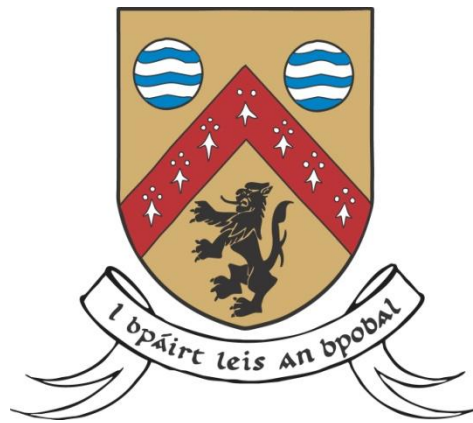


**Comhairle Chontae Laoise**

**Laois County Council**



**Service Delivery Plan 2020**

**Adopted by the Members on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

## SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2020

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**To: Cathaoirleach and Each Member of Laois County Council**

**Re: Service Delivery Plan 2020**

I enclose, for the consideration of Members of the Council, the Council's Service Delivery Plan for 2020.

The preparation and adoption of a Service Delivery Plan are provided for on a statutory basis in the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The Service Delivery Plan identifies the principal services to be provided by the Council to the public and is consistent with the adopted budget for 2020 and the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024.

The Plan is based on the objectives and strategies outlined in the Corporate Plan, in each of the Service Areas, and sets out the actions which the Council intends to take in 2020 so as to meet its commitments to its customers under its numerous policies, plans and programmes including the Local Economic Community Plan 2016-2021 and the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. A comprehensive work programme is planned to be undertaken through a variety of service delivery mechanisms, including direct service provision for the most part, by contract, through shared services in co-operation and in partnership with different agencies, through Service Level Agreements such as those with Enterprise Ireland and Irish Water and indirectly through the various grant and assistance schemes to community and other groups.

There is an emphasis in Local Government on performance and on the efficient delivery of services. Progress in implementing the Service Delivery Plans will be monitored by each department and their teams on a regular basis and relevant significant matters will be reported on, as appropriate, in the regular monthly Management Reports to the Elected Council.

There is an obligation also to include in the Council's Annual Report, an assessment of the Council's delivery of services during the year when compared with the Service Delivery Plan and such a statement will be included in the 2019 Annual Report. Assessments of the Council's performance will be undertaken by each Director of Service and his teams at their regular Service Review meetings and a mid-term report will be prepared and presented to the Corporate Policy Group

The adoption of the Service Delivery Plan for 2020 is recommended to Council.

Signed:

**John Mulholland**  
**Chief Executive**

## **Introduction**

This Service Delivery Plan for 2020 is prepared having full regard to the Councils Corporate Plan in which the Council's Mission Statement and its Core Values and Principals have been outlined as follows:

***“The Council will lead the sustainable economic, social, cultural and community development of our County and deliver quality public services to the communities we serve.”***

In supporting the democratic process and the mandate of the Elected Representatives as well as recognising the need for a safe, healthy, and a supportive environment for staff, the Council subscribes to the following core values and principles:

### **Our Vision:**

***“That Laois is an excellent place to live in, to work in, to invest in and to visit – for now and for the future”.***

### **Core Values:**

#### ***Local Democracy and Accountability***

The Council will exercise its democratic mandate in an impartial, transparent and accountable manner, subject to legal, ethical and statutory requirements.

#### ***Quality Customer Service***

The Council is committed to providing a high quality service to our customers, in an inclusive, equitable and responsive manner.

#### ***Sustainability***

The Council is committed to ensuring it works in ways which accord with the principle of sustainability, facilitate economic progress and social cohesion, and enhance and safe-guard the natural and built environment.

#### ***Social Inclusion***

The Council is committed to promoting social inclusion in all its activities.

#### ***Partnership***

The Council values partnership with private sector, state agencies, community groups, the wider community and our workforce.

#### ***Management of Resources and Value for Money***

The Council is committed to the efficient and effective use of the available financial and human resources.

## **Corporate Objectives**

The Corporate Objectives of Laois County Council are as follows:

1. To enhance the social, cultural and economic lives of the people of Laois,
2. To foster and promote sustainable environmental initiatives and practices in the County/Region,
3. To facilitate and promote sustainable development of the County, including the delivery of key infrastructural projects subject to compliance with good environmental standards and practice,
4. To promote and support socially inclusive communities,
5. To continue to develop and improve the quality of Customer Services,
6. To prudently manage the Council's resources to achieve effectiveness in outcomes for resources expended,
7. To continue to develop Corporate Management practices within the Council and to execute effective Risk Management practices.

## Corporate Affairs

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Service to Elected Members	To facilitate and support the representational role of Elected Members.
Franchise and Elections	To maximise participation in the democratic process. To prepare and complete an accurate Register of Electors. To facilitate the holding of elections and referenda.
Customer Services	To deliver an effective and efficient quality customer focussed service which responds to the needs of the community. To communicate effectively and maintain information clear, brief and concise.
Corporate Governance	To ensure that the requirements of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended in relation to Ethics is implemented in full in respect of employees and elected members.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. The ongoing provision by the Chief Executive and his staff of advice, information and guidance to Elected Members in relation to the strategic direction of the Council, in the exercise by the Council of their reserved functions, in support of the policy making role of the Elected Members and in the delivery of the day to day services.
2. Continue to support and develop the role of the Elected Members and to maximise efficiencies in the conduct of the meetings of Laois County Council and its committees.
3. To facilitate the ongoing implementation of enhanced customer service delivery arrangements at Áras an Chontae.
4. To implement the commitments outlined in Laois County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy in relation to the activities of Corporate Affairs.
5. Prepare and arrange for the adoption of Laois County Council's Annual Report for 2019 by 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.
6. Implement the requirements of the Ethics Framework.
7. Prepare and implement a Communications Strategy.
8. Ensure timely publication on the Council's website of the Agenda and agreed Minutes of Council meetings (including Municipal District meetings).
9. Publish the Register of Electors 2020/2021 in accordance with the prescribed timeframes together with any additional Supplements as required. Continue to maintain the Register and publish the draft Register of Electors 2021/2022 in November, 2020.

10. Facilitate and process requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, Access to Information on the Environment Regulations and Data Protection Acts.
11. Prepare and submit the annual return in respect of Performance Indicators for 2019 in accordance with agreed deadlines.
12. In association with the Information Technology section, continue with the implementation of the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 1988 to 2018.
13. Commence preparation of the Annual Service Delivery Plan for 2021 in December, 2020.
14. Co-ordinate the process of assessing the Council's performance under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

## Housing

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Housing	To ensure that all our citizens enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs , and as far as possible , in a location and tenure of their choice and to provide a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance.

### Key actions for 2020:

1. Achieve the Rebuilding Ireland minimum target of new accommodation units in 2020
2. Continue to progress The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund projects assigned to the Housing Section – CBS Lands and Convent Lands.
3. Continue to progress the delivery of social housing on the two urban regeneration project sites – O’Moore Place and Hepburn Court.
4. Through the Vacant Homes Office continue to examine vacant and derelict homes in the county and identify priority properties that can be quickly brought back into use.
5. Continue to maintain the achievement of 12 week turnaround when re-letting properties.
6. Ensure full compliance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.
7. Complete the fabric upgrade of 20 housing units in 2020. This will improve energy efficiencies among our housing stock.
8. Continue to build on our positive working relationships with the Approved Housing Bodies active in the County to ensure maximum delivery under CAS, CALF and Long Term Leasing.
9. Continue to maintain Council stock to good living standard for all tenants in accordance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.
10. Continue to enhance the Estate Management area, investigate all anti social behaviour complaints and provide a proactive tenant liaison response.
11. Continue to meet the HAP targets for 2020 as set out by the Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
12. Continue to provide Traveller Accommodation in line with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 adopted in September 2019.



13. Continue to meet the Private Rented Inspections targets for 2020 as set out by the Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
14. Continue to ensure suitable emergency accommodation is available to individuals and families that present homeless.
15. Continue to assist service users living in emergency accommodation and potentially homeless housing applicants to secure tenancies with the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) through the Homeless Hap Placefinder Service.
16. Continue to promote and administer the new Rebuilding Ireland Loan Scheme effectively and efficiently.
17. Maximise the number of grants awarded under the three Private Grant Schemes – Housing Aid for Older People, Housing Adaptation Grants and Mobility Aids Grants.

<b>Local Performance Target</b>
A target of 840 Private Rent Inspections will be carried out in 2020

## Roads and Transportation

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Roads – Network	Improvement and Restoration of the Regional and Local Road Network in line with Department of Transport Guidelines.
Road - Network	Improvement and Restoration of National Road Network in consultation with the TII.
Road – Bridges	Maintain and Improve Road Bridges throughout the County
Roads Safety	Engage with all relevant agencies in the promotion and improvement of Road Safety throughout the County. Complete traffic management studies and audits in our urban centres to identify traffic management deficiencies and opportunities to allow corrective action to be taken
Roads – Transportation Policy	Develop policies aimed at meeting the various transportation needs of the County through the Strategic Policy Committee
Roads – Sustainable Transport	<p>To consider national and international carbon reduction commitments in the design of new road infrastructure and in the provision and operation of public lighting services.</p> <p>Provision of a network of Electric Vehicle charging points.</p> <p>Provision of a Town bus Service for Portlaoise &amp; Graiguecullen.</p> <p>Due consideration of the needs of all road users in compliance with Section 13.5 of the Roads Act, particularly urban environments.</p> <p>To promote a shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport through the improvement and development of pedestrian, cycling electric vehicle charging infrastructure and public transport infrastructure and services.</p> <p>Provision of a network of Electric Vehicle charging points.</p>

### Key actions for 2020:

1. Undertaking of Health & Safety (work practices) Schedule of Inspections.
2. Restoration Improvement/Restoration Maintenance and Discretionary Maintenance Programmes on circa 50km of road network, as provided for in the

2020 Roadworks Programme (second year of the multi-annual 2019-2021 Roads Programme).

3. Implement the MapRoad system as a GIS for the public road network in County Laois and as an asset management system.
4. Improvement and Restoration of the National Road Network in consultation with the TII to include pavement and minor works projects.
5. Road Safety Working Together Committee to meet on at least 2 occasions in 2019.
6. Undertake of identified Low Cost Safety Improvement Schemes.
7. Undertake of approved Urban Regeneration Development Fund projects.
8. Deliver the Winter Maintenance Plan.
9. Commence development in 2020 of a Smarter Travel Strategy for County Laois.
10. Progress construction of the N80 Maidenhead Realignment Scheme to completion.
11. Ongoing Maintenance and Replacement of 8,000 public lights under Low Carbon initiatives, e.g., Low Carbon Town Portlaoise.
12. Delivery of Footpath Upgrade Scheme 2019.
13. Complete Phase 1 of the Lyster Square Enhancement Scheme in Portlaoise.
14. Commence development in 2020 of a County Laois Road Safety Plan 2020-2025.
15. Commence development in 2020 of a Multi Annual River Maintenance Programme 2020-2024.
16. Commence development in 2020 of a Multi Annual Bridge inspection and repair programme.
17. Administration and Enforcement of pay parking and associated Bye Laws.
18. Review of parking arrangements at agreed locations
19. Ensure compliance with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and other related Standards, Regulations and Guidelines.
20. Progress the goals of the Laois Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 appropriate to the Roads Section.

## **Capital Projects Office 2020**

### **Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF)**

1. Project Management of approved URDF projects:
  - Portlaoise Cultural Quarter (€7m)
  - Portlaoise Low carbon Town (€2m)

### **J17 National Enterprise Park**

1. Complete Construction of Phases 1-3 for roads and services infrastructure from J17 to Clonminam.

## **Laois Flood Relief Schemes**

### **Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme**

1. Advance stage 1 (scheme review and development of a preferred option) with the appointed consultants.

### **Portarlington Flood Relief Scheme**

1. Complete tender process and appointment of consultants for the project level development of this scheme.

2. Advance stage 1(scheme review and development of a preferred option).

### **Mountrath**

Assist the OPW Flood Risk Management Section to advance the further technical and financial assessment required within the Mountrath study area with a view to determining its eligibility or otherwise for inclusion as a future OPW funded Flood Relief Scheme.

### **Minor Works and Minor Projects**

1. Clonaslee:

Tender for and appointment of consultants for the design and development of this scheme.

2. Where feasible and within the resources made available prepare & submit applications to the OPW for Minor Works Schemes to alleviate identified flood risk. Advance schemes through to construction where funding is made available.

## Water Services

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
SLA - Public Water and Wastewater Schemes	<p>To work in collaboration with Irish Water in accordance with the Service Level Agreement to ensure that a safe, dependable and resilient water supply is provided to the people of Laois in compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and to assist Irish Water in improving the quality of effluent discharged from their Wastewater Treatment Plants. In so working in conjunction with Irish Water, protect the public health of Irish Water’s customers, improve the quality of of the effluent discharged to the receiving environment and support the socio-economic development of the County.</p> <p><i>This objective is subject to Irish Water continuing to provide the necessary financial and personnel resources in the annual budget &amp; that Irish Water deliver on the Capital Investment Programme (CIP) 2020-2024 in order for Laois County Council to meet the targets set out in the Annual Service Plan (ASP) 2020.</i></p>
Non SLA Rural Water	<p>Continue to support the Group Water Scheme Sector in conjunction with the DPHLG and with the support of the National Federation of Group Water Schemes financially, administratively and technically to ensure that a safe, dependable and adequate water supply is provided to the rural population and farming community in Laois in compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014, as amended, thus protecting the public health of the people of Laois and supporting the socio-economic development of the agricultural sector.</p>
Small Private Schemes with a commercial or public activity (SPSs)	<p>Carry out the functions of the local authority as the supervisory authority in order to improve the quality of water intended for human consumption in SPSs in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014 thus protecting the public health of the</p>

	people of Laois, in particular vulnerable users of drinking water and supporting the socio-economic development of the County.
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## Key Actions for 2020:

### SLA - Public Water and Wastewater Schemes

Delivery of service in accordance with the Service Level Agreement and the 2020 ASP.

**1. ASP 2020** - The Measures and targets agreed for these measures set within the ASP are grouped into one of the 4 categories as below:

- **Customer** – Providing services that are valued by customers. This is influenced by the CER Customer Handbook and proposed Overall Performance Assessments (POAs).
- **Internal Process/Compliance** – Adherence to all reporting requirements and meeting regulatory requirements set out by the relevant statutory and regulatory bodies e.g. CER and EPA.
- **Financial** – Providing a cost effective service, within budgetary constraints.
- **Learning and Growth** – To continuously improve and drive transformation and change initiatives.

**2.** In line with the **Joint National Laboratory Strategy**, maximise the usage of the Laois County Council’s INAB Accredited Water Service and Environmental Laboratory by IW so as to ensure the future sustainability and enhancement of an accredited Water Services/Environmental Laboratory Service.

### 3. Capital Projects

To progress capital schemes in Laois in conjunction with Irish Water thus supporting the socio-economic and educational development of the County, in particular:

- Portlaoise Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade.
- Portlaoise Water Supply Improvement – the introduction of 3 no. boreholes in Coolbanagher.

## Non-SLA Activities

### 1. Health and Safety:

- *H & S Inspections under LCCs SMS 2020 to 2021:* Ensure that programme of works is set and that the target number of inspections in that programme is met by relevant staff.
- *Welfare Facilities:* Continue to roll-out welfare facilities as required for all outdoor staff.

- Review and update Laois County Council's Safety Management Systems (SMS) & in particular risk assessments.

## 2. Laois County Council's INAB Accredited Water Service and Environmental Laboratory:

Complete a **5 year Business Plan** to be approved by Management in order to ensure the future viability of the Laois County Council Water Services/Environmental Laboratory, and in particular:

- *Market Strategy:* Maintain existing customer base and seek and secure new business from neighbouring Local Authorities, LAWPRO and LCC's Environment Section in accordance with Market Opportunities.
- *Network of Accredited Local Authority Laboratories:* Engage with WSTO, the Water Committee of the CCMA and the DPHLG to finalise the Business Plan for the implementation of this Shared Service.
- *Accreditation:* Enhance our Accreditation status by achieving accreditation for wastewater compliance parameters.
- *Monitoring of Private Drinking Water Supplies:* In accordance with EPA approved 2020 programme for monitoring of DW, ensure that all Private Supplies are monitored in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended, for all Public Group Water Schemes, regulated Private Group Water Schemes and small private supplies and extend to those exempt Private Group Water Supplies.

## 3. Rural Water

- *Multi-Annual Rural Water 2019 to 2020:* Complete the delivery of the programme.
- *Climate Change:* Carry out a review of all Private Regulated GWSs to assess the potential for energy, materials and chemical efficiencies,
- *Grants:* Allocate grants to active Group Water Schemes as soon as the allocations are notified by DHPLG. Monitor progress and works involved in the expenditure of the grants.
- *Taking in Charge GWSs:* In conjunction with Irish Water, continue the programme of upgrades to active and orphan GWS, to facilitate the takeover by Irish Water of same.
- *Data Acquisition:* Examine and establish current situation on all publicly supplied GWSs and Private GWSs.
- *Subsidies:* Administer subsidies to the 25 active GWSs in accordance with the subsidy scheme.
- *Well Grants:* Administer Well Grants in accordance with the well grant scheme.
- *Reports:* Submit reports and timely recoupment of grants, as required.
- *Water Quality:* Monitor water quality of the Group Water Schemes.
- *National Rural Water Review Group Project-Local Authority Services Delivery to Rural Water:* Continue to support the implementation of the national shared service.

#### **4. Small Private Schemes (SPSs)**

- Maintain Register and Review.
- Engage with SPSs and ensure that their water supply is monitored.
- Where there are exceedences, consult with the Health Service Executive to advise on appropriate action & keep existing protocols for consultation with HSE under review.
- Carry out 6 audits of SPSs and 2 of Private Group Water Schemes on a Risk Assessment Basis. Where required follow up with enforcement where there is unacceptable progress including issuing directions and taking legal action when appropriate and proportionate.
- Report annually to the EPA on Water Quality.
- Ensure that supplies are registered in accordance with the European Union (Water Policy) (Abstraction Registration) Regulations 2018.

#### **5. Dangerous Structures**

- Maintain and review the 15 open files on the Register of Dangerous Structures & Places. Continue to progress all files & reduce the number open to 10 during 2020.

#### **6. Public Nuisances**

- Follow up cases as they arise.



## Local Enterprise Office

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Maximising Business Potential	Deliver support services that equip Entrepreneurs, Owners and Managers with the knowledge to plan, grow and sustain productivity, innovation and competitiveness, as well as encourage greater technology uptake.
Collaborate with Enterprise Ireland	Enhance communication with Enterprise Ireland to facilitate potential progression of companies from LEO to EI, facilitating access to relevant EI financial, business and research facilities.
First Stop Shop	Provision of First Stop Shop activities in respect of Business Support, Enterprise Development and Promotion, including Signposting.
Make it easier to do business	Provide supports, guidance and solutions that make it easier for Entrepreneurs, Owners and Managers to identify opportunities and implement actions to start-up, grow and survive within a competitive business environment.
Promote a Best Practice Enterprise Culture	Act as the catalyst and advocate for the establishment of a best practice enterprise culture among start-ups, micro and small businesses; also promoting enterprise and self-employment as a viable career option among the wider population.
Environment for Start Ups	Implement actions and initiatives that create awareness among potential entrepreneurs of the types of supports available, thereby improving the conversion rate of business ideas to fully-formed enterprises.

**Priority actions for 2020 in the context of the Local Enterprise Development 4 year plan are:**

1. Increase awareness of the LEO/LA services through an enhanced communications strategy,
2. Strengthen links with Laois Diaspora
3. Market Laois as a place to do business through the promotion of the 'Connect2Laois' brand through the new website and other social media platforms
4. Support clients to effectively respond to Brexit
5. Assist businesses in developing an export strategy,
6. Encourage female entrepreneurs to maximise their full potential in their plans for growth and success,
7. Work with businesses to help them improve the efficiency and profitability of their business,
8. Support entrepreneurs, owners and manager in accessing financial supports and enabling them to plan, grow and sustain productivity, innovation and competitiveness,
9. Provide access to training and mentoring supports to an increased number of participants,
10. Support business in accessing and participating in exhibitions, seminars and networking events,
11. Promotion of the Micro-Finance Ireland Loan Fund,
12. Promotion of Online Trading Vouchers,
13. Liaise directly with Enterprise Ireland regarding the progression pathways for new and existing clients,
14. Refer enterprises to relevant support services,
15. Support sectoral networks to promote the development of clusters
16. Working with other key stakeholder to promote Laois as a place to do business,
17. Work with Enterprise Centres in the county to increase enterprise space offering,
18. Supporting economic actions in the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan, the Local Economic and Community Plan etc.

## Economic Development & Business Support Unit

The areas of activity and objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Promotion of Business Information and Enterprise Support Services	To contribute to a dynamic environment that is supportive of entrepreneurs and their new enterprises and the development and growth of the existing businesses in the County
Promotion of Economic Activity in the County	To attract Foreign Direct Investment to the County, foster employment and provide the right environment and supports to help all businesses to thrive.

1. Promote Council/LEO support to new and existing businesses in the County
2. To promote and develop the "Connect2Laois brand through an enhanced communications strategy
3. To manage the marketing and promotion of the J7 National Enterprise Park
4. To work with Laois Chamber of Commerce in promoting Laois as a place to do business
5. To support and promote enterprise in the County through the enhancement and improvement of Business Parks through the County
6. To promote Portlaoise as a place to do business through the "Portlaoise Town Team initiative"
7. To work with Laois TASTE to promote, support and grow the Food & Drinks Sector in the County
8. Access funding for economic development initiatives.
9. Build relationships with Internal, External (SME's), External (Large/FDI), Public Sector agencies for the creation of sustainable employment
10. To support the development of the newly renovated Enterprise Space in Abbeyleix Heritage Centre through the Town and Village renewal scheme
11. To support and assist the Enterprise Hubs in Portlaoise, Portarlington, Mountmellick & Mountrath.
12. To assist where necessary the advancement of projects allocated funding under the Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Funds, Regional Enterprise Development Fund and Town & Village Renewal Scheme
13. To work with other key stakeholder to promote Laois as a place to do business

## Tourism

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objective
County Promotion	To promote Laois as a quality tourist destination and events centre. Support and collaborate with industry partners to promote Laois as a vibrant, interesting and distinctive county.

### Key Actions for 2020

1. Administer the Tourism Grant Scheme for the county
2. Continue to Support the Board of Laois Tourism with their implementation of the strategy plan for tourism in Laois 2018 - 2023.
3. Continue to support Ireland's Ancient East initiative in association with Fáilte Ireland
4. Work with Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland and the Local Development Company to promote and work collectively on new Tourism Developments in the County, including the Barrow Blueway.
5. Support Coillte in progressing phase 2 of the Mountain Bike Trail in the Slieve Blooms
6. Support Ras na mBan the premier women's cycling event in Ireland.
7. Promote the Garden & Walking Trails within the County.
8. Promote and support existing County & Town Twinning Structures.
9. Obtain funding under the Tourism Destination Town Initiative for Portlaoise
10. Progress the provision of car parking at interpretative signage for the Rock of Dunamaise
11. Promote and Support the new Tourist Information Point at the Dunamaise Arts Centre.
12. Continue implementation of Laois County Council's 2017 - 2022 Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme

## Property Management

The Areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objective
Property Management	To record all acquisitions, disposals and burdens within the remit of Laois County Council to include Housing Stock and Land, Industrial Sites and keep it in an accurate Interest Register

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Continue to register all current land and housing interests and maintain the Property Interest Register to ensure it reconciles with the Fixed Asset and Fire Insurance registers and keep both up to date.
2. Migrate all property interest data from existing PIR system into the new IMGS System for 2020.
3. Register all current & historical land interests, land transactions and digitising to link into the PIR system, to ensure an accurate Property Register for the County.
4. Ensure best economic or optimal use of Council owned lands and consider disposal of non-essential sites.
5. Co-ordinate the purchase, sale, lease or transfer of all properties.
6. Invite expressions of interest for the reuse of property/land.
7. Continue to maintain all the Council's land, buildings & parks onto the National State Property Register Database that is overseen by the OPW.

## Broadband

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Broadband	To promote availability of Broadband through existing Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) and other service providers  To support the National Broadband Plan  To support the provision of high speed broadband throughout the County

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. To prepare a Local Digital Strategy for County Laois in 2020
2. Co-ordinate and assist in the rollout of the 11 Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) throughout the County.
3. Deliver on the four WIFI-4-EU vouchers granted in 2019 during 2020, in order to fund the setup of free WiFi hotspots in public spaces throughout the County.
4. Assist where possible with the rollout of broadband initiatives in line with the National Broadband Plan.
5. Support the rollout of High Speed broadband to all areas of the County.
6. Support the provision of Mobile Monopoles around the County to remove Mobile signal black spots.
7. Support the rollout of High Speed Broadband by providers such as EIR, SIRO, Virgin Media, ENET etc.
8. Support and provide High Speed Broadband Hubs in community and economic facilities throughout the county.

## Planning and Sustainable Development

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Forward Planning	To develop a plan led framework to guide the development of the County which is consistent with national and regional planning policies and the principles of sustainable development.
Development Management	To ensure that high quality services are provided by the Development Management process in an efficient, equitable and consistent manner to all our customers in line with proper planning and sustainable development.
Planning Enforcement	To ensure continued implementation of the Planning Enforcement process in line with relevant Planning and Development legislation.
Building Control	To monitor compliance with Building Regulations and implement the Building Control Management Systems in line with relevant building control legislation.
Unfinished Housing Developments	To continue to take estates in charge in an efficient manner consistent with National Guidelines and Planning and Development Legislation.
Derelict and Vacant Sites Implementation	To address the issue of dereliction and vacancy in the towns and villages of the County in line with the relevant Planning and Development legislation and Derelict Sites legislation

### Key Actions for 2020:

#### Forward Planning

1. Commence review of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 following the adoption of the RSES 2020.
2. Contribute to the Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Fund applications as required during 2020.

#### Development Management

1. Implement the E-Planning project being rolled out nationally with regard to the lodgement of planning applications online.
2. Provide an efficient Development Management service by ensuring all applications are dealt with within a timely manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

3. Provide a Pre-Planning Clinic service at Council offices every Thursday and with relevant sections in attendance as required.

### **Planning Enforcement**

1. Deal with all planning complaints within 6 weeks of receipt; take appropriate action by the issue of warnings letters or enforcement notices where required.
2. Implement of the Planning and Development Legislation in relation to the enforcement of short term lettings within the County.

### **Building Control**

1. Implement provisions of the Building Control Act and Regulations, maintain Public Register and inspect at least 12% -15% of construction sites.

### **Unfinished Housing Developments**

1. Monitor bonds on a monthly basis and submit claim on bonds as required.
2. Advance progress on current applications for taking in charge, complete the taking in charge of a minimum of 12 estates by the end of 2020.
3. Avail of government grants for site resolution works on unfinished housing developments.

### **Derelict and Vacant Sites Implementation**

1. Target at least 5 high priority Derelict Sites with focus on those in town/village centres which are negatively impacting upon the streetscape and indeed the Tidy Towns scores for these towns and villages.
2. Implement the Vacant Sites legislation by levying the site on the Vacant Sites Register in 2020.

<b>Local Performance Target</b>
A target of 12 no. estates to be taken in charge in 2020



## Heritage & Conservation

### Heritage

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Heritage	To record, conserve and raise awareness of the built, natural and cultural heritage of Laois, to promote participation in, access to and enjoyment of Laois heritage by all

#### Key Actions for 2020

1. Work on aspects of the Portlaoise Cultural Quarter project, primary conservation of Old St Peter's Graveyard, Phase II of the Fort Protector Public Realm upgrade, as part of the overall project.
2. Implement projects under the Laois Heritage Plan 2014 – 2020, with support from the Heritage Council, including
  - Heritage Awareness programmes (Biodiversity Week, Heritage Week, Science Week and end of year Conference).
  - Connecting Communities – continue to work with the community in Timahoe to ensure implementation of the Conservation Plan for the Monastic Site, including management of vegetation and masonry, and contribution to the Timahoe Heritage Festival even on the June Bank Holiday weekend. Commence work with the local community at the Heath, following publication of the Heath Heritage Guide, with plans to install interpretive signage at ring barrow sites.
  - Publications: Commence Phase I of a three- year project to publish a book on Rock of Dunamase with Wordwell Books, publish booklet on Garden Wildlife (Written and illustrated in 2019), Contribute to publication of book on Portarlinton Schools with Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society. Contribute to reprint of BirdWatch Ireland Garden Birds Poster for distribution to local schools and community groups.
3. Co-ordinate the writing of new Laois heritage Plan to cover the period 2020 – 2025, including public consultation and liaison with relevant external groups and internal committees e.g. SPCs.
4. Manage site specific conservation projects at Killabban Church, Kilmanman Church and other important sites as may arise throughout the year, in partnership with relevant community groups, Creative Ireland and elected members.
5. Ensure the completion, publication and implementation of the Fort Protector Conservation Plan, in association with Laois Heritage Society.

6. Work as part of a Steering Group to conserve, maintain and develop Donaghmore Workhouse
7. Work to maximise the benefit to heritage and communities in Laois of the Ireland's Ancient East programme, through the development of visitor facilities at the Rock of Dunamase, development and promotion of the Laois Heritage audio guides and app.
8. Coordinate the Creative Ireland Programme in 2020.
9. Assist and provide support to elected members, LCC staff, communities and individuals in accessing expertise and funding as required to conserve and promote Laois built, natural and cultural Heritage, including Community Heritage Projects through the Heritage Council.
10. Contribute to the development of strong heritage networks at local and national level through the Laois Heritage Forum and the Local Authority Heritage Officer Network.

## Conservation

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Conservation	To fulfil Laois County Council's obligations under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2014, in relation to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and to promote conservation of the built heritage of Laois through the statutory planning process and administration of conservation grants as funding allows

### Key Actions for 2020

1. Manage the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, and the Historic Structures Fund and any other funding made available by Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
2. Provide advisory service in relation to protected structures and assist owners in availing of funding to conserve protected structures.
3. Issue Section 57 Declarations as required by owners and managers of Protected Structures in a timely manner.
4. Take necessary enforcement action under the Planning Acts to ensure that Protected Structures are maintained.

## Environment

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
<b>Environmental Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To improve, protect, enhance and promote the natural and built environment in the interests of present and future generations</li><li>• Improve water status in all water bodies.</li><li>• To protect public health and to improve and maintain air quality and to protect against noise pollution.</li></ul>
<b>Waste Management &amp; Enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To improve, protect, enhance and promote the natural and built environment in the interests of present and future generations.</li><li>• The protection of human health and the environment against harmful effects that may be caused by the generation, collection, transport, treatment, storage and disposal of waste.</li></ul>
<b>Litter Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To prevent, control and manage litter.</li><li>• To encourage and promote public awareness.</li><li>• Provision of Waste Facilities.</li><li>• Partnership with Communities and Business.</li><li>• Enforcement of the Litter Pollution Acts</li></ul>

The Environment Section's design and implementation of waste policy shall ensure that we lessen our impact on the environment by helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the generation of all waste streams - including food, construction and demolition, packaging, and municipal waste.

Waste prevention is a central concept of the circular economy. The circular economy aims to reduce waste at all stages of the economic cycle and ensure materials are used as efficiently as possible.

All Environmental Services will have regard for the recently adopted Laois County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The Environment Section will continually monitor and review all of the potential risks and opportunities related to environmental compliance as well as climate change.

### **Key Actions for 2020:**

#### **1. Environmental Protection:**

Implementation of the National Environmental Enforcement Priorities 2020.

**(a) National Water Priorities 2020 “Improving Water Status in all Water Bodies”**

1. Water Framework Directive monitoring and investigative monitoring;
2. Investigate Water Quality complaints and incidents
3. Monitor and enforcement of private water supplies including the completion of 6 no. audits of Small Private Supplies & 2 No. Private Group Water Supplies.
4. Carry out Farm inspections, risk based on catchment science
5. Monitor & Enforcement of Section 4 – Discharge to Water licenses
6. Carry out inspections of domestic wastewater treatment systems in accordance with EPA’s Annual Plan;
7. Provide resources for engagement, knowledge exchange within priority areas for action and referrals from LAWPRO.
8. Assess and provide advice on conditions for planning permissions in relation to requirement for Section 4 License applications.

**(b) National Air Priorities 2020 “Protecting Public Health & to Improve and Maintain Air Quality.”**

1. Ensure that fuel merchants, retailers and householders are compliant with Solid Fuels Regulations;
2. Continue extension of Ambient Air Monitoring Programme;
3. Investigate Air and Noise complaints;
4. Assess and provide advice on conditions for planning permissions in relation to air/noise regulation
5. Provide ongoing resources to carry out enforcement work to ensure compliance with solvents, deco-paints & petroleum vapour regulations, air pollution licences, noise action plans and wind turbine complaints.

**2. Waste Management & Enforcement:**

Implementation of National Environmental Enforcement Priorities 2020.

**a) National Waste Priorities 2020 “Improving Waste Management & Protecting our Environment”**

1. Tackling significant illegal waste activity;
2. Identification of Multi-Agency Sites of interest;
3. Focus on the unauthorised disposal of C&D waste;
4. Focus on End-Of-Life Vehicles directive;
5. Ensure compliance with Waste Collection – Household & Commercial;
6. Tracking of waste flows.

**b) Implementation of WERLAs agreed Programme of Co-ordinated Work**

1. Waste Collection – Commercial & Household Food Waste;
2. Construction & Demolition Waste
3. End-of-Life Vehicles;
4. Unaccounted for Waste;
5. PRI Compliance.

### **c) Management of Laois County Council's Landfill & Civic Amenity Sites:**

1. Review SCADA system at Portlaoise Landfill.
2. Advertise tender for the management and operation of the Civic Amenity Sites at Portlaoise Landfill & Portarlington.
3. Develop a potential site layout that enhances access to the weighbridge/recycling areas, provides for recycling services that we may not be currently providing, circulation and improved management and control of the Landfill and CAS operations.
4. Review the Closure Plan/Restoration Fund/Lease Agreements etc.
5. Review overall housekeeping to limit illegal dumping and access to unauthorised areas etc.
6. Construction & Demolition Material and Cell 15: Review and prepare report for Management.
7. Carry out Health and Safety Audits & Inspections in accordance with annual programme.

### **3. Litter Management**

1. Implement the objectives of the Litter Management Plan 2018-2020
2. Draft New Litter Management Plan.
3. Ensure the objectives/aims in the Plan are central to everyday activities & prepare an annual report for the Elected Members.
4. Identify projects which assist in the delivery of raising awareness regarding litter pollution.
5. Enforce breaches of litter legislation including monitoring authorised temporary signage.
6. Investigate litter & illegal dumping complaints.

### **4. Bring Centres (Bottle Banks)**

1. Review regional Bring Centre collection contract & liaise with partner counties to ensure that the new collection contract includes for scheduled additional collections for the busy holiday periods of the year
2. Tackle illegal dumping incidents at sites
3. H&S audits & inspections

### **5. Veterinary Services**

1. Provide for the inspection of abattoirs and comply with the Services contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
2. Comply with the Service Contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (F.S.A.I.) in relation to the eleven food business plants and submit all reports and recoupments within the prescribed timeframe.

3. Provide for the control of dogs in accordance with the Control of Dogs Acts 1986 and 1992.
4. Comply with the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010.

<b>Local Performance Target – Waste Enforcement</b>
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The number of litter inspections completed for 2020 will be 1026. (A litter inspection is defined as a two hour patrol by a litter or community warden for the purpose of implementing the Litter Management Act.)
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## Fire Service

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Fire Brigade Operations	To provide for the rescue or safeguarding of persons and the protection of property from fire and other emergencies.
Fire Service Infrastructure	To provide satisfactory infrastructure for the fire service.
Fire Prevention	To provide for the safe guarding of the public from the hazard of fire in the built environment.
Community Fire Safety	To reduce the number of fires and other emergencies that put lives at risk in accordance with the "Keeping Communities Safe" policy.
Major Emergency Management	To prepare and maintain the Council's ability to carry out its functions in any Major Emergency, severe weather or other critical incident that might be declared.

### Key actions for 2020:

#### Fire Brigade Operations:

1. Maintain adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of LCFRS.
2. Respond to 100% of reportable/reported fire and other non fire emergencies 24hrs a day 365 days a year - on average 700 p.a. Ongoing to Q4,
3. Provide Senior Fire Officer roster 24/7/365 and provide initial senior Local Authority presence at the scene of a major incident/emergency via the Rostered Senior Fire Officer:
  - a. RSFO to respond and be in attendance within 60 minutes of the call if he/she determines it necessary to attend in accordance with the 1996 Rostering of Senior Fire Officers agreement.
4. Provide appropriate training and development for all LCFRS personnel:
  - a. Provide a minimum of 80 hours on-station training & 20 hours block for all retained personnel in accordance with the 1999 Composite Agreement to maintain our competent person concept.
5. Provide effective supervision, quality training and up to date equipment and safe system of work by using the Local Authority Safety Management System & carrying out Incident Safety Audits - Ongoing to Q4 2020.
6. Continue to survey and audit the location and adequacy of water supplies for fire-fighting purposes, fire-fighting equipment and fire hydrants, subject to agreement with Laois Co. Council/Irish Water regarding water storage levels & reservoir capacity.



7. Deliver the new PPE structural fire kit project as approved by Laois County Council in 2019.
8. Purchase 1 no. water tanker, as approved & 100% grant aided by the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management in 2019.
9. Maintain LCFRS capability in accordance with our Section 26 Fire and Emergency Operations Plan, showing the provision made by Laois County Council in respect of organisation, appliances, equipment, fire stations, water supplies and extinguishing agents, training, operational procedure and such other matters as may be relevant, and for dealing with operations of an emergency.

<b>Local Performance Target</b>
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Target time of 5 ½ minutes response from time of alert to going mobile to the incident.
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### **Fire Service Infrastructure:**

1. Progress the new capital works at Mountmellick Fire Station subject to capital funding provided by NDFEM.
2. Complete a Trench Rescue Training facility in Abbeyleix subject to capital funding provided by NDFEM.
3. Complete the upgrade of Mountrath Fire Station.

### **Fire Prevention:**

1. Maintain a register of fire safety notices served by LCFRS.
2. Assess & respond where appropriate to all planning applications referred to the Fire Service, ongoing to Q4 2020.
3. Engage with relevant parties for all licenced outdoor events held in Co. Laois - Ongoing to Q4 2020.
4. Administer Fire Safety Certificate Application and Assessment process – Ongoing to Q4 2020.
5. Assess Dangerous Substances licence applications- Ongoing to Q4 2020.
6. Respond to licensing application where appropriate, under Intoxicating Liquor Acts- Ongoing to Q4 2020.
7. Follow up on all fire safety related complaints – Ongoing to Q4 2020.

### **Community Fire Safety:**

1. Ongoing delivery of the Primary Schools Programme to 3<sup>rd</sup> class pupils in 70 schools in Co. Laois – end of Q4 2020.
2. Carry out Fire Safety in the home talks/demonstrations as necessary- Ongoing to Q4 2020.

### **Major Emergency Management:**

1. To continually develop and maintain Major Emergency Management capabilities of Laois County Council - Ongoing to Q4 2020:
  - a. Continue with Quarterly audits of key MEM areas such as our Local Co-ordination Centre, Controller of Operations Facilities, Crisis Management Team facilities - Ongoing to Q4 2020.
2. Review Laois County Council's Major Emergency Plan and update as necessary – End Q2, 2020.
3. Manage M.E.M training schedules as provided by the National Steering Group and Region Working Groups - Ongoing to Q4 2020.

## Civil Defence

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Support to the frontline emergency services. These include large events such as air shows, tall ships, concerts and festivals, sports events. We also support smaller local events such as parades.	To support the frontline emergency services in dealing with severe weather, flooding, major accidents, fire fighting and searching for missing people.
Provide supports to community events	To support community events throughout the year. These include events such as concerts and festivals & sports events. We also support smaller local events such as parades.

### Key actions for 2020:

1. To recruit and maintain an active and reliable force of 55 members. To maintain a well trained efficient team to assist in an emergency situation by having at least 60 training classes in 2020.
2. To continue to recruit new members.
3. To carry out a review of Civil Defence operations in Laois and benchmark against similar branches Nationwide.
4. To provide assistance to other Local Authorities as requested.
5. To assist communities with recovery and resilience in the aftermath of any incidents.
6. To provide and maintain the necessary specialist vehicles, plant and equipment for use as a supporting agency for incidents in the County and region as may be required.

## Library

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Library	<p>To continue to develop a modern accessible Library and Information service for all sections of the community.</p> <p>To maintain and continue to develop Library Infrastructures.</p> <p>To improve ICT facilities and Digital Library services throughout the Library branch network.</p> <p>To develop Libraries as Cultural and Learning Centres.</p>

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Continue to work in partnership with LGMA, Department of Rural and Community Development rolling out national library initiatives such as Right to Read, Work Matters, Healthy Ireland and Services to Marginalized and Disadvantaged Communities.
2. Adoption and Launch of Laois Library Development Plan 2020-2024. Build upon the national library strategy *Our Public Libraries 2022: Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities*.
3. Engage with all sections of the community promoting library usage through national events and activities such as Creative Ireland, Seachtain na nGaeliga, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Children's Book Festival, Laois Literary Events, Science week and Healthy Ireland.
4. Introduce AS(Autism Spectrum) Friendly library services and facilities on a pilot basis in some library branches .
5. Continue with Age Friendly library services in main libraries in the county.
6. Continue to upgrade ICT facilities in all library service points creating digital spaces and facilitate free digital learning in the library.
7. Piloting of the Open Library service in Portarlinton Library.
8. Continue with the construction of new Library at Main Street, Portlaoise
9. Continue to upgrade Library Website and social media pages to publicise and promote Library services to all.
10. Continue with Local history digitization and uploading of records to Laois Digital Archive.
11. Provide and upgrade high quality Free WIFI, IT facilities and provide access to printing and scanning facilities in all branches.
12. Provide and promote free access to online resources eBooks, eLearning, e-Languages.

## Community

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Laois Local Community Development Committee	To promote and assist an integrated approach to local and community development through plans and programmes both monitored and delivered by Laois Local Community Development Committee.
Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for all	To support delivery of services to the socially excluded throughout the County and where appropriate, to encourage civic engagement by those most excluded.
Laois Public Participation Network	To support the work of Laois PPN as the vehicle through which the Community, Social Inclusion and Environment sectors are represented in the local authority and other forums. To further develop the PPN to highlight the importance of civic participation and to ensure that the voice of the Community, Voluntary and Environmental sectors is heard.
Youth Democracy and Participation	To promote the participation of young people in decision making of service providers in the County and to encourage their input into the future development of our county through local authority youth programmes and Laois Comhairle na nÓg.
Age Friendly	To deliver quality services within existing structures, through co-operation and collaboration, ensuring resources are aligned and used with maximum efficiency and effectiveness for the ageing population of the County. To support existing collaborative structures in delivering the Age Friendly Programme in Laois.
Joint Policing	To support community policing initiatives in Laois and to further develop strategic relationships with An Garda Síochána and communities through the Joint Policing Committee structures.
Town and Village Renewal / Rural Regeneration	To deliver upon initiatives and funded programmes aimed at renewing our rural

	towns and villages, both aesthetically and economically and to support the ongoing development by communities in this regard.
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### **Key Actions for 2020:**

#### **Local Community Development Committee (LCDC):**

1. Monitor and ensure optimum delivery of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in 2020, a programme valued at approx €600K annually.
2. Complete a review the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 in 2020 and re-convene the LECP Steering Group in this regard.
3. Monitor and ensure delivery by Laois Local Action Group (LAG) of the LEADER Programme in 2020 and through this the delivery of objectives of the Laois Local Development Strategy 2014-2020. Programme value for period is €7.1m.
4. As Financial Partner in respect of the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, carry out all financial checks on LEADER projects, claims and administration claims, including the responsibility for Article 48 checks prescribed in EU Regulations.
5. Deliver upon all DRCD funding schemes rolled out to the LCDC, including the Community Enhancement Programme, estimated value in 2020 of €150,000.
6. Monitor the delivery of the Healthy Laois Plan 2018-2020, develop an implementation plan specific to 2020 and work with collaborative partners to achieve actions.

#### **Social Inclusion:**

1. Support and promote social inclusion in Laois, working collaboratively with other partners to do so.
2. Support the work of interagency partners in respect of the engagement and inclusion of the Traveller community.
3. Continue to administer to the Age Friendly Alliance and support the work of the Older People's Forum to drive the implementation of the Laois Age Friendly Strategy 2016-2021.
4. Support the work of partners in engaging with and assisting migrant communities. Support the implementation of the Laois Integration Strategy and deliver on local authority actions within. Work with Respond as the implementing partner throughout 2020 to ensure refugees settle into the community, access services and build lasting relationships with the local community.
5. Facilitate schools engagement programmes, e.g., Skills at Work and continue with other programmes/measures to increase awareness of local democracy and the work of the local government.
6. Support Laois Comhairle na nÓg to be the voice of young people in Laois and provide ways in which young people are included in shaping policy/plan making that will affect their lives and future.

## **Community Development:**

1. Launch the Socio-Economic profile of County Laois, and utilise the information therein for future policy development and evidence based initiatives and measures.
2. Support the development of Laois PPN and its work plan in 2020, particularly the development of Special Interest Groups and to ensure appropriate representation on local authority and other committees. Promote the PPN as the vehicle to support the “joined up” approach to raising and resolving of issues.
3. Work collaboratively with communities to support the physical and economic development of their local areas, through the Town and Village Renewal and Rural Regeneration and Development Schemes, both existing projects to be completed and applications which are funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2020.
4. Highlight and acknowledge the contribution of the community/voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors in Laois, by hosting the Annual Community & Voluntary Awards in 2020.
5. Continue to support the work of Laois Joint Policing Committee in 2020. Review the 5 year JPC Strategic Plan 2019-2021 and commence preparation of a new Strategic Plan.
6. Administer the 2020 Elected Members Discretionary funding to provide assistance to community projects across Laois.
7. Seek out suitable projects for entry in the 2020 Pride of Place competitions and if appropriate, work with entrant groups throughout the competitive process.

## Climate Action and Environmental Supports

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Community Initiatives / Tidy Towns	To support and facilitate environmental community development initiatives
Environmental Awareness	To raise environmental awareness by working with schools and community groups.
Local Agenda 21 (LA21)	To promote and facilitate sustainable development initiatives at community level.
Climate Change	To implement and develop the Laois Climate Change Adaption Strategy
Cemetery & Burial Ground Management	To maintain the 27 Cemeteries in the ownership of Laois County Council

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Provide financial assistance in accordance with the Community and Tidy Towns Grants Scheme and any other applicable grants as advised.
2. Engage with the Laois Federation of Tidy Towns committees on projects and identify suitable projects which will complement and enhance their existing work schedules.
3. Host environmental awareness activities for various sectors i.e. green schools teacher workshops, school based workshops with themed specialists, food waste minimisation etc.
4. Provide advice and assistance to the schools that have already been awarded the Green Flag in Laois and also to the schools endeavouring to achieve Green Flag status in 2020.
5. Co-ordinate the Climate Adaptation Steering Group within the Council to advance the Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy.
6. Implement relevant strategies and targets from the Laois Climate Change Adaption Strategy to combat Climate Change.
7. Identify suitable LA21 projects and have suitable partners to avail of funded projects, as appropriate.
8. Incorporate the principal of environmental sustainability in all our programmes.
9. Continue to progress conservation and carbon reducing initiatives that will aid the progression of making Laois a sustainable, climate-resilient region for future generations.
10. Continue to develop and maintain the 27 Cemeteries in the ownership of Laois County Council.
11. Continue to advance the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town, including Carbon Footprint tender, Street Light LED replacements, Electric Vehicle charging points, and Park and Ride facilities.



## Arts

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Inclusive and Creative Communities	To celebrate and increase public engagement in the arts in our county, particularly those for whom access to the arts is difficult.
Children and Young People	To support and encourage our children and youth to experience and develop through the arts.
Supporting artistic capacity and infrastructure	To underpin and support a suitable range of artistic infrastructure and capacity build both the built and community artistic infrastructure.
Collaborative working	To deliver our objectives by working in cooperation with our national and local partners.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Implement the strategic objectives of the Arts Plan 2018-2022 by developing an annual action plan for 2020, also fulfilling the actions in the Arts Framework Agreement 2018 – 2025.
2. Implement the 2020 Creative Ireland Laois Programme, in accordance with the objectives of the overall Creative Ireland Laois Programme 2018-2022.
3. Implementation of a public art plan for Laois in 2020.
4. Continue to oversee the development and installation of public art in Portlaoise in 2020.
5. Further develop partnerships with the Arts Council, Government Departments, Laois/Offaly ETB, ALAAO, NAYD, Poetry Ireland, the VAI and local partners.
6. Work collaboratively with partners on the Laois and Offaly Local Creative Youth Partnership, to develop a plan under the Local Creative Youth Partnership Initiative.
7. Promote and participate in national and local annual events such as Culture Night, National Drawing Day, Bealtaine Festival, Cruinniú na nÓg, the Leaves Literature Festival and other events as they are advised.
8. Administer schemes e.g., Arts Act Grants, Tyrone Guthrie Centre Bursary, Artist residencies, and provide support and advice to local festivals and community arts events.
9. Continue to implement the Artist in Schools scheme in 9 schools in Laois and the Summer Arts Programme.
10. Develop the potential in 2020 of our county's location as a creative hub and/or location for film making.
11. Continue to oversee the facilitation of Laois Youth Theatre, with over 100 participants and endeavour to expand the programme in Laois in 2020 from a participant and performance perspective.
12. Continue to support and develop our artistic infrastructure including the Laois Arthouse, Dunamais Arts Centre, Laois Music Centre and other artistic facilities
13. Develop "per cent for art" projects including Portlaoise Southern Link Road and Lower Main Street Portlaoise.

## Sport, Recreation and Play

The areas of Activity & Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Sport, Recreation and Play	To promote inclusion of people from all backgrounds and abilities in our planning with regard to sport, recreation and play.
Healthy and Active Living	To promote physical activity in forms to ensure good health and well being for all.
Facilities	To maintain to a high standard our recreational and sporting facilities and support the development of other such facilities in our county.
Support	To support sporting and community organisations in accessing funding and promote the development of all genres of sport and recreation.
Collaborative working	Endeavour to work in cooperation with partners in all sectors to achieve our common goals.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Continue implementation of the Recreation, Play and Sports Strategy 2018-2022 by developing an annual implementation plan for 2020.
2. Secure funding from various government departments to enable delivery of a range of national programmes and events that promote inclusive participation in recreation, play and sports.
3. Maintain to high standard, and continue to promote and develop public play spaces ensuring a quality experience for all users.  
Specifically,
  - complete accessibility infrastructural works at Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Mountrath and Stradbally Playgrounds
  - Install sensory play garden at Coolrain Playground
  - Make further applications for funding to upgrade play areas in 2020 under the DCYA Capital Infrastructure for Play and Recreation Programme and other funding streams.
  - Advise and support community groups with the development of community play facilities.
4. Oversee development of recreational infrastructural works in 2020, both Council led and collaborative projects, e.g., CLÁR, ORIS, Town and Village Renewal, and make further applications under each scheme, where appropriate, in 2020.
5. Develop Parks and Recreational Spaces Bye Laws in 2020.

6. Oversee the promotion and delivery of national programmes and events to encourage increased usage of public facilities and increase participation.
7. Further strengthen community cohesion by developing strong partnerships with Laois Sports Partnership, NGB's and local sporting groups in 2020.
8. Continue to assist community groups and clubs to develop quality sport, recreation and play facilities through the provision of advice, training and information.
9. Support key stakeholders in the ongoing development of Portlaoise College Athletic Track.
10. Identify best practical option for sports centre facilities in Portlaoise.

## **Water Safety**

1. Continue to oversee and support the Water Safety Programmes to primary schools in County Laois in 2020.
2. Maintain ring buoys and water safety signage erected by Laois County Council in 10 locations countywide.
3. Continue to raise awareness of water safety through the delivery of 4 key water safety events during Water Safety Awareness Week 2020.

## Financial Management and Motor Taxation

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Financial Management	To provide effective management of the Council's finances and resources to ensure delivery of the Council's objectives and to achieve and maximize efficiency

### Key actions for 2020:

1. Implement the budgetary control framework across all revenue divisions and capital programmes.
2. Monitor and manage the 2020 budget allocations for revenue and capital.
3. Provide monthly financial management reports to the Management Team detailing Expenditure / Income against budgets for revenue and capital.
4. Provide quarterly financial management reports to the Corporate Policy Group detailing Expenditure / Income against budgets for revenue and capital.
5. Daily / weekly monitoring of cash balances to ensure optimum use of cash/overdraft facilities.
6. Monthly reporting on debt collection performance.
7. Maximise all income streams and focus on debt collection.
8. Ensure all those who should pay rates, are set up for billing purposes.
9. Payment of: a) Trade Suppliers within 30 days, b) Engineering Certificates within 14 days, c) Utilities within 14 days. Although the terms of trade suppliers are 30 days, we aim to pay as many suppliers as possible within 15 days in accordance with the Prompt Payments legislation.
10. Implementation of E Invoicing project. This will further improve efficiencies in accounts payable.
11. Complete the Annual Financial Statement 2019 on or before the end of March 2020.
12. Prepare the budget for 2021 between 1st November 2020 and 29th November, 2020, with budget to be adopted by the Members within 10 days of the Budget meeting. Budget Book and CSV file to be with the DECLG by 31 December 2020.
13. Continue to implement the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process, the Mortgage to Rent Scheme and Shared Ownership re-structuring where deemed necessary.
14. Continue to develop efficient payment methods for all customers, including payment on line.
15. Motor Taxation – Continue to provide a flexible service to meet customer requirements.
16. Submit Statutory / EU IMF returns within the prescribed timelines:

**A) GGB/Quarterly Revenue, Capital and Debtors**

- Q4 2019, Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- Q1 2020 Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- Q2 2020 Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020
- Q3 2020 Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2020
- Q4 2020 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**B) 2020 Borrowing Return**

- Q4 2019 Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2020
- Q1 2020 Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2020
- Q2 2020 Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2020
- Q3 2020 Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2020
- Q4 2020 Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

<b>Local Performance Target</b>
Complete the Annual Financial Statement 2019 on or before the end of March 2020.

## Human Resources

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Recruitment and Selection	To source the appropriate human resources to meet the needs of the Council in accordance with the Workforce Plan.
Human Resources Policies, Procedures and Practices	To implement a 'People Strategy' for Laois County Council To develop and communicate policies to ensure compliance with employment legislation, and implement effective HR management systems.
Staff Training and Development	To train and develop staff in the skills and competencies needed to achieve organisational, team and individual objectives.
Industrial Relations	To maintain stable relationships between management, employees and union representatives.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Review Workforce planning requirements in line with the new Corporate plan 2019-2024.
2. Recruit in accordance with the requirements specified in the Council's Workforce Plan, Departmental Guidelines and support the delivery of labour activation measures as appropriate.
3. Progress a phased implementation of a 'People Strategy' for Laois County Council in 2020 and plan for further implementation measures in the medium term.
4. Develop and communicate H. R. policies having regard to its legal requirements in relation to equality and human rights, as required
5. Examine and review internal communications, within the overall Communications Strategy.
6. Ensure effective management of the CORE HR systems and the retained payroll/superannuation function.
7. Prepare and implement a staff Training and Development Programme for 2020.
8. Meet with Unions regularly to maintain a stable industrial relations environment and ensure compliance with the Public Service Agreements.

## Information Technology

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Information Technology	To provide Management and Staff with modern information systems to assist them in providing quality services to Customers and Elected Members
Information Technology	Provide a resilient and standardised Information Systems infrastructure for the organisation which will facilitate the cost effective and efficient provision of services to customers
Information Technology	Back office transformation through the digitisation of business processes to deliver efficiencies to staff and customers.

### Key actions for 2020:

1. Finalise the migration of the IT infrastructure from the LGMA managed National 'Forest' to the local Laois Domain.
2. Review the network infrastructure and plan for the upgrade of critical devices over a 3 year period.
3. Complete the rollout of the IT Security Roadmap 2019/2020 to protect critical systems, both 'on' and 'off' network.
4. Develop use cases for the Geographical Information System (GIS) for addressing issues across the organisation.
5. Assist Sections in implementing Business Process Improvements including in this year.
6. Deliver and develop a digital Process Management System within Housing
7. Upgrade the telephone system to provide cost effective voice and conferencing facilities.
8. Review, test and update the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan.
9. Upgrade connectivity to Government Networks, area offices, fire stations and libraries.
10. Support the Broadband Office in the development of the Laois Digital Strategy to maximise the opportunities resulting from the National Broadband Plan.
11. Provide input into the Laois Climate Adaptation Plan and its subsequent implementation.
12. Investigate collaborative opportunities regionally that offer efficiencies in cost and time.
13. Continue to review and document existing Contracts for Services and re-tender where required in line with procurement guidelines.

14. Continue to review of licensing requirements for Windows OS/Office desktop software and rollout an end of life replacement plan where required.
15. Continue to maintain and update the council Web Sites and Intranet and continue to facilitate the deployment of online services.
16. Continue to support staff and Councillors through a professional and efficient IT Support system.



## Risk Management

The areas of activity and objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Risk Management	To support the organization in delivering its objectives through minimizing associated identified risks and providing guidance and assurance.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Review and update the Risk Management Register.
2. Insure the Local Authority against all relevant risks.
3. Complete the Internal Audit Plan 2020 and develop future Audit Plans with due attention to the principle of governance.
4. Assist with the Local Government Audit and with the Food Safety Authority, the Fire and Emergency External Validation Groups assessment, the Service Indicator verification process, Irish Water's reporting and audits and Enterprise Ireland's audit of the micro enterprise programme and its other quarterly and annual verifications.
5. Address appropriately any issues raised in the audits.
6. Facilitate a minimum of four meetings of the Audit Committee in 2020.
7. Update the Property Interest Register.
8. Report to the National Oversight and Audit Commission on any issues raised by it.
9. Implement the recommendations of Value for Money Reports/Studies.

## Procurement

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Procurement	To ensure the main principles of Public Procurement are adhered to, while achieving value for money and managing risks associated with the procurement of goods, services and works on behalf of Laois County Council.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Ensure the procurement of supplies, services and works are in line with Procurement CE Order 8/2019 and revised EU Thresholds.
2. Review and publish Corporate Procurement Plan 2020 - 2023.
3. Review 2019 procurement procedures per Service Area with a view to developing a procurement strategy for 2020.
4. Assist and ensure the Public Spend Code Quality Assurance Report 2019 is submitted to NOAC by the end of May 2020.
5. Build organisational capacity to deliver successful procurements through procurement training.
6. Develop a detailed Procurement Procedures Manual in 2020.
7. Promote the use of green procurement and social considerations in our procurements where appropriate.
8. Implement and integrate the new LGMA Spend Tracker System with Milestone 4 with a view to it becoming a Contract Management System.
9. Promote participation in Office of Government Procurement (OGP) National Frameworks and ensure Service Areas comply with the terms of these Frameworks.
10. Promote participation in the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) Frameworks through the Supplygov portal and ensure that all mini competitions are conducted by Service Areas in accordance with the rules of the relevant Framework Agreements.
11. Ensure that all supplies & services over €25,000 and works over €50,000 which are not covered by an OGP or LGOPC Framework are publically advertised on E-Tenders and evaluated / awarded in accordance with EU Directive 2014/24/EU.
12. Encourage the use of the Quotation facility on E-Tenders & Supplygov.ie
13. Ensure that Laois County Council utilises the new Minor Building Works – Residential Framework which is now in place.
14. Encourage centralised procurement for Facilities Management and Maintenance.
15. Ensure that the correct procurement referencing is clearly stated on all Requisition Orders.

## Health and Safety

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Safety Health and Welfare	To provide: Safe places of work, Safe Systems of work, Safe Plant and Equipment, Safe and healthy employees, so far is reasonably practicable.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Monitoring of our Safety Management System through a Safety Inspection Programme (c 250 inspections) and Incident Investigation as appropriate.
2. Prioritising preventative/corrective action programme within each Department - (Q 1, 2, 3 and 4).
3. The provision and implementation of a Health & Safety Training Programme
4. Provision of occupational health services - (Q 1, 2, 3 and 4).
5. Maintain and enhance safety communication mechanisms - (Q 1, 2, 3 and 4).
6. Review/upgrade lone working IT based system (Q 2).
7. Review of statutory plant arrangements as with new Insurance Company engaged (Q1/Q2)
8. Continued rollout of an IT based interactive Safety Management System/consider alternative system - (Q1, 2, 3, and 4).
9. Enhance GDPR arrangements as appropriate.

## My Pay

The areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder in respect of this area:

<b>Areas of Activity</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
Project Planning and Implementation	Develop and implement a roll-out schedule to have all Local Authorities live by the end of 2021. Develop and implement a roll-out schedule to migrate Wave 6 Local Authorities into MyPay by the end of 2020.
Payroll	Ensure all payees in the sector are paid accurately and on time.
Superannuation	Develop a Centre of Excellence for superannuation for the sector.
Quality Management	Develop a quality management system to facilitate the delivery of a quality payroll and superannuation service.

### Key Actions for 2020:

1. Migrate Wave 6 Local Authorities into MyPay by the end of 2020.
2. Make €900,000,000 in total payments to approximately 43,000 Local Authority payees in 2020.
3. Continue to achieve accuracy levels greater than 98% target. MyPay currently achieve 99.9% accuracy.
4. Progress the Superannuation rollout to wave 3 Local Authorities by the end of 2020.
5. Manage the Single Public Service Pension scheme for the Local Government Sector.
6. Manage the creation and submission of all payroll related taxation requirements on behalf of our client local authorities as their tax agents.
7. Provide advice and support to all local authorities and participate in policy formulation for the sector in relation to payroll.
8. Comply with all Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and service level obligations as set out in the Payroll Service Level Agreement.
9. Provide accurate pension entitlement statements for our client local authorities.
10. Provide advice and support to all local authorities and participate in policy formulation for the sector in relation to superannuation.
11. Comply with the following Key Performance Indicator (KPI) obligations:

<b>Category</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>KPI</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Reporting Period</b>
Accuracy	1.1	Incorrect net pay due to Client error as a percentage of number of payees.	Less than 2%	Quarterly
	1.2	Incorrect net pay due to Service Provider error as a percentage of number of payees.	Less than 2%	Quarterly
Timeliness	2.1	No. of delays to payroll runs due to the Client.	Less than 4 per quarter	Quarterly
	2.2	No. delays to payroll runs due to the Service Provider.	Less than 4 per quarter	Quarterly
	2.3	EFT payment file submitted for payment to the bank in accordance with the payroll timelines	100%	Quarterly
Compliance	3.1	Submit month end and year end returns to Revenue by statutory dates	100%	Quarterly
Customer Service	4.1	Percentage of queries to service desk resolved within target times.	90%	Quarterly
	4.2	Number of queries received by the Service Provider	N/A	Quarterly

11. Monitor and report on performance to ensure that agreed service levels are being met or exceeded.
12. Actively review our processes to support our continuous improvement targets.
13. Manage and report on the mitigation of risk in the centre.