



## MILITARY ASSETS AS PUBLIC SPACES



# Longford Integrated Action Plan 2018





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## 1 Executive Summary

This is the Integrated Action Plan for Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter of Longford Town. This was produced as part of the URBACT Military Assets as Public Spaces (MAPS) project.

The development of this Integrated Action Plan comes at an opportune time where the focus nationally is on the regeneration of town and city centres and once again realising the potential of these areas, as a means of tackling climate change, social exclusion, housing shortages but also working towards improving the quality of life of the residents of these towns. The National Planning Framework (Government of Ireland, 2018) and Project Ireland 2040 (Government of Ireland, 2018) have recognised the importance of regeneration to the strategic growth and renewal in our communities with the commitment to establish a Regeneration and Development Fund which will be overseen by a new National Regeneration and Development Agency. It is foreseen in the National Planning Framework that utilising public lands can act as catalysts to stimulate regeneration and wider investment. One of the key policy priorities identified for this region in the National Planning Framework is the harnessing of publicly owned lands, including military sites and combining the potential of such assets with community and wider private and public sector support and investment to bring about the transformation of both urban and rural areas and places in an integrated manner.

Longford suffered significant decline following the economic crash in 2008. At the time it was heavily reliant on the construction sector for employment and it had not experienced the same growth in retail or commercial activity as other parts of the country. This was exacerbated by the closure of Connolly Barracks in 2009, with the loss not only of 200 jobs on site but also the knock-on effect on the wider economy. Longford County Council recognised the potential and importance of this site to the future of the town and purchased a portion of it, acknowledging the ability of it to act as an economic driver for the town and wider region if developed appropriately. It is also clear to the Local Authority that the development in this area must connect with and compliment the existing uses in the wider town area, it must enhance the area, providing new opportunities for the people of Longford and pay tribute to its location, particularly the proximity to the River Camlin. This will be developed through a new masterplan for the wider Northern Quarter area, taking in Great Water Street and Little Water Street, as well as Lower Main Street, up to and including Connolly Barracks and Church Street.

Underpinning all discussions relating to the redevelopment of Connolly Barracks has been the importance of the social dividend for the people of Longford, to ensure that the people who have suffered most since the decline of the economy are given something back through this process. Citizen engagement is key to this and the establishment of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) has been paramount in engaging with stakeholders from different sectors throughout the town, most affected by the potential redevelopment of this area. It is the work with the ULG that is reflected in this document, in the development of the actions felt most appropriate to ensure the appropriate redevelopment of the area. It was also recognised in the process that wider engagement is required and this will be driven forward through the implementation of the actions in the plan.

This IAP also recognises the importance of improving the physical environment in which Connolly Barracks is located in enhancing and utilising the River Camlin which bounds the site. The River Camlin was once the source of power for many of the former industries in the town that provided employment for many people living and working in Longford. However, as these industries closed and the town developed, Longford turned its back on the river. The redevelopment of Connolly Barracks and the wider area now provides an opportunity to open up the town to the River Camlin and embrace this valuable natural asset.



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The Longford Integrated Action Plan has been developed under the **EU URBACT III Programme** and involves a shared learning experience between nine cities across Europe, focusing on the challenges presented in utilising former military heritage that no longer form part of the life of the city but provides opportunities for stimulating the regeneration of their cities.

#### Connolly Barracks, Longford Town

Connolly Barracks in Longford closed in 2009 with the loss of approximately 200 jobs in the town. Not only did the closure result in the direct loss of jobs on the site, it has also meant that there is no longer the footfall and associated revenue coming from the site, and providing support to businesses in the area. This has resulted in a severe decline in Lower Main Street in particular. As a result of the serious impact of the closure of the Barracks and subsequent job losses and the economic crisis which Longford has faced, Longford County Council has been seeking opportunities to address this decline. It has identified that Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter in which it is located provides significant opportunities to drive the economic regeneration of Longford Town.

#### URBACT Programme

URBACT is the European Territorial Cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. It is a know-how programme that promotes exchange and learning between cities. URBACT's mission is to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.

URBACT is defined by the European Regions' initiative for economic change, with the objective of promoting economic modernisation, growth and job creation, using European models at a local level. URBACT uses resources and know-how to strengthen the capacity of cities to deliver integrated urban strategy and actions on the thematic according to their challenges.

An important element of the URBACT programme is the establishment of the URBACT Local Group (ULG), which is seen as a fundamental building block of the URBACT programme. The ULG is the vehicle by which integrated and participative approach to urban policies are developed. The ULG is important to foster shared ownership of the urban planning process and also strengthen capacities.

#### MAPS Project

The MAPS (Military Assets as Public Spaces) project aims to enhance former military heritage as key elements for sustainable urban strategies, combining both functional and social aspects. The MAPS project aims to develop tangible and integrated strategies addressed to the management and enhancement of former military site, "one cultural heritage" that for a long time has been excluded from the active life of the city. The dismissal of formerly productive settings often poses serious



environmental and economic issues that Municipalities have to deal with as political and administrative problems. The main goal of MAPS is to reverse perspectives, and highlight the potentialities of this heritage, albeit discussing all matters related to the plans for their future destination.

The work within the network of cities presenting similar issues expected to lead to a mutual exchange of experiences, has led to the definition of best practices and replicable schedules which can be subsequently adapted to the needs and expectations of local communities, as expressed by stakeholders and interest groups. In the case of the regeneration of the former military heritage, we are aiming to create a new public space, or network of public space and buildings, using a strategy that combines the aspects related to cultural, economic, technological, social and ecological issues.

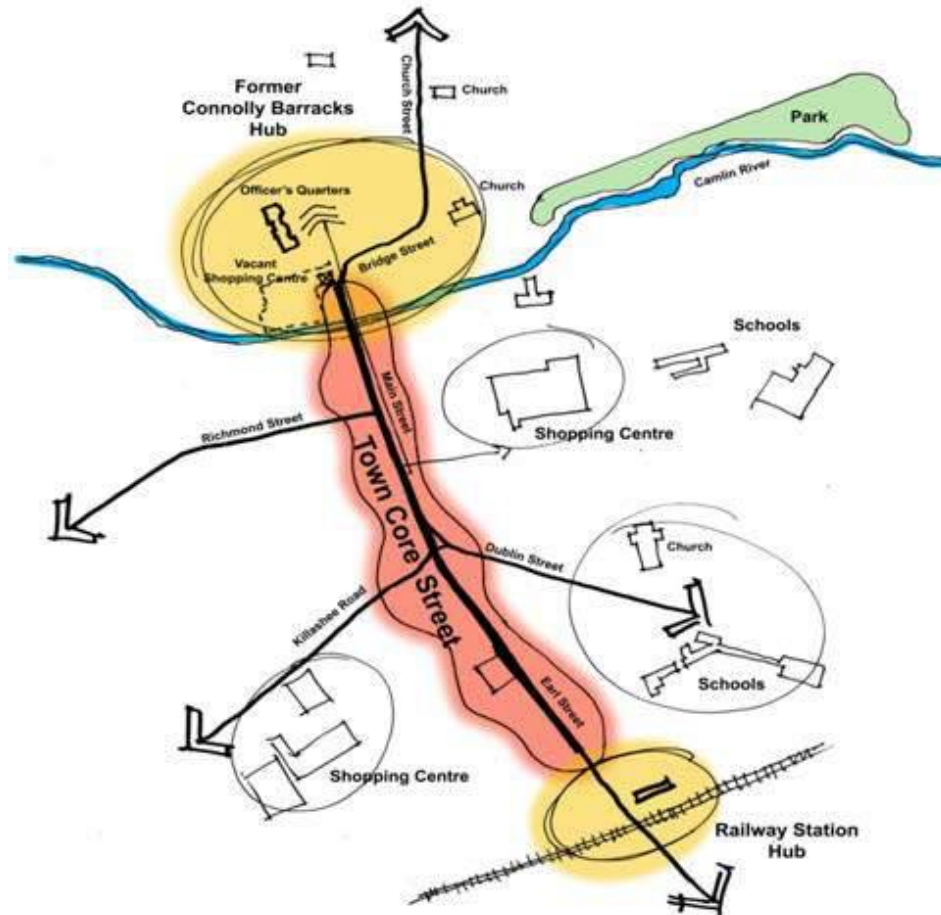
Military heritage can be comprised of different assets, including barracks, compounds, fortifications, towers, administrative buildings, buildings for officers and others. They hold the common currency of having exhausted their former *'defensive purpose'* and now have the capacity to play a new role within their local setting.

### Longford and the MAPS project

The Connolly Barracks Military Site is a prime parcel of real estate located in the urban core of Longford at the end of the main thoroughfare. Following the closure of the Barracks in 2009 and the subsequent acquisition of part of the site by Longford County Council, it is considered that the Barracks provides a perfect opportunity to stimulate growth in Longford town.

The Council recognise that the Barracks complex is an important resource from an economic, social, environmental and cultural viewpoint and that it is fundamental to protect, develop and rethink this asset in order to benefit the community in a sustainable way in the long term. It presents itself as not only an opportunity for the creation of new jobs, particularly given the current economic circumstances, but provides an important chance to transform this feature into a place that fosters cultural and social exchange and inclusion, which is particularly apt for the Longford scenario.





In particular, the reasons for the selection of the project area include that the Longford destination is weak in its ability to retain and attract markets, services and infrastructure for strong operations and the brand and marketing perception is weak and somewhat tarnished. Longford needs to make a steep change in its offer, experience and reputation – its place brand.

Powerful ideas are needed to drive a fresh exciting vision, that is based on reality but it must raise the bar and help people see Longford differently and for the city to secure a clear market position to support economic growth. It is considered that the rehabilitation of Connolly Barracks could help deliver this.

### Integrated Action Plan

Membership of URBACT requires that Longford must develop an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) that addresses local issues surrounding the reuse of the former military asset and identifies relevant solutions and actions to address and overcome these problems. The actions emerging from the IAP will be carefully chosen through a filtering and refining process using the URBACT method which is a particular methodology that is developed to investigate the scale, nature and extent of the problem in each partner city, and to identify appropriate and relevant solutions to these problems.

The process requires that there is continuous engagement with stakeholders in order to ensure that they are aware of the emerging problems and solutions and are ultimately engaged in the project. The actions that are being developed are tested against strict criteria to identify relevant bodies such as agencies, local and regional authorities and

Government Departments who could make resources available and that there will ultimately be a body responsible for the implementation of each action. Relevant funding bodies and new innovative funding models are being explored and identified, to ensure that there are appropriate resources available to support the plan and its actions.

This plan is not intended to be a static plan but it will be constantly reviewed and updated, as circumstances evolve in relation to the site and its development. This is important to ensure that the plan remains relevant and meets the needs of the municipality and the people of Longford. Longford Town has suffered over the years of the recent economic crisis and has not experienced the improvements in the economy to the same extent as the larger urban centres. This plan provides an





opportunity for the Local Authority to work with the local community to drive the regeneration of Longford Town through the redevelopment of this strategic and flagship site.



### 3 Vision for Longford

Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter of Longford town is the physical embodiment of the legacy of regional importance of the settlement and to this end forms the historical core of the Town.

It follows that the vision for the Northern Quarter is to provide a connection and an understanding of its heritage and history and to give confidence back to people of a positive future for the town of Longford. To this end, Connolly Barracks has the capacity to be the economic driver both for this area of the town and also for the wider town area and county. It is also seen that local economic regeneration will result in a social dividend for the people of Longford. This social dividend will encompass the heritage and history of the town, representing the values of the town in terms of local productions, culture and crafts. This will result in strengthening the values and dialogue between generations, drive the development of new jobs and encourage the creation of new employment opportunities for those who lost their jobs over recent years.

#### 3.1 Vision Statement

The reimagining of the former Connolly Barracks will provide a connection and an understanding of the heritage and history of Longford Town for the people of Longford and to give confidence back to the people of Longford of a positive future for the town of Longford. It will contribute to making the urban core a fit place to live, work and play for future generations.

##### 3.1.1 Aims

1. Connolly Barracks will act as an economic driver for the Northern Quarter and the wider town region.
2. Through physical interventions, improve the connections with Longford Town and realise the potential of the River Camlin.
3. Provide a social dividend for the people of Longford, which will provide a link to the heritage and history of the town.

##### 3.1.2 Core Objectives

1. Increased employment opportunities in the Northern Quarter;
2. To provide a cultural space to tell the story of Longford's history and heritage;
3. To increase engagement with cultural activities;
4. To improve connections with Longford Town;
5. To increase visitor numbers to Longford town; *and*
6. To improve the quality of life for the residents of Longford town.



## Longford

The municipality of Longford, along with the various stakeholders are working to develop Longford Town to ensure it reaches its potential as an economic driver for the wider region. As previously discussed, it is envisaged that Connolly Barracks will become the main economic driver for the area. Whilst it is recognised that it will not match the larger urban centres for the retail mix of international brands, Longford currently has a very good offering for smaller boutique shops. It is the aim for Longford County Council to build on this offering and develop the town as a shopping destination, whilst improving the social infrastructure in the town. It is also the aim that we will work together through this process to make Longford a better place for people to live, work and visit.

It has been widely recognised that many towns in rural Ireland have not experienced the recovery from the economic boom to the same extent as larger urban centres and Longford is one such example of this. It is important that we use this opportunity to reverse the town decline by encouraging new roles and functions for buildings, streets and sites and to ensure that these towns become more sustainable. Connolly Barracks could serve as a prime example of how this could be achieved.

### Connolly Barracks within the Longford Vision

The study lands benefit from a strategic location with very close proximity to Longford Town centre and is alongside an unopened shopping centre, a cinema, a mix of services/facilities in the town centre and industrial development area. This area is designated as Longford Northern Quarter. Access, both vehicular and pedestrian, is currently possible into the barracks off Bridge/Church Street and the Battery Road. However, there is a lack of connectivity between the complex and the environs to the north and south.

It is our desire to create a special destination in the Northern Quarter/Connolly Barracks, which would complement the existing town centre and elevate the overall offer of Longford to better compete across the Midlands region for visitors and businesses for their spend and of course providing opportunities for the local community.

It is anticipated that Connolly Barracks will develop as a Longford hub for the region and for the town itself. It will represent a new landmark for the town in terms of spaces for the cultural activities of the local communities; a place where you can find local productions (handicrafts, quality agricultural products, tourist offerings, etc.) to reinforce the idea of a shopping destination; a place to teach new jobs (linked to the resources of the area), to promote the innovation, and to allow the reintegration of those who lost their old jobs; a place to promote social innovation as a tool to reinforce the dialogue between the generations.

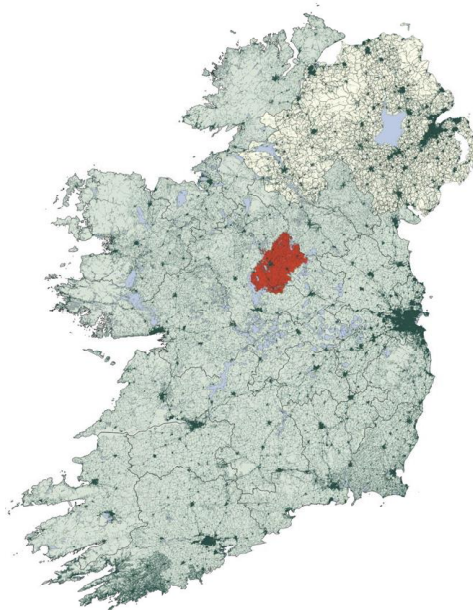


## 4 Longford Town Profile

The Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan: September 2016 (Longford County Council)<sup>1</sup> contains three strategies that consider the development of the town spaces, buildings and services. These strategies are underpinned by proposals to improve the economy, quality-of-life and the infrastructure that are all needed to expedite development to provide optimal value-for-money.

The redevelopment of the former Connolly Barracks has the potential to play a pivotal role in realising the ambitions of the Local Area Plan by improving the overall town image.

### Map 1 – Co. Longford Location



#### 4.1 National Setting

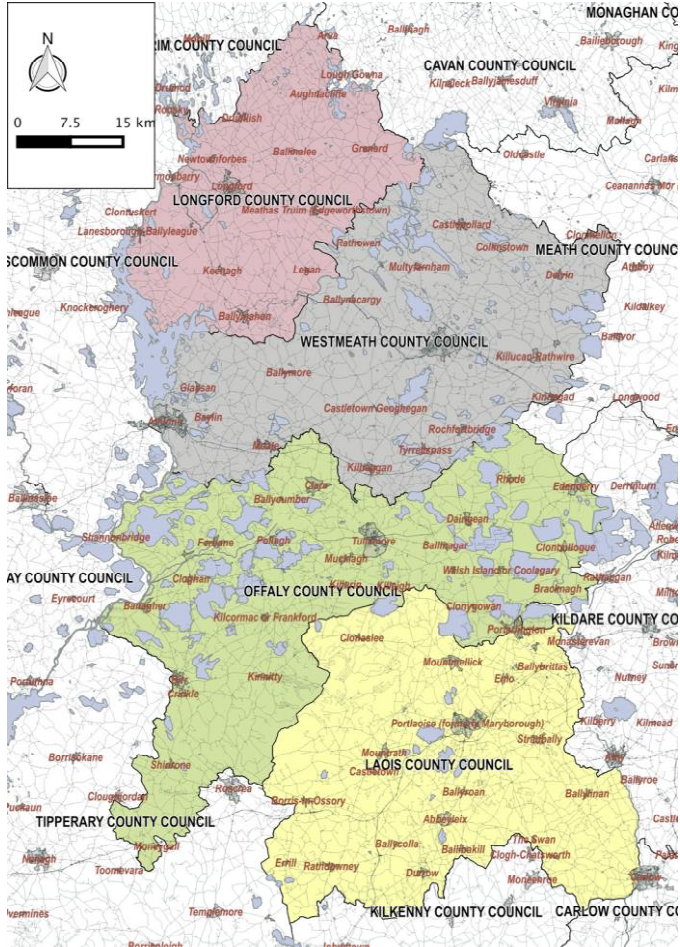
In 2016 Co. Longford was the second smallest county (measured by population) in the State at 40,873 (CSO Census of Population). The county was the fourth smallest of the 32 counties in area (1,091 sq km). In 2016, the county had a population density of 37.4 persons per sq km, compared to the state at 70 persons per sq km.

Co. Longford's population growth during the period 2002-2006 (10.6%) was stronger than that of the State at 8.2%. In the intercensal period 2011-2016, the population of the county grew by 4.8% compared to the State at 3.8% (slowest rate of growth in twenty years).

Quality road and rail networks that provide arterial connections to Dublin City, some 100 km distant, serve Co. Longford, placing it on the periphery of the commuting distance of the city. Belfast City is approximately 200 km distant.



## 4.2 Regional Setting



Map 2 – Midland Strategic Planning Area

Co. Longford is within the administrative area of the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA). In 2016, the population of the EMRA area was 2,328,517 (48.9% of the State population). Co. Longford is set within the NUTS III Midland Strategic Planning Area (SPA), comprising of counties Longford, Westmeath, Offaly and Laois. In 2016 the population of the Midland SPA was 292,301 (6.1% of the State population).

During the intercensal period 2006 - 2016 the population of the State increased by 11%, whilst the EMRA area increased by 15%, the Midland SPA increased by 16.1% and Co. Longford increased by 18.8%.

**Table 1 – Key Midland SPA Settlements (Population 2016)**

Co. Laois	Co. Longford	Co. Offaly	Co. Westmeath
Abbeyleix (1,770)	<b>Longford (10.008)</b>	Tullamore (14,607)	Tyrrellspass (483)
Rathdowney (1,271)	<b>Lanesborough-</b>	Kilcormac (955)	Rochfortbridge (1,473)
Portlaoise (22,050)	<b>Ballyleague (1,454)</b>	Ferbane (1,191)	Mullingar (20,928)
Portarlinton (8,368)	<b>Granard (816)</b>	Edenderry (7,359)	Moate (2,763)
Mountrath (1,774)	<b>Edgeworthstown (2,072)</b>	Daingean (1,077)	Kinnegad (2,745)
Mountmellick (4,777)	<b>Ballymahon (1.877)</b>	Clara (3,336)	Killucan-Rathwire (1,370)
Graigucullen <sup>2</sup> (4,157)		Birr (4,370)	Kilbeggan (1,288)
Durrow (835)			Clonmellon (664)
Stradbally (1,350)			Castlepollard (1,163)
			Athlone (21,349)

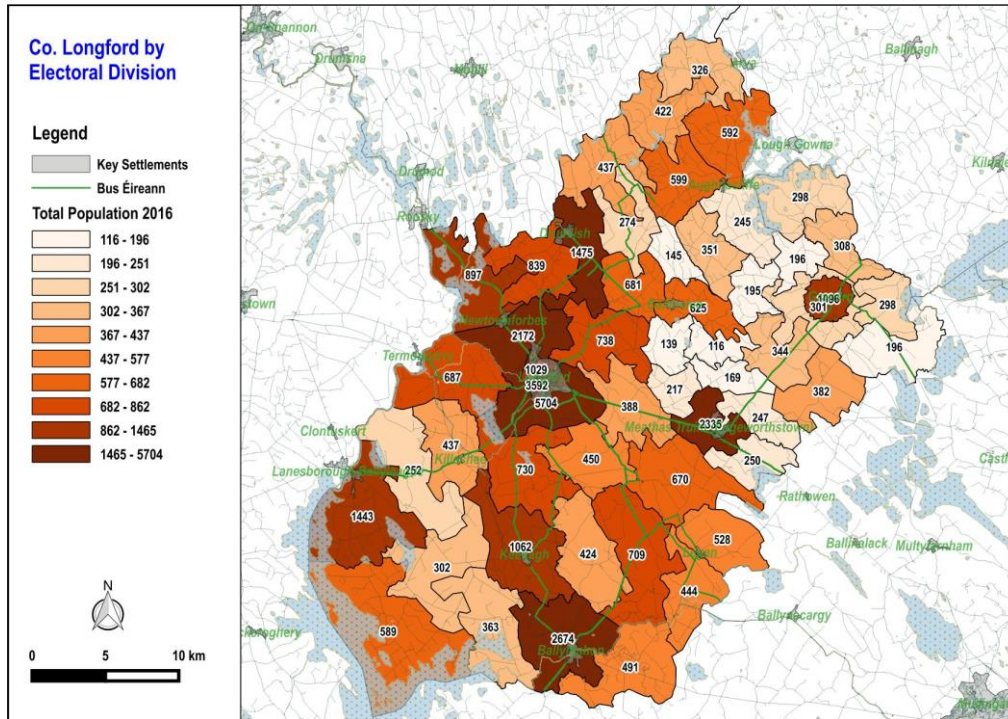
Source: EMRA Midland SPA Socio-Economic Evidence Baseline Report, November 2017

### 4.3 Longford County

County Longford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 (LECP) defines the county as being centrally and strategically located in the Midlands of Ireland providing ease of access to national and international markets making it an attractive location for inward investment.

<sup>2</sup> Graigcullen - Laois area only

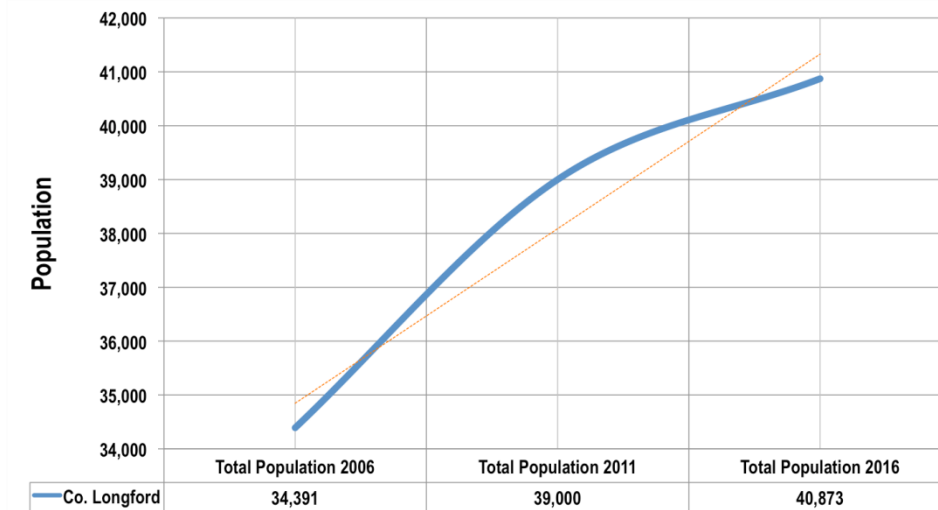
Map 3 – Co. Longford: Population by ED



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

It is a strategic transport hub located on two National Primary Routes; the N4 from Dublin to Sligo and the N5 from Dublin to Mayo. Secondary routes also cross the County; the N55 linking Athlone and Cavan into Northern Ireland, and the N63 linking Longford with Roscommon and Galway. The County is also serviced by the Dublin to Sligo Inter-City railway line with two stations; Longford Town and Edgeworthstown.

**Table 2 – County Population Trend 2006-2016**



Source: CSO Census of Population 2006, 2011, 2016

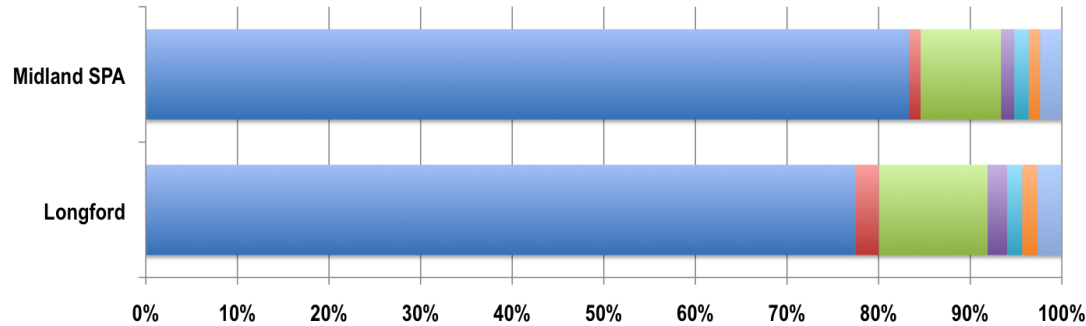
The population of Co. Longford grew by 18.8% over the intercensal period 2006-2016, compared to 11% across the State.

#### Ethnicity

Co. Longford had a relatively high proportion of *White Irish Traveller* population (2.5%) and *Other White* population (11.8%) in 2016.



Figure 1 – Co. Longford Ethnicity 2016



	Longford	Midland SPA
White Irish	31,489	241,799
White Irish Traveller	1,046	3,733
Other White	4,825	25,491
Black or Black Irish	869	4,214
Asian or Asian Irish	672	4,558
Other	675	3,616
Not stated	1,079	6,868

Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

#### 4.3.1 Natural Amenity

From a natural amenity perspective Co. Longford lies in the basin of the River Shannon and Lough Ree and has some of Ireland’s oldest and best-preserved peatlands. Other natural amenities include the Royal Canal, River Camlin, Lough Gowna, Newcastle and Derrycassin Forests.

#### 4.3.2 Economic Perspective

Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 identifies an economic goal to ‘*promote Longford as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism, while encouraging employment growth and economic activity*’.



The Plan recognises that facilitating industrial, commercial or business development requires a combined approach that takes account of a number of key aims, including: -

1. *Promotion of Co. Longford as a viable business location that is attractive and competitive for inward investment;*
2. *Facilitation of the continued economic growth of the County in appropriate areas and encourage the generation of employment and increased economic activity in a spatially balanced manner within a sustainable framework;*
3. *Ensuring a high quality environment, including the provision of hard and soft infrastructural facilities in order to attract inward investment thus increasing employment opportunities, whilst at the same time enhancing the attractiveness of the area for the labour force to locate or remain within the County;*
4. *Facilitating the development of critical mass in the industrial sector, promoting synergistic relationships between facilities and the establishment of spin-off developments, with a view towards creating an industrial centre of excellence in the north midlands;*
5. *Facilitating the reuse of disused industrial buildings for appropriate, alternative uses;*
6. *Promoting sustainability and the use of ‘clean technology’ in existing and proposed industrial developments, including the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and the promotion of developments located within walking and cycling proximity of larger residential areas;*
7. *Identifying key assets of the County and facilitate their appropriate and sympathetic development to create employment opportunities in County Longford; and*
8. *Promotion of the agricultural food sector with a view to using indigenous resources to create new enterprise and employment opportunities.*

### 4.3.3 Affluence and Deprivation

In 2016, Co. Longford returned a Pobal HP relative disadvantage score of -6.01 (Marginally Below Average). In 2016 Longford No 1 Urban Electoral Division was the most disadvantaged in Co. Longford with a Pobal HP Deprivation Index score of -15.82 (classified as *Disadvantaged*).

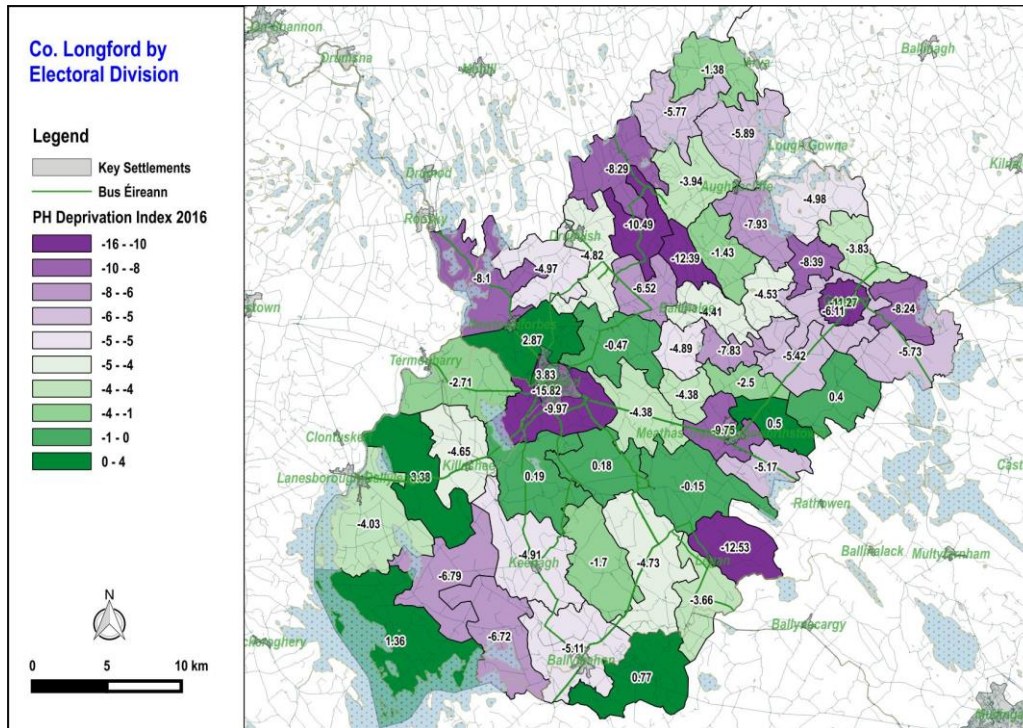
**Table 3 – Deprivation Score >-10 by ED**

ED Name	Total Population 2006	Total Population 2011	Total Population 2016	Deprivation Score 2006	Deprivation Score 2011	Deprivation Score 2016
<b>Longford No. 1 Urban</b>	3,133	3,163	3,592	-16.56	-14.71	-15.82
<b>Foxhall</b>	510	525	528	-15.72	-13.37	-12.53
<b>Lislea</b>	152	139	145	-6.56	-12.63	-12.39

<b>Granard Urban</b>	933	1,021	1,096	-8.45	-8.98	-11.27
<b>Killoe</b>	302	293	274	-6.57	-5.21	-10.49

Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

Map 4 - Co. Longford: Deprivation Index by ED



Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

#### 4.4 Longford Town

Longford town is the second largest town on the N4 National primary route between Dublin and Sligo. It is also the axis for the convergence of the N4 and the N5 National primary routes, between Dublin and Counties Mayo and Roscommon.



Longford town is approximately 91 km from Sligo and 122 km from Dublin. Over recent years improvement in the road network has resulted in reduced travel times to the Greater Dublin area and beyond.

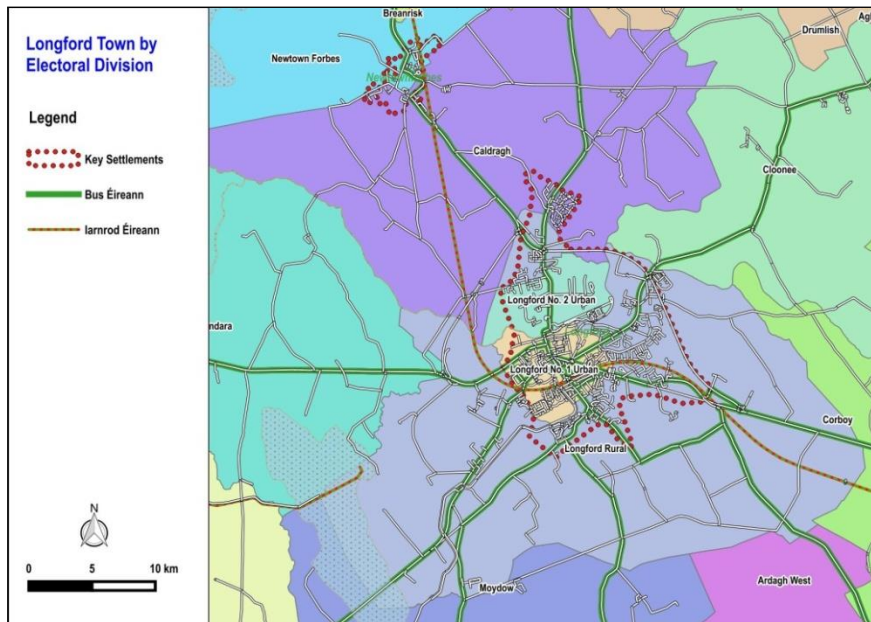
Longford lies on the Dublin-Sligo line of the Iarnród Éireann rail network, and is served by Sligo-Dublin intercity services. The town has a regular, well-utilised commuter service to Dublin. Journeys to the capital by rail generally take about an hour and three quarters. There are a large number of bus services to Dublin and inside the county locally provided by both the State and private bus companies.

Longford Town is the County Administrative headquarters of Longford County Council and the commercial, retail, service and industrial centre of the County.

#### 4.4.1 CSO Census Town

The CSO Census Town of Longford is defined as follows.

**Map 5 – Longford Census Town by ED 2016**



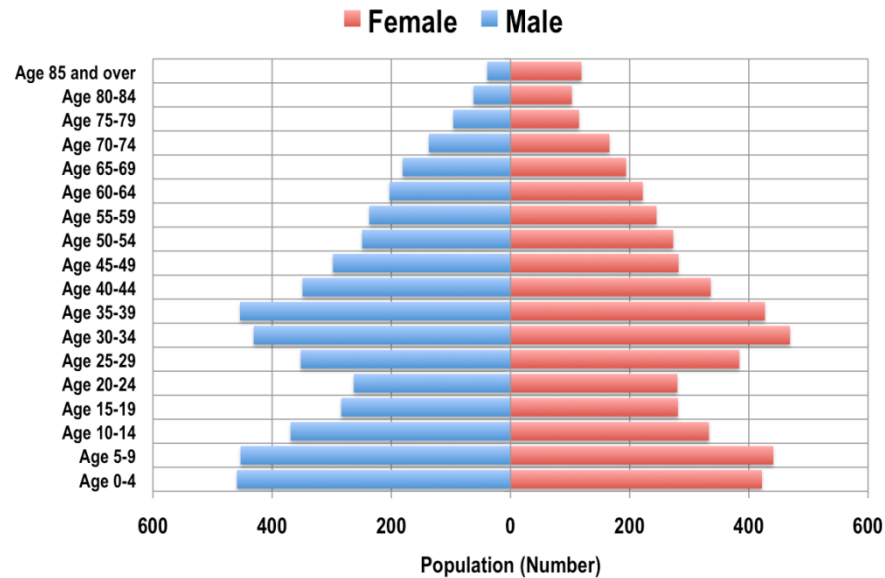
Source: CSO Census of Population 2016



### 4.4.2 Demography

In 2016 Longford Town had a population of 10,008, which represented a 4% increase on the 2011 census figures. It is the largest town in the county by a significant margin, with approximately 25% of the total population of the County residing in the town.

Figure 2 - Longford Town Population Pyramid 2016



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

From the above it can be seen that Longford Town has a reduced number of both males and females in the age cohort 15-24 years of age (11.07% total population). This is typical of a provincial town without third-level education facilities.

The town has a significant population cohort of 30-39 years of age (17.8% total population). This is the prime family-building age range, and drives the 0-9 year old age cohort (17.74% total population).



### **Ethnicity**

The largest percentage increase in the *White Traveller* community was recorded in Longford in 2016 (40.8%). Longford also had the highest absolute increase in *White Traveller* numbers of any county, increasing by 303. Longford also had the highest number of Traveller community members per head of population, with 25.7 *White Traveller* for every thousand people.

Longford Town also had a high number of non-Irish nationals resident within the town, with the 2016 census showing that approximately 10% of the population are of Polish nationality and approximately 3,000 of the 10,008 total originating from countries outside Ireland. One of the secondary schools within the town has 40 different nationalities represented among its students.

Census 2016 identified that Longford has the second highest level of non-Irish residents per head of population after Dublin.

### **4.4.3 Unemployment**

Longford Town has experienced high levels of unemployment. Unemployment levels increased significantly from 18% in 2006 to 35% in 2011, giving it the largest proportion of unemployment for any of the main towns in the County. This had decreased to almost 20% in 2016 but this remained the highest unemployment rate nationally, significantly above the national rate of 12.9%.

### **Employment Losses**

In addition to suffering high employment losses in the construction sector, the closure of the Connolly Army Barracks in 2009 resulted in the loss of 200 military jobs from Longford.

In more recent times the closure of the Cameron Ireland, an IDA precision engineering plant, resulted in the loss of 230 jobs, followed in May 2017 with the closure of another Enterprise Ireland backed engineering plant and the loss of 24 jobs. These job losses have had a significant impact on the economy of Longford Town. This has led to a reduction in the amount of income available to be spent in the town, resulting in the closure of a number of retail units within the town, particularly along Lower Main Street, which leads to Connolly Barracks.

### **Live Register**

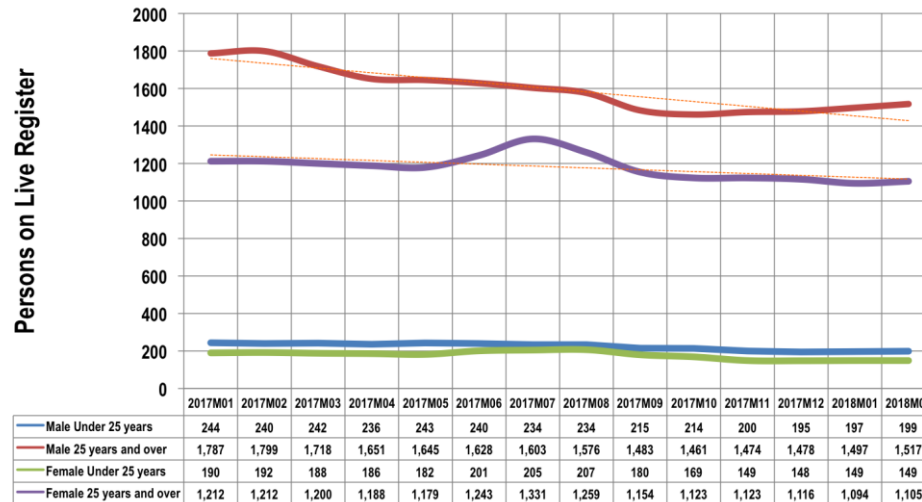
The Live Register is compiled from returns made directly to the CSO by each of the local offices of the Department of Social Protection. It is specifically not designed to measure unemployment, however, it provides an invaluable short-term trend indicator of unemployment.

Included on the Live Register are the following: -

- All those on Jobseekers Benefit (JB) - excluding systematic short-time workers;
- All those on Jobseekers Allowance (JA) - excluding smallholders/farm assists and self-employed persons;
- Part-time workers (those who work up to 3 days per week), seasonal and casual workers entitled to Jobseekers Allowance or Benefit; *and*

- Those signing on for 'PRSI credits' but receiving no payment.

Figure 3 – Longford Town Live Register



Source: CSO StatBank Live Register / LRM07 / Select from table LRM07

During the course of 2017 the Longford Town Live Register showed a relatively consistent decline in the number of males aged over 25 signing on, whilst the number of females declined at a slower rate, and also displayed a significant seasonal increase during the months of June, July and August.

The numbers of young people under 25 years of age signing on the Live Register remained virtually constant throughout the period, tracking the national characteristic for this age cohort of having difficulty in accessing employment opportunities.

### Employment

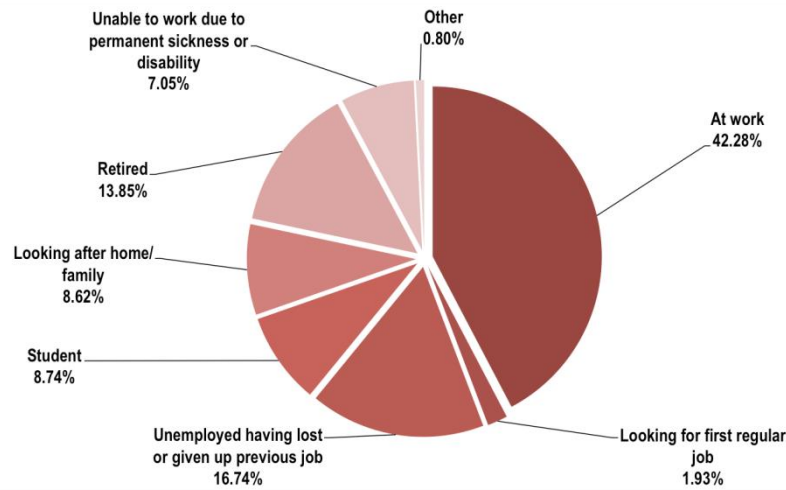
In 2016 there were 3,120 males and 3,199 females of working age<sup>3</sup> living in Longford Town, of these 1,687 males and 1,497 females were at work. 1,607 persons from Longford Town were employed in the town, equating to 25% of the town's labour force. The remaining c.700 out-commute to locations both within and outside of the

<sup>3</sup> Working Age: 15-65 years of age.



County. Of all persons working in Longford Town (residents and in-commuters), 35% are defined as non-manual socio-economic groups, which is significantly greater than all other socio-economic groups.

**Figure 4 - Population Aged 15 years+ by Economic Status**



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

Large employers within Longford Town include *Panelto Foods*, *Abbott Ireland Diagnostics*, and *Finesse Medical* as well as government organisations, including the Local Authority, the Prison Service, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Health Service Executive.

### Commercial Vacancy Rate

The Geoview Commercial Vacancy Rates Report Q2 2017 noted that there was a national average commercial vacancy rate of 13.5%. However, Longford Town has a significantly higher vacancy rate at 21.3%, which represents a 0.8% increase on Q2 2016. According to the report, there were 636 occupied units in Longford Town, with 42.3% in the service industry and 33.5% in the distribution sector, which is significantly above the national average of 24.3%.

### Education

Longford Town is characterised by a low level of educational attainment, in large part due to the lack of opportunities available to graduates in the town and vicinity. This means that there is a corresponding low level of ages represented in the graduate cohort.

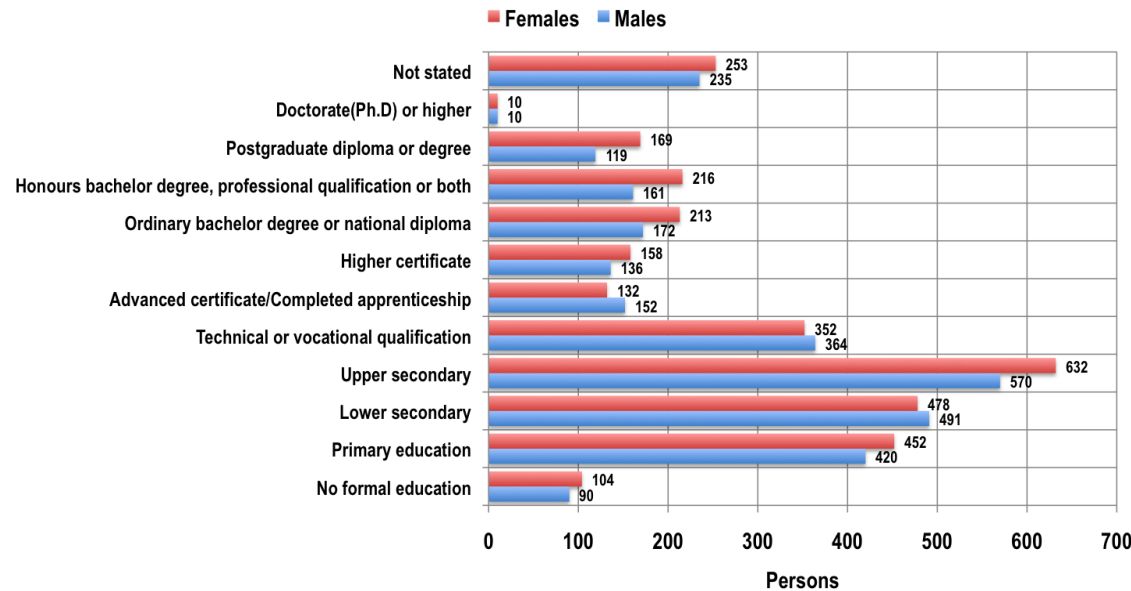
There are four primary schools within the town and three second level schools.



There is no Third Level College within the town. However, there are further education opportunities through the Longford College of Further Education.

The IDA and industry experts have identified that the lack of Third Level education availability within the County has led to the inability of the County to attract significant investment. It also has the effect of lack of retention of young people within the County, as they travel to attain an education and do not see the opportunities available to them to return to the county.

**Figure 5 – Longford Town Educational Attainment 2016**



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

### DEIS Primary Schools

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion is the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years).

DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme.



Primary and post-primary schools participating in DEIS receive significant additional supports and resources including additional staffing to assist them in achieving the aims of the initiative. The level of additional supports and resources allocated to schools participating in DEIS varies according to the level of disadvantage in the school community.

Where the level of disadvantage is greatest, primary schools are classified as participating in Band 1 of DEIS. The remaining participating primary schools are classified as participating in Band 2 of DEIS.

**Table 4 – Longford Town DEIS Schools**

DEIS Band 1 Urban Primary Schools				
DES Number	Roll	Category	School Name	School Address
00856M		Urban	Scoil Naomh Micheal	St. Mel’s Road, Longford
18178R		Urban	St Joseph’s Convent	Dublin Road, Longford
DEIS Post Primary Schools				
717300		Post Primary	Templemichael College	Templemichael, Longford

Source: Department of Education and Skills

### Accessibility

Longford Town’s location is a key strength, both within the context of the County and in terms of its infrastructural linkages beyond the County.

Strategically located within the national transportation network, Longford Town forms an important interchange on the east-west road network, giving excellent quality access to the town from the immediate hinterland and adjoining regions. Longford is served by the N4 and is located at the junction of the N4/N5.

Accessibility within the town itself has been improved with the N5 Longford Bypass. The easing of congestion has been very beneficial to the town centre and the retailers who operate within it.

The provision of car parking within the town is good, with on street parking and a number of both public and private car parks located at various locations in and around the town centre and periphery.

### Retail Offering

The retail offering within Longford Town appears to be reasonably healthy, particularly in the area of convenience retailing.



Longford Town is not well represented in relation to the international and multiple retailers. However, there are a number of small boutiques which have developed over the years and which offer a retail experience that encourage many people to return to visit these premises.

The town is well represented with large convenience retailers, with the presence of *Dunnes Stores, Tesco, SuperValu, Lidl* and *Aldi* in the town core. There is not a large comparison offering within the town.

Longford is approximately 1 hour drive from many retail parks in Dublin where a myriad of international retailers are available.

### **Public Amenity**

The general quality of the public realm and streetscape within the town centre is good, although the trend toward increased vacancy rates does raise the possibility of dereliction becoming an issue in some areas.

The ‘*Albert Reynolds Peace Park*’ is a large urban park that is highly frequented. It contains a public swimming pool and gym, as well as basketball courts, soccer pitch and children’s play area. The area is also highly used by walkers and runners. The River Camlin runs along the edge of the Park, providing an important change to the urban habitat but also providing space for fishing. Traditionally, through the urban structure of the town, the Park has not been very well connected to the Town Centre. However, Longford County Council recently constructed a pedestrian bridge to the rear of the civic buildings improving the connection with the town centre and the overall permeability of this area of the town.

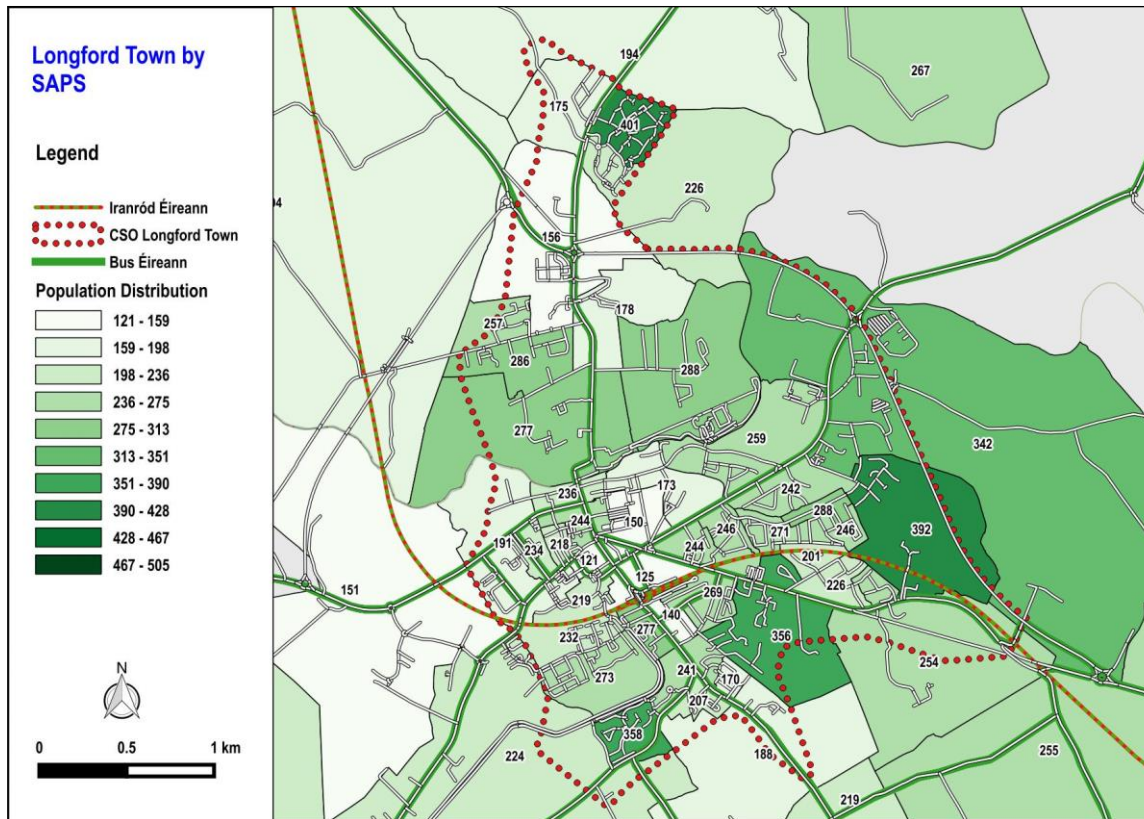
### **4.5 Longford Town by SAPS**

The following section considers the demography of Longford Town by reference to the CSO Census of Population 2016 Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS). Small Areas are areas of population generally comprising between 80 and 120 dwellings, allowing analysis at a resolution that is some fifteen times greater than that offered at Electoral Division level.

Longford Town boundary is contained within the EDs of Caldragh (part), Longford No. 1 Urban, Longford No. 2 Urban and Longford Rural (part).

#### 4.5.1 Population Distribution and Change

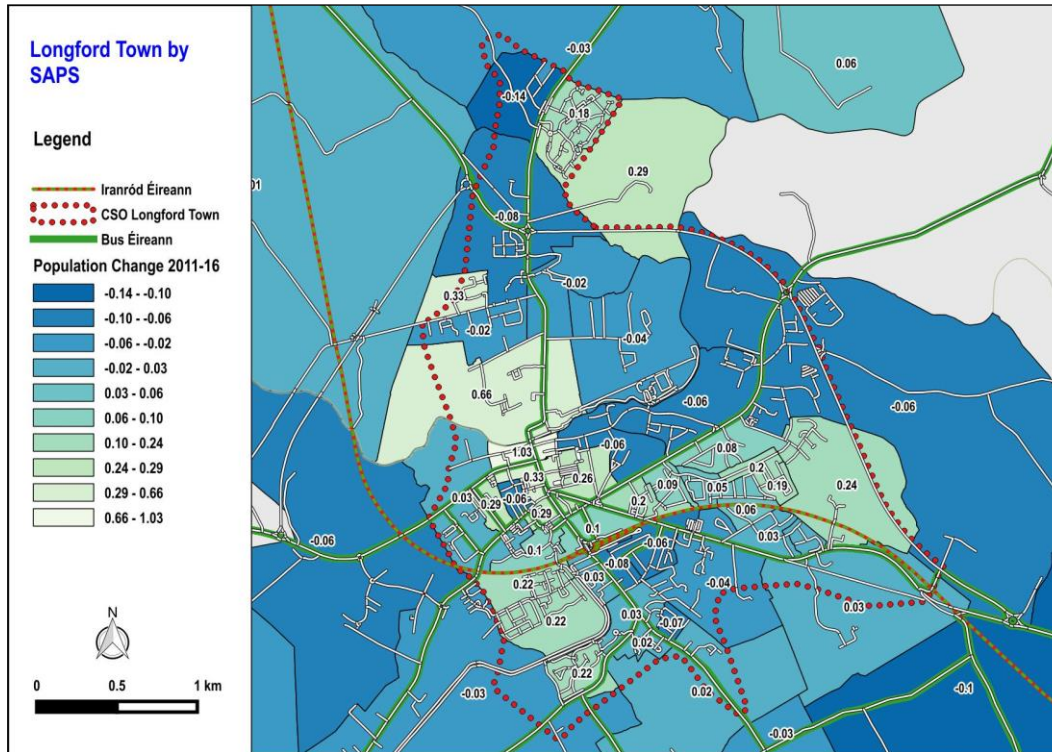
Map 6 – Population Distribution by SAPS 2016



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

The distribution of population within Longford Town, above, illustrates the relative low levels of population within the town core compared to that in the residential areas surrounding the town.

Map 7 - Population Change by SAPS 2016



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

Consistent with the distribution of population within Longford Town the greatest proportional changes in population between 2011 and 2016 occurred in the residential suburbs of the town.

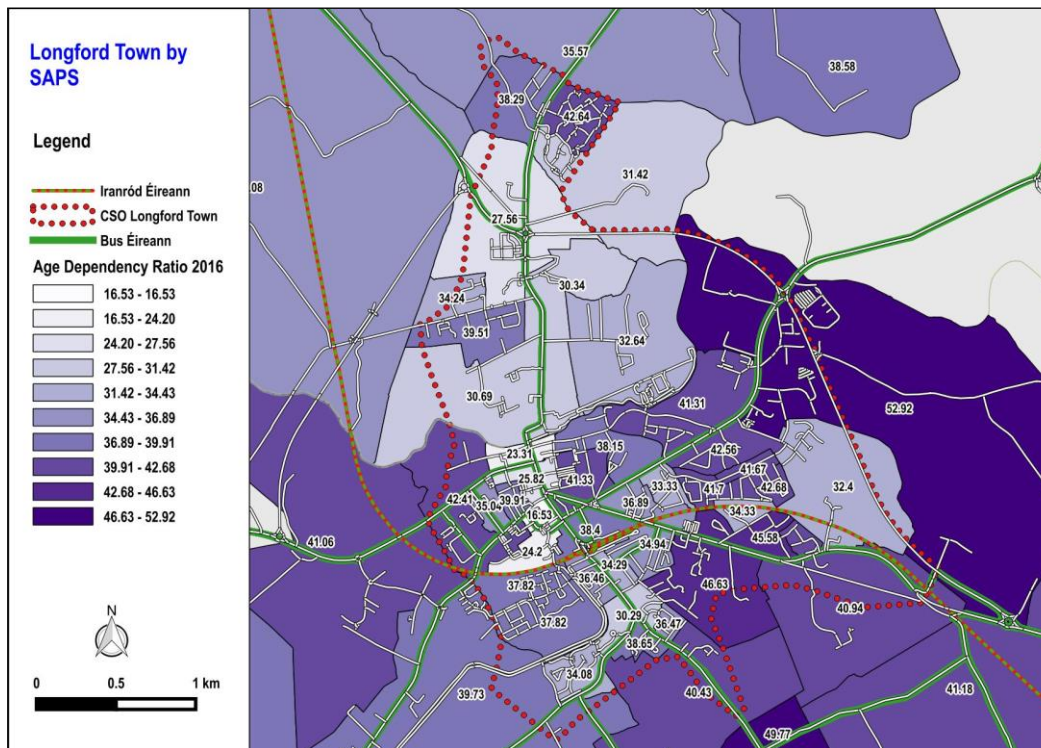
#### 4.5.2 Age Dependency Ratio

Dependents are defined by the CSO as people outside the normal working age of 15-64. Dependency ratios are used to give a useful indication of the age structure of a population with young (0-14) and old (65+) shown as a percentage of the population of working age (15-64).

The total age dependency ratio for the State in 2016 was 52.6 (males) and 52.9 (females). The total age dependency ratio for Co. Longford in 2016 was 60.0 (males) and 60.1 (females).

The age dependency ratio is important because it shows the ratio of economically inactive compared to economically active. The economically active will pay much more income tax, corporation tax, and, to a lesser extent, more sales and VAT taxes. The economically inactive under 16 and over 65 also tend to be bigger recipients of government spending including education, pensions and healthcare.

**Map 8 – Age Dependency Ratio 2016**



Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)



### 4.5.3 Educational Attainment

#### Low Educational Attainment

The lack of educational attainment is closely linked to the issue of poverty. A substantial volume of research indicates that individuals from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and communities are more likely to underachieve in the education system than their peers from higher income backgrounds.

There has been a continuous improvement in the level of education amongst the adult population over the past 25 years throughout Ireland. In 1991, 36.7 percent of the adult population in Ireland had primary education only. This dropped to half that level (18.9 percent) in 2006 and even further to 16.0 percent in 2011. Between 2006 and 2011 the adult population with primary education only decreased by 2.9 percentage points.

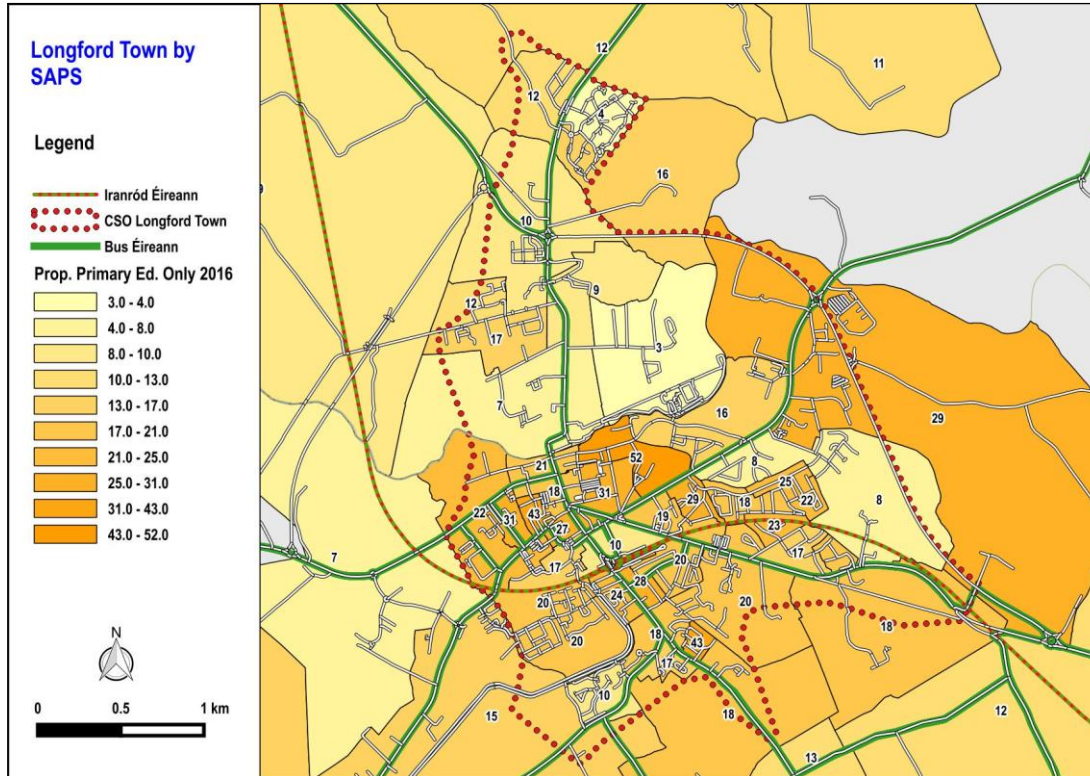
The highest proportion of population with only primary education for Longford town in 2016 was recorded in a SAP area within the Longford No. 1 Urban ED at 52.0 percent. This had risen from 45.8 percent in 2006.

**Table 5 – Prop. Population Primary Education Only >30**

Small Area ID	With ED	Proportion with Primary Education Only 2006	Proportion with Primary Education Only 2011	Proportion with Primary Education Only 2016
137043001	Longford No. 1 Urban	45.8	48.4	52.0
137043005	Longford No. 1 Urban	48.9	48.8	43.0
137045004	Longford Rural	53.3	51.8	43.0
137043002	Longford No. 1 Urban	47.0	39.8	31.0
137043009	Longford No. 1 Urban	32.2	31.6	31.0

Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

Map 9 – Low Educational Attainment Distribution



Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

### Third-Level Education

The reverse applies with regard to third-level education, which has more than doubled over the past 25 years. In 1991, 13.0 percent of the national adult population had completed third-level education. This grew to 30.5 percent in 2006, but increased by only another 0.1 percentage point to 30.6 percent in 2011.





A Small Area of Population within the ED of Caldragh returned a percentage of population with third-level education at 53.6. This was the highest rate in area in 2016, and represented an increase from 46.4 percent in 2006.

**Table 6 – Proportion with Third Level Education >43**

Small Area ID	With ED	Proportion with third education 2006	Proportion with third education 2011	Proportion with third education 2016
137013009	Caldragh	46.4	52.7	53.6
137043014	Longford Urban No. 1	35.2	29.7	51.8
137044002	Longford Urban No. 2	48.8	42.9	50.8
137044001/137044003	Longford Urban No. 2	37.2	41.6	45.5
137013008	Caldragh	49.5	48.3	44.0
137013005	Caldragh	32.7	42.1	43.6

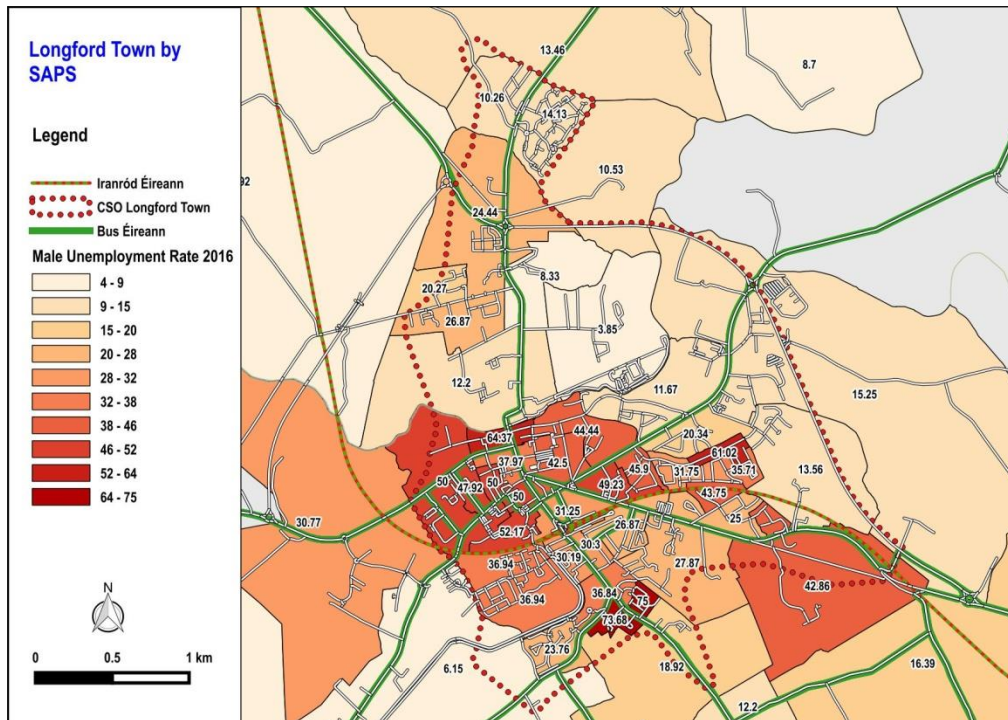
Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)



Female unemployment rates have tended to be slightly below male unemployment rates, but did not fall at the same pace during the time of the economic boom due to the increasing female labour force participation (i.e. reflecting the trend of increased female participation in the labour force with more women registering their unemployed status). The increase in the unemployment rates in the intercensal period 2006- 2011 were much more pronounced with regard to male unemployment, which rose by a factor of 2.5 compared to a nearly two-fold increase for female unemployment.

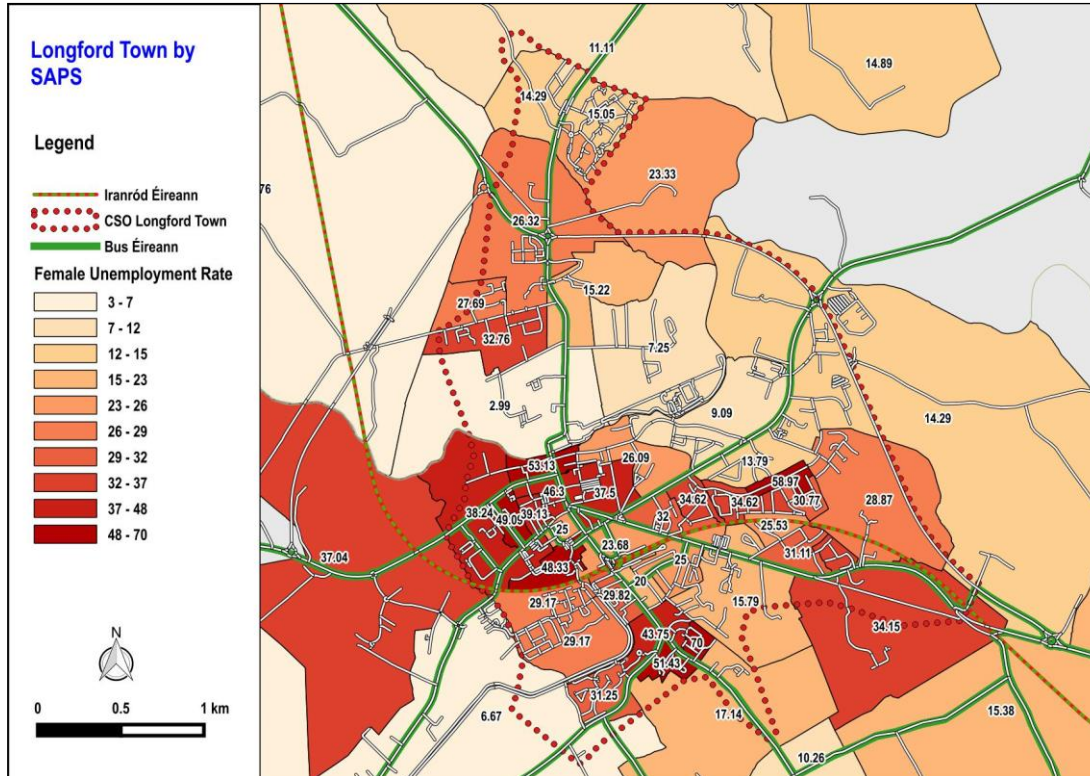
In 2016, the Small Area of Population with the highest Male Unemployment Rate was 137045004, located within the Longford Rural ED, with a rate of 75 percent. Small Area of Population 137045004, within the Longford Rural ED returned a Female Unemployment Rate of 70 percent in 2016.

**Map 11 – Male Unemployment Rate 2016**



Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

Map 12 – Female Unemployment Rate 2016

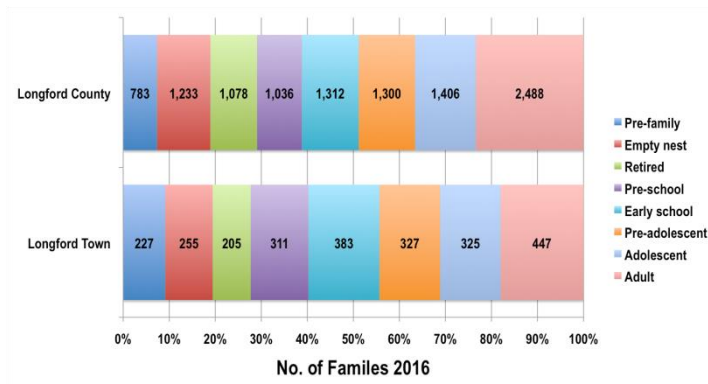


Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

#### 4.5.5 Housing and Households

In 2016 Longford Town contained 3,778 households, including 1,116 one-person households, 488 married couple households, and 131 cohabiting couple households. There were 852 married couple households with children and 214 cohabiting couple households with children. There were 513 lone parent households with children.

**Figure 6 – Longford Town by Family Cycle**



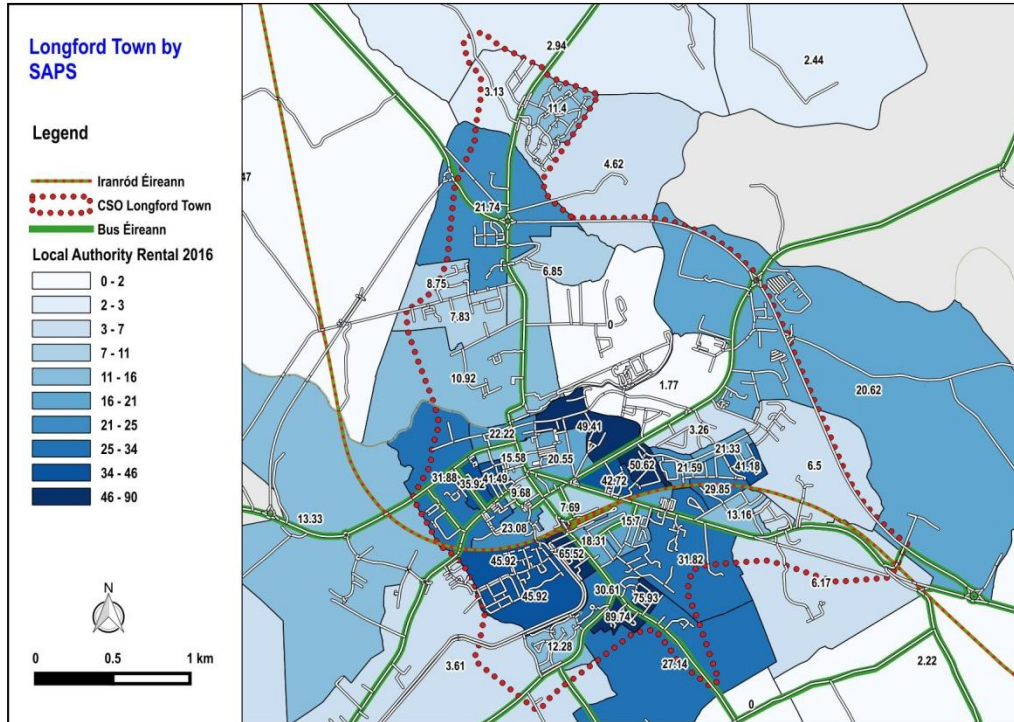
Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

From the above it can be seen that Longford town had a lower proportion of retired families than was the case in the county. It also has considerably higher proportions of pre-school and early school family households than the county.

#### House Ownership

In 2016, 30.4 percent of households in Longford Town were living in properties that were rented from a private landlord (1,148), with a further 24% renting from the Local Authority. Only 13.5% of households were living in mortgaged property.

Map 13 – Local Authority Rental

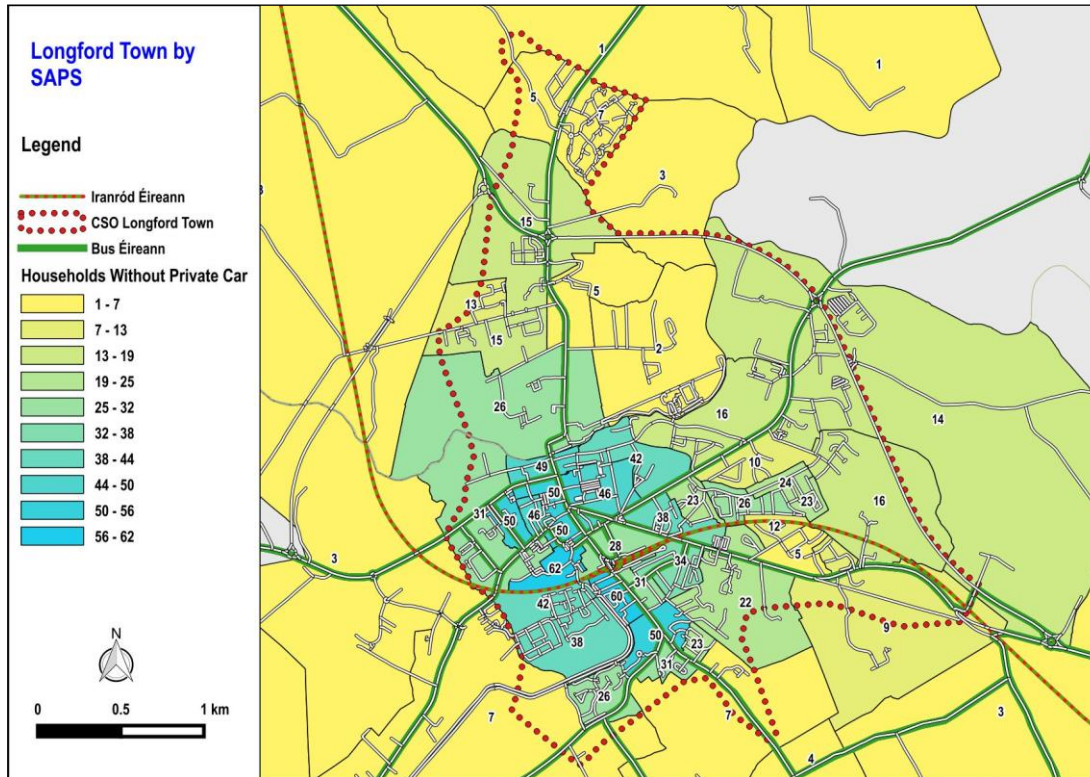


Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

#### 4.5.6 Private Transport

In 2016, 48.57% (1,835) households had access to a single private vehicle; whilst 29.78% (1,125) of households had no private motor vehicle.

Map 14 – Households Without A Private Car

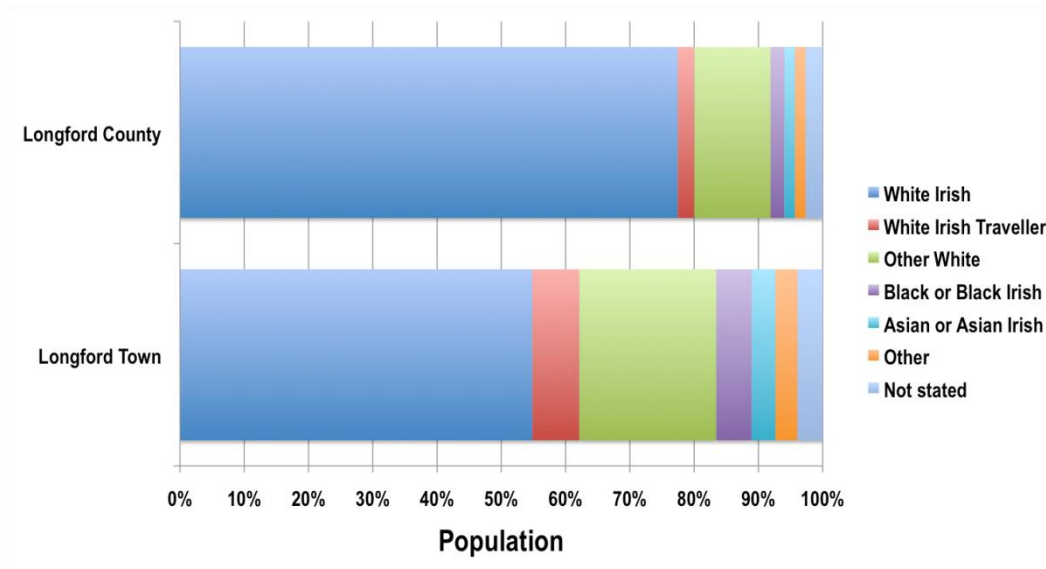


Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

#### 4.5.7 Ethnicity

In 2016 Longford town had greater ethnic diversity than was the case in Longford County.

Figure 7 – Longford Town Ethnic Diversity

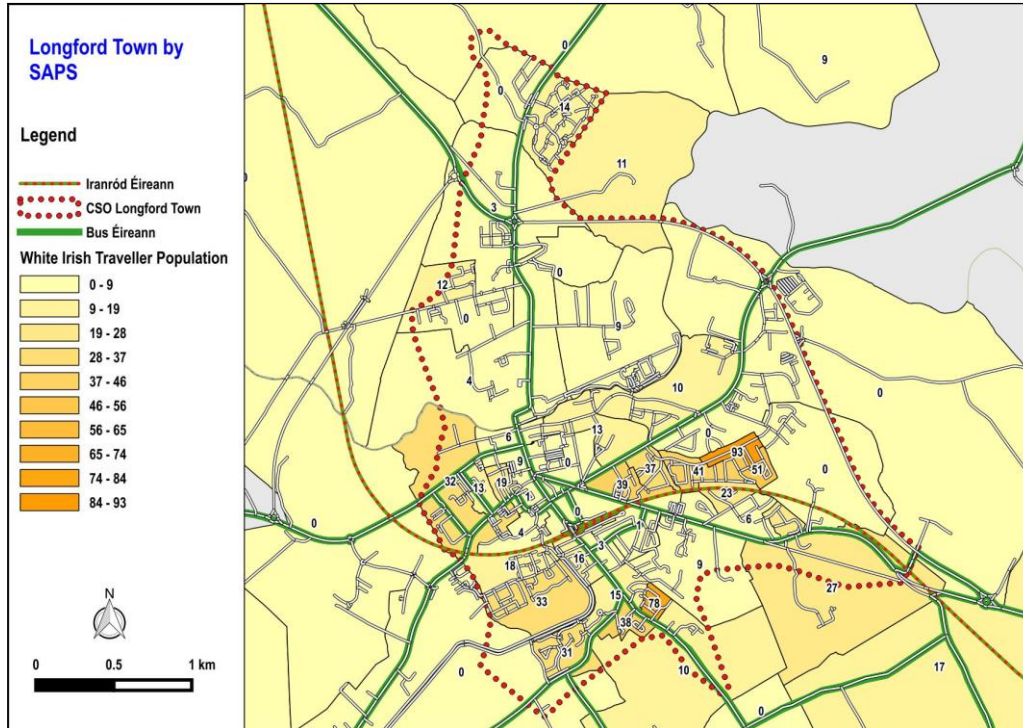


Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

In 2016 only 54.8% of the population of Longford town were *White Irish*, compared to 77.5% in the county. There were 4.75% more *White Irish Travellers*, 9.43% *Other White*, and 3.37% *Black or Black Irish* recorded in Longford town than was the case in the county.



Map 15 – White Irish Traveller Population 2016



Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

Table 7 – Irish Travellers Resident in Co. Longford

	2011	2016	Actual Change 2011-2016	% Change 2011-2016
Permanent private	685	980	295	43.07
Temporary private	25	23	-2	-8.00

Not stated	33	35	2	6.06
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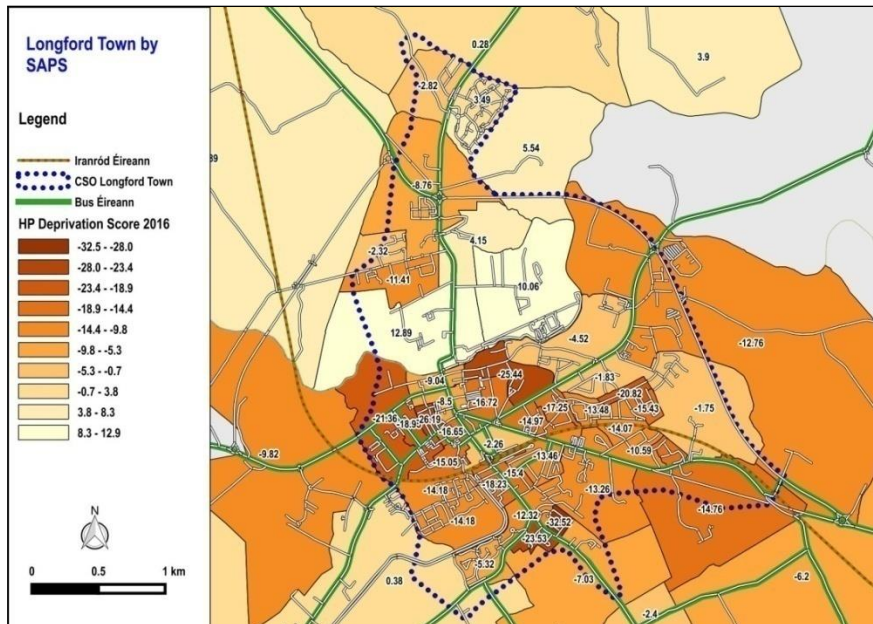
Source: CSO StatBank / Summary Results Part 1 / EY032 / Select from table EY032

#### 4.5.8 Affluence and Deprivation

At ED level in 2016, Co. Longford returned a Pobal HP relative disadvantage score of -6.01 (Marginally Below Average). In 2016 Longford No 1 Urban Electoral Division was the most disadvantaged in Co. Longford with a Pobal HP Deprivation Index score of -15.82 (classified as *Disadvantaged*).

At SAPS level in 2016 170 people were living in an *Extremely Disadvantaged* SAPS area (1370450004) within Longford Rural ED. A further 1,077 people were living in Very Disadvantaged SAPS areas, mainly located in Longford No. Urban ED.

Table 8 – Most Disadvantage SAPS 2016



Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016 - Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)



#### 4.6 Longford Town Core

The Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan (September 2016) defines Longford Regeneration Zone to be contained within a 400m radius of Centenary Square, coupled with concentric 600m, 800m and 1km buffer zones.

Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan notes that: *Longford Town Core can be characterised as a compact and walkable centre with a distinct layout, built heritage and strong identity. The industrial, administrative, transportation and military history of the town is reflected in this identity through the Camlin River, Royal Canal, Connolly Barracks and St. Mels College and Cathedral. The town retains these functions and acts as a service and administrative centre for its wider hinterland. This plan aims to build in these strengths for maximum social, environmental and economic benefit.*

*The central business area of the town is the driver of development for the town itself and its broader hinterland. This plan aims to ensure that development and use categories are appropriately located within the Town Centre and its environs to promote sustainable travel patterns and maximize benefit from infrastructural investment, while protecting and enhancing quality of life.*

*The interplay between the built environment of the town, the services and functions that it provides, the accessibility of these services and function and the attractiveness of their setting all contribute to the quality of life associated with an area.*

*The Ignite survey carried out on behalf of the Heritage Council (April 2015) indicated that those living in Longford town considered it to have quite a high overall quality of life, however, other research (Orla Murphy, 2011) indicates that the proportion of those actually residing within the town centre is quite low.*

*This figure would appear to have decreased further following this research, resulting in a significant loss of services, functions and business premises within the main streets of the town creating high profile vacancies that are challenging to address and a cycle from which it is difficult to emerge.*

*Vacancy and dereliction has taken its toll on the built environment, particular in the centre of the Town, with a number of high profile instances along Ballymahon Street and Main Street that require urgent attention.*

*The Local Area Plan proposes a holistic approach to these issues through an overall quality of Life Strategy that aims to address strategic sites within the character areas outlined above to act as catalysts for economic, social and physical enhancement of the Town and its environs over the plan period, through the application of specific policy outlined in the following sections.*

*The enhancement of Quality of Life is not only relevant to those who reside within the town but is also essential for the economic development of Longford and its wider functional area. Closely linked to economic development, these areas will be developed in conjunction with other strategies such as the Longford Tourism Strategy and the Midlands Action Plan for Jobs and should be read in conjunction with the Tourism Section at Chapter 4.5 of the County Development Plan.*



### 4.6.1 Town Core Activity Assessment

#### Footfall

A footfall survey was undertaken in four key locations across the retail core and including the former Connolly Barracks site. The survey was undertaken on the consecutive Friday and Saturday of 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Sample counts were taken over a six-hour period, between the hours of 10.00am to 5.00pm, with the results extrapolated to provide estimated daily, weekly and monthly flow.

At each count point location, all pedestrians passing in either direction were enumerated, with the exception of all children under the approximate age of eight, and those considered to be generally economically inactive, such as services personnel, shop staff and delivery personnel.

The survey measures the density of people at the enumeration points at a particular time, and compares the same areas on different days/times. The survey was designed to produce an accuracy of +/- 5% at each of the enumeration locations.

Map 16 – Proposed Footfall Enumeration Points





The enumeration points are located within the 400m core regeneration zone centred on Centenary Square, as identified in the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016- 2022. From the data received, it is noted that main pedestrian traffic flows on Main Street are relatively well balanced with the exception of the flow from and towards the Barracks, which has a relatively low count. It was also found that Friday was the busier day at the Barracks, and by a wide margin, suggesting that employees account for a significant proportion of the added number on that day.

### Vehicular Traffic

Information from Longford County Council concerning the use of town centre car parks derived from the returns from the ticket machines and the car park capacities throughout the day has been used. The turnover of vehicles in and out of the car parks provides information about dwell time, and also which car parks are being used more than others.

### TII Traffic Counters

The following indicates the traffic count data from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) TMU N04 110.0 W located on the N4 Between Dublin Road and Granard Road Roundabouts, Longford Bypass.

**Table 9 – Average Daily Flow: TMU N04 110.0 W**

Indicator	Vehicles
07-19 hours	7,002
06-22 hours	8,342
06-24 hours	8,586
00-24 hours	8,869
<b>am Peak</b>	11:00
Peak Volume	428
<b>pm Peak</b>	15:00
Peak Volume	1,031

Source: TII

**Table 10 – Summary Annual Flows: TMU N04 110.0 W**

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014



	Annual	Average	Daily					
<b>Annual Traffic</b>				11,291	12,126	11,657	11,092	10,531
<b>% HGV</b>				9.5%	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%	8.3%
<b>Coverage</b>				23.2%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%

Source: TII



## 5 Key Stakeholders

### 5.1 ULG: Urban Actors

The Longford ULG was established within the objective of engaging with the principal stakeholders and interest groups to identify local needs, frame problems, agree policy priorities and design concrete solutions for the benefit of the people of Longford town. Thus, the ULG encompasses the municipal, business interests and community sectors to develop a collaborative approach to identifying the needs and potential synergies between the former Connolly Barracks and Longford Town in general. The representatives on the ULG include members of the executive of the municipality, as well as a number of Elected Public Representatives. There are also representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the education sector, arts and heritage interests, youth, tourism and the military.

It was found that the desire to join the MAPS ULG was strong. Interest in the potential to use the former military barracks as an engine for municipal development was high, particularly as it was widely regarded as an opportunity to turn around the fortunes of their town and bring funding into the town.

Sector	Club/Organisation	No. of Members
<b>Local Government</b>	Elected Members	5
<b>Community</b>	Longford Historical Society Military Creative media	3
<b>Arts &amp; Heritage</b>	Cruthu Heritage Officer Archivist	3
<b>Education</b>	Longford and Westmeath Education Training Board	1
<b>Business</b>	Legal Chamber of Commerce	2
<b>Tourism</b>	Tourism Officer	1
<b>Longford County Council</b>	Director of Services, Planning and Regeneration Head of Finance, Chair of Municipal District SEO, Planning and Regeneration	3



The ULG at work



### Regional Level

The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government is the department responsible for overseeing the sustainable and efficient delivery of well-planned homes, effective local government and vibrant inclusive communities. They are also the overseeing authority in relation to the URBACT Programme within Ireland.

The North Western Regional Assembly is the authority responsible for the Operational Programme that is relevant in terms of any potential ERDF funding. Longford is located within the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area and will work with the Regional Assembly in relation to the implementation of the IAP.

### Town Level

At Town level, there are many different urban actors. However, there does not tend to be very good engagement with many of the different groups, or with the groups and the municipality.







There are many different nationalities and ethnic groups living within the town, who currently do not integrate with one another or with the people of Longford. A number of these new communities have their own organisations.

The business people are represented by the Chamber of Commerce who are very active in the promotion of the town from a business perspective. However, they do not represent all businesses within the town.

Longford Community Resources CLG is the integrated local development partnership company for County Longford. The core purpose of the company is to promote rural development and tackle social exclusion and this is done through various programmes. They work very closely with the residents and particularly the young people in disadvantaged areas of the town.

The *Attic Youth Cafe* is also an important organisation within the town, which is a purpose built youth centre which encapsulates the needs of young people aged 10-18 years through a range of programs, activities and events which are organised by dedicated, trained and committed volunteers.

Longford is historically steeped in and known for its contribution to various cultural activities, particularly in music and handcrafted skills. There are many groups which are involved in arts, seeing it as an important mechanism in the social regeneration of Longford. These include *Engage Longford*, an artist's led organisation that provides a platform to promote Longford as a hub for visual art, *Brushstrokes*, a painting group formed in 1995 and currently with about 30 members and *Creative Ardagh*, a creativity hub, *Creative Longford* formed by a group of local crafters, a not for profit support network of crafts people in Longford, *Backstage Theatre and Centre for the Arts* is a purpose-built state-of-the-art theatre presenting a high quality, diverse and innovative programme of arts activities, *Outtake Film Group*, a group to foster and grow film making in the Midlands with recording studio and *Cruthu Arts Festival* which is an annual multi-disciplinary arts festival.

There are many community groups throughout the town representing different aspects of life in the town. As previously noted traditionally the communication between many of these groups and the Municipality has not been very strong. However, this sector is now more closely integrated with the Municipality through the *Public Participation Network* which brings together all of the voluntary and community bodies within the functional area of the Municipality.

The further engagement of the people living in the Northern Quarter through dedicated community engagement exercises is recognised as essential. This includes the businesses operating in the area, as well as the local residents.

It is recognised that no one of us can address the problems of Longford alone and there is a much greater need for collaboration and support for the efforts of each other. It is hoped through the work of the ULG some of this collaboration can begin.



## 5.2 Connolly Barracks Neighbourhood

Connolly Barracks is located in the Northern Quarter of Longford Town at the end of Battery Road. Part of the Barracks site is owned by Longford County Council, including the associated field and former residential site of 'Battery Court'. The Longford and Westmeath Education Training Board owns a smaller part of the Barracks.

An Garda Síochána owns a small section on the north east of the site along with a private landowner on a portion of the site to the south.

*The site is abounded to the south by an empty shopping centre, which was owned until recently by NAMA and who have had very positive engagement with Longford County Council in respect of the potential to develop the site as a joint project with the former army barracks. Although this did not come to fruition, the empty shopping centre was recently purchased by Omniplex, with an intention to develop it into an entertainment centre.*

## 5.3 Engagement Mechanism

One issue which has become heightened over recent years in Longford is the lack of engagement of citizens, partly due to disillusionment with the bureaucratic system and the negative impacts some have seen in the quality of their lives and living standards since the recession began and the perception that the state and local authority is responsible for this and not responding to their needs or listening to them. There are also a lot of people from new communities now residing in Longford, who have never engaged with their area and as a result are not fully integrating into the life of the town. Therefore, a primary objective of this project was to have as far reaching impact as possible, engaging those that would not previously have engaged with us.

There are a number of Residents' Associations throughout the town focused around particular housing developments. It was very important to engage with those people, as they will be the people most affected by any proposals carried out as a result of this project. There are also a number of groups in the town representing the new communities, who were important to engage in the whole process, as they now represent a significant proportion of the population of the town and have an important contribution to make in the future of the town. These groups were contacted throughout the process and invited to workshops to be able to obtain a greater understanding of the difficulties they have in integrating into the life of the community or where social issues in a particular area is leading to difficulties for residents.

The young people of Longford represent the future of our Town and it is vital that they are engaged in the future planning and regeneration of the town and encouraged to notice their environment and take responsibility for making changes for the better of their society.

Workshops were held in the primary and secondary schools in the town, working with the students to identify potential opportunities for the Town.



Community Engagement events and workshops





## 6 Connolly Barracks

This chapter sets out the current condition of the Connolly Barracks site, as well as the 'Northern Quarter' in which it is located.

### 6.1 Site and Buildings

Connolly Barracks is characterised by its historical context (buildings from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century), with the built form steeped in local and national history. The barracks encompasses the original town marketplace and market house together with the former Longford Castle. Other significant buildings within the barracks complex are the Butter Market Building, the HQ Building (former Military Barrack and original Officers' Mess), the Officers' Mess (former Military Infirmary) and the Signal Stores (former Military Prison).

#### 6.1.1 Historical Site Development

The progressive development of the site and its environs can be seen from the following Ordnance Survey mapping for the period 1830-1937. All maps are reproduced from OSI GeoHive.

From these maps it will be seen that the core buildings that comprise the barracks complex remain largely intact over the last 200 years. commemorative

Map 17 – Cassini 6" Map 1830's



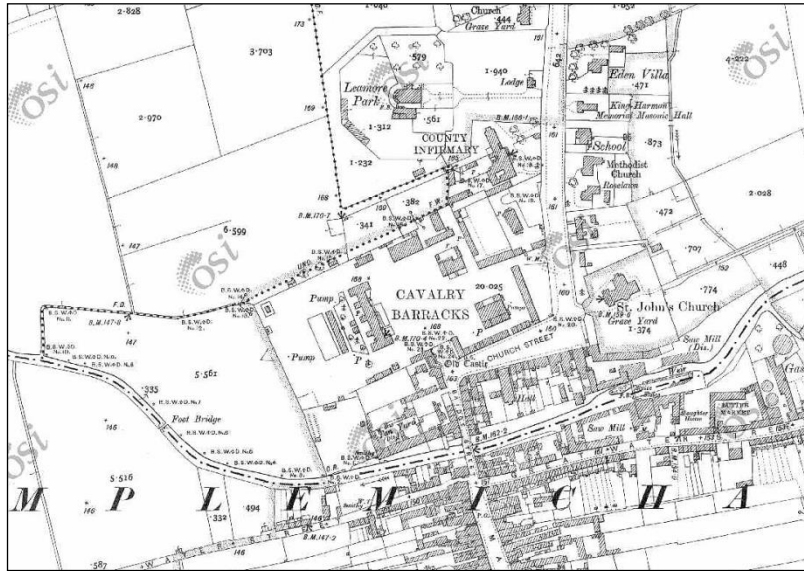
Source: OSI GeoHive

Map 18 - OSI Map 1837



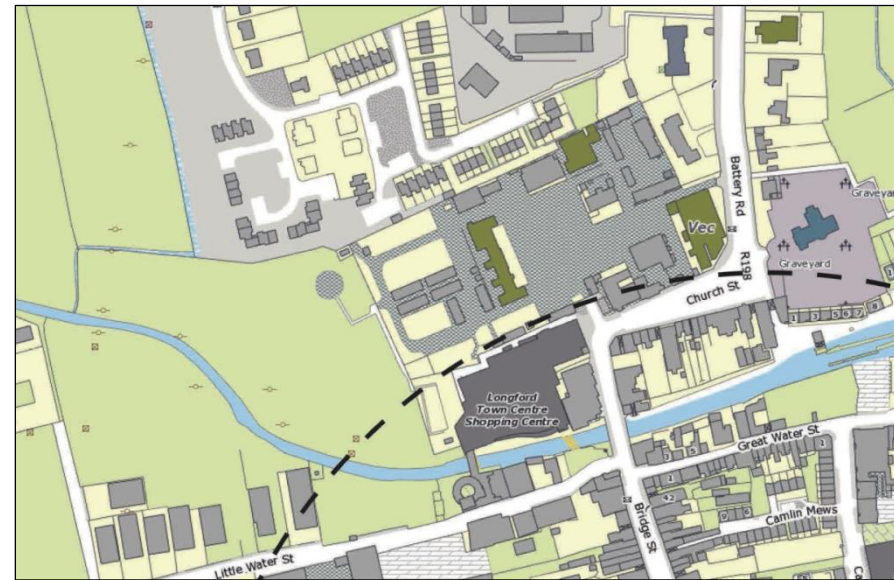
Source: OSI GeoHive

Map 18 – OSI Map 1888-1937



Source: OSI GeoHive

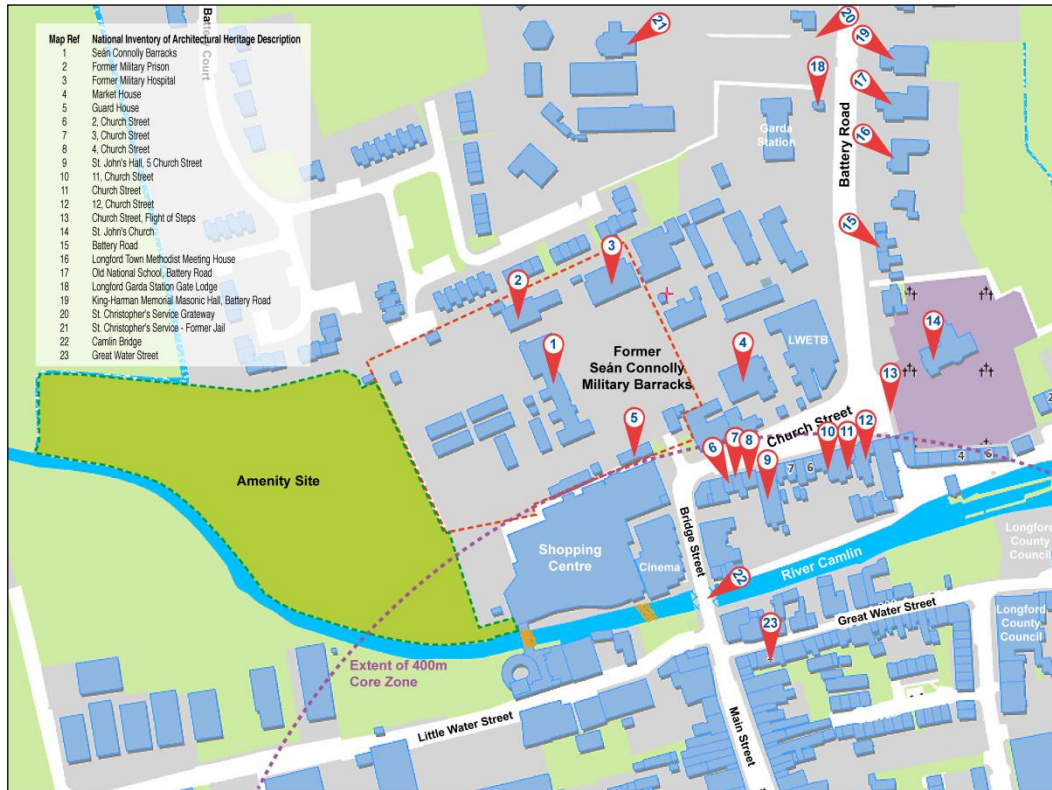
Map 20 - Current Site Layout



### 6.1.2 Former Military Asset

The former Seán Connolly Military Barracks is comprised of a complex of buildings arranged around a central parade ground. A monumental, classically-inspired former cavalry barrack building forms the principal element of the complex.

**Map 19 - Seán Connolly Barrack Complex and Environs**



Refer to appendix for full property descriptions.

Seán Connolly Barracks is named after Brigadier Sean Connolly, of the Longford Brigade, who was fatally wounded in action in 1921 by British forces during the War of Independence.

Originally designed by John Behan, the former cavalry barrack building was constructed to provide accommodation for nine officers and 222 non-commissioned officers and privates. The building retains its early character, form, massing and much of its important fabric. The structure combines fine craftsmanship and evident attention to detail.



*Main Barracks Building*

The main building within the site is composed of a central five-bay three-story block, flanked to either side (north and south) by six-bay two-storey ranges, and with advanced single-bay, two-storey gable fronted end blocks. There were modifications, including rear extension returns in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Later internal modifications to the building fabric and structure are also evident. Longford County Council carried out remedial works to part of the roof structure in 2016, at which time it was noted that the fabric of the remaining of the building was at risk due to water ingress and humidity. Part of this building has been used to facilitate the temporary uses on the site. However, due to the issues with water ingress and lack of use, the spaces available are becoming unsuitable for such uses.

All the buildings within the complex are included in the Record of Protected Structures. It is important to note however that when a structure is protected it does not mean that the structure must be preserved exactly as it is, rather, it allows for managed change through the planning process, with the objective of retaining the qualities of the structure that give it its special interest. Sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and re-use can allow the architectural heritage to yield aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits even where the original use may no longer be viable. The creative challenge is to find appropriate ways to satisfy the requirements of a structure to be safe, durable and useful on the one hand, and to retain its character and special interest on the other.



*Historic buildings within the Connolly Barracks Complex*

*A full structural survey and architectural appraisal of the site and the buildings contained therein have not been carried out to date. Therefore it is difficult to fully assess the level of work that may be required. There is evidence of damp in part of the main barracks building. Longford County Council, with support from funding under the REDZ scheme, replaced part of the roof on this building in 2015 in order to protect the building from further decay.*



Some of the characteristics of the area include:

- Established heritage character on and around site, with original structures;
- Open plan site with number of protected structures;
- Good presentation/public realm upgrade potential along Church Street and Bridge Street;
- Strong vista along Main Street to Barracks;
- Numerous access points (3);
- Great setting within town (anchor/arrival); attractive terrace on Bridge Street;
- Mature planting on site;
- Large green area to the west with easy access to Camlin River, plus river-front parkland and walkway to the east;
- System of the open space.



*Large open space to rear of site*

The total site area is approximately 5.19 hectares with approximately half the eastern portion of the complex being green field in type with no development except for a helipad. The River Camlin bound this area to the south, which is an important amenity running through Longford town. This offers significant potential to the area both for the site and for the River Camlin and there is the potential for the opening up of the River Camlin and extending the Blueways to Longford Town through the River Camlin.

Within the remainder of the site, there is a large open square to the front of the main Officer's building that was traditionally the parade area. This space offers potential in terms of both temporary uses, as was seen from the Christmas market and Dead of Night festival and also for future permanent uses on the site, as a space that can accommodate cultural events within the town.

## 6.2 'Northern Quarter'

Connolly Barracks is located at the northern end of the town envelope, with an entrance onto Battery Road. It forms part of a more affluent area of the town, with residents living in large detached dwellings. To the rear of the Barracks complex is the Battery Court residential development.

### Map 20 – Northern Quarter



### 6.2.1 Northern Quarter Presentation

The centre of Longford Town has suffered the effects of its rural location, bypassed road transport, and its transitory status and midlands location for many years. The economic recession that began in 2008/09 however accelerated a long-term decline by effectively halting investment, reducing discretionary spending, and fundamentally weakening economic confidence. The main street in the town saw business closures, increased vacancies and widespread dereliction of premises once at the commercial forefront of a vibrant market town.

The main street remains striking in displaying dated businesses, vacant premises and a marked absence of modern economic activity, recent business investment, or young enterprise. As such it is a classic case of a rural town centre that has numerous strengths including critical mass, important regional retail, market and administrative functions, and impressive and improving network links, but one struggling to reinvent its core central district and portray vibrancy, youth and forward looking potential, confidence and determination.



A socio-economic profile of the area and as further demonstrated by the additional data provided in relation at Town, County and Regional level the physical effect that the deterioration in economic activity has had on the area over the last census period is clear.

The loss of industry, growth of vacant properties and the loss of employment in Longford Town has had a devastating impact on the vitality and viability of the town and the wider rural hinterland. In particular the dominance of vacant properties within the town centre have considerably weakened the footfall in the town centre area, reducing activity at street level and removing the economic viability of shops and business. This is particularly prevalent in the northern end of the town, where Connolly Barracks is located. Accordingly there is a clear need to secure wider socio-economic benefits for the central town area, which can be summarised as follows:

- ❑ An increase in the skills base of the area, retention of skilled labour and the 20-35-age cohort.
- ❑ Increasing the potential for an economic use to be secured within the town centre on a vacant/ derelict/Brownfield site.
- ❑ Increased linkage between the town as the principal economic driver in the area, and third-level and other educational institutions in larger towns within the region (Athlone Institute of Technology).
- ❑ Multi-use development with knock-on benefits for vitality, viability and security in a town centre site, thereby creating a more conducive residential and amenity environment within the town centre.
- ❑ In terms of redevelopment opportunities within Longford town itself, the sequential and sustainable redevelopment of Brownfield sites should take precedence. A number of buildings that have remained derelict offer the potential to be brought on-stream or given an alternative use. In addition, there is significant scope to redevelop the Brownfield 'Townspark Area' which features a high proportion of commercial vacancy, as an employment growth centre for the town.
- ❑ The Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022, specifically identifies a number of Strategic sites, of which 'Connolly Barracks – Northern Quarter' is Strategic Site no. 1. This lies in close proximity to the Creative and Innovation Hub and complimentary synergies can be developed between both areas.
- ❑ Both the 'Connolly Barracks – Northern Quarter' and the location of the Creative and Innovation Hub are within the Regeneration area identified in the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022.
- ❑ It is anticipated that the redevelopment of Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter in which it is located will act as a driver for the economic regeneration of the remainder of the town.

### 6.3 Northern Quarter Redevelopment Options

The ownership of the former Connolly Military Barrack Site presents Longford Town with a unique opportunity in the early years of the twenty first century.



The site presents the opportunity to redress the balance in respect of lost opportunities of the past: missing the more recent property boom and not being seat to a University. The site presents the opportunity to accommodate a cluster of knowledge economy and social media companies. These uses will present Longford with the opportunity to be a competitive town in the knowledge economy of the twenty first century and beyond.

The location of the historic site at the northern perimeter of the town core provides not only an opportunity to regenerate the town economically and socially, but also provides an opportunity to repair the fabric of the town. To maximise this opportunity, the development of the Urban Framework vision identified in the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan will set the overall parameters for the urban regeneration of the site forming a key element of the Northern Quarter.

The options for the redevelopment of the former Connolly Barrack complex respond to the need for conservation, sustainability, public realm and urban design strategies for the site. These will deliver a mix of uses to ensure that this new quarter will be a vibrant and successful addition to Longford town that is both an attraction in its own right and an enhancement to the medieval core.

The options for redevelopment include: -

- New linear parkland on the banks of the River Camlin;
- Conservation of historic buildings on the site;
- New public, landscaped spaces including a public square in the former barracks;
- Sustainable and energy efficient strategies for individual buildings and the overall site;
- Indigenous and international knowledge economy uses in key buildings; *and*
- Cultural and tourist related uses within the redevelopment.

With the understanding that the proposed redevelopment must be cost-neutral to Longford County Council, implementation will be necessary on a phased basis by the public and private sectors, over the next 10 to 15 years, subject to the vitality of the local and national economy.

In summary, Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter presents Longford with a unique opportunity among Irish towns to create a modern intervention adjoining an historic core that enhances its cultural heritage, improves its sustainability and allows it to compete in the economy of the twenty first century.



## 7 Integrated Action Plan

Working with the ULG, following identification of the aims and objectives of the project and the Integrated Action Plan, a number of actions were identified. These were worked on and refined to ensure that they corresponded to the vision for the Northern Quarter and Connolly Barracks site and to ensure that a definitive change would be seen on the ground. These actions have varying time frames and it is important that progress is made on the actions identified in a timely manner, to raise confidence both within the town and external to it, of the potential of the town.

Throughout the process of the development of this Integrated Action Plan, the vision of utilising Connolly Barracks for the regeneration of the area and the wider town has been the primary focus, with a particular focus on the development of the physical, economic and social regeneration of the town. For this reason, the actions identified are set out under the headings of physical, economic and social. The regeneration of Connolly Barracks must take into account the setting in which it is located and the uses that surround it. It is located adjacent to the campus of the Education and Training Board, and bounds the new entertainment centre which will be located in the unopened shopping centre. It is also in close proximity to the new innovation hub which is being established in the old Provider's building. The River Camlin bounds the site to the rear and is a very important amenity in the town, the value and potential and value it represents to the town has not been fully realised.

Economic	Physical	Social
1. Masterplan	7. Opening up of the River Camlin	10. Development of Assisted Living Facility
2. Commercial Innovation Campus, offering office, industrial and research space	8. Improve urban quality	11. Museum
3. Artisan craft market facility	9. Skate Park	12. Festival
4. Hostel Accommodation		13. Communication
5. Consolidation of Local Authority offices		
6. Development of Tourism Offer		



## 7.1 Economic

Connolly Barracks was once at the heart of the economic activity of the town, with over 200 people employed on the site and generation of footfall at the northern end of the town. It offered a counter focus point to Market Square and the activity there, encouraging people to move along Main Street as they moved between the two sites. From a very early point in this process, it was identified that the appropriate reuse could act as a driver for the economic regeneration of this area of the town, as well as the wider town and region. The Local Authority and ULG, in the process, have taken cognisance of the interest shown in the site through advertising processes but also of the restrictions in funding available to the Local Authority and the conditions of the building. It is now an opportune time to look at the development of the Connolly Barracks, taking into account the ongoing redevelopment of the Provider's building as a Creative Hub and the empty shopping centre adjoining Connolly Barracks, which is to be redeveloped as an entertainment centre, the Northern Quarter offers the potential to become the core of the town centre once again, driving development in the wider town.

From this point, the redevelopment of Connolly Barracks is seen as an opportunity to change direction for this area of the town, to act as a driver for the economic regeneration of the town and this IAP will form an important element is supporting this development.



### Action 1: Masterplan

Connolly Barracks sits within the Northern Quarter of Longford Town, which is an area within the town that has suffered most since the economic recession, with high levels of vacancy and dereliction and a poor urban environment. This area has been identified in the Longford Town Local Area Plan as a strategic site, with the need for a masterplan to co-ordinate and identify appropriate redevelopment of this area.

<b>Expected Results</b>	Defined uses identified for various areas of Northern Quarter, giving certainty and clarity to potential developers and funders					
<b>Action Name</b>	<b>Lead Actor</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>
<b>Masterplan</b>	Longford County Council	Consultants  Local Residents / Business people	A condition survey of the Connolly Barracks site  A detailed masterplan of future uses for the wider area  A business plan for Connolly Barracks options	Financial  Survey equipment	12 months	Longford County Council own resources  Department of Rural and Community Affairs funding
<b>Context</b>	In order to provide certainty and clarity on the future of Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter in general, there is a need for a detailed masterplan to be carried out. This will need to be accompanied by a business plan for the options proposed for the Connolly Barracks site, which will ensure the feasibility and sustainability of the future development of the site.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage consultants to carry out structural and conservation assessment of the site and buildings to ascertain works required and cost involved to bring buildings back into active use.</li> <li>Engage consultants to carry out masterplan of the area.</li> <li>Consult with and engage local business and residents in the Northern Quarter</li> <li>Carry out consultation with wider stakeholder groups.</li> <li>Prepare draft masterplan and present to Municipal District and consult further with stakeholders.</li> </ul>					



## Action 2: Innovation Campus

Connolly Barracks is a prime site within Longford Town, with the potential to drive the economic regeneration of Longford Town. Longford County Council are currently developing an innovation and creative hub on the old Provider's building, which is located in close proximity to Connolly Barracks along Lower Main Street. Connolly Barracks offers the potential to drive Phase 2 of this facility, providing a space for businesses that are creating the technologies and services of tomorrow, which could include a mix of office, industrial and research space, developing ground-breaking products in Robotics/Biomed, Light Engineering and the agri/food fields, tying in with the indigenous industries of Longford. This will also involve the creation of links with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) or Maynooth University, who will be required to provide research support to the industries developing in the Innovation Campus. This new link with the third level education sector also provides a vital education base in the town, which has been identified as a hindrance to the attraction of foreign direct investment to the town and county.

Expected Results	Increased employment levels in Longford Town					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
<b>Commercial Innovation Campus, accommodating office, industrial and research space, developing ground-breaking products in Robotics, Biomed and Light Engineering</b>	Longford County Council	Athlone Institute of Technology / Maynooth University  Midland Skills Forum  Existing established companies in Longford involved in those fields	A number of spaces of varying size and configuration available to companies who need the space and services to develop prototypes of new products	Financial  Research input from AIT  Equipment	18 months	National Regeneration Fund  Longford County Council own resources  Local businesses involved in the Robotics/Biomed, Light Engineering fields and Agri/Foods sector
<b>Context</b>	There are many businesses looking for the opportunity to develop their product and build a prototype in order to be in a position to bring it to manufacturers. However, the cost of renting space and purchasing the equipment necessary is cost prohibitive. Connolly Barracks offers the potential for the provision of this service, to become a commercial innovation campus that promotes the growth of research intensive businesses that are creating the technologies and services of tomorrow. Longford County Council are currently developing Providers Creative and Innovation Hub in close proximity to Connolly Barracks and this project is seen as Phase 2 of that project. It will include space to allow for businesses to grow and will also provide links to third level institute through Athlone Institute of Technology or Maynooth University, bringing an important element of education and research to the town. This centre will focus on the industries that are indigenous to Longford and have a strong base here. The Local Enterprise Office in Longford County Council has received interest from individuals or companies looking for such a space where they can					





	develop prototypes for new products but that is not currently available.
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage consultants to carry out structural and conservation assessment of the site and buildings to ascertain works required and cost involved to bring buildings back into active use.</li> <li>• Establish links with Athlone Institute of Technology/Maynooth University and local businesses operating in the Robotics, Biomed, Light Engineering and Agri/Food fields to ensure their support.</li> <li>• Carry out feasibility study on demand for facility.</li> <li>• Engage consultants to prepare a business plan for the facility.</li> <li>• Obtain funding through various fields.</li> <li>• Carry out works to Connolly Barracks main building and surrounding buildings to accommodate the requirements of the end users.</li> <li>• Purchase equipment, such as 3D printers for installation on the site.</li> </ul>



### Action 3: Farmer's Market

The Northern Quarter was traditionally the main market area of the town and the oldest surviving building within the town, the Buttermarket, is located within the Connolly Barracks complex. This activity has now largely disappeared from the area, with a large degree of vacancy and dereliction in parts of the Northern Quarter. Longford is well known for its crafts people. However, there is currently little opportunity for these people to display and sell their crafts. There is the potential within the Northern Quarter for such a space to be provided, in which can be developed a space which can accommodate a permanent home to some businesses but also become a farmer's market on scheduled days during the week, increasing the footfall and interest in the area. This will also address the issue of vacancy and dereliction in this area of the town.

<b>Expected Results</b>	Establishment of a farmer's market within the town, with both permanent and temporary space for producers of craft and artisan produce.					
<b>Action Name</b>	<b>Lead Actor</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>
<b>Creation of a farmer's market/craft village</b>	Longford County Council	Craft producers  Public Participation Network	A redeveloped space that will accommodate a craft village and farmer's market	Financial  Engineering/design consultant  Architect	12 months	Department of Rural and Community Development  Longford County Council own resources
<b>Context</b>	The Northern Quarter of Longford Town was originally the main town centre, where much of the commercial activity took place and the oldest remaining building remaining in the town is the Buttermarket, which is located within the Connolly Barracks complex. Longford has a wide variety of excellent craft producers and require an outlet to showcase and sell their wares. It is fitting that this area would be within the Northern Quarter, the original commercial core and market area of the town. It would also begin to define a new purpose for this area of the town.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of a suitable space within the Northern Quarter for development of a craft village</li> <li>• Carry out a detailed design of the site, seeking input from the architect and research from similar such facilities.</li> <li>• Engage with local craft producers in terms of their needs and opportunities in the facility.</li> <li>• Source funding for carrying out of the project.</li> <li>• Carry out all necessary construction works to prepare site.</li> </ul>					



#### Action 4: Visitor accommodation

Longford has a severe lack of guest accommodation, which hinders the promotion of the tourism potential of Longford Town and County. Tourism is seen as one of the primary drivers of the economic regeneration of Longford, particularly the promotion of outdoor based activities, around the Greenways, Blueways and bogs. Taking into account the nature of the tourism offer, it is considered that upmarket hostel accommodation would be the most appropriate type to provide in the immediate term, which could be accommodated within one of the vacant buildings within the Northern Quarter.

Expected Results	Increase in the number of visitors to Longford					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
<b>Hostel accommodation</b>	Longford County Council	Accommodation Providers  Longford Tourism  Failte Ireland	Upmarket hostel accommodation catering to needs of visitors	Financial  Suitable site	18 months	Private Sector funding
<b>Context</b>	It has been identified on a number of different occasions that the lack of guest accommodation in Longford is a drawback in the promotion of the tourism offer of the town and county. Much of the tourism product now being developed is focused on the outdoors and adventure visitor. Many of the visitors visiting these sites and experiences do not require high end hotels but rather are happy with upmarket hostel type accommodation. This could also be open to school groups visiting the area for a number of days during the school year, extending the season for such a facility. It has also been noted that there are currently no hostels available across the entire midlands of Ireland.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare business plan for the demand and potential of a hostel.</li> <li>• Identify suitable available site to accommodate such a facility.</li> <li>• Engage with private sector operators/entrepreneurs interested in establishing such a facility and with Failte Ireland (Ireland's tourism board) in terms of the type of support they can offer.</li> <li>• Assist in the process of applying for planning permissions, where necessary.</li> <li>• Carry out works necessary to bring the site up to the sufficient standard to open.</li> </ul>					



### Action 5: Consolidation of Municipal Offices

Longford County Council provides a wide range of public services to the people of Longford, with a remit covering the entire county of Longford. It plays a very important role in the promotion of the economic development of the county and encouraging investment into the county and region. The manner in which it portrays itself is therefore vital. In order to ensure that it portrays a professional image to potential investors in the county, it is important that the offices of the municipality are representative of the image we are trying to represent and to build on. Currently, the Local Authority operates from a number of different sites spread throughout the town, which can make it difficult for members of the public seeking to access services and also not portraying the professional image that the Local Authority is working to present.

Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter offers the potential to develop Municipal Offices, which would be purpose build and therefore accommodate all the needs of the Local Authority, offering a one-stop shop for users of the municipal offices. This also offers the potential to include a museum space and archive and also the conference facility clearly identified as a need within the town. This space could be used for a variety of different functions, including being available to community groups, thereby addressing an identified need in the town.

Expected Results	Development of dedicated Municipal Offices, housing all departments of the Local Authority					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
<b>Consolidation of Longford County Council offices</b>	Longford County Council		Consolidated site housing all staff of Longford County Council	Financial Engineering/Design Consultants	36 months	Longford County Council Loan Department funding
<b>Context</b>	Longford County Council currently operates from a number of different sites around the town, which means that it does not provide as efficient a service as it could do. In order to better portray the positive outlook of the town that we are trying to develop, it is important that our own Municipal offices reflect this. Any consolidation of the Municipal offices must take into account the effect it would have on other parts of the town, by leaving empty buildings behind and the Local Authority must endeavour to ensure that alternative uses are found for those sites.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage consultants to identify most appropriate manner in which offices can be consolidated.</li> <li>Work with the private sector and Local Enterprise Office to identify alternative uses for any sites to be left unoccupied as a result of consolidation.</li> <li>Carry out engagement with relevant stakeholders, including employees.</li> <li>Secure funding through loan/EU funds/Department funds/Longford County Council own resources.</li> <li>Carry out detailed design, procurement and build of office space.</li> </ul>					



## Action 6: Improve Tourism Offer

There are many historic sites and points of interest around Longford Town, with a vast array of stories that make a visit to Longford intriguing. Large numbers of tour buses currently come to Longford Town to visit St. Mel’s Cathedral. However, as there is currently no identified tour route around the town or information to encourage people to spend more time around Longford Town, the visitors on those buses get straight on the bus after the visit to the Cathedral and leave Longford. It is important to work with the tourism officer and tour operators to increase the visitor offer of the town, ensuring that we fully exploit the potential of St. Mel’s Cathedral, encouraging visitors to learn more about Longford Town, including Connolly Barracks and the role it played in the development of Longford over the years.

Expected Results	Improved visitor experience to Longford, leading to increased visitor numbers and longer dwell times, including overnight stays.					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
'Visit Longford'	ULG	Longford County Council  Longford Tourism Office  Volunteers	1. Walking Trail of the Town, including strategically placed maps and wall plaques on buildings of note. 2. Increased number of volunteers engaged to promote and develop Longford	Volunteers	0-3 months	Longford County Council - Municipal District  Longford Tourism Office  Failte Ireland
<b>Context</b>	Longford currently has the lowest visitor numbers of any county in Ireland. It does not have the infrastructure to attract tourists to the town, notwithstanding the many fine features of the town and county. Currently when visitors come to Longford and request a map or points of interest to visit, there is no information to give them. It is proposed to work with the Longford Tourism office to develop the walking trail and develop a brochure that will be available in the Tourism Office for visitors directing them around the town. This will not only improve the visitor experience to the town but will also increase dwell time and encourage visitors to return, resulting them to spend more money in Longford.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a map detailing a walking trail of Longford Town, highlighting points of interest along the trail</li> <li>• Erect signage on the buildings of note detailing the history and importance of the building to Longford Town</li> <li>• Consult with the Tourism Office to ensure the trail ties in with their promotion of Longford Town</li> <li>• Develop a brochure for distribution through the Longford Tourism Office and various outlets throughout the town.</li> <li>• Engage volunteers to become 'Longford Ambassadors', during summer months to guide visitors around the trail/town and explaining the history of the town and assisting with queries they may have</li> </ul>					



## 7.2 Physical

Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter is located within Longford Town Centre, at the northern end of Main Street and bounded by the River Camlin. However, the Northern Quarter and the town in general has turned its back on the River. There is also little connectivity between Connolly Barracks in particular but also the wider Northern Quarter with the main town centre. Following the closure of large businesses within the Northern Quarter, the area has become more rundown, with the footpath in poor condition in places. The existing wall and closed gates of Connolly Barracks, adjoining the goods entrance to the empty shopping centre has resulted in people not being encouraged to walk through this area. There is now an opportunity to address these issues, to open up this whole area of the town and improve permeability and connectivity with the river and the town centre.

### Action 7: River Camlin Enhancements

The River Camlin is a major natural asset within Longford Town but it is one that the town has turned its back on for many years and not utilised the potential of the river for the betterment of the town. Longford County Council has been working in recent years in the development of the Royal Canal Greenway, the Corlea Bog walkway and the Blueways around Clondra, as well as many other projects on improving access to our natural assets and utilising them in a sustainable manner for the development of the tourism offer of the County. There is now the potential to open up the River Camlin to the town. The construction of the pedestrian bridge between the County Council offices and the Mall Park are a first step in this and illustrate the potential of beginning to open up and link up the natural assets within the town and the town centre.

Expected Results	Increased use of the River Camlin within the town environment					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
<b>Opening up access to the River Camlin</b>	Longford County Council	ULG  Inland Fisheries Ireland  Chamber of Commerce  Private landowners	1. Extension of the River Walkway from the Mall to Connolly Barracks  2. Increased access to Blueways	Financial  Engineering/Design Consultants	18 months	Longford County Council  Department of Rural and Community Development  Inland Fisheries Ireland
<b>Context</b>	Longford Town has developed around the River Camlin, a wonderful natural asset that runs along the spine of the town and was once the source of power for many of the industries based in the area. However, over the years, the town has turned its back on the River and does not make the most of this asset. Connolly Barracks bounds a large section of the River Camlin and offers the potential to begin to change the relationship with the River.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out surveys from County Council buildings to Connolly Barracks to identify best locations to locate footpaths and</li> </ul>					



	<p>access points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with local landowners, particularly around the area of the old weir.</li><li>• Design footpaths, access points for fishing, kayak, etc. along this stretch of River, engaging with Inland Fisheries in relation to their requirements and advice.</li><li>• Source funding for carrying out the work, in phases where necessary.</li></ul>
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### Action 8: Urban Quality

Connolly Barracks is located within the Northern Quarter at the end of Main Street and offers the potential to become an extension of the Main Street. It is understood that the main street originally extended through the site heading northwards. However, due to the location of the high walls and gates at the entrance to Connolly Barracks and the adjoining empty shopping centres and general vacancy and dereliction in the wider Northern Quarter area, residents of the town do not find the area inviting. The redevelopment of the Northern Quarter now must address this issue in order to ensure the success of the area and to increase footfall through the area.

Expected Results	Increased activity in the Northern Quarter					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
Improved Urban Quality, including improved accessibility and permeability through the area	Longford County Council	ULG  Omniplex  Longford Municipal District  Area Engineer  Architect/ Landscape Architect	1. Reconfiguration of the entrance to Connolly Barracks 2. Improved footpaths in Northern Quarter 3. Improved connections between Connolly Barracks and Omniplex site 4. General urban quality improvements	Financial  Engineering/Design Consultants	12 months	Longford County Council  Longford Municipal District  Department funding  Omniplex
<b>Context</b>	Since the closure of Connolly Barracks, the site has been closed off and not very inviting for members of the public due to the presence of the locked gates. The wider Northern Quarter has also suffered since the economic recession with the loss of businesses and the failure of the shopping centre to open. The footpaths in parts of the area are in poor condition, the goods entrance to the empty shopping centre and the wall and gates at the entrance to the Connolly Barracks all give a negative impression to pedestrians of the area and reduces the attractiveness of the area. In order to ensure that the redevelopment of the area is successful, there is a need to ensure that people feel comfortable and enjoy visiting the area and wish to return to spend time here.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a competition to invite people to make submissions on the redesign of the gates to Connolly Barracks, with the remit of opening up of the site and making it an extension of the Main Street.</li> <li>Engage with Omniplex to identify a mechanism to open up a connection between the two adjoining sites.</li> </ul>					





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the area engineer and Municipal District to obtain funding and carry out improvement works to the footpaths on both sides of Lower Main Street.</li><li>• Work with the architect and landscape architect to develop a plan for improvements to the urban quality of the area.</li></ul>
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### Action 9: Skate Park

Consultation with the young people of Longford in the preparation of the IAP identified a lack of facilities for their age group, with a skate park identified as a priority in terms of their needs. Currently young people are travelling to neighbouring counties to use skating facilities, for practice and competition. Therefore, not only does the skate park offer an activity for the young people of Longford but also the potential to attract visitors to Longford to utilise the skate park and for competitions. This again ties in with the provision of hostel type accommodation, which would provide ancillary support to the skate park.

Expected Results	Improved facilities for young people					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
Skate Park	Longford County Council	ULG  Longford Municipal District  'Longford Needs a Skatepark' group  Youth groups – Attic/Foroige	Skate Park	Financial  Engineering/Design Consultants	12 months	Longford County Council  Department funding – Rural Recreation
Context	Consultation on the preparation of the plan with various youth groups identified the need for a skate park for the young people of Longford. An ideal location for such a facility would be close to the town centre, with good accessibility and passive overlooking but also not on the main thoroughfare. Therefore, it is considered that Connolly Barracks is an opportune location for such a facility. It is also important that the young people of Longford benefit from the redevelopment of the Northern Quarter and enhancement of the town and facilities within the town.					
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out survey of an area within Connolly Barracks site to assess suitability</li> <li>• Engage with the local skating group to ascertain their requirements</li> <li>• Apply for funding to construct skate park.</li> <li>• Construct skate park</li> </ul>					



### 7.3 Social

From the beginning of the process in the involvement of the URBACT programme, a priority that was identified was the need to ensure that whatever development occurred as a result of this process, a social dividend was provided for the people of Longford. There are a number of different forms that this social dividend may take to ensure that it is felt at different levels of society. Connolly Barracks offers the potential to bring people together and through new opportunities in this area and the positives arising as a result of the redevelopment of the area, improve the quality of life of people in Longford.

#### Action 10: Assisted Living Accommodation

Longford, similar to many towns and cities across Ireland, has experienced a decline in the number of people living in the town centre. Ireland is also experience a significant housing shortage. There is a need to provide accommodation for different stages of people’s lives, to ensure that people have a choice in relocating at the later stages of their lives. It will also result in releasing larger houses for use by families, reducing the pressure on the housing market. It will also increase the number of people living within the town centre.

<b>Expected Results</b>	Provision of alternative accommodation options to people moving to different phases of their lives, increased numbers of people living in the town centre and increased engagement between different age groups.					
<b>Action Name</b>	<b>Lead Actor</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>
<b>Construction of Assisted Living Accommodation</b>	Longford County Council	Approved Housing Body  Longford Age Action  Private Sector Investor	Sheltered accommodation with retail/commercial use such as coffee shop	Financial  Engineering/Design Consultants	36 months	Longford County Council  Health Service Executive  Department of Housing  Approved Housing Body  Private Sector
<b>Context</b>	The number of people residing within the town core has reduced significantly in recent years. There is a need to provide alternative accommodation for people who are no longer in a position to live on their own but not prepared to move into a nursing home. There is an opportunity to provide sheltered accommodation within the wider Northern Quarter area, on a site suitable for such a use. The key requirements for such a site must be the proximity to the town centre, in terms of proximity to services such as the library, shopping centre, St. Mel’s Cathedral and the Mall Park. In order to ensure that the development and the residents who move into the facility are fully integrated into the town life, it is important that there is a commercial element to the facility, e.g. a coffee shop, doctor’s surgery, retail on the ground floor and also perhaps a community space, where different sectors of the community can integrate.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Approved Housing Bodies and the Housing Department of Longford County Council to ascertain level of need for such facility.</li> </ul>					



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify appropriate site within Longford’s Northern Quarter to accommodate the space required, taking into account the requirements of the future residents, in terms of proximity to services.</li><li>• Working with an Approved Housing Body, acquire funding for the construction of the facility.</li><li>• Appoint contractors to construct the facility.</li><li>• Engage with the private sector to operate the commercial/coffee shop element of the facility.</li><li>• Engage with the local community, highlighting the benefit of living in such a space.</li></ul>
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### Action 11: Museum

Longford Town and County is steeped in history but currently does not have a facility to tell this story. It is very important to the people of Longford that they have a facility within the town that can detail and reflect this history. Connolly Barracks is particularly relevant to the history and story of the town and the role it played in the Defence Forces of Ireland, accommodating the 4th Cavalry Regiment and providing Border Patrols during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Therefore, it should have a role to play in the telling of the story.

Expected Results	Increased visitor numbers in Longford, and greater understanding of the history of Longford.					
Action Name	Lead Actor	Key Partners	Outputs	Resources	Timescale	Potential Funding
<b>Museum</b>	Longford County Council	Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht  Creative Ireland  Longford Library  Longford Municipal District  ULG  Longford Tourism  Department of Defence	1. Museum space within the town. 2. Archive space for development of genealogical tourism.	Financial  Appropriate space	36 months	Department of Arts  European funding  Longford County Council  Creative Ireland
<b>Context</b>	Connolly Barracks is located at the historic core of the town, a town which has seen many changes and has many stories to tell. However, there has not been an opportunity to tell this story and it has been a desire of the people of Longford over the years to develop a museum, which would incorporate an archive. This would facilitate increased interaction with visitors to Longford interested in tracing their roots from Longford. There are currently significant numbers of people travelling to Longford to avail of					



	<p>the genealogical services on offer within the Longford Library. However, due to restricted space available, the service does not exploit its full potential. The development of a museum will also facilitate increased visitor numbers and improve the attraction of the town to potential visitors.</p>
<p><b>Key Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage consultants to carry out a feasibility study for the development of a museum, looking in particular at the demand, potential visitor numbers and scale of facility required.</li> <li>• Identify a suitable space within the Northern Quarter for the provision of a museum, in line with feasibility study.</li> <li>• Engage with Department of Arts, Failte Ireland, Arts Council of Ireland and Longford Library in terms of the development of the space and how it is best achieved.</li> <li>• Engage with the Department of Defence to identify the potential of using the site to tell the history of the role of the military in the town of Longford.</li> <li>• Develop the interpretative strategy for the museum, in consultation with local historians, Failte Ireland and other relevant bodies.</li> <li>• Seek funding, from both national and European sources for the development/construction of the museum.</li> <li>• Following procurement procedures, appoint consultants to develop a museum.</li> </ul>



### Action 12: Festivals

Festivals and events are a good way to encourage people to visit a town and showcase what is best about the town. Longford has become well known for the festivals run during the year, all run by various community groups and organisations, with input from the Local Authority and Library service. However, in some instances there does not appear to be co-ordination in the organisations of such events with a number of events held on the same day/weekend, restricting the potential visitor numbers to each of them. There is also merit in increased support from the Local Authority for these local groups in developing and hosting such events.

<b>Expected Results</b>	Increased numbers of people coming into Longford to partake in festivals of varying nature, leading to improved visitor numbers and activity and footfall on the streets of Longford.					
<b>Action Name</b>	<b>Lead Actor</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>
<b>Festivals</b>	Longford Library	Longford County Council  Longford Municipal District  ULG  Longford Tourism  Local Community Groups	1. Increased number of festivals in Longford 2. Co-ordinated programme of themed festivals 3. Purchase of 'Festival Kit' for hire by community groups	Financial	12 months	Longford County Council  Creative Ireland  Department of Arts  Department of Rural and Community Affairs
<b>Context</b>	In order to showcase Longford and all the assets which it has, there is a need to promote temporary events in the town, encouraging visitors to come into the town and spend longer here. There is a large number of festivals and events held in the town throughout the year. However, there is the potential for these to be organised and advertised in a more co-ordinated manner that visitors coming to Longford can plan their visit around events being held in the town. Furthermore, to increase the viability of some of these events for community groups, the Local Authority will purchase basic equipment necessary for the running of events, such as barriers, marquees, lighting equipment, etc. This will reduce the burden on community groups and display the commitment of the Local Authority to supporting communities, thereby encouraging more to get involved in such events.					



**Key Activities**

- Engage with local communities regarding the equipment necessary to put on a festival. Determine the appropriate equipment to be purchased by the Local Authority. Following the public procurement process, purchase the festival equipment deemed appropriate.
- Working with the local community and arts groups, develop a co-ordinated annual programme of themed festivals, which will be distributed and displayed in various locations throughout the town, including accommodation providers, library, post office, tourism office and on line.
- Work with local communities to provide support, both financial and administrative/organisational in the hosting of festivals/community events.





### Action 13: Communication

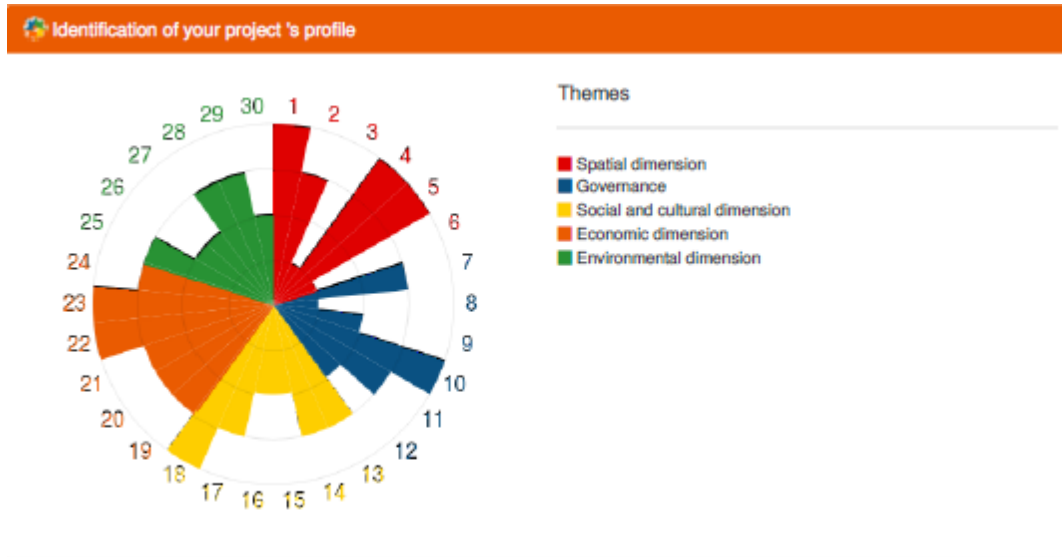
In order to ensure that the IAP is effective, it is necessary to ensure that the plan is communicated in the appropriate way to the appropriate audiences. This will also ensure that the people of Longford begin to feel more confident about the regeneration of their town and the support of the Local Authority in improving the quality of life for the people of Longford.

<b>Expected Results</b>	Improved communication between all groups and organisations within Longford, including the Local Authority, leading to a more co-ordinated approach to the regeneration of the town.					
<b>Action Name</b>	<b>Lead Actor</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>
<b>Communication</b>	Longford County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ULG</li> <li>Local Community Groups</li> <li>Local business people</li> <li>LCRL</li> <li>Longford PPN</li> <li>Space Engagers</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhanced ULG representing wider stakeholders</li> <li>2. Longford Nua app</li> <li>3. Increased communication between Local Authority and wider community</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personnel</li> <li>IT</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Innovation Fund Ireland/Google Ireland</li> <li>URBACT</li> <li>Longford County Council</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	The ULG have been the key to the formulation of this plan. It is now necessary to ensure that the plan is taken through to the next stage of implementation. It is also important that the people of Longford are aware of the progress on the implementation of this plan, to increase confidence in the regeneration of Longford. Effective communication will also improve the connection between the people of Longford and the history of Longford.					
<b>Key Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the ULG, identify additional stakeholders that would benefit to include in the ULG for implementation of the plan.</li> <li>• Develop Longford Nua app, to encourage a wider range of people to utilise it.</li> <li>• Set up Facebook/Twitter pages for the Regeneration Unit which will update the people of Longford on progress of implementation of the plan and regeneration of Longford.</li> <li>• Carry out consultation with the local business people.</li> </ul>					

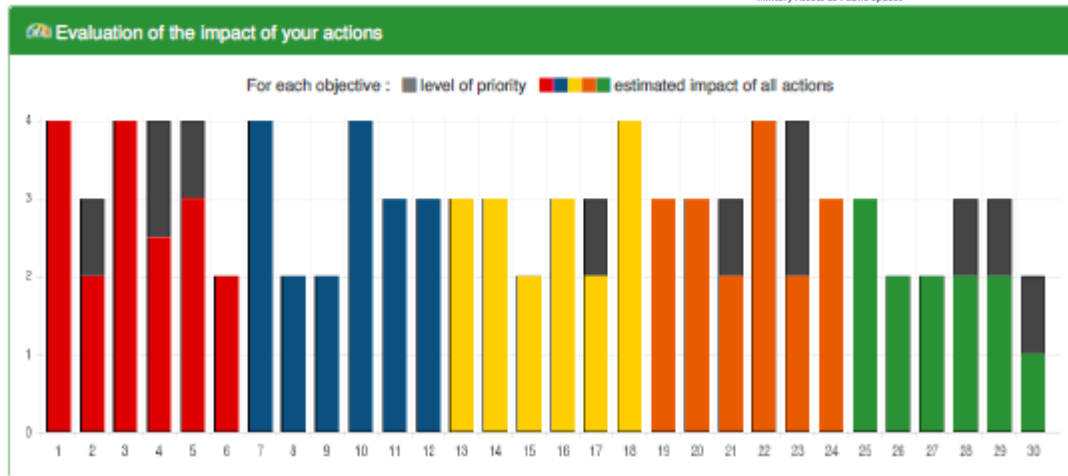


## 8 SWOT analysis

The actions identified in the Action Plan have been assessed using the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities, which is an online tool to support plan makers in ensuring that the action plan takes into account all fields of sustainable urban development. This tool checks the strategy and assess the project against a sustainable urban development framework and can also be used as a monitoring tool to ensure implementation of the strategy is in line with sustainable urban development guidelines. The following table sets out assessment of the project in line with the five themes of the reference framework.



The actions proposed as part of this action plan are then assessed against the level of priority given in the assessment of the project and the results can be found below.



These assessments illustrate the actions of this plan that are strong in line with the sustainable urban development goals. It also provides an opportunity for review of the plan to strengthen the actions in line with sustainable urban development, through continuous review and monitoring.



## 9 Financial Resources

The capacity to implement the Action Plan will be wholly dependent upon the ability for Longford County Council to access appropriate levels of enabling resources. Of pivotal importance will be local funding and community voluntary assistance to act as co-financing to a number of possible public funding initiatives.

The following potential funding resources have been examined in relation to the key potential use themes of community, creative arts, education, and enterprise. The potential funding resources have been considered across five levels: European, State, Local Authority, community and self-funding.

### 9.1 Community

Access to appropriate funding by the community is generally subject to the formation of a legal entity that is properly constituted and governed to handle public monies. Many funders of scale prefer to deal with a community entity that can demonstrate a track record of satisfactory financial management, and will generally offer support through ‘challenge funding’ mechanisms.

**Table 11 - Community Funding: State**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
<b>Town and Village Renewal Scheme DAHRRGA</b>	The central aim of the scheme is to support the revitalisation of towns and villages in order to improve the living and working environment of their communities and increase their potential to support increased economic activity into the future.	The type of projects to be funded under this initiative is primarily a matter for the Local Authorities (LAs) to identify in partnership with local business and communities.	Category 1: Towns/villages with population of <5,000. Category 2: Towns with population of 5,000 – 10,000.
<b>Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland Better Energy Communities</b>	Better Energy is Ireland’s national retrofit initiative aimed at upgrading building stock and facilities to high standards of energy efficiency and renewable energy usage, thereby reducing fossil fuel usage, energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.  By supporting project structures that can be easily replicated, Better Energy hopes to showcase retrofit project models that can be implemented without SEAI support in the future.	The BEC programme supports new approaches to achieving high quality improvements in energy efficiency within Irish communities.  By bringing together groups of buildings under the same retrofit programme, BEC projects facilitate community-wide energy improvements more efficiently and cost effectively than might otherwise be possible.	Creating innovative partnership approaches that facilitate community access to existing local resources, thereby boosting and sustaining the impact of BEC support;  Stimulating employment through sustainable energy upgrading projects; <i>and</i> Supporting small-scale renewable energy projects.



**Table 12 - Community Funding: Local Authority**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
Local Community Development Committee	Longford Local Economic and Community Plan LDS	<p>Rural Development Programme: LEADER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme 2: Social Inclusion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme 3: Rural Environment</li> </ul> <p>Cross-cutting objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovation;</li> <li>2. Climate change;</li> <li>3. Environment.</li> </ol>	<p>Time-limited submissions to be made as response to thematic calls.</p> <p>Eligible public matching funding includes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cash contributions from non-EU funded sources, <i>and</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Benefits-in-kind – eligible for community-led projects only.</li> </ul>
Local Community Development Committee	Longford Local Economic and Community Plan Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme	<p>The aim of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration.</p> <p>Its vision is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment through community development approaches, targeted supports and interagency collaboration, where the values of equality and inclusion are promoted and human rights are respected.</p>	<p>The Programme has three Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues;</li> <li>2. To support individuals and marginalised target groups experiencing educational disadvantage;</li> <li>3. To engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed, to move them closer to the labour market and creating social</li> </ol>

			enterprise opportunities.
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**Table 13 – Community Funding: Self-Funding**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
Crowd Funding	<p>Crowdfunding is a traditional way for small businesses to raise money. In the past, crowdfunding was called the cooperative movement. Collective groups, such as community or interest-based groups, pooled subscribed funds to develop new ideas, products and distribution channels.</p> <p>Today, it is by definition, <i>“the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.”</i></p>	<p>There are crowdfunding platforms particular to the Irish market including:</p> <p>FundIt; SeedUps; iCrowdFund; iDonate.ie; and MoneyCrowd.</p>	<p>There is no legislation or regulations in Ireland specifically dealing with crowdfunding. It’s an unregulated industry.</p> <p>In the United Kingdom, more than 10% of businesses are funded through alternative investment and this percentage is growing.</p>

## 9.2 Creative Arts Funding

**Table 14 – Creative Arts Funding: European**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Requirements
Creative Europe	<p>Creative Europe is the new EU programme to support European cinema and the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion<sup>1</sup> for 2014-2020, it will support tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audio-visual professionals and organisations in the performing arts, fine arts, publishing, film, TV, music, interdisciplinary arts,</p>	<p>Creative Europe's stated aims are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation;</li> <li>2. Enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs, and social cohesion;</li> <li>3. Give Europe's culture and media sectors access to new</li> </ol>	<p>The Creative Europe programme is open to cultural and creative organisations from EU Member States. Besides Norway and Iceland, the following countries are also eligible: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Albania</li> <li>○ Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>○ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</li> </ul>



	<p>heritage, and the video games industry. The funding will allow them to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills needed in the digital age. By helping European cultural works to reach audiences in other countries, the programme will also contribute to safeguarding cultural and linguistic diversity.</p>	<p>international opportunities, markets, and audiences. The culture sub-programme provides funding to organisations in the arts, craft, design and heritage fields to reach new audiences and to develop skills. The MEDIA sub-programme supports European film and audio-visual industries in the development, distribution and promotion of their projects. It also offers opportunities to develop skills in traditional and new media technologies as well as supporting European companies in targeting markets and networks within and beyond European borders. The Cross-sectoral strand provides funding for activities and events that are common to both the MEDIA and Culture Sub-programmes. From 2016, this will include a Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility, a new sector specific instrument on the European Financial market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Georgia</li> <li>○ Moldova</li> <li>○ Montenegro</li> <li>○ Serbia</li> <li>○ Ukraine</li> </ul> <p>Virtually all of the projects receiving support will have a cross-border dimension. Most of the budget will be used to provide grants to individual projects. However, the programme will also support initiatives pursuing similar objectives such as European Capitals of Culture, the European Heritage Label, the European Heritage Days and five European Union prizes (EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards, EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture, EU Prize for Literature, European Border Breakers Awards, and EU Prix MEDIA).</p>
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Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
Erasmus +	<p>In order to promote synergy and cross-sector co-operation, Erasmus + has been designed as an integrated programme supporting 3 main types of Key Action. The Programme has an overall indicative financial envelope of € 14,774 billion for the seven years (2014-2020). Adult education - Grants of maximum €300,000 (2 years project) and €450,000 (3 years project).</p>	<p>Funding opportunities are numerous for the cultural and creative sector under the Erasmus + programme but it is important to keep in mind that Erasmus + does not support international cultural activities, such as festivals or touring events per se.</p>	<p>Erasmus + funds projects: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involving cultural actors for their essential contribution to human and social development through education and training, <i>and</i></li> <li>2. Which are related to other fields, such as economics and education.</li> </ol> <p>The programme supports projects contributing to achieve specific learning objectives increasing specific skills and the employability potential of the beneficiaries. The learning mobility experiences in this framework should be in line with the need of participants as well as conceived according to the organisation's internal plans for internationalisation strategy and capacity building. Cultural organisations work with and/or are part of any of the 5 fields of Erasmus +, particularly adult education and youth.</p> <p>Potential Strategic Partner: LWETB</p>

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Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
<p>The Europe for Citizens Programme</p> <p>The Programme has an overall budget of €185 million for the seven years (2014-2020), of which approximately € 37 million will be allocated to European remembrance.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>The Europe for Citizens Programme is a programme aiming generally at fostering European citizenship with the following objectives: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To contribute to citizens’ understanding of the EU, its history and diversity;</li> <li>○ To foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU level;</li> <li>○ To raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values of the Union and the Union’s aim, namely to promote peace, the values of the Union and the wellbeing of its peoples by stimulating debate, reflection and the development of networks;</li> <li>○ To encourage democratic participation of citizens at EU level by developing citizens’ understanding of the EU policy making-process and by promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at EU level.</li> </ul>	<p>The Programme is divided into two main Strands: European remembrance and Democratic engagement and civic participation.</p> <p>Town-twinning projects under Democratic engagement and civic participation may also encompass activities related to cultural heritage.</p> <p>Action grants are offered for actions with a limited timeframe. The maximum duration of a project is 18 months and the maximum eligible grant for a project is € 100,000. The maximum EU contribution is 70%.</p> <p>Operating grants provide financial support to cover part of the running costs that enable a body to implement a range of activities envisaged in its annual work programme.</p> <p>The minimum amount of the EU grant awarded will be € 60,000 and the maximum grant will be € 200,000 (for civil society organisations for European remembrance) and € 350,000 (for European think tanks). The maximum percentage of EU co-financing rate in both cases is 70%.</p>	<p>Eligible projects should involve different types of organisations and encompass different types of activities, such as research, exhibitions, public debates, non-formal education, etc. They should involve citizens from different target groups and be implemented on a transnational level, with a clear European dimension.</p> <p>Public local/regional authorities or non-profit organisation, including civil society organisations, NGOs, survivors’ associations and cultural, youth, educational and research institutions, associations of twinned towns, etc. established in an EU Member State or in a country having signed an agreement with the Commission on its participation in the Europe for Citizens Programme may apply for funding.</p>

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Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
<p>Horizon 2020 EU funding can cover up to 100% of the eligible costs of the action for research and innovation actions and for coordination and support actions. The general applicable rate for innovation actions is 70%, but it can go up to 100% in the case of non-profit organisations. In the case of the ERA-NET Co-fund, the maximum EU contribution is 33% of the total eligible costs and for projects funded under the SME instrument the EU contribution is usually up to 70%, but it can exceptionally go up to 100% where the research component is strongly present. The overall budget planned for all calls under Reflective Societies: Cultural Heritage and European</p>	<p>Horizon 2020 is the EU’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. It runs from 2014 until 2020 and implements the Innovation Union flagship of the Europe 2020 Strategy, aiming at making Europe a world class science performer, removing obstacles to innovation and changing the way public and private sectors work together by creating synergies between them. Horizon 2020 has a significant budget of €80 billion for the whole 7-year period). It is implemented via biannual work programmes and is structured in 3 main sections (also known as ‘pillars’), some of which are further divided into sub-sections.</p>	<p>Support for culture-related research is available across the three pillars of the Programme, namely Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges. Under the dedicated SME Instrument support is offered to enable SMEs in the creative industries and the cultural heritage sectors to innovate and grow across traditional boundaries, through new business models and organisational change. The Societal Challenges Pillar: Challenge number 6: Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies. Of particular interest for the culture and creative sector is the stream Reflective Societies: Cultural Heritage and European Identities, which aims to support activities contributing to the understanding of Europe’s intellectual basis, creative capacity, cultural identity and historical legacy. Some support is also offered under the stream Europe as a Global Actor within this societal challenge in order to reinforce the EU’s position as a leader in the field of cultural preservation, restoration and</p>	<p>Investments in the cultural sector have to respond to the Thematic Objectives and the investment priorities in a targeted way. In particular the following objectives of the funds could be of relevance for the cultural sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>o Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, including service innovation and clusters;</li> <li>o Enhancing access to and use of ICT, including e-culture applications and services – Digitalisation of Cultural heritage;</li> <li>o Enhancing growth and competitiveness of Cultural and Creative SMEs;</li> <li>o Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency by protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage;</li> <li>o Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility – by enhancing accessibility to, and development of, specific natural and cultural resources;</li> <li>o Promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural</li> </ul>



Identities is €27.5 million for 2015. The budget planned for all calls concerning Europe as a Global Actor amounts to €34.1 million.

The Commission expects grant requests in the range between €1.5 and 2.5 million for Research and innovation actions, between €2 and 4 million for Innovation grants, and in the order of €1 or up to 2 million for Coordination and support actions.

valorisation, using culture as a diplomatic tool in EU's external relations.

and recreational services and as part of urban regeneration schemes;

- Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure;

Reinvesting in human capital by promoting the culture and language, of the neighbouring country, exploiting untapped potential of diversity, e.g. by developing bilingual curricula, school exchanges, organising joint sport or cultural events.

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Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
<p>Cohesion Fund (Structural Funds)</p>	<p>The Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund are the financial instruments of the European Union to implement its regional policy, which is intended to reduce the development disparities among regions and Member States and create economic, social and territorial cohesion.</p>	<p>The Common Provisions Regulation includes a number of specific references to the cultural sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○</li> </ul>	<p>Beneficiaries include public bodies, private sector organisations, especially small businesses (SMEs), universities, associations, NGOs and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Co-funding in the ERDF is limited to small-scale infrastructures; large-scale cultural infrastructures are clearly not a priority.</p>
<p>The Interreg Programme Generally 85% funding for public authorities or public institutions, 75% for private organisations. Typical budget: €1.5-2 million.</p>	<p>The Interreg programme is focused on improvement of member states' and regions' wealth and competitiveness through cross-border or regional cooperation and joint projects.</p> <p>The most applicable priorities would be around the efficient use of cultural and natural resources, including tourism and urban development, supporting SMEs and competitiveness, and building capacity for innovation.</p>	<p>The Interreg programme consists of 3 levels of co-operation projects: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interreg Va: Cross-border Co-operation supports projects that address common problems across borders and enhances cross-border cooperation for development and growth;</li> <li>2. Interreg Vb: Transnational Cooperation aims to improve the way several countries work together to solve common problems. It promotes cooperation between national, regional and local partners and coordinated strategic responses to agreed priorities;</li> <li>3. Interreg Europe: Interregional Cooperation (formerly Interreg IVC) aims to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, for example: creative and digital innovation, cross-sector innovation or research leading to implementation or prototyping;</li> <li>○ Enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT, for example: digital inclusion, enhancing online service provision and use of ICT;</li> <li>○ Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, for example: strategies to support creative businesses, new revenue models for the cultural sector;</li> <li>○ Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency, a priority that also includes natural and cultural heritage.</li> <li>○ Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, for example:</li> </ul>



		<p>regional policies through exchange of experiences between local and regional authorities and related stakeholders.</p>	<p>outreach and cross-cultural programmes, targeting the “<i>least likely</i>” for services and participation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure, for example: professional development programmes and strategies to update skills of the sector.</li> </ul>
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**Table 15 – Creative Arts Funding: State**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
<p>Creative Ireland Programme 2017 – 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs</li> <li>Department of Public Expenditure and Reform</li> </ul>	<p>Creative Ireland is the Government’s Legacy Programme for Ireland 2016. It is a five-year all-of-government initiative, from 2017 to 2022, which at its core is a wellbeing strategy that aims to improve access to cultural and creative activity in every county across the country.</p>	<p><b>Pillar 2: Enabling Creativity in Every Community</b></p> <p>Longford County Council will be asked to develop a Culture and Creativity Plan, reflecting the overall structure and aims of the national strategy for culture and creativity.</p> <p><b>Pillar 3: Investing in our Cultural Infrastructure</b></p> <p>High quality infrastructure is critical for a vibrant art and culture sector and that investment in cultural infrastructure underpins social cohesion and supports strong and sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>A 3-year €9m capital investment scheme in regional and local arts and cultural centres is also underway.</p>	<p>The Department of Arts will work with cultural institutions and other key stakeholders to prepare investment plans to address infrastructure needs and develop an overall capital strategy for the cultural and heritage sector, to include digitisation projects and the building of national cultural collections.</p> <p>The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will be a key partner in this pillar.</p>



**Table 16 – Creative Arts Funding: Self-Funding**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Requirements
Crowd Funding	<p>Crowdfunding is a traditional way for small businesses to raise money. In the past, crowdfunding was called the cooperative movement. Collective groups, such as community or interest-based groups, pooled subscribed funds to develop new ideas, products and distribution channels.</p> <p>Today, it is by definition, <i>“the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.”</i></p>	<p>There are crowdfunding platforms particular to the Irish market including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FundIt;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> SeedUps;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> iCrowdFund;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> iDonate.ie; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MoneyCrowd.</li> </ul>	<p>There is no legislation or regulations in Ireland specifically dealing with crowdfunding. It’s an unregulated industry.</p> <p>In the United Kingdom, more than 10% of businesses are funded through alternative investment and this percentage is growing.</p>

### 9.3 Education Funding

**Table 17 – Education Funding: European**

Funding Source	Summary
Erasmus +	<p>Erasmus + is the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the period 2014-2020. It is designed to support actions, cooperation and tools contributing to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion by tackling socio-economic changes. Erasmus + also contributes to achieve the objectives of the Education and training 2020 strategic framework and of the European Youth strategy.</p>



**Table 18 – Education Funding: State**

Funding Source	Summary
Science Foundation Ireland Discover Primary Science and Maths	Discover Primary Science and Maths (DPSM) is the national programme, run by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), to foster interest in Science, Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) amongst children in primary schools.
Transition Year National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.	Transition Units (TUs) are new curriculum components that are being developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. TUs are timetabled for approximately 45 hours. Alongside shorter modules and other learning experiences, schools may include a variety of TUs as part of their transition year programme. Transition units are not intended to be 'exam' courses but are assessed as part of the teaching and learning in the unit.

## 9.4 Enterprise Funding

**Table 19 – Enterprise Funding: European**

Funding Source	Summary
COSME	COSME is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) running from 2014 to 2020 with a planned budget of €2.3billion. COSME aims at supporting the competitiveness, growth and sustainability of EU's enterprises, in particular SMEs, and promoting entrepreneurship. To reach this, the programme eases SME's access to finance by providing loan guarantees and risk-capital, facilitates access to new markets inside and outside the EU and improves the framework conditions for businesses, e.g. by reducing the administrative burden on SMEs.

**Table 20 – Enterprise Funding: State**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
Fáilte Ireland Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects (>€200,000)	The Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects falls under Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Investment Strategy 2016-2022. The grant scheme is designed to support large tourism experience development projects applying for	The grant scheme sets out to encourage innovation and, therefore, takes an outcome led approach to financial support. The scheme is intended to promote the involvement of diverse public, private and community sector	<b>Currently Closed</b>



	capital grants in excess of €200,000.	parties in the achievement of a set of outcomes for Irish tourism within the framework of the EU General Block Exemption Regulation, which provides exemptions from the State Aid rules in certain situations.	
Fáilte Ireland Grants Scheme for Small Tourism Projects (<€200,000)	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Enterprise Ireland Competitive Start Fund	The Competitive Start Fund provides entrepreneurs and start-ups in all sectors with the critical early stage funding to test the market for their products and services and progress their business plans for the global marketplace.	The fund is designed to enable those companies reach key commercial and technical milestones, to include: Evaluate overseas market opportunities and reach firm conclusions regarding the viability of the proposed business. Build a prototype. Secure a reference site. Develop a market entry plan for exploiting international opportunities. Secure partnership deal or strategic alliance. Identify suitable channels to international markets. Secure third party investment.	The fund is open to applications from individuals, early stage companies or prospective businesses active in the Manufacturing and Internationally Traded Services sectors which includes the following subsectors: Internet, Games, Apps, Mobile, SaaS, Cloud Computing, Enterprise Software, Lifesciences, Cleantech and Industrial Products.

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Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
Enterprise Ireland Community Enterprise Initiative (2015 – 2017)	Open to new and existing organisations, groups and alliances, which collaboratively seek to promote entrepreneurship, create jobs, foster innovation and enhance export opportunities for small business.	A prerequisite for proposals is the need to demonstrate innovative solutions to fostering and creating employment. Priority will be given to new approaches that build on, and strengthen, the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the country.	<p>Through the utilisation of existing infrastructure and the leveraging of nationally available enterprise supports, the specific objectives of the scheme include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Fostering an increased collaborative, networked and linked approach to regional and local enterprise development and job creation</li> <li>❑ Establishment of hubs, accelerators, networks and clusters or other partnerships based on regional strengths, opportunities and uniqueness. Within this is the establishment of partnership activities where innovative start-ups can be established in a supportive network before graduating to other support mechanisms or self-sufficiency</li> <li>❑ Proactively seeking out, encouraging and supporting applications from economically disadvantaged areas and areas facing potential economic shock to foster potential opportunities for job creation and supporting enterprise</li> <li>❑ Promotion of a progression</li> </ul>



			pathway for companies as they start, develop and scale.
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**Table 21 – Enterprise Funding: Local Authority**

Funding Source	Summary	Scope	Focus
Longford Local Enterprise Office	Local Enterprise Office is the first stop shop to provide support and services to start, grow and develop micro business in Longford.	<p>The key objectives of LEO Longford is to provide businesses with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business Information and Advice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Financial Supports</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Networking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local Economic Development Services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enterprise Education</li> </ul>	<p>Enterprise projects eligible for support are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Businesses engaged in manufacturing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Internationally traded services (details of overseas customers)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Innovative projects with export potential (this must be outlined in the application)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Professional services, consultancy, retail and distribution are not eligible</li> </ul>
Local Community Development Committee	Longford Local Economic and Community Plan LDS	<p>Rural Development Programme: LEADER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme 2: Social Inclusion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme 3: Rural Environment</li> </ul> <p>The cross-cutting objectives are innovation, climate change, and environment.</p>	<p>Time-limited submissions to be made as response to thematic calls.</p> <p>Eligible public matching funding includes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cash contributions from non-EU funded sources, <i>and</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Benefits-in-kind – eligible for community-led projects only.</li> </ul>



## 9.5 Longford County Council: Specific Supports

The Longford Local Enterprise Office (LEO) offers a range of complementary supports to entrepreneurs and budding entrepreneurs. The supports range from providing an initial “First Stop Shop” service where individuals can receive advice on the steps involved in setting up a business, to the provision of grants for feasibility studies, provision of financial support for the establishment of new businesses or expansion of existing ones and the provision of a range of soft supports such as training and mentoring.

LEO, Longford offers a variety of financial supports to assist the start-up, development and expansion of small businesses in the manufacturing and services sectors employing ten or less people. Capital grants up to a maximum level of €75,000 are available for machinery and equipment purchases or for purchasing or altering business premises.

## 9.6 Additional Potential Supports

### 9.6.1 Community Services Programme

The aim of the Community Services Programme (CSP) is to support legally incorporated community organisations (companies limited by guarantee) and industrial and provident societies (co-operatives) to provide local social, economic and environmental services through the application of a social enterprise model of delivery. The objectives of the programme are to: -

1. Promote social enterprise as an approach to alleviating disadvantage and addressing local social, economic and environmental needs that are not being met through public or private funding or other resources;
2. Create sustainable jobs for those most distant from the labour market, in particular for those who are long-term unemployed and from specific target groups;
3. Promote sustainable social and economic development;
4. Enable service providers to lever additional public investment to improve facilities and services;
5. Strengthen local ownership through participation in decision-making; *and*
6. Support social innovation and encourage sharing of learning and expertise between participating service providers.

A key requirement under the CSP is that services generate traded income by adopting a social enterprise model of delivery. The generation of traded income must be a consistent component of the business model, underpinned by a business-planning ethos.

In 2017 there were 398 services nationally in receipt of a CSP co-funding contribution (€41.8m).

### 9.6.2 TÚS



The TÚS Initiative is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations.

Unemployed people who are eligible to participate in the scheme are selected and contacted by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP).

### 9.6.3 Community Employment

Community Employment is an employment programme that helps long-term unemployed people to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to work routine. The programme assists them to enhance and develop both their technical and personal skills that can then be used in the workplace.

The CE programme is sponsored by groups wishing to benefit the local community, namely voluntary organisations and public bodies involved in not-for-profit activities.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection gives financial support in the form of allowances and funding to assist with the Community Employment Programme, for example participant wages, supervisor grants, materials grants, and specific skills training grants.

The training provided through Community Employment must be delivered within a Quality Assurance framework leading to major awards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

A CE applicant who needs childcare in order to take up a place is eligible for a CE Childcare Place.

### 9.6.4 Employ Ability

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection funds a range of employment supports aimed at helping employees with a disability to gain and retain employment. Under the Reasonable Accommodation Fund there is the Job Interview Interpreter Grant, the Personal Reader Grant, the Employee Retention Grant Scheme and the Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant.

Other supports for employers include the Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme.



## 10 Implementation and Monitoring

### 10.1 Key players and their role in the Actions

This IAP has been developed as a co-creation project between the Municipality and the ULG, using a number of co-creation workshops where the vision for the site was developed, which then led to the development of objectives and actions. Longford County Council, as the owners of the site and also the organisation with responsibility for implementation for many of the actions identified, have been identified as the key players for the IAP and its implementation.

As part of this process, it is clear that the implementation of the actions can only be achieved through collaboration and cannot be achieved by any one group or organisation. As part of this process, the key bodies/organisations responsible for the implementation of each action were identified. The Local Authority has been identified as a key player for the implementation of the IAP. However, there has been a need to raise awareness across directorates within the organisation and also outside the organisation, among the stakeholders from the city.

### 10.2 Governance arrangements of the Connolly Barracks project

It has become clear through this process that a strong governance structure is required in order to ensure the full and appropriate development of this area. The scale of the existing structure, outbuildings and site environs suggests that a number of uses will be required to support the redevelopment of the complex. A multi-use approach will require the provision of a management function capable of balancing the demands of multiple users. It will also require careful consideration at design stage to ensure optimal use is made of the space and facilities that are available. Multiple access and exit points might be considered to serve a multi-use facility.

A legal entity could be formed with responsibility for the management and operation of the entire facility. This company will have the legal capacity to privately fundraise and finance operations separately from the Local Authority. It offers a number of potential advantages:

- The Articles of Association would be drawn up and a non-executive (unpaid) Board appointed, reflecting community ownership of the activity within the facility;
- The Company can apply for charitable status from the Revenue Commissioners; and
- The Company can receive grant support from the Arts Council and other Government agencies.

It is recommended that the facility operator be set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) (limited by guarantee not having a share capital); *The members' liability is limited to the amount they have undertaken to contribute to the assets of the company, in the event it is wound up, not exceeding the amount specified in the memorandum. As a guarantee company does not have a share capital, the members are not required to buy any shares in the company.*



*Many charitable and professional bodies find this form of company to be a suitable vehicle as they wish to secure the benefits of separate legal personality and of limited liability but do not require to raise funds from the members.*

The creation of the Company will require the establishment of a voluntary Board. The construction of the voluntary Board must reflect the purpose of the Company. Primarily, the Board will oversee the financial operation of the organisation and will be responsible for overseeing operations. However, it should not interfere in day-to-day decisions, but it must work with the executive. The Board must set the direction of the Company and ensure that the mission and philosophy of the organisation are maintained. It is legally responsible for all actions of the organisation. Given the nature of the facility, it will be desirable to establish a working Board with the capacity to help with the functioning of the organisation. This is usually achieved through the efforts of its committee structures, and at this level will need to include people who are well known and respected in the community as a whole, and in specific sectors of the community.

The voluntary Board members will be required to have relevant experience of aspects of the core interests of the Company, including specific local business, financial, legal, marketing, community and artistic experience. Given the nature of the facility, it will also be of advantage to ensure that some members have experience of fundraising and financial control, both in the business and community sectors. It may also be of advantage to have a representative from the Local Authority in the role of facility owners.



## 11 Communication

The objective of any communication strategy is to pass on the relevant information to those relevant stakeholders who have an interest in the idea or plan. The challenge is to communicate what we are trying to do through a variety of means that involves the use of the internet, social media, local newspaper and radio, public information days and workshops, and ultimately one to one communication with those stakeholders whom we consider to be of greatest value and influence regarding the topic in which we are dealing with. It is vital that the IAP is communicated effectively to ensure that it is effective and is implemented. Therefore the medium chosen will vary, depending on the actions and the particular target audience for that action. It is very important the local stakeholders, including the executive of the Local Authority and the elected members are familiar with the IAP and see the implementation of same as an important element of the regeneration of Longford Town.

The dissemination of this IAP is critical. Without clear and accurate communication to the right people, our action plan will not be effective and will not realise full implementation.

The primary audience of the IAP will be policy makers and funding authorities, both within the Local Authority and external to it, who will recognise the reasoning behind the actions and the process engaged in reaching the actions identified, as in working with the ULG to identify actions appropriate to the regeneration of this area. This will lead to support for the actions identified, to ensure implementation of the actions. However, the IAP also has an important role to play in communicating to the people of Longford the work of both the municipality and the ULG with the aim of bringing our former military site back into active use. This is important to begin to change the narrative within Longford and the approach we are taking in regenerating the town. It is very important that is recognised by the people of Longford that this plan is one which was developed through a new approach, very much in partnership with the local community, through the ULG and as such aims to reach to the needs of the people of Longford.

The communication strategy for the IAP is therefore very important and the message which we want to deliver from it is crucial. The key message from this IAP is that Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter of Longford Town plays an important role in the future regeneration and development of Longford Town. The IAP aims to develop actions that will bring this historic core of Longford Town back into the active life of Longford, developing and building on both the economy and cultural assets of Longford. It is important that the message from this IAP is clear and consistent, that the implementation of this plan will result in the regeneration of Connolly Barracks, engaging a wider audience in the discussion on the wider regeneration of the town and bring about an overall positive change to Longford Town. For the policy makers and funding authorities that this plan is aimed at, it is important that they see that the actions set out above have come from the community, are clearly thought through and are realistic, including looking at details such as funding, implementation and monitoring. The benefit to the community has also been demonstrated throughout the process.

As noted above, there are two primary audiences to which this IAP is targeted, the policy makers/funding authorities and the local community. Therefore, communication will be through different mediums for both, using language appropriate to both audiences. For the policy makers/funding authorities, the IAP and a summary copy of same



will be vital, which will set out the primary objectives, actions and how they will be achieved, along with the change that it is aimed to achieve through this project. This document will be short, highlighting the key points from the IAP.

The IAP will need to engage with the local community in a different way and the language used in this will be very important. The use of acronyms will be kept to a minimum as they tend to confuse people and may make people feel that the plan is out of their reach. A short leaflet will be produced, highlighting the background and purpose of the MAPS project and the IAP and the role of the community/ULG in the creation of the plan and the importance for engagement of this by the community. The high level actions will also be highlighted, along with timelines for their implementation. Social media will also be important for communicating the plan and the progress on its implementation. The Regeneration Unit will use their Facebook page, along with Twitter and their website, to disseminate the plan and also progress on implementation of the actions. It is important to continuously update social media accounts in order to engage people, using pictures and infographics demonstrating implementation of the actions. In addition to using the ULG to disseminate the plan to the local community, local groups such as Tidy Towns, Longford Historical Society, Longford Heritage Office and Longford Library will be used to disseminate the IAP and the implementation of same.

Upon completion of the IAP, the Regeneration Team will begin work on the Regeneration Plan for Longford Town. Consultation on the development of the plan will include a number of workshops in the town. The leaflet will be used as one of the tools for the workshops to demonstrate to the participants of the work that has been undertaken by the Regeneration Team working with the ULG and demonstrate the success of the project through using an integrated approach.

The work of the communication of the plan will come through the Regeneration Office of Longford County Council and will be funded through their budget. The first element of the communication strategy in terms of a summary document will not require any extra funding and will be prepared by the Regeneration Team as part of the preparation of the final IAP. The preparation of the leaflet will be carried out by the Regeneration Team of Longford County Council and will be distributed through outlets such as the library and other public spaces.

The preparation of the summary document and leaflet will be undertaken as part of the finalization of the IAP and will be prepared for presentation when presenting the final IAP. The social media campaign for the promotion of the project will be ongoing exercise. This will begin prior to the completion of the plan, with regular updates given through the various social media platforms on the actions identified and subsequently progress on implementation.





## 12 Conclusion

The development of this Integrated Action Plan has provided an important roadmap for the Local Authority and the wider town stakeholders in the redevelopment of Connolly Barracks. It highlights the importance which the Local Authority places on Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter to act as a driver for the social, economic and physical regeneration of Longford Town and the wider region. It clearly ties in with the priorities identified in the National Planning Framework, for the strengthening of the urban core of the county town.

The establishment of the ULG has ensured the stakeholders have had an opportunity not only to have their voices heard but also to influence the direction of the IAP and to ensure that the plan provides a social dividend to the town. This process has demonstrated that the redevelopment of Connolly Barracks cannot be considered in isolation. Connolly Barracks is set within the Northern Quarter, an area of Longford that has experienced significant decline with evidence of dereliction and vacancy in the area. Therefore, a co-ordinated approach to the redevelopment of the Northern Quarter must be taken. This will be developed through a masterplan, which will identify options for various sites throughout the Quarter, connecting them back into the town and benefitting the town.

As we move now from the Action Planning Phase under the guidance of the URBACT network to the implementation phase the importance of the process involved in the development of this Integrated Action Plan must not be lost and the strengthening of the ULG will be important. Through a very successful communication strategy to date, the Integrated Action Plan has the full buy-in from both public and private sector. The input of Government Department and agencies must now happen to fully realise the potential of this project.