



Laois Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028

High Level Goals



The purpose of the LECF, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of County Laois, both by Laois County Council directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

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Section 1.1

What is the Local Economic and Community Plan?

The primary aim of the LECP is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to support and promote the economic development and the local and community development of Laois, both by Laois County Council directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The LECP is an important way to set out how Laois County Council and other stakeholders can work together to ensure that their initiatives, programmes, and projects support an improved quality of life for people living and working in the County.



How does the LECP affect you?

The LECP will have high level goals, objectives and actions which will have a direct effect on the services, supports and amenities in County Laois. A review of the LECP 2016-2021 was undertaken showing what was accomplished in the County because of previous High-Level Goals.

Who will deliver the LECP?

The LECP is a multi-agency plan, which means that the actions will be delivered by several stakeholders to include Laois County Council. Some actions will have several lead agencies working together to achieve a common goal. Some high-level goals will focus on economic development with others focusing on community development. Other goals will be cross cutting, meaning they will have a dual focus both on economic and community development

What are the LECP Guiding Principles?

The LECP is underpinned by several guiding principles:



Equality

Promote and mainstream equality while respecting diversity



Sustainability

Meeting the needs of the present with comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs



Simplicity

Avoid duplication of effort, keep structures as simple as possible and communicate clearly



Collaboration and Consistency

Maximise collaborative opportunities with stakeholders and partners, while maintaining consistency with higher level policy



Commitment and Drive

Agencies, groups and other bodies will be required to make a commitment to drive the implementation of the LECP actions relevant to their functions and interests; and



Smart Protection

Use of evidence-based and targeted approach, as well as an awareness of existing and emerging funding streams, to achieve a significant multiplier effect on the LECP outcomes

How will the LECP be developed?

There are six stages involved in the preparation of an LECP. The new LECP is now at Stage 2, which is the Public Consultation stage. During Stage 1 the Socio-Economic Statement was prepared and now we need your feedback.



What is a Goal, Objective, and Action?

- What is a goal? An idea of the future or a desired result that an individual, group or organisation plan and commit to achieve.
- What is an objective? Identified impact contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other benefits to society, community, or group of people
- What is an action? Specific steps taken to support the achievement of a goal. Actions should be:
- Time bound
 - Achievable, and
 - Measurable

Public Sector Duty

In developing the HLG's a public body in performing its function, have regard to the need to:

- (i) Eliminate discrimination
- (ii) Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons whom it provides services, and
- (iii) Protect the human rights of its members, staff, and the persons to whom it provides services

In developing goals, we need to consider:

- Are the proposed goals/activities free from any form of discrimination under all the nine-ground identified in the equality legislation?
- Do the proposed goals/activities contribute to achieving equality for groups and their individual members who experience inequality?
- Are there potential barriers or problems under the equality grounds associated with the proposed goals/activities?
- Do we need to seek further input to targeted consultation to achieve equality in the goal/activities?
- Who needs to be involved in the proposed activities to support the participation of equality interest?
- Consider how to measure the impact of goals/activities on individuals/groups under the nine grounds?

Sustainable Development

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is a principal element of the LECP. The UN have set seventeen goals as set out below. SDG recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health, education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Do these goals accurately reflect your priorities for the development of County Laois?



How to let us know your views

Feedback from individuals and local organisations can help make the process of developing the LECP even stronger. This Plan is for you and your county, and your feedback will help.

It is important that the Goals we set ourselves are focussed, locally relevant, realistic but aspirational. We invite your feedback and views on these Goals. Your insight will be vital in ensuring that they reflect these aims, resulting in a Plan which can have a meaningful impact in allowing representatives from the Council, communities, and businesses to work together so that our investments support an improved quality of life for people living and working in the County.

If you wish to provide feedback, submission can be made via <https://consult.laois.ie/en>



Section 1.2 – High Level Goals

Proposed High Level Goals 2023-2028

This section contains our initial views on what the High-Level Goals for the County should be in the new LECP. These Goals seek to recognise the challenges the County will face over the lifetime of the new LECP. The High-Level Goals are broad in scope, given that future stages of the process will develop more detailed *Objectives* and *Actions*.

Goals	User Friendly Format
Goal 1	Encourage civic participation and support local communities to lead on their own developments.
Goal 2	Develop and promote ways of living and of doing business that support a sustainable environment and resilient communities.
Goal 3	Encourage a sustainable culture of innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the County.
Goal 4	Help the local economy to diversify in a long-term, sustainable manner, broadening employment opportunities in the County.
Goal 5	Recognise and support diversity in the county, promoting equality, integration, and inclusiveness across all sectors.
Goal 6	Sustain, develop, and enhance town and village centres as focal points for their communities.
Goal 7	Support an integrated and holistic approach to education, training, and employment along with life-long learning.
Goal 8	Promote well-being and excellent quality of life within the county.
Goal 9	Strengthen and encourage a strong sense of pride in the county and promote our unique identity.
Goal 10	Promote the county as a key location for foreign and domestic investment.

Section 1.3 – Development of High-Level Goals

GOAL 1

“Encourage civic participation and support local communities to lead their own developments”

The first goal focuses on encouraging active participation and is intended to develop and enable all individuals and communities within Laois. Goal 1 aims to ensure that all members of our community can take part in all aspects of society.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The population of Laois is 91,657 (46,218 are males and 45,439 females). Laois has experienced a significant population growth with the population of the county increasing by 8.2% between 2016 and 2022. The population of the County in 2022 was 73% higher than it was in 1996.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average age of a person within the county is 34.3 years as against a national average of 37.4 years with Laois being the fifth most youthful county in the country.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the 2016 Census the total number of travellers residing in Laois were 780 persons, 0.9% of the total population, higher than the state (0.7%).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the 2016 Census, the population identifying as non-Irish living in Laois was 8,490 and represents 10% of the total population, slightly below the state average of 11.4%.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laois has a deprivation level of -2.53, marginally below average (Pobal 2016) based on 2016 population stats of 84,697.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portlaoise hosts the divisional HQ of An Garda Síochána.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laois Public Participation Network (PPN) currently has 667-member organisation registered. 558 representing the Community & Voluntary pillar, 85 representing the Social Inclusion pillar and 24 representing the environmental pillar.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER 2014-2020 programme concluded on 31st March 2021. A total of 134 Projects were approved to the value of €5,557,492.21 Transitional LEADER Programme commenced 1st April 2021 with a project allocation of €1,092,976.00. 47 projects were by the LAG as of 16.02.2023. EURI Funding (EU Recovery Instrument) had a project allocation of €485,767, with 13 projects being approved as of 16.02.2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2016-2022 there were 66 successful Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) applications to the value of €5,050,463. The scheme prioritises tackling vacancy and dereliction in towns and villages across rural Ireland and is part of the current rural development policy – Our Rural Future. From 2016-2022 there were 25 successful Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais applications to the value of €444,105. The scheme provides funding for small scale infrastructural projects in identified CLÁR areas that have suffered significant levels of population decline. From 2016-2022 there were 35 successful under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) to the value of €1,238,487. The scheme provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure and helps to make use of the resources of the countryside that contribute to healthy active lifestyles. It supports the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike.
Emphasis
Community Development Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 2

“Develop and promote ways of living and of doing business that supports a sustainable environment and resilient communities”

Goal 2 seeks to support businesses and local communities in protecting and enhancing our local biodiversity in a sustainable manner so that we can reduce our carbon footprint. Sustainability and environmentally aware habits must be factored into all areas of life in Laois.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portlaoise Town emits around 100,000 tons CO2 per annum (pop 23,000 in 2019).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “Portlaoise Public Realm Strategy “2040 And Beyond: A Vision for Portlaoise” sets out a vision for the future development of Portlaoise town centre. The town has also been designated Ireland’s first low carbon town which aims to reduce the impact of the car on the public realm and improving the mix of uses within the town centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2016 Census reported 35,795 County Laois residents commute to either work (33,245) or third-level study (2,550) daily. Excluding mobile workers, those who work from or at home and those whose place of work, school or college could not be coded, a total of 25,959 County Laois residents regularly commutes either to work (91%) or to third-level study (9%). <p>Of those commuting to work, 52% commute to a location within County Laois and 48% leave the County. Dublin (13%) is the most popular destination outside of County Laois, with nearly half of those travelling to Dublin City. Commuters to Kildare (13%) and Carlow (7%) are the next popular destinations.</p> <p>The majority of County Laois commuters drive, accounting for 73% of those who commute to work and 30% of those commuting to third-level study. The next most popular modes of travel for workers are walking (6%), and for third level students on foot (23%) and bus (17%) were the next most popular.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laois has 4 Strategic Policy Committees (SPC’s) being (1) Housing Regeneration & Planning, (2) Climate Action & Community, (3) Transport, Environment & Emergency Services and (4) Enterprise, Economic Development & Planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abbeyleix Bog is situated on the southern periphery of Abbeyleix town and encompasses an area of almost 500 acres of diverse habitats including degraded (but recovering) raised bog, lagg, cutaway, wet carr woodland and meadows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laois has approximately 38 active Tidy Town Groups
Emphasis
Dual emphasis, i.e., focuses on Community and Economic Development
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 3

“Encourage a sustainable culture of innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the county.”

The third high level goal centres on supporting the growth of new and existing businesses throughout Laois, taking advantage of our excellent road and rail transport networks in addition to our highly skilled local workforce. This goal aims to strengthen local employment in Laois.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of 2016 Laois had an ‘At Work’ rate of 53% (33,541 persons) and an ‘Unemployment Rate’ of 9% (5,452 persons).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to Census 2016, the total labour force residing in Laois was 39,609 which is equivalent to 62% (Labour Force Participation Rate) of the total population.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2011 and 2016 the labour force in Laois increased by an additional 5.34% (+3,239). This rate of increase was marginally below the state average of 3.2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portlaoise has been identified as a “Low Carbon Town” receiving funding as a pilot project under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSES notes that the area is economically active and provides transport for surrounding areas with high quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement Regional Growth Centres (Athlone & Dundalk) in addition to Dublin City and suburbs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2016 Census reported 35,795 residence of Laois commute to work (33,245) or Third Level study (2,550) daily. Of those commuting to work 52% (18,613) commute to a location within the County and 48% (17,182) leave the County. Dublin is the most popular destination outside of the County (13%) followed by Kildare (13%) and Carlow (7%). Therefore, out of a total workforce 39,609 approximately 43% leave the county for work and 3rd Level study daily. Most commuters drive, 73% of those that commute to work and 30% of those that commute to Third Level study drive. The next most popular modes of travel for workers is walking (6%), and for third level students on foot (23%) and bus (17%) were the next most popular.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2016 Census reported 8,958 Portlaoise residents commute to either work (8,381) or third level study (577) daily. Excluding mobile workers, those who work from or at home and those whose place of work, school or college could not be coded, a total of 6,623 Portlaoise residents regularly commute either to work (92%) or to third-level study (8%). Of those who commute to work, 63% commute to a location within Laois and 37% leave the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are four IDA supported firms located within the County, with an associated employment of 121 people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2016 Census reported 35,795 residence of Laois commute to work (33,245) or Third Level study (2,550) daily. Of those commuting to work 52% (18,613) commute to a location within the County and 48% (17,182) leave the County. Dublin is the most popular destination outside of the County (13%) followed by Kildare (13%) and Carlow (7%). Most commuters drive 73% of those that commute to work and 30% of those that commute to Third Level study. Therefore, out of a total workforce of 39,609 approximately 43% leave the county for work and 3rd Level study daily.
Emphasis
Business Development Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 4

“Help the local economy to diversify in a long-term, sustainable manner, broadening employment opportunities in the county.”

The fourth goal seeks to promote the local economy and provide leadership in increasing employment levels in the county by attracting foreign investment as well as focusing on local enterprises.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most County Laois commuters drive accounting for 73 % of those who commute to work and 30% of those commuting to 3rd level study. The next most popular modes of transport for workers in walking (6%) and for 3rd level students on foot (23%) and bus (17%) were the next most popular. For primary and secondary students, the most popular mode of travel was as passengers by car (60%), bus (18%) and walking (15%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As of 3rd February 2023, there were 3,264 individuals on the Live Register Figure in Laois. At Social Welfare Branch Office level for the county Portlaoise has the highest Live Register figure of 1,643 persons, followed by Portarlinton with 1,194 persons and Rathdowney with 427 persons. This is a decrease of 750 persons (19%) from the 4,014 persons recorded in December 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portlaoise is the primary centre of employment in the County, with almost 8,410 jobs in 2016. The Job: Workforce ratio in the town of Portlaoise was 0.99 in 2016, highlighting the close alignment between population and employment generation. Portarlinton on the other hand has a lower job workforce ratio 0.435 which implies that more people are leaving the town for places like Kildare, Dublin, Tullamore and Portlaoise for employment.
Emphasis
Business Development Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 5

“Recognise and support diversity in the county, promoting equality, integration, and inclusiveness across all sectors”

Goal 5 intends to support all sectors of our society to ensure the voice of all, including the most excluded is heard across all sectors while identifying, acknowledging, and integrating the diverse need within Laois.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laois has traditionally been a predominantly rural county. The 2016 Census results show a distribution between the urban and rural population as 48.4% and 51.6% respectively. In 2011, this distribution was as 47.4% and 52.6% respectively. Thus, the overall proportion of the County living in urban settlements is increasing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the 2016 Census, 780 members of the Travelling Community are living in Laois
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laois is becoming an increasingly diverse County. According to the Census 2016, non-Irish nationals account for 11.8% of County’s population in comparison to 11.6% nationally. Portlaoise has one of the highest levels of non-national residents, which accounts for 22% of the population.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2016, County Laois had a slightly lower than average proportion of older adults with approximately 11% of the population in the County aged 65 or over, compared to the national average of approximately 13%.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESRI projections indicate that the number of people aged 15 and under will decline by 10% by 2040. The 2016 Census states that Laois has a population where 31% are aged under 19 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries such as Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Stradbally, Mountmellick, Abbeyleix, Mountrath and Durrow serve as key arts and culture outlets within the county.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and cultural facilities are wide ranging across the County and include – Dunamais Arts Centre in Portlaoise, Mountmellick and Attanagh museums, Donaghmore Workhouse & Agricultural Museum and Laois Arthouse in Stradbally and Mountmellick Arts Centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laois Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the founding of the African Union. The first Laois Africa days was hosted in Laois in 2019 with the support of Irish Aid through the Department of Justice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laois Integration Network works to promote community involvement and positive stories about integration in Co Laois
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portlaoise Library was named as the first Library of Sanctuary in Ireland in March 2020. The library has engaged regularly with Laois Integration Network to celebrate and serve our diverse community. Laois Libraries celebrate cultural diversity through books, exhibitions, and events. Their aim is to engender a sense of belonging and affirmation, to create a space where people can feel at home, meet in a warm and non-judgmental atmosphere, study, find news and books in their own language, learn new skills, and meet new friends.
Emphasis
Community Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 6

“Sustain, develop and enhance town and village centres as focal points for their communities”

The sixth goal will aim to grow and enhance our town and village centres while safeguarding our cultural and natural heritage making Laois a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031 identifies Portlaoise as a “Key Town”. This means that Portlaoise is a large economically active county town, with high quality transport links that play an important service role to their catchments. As per the 2016 Census Portlaoise had a population of 22,050 and has a job to resident worker ratio of 0.997.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graigucullen with a population of 4,692 has an important function as the town straddles the regional boundary with the southern region and acts as a gateway in this respect. Graigucullen will play a pivotal role in providing key employment for its own extensive hinterland.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It is envisaged that the population of Laois will grow to in between 95,500 – 97,500 by 2031.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In the Eastern and Midland Region Laois has been identified as one of the fastest growing areas, with a ten-year growth of 23% to 2016.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most dominant industries for Laois workers are within the ‘Professional Services’ 23% (7,717 persons) and ‘Commerce and Trade’ 22% (7,307 persons). Industrial sectors such as Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 7% (2,431 persons), Building and Construction 6% (1,976 persons) and Public Administration 8% (2,548 persons) are all higher than the equivalent state averages. According to the 2016 Census the number of Laois workers employed in Manufacturing Industries 10% (3,423 persons) and Transport Communications 7% (2,286 persons) is below the state averages.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Centre First policy as an important step in supporting the future development and regeneration of towns across our country. It is a key element of the Programme for Government and recognises the importance of towns in enabling social, economic, and environmental development in our communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66 successful Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) applications from 2016-2022 to the value of €5,050,463
Emphasis
Dual emphasis, i.e., focuses on Community and Economic Development
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 7

“Support an integrated and holistic approach to education, training and employment along with life-long learning”

Goal 7 seeks to encourage the development of training and employment opportunities in Laois and seeks to establish and maintain long-term working partnerships between agencies to ensure we develop and enhance our existing workforce.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">As of 3rd February 2023 there were 3,264 persons on the Live Register in Laois. Portlaoise accounts for the highest Live Register figure of 1,643 persons followed by Portarlinton 1,194 persons and Rathdowney 427 persons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">In contrast to national results from Census 2016, Laois has a higher-than-average level of attainment in the lowest category of No Formal/Primary Education (13.1%, 6,995 persons). Laois County also scores higher than the national average for other lower tiers of education attainment; Lower Secondary (16.2%, 8,651 persons), Upper Secondary (21%, 11,173 persons) and Technical/Apprenticeship/Certificate (16.5%, 8,774 persons).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Of the 66 primary schools in the county there are 3 DEIS schools situated in Mountrath, Portlaoise and Mountmellick. Laois is also host to two special schools each of which is situated in Portlaoise namely The Kolbe Special School and St. Francis Special School.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">According to the 2016 Census 6,811 persons equivalent to 12.8% of the total population aged 15 years and over ceased education at 18 years of age. This rate is slightly higher than the rate recorded for the state (11.6%).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Third level education rates consist of 11.6% (6,195 persons) attaining Lower Third Level education (higher certificate or ordinary bachelor’s degree) and 14.6% (7,778 persons) attaining Higher Third Level education (honours degree, postgraduate or PhD). Of the total population in Laois aged 15 years and over 26.2% (13,973 persons) attains third level education, significantly lower than the state average of 33.4%, the 8th lowest in the state.
Emphasis
Business Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 8

“Promote well-being and excellent quality of life within the county”

Goal 8 will focus on promoting good health and well-being across all communities in Laois. This goal will aim to enable good physical and mental health for all and lessen inequalities for all generation.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicates that there has been a slight decrease in birth rates in the County between 2012 and 2016 at 1,276 and 1,118 respectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 66 primary schools in the County catering for 9,883 students and 10 post primary schools in the County catering for 4,954 pupils. Both figures equate to 17.5% of the population.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11,393 people in Laois are registered as having at least one disability which equates to 13.5% of the County's population (CSO 2016 - - i.e., 5,750 males and 5,643 females).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the 2016 Census 59.2% (50,132 persons) of the total population of Laois is of very good health whilst 27.6% (23,413 persons) considered their health to be good. Of the total population of the county 1,343 persons or 1.6% considered their health to be bad or very bad.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently there are 3581 carers in Laois (2,130 females, 1,451 males) 4.2% of the total population of the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 91 childcare services in Laois, 18 of which are community childcare and 73 which are private services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the 2016 Census 3,988 persons or 7.5% of the total population aged 15 years and over (completed education) class their main qualification as being in the field of Health and Welfare. This rate is like the rate recorded for the state (7.4%).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunamais Art Centre provide facilities and opportunities for the organisation of artistic and cultural events and to maintain a center for the holding of performances, exhibitions, workshops, and conferences of all kinds on the premises. The Centre aims to encourage, develop, foster, and stimulate public interest in all aspects of the arts and cultural affairs. To promote the knowledge, appreciation, and practice of the art.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Laois aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people of Laois over the coming generations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laois has a deprivation level of -2.53, marginally below average (Pobal 2016) based on 2016 population stats of 84,697
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountmellick Arts Centre is a local community arts centre, with a 450-seater restored art deco cinema, hosts many a play or concert throughout the year. It is also home to the Mountmellick Drama Festival
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of a total workforce 39,609 approximately 43% leave the county for work and 3rd Level study daily.
Emphasis
Community Development Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 9

“Strengthen and encourage a strong sense of pride in the county and promote our unique identity.”

Goal 9 places a strong emphasis in advocating pride in places where we live and work in Laois.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a total of eight libraries located in County Laois.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 2022 National Ploughing Championships was held in Ratheniska attracting 277,000 visitors and with over 1,700 exhibitors. The 2023 event will return to Ratheniska
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since 2004 Stradbally has hosted the annual music and arts festival, the Electric Picnic attracting in excess of 70,000 revellers per annum
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ballyfin Demesne in has been named as the number 1 resort hotel in the UK and Ireland by Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards 2021.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a total of 59 community centres located throughout the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As of February 2023, there are 20 playgrounds in County Laois with Borris-in-Ossory playground opening soon bringing the number to 21. There is one Skate Park in Portlaoise, 3 public parks in (2 in Portlaoise & 1 in Portarlinton), 2 community parks in Abbeyleix and Mountmellick and several amenity areas across the county (Mountmellick, Mountrath, Slieve Bloom locations, Castletown, Portlaoise, Killeshin, Rossmore and Ballinakill).
Emphasis
Community Emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>

GOAL 10

“Promote the county as a key location for foreign and domestic investment”

Our final goal, HLG 10, centres on promoting all corners of the county to attract investment by both local businesses and large scale foreign investment. This goal will aim to promote Laois and its distinctive characteristics and skilled workforce.

Key Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local workforce is highly skilled with 28% of people having attained a 3rd level qualification and a further 20% holding a vocational apprenticeship qualification.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77% of all commuters have a 3rd level degree or higher.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick access to the motorway connecting Dublin City & Airport to Galway, Limerick, and Cork.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laois has a strong network of co-working hub's (6 sites).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.997 is Portlaoise towns ratio of jobs to resident workers indicates that there is significant potential to capture the existing labour force, who currently commute to work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheaper average weekly fee for full day childcare vs. in Dublin (€860 vs. €1,690 RTB Q '19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,849 represents total employment in Enterprise Ireland supported companies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to being the fastest growing town in Ireland, Portlaoise has the largest % population of under 35's and is one of the most culturally diverse towns in Ireland.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 87% of Irelands population is located within 90 minutes of Laois
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 60 minutes of Laois, we have access to nearly 750,000 people, with a labour force of nearly 360,000 people.
Emphasis
Business emphasis
Objective (intended impact on community/groups)
<i>To be developed</i>
Actions (Specific steps to be taken to support the achievement of a defined goal)
<i>To be developed</i>