



Laois County Council

Draft Litter Management Plan

2018 - 2020



Laois County Council, Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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Contents Page

1	Introduction	Page 1
1.1	Consultation Process	Page 2
1.2	Quantification of Litter Pollution in Laois	Page 2
2	Review of Litter Management Plan 2015 – 2017	Page 4
3	Objectives of Litter Plan 2018 – 2020	Page 8
4	Conclusion	Page 16
	Appendix 1 Consultation Steps	Page 17
	Appendix 2 Submissions Received	Page 18
	Appendix 3 How to report a complaint	Page 19
	Appendix 4 Key Performance Indicators	Page 20
	Appendix 5 Useful contacts	Page 22

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Picture on Cover: Noah Meredith receiving his Clean Up Laois Pack from Ms. Emily Doyle, Litter Warden, 2018.

1. Introduction

Co. Laois is mainly a rural county with a mix of towns and villages, with largely unspoiled countryside, mountains, rivers, forests and bog-lands. It has many important historical and archaeological sites, and interesting built heritage and good biodiversity.

The Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended, requires local authorities to make and implement a Litter Management Plan, and to review the plan every three years.

Laois County Council recognises that litter continues to be a challenge locally and nationally. This latest Litter Management Plan outlines the objectives to prevent and control litter, encourage public awareness and set targets for the next three years. The Plan also reviews the projects undertaken to date and identifies areas where efforts will need to be focused over the next three years.

The aims and objectives of this Plan can only be successfully achieved through co-operation and partnership. This co-operation and partnership will require Laois County Council to continue to effectively undertake its statutory duty and also requires businesses, citizens and visitors alike to actively play their part in the prevention and management of litter and the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste.

The strong and vibrant community sector, along with the local authority, works hard to protect and maintain the county's natural environment and to make it a pleasant place to live, work and visit. Tidy Towns groups in the county also play a particular valuable role in this work.

What is litter? How is it defined?

Litter is defined in the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended, as *"a substance or object, whether or not intended as waste that, when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or other place lawfully designated for the deposit, is or is likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any such substance or object, and regardless of its size or volume or the extent of the deposit"*.

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

Dog Fouling

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

1.1 Consultation

In preparing this Litter Plan, Laois County Council sought submissions from and consulted with a wide range of organisations and community groups. The process also involved placing advertisements in local newspapers, and advertisements were broadcast on local radio station. Consultation steps and process are detailed in Appendix One. Submissions received are listed in Appendix Two.

1.2 Quantification of Litter Pollution in Laois

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

Litter Quantification Survey Results

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

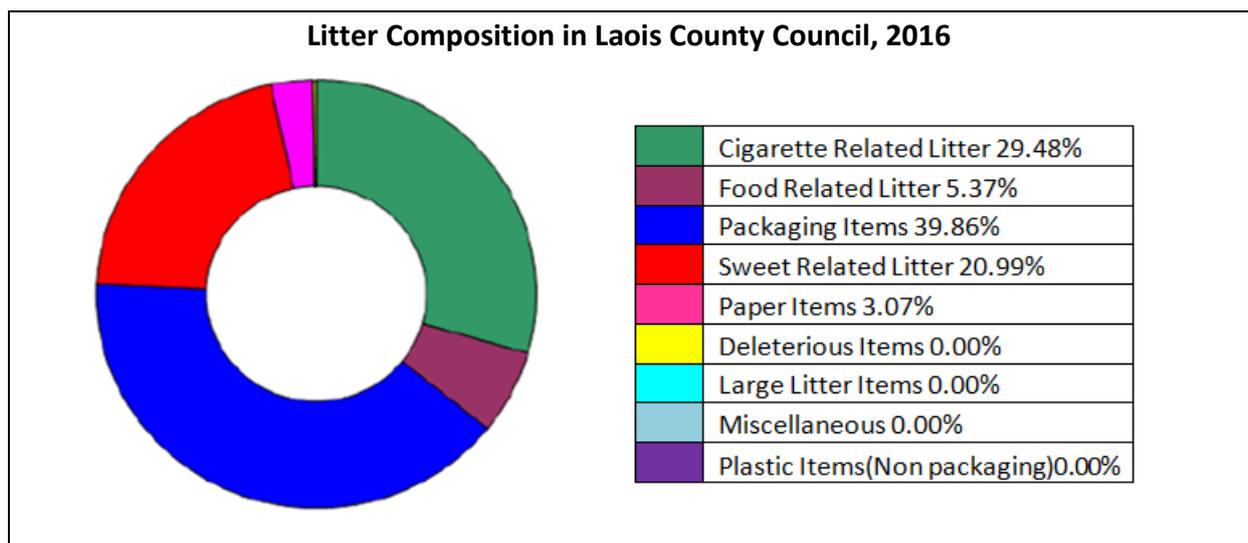


Fig. 1 Composition of Litter Pollution in Laois in 2016

A comparison of the main litter components found by Laois County Council in 2015 and 2016 are presented in Fig. 2

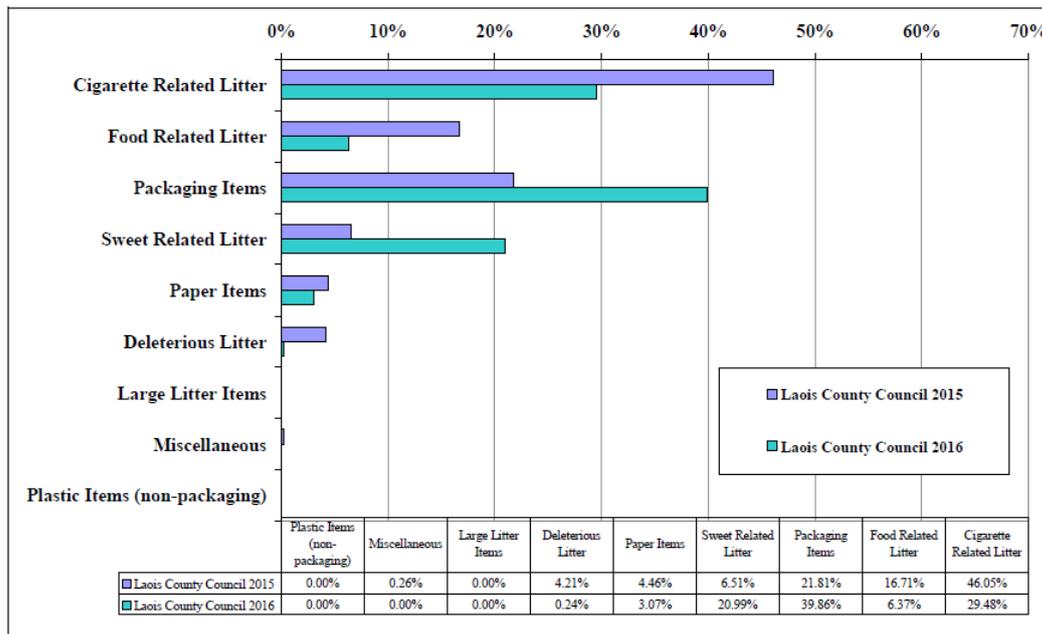


Fig. 2 Comparison of Litter Composition in Co. Laois 2015 and 2016

Litter Pollution Survey Results

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

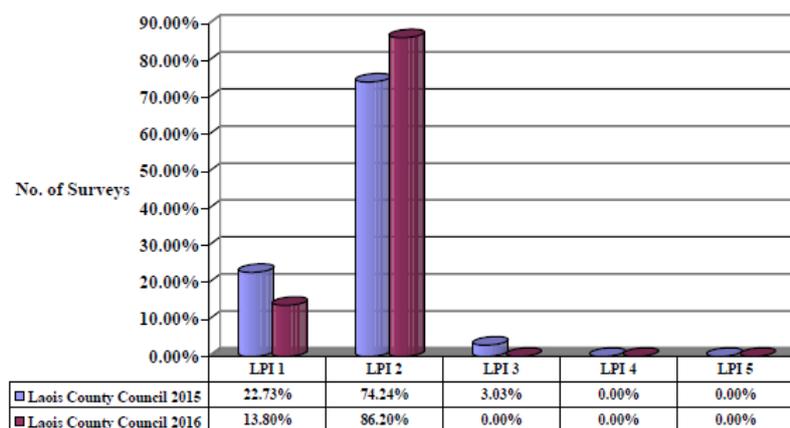


Fig. 3 Litter Pollution Survey Results for Co. Laois 2015 - 2016

Litter Pollution Survey Results		2016	2015
LP1	Percentage of area unpolluted by litter	13.8%	22.73%
LP2	Percentage of area slightly polluted by litter	86.2%	74.24%
LP3	Percentage of area moderately polluted by litter	0%	3.03%
LP4	Percentage of area significantly polluted by litter	0%	0%
LP5	Percentage of area grossly polluted by litter	0%	0%

2. Review of Litter Management Plan 2015 - 2017

An annual report on the progress of policy actions and the implementation of the Litter Management Plan 2015 to 2017 was prepared and presented to full Council for their consideration each year.

Public Awareness campaigns

Clean Up Laois week

This annual event held in conjunction with An Taisce's National Spring Clean Campaign has grown year on year. The environment section distributed litter bags, litter pickers and gloves to voluntary groups, who carried out clean ups of their area. AES co-sponsored the event in 2016 and 2017.

	2017	2016	2015
Voluntary groups registered	111	82	95
Tonnes of waste collected	32	29	17.4



Launch of Clean Up Laois Week 2017

Green Schools programme

Laois County Council, along with An Taisce's Green Schools development officer, continued to work with teachers and pupils of schools and provided a variety of supports (workshops, visits, teacher seminars etc) to them to assist the schools achieve their Green Flags. There are now 76 schools with Green Flags in Co. Laois.

Other public awareness campaigns were conducted by the Environment staff and partners over the lifetime of the Plan. Examples of these anti litter campaigns include the Gum Litter Task Force and Leave No trace workshops, which were delivered via community and school based programmes.



Leave No Trace workshops with Portlaoise Educate Together NS in Páirc an Phobail, 2017

Enforcement

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

	2017	2016	2015
Complaints logged and investigated	663	639	738
Litter Fines issued	189	161	256
Convictions	11	20	19

Waste Infrastructure

Laois County Council area staff serviced and maintained the litter bins on a regular basis. Laois County Council spent the following sums on street cleaning and bin emptying and maintenance during the period.

	2017 €	2016 €	2015 €
Street Cleaning			
Central Area - Operation of Street Cleaning Service	216,618	150,379	133,656
Eastern Area - Operation of Street Cleaning Service	61,225	71,811	63,837
Western Area - Operation of Street Cleaning Service	68,936	64,546	66,576
	346,779	286,736	264,069

Recycling centres at Portlaoise and Portarlington operated year round.

In 2017 the bring banks at 39 of the existing 45 locations were upgraded and the new bottle bank units were installed at one new location within the county. The new banks, with at least twice the capacity of the old banks, are neat, attractive and have good signage to assist the public with their recycling of cans/glass etc.



Bottle banks at Castletown, 2017

Upgrade to Public Tipping Area at Kyletalesha

In 2017 Laois County Council carried out improvement works, including the relocation of public tipping area to a location closer to the offices and weighbridge, including provision and an access road, roundabout, three concrete bays for the storage of different types of waste prior to their removal from site.

Litter Monitoring programmes

Our three Litter Wardens participated in the annual National Litter Pollution Monitoring Survey, Gum Litter Task Force surveys and ATM surveys collecting data on the composition, scale and nature of littering. All surveys were carried out and returns were submitted within the prescribed timeframe.

Litter Management Practices

Staff from the Environment section ensured that litter management was a priority for events planned for the county. Staff attended meetings and prepared reports for Electric Picnic and provided guidance to other projects on a variety of topics including the Durrow Scarecrow Festival.

During 2017, Laois County Council assisted Abbeyleix Tidy Towns participate in the Entente Florale Europe competition, and they were awarded a Silver Medal Award and the President's Prize for Biodiversity.

IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter)

Portlaoise town has been participating in this anti-litter league for a number of years. Judging is carried out at different times during the year and the town is then rated nationally against the other participating towns. In the final results at the end of 2017, Portlaoise town was ranked 11th out of 40 participating towns and cities and was deemed 'Clean to European Norms'.

Anti-Dumping Initiative 2017 – Bogs of Laois

Bog sites have always presented a particular difficulty in Co. Laois with regards to illegal dumping. The bog access roads which provide access to active bog sites see little traffic for much of the year outside of turf cutting season and are prone to illegal dumping on a significant scale. Three particular Bogs were targeted in Co. Laois under an anti-dumping initiative these include Derrybeg Bog, Windsor Bog and Lower Forest Bog.

In working with the local residents, communities and tidy towns groups, Laois County Council developed a targeted action plan which included:

- a clean-up of the sites;
- erection of infrastructure to limit access (gates and barriers);
- the use mobile cameras to catch repeat offenders and increase surveillance by litter wardens;
- a media campaign including signage and a billboard campaign.

The three sites were cleaned and over 19 tonnes of waste was collected. The gates have to date acted as a deterrent and prevention mechanism and will continue to prove even more effective over the winter months when the turf cutting and saving season has drawn to an end. A billboard campaign was run to highlight the incidence of illegal dumping by unauthorised waste collectors in the area on foot of evidence received from the early investigative work and details provided by the community. Laois County Council litter wardens issued letters by hand in a targeted campaign to over 500 residents in a small town neighbouring one of the bog sites to advise residents of their obligation to ensure their waste collector was authorised. A number of litter fines were issued and the mobile cameras were successful in capturing a large scale illegal dumper.



Newly installed gate at Windsor Bog, 2017

3 Objectives of Litter Plan 2018 - 2020

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

Once adopted by the Council, the plan will be in place for three years and an annual report on the progress of the litter plan will be presented for Council before 31st March each year.

The objectives of the Litter Plan 2018 – 2020 are:

- 1. Promotion of Education and Awareness Campaigns**
- 2. Enforcement of Litter Pollution Acts**
- 3. Partnership with Communities and Business**
- 4. Provision of Waste facilities**
- 5. Management of Litter**

Objective 1: Promotion of Education and Awareness Campaigns

Ongoing education and awareness in relation to the problems litter pollution creates for our environment is essential. Every day we learn more about the damaging effects of litter, not only with regard to ourselves and to wildlife, but also the devastating impact it has on the earth's valuable resources, on which we rely. The awareness campaigns set out in this plan will alert everybody to the fact that litter is their responsibility and that everybody's individual actions count, for better or worse.

Objective 1:	Promotion of Education and Awareness Campaigns
Measures:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue education and awareness campaigns as part of schools programme and Tidy Towns• Promotion of national campaigns at local level.• Promotion of green initiatives with internal departments, external agencies and local events.• Promotion of anti-dog fouling campaign / foot patrol in one urban area per year.• Issue relevant correspondence to media• Run social media campaigns.• Continue to promote bilingual information where appropriate.• Identify suitable projects which can be funded under the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment's Anti Litter Grant.	



Gum Litter Task Force Launch w/Portlaoise Educate Together NS and Cathaoirleach Tom Mulhall, 2017

Objective 2 Enforcement of Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended

Laois County Council is committed to utilising its powers under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended to investigate and penalise litter offenders.

Laois County Council employs three Litter Wardens:

1. John Ging who covers Portlaoise town and surrounding countryside.
2. John Rogers who covers the western area of the county and
3. Emily Doyle who covers the eastern area of the county.

They investigate all complaints received and take appropriate actions to deal with the litter. However, they cannot do their work in isolation.

Objective 2:	Enforcement of Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended
Measures:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate litter complaints.• Issue on-the-spot fines.• Prosecute offenders.• Work programme for Litter Wardens.• Promote Litter Hotline – 1800 323230.• Include relevant data in RMCEI returns.• Use various methods to catch offenders e.g. CCTV, drones as and when needed.• Conduct spot checks regarding litter/waste disposal.• Continue to ensure a high visibility presence in our community.	

Penalties for littering

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

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

Objective 3: Partnership with Communities & Business

Laois County Council recognises the huge contribution by the public, community groups and businesses throughout the county in regard to litter control and clean ups. It is only through co-operation and partnerships with local businesses and community groups that real progress can be made with regard to the problem of litter.

Objective 3:	Partnership with Communities and Business
Measures:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen our existing partnerships and identify new complementary programmes and partners.• Continue to provide supports – training, advice and financial support, capital investment as required, whilst always ensuring full transparency of our efforts with all parties involved.• Continue to work with public, community groups and business in the county through the promotion of Clean UP Laois Week, Tidy Towns Schemes, Anti-Litter Campaigns and delivery of national campaigns at local level.• Work in partnership with communities to promote Green Dog Walker campaign.	



Launch of The Big Scoop, anti dog-fouling campaign in association with Dogs Trust, Mountmellick Tidy Towns and St. Josephs' Girls' National School, 2018

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

- Do not litter and don't tolerate those who do. Put your own litter in a public litter bin. If a litter bin is not within sight when you need one, keep your litter until you see a litter bin or take your litter home with you.
- Keep the footpath / roadside outside your premises litter-free.
- Get involved with your local Tidy Towns group and Clean-Ups in your area.
- When you bring your dog for a walk in a public place (park or street), please clean up after them.
- Recycle responsibly. Laois County Council operates recycling centres at Kyletalesha, Portlaoise and Portarlington and 45 recycling bring banks around the county. Do not dispose of rubbish or leave bags or boxes at a bring bank. Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE Goods) are accepted free in Portlaoise and Portarlington recycling centres or the shop where you purchased the item.
- Use only authorised and permitted contractors to remove waste on your behalf. If you pay someone to collect your waste, you must ensure that they have a valid waste collection permit. If you pay for the waste disposal and it is later found illegally dumped, you are responsible for it.
- If you smoke, don't dispose of the cigarette butt on the ground, please put it into a bin.
- If you use chewing gum, please dispose of it responsibly into the nearest bin.

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

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

Objective 4: Provision of Waste facilities

Recycling Centres and Transfer Stations

Laois County Council, two civic amenity sites (Portlaoise and Portarlington), are open six and four days per week, respectively. They are currently operated on the Council's behalf by AES.

Waste Recycling Facilities

Portlaoise Recycling Centre

Kyletalesha Landfill

Portlaoise

Co. Laois

Phone: 057 8620653

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

Portarlington Recycling Centre

Lea Road

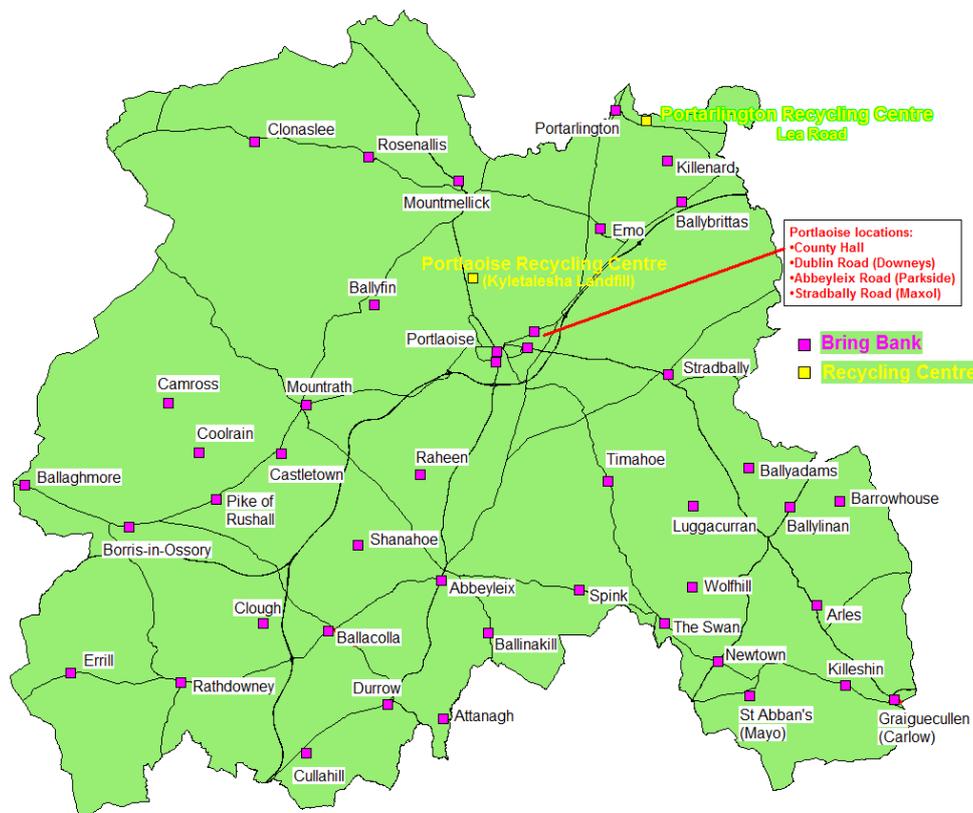
Portarlington

Co. Laois

Phone: 057 8642845

The county landfill located at Kyletalesha on the Mountmellick Road, Portlaoise now operates as a waste transfer station i.e. no waste is deposited on site. Waste brought to the facility is placed in a compactor and it is transported to another landfill site in a neighbouring county for disposal, when the compactor is full

Please note you must have a keyfob account in order to use the waste disposal facility at **Kyletalesha Landfill, Portlaoise**



Map of Laois Local Authorities Waste Facilities

Bring Bank Sites

There are 45 bring bank sites around the county. These unmanned facilities accept glass bottles and jars and aluminium drinks and steel food cans. Our busiest bring banks are serviced at least once a week with additional collections for seasonal surges (e.g. Christmas, Easter and sunny weather!)

Laois currently participate with Offaly, Longford and Westmeath County Councils in a shared service for bring bank servicing.

As with many local authorities around the country, there is an ongoing problem with contamination of bottle banks (with foodstuffs, ceramic and other non-glass materials, plastic bottles and bags and other inappropriate materials) and rubbish left outside the bottle banks by bring bank users. CCTV surveillance has been used successfully to deter, monitor and prosecute littering at bring banks.



Full details are available on www.laois.ie.

Objective 4	Provision of Waste facilities
Measures:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to provide, monitor and maintain bring bank recycling facilities for glass and aluminium cans.• Continue to look for additional Bring Bank site locations.• Promote the use of Portlaoise and Portarlington Recycling Centres.• Promote the use of the keyfob pay as you go system for Kyletalesha Landfill.• Install credit card payment terminal at Kyletalesha.• Provide litter bins if appropriate/possible taking into account Leave No Trace ethos• Develop a CCTV surveillance programme for bring banks - permanent and mobile cameras.	

Objective 5: Management of Litter

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

Objective 5:	Management of Litter
Measures:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively participate in the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System by conducting Litter Pollution and Litter Quantification surveys.• Actively engage with and send reports for other monitoring programmes – Gum Litter, Banking Protocol etc.• Actively participate in other monitoring projects which are facilitated by external agencies, e.g. IBAL.• Engage with Planning Section regarding event licences, e.g. Electric Picnic, Ploughing Championships, Durrow Scarecrow Festival etc. to ensure litter management is a top priority for all events.• Support community initiatives.	

4 Conclusion

Litter Pollution is a major threat to the health and aesthetic quality of our local environment. Everyone can make a year round commitment to help us deliver sustainable litter management activities in Co Laois. People can volunteer with their local Tidy Towns Group, they can put litter in its rightful place (the bin) or make a complaint when they see someone breaking the law.

The success of this plan depends on maintaining and strengthening already established partnerships and a change in the behaviour of those who continue to litter and to dispose of their waste in an irresponsible manner through education and enforcement.

Together we must illustrate the importance of enforcing relevant legislation and ensure that people understand that it is not ok to litter as it detracts from our beautiful location and creates a negative perception for the County.

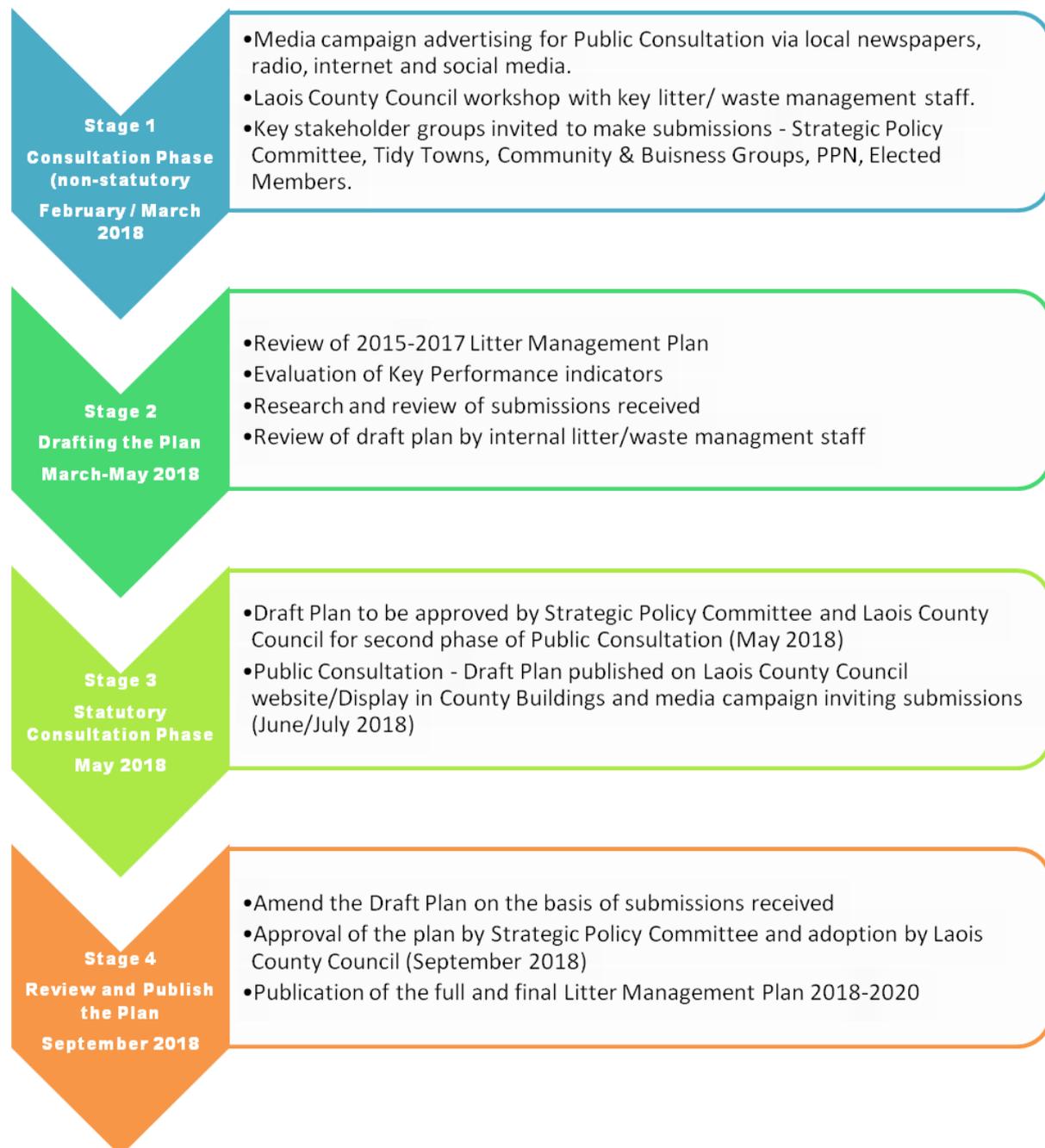
If Laois is considered the heart of the Midlands, then we must acknowledge that litter is clogging our arteries! Working together we can achieve a clean bill of health.



Cathaoirleach Padraig Fleming and Binji at the launch of Clean Up Laois Week 2018

Litter Management Plan Consultation

Laois County Council introduced an additional pre draft consultation phase for 2018, making the process a four stage approach, to encourage more debate.



Appendix 2

Stage 1 (non-statutory) Consultation Phase

Submission	Re	Response
Ray Harte, Portlaoise Men's Shed	Various issues – environmental awareness programmes, dog fouling.	Issues addressed in the Plan, or through Anti-Dumping Initiatives projects 2018.
Cllr. Aidan Mullins	Evidence of household disposal; Additional CCTV cameras	By-laws to be introduced regarding requirements of proof for waste disposal. LCC propose to purchase additional CCTV cameras.
Julia Booth, Secretary, Emo Tidy Towns	Uncovered trailers	Uncovered trailers can and are fined at present.
Erwin Cobbe	Pay to Use Units (PTUs) Waste Disposal Units	Paper being prepared by LCC.

Stage 2 Statutory Consultation Phase

How to report a complaint?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 4

Litter Management Plan 2018 – 2020 Key Performance Indicators

KP1: Policy Action: Design and deliver environmental awareness initiatives with a dedicated focus on litter management.	
Targets	Conduct environmental awareness campaigns
Expected Timeline	Annually for life of LMP
Indicator	No. of campaigns delivered
Responsibility	Laois County Council

KP2: Policy Action: To enforce all breaches of litter legislation as required.	
Targets	When and where breaches occur
Expected Timeline	Annually, as required
Indicator	All litter complaints investigated and 80% closed within 6 weeks and fines issued as appropriate
Responsibility	Laois County Council

KP3: Policy Action: Participate in monitoring programmes with partner agencies.	
Targets	Conduct monitoring programmes in line with partner agency requirements
Expected Timeline	Annually, as required
Indicator	Annual monitoring returns
Responsibility	Laois County Council and Partners

KP4: Policy Action: Provision of appropriate infrastructure	
Targets	Providing / servicing litter bins, bring banks, recycling centres
Expected Timeline	Annually for life of LMP
Indicator	Provision of infrastructure
Responsibility	Laois County Council

Litter Management Plan 2018 – 2020 Key Performance Indicators

KP5: Policy Action: Maintain, develop and integrate litter management practices into ongoing work of Laois County Council and county wide events 2018 – 2020	
Targets	Highlight obligations – LMP an LPA 1997, as amended
Expected Timeline	Annually for life of LMP
Indicator	Disseminate information regarding obligations
Responsibility	Laois County Council and Partners

KP6: Policy Action: Prepare an annual report on the progress of policy and the implementation of the Litter Management Plan 2018 - 2020	
Targets	Prepare annual report and distribute findings
Expected Timeline	End of Q1 annually 2018 - 2020
Indicator	Production of annual report
Responsibility	Laois County Council

Appendix 5 Useful contacts

Freephone Litter Hotline: 1800 323230

John Ging, Litter Warden 087 7988312

John Rogers, Litter Warden 087 9473159

Emily Doyle, Litter Warden 087 2339116

Laois County Council 057 8664000

Log an environmental complaint envcomplaints@laoiscoco.ie

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