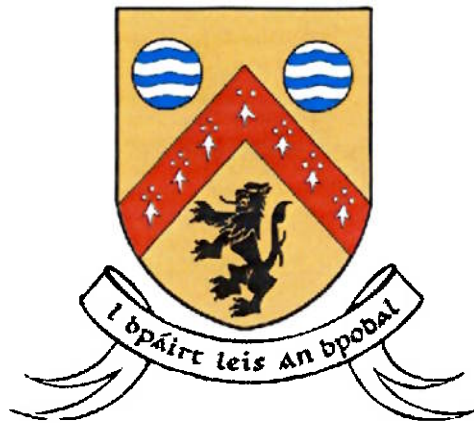


Comhairle Chontae Laoise

Laois County Council



Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024

**As adopted by the Members of Laois County Council at the
December meeting on Monday 11th December 2023.**

SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2024

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To: Cathaoirleach and Each Member of Laois County Council

Re: Service Delivery Plan 2024

I enclose, for the consideration of Members of the Council, the Council's Service Delivery Plan for 2024.

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 2024, 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 2024 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 Uisce Eireann 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 2023 Annual Report. Assessments of the Councils 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 2024 is recommended to Council.

Signed:



John Mulholland
Chief Executive

Introduction

This Service Delivery Plan for 2024 is prepared having full regard to the Councils Corporate Plan in which the Council's Mission Statement and its Core Values and Principals have been outlined as follows:

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

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

Our Vision:

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

Core Values:

Local Democracy and Accountability

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

Quality Customer Service

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

Sustainability

The Council is committed to ensuring it works in ways which accord with the principle of sustainability, facilitate economic progress and social cohesion, and enhance and safeguard 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 2024

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. Plan, prepare and implement the process of Local Elections 2024,
6. Prepare a new Corporate Plan for the period 2024 – 2029 following the Local Elections,
7. Prepare and implement a new Strategic Policy Scheme for the period 2024 – 2025 following the Local Elections,

8. Prepare and arrange for the adoption of Laois County Council's Annual Report for 2023 by 30th June 2024.
9. Implement the requirements of the Ethics Framework.
10. Commence the process of preparing a Communications Strategy.
11. Ensure timely publication on the Council's website of the Agenda and agreed Minutes of Council meetings (including Municipal District meetings).
12. Continue to implement the requirements of Part 3 of the Electoral Reform Act 2022 in relation to the Rolling Register.
13. Facilitate and process requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, Access to Information on the Environment Regulations and Data Protection Acts.
14. Prepare and submit the annual return in respect of Performance Indicators for 2022 in accordance with agreed deadlines.
15. Continue with the implementation of the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 1988 to 2018 in conjunction with all sections of the Council.
16. Commence preparation of the Annual Service Delivery Plan for 2025 immediately after the adoption of the 2025 Budget.

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 2024

Housing Capital Delivery

1. Achieve *Housing for All* target 2022-2026 in respect of all types of housing delivery in 2024.
2. Achieve Social Housing new build delivery targets for 2024 through direct construction, turnkey, Part V and AHB 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 legislative requirements for social housing provision and their requirements of good governance and practice as set out by 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.

Housing Operations

1. Adopt new Scheme of Allocations in 2024 and implement policy in accordance with its content.
2. Continue to manage social housing, Rental Accommodation and Social Housing Leasing tenancies, including carrying out of rent reviews where appropriate effectively and efficiently.
3. Continue to meet the Housing Assistance Payment targets for 2024 as set by the Dept of Housing.
4. 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.
5. Carry out a review 2024 of all demountable accommodation provided by the Council, with a view to assessing locations, suitability and value for money.
6. Meet the Private Rented Inspections targets for 2024 as set out by the Dept of Housing.
7. Maintain the average rate of 23-week turnaround when re-letting properties, as shown in the NOAC performance indicator report 2022.
8. Reduce energy usage in Council social housing stock by implementing Energy Retrofit programmes
9. Complete the retrofit of 74 housing units in 2024 under the retrofit programme.
10. 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.
11. Assess and process applications under all Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability in Social Housing.
12. Assess and process applications sought under the Housing Aid for Older People, Housing Adaptation Grants and Mobility Aids Grants.
13. Continue to promote and administer the Rebuilding Ireland Loan scheme and any subsequent schemes introduced in 2024 effectively and efficiently.
14. Continue to agree affordable units through advanced purchase turnkey arrangements with developers/builders in 2024.
15. Effectively and efficiently promote and administer in 2024, the sale of affordable houses to applicants, as agreed in Local Authority Subsidy Agreements with developers.

Estate Management

1. Adopt the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and Estate Management policy in 2024 and implement the policy content therein.
2. Continue to investigate all anti-social behaviour complaints and provide a proactive Tenant Liaison response.
3. Provide Tenant liaison services including estate management supports to all tenants in line with Tenant Handbook.
4. Finalise Tenant Handbook in 2024 taking into account new climate action measures
5. Endeavour to carry out tenant liaison inspections in each estate in 2024, prioritising transfer applicants.

Housing Support Services

1. Review the Midlands Region Homelessness Action Plan in 2024.
2. Continue with SLA with Midlands Simon and Peter McVerry Trust with regard to the provision of homeless services.
3. Support the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
4. Coordinate Housing Disability Steering Group meetings.

| Local Performance Target |
|---|
| A target of 1,100 Private Rented Inspections will be carried out in 2024. |

Regeneration

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

| Areas of Activity | Objectives |
|-------------------|--|
| 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 |

Laois County Council has established a multi-disciplinary Regeneration Team, comprising of staff from the Vacant Homes Office located in Housing, Derelict sites /Planning and the Town Regeneration Officer, aimed at addressing vacancy and dereliction in the county.

The following actions will be taken in 2024 to address the objective as outlined above:

1. Utilise the regeneration team to co-ordinate Vacant properties/ sites and Derelict Sites legislation and the vacant homes office to proactively deliver appropriate use and development.

Town Regeneration

1. Engage with property owners in the towns of Mountrath and Rathdowney to address vacancy and dereliction in line with Town Centre First Plans and sustainable community plans as prepared by Town Teams in 2023.

Vacant Homes

1. Progress the regeneration of lands across the county including town regeneration sites to provide housing opportunities.
2. 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.
3. Promote funding schemes such as Repair and Lease, Buy and Renew and Croí Conaithe to progress the renewal of properties for housing purposes.
4. 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.

Derelict sites

1. Ensure the process in relation to derelict sites is monitored and implemented in compliance with relevant legislation.
2. Progress URDF Call 3 in relation to the acquisition/ CPO of derelict and vacant sites within Portlaoise for the purposes of appropriate housing.
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. Engage with the relevant sections of the Council to promote business incentives schemes, façade enhancement and shopfront grant support to vacant and derelict commercial properties.
5. Implement the Vacant Sites legislation by levying the sites on the Vacant Sites Register in 2024.
6. Implement the Residential Zoned Land Tax in accordance with legislation.

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 2024

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 2024 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 Active Travel in consultation with the NTA.
6. Road Safety Working Together Committee to meet on at least 2 occasions in 2024.
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. Complete 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 2023/24.
17. Commence development in 2024 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. Commence development in 2024 of a Multi Annual Bridge inspection and repair programme.
22. Administration and Enforcement of pay parking and associated Bye Laws.
23. Review of parking arrangements at agreed locations.
24. Ensure compliance with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and other related Standards, Regulations and Guidelines.
25. Progress the goals of the Laois Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 appropriate to the Roads Section.
26. Support the delivery of ORIS & Clár Projects.

Capital Projects

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

Portlaoise Cultural Quarter (€7m)

1. Convent Urban Garden & New Street to the Triogue.
2. Appoint a design team for a repurposed & refurbished old granary building in the Old Fort

Portlaoise Low Carbon Town (€2m)

1. Triogue way progress Phase 2 to consent, detailed design & tender.
2. Completion of upgrade & improvements to Portlaoise cycle routes.
3. 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)

1. Advance project from provisional approval to confirmed project funding.
2. 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

1. Completion of Old Fort Outdoor Event Space project.

J17 National Enterprise Park

1. Complete construction of roads and services for Phase 4 Western Arm & Phase 5.

Portlaoise Town Bus Service

1. Work with the NTA for delivery of bus stopping location works and to advance the tender for an operator for the service subject to the provision of funding by the NTA.

NTA Active Travel

1. Design, tender and advance the construction of a number of Active Travel projects.

Laois Flood Relief Schemes

Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme

1. Complete Stage1 (scheme review and development of a preferred option) & advance Stage 2 (planning consent).

Portarlington Flood Relief Scheme

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

Clonaslee Flood Relief Scheme (Minor Project)

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

Mountrath

1. 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

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

Water Services

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

| Areas of Activity | Objectives |
|--|--|
| Public Water and Wastewater Schemes – Services provided to Uisce Éireann | <p>Following on from the signing of the Master Co-operation Agreement by Laois County Council and Uisce Éireann on the 27th July 2023, Uisce Éireann now has full responsibility for the maintenance and operation of Water Services in County Laois.</p> <p>There are 50 Laois County Council staff involved in the provision of Water Services, under the instruction of Uisce Éireann.</p> |

Economic Development/Business Support Unit/Local Enterprise Office

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 2024

1. Promote Council / LEO support to new and existing businesses in the County.
2. Promote and develop the "invest in Laois" brand through an enhanced communication's strategy.
3. Work with the Laois Chamber Alliance in promoting Laois as a place to do business.
4. Promote Portlaoise as a place to do business through the "Portlaoise Town Team initiative".
5. Work with Laois TASTE to promote, support and grow the Food and Drinks Sector in the County.
6. Access funding for economic development initiatives.
7. Build relationships with Internal, External (S.M.E.'s), External (Large / F.D.I.) and Public Sector agencies for the creation of sustainable employment.
8. Continue the roll out of the Façade Enhancement Scheme across the County.
9. Extend the Vacant Commercial Property Incentive Scheme to other towns in the County.
10. 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.
11. Work with other key stakeholder to promote Laois as a place to do business.
12. 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.
13. Promote the Green Agenda.

14. Support new/existing projects through the provision of direct financial assistance.
15. Co-ordinate training and mentoring support for businesses.
16. Continue to foster an enterprise culture within the county through the Student Enterprise Programme, business networks, promotional campaigns, etc.
17. Assist businesses in developing an export strategy.
18. Assist businesses in becoming more innovative and competitive.
19. Support business in accessing and participating in exhibitions, seminars, and networking events.
20. Assist businesses grow online through the Online Trading Voucher Scheme.
21. Work with other key stakeholders to promote Laois as a place to do business.
22. Work with Enterprise Centres in the County to increase enterprise space offering.
23. Support economic actions in the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan, the Local Economic and Community Plan, etc.

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 2024

1. Administer Laois County Council's Tourism Grant Scheme 2024.
2. Support new and existing Festivals in the County and attract new festivals / events to the County.
3. Assist the Laois Chamber Alliance with their works programme and the preparation of a new Strategic Plan for Tourism in the County.
4. Continue to support Ireland's Ancient East initiatives and promotional campaigns in association with Fáilte Ireland.
5. Work with Fáilte Ireland, Office of Public Works, Waterways Ireland, Laois Partnership, 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. Progress parking and other facilities at the Rock of Dunamase.
7. Acquire land for parking in Vicarstown to service the Barrow Blue Way.
8. Support Coillte in the completion of the Mountain Bike Trail Project in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.
9. Support the Gordon Bennett Irish Classic Run 2024 and the 2024 Ras na mBan "National Women's Cycling" event.
10. Participate in the National Ploughing Championships 2024 and provide an opportunity for local businesses, craft, and service providers to take part.
11. Promote the Garden and Walking Trails within the County.
12. Promote and support County and Town Twinning.
13. Complete the Tourism Destination Town Project for Portlaoise.
14. Support the Portarlington Regeneration Strategy 2030.
15. Support the development of Caravan & Camping Parks in the County,
16. Continue to work with the Enterprise, Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Policy Committee.
17. Assist with the implementation of the Failte Ireland's EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme 2023-2026.

18. Represent Laois County Council on the Steering group – Shared Island Funding / Columban Way Steering Committee.
19. Progress the link from the Barrow Blueway to Portarlington and Derryounce Lakes and Trails.
20. Review the Laois Tourism information leaflet.
21. Assist with the formation a new County wide Laois Festival of Gardening, Food and Heritage

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 2024

1. Continue to register all current land and housing interests and maintain the M.App Enterprise System.
2. Continue to reconcile the M.App Enterprise System to the Fixed Asset Register in Milestone 7 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.
8. Act as the primary contact with the Council's solicitor regarding all administrative work in relation to acquisitions, leases, disposals, and agreements.
9. To liaise with staff in each electoral area to identify any sites/plots of land that may be missing from our register.

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 To deliver the Local Digital Strategy for the County |

Key Actions for 2024

1. Commence the review of the Laois Digital Strategy 2020-2024 in 2024.
2. Support the implementation of the 2024 action items as outlined in the Laois Digital Strategy 2020-2024.
3. Promote the use of Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) throughout the County in 2024.
4. Maintain the Public Wi-Fi in the towns and villages
5. Assist where possible with the rollout of broadband initiatives in line with the National Broadband Plan.
6. Support the rollout of High-Speed broadband to all areas of the County through the processing of the Section 254 Licences under the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.
7. Support the provision of Mobile Monopoles around the County to remove Mobile signal black spots.
8. Support the rollout of High-Speed Broadband by providers such as EIR, SIRO, Virgin Media, ENET etc.
9. Support High Speed Broadband Hubs in community and economic facilities throughout the county.
10. Work in collaboration with the LOETB and Offaly County Council in the roll out of the STREAM programmes in relation to advancing digital skills in primary and secondary schools in the County.
11. Pilot the Dreamspace initiative in a BCP location within the County in 2024.
12. Collaborate with Technological University of Shannon (TUS) in developing the Dreambig project which works with TY students over a 3 year time frame to

develop skills in the STEM area in conjunction with partner companies within the county.

13. Establish a Local working group to review the necessary requirements in relation to the roll out of the Gigabit Infrastructure Act 2023.

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. |

Key Actions for 2024

Forward Planning

1. Implement the objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.
2. Prepare the 2-year Chief Executive report on the progress achieved on securing the objectives of the County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Housing Strategy 2021-2027.
3. Prepare any necessary variations that may be required following the 2-year review of the County Development Plan.
4. Contribute to the review of the National Planning Framework and RSES as required in 2024.
5. Complete the review process for the Local Area Plans for Portlaoise and Mountmellick in 2024.

6. Complete the review of the Graiguecullen JUAP in conjunction with Carlow County Council in 2024.
7. Complete the review of the Portarlington LAP in conjunction with Offaly County Council in 2024.
8. Commence the preparation of a Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) for County Laois and accompanying variation to the County Development Plan 2021-2027 in 2024 and align with the Climate Action Plan for the County.
9. Contribute to the Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Fund and TVRS applications as required during 2024.
10. 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. Provide a Pre-Planning Clinic service remotely and in Council offices and with relevant sections in attendance as required.
3. Ensure Compliance reports for planning consents are dealt with within a timely manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation.
4. Comply with processes, as required, in relation to the provision of reports on Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SID) for An Bord Pleanala and Largescale Residential Developments (LRD).
5. 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 and complete the taking in charge of a minimum of **12** estates by the end of 2024.

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

Local Performance Target

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| Local Performance Target |
| A target to 12 no. estates to be taken in charge in 2024 |

Heritage & Conservation

Heritage

The Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026 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.

Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy – Strategic Aims

- 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;
and
- D. Celebrate and promote the heritage and biodiversity of Laois.

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

Key Actions for 2024

Research, Data Collection and Best Practice

1. Facilitate Public Access to all heritage data for Laois through Heritage Maps project

Investment in Key Sites and Programmes

1. Contribute to interpretation of Fort Protector Portlaoise through Portlaoise Destination Town Project
2. Collaborate on project to create visitor facilities at the Rock of Dunamase, subject to availability of a suitable site.
3. Carry out urgent conservation works at Donaghmore Workhouse
Donaghmore Workhouse and liaise with other departments to develop a masterplan for future use of site.
4. Continue support for James Fintan Lalor Homeplace at Tinakill House

Investment in People and Community-led Heritage and Biodiversity

1. Continue to work with the community at Timahoe Monastic Site to manage the landscape and buildings with input from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme
2. 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.

Engagement and Education

1. Plan, promote and deliver a full programme of events for Laois during Heritage Week, August 2024, in collaboration with the Heritage Council, members of the Culture Team, and local communities.
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.
3. Promote awareness of the importance of biodiversity and benefits of nature through continuation of the 'In Your Nature' podcast in partnership with BirdWatch Ireland and Offaly County Council, and continued promotion and reprints of the Gardening for Biodiversity booklet, colouring book, and Irish edition.
4. Provide advice and support to local authority staff, Elected Representatives, and communities on all aspects of heritage.
5. 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.

Policy and Advocacy

1. Distribute, promote, and implement the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2026.
2. Participate in promoting and implementing the National Heritage Plan Heritage Ireland 2030.
3. Deliver on the local aims of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) in Laois with the Assistance of NBAP funding.

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. Collaborate with Culture Team and Creative Ireland to deliver on the aims of the Creative Ireland programme in Laois.
6. Collaborate with the Laois County Council Climate Action Team to deliver on the aims of the Laois Climate Action Plan and relevant Sectoral Adaptation Plans.

Place-making and Connecting Landscape

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, other important sites, and promotion of the Laois Heritage.

Championing Laois

1. Laois in 30 Objects' – work with the Heritage Forum and Laois Heritage Society to identify and choose the defining objects of County Laois.

Targeting Resources

2. Work in partnership with the Heritage Council to source funds for and deliver the actions of the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy while also delivering on key Heritage Council priorities at local level.
3. Manage the operation of **Community Monuments Fund** in Laois, subject to 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.
4. 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 overall conservation Objectives and Key Actions are outlined below:

| 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 Conservation Actions for 2024

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.

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 2024

1. Prepare a new County Arts Plan for the period 2024-2029 in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
2. Implement the actions as outlined in the Arts Council Framework Agreement 2018 – 2024.
3. Progress the development of a public art plan for Laois in 2024.
4. Further develop partnerships with the Arts Council, Government Departments, Laois/Offaly ETB, ALAAO, Youth Theatre Ireland, Poetry Ireland, the VAI and local partners.
5. Work collaboratively with partners on the Laois and Offaly Local Creative Youth Partnership, to implement the Local Creative Youth Partnership Initiative.
6. Promote and participate in national and local annual events such as Culture Night, National Drawing Day, Bealtaine Festival, Cruinniú na nÓg, the Leaves Writing and Music Festival and other events as they are advised.
7. 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.
8. Continue to implement the Artist in Schools scheme in schools and the Summer Arts programme.
9. Continue to develop the potential of the County as a creative hub and/or location for film making in 2024.

10. Oversee the development of Laois Youth Theatre, in partnership with Dunamaise Arts Centre, and other youth theatre programmes within the county.
11. Continue to support and develop our Arts and Events infrastructure including the Laois Arthouse, Dunamaise Arts Centre, Laois Music Centre and other artistic facilities.
12. Finalise and implement a Strategy for Laois Artshouse, Stradbally in 2024.

Water Services, Environment & Veterinary Services

The Areas of Activity and Objectives are outlined hereunder:

| Areas of Activity | Objectives |
|---|---|
| Environmental Protection | <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 |
| Waste Management & Enforcement | <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 |
| Litter Management | <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 |
| Veterinary Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services carried out relating to food safety, inspection of abattoirs and the control of dogs under the responsibility of the County Veterinary Officer |
| Rural Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |

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| | public health of the people of Laois and supporting the socio-economic development of the agricultural sector. |
| Small Private Schemes with a commercial or public activity (SPSs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |

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 2024

1. Environmental Protection:

Implementation of the National Environmental Enforcement Priorities.

(a) Water Quality – Improving water status in all water bodies.

- Investigate water quality complaints and incidents.
- Inspections related to pressures from agriculture activities (farmyard and farmland).
- Inspections to reduce the impact of domestic wastewater treatment systems.
- Inspections to reduce the impact of licensed discharges and misconnections.

- Local priorities and water quality monitoring – deliver the Water Framework Directive monitoring programme and address local water quality issues.
- Assess planning application referrals with respect to water quality protection.

(b) Air Quality & Noise

Air Quality - Protecting public health and to maintain and improve air quality.

- Investigate air quality complaints and incidents.
- Solid fuel inspections – to ensure only compliant solid fuel products are available for purchase by the end-user.
- Air quality monitoring & data use – improve air quality forecasting and identification of priority areas for action. Also, encourage greater understanding and involvement of the public in air quality issues.
- Air quality control (including assessment of planning application referrals).
- On-going air quality enforcement work to ensure appropriate controls are in place to minimise, reduce or prevent air emissions that may be harmful to the environment or to human health. Ensure compliance with solvents, deco-paints & petroleum vapour regulations, air pollution licences etc.

Noise – Emissions & Pollution

- Investigate noise complaints and incidents.
- Environmental Noise Directive (ENDs) – Reduce the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise as well as preserve environmental quality where it is good.
- Noise control (including assessment of planning application referrals).
- On-going noise enforcement work to ensure appropriate controls are in place to minimise, reduce or prevent noise emissions that may be harmful to the environment or to human health.

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 - Detection and cessation of unauthorised collection and dumping activities and remediation of polluted sites.
- Construction and Demolition Waste - Effective and authorised management, movement and disposal of C&D waste.
- End of Life Vehicles (ELVs) and Waste Metals - Ensure all relevant ELV and metal facilities are authorised and maintain a high level of compliance for acceptance, classification, segregation, recycling and disposal of ELVs and metals.
- Household and Commercial Waste - Maximise segregation, and recycling of municipal waste.
- Producer Responsibility Initiatives and additional Local Priorities - All operators subject to producer responsibility initiatives registered with appropriate compliance schemes and to ensure good regulatory compliance at all waste facilities including those owned by local authorities.

(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.

- 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.

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.

4. 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 recouplements 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.
- Continue to work with the I.S.P.C.A to provide a dog warden service in Co. Laois and provide the services associated with the dog pond.
- Comply with the Database Licence and Fee collection system contract currently in place with An Post.

5. Rural Water:

- Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme: Advertise, promote and administer submissions and applications and progress the delivery of the programme once announced.
- 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 recouplement 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.

6. 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.

7. Dangerous Structures:

- Follow up on all cases as they arise.

8. Public Nuisance:

- Follow up on all cases as they arise.

9. 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.

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 2024

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 2024.
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 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.

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| Local Performance Target |
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| Target time of 5 ½ minutes response from time of alert to going mobile to the incident. |
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Fire Service Infrastructure

1. Complete the new capital works at Mountmellick Fire Station subject to capital funding provided by NDFEM.
2. Progress the new capital works for a new Stradbally Fire Station subject to approval & capital funding provided by NDFEM.
3. Progress the new capital works for a new Rathdowney Fire Station subject to approval & capital funding provided by NDFEM.

Fire Prevention

1. Maintain a register of fire safety notices served by LCFRS.
2. Engage with relevant parties for all licenced outdoor events held in Co. Laois - Ongoing to Q4 2024.
3. Administer Fire Safety Certificate Application and Assessment process – Ongoing to Q4 2024.
4. Assess Dangerous Substances licence applications, subject to staffing- Ongoing to Q4 2024.
5. Respond to licensing application where appropriate, under Intoxicating Liquor Acts- Ongoing to Q4 2024.
6. Follow up on all fire safety related complaints – Ongoing to Q4 2024.

Community Fire Safety

1. Ongoing delivery of the Primary Schools Programme to 3rd class pupils in 70 schools in Co. Laois – end of Q4 2024.
2. Carry out Fire Safety in the home talks/demonstrations as necessary- Ongoing to Q4 2024.

Major Emergency Management

1. To continually develop and maintain Major Emergency Management capabilities of Laois County Council - Ongoing to Q4 2024.
 - 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 2024.
2. Review Laois County Council's Major Emergency Plan and update as necessary – End Q2, 2024.
3. Manage M.E.M training schedules as provided by the National Steering Group and Midland Region Working Groups - Ongoing to Q4 2024.

Civil Defence

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

| Areas of Activity | Objectives |
|----------------------|--|
| Operational Activity | Provide a Civil Defence service for Co. Laois in line with the Department of Defence "Towards 2030" document. |
| Emergency Response | 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 | Provide support to An Garda Síochána with search and recovery of missing persons |
| Medical Response | Provide a PHECC Licenced emergency medical service ensuring compliance with the Governance Validation Framework. |
| Community Assistance | Provide support to community events |
| Radiation Monitoring | Provide support to the Environmental Protection Agency with radiation monitoring and sample collection |

Key actions for 2024

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 appropriate training and continuous professional development of all Laois Civil Defence volunteers by providing a minimum of 80 hours of training classes per year.
4. Ensure that all members of Laois Civil Defence conform to the Minimum Training Standard as required under the Department of Defence Circular 12/2019.
5. Make provision for the upgrade of aging equipment and vehicles.
6. Strengthen key areas such as search response with the training of additional search managers, communications controllers and team leaders.

7. Recruit to increase the number of active volunteers in Laois to a minimum of 60 by Q4 of 2024
8. Progress next stages of the capital works to the new Civil Defence Headquarters providing welfare facilities for volunteers and storage for the unit's vehicles, and equipment.

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 2024

1. To continue to operate and deliver library services for the county providing free access to library stock and books, government, and Council information, eResources and eBooks, online services, and internet/Wi-Fi/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, All Strategy (Adult Literacy for All), Healthy Ireland and Services to Marginalized and Disadvantaged Communities.
3. Preparation, Adoption and Launch of a Laois Library Development Plan 2024 - 2028, building on key objectives outlined by the NEW national library strategy *The Library is the Place 2023-2027*
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, Seachtain na nGaeilge, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Library of Sanctuary, Children's Book Festival, Creative Ireland, Laois Literary Events and Science
5. Continue to introduce Sensory Friendly library services and facilities in library branches
6. Continue with Age Friendly library services in all libraries in the county.
7. Manage and promote the Europe Direct Information Centre in Portlaoise Library.

8. Continue to upgrade and maintain ICT facilities in all library service points creating digital spaces and facilitate free digital learning in the library.
9. Piloting of the Open Library service in Portarlington and Portlaoise Library.
10. Continue to promote and utilise social media pages to publicise and promote Library, Council and Cultural services to our online community.
11. Continue with Local history digitization and uploading of records to Laois Digital Archive.
12. 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 and Integration Supports

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

| Areas of Activity | Objectives |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Community Forum Response | To lead the coordination of the provision of supports and services at local level to all refugee cohorts, by the range of public and not for profit bodies involved and oversee the integration of refugees into local communities. |
| Integration Support Service | To provide ongoing supports, advice, information and guidance to International Protection applicants and other categories of refugees, including linking them with mainstream support services, promoting social inclusion and encouraging integration. |
| 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 from Ukraine. |

Key Actions for 2024

1. Lead the coordination of service provision by the Community Response Forum to all categories of refugees, in a targeted and responsive manner.
2. Establish the new Integration Support Service which will identify local needs and work with other agencies and bodies to advance and address the integration of refugees into local communities.
3. Arrange for the implementation of IRPP II (Irish Refugee Protection Programme) in respect of resettlement programme refugees allocated to Laois:
 - Appoint an Implementing Partner
 - Convene the Laois Resettlement Interagency Working Group to support the implementation of the project
4. Identify ongoing and evolving integration service delivery needs and supports, and implement plans and programmes to address them.
5. Under the National Refurbishment Programme, continue to assess vacant and/or derelict properties which may be suitable for emergency Ukrainian accommodation.
6. Liaise with departments within Laois County Council and relevant state departments so as to advance the refurbishment of such properties.

7. Continue to liaise with the OPW and DCEDIY in relation to the provision of modular homes in County Laois to Ukrainian beneficiaries.
8. Continue to implement the Offer A Home Scheme for Ukrainian beneficiaries.
9. Liaise as required, with the Department of Integration's (DCEDIY) National Community Engagement Team, regarding completion by them of appropriate local engagement on state provision of additional accommodation centres.

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 | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| 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 | <p>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.</p> <p>To support existing collaborative structures in delivering the Age Friendly Programme in Laois.</p> |

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| | <p>To monitor implementation of Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2027.</p> <p>To increase OPC Database and maintain and strengthen Older Peoples Executive.</p> |
| 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. |
| Cemetery & Burial Ground Management | To maintain the 27 Cemeteries in the ownership of Laois County Council. |
| 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. |
| Climate Change | To adopt and implement the Laois Climate Action Plan (Laois CAP). The Laois CAP will deliver and promote evidence-based and integrated climate action by way of adaptation and mitigation measures, centred around the role and remit of the local authority on climate action. |
| 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. |
| Supporting Sports organisations | To support sporting and community organisations in accessing funding and promote the development of a wide range of genres of sport and recreation. |
| Collaborative working | To work in co-operation with Laois Sports Partnership, Sports Ireland and other community partners across sectors to achieve our common goals. |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Town Centre First | <p>To support the establishment and ongoing work of the various Town Teams within the County.</p> <p>To access funding for rural development through the various funding streams available for towns and villages.</p> <p>Liaise closely with the housing and planning sections through the multi-disciplinary regeneration team that has been established to tackle vacancy and dereliction in towns and villages across the County.</p> |
|-------------------|---|

Key Actions for 2024

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. The adoption and implementation of the Laois Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028.
3. Monitor and ensure continuing delivery by Laois Local Action Group (LAG) of the new LEADER Programme in 2024, 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. Continue to deliver the approved Programme of work/activities under Laois Round Strand 4 Healthy Ireland Fund and work with collaborative partners to achieve actions, in accordance with Healthy Ireland and Pobal Guidelines for Healthy Ireland.

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. Monitor implementation of Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2027 on a quarterly basis. Increase reach of OPC by growing the database.
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 new Graduate.ie Youth Engagement programme 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 2024, 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 2024.
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 2024.
4. Continue to support the work of Laois Joint Policing Committee in 2024. 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 2024 Pride of Place competition and work as required, with entrant groups throughout the competitive process.

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. Continue roll out of an online application facility where the public can submit applications online.

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

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 endeavouring to achieve Green Flag status in 2024.
5. The adoption and implementation of the Laois Climate Action Plan.
6. Co-ordinate the Climate Action Team within the Council to implement the Laois Climate Action Plan.
7. Implement relevant actions and record KPIs from the Laois Climate Action Plan.
8. To engage with communities to support them to take positive climate action and work with Communities in relation to the Community Climate Action Fund.
9. Assist further energy efficiency across the Council's infrastructure.
10. Continue to assist communities to undertake the Sustainable Energy Community process under the SEAI.
11. Continue to progress conservation and carbon reducing initiatives that will aid the progression of making Laois a sustainable, climate-resilient region for future generations.
12. Continue to develop and maintain the 27 Cemeteries in the ownership of Laois County Council.

Recreation, Play and Sport

1. Prepare the Recreation Play and Sports Strategy for the period 2024 – 2029 in association local and national partners (including Sports Ireland and Laois Sports Partnership).

2. Make applications to funding agencies and government departments to assist with delivery of Council led capital projects and programmes of inclusive participation in recreation, play and sports.
3. Oversee the delivery of Council led projects and programmes of inclusive participation in recreation, play and sports.
4. Assist voluntary organisations to make applications to funding agencies and government departments to assist with delivery of capital projects which are to be in the ownership/management of those organisations.
5. Assist voluntary organisations to make applications to funding agencies and government departments to assist with delivery of programmes of inclusive participation in recreation, play and sports which are led by those organisations.
6. Through the provision of advice, training, and information to continue to assist community groups and clubs to develop quality recreation, play and sports facilities.
7. Maintain to a high standard existing Council managed public play spaces ensuring a quality experience for all users.
8. To develop during 2024 a longer-term strategic maintenance plan for Council managed playgrounds/play spaces including an assessment of the current level of provision.
9. Oversee the promotion and delivery of national programmes and events assigned to the Council to encourage increased usage of public facilities and increase participation.

Water Safety

1. Continue to oversee and support the delivery of Primary Aquatic Water Safety Programme to primary schools in County Laois in 2024 and facilitate delivery at Laois Leisure pool facilities.
2. Promote national water safety programmes and water safety classes for County Laois public Leisure facilities and Ballinakill Outdoor Pool.
3. Maintain ring buoys and water safety signage erected by Laois County Council in 10 locations countywide.
4. Continue to raise awareness of water safety through the delivery of 4 key water safety events during Water Safety Awareness Week 2024.

Town Centre First

1. Support the Rathdowney Town Team achieve the objectives set out in the Rathdowney Town Centre First Plan.
2. Support the Mountrath Town Team achieve the objectives set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan.

3. Oversee and support the community groups across the County that have received funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
4. Oversee and support the community groups that have received funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.
5. Identify sources of funding that will support the work of the Portlaoise Town Team.
6. Work with community groups in towns and villages across the County to identify projects which will help regenerate their areas.
7. Engage with property owners in the towns of Mountrath and Rathdowney to address vacancy and dereliction in line with Town Centre First Plans and sustainable community plans as prepared by Town Teams in 2023.
8. To work with other sections in the Council (Finance, Planning, Housing) to support the implementation of the Town Centre First and Town Regeneration policies.

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 2024

1. Implement the budgetary control framework across all revenue divisions and capital programmes.
2. Monitor and manage the 2024 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. The continued development of MyCoCo online payments system to include "Quickpay", and development of other service facilities on the app.
12. Implementation of the Enhanced Employee reporting (EER) requirements for revenue commencing in January 2024, and relevant upgrades to the travel system.
13. Complete the Annual Financial Statement 2023 on or before the end of March 2024.

- 14. Prepare the budget for 2025 between 1st November 2024 and 29th November 2024, 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 2024.
- 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 2023, Friday 23rd February 2024
- Q1 2024 Thursday 25th May 2024
- Q2 2024 Thursday 23rd August 2024
- Q3 2024 Friday 22nd November 2024
- Q4 2024 Friday 24th February 2025

B) Borrowing Return

- Q4 2023 Monday 15th January 2024
- Q1 2024 Friday 15th April 2024
- Q2 2024 Friday 15th July 2024
- Q3 2024 Monday 14th October 2024
- Q4 2024 Monday 14th January 2025

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| Local Performance Target |
| Complete the Annual Financial Statement 2023 on or before the end of March 2024. |

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 2024

1. Review Workforce planning requirements in line with the current Corporate Plan.
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. Commence a phased implementation of a 'People Strategy' for Laois County Council in 2024.
4. Develop and communicate H. R. policies having regard to its legal requirements in relation to equality and public service duty, as required
5. Continue to implement and review 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 2024.
9. To implement the commitments outlined in Laois County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy in relation to the activities of Human Resources.

10. 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 2024

1. Create a Local Digital Action Plan to incorporate the goals of the national Digital and ICT Strategy for the sector.

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.
3. Promote a 'Digital First but not Digital only' approach to Business process improvement within Laois County Council.
4. Benchmark cyber resilience through building further compliance with the evolving Public Sector Cyber Security Baseline Standards.
5. Build Disaster Recovery capacity in accordance with the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan.
6. Finalise the Network Hardware replacement programme to provide standardised, secure, and resilient network infrastructure.
7. Build and launch 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. Develop and promote an Innovation program where technology can be used to improve service for citizens and staff.
10. Put sustainability and green procurement to the fore of all IT decisions and procurement.
11. Complete the rollout of the broadband connectivity and network infrastructure plan throughout the Council offices and Libraries.
12. Provide support for the Laois Climate Action Team and Climate Adaptation Plan.
13. Ongoing review of Contracts for Services and re-tender where required in line with procurement guidelines.
14. Continue to support office based and remote staff and Councillors through a professional and efficient IT Support Service.
15. 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 Authority in delivering its objectives through minimizing associated identified risks and providing guidance and assurance. |

Key Actions for 2024

1. Review and update the Risk Management Register.
2. Insure the Local Authority against all relevant risks.
3. Complete the Internal Audit Plan 2024 and develop future Audit Plans with due attention to the principle of governance.
4. Assist with the Local Government Audit, Motor Taxation Audit, Department of Transport Audits, and with the Food Safety Authority, the Fire and Emergency External Validation Groups assessment, the Service Indicator verification process, Uisce Eireann'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 2024.
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 2024

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. Review Corporate Procurement Plan 2021-2023 and publish new three-year Corporate Procurement Plan 2024 – 2026.
5. Review 2023 procurement procedures with each Service Area with a view to developing appropriate procurement strategies in 2024.
6. Continue to guide the Procurement cross-functional Team improving the strategic support and direction of procurement, driving compliance, value for money and sustainable procurements.
7. Provide guidance and support for staff on new eTenders Platform and eForms.
8. Proactively promote and monitor the use of Green Public Procurement (GPP) and Social Considerations in Tender documents and Contracts as appropriate.
9. Promote utilization of Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) National Framework Agreements.
10. Build organisational capacity to deliver successful procurements by ensuring up-to-date procurement circulars, guidance, templates are available via the procurement library on the Intranet.
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. Publish quarterly details of Contracts awarded over €25,000 on the internet.
15. Manage the annual Spend Data Return to the LGMA and OGP.
16. Assist in compiling the Public Spend Code Quality Assurance Report 2023 for submission to NOAC by the 2024 deadline.

Health and Safety

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

| Areas of Activity | Objectives |
|---------------------------|--|
| Safety Health and Welfare | To provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe places of Work,• Safe systems of Work,• Safe Plant and Equipment, and• Safe and Healthy Employees so far as is reasonably practicable. |

Key actions for 2024

1. Introduce and support rollout of Safety Management System (SMS) Software throughout all Departments / Sections.
2. Monitoring of our Safety Management System through a cross directorate Safety Inspection Programme (c 250 inspections).
3. Conduct Accident / Incident Investigation as necessary and utilise our SMS software to record and review same.
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 as appropriate 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 for Safety, Health, and Welfare as appropriate.
9. Implement appropriate record management system.

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 | Ensure all payees are paid accurately and on time. Implement any relevant pay rate changes on receipt of a department circular. |
| Superannuation | Develop a Centre of Excellence for superannuation for the sector. Ensure all Superannuation administration obligations are met. |
| Quality Management & Customer Service | Administer the quality management system to facilitate the delivery of a quality payroll and superannuation service. Ensure all MyPay obligations are met as per SLA and KPIs. Facilitate the ISAE 3402 Audit of MyPay for the previous year. |
| 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 2024

1. Migrate Dublin City Council to MyPay by the end of 2024
2. Migrate 6 additional Local Authorities into MyPay Superannuation by the end of 2024.
3. Make €1.1bn in total payments to approximately 49,000 Local Authority payees in 2024.
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 2024 for the year covering 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2023.
14. Implement 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 |

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|------------------|-------|--|------|-----------|
| | P.2.3 | EFT payment file submitted for payment to the bank in accordance with the payroll timelines in Error! Reference source not found. | 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 |