

**PORTLAOISE  
LOCAL AREA PLAN  
2022—2028**



**PRE-DRAFT PUBLIC CONSULTATION**  
*Have Your Say ...*

**Why Prepare a Local Area Plan For Portlaoise?**

Laois County Council is legally required to prepare a Local Area Plan for Portlaoise every 6 years, to guide and control development.

It will contain land-use zonings to guide and facilitate the physical development of the town, together with policies and objectives, which the Council will promote and prioritise, in order to ensure that a high-quality environment is provided for residents, workers and visitors to the town.

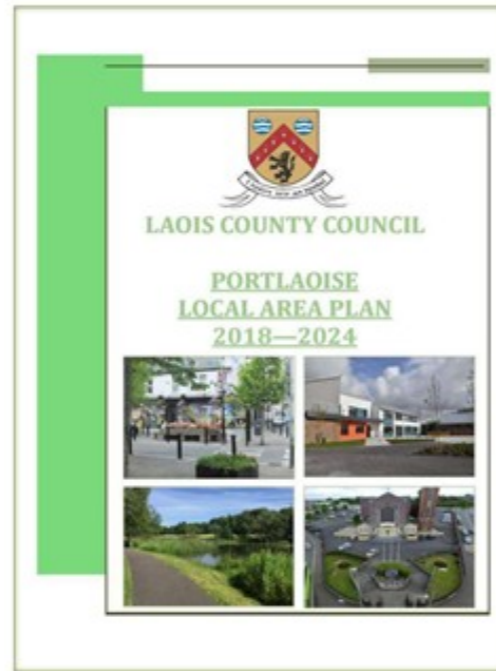
It is important that the future development of Portlaoise is plan-led, so that its existing heritage, character and vibrancy is maintained and enhanced when planning for the current and future needs of the town.

This is our opportunity for ideas to be heard and to help shape the future development of Portlaoise.

Laois County Council has commenced the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Portlaoise and intends to publish a Draft Plan for public display and comment in mid 2023.

The preparation of the new Portlaoise LAP will allow for an updated assessment of the current situation for the town and the formulation of a series of responses that reflects changing economic and social circumstances.

The Council is now seeking initial feedback from residents and interested parties, to ensure that local ideas and opinions will be heard and taken into consideration as part of the preparation of the Draft Plan.

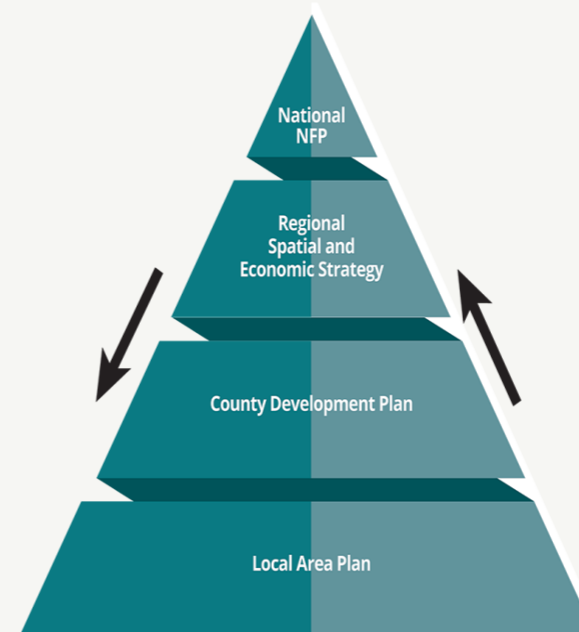


*New Primary School Campus,*

**Strategic Planning**

*The preparation of the Portlaoise Local Area Plan will be informed by policies and objectives in higher level planning documents including the National Planning Framework, The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.*

Strategic Planning Hierarchy



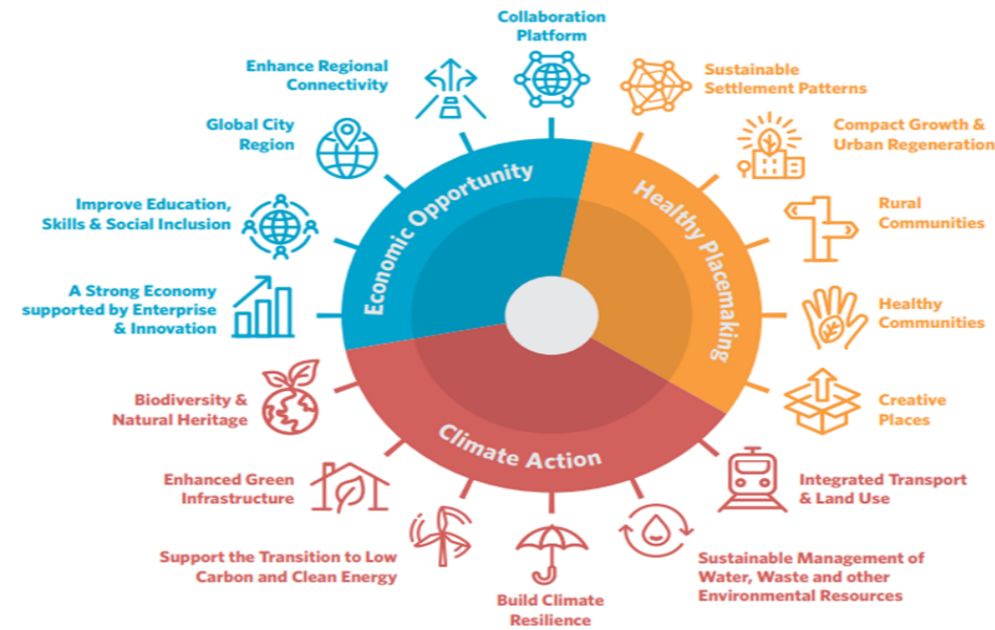
## KEY TOWN

Portlaoise is designated as a Key Town in the RSES, which is defined as 'Large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres'.

The RSES states that Key Towns should seek commensurate population and employment growth, on high quality public transport corridors coupled with investment in services, amenities and sustainable transport.

## Housing

Housing requirements for Portlaoise are contained in the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. The residential unit target within Portlaoise during this period is 982 units.



**Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (Source: RSES)**

### Regeneration and Low Carbon Town

The town has been designated Ireland's first low carbon town which is supported by the RSES. The aim of the Low Carbon Town is to reduce the impact of the car on the public realm and improving the mix of uses within the town centre. This will be achieved by removing large volumes of traffic from congested areas, utilising the South Circular Road and by reconfiguration of existing traffic flows throughout the town centre.

Building on the development of this 'Park and Stride' policy Laois County Council will also be encouraging an increase in the adoption of cycling by extending on-road and off-road cycle ways and the creation of the Triogue River Blueway as an environmental and amenity objective.

### Strategic Employment Zone

It is objective of the Laois CDP to capitalise on Portlaoise's location on the motorway and rail networks and proximity to the Greater Dublin Area. The zoning and servicing of land at Togher as a National Enterprise Park for enterprise, employment and industrial uses, in the immediate vicinity of national strategic transport infrastructure, represents a unique opportunity to develop a cluster of complementary enterprises and more generally a larger, more robust and diverse economic basis for the town, county and region. J17 National Enterprise Park Masterplan sets out the guidance in this respect.

## Laois County Development Plan 2021–2027

The new Laois County Development Plan 2021–2027 was adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and came into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

It provides a planning framework for County Laois, identifying the broad locations for the provision of key infrastructure over its lifetime.

Portlaoise is identified as the principal settlement in the county and is identified for significant further development, in terms of new housing, commercial, economic and employment, civic, educational and amenity developments. The new Local Area Plan for Portlaoise will determine where within the town this critical infrastructure should be located.

## Portlaoise Public Realm Strategy

Laois County Council prepared a Public Realm Strategy for Portlaoise in 2017.

The Strategy sets out a series of long-term proposals and interventions, focused on public spaces, buildings and walkways, which seek to improve the quality of public realm within the town.

The new Local Area Plan for Portlaoise will contain policies and objectives which seek to action the proposals and interventions set out within the Public Realm Strategy, where possible.

2040  
- And Beyond

A VISION FOR PORTLAOISE  
A STRATEGY FOR A BETTER TOWN CENTRE

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### Strengths & Opportunities

- Identified by Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and as a 'key town' with high quality transport link and employment opportunities';
- Proximity to major cities such as Dublin, Limerick, Waterford & Kilkenny;
- Green Infrastructure e.g. People's Park and River Trigue
- Water, energy and telecommunications infrastructure;
- Availability of strategic greenfield employment development land;
- Young and growing population;
- High labour force participation rate;
- Improve pedestrian & cycle access;
- Provide community facilities, including schools, open spaces, etc.
- Retain biodiversity;

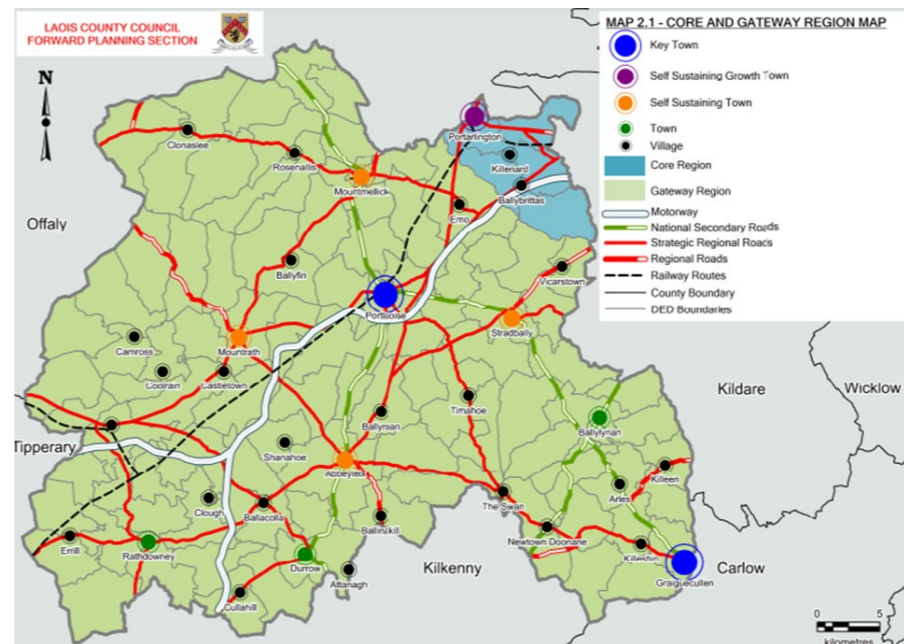
### Challenges & Threats

- High levels of out-commuting of residents for work;
- Need to improve public realm within town centre;
- Declining traditional town centre;
- Low representation of private sector employment;
- Poor permeability within town centre;
- Requirement to plan for additional schools places;
- Sustainable management of surface water/flooding;
- Potential erosion of heritage features within the town;
- The delivery of housing;
- Broadband speeds;
- Irish Water Infrastructure;
- Flood Risk;

- Promotion of Portlaoise as Ireland's first Low Carbon Town



Industrial expansion in Togher,



### Environment and Climate Change

The Portlaoise LAP must ensure a balance between development and protection of the environment. The necessity to transition to a low carbon economy cuts across all policy areas and will be addressed in the plan. Environmental considerations will also inform the drafting of the LAP through the preparation of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory formal process carried out in order to fully incorporate environmental considerations into the plan making process with a view to promoting sustainable development. The process seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the plan.

### Appropriate Assessment

It is a requirement of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) to carry out an Appropriate Assessment on the implications of any plan or project for a Natura 2000 site.



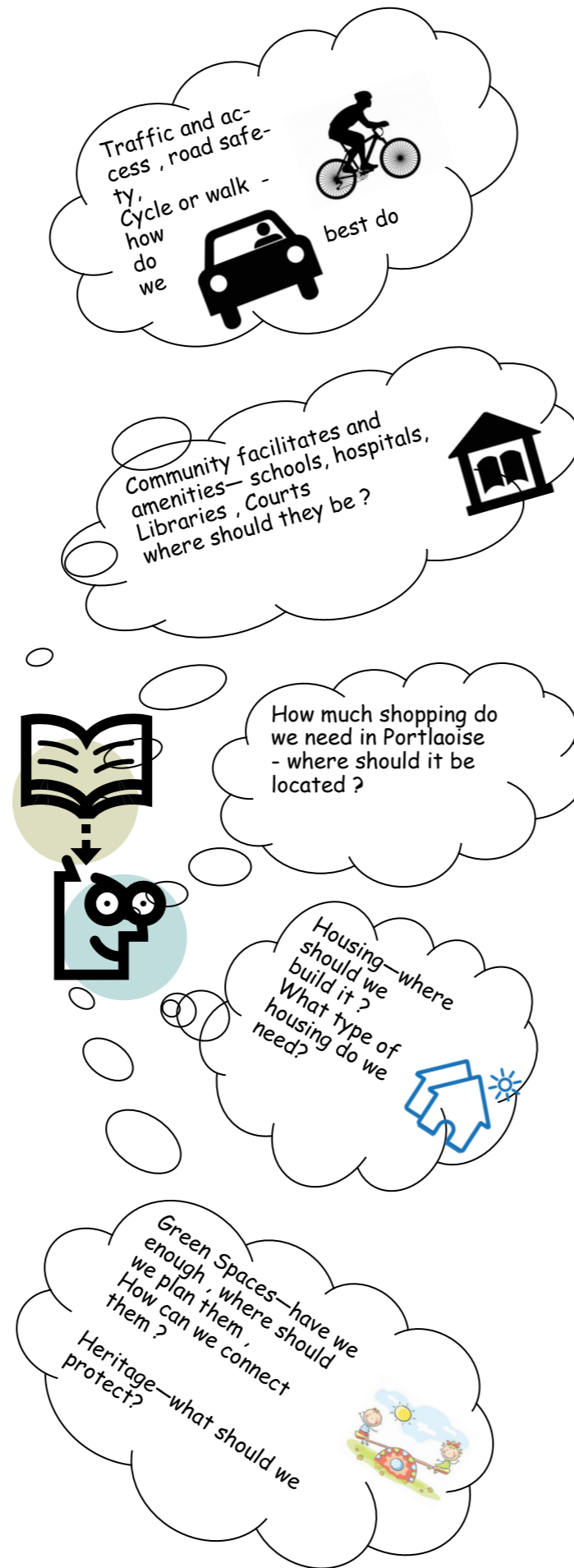
### Flood Risk Assessment

The EU Floods Directive and the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities" set out the requirement for a development plan to be accompanied by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. These guidelines state that inappropriate development that cannot meet the "Justification Test" should not be considered at the plan making stage. The Council will carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the policies and objectives of the Draft LAP.

### Climate Change

Climate change is recognised as a defining issue of our time and is now at the forefront of policy at an international, national, and local level.

Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change will therefore be overarching considerations that will inform policies and objectives in the LAP, with a focus on reducing impacts on Portlaoise through settlement and travel patterns, energy use and the protection of green infrastructure.

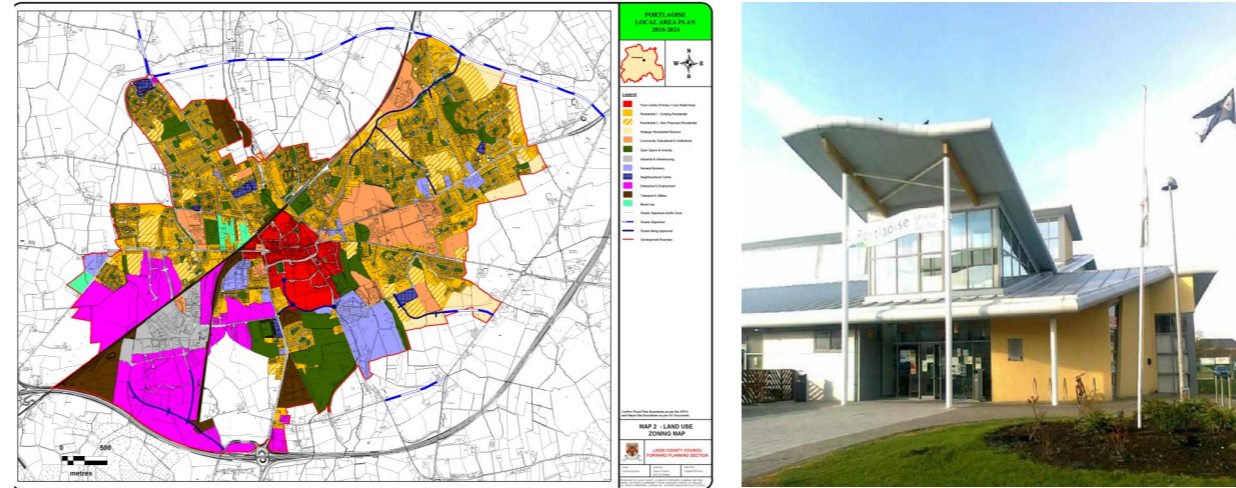


## Key Stages in the Local Area Plan-Making Process

<b>1. Pre-Draft Stage</b>
Forming the issues to be addressed in the Plan and gathering information from consultation with relevant stakeholders and interested parties.
<b>2. Draft Plan Stage</b>
Following a review of collated information a Draft Plan will be prepared by the Planning Authority. The Draft will afford the public the first opportunity to gauge the direction that the final Plan is heading.
<b>3. Notice of Draft Plan</b>
The Draft Plan will be available for inspection for at <b>least 6 weeks</b> . We will publish a notice in local papers letting you know that the Draft is available for inspection and inviting your submissions.
<b>4. Chief Executive's Report</b>
A Chief Executive's Report will be prepared based on the submissions received and containing the opinion of the Chief Executive and his recommendations in relation to the Plan.
<b>5. Consideration by Elected Members</b>
The Elected Members will consider the Chief Executive's Report and then make, amend or revoke the Plan as appropriate in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Executive.
<b>6. Material Alterations</b>
In the event of material alterations or amendments we will publish notice of this & invite further submissions. A similar process to that outlined at stages 4 & 5 is then repeated.
<b>7. Final Plan</b>
Following consultation on Material Alterations, a further Chief Executive's Report will be prepared, to be considered by the Elected Members. The Elected Members will consider the report and the adopt the Plan.

## Who Makes the Plan?

The responsibility for making the LAP rests with the elected members of Laois County Council, in accordance with legislative framework and published Ministerial guidance.



## Making a Submission:

Pre-draft public consultation will take place from **Friday 18th November until Friday 16th December 2022** inclusive. This leaflet and other information can be viewed on the Council's website [www.laois.ie](http://www.laois.ie).

An open morning will be held for members of the public at the offices of Laois County Council, JFL Avenue, Portlaoise, County Laois on **Thursday, 1st December 2022** from 10am to 1pm and from 2pm to 5pm.

Submissions can be made via the addresses below:

- Email: [PortlaoiseLAP@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:PortlaoiseLAP@laoiscoco.ie)
- Through the relevant consultation portal: <http://consult.laois.ie>
- In writing to: Senior Planner, Planning Department, Laois County Council, Aras an Chontae, JFL Avenue, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Submissions and observations should state the name, address and where relevant, the body represented.

**LATEST TIME FOR RECEIPT OF SUBMISSIONS (POST/ONLINE/EMAIL) IS:**

**5.00 PM Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022.**

