



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Two Year Progress Report (review) of the Laois County
Development Plan 2021-2027 – (in accordance with Section
15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended)

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 was formally adopted by the Elected Members of Laois County Council on the 25th January 2022 and came into effect on the 8th March 2022. There have been no variations to the Plan since its adoption.

The Plan is operating in conjunction with the four local area plans of the County, namely the Graiguecullen [in conjunction with Carlow County Council], Mountmellick, Portlaoise and Portarlinton [in conjunction with Offaly County Council] Local Area Plans.

Section 15(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended states that:

“it shall be the duty of the Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan”.

Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended states that:

“the Chief Executive of a planning authority shall, not more than 2 years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives referred to in subsection (1)”.

In addition, there is a requirement under Section 95 (3) (a) of the Act[s] for the *Chief Executive* to carry out a review of the progress achieved in implementing the Housing Strategy.

This progress report, submitted to you, the Elected Members, on the 25th March 2024 is in compliance with the requirements of the above mentioned legislation.

It should be noted that this is **not** a review of the Development Plan per se; rather it is a report on the progress achieved from 2022 to date.

The Laois County Development Plan has been in operation for a period of two years. During these two years, the local economy has continued to grow in line with the national economy.

Since the preparation of the draft Plan and the subsequent making of the Plan by the Elected Members of Laois County Council, there have been a number of significant changes to Government policy at both National and Regional levels. In particular,

New Section 28 Guidelines

Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2022) The new Development Plan Guidelines provide guidance to Local Authorities in relation to the preparation, process, content, implementation, monitoring, and reporting for Development Plans. Section 10.3 of the Guidelines specifically details the monitoring requirements.

Residential Zoned Land Tax Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2022) The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was announced in Budget 2022 and was introduced into Part 22A of Taxes Consolidation Act (TCA) 1997 by the Finance Act 2021. The principal purpose of the RZLT is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced residential development land for housing. The RZLT Guidelines outline the criteria for the inclusion of lands within scope for the tax and the formal process which must be followed.

Draft Sustainable & Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (August 2023) The Draft Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban settlements, with a focus on residential development and the creation of sustainable and compact settlements. The Guidelines, when finalised, will be accompanied by a non-statutory Design Manual that will illustrate best practice guidance on how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied. These Guidelines will replace the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities published in 2009.

Draft Planning & Development Bill 2022

The Draft Planning and Development Bill was published in December 2022 and has completed the Dail Eireann First Stage with an envisaged enactment in early 2024. The main proposed changes from a Forward Planning point of view include:

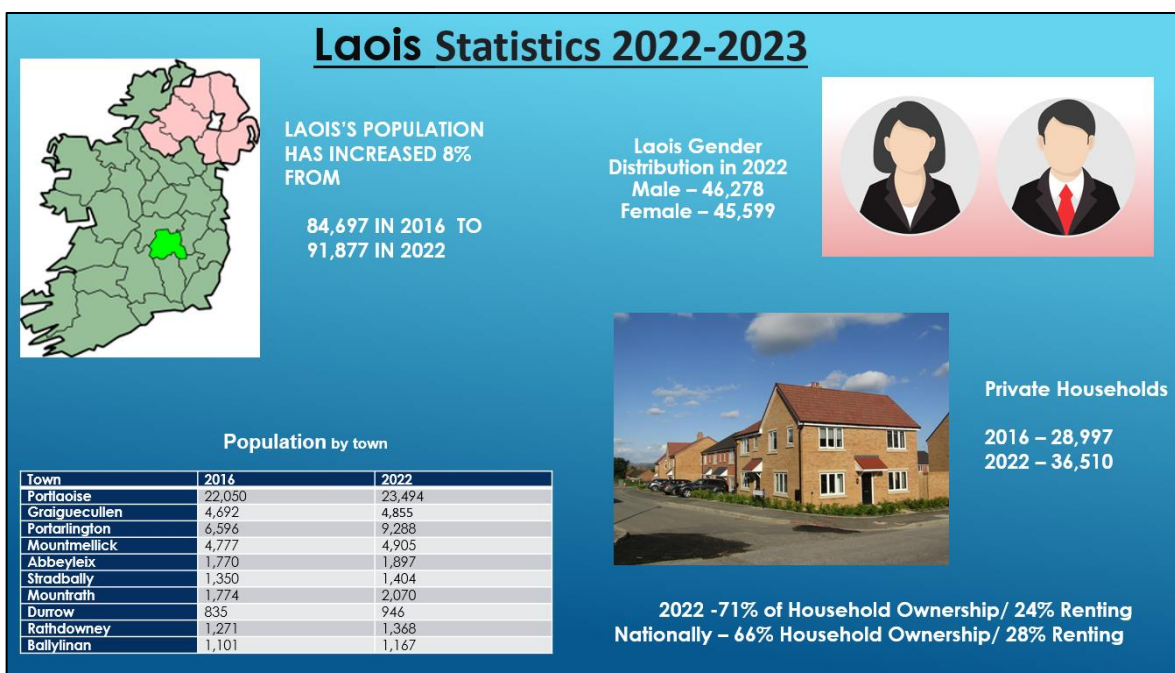
- Duration of County Development Plans - extended to a 10-year cycle with an 'Interim Report on Implementation' to be prepared after 5 years at which point a variation can be proposed if required.
- Area Based Plans – The automatic need to prepare Local Area Plans (LAP's) based on population size will be replaced by specific types of area-based plans to meet particular needs including Urban Area Plans for towns designated as “regional growth centres” or “key towns” in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES); Priority Area Plans for a sub-part of an urban area; Joint Area Plans for a urban area that is in the administrative area of more than one local authority and Urban Development Zones for strategic underutilised lands.

Since the adoption of the Plan in January 2022, the following circulars and guidance have also been issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) to Planning Authorities regarding their responsibilities in terms of planning. These are as follows:

- Circular PL 02/2022 - Planning and Development Act (Exempted Development) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 75 of 2022)
- Circular PL 03/2022 - Progress Report on Implementation of the Vacant Site Levy
- Circular PL 04/2022 - Section 254 Street Furniture Fees Waiver Regulations
- Circular PL 05/2022 - Derelict Sites Act 1990 – Data Return and Prescription of Urban Areas
- Circular PL 06/2022 - Planning Applications - Site Layouts, plans, maps and drawings
- Circular PL 07/2022 – Solar Planning Exemptions

- Circular PL 08/2022 - Planning and Development, Maritime and Valuation (Amendment) Act (Commencement of Certain Provisions) (No 3) Order 2022 [S.I. 523/2022]
- Circular PL 09-2022 Irish Water planning applications
- Circular PL 10/2022 - Planning and Development (Exempted Development) (No. 4) Regulations 2022 [S.I. 605/2022]
- Circular Housing 09/2023 and Planning PL 01/2023 - Amendments to Planning Legislation relating to local authority Housing Developments - Planning and Development, and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2022
- Circular PL 04/2023 - Temporary Time-Limited Waiver in respect of Development Contributions
- PL 05-2023 Exempted Development Regulations Circular
- Circular PL 08/2023 - Temporary Time-Limited Waiver in respect of Development Contributions - Operational Guidance for Local Authorities
- Circular PL 09/2023 re S.I. No. 376/2023 Exempted Development Regulations

Following the adoption of the County Development Plan the 2022 Census results were released and the figures below provide an overview of the population change. This Report will provide a progress update on policies objectives achieved within each of the 14 chapters of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.



This Report comprises two sections with appendices:

Section 1 (above) comprises the introduction.

Section 2 assesses the objectives of the Development Plan under each chapter heading in the Plan. This report should be read in conjunction with the written statement, maps and Environmental Report of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. It must be noted that while this review is concerned with the last two years, the Development Plan has a six year life and it therefore follows that some strategic policies and objectives of the Plan have a much longer time horizon. Many of the objectives are ongoing, but where possible, examples of progress to date have been included.

Appendix 1 comprises a review of the progress achieved in implementing the Housing Strategy.

Appendix 2 looks at each individual town and village within Volume 2 of the Laois County Development Plan and documents the progress and actions that have taken place within each of these since 2022.

Appendix 3 provides an update on the environmental indicators as set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.

CHAPTER 2: CORE AND SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

A review of the implementation of the Core and settlement strategy is informed by a number of factors, in particular

- Census 2022 and the distribution of growth across the County;
- Impact of the number of migrants currently seeking refuge both Ukrainian and International protection;
- House Building within the County has been active in the past 2 years – housing completions and commencements for the period 2022-2024.

The Building Control Management System (BCMS) and Central Statistical Office (CSO) data on population and housing completions have been analyzed to provide the information in this chapter.

Population Growth by Settlement category

As outlined below growth has occurred in every settlement category and tier. Census 2022 shows that the population of Laois grew by 8% to 91,877, which is an increase of 7,180 people. 3,563 of this population increase relates to the urban centres listed in the table below. Portlaoise had the greatest increase in population with an additional 1,444 people. Portarlinton saw an increase of 920 people. As of 2022 Ballyroan, Durrow, Killenard, Borris in Ossory and Mountrath have exceeded their projected 2027 population targets as set out in the Core Strategy of the CDP.

| SETTLEMENT TYPOLOGY | SETTLEMENTS | POPULATION 2016 | Actual population 2022 (CSO) | Projected population 2027 (as per CDP) |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| County | Laois | 84,697 | 91,877 8% | 94,700 |
| KEY TOWNS | Portlaoise | 22050 | 23,494 | 26,366 |
| | Graigecullen | 4692 | 4855 | 5392 |

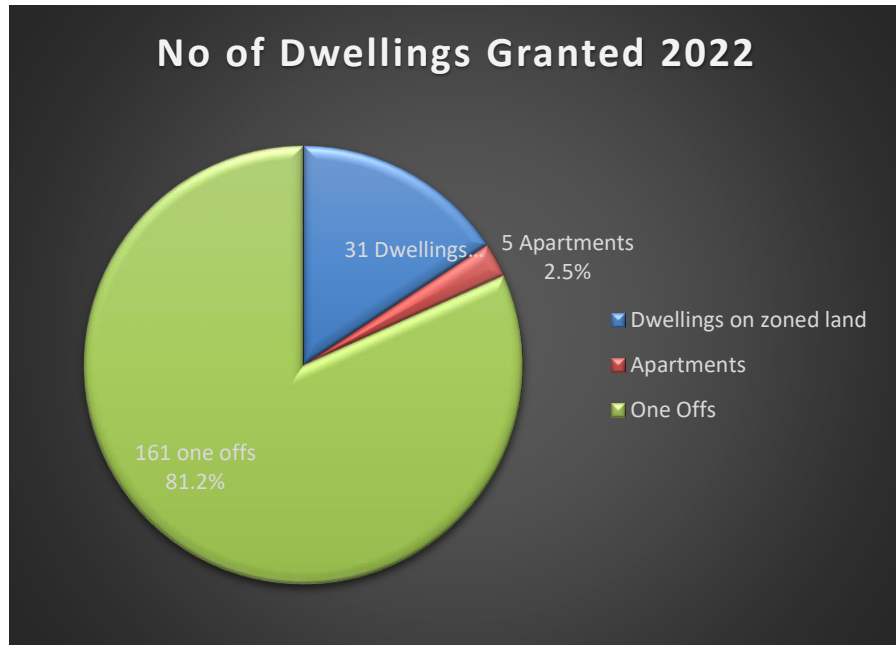
| SETTLEMENT TYPOLOGY | SETTLEMENTS | POPULATION 2016 | Actual population 2022 (CSO) | Projected population 2027 (as per CDP) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| County | Laois | 84,697 | 91,877 8% | 94,700 |
| SELF-SUSTAINING GROWTH TOWNS | Portarlington | 6,596 (8,368 total including Offaly side) | 9,288 | 7,596 |
| SELF-SUSTAINING TOWNS | Mountmellick | 4777 | 4,905 | 5,227 |
| | Abbeyleix | 1770 | 1,897 | 1,970 |
| | Stradbally | 1350 | 1,404 | 1,550 |
| | Mountrath | 1774 | 2,070 | 2,024 |
| TOWNS AND VILLAGES | Durrow | 835 | 946 | 935 |
| | Rathdowney | 1271 | 1,368 | 1,396 |
| | Ballylinan | 1101 | 1,167 | 1,226 |
| VILLAGES (Pop > 500) | Clonaslee | 566 | 608 | 616 |
| | Killenard | 671 | 741 | 721 |
| | Ballyroan | 563 | 657 | 558 |
| | Borris In Ossory | 508 | 629 | 558 |

Policy Objectives CS01 and CS06 seek to ensure the development of the county is in accordance with the National Planning Framework, RSES and promotes the use of town centre and infill sites.

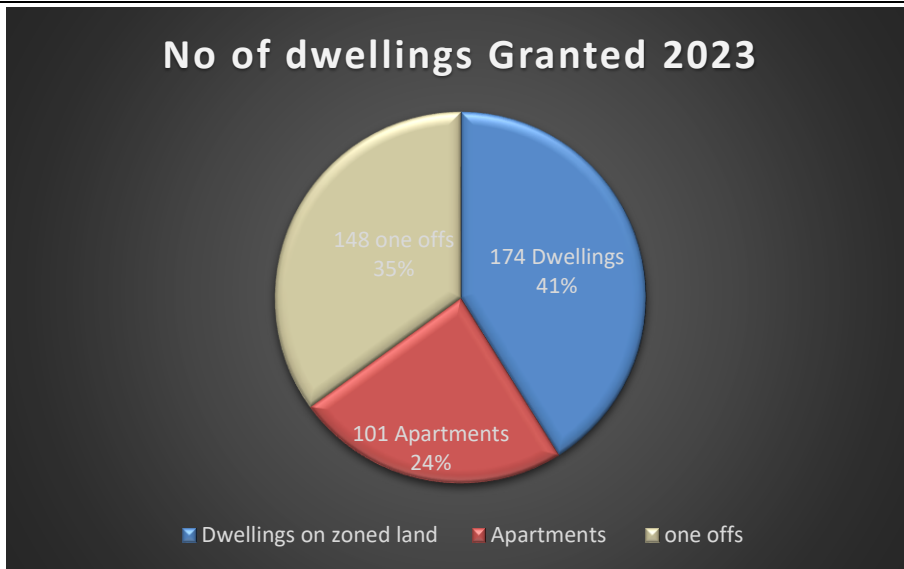
CS01A and CS02 seek to ensure compliance with the core strategy, development management standards and section 28 guidelines.

Number of permitted Dwellings

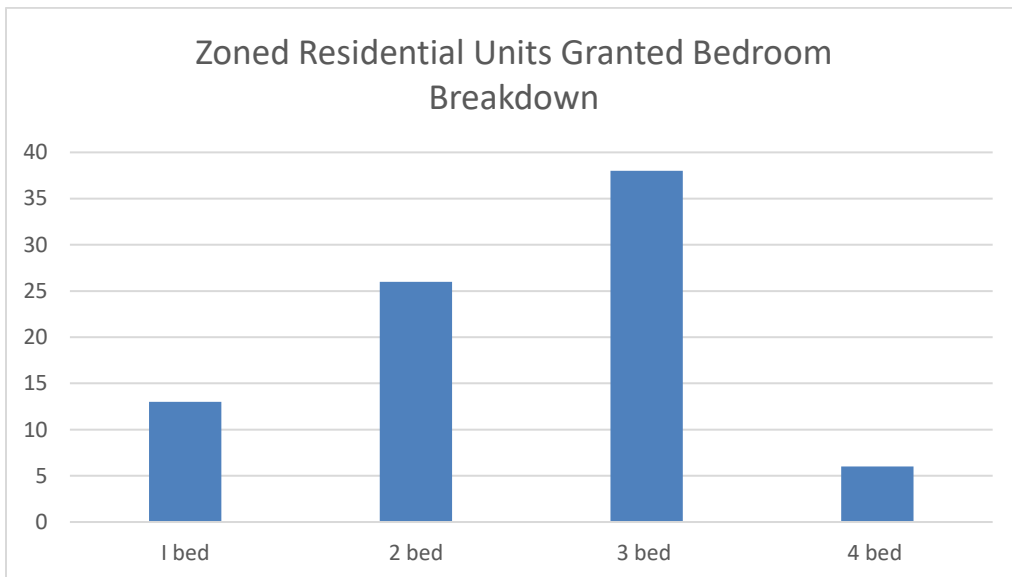
622 dwelling units have been permitted in Laois since the adoption of the County Development Plan. In 2022 there were 31 dwellings and 5 apartments granted permissions on urban zoned lands. In 2022 planning permission was granted for a total of 161 one-off rural dwellings.



In 2023 planning permission was granted for a total of 425 dwelling units. 174 of these units are traditional dwellings on zoned land. A further 101 apartments were granted on zoned land. A total of 148 planning permissions were granted for one off housing.



Traditional house types on zoned lands saw a 17% decrease from 2022 to 2023 possibly reflecting the large number of planning permission granted shortly before the current plan was adopted. One off housing units granted also reduced from 2022-2023 by 18.6% despite a similar refusal rate for such developments in the respective years. The average size of a one-off house permitted in 2022-23 is 227sqm.

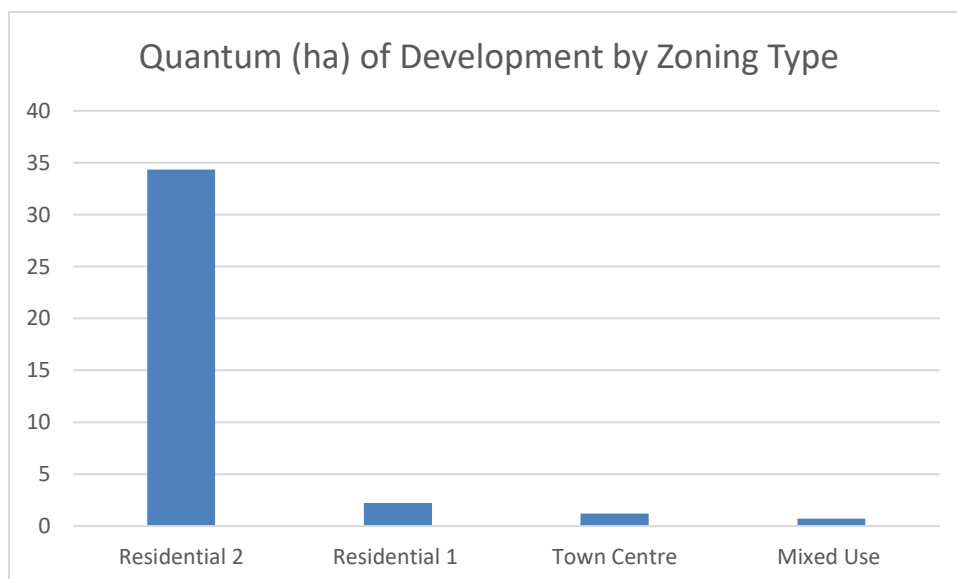


515 social dwelling units have been completed in 2022 and 2023. Part viii consent has been approved for a further 26 dwellings in Stradbally, 12 dwellings in Clonrooske View, 54 units in Hepburn Court and 7 dwellings at Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise.

It must also be noted that there are a significant number of residential units at various stages of the planning process at present in County Laois. 224 units have been appealed to An Bord Pleanála following notifications of decisions to grant permission from Laois County Council.

Zoning types

In the CDP 138ha of land are zoned for residential purposes within the County. Permission for residential development has been granted on 38.48ha of land throughout the county. The bulk of permissions have been granted on lands zoned Residential 2(R2) at 34.35ha. Development has been permitted on 2.22ha of lands zoned Residential 1 (R1) and 1.8ha of town centre (TC) /mixed use lands. A total of 16.5 ha of land has been granted planning permission in Portlaoise and 13.4ha in Graiguecullen for Residential development which demonstrates compliance with CS 13 and CS 18 which seeks to direct population growth into Key Towns and policy objectives CS 14 and CS 15, CS 20 and CS21 in relation to sustainable compact growth and increased densities.



A number of extant permissions in key town centre sites have been activated in the past 2 years such as

- the Convent Site in Portlaoise (Sophia Housing Association) has commenced with the construction of 52 dwellings on a town centre site (1.35 ha);
- Completed in 2023, Goldencroft, on the former CBS lands in Portlaoise, has been redeveloped to include 67 dwellings and 100 space car park adjacent to the train station on a 1.96ha town centre site;
- Part VIII consent was approved in 2023 for the Iona building on the Abbeyleix road, Portlaoise for 7 dwellings on a 0.07149ha town centre site.

These town centre developments demonstrate compliance with Policy objective CS01 in relation to compliance with NPF and RSES , CS01A in relation to Section 28 Guidelines, CS 02 in relation to Core Strategy and transition to low carbon society, CS 04 regarding the integration of land use and transportation, CS 05 in relation to the regeneration of underused town centre sites and compact growth.

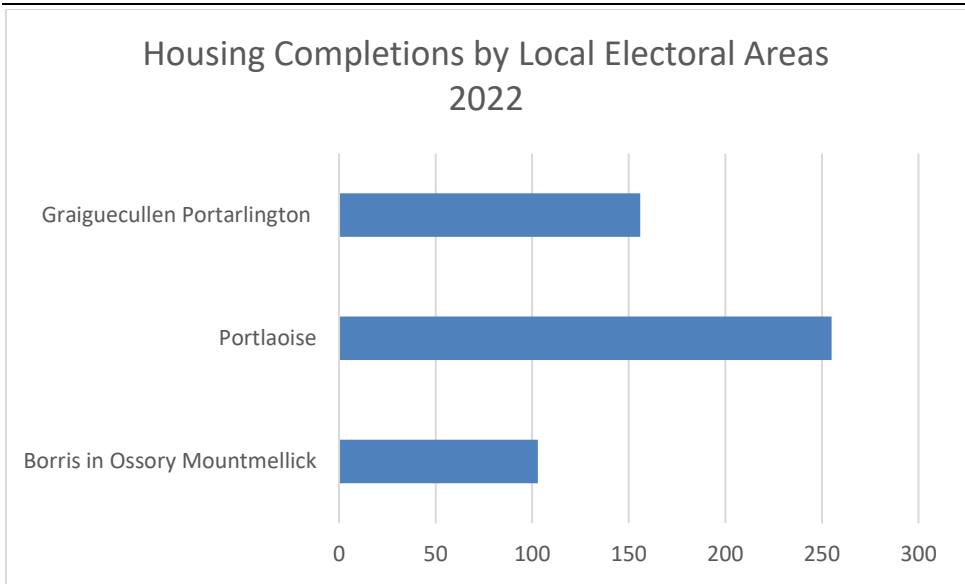
Policy objectives CS08, CS09 and CS10 seek the review and preparation of Local Area Plans for Mountmellick, Portlaoise and joint Local Area Plans for Portarlington and Graiguecullen. In this regard the 4 local area plans have commenced their review with issues papers published and Chief Executive reports prepared. The Carlow Graiguecullen Draft JULAP was published in January and a Chief executive's report on the submissions nearing completion.

Housing Land Requirement over plan period

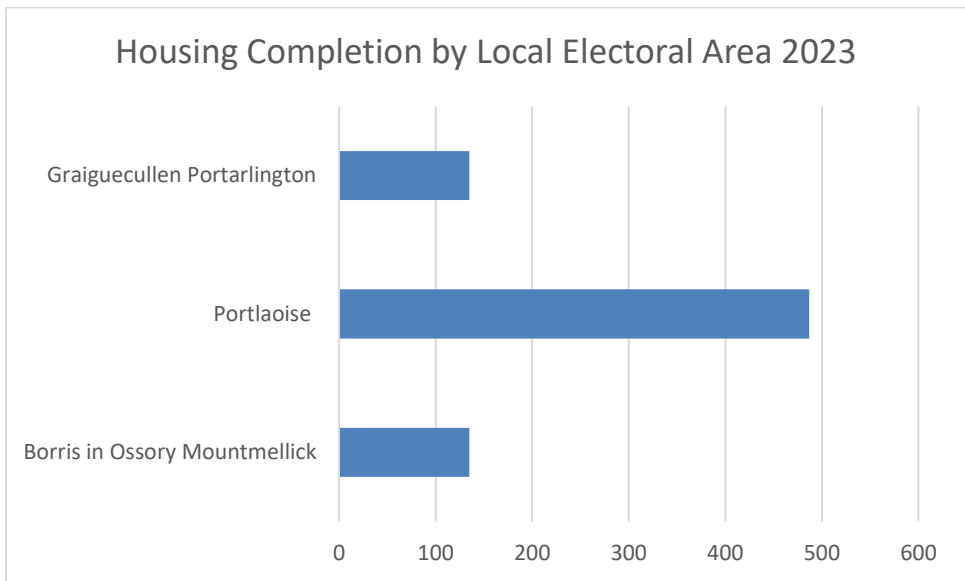
Therefore, the overall housing demand over the Plan period was forecast to be 3,998 units, which equates to 571 housing units per annum. In order to accommodate this 138 Ha of land were zoned for this purpose.

Housing Completions

In 2022 a total of 514 dwellings were completed within Laois. The table below illustrates the housing completions within each electoral area. The Portlaoise area saw a total of 255 dwellings completed in 2022. 149 one off dwellings were completed in 2022.



In 2023 there was a 46% increase in housing completions with a total of 753 dwellings completed within County Laois. The table below illustrates the housing completions within each electoral area. Again, the Portlaoise area saw the greatest total of completions with 487 dwellings in 2023. 114 one off dwellings were completed in 2023.



Housing Commencements

In 2022 a total of 486 dwellings commenced in Laois. 374 of these commencements were in residential developments in Urban areas and the remaining 112 units were one-off houses.

In 2023 a total of 810 dwellings commenced in Laois. 679 of these commencements were in residential developments in Urban Areas, 12 relate to apartments and the remaining 119 dwellings were one off houses.

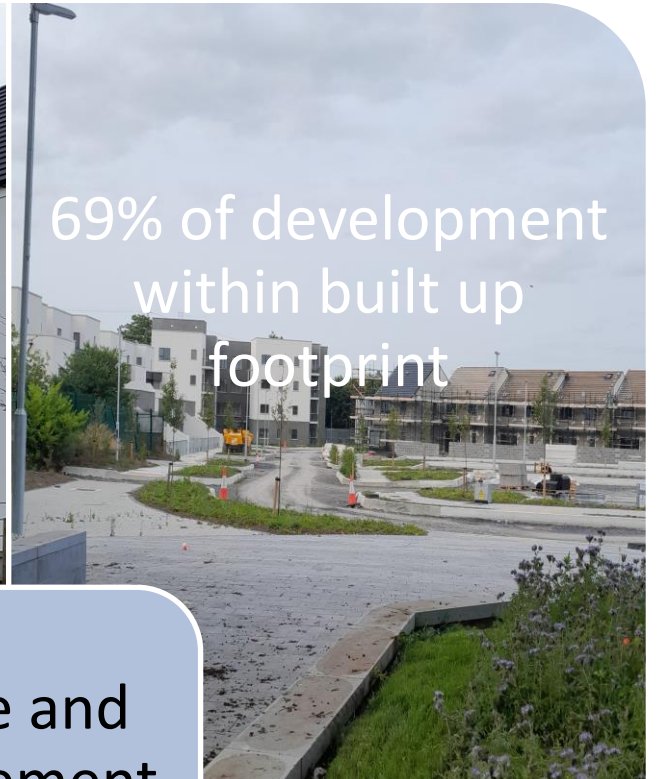
Unit Commencements 2022-23

| YEAR | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| UNIT COMMENCEMENTS | 486 | 810 |

Conclusion

Following the first 2 years of implementation of the CDP 2021-2022, 1267 units have been completed within the County of Laois. 742 of these units are located within the Key Town of Portlaoise.

69.7% of the total number of houses completed are located within the built-up footprint of settlements in Laois. 21% of the dwellings completed are one off houses in the rural areas.



Core and Settlement Strategy



CHAPTER 3: CLIMATE ACTION AND ENERGY

Introduction:

Laois County Council has established a dedicated Climate Action section to deliver on the goals and objectives of the 'Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030' Plan which include achieving our carbon emissions and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050.

Policy Objective CA 1 supports the Climate Action Plan:

Progress update:

Laois County Council have developed a Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (LACAP). The LACAP sets out how the local authority can promote a range of mitigation, adaptation and other climate action measures, to help deliver the Government's National Climate Objective to achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, a transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. In preparation for the plan three essential evidence-based reports were prepared: a Climate Change Risk Assessment for County Laois, a Baseline Emission Inventory Analysis for County Laois, and a Baseline Emissions Inventory Analysis for the Decarbonizing Zone (Portlaoise), all conducted by external consultants. Extensive training for Local Authority Climate Action Plans (LACAP) was conducted. Subsequently, public consultation workshops on the LACAP were conducted from May 16th to 25th 2023, concurrently with consultations on the County Laois Local Development Strategy (LDS 2023 – 2027) and Laois Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP 2023 - 2028) to ensure policy alignment across all plans. The public consultation for the draft Laois Climate Action Plan took place from November 1st to December 14th. The LACAP underwent a rigorous Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) assessment. The Local Authority Climate Action Plan for Laois County Council was adopted on the 29th January 2024.

The introduction of the LACAP will strengthen the links between local, regional, national and international climate policies. The LACAPs are statutory five year plans and include mitigation and adaptation actions that ultimately provide pathways to achieve a decarbonised society. Portlaoise has been selected as the Decarbonisation Zone for County Laois, building on the ongoing work of the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Project.

Policy Objective CA2 seeks to support the creation of a Decarbonisation Zone in Portlaoise.

Progress update:

Chapter 5 sets out actions for designated Decarbonization Zone (DZ) of Portlaoise. A Baseline Emissions Inventory Analysis was conducted of the DZ and 70 actions have been identified for the DZ Zone.

To date significant progress has been made in relation to:

- Communications & engagement
- Active Travel & Sustainable Mobility
- Compact urban regeneration
- Greening of Urban Areas

Policy Objectives NRE1-NRE 5 seeks to reinforce the electricity transmission grid to improve energy supply and provide guidance in relation to same:

Progress update:

SEAI have completed a Laois Grid Study and will present the findings in March 2024. A planning application was received under PL ref. no. 22/764 for the uprate of the existing 110 kV line between structure AM106 in the townland of Bishopswood, County Offaly and the existing EM215 located at Portlaoise 110 kV substation in the townland of Clonminam, County Laois. The application was granted by Laois County Council and the decision was appealed to An Bord Pleanala.

Policy Objective EEB1 and EEB2 requires all new building development to meet low energy performance targets and encourages new development to mitigate against climate change.

Progress update:

All new Laois County Council buildings meet a minimum NZEB standard.

Policy Objective EEB 3 seeks to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock including local authority dwellings.

Progress update:

Laois County Council has made remarkable progress in energy efficiency, garnering 52% GHG reduction and ranking as top Local authority in the most recently published SEAI report. Laois County Council is lead authority in the Midland Energy Agency which has committed to the SEAI Pathfinder programme which further demonstrates our ongoing commitment to achieving our targets. Our strategic approach involves a thorough analysis of our asset portfolio, conducted collaboratively with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), to identify and prioritise decarbonising retrofitting of buildings.

In 2022, Laois County Council retrofitted 159 of their housing stock improving the livability of these homes with measures including: external insulation wraps, new windows and doors and heat pumps replacing fossil fuels and new radiators. The works involved bringing all houses up to a minimum BER rating of B2 to assist with the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

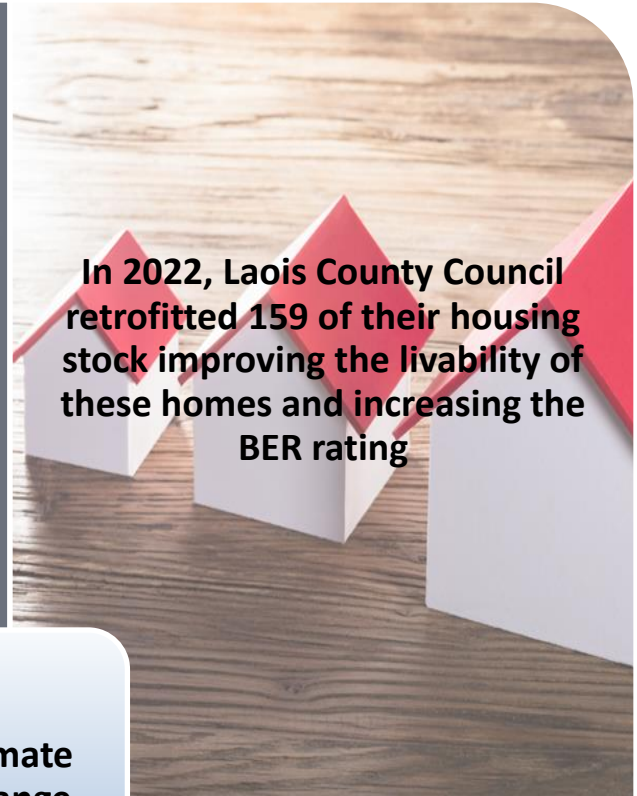
Policy Objective EEB 4 and 5 seeks to provide guidance with respect to energy retrofitting and design for single and multiple housing developments.

Progress update:

Guidance is provided to applicants at pre-planning stage in relation to planning requirements and housing design.



Laois County Council have adopted the Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (LACAP)



In 2022, Laois County Council retrofitted 159 of their housing stock improving the livability of these homes and increasing the BER rating

Climate Change and Energy



Laois County Council has established a dedicated Climate Action section to deliver on the goals and objectives



Decarbonisation Zone of Portlaoise

To date significant progress has been made in relation to:

- Communications & engagement**
- Active Travel & Sustainable Mobility**
- Compact urban regeneration**
- Greening of Urban Areas**

CHAPTER 4: HOUSING STRATEGY

Introduction:

In reviewing the policy objectives in relation to the Housing Strategy, a number of factors were considered:

- Delivery of the social housing across the county
- Delivery of affordable housing across the county
- Provision of accommodations for people with disabilities , travellers , etc
- Regeneration of Vacant and Derelict properties

HPO1 seeks to ensure 35% of residential development provides for single and two person households.

Progress update:

The Development Management team implement this policy objective through the assessment of planning applications for residential development.

HPO2-HPO4 seeks to ensure the implementation of the Laois County Housing Strategy and to support the regional settlement strategy and ensure the availability of zoned land.

Progress update:

Appendix 1 overleaf provides an update on the Housing Strategy.

HPO5 and HPO 14 seeks to engage in active land management and site activation measures.

Progress update:

The RZLT will replace the Vacant Site Register once lands become liable to the tax on 1st February 2025. The Town Regeneration Officer is liaising with the derelict sites staff to issue notices in respect of vacant and derelict buildings that have been identified as causing concern in the respective towns.

The Regeneration Team in Laois County Council has been established to achieve targets set by the Dept, by gathering data via:

- Geodirectory exercise (set out below)

- Continued engagement with property owners
- Engagement via derelict sites legislation where appropriate
- Action objectives of the Town Centre First Plan for Rathdowney and other town/village plans.

A Town Team has been established in Portlaoise since 2017 and a Town Action Plan completed to provide direction for the Town Team. One of the main actions in the Action Plan has been to address vacancy and dereliction within the town. This has been monitored year on year by a sub group of the Town Team and incentives have been put in place by Laois County Council to address this such as Business incentive schemes, shopfront and street enhancement grants, Painting grants and use of the Conservation Grants where relevant.

In 2022, Laois County Council carried out surveys of Mountmellick and Mountrath to identify all vacant and derelict properties. These surveys were carried out by the VHO and Chief Technician. The surveys were then used to identify properties for social housing purposes and/or for works to be carried out under the Derelict Sites Legislation.

In Mountrath, a sustainable Communities Plan was prepared by the Town Team which identified a number of actions for regeneration of the town and this was launched in April 2023.

In 2022, under the Town Centre First Policy, funding was made available to Laois County Council to prepare a Town Centre First plan for Rathdowney. This Plan was carried out by KPMG and completed in September 2023.

The Regeneration Team meets quarterly to discuss and monitor progress on the various schemes and objectives outlined below.

Census 2022

- **34,686** housing units in total were identified in Census 2022 in County Laois
- **2,650** housing units were classed as being vacant in Census 2022 in County Laois (7.6%)

Geodirectory

The following GeoDirectory Vacancy Data from Q2 of 2022 was provided for Laois County Council:

| Vacant Units - All Locations | Vacant Units - Within 1km of Town/Village |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1281 | 647 |

LA Database (Survey APP)

At 31/12/2023, the following survey work had been carried out in 2023 using the Mobile APP:

- Number of properties surveyed - **916**
- Number of vacant and derelict properties - **551**
- Number of derelict properties - **37**

The vacant and derelict properties surveyed were found to be in the following condition:

- Good Condition - **130**
- Fair Condition - **126**
- Poor Condition - **175**
- Uninhabitable - **120**

Derelict Sites Register

The Derelicts sites register is maintained by the Planning Staff. In conjunction with the TRO, the Derelict sites team are working on sites in both Rathdowney and Mountrath as indicated on the maps above:

- Total No of Derelict sites entered onto Register in 2023 – 30
- Total No of Files on hand: 93
- 22 new files in 2023
- 16 files closed in 2023

The Croi Conaithe Vacant property Refurbishment Grant was introduced in July 2022 and 121 applications were received up to 31/12/2023, 65 properties are in rural locations and 56 properties are located in a town or village.

103 of the properties were for use as the applicants principal private residence and 18 properties were to be made available for rent (the option to make a property available for rent is available from 01/05/2023 only).

The Derelict sites Team also works along side the Business Support Unit in advising in relation to the incentives available through the BSU and LEO office in relation to the reuse of derelict and vacant commercial properties.

HPO 7 – HPO 9 relates to rural housing, housing mix and densities in residential developments. This is addressed in the Core Strategy progress review in Chapter 2.

HPO 10-12, 15 & 16 relates to best practice guidance and investment in infrastructure across the County. This is implemented on an ongoing basis through the Development Management team and Forward Planning team in the Planning Section.

HPO 13 relates to the development of serviced sites:

Progress update:

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund - Ready to Build Scheme was launched in 2022 where local authorities will make serviced sites available in towns and villages to potential purchasers for the building of a private residence. The scheme fulfils a commitment in the government's Housing for All plan, and supports the Town Centre First policy, which aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction, and promoting town centre living. 8 sites were sold in Ballyroan and Durrow by Laois County Council under this scheme.



Outline permission was granted for 6 serviced sites with individual septic tanks in Timahoe under PL ref. no. 22/695 in 2023.

HPO 16 relates to unfinished housing estates:

Progress update:

See below list of Estates taken in Charge in 2023 to date:

- Bellingham (Phase 2 Area 2) Mountrath Road, Portlaoise
- Garden Village, Portlaoise
- Ashwood Wal and Ashewood Gardens, Portlaoise
- The Orchard, Stradbally
- Cathair na gCapall, Portarlinton
- Rushall, Mountrath
- Kyle Manor, Borris in Ossary
- Silverwood, Silverglen and Silverbrook, Mountmellick
- Cill an Oir, Graiguecullen
- Droughill Lawns, Portarlinton
- Meadows Way, Graiguecullen
- Marian Grove, Mountmellick

- Borris Meadows, Portlaoise
- Lake Drive, Lake Glade, Lake Crescent, Lake Grove, Lake Vale, Lake Edge, and Lake Side Gardens Kilminchy
- Rathglen/Rathillion, Killeshin
- Featherbed Lane, Borris in Ossary

The following have been advertised:

- Dromnin, Stradbally
- Doireann Alainn

HPO 17, 18 and 25 supports the provision of elderly accommodation.

Progress update:

The Age Friendly section have increased awareness of the age friendly programme over the past two years with outreach to active retirement groups and events such as the Live Well expo which took place in April 2023.

Work is ongoing with Irish Rail to attain Age Friendly stays for rail stations in Laois and the make way day committee engages with user groups to identify and remedy accessibility issues in our towns and villages. Cluid have provided 40 units for Age friendly housing in the Maltings.

Permission was granted for a 119 bed nursing home under PL ref. no. 21/887 in 2022.

HPO 20 relates to general guidance around development management standards and this is carried out on an ongoing basis by the development management team.

HPO 20 relates to 5 opportunity sites identified in the County Development Plan.

Progress update:

1. Former Centerpoint development potential:

- This site was the subject of pre planning for a Strategic Housing Development , however it has not been pursued to date.

2. Former Maltings Site Harpurs Lane

- New housing development constructed on site which incorporates a nursing home and accommodation for people with disabilities



3. Fitzmaurice Place Portlaoise – Convent Site and CBS Lands

- Sophia Housing Association has commenced the construction of 52 dwellings on a town centre site of 1.35 ha in Portlaoise.



- Completed in 2023, Goldencroft, on the former CBS lands in Portlaoise, has been redeveloped to include 67 dwellings and 100 space car park adjacent to the train station on a 1.96ha town centre site.

4. Cooletederry, Portarlinton

A number of historic permissions have been granted on the site which have since expired. These related to substantial commercial developments and apartments.

5. Foxcroft Street, Portarlington

This site is currently for sale to the open market.

HPO 21 relates to the acquisition of lands by Compulsory Purchase Order for housing provision.

Progress update:

Under the CPO activation Programme the following stats relate: -

- Number of properties which have entered the Programme in 2023 - 152 (84 Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Approvals/Approvals in Principle + Correspondence issued to owners of 68 properties)
- Number of properties activated (exited the Programme) along with scheme/support used to activate the property - 9 (6 x Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants paid + 3 properties acquired by CPO)
- Number of properties where CPO/CA process has commenced – 1

Laois County Council applied under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund 2023 Call 3 which was specifically designed to address long term vacancy and dereliction across our URDF cities and towns and accelerate the provision of affordable residential accommodation and was awarded €2 million to address 11 NO. properties in Portlaoise Town.

| URDF 3 | |
|---|----|
| No of properties using property themselves | 3 |
| No of owners willing to sell | 1 |
| No engagement | 6 |
| No of properties using Croi Conaithe | 1 |
| Total No of Properties under URDF 3 | 11 |

These also have been included in this CPO programme through Derelict sites.

REG 1-3 are addressed in Chapter 7.

RH1- RH15 and RH17-23 objectives relate to rural housing:

Progress update:

The Core Strategy chapter provides updates on one off houses granted in Laois. The Development Management Team within the planning section are implementing these objectives on an ongoing basis ensuring the protection of our rural areas.

RH16 relates to the review of the Laois Rural Design Guidance over the lifetime of the Plan. The Planning section have considered modern methods of construction and alternative methods of construction. An addendum to the rural design guidance with them aim to provide applicant's with a more affordable housing solution.

HPO 23, 24, 26-36 relate to guidance around housing provision and same is being implemented on an ongoing basis over the past two years. HPO 37 relates to the implementation of the Laois Traveller Action Programme 2019-2024.

Public consultation on a new Traveller Action Programme was commenced in January 2024.

34,686 housing units in total were identified in Census 2022 in County Laois

2,650 housing units were classed as being vacant in Census 2022 in County Laois (7.6%)

30 properties on the Derelicts sites register

5 properties commenced CPO

121 Croi Conaithe Grants approved to end of 2023

Social Housing Completions to date:

2022 - 229

2023 - 286

Total - 515

Housing Strategy

Energy retrofit rolled out on 159 units under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme 2022

Affordable Housing Target under *Housing for all* - 38 units

To date approval by the dept for 40 units in 3 schemes

27 in Portlaoise

13 in Stradbally

CHAPTER 5: QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Policy Objective SCPO1 seeks to deliver on the objectives and actions set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan.

Progress update:

The Laois Local Economic & Community Plan 2023-2028 (LECP) is currently being prepared and is due to be adopted in Q1 2024. The Plan is a 6-year statutory plan which sets out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support economic and community development in a county. The LECP covers all aspects of the community and economy and an integrated plan has been developed following consultation with all sectors of the communities. The implementation of the LECP will require ongoing cooperation between all agencies to ensure that all the identified actions for both economic and community development can be delivered.

Policy Objective SCPO 2 and 5 supports the provision of community infrastructure. Laois County Council have taken a direct approach to community infrastructure provision in the county.

Progress update:

Recent community projects include the newly completed Portlaoise Library, the approval for a new digital hub at the Courthouse in Borris in Ossary and the provision of a public and community building at the Market House in Portarlington.

Policy Objectives SPCO 3, 4, 6-16 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objectives EDPO 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objectives EDPO 2 and EDPO 6 support the provision of educational facilities:

Progress update:

- Kolbe Special School accommodating 8 no. general classrooms, a GP Hall, specialist educational spaces, administration areas, circulation areas, and other ancillary accommodation was granted permission in 2022. It is anticipated construction will commence in March 2024.

- Construction works got underway in 2023 for the new Saplings Special School in Graigecullen
- Extensions were granted for the following schools:
 - Castletown Primary School
 - Scoil Pdraig Naofa, Mountmellick
 - Our Lady's Meadow Primary School, Durrow
 - St. Fiacc's National School, Graigecullen

Policy Objectives CCPO 1-3 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objectives HCPO 1-7 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objectives EDPO 1-3 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objectives CPPO 1-2 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objectives ACPO 1 – 8 relate to the provision of library and cultural services in the County.

Progress update:

The new flagship Portlaoise Library (1700sqm) was opened in July 2023. The library has provided lifelong learning initiatives targeted at the older and marginalized groups and the library provides free WIFI for third level students. There are a wide variety of cultural events that have taken place including Creative Ireland which was a 5 year programme launched in 2022 which develops creativity and includes a wide ranging programme of events. Abbeyleix and Mountmellick libraries include artistic displays as per ACPO 6. The libraries have developed an online service which was made fully available in 2022 making the library resources accessible to all.

Policy Objectives BGPO 1 and BGPO 2 relate to the provision of new burial grounds and the expansion of the existing burial grounds including Columbarium.

Progress update:

Timahoe and Mountmellick burial grounds were recently extended to facilitate extra capacity. Scrub removal has taken place at St Peters and Paul in Portlaoise opening up the grounds for additional capacity. Furthermore, two Columbarium walls were constructed in St Peters and Paul accommodating 80 niches where each niche can accommodate 2 urns.

Policy Objective NRPO 1 supports the expansion of facilities for sporting and recreational needs.

Progress update:

Laois County Council have facilitated the completion of exemption forms for grant aided infrastructure works for sporting and recreational needs. The following clubs received planning permission for lighting, changing rooms, ball walls, signage, all weather pitches etc:

- Colt GAA Club received planning permission (PL ref. no. 22/591) in 2023
- Ballyroan GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 23/181) in 2024
- Rosenallis GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 22/360 & 23/111) in 2022 and 2023
- Clough/Ballacolla GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 22/377 & 2360169) in 2022 and 2023
- Heath GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2360368) in 2023
- Emo GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2360353) in 2023
- Ratheniska GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2360252) in 2023
- Annalough GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2360146) in 2023
- Ballyfin GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2360042) in 2023
- Clonaslee GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2348) in 2023
- St Fiacc's FC received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2360007) in 2023
- Killeshin GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 2329) in 2023
- Portlaoise GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 22616) in 2022
- Ballylinan GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no 22/163) in 2022
- Rathdowney GAA received planning permission (PL ref. no. 22/265) in 2022

Policy Objective NRPO 1, NRPO 15 and NRPO 17 supports the development playgrounds and the upgrading of existing parks.

Progress update:


Outdoor amenity has been another key focus of the Council with the following projects progressed in 2023:

- a new playground was opened in Borris in Ossary in 2023;
- a new playground was opened in Ballyfin in 2024;
- a new playground was granted permission via Part 8 at Ballyroan in 2023.


Policy Objective NRPO 14 supports the development of leisure facilities. Portarlinton Leisure Centre received funding for refurbishment works.

Policy Objective NRPO 2, 3, 5, 6-9 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Community infrastructure delivery in Laois is on track to rise with its growing population. This delivery will allow local communities to thrive in an inclusive and sustainable manner.



**Permission granted
permission for a number
of extensions to
educational facilities and
for the new Kolbe School**



**Laois Local Economic &
Community Plan 2023-
2028 (LECP) is currently
being prepared and is due
to be adopted in 2024**

**Quality of life
and
Sustainable
Communities**



**Permission granted for
new facilities across 15
Laois clubs in 2022/2023**



**100,158 visits to
Portlaoise library from
July 2023 to February
2024**

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Laois County Council is committed to realising the economic potential of the county via the delivery of significant growth in enterprise and employment.

Since the adoption of the CDP in January 2022, the Council have been monitoring planning permissions for office, industry, retail and warehousing/logistics as required by Section 10.3 of the new Development Plan Guidelines 2022. The commercial floorspace granted permission in 2022 amounted to c20,211.18sqm while in 2023 the corresponding figure was c7,240.90sqm. In 2022 the Council estimates that c6,222.7sqm of commercial floorspace was commenced while the figure for 2023 was 7726.85sqm (estimates based on data extracted from the BCMS system).

Policy Objective ED2 supports the development of J17 and the J17 National Enterprise Park.

Progress update:

Continued expansion has taken place in J17 National Enterprise Park with the sale of sites to new businesses in this large-scale Enterprise Park located just off the M7. All 79 acres of the Laois County Council owned lands have now been sold to a number of companies across many sectors including; food & drink production; pharmaceutical products; engineering; furniture manufacturing; heat & ventilation and hi-tech services. See below map of lands and associated planning permissions:



Since the adoption of the J17 National Enterprise Park Masterplan, a number of planning applications have been approved to deliver the overall vision.

The J17 National Enterprise Park has been a success for the County, with a number of high-profile employers announcing plans at the Enterprise Park in recent years, including Glanbia, Greenfield Global, Kirby Group Engineering and Midland Steel Reinforcement Supplies. Laois County Council will continue to support these companies through the planning process.

Policy Objective ED4 supports the development of the CUBE in Portlaoise.

Progress update:

The Low Carbon Centre of excellence is a dedicated centre for new businesses and economic activity in the centre of Portlaoise and it was officially opened in 2023. The CUBE building is located on Church Street and consists of 10,000 sq ft. across three floors and offers business consultancy and training whilst supporting start-up businesses.

Policy ED5 supports entrepreneurship in County Laois and jobs-focused education and training programmes.

Progress update:

- 167 training courses were delivered in 2022 and 2023 with a total of 2302 participants, of which 200 potential start-ups participated in Start Your Own Business Courses.
- 500 businesses availed of mentoring in 2022 and 2023 with a total of 702 mentoring sessions delivered in specific areas such as finance, human resources, business development, social media and web development.
- 20 companies participated in the Lean for Micro Programme in 2022 and 2023, designed to encourage clients to adopt lean business principles in their organisations to increase competitiveness.
- 42 companies took part in the Green for Business programme in 2022 and 2023, designed to assist businesses in lowering their carbon footprint, reducing costs and improving the environmental profile of their business in the marketplace. €15,000 was approved in grant aid to 3 companies under the Energy Efficiency Programme as Digital Start Programme
- 5 Laois businesses took part on the Digital Start Programme designed to assist LEO clients in the Micro sector to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across their business.
- 10 businesses participated in the first phase of our Export Ready Programme. This programme was developed to support businesses looking at developing an export strategy.
- 20 businesses completed the Management Development Programme designed to enable companies to become stabilized, ready for growth and to further improve competitive advantage.
- 20 participants with a food idea or within the first 24 months of trading took part in our Start Your Own Food Business workshops. Participants were provided with knowledge and understanding of the necessary steps to start food manufacturing business or wider food businesses like food trucks and foodservice operations.

Policy Objective ED6-13 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objective ED14 seeks to foster the cultivation of entrepreneurship among children.


Progress update:

Over 800 students from 7 Laois second level schools took part in the Student Enterprise programme 2023 which encourages students to research, set up and run their own business. Heywood Community School were amongst National Final award winners taking 3rd prize in the Senior category.

Policy ED15 promotes remote working hubs. RRDF Government funding has been secured for the following:

- Borris-in-Ossary - renovation and re-use of the historic courthouse building for the benefit of the local community to include a remote working hub.
- Durrow Community Enterprise Hub project is the re-development of the former Methodist chapel and hall and its forecourt and the provision of a large two-storey extension to act as a community enterprise centre including a remote working hub.

Policy Objective ED16-19 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.



CUBE Low Carbon Centre of Excellence, Portlaoise opened in 2023




J17 - all sites have been sold and planning applications have been granted for manufacturing and light industrial development

Economic Development



800 students from 7 Laois second level schools took part in the Student Enterprise programme 2023



RRDF funding secured for digital hubs in Borris-in-Ossary and Durrow

CHAPTER 7: RETAIL AND TOWN/VILLAGE CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Policy TC 1 aims to maintain and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of towns and village centres.

Progress update:

The Town Regeneration Officer is working closely with town teams and community groups to encourage occupancy in the various town centres focusing on initiatives designed to combat vacancy and dereliction. The Town & Village Renewal Scheme, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, is part of a package of national and local support measures to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. Following the launch of Our Rural Future, and subsequently the Town Centre First Policy, there has been some amendments to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Our Rural Future will see increased investment out to 2025 in remote working infrastructure to provide an opportunity for people to continue to live in rural communities while following their career ambitions. It will also see continued investment to support town centre living. It will ensure cross government investment to support rural towns and villages as hubs of economic and social activity.

Policy Objective TC 2 and TC 3 seeks to enable the establishment of Town Teams to address town centre management.

Progress update:

Town teams have been established in the towns of Rathdowney, Mountrath & Portlaoise. A town team will be established in Mountmellick in 2025. Laois County Council appointed a Town Regeneration Officer (TRO) in 2023. A town centre first plan was adopted for Rathdowney in association with the local community in 2023. A town centre first plan will be developed for additional Laois town in 2024/2025. The TRO is liaising with the derelict sites staff to issue notices in respect of vacant and derelict buildings that have been identified as causing concern in the respective towns.

Policy Objective TC 4-8, 10, 11 and 15 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objective TC 11 seeks to recognize and support the role of town/village community groups.

Progress update:

As mentioned above Town teams have been established in 3 towns in Laois with plans to establish more in other towns. The town regeneration officer collaborates closely with these Town Teams and community groups to ensure the development of these towns and villages is being informed by the various representative groups.

Policy TC 12 seeks to encourage start-up businesses.

Progress update:

The Vacant Commercial Property Incentive Scheme has been launched in all towns across the County in Laois to encourage businesses to open up in town centre locations.

Policy TC14 seeks to develop a regeneration framework for settlements to address vacancy and dereliction.

Progress update:

Laois County Council have appointed a Town Regeneration Officer (TRO) as part of the establishment of the TRO network across the country. In 2022, Laois County Council carried out surveys of Mountmellick and Mountrath to identify vacant and derelict properties. These surveys were carried out by the VHO and Chief Technician. The surveys were then used to identify properties for social housing purposes and/or for works to be carried out under the Derelict Sites Legislation.

Policy RTP 1 seeks to ensure the orderly development of future retail development in Laois with regard to determining applications.

Progress update:

The Development Management Team within the planning section are implementing this on an ongoing basis ensuring the retail strategy is at the core of any decision making.

Policy RTP 2-4 and 6-12 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by various sections on an ongoing basis.

Policy RTP 5 seeks to encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict sites and buildings.

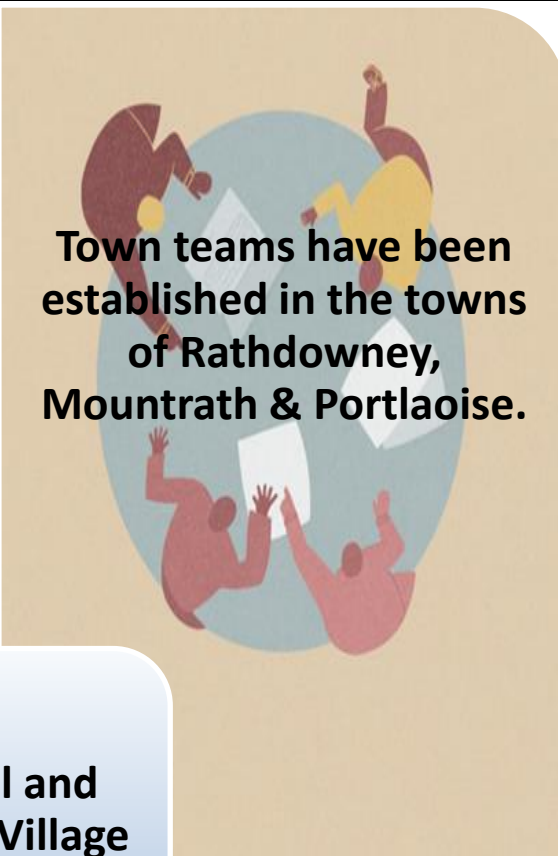
Progress update:

A number of inspections have been carried out and work/progress has been made on some sites with 93 files on hand. In 2023, 16 files were closed and removed from the Register as improvement works have been carried out at the locations and in 2022, 15 files were closed and removed from the register. In 2024, there are currently 31 sites on the derelict sites register. The Council will proceed to value and place levy on some structures, as appropriate, subject to funding.

Policy RTP 14-18 relate to general guidance and same is implemented by the Development Management team in the Planning section.



A town centre first plan was adopted for Rathdowney in association with the local community in 2023.



Town teams have been established in the towns of Rathdowney, Mountrath & Portlaoise.

Retail and Town/Village Centre Management



The Vacant Commercial Property Incentive Scheme has been launched in all towns across the County in Laois to encourage businesses to open up in town centre locations.



**Derelict Sites Register:
2022 - 15 files were closed
2023 - 16 files were closed
2024 - 31 sites on the derelict sites register.**

CHAPTER 8: TOURISM

Policy Objective TM 1 seeks to identify funding streams. In this regard, 'Just Transition' is discussed under RL 11 in Chapter 9 Rural Laois.

Policy Objective TM 2 provides general guidance only in relation to supporting the Strategic Plan for Tourism.

Policy Objective TM 3 supports the development of tourism related visitor attractions:

Progress update:

- Work continued on the Tourism Destination Town Project for Portlaoise including the installation of wayfinding, interpretation signage and panels.
- Agreement was reached in 2023 regarding the purchase of a site to provide carparking and ancillary facilities adjacent to the Rock of Dunamase. The Part VIII for the work was approved by the Elected Members. It is expected to commence in 2024.
- Work commenced, and was completed, on providing an additional 60 car parking spaces in the carpark at Glen Barrow trailhead. These have been provided immediately adjacent to the existing car-park which has 35 spaces.
- Glenbarrow Car Park was opened in August 2023 with a capacity of 60 new car parking spaces and is operated by Laois County Council
- A tourism space/hub (c.64sqm) in Ha'penny Babies School (a Protected Structure, RPS number 900) was approved under a Part VIII process in January 2024
- A number of permissions were granted for tourist accommodation as follows:

| PI ref. no. | Year of decision | Type of accommodation | No. of units |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 21/692 | 2022 | Glamping | 8 |
| 21/587 | 2022 | Glamping | 6 |
| 22/305 | 2022 | Holiday homes | 2 |
| 23/60193 | 2023 | Short term let apartments | 3 |

| | | | |
|----------|------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 23/60055 | 2023 | Short term let dwelling | 1 |
| 22/624 | 2023 | Hostel and camping | 5 hostel rooms + 5 camping huts |

Works on the conservation and upgrading of the Heritage Centre in the former Church of Ireland in Timahoe were carried out, these works included repairs to the vestry roof and external doors, painting, a new kitchenette and reception area, heating system and floor coverings. The building is being managed by the Tigh Mochua Cheile Committee.

Policy TM 4 relates to the implementation of the Local Economic Community Plan and this is discussed in Chapter 3 Climate Change.

Policy Objective TM 6 relates to the promotion of tourism in the Slieve Blooms, inland waterways etc. An update is provided under Policy NH 1 and NH 3 below.

Policy Objective TM 7-11 relate to engaging with stakeholders and promotion of tourism in rural areas and towns and villages. The Development Management team within the Planning Section are facilitating these objectives on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objective TM 12 and 15-18 encourages the promotion of tourism whilst ensuring the protection of the environment. The Development Management team within the Planning Section are facilitating these objectives on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objective TI 1-5 encourages the promotion of tourism infrastructure. As discussed above under objective TM 3 tourism accommodation has been granted permission over the past two year period and pre-planning consultation have been carried out with respect to same.

Policy Objectives ABT 1- ABT 6 relate to the promotion of activity based tourism. The Blueway and Slieve Blooms trails are discussed under NH 1 and NH 3 below.

Policy Objective FA 1, 2 and 4 relate to the support of the development of arts, crafts and food sectors and facilitating business tourism. The Development management team hold pre-planning

consultations on an ongoing basis supporting the development of business tourism. Farm to fork is encouraged in County Laois and Fiorbhia Farm is a regenerative agroforestry farm located near Ballyfin providing locally produced food to the people via the posting of meat boxes.

Policy Objective FA3 supports existing festivals and cultural events which take place in the County.

Progress update:

There are a number of yearly festivals that place in County Laois and attract large numbers of visitors year on year:

- Electric Picnic
- Ploughing Championships
- Forest Fest
- Heritage Week
- Durrow Scarecrow festival

Policy Objective IAE 1 - IAE 6 promotes the enhancement of visitor infrastructure and facilities. The Council have continued to work with Fáilte Ireland promoting Laois as a destination in Ireland's Ancient East Region.

Policy Objectives CH1-CH5 relate to the promotion of heritage assets and liaising with key stakeholders. The Development Management team within the Planning Section and the Heritage Officer are facilitating these objectives on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objective NH 1 supports the development and marketing of the Barrow Blueway.

Progress update:

The Laois section of the Barrow Blue Way is complete apart from the M7 underpass and snagging of areas. Consultants were commissioned to prepare a 'Placemaking Plan' to provide consistency in terms of a wayfinding approach to facilities, amenities and access. The plan is at draft stage.

Policy NH 3 supports the development of the Slieve Bloom Mountains bike trail as a key tourism asset.

Progress update:

Coillte, in association with Laois and Offaly County Councils continued to work on the development of the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trail. In 2023 planning permission was granted by Laois County Council for the construction of a trailhead building which will be located in Baunreagh, Mountrath. It is hoped to commence construction in 2024. A further 3km of trail construction in Laois was also carried out.

Policy Objectives DT 1 – DT 5 relate to destination towns and Policy Objective CH6 below provides an update in relation to the Fort Protector and signage.



Part 8 for car park at Dunamase approved and Glenbarrow Car Park opened in 2023



Tourism space/hub approved under Part 8 at the Ha'penny Babies School in 2024

Tourism



Planning permission granted for a number of tourist accommodation facilities including glamping and short let accommodation



There are a number of yearly festivals that place in County Laois:

- Ploughing Championships**
- Electric Picnic**
- Forest Fest**
- Heritage Week**
- Durrow Scarecrow festival**

CHAPTER 9: RURAL LAOIS

Policy RL 1 and RL 2 seeks to support the agriculture sector. The Development Management Team within the planning section are implementing this on an ongoing basis ensuring the protection of natural waters, wildlife and habitats is at the core of any decision making.

Progress update:

In 2022, there were c21,456sqm of floorspace granted for agricultural buildings and in 2023, there were c13,584.52sqm of floorspace granted.

Policy Objective RL 3 seeks to work with stakeholders and Laois food producers. Laois County Council has collaborated with Laois Taste over the past number of years. Laois Taste consists of 26 Laois based food and drink producers and aims to promote the Laois food and drinks sectors.

Policy Objective RL4 supports the expansion of and diversification of agriculture and agri-food sector. A farm shop was granted permission under PL ref. no. 21/668 at Manor Stone, Co. Laois. Also, G's Jam is a rural shop in operation for a number of years (PL ref. no. 98/932).

Policy Objective RL 5 to RL 8 provide general guidance and same is implemented on an ongoing basis by various section.

Policy Objectives RL 9-11 relate to planning for future use of industrial peatland areas and supporting the Midlands Regional Transition Team.

Progress update:

On 29th August 2023, Failte Ireland launched an open call for Expressions of Interest for its Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private and Community SMEs. Following an interview process in late 2023, the Tourism Activator role was filled. The role will have the key responsibility of raising awareness and understanding of how the Just Transition Funding and Support scheme works, providing a liaison between tourism businesses and JTF schemes while eliciting and supporting the development of quality project proposals leading to grant applications. Laois County Council are making applications under the EU Just Transition Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme 2023- 2026 to Failte Ireland for 3 projects. The purpose of this scheme is to provide grant aid to deliver improved tourism infrastructure, facilities, visitor experiences, digital transformation/user experience, accessibility, sustainability and regenerative Tourism in the Just

Transition Region, in doing so, it is hoped to build relationships across different tourism industries and sectors.

Policy Objective RL 13 and 18 seeks to have regard to the Laois Landscape Character Assessment and protect rural and natural amenities. The Development Management Team within the planning section are implementing this on an ongoing basis ensuring the protection of the landscape is at the core of any decision making.

Policy Objective RL 14 -17 seeks to secure the long terms supply of concrete and asphalt products. Permission was granted for an extension to Central Precast (PL ref. no. 23/70) for an extension to the existing workshop and other associated works.

Policy Objective RL 19 and 21 seeks to facilitate economic activities in rural areas and implement the EU 'A Farm to Fork Strategy'. This is discussed in Chapter 8 Tourism.

**Agricultural Buildings
granted permission:**

2022 -

c21,456sqm

2023 -

c13,584.52sqm

**The Development
Management team
supports the expansion
of and diversification of
agriculture and agri-
food sector**

Rural Laois

**The Development
Management Team
within the planning
section ensure the
protection of natural
waters, wildlife and
habitats is at the core of
any decision making.**

**Laois County Council
are making applications
under the EU Just
Transition Regenerative
Tourism and
Placemaking Scheme
2023- 2026 to Failte
Ireland for 3 projects.**

CHAPTER 10: INFRASTRUCTURE

Roads:

Policy Objective Trans 1-3 are general guidance measures and same are implemented on an ongoing basis by the Roads section.

Policy Objective Trans 4 and 6 seeks to prevent inappropriate development and proliferation of entrances affecting road safety. The Roads section in collaboration with the Development Management ensure same is prevented in the assessment of planning applications for new entrances etc.

Policy Objective Trans 7-11 are general guidance measures which are implemented on an ongoing basis.

Policy Objective Trans 13 seeks to promote alternative modes of transport.

Progress update:

The Active Travel Department has introduced Safe Routes to Schools and the following schools had safety and accessibility improvement works completed on the approaches to and in front of the respective schools:

- Scoil Mhuire Abbeyleix,
- Scoil Phadraig Naofa Mountmellick,
- Maryborough National School Portlaoise,

There were safety and accessibility improvements carried on the Southern Circular in the vicinity of the various school campuses.

Policy Objective Trans 5 and 14 seeks to undertake Local Transport Plans. Local Transport Plans have been prepared for Portlaoise, Portarlington and Mountmellick. Carlow County Council have drafted the Local Transport Plan for Carlow Graiguecullen.

In relation to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Triogue way Phase 1 Peoples Park to Southern Circular was completed. Triogue way Phase 2 People Park to Greenmill Lane is on Part 8 consultation.

Active travel upgrades to provide protected cycle lanes on the Borris Road & Mountrath Road, Portlaoise have commenced.

Junction tightening schemes have been completed in a number of towns to support improved and safer movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

70 additional bicycle parking spaces provided along with supporting repairs stations at a number of locations. Trial E Bike hire scheme to commence spring/summer 2024 with 50 units initially to be deployed.



Policy Objective TRANS 16 seeks to prohibit access onto the motorway network. No new accesses have been permitted onto the motorway network to date.

Policy Objectives TRANS 17-24 relate to national routes, strategic routes, regional roads and local roads.

Progress update:

The Roads Section and the Development Management team in the Planning section ensure the ongoing protection of Laois's national roads through thorough assessment of new planning applications. National, Regional & Local road improvements have continued through the delivery of the annual roads programmes and safety schemes on National, Regional and Local roads has

continued throughout 2022 and 2023. Climate adaptation & resilience works have continued improving drainage to existing roads infrastructure.

Policy Objectives Trans 25 seeks to facilitate priority road projects.

Progress update:

- The Portlaoise Southern Orbital route extension was completed during the period of the previous County Development Plan.
- The Togher, Portlaoise Link road Phase 2 is complete and a further phase, the Western arm, has since been designed and is currently under construction. The current phase will provide roads and utility services infrastructure to the remaining LCC and adjacent lands. This phase is due for completion in Q3 2024.
- The N80 Mountmellick Road Portlaoise has since undergone considerable surface improvements with the road surface from Rossleighan to Mounmellick with 7km improved in the last 2 years.
- The N77 Abbeyleix Road Portlaoise has had approximately 2KM of pavement rehabilitated and space reallocation for safety & active travel improvements.
- Railway Street transportation hub was completed consisting of the following:
 - ❖ 94 space carpark (12 EV charging points) serving Railway Station & Town Centre,
 - ❖ Covered cycle parking for 40 bicycles,
 - ❖ Fully accessible bus stop with shelter,
 - ❖ Pedestrian linkage to existing Triogue river walk
- Safety and pedestrian improvements at Greenmill/Lane Ridge Road junction. Pedestrian bridge to be installed Q2 2024.
- Mountmellick bypass Feasibility study & Strategic Assessment Report has been completed with preferred option identified (not in NDP)
- Portarlinton Relief Road not yet commenced.
- Bridge works to maintain, repair and strengthen the existing infrastructure has continued with allocations on an annual basis seeing 6-8 bridges improved from a safety and condition perspective.

TRANS 26-32 relate to road assessment and parking policy. The Roads Section and the Development Management team in the Planning section ensure the ongoing protection through

thorough assessment of new planning applications including requesting Transport Impact Assessments and Road Safety Audits.

Trans 33-35 seeks to provide EV charging facilities. The Development Management Team ensure this is included in any permitted residential scheme. 12 new EV charging points have been provided in Portlaoise and agreements are in place for additional points in Portarlington, Mountmellick, Stradbally, Abbeyleix, Mountrath, Durrow and Rathdowney.

To inform further future provision there has been engagement with Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) which has resulted in agreement for the development of a Regional EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy which is currently awaiting approval for the commencement of the procurement process for the appointment of a consultant to develop the strategy.

Policy Objective 36-42 relate to pedestrian and cyclists. These have been addressed above.

Policy Objectives TRANS 43-48 relate to the Barrow Blueway and Slieve Bloom Mountains. This is addressed under Policy Objective NH1 above.

Policy Objective Trans 62 seeks to support the provision of bus services. Stop designs are developed for Portlaoise Town Bus Service for 2 routes which are awaiting NTA funding to progress the delivery of infrastructure and procurement of an operator. The Service is programmed to be operational before the end of 2024.

Roll out of bus shelters has commenced with installations in Railway Street transportation hub, JFL Avenue & Kilminchy in Portlaoise and Ballybrittas village completed. Further shelters are in the planning stage to be provided in towns throughout the county.

Water and Wastewater:

Policy Objective WS2 seeks to deliver priority schemes. The 3 non producing boreholes for Portlaoise are complete and are awaiting ESB connection. There is sufficient capacity in Portlaoise going forward.

Policy Objective WS3 seeks to roll out drinking water safety plans. Irish Water are working on the rollout of same.

Policy Objective WS8 seeks to encourage energy efficient solutions in water system and Irish Water are working on the implementation of same.

Policy Objective WS 12 relates to the taking in charge of public group water schemes. 6 group schemes were taken in charge in 2023:

- Moyadd No. 3
- Kilbride
- Crannagh
- Dereen
- Lower Lea
- Ullard

1 scheme was taken in charge in 2022:

- The Rock

Policy Objective WS21 seeks to provide annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality and an annual programme is in place for same.

Policy Objective WS 25 seeks to ensure grants for wells are administered effectively. The following grants were administered:

| Year | No. of grants paid | Total amount paid |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2022 | 39 | €139,943.70 |
| 2023 | 44 | €191,891.24 |

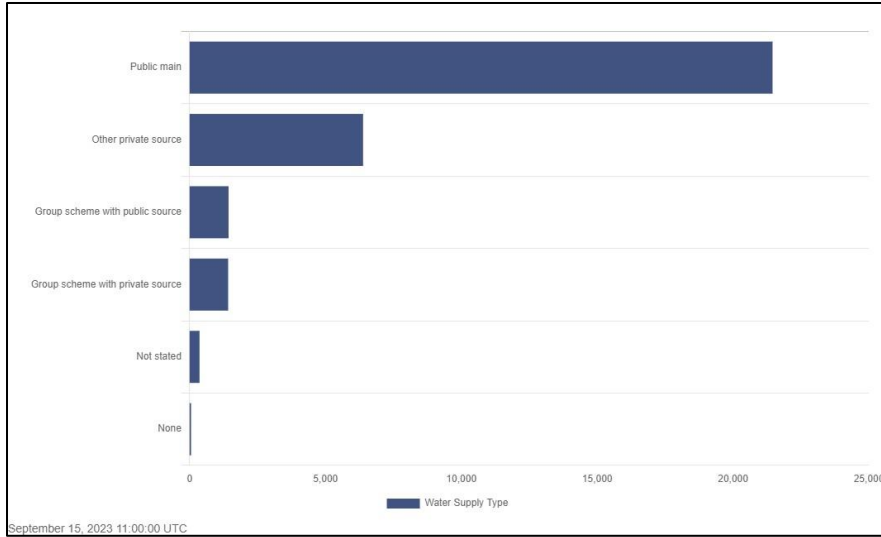


Figure: Permanent private households by water supply in Laois (CSO data 2022)

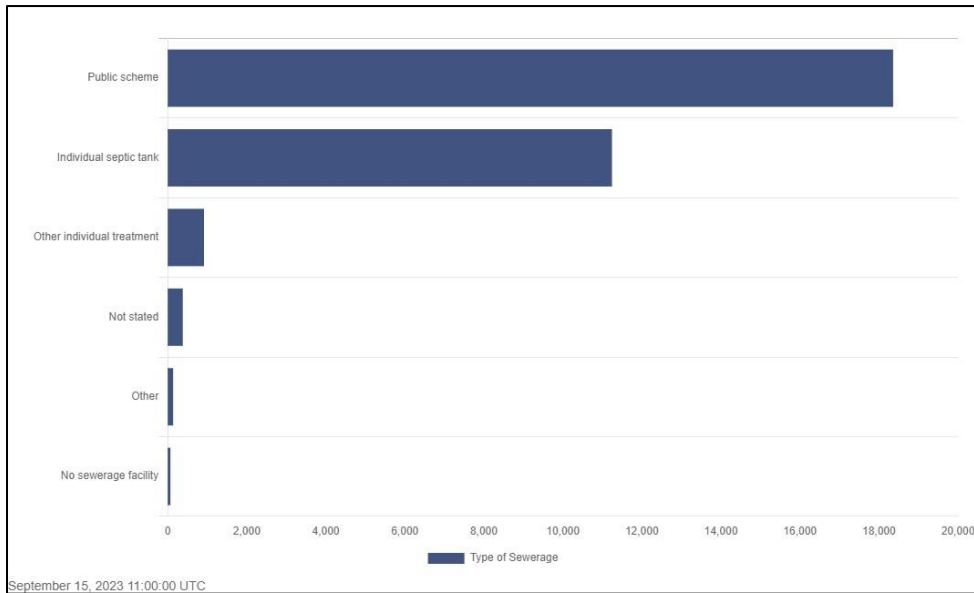
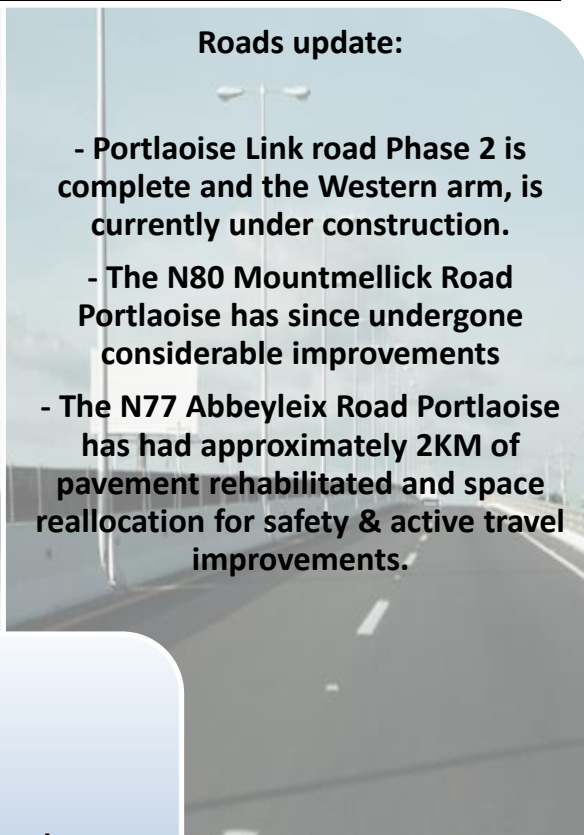


Figure: Permanent private households by sewerage facility in Laois (CSO data 2022)



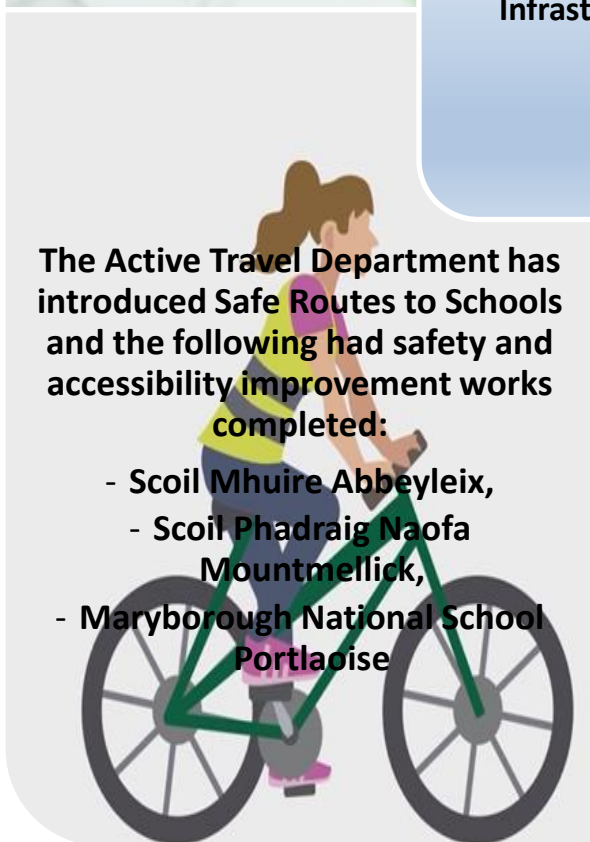
Local Transport Plans have been prepared for Portlaoise, Portarlinton and Mountmellick



Roads update:

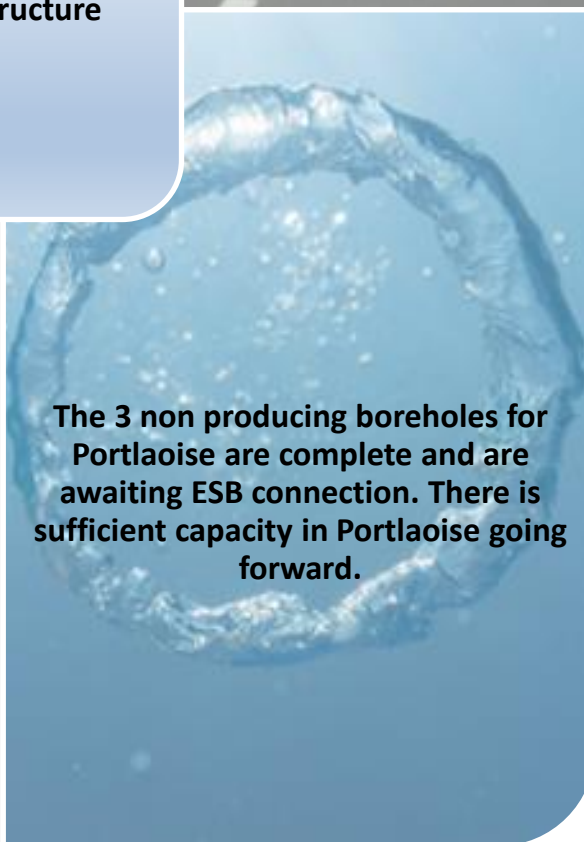
- Portlaoise Link road Phase 2 is complete and the Western arm, is currently under construction.
- The N80 Mountmellick Road Portlaoise has since undergone considerable improvements
- The N77 Abbeyleix Road Portlaoise has had approximately 2KM of pavement rehabilitated and space reallocation for safety & active travel improvements.

Infrastructure



The Active Travel Department has introduced Safe Routes to Schools and the following had safety and accessibility improvement works completed:

- Scoil Mhuire Abbeyleix,
- Scoil Phadraig Naofa Mountmellick,
- Maryborough National School Portlaoise



The 3 non producing boreholes for Portlaoise are complete and are awaiting ESB connection. There is sufficient capacity in Portlaoise going forward.

CHAPTER 11: BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Policy Objective BNH 1 seeks to protect, conserve and seek to enhance the county's biodiversity.

Progress update:

Portlaoise Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2028 was launched in 2023 and it seeks to provide a valuable guide for promoting and protecting biodiversity in the local area for years to come. Portlaoise is a growing town with almost 25,000 people and there have been a lot of changes in the in the urban and rural landscape which has put pressure on biodiversity and has presented opportunities for improvement including the conversion of large amenity grassland being converted to meadows which support pollinators and wildlife.

Policy Objectives BNH 2-9 relate to general guidance.

Policy Objective BNH 10 supports the objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Progress update:

In 2021, Laois County Council signed up as a partner in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and continues to work with communities and across sections of the council to have a positive impact on biodiversity and pollinators. Over the last two years, over 1 million pollinator friendly bulbs were planted and it is envisaged to develop 9 pollinator friendly roundabouts over the next 3 years. Funding has been received to construct a sand martin wall in Pairc An Phobail.

Policy Objectives BNH11, 13-15 relate to the protection of swifts nests. Policy Objective TC15 above addresses same.

Policy Objectives BNH 19-23 relate to guidance on green infrastructure and the promotion of same.

Policy Objective BNH 26 seeks to protect trees, groups of trees and woodlands.

Progress update:

Laois County Council are in the final stages of developing a County Tree Management Policy and it is anticipated the Policy will be finalized in Q1 2024. The Policy aims to protect and enhance the value of the public tree resource. The policy will set out the main priorities, principles and best

practice protocols for the local authority to follow whilst raising awareness of the tree resource and its value. Over 10,000 trees were planted in the last 5 years.

Policy Objective BNH 40 relates to the Just Transition Fund and this is addressed under Policy Objective RL11 above.

Policy Objective BNH 41-44 and 47-49 relate to general guidance only.

Policy Objective LCA 1- LCA 22 seek to protect landscape character area, upland and lowland areas.

Progress update:

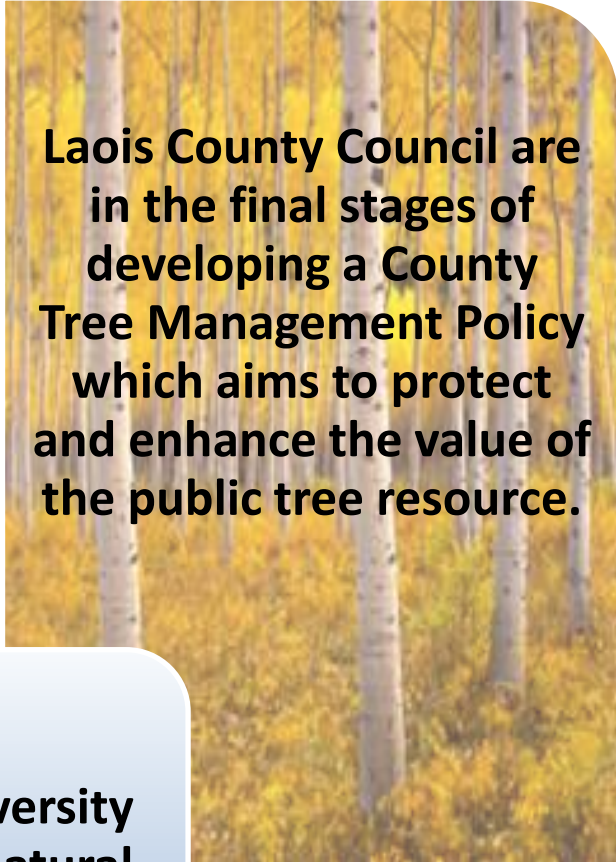
The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection through thorough assessment within planning applications received and seeking Visual Impact Statements where necessary to ensure the protection of the landscape. Policy LCA 14 seeks to conserve valuable habitats with European or national designation, the Development Management team in the Planning Section prepare Environmental Impact Assessment Screenings and Appropriate Assessment Screening reports as part of each planning application to ensure the protection of same.

Policy Objective SV 1 seeks to protect views and prospects. The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection through thorough assessment within planning applications received and seeking Visual Impact Statements where necessary.

Policy Objective GEO 1-6 relate to guidance on geology and eskers. The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection of our geology and eskers through thorough assessment within planning applications received.



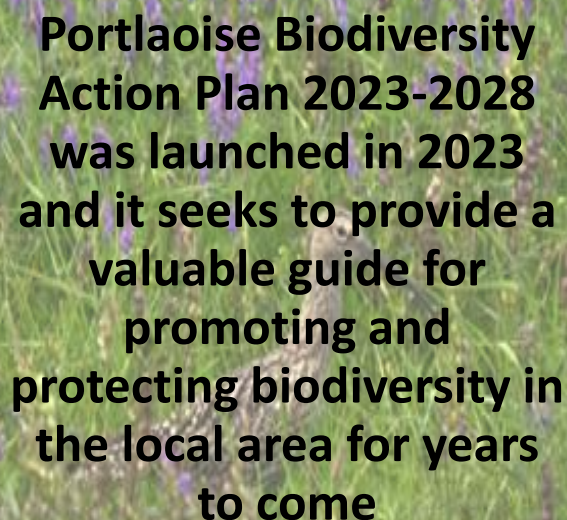
Laois County Council signed up as a partner in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and continues to work with communities and across sections of the council to have a positive impact on biodiversity



Laois County Council are in the final stages of developing a County Tree Management Policy which aims to protect and enhance the value of the public tree resource.



Biodiversity and Natural Heritage



Portlaoise Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2028 was launched in 2023 and it seeks to provide a valuable guide for promoting and protecting biodiversity in the local area for years to come



The Development Management team in the Planning Section play a key role in the protection of Laois's Natural Heritage

CHAPTER 12: BUILT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Laois Heritage & Biodiversity Strategy 2021 – 2026 was officially launched in December 2023. The Plan aims to yield investment in all aspects of heritage whilst safeguarding vernacular buildings and strengthening our townscapes. The strategy provides a cohesive framework which will guide Annual Action Plans to be devised, implemented, and published each year based on the aims and objectives of this Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy. This approach will afford the Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy the agility required to support the local authority and local communities to achieve the best outcomes for heritage and biodiversity.

Policy Objectives PS 1 – PS 3 seek to protect and conserve Protected Structures. There were grants available under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and Historic Structure Fund (HSF) in 2022 and 2023. See below summary of grants allocated:

| Year | Built Heritage Investment Scheme | Historic Structure Fund |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022 | €96,000.00 | €124,590.00 |
| 2023 | €61,537.00 | €107,100.00 |
| Total paid | €157,537.00 | €231,690.00 |

The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection through thorough assessment within planning applications received and seeking Visual Impact Statements where necessary.

A number of local authority projects have been approved under the Part VIII process including the following:

- Digital hub at the Courthouse in Borris-in-Ossary
- Tourism hub at the Ha’Penny Babies School in Portlaoise

There were a number of planning applications granted for Protected Structures in the County including the following:

- Abbeyleix Demesne, Abbeyleix, Co Laois
- Greenville House, Mountmellick Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

- Capard House, Rosenallis, Co. Laois
- Emo Court Demense, Co. Laois

Section 57's applications relate to exemptions for works to Protected Structures. The following applications were received in 2022 and 2023:

| Year | No. of Section 57's received |
|------|------------------------------|
| 2022 | 16 |
| 2023 | 16 |

Policy Objectives PS4 – PS 6 and ACA 1-ACA 3 relate to the protection of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection of Protected Structures and the Architectural Conservations Area's (ACA) through thorough assessment within planning applications received and seeking Architectural Impact Assessments (AIA) prepared by competent conservations architects.

Policy Objectives VS 1 -VS 6 seeks to protect vernacular structures. The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection of vernacular structures through the assessment of planning applications and resisting the demolition of same.

Policy Objective CH1-2 relates to historic gardens. The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensure the protection of historic gardens through the assessment of planning applications and resisting the demolition of same.

Policy Objective CH4 seeks to assess the demesnes and historic designed landscapes in Laois. A landscape study was carried out for Haywood Gardens by the OPW and same was funded by Laois County Council.

Policy Objective CH5 seeks to work with stakeholders to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism. The following projects have been completed:

- Rock of Dunamase Capital works – carpark
- Timahoe TVRS (Town & Village Regeneration Scheme)
- Stradbally TVRS (Town & Village Regeneration Scheme)

Policy Objective CH6 seeks to implement actions in relation to the development of the Cultural Quarter in Portlaoise. The following works have taken place with respect to same;

- Conservation Works on Fort Protector.
- Information signage.
- Fort Festival (in collaboration with Laois Heritage Society).
- Fort Protector Interpretation Plan completed.
- Venue being developed inside Fort grounds.
- Housing development in Old Convent.
- Tourism hub planned for former Ha’Penny School

Policy Objectives AH1 – AH5 seeks to protect archaeological heritage. The Development Management team in the Planning Section ensures the protection of archaeological monuments through the assessment of planning applications and requesting Archaeological Impact Assessments prepared by competent archaeologists where necessary.


Policy Objective AH5 seeks to encourage the provision of public access and signage to sites in the Record of Monuments and Places. The following works are in progress or have been carried out:

- Rock of Dunamase carpark underway to improve access
- Fort Protector – conservation works and signage to improve access and awareness.
- Timahoe – improved management of site and completion of visitor centre/ coffee shop.
- Old St. Peter’s Church, Portlaoise - Renovation and improved access.
- Improved access to sites in Just Transition – Conservation & Pollination Project: Clopook Church & Graveyard, Kilmanman Church & Graveyard, Dysart Gallen Church & Graveyard
- Killabban Church & Monastic site - Interpretive signage installed
- Improved access and awareness of sites where works were completed through CMF (Community Monuments Fund).

Policy Objective AH6, 8, 10 relate to general guidance in relation to consulting with stakeholders.

Policy Objective AH8 seeks to work with stakeholders to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism. The following have contributed to this policy:

- Rock of Dunamase book completed
- Timahoe Heritage Festival
- Annual Heritage Week events



**Grant aid allocated
under BHIS and HIS
for Protected
Structures in 2022
and 2023:**


BHIS: €157,537.00

HIS: €231,690.00

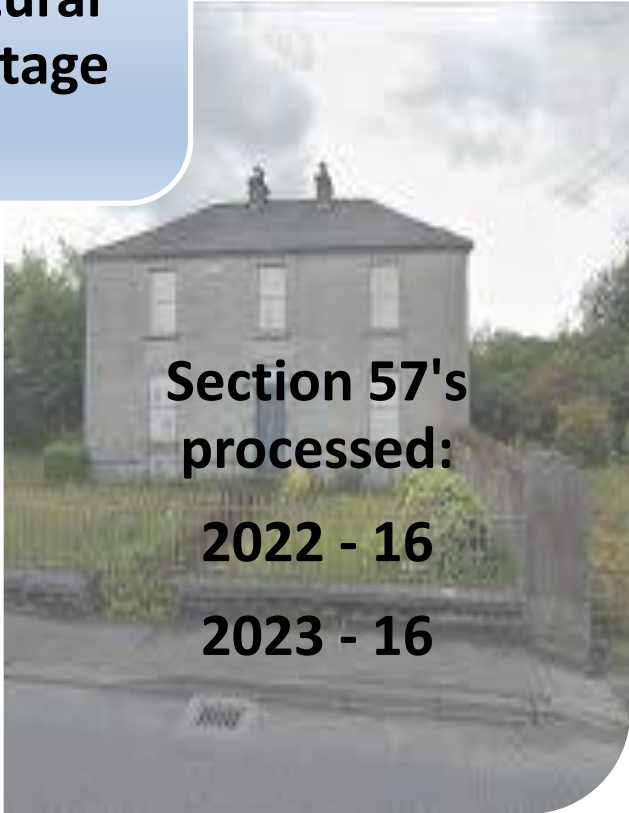


**Laois Heritage &
Biodiversity Strategy
2021 – 2026 was
officially launched in
December 2023**

**Built and
Cultural
Heritage**



**Planning permission
granted for a number
of Protected
Structures across the
County**



**Section 57's
processed:
2022 - 16
2023 - 16**

CHAPTER 13: GENERAL LOCATION AND PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

Laois County Council is committed to the sustainable growth and regeneration of Laois's urban and rural settlements. This commitment involves detailed forward planning, development management, and enforcement of development standards across the county in accordance with its development plan and relevant legislation. The policies and objectives relating to urban and rural designed are largely managed by the Development Management team through good decision making and permitting development in accordance with policy objectives.

CHAPTER 14: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Policy Objective IM 3 relates to the preparation of a stand-alone SEA Monitoring Report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan in advance of the beginning of the review of the next Plan. This will be completed in advance of the review of the next County Development Plan.

Appendix 1:

Housing Strategy

Introduction

Under Part V of the Planning and Development Act (as amended), each planning authority must prepare a Housing Strategy which will cover the period of its development plan. Each strategy must have regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and must address the overall supply of housing within the administrative boundary of the Local Authority. Within this, the Planning Authority has a statutory obligation to address the need for social housing and to ensure that sufficient land for social housing purposes is provided.

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced by the Finance Act 2021 with the aim to increase housing supply by activating zoned and serviced residential development lands for housing. In accordance with its obligations, Laois County Council published a Draft and Supplemental RZLT Map in 2022. Minister for Housing Darragh O’Brien announced on 10th October 2023, that the Government have extended the liability date of the tax by one year to allow for the planned 2024 review of maps to take place. The Council will continue to review the RZLT Map annually as required by the Finance Act 2021 and RZLT Guidelines 2022. The RZLT will replace the Vacant Site Register once lands become liable to the tax on 1st February 2025.

Policy Objective HP02 seeks to ensure the implementation of the Laois County Housing Strategy. A Housing Strategy for the period 2021-2027 formed part of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. The Strategy sets out the following key principles:

- To work to deliver the revised county population target of 94,700 by 2027 and 97,500 by 2031, having regard to the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and county’s established Settlement Hierarchy as set out in the Laois County Development Plan;
- To promote socially balanced and inclusive communities in all housing areas across Laois;
- To provide for varying identified needs in the county with respect to housing typology, size and mix;
- To monitor the housing strategy, allowing for adequate consultation with those who are central to the implementation of the policies in the strategy.

Under the Housing Strategy

Under Section 95(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, the Chief Executive is required to include a review of the progress achieved in implementing the Housing Strategy in the two year progress report on the Development Plan. In reviewing the Housing Strategy, it is considered appropriate to review:

- 1) The availability of sufficient zoned land,
- 2) Housing supply,
- 3) The provision of social and affordable housing and housing supports by the Council,
- 4) The Role of the Private Rented Sector in the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing,
- 5) The Housing Needs of Persons with Specific Requirements.

It is important to note that the Census 2022 data had not been finalised when the Housing Strategy was being prepared. The actual results of the 2022 Census data revealed a population of 91,877 for County Laois, 8% higher than the originally projected figure.

The Availability of Zoned Land

There are a total of 30 settlements identified in Volume 2 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. There are 571.6 hectares zoned for new and residential development across all settlements. This residential zoning can be broken down as follows:

- Residential 1 Established – 1030.8ha
- Residential 2 Proposed – 138ha
- Strategic Reserve – 59ha

There have been no variations to the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 since its adoption. Thus, the quantum of land zoned within Volume 2 of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 remains unchanged.

The Plan is operating in conjunction with four adopted Local Area Plans, namely the Graiguecullen [in conjunction with Carlow County Council], Mountmellick, Portlaoise and, Portarlinton [in conjunction with Offaly County Council] Local Area Plans. The areas of residential zoned land in each of these settlements are as follows:

| | Portlaoise | Mountmellick | Portarlington (area within Laois only) | Graigucullen (area within Laois only) | Abbeyleix | Stradbally | Mountrath |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|--|---|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Existing | 171ha | 45.5ha | 44.4ha | 6.1ha | 48.6ha | 26.8ha | 31.4ha |
| Proposed | 64.2ha | 4.5ha | 13.3ha | 8ha | 10.8ha | 4.6ha | 4.7ha |
| Strategic Reserve | 24ha | 3ha | 8ha | 5ha | 2ha | 2ha | 2ha |
| Mixed Use | 15.7ha | 0ha | 0ha | 0ha | 1ha | 0.6ha | 0.6ha |
| Total | 274.9ha | 53ha | 65.7ha | 19.1ha | 62.4ha | 34ha | 38.7ha |

Figure 1: Residential zoned land in settlements

Housing Supply

The following table sets out annual house commencements in Co. Laois for the period 2022-2023:

| YEAR | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| UNIT COMMENCEMENTS | 486 | 810 |

Provision of Social and Affordable Housing

HPO 34, HPO 35 and HPO 36 aims to meet the County's housing need for social housing through a range of mechanisms discussed below.

In accordance with Section 9 of the Housing Act 1988, Housing Authorities are required to undertake an assessment of housing need in their administrative area. The assessment itself includes a broad range of categories encompassing the homeless; travellers; those in overcrowded or involuntary accommodation and those people with disabilities etc.

See below table showing the number of social housing completed to date. The combined target under Housing for All for 2022 and 2023 is 279 units and it is evident this has been exceeded from the table below.

| SOCIAL HOUSING DELIVERY | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Annual Social Housing Delivery Targets under Housing for All | | | | | | |
| Year | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | Total |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|----|----|----|----|------------|
| Units | 200 | 79 | 80 | 87 | 88 | 534 |
|--------------|-----|----|----|----|----|------------|

| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | Total |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| Social Housing completions to date | 229 | 286 | - | - | - | 515 |

Figure 3: Social Housing Completions

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Minimum targets for Laois issued by Dept of Housing in relation to the delivery of Affordable Purchase / Cost Rental housing by the local authority are as follows:

| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | TOTAL |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| LA Affordable Purchase & Cost Rental Delivery Target | 5 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 38 |

Discussions ongoing to progress potential affordable units as follows:

| Affordable | <i>AHF approved in principle by DHLGH</i> | <i>AHF Application submitted to DHLGH – Potential no of unit yield</i> | <i>Advance Turnkey Purchase EOI's under consideration – Potential No of unit yield</i> | <i>Part V – Potential No of Unit Yield</i> | <i>LCC Construction Potential No of Unit Yield</i> |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Affordable | 40 | 0 | *60 | 8 | 40 minimum |
| Cost Rental | | | 28 | | |

**Expressions of Interest received for proposed units across potential schemes, under consideration from the perspective of demand, price affordability and feasibility of subsidy funding from DHLGH. Not all units may be realised.*

- 13 units approved for Affordable Purchase in Stradbally. Currently working with developer regarding their Local Authority Subsidy Agreement with LCC. Construction of units not yet commenced.
- 16 units approved for Affordable Purchase Scheme at Kilminchy, Portlaoise. Subsidy agreement signed by developer of scheme and units advertised on the 12th December 2023. The scheme is comprised of 2- and 3-bedroom homes. Application portal opened on the 4th January 2024 for three weeks. Applications will then be assessed in accordance with Scheme of Priorities.
- 11 units approved for Affordable Purchase Scheme at An Lochan, Summerhill, Portlaoise. Subsidy agreement signed by developer of scheme and units advertised on the 19th December 2024. The scheme is comprised of 3-bedroom homes. Application portal opened on the 11th January 2024 for three weeks. Applications will then be assessed in accordance with Scheme of Priorities.
- Advertisement of both schemes in December ensures that LCC's Affordable target for the Housing For All period being exceeded by 2 units.
- Priorities agreements with all Pillar Banks are now agreed, signed and sealed.
- Design has been finalised for social (21) and affordable (46) housing on Council owned landbank on the Stradbally Road, Portlaoise. Funding mechanism for this developing this site as a mixed tenure scheme is still to be determined – Dept of Housing to advise on how this can be progressed.

The Role of the Private Rented Sector in the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing

There were approximately 1805 people on the County Council housing list in 2022 and this decreased to 1554 people in 2023.

1. The *Housing Assistant Payment (HAP)* commenced in Laois in 2016. It is a form of social housing support for people who have a long-term housing need.
A total of 865 applicants signed up to HAP in 2022 and 720 signed up to HAP in 2023.
2. The *Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)* is a government initiative to cater for people who qualify for social housing supports and are in receipt of long term rent supplement (state support payment) and living in the private rented sector for 18 months or more.

In 2022, there was a total of 77 active tenants and in 2023, there were 65 active tenancies. In addition to the above there is now another form of RAS type agreements called Social Housing Leasing Scheme (SHLS) of which there are currently 11 active tenancies.

Thus it is clear that the private rented sector continues to play an important role in addressing the Council's housing waiting list figures.

The Housing Needs of Persons with Specific Requirements

The Housing Strategy provides commentary on a number of categories with housing needs, which require specific mention in this review:

➤ Travellers:

HPO 33 and HPO 37 seeks to provide for the housing needs of the travelling community.

Details of allocations to members of the travelling community from 2022 to date are shown in the below table:

| | Standard Local Authority Housing | Acquisitions | Approved Housing Bodies | HAP | Traveller Specific |
|-------------|---|---------------------|--|------------|-------------------------------|
| 2022 | 9 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| 2023 | 10 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 0 |

Figure 4: Housing allocation to travelling community

➤ Homeless Presentations:

In 2022, there were 244 homeless presentations. In 2023, there were 262 homeless presentations,. To date in 2024, there have been 25 homeless presentations.

➤ People with Disabilities:

Policy Objective HPO 19 and HPO 33 seeks to provide for the housing needs of those with disabilities.

Laois County Council endeavours to carry out specialist extensions and alterations to Local Authority houses to accommodate the needs of disabled persons.

The below table shows that 146 allocations were made to people with a disability in 2023 and 67 allocations were made to people with a disability in 2022.

| ALLOCATIONS MADE TO PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY AS OF 31st DECEMBER 2023 | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| Disability | No. of allocations made to people with a disability including transfers, RAS & Leasing | |
| | 2022 | 2023 |
| Basis of need - Physical | 42 | 86 |
| Basis of need - Sensory | 2 | 22 |
| Basis of need - Mental health | 11 | 24 |
| Basis of need - Intellectual | 12 | 14 |
| Classification of Need is physical, sensory, mental health or Intellectual impairment.* | | |
| Total | 67 | 146 |

Figure 5: Housing allocation to people with a disability

➤ Older persons :

In order to be considered for Older Persons accommodation, a person must be either:

- 55 years;
- 50 or over with Medical or Welfare Priority;
- Have a Spouse/Partner who is 50 years or over.

Schemes such as the Maltings in Portlaoise (40 units) has provided for age friendly accommodation.

Next Steps

As set out in Section 1 of this report, a review of the Laois County Development Plan will commence in 2025 to enable an alignment of national, regional and local policy objectives. This process will include a review of the Housing Strategy.

The Housing Strategy, along with housing policies and associated land use zoning policies, will be informed by a revised 'Housing Needs Demand Assessment' (HNDA) which will be prepared in 2024.

Appendix 2:

Review of Objectives of Towns and Villages

| Settlement Hierarchy in Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 | |
|--|---|
| KEY TOWNS | |
| PORTLAOISE AND ENVIRONS | A new Local Area Plan for Portlaoise is being prepared and same will be adopted in 2024. |
| GRAIGUECULLEN | A Joint Local Area Plan is being prepared in conjunction with Carlow County Council and same will be adopted in 2024. |
| SELF SUSTAINING GROWTH TOWNS | |
| PORTARLINGTON | A Joint Local Area Plan is being prepared in conjunction with Offaly County Council and same will be adopted in 2024. |
| SELF SUSTAINING TOWNS | |
| MOUNTMELICK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new Local Area Plan for Portlaoise is being prepared and same will be adopted in 2024. - Plans for a Flood relief scheme for the town have commenced with preferred options on consultation in 2023 - Permission granted for 49 residential units in 2023 under PL ref. no. 2260005 - Part 8 application on consultation for proposed new fire station |
| ABBEYLEIX | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abbeyleix Tidy towns won overall National award in 2023 and county winner, best small town and regional winner - Abbeyleix Streetscape Enhancement Scheme launched in 2022 - Part 8 granted for Roads Rehabilitation and Enhancement Scheme in 2022 |
| STRADBALLY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electric picnic continues, event licence issued for 2022 and 2023 and consultation is ongoing for a licence in 2024 - Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area |
| MOUNTRATH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permission granted for 74 residential units in 2021 under pl ref. no. 20/583 |
| TOWNS AND VILLAGES | |

| | |
|--|--|
| DURROW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part 8 currently on consultation for a community hub development at Former Methodist Chapel, Patrick St, Durrow |
| RATHDOWNEY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town Centre First Plan was launched in 2023 - WIFI4EU installed - Public realm project on Main street complete - 46 units for Ukraine constructed on the Golf course Road |
| BALLYLINAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permission granted for 99 residential units in 2024 |
| VILLAGES (EXCEEDING 500 POPULATION) | |
| KILLENARD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works have commenced on the new Nursing home - Permission granted for 79 residential units in 2022 |
| CLONASLEE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area - Consultation period has closed for Flood Relief Scheme |
| BALLYROAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area - Part 8 granted for Old school playground |
| BORRIS IN OSSARY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part 8 granted for digital hub at the Old Courthouse |
| VILLAGES (LESS THAN 500 POPULATION) | |
| ARLES | Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area |
| ATTANAGH | Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area |
| BALLACOLLA | Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area |
| BALLYBRITTAS | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> <p>Plan launch for Ballybrittas</p> |
| BALLYFIN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area - New Playground opened in 2024 |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| CAMROSS | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> <p>Community development association opening community park in 2021</p> <p>Pride of Place 2023</p> |
| CASTLETOWN | <p>A number of serviced sites in Castletown were sold and have since been granted planning permission</p> |
| CLOUGH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area - Planning application submitted in 2023 for a new community recreational building under PL ref. no. 23/60138 |
| COOLRAIN | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> |
| CULLAHILL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permission granted for Community hub center in 2022 under PL ref. no. 22/159 - Folly festival continues to be held |
| EMO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forest fest licence granted in 2023 |
| ERRILL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning permission granted for 14 residential units in 2023 under pl ref. no. 22/677 |
| KILLEEN | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> |
| KILLESHIN | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> |
| NEWTOWN DOONANE | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> <p>Part VIII for Housing development and 2 serviced sites granted in 2023</p> |
| ROSENALLIS | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> |
| SHANAHOE | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> |
| THE SWAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phase 2 of Clarmallagh Housing development has commenced - Spink Quarry (21/700) is currently on appeal to An Bord Pleanala |
| TIMAHOE | <p>Outline permission granted for 6 serviced sites under PI ref. no. 22/695 in 2023</p> |
| VICARSTOWN | <p>Planning permissions pertaining to modest development proposals are noted in the wider area</p> |

Appendix 3:
Monitoring of Environmental Indicators

It is noted that in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) which was carried out on the Laois County development Plan 2021-2027, Chapter 10 outlines monitoring in relation to each of the environmental criteria. The Council shall, in conjunction with the Regional Assembly and other sources as relevant, implement the monitoring programme and indicators set out below. This will include the preparation of stand-alone SEA Monitoring Reports:

1. To accompany the report required of the manager under Section 15(2) of the Act, including information in relation to progress on, and the results of, monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan, as required by Article 13J(2) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended);
2. On the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, in advance of the beginning of the review of the next Plan.

The following provides a update in relation to the implementation of the CDP 2021-2027 and how its impacts are being monitored in relation to the environmental indicators: -

| Environmental Component | Potential Effect (if unmitigated) | Targets | Indicators for Monitoring | Update |
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| Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna | <p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and nondesignated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species • Implement and review, as relevant, Local Biodiversity Action Plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of European sites • Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted • SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. • Status of water quality in | <p>Ongoing mitigation through Development Management. Each plan and project (i.e. planning application and Part VIII proposal) is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening – 20 planning applications were received with accompanying Natura Impact Statements since March 2022.</p> <p>Statutory consultation is undertaken in accordance with the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 11: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” | <p>the County’s water bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 11: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage” | |
| Population and Human Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 6 “Economic Development” No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 6 “Economic Development” Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work | <p>The HSE has not raised any issue in relation to potential or actual adverse impacts on Public Health arising from water or air pollution.</p> <p>According to CSO 2022, 2,073 people walked to work, up from 1,883 in 2016, while 367 people cycled, an increase of 121 people since 2016. Almost 3,200 children aged under 5 travelled to childcare or school. Most of these (over 2,500) travelled by car, while 393 walked and 55 went by bus. Most of the 11,553 primary school aged children (5 to 12 years old) travelling to school in the county in April 2022 also travelled by car,</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Green Infrastructure | <p>above 2016 CSO figures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping | <p>with 7,455 doing so. Walking was the second most common means of travel at 1,513 children. A further 1,323 children used a bus while 211 children cycled.</p> <p>Of the 7,972 secondary students (those aged 13-18 years) travelling to school, 3,776 were driven to school in a car, while 125 drove themselves to school. There were 2,205 students using a bus, and 88 using the train. A further 1,181 students walked to school while 172 cycled.</p> |
| Soil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. Potential for riverbank erosion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. NPF National Policy Objective 3c: Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield Volume of contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill Number of AA determinations and environmental assessments undertaken to support applications for | <p>The bulk of permissions have been granted on lands zoned Residential 2(R2) at 34.35ha. Development has been permitted on 2.22ha of lands zoned Residential 1 (R1) and 1.8ha of town centre (TC) /mixed use lands.</p> |

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| | | | brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission | |
| Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' • Implementation of the objectives of the second cycle of the River Basin Management Plan by 2021 (and subsequent iterations as relevant) • Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD • Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas | <p>In preparation of the 'Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027', the water quality status of all waterbodies in the county are classified. For the Third Cycle, which will run until 2027, there are three proposed categories of Area for Action. This approach is designed to provide 'a place in the plan for everyone'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas for Restoration • Areas for Protection • Catchment Projects <p>Each Area for Action will have a designated lead and Laois County Council is the lead Authority for the Fushoge River Catchment Area for Action i.e. a targeted and integrated catchment management approach to Protect its 'Good' Water Quality Status. This approach will allow for actions that are successful in restoring and</p> |

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| | | | | <p>protecting water quality.</p> <p>There is ongoing work under <i>the 'Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027'</i> to prevent deterioration of the status of Groundwater.</p> <p>Ongoing mitigation through Development Management – a Flood Risk Assessment is required for any development likely to pose a significant flood risk (i.e. within a flood zone) and in these instances, the applicants are assessed against the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.</p> |
| <p>Air and Climatic Factors</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. • Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. • Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels. • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NOx and particulate matter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74% • NOx, SOx, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring • Implementation of Plan | <p>There were 36,189 people travelling to work in the county in April 2022. The majority of these drove to work, with 23,944 people driving to work by car in 2022.</p> <p>According to CSO 2022, 2,073 people walked to work, up from 1,883 in 2016, while 367 people cycled, an increase of 121 people since 2016.</p> |

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| | <p>emissions and protection of sensitive receptors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures climate reduction targets as provided for by Plan provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 3 "Climate Change" • Increase in the proportion of people resident in the County reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures • Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the County using private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels • Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 • Contribute towards the target of the Renewable | <p>measures relating to climate reduction targets as provided for by Plan provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 3 "Climate Change"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels • Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures | <p>The LACAP sets out how the local authority can promote a range of mitigation, adaptation and other climate action measures, to help deliver the Government's National Climate Objective to achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, a transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.</p> |
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| | | <p>Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors • To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating • See various other national and local targets under Section 8.6 | | |
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| <p>Material Assets</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Increases in waste levels. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. • Interactions between agriculture and soil, water, biodiversity and human health - including phosphorous and nitrogen deposition as a result of agricultural activities and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To map brownfield and infill land parcels across the County. • All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan • Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive • Increased budget spends on water and waste water infrastructure • By 2020 all citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed delivery of Irish Water infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Irish Water Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated • Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan • Proportion of population within who report regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures | <p>Ongoing mitigation through Development Management – A site suitability assessment is submitted with all new development proposals that are unable to connect to public wastewater mains. In these cases, proposals must comply with the EPA’s Code of Practice: Waste Water Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses 2021.</p> <p>Where it is proposed to connect to public wastewater mains, a pre-connection agreement with Irish Water must be put in place.</p> <p>Since March 2022, approximately 309 rural one off houses were granted planning permission across the county.</p> |
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| | | citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps | | |
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| | | | <p>Under the Water Services No. 2 Act, Uisce Éireann became the statutory body responsible for the provision of all Public Water and Wastewater Services.</p> <p>Water Services staff continue to operate and maintain these schemes for Uisce Éireann (UE) under a Master Co-operation Agreement (MCA).</p> <p>The European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations S.I. 99/2023, as amended sets out the frequency and parameters and their limits to be monitored to ensure that water is wholesome and safe.</p> <p>Drinking Water Quality in Public Water Schemes in Laois continues to be 100% compliant with Microbiological and Chemical Parameters.</p> <p>In relation to Private Water Supplies which include Group Water Schemes and Small Private Supplies (SPSs), the quality of Drinking Water is not quite as compliant as with Public Supplies in particular in SPSs.</p> |
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| <p>Cultural Heritage</p> | <p>Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan • Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan • Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan | <p>Ongoing mitigation through Development Management.</p> <p>Each planning proposal that is likely to have an impact on the County's built heritage and archaeological heritage is subject to statutory consultation with The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and other statutory consultees. Where necessary, an Architectural Heritage Assessment and / or an Archaeological Impact Assessment are requested for consideration.</p> <p>Since March 2022, the Planning Authority have considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 29 Section 57 Declarations under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) • Approximately 40 planning applications relating to Protected Structures. |
| <p>Landscape</p> | <p>Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No developments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of developments | <p>None recorded</p> |

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| | <p>conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape</p> | <p>permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan</p> | <p>permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek to align with the National Landscape Strategy | |
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