



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

Litter Management Plan

January 2022 – December 2024

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SECTION 1

Introduction

The County of Offaly is situated in the middle of Ireland, bordered by 7 counties and covers approximately 493,985 acres, one fifth of which is peatland and the majority of the remainder being in agricultural or forestry use. Its current population is 76,687 (census 2016) with the majority of the population residing in rural areas and the largest towns being Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry. There are many places of interest in Offaly which are tourist attractions, such as Birr Castle, Clonmacnoise, Croghan Hill, Tullamore Town Park and Lough Boora.

Offaly County Council must strive to maintain a litter free environment, not just for visitors to the County but for those who live here. It is not only tourist attractions that fuel the need for effective litter prevention and control, but it is the aesthetics associated with approach roads in towns and villages as well as footpaths, hedges and grass verges.

In order to produce a Litter Management Plan, consideration of both the rural and urban environments must be taken into account. The large towns within Offaly are Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry. Offaly County Council had Town Councils in these towns until their dissolution with the introduction of Municipal Districts in 2014. There is currently three Municipal Districts in the County of Offaly – Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry, which are now incorporated into one Litter Management Plan in order to achieve a more effective and consistent approach to litter management across the whole County.



1.1 Statutory Obligation

The legislation which governs the management of litter is the Litter Pollution Act, 1997. This Act has been amended since 1997 to take into account a number of changes including the change in currency from punt to euro, the change in penalties for offences and the regulation of the distribution of advertising material. The Acts which dictated these changes were the Waste Management (Amendment) Act, 2001 and Protection of the Environment Act, 2003. The Department of Environment followed this with a directive in 2009 regarding the advertising for elections; hence the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 herein is referred to as the *Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended*.

The obligation of a local authority to produce a Litter Management Plan is set out in Section 10 of the aforementioned Act. It requires Local Authorities to make and implement a Litter Management Plan for its own functional area or to produce a joint plan with one or more Local Authorities. A Litter Management Plan is a reserved function within a Local Authority and is to be adopted by its members and reviewed every three years. The previous Litter Management Plan was reviewed and extended for three years in accordance with Section 12 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, to December 2021.

Each Local Authority is responsible for implementing the litter laws within their functional area. They are responsible for the prevention and control of litter and have the power to take enforcement action against people who break or ignore these laws. The obligations comprise of responsibilities by not only the general public but also a local authority itself. A local authority is responsible for keeping public places that are under its control, clear of litter as far as is practicably possible; which includes the arrangement of cleansing programmes and the provision and servicing of litter bins. Regarding the public, there is a varied range of areas covered under the Act besides public spaces, such as private areas (gardens/apartments), event management, responsible dog ownership as well as advertising.

1.2 Public Consultation

In preparing a Litter Management Plan, a local authority is obliged to consult with other sectors before a plan is adopted by the Council members; and at the core of the approach to drafting the new Plan is engagement with the public and interested parties such as local community groups, elected representatives and the business sector. A notice of the Local Authority's intention to make/amend or replace a plan must be published in one or more local papers and be broadcast on radio at least once on three successive days. The Litter Management Plan itself must be made available to the public free of charge and any submissions received via the public consultation process must be given due consideration by the Council prior to the official adoption and publication of the Plan.

1.3 Internal Consultation

There are four Strategic Policy Committees in Offaly County Council, whose function it is to focus on policy development in areas related to Council services. They are:

- 1 Community, Cultural & Emergency Services SPC
- 2 Climate Action Policy, Environment, Water & Transportation SPC
- 3 Housing SPC
- 4 Land Use, Planning & Economic Development SPC

The Strategic Policy Committee responsible for Litter is the Climate Action, Environment, Water & Transportation SPC.

In preparation of this Litter Management Plan, a three stage approach is adopted by the Council and is summarised in the flow chart below.

1. Drafting the Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Background research. b. Review by Litter Section in Council, including Municipal Districts.
2. Consultation Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. SPC and Council – Draft Plan to be approved by both parties prior to public consultation. b. Public Consultation period including media campaign. c. Submission invited on the Draft Litter Management Plan from the public.
3. Review & Publication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Amendments to Draft Litter Management Plan if required. b. Adoption of Plan by Council members. c. Publication of Litter Management Plan.



Caption???

SECTION 2

Litter

In order to produce a comprehensive Litter Management Plan, it is important that the definition of Litter and what constitutes a litter offence be portrayed effectively to the public.

2.1 What is litter?

Under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended, the definition of litter is:

“any substance or object, whether or not intended as waste, that when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or other place designated for the deposit is, or likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any other such substance or object, and regardless of its size and volume or the extent of the deposit”

The definition is quite wide and includes graffiti, fly-tipping, domestic refuse placed in a litter bin, casual littering from papers/cigarette butts/chewing gum, advertising and dog fouling as well as anything else which is or is likely to become unsightly. Examples of littering and those responsible are provided below, reference should be made to the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 for a full and comprehensive list.

2.2 Who is responsible?

General Public Section 3/4/5

The following are examples of what constitutes a litter offence for the general public.

- Throwing litter on the ground
- Putting domestic waste into a litter bin
- Throwing litter out of a vehicle
- Litter falling from your vehicle/trailer
- Depositing materials other than those designated at a bring bank

Occupiers of a Public Place Section 6

- Any occupier of a public place (not being a public road/building or other structure) shall keep the place free of litter
- Any occupier of land that is not a public place but is visible from a public place
- Any occupier of land appurtenant to a residence that is let in two or more dwelling units

In essence, any outdoor area on your property that is visible from a public place is required to be kept litter free and that responsibility lies with the occupier of the property.

Local Authorities Section 7/8/10

Each Local Authority, must within its functional area, keep public roads clean and free from litter. They are responsible for the prevention of litter being created and for managing litter in public places. They are also responsible for preparing a Litter Management Plan. Under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended, the Council has the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (Litter Fines) and Section Notices for offences in breach of the Act. In this case, a notice may be issued under Section 9 requiring the removal of litter.

Mobile Outlets Section 15

Operators of mobile outlets involved in the sale of produce, food or drink must provide and maintain litter receptacles at or in the vicinity of the outlet whilst it is in operation. They must also arrange for the removal of any litter within 100m of the operation of the outlet.

Major Events Section 18

The promoter or organisers of such events must take measures to ensure litter is prevented or limited at the venue and in the surrounding vicinity before, during and after the event. This applies to football matches, other sporting events and festivals whereby large crowds attend. A local authority may serve a Notice to the event organiser requiring that appropriate measures be put in place. Failure to do so can result in the local authority taking action to manage litter at the event and recover costs from the event organiser.

Advertising Section 19

- Placement of any signage on public property must have the permission of the Local Authority (Planning Department). Signage on private property must also adhere to certain planning conditions as set out by the Local Authority. Exceptions refer to presidential and local elections, referendums and public meetings.
- Advertising flyers placed on car windscreens is prohibited and anyone wishing to do so should contact their Local Authority for advice.
- Defacement of structures situated in the functional area of a Local Authority is also an offence.
- A Local Authority may issue a notice under Section 20 of the Act requesting the removal of any illegally placed signage or advertising material on public property.
- A Local Authority may also introduce bye-laws under Section 21 to regulate the distribution of advertising material within their functional area.

Dog Fouling Section 22

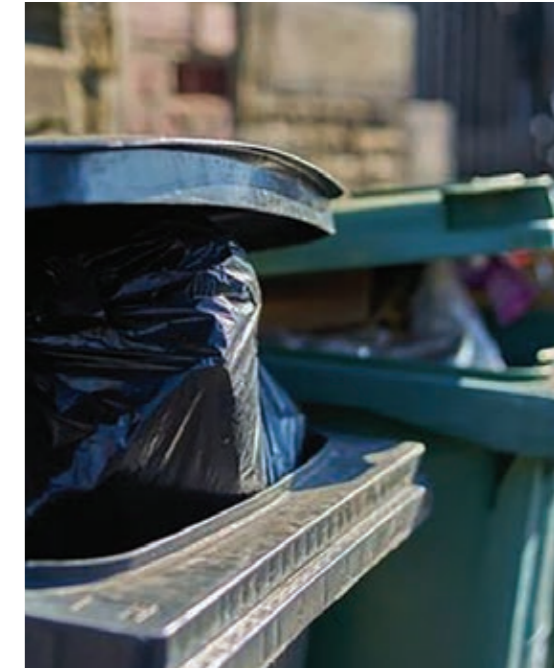
It is illegal to allow your dog to foul in public places or on private property where the owner has not consented to the presence of the dog.

Presenting your refuse for collection

Due care should be enacted when presenting your waste and recycling bins for collection in order to ensure that they do not cause a litter nuisance. The phasing out of domestic waste presented in plastic bags was introduced by the Council when Offaly County Council introduced Waste Management (Storage, Presentation, Segregation and Collection of Household Waste) Bye-Laws 2009.

Under Section 5 of the Bye-Laws, household waste is to be presented in an approved container, i.e. wheeled bin. The introduction of this method of household waste presentation was significant in reducing the generation of litter from kerbside waste collections.

In 2018, Offaly County Council adopted the following Bye-laws in order to strengthen their powers relating to waste management: Offaly County Council (Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye-laws, 2018.

**2.3 Penalties**

Littering is an act which is liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice, otherwise known as a litter fine or on-the-spot fine, of €150. The timeframe for payment is 21 days from its date of issue. Failure to pay a litter fine within the timeframe may result in the Council initiating legal proceedings to the alleged offender. Upon a successful prosecution in court under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 by a Local Authority, a conviction may incur a fine of up to €3,000. A person convicted may also be required to pay the financial costs associated with the legal fees and other costs which the Local Authority incurred in undertaking legal proceedings. A fine issued under the Bye-laws in Section 2.2 is €75 for non compliance.

In some cases, the Council may decide not to issue a Litter Fine but to take the alleged offender to court under a *Direct Prosecution*, depending on the extent of littering/illegal dumping and should the evidence be strong enough to do so.



SECTION 3

Litter Plan Objectives

By working together and enhancing links with local community groups, the Council will continue to work towards the elimination of litter in County Offaly. This Plan sets out 8 objectives to achieve this. The objectives are listed below and each is discussed in more detail.

- **Education and Awareness**
- **Street Cleaning**
- **Events in County Offaly**
- **Develop a Policy on Advertising**
- **Enforcement**
- **Local Participation**
- **Develop partnerships with various voluntary, public and commercial bodies**
- **Encourage the use of recycling infrastructure**

The achievement of these objectives requires significant resources in terms of

- ✓ Enforcement and administration of the relevant legislation pertaining to litter
- ✓ Provision of Litter Wardens to carry out the relevant duties
- ✓ Dedicated Environmental Awareness Officer
- ✓ Street cleaning staff
- ✓ Street cleaning plant and equipment
- ✓ Appropriate litter disposal
- ✓ Adequate budget to provide for the above

3.1 Education and Awareness

In the making of this Litter Management Plan, Offaly County Council has a duty to raise awareness and educate the public about litter management and will use the following avenues:

- ✓ Public consultation regarding the Litter Management Plan using local media and meet the requirements for same as set out in the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended
- ✓ Publication of the Litter Management Plan on the Council's website www.offaly.ie
- ✓ Continued promotion of the Green Schools Programme
- ✓ Continued support and assistance in National Spring Clean
- ✓ Information regarding litter responsibilities on the website
- ✓ Design and publication of leaflets regarding specific litter issues where required. (e.g. dog fouling)
- ✓ Continue to develop close links with the local community and business sectors
- ✓ Run initiatives with communities on environmental awareness

Awareness and Education is an integral part of the Litter Management Plan and Offaly County Council has a dedicated Environmental Awareness Officer whose area of responsibility includes promoting more positive behaviour among groups such as tidy towns, schools and the business sector. The Municipal Districts also have developed close links to the community sector working hand in hand for a cleaner community. A key objective of the Plan is to continue to support and facilitate educational programmes such as those outlined below.

3.1.1 Green Schools Programme

This is an environmental education programme targeted mainly at primary and secondary schools. It is a national and international programme operated in Ireland by An Taisce, in conjunction with the local authorities. There are various themes in this programme, the first being Litter and Waste. Therefore, when a school registers to participate in the programme, it must initially address litter and waste and follow seven steps to complete the programme. It has proved to be hugely successful in all schools and has expanded to include third level institutions, pre-schools and other educational facilities, such as Rehab Care, Adult Education Centre and Youth Reach Organisations.

The Green Schools Programme is greatly supported within the Council with visits made to the schools by the Environmental Awareness Officer to give talks on litter and waste as well as facilitating and financing environmental workshops. An annual teacher training seminar is held to inform and advise schools on the programme and its different themes. The Council also offers resources such as free compost bins, litter pickers, clean up kits and sometimes offers financial assistance for green initiatives where possible.

The Council also supports schools who participate in One Good Idea which is an energy awareness competition run by Sustainable Energy of Ireland (SEAI). The competition is all about students taking action on saving energy and

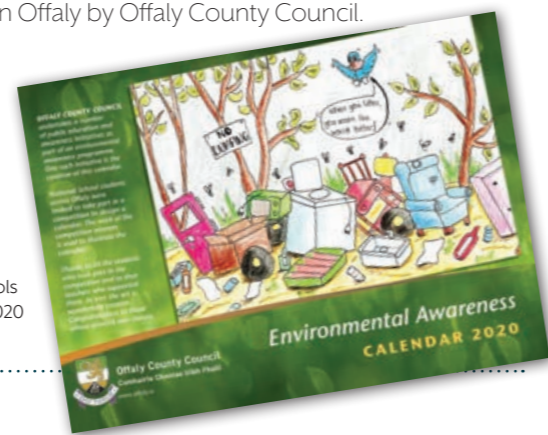
One Good Idea Green Schools



climate change while inspiring others to join in. Offaly County Council was proud to have two of its green schools tackling the issue of single use plastic in their schools. They entered in SEAI's One Good Idea Competition and were selected for the Regional Finals in Limerick in February 2020.

A team of 6th class students from St Rynagh's National School, Banagher were runners up in the competition. They researched the harmful effects of single use plastics and promoted the switch to reusable bottles instead. Geashill National School came up with the initiative "BottleBusters". They want to eliminate single use plastic in their school and have now introduced aluminium drinking bottles for all the pupils and teachers.

In 2020 Offaly County Council invited all primary schools to participate in a Green Schools Calendar as an awareness raising initiative. Pupils from 3rd to 6th class were invited to draw pictures based on any environmental theme. Finalists were selected and 12 winners, one for each month were published in a calendar which was distributed to all primary schools in Offaly by Offaly County Council.



Greenschools Calendar 2020

Offaly County Council – through Comhairle na nÓg, as part of their work plan on climate change have been developing an app named 'Trash-Talk'. The app provides secondary school students in Offaly with a toolkit that students can use to campaign to make their schools single-use-plastic free. Anyone can download and use this app from their app store and become more aware of environmental issues and learn how to reduce single-use-plastic in their school.

In order to achieve more awareness about the issue of plastic waste in schools in Offaly, Comhairle na nÓg collaborated with the Environment section in Offaly County Council and now have six secondary schools in Offaly receiving workshops from Susan Adams of 'Education for Sustainability'. Susan Adams provides education to young

people in sustainability and variety of environmental based action workshops (www.educationforsustainability.ie).

The following schools are participating

- St. Brendan's Community School, Birr
- Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Clara
- Sacred Heart School, Tullamore
- Tullamore College
- St. Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry
- Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac
- Coláiste Íosagáin, Portarlinton
- Coláiste na Sionna, Banagher College

Schools will receive workshops on how to reduce and eliminate single use plastic within their school which will work towards their green school targets.



Left to right: Susan Adams (educationfor sustainability.ie), Aisling Lambe (Offaly County Council Comhairle Coordinator), Transition Year students from Sacred Heart School, Cathaoirleach Declan Harvey, Sindy Meleady (TY Year Head), Breda Hand (TY Year Coordinator)



Left to right: Susan Adams (educationfor sustainability.ie), Transition Year Students from St Brendan's School Birr, Aisling Lambe (Offaly County Council Comhairle Coordinator)

3.1.2 Tidy Towns Seminars

The Council has run Tidy Towns seminars for groups over the last number of years. This is run in conjunction with the Local Community Development Committee and is tailored towards the needs of the groups. They are invited to attend a seminar on topics which they find most difficult in the National Tidy Towns Competition, such as Litter, Waste Minimization and Biodiversity. The Council also piloted a "walk and talk" audit of the local towns/villages by Tidy Towns experts over two days and an evening seminar to discuss issues of common interest and concern. The Council continues to build on this relationship with groups and is always keen to introduce new initiatives.

Tidy Towns groups and community groups raise awareness at a local level by being visible throughout the year when doing clean ups. Many liaise with their local school to encourage the green schools programme and these groups continue to be an invaluable resource to the Council. They work tirelessly for the good of their town/village on a voluntary basis and can be seen regularly around the County at all times of the year. They provide not only litter picking in their area but also provide the planting of shrubs and plants. In many cases, where there is limited funding available by the Council, the funding for such is raised locally by the groups, making the work of these groups even more vital for the County.

Geashill Tidy Town National Winner November 2021



Smaller towns and villages have also strived to improve their appearance and aesthetics and this again, is due to the increased work that the Tidy Towns Groups undertake, with the support of the Council, through financial and practical assistance. Towns such as Geashill, Tubber and Clonbullogue have consistently achieved high points in the annual National Tidy Towns Competition, with Geashill being awarded first place as Ireland's Tidiest Village in 2021. The Gateway scheme has greatly assisted in this regard by working in conjunction with community and voluntary groups.

The Community Department within Offaly County Council holds annual Tidy Towns seminars for groups. The purpose is to provide information and training to groups who wish to focus on a specific area of the Tidy Towns applications. Workshops are often provided to assist groups and financial assistance where possible. These seminars have not been held since the COVID-19 pandemic; however support is still on hand for all groups. The Council would also include bringing groups to other counties to meet Tidy Towns groups to brain-storm and get ideas on innovative projects.

PPN's

The PPN is the recognised link through which the local authority connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors to facilitate input by the public into local government. The PPN is the collective voice of the Community and has:

- a A County Plenary dealing with county issues
- b A Municipal Plenary dealing with local area issues
- c Linkage Groups to deal with specific issues/topics
- d A Secretariat at county level to organise and facilitate the working of the foregoing structures/mechanisms.

Role of the PPN

- To contribute and facilitate opportunities for networking
- To identify issues of collective concern
- To actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups
- To enable public participation in local decision making and planning of services
- To facilitate elections onto decision making bodies
- To support the Local Economic and Community Plan consultation and a strong voice of community on the Local Community Development Committee
- Support individual members of the PPN to participate



Community Composting at Lloyd Town Park, Tullamore

GREEN OFFALY

Green Offaly began life as an Offaly Public Participation Network, Environmental Pillar initiative. In collaboration with Offaly PPN, Offaly Local Development Company, Community Power and ECO-UNESCO, Green Offaly has already embarked on a number of projects.



ODEN (Offaly Disability Equality Network) ODEN are members of the PPN and have carried out a number of projects including environment/ public realm spatial awareness. A Countywide Dog Fouling Awareness campaign including the stencilling element took place during 2021 in Tullamore, Clara and Shinrone.



Cathaoirleach Declan Harvey lending a hand with the Stencilling in Tullamore



Scoil Naomh Phadraig, Ballybryan participating in National Spring Clean



Stephen Darby and grandson Conor participating in National Spring Clean

3.1.3 National Spring Clean

Each year, the Council supports the litter initiative, National Spring Clean which is promoted during the month of April. It is organised by An Taisce and supported by Offaly County Council and it has three main objectives:

- 1 To heighten awareness of litter and waste issues
- 2 To encourage clean ups throughout the month of April
- 3 To promote sustained, practical involvement in looking after the environment

This campaign encourages local communities to participate in clean ups and has proved to be a growing success year on year. The Council offers support through the provision of

litter pickers, bags and gloves and facilitates the free disposal of collected waste from groups. Offaly County Council encourages and support clean ups not only in the month of April for National Spring Clean but all throughout the year and strives to offer the same support to groups. Groups wishing to register for clean ups can contact An Taisce www.antisce.org/projects.nsc.html.

In 2021 to date, Offaly County Council has supported over 252 litter picks and collected over 73 tonnes of litter from voluntary community groups. Without the hard work of these groups, Offaly County Council would not be able to aspire to becoming a litter free county.

3.1.4 IBAL – Irish Business Against Litter

This Anti-Litter League is an initiative of IBAL, an alliance of companies who came together in 1996 with the common aim of tackling the Irish litter problem. The Companies believed this was having a significant detrimental effect on our economic well-being, given that Ireland has always highlighted our ‘clean green’ image as a major asset in attracting both business and tourists alike. This alliance came to the view that education and promotion alone would not solve the problem but that the rigorous enforcement of the litter laws by local authorities would go a long way towards solving the problem.

One of the major initiatives of IBAL was the Anti-Litter League which commenced in 2002. This annual survey ranks the performance of a number of towns and cities (40 in total in 2021) throughout the country and this initiative is now co-funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

Tullamore town has made significant progress since its participation in the IBAL League. There are two rounds of surveys each year and Tullamore has shown significant improvement over the years and the establishment of Team Tullamore has contributed greatly to this result. This is discussed in more detail further on.

It has long been acknowledged that a clean environment is essential to the social and economic well being of any town. Experience has shown that no one agency alone can tackle the issue of litter and with this in mind the Council has initiated and developed a number of inter-agency partnerships within the town. Collectively with these like minded groups and organisations, many successful litter abatement initiatives have been undertaken. Through a combination of individual and collaborative efforts

the attractiveness of the county, and in particular, the largest town, Tullamore, has been greatly enhanced over the past five years. This is reflected in the town’s performance in the IBAL Anti-Litter League with Tullamore ranked 20th in 2021.

The establishment of a local Inter-Agency group in 2009 to focus on improving Tullamore’s position in this annual litter league as the town’s lack of progression between 2003 and 2008 was a matter of grave concern to the community at large. The group included representatives of the Tidy Towns, Chamber of Commerce, Offaly County Council and Waterways Ireland. This group has now been renamed Team Tullamore.

The targeting of a number of specific ‘black spots’ identified in the IBAL report were agreed and each agency worked together to eliminate these. The Council for example reviewed its street cleaning schedule to ensure a more focused and targeted approach in black spot areas. Mobile surveillance units were engaged to record evidence of litter offenders. Waterways Ireland and the Tidy Towns arranged for joint clean-ups along the Grand Canal in the town. The initiative was a huge success and this was reflected in the town’s performance in the league

where the town jumped from 42nd in 2008 to 12th in 2021 and is now classified as ‘Cleaner than European Norm’ standard. Future community partnerships will be built on this successful model.

Team Tullamore

Meetings of Team Tullamore are convened monthly/bi monthly and chaired by Tullamore Municipal District. The objectives of the Group are as follows:

- To win the Tidy Towns Competition.
- To strengthen pride of place and to raise the profile of Tullamore, contributing to the evolution of Tullamore as a quality visitor destination enhancing the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town.
- Encourage greater numbers to visit and enjoy the town of Tullamore while encouraging those who visit the town to stay for longer and avail more of the tourism offering.
- Develop a three-year implementation plan, prioritising projects that can be delivered and demonstrate positive change while strengthening a strategic relationship between the Local Authority, Tidy Towns, Chamber of Commerce and Waterways Ireland.



Fayre in the Square



Fayre in the Square

3.1.5 Local Media

The Council shall continue to promote litter and general environmental responsibility using the local media as an important information tool. Radio interviews and specific promotions are provided for specific events, such as National Spring Clean, Halloween and Christmas. The Council shall continue to use its own website to inform the public about litter issues and responsibilities and promote its services www.offaly.ie.

The use of social media has become an increasingly popular tool to disseminate information to the public, particularly through Facebook and Twitter. This also allows feedback from the public on litter issues and it is becoming apparent that there is little tolerance for littering and illegal dumping by members of the public.

3.2 Street Cleaning

Street cleaning is the second objective of the Litter Management Plan and is an integral part of the Council's function regarding litter control and management. The servicing of litter bins in the County is overseen by the Area Engineers in the Roads Department and is achieved through three essential elements

- Mechanical sweeping on a scheduled basis – this is through the use of a “green machine” and street sweeper in more concentrated urban areas
- Manual servicing of litter bins and road sweeping – this is through the provision of staff resources
- Disposal of litter – where all the litter collected from the road sweepings and litter bins is disposed of appropriately.

All of the above is achieved at a cost and the provision of the street cleaning service is subject to annual budget approval by Council members. Over the last 3 years, Offaly County Council has spent in excess of €1.4 million on street cleaning for its towns and villages – approximately €500,000 per annum. The Council is also investigating the use of smart bins which utilise solar energy and compaction efficiency within the unit, to determine the efficiency and cost effectiveness of such technology.

The Council shall continue to provide this essential service and increase it where possible. The role of local community groups is recognised in this respect. The Council shall continue to assist any groups who support street cleaning in their local towns and villages and continue to provide resources, where available, to groups.



3.3 Events in County Offaly

The third objective relates to the many events, both large and small that take part all across the county. Offaly County Council proudly supports major events in the county such as the Fleadh Ceoil na h-Eireann which took place in Tullamore for three consecutive years and the annual Tullamore Show, which can attract over 60,000 people on one day as well as the Castle Palooza Festival and many more. Major events such as GAA matches are also supported by the Council. Although such events contribute positively to the county, inevitably, considerable costs are incurred by the Council in cleaning up after large public events. To prevent the creation of litter at such events, the Council shall engage with event organisers to produce an agreeable litter management plan as outlined in Section 17 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, as amended. In the recent Christmas event in O'Connor Square Tullamore, Offaly County Council introduced segregated bins for the public for recycling, organics and waste.

3.4 Enforcement

As well as having a role in awareness regarding litter, Offaly County Council is also tasked with the responsibility of enforcing the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended. This objective relates to the team work within the Council in enforcement and the Litter Wardens' role is of paramount importance in this function. The Litter Wardens will continue to enforce the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended and any future legislation, and progress all cases of littering and illegal dumping to their conclusion. They shall issue litter fines where possible and liaise with the administrative section of the Council on legal proceedings.

In some cases, the Council uses CCTV to monitor litter black spots and eliminate littering offences, whether in rural or urban areas. This has proved to be very successful in issuing fines and prosecutions for litter offences at Bring Banks.

Offaly County Council recently introduced audio messages at bring banks that were particularly littered advising the public not to litter.



3.5 Local Participation

The involvement and co-operation of the residents of Offaly is essential to the success of the Litter Management Plan and below outlines the Plan's objectives in this regard.

- I The Council shall continue to encourage local community groups to participate in the National Tidy Towns Competition
- II Continue to develop a good working relationship with local businesses
- III The Environmental Awareness Officer will provide assistance to groups via community workshops
- IV The Council shall provide financial assistance when funding is available to do so
- V Support anti-litter initiatives
- VI Encourage local responsibility to tackle specific litter issues, such as dog fouling

In November 2021, Offaly County Council and volunteers from a number of community groups including Tullamore Tidy Towns and Shannonside Sub Aqua Club participated in a clean up of the Tullamore River. There was a large volume of waste and litter visible in the river which needed to be removed in order to enhance and restore the quality of the river. Over 20 shopping trolleys along with bikes, beds, mattresses and a 60 inch flat screen TV were retrieved. This event was hugely successful with a total amount of 1.5 tonnes of waste and litter being disposed of.



3.6 Develop new partnerships with various voluntary, public and commercial bodies with the view to creating joint anti-litter initiatives

This objective outlines below how the Council shall achieve same

- Create collaborative partnerships with businesses, residents associations, tidy towns groups and any other concerned parties with the view to creating a cleaner sustainable environment in County Offaly
- Subject to the availability of finance, provide assistance by way of a grant to groups in respect of environmental presentation of their local areas.
- Examine the potential of using the probationary services to undertake the cleaning up of litter black spots
- Work with local CE and TÚS schemes on litter and street cleaning initiatives

3.7 Encourage the use of recycling infrastructure

The final objective relates to the Council's recycling infrastructure and the promotion of this within the County. The Council shall continue to provide bring banks and civic amenity sites for the public and expand these facilities if possible. The Council shall monitor and maintain these facilities to ensure they are free from litter.

SECTION 4

National Litter Monitoring System

The Litter Pollution Monitoring System provides an accurate picture of litter pollution countrywide and accurately measures changes over time. It is an ongoing system whereby annual surveys are completed by Local Authorities and correlated to produce an Index on litter pollution on a county basis.

The System was developed by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Tobin Consulting Engineers in consultation with local authorities. Under the System, local authorities carry out surveys – a minimum of between some 30 and 600 surveys per annum depending on population size - to determine the extent, composition and causes of litter pollution in their areas. The data obtained from the system enables them to provide more effective litter management planning for their areas, to assess the effectiveness of their litter management strategies and to ensure the optimum allocation of its resources to tackle litter. It provides vital information to the Department on the national picture regarding litter pollution which is then fed back to the local authorities.

4.1 How it Works

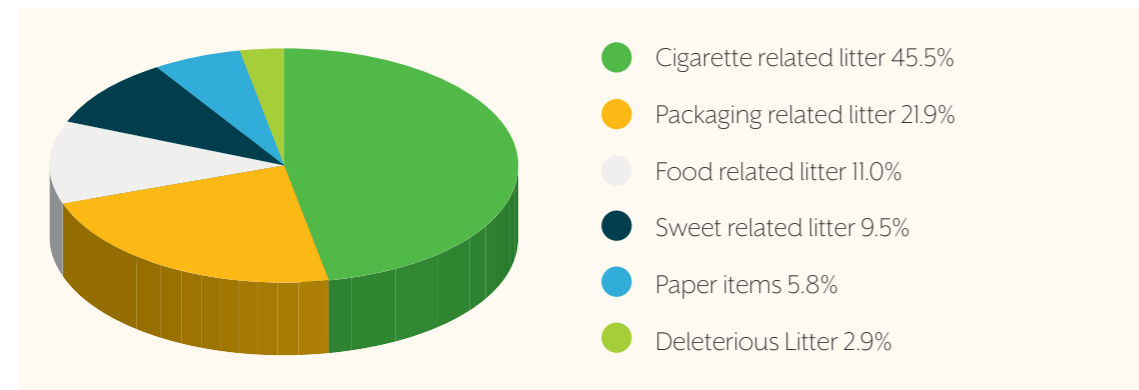
The System provides answers to three key questions:

- 1 How littered is the country at local and national level?
- 2 What are the main constituent elements of litter pollution?
- 3 What are the main causes of litter pollution?

There are two types of surveys undertaken. The first type is the Litter Pollution survey to determine the extent and severity of litter pollution. The Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) developed a Litter Geographical Information System (GIS) software package to assist local authorities to map potential sources of litter and identify survey locations for their surveys. Local authorities determine the survey locations using maps produced by the GIS Software, as follows:

- 40% "high risk" locations
- 40% random potential litter generating areas chosen by the GIS Software
- 20% based on local authority knowledge of litter pollution in the area. The litter pollution survey results are expressed as a litter pollution index for the areas surveyed, ranging in value from 1 to 5, as follows:
 - 1 Unpolluted i.e. litter free L1
 - 2 Slightly polluted, L2
 - 3 Moderately polluted, L3
 - 4 Significantly polluted, L4
 - 5 Grossly polluted, i.e. level of litter expected after a major sporting or entertainment event, L5

The main constituent elements of litter are outlined below. This data is based on the most recent published data from the Litter Monitoring Body containing data from litter quantification surveys carried out in 2020:



Composition of Litter Pollution survey results for 2020 Offaly County Council

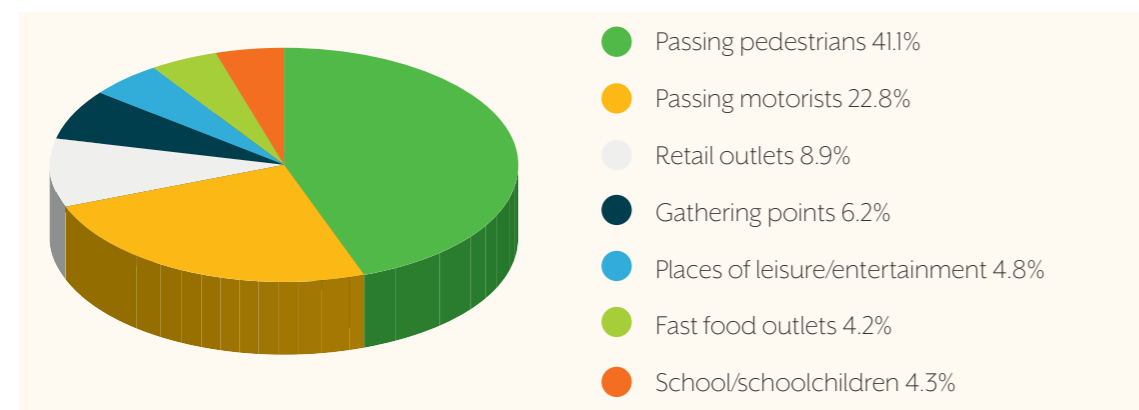
Cigarette related litter (45.5%) continues to constitute the highest percentage of litter in the locations surveyed – this is comprised mainly of cigarette ends which constitute 43.3% of all litter items nationally.

Packaging litter (21.9%) is the second largest component of national litter pollution recorded. Bottle caps (2.5%), bottles (1.9%), drink lids (1.6%), drink cups (1.6%), beverage bottles (non-alcoholic) (1.6%), bags and wrappers (1.4%) beverage cans (alcoholic) (1.3%), beverage cans (non-alcoholic) (1.2%) and beverage bottles (alcoholic) (1.2%) are the main litter items in this category.

Food related litter (11.0%) is the third largest category of litter pollution recorded. Chewing gum is the single largest litter component in the food related litter category, and the second largest component nationally, comprising 9.4% of all litter recorded in the LQS carried out in 2020.

Sweet related litter (9.5%) is the fourth largest category of litter pollution recorded. Sweet wrappers (plastic/foil) (5.1%) is the largest litter component in the sweet related litter category in 2020.

The main causes of litter pollution nationally are:

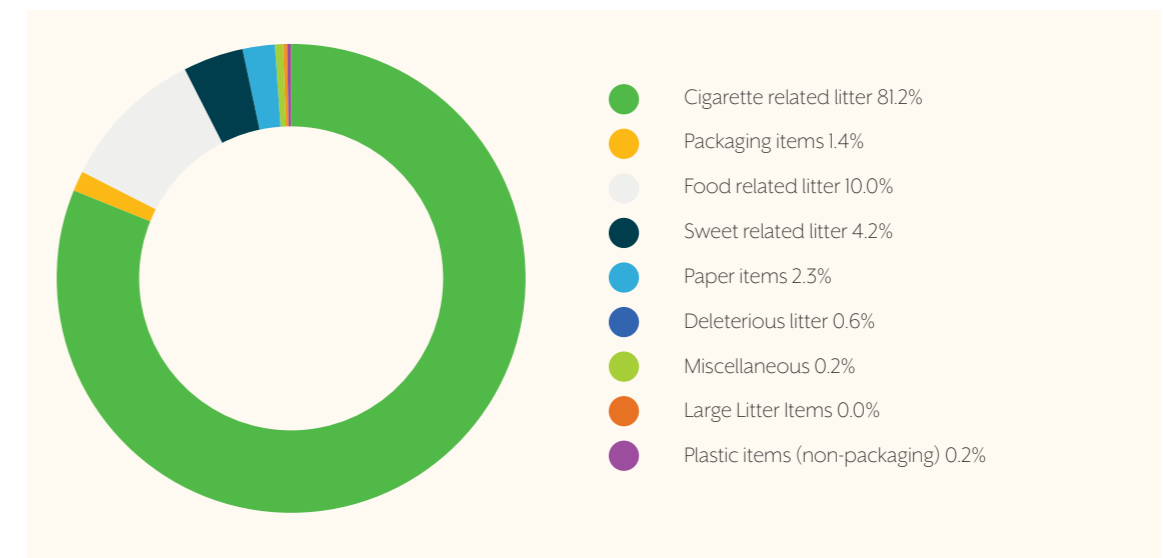


Main causes of litter pollution nationally

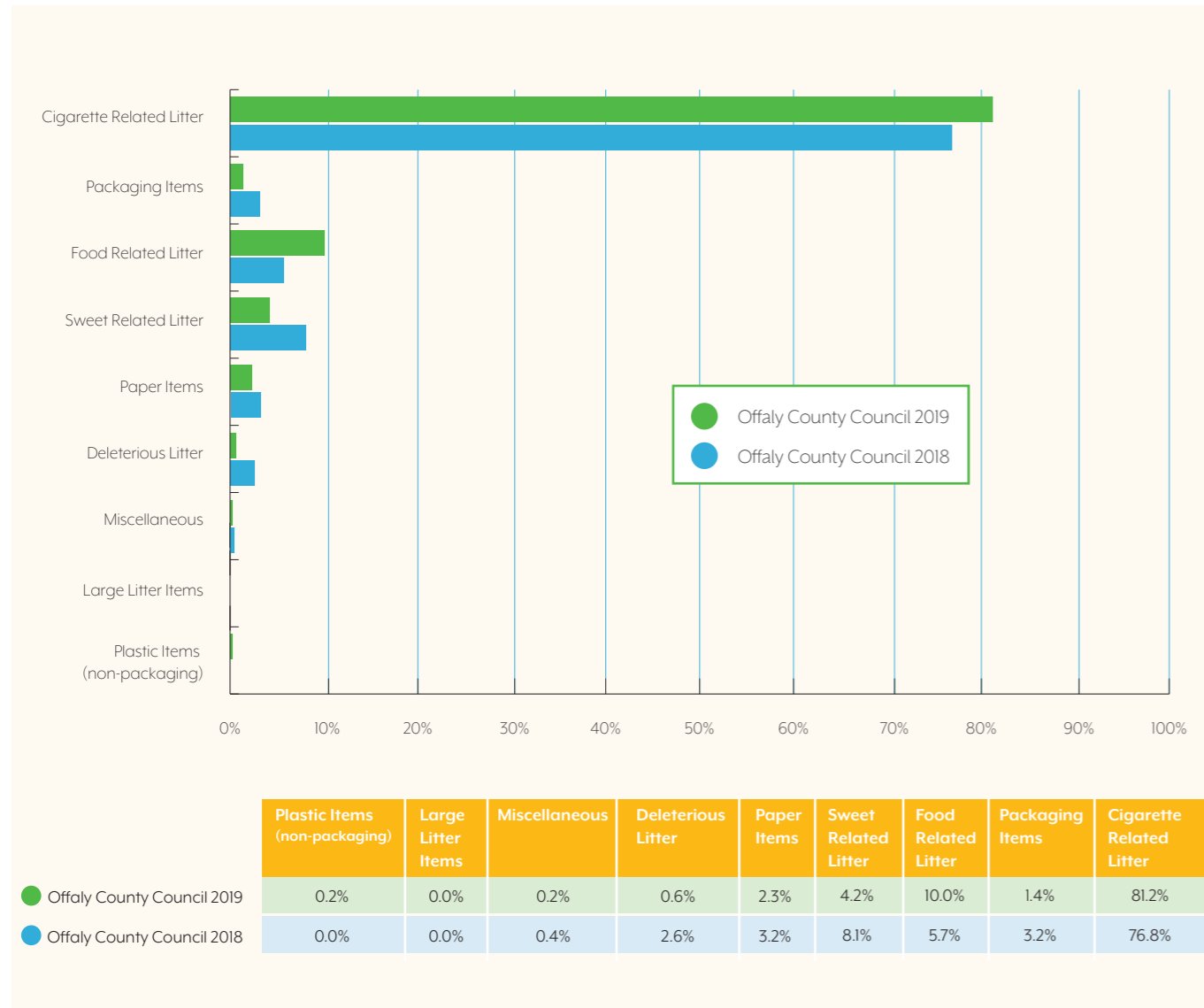
A comparison of the results of LQS carried out in 2019 and 2020 shows a relatively similar composition of litter. However, analysis reveals some differences in the relative quantities of certain components.

The percentage of cigarette related litter has decreased by 7.4% since 2019. The percentage of packaging items increased by 7.0% since 2019. The percentage of food related litter has decreased by 1.3% since 2019. The percentage of sweet related litter items increased 0.1% since 2019. The percentage of paper items decreased by 0.1% since 2019. The percentage of deleterious litter has increased by 1.3% since 2019. The number of items recorded as miscellaneous litter has increased by 0.6% since 2019. There has been a decrease in large litter items (0.4%) since 2019. The percentage of plastic items (non-packaging) remained at 0.5% in 2019 and 2020.

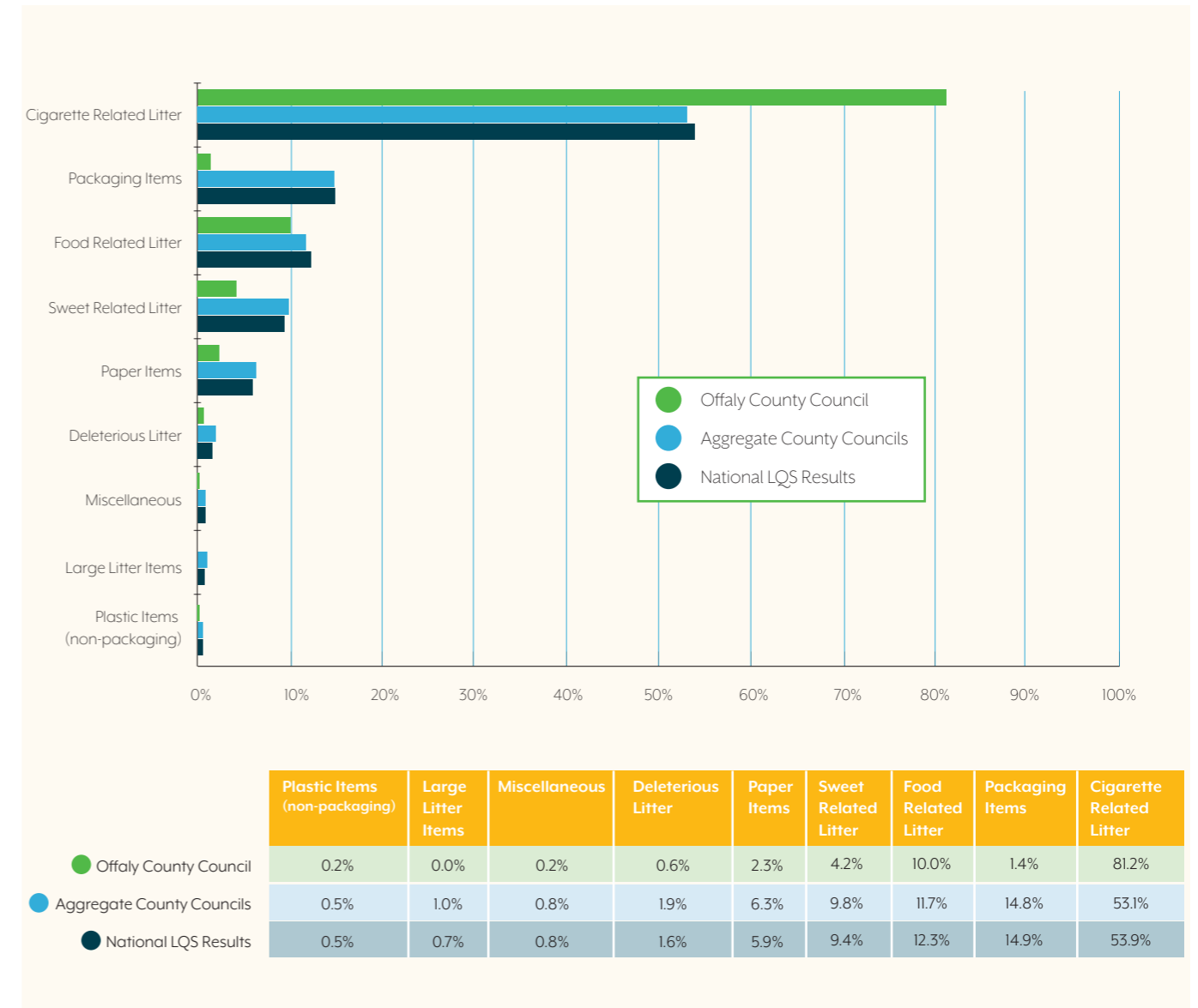
The greatest percentage change in litter composition is in the cigarette related litter which has decreased by 7.4% since 2019. This large decrease may be attributed to the Government's Covid 19 restriction measures and the temporary closure of many businesses during 2020. Packaging items had the largest increase since 2019 (7.0%). This can be attributed to an increase in several items in this category including beverage bottles - non-alcoholic (1.0% increase), lids (e.g. bottles and jars) (0.8% increase), bottle caps (0.7% increase), beverage bottles – alcoholic (0.6% increase), drink cups (0.4% increase), bags and wrappers (0.4% increase), beverage cans - alcoholic (0.4% increase) and other plastic packaging (0.4% increase).



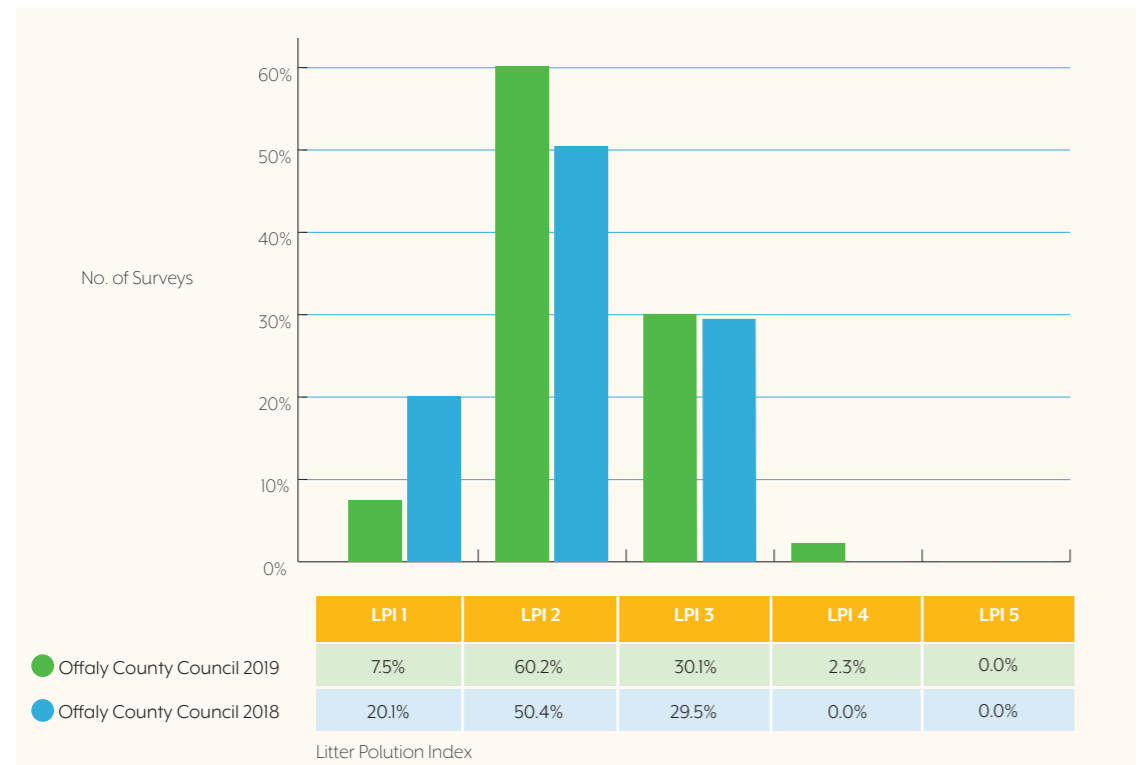
Composition of Litter Pollution in Offaly in 2019



Comparison of Litter Composition in Offaly County, 2018 and 2019

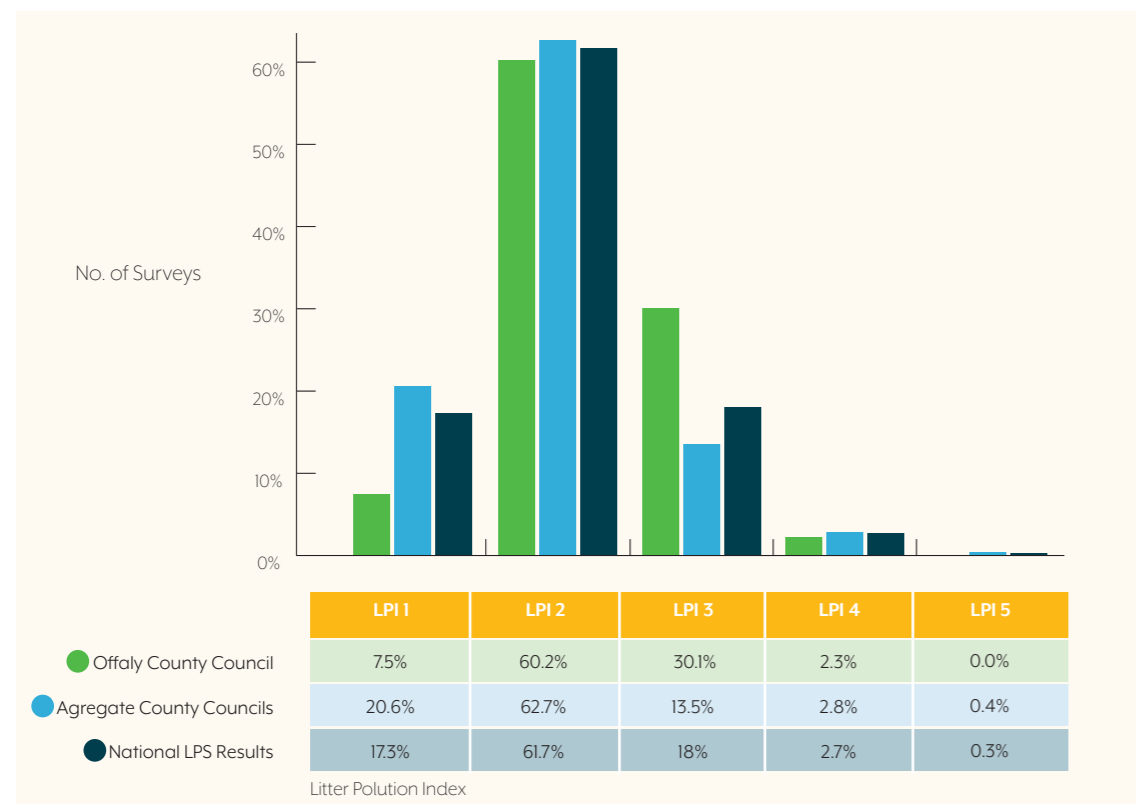


Comparison of Litter Composition in Offaly County Council with Aggregate Results for County Councils and National Results.



Litter Pollution Survey Results for Offaly County, 2018-2019

Below is a comparison between Offaly County Council, aggregate Local Authorities and National results.



Comparison of Litter Pollution Indices in Offaly County Council with Aggregate Results for County Councils and National Result.

Offaly County Council also participates in ATM Surveys as required by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, in agreement with the banking sector. These surveys analyse the quantity of litter around the vicinity of banking machines, in particular discarded receipts from the ATM machines. All machines now automatically do not print a receipt for a customer and a customer must select this option should they wish to have a paper receipt. This has gone a long way towards reducing paper litter at these premises and reduces the necessity for a bin for disposal of receipts.

SECTION 5

Issues of Concern

Litter, as well as being unsightly, has many detrimental aspects which affect the ability of the County to develop to its full potential. Passing pedestrians and motorists constitute the largest causative factor in litter pollution in Offaly according to the National Litter Monitoring Body. Passing pedestrians account for 42% and motorists account for 25%. This shows a correlation to the composition of litter found during the surveys, i.e. people smoking, eating and drinking on the street or dropped from passing vehicles.

Illegal Dumping/Fly Tipping

Another major issue of concern for the Councils is the extent of fly-tipping in the county and this includes dumping at bring banks. This is not only disrespectful to local residents who live nearby bring centres but also encourages more dumping.

The Council changed from the wheeled bin bring centre system in 2010 to a more efficient receptacle. The Council also placed CCTV at problematic sites. This has reduced the littering issue significantly. A full list of Bring Banks and Civic Amenity Sites is provided in Appendix 1.

Over the last year, the Council has noted an increase in large scale illegally dumping/fly tipping, particularly in remote areas. To return these sites back to their original state incorporates a lot of resources in terms of staff and financial assistance from the Council.



Bring Bank System – Wheeled



New Bring Bank System

Dog Fouling

Dog Fouling throughout the county, particularly in our towns and villages has become an increasing litter issue over recent months. Not only is dog fouling unsightly, it poses a health and safety risk to many, particularly those who use wheelchairs, pushchairs and prams as well as for walking, etc.

Actions taken to combat dog litter

- The Council has increased foot patrols in problematic areas
- Issued letters and information leaflet on responsible dog ownership to local residents
- Put educational poster into shops/libraries
- Put free doggy bags into local shops/post offices/ public buildings
- Placed signage in prominent locations

Towns such as Edenderry and Ferbane, as well as Geashill and Crinkill villages have, with the assistance of Offaly County Council, installed specific anti dog fouling measures, such as Mutt Mitts. These are doggy bag dispensers placed strategically along dog walking routes to encourage people to clean up after their dog.



Doggy Bag/Mutt Mitt dispenser



Leaflet on dog owner responsibility



Cigarette Litter



Drug Related Litter

Cigarette Litter

As has been demonstrated in Section 4, cigarette related litter continues to be the largest composition of litter in Offaly. Under the Litter Pollution Act, occupiers are obliged to keep their place free from litter and this would include, shop owners, publicans and businesses. The Council ran an awareness campaign a number of years ago on cigarette litter and although many premises have specific bins for used cigarette outside their premises, there is still work to do in this regard.

Drug Related Litter

Offaly County Council was invited to participate in a new litter awareness scheme for tackling drug litter. A successful pilot study had been done with Westmeath County Council and the objective was to extend this to other midland authorities. The development of an inter-agency protocol and production of the information leaflet is a result of a co-ordinated response from a working group comprised of representation from the MRDATF, HSE CADS, An Garda Síochána, the County Council in Westmeath, Longford, Laois & Offaly and Merchants Quay Ireland.

Abandoned Cars

Cars are often abandoned on roadsides and public open spaces, including residential estates. Abandoning a vehicle is an offence under Section 71 of the Waste Management Act, 1996 as amended. In such cases, the Council will issue a letter to the owner of the vehicle requesting its removal and failure to do so can result in the Council removing same and costs may be incurred by the owner should the Council remove the vehicle.

Convenience Food Outlets

This is another issue identified as a problem in the litter pollution/quantification surveys. This type of litter is most visible on footpaths and roads within a one mile radius of towns and villages. It is not only unsightly but poses a risk to local wildlife, birds, flora and fauna. In towns where fast food outlets are present, the Litter Wardens monitor the volume of litter present outside on the public footpaths and liaise with the owner to install litter bins and sweep the footpaths on a regular basis.

Graffiti

Graffiti is specifically addressed in Section 19 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended. Over the years, it has not been a significant problem for the Council. However, the Council has funded organised creative graffiti projects in some estates in Tullamore with youth clubs.

Tourist Areas

The marinas at Banagher and Shannonbridge attract a large number of boat users during the tourist season – the months from May to October. To tackle the issues of littering from boats at these locations, the Councils put waste and recycling bins in place during this period. Signage is erected at the banks to encourage those using the facilities to keep the area clean as well as delivering the important message regarding waste segregation.



SECTION 6

Litter Control & Enforcement

Offaly County Council has a dedicated team of staff to enforce the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended. There are currently three full time litter wardens on patrol over 6 days per week and each has a dedicated litter van to deal with complaints. There are three more Litter/Traffic Wardens, whose area of responsibility is the large towns, Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry.

There is administrative support to process litter fines, issue section notices and if required, progress litter cases to court. All litter complaints received by the Council are firstly logged onto a computer package – the Pollutions Complaints Database and this is discussed in further detail in section 6.1. This ensures accurate quantification of all complaints and as this is accessed by the Litter Wardens via their mobile phones, it ensures a very effective and speedy method of dealing with complaints when they are received from the public. Should a litter investigation result in legal proceedings being issued against the alleged offender, the Litter Wardens act as witnesses in such cases and play a vital role in achieving a successful conviction.

It should be noted that the Litter Wardens also play an important role not only towards litter enforcement but also play a key role in litter awareness. They have visited schools and attended evening workshops on litter and waste for the community. They also participate in National Spring Clean by delivering clean up kits to schools and community groups and arranging the collection of the material. The bring centres are also monitored closely by the wardens to reduce illegal dumping.



6.1 Litter Complaints

All environmental complaints received by the Environment & Water Services are logged into the Pollution Complaints Database. These complaints include all those under the category of Litter Control with subcategories for specific types of offences such as dog fouling, fly tipping, advertising/signs, litter on land and in urban areas. Complaints are received via email, phone, personal and local representation and by the Litter Wardens themselves whilst on patrols. The general public also have the option to contact the Litter Hotline Number 1800 242673 or use the EPA's complaints system NIECE/Fix your Streets, who then forward complaint to the relevant local authority.

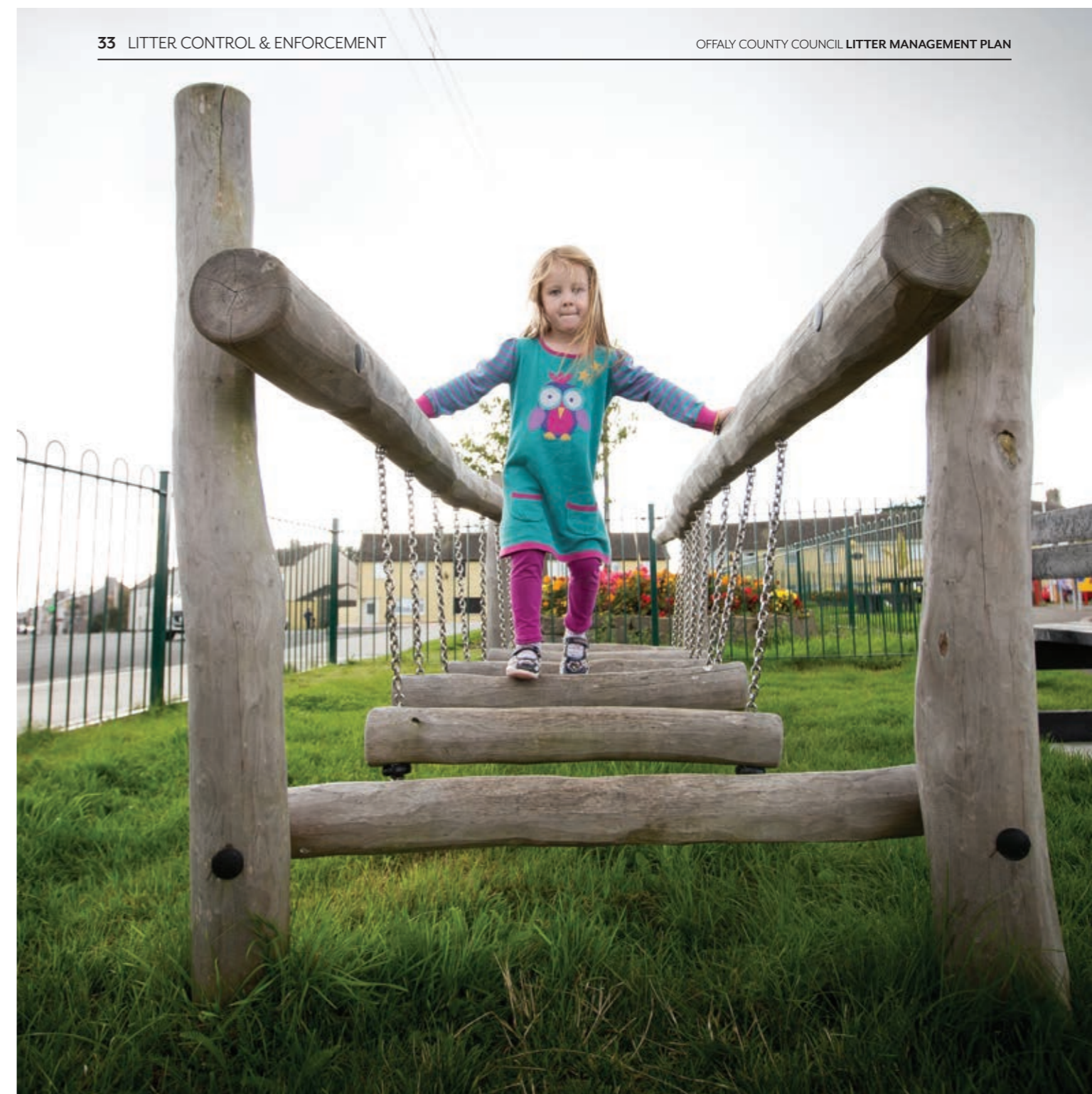
Each complaint is given its own unique number and investigated in a timely manner by the Litter Wardens. Photographs and a report are submitted by the Litter Wardens and uploaded for each complaint. Recommendations for action (e.g. issuing of a Section Notice, Litter Fines, legal proceedings) are also provided to assist in progressing each complaint to closure.

The number of complaints received in the Pollution Complaints Database from 2018 to 2021 (end of November) inclusive is outlined below:

	2018	2019	2020	2021 (until end November)
Complaints received	979	966	1,142	929

Number of complaints received in the Pollution Complaints Database from 2018 to 2021.

There was 133 litter fines issued in 2021 with over 50% paid to date. This compares to 177 in 2020.





SECTION 7

Conclusion

The objectives set out in this Plan can only be achieved through the co-operation of all sectors, from the Council to the business and school sectors and most importantly from the public. Education and awareness, as well as enforcement are key to the success of maintaining Offaly as a clean County in which to live as well as improving areas that need attention. Litter management is everyone's responsibility and it is only by working together and combining resources, we will achieve a cleaner, greener and healthier Offaly in which to live.





Appendix 1

Offaly County Council currently has 42 Bring Sites which accept glass and cans and in some cases, Textiles. It is the Council's intention to provide such valuable community services where possible to assist its residents with recycling.

List of Bring Centres and Civic Amenity Sites in County Offaly

(1) Bring Centres

Acceptance of glass, steel and aluminium cans and in some cases, textiles. At present there are 42 Bring Centres in County Offaly.

- Clonfanlough** Community Hall
- Shannonbridge** Harbour Area
- Banagher** Council Car Park
- Kilcormac** KDA Car Park
- Moneygall** Legion Hall
- Ballyboy** Community Hall
- Kinnitty** Community Centre Car Park
- Pollough** GAA Centre
- Cadamstown** Council Car Park
- Ferbane** Outside Gallen Utd Grounds
- Rath** National School
- Shinrone** Community Hall
- Shannon Harbour** Canal Service Road
- Killavilla** Community Centre
- Cloghan** Londis Shop
- Kilclonfert** Crossroads
- Belmont** near Crossroads
- Cloneygowan** Community Hall
- Ballycumber** Sycamore Drive
- Portarlington** School Car Park
- Rahan/Killina** Church Car Park
- Walsh Island** National School
- Ballinamere** Community Hall (removed temporarily)
- Bracknagh** Cross Roads
- Geashill** Gala Car Park
- Clonbullogue** Community Hall
- Ballinagar** Park beside School
- Ballycommon** Telecentre
- Coolderry** Village Centre
- Tullamore** Tesco Car Park
- Clareen** Car Park at GAA Pitch
- Durrow** beside Graveyard
- Tullamore Council Car Park** Bury Quay
- Ballybritt** opposite Brereton's Pub
- Tullamore** Daingean Road Car Park
- Tubber** Council Car Park
- Birr** Tesco Car Park, Roscrea Road
- Mountbolus** Community Hall
- Dunkerrin** Community Centre
- Mucklagh** exit off roundabout
- Clara Town** Leisure Centre
- Derryounce Lakes** Cushina, Portarlington

*The locations of the Bring Sites are subject to change, therefore please refer to the Council's website for updated information.

(2) Civic Amenity Centres

There are three civic amenity sites in the County which accept a wide range of materials from the general public (domestic only), such as dry recyclables, textiles, electrical/ electronic items, wood, garden waste, batteries, fluorescent tubes/light bulbs, mobile phones, ink cartridges, bulky items, domestic refuse, organic waste, scrap metal, polystyrene, gypsum, oils, white goods, hazardous items – paints, aerosols, pesticides/herbicides.

Note: All centres may not accept the full list of materials mentioned above so please check the Council's website or telephone the site centre

DERRYCLURE, Portlaoise Road, Tullamore (057 9344893)

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday 8am–4.30pm
Saturday 8am–3pm

BIRR Syngesfield Industrial Estate, Kinnitty Road

Opening hours:
Tuesday to Saturday 9am–5pm
Closed Mondays and Bank Holidays

EDENDERRY, Dublin Road (046 9772677)

Opening hours:
Monday to Saturday 9am–5pm
Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays





Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council