



# **Comhairle Chontae Laoise** **Laois County Council**

**Corporate Plan**  
**2014 – 2019**

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

## Foreword by An Cathaoirleach & County Manager



As Cathaoirleach & Chief Executive of Laois County Council, we are privileged to welcome the publication of our Corporate Plan for 2014 – 2019.

The Corporate Plan serves as this Council's strategic framework for action during the lifetime of this Council. It will play a key role in the realisation of the vision set out in the Action Plan for Effective Local Government, for local government to be "the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value

services and representing citizens and communities as effectively and accountably as possible".



A key purpose of the Corporate Plan will be to provide a framework within which Annual Service Delivery Plans will be formulated. These Plans will detail the activities to be undertaken across all key function areas in order to deliver on the objectives of the Corporate Plan and will translate these objectives into more detailed supporting strategies and actions which link with annual departmental activities. They will also be linked to the budgetary process, Project Management Development Systems and relevant service/performance indicators.

The Municipal District system is also a significant development which introduced an important dynamic to local government and enhanced the statutory decision making role for elected members particularly in deciding on programmes of works and related expenditure across the various services in the District through the adoption of the annual schedule of works following the budgetary process.

Many other initiatives have been introduced since the adoption of the last Plan, namely, the potential of shared services to optimise efficiencies and the evolving role of local government particularly in relation to economic, community and enterprise functions, including the establishment of Local Community Development Committee's and Local Enterprise Offices.

Local Government in Ireland has experienced a process of major re-organisation and it is critical that the strategies and objectives outlined in this Plan ensures that Laois County Council's Elected Members and Employees continue to provide leadership in the promotion and development of the social, economic and cultural life of the County. It is also essential that the Council can adapt within the framework of the Plan to meet the challenges and opportunities arising within both our internal and external operating environments over the next 5 years.

We look forward to working in conjunction with our Elected Members, employees, stakeholders the business sector and community organisations throughout the County to ensure the successful implementations of the actions detailed in this Plan.

**John Joe Fennelly M.C.C.**  
*Cathaoirleach*

**Gerry Murphy**  
*Chief Executive*

## Our Mandate

Laois County Council was established under the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898. The elected Council consists of 19 Members who are democratically elected to represent the people of the County, and who work alongside the Executive of the Council which comprises of the Chief Executive and his staff. Local Elections are held every 5 years, the most recent being May, 2014.

Laois County Council is the primary unit of Local Government in the County and is responsible for the provision of an extensive and diverse range of services which impact upon the County's economic, social, environmental, infrastructural, cultural, agricultural and educational activities.

The functions of the Council are divided into Reserved and Executive functions. The former are discharged by Elected Members and involve important matters of policy such as the adoption of the Annual Budget, the borrowing of finance, the making of Development Plans, bye-laws etc. Executive functions performed by the Chief Executive include the employment of staff, property management, planning decisions and the day-to-day administration of the Council's affairs. The Council is one of the County's major employers and currently has approximately 348 wholetime equivalent employees.

## Municipal Districts (MD's) / Strategic Policy Committees/(SPC's) / Corporate Policy Group (CPG)

### Municipal Districts (MD's)

Since the 1st June 2014, the reserved functions of the Council are now exercisable by the Members at two levels. Some functions remain reserved for the full County Council, sometimes referred to as the Plenary Council. Other functions will be performed at Municipal District level. In the case of Laois, the County is broken up into three Municipal Districts

- Portlaoise
- Graiguecullen-Portarlinton
- Borris-in-Ossory-Mountmellick

### Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

The SPC's assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy and should have, as a minimum, one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the work of the particular SPC. The role of the SPC is to provide elected members with external views and in doing so enhance the policy formulation process. In Laois, there are four SPC's

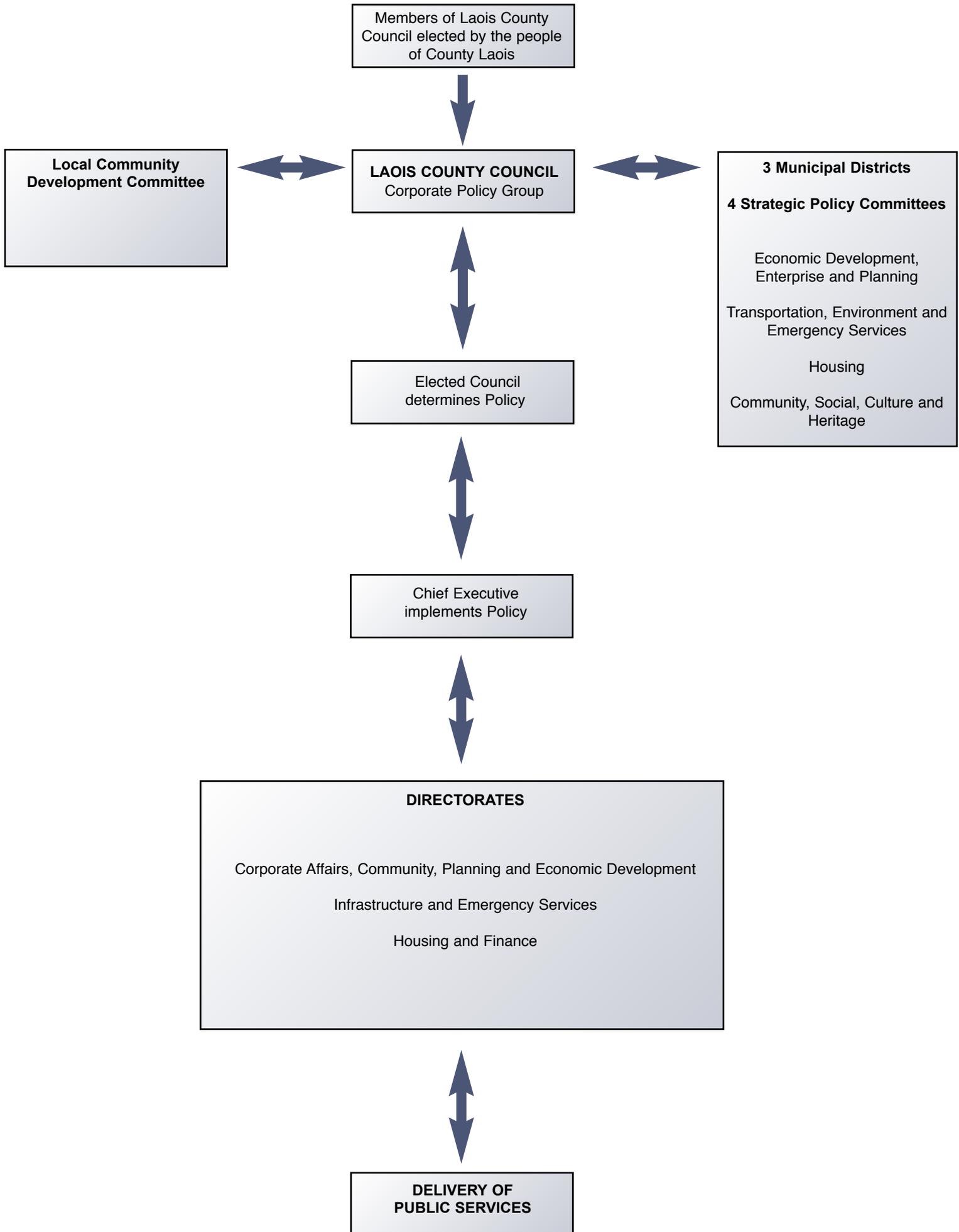
1. Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning
2. Transportation, Environment & Emergency Services
3. Housing
4. Community, Social, Culture and Heritage

### Corporate Policy Group (CPG)

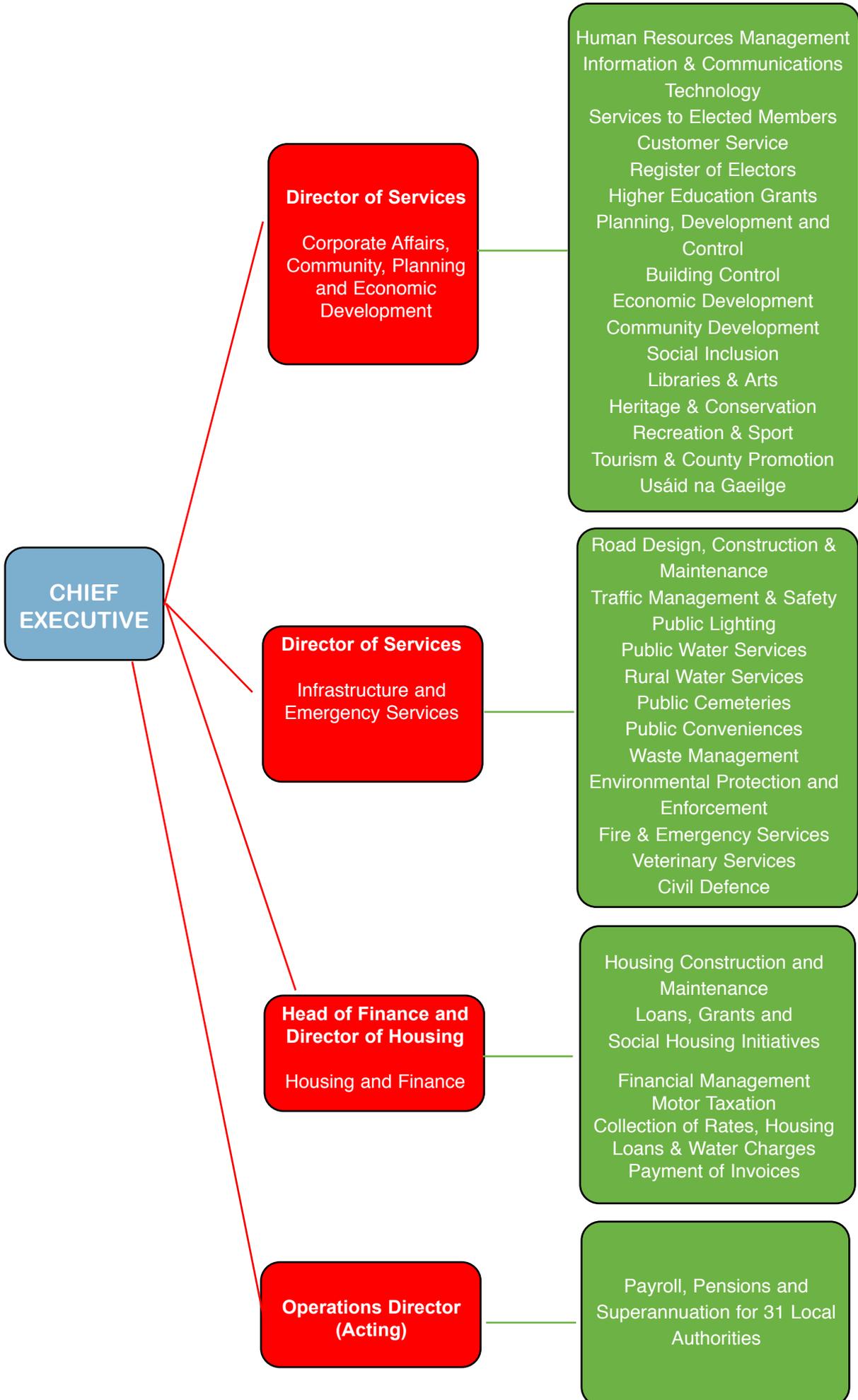
The CPG provides a forum for the co-ordination and discussion of policy issues, which transcend the remit of the four SPC's and MD's and acts as a link between the SPC's and the full Council. The CPG consists of the Cathaoirleach and Chairs of the four SPC's and is supported by the Chief Executive and the Senior Staff.



# How The System Works



# Core Service Areas



## Our County in Outline

The County of Laois, located in the South Midlands of Ireland, occupies an area of 171,990 hectares. The population of the County is 80,559, according to the 2011 census - 20% higher than it was in the 2006 census, which is the highest percentage population growth in the country. The county is landlocked and, uniquely, does not border any other county which touches the coast.

The county town of Portlaoise is strategically linked to the major cities of Dublin, Cork and Limerick via the M7 M8 motorway network. The N80 also traverses the County linking the county towns of Carlow and Portlaoise with the towns of Tullamore, Athlone and Mullingar. Laois also enjoys excellent rail connectivity with the main Dublin/Cork/Limerick and the Dublin/Galway railway lines passing through the County. Other main towns include Portarlington, Mountmellick, Mountrath, Stradbally, Abbeyleix and Graiguecullen.

From the Rock of Dunamaise to the lovely seclusion of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Laois is rich in natural amenities. The county boasts a wide range of attractions including the Dunamaise Theatre, the Donaghmore Famine Workhouse Museum and the Arthouse, Stradbally to name but a few. Laois has now become a major events and festivals destination hosting some of the biggest events in the Midlands, including the Electric Picnic, the National Ploughing Championships, the regional Rose of Tralee Festival and a range of other events.

The county also enjoys excellent recreation, leisure and amenity facilities including two leisure centres, 19 playgrounds and a large number of walks and trails which attract a large number of visitors throughout the year. A Garden Trail, showcasing the range and diversity of gardens throughout the county has also been developed.

Laois has a mixed economy with the services and manufacturing sectors accounting for over 90% of the labour force. Enterprise Centres are also located at Portlaoise and Portarlington which offer a selection of affordable, attractive office and light-industrial space for early-stage and start-up businesses.

## Our Values

### ***Local Democracy & Accountability***

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

### ***Quality Customer Service***

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

### ***Sustainability***

The Council is committed to ensuring it works in ways which accord with the principle of sustainability, facilitate economic progress and social cohesion, and enhance and safe-guard the natural and built environment.

### ***Social Inclusion***

The Council is committed to promoting social inclusion in all its activities.

### ***Partnership***

The Council values partnership with private sector, state agencies, community groups, the wider community and our workforce.

### ***Management of Resources & Value for Money***

The Council is committed to the efficient and effective use of the available financial and human resources.

## Internal Capacity and Resources

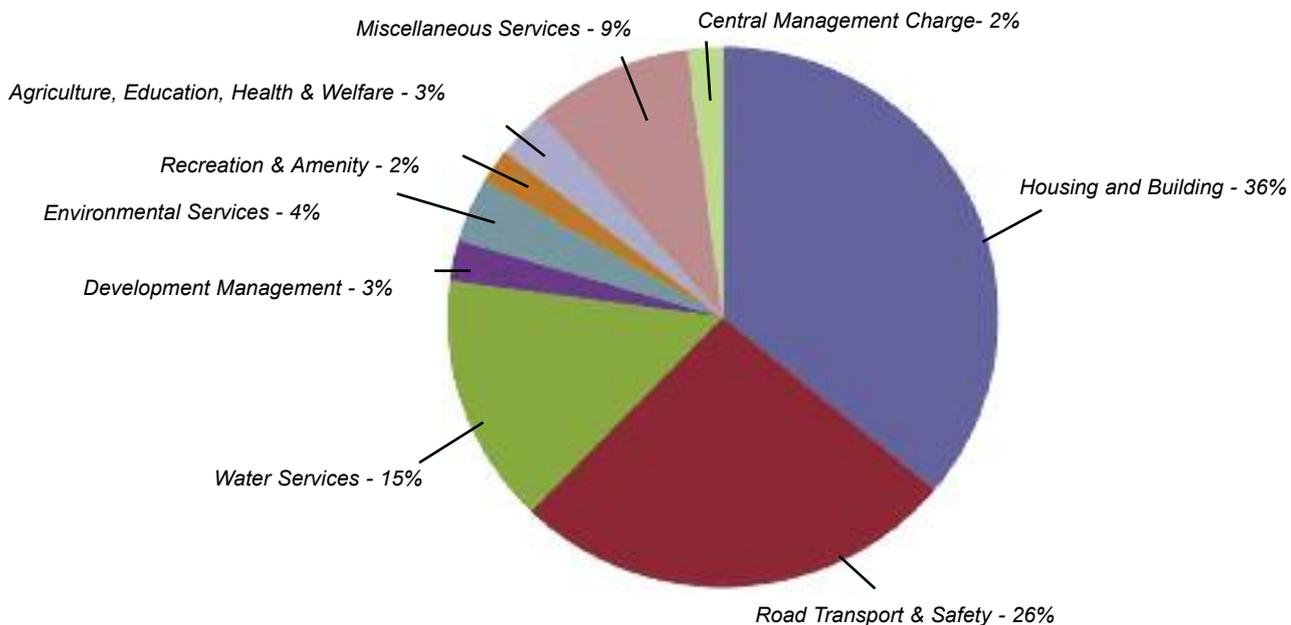
Laois County Council has a committed workforce of 348 wholetime equivalent employees and in line with best practice, manages its human resources function through a wide and varied suite of HR policies including performance management through the PMDS process.

The Council has successfully met the challenges arising from the various national public service agreements and have delivered a wide range of efficiencies through the commitment and flexibility of our workforce.

From 2015, Laois County Council will produce Annual Service Delivery Plans in line with the approved Budget. These plans will take into account the agreed priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan as well as legislative and statutory requirements that must be complied with such as health and safety etc. The framing of the Annual Budget will be carried out within the context of available resources both from central government and our own resources.

The amount of resources available will therefore impact on the capacity of the Council to deliver on its objectives. Laois County Council will endeavour to meet the challenges of the ever changing environment in which the local authority operates.

## Sources of Funding



*\* Based on 2015 budgetary income*

# Our Operating Environment

## Strategies and Plans Influencing Laois County Council Activities

Change is occurring at an unprecedented rate and the forces which drive change will continue to impact on the County. As a Local Authority we are affected by a wide range of external and internal factors which influence our ability to achieve our goals. It will require a vibrant, proactive and responsive approach to keep pace with developments.

It is difficult to predict accurately how these forces of change will impact on Laois County Council. However, it is imperative that we attempt to identify these forces and the extent of their influence. This will enable us to develop structures, services and programmes to achieve our goals and adhere to the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The following are some of the strategies and plans which influences our activities:

### National/EU

- The Role of Laois County Council in progressing and playing its part in existing relevant national policies
- National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2020
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 (DoECLG)
- Keeping Communities Safe - Fire Services Framework 2013 (DoECLG)
- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework
- National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013 - 2015 (Department of Health)
- National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 (DoECLG)
- Social Housing Strategy 2020 (DoECLG)
- Action Programme for Effective Local Government 2012 (DoECLG) "Putting People First"
- Implementation Plan on the State's Response to Homelessness 2014-2016 (DoECLG)
- Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020 (Department of An Taoiseach)
- Action Plan for Jobs (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)
- Construction 2020 (Department of An Taoiseach - 2014)
- Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012 (DoECLG)
- National Policy Framework for Children 2014 - 2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs)
- Restructuring of the Rural Transport Programme
- Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 (Haddington Road Agreement)
- RSA - Road Safety Strategy 2013 - 2020
- National Positive Ageing Strategy

### Regional

- Border Midlands West Regional Operational Programme 2014 - 2020
- Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022
- Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015 -2021
- Midland Regional Homeless Strategies

### Local

- Local Economic and Community Plan (to be adopted)
- Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017
- Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018
- Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018
- Graiguecullen Local Area Plan 2012- 2018
- Age Friendly Strategy (to be adopted)

The challenge for Laois County Council is to be proactive and responsive, to provide continuous improvement in service delivery, to manage resources and meet organisational requirements while executing its statutory role and functions.

## Corporate Objectives

The Corporate Objectives of Laois County Council are as follows:

1. To continue to develop Corporate Management and to improve the quality of Customer Services.
2. To effectively manage the Council's Human Resources so as to maximise efficiency in the delivery of services.
3. To strictly monitor and effectively manage the Council's resources to achieve and maximise efficiency.
4. To facilitate and promote sustainable economic development and advance the delivery of key infrastructural projects.
5. To promote and support a socially inclusive community.
6. To promote and implement Risk Management.
7. To foster and promote sustainable environmental initiatives and practices in the County/Region and
8. To implement the Haddington Road Agreement and the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The Values and Corporate Objectives of Laois County Council will be fulfilled through the execution of the following Section Plans.

# Transportation

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Roads - Our Network	To protect and enhance the physical road infrastructure of the County to satisfy local, regional and national aspirations	Maximise funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and other sources to improve, maintain and provide a safe and efficient road network. We will continue to safeguard that investment in conjunction with planning control, in keeping with proper and sustainable development of the County.
Road Safety	To reduce the number and severity of road collisions within our County	<p>Devise and implement a Road Safety Plan for the County with regard to National Policy as contained in the Road Safety Authority's Safety Strategy</p> <p>Continue to work with all stakeholders e.g. An Garda Síochána, National Roads Authority, the Fire Service etc. to implement best practice in relation to safety on our roads</p>
Roads - Connectivity	To aim to improve Laois as an important transport link in the Midlands	Liaise and co-operate with local, regional and national bodies to promote Laois as an important transport link in the Midlands
Roads - Sustainable Transport Systems	To implement the Government's strategy on smarter travel	Ensure that we plan and implement measures within the County to encourage all modes of transport, with the overall objective of reducing the level of car usage, encouraging alternative 'healthier' options and the optimisation of public transport services



Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
<p>Public Water and Wastewater Schemes</p>	<p>To work in collaboration with Irish Water in accordance with the Service Level Agreement to ensure that a safe, dependable and adequate water supply is provided to the people of Laois, businesses, hospitals and schools in compliance with the European Union (DrinkingWater) Regulations, 2014 thus protecting the public health of the people of Laois and supporting the socio-economic development of the County</p>	<p>Ensure that the Performance and Service Delivery Targets as set out in the 2015 Irish Water/Laois County Council Annual Service Plan are at least met.</p> <p>Support Irish Water in the successful delivery of the Capital Investment Programme in Public Water &amp; Wastewater Schemes.</p>
<p>Rural Water</p>	<p>Continue to support the Group Water Scheme Sector in conjunction with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes both financially, administratively and technically to ensure that a safe, dependable and adequate water supply is provided to rural population and farming community in Laois in compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014 thus protecting the public health of the people of Laois and supporting the socio-economic development of the agricultural sector.</p> <p>Continue to support rural households to address deficiencies in their private water supply.</p>	<p>Monitor the quality of Private and Public Group Water Schemes</p> <p>Aim to have Public Group Water Schemes brought up to a standard through funding from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to allow for the taking in charge of such schemes by Irish Water.</p> <p>Continue with the aid of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to subsidise the maintenance and upkeep of Private Group Water Schemes.</p> <p>Continue to operate the Well Grant Scheme in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.</p>

## Areas of Activity

Small Private Schemes

## Objectives

To ensure that a safe, dependable and adequate water supply is provided by the Small Private Water Suppliers in compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014 thus protecting the public health of the people of Laois and supporting the socio-economic and educational development of the County.

## Strategies

This is achieved by Laois County Council providing the necessary resources both in staff and personnel to fulfill its role as Supervisory Authority under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014.



*Construction of Knocks Reservoir*



*Portlaoise RAL project - Pipe laying in Shaen*



*Laois Towns Network Contract Signing*



*Reary Pumphouse upgraded in 2013*

# Environment

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Community Initiatives / Tidy Towns	To support and facilitate community development	<p>Develop &amp; promote community initiatives and invest in partnerships with community groups and various associations.</p> <p>Facilitate the Laois Tidy Towns Federation</p> <p>Support and promote local Tidy Towns Committees and the national tidy towns ethos at local level.</p>
Climate Change	To achieve the 33% energy reduction for 2020, as set out in the National Climate Change Strategy	<p>Introduction of EnergyMap, a formalised energy management process with the support of S.E.I.</p> <p>Implementation of key projects in the areas of energy efficiency and energy reduction</p>
Environmental Awareness	To raise awareness by working with schools and community groups	<p>Design and deliver a dedicated schools programme with complementary initiatives.</p> <p>Continue provision of public awareness programmes, competitions and various initiatives including, where appropriate, promoting national environment campaigns at local level.</p>
Local Agenda 21 (LA21)	To promote and facilitate sustainable development at community level	<p>Promote national LA21 grants programme at local level. Assess applications received and adhere to Department of Environment Community and Local Government criteria and deadlines.</p> <p>Work with local groups / networks that actively promote the principles of sustainable development and LA21</p>
Litter Management & Enforcement	To continue enforcement of the Litter Pollution Acts, as amended	<p>Pursue all breaches of the Acts and offences</p> <p>Resolve littering/illegal dumping in litter blackspot areas</p>
Water & Air Quality	To comply with EU Directives and National Legislation on Water & Air Quality	<p>Implement the relevant River Basin District Management Plans and Water Quality Management Program</p> <p>Investigate possible pollution sources</p> <p>Licensing of Discharges to Waters and Air Emissions</p>

# Environment

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Disposal of Solid Waste	To ensure availability of adequate waste disposal facilities in the County	<p>Operate landfill to environmentally acceptable standards in compliance with EPA licence and review operational efficiencies</p> <p>Maximise the use of existing bring banks and civic amenity sites</p> <p>Expand range of recyclable materials accepted at recycling facilities</p>
Waste Enforcement	To enhance levels of waste enforcement in the County	Continue to improve system of enforcement in the County in compliance with Waste Management legislation
Waste Management	To comply with requirements of the Eastern Midlands Waste Management Plan	Identify measures to deliver on targets specified in plan for Laois



*Launch of the Gum Litter Taskforce 2014*



*Environment Awards*



*Re-use Programmes undertaken by Schools*



*Wee Wagon Day*

# Fire Services

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Fire Brigade Operations	To provide for the rescue or safeguarding of persons and the protection of property from fire and other emergencies	Maintain crews and equipment capable of delivering an effective and efficient service in accordance with the “Keeping Communities Safe” policy document
Fire Service Infrastructure	To provide satisfactory infrastructure for the fire service	Continue with the Capital Program for a) the procurement of appliances and equipment and b) the improvement and construction of fire stations and facilities
Fire Prevention	To provide for the safeguarding of the public from the hazard of fire in the built environment	Carry out the functions conferred on the Fire Authority under the following Acts:- - The Building Control Act - The Dangerous Substances Act - The Fire Services Act
Community Fire Safety	To reduce the number of fires and other emergencies that put lives at risk in accordance with the “Keeping Communities Safe” policy	Provide consultation and advice to the public  Carry out a Community Fire Safety Programme
Major Emergency Management	To prepare and maintain the Council’s ability to carry out its functions in any Major Emergency or other critical incident that might be declared	Review and update the Major Emergency Plan  Carry out staff training and exercises  Co-ordinate with other agencies



# Planning & Development

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Forward Planning	To develop a plan led framework to guide the development of the County which is consistent with national and regional planning policies and the principles of sustainable development	<p>Continue to provide input into National and Regional policy</p> <p>Review the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans and ensure all environmental implications are considered in their preparation</p> <p>Reduce dereliction through enforcement of the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act</p>
Development Management	To ensure that high quality services are provided by the Development Management process in an efficient, equitable and consistent manner to all our customers in line with proper planning and sustainable development	<p>Continue to improve the quality of decisions issued on all planning applications</p> <p>Maintain an effective, efficient, equitable and consistent planning application process</p>
Planning Enforcement	To ensure continued implementation of the Planning Enforcement process in line with relevant Planning and Development legislation	<p>Investigate complaints and take appropriate enforcement action in a timely manner to remedy breaches and/or negotiate solutions so as to ensure compliance with planning legislation</p> <p>Review and improve the Planning Enforcement Procedures on a regular basis</p>
Building Control	To monitor compliance with Building Regulations and implement the Building Control Management Systems in line with relevant building control legislation	<p>Maintain and improve Inspection Programme, investigate complaints and take appropriate action in a timely manner to remedy breaches and/or negotiate solutions</p> <p>Develop awareness strategy in relation to Building Control Regulations</p>
Unfinished Housing Developments	To continue to take estates in charge in an efficient manner consistent with National Guidelines and Planning and Development Legislation	<p>Review the Taking in Charge policy and process in conjunction with all main stakeholders so as to ensure compliance with planning and development legislation.</p> <p>Maintain and update unfinished estates register.</p> <p>Process requests for taking in charge of estates in a timely manner and continue to take estates in charge</p>

# Planning & Development

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Heritage	To identify, preserve and conserve the built, natural and cultural heritage	<p>Implement the actions in the Heritage Plan 2014 - 2019.</p> <p>Establish and promote the best practice in heritage management and conservation.</p> <p>Raise awareness of and promote enjoyment of the heritage of County Laois</p>
Economic Development	To act as a catalyst, link and agent for economic development in County Laois	<p>Publication of a Local Economic and Community Strategy for the County.</p> <p>Foster the development of a National Enterprise Park/Inland Port at Togher, Portlaoise.</p> <p>Encourage sustainable employment and nurture entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Harness the economic development potential of Laois' central location and its accessibility on motorway and rail networks.</p> <p>Promote County Laois as an events destination.</p> <p>Target enterprises and employment sectors that are suited to the education and skillset of Laois residents, in light of the skills audit.</p> <p>Act as economic development champions for Laois.</p> <p>Link with promotional agencies and educational institutions to prepare a marketing strategy and website for economic development in Laois.</p> <p>Maximise Laois' share in the tourism economy, focusing on heritage assets and activity-based tourism.</p>

# Local Enterprise

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
<p>Promotion of Business Information &amp; Advisory Services</p>	<p>To contribute to a dynamic environment that is supportive of entrepreneurs and their new enterprises and the development and growth of the existing businesses in the county.</p>	<p>Provision of general business advice and information</p> <p>Advices and information on rates, planning, licensing, etc.</p> <p>Continue to provide information and access to other government services</p> <p>Advice and information for local businesses on accessing public procurement processes including training and workshop delivery</p> <p>Advice on energy efficiency; sustainable development and alternative renewable energy sources</p>
<p>Promotion of Enterprise Support Services</p>	<p>To focus on the needs of existing enterprises, to reinforce the progression of small businesses, enhance their competitiveness, innovation and management capability. Local Enterprise Office Laois will work in partnership with its clients to support their growth and development .</p>	<p>Provision of financial supports for start-up and business development</p> <p>Facilitate access to alternative funding options</p> <p>Devise a programme of training to meet the needs of new/existing businesses</p> <p>Foster relationships with existing clients to support development efforts</p> <p>Facilitate access to commercial enterprise space</p> <p>Provision of marketing supports to small businesses</p> <p>Provision of mentoring services</p> <p>Provision of networking opportunities</p> <p>Development of web enabled services with a focus on trading on line</p> <p>Facilitate the progression for high potential start-ups to Enterprise Ireland</p>

# Local Enterprise

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
<p>Promotion of Entrepreneurship Support Services</p>	<p>To provide appropriate support to assist entrepreneurs create new enterprises in Laois, particularly those with the potential to grow and develop.</p>	<p>Engage at primary and secondary level in the promotion of entrepreneurship as a career option.</p> <p>Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship through the provision of targeted gender specific programmes.</p> <p>Develop links with 3rd Level colleges.</p> <p>Provision of Enterprise Clinic/ Seminars.</p> <p>Provision of Enterprise Promotional Activities.</p>
<p>Promotion of Local Enterprise Development Services</p>	<p>To focus on the needs of existing enterprises, to enhance their competitiveness, innovation and management capability and, where an aspiration for growth exists, to work in partnership with the company to support its growth and development.</p>	<p>Development and implementation of Local Enterprise Plan</p> <p>Provide input into County Development Plan process</p> <p>Development of partnerships with relevant agencies e.g. North/South Development</p> <p>Continued promotion of Laois as a place to do business</p> <p>Assisting in development of County Economic Strategies as proposed in the Local Government Reform Programme</p> <p>Direct engagement with businesses in difficulty in order to development payment plans</p>

# Community

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Support the Local Community Development Committee and implement its plan	To promote and assist an integrated approach of initiatives and supports to meet the strategic aims of the Local Community Development Committee	Facilitate the work of the Local Community Development Committee
Work to ensure Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for all customers of Laois County Council	To support the delivery of services to the socially excluded throughout the County	Ensure the support of all relevant Agencies in the delivery of supports to the socially excluded
Support the work of the Public Participation Networks as the representative bodies of the Community, Voluntary and Environmental Sectors	To facilitate the Public Participation Networks to ensure that the voice of the Community, Voluntary and Environmental sectors are fairly represented	Continue to promote the work of the Public Participation Networks
Encourage and promote the participation of young people in the future development of the County	To promote and encourage the participation of young people in decision making of service providers in the County	Continue to support the Youth Initiatives and further develop Comhairle na n'Óg/Youth Council within the County
Provide and promote equality of access to all public spaces and buildings and all services owned or operated by Laois County Council	To continue to meet our obligations under the Disability Act 2005 and the Barcelona Declaration	Work with Disability Groups and those representing the Disabled in the County to Implement the Disability Act 2005
Support the delivery and implementation of the Laois Age Strategy and Action Plan	To deliver quality services within existing structures through co-operation and collaboration ensuring resources are aligned and used with maximum efficiency and effectiveness for the ageing population of the County	Ensure that all citizens are valued, recognised, supported and enabled to live full independent lives

# County Promotion

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
County Promotion	<p>To promote Laois as a quality tourist destination and events centre</p> <p>Support and collaborate with industry partners to promote Laois as a vibrant fun and distinctive county</p>	<p>Co-operate with designated tourism interests to optimise Laois tourism potential</p> <p>Provide advice and assistance to tourism providers</p> <p>Manage tourism projects under the auspices of Laois County Council</p> <p>Support of tourism development in the County</p> <p>Continue to develop and support cross county initiatives</p>

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Library	<p>To develop a modern accessible Library and Information service for all sections of the community</p> <p>To maintain and continue Library Infrastructures</p> <p>To improve ICT facilities and Digital Libraries throughout the Library branch network</p> <p>To implement the recommendations of National Library Policies "Opportunities for All 2013-2018 and Managing an Effective Library Service 2014</p> <p>Develop Libraries as Cultural and Learning Centres</p>	<p>Improve services to all sectors of the community responding to local needs, maintain current opening hours, providing current and updated stock and media for Libraries, improve services to schools and outreach centres. Liase with other partner organisations such as Laois Partnership, Laois Heritage.</p> <p>Continue Library Infrastructure Building programme</p> <p>Improve Website to enhance Virtual Library, improve ICT/WIFI facilities in all branches, digitise local history collections, promotion of library services using Social media, Text messaging and other communications.</p> <p>Implement recommended National Policies</p> <p>Supporting the development and free access to cultural and arts events in libraries, providing free events, classes, exhibitions for all of the community. Continue to provide free language and IT classes and promote the Irish Language</p>
Arts Service	<p>To promote, facilitate and support equal opportunities for all to participate in the Arts Programme</p>	<p>Implement a Strategic Arts Plan with regular evaluation of same</p> <p>Create an environment which supports the artist and artistic ambition and the creative development of individual artists</p> <p>Increase socially inclusive participation in all artistic programmes</p>
Sport, Recreation, Leisure & Play	<p>To ensure that planning for sport, recreation, leisure and play is an integrated, inclusive and sustainable part of the development of County Laois</p>	<p>Develop and implement a strategy for sport, recreation, leisure and play facilities development</p> <p>Support and work with key agencies and organisations to maximise participation</p> <p>Implement an awareness raising campaign</p>

# Housing & Sustainable Communities

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Housing Provision	To ensure that all our citizens enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs and as far as possible in a location and tenure of their choice and to provide a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance	<p>Maximise the availability of accommodation through construction and social leasing programmes.</p> <p>Implement the Housing Assistance Payment scheme in Co. Laois.</p> <p>Provide for particular categories of groups such as persons with disabilities, travellers and homeless within agreed Housing Accommodation Programmes.</p> <p>Provide loans and support for people sourcing private accommodation.</p> <p>Support the voluntary housing sector in the provision of units.</p> <p>Maintain existing social units to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>Achieve high standards in energy efficient housing through the continued implementation of the Energy Efficiency Programme</p>
Estate Management and Community Development	To maximise tenant involvement in estate management and community living	<p>Foster tenant participation in estate management</p> <p>Provide support for community projects related to social housing</p>



*Clodiagh Way*



*New Mill Court*



*Rural Dwelling*

# Corporate Affairs

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Service to Elected Members	<p>To provide an effective support service to Council</p> <p>To increase awareness of the Council's positive contribution to the community</p>	<p>Maximise efficiency in the conduct of Council business</p> <p>Provide appropriate training and support for Elected Members Putting People First</p> <p>Implement the Ethics Framework in Local Government</p> <p>Maximise the provision of information on the Council's activities and facilitate promotional events - Social Media</p> <p>Implement the Council's Communications Strategy</p>
Service to Customers	To deliver quality customer focused services responding to the needs of the community	<p>Implement and review the Council's Customer Charter</p> <p>Maximise dissemination of information to Customers</p> <p>Monitor performance against National and Local Service Indicators</p> <p>Examine opportunities for greater use of Council facilities in the delivery of customer services</p> <p>Examine the equality and human rights issues that may be relevant to the functions of Laois County Council and put in place appropriate actions to address same.</p>
Franchise and Elections	To encourage maximum participation in the democratic process	<p>Provide maximum information with regard to the electoral registration process</p> <p>Improve and maintain the accuracy of the Register of Electors</p> <p>Facilitate the holding of local elections</p>
Higher Education Grants	To facilitate access to Third Level education	Administer the remaining Higher Education Grant applications in an efficient and effective manner

# Corporate Affairs

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
<p>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</p>	<p>To promote and implement Risk Management</p> <p>To provide a Healthy and Safe Working Environment</p>	<p>Review and Update Risk Management Policies and Register</p> <p>Continuous review, up-dating and implementation of Safety Management Systems</p> <p>Development, promotion and fostering of a safety culture throughout all our activities</p> <p>Embed the value of Health &amp; Safety in all decision making processes</p> <p>Ensure procurement arrangements included best practice Risk Management and Health and Safety controls</p>
<p>Corporate Governance</p>	<p>To put structures in place to ensure that the work of the Council is carried out in an open and transparent manner maximising the use of available resources</p> <p>To ensure that the Council and its employees operate in an ethical manner and are accountable to its customers and the public at large</p>	<p>Support the work of the Audit Committee</p> <p>Support the Internal Audit and External Audit processes</p> <p>To review, update and implement 'best practice' standards relating to Corporate Governance</p>

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Recruitment and Selection	To source the appropriate human resources to meet the needs of the Council in accordance with the Workforce Plan	<p>Establish effective and flexible recruitment processes to meet the human resource and skill requirements of the organisation</p> <p>Support national initiatives for long term unemployed</p>
Internal Human Resources Policies & Procedures	To develop and communicate policies to ensure compliance with employment legislation	Develop and communicate a suite of HR policies and procedures to ensure they are compliant with the latest legislation and best practice
Staff Training	To train staff in the skills and competencies needed to achieve organisational, team and individual objectives	Develop and deliver a training and development plan to support organisational objectives and staff development to include a safe working environment under Health and Safety Legislation
Industrial Relations	To maintain stable relationships between management, employees and union representatives	<p>Regular IR meetings with staff representatives</p> <p>Use partnership process to support change and modernisation and information and consultation process.</p>
Information & Communications Technology	<p>To provide Management and Staff with modern information systems to assist them in providing quality services to Customers and Elected Members</p> <p>To provide information to the organisations Customers in a timely manner on a 24/7 basis</p>	<p>Provide a resilient and standardised Information Systems infrastructure for the organisation which will facilitate the cost effective and efficient provision of services to customers</p> <p>Ensure that ICT staff are properly trained in the use of technologies</p> <p>Exploit the potential of ICT to enable Laois play a leading role in the delivery of integrated electronic public services</p> <p>Ensure that public systems are accessible to customers of all abilities</p> <p>Ensure that information is published within an acceptable timeframe and within specified guidelines</p>

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Budget Strategy	To effectively manage the budget to achieve maximum efficiency goals	<p>Prepare the annual budget within the timeframe established and effectively manage the Council's resources</p> <p>Monthly review of expenditure/income with the adopted budget</p>
Financial Management & Treasury Management	To foster strong financial management practices throughout the organisation and ensure corporate governance is achieved	<p>Provide timely, accurate and impartial financial advice and information to the elected Council</p> <p>Prepare quarterly financial reports for revenue and capital and monitor against budget</p> <p>Prepare the Annual Financial Statements in accordance with best practice</p> <p>Ensure tax compliance is achieved across the organisation</p>
Expenditure	Ensure timely payment of all our commitments	<p>Ensure compliance with the Prompt Payment of Accounts legislation</p> <p>Ensure that mandatory payments are made on time to Revenue Commissioners</p>
Revenue Collection	To maximise collections in all areas and reduce arrears	<p>Ensure income is collected as quickly, efficiently and sensitively as possible</p> <p>Continue to engage with all our debtors to ensure maximum collection</p>
Audit Service	To carry out an audit of the Annual Financial Statements in accordance with relevant legislation	To ensure the Council's resources are utilised in accordance with relevant legislation

# My Pay

Areas of Activity	Objectives	Strategies
Project Planning & Implementation	Develop and implement a roll-out schedule to have all local authorities live by end of 2016	<p>Develop and update comprehensive project plan</p> <p>Development of detailed communications plan</p> <p>Review processes and report to Programme Board monthly</p>
Payroll	Ensure all payees in the sector are paid accurately and on time	<p>Ensure all operators and supervisors are adequately trained</p> <p>Utilise PMDS to ensure efficient performance levels are maintained</p> <p>Engage in ongoing communications with Local Authorities</p>
Superannuation	Deliver a Centre of Excellence for superannuation for the sector	<p>Source accredited superannuation training</p> <p>Interact with DOECLG to ensure that information in MyPay is always up to date.</p> <p>Engage in ongoing communication with local authorities.</p>
Quality Management	Develop a quality management system to facilitate the delivery of a quality payroll and superannuation service.	<p>Document payroll and superannuation procedures to facilitate quality assurance</p> <p>Establish quality controls and checks to identify errors before service delivery.</p> <p>Develop quality management procedures to promote continuous improvement.</p> <p>Measure performance against Service Level Agreement key performance indicators.</p>

This Corporate Plan sets out the core objectives of Laois County Council over the period 2014 - 2019 and the actions to realise them.

New demands and challenges may arise, not all of which can be anticipated, and priorities may change as a result. It will be necessary to review the Plan to take account of changes which have occurred and to ensure that the plan is implemented within the agreed timeframes. The framework for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Corporate Plan is as follows:

- An Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Corporate Plan will be prepared and submitted to the Elected Members for their consideration and will be published as part of the Annual Report.
- The ongoing monitoring and review of the Corporate Plan will be an integral part of the work of the Corporate Policy Group of the Council.
- Annual Service Delivery Plans will be prepared which will reflect objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and demonstrate how these objectives will be achieved through specific actions for the year in question.
- The Performance Management Development System (PMDS) process will ensure that all departments, sections and employees are involved in the review and implementation of the Corporate Plan.
- The implementation of recommendations from the National Oversight and Audit Commission.
- The preparation and submission of Monthly Management Report to Council
- The implementation of National Service Indicators.

# Appendix 1 - ACTIVITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## Housing

### H1: Social Housing Stock

H1A: The overall total number of dwellings provided by the Local Authority comprising:

H1B: The number of dwellings directly provided, i.e. constructed (B1) or purchased (B2) by the Local Authority

H1C: The number of units provided under the Rental Accommodation Scheme

H1D: The number of units provided under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme

H1E: The number of units provided under the Social Housing Leasing Initiative

H1F: The overall total number of social housing dwellings in the Local Authority

H1G: The total number of dwellings directly provided (constructed or purchased)

H1H: The total number of units provided under the Rental Accommodation Scheme

H1I: The total number of units provided under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme

HJ1: The total number of units provided under the Social Housing Leasing Initiative

### H2: Housing Voids

H2A: The percentage of the total number of dwellings at H1G that were vacant

### H3: Average Re-letting Time and Cost

H3A: Time taken from the date of vacation of dwelling to the date when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all units re-let.

H3B: The cost expended on getting the re-tenanted units ready for re-letting, averaged across all units re-let

### H4: Housing Maintenance Cost

H4A: Expenditure on the repair and maintenance of housing bought or built by the Local Authority.

### H5: Privatized Rented Sector Inspections

H5A: Total number of registered tenancies in the Local Authority area

H5B: Number of inspections carried out

### H6: Long Term Homeless Adults

H6A: Number of adult individuals that are long-term homeless as a % of the total number of homeless adult individuals.

## Roads

### R1: Ratings in Pavement Surface Condition Index

R1A: The % of (a) Regional, (b) Local Primary (c) Local Secondary and (d) Local Tertiary road surfaces in each of the 10 PSCI rating categories (1 to 10)

### R2: % of Motor Tax Transactions conducted online

R2A: The percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed and the tax disc is issued)

### W1 and W2: Water

W1: Unaccounted for Water as % of total volume of water supplied under Local Authority schemes

W1A: Unaccounted for water (UFW) as a percentage of total volume of water supplied under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for under a Service Level Agreement

W2: % Drinking Water (Public and private schemes) in compliance with statutory requirements

### Waste/Environment

E1: Number of Licensees operating in the Local Authority area

E1A: The number of waste operators that have been licensed by the Local Authority to operate in its area

E2: No./% of Households with access to a 3 bin service

E2A: The number of households, based on the 2011 Census, who are situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3 bin service

E2B: The % of households within the area (also as per the 2011 Census) that the number at A represents

E3: No. of Waste complaints lodged with EPA Office of Environmental Enforcement

E3A: The number of distinct complaints relating to waste within the area that were referred to the OEE because the problem persisted after investigation of the complaint by the Local Authority

## Appendix 1 - ACTIVITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

E4: % of other (i.e. not waste) environmental pollution complaints closed

E4A: The total no. of cases (litter/air/noise/water pollution) in respect of which a complaint/s was/were made through any medium whether instigated by the public or by the Local Authority itself and the % of those cases closed.

E5: % of Local Authority area within the 5 levels of litter pollution

E5A: The % of the area within the Local Authority that when surveyed was 1) unpolluted or litter free, 2) slightly polluted, 3) moderately polluted, 4) significantly polluted or 5) grossly polluted.

### Planning

P1: New Buildings Inspected

P1A: Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority

P2: No./% of Planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála

P2A: Number of Local Authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in the last year.

P2B: % of the determinations at A which were to confirm either with or without variation the decision made by the Local Authority.

P3: % of Planning Enforcement cases closed as resolved

P3A: Total number of planning cases (as opposed to complaints) referred to or initiated by the local authority that were investigated

P3B: total number of cases that were closed

P3C: % of the cases at B that were dismissed under Section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000

P3D: % of the cases at B that were resolved to the Local Authority's satisfaction through negotiations

P3E: % of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings (i.e. in remedied in response to a warning letter issued under Section 152 of the Act or to an enforcement notice issued under Section

154 of the Act or where a prosecution was brought under Section 157 or an injunction was sought under Section 160 of the Act)

P3F: Total number of planning cases being investigated

P4: Cost per Capita of the Planning Service

P4A: The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the Local Authority area per the 2011 Census

### Fire Service

F1: Cost per Capita of the Fire Service

F1A: The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E data divided by the population of the Local Authority area per the 2011 Census

F2: Service Mobilisation

F2A: Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire

F2B: Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire

F2C: Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents

F2D: Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents

F3: Percentage of Attendances at Scenes

F3A: % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes

F3B: % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes

F3C: % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes

F3D: % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes

F3E: % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes

## Appendix 1 - ACTIVITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

but within 20 minutes  
F3F: % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes

### Library/Recreation Services

#### L1: Library Visits

L1A: Number of visits to libraries per 1,000 population area per the 2011 Census

#### L2: Cost of operating a Library Service

L2A: The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by 1,000 population per the 2011 Census

### Youth/Community

#### Y1: Participation in Comhairle na nÓg scheme

Y1A: Percentage of local schools and youth groups involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme

#### Y2: No. of Gateway participants employed as % of target

Y2A: Number of Gateway participants who commenced a work placement expressed as a % of the placements allocated to the Local Authority

#### Y3: % of nominees to LCDC membership via the PPN structures from the most marginalised SICAP groups

Y3A: The overall number of private sector members of the Local Community Development Committee nominated via the People's Participation Network structures who are any of: Travellers, Roma, Unemployed, People with Disabilities, Lone Parents or Families in Disadvantaged areas and Disadvantaged or New Communities (including Refugees/Asylum Seekers).

#### Y4: Number progressing to FT, PT or self-employment within 6 months of receipt of a Goal 3 employment support

Y4a: The number of people in the 'Individuals supported into employment or self-employment' category, who commenced that employment within 6 months of receiving a Goal 3 support, included in the Local Community Development Programme Annual Report for 2014, the figures for which will be available by end March 2015

### Corporate

#### C1: Total number of WTEs

C1A: The wholetime equivalent staffing number

#### C2: Working Days lost to Sickness

C2A: Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave

C2B: Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave

#### C3: Number of page visits to Local Authority website

C3A: The cumulative total page views obtained from a page tagging on-site web analytics service

#### C4: Overall cost of ICT provision per WTE

C4A: All revenue expenditure on hardware and software plus depreciation (20% straight-line) on existing hardware plus IT consultancy and IT contracts plus IT licensing fees and the relevant proportion of the central management charge divided by the WTE no. supplied under the C1 indicator.

### Finance

#### M1: 5 Year summary of Revenue Account balance

M1A: The debit/credit balance (denoting which) at 31/12/2010 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS)

M1B: The debit/credit balance (denoting which) at 31/12/2011 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS

M1C: The debit/credit balance (denoting which) at 31/12/2012 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of AFS

M1D: The debit/credit balance (denoting which) at 31/12/2013 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS

M1E: The debit/credit balance (denoting which) at 31/12/2014 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS

M2: 5 Year summary of % collection levels for major revenue sources

M2A: The individual % figures for each of (a) Rates, (b) Rent & Annuities and (c) Housing Loans in the final column of Appendix 7 of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) for 2010

M2B: The individual % figures for each of (a) Rates, (b) Rent & Annuities and (c) Housing Loans in the final column of Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2011

M2C: The individual % figures for each of (a) Rates (b) Rent & Annuities and (c) Housing Loans in the final column of Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2012

M2D: The individual % figures for each of (a) Rates, (b) Rent & Annuities and (c) Housing Loans in the final column of Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2013

M2E: The individual % figures for each of (a) Rates, (b) Rent & Annuities and (c) Housing Loans in the final column of Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2014

J1: Economic Development

J1: No of jobs created

J1A: The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office

<i>Chief Executive:</i>	<b>Gerry Murphy</b>
<i>Director of Corporate Affairs, Community, Planning and Economic Development :</i>	<b>Anna Marie Delaney</b>
<i>Director of Infrastructure &amp; Emergency Services:</i>	<b>Kieran Kehoe</b>
<i>Head of Finance and Director of Housing (Acting):</i>	<b>Julie Bergin</b>
<i>Operations Director (Acting):</i>	<b>John Forde</b>
<i>Senior Executive Officer - Community &amp; Enterprise</i>	<b>Ian McCormack</b>
<i>Senior Executive Officer - Housing:</i>	<b>Michael Rainey</b>
<i>Senior Executive Officer - Human Resources (Acting):</i>	<b>Evelyn Brownrigg</b>
<i>Senior Executive Officer - Planning:</i>	<b>Carmel McNicholl</b>
<i>Head of Information Systems (Acting):</i>	<b>John Smith</b>
<i>Senior Engineer - Roads &amp; Environment:</i>	<b>Henry Ritchie</b>
<i>Senior Engineer - Water Services:</i>	<b>Michael O’Hora</b>
<i>Senior Planner:</i>	<b>Angela McEvoy</b>
<i>County Librarian (Acting):</i>	<b>Bernie Foran</b>
<i>Chief Fire Officer (Acting):</i>	<b>Declan Power</b>
<i>Senior Social Worker:</i>	<b>Fionnuala Daly</b>

## How to Contact Us

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