



# Chief Executive Report March 2024

Longford County Council

# Contents

---

Recent Highlights	3
Community Development	4
Tourism	8
Longford Local Sports Partnership	9
Human Resources	11
Finance	12
Information Technology	15
Housing	17
Roads	21
Environment	23
Civil Defence	31

# February and March Highlights

## Longford represented at St Patrick's Day Celebrations in New York

Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray and Director of Services Barbara Heslin represented Longford attending the New York St Patrick's Day Parade.



## Top prize for Harp Media at Longford Enterprise Awards

Harp Media will go on to represent Longford at national level after scooping the overall prize at the County Longford Enterprise Awards in March.



## Success for two Granard schools at Relove Fashion Awards

Cnoc Mhuire Granard and Árd Scoil Phádraig Granard will now go forward to represent Longford at the national finals of the Relove Fashion Awards. They won the Best Tailoring and Best Research categories.



## Longford Literary Trail Audio Tour launched in Edgeworthstown

An exciting new audio tour guiding visitors along Longford's 73km Literary Trail was launched in February.



# Community Development

---

## Longford Local Community Development Committee

Meetings of Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) were held on the 13 February and 12 March, 2024.

## 2023 - 2027 LEADER Programme

At its meeting on 12 March 2024, Longford LCDC, as the Local Action Group for the LEADER Programme in Longford, approved a revised Local Development Strategy and a funding agreement with the Department of Rural and Community Development in relation to the allocation of €5,823,488 in LEADER funding to Longford.

## Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2024

Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) invited applications from community groups for the Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2024. The LEP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and is administered by Longford LCDC.

Any not-for-profit community or voluntary group may have applied. This funding is targeted towards supporting communities that are impacted by disadvantage as identified in the County Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023 - 2029. Longford has an allocation of €134,866.64. The LEP will support groups, particularly in disadvantaged

areas, to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, and/or to purchase equipment, such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies, training equipment, and so on. Some funds are ring-fenced for women's groups.

Application guidelines and terms and conditions are available on the Community Development webpages on [longfordcoco.ie](http://longfordcoco.ie). The closing date for online applications and supporting documentation was Wednesday, 27 March 2024.

Applications will be considered by an evaluation committee in early April, with recommendations being forwarded to the April meeting of Longford LCDC for approval. The DRCD will then announce grant awards prior to applicants being advised.

## Longford Comhairle na nÓg

In February, Comhairle members attended a regional seminar in the Phoenix Youth Centre where they participated in a range of activities and discussions with young people in the region on numerous issues and on ways in which they can influence decisions making bodies.

Comhairle members also attended a Food Waste Workshop in The Attic on 21 March with Criodan O'Mhurchu from the Science Outreach Executive, Midlands Science. They found the workshop very informative and it gave

# Community Development

---

them some ideas for projects for the National Citizenship Showcase event on 24 May.

## Healthy Longford

Healthy Longford is in the final stages of reviewing applications for Healthy Ireland Funding 2024.

Healthy Longford has been approved for funding under Period Dignity for 2024.

Healthy Longford has started the process of reviewing a Breastfeeding Initiative for Longford and will link with a working group to put a plan in place in 2024.

Healthy Longford linked in with Longford's St Patrick's Day Parade 2024 whose theme was Sláinte linking with community groups putting forward a float based around Health in all its forms.

## The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

At a meeting of the LCDC on 13 February, the SICAP Annual Performance Review 2023 was approved and at the LCDC meeting on Tuesday, 12 March the SICAP Annual Plan 2024 was approved.

In 2024, Longford Community Resources CLG (LCRL) will receive €722,070 to deliver SICAP which includes the core SICAP budget of €643,044 and a 'New Arrivals' allocation of €79,026.

LCRL will use this funding for staffing and activities to work with community groups and individuals throughout County Longford to deliver the two goals of the programme which are

- Goal 1, Contribute to Building more Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities and
- Goal 2, Empower Disadvantaged People to Improve the Quality of their Lives.

# Community Development

## Intercultural Grants 2024

At a meeting of Longford County Council held on Wednesday, 13 March the following intercultural grants were approved under Longford County Council Community Grants Scheme 2024.

Name of Group	Project	Allocation
Bridgeways Family Resource Centre	Host a family fun integration day	€2,000
Longford Comhairle na nÓg	Organise study stress workshops to enable schoolchildren for all cultures to cope with the stress of exams.	€2,100
Rathmhuire and Dolmen Community Resource Centre	Run an event to celebrate the richness of diversity between the local community and the diverse traditions of the local migrant community	€2,000
Ballyboro FC	Host a series of intercultural events	€1,000
Longford Women's Link	Provide equipment to support early childhood education and to support women returning to work	€1,900
Drumlish Women's Shed	Organise an initiative for different nationalities to experience the cultural flavours of Drumlish and Ballinamuck.	€1,000
Asian African Group	Facilitate members of the Asian African community to interact and gather information from meetings with various agencies.	€500
Granard Intercultural Group	Promote intercultural food delights	€2,000
County Longford Agricultural Show	Establish trade stands and subsidise fees to allow as diverse a population as possible to attend and display.	€2,000
Lough Ree Access For All	Programme of health and wellbeing days	€1,000
Ghana Union Longford	Host Ghana 67 years independence day celebration	€1,000
Ethnic Minority Hub	Run a cooking and cultural arts programme	€1,500

# Longford Local Sports Partnership



## Primary School's Sports Hall Athletics

All primary schools across county Longford were invited to Longford Sports Hub to participate in Sports Hall Athletics during the week 11 – 15 March. Sports Hall Athletics is an indoor form of track and field, this exciting format provides children with their first competitive athletic experiences, however, the focus of the competition is about having fun. The programme is for children from 3rd to 6th class focusing on fitness and multi skill development, providing a grounding for all sports.

With 26 schools across the county signing up for Sports Hall Athletics this year, our tutors had to add an additional day. Overall, over 900 primary school children got to represent their school in a variety of events from Speed bounce, High Stepper, Long Jumps to the very exciting team relay event.

## Aquacise for Older Persons and Chronic Conditions

Aquacise is a water-based exercise programme for men and women over the age of 55 years, that caters for all levels and abilities. The tutor of these programmes guided the groups through a range of exercises including strength, cardio, and resistance training. One of the key benefits of Aquacise is that it is low impact, meaning it places minimal stress on your joints and bones. This makes it an excellent option for people with joint or mobility issues, as well as those recovering from injury. The buoyancy provided by the water reduces your risk of injury and allows for a full range of motion. The programmes (two programmes one for men and one for women) took place in the Mall on Mondays and Wednesdays for six weeks during February and March.

# Longford Local Sports Partnership



## Girls Active Day for International Women's Day

On Wednesday, 6 March LSP held the Girls Active event in Edgeworthstown Sports Hub to mark International Women's Day. TY female students from around the county were invited to participate in a festival of activities including yoga, dance, functional fitness and fun games. Some 129 students from Cnoc Mhuire, Granard; Longford Convent; Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon and Lanesborough Community College attended on the day along with some teachers and SNAs. Female tutors were on hand to coach the girls in each activity for 45 minutes.

The day was also used to create awareness around celebrating every woman and girl who plays, coaches, officiates, volunteers, or leads on supporting women in sport. Throughout the day, the girls were reminded to support each other and participate in sporting opportunities.

## Women in Sport Week

Longford Sports Partnership Women in Sport Week programme of activities took place from 4-10 March. Longford women embraced the campaign's ethos of celebrating female participation in sports. Engaging 87 women, the initiative celebrated women's diverse roles as athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and leaders. Through kayaking, paddleboarding, spin, circuits, Zumba, archery, and strength sessions, women were empowered to explore their passions and forge connections.

This week reinforced Longford Sports Partnership's commitment to promoting inclusivity and equality in sports, fostering healthier lifestyles and stronger communities.





# Tourism



## Launch of the County Longford Tourism Strategy

The Longford Tourism Strategy was launched on the evening of Thursday, 1 February. This strategy is a roadmap for Tourism in County Longford up to and including 2027. The strategy is available on [Longford.ie](https://www.longford.ie) for viewing.

Sustainable tourism forms the basis of this strategy accounting for the needs of visitors, tourism industry stakeholders, local communities, and the environment. The key tourism assets in Longford are outlined and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands vision and objectives are highlighted along with the relevant policies and plans that this strategy supports. County Longford has many strengths, opportunities and challenges, all of which are outlined in this document. A consultation process was held to gather data in the form of surveys, public consultation, the tourism committee and stakeholders.

Overall, this new County Longford Tourism Strategy is about developing

a connected sustainable tourism destination. Longford as a county has the foundations and have built on these foundations in recent years. We just need to keep building!

## Longford Literary Trail Audio Tour unveiled in Edgeworthstown

Longford Literary Trail Audio Tour was launched at The Maria Edgeworth Centre in Edgeworthstown on Wednesday, 21 February 2024. Including interviews from local people and actors from Backstage Theatre, this audio tour covers the exciting and interesting story of literature in County Longford.

The literary tradition in Longford is very strong and includes connections with Jane Austen and Oscar Wilde. Maria Edgeworth was based in Edgeworthstown and her story is well presented in the Maria Edgeworth Visitor Centre. Oliver Goldsmith was born in Longford and educated in Edgeworthstown. You can visit his birthplace and many of the locations

# Tourism

included in his poems and plays.

The Literary Trail encompasses the South of County Longford including Ballymahon. The whole Longford Literary story can be explored through this driving trail with an option of audio in English and Irish. There are QR codes at each of the nine stops to access the audio. The addition of the audio to this trail enhances and brings the experience to life. In 2022, Longford Tourism also enhanced the Longford Rebel Trail with the addition of QR codes and audio at each stop. The audio for the Longford Rebel Trail is

available in English, Irish and French. All audio is available on the audio section of Longford.ie.

County Longford has three driving trails, The Longford Literary Trail with a distance of 73km, The Longford Rebel Trail with a distance of 71km and the Mid Shannon Trail with a distance of 98km. Work will commence shortly on the enhancement of the Mid Shannon Trail and when complete, this will give County Longford three excellent driving trails all with their own story to tell and a high-end product for visitors to the County.



# Human Resources

## Learning and Development

### Business Skills Training

- FOI Information Sessions
- Women in Leadership
- Standards for Rented Housing
- Budget Management and Costing
- Strategic Communications for Local Authorities
- Local and European Election Training
- Professional Certificate in Climate Action and Sustainability Reporting
- Relevant Contracts Tax
- ICDL
- Environmental Planning and Legislation
- Appropriate Assessment
- Competency Based Interviewer Training
- Health and Safety Training:
- PSDP Project Supervisor Design
- Manual Handling - Outdoor Staff
- Abrasive Wheels
- Road Safety Audit
- Temporary Traffic Management and Design
- VDU Assessor
- IAT Sustainable Road Pavement
- Ride on Roller
- Signing, Lighting, and Guarding at Roadworks
- IOSH, Health, Safety and

### Environment

- Driver CPC Module 5
- First Aid Response

## Health and Wellbeing



### Physical Wellbeing - Spring Fitness

Eight week lunchtime Couch 2 5K and walking training. Also, 55 staff participated in the Noel McManus Walk/Run/Cycle on Good Friday, 29 March.

### Marie Keating Foundation Mobile Unit

The Marie Keating Foundation Mobile Unit visited Longford County Council on Friday, 22 March. Information on cancer prevention and early detection was shared with 170 staff by the cancer nurse present on the day.

### Lunchtime Classes

Lunchtime speed flex and yoga classes have been running at Longford Sports Centre at the Mall Complex in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park.

### Social Wellbeing - Clubs

Photography club and Art club collaboration has been underway with Edgeworthstown Library.

# Finance

## Revenue Account Income and Expenditure

### Summary by Service Division

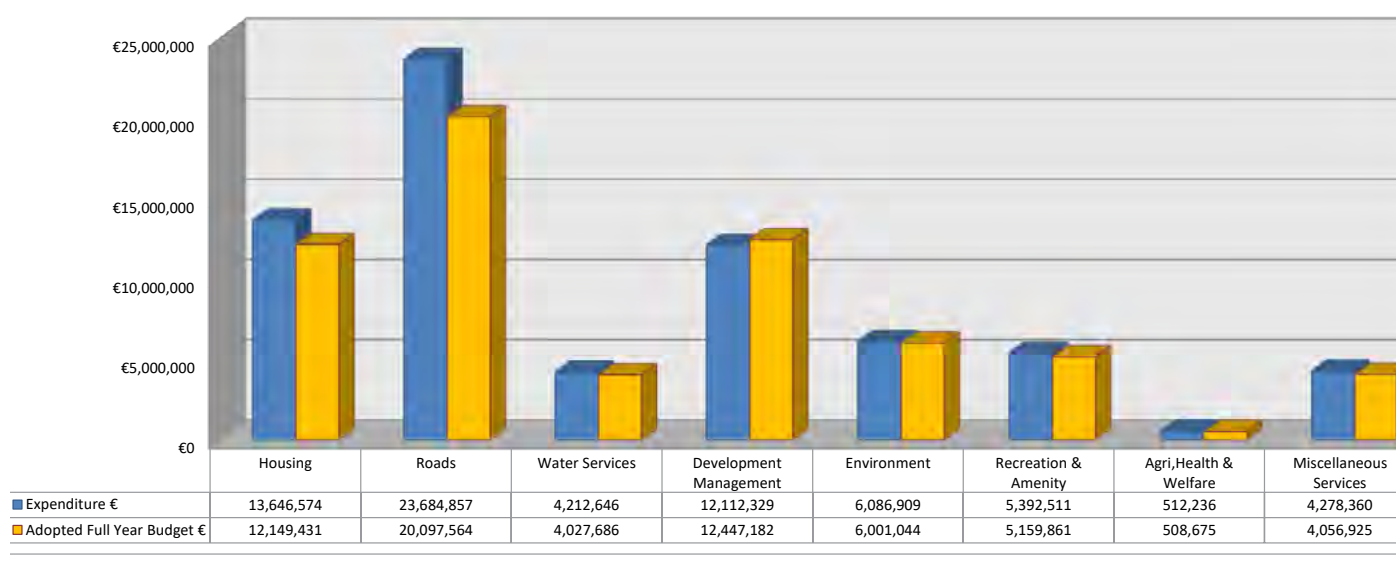
#### Year to Date Quarter End 31 December 2023

	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	13,646,574	12,149,431	112%	(1,497,143)	12,744,661	12,203,784	104%	(540,877)	(901,913)
Roads	23,684,857	20,097,564	118%	(3,587,293)	18,735,042	14,691,514	128%	(4,043,528)	(4,949,815)
Water Services	4,212,646	4,027,686	105%	(184,960)	4,188,454	3,979,953	105%	(208,501)	(24,192)
Development Management	12,112,329	12,447,182	97%	334,853	6,987,783	6,158,074	113%	(829,709)	(5,124,546)
Environment	6,086,909	6,001,044	101%	(85,865)	1,302,161	621,556	210%	(680,605)	(4,784,748)
Recreation & Amenity	5,392,511	5,159,861	105%	(232,650)	1,157,472	941,661	123%	(215,811)	(4,235,039)
Agri,Health & Welfare	512,236	508,675	101%	(3,561)	298,324	262,423	114%	(35,901)	(213,912)
Miscellaneous Services	4,278,360	4,056,925	105%	(221,435)	6,075,210	7,054,050	86%	978,840	1,796,850
Local Government Fund					9,206,051	9,206,051	100%	0	9,206,051
*Commercial Rates					9,256,393	9,329,303	99%	72,910	9,256,393
	<b>€69,926,422</b>	<b>€64,448,368</b>	<b>108%</b>	<b>(€5,478,054)</b>	<b>€69,951,551</b>	<b>€64,448,369</b>	<b>109%</b>	<b>(€5,503,182)</b>	<b>€25,129</b>

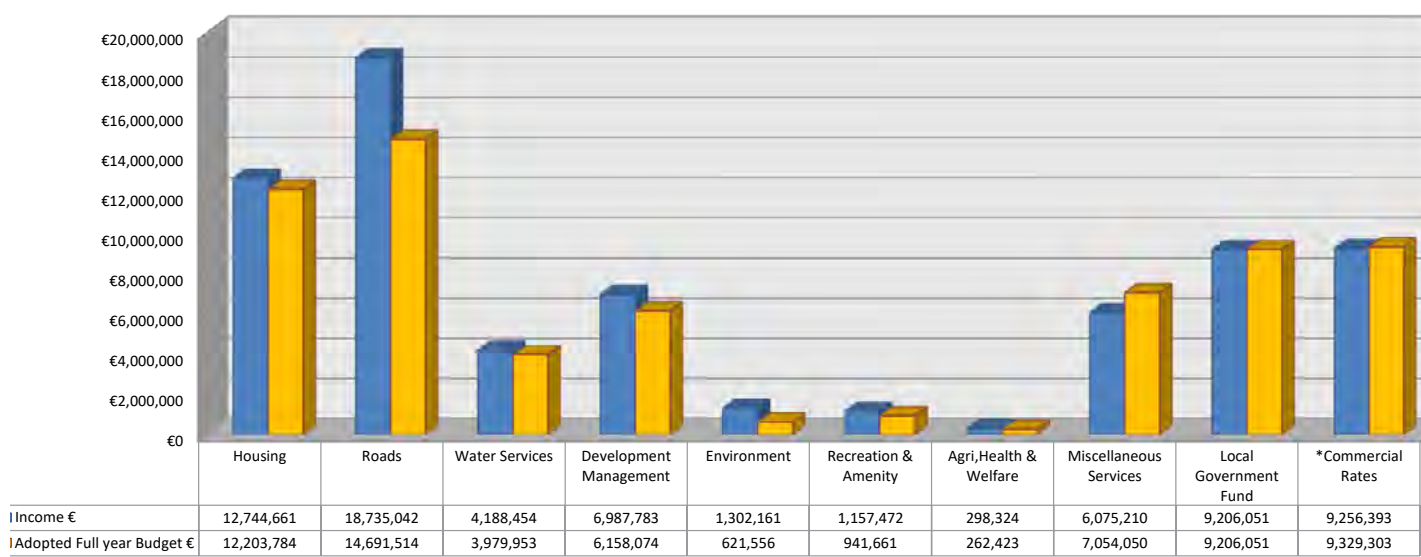
These figures were submitted to the Department on Friday, 1 March 2024.

# Finance

## Expenditure versus Budget - Quarter 4, 2023



## Income versus Budget - Quarter 4, 2023



# Finance

## Summary of Major Revenue Collections - Quarter 4, 2023

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 4, 2023	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€859,492	€9,256,393	€9,225,188	€8,024,656	€1,200,532	87%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€882,623	€7,565,552	€8,419,840	€7,512,702	€907,138	89%
Housing Loans	€346,022	€1,168,696	€1,514,669	€1,163,794	€350,875	77%

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 4, 2022	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€966,941	€8,695,458	€8,276,750	€7,416,808	€859,942	90%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€800,153	€7,417,014	€8,196,218	€7,313,595	€882,623	89%
Housing Loans	€457,955	€1,017,285	€1,475,240	€1,129,218	€346,022	77%

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
VARIANCE YOY	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	(€107,449)	€560,935	€948,438	€607,848	€340,590	-3%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€82,470	€148,538	€223,622	€199,107	€24,515	0%
Housing Loans	(€111,933)	€151,411	€39,429	€34,576	€4,853	0%

# Information Technology

---

## Infrastructure Section

- Service Desk stats for February and March: 1,475 tickets.
- Work to maintain our security posture in on-going.
- Regular patching of client and server systems.
- Mobile phone administration and support.
- IT support for statutory and Teams hybrid meetings.
- Support for community CCTV project.
- Irish Water transition work progressed with operational data transfer project.
- Procurement for annual renewals and hardware replacements/ upgrades.
- New OGP laptop and peripherals framework implemented.
- SIEM and SOC project onboarding completed and moved to go-live preparations.
- Windows Server 2012 upgrade project progressed.
- Digital divide initiative for outdoor staff in progress.
- Procurement competitions completed for equipment for new offices.

## Ongoing Digital Service Projects

- Tender completed for new cloud-based phone system
- ePMDS and Blended Working software being used by all employees
- CRM rollout ongoing for managing email queries - Meetings Administrator, Media Enquiries, Roads and Human Resources mailboxes migrated along with Ballymahon, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown, Granard and Longford Library mailboxes.
- Longford Text Alert, an app and accompanying website sends local people crime prevention text alerts and community notices from across [County Longford Text Alert](#). County roll out ongoing.
- A soft launch has commenced unveiling the brand "Longford Works" through our social media platforms to engage and connect with our audience before an official launch.
- The STEM Passport for Inclusion initiative is jointly led by Maynooth University, Microsoft Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), and the Department of Education.
- Preparation work for Dream Space 2024 continues, with 600 children due to attend the event in Edgeworthstown on the 24th May.

# Information Technology

- Broadband Connection Points (BCP) update: In February and March there were 53 new guests and 353 returning guests, with 27.4 TB of data sent and received.

## Geographic Information Systems (GIS) works completed

- Residential Zoned Land Tax draft

- map data preparation and upload
- Mobile app development for road drainage and draft road programme progressed
- Data processing and analysis for the Noise action Plan
- SQL database migration and consolidation
- GIS in house training



**LONG  
FORD  
WORKS**  
work smarter, live better

**AN LONG FORT**  
CONNECTED  
County Council for Longford  
Longford County Council



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



# Housing

## Capital Housing Update

The Social Housing Targets set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under Housing for All – Housing Plan is 76 units for 2024.

Project	No of Houses	Status
Cranleymore Abbeylara	3	Stage 3 approved. Japanese knotweed second Herbicide treatment due in April. To be screened and removed in May. Once removed will advertise for main contract.
St Rita's Park Road	13	Stage 2 approval received. Part 8 Planning approved for Phase 1 (6 houses). Japanese knotweed second Herbicide treatment due in April. To be screened and removed in May. When costs known will submit stage 3. Once JK removed will advertise for main Contract. Phase 2 draft plans being prepared for 7 units.
24 Congress Terrace	2	Substantially Completed in December 2023. Awaiting Irish Water connection.
Radharc na Muileann, Lanesborough	20	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. Awaiting additional information from Consultants
Drynan, Ballymahon	12	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. Awaiting additional information from Consultants
Clough Dillons Keenagh	4	Stage 1 approved. Legal issues due to be sorted soon before can proceed.
Cnoc na Greine, Granard	6	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. Awaiting additional information from Consultants. May increase to 8 units.

# Housing

Project	No of Houses	Status
Lamagh, Newtownforbes	6	Stage 2 approved. Road Safety Audit and Noise impact survey carried out. Awaiting Environmental Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment Screening and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment reports. Will then submit for Part 8 planning Q2 2024.
2 Legion Terrace	4	On site for completion April 2024 subject to Irish Water connection
Richmond Street	23	On site. 21 substantially complete, with remaining 2 due for completion Q2 2024.
Corneddan, Ballinalee	1	Combined stage 1 and Stage 2 approval received 27 June 2023. Part 8 planning approval received. Consultants to submit updated plans and costs for stage 3 submission shortly.
Houricans Hotel, Granard	8 and Parking	Demolition complete. Survey and Road safety audit complete. Management plan for Japanese knotweed received. Housing Agency submitted feasibility study for apartments/duplex units and parking. Received comments from Department. Awaiting planning comments. To discuss with elected members.
Aghaboy, Killoe (Ennybegs)	4	Site purchased with planning permission for 4 houses. Surveyed. To prepare preliminary drawings, carry out site investigations and advertise for consultants.
Casey Court, Keenagh	2	Potential for 2 houses in large corner plot. Surveyed. Cost report received from QS. Drawings to be prepared for stage 1 submission.
Farrell's Ballinalee	4	Turnkey approved. Not started, awaiting contracts.

# Housing

Project	No of Houses	Status
Forthill, Aughnaccliffe	13	Turnkey approved. 6 completed in 2023. 2 to be completed by end of Q1 2024 and a further 5 by end of May 2024.
Longford Road, Ballinalee	14	Turnkey approved. Not yet started on site.
Cluain Ri, Ballymahon	16	Turnkey approved. Complete. 12 completed in 2023, remaining 4 units completed in March 2024.
Market Square	2	Turnkey approved 27 June 2023. On site. Due for completion by end of April 2024
Colmcille Terrace, Granard Phase 1	19	Stage 4 approved 27 April 2023. On site. Four completed in Q4 2023, remainder Q3 2024.
Colmcille Terrace, Granard Phase 2	7	Under negotiations to purchase

## Climate Change

The Energy Efficiency Retrofit scheme is ongoing with the focus this year on targeting the houses with the lowest BER rating. Last year the Department target was 30 houses and we completed 64 houses throughout the county. In 2024, the target set is 45 this year and it is envisaged that this works will be carried out in the various municipal districts throughout the county.

## Vacant Homes Unit

The Vacant Homes Unit remains committed to executing housing projects outlined in the Vacant Homes Action Plan 2023-2026 aiming to identify and repurpose recoverable

vacant properties to enhance housing supply and rejuvenate local communities.

## CPO and Derelict Sites

Six properties have been designated for compulsory purchase order (CPO) in 2023, to convert them into social housing. Currently, the team is actively engaged in identifying the owners and issuing notices for these units to progress well through the initiative.

Proactive measures are being taken to update the Derelict Sites Register (DSR). This year, the potential imposition of the Derelict Sites Levy on properties listed as derelict in the register aims to incentivise property owners to address dereliction and take necessary

# Housing

---

actions. The Vacant Property Survey was completed by Longford County Council in 2023. Furthermore, all the data collected is being updated accordingly in the Vacancy Activation Program to reflect the council's efforts to bring vacant properties back into use and activate derelict sites through the various vacancy schemes available.

## Ready to Build Scheme

Longford County Council is currently exploring participation in the "Ready to Build" scheme. However, as of now, no potential sites have been identified for sale and participation in this initiative. Once the data entry for the CPO activation program is completed and the Derelict Sites Register is updated, details will be provided on proposed sites for participation in the Ready to Build scheme.

## Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (Croí Conaithe)

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme remains supporting property revitalization, offering €50,000 for vacant properties and €70,000 for derelict ones. As of the latest update, the scheme has garnered 110 applications, including five withdrawals and three refusals. Three grants have been successfully disbursed, and 48 applications have received preliminary approval. Furthermore, 19 applications are undergoing revision for approval in principle, while 32 applications are pending additional information.

## Applications and Assessments

### Applications

104 new social housing support applications have been accepted to date in 2024.

Currently there are 670 approved housing applicants on our waiting list.

A further 193 are within the assessment process and 36 applicants have been allocated a property and await appointment.

### New Tenancies

To date in 2024:

- 17 new local authority/Approved Housing Body (AHB) tenancies have commenced

## Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2023

We are set to commence reviewing 139 approved housing applicants under the Summary Social Housing Assessment 2024. Letters will issue to these applicants in the coming weeks and it is essential that they engage to update or review their application.

## Rent Review

A review of almost 2,400 local authority and leasing tenants is nearing completion. Many tenants will see an increase in their rent due to increased incomes. Fixed rent for old age pensioners remains at €35.

# Roads

## Regional and Local Road Allocations

The Roads Programme is currently being prepared on foot of the notification of the Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations for 2024 which came through on 15 February. Funding for Longford County Council was decreased by €283,500 or approximately 2.91% on the 2023 allocation.

The total allocation per grant heading is detailed in the table below.

Dept Grant	Allocation 2024
Restoration Improvement	€4,941,500
Restoration Maintenance	€676,000
Supplementary Restoration Maintenance	€591,500
Discretionary Grant	€1,305,000
Bridge Rehabilitation Grant	€433,350
Specific Improvement	€200,000
Safety Improvement Works	€220,550
Speed Limits (Housing Area Signage)	€5,200
Cycle Signs	€2,200

Dept Grant	Allocation 2024
Former National Roads	€260,000
Climate Adaption	€283,000
Training Grant	€34,000
Community Involvement Scheme	€224,100
Drainage Works	€299,000
PSCI: Survey Support	€12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€9,487,400</b>

## National Road Schemes

Longford County Council received €4,892,451 from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) for national roadworks in 2024. This consisted of

- Capital Investment: Protection and Renewal and Active Travel (AT) €4,453,000
- Current Maintenance: Protection and Renewal €389,451
- Greenways: €50,000

An allocation has been provided for the N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Scheme and it is envisaged that the preferred route corridor will be finalised in Quarter 3 2024. Funding has also been provided to commence a new N55 Granard By-Pass Scheme.

Construction works on the N55 Meeltanagh Pavement Scheme continued in February and March.

The mainline wearing course works on

# Roads



this 5km section of the N55 between Carrickboy and Crossea, which required a three-week road closure, are now complete. Accommodation works which are being progressed under lane closures are ongoing and will be completed in the next few weeks.



## Municipal District Works

Works on footpaths, drainage, pothole repair and general road maintenance continued in each municipal district during February and March.

Area technical staff continued work on the preparation of the Roads Schedule for 2024 which will be presented to the members at the various municipal district meetings at the end of March.

Procurement of plant and materials is ongoing.

## Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works

Longford County Council received €283,000 for 2024 Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works.

This will facilitate embankment stabilisation works on the L-1048 Aghnacliffe to Ballinalee at Aghacordrinan and on the L-1164 at Tureen.

Funding is also provided for drainage works on the R392 at Gorteengar, the L-10841 at Coolagherty and the L-3004 St Mel's Road.

## Local Improvement Schemes (LIS)

The objective of the Local Improvement Scheme is to fund the construction or improvement of non-public roads. Eligible road projects are defined by the scheme and local contributions set at 10% or 15% depending on the number of beneficiaries.

Funding is provided from the Department of Rural and Community Development. Longford County Council is currently awaiting notification of an allocation for 2024.

## Climate Action

Longford County Council proposes to carry out a small number of warm mix and recycling projects as part of the 2024 Regional and Local Road Programme .

# Environment

## Raising Awareness of Illegal Dumping

The Environment Section of Longford County Council proactively enforces its powers when it comes to illegal dumping and littering in the county. A new initiative aimed at highlighting the issue of illegal dumping, saw the development of highly visible 'Waste Investigation Stickers', which are placed on all waste which is being investigated. The sticker contains a log number, phone number and email address.



If you see someone littering or come across dumped waste, help us to take action. Let us know in strict confidence:

- When and where it is happening
- What sort of rubbish and how much
- Details such as a vehicle registration or description (for example colour, make, model or logo)

It is hoped that the new initiative will raise public awareness and increase compliance.

## Illegal Dumping at Weavers Hall

Longford County Council's Waste Enforcement Team commenced multiple enforcement actions against the designated management company of Weavers Hall Apartments in Longford Town in December 2023. The action followed ongoing failure by the apartment block caretaker to adequately manage tenants waste, resulting in the build-up of illegally dumped waste outside the designated bin store area.



As a result of the enforcement action, the management company actively worked with the Waste Enforcement Team and implemented agreed measures including the removal of all waste from the area.

Longford County Council Waste Enforcement team members were present on site and investigated all the waste, including some 100 bags. Thirteen pieces of evidence were found, resulting in enforcement action being taken.

# Environment

Longford County Council also erected multiple 'No Dumping' signs to assist in deterring the recurring illegal dumping in the area.

The area is monitored regularly and while other measures are being progressed with the management company, it is much more proactive and promptly contacts the Longford County Council Waste Enforcement Team to investigate illegally dumped waste prior to its removal.



Before (below) and after (above)





# Environment

## Emma Plant Veterinary wins for Longford at Green Awards 2024

Emma Plant Veterinary fought off some stiff opposition in a very competitive category to take the crown as best Micro Enterprise of the year 2024, at the Green Awards held on Tuesday, 27 February in the Carlton Hotel Dublin. The Green Awards is a leading platform for sustainability intelligence, leadership and innovation in best green practice in Ireland.



The Green Awards recognise the extraordinary contribution and commitment made by companies, towards growing a greener future in Irish business.

The Environment Section nominated Emma Plant Veterinary in the Micro Enterprise category of the Green Awards 2024 and worked collaboratively with her on the application process. This is the first time Longford has won a green award and the win recognises the wonderful

collaboration between Longford County Council and local businesses in the county.

Emma Plant Veterinary took part in the Green for Micro training programme in 2022 organised by the County Enterprise Office and received some funding to help green the veterinary practice. As a result of this training and funding the veterinary practice continued to make their business more innovative and environmentally sustainable.

## Dog Control - XL bully dogs



Following the increased awareness generated by the recent ban of XL bully dogs in England and Wales, there has been an increase in reports to Longford County Council of XL bully dogs that are not under effective control in the county. This has included XL bully dogs roaming loose in estates where small children are present.

# Environment

Dog owners are reminded that by law, dogs must be kept under control at all times. When in a public place, restricted breed dogs must be kept on a leash, muzzled and controlled by a person over 16 years old, who is capable of controlling the dog. Where dogs are seized, and the owner is identified, fines of €300 per offence will issue.

Longford County Council wishes to remind all dog owners that even loved family pets can attack and kill defenceless lambs and sheep. It is the dog owners responsibility to ensure that sheep worrying does not happen. Longford County Council encourages all dog owners to:

- Understand that your pet dog is as capable of killing sheep as any other
- Always know where your dog is
- Always have dogs under control and leashed around livestock

You don't want your dog to be responsible for killing sheep, or for the distress it causes to animals, farmers, and their families.

If you see dogs roaming freely in your area or involved in sheep worrying, please notify Longford County Council by calling 043 334 3362 or by emailing: [dogcontrol@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:dogcontrol@longfordcoco.ie)

## Water Framework Directive Monitoring

In February Environmental Pollution Officers commenced the statutory

Water Framework Directive (WFD) monitoring in accordance with the WFD River and Lake Sampling Programme 2024.

The sampling programme is designed to provide a representative geographical spread of surveillance and operational monitoring sites across all hydrometric areas. The full list of WFD sites, including location details, samples required based on the classification of the river site, sampling frequencies and more, are provided to Longford County Council by the EPA via the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) Administrator.

In Longford eight operational river sites and two surveillance sites will be sampled four and eight times respectively throughout the year.



General samples are taken, and Longford County Council engages with the EPA Regional Inspectorate Laboratory in Castlebar in the

# Environment

scheduling of sampling for analysis. The subsequent results are published on the Environmental Data Exchange Network Portal page.

## Longford Schools win two awards at Relove Fashion 2024

Two Longford schools claimed two of the six categories at the Relove Fashion Awards 2024, held recently in the Rediscovery Centre Dublin.

The Best Tailoring award went to Chantel Higgins, Cnoc Mhuire Granard, supported by teacher Charmaine Hetherton.

The Best Research award went to Darragh Maguire, Nicole Skujina, and Zohra Hirzel, Árd Scoil Phádraig Granard, supported by teacher Mary Cooney.

Relove fashion is a sustainable fashion competition, open to all secondary school students in the Eastern, Midlands and Dublin region. Students are challenged to explore their creative design skills, to design and create their own sustainable and rewearable outfit made from repurposed fabric. Students learn how to repair, upcycle and repurpose along the way.

Cnoc Mhuire Granard and Árd Scoil Phádraig Granard will now go forward to represent Longford at the national finals.



# Environment

---

## Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspection (RMCEI)

In February 2024, the Environment Department submitted Longford County Council's 2023 RMCEI data returns and National Enforcement Priorities (NEP) progress reports to the Environmental Protection Agency. The proposed RMCEI Plan for 2024 was also submitted.

The EPA measures and reports on local authority environmental enforcement performance using the EPA's Local Authority Performance Framework (LAPF). It assesses the LA's performance against the NEP, which are focused on achieving good environmental outcomes.

The NEP Progress Reports are designed to allow local authorities demonstrate how their enforcement activities deliver environmental outcomes for waste management, water, noise and air quality. Each NEP is assessed by the EPA against a set of specified criteria including compliance rates, appropriate site selection, identification and follow through of non-compliance/unauthorised activities and the demonstration of a positive environmental outcome.

The EPA will publish a national report on local authority performance in 2023 towards the end of 2024.

## Workshop: "Sharing Our Experiences in Waste Enforcement"

As part of Longford County Council's ongoing commitment to continual professional and personal development, members of the Environment Team attended a workshop "Sharing Our Experiences in Waste Enforcement" in March 2024.

The workshop was facilitated by the Network for Ireland's Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (NIECE) in conjunction with the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLA). The programme included a diverse range of case studies presented by local authority staff who shared their specific experiences, along with presentations by EPA staff and question and answer sessions.

Geraldine Glennon, Waste Enforcement Officer, Longford County Council, gave a very well received presentation on upcycling textiles.



# Environment



## National Tree Week

Longford County Council, in partnership with Coillte and the Heritage Council of Ireland, held a guided walk of Derrycassin Woods on 7 March 2024 to celebrate tree week.

The walk was well attended by classes from the local St Columba's NS and by members of the public. It was guided by John Connolly of Coillte and Adam Mulvihill, the Biodiversity Officer with Longford County Council.

During the walk John spoke about the importance of trees for air quality, planting and harvesting of trees, and storm damage to trees as well as identifying a number of species of trees within the forest.



Adam spoke about the importance of biodiversity, species present within the forest, such as our smallest bird the goldcrest, otters, and bats. The fallen dead trees were identified as reservoirs of life that can host a huge abundance of fungi and insect species that will decompose the wood and recycle nutrients back into the soil. He also spoke about the invasive alien species Rhododendron and how it affects local species as well as how it degrades habitats.



The school class, members of the public, and hosts were treated to the delightful sight of two red squirrels running down a tree and along the ground to cap off a great event.



# Environment

## Climate Action

At the Midland Energy Agency Steering Group meeting on the 13 March 2024, SEAI introduced Mr Diarmuid Waters, Senior Programme Manager at Rogerson, Reddan and Associates, who will act as Project Manager for the Midland Energy Agency’s SEAI Pathfinder Programme.

As part of this programme Longford County Council has committed €1,000,000 match funding for energy efficiency upgrades of its main office buildings, fire stations and libraries.

The initial focus will be on, Aras An Chontae, Camlin Court, Library HQ, Longford Library and Longford Fire Station.

Work will commence immediately on the development of investment plans for each building.

It is planned to commence construction in 2025.



# Civil Defence

## Duties

Civil Defence provided medical response cover at 13 events during February and March.

These included:

- GAA matches x 2
- Longford Town Soccer match x 4
- Official Opening of Skate Park x 1
- Longford Festival of Lights x 3
- St Patrick's Day Parades in Longford, Ballymahon and Ballinamuck

## Training and Operations

- VEMS portal for Volunteers - Ongoing training is being provided by Civil Defence Officer (CDO)/ Assistant Civil Defence Officer (ACDO).
- EMT (Emergency Medical Technicians) attended training/ upskilling programme in Roscrea.
- 4 volunteers attended the Manual Handling Course.
- 4 volunteers completed the People Handling Recertification Course.
- 4 volunteers completed Induction Training.
- 4 volunteers completed Cardiac First Response Course (CFR)
- 8 volunteers completed Missing Person Search Responder Theory Course.

- ACDO attended the Designated Liaison Persons Course.
- CDO/ACDO attended the Critical Incident Stress Response Course.
- CDO/ACDO and 12 volunteers attended Evacuation/Extraction training at Bishopsgate stadium.
- Emergency Medical Technicians completed their privileging process. This allows them to practice for Civil Defence.
- A Governance Validation Framework site visit took place at headquarters and continued onsite where volunteers were observed on duty.
- The unit received a new defibrillator from Civil Defence branch.
- CDO/ACDO accompanied Teresa McKenna to the Medal Ceremony in Trinity College where Teresa received her 30 Year Service Medal from Mr Michael Martin, Minister for Defence.



# CONNECTED

People • Place • Opportunity

---

Management Report for March 2024 prepared in accordance with Sec 136 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by Section 51 the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The report outlines key aspects of our service delivery and performance in March 2024 in securing the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Signed:   
Paddy Mahon  
Chief Executive



