Pre-Tenancy Meetings during much of 2020, but these were overcome. The members of the team continued to provide advice and assistance to Residents Associations and other such groups which are involved in providing very important supports in their areas.

Housing Grant Schemes

In 2020, 113 applications for Housing Grants, were approved across the three grant categories that were available to applicants.

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

The total value of the grants that were allocated was €507,133. Twenty-seven Housing Adaptation Grants to the value of €186,386 were awarded. Forty-one Mobility Aid Grants to the value of €148,292 were awarded. Forty-five Housing Aid for Older People Grants were awarded with the value of these being €172,455.

Work was carried out on 31 Council owned properties in order to address the medical needs of those living in the properties. The cost of these works was €168,031.

Traveller Accommodation

The work required to update the Traveller Accommodation Programme was completed in October 2019 when the Longford Traveller Accommodation Plan 2020-2024 was adopted by the Council. The revised Traveller Accommodation Plan includes the agreed targets for the numbers and types of accommodation that will be provided over the period from 2020 to 2024. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee was involved in the drafting of the new Traveller Accommodation Plan and met on a number of occasions throughout the year to discuss the progress that was being made in achieving the targets that had been set out for 2020.

Housing Disability Steering Group

The COVID-19 Restrictions that were in place during much of 2020 resulted in it not being possible for the group to conduct its business in the usual manner. The restrictions also had an impact on the work of providing accommodation suitable to the needs of those with disabilities as construction activity was less than what had been anticipated. The Council continued to provide accommodation that is designed to meet the needs of those with disabilities and completed adaptations to 31 of its properties. In addition to this assistance in the form of grants was provided to the owners of 113 privately owned properties during 2020.

Private Rented Property Inspections

Longford County Council is responsible for implementation and enforcement of standards in the private rental sector. Funding is made available to the Council based on the number of inspections that are carried out. Targets are set each year by the Department of the Environment. The target for 2020 was 570. The target was not achieved as the activities of the inspections team was very badly impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place for long periods during 2020. A total of 324 inspections were completed in the year to 31 December 2020.



PLANNING

The Planning Department has maintained maximum service during the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the challenges faced for customers and staff alike, a number of initiatives were implemented to ensure both were maintained in as safe and customer focused manner, including enhanced online services.

The level of planning activity in the County of Longford has maintained a steady pace in 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of planning applications, enforcement, compulsory purchase orders and the review of the County Development Plan (CDP). The Planning Department are committed to ensuring that all its activities are brought to successful completion within the timeframes as set out by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The implementation of the County Development Plan 2015-2021 in relation to tourism and trails projects is proving very successful and will be an asset in adding to the well-being of the County. New legislation, guidelines and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) have created ongoing challenges which are being successfully dealt with by the Planning Section to date. The setting up of the Office of the Irish Planning Regulator creates a new dynamic and challenge for us all in the review of the CDP. Significant activities undertaken by the Planning Department in 2020 are outlined below.

Development Management

The Development Management Section is responsible for the processing of all planning applications in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations. Applications in 2020 included a wide mix of areas from residential, agricultural, retail, amenity and employment activities. Ongoing planning meetings and discussions are taking place to successfully implement projects in County Longford.

Planning Statistics 2020	Number
Applications Received	327
Decisions to Grant	269
Decisions to Refuse	18
Appeals to An Bord Pleanála	15
Part 8 Applications Advertised	17
Part 8 Applications Adopted	15



Pre-planning consultations are an integral part of the Development Management process and are utilised on an ongoing and increasing basis. These meetings are held to provide an informative, higher quality and more transparent planning service to the general public. The Planning Department increased its online activities to maintain a consistent service including facilitating preplanning meetings and availability of documents online to meet the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic.

Planning applications are screened for appropriate assessment as required by the Habitats Directive and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). Licence applications under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, principally for roadside signage and planning questions for LEADER funding, are a regular feature of the work carried out in the Planning Department.

Development Fees and Contributions

Development Contributions are levied in accordance with the Development Contributions 2018-2022 Scheme adopted by the Longford County Council under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Certain planning permissions contains a condition requiring the payment of a relevant development contribution which becomes payable if and when the development commences. There are many cases where permissions granted have been superseded by alternative permissions on the same site and where permissions granted have not yet been activated. This can sometimes give an inaccurate account of the amount due and owing to the Council.



Corlea Amenity Walk Phase 2

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

The implementation of a new financial management system to manage Development Contributions has led to improved customer service and audit/tracking system.

Forward Planning

The Forward Planning Section is responsible for the research, preparation and production of all Development Plans, Local Area Plans and forward-looking initiatives. The forward planning work schedule is governed by the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), and the ongoing implementation of national and EU legislation in the planning and environmental arenas.

National and Regional Planning

The Forward Planning Section has a key role to play in National and Regional Planning and the staff members attend regular national and regional planning working groups. Regular submissions are made to national and regional guidance documents.

County Development Plan

Longford County Council's County Development Plan sets the planning framework for development in the County. The preparation of the first phase of the new draft plan was completed in 2020 and placed on public display allowing for submissions and public consultation. The second phase will run through 2021. The new plan to be adopted by the Elected Members in December 2021.

The recently established Office of Planning Regulator now has a pivotal role in assessing and making recommendations on County Development Plans as prepared by the Planning Authority.

In addition, the Forward Planning Section is regularly involved with other projects that require substantial time allocation such as Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), Route Corridor Studies and other projects from national to local level.

County Longford Diaspora

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

National Housing Policy

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

Tourism, Community and Regeneration Initiatives

The Planning Team worked closely with Fáilte Ireland, the Tourism Committee, LEO, Members and Community Groups on various Plans for Longford including the Hidden Heartlands during 2020, including:

Mid Shannon Wilderness Plan/UNESCO Biosphere Reserve	Covering South Longford, Lough Ree and the Royal Canal. A joint project has now been prepared with National Parks and Wildlife Service, Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly County Councils called Lough Ree at the Spirit Level.
Newcastle Wood	Provision of new amenity paths in association with Coillte.
Corlea Trackway	Work continues on the development of an Amenity and Biodiversity Park in association with Bord na Mona.
Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme 2019	The specific projects that Planning assisted in the delivery were the White's Bridge (River Inny Bridge), the Newcastle to Royal canal link, and the Lanesborough to Ballinakill link.



Corlea Amenity Walk Phase 2 pictured during construction

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

Planning Enforcement

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

Conclusion

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



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

In 2020 the Environment Directorate carried out a wide range of activities under inspection, monitoring and environmental awareness programmes.

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

- Pollution Control and Water Quality Management
- Litter Management and Street Cleaning
- Waste Management and Regulation
- Environmental Awareness
- Burial Grounds
- Veterinary Services and Food safety
- Dog Control and Horse Control
- Dangerous structures
- Derelict sites

2020 has been a difficult year as the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted on the planned inspection schedules. Despite this, a full programme of work was completed with greater amounts of activity in some categories and less in others.

Longford County Council is committed to Environmental Enforcement in order to improve and maintain the Human and Natural Environment for the benefit of all who live, work and visit County Longford.

Pollution Control and Water Quality Management

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

We facilitate a Catchment Focus group that includes representatives from Dept of Agriculture, Teagasc, EPA, LAWPRO and other stakeholders to investigate causes of high levels of the herbicide MCPA in the Lough Forbes catchment which is the source of Longford's largest public water supply.

River Basin Management

The EU Water Framework Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Community (Water Policy) Regulations, 2003 under which a number of River Basin Districts were established. This was altered in 2014 whereby Ireland is now regarded as a one River Basin District. In addition, the EU Policy (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 places new obligations on local authorities in co-ordinating the public participation element of the Water Framework Directive. The new national governance arrangement requires Longford County Council to co-ordinate our work in this area with the newly set up national Local Authority Water Community Office (LAWCO) in Kilkenny. Extensive work was undertaken in one particular catchment to improve water quality. Longford County Council continues to monitor water quality in rivers and lakes in line with the relevant River Basin Management Plans.

Environmental Laboratory

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

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

Litter Management

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

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

The Council continues to prosecute litter offenders and seek full cost recovery where cases proceed to court. A total of 10 prosecutions were initiated in 2020 for non-payment of fines under the Litter Pollution Act 1997. Fines and costs awarded by the Courts amounted to €5,790.

In the course of environmental investigations into illegal dumping, the Litter Wardens oversaw the removal of 77.14 tonnes of waste from illegal dumpsites around the county during 2020.

Street Sweeping

The Council continued its programme of street sweeping and servicing of litter bins in the County's towns and villages, in accordance with the County Longford Litter Management Plan. Expenditure on this service was €536,986 in 2020.

Waste Management Plan 2015–2021

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

Waste Management Enforcement

Local authorities have a wide range of statutory functions under National and European waste legislation.

The work of the Local Authority Waste Enforcement team includes investigating illegal dumping incidents, taking prosecutions and enforcement measures, enforcing producer responsibility regulations for a wide range of wastes (including Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Batteries, End-of-life Vehicles, Tyres, Packaging, Food Waste, Farm Plastic and Construction and Demolition Wastes). We also enforce the Waste Management (segregation, storage and presentation of Household and Commercial waste) Byelaws 2018, these came into effect on 1 May 2019.

During 2020, 1781 new waste and litter complaints were received and investigated, and 1,774 complaints were resolved (including complaints outstanding from 2019).

In addition, 10 prosecutions were initiated under the Litter Pollution Act and Waste Management Act in relation to illegal dumping incidents. Illegal dumping of household waste in rural areas and on vacant properties remains a significant problem and the Council has had to expend significant resources cleaning up such sites.

RMCEI Plan 2020

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

During 2020, the Council's routine waste inspections focused on three priority areas. These were:

Waste	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tackling significant illegal waste activity 2. Multi-Agency Sites of Interest 3. Construction and Demolition Activity 4. End-of Life Vehicles (ELV) 5. Waste Collection - Household and Commercial 6. Tracking of Waste Flows
Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. WFD monitoring, bathing water monitoring, and investigative monitoring.

	8. Monitoring and enforcement of Private water supplies. 9. Farm inspections 10. Monitoring and enforcement of Section 4 licences 11. Inspections of septic tanks 12. Resources for engagement, knowledge exchange within priority areas for action and referrals from LAWPRO
Air	13. Solid Fuels: Compliance of fuel merchants, retailers and household 14. Ambient Air Monitoring Programme 15. Air and Noise Control (complaints) 16. Air and Noise Control (planning)

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

Longford County Council's "Enforcement Policy on Illegal Waste Activity" can be viewed on the Council's website at www.longfordcoco.ie.

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

Local Authorities must comply with the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007. Subject to certain exceptions, information relating to the environment held by, or for, a public authority must be made available on request to any person. Advice and guidance on waste management is provided to members of the public upon request.

Anti-Dumping Initiative 2020

Longford County Council undertook two large clean-ups on fly-tipping black spots. A total of 14.72 tonnes of waste material was collected. This work was carried out in conjunction with Household Waste surveys in the immediate area and awareness and preventative measures.

Two Large Goods Collections and one Hazardous Waste Collection were carried out on separate dates in August and September 2020. A total of 30.56 tonnes of bulky waste were collected and 12.03 tonnes of hazardous waste was collected.

Waste Management Provision of Facilities

There are currently 25 bring bank sites in County Longford. Green, brown and clear glass, as well as aluminium cans, is accepted at all sites. Total tonnages collected for re-processing in 2020 were 962 tonnes of glass and 29 tonnes of aluminium and steel cans.

Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures

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

Climate Action

Longford County Council continued with its implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in 2020.

Some of the actions commenced include:

- Formation of a Climate Action,
- Incorporation of Climate Action into the Corporate Plan
- Incorporation of Climate Action was into the draft Development Plan
- Replacement of public lighting with energy efficient LEDs
- Energy Efficiency upgrades to the public housing stock.

Energy

In 2020 Longford County Council continued on course to meet its' 2020 target of 30% reduction in energy usage.

Environmental Awareness

This aspect of the Department's work includes:

- National Spring Clean
- National Tree Week
- Large Goods and Hazardous Waste Collections
- Green Schools
- Green Christmas
- Local Environmental Partnership Funding
- Anti-Litter Awareness Grants
- Tidy Towns
- Invasive Species
- Biodiversity

National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 so localised collections took place during the months of April, May, June July August and September. Litter pickers, gloves, bibs and colour-coded bags were provided for the community clean-ups. Over 60 individuals and groups took part in clean-ups across the County.

National Tree Week

National Tree Week "Healthy Trees Healthy Planet" which is organised by the Tree Council of Ireland and supported by Coillte and Longford County Council, was meant to take place from 21 March to 27 March 2020, however COVID-19 restrictions prohibited this event from taking place. Community Groups, Tidy Towns Organisations and other organisations in the County were offered the opportunity to obtain young trees. Over 200 free saplings were given out to more than 20 community groups and 15 individuals during the months of March and April to plant in a socially distant manner

Large Goods/Hazardous Waste Collections

Two large goods collections and one hazardous waste collections were held in Longford and Drumlish during 2020. Collection day one was in Longford for beds, mattresses sofas only with 90 mattresses, 60 sofas and 20 beds being collected. Collection day two took place in Drumlish where General and recyclable waste amounted to 23.76 tonnes while 12.03 tonnes of hazardous waste was collected.

Green Schools

During 2020 8 schools renewed their green flags. The flags cover themes such as litter and waste, energy and water conservation, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship.

Green Christmas

The Council provided two drop-off points in Longford and Drumlish where householders could deposit their trees for shredding, free of charge. Old Christmas cards could also be dropped off at local libraries throughout the County. A new food waste campaign was launched online for the Christmas period and the council had a dedicated waste reduction page to help the public reduce the amount of waste they were generating over the Christmas period

Anti-Litter Awareness Grants

The Anti-Litter Awareness Grant for 2020 was not allocated to any local authorities from the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government (DECLG). However, Longford County Council were in a fortunate position to have some ancillary funding that they could offer to support community groups in their efforts to clean up local areas. The Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grants are used to support clean-up initiatives, fund advertising campaigns and school recycling projects and provide materials support to local community clean-up initiatives.

Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund

The Council has still not received an allocation of funding under this Scheme from the DECLG for 2020. However, it is hoped that the 2020 allocation will be received very soon. The Council provided 50% matching funds to support innovative, community-based environmental projects as well as talks and workshops for schools and community groups.

Longford Tidy Town / Community Groups

Longford County Council had another successful year working with Tidy Towns and Community Groups throughout County Longford despite the COVID-19 lock down restrictions. Groups were allocated litter pickers, gloves, and specially coloured bags on request for litter clean up events during 2020.

Invasive Species

The treatment of Japanese Knotweed continued during 2020 with €23,000 of Local Authority Funding being granted for a countywide treatment programme. Over 280 sites have now been treated with 10 new sites being identified during 2019. The treatment of JKW will continue during 2020.

N4 By-Pass and Roundabout Pollinator and Biodiversity project

Work has been ongoing during 2020 on removing old and worn out plants on the five Roundabouts along the N4 By-pass and replacing them with pollinator friendly perennial plants and flowers. Native Irish Trees have also been planted on the roundabouts on the recommendation of TII to give a uniformity to the planting regime.

Burial Grounds

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

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Fire and Rescue Service have Fire Stations in Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard, 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. A limited number of Fire Safety Inspections of commercial premises were carried out due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Operations	
Total number of Callouts – January to December 2020	333

Building Control	
Number of Fire Certificates processed in 2020	23

Longford Fire Service cost €2,350,000 to operate for 2020 for both its operational response and mitigation work streams.

Three vacant fire-fighter positions have been advertised a few times for Granard and Edgeworthstown Fire Brigades and remain unfilled. Recruitment of Fire Fighters is an ongoing problem.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Marie Lough resigned from Longford Fire Service after 12 years of service.

The Fire Fighter Training/Drill Programme was completed in accordance with the Fire Service Annual Operational Plan 2020



Longford County Fire Service: Breathing Apparatus training completed in Lanesborough



High Volume Pump training completed in conjunction with Westmeath Fire Service in Clondra

CIVIL DEFENCE

Civil Defence is a volunteer-based organisation that supports the principal response agencies (An Garda Síochána, the HSE and local authorities) as well as government departments and state agencies during national, regional and local emergency and non-emergency events.

Volunteers are recruited and trained locally and attend the Civil Defence College in Roscrea, Co Tipperary for more advanced training. Civil Defence volunteers in Longford are trained in areas including medical response, missing person search, radiation monitoring, severe weather emergencies and communications.

Civil Defence supports services in dealing with crisis situations such as severe weather, flooding, missing person searches and major accidents. Civil Defence also supports hundreds of community events during the year and in 2020 a priority was helping people to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Activities

- Longford Civil Defence undertook 134 operations in 2020 including:
 - 21 related to sporting, weather or community events
 - 113 related to COVID-19
- 1,090 volunteer hours were provided to the community including:
 - 63 climactic
 - 306 community
 - 721 COVID-19

Month	No of Duties	Type of Duty	Total Hours
January	3	3 Sporting	44
February	11	3 Climactic, 5 Community, 3 Sporting	231
March	10	1 Community, 9 COVID-19	48
April	19	19 COVID-19	141
May	27	27 COVID-19	162
June	21	21 COVID-19	136
July	14	14 COVID-19	68
August	7	4 Sporting, 3 COVID-19	66
September	6	2 Sporting, 4 COVID-19	78
October	7	2 Sporting, 5 COVID-19	51
November	6	6 COVID-19	20
December	3	3 COVID-19	45
	134		1,090

Local and community events included:

- GAA matches
- Longford Town soccer matches
- Local Authority events including the Operation Transformation Walk
- Assisting Dublin Civil Defence at the Cold Weather Shelter
- Assistance during Storm Dennis.

Civil Defence have been assisting the Local Authority, Community Forum and the HSE with the COVID-19 emergency.

Tasks included:

- Transportation of COVID-19 samples to the laboratory
- Distribution of information leaflets on behalf of the Local Authority and Longford Libraries
- Welfare checks and delivery of supplies to vulnerable households
- Assistance to local community groups
- Assistance to the IBTS with local blood bank clinics

Four Wheel Drive

An application by the Department of Defence to the Dormant Accounts Fund was approved in November 2019. A total of €1 million was allocated to the 2020 Civil Defence budget to improve four-wheel drive capability and Longford Civil Defence received a 4 x 4 Ford Ranger as a result.

Training

- Volunteers completed Casualty training locally.
- EMT's attended a CPC training day at the National Ambulance Service College.
- Volunteers completed TUSLA Child Protection E-Learning training.
- EMT's completed their privileging process.
- Volunteers completed training in the fundamentals of GDPR
- Mandatory Cardiac First Response (Community)

- Mandatory Cardiac First Response (Advanced)
- Mandatory Manual Handling
- Casualty Instructor Training.
- Radio Communications Instructor Training.
- Approved Driver Instructor training.

Specific COVID-19 preparation included:

- COVID-19 Induction Training
- COVID-19 Compliance Officer training
- COVID-19 Lead Representative training
- Communication of COVID-19 Risk Assessments
- Training in the decontamination of vehicles and radios
- Volunteers completed donning and doffing practical training in the use and wearing of PPE and online courses in areas such as, handwashing, infection prevention, proper use and disposal of PPE.
- Preparation of rooms in headquarters to allow for social distancing and the provision of PPE and hand sanitizers on entrances and exits.

Policy

The Civil Defence Plan for 2020-2022 was submitted.

Civil Defence Branch finalised the Governance Validation Framework.

Civil Defence was included in the NSAI Audit that took place.

Procedure Manual and SOP for Management of Civil Defence Volunteers were reviewed.

Preparation for COVID-19 included:

- Preparation of a Business Continuity Plan
- Updating of Risk Assessments and Revision of SSWP to include COVID-19
- Preparation of Return to Duty and Training documentation
- Policies, procedures and guidelines were issued by PHECC, Civil Defence and Local Authority in relation to COVID-19
- Communication of Risk Assessments to volunteers.



ROADS, TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD SAFETY

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

Longford is strategically located near the centre of Ireland and is traversed by National Primary Routes N4 and N5 and National Secondary Routes N55 and N63. These routes give rise to significant traffic flows throughout the county. Longford County Council has a network of national, regional and local roads within the county. Currently the breakdown of roads under the authority of Longford County Council is as follows:

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

The following specific works were carried out in 2020.

National Road Pavement Improvement Schemes

National Pavement schemes are selected on the basis of recent condition surveys of the network with the following specific works carried out in 2020:

Pavement	Work Detail
N4 Cooleeny	Resurfacing of road pavement over approximately 2km of the N4 national primary route from Shroid to Cooleeny. Works included placing new HRA surface course, road marking, road studs, drainage, safety barrier installation and accommodation works
N55 Granard Streets	Resurfacing of road pavement over approximately 1.7km of the N55 national secondary route from Main Street, Granard to Carragh Junction. Works included placing new HRA surface course, road marking, drainage, accommodation works and the reconstruction of footpaths.
N63 Market Square, Longford	Works commenced on the resurfacing and reconstruction of road pavement over approximately 1.1km of the N63 national secondary route from the Flancare Roundabout to the Market Square. Works included reconstruction of section of road, placing new surface course to extents of scheme, road marking, drainage, undergrounding of overhead cables, reconstruction of footpaths/kerb line, installation of pedestrian crossings and accommodation works.



Night-time Pavement Works in Edgeworthstown

Capital Maintenance Pavement Repairs were carried out at the following locations:

Category A (<50,000)

- N4 Longford Bypass
- N5 Fiddlemaster Blind Kiernan Roundabout
- N55 Junction Edgeworthstown

Category B (50,000 to 200,000)

- N55 Rathcronan, Granard
- N63 Barnacor

Local and Regional Road Improvement

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

- The Restoration Improvement element is designed to meet expenditure on surface restoration and road reconstruction. A total of 67.177km of road was improved under this grant in 2020.
- The Restoration Maintenance aims to protect the structural integrity of the road by way of surface dressing. In 2020, 74.662kms of road was improved under this grant.



Restoration improvement works on the R398 in Ballymahon MD



Surface Dressing Works on the N63 at Barnacor in Ballymahon MD

Bridge Rehabilitation Works

Bridge Rehabilitation Works were carried out at Foygh, Ballinamuck, Killinlastra, and Soran.

Low Cost Safety Schemes

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

- Furze, Foxhall Legan
- Lissanisky
- Ballycloghan
- Abbeyshrule
- Derryoghill
- Springtown
- Molly, Aughnacliffe
- Moatfarrell
- R194 Granard
- Newtownforbes
- Clonterm
- Clondra

Winter Maintenance Programme

The Winter Service plan provides the framework for dealing with Winter Weather conditions on the roads and provides for a planned and co-ordinated response by Longford County Council.

The objective of the winter maintenance programme is to provide so far as it is reasonably practical for the safe movement of road users on the National Roads and other strategic routes identified during adverse weather conditions.

Expenditure

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

1. National Roads (Transport Infrastructure Ireland Grants)	
Improvement Works	2,604,773
NP & NS Maintenance	343,161
HD Pavement Renewals & Surveys	238,829
Winter Maintenance	96,302
Total:	3,283,065
2. Non-National Roads (Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government Grants)	
Specific Improvement Grant	610,211
Restoration Improvement Works	3,987,371
Restoration Maintenance Works	1,117,108
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	1,331,106
Low-Cost Safety Improvement Works	285,298
Drainage	331,542
Bridge Rehabilitation	321,984
Training Programme	34,000
Total:	8,018,620
3. Non-National Roads (Council Contribution)	
Council Contribution	846,617
Total Budget:	12,148,302

Road Safety Promotion and School Warden Service

The Road Safety role of local authorities is wide and ranges from road construction to safety promotion to School Warden Schemes. The local authority now has an expanded role in promoting road safety by developing more initiatives at local level.

The Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee consists of the following agencies:

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Road Safety Authority
- Longford County Council Sports Coordinator
- An Garda Síochána
- Longford County Council Road Safety Officer
- Longford County Childcare Member
- Councillor Paul Ross
- Members of Longford Fire Services

Some of the initiatives of 2020 included:

- AXA Road Safety Show scheduled for 24 March 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19.
- Co-ordination with the Road Safety Authority on advertising, promotions and media campaigns.
- Promotion of “Safe Cross Code”.
- Promotion of Road Safety in Secondary Schools through the “Drive for Life Programme”. In 2020 training took place in Mean Scoil Mhuire Secondary School Longford and St Mel’s Secondary School.
- The Regional Final of the Junior School Warden Competition did not take place due to COVID-19 Restrictions.
- Virtual Reality goggles were used at the “Driving for Work Day” held in February 2020 at Longford Fire Station. The RSA Roll Over and Shuttle attended The Mall on the day.
- In conjunction with The Road Safety Authority the “Check it Fits” campaign visited Davis Super Valu, Longford on 19 February 2021. Unfortunately, in Ireland, fitting child car seats is still a significant cause for concern with as many as three out of four child car seats fitted incorrectly.
- Local Authority Campaigns: Drive away your habits – Light up for road safety.
- National “Slow Down” Day on 22 May 2020 in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.
- Longford County Council promoted the wearing of high-vis vests by distributing over 1,000 vests to community groups throughout the county with the help of Longford Civil Defence.
- Participated in Train-the-Trainer workshop November 2020.
- Worked with Green Schools to improve safety at schools within the county.



Check it Fits Campaign

Food Safety

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

The Local Authority Veterinary Service remained an essential service during the difficult year of 2020 throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The small slaughterhouses and low throughput meat manufacturing establishments in the county are statutorily supervised to ensure there is full compliance with food safety legislation. Locally produced cattle, sheep, pigs, deer and poultry were processed in small local slaughterhouses in County Longford in 2020. Each animal slaughtered was ante-mortem and post-mortem inspected by a Veterinary Inspector. A sampling programme which is intended to detect harmful substances such as microbes, chemicals and hormones in meat is carried out. The Local Authority Veterinary Service ensures that animal health and welfare is maintained in accordance with legislative provisions. All owners and staff in small slaughterhouses in County Longford now have Certificates of Competence in Welfare at time of slaughter. During 2020, the low throughput meat manufacturing establishments and slaughterhouses in County Longford continued to work to EU approved standards. The meat products produced in the county are under official veterinary controls.

The Local Authority Veterinary Service regulates and, at the same time, affords appropriate flexibility to low throughput premises. In 2020, a new Food Safety Official Controls regulation was introduced called Regulation (EU)2019/625. One change in the new regulation is the requirement for a proactive approach to preventing incidences of food fraud and deception.

The year 2020 also saw preparation of Official Veterinary Export Health Certification for food of animal origin to Great Britain, following Brexit. This requirement was ultimately postponed until 1 October 2021. Enterprise and development are continuing within premises and the sector as businesses react to changing commercial demands. New entrants are encouraged to consult with the Council's service and to become involved in the sector. It is encouraging to report that there was a significant increase of approximately 28 per cent over comparable timeframes in the throughput of small slaughterhouses in County Longford in 2019 and a further 36 per cent increase in throughput though 2020.

The section, through supporting food production in County Longford, is in keeping with our Corporate Plan for promoting enterprise and development in this important area of commercial activity in a rural county. The Veterinary Section, in cooperation with Longford County Council Local Enterprise Office, assisted individuals with an interest in the sector in 2020 and prepared four new food businesses for registration or approval.

Professional Development and training in food safety and animal health and welfare continued in 2020 and the Veterinary Service has an Internal Audit System.

Longford Local Authority Veterinary Service carried out Joint Approval Inspections as requested by the national authority in neighbouring counties.

Activities relating to the disposal of animal by-product continued to be an important area of work in 2020.

Meetings of the Regional Zoonosis Committee provide the forum for formal liaison between Longford County Council Veterinary Public Health Service and other agencies, for example, Department of Agriculture and HSE. Longford County Council Veterinary Service liaised through bilateral meetings with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine locally and nationally in 2020.

Dog Control

Longford County Council provides its own full-time Dog Control Service in County Longford. The local authority employs a Dog Warden and operates a dog shelter at Little Water Street in Longford Town. Pound fees are charged.

Online dog licensing was introduced in 2018. Dog licenses can now be purchased at any Post Office or at www.licenses.ie.

The Service dealt with a reduced number of 231 cases of unwanted/stray dogs in 2019. This figure was down 26 per cent in 2019 in keeping with national trends and halved again in 2020 (due mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic) and it also indicates general improvement in responsible dog ownership. Of those seized, three were re-homed, three were reclaimed by their owners and 105 were transferred to dog welfare groups.

Cases which were seized, straying or surrendered still cause significant risk in a lot of cases. There were nine incidences of livestock worrying dealt with by the local authority in 2020 and a lot of work relates to control of restricted breeds of dogs. The Dog Control Service provides significant assistance to An Garda Síochána in their work.

The iconic 'Bonzo the Dog' advert was reimagined as part of the work to promote responsible dog ownership. The video is available on YouTube at the following link: <https://youtu.be/OEZvqTt9zoc>

Longford County Council's policy is to re-home all dogs suitable for re-homing. In many cases the dogs which were re-homed were selected by their new owners with the aid of the Council's Longford Dog Control Service Facebook page.

Longford County Council maintained a very low number of dogs that had to be put to sleep in 2020. This is as a result of the strategic plan implemented by the Dog Control Service assisted by other stakeholders and volunteers, to whom we are grateful.

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

Inspections of dog breeding establishments continued in 2020 under the Dog Breeding Establishment Act.

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

Horse Control

In 2020, 33 horses were seized in Longford under the Control of Horses Act 1996. Longford County Council's Control of Horse Bye Laws regularise detention and disposal requirements, as per the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as well as controlling access and activities of horses in public places.

Longford County Council cooperated with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on a plan for an Urban Horse Project, and in addition, had its third Pony Riding and Animal Welfare project for training of young people in responsible horse ownership during 2020. Longford Sports Partnership and LCRL provided great support to the successful education project for the young participants from County Longford. This was a great achievement during the summer of 2020 even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WATER SERVICES

Water Services

The activities of Longford County Council's Water Services Section are predominately directed and informed by a 12-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water, which commenced in 2014. This SLA, its associated protocols and yearly Annual Service Plans (ASP) define in detail the relationship between Irish Water and Longford County Council with respect to water and wastewater operations. In 2020, there were 47 members of Longford County Council Water Services Team with an annual operations budget of €6 million working on the delivery of the requirements set out in the SLA and ASP, with monthly performance measures in place for the main aspects of the service.

Essential Service during 2020

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 put a huge priority on the importance of a continuous high-quality water and wastewater service to the community for public health reasons. Whereas many organisations worked from home, the Water Services Section is regarded as an essential service and consequentially Water Services staff worked throughout all of the lockdown periods of 2020, to ensure this necessary continuity of service. The Water Services Business Continuity Plan was implemented whereby key duties could be carried out if required by a separate individual or team who were trained in the activity, for example, the operation of a water treatment plant. Throughout 2020, the Business Continuity Plan worked well and none of County Longford's services were compromised due to the pandemic. The Wastewater Team in Water Services succeeded in keeping all treatment plants and networks operational throughout the year to the required environmental standards. Protecting the health and safety of staff was critically important. Strict operating procedures were implemented across all sites to provide for safer delivery of water and wastewater services during COVID-19 such as social distancing, staggered working arrangements, increased hygiene requirements and the use of additional PPE as necessary.



Longford County Council Water Services staff at work in a designed confined space with rescue equipment in place.

2020 Annual Service Plan

The 2020 Annual Service Plan (ASP) sets out more than 70 separate challenging measurable targets across the full range of Water Services activities. These targets, including key performance indicators (KPIs), cover the areas of health and safety (HSQE), water quality, wastewater discharge license limits, budget expenditure profile, procurement and all these parameters are time and cost dependent. These targets also include achieving efficiencies, value for money and continuous improvement in order to meet customer expectations; with some of the targets set by national regulators for utilities and the environment. The resulting outcome of the Water Services Sections ASP performance in 2020 was that all water supply zones operated at maximum efficiency levels due largely to the dedication and commitment of the technical team, caretakers, repair crews and administrative personnel. Longford County Council's Water Services Section scored in the highest ranges again in 2020 with regards to Irish Water's SLA key performance indicators utilised to measure performance of each local authority nationally.

Capital Works in 2020

Water Services Capital Section undertook several Capital Upgrade Schemes in 2020, which were deemed to be essential activities in relation to the Government COVID-19 regulations. Additional funding for water and wastewater works was also secured under the July and October stimulus packages announced by the Government. These works have improved water quality and reduced leakage which was impacting on supply to customers.

Works completed in 2020 included:

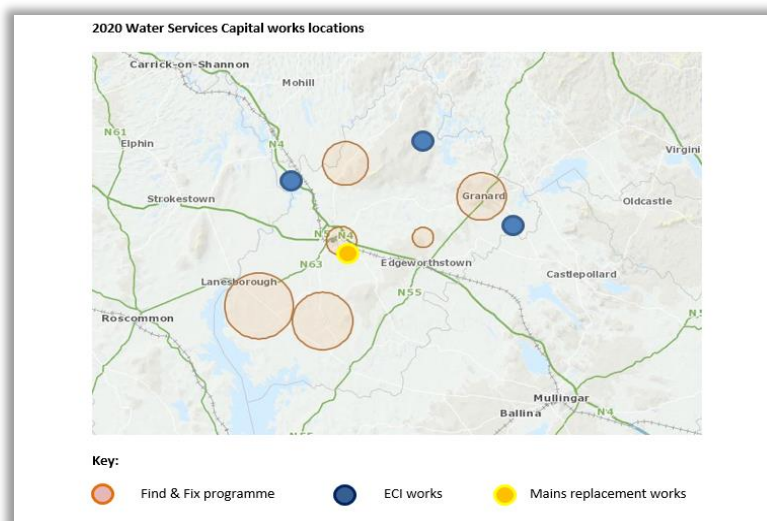
- Watermain replacement works on 2km of problematic watermain at Ballymakeegan, Longford.
- Mains rehabilitation works at the Templemichael and Bannon Terrace areas of Longford Town.
- Extensive upgrade works at three water treatment plants.

These projects are generally called ECI (Early Contractor Involvement) schemes with a project value of more than €6 million. Granard and Lough Gowna (Smear) Water Treatment Plants upgrade works commenced during 2020 and are now nearing completion. It is envisioned that the capital works at both sites will be fully completed by the end of Q1 2021. The role of the onsite caretakers and technical staff from Longford County Council has proven to be very beneficial to the successful delivery of these schemes and maintaining a quality water supply throughout the complex on-site upgrade works. Furthermore, throughout 2020 the detailed design and planning of a major capital infrastructure project at Lough Forbes Water Treatment Plant was completed and it is due to commence in Q1 of 2021.

- The 'Find & Fix' leakage reduction programme continued throughout 2020 with Longford County Council in association with Irish Water. This is a nationwide project aimed at delivering major water leakage savings. Longford County Council's directly staffed 'Find & Fix' team achieved water leakage savings of approximately 36.7m cubed of water per hour (880,000 liters per day) in 2020 through its leakage reduction works.



Longford's 'Find & Fix' team at work



APPENDIX 1: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2018	2019
C1 & C2 & C4: Corporate		
Wholetime equivalent staffing number at year end	314.92	334.61
% of paid working days lost due to sickness absence through:		
medically certified leave	2.98 %	4.58%
self-certified leave	0.31 %	0.30%
Number working days lost to sickness absence through:		
medically certified leave	2,389	3,582
self-certified leave	233	226.5
Number unpaid working days lost to sickness absence through:		
medically certified leave	256	102.5
self-certified leave	0	0
All ICT Expenditure in the year divided by the WTE number	€2,377.81	€2,337.07
Total ICT Expenditure in the year	€748,820.86	€782,007.05
All ICT expenditure calculated as a proportion of Revenue expenditure	1.69	1.60
Total revenue expenditure in the year before transfers to or from reserves	€44,407,995	€48,956,521
C3: Corporate		
Total page views of all websites operated by the LA	447,310	714,682
Number social media users following the LA on social media sites	25,496	38,858
Number social media accounts operated by the LA	17	23
E1: Waste		
A. Number households in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3 bin service (census)	3,483	3,385
% households that the number at A. represents	23.08 %	22.43%
E2: Environmental Pollution		
Number of pollution cases:		
in respect of complaint during the year	1,581	1,732
closed during the year	1,516	1,831
on hand at year end	159	60
carried forward from the previous year	94	159
E3: Litter Pollution		
Percentage of area:		
unpolluted by litter	22 %	32%
slightly polluted by litter	63 %	53%
moderately polluted by litter	14 %	15%
significantly polluted by litter	1%	0%
grossly polluted by litter	0%	0%
E4: Green Flag Status		
A. The % of schools awarded Green Flag Status (introduced 2018)	61.70%	59.57%
F1: Fire Service		
AFS Programme E expenditure divided by Census population served by the Fire Service	€50.99	€52.57
AFS Programme E expenditure data consisting of E11 – Operation of Fire Service & E12 Fire Prevention	€2,443,596	€2,519,329
F2 & F3: Fire Service		
Average time (minutes) to mobilise fire brigades in:		
A. Full-Time Stations in respect of Fire	0 min	0 min
B. Part-Time Stations in respect of Fire	6.32 min	6.89 min
C. Full-Time Stations in respect of other (non-fire) emergency incidents	0 min	0 min
D. Part-Time Stations in respect of other (non-fire) emergency incidents	6.53 min	6.91 min
% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at scene is:		
A. within 10 minutes	36.05 %	36.05 %
B. after 10 & within 20 minutes	53.49 %	54.51 %
C. after 20 minutes	10.47 %	9.44 %
% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at scene is:		
D. within 10 minutes	21.05 %	26.56 %
E. after 10 & within 20 minutes	68.42 %	65.62 %
F. after 20 minutes	10.53 %	7.81 %
Total number call-outs in respect of fires in the year	258	233
Number fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is:		

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS				2018	2019
within 10 minutes				93	84
after 10 & within 20 minutes				138	127
after 20 minutes				27	22
Total number of call-outs in respect of all other emergency incidents in year				57	64
Number non-fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is:					
within 10 minutes				12	17
after 10 & within 20 minutes				39	42
after 20 minutes				6	5
H1, H2 & H4: Housing					
A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the LA at 1/1/2018				1,903	1,975
B. Number of dwellings added to the LA owned stock during the year (constructed or acquired)				51	125
C. Number of LA owned dwellings sold in the year				26	14
D. Number of LA dwellings demolished in the year				0	10
E. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the LA at year end				1,928	2,076
F. Number of dwellings planned for demolition under a DHPLG approved scheme				0	0
A. % of total number of LA owned dwellings vacant at year end				5.03%	8.00%
Number of dwellings within the overall stock not tenanted at year end				97	166
A. Expenditure on maintenance of housing divided by number dwellings in stock at year end				€933.37	€242.66
Expenditure on maintenance of LA stock incl. planned maintenance qualifying for grants				€1,799,543	€503,760
H3 & H5: Housing					
A. Average time taken from date of vacation of dwelling to date new tenancy commenced (weeks)				70.64	84.69
B. Average cost expended on getting dwellings re-tenanted ready for re-letting				€14,019.68	€30,535.54
Number dwellings re-tenanted on any date in year (excl. those vacant for estate refurbishment)				66	58
Number weeks from date of vacation to date when the dwelling is re-tenanted				4662	4,912
Total expenditure on works necessary to enable re-letting of the dwellings				€925,299.03	€1,771,055
A. Total number registered tenancies at end June				2,790	2,807
B. Number rented dwellings inspected in the year				233	295
C. % of dwellings inspected found not to be compliant with the Standards Regulations				101.29 %	97.93 %
D. Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant				44	101
Number dwellings inspected found not to be compliant with the Standards Regulations				236	189
H6: Housing					
A. Number adults in emergency accommodation long-term as a % of total no. of homeless adults				100 %	40 %
Number adults classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation at year end, on PASS				1	15
Number adults at year end who were in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months				1	6
J1 to J3: Economic Development					
A. Number jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office				70	73
A. Number trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office				13	18
B. Number trading online vouchers drawn down				6	8
A. Number participants who received mentoring				58	104
L1: Library Service					
Number library visits during the year				232,528	273,020
Number library visits per head of population				5.69	6.67
Number items borrowed during the year				89,297	119,491
L2: Library Service					
AFS Programme F data / by the population of the LA area per census				€47.32	€46.02
AFS Programme F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service				€1,933,927	€1,880,797
M1 & M2: Finance					
Cumulative balance in Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure of the AFS:					
	A.	B. 31/12/2016	C. 31/12/2017	D.	E. 31/12/2019
	31/12/2015			31/12/2018	
	€142,995	€174,151	€231,830	€233,046	€246,348
F. Cumulative surplus or deficit at year end as a % of Total Income from the AFS statement				0.51%	0.74%

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS					2018	2019			
G. Revenue Expenditure per capita in					€1,086.49	€1,197.77			
Total Income figure from Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS					€46,129,371	€33,236,436			
Total Expenditure figure from Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS					€44,407,995	€48,956,521			
Summary of % of collection levels for major revenue sources:									
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019			
	Rates	82 %	84 %	89 %	89 %	88%			
	Rent & Annuities	88 %	90 %	92 %	93 %	90%			
	Housing Loans	55 %	57 %	60 %	55 %	59%			
P1: Planning									
A. Buildings inspected as a % of new buildings notified to the local authority					48.62 %	52.03 %			
Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority					109	148			
Number of new buildings notified, subject of at least one inspection					53	77			
P2 & P3: Planning									
A. Number of planning decisions subject of appeal to An Bord Pleanála determined by Board					14	7			
B. % of the determinations which confirmed (with or without variations) decision made by the LA					64.29 %	57.14 %			
Number determinations confirming the LA's decision with or without variation					9	4			
A. Total number planning cases referred to or initiated by the LA in year that were investigated					44	42			
B. Total number of investigated cases that were closed during the year					54	42			
C. % cases at B dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation, or closed because statute barred or exempted development					35.19 %	33.33 %			
D. % of cases at B resolved to the LA's satisfaction through negotiations					12.96 %	26.19 %			
E. % Cases at B closed due to enforcement proceedings					51.85 %	40.48 %			
F. Total number planning cases being investigated as at year end					62	62			
Number cases at B dismissed under Section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000					19	14			
Number cases at B resolved to the LA's satisfaction through negotiations					7	11			
Number cases at B closed due to enforcement proceedings					28	17			
P4 & P5: Planning									
A. AFS Programme D data divided by the population of the LA area					€43.94	€41.15			
AFS Programme D consisting of D01, D02, D03 (inclusive of the central management charge)					€1,796,035	€1,682,091			
A. % of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within 2 months of their receipt					88.89 %	96 %			
B. % of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant					5.56 %	4 %			
Total number of applications for fire safety certificates received that were not withdrawn by applicant					36	25			
Total number of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within 2 months of the date of receipt of the application					32	24			
Total number of applications for fire safety certificates received that were decided (granted or refused) within an agreed extended time period					2	1			
R1 & R2: Roads									
% road kilometres with a PSCI rating:		Regional			100 %	99.72 %			
		Local Primary			97 %	98.97 %			
		Local Secondary			97 %	99.09 %			
		Local Tertiary			6 %	84.53 %			
% Total Road Kms with PSCI Ratings		2018				2019			
		1 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10	1 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10
	Regional	2 %	14 %	38 %	46 %	1.68%	14.17%	39.53%	44.41%
	Local Primary	0 %	16 %	66 %	17 %	.32%	12%	63.38%	23.86%
	Secondary	2 %	27 %	57 %	12 %	1.49%	21.36%	60.49%	16.28%
	Tertiary	7 %	21 %	22 %	163 %	6.14%	21.37%	34.77%	22.70%
A1. Kilometres of regional roads strengthened					5.4 km	4.4 km			
A2. Amount expended on regional roads strengthening work					€701,641	€741,610			
B1. Kilometres of regional roads resealed					5.1 km	4.6 km			
B2. Amount expended on regional road resealing work					€124,524	€139,639			
C1. Kilometres of local roads strengthened					56.3 km	47.7 km			

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2018	2019
C2. Amount expended on local road strengthening work	€3,086,246	€2,989,370
D1. Kilometres of local roads resealed	46.8 km	50.5 km
D2. Amount expended on local road resealing work	€653,745	€719,113
R3: Motor Tax		
% of motor tax transactions online	59.75 %	62.80 %
W1: Water		
% of Private Drinking Water Schemes in compliance with statutory requirements	1%	96.98%
Y1 & Y2 Youth and Community		
A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme	100%	100%
Total number of 2 nd level schools in the LA area at year end	9	9
No. 2 nd level schools from which representatives attended the Comhairle na nÓg AGM	9	9
Number organisations included in the County Register and the proportion who opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN	14.85	14.40
Total number organisations included in the County Register for the local authority area	303	375
Total number those organisations that registered for the first time	86	74
Number organisations opting to join the Social Inclusion Electoral College when registering for the PPN	45	54

APPENDIX 2: COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

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

APPENDIX 3: CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY ELECTED MEMBERS

Conferences Attended 2020

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE
04/02/2020	Irish Planning Institute	Limerick	P.J. Reilly, Paraic Brady, Paul Ross
08/02/2020	Longford London Association	London	Seamus Butler
13/02/2020	AILG "In Service" Training for Elected Members – Module 2	Hotel Kilmore, Cavan	Paul Ross, Mark Casey, John Browne
15/02/2020	Lama Awards	Croke Park, Dublin	Micheál Carrigy
15/02/2020	AILG "In Service" Training for Elected Members – Module 2	Waterford	Peggy Nolan, Garry Murtagh, P.J. Reilly, Colm Murray, Gerry Hagan, Turlough McGovern, Paraic Brady, Micheál Carrigy
27/02/2020	Irish Planning Institute Awards	Westin Hotel, Dublin	Micheál Carrigy
04/03/2020 05/03/2020	AILG Annual Conference	Longford	Paul Ross, Gerard Farrell, Pat O'Toole, Paraic Brady, P.J. Reilly, Gerry Hagan, John Browne, Martin Monaghan, Colm Murray, Uruemu Adejinmi, Turlough McGovern, Micheál Carrigy, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan, Gerry Warnock, Seamus Butler
06/03/2020 9/03/2020	Longford New York Association Dinner	New York	Seamus Butler
30/07/2020	AILG "In Service" Training for Elected Members	Dundalk	Paraic Brady, John Browne, Gerry Hagan, Turlough McGovern, Colm Murray, Garry Murtagh, Peggy Nolan
06/08/2020	AILG "In Service" Training for Elected Members	Horse & Jockey Hotel in Tipperary	Paul Ross
08/08/2020	AILG "In Service" Training for Elected Members	Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo	Uruemu Adejinmi
11/08/2020	AILG "In Service" Training for Elected Members	Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone	P.J. Reilly

APPENDIX 4

Longford County Council		Annual Service Plan 2020
Strategic Objective	Longford – A Thriving County	
	Initiatives to deliver Objective	Successes for 2020
Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action	<p>Meet our Existing and future Infrastructural needs and Support appropriate infrastructural development of Water Services</p> <p>Under the Terms of the SLA in Partnership with Irish Water, maintain and improve the quality of Water Services</p> <p>Support Existing and New Businesses by ensuring a sufficient supply of drinking water to meet present and anticipated needs and ensuring waste water is treated to the required standard before being discharged to the Environment</p> <p>Ensuring timely response to new connection and reconnection requests for Non Domestic Customers</p> <p>Support Tourism and its potential to deliver Economic benefits to our County</p> <p>Manage Finances in and Open and Transparent Manner, Ensure adequate Financial Reporting, Promote and deliver value for Money and Ensure Compliance with IW Required process and Procurement</p> <p>Improvements in National Roads Infrastructure promoting economic development in the County.</p> <p>Delivering the Roadworks Programme 2020 to support economic development in our Towns & Villages and</p>	<p>Successful results achieved in the KPIS, Operational and Tracking Measures in IW ASP Monthly reports for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the progression of Capital Projects and Contracts, Leakage Management Programmes and DMA Operability, • Making Contingency Plans to deal with water shortages, whilst keeping customers informed via the IW outage Portal • Implementing Sludge Management Plans locally in conjunction with Irish Water and The SLA • Adhering to timelines for New Connection and Reconnection requests as outlined in the ASP • Ensure quick response times, minimal interruptions and good communication channels • Maintain Operational Budget, Utilise Capital Expenditure, Comply with Financial and Procurement Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N55 Granard Streets Constructed. N63 Market Square construction ongoing. N4/N5 minor works. • Ongoing Design of various minor improvement work schemes on N4, N5, N63 and N55 • Construction of numerous Restoration Improvement Work Schemes, Restoration Maintenance Schemes, Bridge Schemes, Drainage Schemes, Community Schemes etc at a cost of over 10 million euro. • Achieved satisfactory performance indicators as reported to NOAC

	<p>ensuring Longford is well connected and accessible for our businesses, communities and visitors Promote Longford as a proven and successful location for investment</p> <p>Support businesses to adapt to national and global changes</p> <p>Support and encourage innovation in Tourism</p> <p>Lead and Support the Regeneration of our county towns and villages</p> <p>Continue to leverage funding for regeneration projects and work in partnership with agencies and our communities on regeneration projects</p> <p>Develop arts and cultural activities to add to the vibrancy of our towns and villages</p> <p>Ensure planning and economic development takes place within an agreed framework, developed in consultation with our citizens and our stakeholders.</p> <p>Develop new and existing business districts and encourage the growth of a skilled workforce</p> <p>Collaborate with other stakeholders and statutory providers in developing the essential infrastructure necessary for economic and social development.</p> <p>Promote our central and connected modern county as a place to live and do business.</p> <p>Strengthen linkages with Our Diaspora to contribute to the business development of our county.</p> <p>Improve connectivity and accessibility, both infrastructural and digital to attract and support business community and our people.</p> <p>Support and Implement the Public Service Information Communication Technology Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured that appropriate facilities and services were available to adequately provide for the appropriate disposal of waste in the county. • Supported Community Groups with the Spring Clean Anti-Dumping Initiative, whereby we cleaned up Ballyminion, Palace Crescent and Cluain Ard. • Supported Tidy Towns Committee.
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	<p>Support Governments National Broadband Plan and development of innovation hubs and shared spaces where people will have access to a modern and reliable broadband network</p> <p>Improvement of Longford’s strategic road network.</p> <p>Housing</p>	<p>The Rebuilding Ireland Capital Works are progressing well on a number of projects on site currently including: 6 OPDs at Rose Cottage, Ballinalee; 1 no. unit, Fairgreen View, Longford and 1 no unit Cloonahard, Longford. The 5 no. units, Church Street, Edgeworthstown, the 18 /22 units at Legan and 16 no. units at Farnagh Hill, Longford will be completed in early December which will meet the housing need of applicants on the Social housing list for county Longford. Under the Voids Programme 2020 and July Stimulus Funding, 67 units have recently been approved for funding of €1,886,813.00 for standard voids and long term voids / vacant units. This special funding has been made available in recognition of the very challenging financial circumstances, which all local authorities are currently experiencing and to ensure vacant local authority homes are refurbished and tenanted in 2020.</p>
Community and Enterprise	<p>Maintain and improve our physical library spaces within each town.</p> <p>Support Learning opportunities and educational support for families and individuals.</p> <p>Provision and promotion of a wide range of online resources and programmes during COVID-19.</p> <p>Provision of full range of COVID-19 supports to the enterprise sector to help sustain as many businesses as possible during the pandemic.</p> <p>Promotion and celebration of enterprise and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Integration of ebusiness platforms for small businesses to support the transition in consumer behaviour towards online purchasing.</p> <p>Increase awareness of the LEO products and services through improved communications with our target audiences.</p> <p>Grow employment levels in County Longford by supporting the creation and growth of small indigenous enterprises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a new Community library in Edgeworthstown. • Success of the Right to Read, Work Matters and Healthy Ireland at your Library programme. • Huge increase in usage of our online library services and programmes. • A programme of activities to support Government’s response to COVID-19. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vast majority of enterprises have survived 2020 supported by a range of Government supports delivered through the Finance section and LEO office of Longford County Council. • Continued to foster a culture of enterprise by highlighting local business achievements and successes from school’s level, through to IBYE and the national Enterprise Awards. • Over 125 local micro-enterprises have been approved for a Trading on-line Voucher to support the development of an ebusiness element for their business. • The LEO office has revised its communication strategy focussing more exclusively on regular electronic communication with its client base, using mail chimp, website and Facebook primarily. • The LEO office continues to provide direct financial assistance to new and emerging business to support the creation of new employment opportunities. • Successfully applied for funding for new projects and supported funding applications. • Introduced new promotional activities and initiatives to profile Longford as a tourism destination within Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands. • Worked closely with agencies including Failte Ireland, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Waterways Ireland to increase the profile of Longford as a place to invest and visit and deliver sustainable projects in the county.

	<p>Improve the profile of Longford as a place to visit and invest. Support the LCDC in its role of providing LEADER grant assistance for rural development, arts/cultural projects, tourism and business development projects including Digital and Innovation hubs.</p> <p>Development of a Recruitment Programme. Development of Core Project Team. Development and Revision of HR Policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 projects approved for LEADER funding. • 20 recruitment competitions held. • 1,255 applications received. • 324 candidates interviewed. • 51 days of interviewing conducted. • 47 appointments were made. • 13 employees retired or resigned. • The recruitment programme moved online in Q2 2020 and is now delivered through digital medium. • Delivery of the Recruitment programme is on target. • The Core HR Project Team was put in place to review and develop the Core HR system and the Learning and Development system. This work remains in progress. • 4 HR policies have been reviewed and updated in conjunction with employees and Employee Representative Bodies in a collaborative manner.
<p>Finance and Regeneration</p>	<p>Rates Section: Engaging and assisting customers that were proposing to start a new business. Advising them on the Commercial Rates liabilities and referring them to LEO in relation to any business incentive schemes that are available.</p> <p>During 2020 this section processed restart grants to provide supports to businesses affected by COVID-19.</p> <p>Provide a modern Community CCTV system in our County Town</p> <p>Develop and implement a digital strategy for County Longford</p> <p>Provide open datasets for use</p> <p>Support the implementation of Town & Village WIFI wherever possible</p> <p>Develop the council's social media presence to improve communications</p> <p>Support the use of the Explore Longford App</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Public Consultation and Alternative Measures completed. • Mast move at Connolly Barracks Part 8 completed • Significant consultation completed for design and update of Longford Town CCTV System • Tender for update and extension of CCTV system in Longford Town live on eTenders • Strategy consultation completed and draft strategy ready for approval • Open data portal for Longford Co Co in place • Longford town WIFI in place • 3 Rural Broadband Connection Points WIFI live • Updated process in place, significant growth in social presence • App completed and ready for implementation by Tourist office the year approximately €6m in grants have been to 682 businesses

	<p>Collaborate with other stakeholders and statutory providers in developing the essential infrastructure necessary for economic and social development</p> <p>Well-designed, active, vibrant communities where families can live, learn and work locally</p> <p>Support and implement the Public Service Information Communication Technology Strategy</p> <p>Support Government’s National Broadband Plan and development of innovation hubs and shared spaces where people will have access to a modern and reliable broadband network</p>	<p><u>Funding secured in 2020 under following schemes</u> Town & Village Scheme Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme (ORIS) Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) Failte Ireland Dept of Tourism Transport and Sport</p> <p>As of November 2020 the Regeneration team are working on projects totalling €20 million approx. which have been completed or are ongoing in 2020/2021. We await further funding announcements on applications made in the year to the value of €44 million (URDF, Platforms for Growth, Climate Action Fund, Just Transition, Town & Village Main Scheme, ORIS, RRDF schemes) Project implementation and delivery has contributed significantly to the local economy, supporting employment and has led to immense improvements to the infrastructure of the county.</p> <p><u>Granard and Lanesborough/Ballyleague Masterplans</u> Consultants have been appointed to prepare Regeneration Strategies for the towns of Granard and Lanesborough /Ballyleague. The aim is to develop and deliver an effective short, medium and long term path to enterprise and job creation in these areas, building on existing and planned investment and innovation initiatives.</p> <p><u>Amenity and tourism development</u> Green, blue and peatway development has resulted in improved outdoor amenity infrastructure provision for the citizens of Longford and has been successful in attracting increased tourism numbers year on year to the county, impacting positively on the local economy. These include the Newcastle Woods Greenway at Newcastle Woods, Ballymahon, County Longford which was officially opened on 20 July 2020 by Cathaoirleach Cllr Paul Ross. This Greenway links Newcastle Woods with the Royal Canal Greenway and will allow users travel from Dublin along the Greenway and into Center Parcs. This will increase the attractiveness of Longford and the wider Hidden Heartlands as a destination of choice for holiday makers.</p> <p><u>Granard Motte, Granard</u> In 2019 Longford County Council Regeneration department were successful in securing funding of €2.8 million under RRDF for creation of a Heritage Park at the base of Granard Motte. As part of the development, Failte Ireland granted €640k towards the “Norman Heritage Park”. Contracts for this Interpretative Centre were signed with DMW Creative Limited on 23 July 2020. Agreement on the purchase of the 12th century Motte by Longford County Council was also finalised in July 2020. This development forms a vital part of the Hidden Heartlands attractions, greatly enhancing tourism in the area and will contribute to the economic and social regeneration of Granard town and surrounding areas for many years to come. Aligned with greenway development and the just transition process, these projects represent an holistic and sustainable approach to protecting the heritage resource while</p>
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	<p>Continue to Assist with Regeneration Initiatives</p> <p>Provide strong financial management, risk management, audit, control and compliance systems</p> <p>Bank/Treasury</p>	<p>promoting local economic development and enhancing heritage and environmental awareness.</p> <p><u>Edgeworthstown Library and Public Realm</u> Undergrounding of services is complete and street lighting is operational along Edgeworthstown Main Street. Construction work is progressing well on the library and the project is due to be completed by Q1 2021.</p> <p><u>Community Heritage projects completed in 2020</u> Projects that promote heritage and environmental awareness in local communities include the Latin School in Moyne and mapping projects in the larger towns throughout the County.</p> <p><u>Rural working Hubs</u> On 2 July 2020 contracts were signed for the appointment of architects de Blacam and Meagher to 'The Yard Hub' project in Abbeyshrule. The Yard Hub project involves the redevelopment of a derelict site in Abbeyshrule village to create space for economic and enterprise development. This facility will provide local people currently facing long commutes the opportunity to work close to home, and it will also bring economic activity to the village centre.</p> <p><u>Indoor Gymnasium, The Mall, Templemichael, Longford</u> Construction of a single storey gymnasium at the Albert Reynolds Peace Park completed in November 2020. The development will complete the facility to regional standard and it will provide a vital asset to the citizens of Longford</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Aesthetic Improvements to LIADH (Old Providers Building) • Input into the construction of the new gym in The Mall Leisure Centre • Completion of Retiling of Swimming Pool to address safety issues and provide a superior facility for service users • Assisted in the refurbishment of Ballymahon Library following a fire in early 2020 • Worked to improve the corporate image of our organisation with painting works on our buildings at Aras an Chontae and Camlin Court and installation of new Longford Connected Signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of Annual Financial Statement, Annual Budget, EU/IMF Quarterly Reports by Department deadlines • First AFS to be audited in the country • Liaised with each section in respect of their budgetary requirements, producing a balanced budget to meet the demands of the county, COVID-19 demands and to promote growth and regeneration in the county <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the Treasury function in respect of negative interest rates being charged. • Treasury policy drafted and is now in the final stages of the approval process • Bank receipting done on a timely basis to ensure accurate up to date financial information is available for reporting, recoupment claims and CCR monthly deadline
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	<p>Accounts Payable</p> <p>Superannuation</p> <p>Payroll</p> <p>Control and Compliance/Internal Audit</p> <p>Initiate review of County Development Plan</p> <p>Promote sustainable and positive development of County Longford and identify areas of potential growth</p> <p>Improving connectiveness and business continuity of Longford</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to 15 prompt payment requirements, 98.3 % average compliance year to date 2020 • All Revenue returns and payments processed by due date • Timely information available to employees to facilitate informed decisions re retirement options • Prompt payment to retiring employees • Adherence to Department deadlines • Adherence to Shared Service strict payroll processing deadlines • Continual monitoring of procurement compliance • Production of reports to strict deadlines as determined by the Audit Committee and the annual Audit Plan, quarterly reports and coordination of SICAP audit, Performance Indicators and the Public Spending Code • Draft Development Plan published for public consultation Oct. 2020 setting out the policy to allow for the sustainable growth of Longford as a County • Provision of amenity grants and Part VIII applications, engaging with Departments and other parties to promote tourism projects • Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring maximum service provided to the public by telephone, email, online meetings, public opening hours
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Strategic Objective	Longford – A Greener County	
	Initiatives to deliver Objective	Successes for 2020
Strategic Infrastructure and Climate Action	<p>Leakage Management Programme</p> <p>Water Conservation Initiatives</p> <p>Compliance with Water and Wastewater Directives</p> <p>Develop Action Plans for the adaption of Local Authority Roads and Transportation infrastructure to reduce the impact of climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful results achieved in the KPIS, Operational and Tracking Measures in IW ASP Monthly reports for Leakage Management and Water Conservation. • Ongoing development of plans to reduce impact of Climate • Change on strategic Infrastructure. Consideration of design capacity, materials etc

	<p>Maintain and Improve the Public Lighting system throughout the County</p> <p>Place climate action, biodiversity and the environment at the heart of local decision making</p> <p>Climate proof Council policies and operations</p> <p>Integrate climate change as a key consideration informing the County Development Plan</p> <p>Mainstream climate change adaptation into all Council functions, operations and service level agreements</p> <p>Lead and provide a planned and coherent response to the effects of climate change</p> <p>Promote principles and best practices of a sustainable environment to maintain the county's image as an environmentally friendly county in all its aspects</p> <p>Increase awareness of climate change at local level</p> <p>Lead the way to reduce the economic, environmental and social impacts of climate change across community's</p> <p>Protect our natural and built environment</p> <p>Maintain and protect Longford's natural and built resources - green spaces, lakes and rivers through the implementation of appropriate policies, plans and actions</p> <p>Promote, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the county</p> <p>Work in partnership with state agencies and Bord na Mona on the rehabilitation of bogs and the development of a wilderness park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued roll-out of Energy Efficient Lantern Replacement Programme to reduce Energy Consumption. Commenced the Implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy by incorporating climate change into the Draft County Development Plan and the Corporate Plan. Developed environmental awareness and education strategies We responded to climate change through sustainable rural development eg maintaining small slaughterhouses and local low throughput meat plants In conjunction with Caro, Longford County Council has commenced the implementation of staff training. We are continuing to work to reduce our energy consumption and to have our energy consumption reduced by 30% by the end of the year We have promoted awareness of climate change through engagement with tidy towns, green schools and other local community groups. Implemented legislation to deal with Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures Reduced Environmental Pollution through engagement and enforcement with relevant stakeholders. Regulated animal by products and their disposal. In 2020 LCC protected our natural environment in relation to disposal of animal by-products.
Community and Enterprise	Administering and developing projects under the National Biodiversity Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for North Longford Native Tree Nursery Moyne. The Pallas Pollinator project at the childhood home of Oliver Goldsmith.

	<p>Intergenerational collaborative working with local schools and Men’s Sheds on creating a greater knowledge and pride in their own place.</p> <p>Support the LCDC in its role of providing LEADER grant assistance for Environmental projects.</p> <p>Enhance Organisational Information Management Systems and Processes.</p> <p>Participate in the Council’s implementation of Climate Action Charter including participation in employee training.</p> <p>Design and deliver programmes to encourage small firms to adopt more environmentally friendly businesses practices.</p> <p>Promote local firms that bring forward green solutions to the marketplace. Encourage local support for local enterprises that are supporting the climate change agenda.</p> <p>Preparation of Learning and Development Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of workshops and an exhibition in partnership with Dromard Men’s Shed, Moyne Community School and Ballinamuck and Dromard Primary schools. • 5 environmental projects approved for LEADER funding. • Data Protection Records of Processing Exercise conducted in sections used to test and pilot electronic File Management process. • Training not scheduled as yet therefore no success to report on this initiative. • The Longford LEO office is coordinating a Going Green Pilot Programme for 32 small firms across the Midlands to encourage the adoption of more sustainable business practices • Firms promoting new green technology solutions are a new priority for LEO supports • The Longford LEO office is now represented on a Department development committee looking at devising new green programmes for the micro-enterprise sector. • 104.5 days of training has been completed with employees • 1,236 employees have participated in training programmes since January. • Examples of training courses completed include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in Leadership • End User IT Security Training • Line Manager Training • Manual Handling • Temporary Traffic Management • The Learning and Development Programme moved online which increased efficiencies and participation in relation to Learning and Development. • Training is now predominantly delivered online eliminating/reducing the need to travel to attend training • Delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Programme is on target
Finance and Regeneration	<p>Accounts Receivable: During the COVID-19 restrictions this section facilitated customers setting up standing order and paying via credit card over the phone</p> <p>Participate in the Council’s implementation of Climate Action Charter including participation in employee training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This reflected in customers ensuring their accounts where appropriate where paid in a timely manner despite the COVID-19 restrictions. • Training not Scheduled as yet

	<p>Electronic filing of all journals and backup material</p> <p>e-Invoicing Continue to meet energy efficiency targets through a planned works programme</p> <p>Climate proof Council policies and operations Integrate climate change as a key consideration informing the County Development Plan Mainstream climate change adaptation into all Council functions, operations and service level agreements</p> <p>Promote principles and best practices of a sustainable environment to maintain the county's image as an environmentally friendly county in all its aspects Increase awareness of climate change at local level.</p> <p>Lead the way to reduce the economic, environmental and social impacts of climate change across communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenced in March 2020. Project commenced to convert historic data to electronic form • e-Invoicing successfully implemented in September 2020 and available to suppliers who wish to use it. • Commenced a thorough examination of our energy use in tandem with Bernard Shea with an objective to implement a programme of works to reduce our carbon footprint through a series of capital works. Consultants are currently engaged in assessing the viability of installing a Biomass Heating System in Aras and Chontae, Camlin Court and Longford Library • Planned maintenance works on fuel burners were tendered and contract appointed. This will form part of our Planned Maintenance Schedule and will create a more efficient system that will reduce emissions and over time reduce costs <p><u>Gas network expansion 2020</u> Extension of the Gas Network to Ballymahon in conjunction with Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) completed.</p> <p><u>Longford Connected project €4million approx.</u> Enhanced connectivity across the town core and between strategic uses and services, will support compact urban growth and waking/cycling as dominant transport modes and reduce the need for vehicular travel.</p> <p><u>Town and Village Scheme 2020</u> €40k funding in support of connectivity was received to improve Breaden's Lane, Longford town, to be completed Q1 2021.</p> <p><u>Fáilte Ireland, destination towns €500k Funding Secured</u> Delivery of a coherent link to connect Longford Town Centre with the Canal Blueway. Project will promote sustainable tourism by connecting the walk/cycleway with town centre services and the national transport network.</p> <p><u>Rural working Hubs</u> In association with enterprise, local communities and EU partners, progression of remote working facilities at Edgeworthstown and Abbeyshrule to reduce commuting requirements, promoting sustainable travel and rural economic development.</p> <p><u>€100k Just Transition Funding Secured</u> Funding is for a study into potential renewable energy development and spin-off circular economic benefits under this fund. The aim is to ensure an equitable shift from carbon based fossil fuels and establish social, economic and environmental supports, with a particular emphasis on affected communities.</p> <p><u>Amenity and tourism development</u></p>
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	<p>Ensure Climate Action is at the heart of policy making to support the development of Longford as a carbon neutral County</p> <p>Protect and enhance Longford's natural and built resources</p> <p>Promote the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park</p> <p>Housing</p>	<p>Programme of sustainable tourism i.e. Greenways, Blueways and associated facilities have been and continue to be installed countywide, connecting local communities with strategic facilities and amenity areas, forming a local, regional and national network that promotes sustainable recreation and tourism.</p> <p>Sustainable Tourism development €468,750 funding secured under RRDF20 to develop enhanced connectivity in tandem with resource-based tourism facilities in Lanesborough, consolidating visitor attractions close to Lough Ree to provide an immersive experience and in close proximity to existing town centre services and infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action is embedded throughout the Draft Development Plan to ensure Longford is a sustainable and attractive greener County • Ensuring the Draft County Development Plan sets policies which will protect our natural and built resources • Ongoing engagement with interested parties to develop the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park and developing a nature friendly and carbon sequestration countryside with improved biodiversity • The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, has allocated €3.3 million to Longford County Council for the retrofitting of local authority-owned houses in the county. The retrofitting of homes in Granard, Longford and Ballymahon Municipal Districts will result in warmer, more comfortable homes and benefit householders' health through improved air quality.
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Strategic Objective	Longford – A Safer County	
	Initiatives to deliver Objective	Successes for 2020
Strategic Infrastructure and Climate Action	<p>Maintain Safe Drinking Water Supplies and Manage Waste Water Treatment Plants whilst engaging with Customers and Stakeholders</p> <p>Ongoing improved road safety throughout the County. Improved compliance with quality standards. Safer and</p>	<p>Successful results achieved in the KPIS, Operational and Tracking Measures in IW ASP Monthly reports for ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of water supplies to ensure Compliance with Drinking Water Regulations 2014 • Monitoring of Waste Water Discharges in line with EPA Discharge Licences and Certs of Authorisations, • Effective Communication with Customers and Stakeholders via the Customer Call Centre and IW Outage Portal and Directly with Regulatory Bodies • Construction of Road Safety Schemes at various locations throughout the County with expenditure in excess of 250k on Regional and Local Roads.

	<p>more accessible roads for our citizens. Continue to eliminate Accident Blackspots.</p> <p>Promotion of an integrated approach to Road Safety in the County by engaging with all relevant agencies in the promotion and improvement of Road Safety throughout the County</p> <p>Safeguard, protect and enhance the environment in the interests of quality of life, economic development and regulatory compliance</p> <p>Develop and implement appropriate policies, plans and actions to ensure our county becomes a safer place to live, work and invest</p> <p>Provide a professional and active role in monitoring air, water and food quality and standards</p> <p>Work with the relevant agencies to improve road and water safety</p> <p>Take action to prevent and reduce incidences of anti-social behaviour through the Joint Policing Committee</p> <p>Ensure a multi-agency approach is adopted to deal with specific anti-social behaviour issues and participate in effective crime prevention partnerships with community and State Agencies</p> <p>Encourage and support crime prevention initiatives</p> <p>Provide dog and horse control services.</p> <p>Partner with other principal response agencies to plan and respond to emergencies</p> <p>Ensure necessary planning, preparedness, capacity, training and coordination is in place</p> <p>Support and strengthen communities' resilience for response to emergencies and work with other principal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct HD 28 National Pavement Works on various National Roads in the County. • Design and Construct Road Safety HD 15 and HD 17 Minor Work Schemes in the County. • This is an ongoing process promoting Longford's Road Safety Strategy in collaboration with the Gardai, RSA, Schools etc • Completed our plan of Inspections in accordance with the RMCEI Plan 2020 • Ensured consistent enforcement of our powers under various Environmental legislation • We have successfully implemented FSAI contract as per contract requirements. We have maintained and improved food safety in County Longford. • Ensured regulatory compliance with food standards • Continued to provide high standards in dog and horse control services. • Under Joint Policing Committee, our Dog Control Services assisted An Garda Siochana in relation to stolen dogs. • Worked with the JPC in tackling incidents of illegal dumping associated with anti-social behaviour • Continued the use of CCTV and GPS equipment to locate and plot environment black spots • Engaged with training on major emergency planning
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	<p>response agencies to plan for and respond to major emergencies</p> <p>Promote and implement best practice in Occupational Health and Safety</p> <p>Maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce</p> <p>Encourage and promote a culture of continuous Health and Safety improvement across the organisation</p> <p>Implement proactive and responsive approaches</p> <p>Ensure our governance structures are underpinned by responsive leadership, robust processes and compliance</p> <p>Provide strong executive business management, procurement, audit and corporate governance structures and ensure that systems, processes and procedures meet the highest standards</p> <p>Measure and report on the performance of the organisation</p> <p>Support Elected Members in their policy making and representational roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued monthly meetings with H&S Officer to ensure best practice for our staff
Community and Enterprise	<p>Coordination of Longford Older Persons Council and Longford Age Friendly Alliance.</p> <p>Support the work of the Joint Policing Committee.</p> <p>Continue to promote the Property Marking Scheme.</p> <p>Support government efforts to assist communities during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>Work to attain ISO 450001 accreditation for the Health and Safety Management System.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with Longford Community Gardai to promote the Crime Prevention Ambassador programme. Working with Active Age Groups and our older citizens to make Longford a better place to grow older in. JPC approved Operation Phoenix - to work in partnership in Longford Town Centre to improve the quality of life of those operating businesses, those living and those shopping in the County Town Training provided to Gardai and community groups to use the equipment at community events Set up Community Call Helpline Set up Community Forum Award grants of €58,000 to support frontline organisations Successful transition to ISO 450001 accreditation for the Health and Safety Management System. Conduction of NSAI H&S Audit. Submission of Council application to NISO for safety awards.

	<p>Promote a Safety Culture with employees, contractors and visitors to ensure safety of all.</p> <p>Work with the Governance SPC to strengthen governance processes.</p> <p>Maintain Compliance with Data Protection, Freedom of Information Legislation.</p> <p>Safeguarding the Privacy and Security of Data with robust preventative measures, policies and processes.</p> <p>Enable our customers exercise their rights under Data Protection legislation.</p> <p>Protect the Privacy Rights of our customers.</p> <p>Facilitate the public with access to records held by the Council.</p> <p>Enhance Data Protection Awareness.</p> <p>Promote and observe best practice and the highest standards of governance.</p> <p>Response to COVID-19.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to all FOI and DP requests in an open and transparent manner within prescribed Statutory timeframes. • FOI Decision Makers appointed and trained. • FOI Disclosure Log published quarterly on Council’s website. • Data Protection Policy Framework put in place • Five Data Protection Policies developed and implemented. • Council’s Privacy Statement developed, approved and published. • Develop the Council’s Records of Personal Data Processing Register. • FOI Publication Scheme updated • Efficient and user-friendly process for Data Subject Access Requests implemented. • Data Protection Awareness training made available to employees. • Periodic Data Protection information sessions with Senior Officers. • Compliance with Corporate Plan implementation and monitoring framework. • Timely completion NOAC Returns. • Development and publication on website of professional CE monthly report. • 23 COVID-19 Employee Updates and 4 Business Response Plans were issued to all employees since March 2020. • The purpose of the COVID-19 Employee Updates was to keep employees up to date with information received, decisions of the Management Team and changes within the organisation as a result of the response required to COVID-19.
<p>Finance and Regeneration</p>	<p>Ensure that there is a safe working environment for employees in the section and customers entering the building.</p> <p>Provide a modern Community CCTV system in our County Town</p> <p>Promote communication with all stakeholders using digital media and marketing tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided relevant PPE for staff and ensured that hand sanitiser was available to all customers entering the building. A staff member was assigned to assist and control access for customers entering the building while restrictions were eased during the summer months. • CCTV governance committee in place with reps from AGS • Public Consultation and Alternative Measures completed. • Mast move at Connolly Barracks Part 8 completed

	<p>Develop and implement appropriate policies, plans and actions to ensure our county becomes a safer place to live, work and invest.</p> <p>Safer and more accessible amenities for our citizens. Address safety and security issues and concerns for our communities.</p> <p>Encourage and promote a culture of continuous Health and Safety improvement across the organisation.</p> <p>Continue our work on Longford County Council's COVID-19 Response for the safety of both staff and customers utilising our buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant consultation completed for design and update of Longford Town CCTV System • Tender for update and extension of CCTV system in Longford Town live on eTenders • New digital communications platform available to all sections to use to communicate with the public, targeted communication <p><u>URBACT Project</u></p> <p>The main objective of the network is to study, create and develop new approaches and strategies aimed at innovative urban planning solutions that can prevent crime, improve the perception of urban security and change behaviours to improve the quality of life of citizens in urban environments.</p> <p>UrbSecurity will contribute to the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of cities. Partners have been divided into nine thematic groups in the areas of spatial design, functions and animation, engagement techniques, communities, minorities, benchmarking and impacts, CCTV, nudging and pedestrian safety. Taking advantage of the good practices already implemented by each of the partners and having each established their local objectives, the network's activities will run until mid-2022.</p> <p>Health and Safety Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Regeneration continue to implement all Health and Safety Policies and Procedures. The Department work closely with the Health and Safety Officer, ensuring Employees are trained adequately and always aware of Health and Safety obligations.</p> <p><u>Vacant Sites Levy</u></p> <p>Implementation of the Vacant Sites Levy provisions of the Housing and Urban Regeneration Act 2015 continues in 2020.</p> <p><u>Unfinished Estates</u></p> <p>Excellent progress is being made in resolving the issues and difficulties of unfinished private estates and bringing them to a taking in charge standard. To date a total of 117 estates have been resolved and/or formally taken in charge and no longer on the Unfinished Estates list. Site Resolution Plans are agreed and currently being implemented on the remaining 11 estates. Work to finalise issues on those estates will continue in 2021 will the aim of reducing this number further</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of C19 safety measures (Signage and PPE) in all of our buildings • Created, stocked and managed a COVID-19 PPE Store in Aras an Chontae • Liaised with all Sections to ensure adequate safety measures were in place to accommodate staff both working in the buildings and remotely
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	<p>Continue to implement the high health and safety standards in all of our buildings</p> <p>Maintain Compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation</p> <p>Promote a Safety Culture with employees, contractors and visitors to ensure safety of all</p> <p>Safeguard, protect and enhance the County</p> <p>Support initiatives which will lead to a safer environment for the citizens of Longford and visitors alike</p> <p>Utilise necessary channels to ensure safety and compliance for the public</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Fire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the successful NSAI Audit to migrate to ISO45001 • Implementation of Joblogic Software Programme to manage Planned Maintenance Works and Statutory Inspections • Large Safety Works completed in 2020 include the upgrading of Air Handling Units in Aras an Chontae and Camlin Court; Legionella Survey and Asbestos Surveys completed and all PAT Testing completed • Respond to all FOI and DP requests in an open and transparent manner within prescribed Statutory timeframes • FOI Decision Maker trained in the section • Participation in Data Protection training • Support all safety inspections and any issues arising • Section was successfully audited by NSAI H&S Audit • Successful transition to ISO 450001 accreditation for the Health and Safety Management System for Longford County Council • Ensuring the policies set out in the Draft Development Plan protect and improve the safety of the County as a whole • Engaging with other Departments and interested parties through Part VIII processes and other initiatives • Where necessary, utilising Enforcement process, ensuring measures are in place to maintain the safety of our communities • The Homeless Action Team met this month; the focus of this interagency group is to discuss the needs of homeless people and put in place support services to enable them to secure accommodation and tenancy sustainment • The Fire Service maintained full standards of fire cover throughout the pandemic by changing how it worked, by utilising resilience measures as detailed in the Business Continuity Plan and Action Tracker System. • The Fire Authority met all its statutory obligations with regards to Planning, Licensing and its functions under the Buildings Control Act- A new draft fire safety plan was prepared for the county.
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Strategic Objective		Longford – A County for Everyone
	Initiatives to deliver Objective	Successes for 2020
Strategic Infrastructure and Climate Action	<p>Ensure an Adequate supply of treated water with minimal interruptions, quick response times and information to customers when emergency disruptions in water Supplies occur via the IW Outage Portal</p> <p>Ensure quick response times to deal with Waste water network complaints and reports of Asset Flooding which may have originated from an IW asset</p> <p>Facilitate and Support our Councillors</p> <p>Improve and maintain the National, Regional and Local Road Network to enhance connectivity throughout the County.</p> <p>Develop connected, sustainable and prosperous communities with access to housing, education, work, healthcare and leisure</p> <p>Create balanced and mixed communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic background and</p>	<p>Successful results achieved in the KPIS, Operational and Tracking Measures in IW ASP Monthly reports for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering on the objectives of the Annual Services Plan • Resolved actions arising from Cllr Clinics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road and Bridge improvement works were carried out throughout the County in both urban and rural areas enhancing physical connectivity throughout the County • Worked with communities on Local Environmental Matters, Ardnacassa Avenue and environs. • Engaged the CPO process to deal with Derelict Sites and support the provision of Social Housing.

	<p>socio-economic status and facilitate the provision of well managed and well maintained social housing within an environment that is attractive, safe and secure in a community where people will want to live</p> <p>Support the LCDC in the development of a strategic framework for economic and community development for the county</p> <p>Work with the relevant agencies to improve access to and delivery of high quality services for our citizens</p> <p>Enhance, celebrate and support our rich culture, heritage, diversity, sport and creativity</p> <p>Enable every person in Longford to have the opportunity to realise their full potential</p> <p>Implement appropriate strategies, policies, plans and actions which support integration, activity, creativity and improved health outcomes for citizens</p> <p>Provide support and assistance to emerging and established communities</p> <p>Support and strengthen Local Democracy Promote public participation and involvement in the democratic and decision making processes through active consultation and communication with employees and citizens and provision of support for the Public Participation Network</p> <p>Ensure our communications are accurate, timely and relevant for all</p> <p>Implement Electoral Register Modernisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have delivered environmental awareness and education strategies through Green Schools Programme • Supported elected members and democratic structures in their representative and policy formulation roles.
Community and Enterprise	<p>Facilitate active citizenship through the provision of high quality accessible spaces, programmes and resources through our branch Library network.</p> <p>Delivery of the Longford Culture and Creativity Plan.</p> <p>Support our communities through the PPN.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the pandemic the delivery of a number of initiatives and online programmes to keep people connected. • Support for Longford writers, artists and creatives in partnership with Creative Ireland with an emphasis on assisting them to share their work online. Delivering Bealtaine, Cruinniú na nÓg , Still Voices, Heritage Week and Decade of Centenaries Programme. • Funding provide to support 2 PPN members of staff. • 15 social inclusion projects approved for LEADER funding.

	<p>Support the LCDC in its role of providing LEADER grant assistance for social inclusion projects.</p> <p>Support the LCDC in implementing the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme.</p> <p>Support the LCDC in implementing initiatives that promote and support communities eg Community Enhancement Programme Healthy Longford Programme</p> <p>Implement other initiatives that promote and support communities eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLÁR scheme • Community grant support scheme • Playground scheme <p>Support the Refugee Resettlement Programme.</p> <p>Support diversity in our community.</p> <p>Implement the inter-cultural strategy.</p> <p>Support “Connecting for Life” Ireland’s National strategy to reduce suicide.</p> <p>Support the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP).</p> <p>Support the Comhairle na nÓg initiative.</p> <p>Support the work of Longford Sports Partnership incl. / NGB / Sports Inclusion Disability officer programme.</p> <p>Support the outdoors as a means of affordable and accessible sport and recreation participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of Key Performance Indicators, ie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 300 individuals assisted • 17 community groups engaged • Over €55,000 awarded to 51 organisations under round 1 CEP funding. • Over €109,000 awarded to 52 organisations under round 2 CEP funding. • Over €246,000 approved for Healthy Ireland Programme of works including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Mental Health Fund • Small Grants scheme and • Teen suicide bereavement support service • Over €265,000 awarded to 8 CLÁR projects. • Over €300,000 fund to support community groups through county-wide fund and Municipal District funding. • Adventure trail in Albert Reynolds Peace park refurbished. • Funding secured for refurbishment of Granard playground. • Respond contracted for a further period to provide support to the Syrian community in Ballymahon and Granard. • Dormant Accounts Funding of €10,000 was secured from the DRCD for work with two LGBTI groups in County Longford. • Worked with the PPN to support the Intercultural Forum. • Supported an Intercultural event on the 28 February in conjunction with the PPN. • Promoted the integration of migrants into local communities through the provision of grants for intercultural activities. • Promoted the HSE suicide prevention training programmes available to staff in government departments and people in the community. • Represented the LA on LWCYPSC committee and subgroups. • Supported the completion of the CYPP 2020-2022. • LWCYPSC Established Youth Forums (aged 3-24yrs) in which Comhairle na nÓg are represented 12-18 age group. • Members conducted a survey on the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions on young people and released a song on social media called ‘Stand Tall’. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured €20,000 from DCEDIY to operate the Comhairle na Óg and a further €2,550 for ICT hardware to implement a blended model of service provision. • Successfully held the Comhairle na nÓg AGM through Zoom with 65 young people representing all post primary schools and youth services in the County. • Deliver/administer an investment of €310,990 allocated to date in 2020 for sports clubs, and sport and physical activity initiatives from various source. • Creation of QR codes for Outdoor Gym Equipment and video content inclusive for everyone with sign language and captions.
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	<p>Develop timely effective communication programmes to inform all citizens.</p> <p>Maximise use of all available communication channels to raise awareness in the county of the Council's diverse and valuable work and service activities.</p> <p>Local Electoral Register modernisation initiatives.</p> <p>Promote citizen participation in the Elector Register process through innovative use of technology.</p> <p>Support Elected Members and Democratic Structures in their representative and policy formulation roles.</p> <p>Celebrate local entrepreneurs as the employment and wealth creators who drive economic growth.</p> <p>Support sustainable lifestyles by creating more employment opportunities for local residents, by supporting the provision of remote working hubs.</p> <p>Development of integrated communities through better connection between businesses, workers and residents.</p> <p>Development of Health and Wellbeing Programme.</p> <p>Delivery of the Open Learning Scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 300 participants (600% increase on last year) for our Water Sports Programmes and Longford "Women on the Water" programme was chosen to feature in the National Promotional Campaign for European Week of Sport. • 500 people took part in the Longford Summer Series of Walking. Over 700 already registered for the current 4*4 Walking challenge. • Ongoing communications with authentic image-based content and Longford-focused messaging. • Frequently updated social media channels. • Council expanded its communication channels to include Instagram and TikTok platforms • Services Charter developed • Monthly publication of CE Report on website • Online application for Electoral Registration process developed and implemented. • Innovative Social Media Electoral Registration publicity campaign developed. • Longford County Council ranked 4th nationally in Local Authorities Satisfaction Survey 2020. • Longford LEO continues to foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and celebrates success at school's level, young entrepreneurs level, and at county level. • Longford County Council has supported the development of co-working spaces in Edgeworthstown, Abbeyshrule and Ballymahon • Development of walking and cycling corridors to facilitate local employment and public realm enhancements to make our core business areas more attractive and inviting spaces. • 9 Health and Wellbeing Programmes completed. • 4 in progress. • 502 employees/elected members have participated in Health and Wellbeing programmes to date in 2020. • Examples of initiatives delivered include - May, Health and Wellbeing Day, Active July initiative, Yoga and Circuit Class, Managing Stress and Keeping well while working from home.
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Finance and Regeneration	<p>Continue to provide a working environment cognisant to the diverse nature of the workings of Longford County Council</p> <p>Ensure our Policies and Procedures are fair, equitable and inclusive.</p> <p>Ensure projects are consistent with the objectives in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).</p> <p>Listen and respond to our communities and citizens.</p> <p>Promote public participation and involvement in the democratic and decision making processes through active consultation and communication with employees and citizens and provision of support for the Public Participation Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured our buildings are safe and usable for all our staff and citizens irrespective of their particular needs • Ensured that we fulfilled our duties in the respectful and dignified manner representative of the organisation <p><u>Participation with groups in 2020</u> Town teams established in Edgeworthstown, Drumlish, Ballymahon, Lanesborough/Ballyleague Collaboration Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active engagement and feedback from our communities/Stakeholders/Elected Members/Public to ensure projects developed enhance accessibility and inclusiveness. • Quarterly Regeneration Committee meetings held remotely with Elected Members. • Continued regular engagement and provision of support to community groups and town teams in Longford through deliverance of projects. • Work in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Bord na Mona and other public and private organisations to deliver projects for all of our citizens. <p><u>Regeneration Strategy</u> Developed and implemented an agreed Strategy for the ongoing regeneration of Longford County.</p> <p><u>Community walkways and trail projects 2020</u> Development of the recreational infrastructure across the county will play a key role in our economic recovery from COVID-19 as they form a key part of the tourism offering of the county and the wider Hidden Heartlands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drumlish to Monaduff walkway • Royal Canal link Mosstown to Keenagh • Newcastle Wood to Royal Canal link,

	<p>Support and promote the digital agenda within County Longford and the implementation of the National Broadband Plan within the county.</p> <p>Promote communication with all stakeholders using digital media and marketing tools</p> <p>Engage with the public to ensure maximum participation through Policy formation</p> <p>Support and foster relationships with Elected Members to ensure citizens of Longford are fully represented</p> <p>Support the development of amenity/tourism projects to provide a healthy, sporting and creative community and socially inclusive society</p> <p>Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Newcastle Woods Perimeter Walk ● Lanesborough to Royal Canal Link, ● Longford Town Royal Canal ● Killashee to Clondra Royal canal upgrade works ● The Mall Walk Upgrade, Longford Town. <p><u>Indoor Gymnasium, The Mall, Templemichael, Longford</u> Completed November 2020.</p> <p><u>Edgeworthstown Library</u> To be completed in Q1 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Longford town WIFI in place ● 3 Rural Broadband Connection Points WIFI live ● Longford town WIFI in place ● 3 Rural Broadband Connection Points WIFI live ● New digital communications platform available to all sections ● Maximising engagement with the public in preparing the Draft County Development Plan ensuring the Plan takes into account the wider communities’ considerations and needs ● Ensuring Elected Members are adequately informed in their role in the various planning processes to ensure local democracy is maintained ● Supporting the work of Regeneration/Housing/Roads/Agencies in relation to the Draft County Development Plan, tourism initiatives, Part V and Part VIII applications to provide a healthy, sporting and creative community and a more socially inclusive society ● A Virtual meeting of the Intercultural Hub of the Longford Community Resources clg (LCRL) took place in November bringing together a wide sector of the Longford community to discuss the functions of the Housing Department and provided details on the Housing application process and housing options available.
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