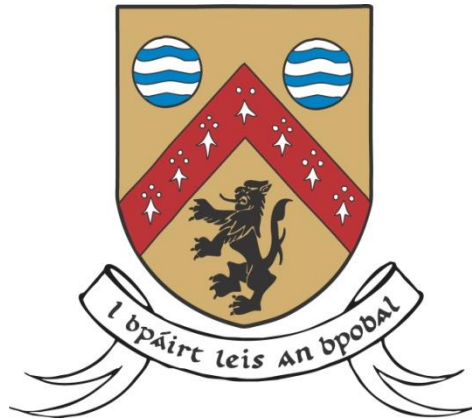


Comhairle Chontae Laoise

Laois County Council



Service Delivery Plan 2023

**Adopted by the Members of Laois County Council at the December meeting
held on the 12th December 2022**

SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2023

Page No.

Foreword by Chief Executive	3
Introduction	4
Our Values	4
Corporate Objectives.....	5
Corporate Affairs	6
Housing	8
Roads and Transportation	11
Capital Projects	13
Water Services.....	15
Local Enterprise Office	20
Economic Development & Business Support Unit	21
Tourism	22
Property Management.....	23
Broadband.....	24
Planning and Sustainable Development	25
Heritage and Conservation.....	28
Environment.....	33
Fire Services	36
Civil Defence	39
Library	41
Ukrainian Response	43
Community.....	44
Climate Action and Environmental Supports.....	48
Arts, Sport, Recreation and Play	50
Financial Management and Motor Taxation.....	54
Human Resources	56
Information Technology.....	57
Risk Management	59
Procurement	60
Health and Safety.....	61
My Pay	62

To: Cathaoirleach and Each Member of Laois County Council

Re: Service Delivery Plan 2023

I enclose, for the consideration of Members of the Council, the Council's Service Delivery Plan for 2023.

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 2023, the three-year Indicative Capital Programme 2023 - 2025 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 2023 so as to meet its commitments under numerous policies, plans and programmes including the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 - 2026. 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 ongoing emphasis in Local Government on performance, on value for money and on the efficient delivery of services. Progress in implementing the Service Delivery Plans will be monitored by each internal department 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 also an obligation 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 2022 Annual Report. Assessments of the Council's performance will be undertaken by each Director of Service 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 2023 is recommended to Council.

Signed:

John Mulholland
Chief Executive

Introduction

This Service Delivery Plan for 2023 is prepared having full regard to the Councils Corporate Plan in which the Council's Mission Statement and its Core Values and Principles 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 2023:

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 2022 by 30th June 2023.
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. Implement the requirements of Part 3 of the Electoral Reform Act 2022 in relation to the Rolling Register.
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 2022 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 2024 immediately after the adoption of the 2024 Budget.
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 2023:

Housing Capital Delivery

1. Achieve *Housing for All* target 2022-2026 in respect of all genres of housing delivery in 2023.
2. Achieve Social Housing new build delivery targets for 2023 through direct construction and turnkey schemes.
3. Maintain the positive working relationships with the Approved Housing Bodies active in the County to ensure maximum social housing delivery under CAS, CALF and Leasing schemes.
4. Optimise the use of the Midlands AHB Forum to consult and support AHB's in meeting their requirements under the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA).
5. Use the Dept of Housing assistance schemes to provide options, where possible in Laois, to enable those who wish to become homeowners to buy or rent through affordable or cost rental schemes.
6. Actively pursue opportunities to increase the Council's landbank for social/affordable housing.
7. Continue to acquire, where appropriate, houses for specific social housing need, as prescribed annually by Dept of Housing Circular.
8. Continue to ensure suitable emergency accommodation is available to individuals and families that present and are deemed to be homeless.
9. Provide Traveller Accommodation to meet the targets as set out in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 adopted in September 2019.
10. Provide accommodation for persons with a disability in accordance with the Strategic Housing Plan for people with Disabilities 2021-2026, adopted in December 2021.

Regeneration

11. Progress the regeneration of lands across the county including town regeneration sites to provide social/affordable housing.
12. Identify and map vacant/derelict homes and sites in the county and prioritise their re-use as residential and/or sale to provide homes, as appropriate, under schemes such as Repair and Lease, Buy and Renew and Croí Conaithe funding Streams.
13. Use CPO legislation to actively acquire derelict and vacant sites for housing purposes to deal with dereliction and urban decay within our towns and villages.

Housing Operations

14. Continue to allocate social housing to approved applicants as per the Council's Scheme of Allocations 2011.
15. Continue to effectively and efficiently manage social housing, rental accommodation and social housing leasing tenancies, including carrying out of rent reviews where appropriate.
16. Review the Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities in 2023.
17. Continue to meet the Housing Assistance Payment targets for 2023 as set by the Dept of Housing.
18. 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.
19. Carry out a Differential Rent Review in 2023 for all social housing tenants.
20. Meet the Private Rented Inspections targets for 2023 as set out by the Dept of Housing.
21. Maintain the average rate of 23-week turnaround when re-letting properties, as shown in the NOAC performance indicator report 2021.
22. Reduce energy usage in Council social housing stock by implementing Energy Retrofit programmes
23. Complete the retrofit of 74 housing units in 2023 under the retrofit programme.
24. Maintain Council Housing stock to a good living standard for all tenants in accordance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 and associated guidelines issued thereafter.
25. Assess and process applications under all Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability in Social Housing.
26. Assess and process applications sought under the Housing Aid for Older People, Housing Adaptation Grants and Mobility Aids Grants.
27. Continue to effectively and efficiently promote and administer the Rebuilding Ireland Loan scheme and any subsequent schemes introduced in 2023.

Estate Management

28. Review Anti Social Behaviour Strategy in 2023
29. Continue to investigate all anti-social behaviour complaints and provide a proactive Tenant Liaison response.
30. Provide Tenant Liaison services including estate management supports to all tenants in line with Tenant Handbook.
31. Review Tenant Handbook in 2023 taking into account new climate action measures.
32. Endeavour to carry out tenant liaison inspections in each estate in 2023, prioritising transfer applicants.

Housing Support Services

33. Review the Midlands Region Homelessness Action Plan in 2023.
34. Continue with SLA with Midlands Simon and Peter McVerry Trust regarding the provision of homeless services.
35. Support the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
36. Coordinate Housing Disability Steering Group meetings.

Local Performance Target
A target of 1,200 Private Rented Inspections will be carried out in 2023.

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</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 2023:

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 2023 Roadworks 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. Deliver new infrastructure and improvements in existing infrastructure in the area of Smarter Travel in consultation with the NTA.
6. Road Safety Working Together Committee to meet on at least 2 occasions in 2023.
7. Undertake identified Low Cost Safety Improvement Schemes.
8. Undertake approved Urban Regeneration Development Fund projects.
9. Undertake approved Town & Village Renewal Scheme projects.
10. Undertake approved Active Travel Measures projects.
11. Undertake approved Bridge Rehabilitation projects.
12. Undertake approved Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience projects.
13. Undertake the N77 Abbeyleix Road Enhancement Scheme.
14. Undertake identified Community Involvement in Roadworks Schemes.
15. Undertake identified Local Improvement Schemes.
16. Deliver the Winter Maintenance Plan 2022/23.
17. Commence development in 2023 of a Smarter Travel Strategy for County Laois.
18. Ongoing Maintenance and Replacement of 9,350 public lights under Low Carbon initiatives, e.g., Low Carbon Town Portlaoise.
19. Delivery of Footpath Upgrade Scheme.
20. Progress design of Phase 2 of the Lyster Square Enhancement Scheme in Portlaoise.
21. Continue to progress in 2023, the delivery of a Multi Annual River Maintenance Programme 2020-2024.
22. Commence development in 2023 of a Multi Annual Bridge inspection and repair programme.
23. Administration and Enforcement of pay parking and associated Bye Laws.
24. Review of parking arrangements at agreed locations
25. Ensure compliance with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and other related Standards, Regulations and Guidelines.
26. Progress the goals of the Laois Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 appropriate to the Roads Section.

Capital Projects Office 2023

Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF) Project Management of approved Call 1 projects:

Portlaoise Cultural Quarter (€7m)

- CBS Lands Carpark completion
- Convent Urban Garden & New Street to the Triogue.

Portlaoise Low Carbon Town (€2m)

- Triogue way progress Phase 2 & 3 to consent.
- Completion of upgrade & improvements to Portlaoise cycle routes.
- Completion of Low Energy lighting upgrade for Portlaoise Town.

Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF) Project Management of approved Call 2 projects:

Portlaoise, A place making project for a low Carbon Town Centre (€12m over 3 phases)

- Advance project from provisional approval to confirmed project funding.
- Commence design, planning consent and construction where possible of Phase 1 Cultural Quarter connection to Main St and Portlaoise Laneways with associated works at Lyster Square.

Outdoor Public Space Scheme

- **Delivery of Old Fort Outdoor Event Space project.**

J17 National Enterprise Park

- Advance construction of roads and services for Phase 4 Western Arm.

Portlaoise Town Bus Service

- Finalise the detailed design, tender and works for delivery of Bus Stops. Work with the NTA to advance the tender for an operator for the service subject to the provision of funding by the NTA.

Laois Flood Relief Schemes

Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme

- Complete Stage1 (scheme review and development of a preferred option) &

advance Stage 2 (planning consent).

Portarlington Flood Relief Scheme

- Complete stage 1 (scheme review and development of a preferred option).
- Commence Stage 2 (planning consent).

Clonaslee Flood Relief Scheme (Minor Project)

- Complete stage 1 (scheme review and development of a preferred option).
- Commence Stage 2 (planning consent).

Mountrath

- Work with the OPW Flood Risk Management Section to complete the Scheme Viability Review for 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 Schemes

- 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.

NTA Active Travel

- Design, tender and advance the construction of a number of Active Travel projects including the Dublin road scheme.

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>Engage and work with Irish Water, their Integration and Management Team and Regional Operations Management team to maintain service continuity as operations transfer from local authorities to a single, national water services authority, Uisce Eireann from 1st January 2023.</p> <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 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 & 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) 2023.</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)	Carry out the functions of the local authority as 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 people of Laois, in particular vulnerable users of drinking water and supporting the socio-economic development of the County.
---	--

Key Actions for 2023:

SLA - Public Water and Wastewater Schemes

Delivery of service in accordance with the Service Level Agreement and the 2023 ASP.

1. ASP 2023 - The Measures and targets agreed for these measures set within the ASP are grouped into one of the 4 categories as below:

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

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.
- Disinfection/PH control programme
- Leakage Reduction Program
- Mountmellick and Portarlinton DAP
- Ballyroan WwTP upgrade

- Small Towns and Villages Growth Program (Ballinakill & Borris in Ossory WTPS)

4. Taking in Charge

- To work with Irish Water to take 19 no. outstanding legacy estates in charge. These estates are already taken in charge by Laois County Council. Approximately half of these estates will require considerable funding to upgrade the water/wastewater services assets.
- To work with the Planning Section, Roads Section and Irish Water to take 12 no. new estates in charge.

Non-SLA Activities

1. Health and Safety:

- *H & S Inspections under LCCs SMS 2022 to 2023:* Ensure that programme of works is set and that the target number of inspections in that programme is met by relevant 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.
- 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 2022 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 Programme 2022-2024: Advertise, promote and administer submissions and applications and progress 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 exceedances, 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

- Continue to monitor progress on the only one open Dangerous Structure file.
- Follow up on all cases as they arise

6. Public Nuisances

- No. open files at 15th November 2022.
- Follow up cases as they arise.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2023:

1. Support businesses and enterprises as they continue to adapt to and recover from the challenging economic environment and impact of Brexit, Covid 19 and the ongoing Ukrainian crisis.
2. Promote the Green Agenda
3. Support new/existing projects through the provision of direct financial assistance.
4. Co-ordinate training and mentoring support for businesses.
5. Continue to foster an enterprise culture within the county through the Student Enterprise Programme, business networks, promotional campaigns, etc
6. Assist businesses in developing an export strategy
7. Assist businesses in becoming more innovative and competitive
8. Support business in accessing and participating in exhibitions, seminars and networking events
9. Assist businesses grow online through the Online Trading Voucher Scheme
10. Work with other key stakeholders to promote Laois as a place to do business
11. Work with Enterprise Centres in the County to increase enterprise space offering
12. Support economic actions in the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan, the Local Economic and Community Plan, etc.

Economic Development and 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 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.

Key Actions for 2023:

1. Promote Council / LEO support to new and existing businesses in the County.
2. Promote and develop the "Connect2Laois brand through an enhanced communication's strategy.
3. Work with the Laois Chamber Alliance in promoting Laois as a place to do business.
4. Support and promote enterprise through the enhancement and improvement of Business Parks in the County.
5. Promote Portlaoise as a place to do business through the "Portlaoise Town Team initiative".
6. Work with Laois TASTE to promote, support and grow the Food and Drinks Sector in the County.
7. Support and promote the development of the Farmer's markets in the County.
8. Access funding for economic development initiatives.
9. Build relationships with Internal, External (S.M.E.'s), External (Large / F.D.I.) and Public Sector agencies for the creation of sustainable employment.
10. Complete the Portlaoise Tourism Destination Town Project.
11. Continue the roll out of the Façade Enhancement Scheme across the County.
12. Extend the Vacant Commercial Property Incentive Scheme to other towns in the County.
13. Assist the advancement of projects allocated funding under the Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Funds, the Regional Enterprise Development Fund and the Town & Village Renewal Schemes.
14. Work with other key stakeholder to promote Laois as a place to do business.
15. Implement an online application facility to enable businesses to access grant opportunities in a more streamlined manner.

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 2023

1. Administer Laois County Council's Tourism Grant Scheme 2023;
2. Support new and existing Festivals in the County.
3. Continue to support the Board of the Laois Chamber Alliance with their implementation of the Strategic Plan for Tourism in Laois 2018 - 2023.
4. Continue to support Ireland's Ancient East initiatives and promotional campaigns in association with Fáilte Ireland.
5. Work with Fáilte Ireland, OPW, Waterways Ireland and the Local Community Development Company to promote and work collectively on new tourism developments in the County, including the completion of the Barrow Blueway;
6. Support Coillte in the completion of the Mountain Bike Trail in the Slieve Blooms;
7. Support the Ras na mBan "Premier Women's Cycling" event in Laois in 2023;
8. Participate in the National Ploughing Championships 2023 by providing an opportunity for local business, craft and service providers to engage in same;
9. Promote the Garden and Walking Trails within the County.
10. Promote and support existing County and Town Twinning structures.
11. Complete the Tourism Destination Town Project for Portlaoise;
12. Continue implementation of Laois County Council's 2017 - 2022 Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme;
13. Support the Portarlinton Regeneration Strategy 2030;
14. Support the development of Caravan & Camping Parks in Laois;
15. Continue to work with the members of the Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism SPC.

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 leases within the remit of Laois County Council to include Housing Stock and Land, Industrial Sites and keep in an accurate Mapping Register.

Key Actions for 2023:

1. Continue to register all current land and housing interests and maintain the M.App Enterprise System.
2. Reconciliation of the M.App Enterprise System to the Fixed Asset Register in Milestone 4 Financial Management System;
3. Ensure best economic or optimal use of Council owned lands and consider disposal of non-essential sites;
4. Co-ordinate the purchase, sale, lease or transfer of all properties in co-operation with relevant sections;
5. Invite expressions of interest for the reuse of property/land;
6. Regulate all Leases of Council Land / Properties;
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 2023:

1. Support the implementation of the 2023 action items as outlined in the Laois Digital Strategy 2020-2024
2. Co-ordinate and assist in the rollout of further Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) throughout the County as required and funding allows;
3. Assist where possible with the rollout of broadband initiatives in line with the National Broadband Plan.
4. Support the rollout of High Speed broadband to all areas of the County.
5. Support the provision of Mobile Monopoles around the County to remove Mobile signal black spots.
6. Support the rollout of High Speed Broadband by providers such as EIR, SIRO, Virgin Media, ENET etc.
7. 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.
Regeneration	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, finance legislation and Derelict Sites legislation

Key Actions for 2023:

Forward Planning

1. Implement the objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.
2. Commence the review process for the Local Area Plans for Portlaoise, Mountmellick in 2023.
3. Review the Graiguecullen JUAP in conjunction with Carlow County Council in 2023.
4. Review Portarlington LAP in conjunction with Offaly County Council in 2023.
5. Prepare Masterplan for lands on Southern Circular Road, Portlaoise in 2023.

6. Prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for Co Laois and accompanying variation to the CDP 2021-2027 in 2023.
7. Contribute to the Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Fund and TVRS applications as required during 2023.
8. Commence review of the Development Contribution Scheme 2017-2023 and prepare a new scheme for the period 2023-2028.
9. Implement the provisions of the Residential Zoned land Tax legislation.

Development Management

1. Provide an efficient Development Management service by ensuring all applications, Section 5 declarations, Section 97 certs, etc. are dealt with within a timely manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation.
2. Implement the E-Planning project being rolled out nationally with regard to the lodgment of planning applications online.
3. Provide a Pre-Planning Clinic service remotely and in Council offices and with relevant sections in attendance as required.
4. Ensure Compliance reports for planning consents are dealt with within a timely manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation.
5. Comply with processes, as required, in relation to the provision of reports on Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SID) for An Bord Pleanala and Large Scale residential Developments (LRD).
6. Review and monitor the Planning pages of the Council website to ensure that it provides current, clear and concise information to the public.

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.
2. Implement the BCMS system
3. Continue to process Disability Access Certificates (DAC).

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 2023.
3. Avail of government grants for site resolution works on unfinished housing developments.

Regeneration

1. Utilise the regeneration team to co-ordinate Vacant Sites and Derelict Sites legislation and the vacant homes office to proactively deliver housing development.
2. Ensure the process in relation to Derelict Sites is monitored and implemented in compliance with relevant legislation.
3. Target at least 5 high priority Derelict Sites with focus on those in town/village centres which are negatively impacting upon the streetscape and the Tidy Towns scores for these towns and villages.
4. Implement the Vacant Sites legislation by levying the sites on the Vacant Sites Register in 2023.
5. Implement the Residential Zoned Land Tax in accordance with legislation.

Local Performance Target
A target of 12 no. estates to be taken in charge in 2023

Heritage & Conservation

Heritage

A new Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026 for Laois was adopted in 2021. The aims of the Strategy are detailed below and will be reflected in each Annual Service plan for the lifetime of the strategy.

Areas of Activity	Aims
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Conserve and enhance the heritage and biodiversity of Laois;b) Commemorate the people and events of historical significance for Laois;c) Integrate our work across built, natural and cultural heritage, where possible; andd) Celebrate and promote the heritage and biodiversity of Laois.

In order to deliver on our aims over the life of the strategy, delivery will be targeted under the eight objectives as set out below:

Key Actions for 2023:

1. Research, Data Collection and Best Practice

Objective: Document Laois heritage and biodiversity and ensure that all partners have access to the data, insights and expert guidance required to inform decision-making and guide future investment.

1.1. Phase III of Laois Wetland Survey, with funding from the National Biodiversity Action Plan

1.2. Publish Conservation Plans for Dysartgallen, Clopook and Kilmanman Graveyards

2. Investment in Key Sites and Programmes

Objective: Build on investment in conservation and biodiversity undertaken to sustain and enhance key built, natural and cultural heritage assets in Laois.

2.1. Ensure opening Old St Peter's Graveyard Portlaoise to the public once conservation works are complete

- 2.2. Contribute to interpretation of Fort Protector Portlaoise through Portlaoise Destination Town Project
- 2.3. Collaborate on project to create visitor facilities at the Rock of Dunamase, subject to availability of suitable site.
- 2.4. Carry out urgent conservation works at Donaghmore Workhouse
- 2.5. Continue support for James Fintan Lalor Homeplace at Tinakill House

3. Investment in People and Community-led Heritage and Biodiversity

Objective: Support the work of heritage and biodiversity champions and build the capacity of local communities to conserve, commemorate, and celebrate local heritage and strengthen pride of place.

- 3.1. Work with communities in Clopook, Dysart Gallen and Kilmanman on the new Laois Offaly Conservation and Pollination project, with funding from the Just Transition Fund.
- 3.2. Continue to work with the community at Timahoe Monastic Site to manage the landscape and buildings on site, with input from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- 3.3. Manage ongoing community heritage conservation projects and other important sites as may arise throughout the year, in partnership with relevant community groups and elected members.

4. Engagement and Education

Objective: Promote understanding, appreciation, and dialogue; cultivating a collective responsibility to safeguard the heritage and biodiversity of our county and create a sustainable future.

- 4.1. Work in collaboration with the Heritage Council, local communities and other Culture Team members to plan, promote and deliver a full programme of events for Laois during Heritage Week, August 2023
- 4.2. Collaborate with partners to deliver events for Science Week that promote understanding of and engagement with the built, natural and cultural heritage of Laois.
- 4.3. Promote awareness of the importance of biodiversity through the Nature Podcast planned in partnership with BirdWatch Ireland and Offaly County Council, and continued promotion of garden biodiversity and the mental health benefits of getting out in nature.
- 4.4. Provide advice and support to local authority staff, Elected Representatives and communities on all aspects of heritage. Assist 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.

5. Policy and Advocacy

Objective: Work with key partners and policy stakeholders to strengthen their understanding of the value and potential in supporting heritage and biodiversity in Laois.

- 5.1. Publish, distribute, promote and implement the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026.
- 5.2. Participate in promoting and implementing the National Heritage Plan Heritage Ireland 2030
- 5.3. Deliver on the local aims of the National Biodiversity Action Plan in Laois with the Assistance of Local Biodiversity Action Fund funding.
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. Collaborate with Culture Team and Creative Ireland to deliver on the aims of the Creative Ireland programme in Laois.

6. Place-making and Connecting Landscapes

Objective: Enhance the integrated experience of heritage and biodiversity at visited sites, and the connections between heritage places across Laois and further afield, to strengthen our sense of place and reveal our storied landscapes.

- 6.1. Work to maximise the benefit to heritage and communities in Laois of the Ireland's Ancient East programme, by advancing visitor facilities at the Rock of Dunamase, development and promotion of the Laois Heritage audio guides and app.

7. Championing Laois

Objective: Target important heritage and biodiversity milestones, connections, stories or developments to raise national/international awareness and appreciation of our county.

- 7.1. Work in Partnership with the Col Fitzmaurice Commemoration Committee to celebrate and share the important story of innovation of the Portlaoise Plane and the Fitzmaurice story, working towards the centenary of the first East-West.

8. Targeting Resources

Objective: Scope key resource requirements and target investment from local and national sources for delivery of this plan.

- 8.1. Work in partnership with the Heritage Council to deliver the actions of the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy while also delivering on key Heritage Council priorities at local level.

- 8.2. Manage the operation of Community Monuments Fund in Laois, depending on funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, working with communities to secure conservation, interpretation and planning for management of archaeological monuments in their area.
- 8.3. Assist communities and groups in Laois in developing projects and sourcing funding through mechanisms such as the Heritage Council Community Heritage Grants Scheme

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, as amended 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 2023:

1. Manage the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, and the Historic Structures Fund and any other architectural conservation funding made available by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
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:

Areas of Activity	Objectives
<p style="text-align: center;">Environmental Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve, protect, enhance and promote the natural and built environment in the interests of present and future generations • Improve water status in all water bodies through catchment management programmes and enforcement measures • To protect public health and to improve & maintain air quality and to protect against noise pollution
<p style="text-align: center;">Waste Management & Enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve, protect, enhance and promote the natural and built environment in the interests of present and future generations • 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
<p style="text-align: center;">Litter Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent, control & manage litter • To encourage & promote public awareness • Provision of Waste Facilities • Partnership with Communities & Business • Enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act

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 to the 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 2023:

1. Environmental Protection:

Implementation of the National Environmental Enforcement Priorities.

(a) Water Quality

- Investigate Water Quality complaints and incidents.
- Pressures from Agriculture (slurry/soiled water collection and storage).
- Pressures from Agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading).
- Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems/Septic Tanks.
- Discharge Licences/Misconnections.
- Local Priorities and Water Quality Monitoring.
- Assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.

(b) Air Quality & Noise Pollution

- Investigate Air and Noise complaints and incidents.
- Solid Fuel
- Air Quality Monitoring & Data Use
- Environmental Noise Directive (ENDs)
- Air & Noise Control (including Planning)
- On-going Air and Noise Enforcement Work
- Enforcement work to ensure compliance with solvents, deco-paints & petroleum vapour regulations, air pollution licences etc.

2. Waste Management & Enforcement:

Implementation of 'A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland's National Waste Policy 2020-2025.

a) National Waste Enforcement Priorities:

Objective for waste enforcement is to improve waste management, segregation and recycling to meet national targets by maintaining a high level of compliance with waste legislation.

- Tackling illegal waste activities and Multi-Agency Sites/Operators of Concern
- Construction and Demolition Waste
- End of Life Vehicles (ELVs) and Waste Metals
- Household and Commercial Waste
- Producer Responsibility Initiatives and additional Local Priorities

b) Co-ordinated Work Programme

- Waste Collection – Household Food Waste: Increase the percentage of households with access to a 3-bin Waste Service.

- Collaborate with the Eastern Midlands Enforcement Lead Authority in the implementation of waste enforcement initiatives.
- Tackle unauthorised disposal of construction & demolition waste, end-of-life vehicles etc.
- Use of smart technology (drones, CCTV etc.) to identify and monitor unregulated black-spot waste disposal sites.

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

- Provide for the maintenance and aftercare of the landfill.
- Provide for the maintenance of the existing Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) to encourage the recycling of waste.
- Provide a range of well-run facilities for waste recycling, recovery and disposal at the Landfill, Civic Amenity Sites and Bring Banks
- Review the Landfill Closure Plan/Restoration Fund/Lease Agreements etc.
- Continue to accept construction & demolition material.
- Identify and progress carbon reducing initiatives at the waste facilities
- Carry out Health and Safety Audits & Inspections in accordance with annual programme.

3. Litter Management:

- Implement the objectives of the Litter Management Plan 2022-2024.
- Continue enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act.
- Carry out inspections and implement the Bye-Laws for the Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household and Commercial Waste.
- Investigate litter & illegal dumping complaints.
- Identify and implement measures to reduce levels of litter and illegal dumping.
- Identify projects which assist in the delivery of raising awareness regarding litter pollution.
- Continue to promote and develop projects within the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications Anti-Dumping Initiative.
- Develop litter education and awareness programmes.

4. Bring Centres (Bottle Banks):

- Review and improve the existing locations and provide additional facilities.
- Continue the daily inspection and maintenance of the facilities.
- Tackle illegal dumping incidents at the facilities.
- H&S audits & inspections.

5. Veterinary Services:

- Provide for the inspection of abattoirs and comply with the Services contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- 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 recoupmets within the prescribed timeframe.

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

Fire & Rescue 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 safeguarding 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 or other critical incident that might be declared.

Key actions for 2023:

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 2023.
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. 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.

Local Performance Target

Target time of 5 ½ minutes response from time of alert to going mobile to the incident.

Fire Service Infrastructure

8. Complete the new capital works at Mountmellick Fire Station subject to capital funding provided by NDFEM.
9. Progress the new capital works for a new Stradbally Fire Station subject to approval & capital funding provided by NDFEM.
10. Progress the new capital works for a new Rathdowney Fire Station subject to approval & capital funding provided by NDFEM.

Fire Prevention

11. Maintain a register of fire safety notices served by LCFRS.
12. Engage with relevant parties for all licenced outdoor events held in Co. Laois - Ongoing to Q4 2023.
13. Administer Fire Safety Certificate Application and Assessment process – Ongoing to Q4 2023.
14. Assess Dangerous Substances licence applications, subject to staffing- Ongoing to Q4 2023.
15. Respond to licensing application where appropriate, under Intoxicating Liquor Acts- Ongoing to Q4 2023.
16. Follow up on all fire safety related complaints – Ongoing to Q4 2023.

Community Fire Safety

17. Ongoing delivery of the Primary Schools Programme to 3rd class pupils in 70 schools in Co. Laois – end of Q4 2023.
18. Carry out Fire Safety in the home talks/demonstrations as necessary- Ongoing to Q4 2023.

Major Emergency Management

19. To continually develop and maintain Major Emergency Management capabilities of Laois County Council - Ongoing to Q4 2023:
 - 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 2023.

20. Review Laois County Council's Major Emergency Plan and update as necessary – End Q2, 2023.
21. Manage M.E.M training schedules as provided by the National Steering Group and Midland Region Working Groups - Ongoing to Q4 2023.

Civil Defence

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

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Operational Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a Civil Defence service for Co. Laois in line with the Department of Defence "Towards 2030" document.
Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Principal Response Agencies – Local Authorities, HSE and An Garda Síochána in providing emergency response. • Provide support to the local authority with displaced persons • Supporting the Local Authority with roles set out for Civil Defence within the Major Emergency Plan
Search & Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to An Garda Síochána with search and recovery of missing persons
Medical Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a PHECC Licenced emergency medical service ensuring compliance with the Governance Validation Framework.
Community Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to community events
Radiation Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Environmental Protection Agency with radiation monitoring and sample collection

Key actions for 2023:

1. Maintain the Civil Defence service in Co. Laois in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Defence Towards 2030 Document and the Local Authority.
2. Respond to 100% of emergency requests from the Principal Response Agencies 24hrs a day 365 days a year.

3. Provide and maintain equipment and safe working practices in line with the Safety, Health & Welfare at work act 2005 and the Local Authority Safety Management System.
4. Provide appropriate training and continuous professional development of all Laois Civil Defence volunteers by providing a minimum of 80 hours of training classes per year.
5. Ensure that all members of Laois Civil Defence conform to the Minimum Training Standard as required under the Department of Defence Circular 12/2019.
6. Select and provide training for additional instructors in key areas of Civil Defence operations to increase competence across all disciplines.
7. Recruit to increase the number of active volunteers in Laois to a minimum of 45 by Q4 of 2023
8. Roll out of the new Volunteer & Equipment Management System (VEMS) which is being commissioned by the Department of Defence allowing for a more modern and structured system of recording volunteer training and recording equipment maintenance.
9. Create and keep up to date records on volunteer training, vehicle and equipment maintenance

Civil Defence Facilities

1. Provide essential upgrades where possible to ensure a safe place of work for all staff and volunteers at the Stradbally Base.
2. Progress the new capital works for a new Civil Defence Headquarters in Portlaoise subject to approval and funding from both Laois County Council and the Department of Defence.

Library

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

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Library	<p>To continue to operate and develop our services to provide a modern accessible Library and Information service for all sections of the community .</p> <p>To support and promote our online resources, e-books and events programme to all sections of the community, improving ICT facilities and digital literacy for our customers .</p> <p>To maintain and continue to develop Library Infrastructures.</p> <p>To develop Libraries as Cultural and Learning Centres</p>

Key Actions for 2023:

1. To continue to operate and deliver library services for the county providing free access to library stock and books , government and council information, e resources and ebooks , online services and internet/wifi/printing facilities in all service points .
2. Continue to work in partnership with LGMA, Department of Rural and Community Development rolling out national library initiatives such as Right to Read, Ireland Reads , Healthy Ireland and Services to Marginalized and Disadvantaged Communities.
3. Adoption and Launch of a Laois Library Development Plan 2023 -2027, building on key objectives outlined by the NEW national library strategy *2023-2027 launching in December 2022*
4. Continue to engage with all sections of the community both offline and online promoting library usage through national events and activities such as Creative Ireland, Decade of Centenaries, Seachtain na nGaeilge, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Library of Sanctuary , Children’s Book Festival, Laois Literary Events, Science week and Healthy Ireland.
5. Continue to complete construction and final fitout of the New Library at Main Street, Portlaoise in order to open the new Library to the public in 2023.
6. Continue to introduce Sensory Friendly library services and facilities on a pilot basis in some library branches.
7. Continue with Age Friendly library services in all libraries in the county.

8. Manage and Promote the Europe Direct Information Centre in Portlaoise Library.
9. Continue to upgrade and maintain ICT facilities in all library service points creating digital spaces and facilitate free digital learning in the library.
10. Piloting of the Open Library service in Portarlinton Library in line with Public Health Guidelines
11. Continue to promote and utilise social media pages to publicise and promote Library, Council and Cultural services to our online community.
12. Continue with Local history digitization and uploading of records to Laois Digital Archive.
13. Continue in the delivery and communication of the targets of the Climate Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goals through library talks, events and workshops.

Ukrainian Response

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

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Community Response	To lead the coordination of the provision of supports and services to Ukrainians at local level by the range of public and not for profit bodies involved and oversee the integration of Ukrainian displaced persons into local communities.
Accommodation Provision	To examine all accommodation options within the administrative area of County Laois, in conjunction with other government agencies as required, and establish their feasibility and suitability to accommodate displaced persons.

Key Actions for 2023:

1. Continue the coordination of service provision by the Ukrainian Community Response Team in a targeted and responsive manner.
2. Continue implementation of the Health & Well Being Support Fund initiatives during 2023
3. Identify ongoing and evolving service delivery needs & implement plans and programmes to address them.
4. Work with other agencies and bodies to advance and oversee the integration of Ukrainian displaced persons into local communities.
5. Liaise with the OPW and DECDIY in relation to the provision of modular homes in County Laois to Ukrainian displaced persons
6. Continue to assess vacant and/or derelict properties which may be suitable for emergency accommodation.
7. Liaise with departments within Laois County Council and relevant state departments so as to advance the refurbishment of such properties.
8. Continue to implement the matching of pledged properties to Ukrainian beneficiaries.

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, Social Inclusion 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 Siochana and communities through the Joint Policing Committee structures.
Town and Village Renewal / Rural Regeneration Funding	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.

Key Actions for 2023:

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

1. Monitor and ensure optimum delivery of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in 2023, a programme valued at over €600,000 annually.
2. Lead the preparation of the new LECP for 2023-2027 in accordance with national guidelines.
3. Monitor and ensure continuing delivery by Laois Local Action Group (LAG) of the new LEADER Programme in 2023, and through this the delivery of objectives of the Laois Local Development Strategy 2023 - 2027.
4. As Financial Partner in respect of the new LEADER Programme 2023-2027, carry out all financial checks on LEADER projects, claims and administration claims, including the Article 48 checks prescribed in EU Regulations.
5. Deliver upon all DRCD funding schemes rolled out to the LCDC, including the initiatives under the Community Enhancement Programme, Community Activities Fund and Community Support Fund.
6. Continue to monitor the delivery of the Healthy Laois initiatives. Commence preparation of new Healthy Laois Plan 2023 to 2025. Develop an implementation plan specific to 2023 and work with collaborative partners to achieve actions, in

accordance with Healthy Ireland and Pobal Guidelines for Healthy Ireland – Round 4 Programme.

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 support the Age Friendly Alliance and the work of the Older People’s Council. Prepare new Laois Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2027 in consultation with key Stakeholders. Develop outreach supports and map key advocates across the county.
4. Exploring sustainable options for the dissemination of information to our Age Friendly citizens to increase reach and ease of use.
5. Support the work of partners in engaging with and assisting migrant communities.
6. Facilitate school engagement programmes, e.g., World of Work and commence development of other programmes to increase awareness of local democracy and the work of the local government.
7. 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 and Supports

1. Support the development of Laois PPN and its work plan in 2023, 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.
2. 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 new applications for funding in 2023.
3. Highlight and acknowledge the contribution of the community/voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors in Laois, by hosting the Annual Community & Voluntary Awards in 2023.

4. Continue to support the work of Laois Joint Policing Committee in 2023. Continue to ensure that the 5 year JPC Strategic Plan 2022-2027 actions are being delivered, by quarterly monitoring through the Implementation Plan.
5. Seek out suitable projects for entry in the 2023 Pride of Place competition and work as required, with entrant groups throughout the competitive process.

Healthy Laois

1. Co- ordinate and oversee the approved Programme of work/activities under Laois Round Strand 4 Healthy Ireland Fund, including co-ordination and liaison with action partners to ensure adherence to funding requirements on actions/activities agreed.
2. Build effective partnerships with key stakeholders internal and external to ensure that the Healthy Ireland agenda is taken into consideration in the planning, design and implementation of local plans, programmes and initiatives.
3. Implement the Healthy Laois Plan 2023-2025.
4. Provide regular reports to the Laois LCDC and sub-groups to ensure that the Healthy Ireland initiatives are progressing and that the objectives of the programme are being realised.
5. Support overall financial/non-financial monitoring and reporting to Pobal in a timely manner.
6. Develop a Healthy Ireland webpage as part of the Laois LCDC and Local Authority website/ pages and use social media to promote the profile of Healthy Ireland in the county.

Support LCCs Digital First Policy

1. Meeting Papers and all correspondence to issue via soft copy through email, with hard copies only available upon request.
2. Strategies, Plans to be made available online and link sent to all stakeholders. Hardcopies available only on request.
3. All documents to be submitted for approval through DocuSign.
4. Introduction of an online application facility where the public can submit applications online.
5. Introduce a Climate Action category, as a new award for 2023 Community & Voluntary Awards.

Procurement

1. Ensure that Green Public Procurement and Social Considerations are embedded in all our tender processes and Contracts as appropriate.

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 develop a Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP). The LACAP will deliver and promote evidence-based and integrated climate action by way of adaptation and mitigation measures, centered around a strong understanding of the role and remit of the local authority on climate action
Cemetery & Burial Ground Management	To maintain the 27 Cemeteries in the ownership of Laois County Council.

Key Actions for 2023

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 school's 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 to the schools endeavoring to achieve Green Flag status in 2023.
5. Co-ordinate the Climate Action Team 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. To engage with communities to support them to take positive climate action.
8. The development of a Local Authority Climate Action Plan.
9. Identify suitable LA21 projects and have suitable partners to avail of funded projects, as appropriate.
10. Incorporate the principal of environmental sustainability in all our programmes.
11. Assist further energy efficiency across the Council's infrastructure.

12. Continue to assist communities to undertake the Sustainable Energy Community process under the SEAI.
13. Continue to progress conservation and carbon reducing initiatives that will aid the progression of making Laois a sustainable, climate-resilient region for future generations.
14. Continue to develop and maintain the 27 Cemeteries in the ownership of Laois County Council.
15. Ensure that Green Public Procurement and Social Considerations are embedded in all our tender processes and Contracts as appropriate.

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 2023:

Arts

1. Devise a new county Arts Plan, 2023-2027, also fulfilling the actions in the Arts Council Framework Agreement 2018 – 2025.
2. Implement the 2023 Creative Ireland Laois Programme, in accordance with the objectives of the overall Creative Ireland Laois Programme 2023-2027.
3. Progressing a public art plan for Laois in 2023.
4. Continue to oversee the development and installation of public art in Portlaoise in 2023.
5. Further develop partnerships with the Arts Council, Government Departments, Laois/Offaly ETB, ALAAO, Youth Theatre Ireland, Poetry Ireland, the VAI and local partners.
6. Work collaboratively with partners on the Laois and Offaly Local Creative Youth Partnership, to implement 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. Continue to develop the potential in 2023 of our county's location as a creative hub and/or location for film making.
11. Oversee the development of Laois Youth Theatre, in partnership with Dunamaise Arts Centre, and other youth theatre programmes within the county.
12. Continue to support and develop our artistic infrastructure including the Laois Arthouse, Dunamaise Arts Centre, Laois Music Centre and other artistic facilities.

Recreation, Play and Sport

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 wellbeing for all.
Facilities	To maintain to a high standard in our recreational and sporting facility 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 2023:

1. Complete review of 2018- 2022 Recreation, Play and Sports Strategy and finalise 2023 – 2028 strategy and develop an annual implementation plan for 2023.
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. Continue to provide support to Laois Leisure, who are licenced to operate Portlaoise and Portarlington Leisure Centres, to ensure both facilities deliver a safe quality service to the public by continuing to oversee upgrading of facilities and seeking appropriate funding as required.
4. Maintain to a high standard and continue to promote and develop public play spaces ensuring a quality experience for all users.
5. Specifically, continue the
6. Accessibility and biodiversity upgrading of playground facilities
7. Submission of applications for funding to upgrade play areas in 2023 under the DCEDIY Capital Infrastructure for Play and Recreation Programme and other funding streams.
8. Advise and support community groups with the development of community play facilities.
9. Maintenance of Green Flag Award for Páirc an Phobail Portlaoise and People's Park Portarlington.

10. Oversee development of recreational infrastructural works in 2023, both Council led and collaborative projects, e.g., CLÁR, ORIS, Town and Village Renewal, and make further applications under each scheme, where appropriate, in 2023.
11. Assist with the development of an Open Spaces Plan for the county having regard to the town parks, riverside walks, greenways, blue ways and other amenity spaces and resources.
12. Oversee the promotion and delivery of national programmes and events to encourage increased usage of public facilities and increase participation including Let's Play Ireland, Bike Week, Paddles Up, Parks Tennis, Urban Outdoor Adventure Programme etc.
13. Assist with the implementation of the Healthy Laois Strategy 2023-2025 by developing and/or supporting initiatives in the area of sport, play and keeping well promoting physically and mental wellness.
14. Further strengthen community cohesion by developing strong partnerships with Laois Sports Partnership, Laois Partnership, NGB's and local community and voluntary groups in 2023.
15. Continue to assist community groups and clubs to develop quality recreation, play and sports facilities through the provision of advice, training and information.
16. Pursue appropriate partnerships and funding streams to advance the ongoing development of indoor and outdoor facilities in Portlaoise.

Water Safety

17. 1. Continue to oversee and support the delivery of Primary Aquatic Water Safety Programme to primary schools in County Laois in 2023 and facilitate delivery at Laois Leisure pool facilities.
18. 2. Promote national water safety programmes and water safety classes for County Laois public Leisure facilities and Ballinakill Outdoor Pool.
19. 3. Maintain ring buoys and water safety signage erected by Laois County Council in ten locations countywide and oversee installation of 25 ring buoy sensors.
20. 4. Continue to raise awareness of water safety through the delivery of 4 key water safety events during Water Safety Awareness Week 2023.

Procurement

21. 1. Ensure that Green Public Procurement and Social Considerations are embedded in all our tender processes and Contracts as appropriate.

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 2023:

1. Implement the budgetary control framework across all revenue divisions and capital programmes.
2. Monitor and manage the 2023 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. Ensuring that Fire Charges issue within 14 days from the end of the month with the aim of improving collections.
9. Ensuring all those who should pay rates, are set up for billing purposes and receiving all relevant supports as advised by the Department.
10. 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.
11. Implementation of MyCoCo online payments system across all revenue stream to include the mobile payments app.
12. Upgrades to the Eplanning system introduced in Q4 ,2022.
13. MS7 enhancements and upgrades to provide a web-based platform for much of the functionality
14. Complete the Annual Financial Statement 2022 on or before the end of March 2023.
15. Prepare the budget for 2024 between 1st November 2023 and 29th November, 2023, with budget to be adopted by the Members within 14 days of the Budget meeting. Budget Book and CSV file to be with the DECLG by 31 December 2023.

16. Continue to implement the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process, the Mortgage to Rent Scheme and Shared Ownership re-structuring where deemed necessary.
17. Motor Taxation – Continue to provide a flexible service to meet customer requirements.
18. Submit Statutory / EU IMF returns within the prescribed timelines

A) GGB/Quarterly Revenue, Capital and Debtors

Q4 2022, Tuesday 14th February 2023

Q1 2023 Thursday 25th May 2023

Q2 2023 Thursday 24th August 2023

Q3 2023 Friday 24th November 2023

Q4 2024 Friday 23rd February 2024

B) 2021 Borrowing Return

Q4 2022 Tuesday 17th January 2023

Q1 2023 Friday 14th April 2023

Q2 2023 Friday 14th July 2023

Q3 2023 Monday 16th October 2023

Q4 2023 Monday 15th January 2024

Local Performance Target
Complete the Annual Financial Statement 2022 on or before the end of March 2023.

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 2023:

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 2023 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 public service duty, as required
5. Implement Blended Working arrangements in line with national guidelines and advice.
6. Examine and review internal communications, within the overall Communications Strategy.
7. Ensure effective management of the CORE HR systems and the retained payroll/superannuation function.
8. Prepare and implement a staff Training and Development Programme for 2023.
9. Meet with Unions regularly to maintain a stable industrial relations environment and ensure compliance with the Public Service Agreements.

Information Technology

Core Objective:

The Core Objective is to ensure that the Council has in place modern, secure, and well managed technological, information and communication systems capable of meeting the needs of the Council and its customers.

Supporting Strategies:

Supporting Strategies for Information Technology include

- the provision of relevant information in a timely manner that supports effective service delivery and informed decision making by members, management, and staff
- the use of information and communications technologies to assist in the implementation of the Council's goals and objectives including the modernisation of its systems where required
- the ongoing and continued implementation and co-operation with shared information technology systems and the continued encouragement of the use of online service provision and e-business by its customers.

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Information Technology	To provide Management and Staff with modern, secure, and well managed 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 2023:

1. Expand the digitization of services with a privacy driven and secure by design approach to service improvement.
2. Further develop on-line access to Council services, through shared sectoral initiatives and in-house innovation, in line with the commitments in the Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland's Public Sector.
3. Promote a 'Digital First but not Digital only' approach to Business process improvement within Laois County Council.
4. Further build resilience to cyber threats through adoption of the Public Sector Cyber Security Baseline Standards.
5. Continue to review, test, and update the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan.
6. Harden the data backup and recovery systems using immutable backup technologies.
7. Redevelop the LAOIS.IE website to provide a modern and citizen focussed online portal.
8. Maintain all key IT applications on up to date and supported versions and technologies.
9. Put sustainability and green procurement to the fore of all IT decisions and procurement.
10. Complete the rollout of the broadband connectivity and network infrastructure plan throughout the Council offices and Libraries.
11. Continue to support the implementation of the Laois Digital Strategy 2020 – 2024 and the Wifi4EU rollout.
12. Develop use cases for the Geographical Information System (GIS) for addressing issues across the organisation in cooperation with the national GIS User group.
13. Provide support for the Laois Climate Action Team and Climate Adaptation Plan.
14. Ongoing review of Contracts for Services and re-tender where required in line with procurement guidelines.
15. Continue to support office based and remote staff and Councillors through a professional and efficient IT Support Service.
16. Continue to develop supports for a hybrid working model within Laois County Council to support the continuity of services.

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 2023:

1. Review and update the Risk Management Register.
2. Insure the Local Authority against all relevant risks.
3. Complete the Internal Audit Plan 2023 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 2023.
7. Report to the National Oversight and Audit Commission on any issues raised by it.
8. 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 2023:

1. Continue to promote best practice and application of the Public Procurement Directives and Regulations for EU, National & below threshold expenditure across the organisation.
2. Monitor expenditure for procurement compliance with National and EU Thresholds, ensuring appropriate procurement procedures are in place.
3. Provide clear procurement advice, guidance and support to all staff.
4. Implement the actions of the Corporate Procurement Plan 2021-2023.
5. Guide a Procurement cross-functional team to improve the strategic support and direction of procurement, driving compliance, value for money and sustainable procurements.
6. Migration to New eTenders Platform
7. Review 2022 procurement procedures with each Service Area with a view to developing appropriate procurement strategies in 2023.
8. Proactively promote and monitor the use of Green Public Procurement and Social Considerations in Tender documents and Contracts as appropriate.
9. Build organisational capacity to deliver successful procurements through the creation and roll out of procurement procedures manuals and systems training.
10. Promote utilization of Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) National Framework Agreements.
11. Promote Electronic public tendering via eTenders and Supplygov portals.
12. Encourage appropriate publication of Contract Award Notices.
13. Publish quarterly expenditure reports on the internet.
14. Manage the annual Spend Data Return to the Local Government Management Agency / OGP.
15. Assist in compiling the Public Spend Code Quality Assurance Report 2022 for submission to NOAC by the 2023 deadline.

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 2023:

1. Rollout of Safety Management System (SMS) Software throughout all Departments /Sections.
2. Monitoring of our Safety Management System through a Safety Inspection Programme (c 250 inspections) and Accident / Incident Investigation as appropriate in addition to utilising our SMS software.
3. Prioritising preventative/corrective action programme within each Department - (Q 1, 2, 3 and 4).
4. The provision, implementation and monitoring of a Health & Safety Training Programme
5. Provision of occupational Health Services - (Q 1, 2, 3 and 4).
6. Maintain and enhance safety communication mechanisms as appropriate - (Q 1, 2, 3 and 4).
7. Review / upgrade lone working IT based system ensuring compatibility with SMS software.
8. Enhance GDPR arrangements where appropriate.

My Pay

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

Areas of Activity	Objectives
Project Planning and Implementation	Develop and implement a roll-out schedule to take on Local Authorities into MyPay for Payroll and Superannuation administration.
Payroll	<p>Ensure all payees are paid accurately and on time.</p> <p>Implement any relevant pay rate changes on receipt of a department circular.</p>
Superannuation	<p>Develop a Centre of Excellence for superannuation for the sector.</p> <p>Ensure all Superannuation administration obligations are met.</p>
Quality Management & Customer Service	<p>Administer the quality management system to facilitate the delivery of a quality payroll and superannuation service.</p> <p>Ensure all MyPay obligations are met as per SLA and KPIs.</p> <p>Facilitate the ISAE 3402 Audit of MyPay for the previous year.</p>
Access XD Test Management	Ensure all releases of software impacting on Payroll and Superannuation are tested and any issues are resolved by the software vendor.

Key Actions for 2023:

1. Migrate Dublin City Council to MyPay by the end of 2023
2. Migrate 6 additional Local Authorities into MyPay Superannuation by the end of 2023.
3. Make €1bn in total payments to approximately 49,000 Local Authority payees in 2023.

4. Continue to achieve accuracy levels greater than 98% target. MyPay currently achieve 99.9% accuracy.
5. Manage the Local Government Superannuation Scheme for the Local Government sector.
6. Manage the Single Public Service Pension scheme for the Local Government Sector.
7. Manage the creation and submission of all payroll related taxation requirements on behalf of our client local authorities as their tax agents.
8. Provide advice and support to all local authorities and participate in policy formulation for the sector in relation to payroll and superannuation.
9. Comply with all Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and service level obligations as set out in the Payroll Service Level Agreement.
10. Provide accurate pension entitlement statements for our client local authorities.
11. Provide advice and support to all local authorities and participate in policy formulation for the sector in relation to superannuation.
12. Carry out testing of Access XD software that impacts on Payroll and Superannuation service delivery. Highlight any issues and see resolution.
13. Facilitate the ISAE 3402 audit before the end of March 2023 for the year covering 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2022.
14. Implement March and October Pay Rate changes on behalf of the sector.
15. Monitor and report on performance to ensure that agreed service levels are being met or exceeded.
16. Actively review our processes to support our continuous improvement targets.
17. Manage and report on the mitigation of risk in the centre.
18. Comply with the following Key Performance Indicator (KPI) obligations:

PAYROLL KPIS

Category	No.	KPI	Target	Reporting Period
Accuracy	P.1.1	Incorrect net pay due to Client error as a percentage of number of payees.	< 2%	Quarterly
	P.1.2	Incorrect net pay due to Service Provider error as a percentage of number of payees.	< 2%	Quarterly
Timeliness	P.2.1	No. of payroll timeline breaches due to the Client.	< 4 per quarter	Quarterly
	P.2.2	No. payroll timeline breaches due to the Service Provider.	< 4 per quarter	Quarterly
	P.2.3	EFT payment file submitted for payment to the bank in accordance with the payroll timelines	100%	Quarterly
Compliance	P.3.1	Confirm Revenue Monthly Liability Figures	100%	Quarterly

Customer Service	P.4.1	Percentage of queries to service desk resolved within target times.	90%	Quarterly
	P.4.2	Number of queries received by the Service Provider	N/A	Quarterly

SUPERANNUATION KPIS

Category	No.	KPI	Target	Reporting Period
Accuracy	S.1.1	Benefits/Calculations incorrect due to data recorded incorrectly by the Client e.g. pensionable indicator incorrect, incorrect overtime codes used	< 2%	Quarterly
	S.1.2	Benefits/Calculations incorrect due to system configuration and or manual calculation errors by the service provider	<2%	Quarterly
Timeliness	S.2.1	No. of breaches of completed retirement application forms submitted late to MyPay as defined in the timelines	10%	Quarterly
	S.2.2	No. of breaches of timelines due to the service provider in respect of processing benefits as defined in the timelines	10%	Quarterly
Compliance	S.3.1	Submit returns as required by the deadline	100%	Quarterly
Customer Service	S.4.1	Percentage of superannuation general queries to service desk resolved within target times	90%	Quarterly
	S.4.2	Percentage of superannuation calculations other than ¹ retirement calculations to service desk resolved within target times	90%	Quarterly
	S.4.3	Number of service requests by the service provider	N/A	Quarterly