

LONGFORD DRIVES INVESTMENT IN THE MIDLANDS

Longford County Council's Dedicated Regeneration Team will partner with local communities to drive a number of projects forward this year. The council is the engine behind initiatives such as Innovation Hubs in Longford Town and Edgeworthstown, a Norman Village Tourism attraction in Granard, a new library in Edgeworthstown in addition to a range of streetscape and enhancement projects across the county.

Longford County Council is striving to achieve operational excellence by looking to excel across its functional areas, with health and safety a prime example in setting standards. Over the last few years Longford has won several prestigious national health and safety accolades, such as the 'Best Local Authority' at the Annual Occupational Safety Awards Event.

It also became the first local authority to introduce the international safety management standard OSHAS 18001:2007 across sections in all directorates, this commitment to excellence is thanks in no small part to the dedicated work of Longford County Council's Safety Officer Mary Gouldsbury and her team. And a strong personal commitment has been demonstrated by each employee in Longford County Council to continually improve on health and safety.

And while other national awards have been won across tourism and the arts sectors, the key strength lies in Longford's flexible approach that allows different sectional areas to work together on the delivery of key projects to benefit County Longford.

Center Parcs is a good example of how the local authority deployed its full range of services to facilitate this €240m project. Longford has worked in partnership with Center Parcs at every stage of the process to provide planning guidance and infrastructural support. And importantly it has facilitated engagement with the local community.

This involvement with the local community has energised the local authority and helped the broader community in Ballymahon (where the Center Parcs resort is located) to be more confident in exploring ways their town can be enhanced and developed into the future.

According to Longford's Chief Executive Paddy Mahon, the County Council has a responsibility to ensure that the business support environment in Longford is strong and flexible enough to meet the needs of existing and potential employers.

"Longford County Council is proactive in its dealings with potential investors, always emphasising the advantages of a Longford location, especially in terms of its central location in the heart of Ireland, obvious cost advantages compared to larger

urban centres, employees with the right skill-sets and low levels of staff turnover. We pride ourselves in our approach to dealing with investors and believe that our open transparent approach is appreciated by the business community."

URBAN-RURAL REGENERATION

The priority of local government in 2019 is to drive regeneration, both urban and rural. "The range of funding programmes currently being rolled out by central government to support the regeneration of our towns and villages has given authorities like Longford a real opportunity to address and stem potential decline and create modern vibrant spaces for communities," he added.

While continued economic growth is the key to sustainable communities, Longford County Council has been to the fore in presenting the region as an attractive location for investment and co-ordinating the efforts of the different authorities designed to drive economic development.

Key employers such as Abbott, Avery Dennison, Tool & Plastic, Kiernan Milling and Panelto are all in expansion mode as employers and employees alike realise the value of a Midlands location.

The range of skilled personnel working within the local government sector means that Longford can meet any challenge with confidence, according to Paddy Mahon. "The fact that Center Parcs could deliver such a project of scale and significance in such a seamless manner working with a small local authority like Longford shows the great capacity local authorities have in meeting the needs of industry. We look forward to further achievements in 2019," the chief executive noted.



"Our open transparent approach is appreciated by the business community" – Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive, Longford County Council.