



Laois County Council

Litter Management Plan 2022 – 2024



Laois County Council, Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
057 86 64000
www.laois.ie



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Draft 2	Derval O'Rourke	Rory O'Callaghan	Laois County Council Members	30 th November 2021
Plan 13	Ann Carroll	Rory O'Callaghan	Laois County Council Members	28 th February 2022

1.0 Introduction

This Litter Management Plan is for the period 2022 — 2024.

It is a statutory plan prepared as prescribed in Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 as amended, which requires local authorities to make and implement a Litter Management Plan and to review the plan every three years.

This Litter Management Plan replaces the 2018-2020 Plan, whose life was extended by one year, and proposes to address the negative impacts of litter on our county, improve the quality of life and sense of wellbeing of our residents, and enhance our commercial and tourism potential through effective and efficient:

- Enforcement of legislation and regulation
- Management and maintenance of our public realm
- Communication, education and awareness

The objectives of this plan shall have regard to the mission statement and objectives of the Corporate Plan 2020—2024 to improve, protect, enhance and promote the natural and built environment in the interests of present and future generations.

This Litter Management Plan is formulated having regard to the shared goals of the Climate Change Adaption Strategy, the National Waste Plan and the UN Sustainable Development. The plan contains actions and objectives that can contribute to positive climate and environmental outcomes, waste reduction and increases in recycling and reuse.



1.1 Climate Change

Climate Change and its long-term effects need to be addressed at national and local levels, by counties, businesses and communities. Laois County Council is committed to leading and driving the national response to climate action, by delivering on the actions outlined in our Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 as well as progressing our climate obligations as outlined in the Climate Action Charter, whilst promoting and protecting a clean, safe environment in a manner which is viable and sustainable.

Delivering on these roles will present local authorities with substantial challenges which will require significant cultural and behavioural change and will also require substantial additional resources. Examples of commitments to-date to assist with climate action within Laois County Council and its divisions, the rollout of a compacting solar bin initiative in key locations throughout the county, introduction and promotion of biodiversity and the benefits of pollinator friendly planting, reduction in the use of pesticides and the promotion of green procurement for goods, services and works to support environmental and wider sustainable development, representing both short-term and long-term value for money.



**Signing of the Climate Action Charter,
Mr. John Mulholland, Chief Executive and Mr. William Aird, Cathaoirleach.**

2.0 Statutory Obligation & Consultation

Laois County Council is obliged to produce a Litter Management Plan as set out in Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997. It requires Local authorities to prepare and implement a Litter Management Plan for their own functional area.

A Litter Management Plan is a reserved function of the elected members. Each Local Authority is responsible for implementing the litter laws within its functional area. It is also responsible for the prevention and control of litter and has the power to take enforcement action.

A Local Authority is responsible for keeping public places that are under its control clear of litter as far as is practicably possible, which includes for the provision, maintenance and servicing of the public litter bins in the county.

An important aspect of drafting a Litter Management Plan is statutory consultation, including discussions at Area Committee Meetings, Strategic Policy Committee meetings and public submissions. The statutory consultation process informs the Local Authority of the concerns of businesses, residential/community groups and individuals.

2.1 Preparing the Plan

The preparation of the plan involves a four-stage process:

- (a) **Internal Consultation** - Consultation was held with key stakeholders, waste management and enforcement staff to review the success of the previous plan and to discuss and draw out ideas about the new plan, based on their experiences on the front line of litter management in the county.
- (b) **Drafting the Plan** - Background research was carried out and a review of the internal consultation was undertaken for the preparation of the new Litter Management Plan. A review of 2018 - 2020 Litter Management Plan and evaluation of performance against previous targets was completed. The draft plan was then reviewed by the Strategic Policy Committee and the Waste Management Team and other key stakeholders.
- (c) **Statutory Consultation** - The Draft Plan must be approved the Strategic Policy Committee and Laois County Council for the statutory phase of Public Consultation to commence. During the Public Consultation, the Draft plan will be published on the Laois County Council website and advertised through a media campaign inviting submissions including press and radio advertising. The results of the Statutory Consultation will be reviewed through a Special Meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee.
- (d) **Review and Publishing the Plan** - The Draft Plan will be reviewed and amended based on the submissions received, followed by adoption of the Plan by Laois County Council. The final stage will be the publication of the full and final Litter Management Plan 2022 - 2024.

3.0 Litter

3.1 What is Litter? How is it defined?

Litter is defined in the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended, as:

“any substance or object, whether or not intended as waste that, when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or other place lawfully designated for the deposit, is or is likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any such substance or object, and regardless of its size or volume or the extent of the deposit”.

This definition means that any item or material which is disposed of improperly (i.e. not in a litter bin or authorised waste facility) is litter. This can range, for example, from a single coffee cup or cigarette butt, discarded on the street or thrown from a car window, to the dumping of larger volumes of litter or waste.

Litter is one of the environmental issues that is very much one of “think global, act local”.



Dog Fouling

Under the Litter Pollution Act, dog owners are legally obliged to clean up after their pets if they foul in a public place, e.g. on the street or in a park.

3.2 Quantification of Litter Pollution in Laois

In order to manage the litter problem in County Laois, it must be measured. The National Litter Pollution Monitoring System, developed by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and TOBIN Consulting Engineers enable local authorities to measure and therefore manage litter pollution in a structured manner.

Litter Quantification Survey Results

The composition of litter pollution is established by carrying out Litter Quantification Surveys. The main categories of litter detected are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

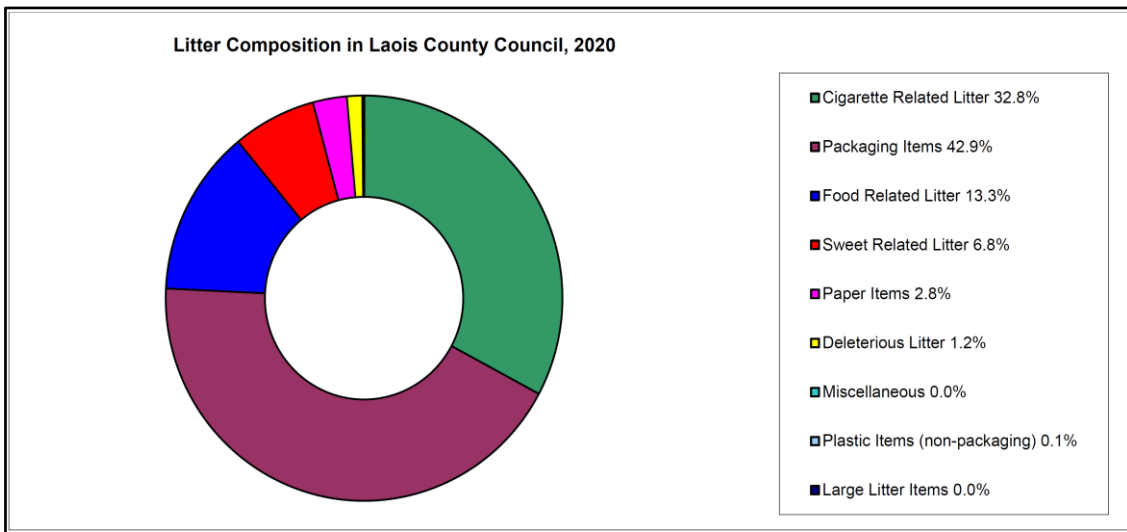


Figure 1 - Composition of Litter Pollution in Laois in 2020

A comparison of the main litter components found by Laois County Council in 2019 and 2020 are presented in Figure 2.

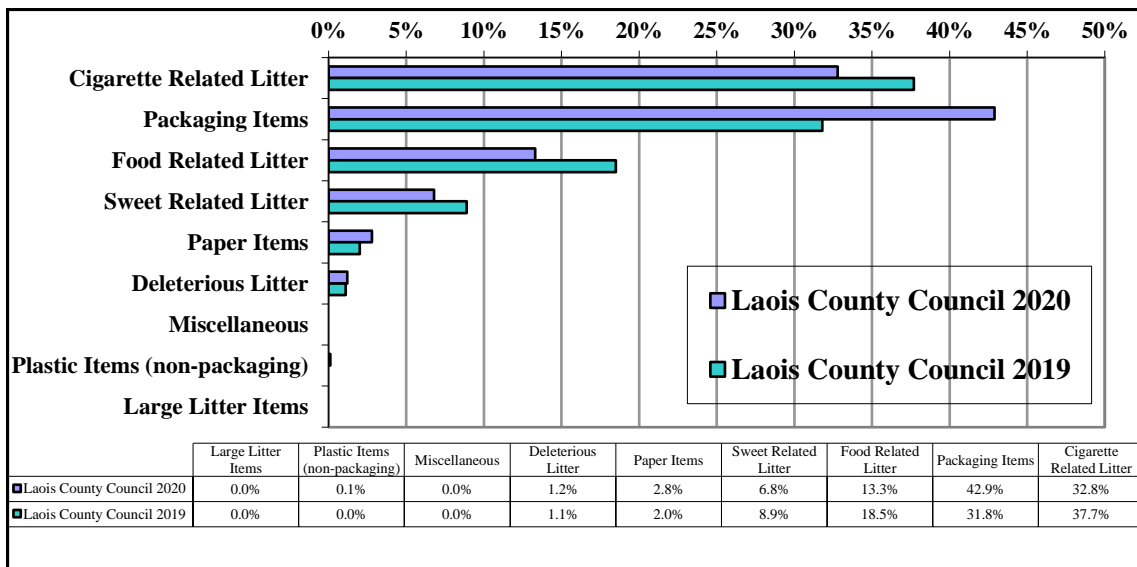
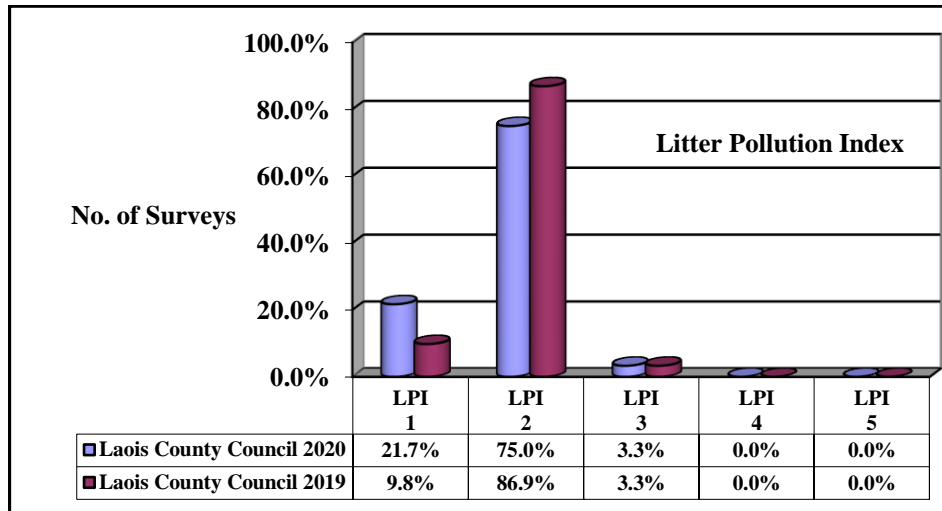


Figure 2 - Comparison of Litter Composition in Co. Laois, 2019 and 2020

Litter Pollution Survey Results

The purpose of the Litter Pollution Survey is to identify the severity and causes of litter pollution within each local authority's functional area. The Litter Monitoring Body tracks changes in pollution levels in order to measure improvement in the severity of the litter pollution problem.



Litter Pollution Survey Results		2020	2019
LP1	Percentage of area unpolluted by litter	21.7%	9.8%
LP2	Percentage of area slightly polluted by litter	75%	86.9%
LP3	Percentage of area moderately polluted by litter	3.3%	3.3%
LP4	Percentage of area significantly polluted by litter	0%	0%
LP5	Percentage of area grossly polluted by litter	0%	0%

Figure 3 - Litter Pollution Survey Results for Co. Laois 2019 – 2020

4.0 Review of Litter Management Plan 2018 - 2020

An annual report on the progress of policy actions and the implementation of the Litter Management Plan 2018 to 2020 was prepared for consideration each year and updates on specific litter management issues are provided in the Monthly Management Reports.

The following has been achieved over the life of the previous Litter Management Plan:

1. Waste Amnesties, Clean-Ups, Street Cleaning Services & Public Awareness Campaigns
2. Waste Facilities - Portlaoise & Portarlington Civic Amenity Sites, Bottle Banks
3. Use of New Technologies
4. Enforcement

1. Waste Amnesties, Clean-ups, Street Cleaning & Public Awareness Campaigns

i) Waste Amnesties

- 2018 - Mattress Amnesty (822 collected)
- 2019 - Mattress & Couch Amnesty (2400 Mattress; 1300 Couches; 1500 Armchairs for recycling). This initiative was shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Waste Management Programme in the All Ireland Community and Council Awards in association with IPB Insurance and Lama.
- 2020 - Household Hazardous Waste (26 Tonnes of hazardous waste diverted from Landfill)
- 2021 - Bulky Goods Collection

ii) Clean-Ups & Anti-Dumping Initiatives

- 2018 - 168 Tonnes (6 Tonnes –Drug Related Waste)
- 2019 - 80 Tonnes
- 2020 - 25 Tonnes
- 2021 - 30 Tonnes

Clean-Ups (Illegal Dumping)

- 2018 - 190 Tonnes
- 2019 - 215 Tonnes
- 2020 - 235 Tonnes
- 2021 - 550 Tonnes

Operation Tombola (Bon Fires)

- Multi-Agency Operation (Gardaí, Council, Tidy Towns)
- Bonfires were removed from various locations throughout the county
- Waste included furniture, mattresses, electrical items etc.

iii) Street Cleaning Services

Laois County Council area staff service and maintain the public litter bins around the county on a regular basis.

iv) Public Awareness Campaigns

The Council has increased the use of Social Media to engage the general public, Tidy Towns and community groups via Facebook and Twitter and has utilised this in the running of several campaigns such as:

- Responsible Dog Ownership and Dog Fouling Campaign
- Illegal Waste Collectors Awareness Campaigns
- Stop Food Waste & Reuse Re-Cycle Projects.
- Litter Awareness Campaigns for e.g. Clean up Laois Week, Green Schools, Anti-litter/Anti-Graffiti such as Bottle Bank Campaign over Festive Season.



2. Waste Facilities

Portlaoise Civic Amenity Site

- County Council took over the management and operation of the Civic Amenity Site in August 2020
- Improved quality of service and an increase in the amount of materials received
- Site infrastructure and site maintenance much improved
- Improved site supervision has resulted in a significant decrease in contamination of collected materials

Portarlinton Civic Amenity Site

- This facility is managed and operated under contract by a Licenced Waste Collector

Bottle Banks

- 42 bottle bank facilities provided throughout the county
- In mid-2020 the Council assigned staff to the maintenance and upkeep of these facilities following large number of complaints in 2020
- Complaints Received - 2020 (88); 2021 (9)

3. Use of New Technologies

CCTV & Audio Devices

- Use of CCTV technology to monitor littering and illegal dumping at some of its bottle banks and at black-spot areas
- Due to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) evidence gathered could not be used to initiate legal proceedings etc.
- Audio Devices were placed in litter black spot areas, advising the public to discontinue littering and bring their rubbish to an authorised facility.

4. Enforcement:

During the period of the Plan Laois County Council performed its statutory duties regarding litter enforcement, detection and investigation.

Waste Bye-Laws & Brown Bin Campaign – Waste Bye Laws came into force on 1st November 2019, Environment staff carried out household waste inspections around the county and issued advice letters

Litter Fines issued for breach of the Litter Pollution Act:

Item	2021	2020	2019	2018
Litter Fines issued	79	180	142	119
Convictions	0	2	6	10

Green Space Enforcement Race against Illegal Dumpers/Illegal Waste Collectors

Environment staff and the Gardaí carried out several vehicle checkpoints in 2019. Fixed penalty notices were issued. Information was provided on Council Website about combating unauthorised waste collectors and illegal dumping.

Dog Fouling

75 Mutt Mitt dispensers & a number of “No Dog Fouling” signs were installed throughout the county, used painted stencils on footpaths to deter dog fouling and promoted responsible dog ownership.



5.0 Objectives of Litter Plan 2022 - 2024

The purpose of making a Litter Management Plan is to provide a strategy for the prevention, control and management of litter within County Laois. Through these planned objectives and actions, it is hoped that every citizen in County Laois will have an increased awareness of the negative impact of litter in the county, be aware of the penalties for littering, and strive through partnership with Laois County Council to have a county that is litter free.

Once adopted by the Council, the plan will be in place for three years and an annual report on the progress of the litter plan will be presented for Council each year.

The objectives of the Litter Plan 2022 – 2024 are:

- 1. Promotion of Education and Awareness Campaigns**
- 2. Litter Prevention & Enforcement**
- 3. Partnership with Communities and Business**
- 4. Provision of Waste Facilities**
- 5. Management of Litter**

5.1 Promotion of Education and Awareness Campaigns

Laois County Council has a duty to raise awareness and educate the public on litter management issues. This will be achieved through the following actions and measures:

- Engage in public consultation regarding the Litter Management Plan using local media to meet the requirements as set out in the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended.
- Publish the Litter Management Plan on the Council's website www.laoiscoco.ie.
- Continue promotion of the Green Schools Programme and Tidy Towns.
- Provide support and assistance to the National Spring Clean programme.
- Promote initiatives with local community groups, Tidy Towns on environmental awareness.
- Work with the Business Sector on various agreed green initiatives.
- Continue to address dog fouling in towns and villages.
- Run social media campaigns and continue to promote bilingual information where appropriate.
- Identify suitable projects which can be funded under the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment's Anti-Litter Grant.

5.2 Litter Prevention and Enforcement

Laois County Council will continue to undertake litter prevention and enforcement measures to combat the litter problem. This will be achieved through the work of our Enforcement Officers and Litter/Traffic Wardens who respond to complaints, issue litter fines and apply preventative measures in areas prone to littering. Other measures include:

- Place CCTV cameras/audio devices at locations such as Bring Banks and litter blackspots (where legislation allows & in line with GDPR)
- Oversee a comprehensive street cleaning service in the larger towns in the county through the area offices.
- Ensure all complaints relating to litter are recorded on our environmental complaints database and are dealt with promptly.
- Promote Litter Hotline – 1800 323230.
- Issue on the spot fines and prosecute offenders.
- Continue to provide mutt dispensers, dog fouling bags and anti-dog fouling signs along popular dog walking routes and key amenity areas.
- Conduct spot checks regarding litter/waste disposal and include relevant data in the RMCEI.

Penalties for Littering

Leaving or throwing litter in a public place is an offence which can be subject to an '*on-the-spot*' fine of €150 and a maximum fine of €3,000 through the Courts (conviction on indictment for litter offences carries a maximum fine of €130,000). A person convicted of a litter offence may be required by the Court to pay the Council's costs and expenses in investigating the offence and in bringing the prosecution.

Large-scale dumping will be prosecuted under the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended, with penalties on conviction or indictment of up to €15 million and/or a 10-year prison term.

5.3 Partnership with Local Communities and Business

Laois County Council aims to work in partnership with community groups, Tidy Towns committees, resident associations, local business/commercial interests and others to provide a litter-free environment for all.

- Continue to develop a good working relationship with local businesses in addressing litter.
- Continue to work with public, community groups and business in the county through the promotion of Clean Up Laois Week, Tidy Towns Schemes, Anti-Litter Campaigns and delivery of national campaigns at local level, by providing bags, litter pickers, promotional material as well as the collection and free disposal of litter/waste collected in certain instances.
- Continue to provide supports – training, advice and financial support, capital investment as required, whilst always ensuring full transparency of our efforts with all parties involved.
- Promote Green Business Initiatives in conjunction with WERLA.
- Work in partnership with communities to promote Green Dog Walker Campaign

Everyone has responsibilities when it comes to litter: what can I do?

- Do not litter and don't tolerate those who do. Put your own litter into a public litter bin. If a litter bin is not within sight when you need one, keep your litter until you see a litter bin or take your litter home with you.
- Keep the footpath / roadside outside your premises litter-free.
- Get involved with your local Tidy Towns group and Clean-Ups in your area.
- When you bring your dog for a walk in a public place (park or street), please clean up after them and dispose of the dirt in a suitable sanitary manner. Use a "poo" bag and dispose of bag in a litter bin or take it home to dispose of in your household bin.
- Recycle responsibly. Laois County Council operates recycling centres at Kyletalesha, Portlaoise and Portarlinton and 42 bring banks (for the recycling of food and drink packaging) around the county. Do not dispose of rubbish or leave bags or boxes at a bring bank. Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE Goods) are accepted free in Portlaoise and Portarlinton recycling centres or the shop where you purchased the item.
- Use only authorised and permitted contractors to remove waste on your behalf. If you pay someone to collect your waste, you must ensure that they have a valid waste collection permit. If you pay for the waste disposal and it is later found illegally dumped, you are responsible for it.
- If you smoke, don't dispose of the cigarette butt on the ground, please put it into a bin.
- If you use chewing gum, please dispose of it responsibly into the nearest bin.

If I'm involved in business, what can I do?

- Keep the footpaths, pavements, gutters, grass verges along the road in front of your property free of litter,
- Secure transported material on a trailer or truck (use a trailer cover),
- Dispose of waste correctly with an authorised collector. Unauthorised collectors will often dump your rubbish on a roadside or into a public bin – that is not allowed by Law and you can be prosecuted,
- Get planning permission to put up promotional signs,
- Do not place advertising flyers or notices on vehicles.
- (Operators of mobile outlets and organisers of major events also have additional obligations).

5.4 Provision of Waste Facilities

Civic Amenity Sites & Waste Transfer Station

Laois County Council has two civic amenity sites (Portlaoise and Portarlinton), which are open six and four days per week, respectively. The Portlaoise Civic Amenity Site at Kyletalesha is owned, operated and managed by Laois County Council while the Portarlinton Civic Amenity Site, owned by the Council, is operated on the Council's behalf by an authorised waste contractor.

Civic Amenity Sites	
Portlaoise Recycling Centre	Portarlinton Recycling Centre
Kyletalesha Landfill Portlaoise Co. Laois Phone: 057 8620653	Lea Road Portarlinton Co. Laois Phone: 057 8642845

Table 4 – Civic Amenity Site Details

Up-to-date information on opening hours, charges and items accepted are available on www.laois.ie.

The county landfill located at Kyletalesha on the Mountmellick Road (N80), Portlaoise now operates as a waste transfer station, i.e. no waste is landfilled on-site. Waste brought to the facility is placed in compactors and it is then transported for disposal to an authorised facility.

Waste Facilities Objectives

- Continue to provide, monitor and maintain bring bank recycling facilities for glass and cans.
- Continue to liaise with the service contractor on a regular basis to ensure efficient servicing is undertaken in compliance with the service contract.
- Continue to look for additional Bring Bank site locations.
- Promote the use of Portlaoise and Portarlington Recycling Centres.
- Develop and implement an annual maintenance programme for bottle banks including power washing, branding and bin replacement.
- Provide litter bins if appropriate/possible taking into account Leave No Trace ethos.
- Develop an audio device programme for bring banks – promoting proper use of same.
- Continue the phased roll out of solar powered compactor litter bins around the county.

5.5 Management of Litter

Laois County Council firmly believes that if litter pollution can't be measured, it can't be managed. Having regard to this, the Council participate in various annual national monitoring programmes.

Measures:

- Actively participate in the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System by conducting Litter Pollution and Litter Quantification surveys.
- Actively engage with and send reports for other monitoring programmes – Gum Litter, Banking Protocol etc.
- Actively participate in other monitoring projects which are facilitated by external agencies, e.g. IBAL.
- Engage with Planning Section regarding event licences, e.g. Electric Picnic, Ploughing Championships, Durrow Scarecrow Festival etc. to ensure litter management is a top priority for all events.
- Support community initiatives.

6.0 Litter Management Plan Measurement & Enforcement

The effectiveness of the Litter Management Plan will be monitored using the following measures and systems.

- Number of Complaints processed and resolved
- CCTV Surveillance
- Results from the Annual Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Anti-Litter League survey
- Indicators from National Litter Pollution Monitoring Scheme
- Implementation of enforcement measures

6.1 Environment Complaint Register

The Environment Complaint Register records and tracks litter complaints. All complaints are logged and investigated. To make a litter complaint, a member of the public can contact the Environment Section using the confidential litter hotline 1800 323230 (24 hours) or by using any of the contact details contained in Appendix 3 – Report a Complaint.

6.2 CCTV Surveillance

When appropriate legislation is enacted, CCTV cameras will be deployed throughout the county to deter illegal dumping and littering in litter black spots in both rural and urban areas. CCTV surveillance will be used as a deterrent in bog lands, forests and woodlands areas. Litter fines will be issued where evidence permits.

6.3 Irish Business against Litter (IBAL)

Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) is an alliance of companies who believe that litter has a significant impact on our economic wellbeing. Each year An Taisce assesses litter levels in Ireland's largest towns and cities against European norms. At the end of 2021, Portlaoise town was ranked 1st out of 40 participating towns and cities surveyed and aims to improve on this placing in future years.

6.4 National Litter Pollution Monitoring System

Laois County Council will continue to carry out litter surveys as part of the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System (NLPMS), as administered by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. The findings from the surveys will assist in developing appropriate policies and measures to target the sources of litter pollution.

6.5 Enforcement Measures

Laois County Council will continue to carry out litter patrols and to apply enforcement measures against those involved in littering and illegal dumping activities throughout the county.

Enforcement Objectives

- To continue to heighten the visibility of the Anti-Litter Warden and Waste Enforcement Services
- To provide a targeted focus on known litter generators, particularly around times of known occurrences
- To investigate all complaints and enforce regulations and legislation as appropriate
- To continue to operate and seek to enhance the Customer Relations Management System
- To continually examine options for surveillance to reduce incidences of littering, illegal dumping and dog fouling
- To continue to provide and promote the Council's Litter Hotline on 1800 323 230 and the Environmental Protection Agency's antidumping hotline on 1850 365 121
- To use technology as a tool to combat littering and illegal dumping

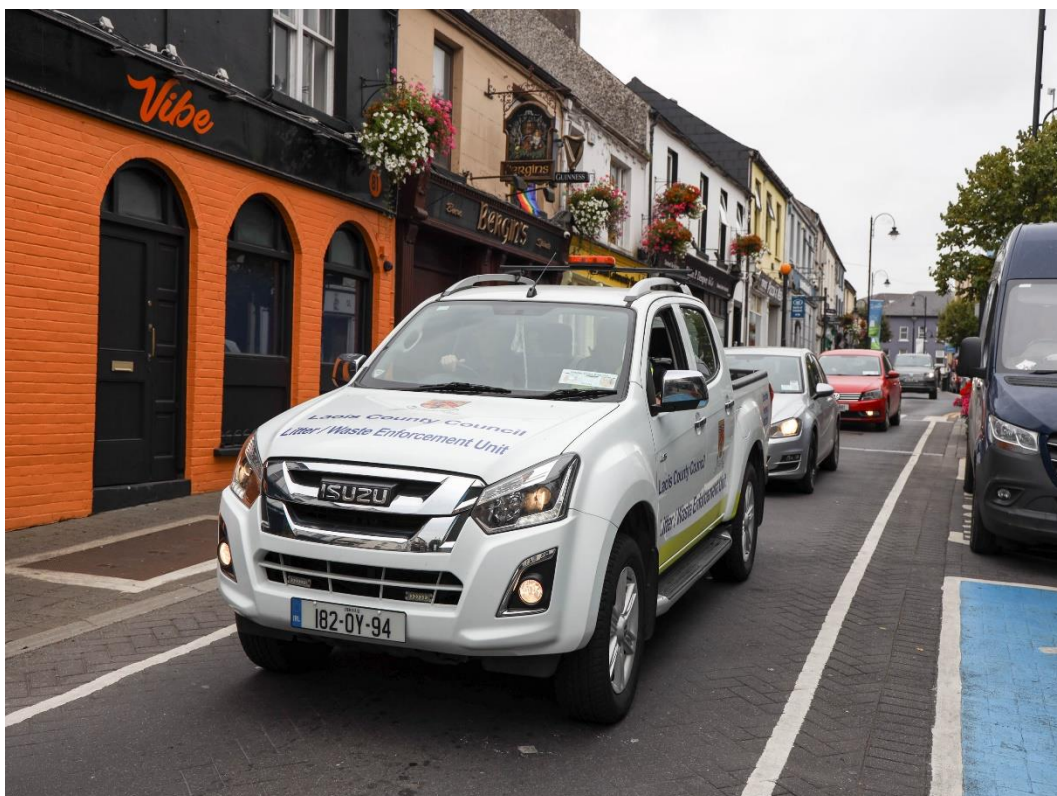
7.0 Conclusion

The Litter Management Plan 2022 - 2024 has identified the litter problem as a significant environmental concern for the citizens of County Laois. The plan has set out objectives and strategies to improve the situation concerning litter and aims to reduce and ultimately eradicate the problem.

The efforts of individuals, the voluntary and community sector and business communities, in challenging and preventing littering, are recognized and acknowledged. It is by working together in partnership with concerned residents and groups in Laois that a targeted programme of awareness, education and enforcement can be implemented and sustained.

Littering is current, it is present and ongoing. Every individual must look at their own practices, clean up their own litter, take responsibility for waste and leave no footprint or impact on their surrounds.

It is the collective responsibility of all living, working and visiting County Laois to protect our environment for now and for future generations. Starting today.



Appendix 1 – Bring Bank Locations

Bring Bank Locations	
Abbeyleix	Killenard
Arles	Killeshin
Attanagh	Luggacurren
Ballacolla	Mountmellick, SuperValu
Ballaghmore	Mountmellick, Tullamore Rd.
Ballinakill	Mountrath
Ballyadams	Newtown
Ballybrittas	Pike of Rushall
Ballyfin	Portarlington, SuperValu
Ballylinan	Portlaoise, County Hall
Barrowhouse	Portlaoise, Dublin Road
Borris-in-Ossory	Portlaoise, Parkside
Castletown	Raheen
Clonaslee	Rathdowney
Clough	Rosenallis
Coolrain	Shanahoe
Crettyard, St. Abbans	Spink
Cullohill	Stradbally
Durrow	The Swan
Emo	Timahoe
Graigecullen	Wolfhill

Appendix 2 – Report a Complaint

How to Report a Complaint?

Laois County Council provides numerous ways to report a litter pollution complaint including:

1. Freephone the confidential litter hotline 1800 323230 (24 hours)
2. Phone our main switch 057 8664000 (office hours) and ask to speak to a member of our Environment team
3. Email environmentadmin@laoiscoco.ie
4. Via the Contact / Report it features on www.laois.ie
5. Call into our office in Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise during opening hours.
6. Log your complaint on www.fixyourstreet.ie.

Please note that you will be asked for your name and contact number, which will remain confidential, as well as details regarding your environmental complaint. We need this information in case we need further details or to clarify your query. This information is not passed to any third party.

When we receive a complaint, we follow a series of steps including:

1. Log it on the Environmental Complaints Register.
2. Assign it to the relevant personnel, depending on the nature of the complaint and the location.
3. Our Litter Wardens investigate, take photographs and report back to the office.
4. A litter fine may issue (depending on evidence found).
5. If a fine remains unpaid within 21 days, a 7-day reminder notice is issued. If this also goes unpaid, with no effort made to engage / discuss the fine, legal proceedings will be initiated.

Statistics relating to numbers of litter pollution complaints received will be provided during our annual progress reports to Strategic Policy Committee and Elected Members of Full Council.

Appendix 3 - Useful Contacts

Freephone Litter Hotline: 1800 323230

John Ging, Litter Warden 087 7988312

John Rogers, Litter Warden 087 9473159

Emily Doyle, Litter Warden 087 2339116

Laois County Council 057 8664000
Environment Dept. 057 8674316

Litter hotline 1800 323230

Log an environmental complaint environmentadmin@laoiscoco.ie

By Post: Laois County Council, Environment Section, Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.