



Longford County Council Chief Executive Report June 2022

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June Highlights

New Cathaoirleach Elected

This month, Cllr Turlough McGovern has been elected Longford County Council Cathaoirleach. Also in June, Cllr Paul Ross was elected Ballymahon Municipal District (MD) Cathaoirleach, Cllr Colin Dalton was elected Granard MD Cathaoirleach and Cllr Gerry Hagan was elected Longford MD Cathaoirleach.



New social homes unveiled

Three new social housing developments were opened by Minister of State for Planning and Local Government and Longford-Westmeath TD Peter Burke. The developments, Campbell's Drive in Farnagh, Alder Field in Farnagh Hill and Slí Corglass in Legga, are home to 120 adults and 115 children.



Cathaoirleach Awards

Cathaoirleach Awards covering the past three years were held to recognise local people. It included the first live performance of the Longford County Council Choir.



National Enterprise Awards

Longford representatives Cirtex Ltd were worthy winners of 'Best Green and Sustainable Business' at the National Enterprise Awards.



Community & Enterprise

Library, Heritage and Archives

Libraries

Footfall in all libraries have increased over the last months, helped by many new events and activities. Highlights included the Cruinniú creativity programme, a local history tour and a coffee morning for our new Ukrainian community in the Longford branch.



Several exhibitions were launched, including the Edgeworthstown Street Photographic Exhibition and the Granard Art Group Exhibition. The latter was launched by Granard Municipal District Cathoirleach Cllr Paraic Brady.

The Summer Stars Reading Programme, which encourages children to join the library and read for pleasure, is underway in all branches. It is supported by many fun and exciting events for children over the summer months.

Creative Ireland

Part of the Creative Ireland programme, Cruinniú na nÓg which is Ireland's national day of free creativity for children and young people took place in June. For this, many events took place across all County Longford libraries.

These activities enabled children and young people to experience and enjoy different forms of creativity, including arts, crafts, dance, rap, puppet making, bodhrán playing, African drumming and music.

Cruinniú na nÓg celebrations also took place at Connolly Barracks where an international family day and performances of a play by Backstage Youth Theatre.

Then Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council Cllr Peggy Nolan launched a new children's book entitled *Sky is the Limit* by Shelley Corcoran and Angelika Florkiewicz.



Further celebrations were held in The Mall with the Ethnic Minority Hub holding a tree-planting ceremony and displaying artwork.

Community & Enterprise

Longford Age Friendly Programme

This year's third Older Person Council meeting took place in June. With updates from the recent national convention and a review of the Bealtaine Festival, the event was well-attended.

It also included information from Community Garda representatives on the upcoming crime prevention ambassador recruitment programme.

Longford Age Friendly Programme have submitted applications under the upcoming National Age Friendly Recognition Awards, which will be announced in October.

Heritage

All Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage conservation grant projects are committed to going ahead, with a number already underway.

The tender for the Community Monuments Fund (CMF) for Abbeyshrule Abbey is being completed and will go to tender shortly.

The CMF project for the medieval church at Clondra is also underway, with the specifications for preliminary ivy clipping being finalised.

The Longford Popular Music Heritage Project is continuing. Interviews with Bernie Connolly, Paddy Egan and Aidan O'Hara have taken place. Interviews with Jude Flynn, Pat Rock and others to due to start shortly.

The final edits to Seamus Mimmagh's book are complete. Publication is due to take place during

Heritage Week, with preparation for Heritage Week 2022 also having started. Edits to the Longford Rocks geology book have also commenced.

The Heritage Office participated in the Climate Change Science and Policy Group plenary, and Hertiage continue to participate in its working group.

Archives

Further material from Longford has been put forward for Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury, with this landmark project launched on 27 June.

Contributions include lists of cess defaulters from 1850-51, wills and a Church of Ireland census of Killashee parish from 1846-49.

A lecture on the project by Dr Brian Gurrin, a researcher on the team, was held in Longford Library in May.

A donation of papers of the late John Donlon from Longford was also received into Archives.

As part of the Decade of Centenaries, the documentary film *Clonfin* made by Harp Media was screened in Ballymahon Library in May.

A lecture on the assassination of field marshal Sir Henry Wilson by author and journalist Ronan McGreevy was held in Longford Library.

Work has begun on a documentary on the 'Big Houses' in Longford, with filmmaker Charles Lambert.

Community & Enterprise

Local Enterprise Office

National Enterprise Awards

Longford representatives, Cirtex Ltd were worthy winners of 'Best Green and Sustainable Business' at the National Enterprise Awards held in Dublin.

Cirtex Ltd uses innovative technology to upcycle textiles to produce many new products. This includes insulation, floor underlay, arena fibre and insulator pads for mattresses and furniture cushioning.

Women in Business

Women in Business from Longford, Leitrim and Westmeath attended the first in-person tri-county networking event in over two years. The event, held in Lough Rynn Castle in Mohill, provided an opportunity to share experiences on surviving in business through COVID-19 restrictions, as well as a well-earned catch up.

The event was opened by Pat Murphy, Chairperson of the Network. Guest speakers included Ellen Gunning from the Irish Academy of Public Relations and Iris Kavanagh, marketing and communications professional, trainer and facilitator.



Corporate Services

Customer Services

Customer Services responded to 833 calls in May and 998 calls in June.

Franchise

A draft polling scheme has been prepared in line with recommendations from the Department of Housing, Local Government and the Environment and the Electoral (Polling Schemes) Regulations 2021. Submissions on the draft scheme can be accepted up to 8 July 2022.

A pilot project to increase the accuracy of the Electoral Register is underway. For this, 2,500 letters were issued to electors, with a return rate of 38%.

Elected Members Supports and Meetings Administration

- 10 May Corporate Policy Group
- 11 May Longford County Council
- 24 May Granard MD
Granard MD Committee
- 25 May Longford MD
Longford MD Committee
- 26 May Ballymahon MD
Ballymahon MD Committee
- 8 June Corporate Policy Group
Longford County Council
- 22 June Longford MD AGM
Longford MD
- 28 June Granard MD AGM
- 29 June Ballymahon MD AGM
Longford County Council AGM

Community & Enterprise

Official Languages Act

Preparations are underway for new regulations under the Official Languages Act which will come into effect in October.

Data Protection

Awareness campaigns:

- Celebrated GDPR's fourth birthday on the 25 May
- Introduced a short video on GDPR and You

Policies circulated to all Council employees:

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Subject Rights Policy
- Clean and Clear Desk Policy

Records of Processing Activities:

This is a legal requirement under Article 30 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- Ten sections have completed their Records of Processing Activities
- Six sections remain outstanding

Data Protection Queries May and June: 21

Data Breach: one non-reportable breach occurred

Freedom of Information (FOI)

	May	June	YTD*
FOI requests received	4	2	23
Access to Information on the Environment requests received	0	2	4
Office of the Ombudsman complaints received	0	0	2

*Year-to-date

Health and Safety

Health and Safety Inspections

Ten safety inspections were completed.

Health and Safety Authority Inspection

Health and Safety Authority inspections took place at Longford, Abbeyshrule and Keenagh wastewater treatment plants. Actions regarding minor issues were identified, followed up on and closed out.

Health and Safety Internal Audits

Two internal health and safety audits were completed in the Roads and the Health and Safety sections.

Temporary Traffic Management

A temporary traffic management audit and inspection was completed, with it found to be of a high standard.

Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee

Three Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee (SMCC) meetings with Community and Enterprise, Finance and IT, and Infrastructure, Housing and Innovation directorates took place.

The meetings allow safety representatives raise concerns. They are chaired by the Directors of Services.

Safety Management Team

A Safety Management Team (SMT) meeting took place. The team monitors progression on the Safety Management System and hears issues not resolved from SMCC meetings. No issues were referred to the SMT during this period.

Health and Safety Training

Health and Safety briefings were held with Roads and Water Services on updated risk assessments and the contents of the revised Safety Statement.

Community & Enterprise

Communications

Press Releases

Fourteen press releases were issued in May and June. These included:

- #ClickIntoGear for Bike Week 2022
- Roscommon-Longford Garda Youth Awards celebrate young people in the community
- €265,769 in funding announced for local projects
- Open call for Longford Live and Local round four funding

Media Enquiries

Communications received and replied to 16 media enquiries in the months of May and June.

Events

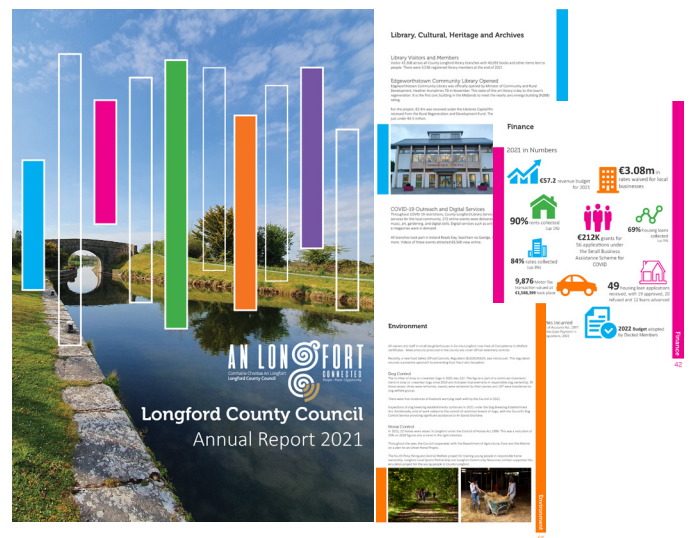
Communications assisted the Council's Meetings Administrator with the following events:

- Moroccan Ambassador Lahcen Mahraoui visit
- Volunteer recognition event held to acknowledge volunteers' work during COVID-19
- Cathaoirleach Awards 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022 was held in the Backstage Theatre
- President of Pakistan administered State of Azad Kashmir – Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry and Ambassador of Pakistan visited Longford



Publications:

Communications helped in the compilation, editing and design of the Longford County Council Annual Report 2021. It is available on [Longfordcoco.ie](https://longfordcoco.ie).



Social Media

Social media continues to be used to effectively communicate with Longford people. In May and June, Communications shared updates on the Cathaoirleach Awards, the Iora Nua project, and the Arts Bursary Scheme. Information was also shared on how to attend the Council and Municipal Districts' Annual General Meetings. Communications also worked with Roscommon County Council in the promotion of entry into the Roscommon-Longford Garda Youth Awards.

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Posts	131	123	52
Stories	1		1
Reach*	136K		14K
Impressions**	145K	23K	16K

*Reach: number of people who had a post enter their screen

**Impressions: number of times a post entered a person's screen

Finance & IT

Finance

Revenue and Account Income and Expenditure Summary by Service Division Year to date to quarter end 31 March 2022

	Expenditure				Income				Net
	Expenditure (€)	Adopted Full Year Budget (€)	% Budget Spent to Date	Budget Remaining (€)	Income (€)	Adopted Full Year Budget (€)	% Budget Raised	Budget Outstanding (€)	Actual Overall Surplus/ (Deficit) €
Housing	2,467,937	10,026,917	25%	7,558,980	2,630,415	11,032,967	24%	8,402,552	162,478
Roads	2,570,373	20,380,160	13%	17,809,787	1,312,398	15,289,857	9%	13,977,459	(1,257,975)
Water Services	1,073,714	4,260,760	25%	3,187,046	1,239,404	4,158,150	30%	2,918,746	165,690
Development Management	2,771,651	11,417,181	24%	8,645,530	1,567,138	6,058,853	26%	4,491,715	(1,204,513)
Environment	1,442,616	6,178,587	23%	4,735,971	165,494	729,751	23%	564,257	(1,277,122)
Recreation and Amenity	1,237,406	4,891,511	25%	3,654,105	265,328	853,625	31%	588,297	(972,078)
Agri, Health and Welfare	128,111	499,303	26%	371,192	70,241	255,030	28%	184,789	(57,870)
Miscellaneous Services	1,903,880	3,925,448	49%	2,021,568	1,647,553	5,027,742	33%	3,380,189	(256,327)
Local Government Fund					2,311,119	9,244,474	25%	6,933,355	2,311,119
*Commercial Rates					2,224,131	8,929,416	25%	6,705,285	2,224,131
	€13,595,688	€61,579,867	22%	€47,984,179	€13,433,221	€61,579,865	22%	€48,146,644	(€162,467)

These figures were submitted to the Department on Wednesday 25 May 2022.

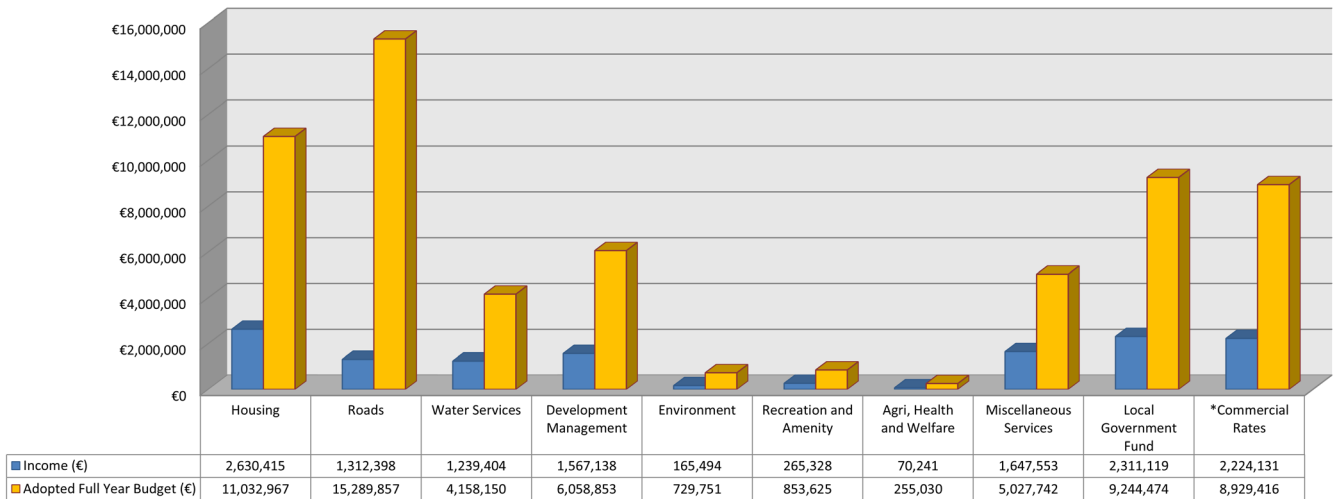
Where COVID-19 related expenditure has been incurred, corresponding deferred income from Central Government has been accounted for.

*The amount of Commercial Rates waived under the 2022 three-month waiver scheme for Q1, 2022 was €465,872.

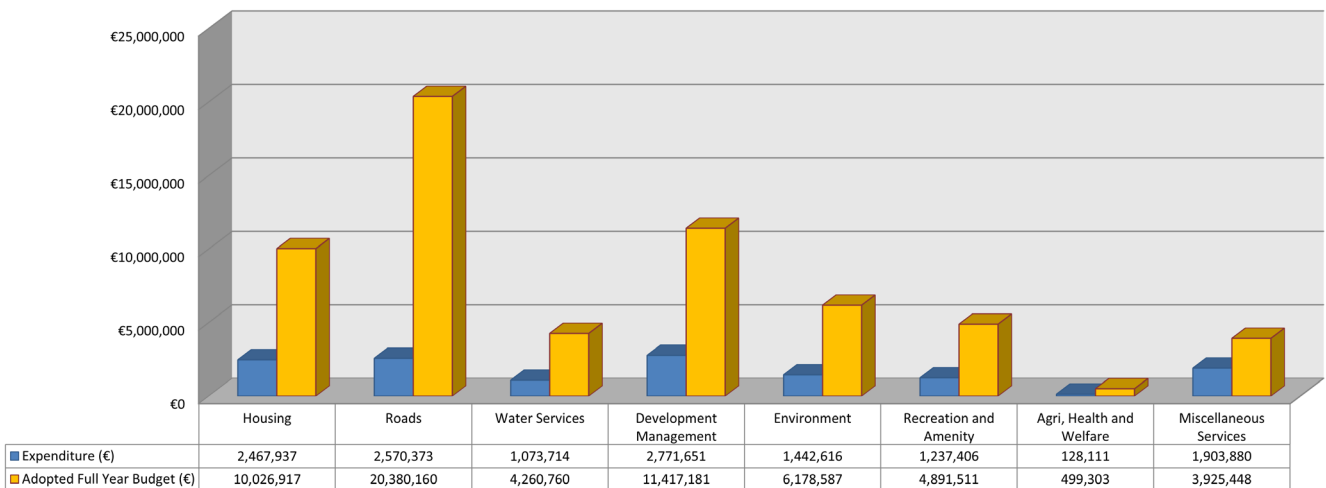
Finance & IT

Finance (Continued)

Expenditure v Budget Quarter 1, 2022



Income v Budget Quarter 1, 2022



Finance & IT

Finance (Continued)

Summary of Major Revenue Collections Quarter 1, 2022

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 1, 2022	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€966,941	€8,896,524	€9,334,230	€2,290,362	€7,043,868	25%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€800,153	€1,838,963	€2,639,012	€1,788,238	€850,774	68%
Housing Loans	€457,955	€230,107	€688,062	€269,704	€418,358	39%

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 1, 2021	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€1,124,618.00	€10,025,317.00	€10,299,808.00	€1,345,084.00	€8,954,724.00	13%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€839,673.00	€1,793,330.00	€2,633,002.00	€1,707,168.00	€925,834.00	65%
Housing Loans	€481,344.00	€233,528.00	€714,872.00	€233,982.00	€480,890.00	33%

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Variance YOY	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	(€157,677)	(€1,128,793)	(€965,578)	€945,278	(€1,910,856)	11%
Rents (inc. RAS)	(€39,520)	€45,633	€6,010	€81,070	(€75,060)	3%
Housing Loans	(€23,389)	(€3,421)	(€26,810)	€35,722	(€62,532)	6%

* COVID-19 Commercial Rates waivers amounted to €465,872 in Q1, 2022.
These have been taken account of in the 'To be Collected' figures above.

Infrastructure, Housing & Innovation

Social Housing

Official Opening of Three New Social Housing Developments

Three new social housing developments were officially opened in County Longford in June by Minister of State for Planning and Local Government and TD for Longford-Westmeath Peter Burke.

All three estates, Campbell's Drive in Farnagh, Alder Field in Farnagh Hill and Slí Corglass in Legga, were delivered in late 2021 and are currently accommodating 120 adults and 115 children.



The Alder Field, Farnagh Hill development is the largest of the three, with the 47 units including 36 three-bedroomed and 11 two-bedroomed units.

The Campbell's Drive, Farnagh includes 17 three-bedroomed and four two-bedroomed units.

The Slí Corglass, Legga housing scheme at Moyne consists of nine four bedroomed units.

Strategic Plan for Disabled People 2022-2027

The Council's Strategic Plan for Disabled People 2022-2027 was adopted at May's Council meeting. This ambitious plan will be used to inform and guide the provision of accommodation for disabled people. It aims to give disabled people access to housing supports and related services that promote dignity, equality, choice and independent living.

The plan was developed in accordance with the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People, published in January 2022. Consultation with housing providers, statutory agencies, service-user groups and other stakeholders took place. Engagement with disabled people and with organisations representing those with disabilities was also sought.

Supplementary Internal Guidance Policy on Private Housing Grants

The Supplementary Internal Guidance Policy on Private Housing Grants has been developed. It will be presented to the next Housing Strategic Policy Committee meeting.

This policy offers internal guidance and is an informative supplement to the Administrative Guidelines for Local Authorities issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in January 2022.

This policy will include summaries or details of:

- each grant available to applicants
- the type of works covered and not covered
- financial thresholds that apply
- the process to apply for a time extension
- an appeal process for applicants
- answer frequently asked questions

Infrastructure, Housing & Innovation

Increase in Discretion Rates for Housing Assistance Payment

Government and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are working to provide for an increase in the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) discretion rates.

If approved, the proposed discretion rate of 35% will apply to existing and new tenancies. The proposal to expand the couples' rate to single persons will apply to new tenancies only, with effect from the implementation date of these additional discretionary measures. It is hoped these changes will be implemented in mid-July.

Once this engagement process is complete, the changes to the HAP scheme will be implemented by regulations and a circular and additional guidance will issue to all local authorities.

Updated Maintenance and Tenants Handbooks

Updated General Information Handbook and Home Maintenance Handbook for Tenants were approved at May's Council meeting.

Water

Find and Fix Programme

The Find and Fix team are operating in the Longford North and Abbeyderg-Kenagh District Metered Areas (DMAs), with saving of approximately 125,000 litres of drinking water per day.

Capital Network Schemes

A 2023 priority list for network watermain rehabilitation schemes and backyard or lead service replacement schemes is being prepared for submission to Irish Water.

Water also continues to liaise with Irish Water to progress the following capital network rehabilitation schemes:

- Rathcline Road in Lanesborough (Phase One): replacing 2.5km of problematic watermain between Lanesborough and Carrowroe Reservoir. This is substantially completed and the new watermain will soon be commissioned.
- Carrowroe Reservoir reconfiguration (Phase Two): replacing 2.5km of problematic watermain between Lanesborough and Carrowroe Reservoir is complete. Associated pipe reconfiguration at Carrowroe Reservoir is ongoing.
- Ballywillan to Creevy in Granard: replacing problematic watermain is substantially completed.

Longford to Lanesborough Network
Network upgrades to enable water supply from Longford Central to the Lanesborough Supply Zone continues. This will improve the resilience of the water network and provide security of supply to the Lanesborough area.

Infrastructure, Housing & Innovation

Fire

Health and Safety

No injuries to report.

Operations:

Total callouts numbered 37 in May and 24 for the month of June.

Major Emergency Management

Regional Working Group held an online meeting in June. The Regional Media Subgroup also had their first meeting.

Fire Prevention

- Seven fire safety certificates have been processed for May and June.
- Four court licence applications were processed
- Twelve planning applications were processed

Recruitment:

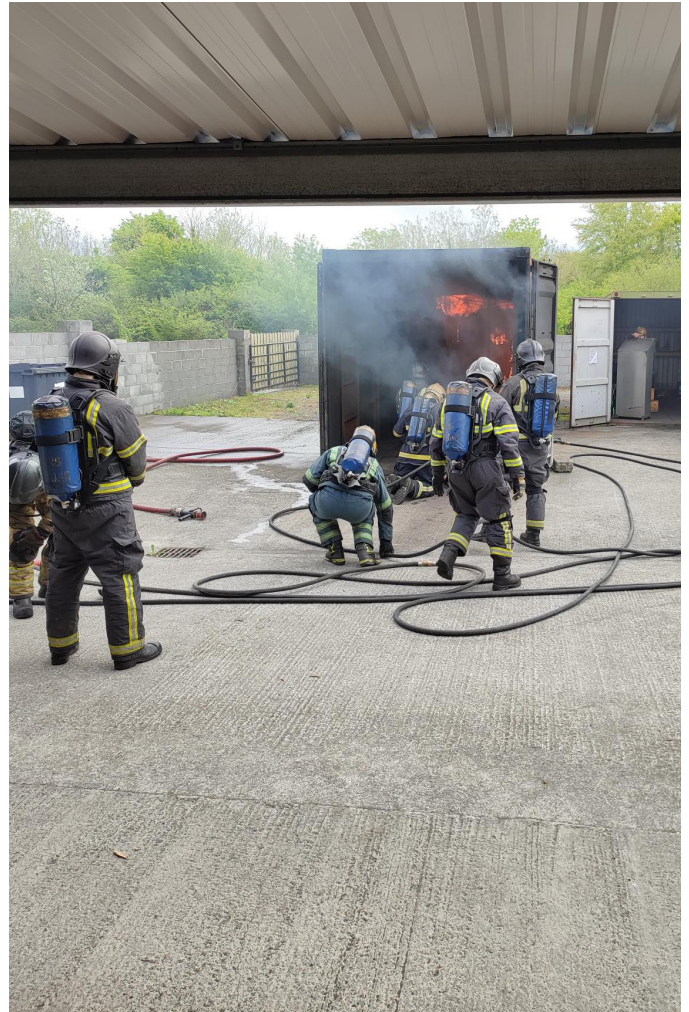
A new recruitment campaign took place. Granard and Lanesborough fire fighters distributed recruitment information. Expressions of interest have been recieved.

Equipment

Approval in principle has been sought from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management. This has been sough to provide capital funding for new fire tunics as well as wildland fire kit.

Training

- Two students are on initial breathing apparatus training in Bray
- Compartment Fire Behaviour training was completed in Ballinrobe
- Senior Officers attended fire engineering seminars in Limerick



Planning & Project Delivery

Regeneration

The Yard Hub in Abbeyshrule

Work is progressing well on The Yard Hub in Abbeyshrule. This project involves the redevelopment of a derelict site within the village to create a rural working hub.

The external walls and roofs on the north, middle and south barns are substantially complete. Installation of dry lining and airtightness membrane and insulation is ongoing in all barns.

Repointing of the stone is being completed on the south barn in preparation for plastering. Windows are installed and the first fix mechanical and electrical fit-out has started.

Civil works to facilitate the installation of the site services are ongoing. Foundations and floor slab for Abbeyshrule Canoe Club building are now complete.



Just Transition Fund for Lanesborough

The feasibility study on Lanesborough anaerobic digestion and the circular economy is ongoing, in conjunction with KPMG and partners.

The research, literature review and consultation are complete and are being incorporated to an feasibility document. In-depth consultation outlined opportunities in the areas of land use, transportation and tourism, which are currently being explored.

Further refinement is underway to ensure the document is a useful reference for the community, potential developers, investors and policymakers.

Camlin Quarter Regeneration

A preliminary business case is prepared for the Camlin Quarter Regeneration Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) project. The final draft will be submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in July.

The report addresses the Department requirements under the public spending code, including:

- Confirmation of the strategic relevance of the proposal and specification of the objectives
- Description of the shortlist of potential options to deliver the objectives set out
- Financial and economic options appraisal, including sensitivity analysis
- Assessment of affordability within existing resources

This preliminary business case addresses the sharp increase in construction costs in the interim period between project development and approval. These revised figures are used in the preparation of this report and the analysis contained within.

Planning & Project Delivery

Planning

Planning Applications and Enforcement

Statutory requirements were maintained, including:

- Managing planning applications, housing, retail, industrial proposals, Part 8 planning schemes, and Compulsory Purchase Orders
- Planning administrative office, public counter and technical advice and reports were kept fully functioning
- Assisting in the implementation of the Housing, Regeneration and Climate Change programme

Development Plan

Statutory requirements were maintained, including:

- Development Plan review is ongoing. This sets out a template for the county's development until 2027.
- Chief Executive's Report on second phase public consultation on Draft Plan was issued in March and presented to Elected Members. It was approved for next phase of public consultation. The substantial number of submissions received have been analysed and reported on. Based on the substantive issues raised in the various submissions, a Revised Plan with proposed amendments was presented to members for their approval in June. A further period of public consultation will follow in July-August 2022. The Draft Plan should be complete October-November 2022 for adoption.

Climate Action Initiatives

Library, Heritage and Archives

Longford Library is one of ten local authority library services taking part in a climate literacy initiative in partnership with Grow It Yourself or 'GIY'. It aims to support libraries provide knowledge and resources within communities.

Fire

A report on the energy assessment of Longford Town Fire station was forwarded to the Fire Service. It has recommendations to improve the building carbon footprint, which would require significant capital investment.

Regeneration

Regeneration continues to work on the development of walkways throughout the county. These amenities facilitate walking and cycling as a leisure activity and reduce use of motorised vehicles, lowering carbon emissions.

Construction of The Yard Hub in Abbeyshrule will contribute to the development of the network for rural working hubs. These hubs help people to work in their local communities and decrease car-use.

Planning

The Development Plan review includes a specific chapter on climate change, as well as a climate change check list the end of all chapters.

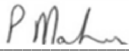
Work is being prepared on active Travel for Longford Town, and a new graduate has been recruited to Planning to develop climate actions for the county.

CONNECTED

People • Place • Opportunity

Management Report for June 2022 prepared in accordance with Sec 136 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by Sec 51 the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The report outlines key aspects of our service delivery and performance in June 2022 in securing the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Signed:



Paddy Mahon
Chief Executive





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