

CHAPTER 10 INFRASTRUCTURE

AIM: To achieve a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system for the county and to protect, improve and extend water services and other enabling infrastructure in line with national, regional and local population and economic growth for the county

10.1 TRANSPORTATION

The timely provision of a full range of transportation services is critical if County Laois is to continue to develop as an attractive location for business and residential development. Achieving spatial balance by developing the potential of areas will depend on enhancing capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy and information between different places. The attractiveness of particular locations depends on their relative accessibility and connectivity which in turn depends on the quality and quantity of the transport infrastructure. Although Laois County Council is only directly responsible for the development of some transportation modes, the Council will continue to provide those elements of the transportation system which are within its remit and to facilitate the development of those elements provided by others.

10.1.1 *INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PLANNING*

Laois County Council recognises that the current trends in transportation are unsustainable, in particular the relentless increase in private car traffic. The Council is strongly committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel including public transport, walking and cycling, and the encouragement of modal change from private car use to these more sustainable alternatives. In planning for transport development, the Council will ensure that the needs of people with differing abilities are taken into account. The Council seeks to reduce the degree of commuting in the first instance by facilitating the creation of additional jobs within the County for the resident population.

The integration of good land use planning with transportation is fundamental to efficient and sustainable planning. For instance, a combination of urban design, land use patterns and transportation systems that promote walking and cycling will help create active, healthier and more liveable communities.

The Council will continue to provide for all components of the transportation system which are within its own remit and will encourage and facilitate the development of those other elements provided by external agencies, such as the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

10.1.2 *POLICY CONTEXT*

10.1.2.1 *The National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040*

The NPF places a strong emphasis on sustainable mobility with a particular focus on electrification of public transport fleets and use of electric vehicles and the transition to more sustainable modes of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking. In particular,

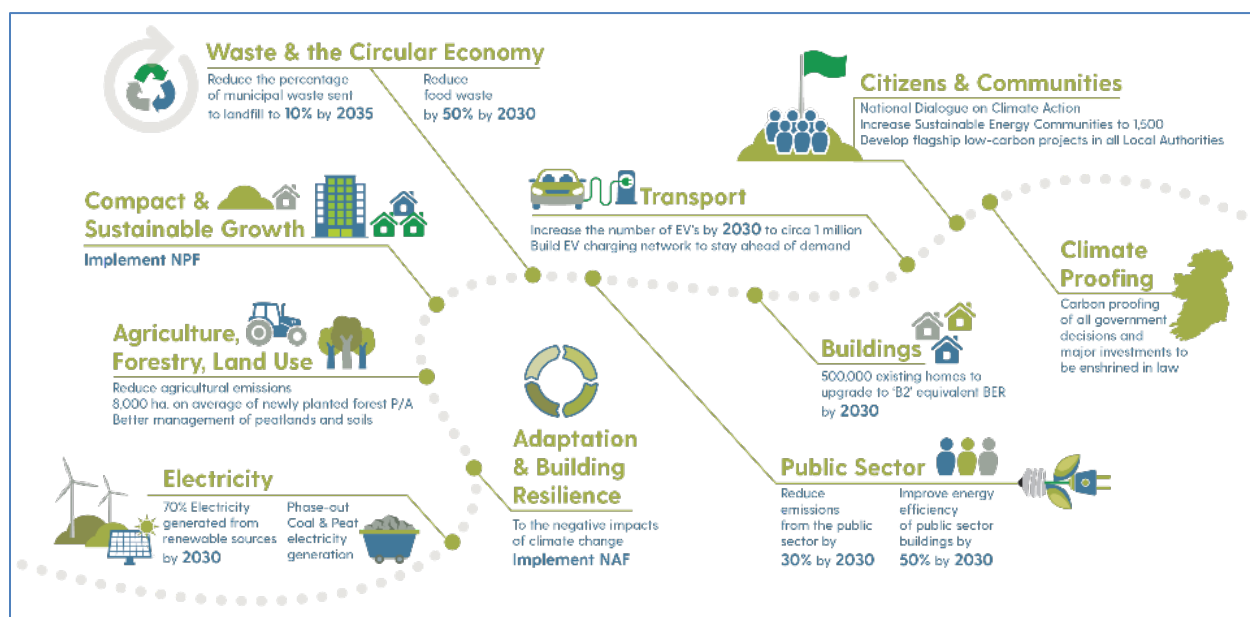
Enhanced Regional Accessibility (NSO 2), Sustainable Mobility (NSO 4) and Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society (NSO 8) apply to this section of the Plan.

10.1.2.2 *Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*

The RSES, in Chapters 7 Environment and Climate and Chapter 8 Connectivity supports sustainable and low carbon transport modes through a modal shift from carbon heavy to more sustainable transport mode and promoting walkable communities and the importance of sustainable greenway, blueway and peatway networks.

10.1.2.3 *Climate Action Plan 2019*

The Climate Action Plan identifies the nature and scale of the climate challenge and sets the course of action and carbon proof polices over the coming years to address climate change. This Plan clearly recognises that Ireland must significantly step up its commitments to tackle climate disruption. The leadership role both the Government and public bodies can play in taking early action on climate is fundamental to achieving our decarbonisation goals. The infographic below provides an overview of targets set.



10.1.2.4 *National Guidance*

The policy objectives of this Plan shall be informed by the following National and Regional guidance and policies:

- The National Climate Mitigation Plan and Climate Adaptation Framework
- Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021
- National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP)
- Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018
- Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

- Smarter Travel–A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020
- Smarter Travel - National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020
- Developing Resilience to Climate Change in the Irish Transport Sector
- National Cycle Manual
- Spatial Planning and National Roads-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2012)
- National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021
- *Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads (March 2011)*

Transportation Policy Objectives	
TRANS 1	Maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of Laois’s roads network and associated junctions in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG, (2012) and the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T) Regulations.
TRANS 2	Upgrade and improve the hierarchy of Laois’s road transportation infrastructure including reserving corridors for proposed routes, free of development, so as not to compromise future road schemes
TRANS 3	Co-operate with Transport Infrastructure Ireland [TII] in the upgrade of existing Interchange[s] on the National Routes where appropriate and to restrict development immediately adjacent to Interchange[s] to provide for the future enlargement of Interchange;
TRANS 4	Prevent inappropriate development on lands adjacent to the existing road network, which would adversely affect the safety, current and future capacity and function of national roads and having regard to possible future upgrades of the national roads and junctions;
TRANS 5	Prepare a Local Transport Plan for Portlaoise in compliance with RPO 8.6 of the RSES and Support the strategic vision of J17 National Enterprise Park Masterplan to deliver a strategic economic zone within Portlaoise;
TRANS 6	Discourage the proliferation of access points onto public roads, particularly in areas where the maximum speed limit applies or where road safety is of concern. The Council also encourages and promotes shared access points in all circumstances.
TRANS 7	Subject to availability of resources, provide for and carry out improvements to sections of local roads that are deficient in respect of realignment, structural condition or capacity, and to maintain that standard thereafter;
TRANS 8	Require development proposals accessing onto Laois’s roads network to comply with the Council’s road standards contained in the Road Design Section document titled Roads and Parking Standards (2007) and to any subsequent revisions thereto. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where developments are permitted in rural areas along National, Regional

	<p>and County Roads that they must conform to the minimum distance listed in Table 4.1 – Minimum Desired Building Lines and Fence Lines, of the Laois County Council Roads and Parking Standards (2007) guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In situations where there is an established building line, new houses, where appropriate, shall conform to the established building line. Building lines in developed areas will be determined having regard to the historic urban grain of the area and the need to provide pedestrian friendly streets with a sense of enclosure.
TRANS 9	Where the capacity, width, alignment or surface condition of the road are inadequate, development will not be favoured. Where new development would adversely impact on road drainage, development will not be permitted unless applicants agree proposals with the Council to improve the road.
TRANS 10	Work with the National Trails Office, Coillte, the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of transport infrastructure and facilities for walking and cycling.
TRANS 11	Integrate land use policies and transportation in a manner which reduces reliance on car based travel and promotes more sustainable transport choice and co-ordinates particular land uses with their accessibility requirements;
TRANS 12	Support sustainable travel in the tourism sector by the promotion of public transport use and by undertaking enhancements to overall accessibility thereby making the County easier for visitors to navigate. Integrate the County's transport and tourism strategies to promote increasingly sustainable travel patterns among visitors to the County. Support the construction of green routes/cycleways/pedestrian routes.
TRANS 13	Encourage transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and 'walkable communities' together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement.
TRANS 14	<p>To undertake transportation studies in the following towns. The purpose of Transportation Studies is to identify the transport strategy to address traffic, parking and active travel deficiencies in the existing network and make recommendations on same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portlaoise & Environs - Mountrath & Environs - Mountmellick & Environs - Durrrow & Environs - Abbeyleix & Environs - Stradbally & Environs - Portarlinton & Environs (Joint Study with Offaly Co Co to be explored) - Graiguecullen & Environs (Joint Study with Carlow Co Co to be explored)
TRANS 15	It is a Policy Objective that where projects for new roads or other linear projects,

	identified in Chapter 10 and Volume 2, are not already provided for by existing plans/programme or are not already permitted, that the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the Plan relating to sustainable mobility. A Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken where appropriate, for relevant new road infrastructure in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor Identification, Evaluation and Selection and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.
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Transportation Development Management Standard

DM TRANS 1	GENERAL In towns, villages and settlements new developments access arrangements shall have regard to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTS and DHPLG (2019) (DMURS) and TII Publication DN-GEO-03060
DM TRANS 2	SIGHTLINES Sightline requirements are determined by the Council having regard to Laois County Council Roads and Parking Standards (2007) guidelines (and any and in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. Factors including the type, speed limit and condition of the road shall be taken into consideration: Where sightlines are inadequate and would give rise to a traffic hazard, development will not be permitted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In cases where an access already exists with inadequate sightlines, it is Council policy to recommend the closing up of this entrance and to facilitate another entrance with adequate sightlines. • All applications for planning permission must clearly indicate the sightlines available at the proposed access within the boundary of the site.
DM TRANS 3	Proposals for residential developments near busy roads in urban areas may be required to show how it is proposed that impacts of noise are mitigated. A Noise Impact Assessment along with noise screening measures such as facade insulation and noise barriers should form part of proposals, as appropriate.
DM TRANS 4	The Council requires the submission of a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) as part of planning applications for larger developments in accordance with the NRA Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines May 2014 document. These guidelines advise that applicants should consult with the Transportation Department of the Council prior to submission of an application
DM TRANS 5	Where a development requires that the existing roads / footpaths and public lighting be improved / extended, or any other works carried out to facilitate a development, the developer may be required to provide these as a condition of planning permission.

10.1.3 ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE

A hierarchy of roads exists with the Plan area including sections of motorways, national roads, regional roads, local roads and urban roadways. There has been significant investment into the road infrastructure and therefore it is important to protect and maintain the carrying capacity of the road network within the county.

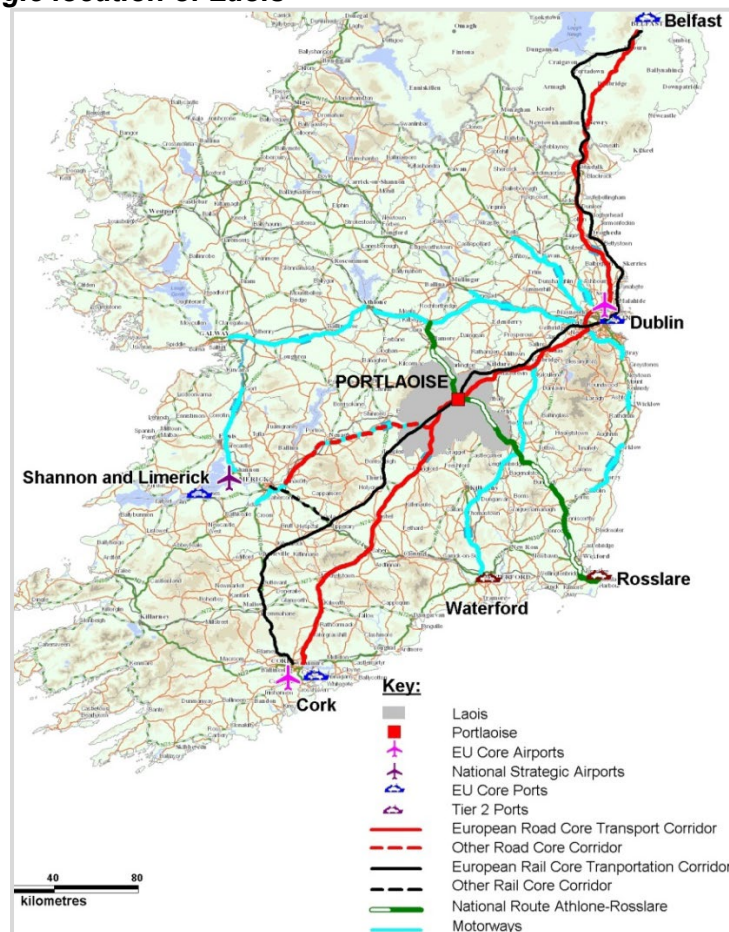
10.1.3.1 Motorway Network

County Laois occupies a strategic location on the National Road network with the M7, M8, N80, N77, N78, traversing the county. The primary purpose of the national road network is to provide strategic transport links between main centres of population and employment. The M7 and the M8 have been identified as part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

Motorway Policy Objective

TRANS 16	Prohibit development seeking access onto the Motorway network and associated junctions.
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Figure 10.1: Strategic location of Laois



10.1.3.2 National Routes

In terms of road transport, some of the country’s most significant sections of national route network traverse County Laois and important connectors of the eastern and southern ends of the County to the wider regional and national communications network. These include:

- N80 Rosslare–Carlow-Moate National Secondary Route.
- N77 linking Portlaoise to Kilkenny via Durrow and Ballyragget
- N78 from Athy to Castlecomer passing through Ballylynan and Newtown Doonane

National Routes Policy Objectives	
TRANS 17	Avoid the creation of any new direct access points from development or the generation of increased traffic from existing direct access/egress points to the national road network to which speed limits greater than 60kmph apply
TRANS 18	Facilitate a limited level of new accesses or the intensified use of existing accesses to the national road network on the approaches to or exit from urban centres that are subject to a speed limit zone between 50kmph and 60kmph otherwise known as the transition zone. Such accesses will be considered where they facilitate orderly urban development and would not result in a proliferation of such entrances, leading to a diminution in the role of these transitional zones. A Road Safety Audit, prepared in accordance with the <i>Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA, 2010)</i> , shall be submitted where appropriate
TRANS 19	Consider permitting access for replacement dwellings for persons who [or their families] own the original house and site for a minimum of 10 years [documentary evidence in this regard to be submitted] subject to the following provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original dwelling is in-situ and is habitable; • The cost of refurbishment of and/ or extension to the original dwelling is prohibitive; • The applicant complies with the provisions of the local need factor of the rural housing policy as outlined in Chapter 4 Housing Strategy, Section 4.6 of the Plan; • An alternative site with access onto a minor road is not available; • The proposed development can be accommodated without the creation of a specific traffic hazard; • Where possible an existing entrance is used; • Sightlines of 215m must be achieved within the site boundary only and not require any set back of adjacent boundaries on 3rd party lands; • The Councils road standards are fully met; • The site is of minimum size of 0.202 hectares [0.5 acres]; • A Site Suitability Assessment must be submitted

10.1.3.3 Regional Roads Network

The regional road network in the county is subdivided into Strategic Regional Roads and Regional Roads. In the case of strategic regional roads and regional roads, especially those

which have a high carrying capacity, the Council shall adopt a restrictive policy in relation to new development in the interests of traffic safety.

Strategic Regional Roads

There are 17 Strategic Regional Roads in County Laois linking the main county towns to the national routes and M7 and M8 motorways. These are shown in the table below.

Table 10.1: Strategic Regional Roads in County Laois

Road Name	Location
R419	Junction with R445 (Great Heath) to County Boundary (Portarlinton)
R420	Junction with R419 (Portarlinton) to Junction with R445 (Killinure)
R421	County Boundary (Ballynahown) to Junction with R422 (Coolagh Cross Rds)
R422	Junction with R419 (Coolagh Cross Roads) to Junction with R445 at New Inn
R423	Junction with R445 (Mountrath) to Junction with N80 (Derryclooney)
R425	Junction with N77 (Abbeyleix) to Junction with R445 (Rathbrennan)
R426	Junction with N80 (Portlaoise) to Junction with R430 at the Swan
R427	Junction with R425 (Cashel) to Junction with N80 (Stradbally Town)
R428	Junction with N80 (Stradbally) to County Boundary (Blackford)
R430	Junction with R445 (Mountrath) to County Boundary (Carlow)
R433	Junction with N77 (Abbeyleix) to County Boundary (Knockahaw)
R434	Junction with R445 (Sentryhill) to Junction with N77 (Durrow)
R435	Junction with R445 (Borris-in-Ossory) to County Boundary (Rossdaragh)
R445	County Boundary (Ballaghmore) to County Boundary (Killinure)
R639	Junction with N77 (Durrow) to Kilkenny County Boundary (Old Town)
R941	Junction with N77 (Knockmay) to Junction with N80 (Clonreher)

Strategic Regional Roads Policy Objectives	
TRANS 20	Prohibit unnecessary access onto strategic regional routes in areas where speed limits in excess of 50kmph applies.
TRANS 21	Consider permitting access onto a Strategic Regional Road for (1) single dwellings for full time farmers and/or their children (2) an established farm activity and (3) developments of a commercial nature, subject to the following provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific nature of development • An alternative site with access onto a minor road is not available; • Sightlines of 180m must be achieved within the site boundary only and

	<p>not require any set back of adjacent boundaries on 3rd party lands;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed development can be accommodated without the creation of a specific traffic hazard; • Where possible an existing entrance is used; • The Councils road standards are fully met.
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Regional Roads

There are 2 Regional Roads in County Laois linking the main county towns. These are shown in the table below. The remaining regional roadways that are not listed in Table 16 are classified as standard regional roadways. The Council shall also adopt a restrictive approach in relation to new development along these roadways also.

Table 10.2: Regional Roads

Road Name	Location
R440	Junction with R423 (Ballyfin Rd) to Offaly County Boundary (Baunreagh)
R432	Junction with Ballinakill Rd to Kilkenny County Boundary (Kilcronan)

Regional Roads Policy Objectives	
TRANS 22	Restrict development requiring access onto Regional Roads where speed limits in excess of 50kmph apply.
TRANS 23	<p>Consider permitting access onto a Regional Road for (1) single dwellings for full time farmers and/or their children (2) established farm activity and (3) developments of a commercial nature, subject to the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific nature of development • An alternative site with access onto a minor road is not available; • Sightlines of 160m must be achieved within the site boundary only and not require any set back of adjacent boundaries on 3rd party lands; • The proposed development can be accommodated without the creation of a specific traffic hazard; • Where possible an existing entrance is used; • The Councils road standards are fully met

10.1.3.4 County Roads and Urban Roads/Streets

County roads (or local roads) form the bulk of the road network in County Laois (a total of 1,718 km) and serve an important economic role because of the dispersed nature of the population in the county. Urban roads and streets are located in towns and villages and provide essential access from residential areas to retail streets, commercial lands and amenity areas. Laois County Council has responsibility for the carrying out of maintenance and improvement works on these roads, financed from their own resources and supplemented by state grants. Sight distance requirements for the above roads are outlined in the Council's Road Design Section document titled *Roads and Parking Standards (2007) or any proceeding document thereafter*.

Local Roads Policy Objectives

TRANS 24	<p>Ensure that the Council’s own development and those of other developers and agencies has regard to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS and DHPLG, 2019). Proposals shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users ahead of the needs of private car drivers; • Seek to create more attractive places on roads/streets which communities can understand and enjoy; • Seek to ensure that the design of the road/street is influenced by its function and the contexts of the places that road/street passes through, and that permeable and legible street networks are promoted; • Have regard to the detailed advice and standards within in the Manual including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speed limits and traffic and congestion management; ○ Street landscaping and active street edges; ○ Control of traffic noise and pollution, Signage and line marking; ○ Street furniture and lighting, Material and finishes; ○ Historical contexts; ○ Pedestrianised and shared surface areas.
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10.1.3.5 Laois County Council Priority Road Projects

Priority Roads Projects Policy Objectives

TRANS 25	<p>Facilitate the following priority road projects during the lifetime of the Plan period 2021 -2027:</p> <p><u>Key Town – Portlaoise</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. M7 Junction 17 Off Ramp at Togher National Enterprise Park, Portlaoise; ii. Togher, Portlaoise Link Road Phase 2; iii. N80 Mountmellick Road , Portlaoise Improvements; iv. R445 Mountrath Road, Portlaoise Improvements; <p><u>Key Town – Graiguecullen</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Carlow Northern Relief Road Extension; <p><u>Self-Sustaining Growth Town – Portarlington</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Portarlington Relief Road; <p><u>County Wide roads projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Rathdowney Traffic Improvements Phase 2 ii. M7/M8 Interconnector iii. Improvements to the N80 including Mountmellick By-pass
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Improvements to N77 v. Improvements to N78 vi. Interurban Cycle facilities on former National Routes; vii. Ongoing Bridge Maintenance.
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10.1.4 GUIDANCE ON ROAD ASSESSMENT

10.1.4.1 Traffic and Transport Assessments

Developers will be required to undertake Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) for development proposals, which may generate significant additional trips/travel, including road traffic, with potentially significant implications for national and non-national roads. TTAs are used to assess the transport impacts of a proposed development, incorporating any subsequent measures necessary to ensure roads and junctions and other transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the development remain fit for purpose and encourage a shift towards sustainable travel modes. Thresholds for TTAs are contained within the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2014. The TTA should also address urban design impacts of proposed public and private transport proposals and also deal with delivery and monitoring regimes for various aspects.

10.1.4.2 Road Safety Audits

Road Safety Audits are generally required when a development requires a new access to a national road or significant changes to an existing access. Guidance for the preparation of road safety audits is included in the NRA [TII] Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

10.1.4.3 Mobility Plans

Mobility management plans/travel plans are proposals which will minimise the impact of the traffic generated by their development. They include mitigation measures which will take account of the findings of a Traffic & Transport Assessment (TTA). They bring together transportation requirements; employers, staff and site management issues in a coordinated manner. Measures that should be included are integration with public transport, promotion of car sharing/pooling, parking pricing and control and the encouragement of cycling and walking by the provision of cycling and walking routes and secure cycle parking. The NTA document “Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans – Guidance for Local Authorities” also provides guidance on proposals to encourage employees to walking, cycling or carpool to the workplace.

Road Assessment Policy Objectives	
TRANS 26	Require the submission of a Traffic and Transport Assessment including mobility management plans in accordance with the guidelines in the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2014, for developments with the potential to create significant additional demands on the traffic network by virtue of the nature of their activity, the number of employees, their location or a combination of these factors and for significant developments affecting the national and non-national road network;
TRANS 27	Require a Road Safety Audit for developments that require a new access to a

	national road or significant changes to an existing access in accordance with the guidance included in the NRA [TII] Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.
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10.1.5 CAR PARKING AND CYCLE PARKING

Car parking requirements are to comply with standards contained in Table 10.3 (see below) and the following Policy Objectives and Development Management Standards.

Table 10.3: Land Use Parking Space Requirements

Land Use	Parking standard requirement
Houses	2 per Dwelling ¹
Apartments/Flats	1.26 - 2 per Unit
Retail	1 per 26m ² gross floor space
Offices	1 per 20m ² gross floor space
Financial Institutions	1 per 20 m ² gross floor space
Retail warehousing	1 per 36 m ² gross floor space
Cash and Carry Outlets	2 per 90 m ² plus adequate loading/unloading and circulation facilities
Industry	1 per 60 m ² gross floor space or 1 per 4no. employees, whichever is greater
Warehousing	1 per 100 m ² gross floor space or 1 space per 4no. employees, whichever is greater
Hotels, B&B's, Guesthouses*	1 space per bedroom
Bars and Lounges*	1 per 7 m ² gross floor space within speed limit 2 per 7 m ² gross floor space outside speed limit
Dance Areas, Dance Halls and Function Rooms	1 per 3 m ² gross floor space
Restaurants	1 per table
Take away	6 per unit
Commercial Garage	1 per 30 m ²
Service Station	1 per 300 m ² gross floor space + shop requirements
Showrooms	1 per 100 m ² gross floor space+ shop requirements
Hospitals	1 per bed
Nursing homes	1 per 2 bedrooms
Surgeries/Clinics	2 per consulting room
Funeral home	1 per 10 m ² gross floor space
Childcare/crèche/ montessori	1 per employee + 0.26 per child

¹ It is encouraged that parking spaces must be provided on site of the dwelling.

Schools	2 per classroom plus sufficient bus circulation and off-loading facilities to cater for school-going population
Community Centre/Sports Club	1 per 14 m ² gross floor space or 2 per 90 m ² gross floor space plus 2% whichever is greater
Golf and Pitch and Putt Courses	2 per hole
Golf Driving Range	1 per bay
Bowling Alley*	1 per lane
Theatre/ Cinema/Stadia/Churches*	1 per 6 seats
Non-Retail Service Outlet e.g. Hairdressers, Bookmakers etc	3 per 100m ² gross floor area

*** NOTE:**

- *Bars and lounges, dancing areas, accommodation and function rooms to be calculated separately. Any development type not listed above shall be determined by the Planning Authority.*
- *Where settlements are covered by a Local Area Plan or Village Policy Statement, the provision for parking shall comply with the relevant document.*

Parking Policy Objectives	
TRANS 28	<p>Ensure that the provision of adequate parking facilities, including disabled parking, shall form part of the assessment of any application for development in accordance with the standards contained in Table 10.3: Land Use Parking Space Requirements.</p> <p>Where it is not possible to provide parking for the proposed development within the site, charges will be levied for parking provided on street or by the Local Authority in accordance with an approved Development Contribution Scheme.</p> <p>A relaxation of car parking requirement may be considered where a development is located in town centre locations, in close proximity to public transport or for certain types of housing developments such as assisted living units.</p>
TRANS 29	<p>Ensure that in the cases of certain activities where it can be demonstrated to the Planning Authority that there is a clear time demarcation between uses, dual use of parking spaces may be permitted. Such assessments shall be determined on a site by site basis and according to their merits;</p>
TRANS 30	<p>Ensure adequate space shall be made for the servicing of the facility, including loading and unloading of vehicles, which should be provided for within the site curtilage and should not interfere with the operation of adjacent public thoroughfares;</p>

TRANS 31	Ensure that cycle Parking will normally be required in development schemes and the Council shall promote and encourage the provision of cycle spaces in public car-parks and appropriate locations in towns and villages throughout the county. Where appropriate, cycle spaces shall be provided in prominent and secure locations convenient to building entrances;
TRANS 32	Ensure that Age Friendly Parking spaces are provided in main towns, near strategic areas e.g. Post office, credit union, doctors' surgery, civic buildings, etc.

Parking Development Management Standard

DM TRANS 6	<p>DISABLED PARKING</p> <p>Disabled Parking will be calculated based on the following:</p> <p><u>Buildings not normally visited by the public:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of one space of appropriate dimensions in every 26 standard spaces, up to the first 100 spaces, thereafter, one space per 100 standard spaces or part thereof. <p><u>Shops and buildings with public access:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum one space of appropriate dimensions in the first 26 standard spaces, minimum 3 in 26-60 standard spaces, five in 60-100 standard spaces and additional three per every 100 standard spaces in excess thereof. <p>Spaces shall be a minimum of 3.75m wide and 5m long and clearly marked with a highly visible symbol. Spaces should be located at the nearest point possible to the entrance to the facility served.</p>
DM TRANS 7	<p>PARKING IN FRONT GARDENS</p> <p>The cumulative effect of removal of front garden walls and railings damages the appearance of suburban streets and roads. Consequently, proposals for off street parking need to be balanced against loss of amenity. Where permitted, "drive-ins" should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not have outward opening gates; • Have a vehicular entrance of generally not less than 4m; • Have an area of hard standing (parking space of 2.5m x 5m); • Retain the balance as garden; • Have gates, walls or railings.
DM TRANS 8	<p>CAR PARKING DIMENSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking bay: 5m x 2.5m • Loading bay: 6m x 3m • Circulation aisles: 6m wide

DM TRANS 9	<p>CAR PARKS</p> <p>Surface car parks shall be designed to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid an oppressive effect on the public realm and to provide for pedestrian mobility; • Create a pleasant environment through the use of soft landscaping including tree planting and planter boxes within large car parking areas, variation in the choice of surfacing material and the delineation of pedestrian routes; • Ensure disabled parking to be located as close to the destination entrance as possible and highlighted by way of signage and colour variation. 																
DM TRANS 11	<p>CYCLE PARKING</p> <p>The following table gives guidance on the minimum number of cycle parking which should be provided at new developments.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 774 776 999">Apartment developments</td> <td data-bbox="776 774 1317 999"> <p>2 private secure spaces per 100 sq. m (design should not require bicycle access via living area)</p> <p>1 visitor bicycle space per two housing unit</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 999 776 1163">Offices</td> <td data-bbox="776 999 1317 1163">10% of employee numbers, (subject to a minimum of 10 bicycle places or one bike space for every car space, whoever is the greater)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1163 776 1352">Schools</td> <td data-bbox="776 1163 1317 1352"> <p>10% of pupil registration numbers, minimum 10 places</p> <p>Consider separate teacher/employee parking</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1352 776 1430">Other developments</td> <td data-bbox="776 1352 1317 1430">1 bike space for every car space</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1430 776 1493">Shops</td> <td data-bbox="776 1430 1317 1493">1 space for every 100 sq. m</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1493 776 1625">Public transport pick-up points (rail, bus)</td> <td data-bbox="776 1493 1317 1625">205% of daily boarders at that point/station, subject to minimum of 10 bicycle places</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1625 776 1724">Off- street parking (incl. Multi-storey)</td> <td data-bbox="776 1625 1317 1724">10% of total car spaces, subject to a minimum of 50 spaces</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="412 1724 776 1778">Events</td> <td data-bbox="776 1724 1317 1778">5% of forecast attendees</td> </tr> </table>	Apartment developments	<p>2 private secure spaces per 100 sq. m (design should not require bicycle access via living area)</p> <p>1 visitor bicycle space per two housing unit</p>	Offices	10% of employee numbers, (subject to a minimum of 10 bicycle places or one bike space for every car space, whoever is the greater)	Schools	<p>10% of pupil registration numbers, minimum 10 places</p> <p>Consider separate teacher/employee parking</p>	Other developments	1 bike space for every car space	Shops	1 space for every 100 sq. m	Public transport pick-up points (rail, bus)	205% of daily boarders at that point/station, subject to minimum of 10 bicycle places	Off- street parking (incl. Multi-storey)	10% of total car spaces, subject to a minimum of 50 spaces	Events	5% of forecast attendees
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Events	5% of forecast attendees																

10.1.6 ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV)

In 2008, the Government launched an Electric Transport Programme with a target that 10 percent of the national road transport fleet be electrically powered by 2020. Most recently the Climate Action Plan set an ambitious target of achieving 100% or 950,000 of all new cars and vans to be EVs by 2030. Developing the infrastructure for alternatively fuelled vehicles will be a vital step in encouraging consumers to make more environmentally friendly transport choices. In 2020, there was a total of 18 electric charging points registered throughout the County, 10 located in Portlaoise, 2 located in Mountmellick and 6 located in Portarlington. It shall be the responsibility of the companies supplying the EV points to maintain and update the equipment to the current standards.

Electric Vehicle Policy Objectives	
TRANS 33	Support the growth of Electric Vehicles with support infrastructure, through a roll-out of additional electric charging points in collaboration with relevant agencies at appropriate locations, both on street and in new developments.
TRANS 34	All developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery-operated cars at a rate of up to 10% of the total car parking spaces. The remainder of the parking spaces should be constructed so as to be capable of accommodating future charging points, as required.
TRANS 35	New residential development should accommodate at least one car parking space equipped with an EV charging points for every ten car parking spaces being provided for the associated development.

10.1.7 PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

Government policy, as set out in the publications “*Smarter Travel – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*” and the “*National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020*”, clearly places an emphasis on walking and cycling as alternatives to vehicular transport which reduces greenhouse gas emissions, noise and pollution. The National Cycle Policy Framework states that by 2020, 10% of journeys should be by bicycle.

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets [DTTS and DHPLG, 2019] advocates assigning higher priority to pedestrian and cycling without unduly compromising vehicular movement. A Walking and Cycling Strategy was undertaken during the last plan period for County Laois.

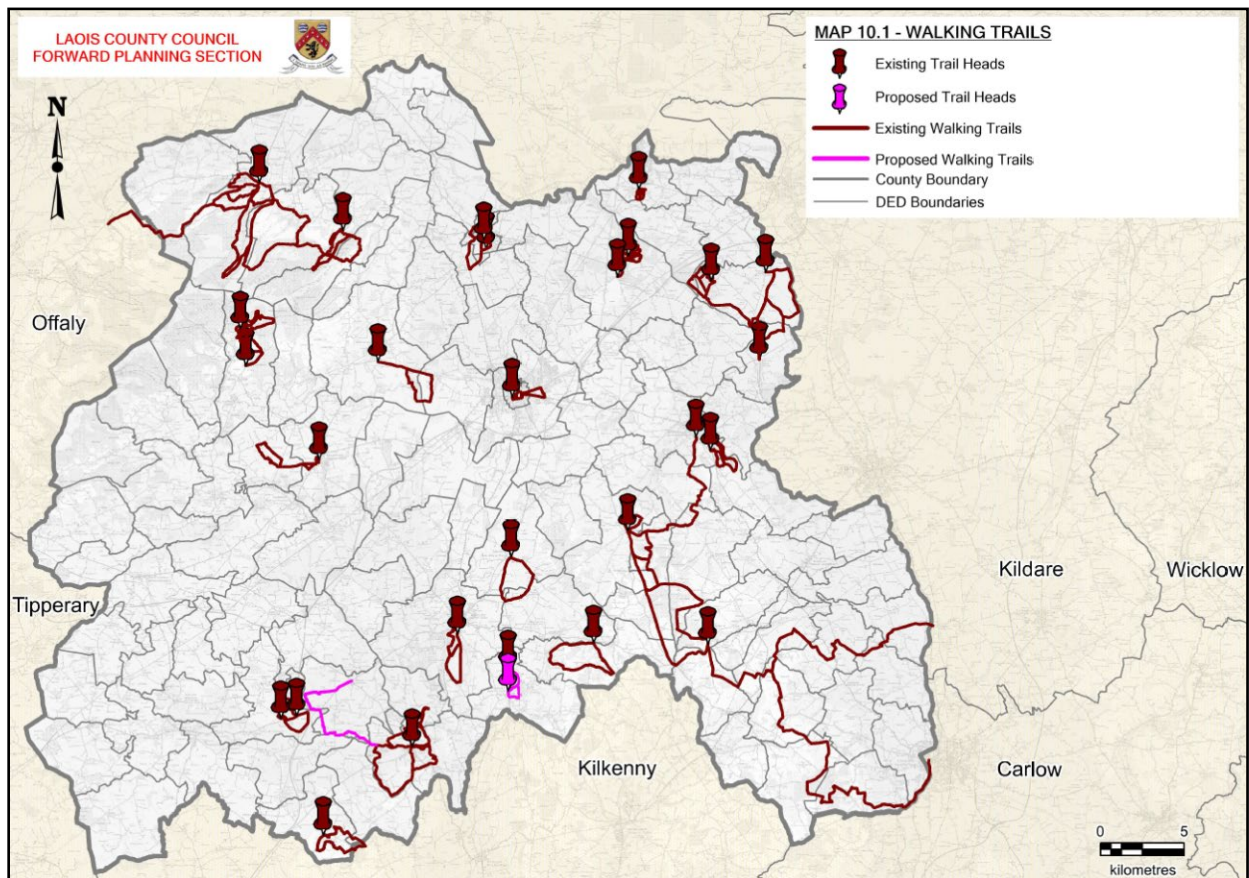
10.1.7.1 Greenways

Ireland has significantly invested in developing a network of strategic greenways across the Country. Although Laois has yet to secure a designated greenway, the feasibility of developing a 24km greenway along a dismantled railway line on privately-held lands between Mountmellick,

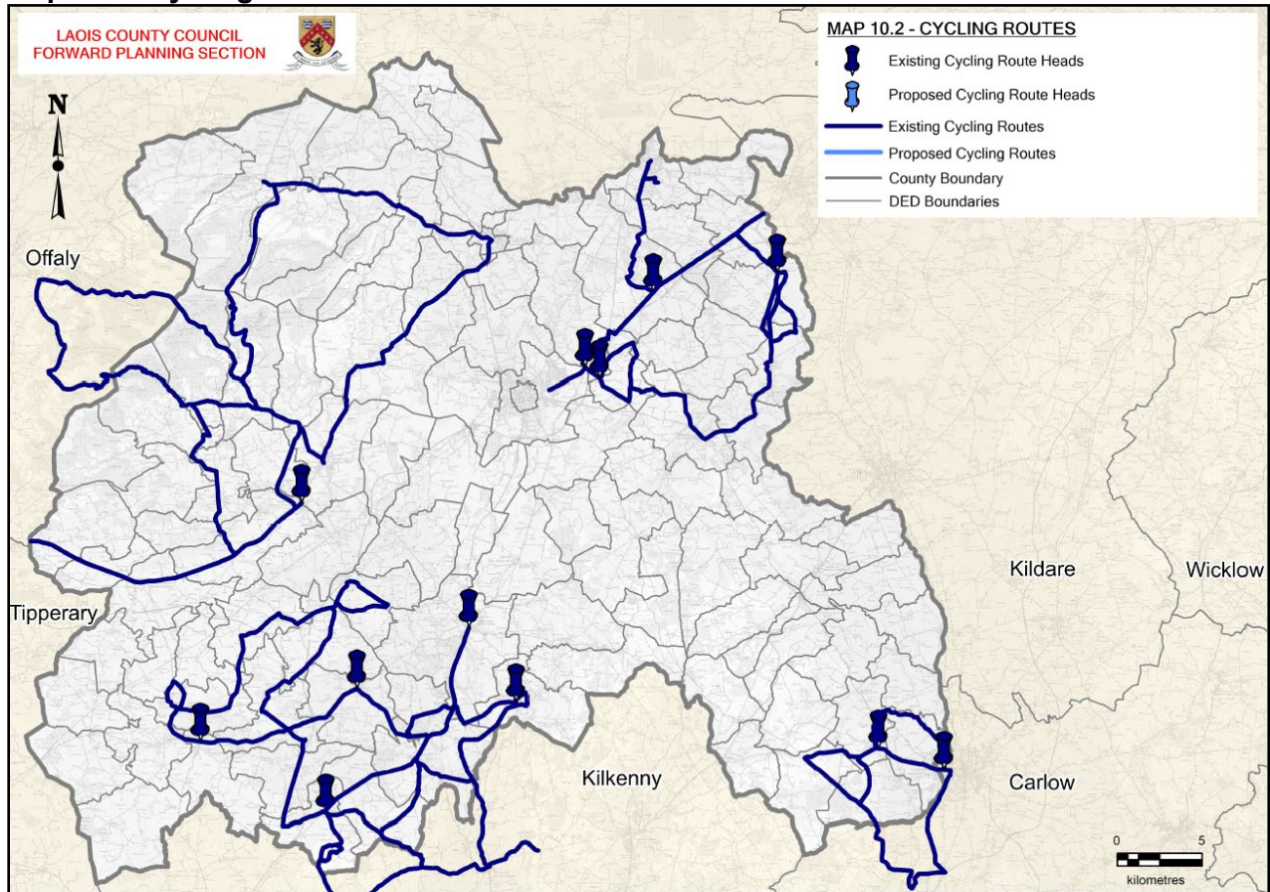
Portlaoise and Abbeyleix and integrate into a wider network of off-road trails in Counties Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny and Offaly is being considered.

The Council recognises the numerous benefits arising of **providing greenways such as a safe** place to walk and cycle away from traffic, a safe commuting route to school and work and the value of healthy exercise. There is also an economic benefit and the creation of jobs from cycle hire to service jobs in the food and construction sectors.

Map 10.1: Walking Trails



Map 10.2: Cycling Routes



Pedestrian and Cyclist Policy Objectives

TRANS 36	Encourage walking and cycling through the provision of the necessary infrastructure and also provide a mix of land uses which generate short trip distances to combat sedentary transport patterns. All new development proposals shall be required to provide for well integrated pedestrian and cycling networks.
TRANS 37	Support the installation of infrastructure measures (for example new/wider pavements, road crossings and cycle parking facilities), retrofitted if necessary, which facilitates, and encourages safe walking and cycling;
TRANS 38	Promote cycling and pedestrian friendly development layouts, provide facilities at public transport nodes, towns and villages, plan for and make provision for the integration of cyclist and pedestrian needs when considering new development proposals to promote Laois as a walking and cycling destination
TRANS 39	Investigate the possibility of developing and utilising existing abandoned road/ rail

	infrastructure for the purposes of walking and cycling.
TRANS 40	<p>Support the principle of delivering a cycling link between the towns of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullamore – Mountmellick • Mountmellick - Portlaoise • Portlaoise - Stradbally • Stradbally - Graiguecullen/Carlow • Routing any link away from the N80 and tying into the Barrow Way <p>Seek the establishment of cycle links between the towns of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portlaoise, Kildare Town, Newbridge and Naas • Portlaoise and Athy • Portlaoise and Kilkenny via Abbeyleix and Durrow; <p>Support the development of on-road cycle lanes to link towns and villages located along the R445 & R639 and if permitted proceed with works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portlaoise – Monasterevin • Borris-in-Ossory – Roscrea • Durrow – Cullahill;
TRANS 41	Support the development of and secure funding for a Greenway along a dismantled railway line on between Mountmellick, Portlaoise and Abbeyleix.

Barrow Blueway Policy Objectives	
TRANS 42	Promote the Barrow Blueway and surrounding area as an Activity Hub in collaboration with relevant stakeholders
TRANS 43	Designate on-road cycling trails to link the Barrow Navigation with Portlaoise, Stradbally and Portarlinton and to link the Barrow Navigation with the Killeshin Plateau. Trails to include points of interest such as Emo Court, the Rock of Dunamaise, Killeshin Romanesque Doorway and the Dancing Boards viewing point

Slieve Bloom Walking and Cycling Activity Hub Policy Objectives	
TRANS 44	Investigate the feasibility of developing a National Scale Centre for Off-Road Mountain-Biking in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, subject to planning permission & the Habitats' and Birds Directives;
TRANS 45	Investigate the feasibility of designating and promoting the Slieve Blooms as a Walking and Cycling Activity Hub

TRANS 46	Continue to audit, maintain and promote walking trails and walking events in the Slieve Blooms, subject to planning permission & the Habitats' and Birds Directives
TRANS 47	Designate the following graded on-road cycling trails in the Slieve Blooms; install related signage and improve road surfaces along these trails, as resources allow; produce trail maps and market the trails , subject to the Habitats' and Birds Directives; H1. Cut Cycle Climb H2. Wolftrap Cycle Climb H3. Glendine Cycle Climb H4. Mountrath-Clonaslee Trail H5. Camross Coolrain Trail H6. Castletown Mountrath Trail

South Laois Walking and Cycling Hub Policy Objectives

TRANS 48	Designate and promote South Laois as an Activity Hub
TRANS 49	Support ancillary or complementary recreational uses in the area, such as the establishment of canoe trails, bridle trails and angling
TRANS 50	Develop on-road cycle trail with a Rathdowney Trailhead to facilitate sporting and general cycling as well as link points of interest including Donaghmore Workhouse and Museum, Aghaboe Abbey, views of Gortnaclea Castle, Clough Village, Grantstown Lake and River Erkina
TRANS 51	Establish a new Woodenbridge Walking Trail linking Durrow and Ballacolla, subject to the Habitats' Directive
TRANS 52	Promote the physical and health benefits of walking, for example through Get Into Walking Workshops, the Annual Laois Walks Festival and other community /stakeholder organised walking events in Laois
TRANS 53	Foster the development of initiatives such as walking buses to serve schools and continue the Green Schools Programme, cyclist safety and cycling to school during schools-based Road Safety Workshops
TRANS 54	Foster the development of additional walking routes with trailheads in or close to Laois towns and villages, using National Trails Office toolkits, where an under-provision of walking trails exists, for example in Rathdowney and Borris-in-Ossory
TRANS 55	Encourage the provision of facilities to support commuting by bike by large employers, such as workplace shower rooms and lockers via workplace workshops
TRANS 56	Support the designation of forest cycling areas in Laois such as at cycle club trails at Durrow, Cullenagh, Fossy and Cullahill Mountain

10.1.8 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Key public transport corridors exist within County Laois. It is the aim of Laois County Council to facilitate a modal shift in transportation from car based modes to more sustainable forms of integrated public transport. In order to ensure developments are sustainable, land use and transportation planning (including non-motorised modes) has to be coordinated and integrated. Future development layouts should be designed to reduce trip generation, especially by cars. Laois County Council seeks to reduce car dependency and promote a balanced transportation strategy. This strategy shall combine and connect the Bus & Rail connectivity hubs. A proposed bus route within the town of Portlaoise is currently at design stage and is being considered to provide interconnection between the Bus route and Portlaoise Train Station.

10.1.8.1 Rail

County Laois is well served by a number of mainline and commuter train services. Mainline infrastructure consists of the main Dublin/Cork line with stations at Portarlington, Portlaoise and Ballybrophy. The Galway/Westport line via Athlone branches off at Portarlington and at Ballybrophy there is a branch line to Limerick via Nenagh. In addition, there are extensive daily commuter services between Portlaoise and Portarlington and Dublin which have played a central role in the residential expansion of these towns. Proposals for additional car and cycle parking at train stations within the County will be delivered during this plan period – permission has been granted for an additional 90 approx spaces at Portlaoise and further plans for Ballybrophy are being considered.

Recent roll-out of rail related infrastructure in the County includes provision of car parking facilities at Portarlington and Portlaoise stations and the development of a national train service depot located at J17 (Togher), Portlaoise.

Further opportunities exist to develop a light rail link between the main line service at Portlaoise and the J17 National Enterprise Park in order to develop a large inter modal facility. Laois County Council will fully encourage and facilitate the provision of bus, cycle and pedestrian facilities and linkages in the vicinity of rail stations to support the Smarter Travel 2009-2020 policy.

10.1.8.2 Bus

Bus Éireann operates daily mainline services to and from the main population centres of County Laois. Intra-regional services are provided to Limerick, Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Tullamore and Athlone. This level of national and regional service is augmented by a number of private operators with dedicated student orientated services to third level colleges in Athlone and Carlow. Aircoach runs a direct service from Cork to Dublin Airport with collection points in Portlaoise.

At a more local, rural level, the National Transport Authority funded Rural Transport Programme provides Local Link Laois Offaly aimed at addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services. This service provides door to door and semi-fixed route services, mainly in the west of the County, connecting these outlying rural areas to Portlaoise and other large towns in the County such as Mountmellick, Borris-in-Ossory, Rathdowney, Ballacolla, Durrow, Abbeyleix and Ballyroan. The service also provides destinations outside of the County to Tullamore, Carlow, Athlone and Roscrea. Other bus services are run by the Department of Education and the Health Service Executive in relation to their own functions.

Public Transport Policy Objectives	
TRANS 57	Support the maintenance and enhancement of rail infrastructure and associated facilities in County Laois, particularly the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Examination of options for how to increase the capacity of the Dublin to Galway line; b) Develop a light rail link between the main line service at Portlaoise and the J17 National Enterprise Park in order to develop a large inter modal facility; c) Facilitate the development of additional car, coach and cycle parking at the train stations within the County – Portarlinton, Portlaoise and ballybrophy;
TRANS 58	Support provision of additional rail links within the midlands region or other regions adjoining County Laois;
TRANS 59	Encourage co-ordination by providers to promote linked up services enabling complete coverage of the county independent of private vehicular transport and promote the provision of appropriately sited and designed facilities, bus shelters and bus lanes which facilitate increased public transport usage;
TRANS 60	Facilitate and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect, as required, lands necessary for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations or the provision of new railway stations throughout the County;
TRANS 61	Support the provision of bus services, connecting key towns in Laois with Dublin, Dublin Airport, Kilkenny, Carlow, Roscrea, Tullamore and other towns
TRANS 62	Support the Rural Transport Programme and other rural transport providers to facilitate and promote sustainable options for rural transport given the increased running costs
TRANS 63	Support the provision of a Park and ride facility at Junction 17 to encourage sustainable transport measures and facilitate a strategic park and ride link to public transport facilities within Portlaoise and links to other destinations including Dublin City & Dublin Airport.

10.2 SURFACE WATER, DRAINAGE AND FLOODING

10.2.1 SURFACE WATER & DRAINAGE

A major by-product of development in both urban and rural areas in County Laois is surface and storm water run-off. The management of surface and storm water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in the storm water network, rivers and streams in the county's towns, villages and rural areas. The Council will require compliance with best practice guidance for the collection, reuse, treatment and disposal of surface waters for all future development proposals.

10.2.1.1 Sustainable Drainage Systems

Sustainable Drainage Systems, commonly known as SuDS is an approach that seeks to manage the water as close as possible to its origin by various engineering solutions that replicate natural drainage processes, before it enters the watercourse. The incorporation of SuDS techniques allows surface water to be either infiltrated or conveyed more slowly to water courses using porous surface treatments, ponds, swales, filter drains or other installations and to minimise the risk of flooding and contamination and to protect environmental and water resources. SuDS provide an integrated approach which addresses water quantity, water quality, and helps to incorporate climate mitigation measures into development.

Surface Water and Drainage Policy Objectives	
SWD 1	Support in conjunction with Irish Water the improvement of storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.
SWD 2	Implement policies contained in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDS) in relation to SUDS and climate change.
SWD 3	Ensure new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure which meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, associated River Basin Management Plans and CFRAM Management Plans.
SWD 4	Require that planning applications are accompanied by a comprehensive SUDS assessment that addresses run-off quantity, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality.
SWD 5	Ensure that in public and private developments in urban areas, both within developments and within the public realm, seek to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.
SWD 6	Ensure appropriate maintenance of surface water drainage infrastructure to avoid flood risk.
SWD 7	Ensure that all storm water generated in a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved storm water system;
SWD 8	Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and to incorporate design solutions that provide for collection and recycling of surface water in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as recommended in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009) and Laois County Council’s Roads and Drainage Standards, or as amended.

Sustainable Drainage Systems Development Management Standard

DM SWD 1

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Detailed proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be submitted which demonstrate that the development would not result in surface water discharges affecting neighbouring lands without agreement and/or the public road.

The following should be taken into consideration:

- 1) Store rainwater for later use (rainwater harvesting);
- 2) Use infiltration techniques such as porous hard surfaces, soft landscaping and green roofs;
- 3) Attenuate rainwater in ponds, swales or open water features for gradual release;
- 4) Attenuate rainwater by storing in tanks or sealed water features for gradual release;
- 5) Discharge into storm water collection system or watercourse (subject to license) having regard to capacity and quality of discharge;

Soakaways are suitable for single family dwelling houses but are not suitable for urban areas.

10.2.2 FLOODING RISK MANAGEMENT

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body responsible for the coordination and implementation of Government policy on the management of flood risk in Ireland. The EU Floods Directive and the National Flood Policy Review Report (2004) set the parameters for flood management in Ireland. The National Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme (CFRAM) commenced in 2011 and is the principal response to EU Flood Directive on the assessment and management of flood risk. The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG and OPW (2009) addresses flood risk management within the planning system and requires all County Development Plans and Local Area Plans to be in accordance with these guidelines.

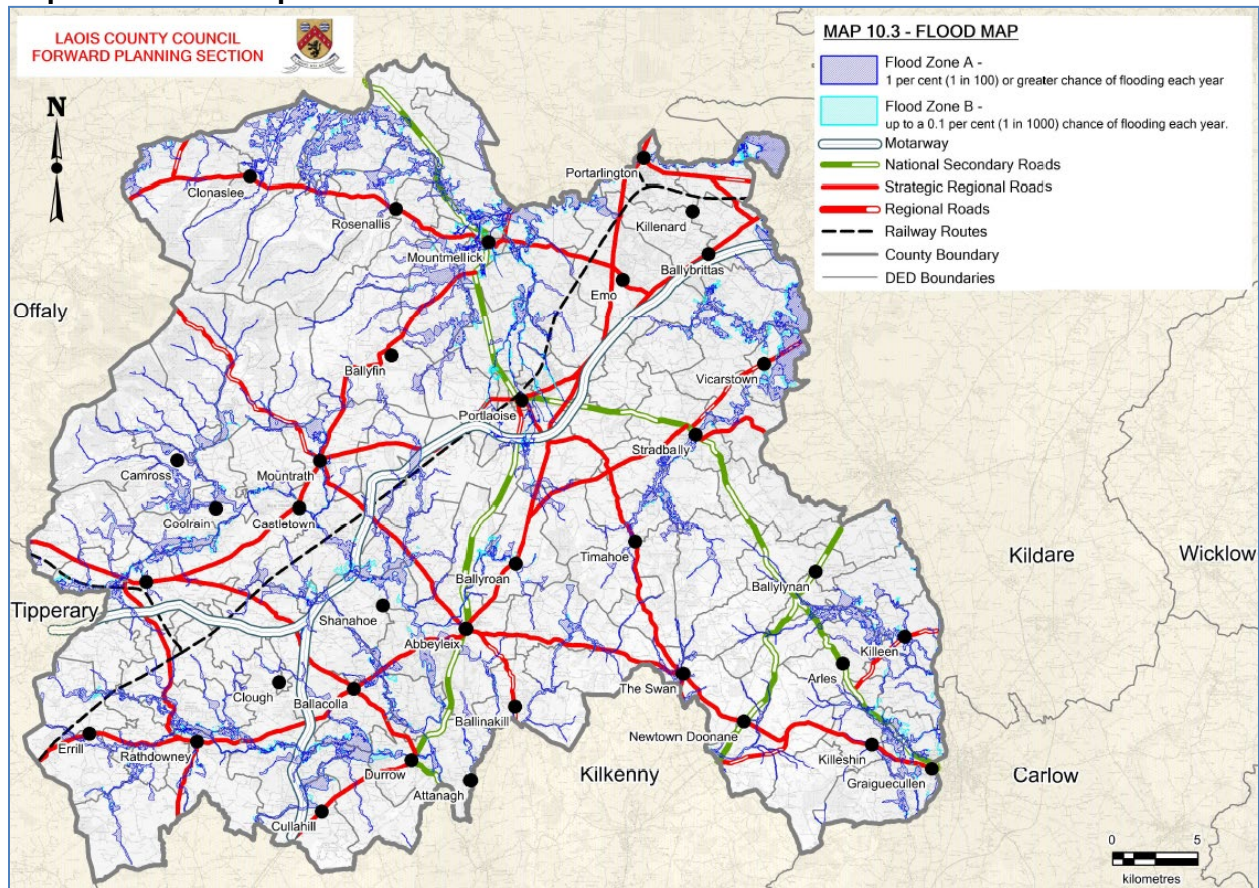
Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. As a result of climate change, there is a likelihood of increased rainfall and rising sea levels. This in combination with the urbanisation of our settlements results in a greater flood risk to property. It is therefore important to protect and preserve our floodplains and wetlands from development to ensure that when a flooding event occurs, excess water can be slowly released back into the river system. Key sources of flooding are identified as follows:

- Fluvial flooding arising from rivers and streams
- Pluvial flooding in low spots following heavy rainfall
- Drainage flooding due to inadequate drainage infrastructure

The Council has prepared a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Appendix 9) following which the county has been divided into two zones according to their risk of flooding and in compliance with latest CFRAM mapping. Map 10.3 indicates flood zones A and B in County Laois. In making its

zoning decisions and planning application decisions, the Council will rely on the best available flood-risk data and will be mindful of the unpredictable nature of climate change.

Map 10.3: Flood Map



10.2.2.1 Sequential Approach

The Planning System and *Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DEHLG, 2009)* prescribe the use of a sequential approach to ensure that new development is directed towards land that is at a low risk of flooding. The sequential approach makes use of flood risk assessment and of prior identification of flood zones for river flooding. It is essential that the risk potentially arising from other sources of flooding should also be taken into account in all areas and stages of the planning process. The planning implications for each of the flood zones are as follows:

Table 10.4: Flood Zones

Flood Zone A	High Probability of flooding	Most types of development would be considered inappropriate in this zone. Development in this zone should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances where the requirements of the Justification Test set out can be met.
Flood Zone B-	Moderate Probability of	Highly vulnerable development would generally be considered inappropriate in this zone, unless the

	flooding:	requirements of the Justification Test can be met. Less vulnerable developments might be considered appropriate in this zone subject to a flood risk assessment to the appropriate level to demonstrate that flood risk to and from the development can and will be adequately managed
Flood Zone C	Low Probability of flooding	Development in this zone is appropriate from a flood risk perspective (subject to assessment of flood hazard from sources other than rivers and the coast) but would need to meet the normal range of other proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

Flood Risk Management Policy Objectives	
FRM 1	Ensure that flood risk management is incorporated into the preparation of all local area plans through the preparation in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009)
FRM 2	Ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG 2009) and to ensure that the Justification Test for Development Management is applied to required development proposals and in accordance with methodology set out in the guidelines and new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff.
FRM 3	Support the implementation of recommendations in the CFRAM Programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented.
FRM 4	Support the implementation of recommendations in the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP's), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.
FRM 5	Consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, and to retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto.
FRM 6	Assist the OPW in developing catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans for rivers in County Laois and have regard to their provisions/recommendations.
FRM 7	Protect and enhance the County's floodplains and wetlands as 'green infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defenses in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

FRM 8	Protect the integrity of any formal (OPW or Laois County Council) flood risk management infrastructure, thereby ensuring that any new development does not negatively impact any existing defense infrastructure or compromise any proposed new infrastructure.
FRM 9	Ensure that where flood risk management works take place that the natural and cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced.
FRM 10	Ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.
FRM 11	Consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the provision of flood alleviation measures in the County.
FRM 12	Prioritise plans for flood defence works in the towns as indicated in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in order to mitigate against potential flood risk.
FRM 13	Ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff.
FRM 14	Protect water sinks because of their flood management function, as well as their biodiversity and amenity value and encourage the restoration or creation of water sinks as flood defence mechanisms, where appropriate.

Flood Risk Development Management Standard

DM FRM 1	<p>FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS</p> <p>Flood risk management will be carried out in accordance with the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2009)</i>. Development proposals on lands that may be at risk of flooding should be subject to a flood risk assessment, prepared by a suitably qualified person, in accordance with the guidelines.</p> <p>Proposals for minor development to existing buildings in areas of flood risk (e.g. extensions or change of use) should include a flood risk assessment of appropriate detail.</p>
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10.3 WATER AND WASTE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

10.3.1 PUBLIC WATER AND WASTEWATER

Irish Water is the statutory body responsible for the provision of public water and wastewater supply schemes. It is an objective of Irish Water to provide both drinking water and wastewater capacity to facilitate growth in accordance with core strategies at county level and with national and regional planning policies and objectives (subject to the constraints of the Irish Water Capital Investment Programme).

Laois County Council retains its role in the provision of water services, in conjunction with Irish Water, at a local level, through Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the environmental regulator of Irish Water and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) is their commercial regulator. The Council will work closely with Irish Water to inform and influence the timely provision of infrastructure within the County in line with the Core and Settlement Strategies of this Plan.

10.3.2 POLICY CONTEXT

Water and waste water services are governed by the following statutory legislation:

- Water Services Act 2007 – 2017;
- Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC and its imminent recast.
- Water Framework Directive.

The policy objectives of this Plan are informed by the following National and Regional guidance and policies:

- *The National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040*
- *Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031*
- *Irish Water’s Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP)*
- *Irish Water’s Connection Charging Policy approved by the CRU*
- *Irish Water Capital Investment Plan 2020 to 2024 and subsequent plan.*
- *Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses Environmental Protection Agency-2010, updated 2012 & 2013*
- *Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Water Services Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government-2018*
- *Irish Water Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent programme (2020 to 2024).*
- *Irish Water National Capacity Register for Wastewater Treatment Plans*
- *Taking in Charge of Private Estates Memorandum of Understanding and Protocol agreed between the Local Authority and Irish Water.*
- *Connection and Development Services Standards for Water and Wastewater Infrastructure and Code of Practice.*

10.3.3 PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

There is a total of 28 Public Water Supply (PWS) Schemes in Laois supplying drinking water to 14 Towns, 7 Villages, a number of small rural settlements and a considerable rural area. Laois

is unique in that 98.5% of all Public Water Schemes sources come from groundwater. In general, the quality of groundwater in Laois is of good status and requires far less treatment in order to ensure compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended.

10.3.4 PUBLIC WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

In relation to wastewater, there are a total of 14 Licensed Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) in Laois – those are agglomerations treating greater than 500 population equivalent (p.e.) and a total of 13 WWTWs with Certificates of Authorisation issued by the EPA under the Wastewater Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 – less than 500 p.e.

10.3.5 IRISH WATER SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2015, Irish Water published its Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP), which sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over a 25 year period and sets a context for investment and implementation plans. This plan is reviewed every five years. Irish Water and the Council will continue to work together to identify the water services required to support planned development in line with national and regional planning policies for inclusion in the Irish Water Capital Investment Plans.

The Strategic Aims in IW's WSSP are as follows:

- **Strategic Objective 1:** Quality - Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water Supply by managing the sustainability and quality of drinking water from source to tap to protect human health.
- **Strategic Objective 2:** Provide Effective Management of Wastewater by managing the operation of wastewater facilities in a manner that protects environmental quality and manage the availability and resilience of wastewater services now and into the future:
- **Strategic Objective 3:** Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water Supply and Manage water supplies in an efficient and economic manner and manage the availability, sustainability and reliability of water supply now and into the future:
- **Strategic Objective 4:** Conservation - Protect and Enhance the Environment to ensure that services are delivered in a sustainable manner which contributes to the protection of the environment
- **Strategic Objective 5:** Support Social and Economic Growth – Facilitate growth in line with National, Regional and Local spatial planning policy and the Core Strategies in Development Plans:
- **Strategic Objective 6:** Meet Customer Expectations.

10.3.6 IRISH WATER CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The Capital Investment Programme (CIP) of Irish Water outlines the indicative priorities and investments in water services infrastructure over the plan period. This CIP aims to deliver improvements in drinking water quality, leakage, wastewater compliance, business efficiencies and customer service. The current investment plan covering the period 2020 to 2024 is being finalized by IW on foot of the CRU's decision dated 4th August 2020 on its updated CIP submitted to the CRU in April 2020.

10.3.7 CAPITAL INVESTMENTS IN LAOIS

Having regard to the IW Capital Investment Plan CIP 2020 to 2024 and the subsequent CIP, Laois County Council, will work collaboratively with IW in accordance with the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water, and consistent with Irish Water’s Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP).

The strategic objectives and aims identified in the WSSP outline the measures and the Programmes and Projects to be implemented by IW to deliver on these strategic objectives. **The specific projects and programmes as proposed by Laois County Council in this Plan represent what Laois County Council considers are priority schemes to ensure that IW deliver on the Strategic Objectives and aims within their WSSP.** It is recognized that IW are restricted by the funding approved by the CRU and that some of these programmes/projects may not be delivered within the lifetime of this plan for the period 2021-2027.

Laois County Council will continue to work with IW in accordance with the SLA and aim to achieve the **strategic objectives within IW’s WSSP** by setting the following specific objectives.

Public Water Supply Policy Objectives	
WS 1	Continue in conjunction with Irish Water to ensure that a Safe and Reliable Water Supply by managing the sustainability and quality of drinking water from source to tap to protect human health
WS 2	Provide for Resilience in Public Water Schemes and support social and economic growth and meet customer demands particularly during drought conditions by working with IW to deliver on the following priority schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Portlaoise PWS – Bring into production the 3 non-producing Boreholes in Coolbanagher and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply; ➤ Portarlinton PWS – Bring into Production Borehole(s) and Treatment Plant in the Doolough Wellfield and increase Storage Capacity to provide 24 hours emergency supply and ➤ Swan PWS – Bring into Production the Borehole and Treatment Plant at Tollerton.
WS 3	Protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and roll-out Drinking Water Safety Plans across all water schemes to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchments and to ensure that good water quality is sustained in all public water supplies.
WS 4	Work with Irish Water to ensure that adequate water services will be available to service zoned development and to require developers to engage with IW in a timely fashion by way of submitting a pre-connection enquiry form to IW.
WS 5	Laois County Council will not permit housing developments of greater than one dwelling which propose standalone developer provided water infrastructure in areas

	remote from Public Water Schemes.
WS 6	Work with IW to minimise wastage of water supply by requiring existing and new developments to incorporate water conservation measures
WS 7	Promote and encourage the harvesting of rainwater to meet non-potable water needs
WS 8	Implement Energy Efficiency solutions in Water Systems;
WS 9	Encourage industrial and commercial developments with small private water supplies to connect to the public water schemes where technically and financially feasible.
WS 10	Ensure Water Conservation through the following actions : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Roll-out further Mains Replacement programmes: ➤ Continue with validation of District Metre Areas(DMA's) ➤ Carry out focused Find and Fix Programmes to achieve target volumetric reductions in accordance with IWs targets.
WS 11	Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Water and transfer assets to IW.
WS 12	Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol and with the NFGWS on an agreed programme with the Local Authority to take in charge Public Group Water Scheme and transfer assets to IW.
WS 13	Secure the future sustainability of Laois County Council's INAB Accredited Laboratory and enhance the accreditation status of the Laboratory in order to develop the Laboratory into one of 4 Regional Local Authority Accredited Laboratories nationally.

Public Wastewater Objectives

WS 14	<p>Support and facilitate social and economic growth in line with National, Regional and Local spatial planning policy and the Core Strategy in Chapter 2 of this plan through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Measure 1: Facilitate Growth: Wastewater Growth Programme:</u> - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Upgrade to the Portlaoise WWTP – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study. ➤ Roll-out agreed priorities for IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent Programmes. ➤ • <u>Measure 2: Network and Treatment Programmes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Roll-out improvements to network in Portlaoise WW Network as identified in the Portlaoise Drainage Area Plan (DAP). ➤ Complete DAPs for Portarlington and Mountmellick Wastewater
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	<p>Networks and complete modeling for improvements to these networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure 3: Irish Water Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Under IWs Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020 to 2024 and subsequent programmes agree priorities for delivering upgrades/replacements of WWTPs with insufficient headroom or plants that are non-compliant and damaging to the receiving environment so as to enhance and provide for growth in small towns and villages throughout the county.
WS 15	<p>Work in conjunction with Irish Water and with the DHPLG during the lifetime of the plan for the provision, extension and upgrading of waste water collection and treatment systems in the County that have existing facilities to serve existing populations and facilitate sustainable development of those towns, in accordance with the requirements of the Settlement Strategy and associated Core Strategy. In particular</p> <p>A. Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Compliance (EPA Licensed Plants)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete upgrade to Portlaoise – phase 1 as proposed in the Feasibility Study; Upgrades to Ballinakill; Ballyroan – Phase 3, 4 and 5; Castletown _ - Sludge and Storm Tank Programmes; Mountmellick – Ortho P and Ammonia Compliance <p>B. Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive Compliance: Complete upgrades to COA WWTPs (plants with <500pe design) under the National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP) on a priority basis as agreed with the Local Authority.</p>
WS 16	<p>Promote use of wetland systems for treatment of waste-water in accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines “Integrated Constructed Wetlands –Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications” [2010].</p>
WS 17	<p>Deliver Energy efficient Capital Programmes where appropriate and as follows</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Borris-in-Ossory – Install Fine Bubble Diffused Aeration
WS 18	<p>Work in accordance with IW/LA MoU and Protocol on an agreed programme with LA planning to take in charge private housing estates Wastewater Infrastructure and transfer assets to IW.</p>

Waste Water Development Management Standard

DM WS 1	<p>DISTANCES FROM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS</p> <p>Proposals to develop in close proximity to existing or proposed sewerage treatment Plants and pumping stations will be assessed having regard to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The nature of the effluent being treated;
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Prevailing wind direction; 3) Noise; 4) Type of treatment process employed; 5) Sludge treatment; 6) Visibility and screening of treatment plant; 7) Development will not be allowed within 100m of a treatment works or 25m of a pumping station. This distance may be increased if significant environmental issues are likely to arise and will be judged on a site by site basis. <p>The buffer area may be used to fulfil open space requirements.</p>
DM WS 2	<p>WAYLEAVES</p> <p>Wayleaves for infrastructure necessary for the provision of wastewater and / or water infrastructure over third party lands must be legally binding and in place prior to making planning applications.</p>

10.3.8 PRIVATE WATER AND WASTEWATER SUPPLIES

Private water supplies are those supplies not operated by Irish Water. They include Group Water Schemes- both public and private (GWSs), Small Private Supplies (SPSs) with a commercial or public use and individual Wells serving single houses. The water source for all private supplies comes from groundwater and are either from is a spring or a Borehole (well). One fifth of the people of Ireland get their water from private supplies.

In the EPAs 2018 Focus on Private Water Supplies the key findings were that water quality in private water supplies remains poorer than in Public Supplies (excepting Public Group Water Schemes) and when one looks at E Coli Compliance in the results from sampling the following is the position:

- Public Supplies are 99.9% Compliant
- Public Group Water Schemes are 100% compliant
- Private Group Water Schemes are only 95.4% compliant and
- Small Private Group Water Schemes are only 95.4% compliant

While certain functions of the Council have transferred to Irish Water, Laois County Council remains responsible for ensuring that the water supplied by any other water supplier which includes the Public and Private Group Water Schemes, Small Private Water Supplies wholesome and clean and meets the requirements of the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended.

The overarching objective of Laois County Council is to use its powers as Supervisory Authority under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended to improve the quality of water in private supplies. The crucial importance of ground water resources and abstraction points is recognised by the Council.

Careful protection of water resources from pollution in the interests of the common good and public health is a priority of the Council. The control of pollution and prevention of contamination of groundwater and watercourses will be assessed in developments which discharge to groundwater or watercourses within the requirements of the Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990. Effluents must be treated and discharged in a satisfactory manner.

10.3.8.1 Group Water Schemes

Under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended Laois County Council is the Supervisory Authority for 74 Group Water Schemes. 46 of these schemes are connected to a public water supply, while 28 use privately sourced groundwater serving an estimated population of almost 6,000 people. The Council monitors the quality of water in all 74 GWSs in order to ensure compliance with the EU (Drinking Water) Regulations, as amended.

10.3.8.2 Small Private Supplies (SPSS)

Under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, Laois County Council is the Supervisory Authority of SPSs with a Commercial or Public Use. Laois County Council has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Regulations of 93 small private supplies with a commercial or public use. This includes 14 National Schools.

10.3.2.3 Private Wells

Private boreholes are used when access to the public water supply or a group water scheme is not possible. It is estimated that up to 30% of private wells are contaminated by E-Coli and that around two thirds are at risk on contamination. Laois County Council administers a Grant Scheme for the provision or upgrade of private wells and treatment systems. In all circumstances the applicant will need to clearly demonstrate that a suitable site is available and that sewage treatment can be accommodated without negative impact on the proposed water source.

Rural Water and Wastewater Policy Objectives	
WS 19	Work in conjunction with the NFGWSs and with the support and funding of the DHPLG by way of the Rural Water Multi-Annual Programme 2019 to 2021 and subsequent programmes to - through various measures - improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for rural dwellers where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.
WS 20	Support, monitor, advise and administer Group Water Schemes on behalf of the DHPLG in conjunction with the NFGWSs by implementation of Source Protection Works, Water Treatment Improvements, Amalgamation/Rationalisation of schemes and administering of Capital Replacement Costs
WS 21	Continue to draw up and implement annual programmes for the monitoring of water quality in Group Water Schemes in accordance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended and as approved by the EPA.

WS 22	Embed water conservation at the heart of water policy through prioritising resource management, abstraction control, source protection, tackling leakage and encouraging behavioural change.
WS 23	Promoting water conservation and water resource management reflected in investment for leak detection and repair, network improvements, cost effective metering and awareness campaigns among the GWS.
WS 24	Ensuring that rural water services investment decisions are aligned with the broad strategic aims of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework ² and Improve the resilience of rural water supplies by supporting the implementation of the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Group Water Schemes and extensions b) Transition of Group Water and Group Sewerage schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Water Sector c) Community Connections (Water & Wastewater) Networks d) Innovation and Research.
WS 25	Ensure that the scheme relating to private wells is administered effectively and that improvements to sources and/or treatment works are carried out in accordance with IW and EPA standards
WS 26	Work in conjunction with stakeholders through various measures to improve the quality, reliability and efficiency of water services for consumers of Small Private Supplies ³ where Irish Water services are not available and thereby sustain and enhance the social, economic and future prosperity of the rural water sector.
WS 27	Support, monitor, advise and raise awareness among owner/operators of SPSs of their duties as water suppliers under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 as amended to ensure that a safe and dependable water supply is available to those persons who avail of the service (Customers/service users/children etc).
WS 28	Collaborate with stakeholders including LA Water and Environmental Services staff, the HSE, LEO staff, Laois Chamber, representatives from the educational, tourist, childcare and hospitality sectors to raise awareness among their members of the duties of the Owners/Operators in relation to the provision of clean and wholesome drinking water
WS 29	Maintain and update its register of SPSs and focus enforcement powers on those schemes that are non-compliant with the Drinking Water Regulations by carrying out Audits on these schemes and by further enforcement measures if

² See at this link: <http://www.gov.ie/en/project-ireland-2040>

³ *Small Private Supplies are private water supplies with a commercial or public use e.g. Hotels, B and Bs, Schools, Crèches, Nursing Homes, Public Houses that are supplied from a private source e.g. Borehole or well. These supplies are not connected to the Public Water Supplies. The owner or operator of the supply is the water supplier and the Local Authority is the Supervisory Authority under the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014, as amended.*

improvements are not implemented. Where the option exists to connect to a public water supply, the water supplier will be encouraged to make an application to IW for a connection.

10.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Laois County Council's environmental policy objectives aim to minimise waste using the Circular Economy concept; mitigate where possible and adapt to the impacts of climate change; protect and improve ground and surface waters; and provide a clean natural environment.

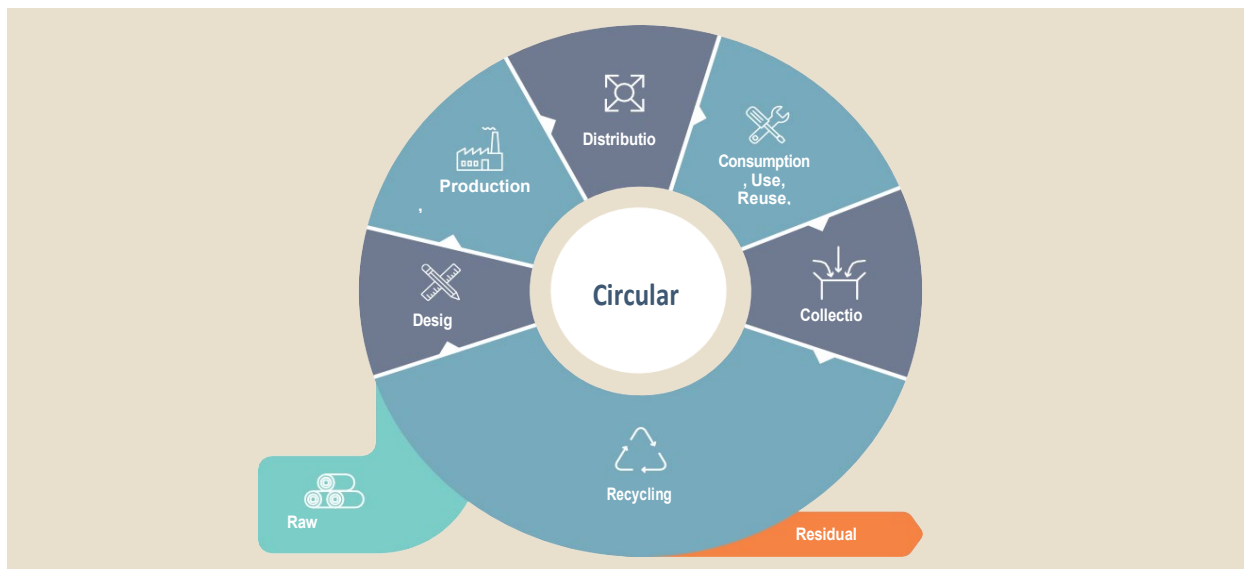
The Environmental Services consist of Waste Management (Waste Recovery & Disposal and Enforcement) and Environmental Protection (Water Quality, Air Pollution & Noise).

10.4.1 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The concept of the Circular Economy is to minimise waste going to landfill and maximise waste as a resource. This means that prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling and recovery are prioritised in that order, over the disposal of waste.

The European Commission has proposed a recycling rate of 65% for 2030 for the Circular Economy Package. The Council will support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, re-use, recycling and recovery over the disposal of waste.

The [Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy](#) is Ireland's new roadmap for waste planning and management. This Plan shifts focus away from waste disposal and looks instead to how we can preserve resources by creating a circular economy.



The Plan sets out a range of aims and targets for the State and the measures by which these will be achieved, including increased regulation and measures across various waste areas such as Circular Economy, Municipal Waste, Consumer Protection & Citizen Engagement, Plastics

and Packaging, Construction and Demolition, Textiles, Green Public Procurement and Waste Enforcement.

The overarching objectives of the [Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy](#) are to:

- Shift the focus away from waste disposal and treatment to ensure that materials and products remain in productive use for longer thereby preventing waste and supporting reuse through a policy framework that discourages the wasting of resources and rewards circularity;
- Make producers who manufacture and sell disposable goods for profit environmentally accountable for the products they place on the market;
- Ensure that measures support sustainable economic models (for example by supporting the use of recycled over virgin materials);

10.4.1.1 Waste Recovery and Disposal

Laois County Council is actively involved in facilitating the delivery of a more sustainable approach to waste management within the county. Key to this is the implementation of the Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy. Waste Management policy is predicated on the EU Waste Hierarchy of prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, energy recovery and sustainable disposal.

The Eastern–Midlands Region Waste Management Plan, 2015-2021 provides the framework for waste management in the Region and sets out a range of policies and actions to meet specified mandatory and performance based targets.

The strategic vision of the regional waste plan is to rethink the approach to managing waste, by viewing waste streams as valuable material resources. Three strategic targets have been set in the plan covering the areas of prevention, recycling and landfilling.

- 1% reduction per annum in the Quantity of Household Waste per capita over the period of the Plan.
- Achieve a Recycling Rate of 50% of managed municipal waste by 2020
- Reduce to 0% the direct disposal of unprocessed residual Municipal waste to landfill (from 2016 onwards) in favour of higher value pre- treatment and indigenous recovery practices.

In tandem, the Plan identifies measures to develop a circular economy whereby waste management initiatives are no longer confined to treating and disposing of waste, instead supporting initiatives that value waste as a resource or potential raw material. The delivery of these targets will require the local authority and industry to work together.

Waste Recovery & Disposal Policy Objectives	
ES 1	Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025.
ES 2	Implement and support the strategic objectives of the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 and any subsequent Waste Management Plan adopted during the current development plan period.
ES 3	Promote circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and

	recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Waste Management Plan for the Region and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.
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10.4.1.2 Waste Enforcement

The implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation is one of the key responsibilities of the Council’s Environment Section. The main pieces of legislation are the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended and the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended.

In relation to waste activities, the principal piece of legislation is the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended. Under the Act, it is the responsibility of the Council to monitor and inspect waste activities generally and to take appropriate and proportionate enforcement action in respect of illegal waste activities.

In relation to litter, the principal piece of legislation is the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended. Laois County Council’s Strategy on litter as set out in the Laois County Council Litter Management Plan 2018-2020, aims to increase public awareness by increased education, and to promote a litter free environment through the implementation of enforcement action through the relevant legislation. The Council shall continue its education and awareness programmes in local schools and shall promote schemes and initiatives which aim to reduce litter pollution in the County.

Waste Management Enforcement Policy Objectives	
ES 4	Implement the provisions of the Waste Management Act, 1996, as amended and associated Waste Regulations.
ES 5	Investigate and take appropriate legal action against those involved in unauthorised waste activities.
ES 6	Implement the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended and the Laois Litter Management Plan 2018 -2020 and any subsequent revisions.
ES 7	Implement, complete and report to the EPA on the annual agreed Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).
ES 8	Encourage and support the segregation of food waste and the provision of separate collection of waste in accordance with the requirements of the EU (Household Food Waste & Bio-Waste) Regulations 2015, the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009, the Waste Framework Directive Regulations, 2011 and other relevant legislation.
ES 9	Implement the provisions of the Laois Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household & Commercial) Waste Bye-Laws 2018 and to take enforcement action where necessary to protect the environment and local amenities.
ES 10	Process and make recommendations of all Waste Facility Permit (WFP) and Certificate of Registration (COR) Applications under the relevant Regulations. To monitor and

	inspect all authorised facilities with WFPs & CORs.
ES 11	Require Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to be prepared for larger scale projects and this requirement shall be assessed on a case by case basis as part of the development management process.
ES 12	Require that all construction projects are carried out in accordance with Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects.
ES 13	Encourage best environmental practice in all agricultural, industry, business and local authority activities.

10.4.1.3 Laois Recycling Facilities

Civic Amenity Facilities

Laois has two Civic Amenity Sites (Kyletalesha, Portlaoise & Portarlington) in operation for the acceptance of recyclable materials and waste electrical and electronic equipment. The Portlaoise Facility is managed and operated directly by the Council whereas the Portarlington Facility is currently managed and operated by an authorised Waste Contractor.

The Council is developing a 10-year roadmap for the strategic planning and development of the Kyletalesha Landfill and Civic Amenity Site.

Bring Banks

There are currently 46 bring banks within the County for the collection of aluminium/metal cans and glass. There are also a number of privately owned/operated textile banks throughout the county.

The collection of the materials from the bring banks is carried out by an authorised contractor engaged under a regional contract (Laois, Longford, offaly & Westmeath).

The Council aims to maintain improve and increase the capacity of these existing recycling facilities pending regular reviews being carried out investigating the necessity and viability of each facility. The Council will seek out further suitable sites for these facilities.

Civic Amenity Facilities & Bring Bank Policy Objectives	
ES 14	Provide for, improve and maintain the network of bring infrastructure (e.g. civic amenity facilities, bring banks) in the County to facilitate the recycling and recovery of hazardous and non-hazardous municipal wastes.
ES 15	Develop a 10-year roadmap for the strategic planning and development of the Kyletalesha Transfer Station and Civic Amenity Site.
ES 16	Develop the Bring Bank Regional Contract to improve the quality of service and frequency of collection.

10.4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

10.4.2.1 The Water Framework Directive

Water provides a clean source of drinking water, a vital raw material for industry, and a home for a huge variety of aquatic plants and animals in County Laois. The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (WFD) establishes a framework for the protection of all waters including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, groundwater, canals and other artificial water bodies for the benefit of everyone.

National River Basin Management Plans (2018 - 2027)

In County Laois we have the Nore and Barrow catchments and a tributary of the Shannon catchments. Management of water resources must be planned and implemented, through the National River Basin Management Plan (RBMP 2018-2021). The Plan outlines the measures that will be taken to protect and improve water quality up to 2021. Work is now underway to prepare the third cycle of River Basin Management Plan (2022-2027).

10.4.2.2 Water Quality in Laois

The protection of our surface and groundwater resources is one of the most fundamental challenges facing Laois in the future as good quality water is essential in supporting diverse and varied ecosystems, sustainable communities and a developed economy. The Environmental Protection Agency recently published its Water Quality in Ireland Report 2013-2018. Water quality in County Laois is quite good with 58% of rivers stations in the county at good or high ecological status. However there is no room for complacency, a deterioration in some of our most pristine river sites is a very significant concern. The Blue Dots Catchment Programme has been established under the current River Basin Management Plan specifically to improve the protection and restoration of these high ecological status water bodies. The Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel, known as *Margaritifera durrovensis* found only in the River Nore in Laois (not found anywhere else in the world) and its habitat needs protection.

Groundwater quality remains good, with 70% of the groundwater underlying County Laois is at good status and 5% identified as being at risk. The status of 25 % of groundwaters in Co. Laois is currently under review. The protection of groundwater is so important in Co. Laois as nearly all of our public and private water supplies are from groundwater sources.

In County Laois, the most significant pressures on water quality are Agriculture, Urban Waste Water, Forestry, Urban run-off and Hydromorphology. Other activities which also impact on water quality are Mines and Quarries, Industry, Peat Extraction and Domestic Waste Water.

Laois County Council is working to protect this valuable natural resource which is fundamental for the development of the county. Important elements in delivering targets include the regime of planning permissions, waste permits and discharge licenses and enforcement of planning law, waste management law and water pollution law as well as the licensing of effluent discharge, inspection of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems, farming and business activities, and monitoring the quality of our waters.

To try and improve water quality, Laois County Council is working closely with *The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)*, the EPA, the IFA and other agencies such as Inland Fisheries Ireland, Coillte and Bord na Móna to identify the specific issues that are impacting on our rivers and to implement solutions. The Council will also work with the community including

the farming community to protect the environment through the effective management of environmental resources.

10.4.2.3 *Water Quality protection*

The Council operates under the Water Pollution Acts 1977 and 1990 which enables Local Authorities to:

- Prosecute for water pollution offences;
- Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters;
- Issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices;
- Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects;
- Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas;
- Make bye-laws regulating certain agricultural activities where the Local Authority considers this to be necessary so as to prevent or eliminate pollution of waters

Water Quality Policy Objectives	
ES 17	Implement the provisions of water pollution abatement measures in accordance with National and EU Directives and other legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate
ES 18	Maintain and improve the water quality in rivers and other water courses in the county, including ground waters. The Council will have cognizance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.
ES 19	Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from domestic wastewater treatment systems and other potentially polluting sources. The Council will comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009) and the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code for Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels'
ES 20	Assist and support with the Blue Dots Catchment Programme which been established under the current River Basin Management Plan specifically for the protection and restoration of high ecological status water bodies
ES 21	Ensure the protection of all High Status Water Bodies in the county by complying with the requirements of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended), the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations.

ES 22

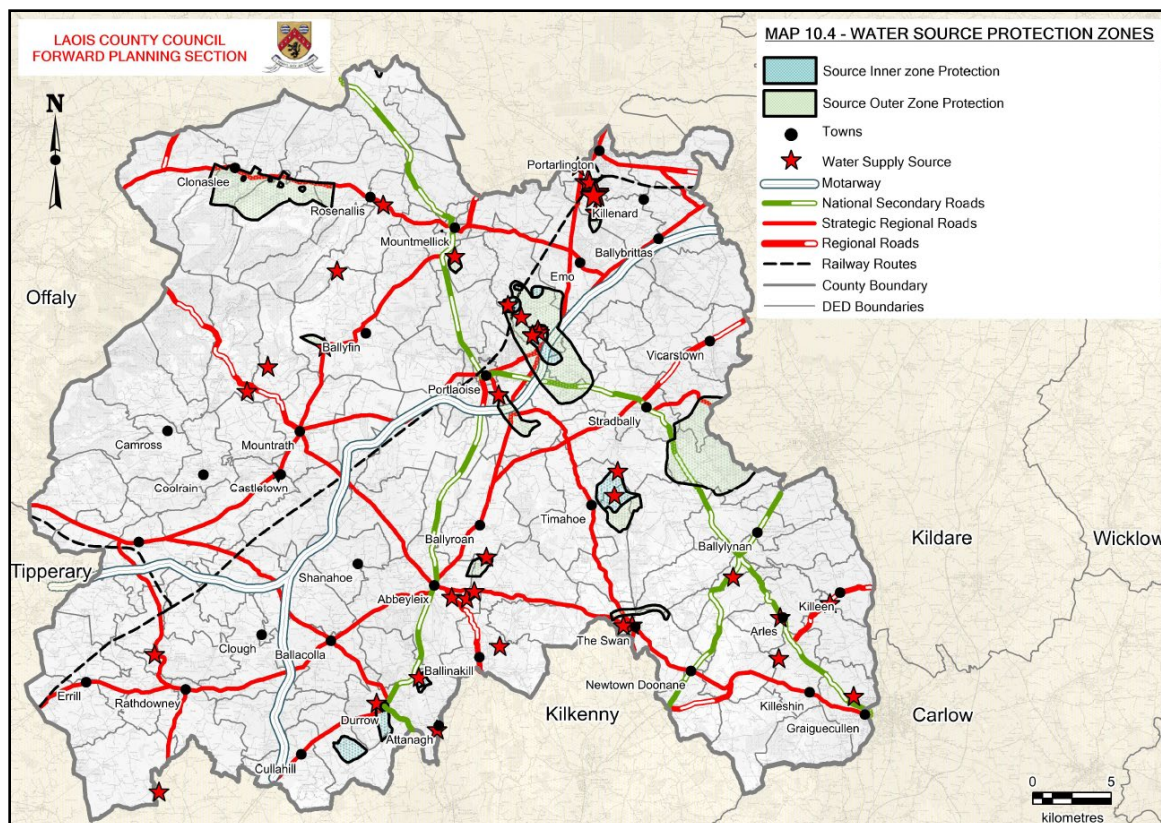
Ensure where private wastewater treatment systems are permitted by virtue of their remoteness from Public Wastewater Schemes to serve commercial and business developments, e.g Motorway Service Stations, Tourism and the Hospitality Sector etc, that their performance is monitored and audited so that they are operated in compliance with their wastewater discharge license, in order to protect water quality.

10.4.2.5 Groundwater Protection

Groundwater provides drinking water requirements and almost 100% of households and businesses in county Laois via public, group scheme and private wells. Groundwater also contributes water to the river system as base flow, and so its quality is intrinsically linked to surface water quality. The main threats are posed by:

- i) Point contamination sources e.g. farmyard wastes (mainly silage effluent and soiled water), industrial discharges, activities related to quarrying and extraction, septic tank effluent, leakages, spillages, the improper use of pesticides and leachate from waste disposal sites.
- ii) Diffuse sources e.g. spreading of fertilisers (organic and inorganic) and pesticides

Map 10.4: Laois's Groundwater Protection Scheme



A number of surface water bodies are protected by way of Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation. Sensitive aquifers that contribute to the groundwater resources of the county also require protection and careful management. The Geological Survey of Ireland has completed a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Laois. The overall aim of a Groundwater Protection Scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, for drinking water, surface water ecosystems and terrestrial ecosystems, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidance for Laois County Council in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. Some areas may not have suitable hydrogeological conditions to accommodate discharges to groundwater such as a conventional septic tank or a proprietary wastewater system; in addition a high density of septic tanks in an area may cause a reduction in water quality.

Source Protection Areas for Groundwater sources, particularly for public, group scheme and industrial supplies, are of critical importance. Consequently, Source Protection Areas are delineated around groundwater sources to provide protection by placing tighter controls on activities within those areas. Source Protection Areas are divided into Inner Protection Areas and Outer Protection Areas. Development within Source Protection Areas shall be subject to stringent requirements in accordance with the Groundwater Protection Scheme and the Water Services Acts 2007 & 2012.

In County Laois, the main pressures on waterbodies are from nutrients related to agriculture. The objective of the Nitrates Directive is the prevention of the pollution of ground water and surface waters by nitrates from agricultural sources. The Council works with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to achieve the maximum protection of waters from nitrate and phosphorous pollution, and will seek compliance with any bye-laws made under the Local Government (Water Pollution) (Amendment) Act 1990 in relation to agricultural activities in those parts of the county, which have been prescribed in the byelaws.

There are also pressures on groundwater bodies from housing developments and single dwellings located in areas where the groundwater vulnerability is extreme or high. Waste Water Treatment Systems which serve these developments must be appropriate for the area and maintained according to their manufacturer's instructions on a on-going basis to prevent pollution of groundwater.

Groundwater Protection Policy Objectives	
ES 23	Ensure, through the implementation of the relevant River Basin Management Plan and their associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county
ES 24	Protect and develop, in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the County and control development in a manner consistent with the proper management of these resources, in accordance with the County Water Source Protection Zones
ES 25	Assist and co-operate with the EPA, LAWPRO and IW in the continued

	implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive
ES 26	Minimise the impact on groundwater of discharges from septic tanks and other potentially polluting sources through compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses' (2009).
ES 27	Ensure the protection of groundwater dependant Natura 2000 sites which rely on the continued supply of groundwater resources to secure the key environmental conditions that support the integrity of the site and through the protection of groundwater standards as defined by the National River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 (and any subsequent Plan). Where no detailed Plan for protection of a specific source is available wastewater discharge will not be permitted within a radius of 200 metres of that source
ES 28	Ensure that Source Protection Areas are identified for any public and group scheme water supplies or multiple unit housing developments with private water supplies;
ES 29	Continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended) and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the Surface Water Legislation Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in the River Basin Management Plans, and other relevant Regulations
ES 30	Ensure that all industrial development is appropriately located, to seek effluent reduction and 'clean production' where feasible, and require that waste water treatment facilities are adequate, and that effluents are treated and discharged in a satisfactory manner
ES 31	<p>New developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in an Extreme Vulnerability Inner Source Protection Area shall be restricted to the following categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A dwelling for a full-time farmer; b. An existing inhabited dwelling in need of replacement; c. A second family dwelling on a farm where this is required for management of the farm <p>Permission may be granted in the above instances subject to the following stipulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. That an alternative site outside the Extreme vulnerability Inner Protection Area is not available b. The existing water quality of the source is not subject to any significant nitrate and /or microbiological contamination c. The existing water quality of the groundwater source is in compliance with the environmental objectives set out in relevant River Basin District Management Plan.
ES 32	Control intensive agriculture development e.g. intensive pig unit productions in order to minimise their impact on soil and ground water quality.

	<p>Developments involving intensive pig units shall be required to show compliance with the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The developer shall demonstrate that all lands available are suitable for landspreading of manures and have satisfactory Nutrient Management Plans for such lands Satisfactory arrangements for storage, management and spreading of slurries are provided.
ES 33	Encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets, European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017, as amended and comply with the relevant River Basin Management Plan.
ES 34	Consult as necessary with other competent authorities with responsibility for environmental management
ES 35	To work in co-operation with relevant organisations and major stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the county's water resources
ES 36	Ensure that developments that may adversely affect water quality will not proceed unless mitigation measures are employed, such as settlements ponds, interceptors etc
ES 37	Promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect both surface water and groundwater bodies

10.4.3 AIR QUALITY

Poor air quality both in the urban and rural environment can lead to major environmental problems and be detrimental to public health. The most sensitive areas in relation to air quality are built-up urban areas and major transport developments.

Air pollution continues to present challenges including:

- transport emissions, especially road transport emissions of NOx and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) arising from increase in diesel cars and buses on our road network;;
- power generation and emissions from industry, agriculture and agricultural activities that lead to methane and nitrous oxide emissions;
- burning of fossil fuels e.g. gas, peat, and coal resulting in carbon dioxide emissions and the persistent problem of 'smoky' emissions from the use of solid fuel in homes and backyard burning.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the body responsible for the monitoring of air quality in Ireland. The Council is the regulatory authority under the Air Pollution Act 1987 and the Air Pollution Act 1987 (Licensing of Industrial Plant) Regulations 1988. Under the above legislation Laois County Council's role is to protect, enhance and control air pollution and to ensure the provision of the highest standards. The Council is empowered to improve air quality and prevent pollution by having regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011). These regulations implement Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (CAFE Directive).

The Council has adopted policies in relation to air quality having regard to its importance to a good quality of life, public health and environmental sustainability. Air pollution can negatively affect human health and eco-systems with the main threat to air quality being emissions from road traffic and solid fuel burning. The policy approach of the Council to integrate land use planning and transportation will reduce emissions from vehicles. The most sensitive areas in relation to air quality are built-up urban areas and major transport developments. A reduction in the amount of heating required through improved energy efficiency of homes is also an important part of the solution. The Council will have regard to the EU Framework Directive on Air Quality Assessment relating to air quality standards. Regard shall also be had to the relevant WHO Guideline Values and the EPA document “Air Quality in Ireland”.

<i>Air Quality Policy Objectives</i>	
ES 38	Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).
ES 39	Encourage more sustainable modes of transport and a more balanced modal split to reduce carbon emissions
ES 40	Encourage the use of appropriate mitigation measures, such as dust dampeners, chimney stack scrubbers, etc. to minimise the potential impacts of developments on air quality
ES 41	Require developments of a certain nature to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on air quality
ES 42	Ensure the implementation of the radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the Building Regulations

10.4.4 NOISE POLLUTION

Noise control is governed by the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act (Noise) Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 179 of 1994). The definition of environmental noise includes “noise which causes a nuisance, or would endanger human health or damage property or harm the environment”.

Noise that is continuous, repeated or loud can have significant impacts on the quality of life of individuals, communities and the environment, in particular, wildlife. The protection of noise sensitive land usage, such as residential uses, is important in order to foster a good quality of life. The Planning Authority of Laois County Council will seek to minimise noise through the planning process by ensuring that the design of future developments incorporate measures to prevent or mitigate the transmission of noise and vibration, where appropriate. Similarly, where noise sensitive uses are proposed within proximity to a noise source, such as national roads,

rail lines, etc., proposals shall include noise and/or vibration attenuation measures in any planning application.

10.4.4.1 *Noise Action Plan*

Laois County Council adopted the 2019-2022 Noise Action Plan in 2019, which is in accordance with Environmental Noise Regulations (SI 140 of 2006). The aim of the plan is to avoid, prevent and reduce, on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance due to the long term exposure to environmental noise.

This Noise Action Plan 2019 has been prepared by Laois County Council to address environmental noise from major roads with more than three million vehicles per annum. The action planning area covers the M7, M8, N80, N77 and sections of the R445. It also covers the major rail line between Hazelhatch and Portarlinton within the functional area of Laois. It is a follow up to the 2014 Noise Action Plan which addressed environmental noise from roads with more than three million vehicles per annum and the 2008 Noise Action Plan which addressed environmental noise from roads with more than six million vehicles per annum.

Noise Pollution Policy Objectives	
ES 42	Require an assessment of impact of the developments on noise levels, having regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications
ES 43	Support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006
ES 44	Ensure that relevant planning applications comply with the provisions of any Noise Action Plan or noise maps relating to the area.
ES 45	Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards
ES 46	Regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA.
ES 47	Ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to submit a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.
ES 48	Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate

10.4.5 *LIGHT POLLUTION*

The control of light pollution is important in the interests of nature conservation, residential amenity and energy efficiency. While adequate lighting is essential to a safe and secure environment, light spillage from excessive or poorly designed lighting is increasingly recognised

as a potential nuisance to surrounding properties, a potential hazard to road safety, a threat to wildlife and can reduce the visibility of the night sky.

Light Pollution Policy Objectives	
ES 49	Ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised, thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species
ES 50	Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas
ES 51	Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and rural areas

10.4.6 SOIL QUALITY

The large percentage of permanent pasture land has protected Ireland’s soils from serious degradation, with the notable exception of peatlands. There is, however, increasing pressure on soil, particularly from land use changes, intensification of agriculture, erosion and overgrazing, afforestation, industry and urbanisation. These developments have significant impacts on soil quality and require careful management to protect soils and the wider environment.

Soil Quality Policy Objectives	
ES 52	Ensure good soil quality throughout the county by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality
ES 53	Recognise the significant impacts of land use, land use change and sludge generation and treatment in relation to carbon loss/stocks and recognise the function of soil assessment and management, carbon sinks, carbon sequestration and restoration of degraded lands in plan led settlement and development strategies

10.5 CONTROL OF MAJOR ACCIDENT HAZARDS DIRECTIVE (SEVESO III DIRECTIVE)

The Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015) (the “COMAH Regulations”), implement the Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU). The purpose of the COMAH Regulations requires for the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances, and seeks to limit the consequences for human health and the environment of such accidents.

COMAH Policy Objectives	
ES 55	Ensure that any COMAH sites in County Laois are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Seveso III Directive
ES 56	Have regard to the following in assessing applications for new developments (including extensions); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Major Accidents Directive Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU); • The potential effects on public health and safety; • The need to ensure adequate distances between such developments and residential areas, areas of public use and any areas of sensitivity
ES 57	Any proposals for developments within the vicinity of major accident hazard sites shall have cognisance of the required minimum separation distances as required by the Major Accidents Directive. In this regard all future proposals of this nature shall be forwarded to the Health and Safety Authority

10.6 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The development of high-quality telecommunications infrastructure is critical to advance the economic and social development of the county. The development of telecommunications infrastructure is essential to attracting investment and facilitating economic development. The Council is committed to enhancing the telecommunications network and infrastructure throughout the county. However, this must be managed to ensure a balance between the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in the interests of social and economic progress, and sustaining residential amenity and environmental quality.

10.6.1 BROADBAND

The availability of a high-quality and high speed broadband network will, increase economic development potential by facilitating a transition to a knowledge-based ‘smart economy’, it promotes sustainable development by encouraging remote working and reducing commuting and it can promote social inclusion and an enhanced quality of life for all.

The National Broadband Plan is Government policy focused on ensuring that everyone, irrespective of where they live, should have access to high quality, competitively priced broadband services. The contract for the delivery of the National Broadband Plan was awarded in November 2019. As part of this plan, each local authority is required to prepare a Digital Strategy for the County.

10.6.2 LAOIS DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020-2024

Laois County Council adopted a Local Digital Strategy in October 2020 to ensure the delivery of high speed broadband throughout the County. The Vision of the strategy is two fold – to set out the Councils ambitions to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of County Laois in enabling them to benefit from digital technologies and infrastructures throughout the county and to enable the citizens of Laois to be better informed and skilled, to be able to carry out their

business in a more resilient manner, access all aspects of life – education, public services and entertainment, whilst offering a better experience to visitors coming into the County.

Actions relating to the following objectives frame this strategy:



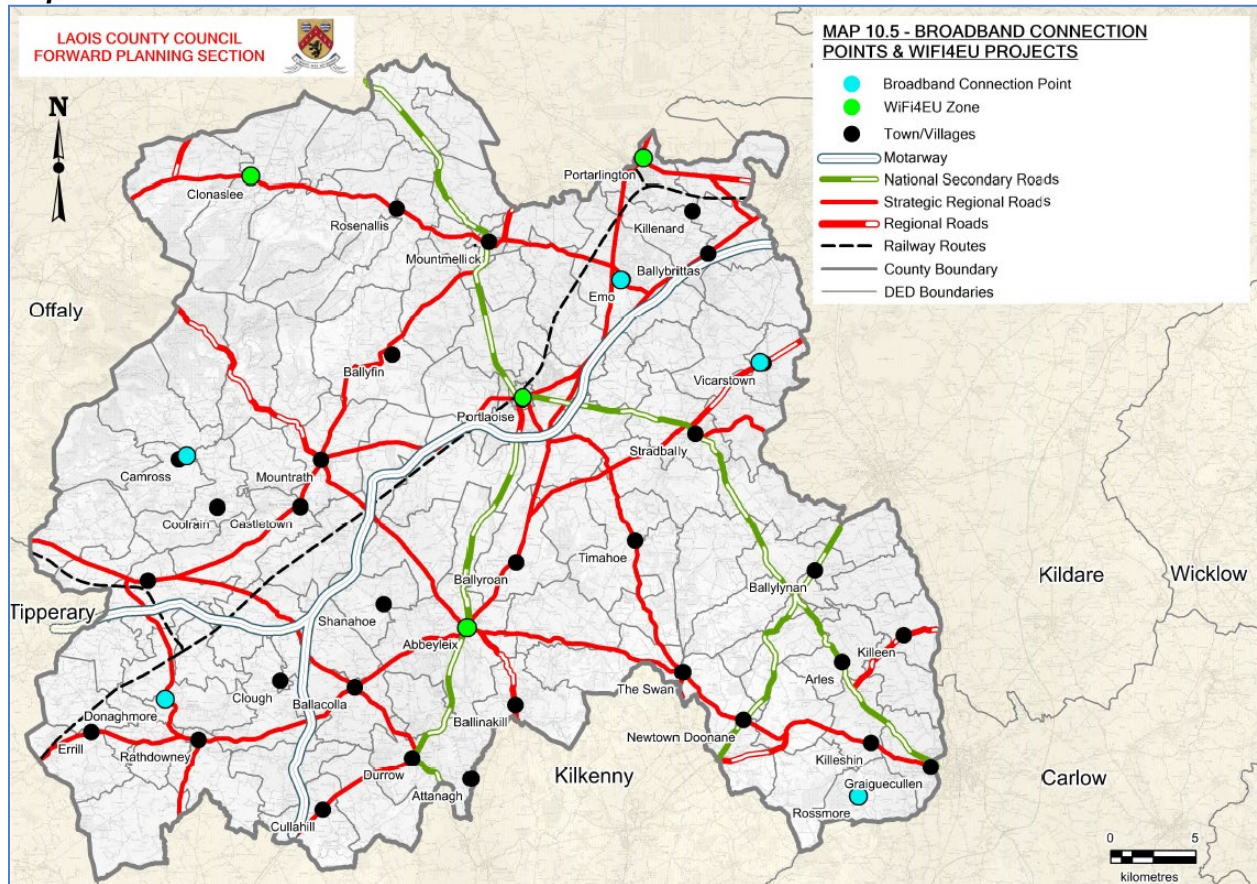
10.6.3 PUBLIC WIFI ZONES

Extensive work has been carried out by the Department of Rural and Community Development to determine intervention areas that will be connected throughout the Country. Nearly 300 Broadband Connection Points (BCP's) will be provided in Year 1 (2020) which will provide free WIFI in local communities supporting digital work hubs in every county. In County Laois 11 such BCP's have been identified and developed on site as per Map 10.5.

The European commission also promotes free WIFI connectivity for its citizens and visitors in public spaces. To support this, the WIFI4EU initiative matched by the Department of Rural and Community Development funding will provide the equipment and installation costs of internet access points across the County.

Laois County Council has been successful in securing 4 such vouchers under WIFI4EU which will roll out during 2020/ 2021 in 4 public locations within the county. This will provide free public WIFI in urban centres and at locations with increased visitor numbers.

Map 10.5: BCPs in Laois



10.6.2 TELECOMMUNICATIONS MASTS AND ANTENNAE

An efficient telecommunications system is important in the development of the economy of which the provision of masts and associated antennae are an essential element. The Council will have regard to the document titled *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoELG, 1996)* when considering applications for masts and antennae.

Telecoms Policy Objectives	
TEL 1	Encourage and facilitate the coordinated development and extension of broadband infrastructure throughout the county, by state or private operators
TEL 2	Support the delivery of the National Broadband Plan and implement the objectives of the Laois Local Digital Strategy 2020 – 2024
TEL 3	Ensure that ducting for broadband fibre connections is provided during the installation of services, in all new commercial and housing schemes and during the carrying out of any work to roads or rail lines;

TEL 4	Encourage the provision of WiFi zones in public buildings.
TEL 5	Facilitate the delivery of high-capacity telecommunications infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the county having regard to the guidelines for “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures” and any updated documents issued by the DoECLG or relevant authority
TEL 6	Co-operate with telecommunications service providers in the development of infrastructure, having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, normal planning and environmental
TEL 7	Adopt a presumption against the location of structures in vulnerable landscapes as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 6) and in areas where views are to be preserved and in areas adjacent to national monuments, sites of archaeological heritage or protected structures
TEL 8	Existing Public Rights of Way will be identified prior to any new telecommunication developments (including associated processes) which will be prohibited if they impinge thereon or on recreational amenities, public access to the countryside, communities or the natural and built environment
TEL 9	Encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures and to require documentary evidence as to the non-availability of this option is proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration.
TEL 10	Assess proposals for the location of telecommunication structures in sensitive landscapes in accordance with the policies set down within the Landscape Character Assessment.

Telecommunications Development Management Standards

DM TEL 1	<p>TELECOMMUNICATION STRUCTURES</p> <p>To facilitate the evaluation of development proposals for the erection of antennae and support structures, applicants/developers/operators will be required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Submit a reasoned justification as to the need for the particular development at the proposed location in the context of the operators overall Plans to develop a network in County Laois and strive to reduce the number of telecommunication structures by ensuring that ComReg’s Code of Conduct is implemented. 2) Indicate what other sites or locations in the County were considered; 3) Submit evidence of consultations, if any, with other operators with regard to the sharing of sites and/or support structures; 4) Where masts are located in areas of high amenity, landscapes of exceptional or high value or international or national importance and high sensitivity as indicated in the Landscape Character Assessment, there shall be a presumption to provide a “Landscape Impact Report” to allow proper assessment of the visual impact. Surrogate (coniferous trees) shall
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	<p>be considered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) Masts will only be permitted if supported by an acceptable Visual Impact Report. 6) Furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines (Health Physics, Vol. 54, No. 1(Jan) 1988) or the equivalent European Prestandard 50166-2 which has been conditioned by the licensing arrangements with the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications; 7) Cumulative effect of dishes in the area should be considered. 8) Furnish evidence that an installation of the type applied for complies with the above Guidelines. 9) Cables and wire connections shall be located underground where feasible. 10) The design of the mast structures should be simple and well finished; monopoles are preferred to latticework types. Where appropriate, masts, antennae and fencing should be in harmony with their surroundings and should be of dull or neutral sky grey colour so as to be less visually obtrusive. Green or black is the preferred colour at ground level. 11) Subject to visual and landscape considerations, support structures will normally be required to be designed to facilitate the attachment of additional antennae to facilitate co-location. The number of ancillary buildings/containers shall be kept to the minimum and the need for each structure must be clearly justified. They should be located in accordance with the provisions of the DoECLG Guidelines 1996 (or as may be amended). 12) Restoration plans shall be submitted with the application for when antennae and their support structures are no longer being used and no new user has been identified. 13) Access roads will be permitted only where they are absolutely necessary. 14) Where it has been proven that there is a need for new/expanded coverage in a particular area, the applicant shall show that all existing masts and support structures have been examined to determine if the attachment of new antennae to existing structures can provide the coverage required, the applicant shall submit either a Discovery Series Map or similar map type (to be agreed with planning authority) to the scale of 1:50,000 the location of all telecommunication structures within a radius of 1km of the proposed site, indicating the coverage area of the proposed facility and a technical evaluation of the capabilities of these masts to take additional antennae and provide the coverage required.
<p>DM TEL 2</p>	<p>UNDERGROUNDING AND CONCEALING OF SERVICES</p> <p>In new housing and in other forms of urban development, all services including E.S.B., telephone and television cables shall be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed underground; • Service buildings or structures should be sited as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened; <p>Care should also be given to the treatment of maintenance boxes, electrical boxes and bin storage on facades so that such items are concealed as</p>

unobtrusively as possible.