



# Chief Executive Report May–June 2024

# Contents

---

May–June Highlights.....	3
Community Development.....	4
Longford Local Sports Partnership.....	8
Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage .....	9
Corporate Services.....	15
Human Resources.....	19
Longford Local Enterprise Office.....	20
Tourism.....	22
Finance.....	24
Information Technology.....	28
Planning.....	31
Housing.....	32
Regeneration.....	36
Roads.....	40
Environment .....	43
Fire Services.....	48
Civil Defence .....	49

# May–June Highlights

---

## Local Elections 2024

The Local Elections 2024 took place in June. In Longford County Council, 18 elected members were elected, including six first-time county councillors.



## National Famine Commemoration

The National Famine Commemoration took place in Edgeworthstown, a first for County Longford and a first public engagement for the new Taoiseach Simon Harris TD.



## Microsoft Dream Space Showcase 2024

The second year of the Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase took place with 450 students presenting over 100 STEAM projects.



## Active Travel official openings

Minister of State Jack Chambers opened Safe Routes to School and Active Travel schemes in County Longford in Newtownforbes, Enybegs and Longford Town.



# Community Development

---

## CLÁR 2024

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, launched the CLÁR 2024 Scheme.

CLÁR Measure 1 is administered by local authorities and provides grants from €5,000 to €50,000 to support the development of community and sports facilities and more. It closed for applications in May and a priority list of fifteen projects was sent to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCDD) for consideration. A funding announcement is expected in October.

CLÁR Measure 2 and Measure 3 are administered by the DRCDD. Both closed for applications in June.

## Healthy Longford

### Healthy Ireland Fund

Sixteen projects in Longford have been approved for the Healthy Ireland Fund. These projects meet an outcome set by Healthy Longford through Healthy Ireland Fund 2023-2025. These outcomes are:

- Increase in % of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines
- Increase in positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index

### Hello, How Are You?

Hello, How Are You? is an initiative facilitated through Mental Health Ireland. It took place in May with two coffee mornings in Ardnacassa Community House and McEoin

Community House. This initiative provides opportunities for meaningful connection and conversation encouraging that a simple Hello How Are You can make a world of difference.

### CYPSC Trauma Informed Care Conference

CYPSC Trauma Informed Care Conference took place in May in Mullingar. Healthy Longford was a partner and co-funder of the Conference which explored the value of a trauma-informed approach in services for children, young people, and families. This excellent learning opportunity was organised through Longford Westmeath CYPSC.

### Longford Breastfeeding Project 2024

Healthy Longford is linking with an established working group focused on a Longford Breastfeeding Project 2024 under Healthy Ireland Fund 2024. The first two initial meetings have provided scope and a plan for the aim of this project in 2024.

### Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

In May, the Department of Rural and Community Development allocated Longford Community Resources CLG (LCRL) an additional €15,000 to the 'New Arrivals' allocation of €79,026 for 2024. LCRL have indicated that this funding will be used to employ a New Arrivals Support Worker and towards programme money for one-to-one supports.

# Community Development

## Longford Comhairle na nÓg

Longford Comhairle na nÓg members attended the Dáil na nÓg in the houses of the Oireachtas. Members got to take their seats in the Dáil chamber and were addressed by the Ceann Comhairle Sean O’Feargail and Minister Mary Butler TD, with a surprise meeting with the Taoiseach in waiting at the time Simon Harris TD. Members deliberated and voted on aspects of mental health that directly affect young people. The key topic that went forward to be addressed was school stress. This was a wonderful experience and opportunity for our Comhairle members who thoroughly enjoyed the day.



## Africa Day 2024

Africa Day celebrations are organised by Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs in partnership with African embassies in Ireland and local authorities around the country. Longford County Council secured a maximum of €7,500 on behalf of Longford African Network who hosted an event in May in Longford Athletic Centre. This year’s event showcased the unique offerings of African countries through dance performances, music entertainment, craft displays and staple foods.



## LEADER 2023-2027

LEADER 2023-2027 was launched with a budget of €5.8M to support businesses and communities in County Longford. Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Longford County Council and Longford Community Resources Clg announced the start of this programme which will support the development of rural communities and enterprises.

# Community Development

Between now and the end of 2027, Longford Community Resources as the LEADER implementing partner working closely with Longford LCDC and Longford County Council, will invest €4,350,000 in LEADER funding in innovative community and enterprise projects focusing on the following themes:

- Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation
- Theme 2: Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion
- Theme 3: Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

LEADER Funding Information sessions were held in June to help community groups, organisations or businesses interested in applying for LEADER funding.

## Longford Local Community Safety Partnership

### All Ireland Community Safety Network: Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Good Practice Sharing Session

Longford Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSP) secured funding to arrange six gatherings of Community Safety Partnerships in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland over the next two years. This funded was secured in conjunction with the Dublin and Waterford LCSPs, Drogheda Implementation Board and Newry Mourne and Down PCSP. These meetings will build on the

work and networks developed at the Beyond Borders Community Safety Conference held in 2022.

The first event of the All-Ireland Community Safety Network was held earlier this year in Drogheda. Several LCSP members were in attendance. Longford Women’s Link was one of the agencies leading a ‘Sharing Good Practice’ Session and spoke of their work around the ‘8 Stages to DV Homicide’ and the Interagency Model Working Group.

Other speakers included the Department of Justice Northern Ireland and the Department of Justice Dublin, the PSNI, and An Garda Síochána. The other shared learning sessions came from Women’s Aid Newry (DASS project) Mens Aid in Drogheda (Intimate Partner Violence in the LGBTQI+ Community) and Seeking Safety (Drogheda Red Door Project).



# Community Development

## Community Safety Ambassadors

Longford LCSP, working with An Garda Síochána and the Age Friendly Programme, have revised the Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme and renamed it the Community Safety Ambassador Programme to reflect the wide remit of the Community Safety Partnership. This is a peer-to-peer information-sharing initiative, where trained ambassadors share community safety and crime prevention advice with their own network.

A pilot training session took place with 12 volunteers in Longford Garda Station to test the new training module. Attendees were sought from the Older Peoples Council, several minority communities in Longford, and TidyTowns Longford. Led by the Community Safety Coordinator, presentations were given, including from Age Friendly Programme Manager Martina Needham and Longford Crime Prevention Officer Sargent Damien Bartley.

Feedback was good and some suggestions were made to help improve the training module before it is rolled out across the County. Ambassadors were given a handbook, branded hi-vis jacket, information packs. Meetings will take place every two months to give new briefings and to hear the issues and concerns from their communities. Longford now has 12 trained Community Safety Ambassadors, and we hope to hold more training sessions for larger groups in 2024.

## Kids Court

Along with An Garda Síochána, the Longford Local Community Safety Partnership held two Kids Court events so far in 2024:

- Sacred Heart National School in Granard
- Scoil Samhthann in Ballinalee

Over 50 children took part in Kids Court with 10 drivers coming before the jury. Students also learned about roads policing, tried out the speed gun and spoke candidly about their views on speeding and road safety in their area to the Gardaí and community safety team. Feedback has been excellent from the children and schools taking part.

Drivers who took part were typically going marginally over the speed limit while several drivers identified going significantly over the limit were given a fine and penalty points. Drivers who did go through the process all felt that it was a difficult process to be asked the questions by children who may have been seriously injured or killed if an accident took place. All agreed it has impacted their attitude and awareness to speed limits around schools.



# Longford Local Sports Partnership

---

## Bike Week 2024

Promoting the benefits of cycling, Bike Week took place in May. Many events were held in the county with the Royal Canal Greenway providing the idea starting point for many activities. Over 600 people came along to community leisure cycles, school and social cycles, and children learn to cycle events. Events were organised by Longford Sport Partnership took place. Bike Week is funded by the Department of Transport through the Transport of Ireland (TFI).



## Prime Time of Life

Prime Time of Life is a 12-week twice-weekly exercise training and health education programme for older adults and adults with chronic conditions. Taking place from May to July, 42 people signed up for the programme which is delivered in Longford Sports Hub.

The training includes aerobic, resistance, balance, and flexibility exercises. It aims to improve strength, balance, flexibility, and cardiovascular health. It also aims to improve mental health and quality of life of participants. Before beginning the programme, baseline health indicators were measured. These will be compared to indicators taken at the end of the programme to identify expected improvements.

## Summer Sports Inclusion Initiative

Every Saturday in May the Summer Sports Inclusion Initiative took place at Mc Eoin Park Recreational Park. It focused on GAA and Rugby with around 40 children participating. Many participants come from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children from the Traveller community.

It aims to foster teamwork in a supportive and inclusive environment. It aims to create a sense of community among participants and encourage a love of physical activity which contributes to the children's overall wellbeing and development.

Due to the success of the initiative, it is hoped to extend it through the summer.

## Inclusion Sports Days

Longford Sports Partnership and Longford GAA worked together to arrange Inclusion Sports Days for the following schools: St Marys National School, St Matthews National School, St Teresa's National School, St Colmcille National School, Sacred Heart Primary School, and St Joseph's National School. Over four days, 132 children took part.

Four Longford GAA coaches assisted and helped make these days possible. The sports days were held either held at the participating schools or in the Longford Sports Hub. There were structured games, as well as free unstructured play. Feedback from teachers, special needs assistants and parents has been overwhelmingly positive.

# Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage

---

## National Famine Commemoration Day

The National Famine Commemoration took place in Edgeworthstown on Sunday, 19 May. Taoiseach Simon Harris TD officiated at this formal State ceremony and gave a keynote address. The Taoiseach also took part in a wreath-laying ceremony in remembrance of all those who died during the Famine and military honours.

His Excellency The Most Reverend Luis Mariano Montemayor and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Apostolic Nuncio and Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray planted a Longford oak tree and laid a wreath with the Taoiseach.

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD and ambassadors from over 70 counties were also in attendance on the day.

Music was provided by Streancán and musicians Dr Conor Ward, Noel Carberry and Meadhbh Carberry.



Amy Rooney Maguire, Emma Mihai and Aaron Ó Míacháin from St Mary's National School, Edgeworthstown performed the poem An Píobaire Uillinn. Matt Farrell read extracts from the letters of Maria Edgeworth.

Freya Lilly O'Connor, Jack Garrett Cuffe and Thomas Denniston from St John's National School assisted the Taoiseach, our Cathaoirleach and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corp with the planting of the tree oak trees. These oak trees will be re-planted in September – one in each municipal district.

The ceremony was broadcast on the RTÉ News channel and is available to watch on the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media's YouTube channel.

## Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase

The second year of Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase saw over 450 children from 18 primary schools demonstrate over 100 STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths) projects.

Industry partners who exhibited on the day included Microsoft and Ericsson. Fourteen different Council sections also exhibited including the Libraries and the Arts Office, Environment, Longford Sport Partnership, the Fire Service, Civil Defence, Community, Roads, Information Technology, Local Enterprise Office Longford, Comhairle na nÓg.

Read more on Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase in the Information Technology section of the Chief Executive Report.

# Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage

---

## Right to Read

### Summer Stars

Summer Stars is a free national summer reading programme for children running until the end of August. Children are encouraged to enjoy the fun and pleasure of reading and writing. It is non-competitive and every child who reads even one book or e-book is regarded as having completed the programme. All participants are included in a draw for book hampers worth over €100. A draw will take place in each library this September.

### My Little Library Book Bags

My Little Library Book Bag is filled with books which aim to help children preparing to take the big step of starting school this year. It can be collected by children and parents and guardians for free from any County Longford library from June.

This is an initiative between libraries, the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

Each My Little Library Book Bag contains a book on starting school, making friends or being comfortable to be yourself, and a library card and special My Little Library cardholder. Book bags are available in both Irish and English.

## Longford Age Friendly

During May, our libraries hosted activities to celebrate Bealtaine, with a 'Lust for Life' theme for this year's festival. It got off to a lively start with a concert in Ballymahon Library where there was lots of singing, music, and dance. It featured Angela Reynolds and her songbirds' choir with guests. Other Bealtaine events focussed on arts and crafts, dancing, health, wellbeing, and sustainability. Over three hundred attended these events in the libraries.



Move Well for Health Classes are continuing in five libraries. This is organised by Longford County Council Physical Activity for Health Officer with Longford Sports Partnership and Longford Libraries. The classes which include falls prevention, step and strength classes and a pole activator class have proved to be very popular with all participants. There is a break over the summer months with the next round of classes starting in September.

# Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage

---

Older Person's Council Chairperson Kitty Burkhill and Paula Mulry represented Longford Age Friendly Programme at the annual Older Person's Convention in Kilkenny. The theme of the Convention was 'Ageing with Independence'. With opportunities to network, discuss topics and share ideas, the Older Person Councils has members from different counties.



Kitty attended the Ambassador Launch Day in Slane Castle accompanied by our Age Friendly Ambassador, Declan Nerney. Declan will be promoting the Ageism Awareness Campaign and the Age Friendly movement this year.

Kitty also attended the inaugural meeting of the Commission on Care for Older People Reference Group chaired by ERSI Chief Executive Officer Prof Alan Barrett. This event looked at the provision of health and social care services and supports for older people. It makes recommendations to the Government for their strategic development.

Longford Age Friendly and Regeneration staff attended a walkability audit in Castlepollard by invitation of Westmeath County Council Regeneration and Age Friendly Teams. It is hoped that this template will be replicated when designing Longford walkability audits in Ballymahon and Granard this autumn. Following the National Launch of the Age Friendly Libraries Charter in Edgeworthstown Library, the Older Persons' Council have agreed to carry out walkability audits in each County Longford library in August.

Longford Age Friendly Programme will be making an application across several categories for the Annual Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards which will be held later this year. These awards highlight efforts to enhance the quality of life for older adults that not only make a difference but also set a benchmark for others to follow.

## Musical Memories project

The Musical Memories project aims to capture and share the personal stories of Longford musicians and the impact of music on their lives. It is a creative collaboration between CO:WORX Edgeworthstown, Creative Ireland, Longford Libraries and Age Friendly. This initiative bridges generational gaps and brings creativity into our remote working hub. It is funded by Creative Ireland, Longford and led by CO:WORX.

The aim was to create a digital archive of Longford musicians from across the county. The project features Sean Marshall (flute), Jimmy Whelan (accordion), Mary Brady (fiddle), Noel

# Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage

---

Sweeney (fiddle and saxophone), Olive Kilbane (fiddle and singing), Bernardine Farrelly (harp), Michael Owens (guitar), and Brendan Daly (keyboards).

Earlier this year, the eight musicians shared their music and stories.

Jimmy Connell from the Jimmy Jests interviewed each musician, while Lee Williamson from Shuttermanic Productions filmed the event and music sessions. Clare Frances Photography captured portraits of the musicians with their instruments. It concluded with an impromptu ceili.

On the 18 June, friends and families of the musicians gathered at Edgeworthstown Library to watch the short film 'Musical Memories – Echoes from Longford April 2024'. Longford County Council Chief Executive Paddy Mahon presented each participant was presented with their portrait and a copy of the video. The evening was filled with lively music and community spirit.

## Archives and Records Management

The Archives service is working on the metadata for the development of a major digitisation project with the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland, involving the archives of the boards of guardians of the poor law unions. The Archivist and Assistant Archivist worked with the Library, Motor Tax, Traffic, Environment and Corporate Services Departments to authorise the destruction of records according to the National Retention Policy.

Two aerial photographs of part of Longford town, taken in 1974, were donated.

The Archivist participated in an online skill share session, organised by Libraries Development in the LGMA. The Archivist spoke about outreach projects and how we engage with local groups. An audience of 75 library staff from around the country attended online.

## Arts Office

County Longford Arts Bursary Awards: Assessments were finalised, and grant offers were made to the 11 artists to support their practice and professional development in the following areas: Music, Visual Arts, Circus, Photography and Theatre.

County Longford Arts Project Awards: Assessments were finalised, and grant offers were made to the following 10 arts and culture organisations in Longford to deliver projects, events, and festivals in 2024.

The Longford Arts Office supported the recent Young People, Children and Education Project Award (YPCE) application for the project Making Moving Art. This application was successful in receiving funding in 2024.

Making Moving Art is designed to support young Roma and Traveller children to make a successful transfer to secondary school by involving them in an innovative performance programme to learn new skills and be able to represent themselves and their culture. The programme involves learning drumming, drama, dance, and circus. The programme is a partnership between Longford Arts Office, Longford School Completion Program (LSCP), St

# Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage

---

Michael's Boys National School and St Joseph's National School. LSCP is the lead partner.

Longford Arts Office supported Bula Bula Samba Band to organise Longford's first Pride Parade and Festival on 15 June. This project received funding and supported from the new night-time economy (NTE) element of the Cruinniú na nÓg programme. This event was an enormous success with over two hundred people in attendance.

## Creative Ireland

Twenty-six community projects received Creative Ireland funding, including Granard Booktown, Maria Edgeworth Festival in Edgeworthstown and the Goldsmith Festival in Ballymahon. Three community choirs, several theatre productions, poetry workshops, art classes were also supported.

The summer will be packed with load of activities as well including Granard Midsummer festival, climate action upcycling, recycling and sustainability workshops in Ballymahon and Camlin Keys Piano Festival in Longford.

## Cruinniú na nÓg

Ireland is the first and only country to have a national day of free creativity for children and young people. This year it was held on 15 June. With 21 events in eight locations, over 500 children tried music, art, crafts, circus skills, dance and more.

Cruinniú na nÓg is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme's Creative Youth Plan to enable the creative potential of children and young people.

## Creative Health and Wellbeing in the Community Scheme 2024

Longford and Westmeath County Council submitted a joint application for the Creative Health and Wellbeing in the Community Scheme 2024. The project 'Interwoven Threads: Ireland's Migrant Stories' was awarded €140,000.

This project will explore the similarities between the Irish emigrant stories and those of immigrant stories of the new Irish. It will highlight similarities of these stories, show the benefits of integration and social inclusion, including creating social cohesion and reduce social isolation. The stories will show the customs and cultures of both communities and their common threads.

This project will work with key new and established communities to explore the impact of anti-immigrant behaviour, including on mental well-being, perceptions of safety and inclusion in local community groups.

## Healthy Ireland

Longford Libraries hosted a stand at a men's health morning at Longford Athletics Centre, showcasing Healthy Ireland at Your Library and the services offered by Longford Libraries.

Edgeworthstown Library hosted a 'Hello, How Are You' coffee morning in partnership with Mental Health Longford. Finola Colgan from the HSE attended and there was an open conversation around mental health.

Events have been organised for July, including information sessions by a kinesiologist and an optician and workshops with a sensory play therapist. Bookings are already coming in on the library's website.

# Libraries, Archives, Arts and Heritage

---

## Heritage

The Community Monuments Fund 2024 provides for the care, conservation, maintenance, protection, and promotion of archaeological monuments. It also considers the impacts of climate change on such monuments.

The fund is prioritised for local authorities, private owners and custodians and community groups. Total funding available nationally will be €7,000,000.

Four Longford projects were awarded €133,102.50 in funding from Stream 1 and 2 of this Fund. They include projects in Clondra, Abbeylara Cistercian Abbey, Abbeyshrule Abbey and Saints Island.

Planning is underway for Heritage Week, which takes place from 17-25 August.

# Corporate Services

## Customer Services

Customer Services responded to over 1,700 calls in May and June, as well as responding to emails and many in-person customers.

## Register of Electors

Over 2,000 applications were processed in the lead up to the Local and European Elections. These include many first-time applications registering to vote and those wishing to update their details. There was also a large volume of applications from electors to be included on the postal voters list.

## Local and European Elections 2024

Support was provided to the Local Returning Officer and the European Returning Officer in the lead-up to the Local and European elections. The Corporate team were available by telephone to assist electors and presiding officers on polling day.

## Official Languages Act

Work continues to meet our obligations under Section 10A of the Official Languages Act (Amendment) 2021. In May and June, a total of 314 advertisements were placed, with 90 in Irish or bilingual.

## Freedom of Information

	May	June	Year to Date
Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received	6	7	35
Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) requests received	1	1	5
Office of the Ombudsman complaints received	0	1	3

## Elected Members Supports and Meetings Administration

Meetings in May and June included:

7 May	Granard Municipal District (MD)
8 May	Protocols and Procedures
8 May	Corporate Policy Group (CPG)
8 May	Longford County Council
22 May	Longford MD
23 May	Ballymahon MD
21 June	Annual Meeting of Longford County Council
24 June	Annual Meeting of Granard MD
24 June	Annual Meeting of Ballymahon MD
24 June	Annual Meeting of Longford MD

# Corporate Services



## Cathaoirleach Awards

The Cathaoirleach Awards were held in May with the following local organisations recognised for their contribution to their communities:

- County Longford defibrillator groups: Nominated by former Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray
- Newtownforbes TidyTown and Biodiversity Group: Nominated by former Longford Municipal
- District Cathaoirleach Cllr Martin Monaghan
- Mostrim Player: Nominated by former Ballymahon Municipal District Cathaoirleach Cllr Paul Ross
- Granard TidyTown Committee: Nominated by former Granard Municipal District Cathaoirleach Cllr Turlough McGovern

## Communications

### Press Releases

Communications issued 23 press releases in May and June. These included press releases for work happening across the Council, such as Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase, Culture Night 2024 funding, Cathaoirleach Awards 2024, and the Sports Bursary Awards.

### Events

Communications assisted with various events including the Local Elections 2024 Count. This including media liaison with journalists present at the Count and responding to media queries in the run up to the election.

# Corporate Services

Communications assisted with the National Famine Commemorations which took place in Edgeworthstown and with the three Active Travel official openings in Newtownforbes, Ennybegs and on the Ballinalee Road in Longford Town.

## Social Media

Social media was used for the communication of Local Elections 2024 results in real-time to keep the public updated on the Count. It was also used in the run up to promote voter registration. Longfordcoco.ie was updated also to provide further information for the public in regard to the Local Elections and voting.

Social media has been promoting Longford Works. This is a branding and awareness building project for the network of County Longford remote working hubs. This work was done with the Information Technology team and the Local Enterprise Office.

Social media was also used to help to increase awareness of and attendance at a recent event for the Town Centre First Plan for Ballymahon. Radio advertising was also used in tandem with social media to help to increase awareness of this event.

Platform	Reach or Impressions*	Follower Count
Facebook	94K	7,303 (+142)
Instagram	23.3K	1,978 (+43)
X (Twitter)	**	3,585 (+47)
LinkedIn	89K	1,041 (+63)
TikTok	1,599	226 (+28)

\* Reach: Number of people who had post enter their screen. Impressions: Number of times post entered a screen.

\*\* Analytics are no longer available on the non-paid version of X.

## Websites

Longfordcoco.ie had 38,549 visits in May and June, with 92,645 page views. The most popular sections were:

- Voting and Elections (48K page views)
- Planning (8K page views)
- Housing (6K page views)

Other Council websites had 16,888 visits and 33,319 page views in the same period.

## Data Protection

### Data Protection signage

Data Protection introduced new signage which can be used at Council events. These signs are proving to be well received since their introduction.

### Data Protection Newsletter

The latest Data Protection Newsletter for Q2 2024 is now available.

### General Data Protection update

Complaints	2
Data Breaches	5
Data Agreements	10
Data Subject Access Request	3
Data Protection Impact Assessment	7

### Data Protection queries

So far this year, there has been 129 data protection queries.

# Corporate Services

---

## Health and Safety

### Health and Safety Inspections

Eight safety inspection were completed.

### Health and Safety Authority Inspections

The Health and Safety Authority (HAS) completed four inspections of Council premises.

### Health and Safety Audits

Internal health and safety audits were completed within Civil Defence and Environment.

### Events

Health and Safety assisted with the National Famine Commemoration, Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase and the Local and European Elections 2024 Count.

### Health and Safety Training

Ongoing risk assessment briefing sessions are held within each Council section. Four new employees completed health and safety inductions.

## Housing Frameworks Contractors meeting

The Housing section met with Housing Frameworks Contractors regarding multi-party framework agreement for house construction, maintenance, energy retrofit and refurbishment contracts and associated minor works for 2024-2026. Housing Section Senior Executive Engineer Orla Maguire gave an update on the requirements of the framework and A/ Health and Safety Officer Amanda Cullen gave health and safety briefing on the role of PSCS and overview of the Longford County Council safety management system.

## Workers' Memorial Day Ireland 2024

Workers' Memorial Day Ireland 2024 was marked earlier this year with a national and annual commemorative event to remember people who died, were injured, made ill and bereaved through work-related incidents. In Ireland in the ten-year period between 2014 and 2023, 459 people died in work-related incidents and many thousands more were severely injured or made ill. In 2023 alone, 43 people died in work-related incidents.

By working together and promoting the practice of safety and health in workplaces throughout Ireland we will achieve a significant drop in these dreadful deaths and injuries.

Longford County Council marked the day with a briefing session for all employees on driving for work.

# Human Resources

---

## Learning and Development

Business skills training took place, including:

- Local and European Election training
- Professional Certificate in Climate Action and Sustainability Reporting
- Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures
- Certificate in Strategic Communications for Local Authorities
- Courtroom Skills
- Purchase and Transfer of Retirement Benefits
- Freedom of Information for Decision Makers
- Culture, Ethics and Governance for Public Sector Bodies
- Scenarios and Roleplay Training for Housing Practitioners

Health and Safety Training took place, including:

- Asbestos Awareness Training
- Driver CPC
- Pavement Surface Condition Index
- Road Safety Audit
- Chainsaw Operative (New Entrant)
- Paver Operative
- Mini Digger Operative
- (New Entrant)
- Manual Handling (Indoor)

## Health and Wellbeing

For Bike Week 2024, Human Resources and Longford Sports Partnership celebrated Cycle to Work Day on Wednesday, 15 May with a cycle around Longford Town and the Canal Loop. This coincided with the official opening of the Ballinalee Road cycle path. This is part of our physical wellbeing remit.



As part of physical wellbeing, lunchtime yoga classes and beginner and intermediate swimming lessons took place at Longford Sports Centre at the Mall Complex.

As part of our financial wellbeing remit, an information session on 'Understanding your Private Health Insurance' was held with the Health Insurance Authority (HIA) of Ireland.

As part of the social wellbeing remit, Maria Carton delivered an evening of fashion advice with ways to boost their confidence. The Annual Planning for Retirement course also took place.

As part of the mental wellbeing remit, Mental Health Awareness Week, which coincided with Pieta House's annual Darkness into Light event, included the following activities:

- Mental Health and Workplace Support Information session
- Mental Health Champion Training
- Supporting your Child's Mental Health online seminar

# Longford Local Enterprise Office

## The National Manufacturing and Supply Chain Conference and Exhibition

The National Manufacturing and Supply Chain Conference and Exhibition took place in May in the RDS, Dublin. Local Enterprise Office, Longford attended the event as part of the Engenuity Midlands Engineering Network, with engineering company Cooney Precision Ltd representing Longford on the day.

The event showcases Ireland's best innovative solutions and cutting-edge technologies and allowed industry leaders and stakeholders to share their experience in their everyday practice. Incorporating a comprehensive conference programme and an extensive exhibition area, the event is the largest event of its kind in Ireland.

## National Student Enterprise Final

The National Student Enterprise National Final took place in the Mullingar Park Hotel in May. Students from Ardscoil Phádraig in Granard, Moyne Community School, and Ballymahon Vocational School took part, including:

- Maria Kelly from 'Hats Scents' at Ardscoil Phádraig in Granard in the Junior category
- Grainne McKenna and Sarah Mollaghan from 'Trendy Threads' at Moyne Community School in the Intermediate category

- Kiera Hopkins, Lára Flood and Grace Cassells from 'Handle Holders' at Ballymahon Vocational School in the Senior category

There were 81 student businesses in contention across three main categories for the final of Ireland's largest entrepreneurship programme for second level students.



# Longford Local Enterprise Office

---

## **Tri County Women in Business Networking Event**

A Tri County Women in Business event took place in The Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon on Monday, 20 May. Organised by the Local Enterprise Offices of Longford, Leitrim, and Westmeath, businesswomen from all three counties were in attendance. The theme for the event was 'Women's Wellbeing in the Workplace'.

Keynote speaker was Dennison Training Academy founder and chief executive, Louise Dennison. A workplace wellbeing expert, Louise shared her knowledge on topics such as productivity, work-life balance, relationships, workplace satisfaction, and the risk of anxiety and burnout.

Louise was joined by a guest speaker from each of the counties, including Longford businesswoman Geraldine Stewart. Geraldine is the founder and director of DGS Business Consulting. Geraldine, working alongside her husband Robert, has developed Cathedral View Apartments which offer short-term accommodation for tourists and business clients.

# Tourism

---

## Just Transition: Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private and Community SMEs

Support is being provided to help those wishing to apply for the Just Transition Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private and Community SMEs. Expression of interests (EOI) were the first step in the application process, with a deadline of Sunday, 30 June.

Eligible EOIs can submit their full application by Monday, 13 January 2025. For this, any planning permission and/or statutory consents must be in place before this date.

Funding may be used for new and sustainable (or the expansion of existing) visitor attractions or tourist accommodation. Capital project planning and design and accessibility enhancements to visitor accommodation and attractions may also be funded.

Find out more on [Faiitelreland.ie](https://faiitelreland.ie) or email [tourism@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:tourism@longfordcoco.ie).

## Fáilte Ireland Regional Festival and Participative Events Fund 2024

Longford Tourism was awarded €7,506 for the following festivals and events (with funded amount in brackets): Longford Panto (€1,456), Dead of Night (€2,730), Grian Ard – Granard Sun Festival (€2,095) and Ballinamuck Olde Fair Day (€1,225).

These events will take place between July and December. Funding was awarded under the second round of the Fáilte Ireland Regional Festival and Participative Events Fund 2024.

## Information Boards

Information boards are being designed and translated for towns and villages around County Longford. Anyone with images of local attractions that may be used for these information boards can email them to [tourism@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:tourism@longfordcoco.ie).

## Town Twinning Committees Workshop

Longford Tourism presented at the Town Twinning Committees Workshop, held in Ballymahon Library in May. It was attended by Town Twinning committees from Longford, Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon, Ballinamuck and the new Lanesborough committee.

The new vision for tourism as outlined in the County Longford Tourism Strategy 2023-2027 was presented. Information on 'slow tourism', as well as festivals, events, attractions, trails and itineraries were provided.

Honorary French Consul with responsibility for Town Twinning, Catherine Gagneaux was in attendance. Catherine invited attendees to reflect on how the Town Twinning Committees can work together to promote the existing French and Irish connections.



# Tourism

---

## National Famine Way Commemorative Walk

Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Colm Murray, Chief Executive Paddy Mahon and Longford Tourism made their way along the Royal Canal Greenway in Longford for the National Famine Way Commemorative Walk.

There they met with the Irish Ambassador to Canada Eamon McKee, the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland Nancy Smith, and Liverpool Irish Famine Trail representatives.

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra school children joined in to walk to the bronze shoes for a schools' ceremony. This was supported by Enchanted Croí Theatre.

A Longford welcome and hospitality was provided by Foigha Bar and Lounge in Keenagh, the Ticket Office in Ballybrannigan and The Farmhouse in Abbeyshrule. Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre in Granard surprised walkers with a display of famine time replicas. These replicas included a famine ship and a handmade cart by Martin Briody. Restoration specialist Eamonn Creamer created a replica sliding coffin as a commemoration to the missing 1490. Eamonn gave a demonstration of the sliding coffin, used in workhouses during the Famine.

Historian Grey Quiery from Liverpool Irish Famine Trail ended the day with a reading of the poem Vanished. You can view this on Longford Tourism's Instagram page.

The walk took place over six days from Monday, 20 to Saturday, 25 May. It passed through six counties, finishing at the launch of the Global Irish Famine Way at EPIC Museum in Dublin.

The National Famine Way is open all year. The route and associated stories can be found on its free National Famine Way app. Official National Famine Way passports can be purchased for walkers to get stamped in key locations along the route.

The National Famine Way is a collaboration between Waterways Ireland, the Irish Heritage Trust, and the local authorities along the route: Longford, Roscommon, Westmeath, Meath, Kildare, Fingal, and Dublin City.

An extension of the National Famine Way, the new Global Irish Famine Way will launch in 2024 and will become the largest heritage trail in the world. It will follow the journeys of all the Irish Famine emigrants around the world, including the UK, Canada, the United States, South Africa, and Australia. The Bronze Shoes that mark the National Famine Way will also mark each significant location on the Global Irish Famine Way. A series of commemorative events will mark their arrival. This initiative begins in 2024 in Canada and in Liverpool in the UK.



## Longford Local Area Plan (LAP) and Longford Town Local Transport Plan (LTP)

Earlier this year, the draft Longford Local Area Plan (LAP) was sent to consultants for the completion of various reports. It is anticipated that the statutory process will formally start shortly with the display of the draft plan.

# Finance

## Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Summary by Service Division

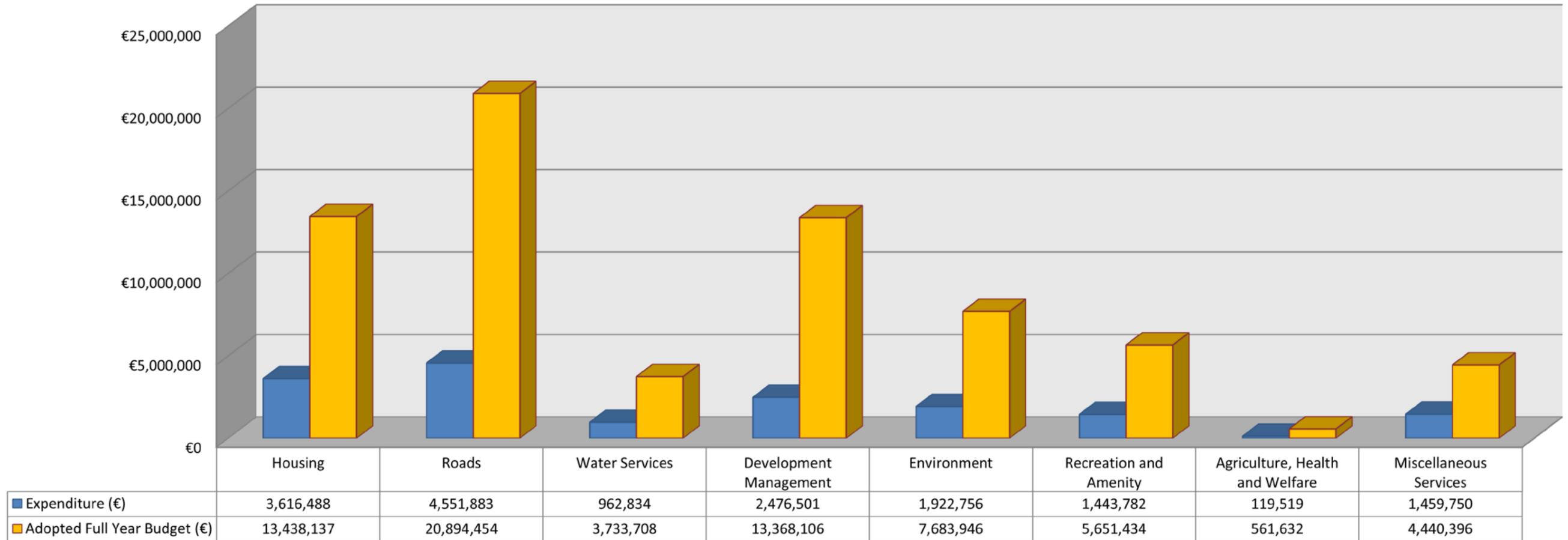
Year to Date to Quarter End 31 March 2024

	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 or (Deficit) €
Housing	3,616,488	13,438,137	27%	9,821,649	3,565,920	12,736,928	28%	9,171,008	(50,568)
Roads	4,551,883	20,894,454	22%	16,342,571	3,270,684	16,507,927	20%	13,237,243	(1,281,199)
Water Services	962,834	3,733,708	26%	2,770,874	814,808	3,527,710	23%	2,712,902	(148,026)
Development Management	2,476,501	13,368,106	19%	10,891,605	1,043,858	7,199,080	14%	6,155,222	(1,432,643)
Environment	1,922,756	7,683,946	25%	5,761,190	229,668	1,861,508	12%	1,631,840	(1,693,088)
Recreation and Amenity	1,443,782	5,651,434	26%	4,207,652	312,941	1,100,368	28%	787,427	(1,130,841)
Agriculture, Health and Welfare	119,519	561,632	21%	442,113	78,879	264,213	30%	185,334	(40,640)
Miscellaneous Services	1,459,750	4,440,396	33%	2,980,646	2,066,264	6,469,629	32%	4,403,365	606,514
Local Government Fund					2,682,140	10,728,561	25%	8,046,421	2,682,140
*Commercial Rates					2,313,150	9,375,889	25%	7,062,739	2,313,150
	<b>€16,553,513</b>	<b>€69,771,813</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>€53,218,300</b>	<b>€16,378,312</b>	<b>€69,771,813</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>€53,393,501</b>	<b>(€175,201)</b>

These figures were submitted to the Department on Friday, 24 May 2024

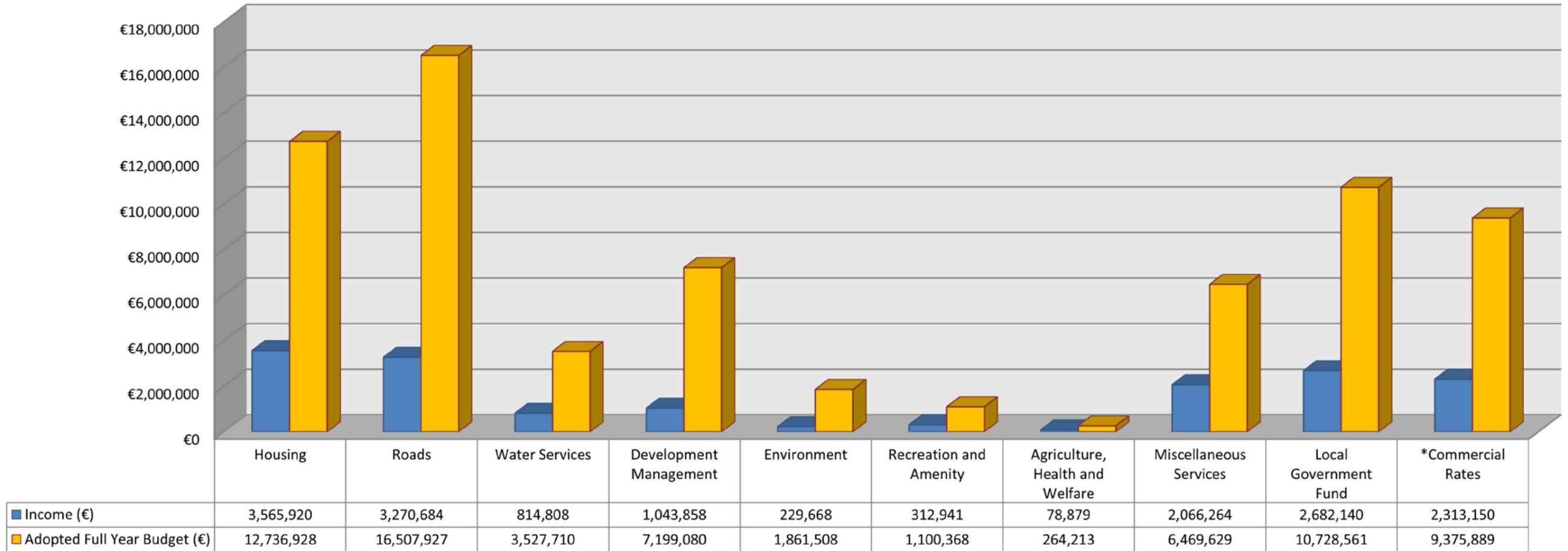
# Finance

## Expenditure V Budget – Quarter 1, 2024



# Finance

## Income V Budget – Quarter 1, 2024



# Finance

## Summary of Major Revenue Collections: Quarter 1, 2024

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 1, 2024	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€1,200,532	€9,252,602	€10,453,134	€1,965,921	€8,487,213	19%
Rents (including RAS)	€907,238	€2,229,989	€3,134,124	€2,084,426	€1,049,698	67%
Housing Loans	€350,875	€282,470	€633,345	€298,568	€334,777	47%
	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 1, 2023	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€859,492	€9,258,578	€10,118,520	€465,809	€9,652,711	5%
Rents (including RAS)	€882,623	€1,864,815	€2,741,773	€2,154,457	€587,316	79%
Housing Loans	€346,022	€276,318	€622,340	€300,435	€321,905	48%
	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
VARIANCE YOY	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€341,040	(€5,976)	€334,614	€1,500,112	(€1,165,498)	14%
Rents (including RAS)	€24,615	€365,174	€392,351	(€70,031)	€462,382	-12%
Housing Loans	€4,853	€6,152	€11,005	(€1,867)	€12,872	-1%

# Information Technology

## Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase

Over 450 children from 18 primary schools across the county took part in Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase 2024. The event took place on Friday, 24 May in Edgeworthstown with school children demonstrating over 100 STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths) projects.

Longford's Microsoft Dream Space Showcase is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund Programme 2021-2027. The equipment was supported by Longford County Council and the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan (NDP) Delivery and Reform under the Public Service Innovation Fund 2023.

The event was supported by Microsoft, Ericsson, Computex, and FIT (Fasttrack into Information Technology) who exhibited on the day. Other exhibitors included teams from across Longford County Council and local organisations including Comhairle na nÓg and Music Generation Longford. Connectivity was supported by Eir and Arden Broadband.

Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase is the culmination of months of engagement with schools including hands-on STEM sessions from the Microsoft Dream Space teaching team and a 10-week Dream Space TV programme. This included teaching school children computer science, micro: bit technology and artificial intelligence.



## Broadband Connection Points

There were 90 new guests and 715 returning guests for County Longford Broadband

Connection Points, with 59TB of data sent and received.

# Information Technology

## Local Elections 2024

The IT team supported the running of the Local Elections 2024. This support included assisting with the count, as well as supporting communications of the result and other update throughout.



- Windows Server 2012 upgrade project progressed
- Digital divide initiative for outdoor staff in progress
- DMARC projected completed
- Telephony migration project started

## Digital Services

Longford Text Alert local launch for Dromard took place in May. This app and website send local people crime prevention text alerts and community notices from across County Longford. Find out more at [LongfordTextAlert.ie/app](https://LongfordTextAlert.ie/app).



## IT Infrastructure

IT infrastructural work includes 1,425 tickets on the Service Desk for this period. There was an IT set up and fit out for the new Longford County Council Church Street offices.

Other infrastructural work includes:

- Support for community CCTV project
- Community CCTV phase 1 completed pending AGS authorisation
- Irish Water transition work progressed with operational data transfer project
- Procurement for annual renewals and hardware replacements/ upgrades
- SIEM and SOC project go-live completed

Longford Works is a network of remote working hubs across County Longford, in Abbeyshrule, Ardagh, Edgeworthstown, Longford Town, Moydow, Moyne, and Mullinalaghta. This project will be official launched in the coming weeks.

The STEM Passport for Inclusion initiative is continuing. This is led by Maynooth University, Microsoft Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), and the Department of Education. Longford have successfully

# Information Technology

---

completed this programme in three secondary schools: St Mel's College, Lanesborough Community College, and Moyne Community School. For the first time in this project, boys were able to participate.

Longford has secured €841,290 from the EU Just Transition Fund: Local and Regional Economic Strategies Support Scheme. This funding will be utilised by working in partnership with industry and schools to achieve the objective of having Computer Science a Leaving Certificate option in all nine secondary schools in Longford.

CRM rollout is ongoing for managing email queries. This includes its use for meetings administration, media enquiries, Roads and Human Resources, as well as for Ballymahon, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown, Granard and Longford Libraries.

Other digital services work includes:

- Tender completed for new cloud-based phone system
- ePMDS and Blended Working software being used by all employees
- Planning enforcements moved to SharePoint to automate mapping and automate business flows
- Testing of moving planning registers to SharePoint to automate mapping and automate business flows
- Work ongoing for the digitization of environment inspection forms.

## Geographic Information Systems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) updates include:

- SQL database migration and consolidation ongoing
- GIS in-house training
- Eircode API replacement
- Development digital planning registers and disabled parking capture application
- Creation of Longford Healthy Ireland map viewer
- Supply of mapping to Civil Defence
- Testing of Planning Application Capture Environment (PACE)
- Processing and systems update of data release of Tailte Éireann mapping and Eircode data
- Publication of planning application and development plan GIS datasets to Longford Open Data Portal

# Planning

---

## Lough Ree Biosphere Reserve

The UNESCO application for Biosphere Reserve status for Lough Ree is progressing. Consultants have been appointed to carry out public consultation which is due to start in January following a Ministerial launch.

This project features in the National Climate Action Plan, Shannon Tourism Masterplan, Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Programme for Government and is a flagship project in the region in our efforts to combat climate change and reverse biodiversity loss.

Extensive discussions have been carried out between the consultants, the steering committee, and the secretariat regarding the boundary requirements. Public consultation is due to start shortly.

## Planning Applications, Development Management

ePlanning has been fully implemented with over 80% applications now received online.

Development is due to start on the permitted extension to Center Parcs, which when completed will be a 50% increase in the accommodation levels at the holiday village.

There have been numerous Part 8 applications processed from Housing, Regeneration, and Active Travel.

The Waiver scheme in relation to development contribution has been extended with a modest uptake in applications. Planning are looking to make as many as possible aware of this scheme.

## Residential Zoned Land Tax

A Draft map for the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has been published, as required for Revenue Commissioners under legislation. Land appearing on the annual draft maps (amended to account for the outcome of submissions and rezoning requests) will be included on the annual final map of land within scope for RZLT in the local authority area. This is to be published on 31 January 2025. This land will be subject to the tax in 2025 unless it is exempt as a residential property or qualifying for any other exemption as specified within legislation.

## Derelict Site

The Derelict Sites Act and process is being used as a vehicle to minimise dereliction and vacancy in the towns of Longford. The derelict site registration process has begun on seven sites.

# Housing

## Social Housing

Social housing targets set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under Housing for All, with 76 units for 2024 in County Longford.

Project (Number of houses)	Status
Cranleymore Abbeylara (3)	Stage 3 approved. Japanese knotweed second herbicide treatment is now complete. Screening and removal was started in May. Once removed, main contract will be advertised.
St Ritas Park Road (13)	Stage 2 approval received. Part 8 planning has been approved for phase one (six houses). Japanese knotweed second herbicide treatment is complete. Screening and removal started in May. When costs are known, Stage 3 will be submitted. Once approved, main contract will be advertised. Phase 2 draft plans for seven units are due shortly.
24 Congress Terrace (2)	Complete, including tarmac to laneway.
Radharc na Muileann, Lanesborough (20)	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. Awaiting additional information from consultants. Due for Part 8 planning in May.
Drynán, Ballymahon (13)	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. Awaiting additional information from consultants. Due for planning in 2025.
Cnoc na Greine, Granard (8)	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. Awaiting additional information from consultants. Due for planning June.
Clough Dillons Keenagh (4)	Unfinished estate. Stage 1 approved. Legal issues due to be resolved soon, before proceeding.
Lamagh, Newtownforbes (6)	Stage 2 approved. Awaiting final reports to be submitted with Part 8 planning, to be advertised in May.
2 Legion Terrace (4)	On site. Irish Water connection due at the start of June. Completion due in June.
Richmond Street (23)	On site. All houses complete. Completion of site works due in June.
Corneddan, Ballinalee (1)	Part 8 planning approval received. Stage 3 approved. Advertised for tender in May. Tender return due is 4 June.

# Housing

Project (Number of houses)	Status
Houricans Hotel, Granard (8)	Preliminary pre-planning stage. Pre-planning meeting held in May. Housing agency updating plans and preparing tender for site investigations. Due to go to Stage 1 submission in June.
Butchers, Market Street, Granard (2)	Preliminary pre-planning stage. Structural survey complete and awaiting report. Housing Agency to prepare preliminary plans on receipt of report.
Aghaboy, Killoe (Ennybegs) (4)	Planning approved and costs received. Housing Agency preparing tender for site investigations. Advertised for consultants in May. Preparing single stage submission or combined Stage 1, 2 and 3.
Casey Court, Keenagh (2)	Infill site. To survey and prepare for Stage 1 submission in May.
Shanmullagh, Ballinamuck (10)	Planning approved. Surveyed. To advertise for consultants to carry out site investigations and prepare tender documents in May or June.
Canal Court, 'Fondermans' (2)	Existing building formerly used for district heating. Currently being decommissioned and cleared out. To survey and prepare for Stage 1 submission in June. To convert to two units.
Willow Park halting site (2)	Proposals submitted to CENA to tender for consultants. Agreeing plans with tenants and submitting Stage 1 to Department in June. (CENA is an Approved Housing Body (ABH)).
Vacant and derelict houses, Great Water Street (15)	Housing Agency preparing tender for consultants in May.
Farrell's Ballinalee (4)	Turnkey approved. Not started.
Forthill, Aughnacliffe (13)	Turnkey approved. Six houses completed in 2023. Two houses completed in Q1 2024 and a further five due by end of May 2024.
Forthill, Aughnacliffe (Phase 2) (4)	Turnkey approved. Due for completion Q4 2024.
Longford Road, Ballinalee (14)	Turnkey approved. Not yet started on site.
Market Square (2)	Turnkey approved. On site. Due for completion by end of June.
Colmcille Terrace, Granard (Phase 1) (19)	Stage 4 approved. On site. Four completed in Q4 2023, remainder to be complete in Q3 2024.
Colmcille Terrace, Granard (Phase 2) (7)	Under negotiations to purchase.

# Housing

---

## Energy Efficiency Retrofit Scheme

The Energy Efficiency Retrofit Scheme is ongoing with this year's focus on targeting houses with the lowest BER rating. In 2024, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage set a target of 45 units. To date, tenders received for six units at St Anne's in Ballymahon. Tenders are being prepared for six units at Abbeycartron Lane and 22 units at Casey Court, Kenagh. Energy efficiency works are also planned for Longford County Council housing stock, with 12 units submitted for Department for approval to date.

## Repair and Leasing

In April, funding was approved for seven apartments at 42 Main Street, Longford. This is an AHB led scheme with Kilkenny Voluntary Housing Association. It comprises of four one-bed apartments and three two-bed apartments.

## Compulsory Purchase Orders

Last year, six properties were designated for compulsory purchase orders (CPO) to convert them into social housing.

Section 8(7) Notices of Entry on the Derelict Sites Register and Section 11 Lists of Measures have been served to the property owners of three properties. If no engagement is made by the owners, the properties will soon be entered into the Derelict Sites Register, and the CPO process will begin.

Additionally, efforts are underway to CPO 10 properties in a state of disrepair at the St Michael Road and Wards Terrace area. Residents from the area have been engaged and are providing their local knowledge to identify ownership of the properties.

## Derelict Sites

The Derelict Sites Register is being updated. Three properties were added earlier this year for CPO by Longford County Council. Seven properties were removed from the register due residents' efforts which improved these properties so that they are no longer considered to be derelict. Additionally, the Derelict Sites Levy is working to motivate owners to address dereliction.

Completed in 2023, the Vacant Property Survey data is being updated as part of the Vacancy Activation Programme. These updates reflect efforts to bring vacant properties back into use and activate derelict sites through available vacancy schemes.

## Ready to Build Scheme

Participation in the Ready to Build scheme is currently being explored. To date, however, no potential sites have been identified for sale and participation in this scheme. Once the data entry for the CPO activation program is completed and the Derelict Site Register updated, details on proposed sites for participation in the Ready to Build scheme will be provided.

# Housing

---

## Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (Croí Cónaithe)

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme, also called Croí Cónaithe, continues to support property revitalization. It offers €50,000 for vacant properties and €70,000 for derelict properties.

To date, Longford County Council has received 127 applications. Of this, six applications were withdrawn and three were refused. Additionally, three grants have been successfully paid out. Furthermore, 83 applications have received preliminary approval, with an additional 32 applications pending further information from the applicants.

## Applications and Assessments

To date in 2024, 224 new social housing support applications have been accepted. Currently, there are 648 approved housing applicants on the Council waiting list. A further 190 are within the assessment process and 34 applicants have been allocated a property and await appointment.

## New Tenancies

To date in 2024, 66 new local authority, AHB and Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) tenancies have started.

## Rent Review

The rent review is now complete for all 2,342 households. Of this, approximately 200 households sought a reassessment due to further information submitted after their initial assessment or a change in household circumstance. There were approximately 100 hardship applications made. To date, three households have had a small reduction in rent having proved their need for a reduction. The remainder did not or have not yet submitted further information to support their application.

Tenancies were updated, included adding and removing occupants, and changing joint tenancies when one party left without notifying the Council. These updates also captured subsidiary earners who were not previously disclosed, leading to an increase in rent. iHouse is up-to-date and the total estimated annual additional revenue based on the households reviewed is €3,557,174.

## Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2024

There has been a review of 141 approved housing applicants under the Summary Social Housing Assessment (SSHA) 2024. Letters have issued to these applicants, and it is essential that they engage to update or review their applications.

# Regeneration

## Moyne Latin School Heritage Centre

Moyne Latin School Heritage Centre was officially opened by former Longford County Council Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr Garry Murtagh. This new visitor experience tells the history of the role of Moyne in the development of education in the region and provides tourism and employment opportunities.

Moyne Latin School Heritage Centre was supported by Longford County Council and the

Department of Rural and Community Development under their Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2021.



## Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project

Part 8 has issued in relation to the upgrade of the Mall Outdoor Facilities Upgrade. Closing date for submissions was Wednesday, 5 June.

## Mall Complex: Changing Room Upgrade and Storeroom Extension

The changing room upgrade work is practically completed on the changing room upgrade, installation of new lockers and shower cubicles are outstanding.

For the storeroom extension, six quotations from local builders were sought, however, no responses were received. This work will now be procured on eTenders – open procedure.

## Ballymahon Pobal Le Cheile

For the Ballymahon Pobal Le Cheile project, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2021 Part 8 planning was issued. The date for submissions closed on 13 May. This planning submission is currently on hold.

## North Longford Rebel Trail Phase 2: Monaduff to Ballinamuck

North Longford Rebel Trail Phase 2: Monaduff to Ballinamuck works are ongoing and approximately 40% complete. Expected completion in September 2024. This is funded under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) Measure Three 2022

# Regeneration

---

## Active Travel

### R198 Battery Road Pedestrian and cycle scheme

The footpath on the outbound side of the R198 Battery Road was reopened to the public from the entrance to St Albans up to the Lisbrack road junction. This section comprises a new concrete footpath with new cycle track running alongside. The finished red surfacing was applied to this cycle track and new decorative public lighting poles installed. The outbound carriageway lane has also been reconstructed along this section with the final surface course yet to be applied and traffic is now shifted onto this side.

Works have moved over to the inbound side of the Battery Road again working between Lisbrack road junction and Saint Albans. Installation of services and drainage are ongoing. ESB underground ducting network has been completed and the removal of the overhead network and poles was carried out. This has allowed for the construction of the separator kerb and carriageway kerb to be laid on the first 350m section.

When complete this Pathfinder sub project will deliver over 1.2 km of new footpath and cycle track along this key arterial route to Longford Town. Works will include the signalling of the Lisbrack road junction, carriageway and junction tightening along the route and the undergrounding of overhead services, public lighting upgrades and road reconstruction.

## Active Travel Schemes in Granard

Two Active Travel schemes in Granard town had Part VIII planning were approved. The first of these will see a new footpath link along the R194 Longford Road Granard to link from Ard Scoil Pdraig as far as the old Ulster Bank building. This scheme will include a new pedestrian crossing on the R194 along the route and involve carriageway narrowing and junction tightening works.

The second scheme will tie in directly to the scheme above and will see the construction of a footpath link from Market Street to Barrack Lane. Detailed design works and site surveys are ongoing for both schemes. Survey information had been obtained and the consultant is now progressing to detailed design and the preparation of a tender package.

### Pencil Bollards at Entrance to Sacred Heart National School Granard

Enhancement works at the entrance to Sacred Heart National School Granard have been completed. Works included installation of 32 pencil bollards, pier removal with carpark entrance widening, kerbing, and surfacing.

These measures have sought to regularise parking and turning movements and to provide a more clearly defined and safer uncongested route for pedestrians on route to school.

# Regeneration

---

## Town Centre First

### URBACT UR Impact

As part of URBACT UR Impact, URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings took place in May and June. These meetings included discussions on opportunities and challenges related to the project. They also included discussions on the development of testing actions for implementation later in the year to test how the ULG will ensure the project has a positive social impact on the wider community.

### Longford Town Centre First Strategy

Longford Town Centre First Strategy was launched in May with the Town Team and representatives of the national Town Centre First Office. The strategy sets out a vision for the development of the town centre through the delivery of nine transformational projects.



### Ballymahon Town Centre First

There was a Town Team and ULG meeting held in May and June looking at place analysis. A public consultation event was also held in May. Several challenges and opportunities were

highlighted. This will inform the development of the plan. Data gathering continues regarding the current situation in Ballymahon.

### Derelict Sites

There are currently 26 properties on the Derelict Sites Register. Work is progressing on including a further three properties on the Register. Engagement is ongoing with landowners to remedy their properties to get them taken off the Register. The Derelict Sites Levy will be applied from January 2025 on properties remaining on the register.

## Granard Destination Town

For the Granard Destination Town project under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2021, tenders were sought for the procurement of project management and design consultancy services with specific skills in urban design and public realm improvement projects. This is for the Granard town centre public realm and car park. Five tenders were received and have been assessed. The project is now awaiting Department of Rural and Community Development approval to appoint successful consultant.

## Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Town and Village Renewal 2023

Applications have been submitted under ORIS and Town and Village Renewal for 2023.

Six ORIS 2023 Measure 1 projects have been approved for €180,000 funding.

# Regeneration

---

ORIS 2023 Measure 2 applications approved are Granard Lights and Additional Walkway, Moyne Amphitheatre, and Legga Carpark

Two Town and Village Renewal 2023 applications with funding up to €250k have been approved. They are a Ballinalee playground and Edgeworthstown Mahon Building.

# Roads

---

## National Road Schemes

The N4 Newtownforbes to Clooniher (4km) scheme has been tendered. The contractor appointment will be approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

The N63 Gowlan (1.2km) scheme is awaiting TII approval to tender.

The N55 Edgeworthstown North (1.8km) scheme is at the design stage.

It is hoped to soon start pavement repair works on the N55 Fowlards Bridge.

TII have provided additional funding for the following schemes (with funding amount in brackets):

- N5 Aughareagh (€32,000)
- N55 Rathmore Patch Repair (€50,000)
- N55 Creevagh Beg Patch Repair at Cluain Rí (€50,000)
- N4 Kilsallagh Patch Repair at county boundary (€50,000)
- N4 Newtownforbes Drainage (€6,000)
- N55 Granard Drainage (€7,000)

An additional €50,000 in Defects Allocation funding was successfully applied for for the N55 Athlone Road, Ballymahon.

The following resurfacing schemes are currently at tender stage:

- N55 Edgeworthstown Level Crossing
- N63 New Street
- N55 Carrickboy

The preliminary design is complete on the R392 Abbeyshrule Road junction. Once the design is fully complete, the specific improvement scheme contract will be tendered.



## Municipal District Works

Road maintenance works continued in each municipal district (MD). These works include footpath repairs, drainage, and pothole repairs.

Restoration improvement and restoration maintenance works on regional and local roads started in each MD. These works will continue throughout the summer.

Bridge inspections continue in each MD.

Bridge works are ongoing. These works have been completed on the Tawnagh/Aghadowry bridge. Works will start on the bridge at Leggagh (Dromard GAA). Other bridge works scheduled for this year include Ballagh/Curraghboy,



# Roads

---

## **Climate Adaption Strategy for Regional and Local Roads**

The Department of Transport's Climate Adaption Strategy for Regional and Local Roads has been adopted by Longford County Council's Roads section. This strategy has the aim of improving the resilience of regional and local roads against the impacts of climate change.

The strategy identifies actions required to improve climate resilience including updating existing guidance documents, producing vulnerability mapping, identify critical infrastructure routes, and works prioritisation methodology.

# Environment

## Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase

Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase took place in May. At the event, the Council's Climate Action and Environment team had an interactive and engaging exhibition stand to promote environmental awareness among students. This included biodiversity awareness. Awareness videos were shown, followed by an interactive quiz for up to four players playing for prizes. Feedback was positive from both students and teachers.



## Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026

A Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026 funding application was submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on behalf of Clonmore/Kilmore and Derryohill Group Water Schemes.

The Environment team supported several other community connections and Group Water Schemes in their application. Unfortunately, due to criteria requiring a minimum of 25 houses for community connection applications, a restriction in grants of €15,000 per house, and criteria in relation to the development of options reports, it was not possible to progress applications for a further five schemes.

## Longford County Council TidyTowns engagement event

Longford County Council's first TidyTowns engagement event was held in Edgeworthstown Library in April, with 16 local TidyTowns groups in attendance. Guest speaker Ann O'Leary gave an informative presentation as she shared her experience as a TidyTowns adjudicator for the past 43 years. The Biodiversity Officer and Environmental Awareness Officer also gave presentation on the day.



# Environment

---

## Septic Tank Inspections

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued their Domestic Waste Water Treatment System Inspections 2023 report which is a review of its National Inspection Plan. Longford County Council ranked nine out of 31 local authorities for the percentage of waste water treatment systems fixed after any failing inspection since 2013.

The average national inspection failure rate is 45%. This compares with 63% in County Longford last year. The EPA requires a minimum number of septic tank inspections annually. Longford County Council exceeded its allocated number of inspections in 2023, inspecting 10 sites.

It is now easier for to access grants and remediate waste water treatment systems that fail inspection. Since the start of 2024, the requirement for septic tanks to be on the Protect Our Water Register was removed and the maximum grant available to householders was increased to €12,000.

## Granardkille Cemetery Boundary Wall Remediation Works

Essential maintenance works took place at various cemeteries throughout the county. Most notably this includes the remediation of the boundary wall at Granardkille Cemetery.

Adverse weather conditions and an original design defect had over time compromised the structural integrity of the stone face boundary wall. The cost of the wall remediation was

around €25,000. It was considered the most appropriate solution, by sustaining the longevity of the wall without having to ultimately remove and replace a failed structure.



## Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLA)

In May, the Environment team hosted the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLA) Operations meeting for 2024 Q2. Longford County Council is a member of the Eastern Midlands WERLA which is one of three regional groups. WERLA work with local authorities in setting priorities and ensuring consistency of enforcement of waste legislation, while allowing local authorities to be the first responders on the ground.



# Environment

## Anti-Dumping Initiative Funding

Illegal dumping remains a priority for the Council. The Environment team successfully submitted for funding of €70,800 under the Anti-Dumping Initiative for several projects, including:

- Installation of CCTV at illegal dumping blackspots
- Transform McEoin Park waste ground into an edible garden amenity area
- Feraghfad and Keenagh illegal dumping clean ups
- Camlin River protection fencing
- Provision of accessible bring banks
- Bulky goods and mattress collections
- Your Country, Your Waste anti-dumping campaign

## Dangerous Structure

Property owners are legally required to ensure their property does not contain any dangerous structures. If it does, they must take steps to remedy the situation or they may face prosecution. The Council is empowered to deal with dangerous structures and can require an owner to carry out works to prevent the structure from being dangerous.

In May, a Notice under Section 3 of the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act, 1964 (as amended) was issued to the owner of a premise, requiring the demolition of the structure in whole or in part to prevent the structure from being a dangerous structure. The owner demolished the structure in part and

secured the site within 14 days of serving the notice.

Following the demolition works the local community gave the area a much-needed facelift, painting the entirety of the hoarding ahead of the National Famine Commemoration event. This is an excellent example for collaboration and cooperation between the council, property owner and local community, to make a dangerous structure safe and improve the visual amenity of an area.

## Large Goods Collection

A one-day large goods collection was held to assist the public to dispose of large goods correctly. Large goods includes beds, mattresses, furniture, carpets, toys, and household scrap metal.



# Environment

---

## Biodiversity

### Local Biodiversity Action Fund

County Longford biodiversity projects have been approved for €117,647 funding (including €17,647 match funding) by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund.

### Biodiversity Action Plan

A list of plant and animal species in County Longford using the National Biodiversity Data Centre database has been compiled. An inventory of amenity areas and areas of biodiversity interest is being developed. This work is part of the preparation for a Biodiversity Action Plan. Stakeholder engagement on the preparation of the Biodiversity Action Plan is also ongoing.

### Biodiversity Working Group

The first meeting of the Biodiversity Working Group took place on the 15 May with Longford County Council, NPWS, Teagasc, Coillte, Bord na Móna, LAWPRO, and Hedgerows Ireland all represented on the working group.

### Biodiversity Week

Biodiversity Week took place in May with several events in County Longford. This included talks given by the Biodiversity Officer at each of library in the county. A talk was also held in conjunction with the Office Public Work and Longford County Council at Corlea Trackway. A hedgerow walk was given by Richard Markham in the Mall. A Barn Owl talk

was given by BirdWatch Ireland in the Longford Library headquarters.

### Urban Forest Project

Longford County Council and the Longford Community Resources clg Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme obtained over 300 trees from Future Forests, Cork, Uplift and Coillte.

In April, a tree planting event was organised where a mixture of native oak, alder, birch, rowan and Scots pine trees were planted. For this members of Roma, asylum seeker and Ukrainian communities and residents came together to celebrate the cultural diversity with the symbolic planting of roots.

Brendan Farrell from Ardagh Village Landscaping was on hand to help with the planting and layout of the new urban forest. The trees were laid out to resemble how a natural forest would form.



### An Taisce National Spring Clean

In April, An Taisce held their annual National Spring Clean initiative. Sixteen Longford groups participated by organising clean-ups of their local towns and villages to tackle litter, improve their environment and protect biodiversity.

# Environment

---

This local effort fed into the overall National Spring Clean. This is the 25th year of the campaign, which has seen the removal of an estimated 47,500 tonnes of litter from the environment.

## Climate Action

### Longford County Council's Climate Action Plan

Longford County Council Climate Action Plan has been launched. The Plan can be viewed on the Council's website under the Environment section.

### The Community Climate Action Fund

The Community Climate Action Fund had 20 applications for funding of €680,000. The evaluation committee met in April and 14 projects from Strand 1 and one project from Strand 1a were recommended to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications for funding of €328,000. It is anticipated that it will take 8-12 weeks for final approval.

### Electric Vehicle Chargers

The 50kw electric vehicle (EV) chargers in Ballymahon, including its street carpark, are now operational. Chargers at Lanesborough, and Longford Centre are due to be commissioned shortly. Granard is contingent on progress with the construction of the carpark behind the Garda barracks.

Tenders for the Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) strategy have been received by Offaly County Council. Tender assessment involving the five participating counties is currently being organised.

# Fire Services

---

## Call Outs

All stations remained fully operational. There were 57 callouts up in May and June (up to 26 June). Of these callouts, three units of Longford fire brigade attended a large industrial fire in Ballymahon on Wednesday, 26 June. The building suffered substantial damage.

## Training

A one-day breathing apparatus refresher course was completed by 40 firefighters. This was held in Tullamore. Two instructors completed a three-day compressed air foam refresher training course in Longford Town. This was a national course held in Longford. One recruit fire fighter completed a one-week compartment fire behaviour course in Carlow.

All fire service employees are to receive climate awareness training which is being rolled out nationally.

## Health and Safety

There are no injuries to report.

## Fire Certificates and Licences

- Five Fire Safety Certificates were processed.
- Two Circuit Court and three District Court licence were processed.

## Fire Safety

Edgeworthstown fire brigade did a chip pan fire safety display at Longford Dream Space Showcase.



## Recruitment

Eight more people have completed the pre-selection process for the position of Firefighter in various Stations.

The recruitment process is still open as we will still have vacancies in Lanesborough, Granard and Ballymahon.

## Equipment

A second-hand Jeep has been purchased for Granard fire brigade. This is to be used at road traffic incidents and replaces an obsolete Jeep.

The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management has sanctioned capital approval of €57,000 for the purchase of eight new thermal imaging cameras and a decontamination washing machine for breathing apparatus sets.

# Civil Defence

---

## Duties

Longford Civil Defence provided medical cover at 22 events in April and May, including:

- Longford GAA match
- Longford Town football club soccer matches
- A Royal Canal Greenway run
- Three Irish Blood Transfusion Service blood bank clinic
- Two County Longford Community Games
- Longford Athletics Primary schools races
- An anti-bullying sports day
- A Longford County Council Civic Recognition event
- Tri-A-Tri event
- Darkness into Light
- Show jumping event
- National Famine Commemoration
- Fundraising run
- Gaelforce swim
- Longford County Council Microsoft Dream Space Showcase

## Training and Operations

Volunteers completed missing person search responder certification.

Manual handling instructors completed the first part of their upskilling course.

Training at a drill night with Longford Fire Station fire fighters took place.

Longford Civil Defence purchased Mapyx mapping software to assist with support to the primary response agencies. Two volunteers received training to operate this software.

Longford Civil Defence assisted An Garda Síochána with a missing person search. Longford Civil Defence were supported with this search by Roscommon, Offaly, Mayo, Dublin and Meath Civil Defence units.

An obsolete ambulance was donated to a charity organisation, where it will be sent to Ukraine.



# CONNECTED

People • Place • Opportunity

---

Management Report for April 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 April 2024 in securing the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Paddy Mahon  
Chief Executive



