



DRAFT LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024 - 2026

ATHLONE MOATE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

**“Protect and further enhance
our environment and contribute to
combating and adapting to
climate change”**

DRAFT



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Definitions and General Information

Definition of Litter

The definition of 'litter' under this legislation is quite wide and extends from casual pieces of paper or cigarette ends to anything large or small that is, or is likely to become, unsightly and extends to both public and private property. In summary, it includes any item or material which is disposed of improperly (i.e. not deposited in a litter bin or authorised waste facility)

Under the Litter Pollution Acts, 1997 (as amended), litter is defined as:

“

a substance or object, whether or not intended as waste (other than waste within the meaning of the Waste Management Act, 1996, which is properly consigned for disposal) that, when deposited in a place other than a receptacle or other place lawfully designated for the deposit, or is likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any such substance or object, and regardless of its size or volume or the extent of the deposit

”



The Litter Pollution Act 1997, (as amended), introduced strong penalties to help combat the problems of litter pollution more effectively and also outlines everyone's responsibilities and liabilities in relation to litter and littering.

Public Place

Throwing litter in a public place is an offence and can be subject to an on-the-spot fine of €150 or a maximum fine of €4,000 if you are convicted of a litter offence in the District Court.

Private Property

If you either own or are responsible for a place to which the public has access (e.g. places like a school campus, public park, train or bus station or the precincts of a shopping centre), you are obliged by law to keep the place litter-free, regardless of how the litter got there.

The owner/occupier of property (a building or area of land) that can be seen from a public place is obliged to keep the property free of litter. Where litter has accumulated on property for whatever reason and the litter is visible from a public place, the local authority can issue a notice to the owner requiring the prompt removal of the litter. Failure to comply with this notice is an offence and may result in a maximum fine of €4,000 if you are convicted of a litter offence in the District Court.

Major Events

The promoters or organisers of major events (e.g. concerts, festivals, circuses and local sporting events) are required to ensure that they have litter control measures in place at the venue and in the surrounding vicinity before, during and after the event. This task can be undertaken by the Local Authority, but the promoter/organiser must bear the costs involved. Failure to comply with the requirements under Section 17 and 18 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended), is an offence and may result in a maximum fine of €4,000 if you are convicted of a litter offence in the District Court.

Mobile Food Outlets

Operators of mobile food outlets selling fast food or beverages are obliged to provide suitable litter bins in the vicinity of their outlets. Also, they must ensure that any litter arising from this operation within a distance not exceeding 100 metres of their outlet, is removed. Failure to comply with this is an offence.



Dog Fouling

Dog owners must remove their pets' waste from public places and dispose of it in a proper manner. You can read more about the responsibilities of dog owners, in our Responsible Dog Ownership Policy.



Posters and Temporary Signs

The increasing amount of signage that is being erected without appropriate licence or permission by businesses, event organisers etc along our road network is detracting from the amenity of the County and can in some instances constitute a hazard to road users. The law forbids the putting up of posters/signs on poles or on other structures in public places unless written permission is obtained from the owner of the pole or other structure in advance of putting up the poster/sign. Illegal signs will be removed by our Community Wardens.

Waste Bye Laws

The Westmeath County Council (Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye Laws, 2019 require the holder of household and/or commercial waste to prove that they dispose of their waste correctly by giving it either to an authorised waste collector or by bringing it to an authorised waste facility. These bye laws will also help ensure that recyclables, food waste and residual waste is correctly segregated and presented separately for collection.

Enforcement/Fines

The issue of enforcement of litter legislation is instrumental in the management of litter pollution. Leaving or throwing litter in a public place is an offence that can be subject to an on-the-spot fine of €150 or a maximum fine of €4,000 if you are convicted of a litter offence in the District Court. You can be issued with an on-the-spot fine by a community warden appointed by your Local Authority or by a member of the Gardaí. Litter Wardens will continue to enforce litter legislation by the issuing of on-the-spot fines and increasing the number of prosecutions in Court.

A person convicted of a litter offence may also be required to pay the local authority's costs and expenses in investigating the offence and bringing the prosecution to Court. Westmeath County Council will endeavour to utilise fines and prosecutions to their full extent and to provide an enhanced street cleaning service to prevent areas being spoilt by litter. Further information on Litter and the Law is available on the website of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment <https://www.dccae.gov.ie>

Enforcement by Community Wardens

Community Wardens play a vital role in enforcement of litter legislation. Their duties include dealing with littering/dumping and the issuing of on-the-spot fines under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 (as amended) and the Waste Management Acts, 1996 (as amended). The Wardens carry out active street patrols and remove abandoned cars. The Wardens currently liaise with members of the public and community groups in relation to litter and litter offences. The Community Wardens actively encourage anti-litter activity and deal with litter complaints.

Westmeath County Council currently employs four Community Wardens, who actively enforce litter legislation within the local authority. The Council will continue to provide regular training and refresher courses to its Wardens including courtroom skills related to prosecutions, litter legislation and training programmes to ensure that the Wardens maintain a high-profile presence within the Council's functional area. All personnel engaged in litter-reduction services will be trained in litter control practices.

Enforcement by An Garda Síochána

Westmeath County Council will continue to work closely with An Garda Síochána to pursue enforcement measures in relation to litter and abandoned cars.

Surveillance/CCTV

CCTV monitoring has been used successfully to deter, monitor, and prosecute littering in the past. Changes in the legislation under the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 which came into effect on the 15th of February 2024 will now allow CCTV monitoring to continue for the purposes of enforcement.

The Council will develop a local code of practice within this framework for the use of CCTV at litter black spots and bottle banks, for the purposes of targeting litter offenders and reducing instances of littering and illegal dumping in these areas.

How to make a complaint

Members of the public can report litter offences/ complaints directly to Council staff and Community Wardens by contacting the Council at 044 9332000 or the Freephone Litter Line on 1800 819 000. Litter offences/complaints can also be reported via email to litter@westmeathcoco.ie or by writing to the Council. Alternatively calls can be made via the EPA's National Environmental Complaints Line (NECL) 1850 365 121.

Members of the public are invited to contact the Council's Municipal District or Environment Section should they observe any illegal or suspicious waste activities; this collaborative approach greatly assists the local authority in minimising the impact of littering and illegal waste activities.



Litter Complaint Handling

The introduction of Customer Contact Management System (CCMS) system provides accurate recording of information regarding the various types of interaction between the public and the Council's various Sections. This has improved responsiveness and provided a valuable reporting tool for tracking the progress of complaint management.

The CCMS system records complaints and details of all actions undertaken in the resolution of that complaint. Once a litter complaint has been logged, it is assigned to an appropriate Enforcement Team Member through the Environmental Complaint System. They investigate the activity/incident with the view to obtaining evidence which might secure a fine or prosecution, should there be any illegality involved. The Enforcement Team Member then reports on the investigation to the line manager. Appropriate enforcement action is recommended when there is sufficient evidence to identify an offender. In the case of public property, the necessary clean-up or removal of litter/waste is arranged.

As well as the CCMS system, complaints may be generated through the various other communication points listed in the previous section. A summary of the litter complaint procedure is shown in figure 1 below.

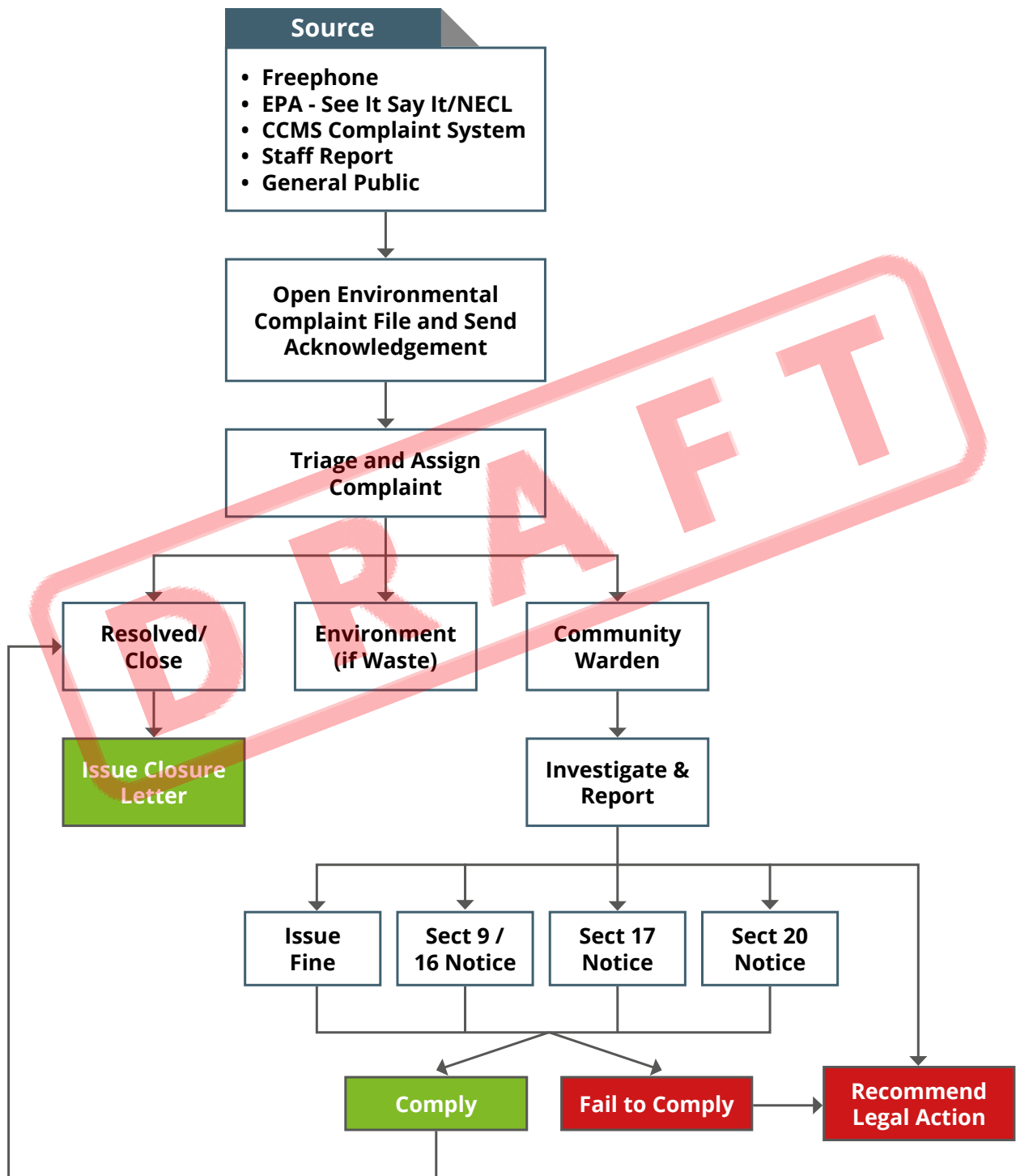


Figure 1 Litter Complaint Procedure

Working in Partnership with the Citizens of Westmeath

The Litter Management Plan 2024 - 2026 sets out our commitments for managing litter in the Municipal District of Athlone-Moate. If we are to achieve a clean environment, then we need to work in partnership with the individual citizens that make up our communities. Here's how the individual can help:

- Keep our streets clean. Put litter into on-street litter bins or take it home and put in your wheelie bin.
- Adopt the public footpath and/or grass margin in front of your home or business premises, as it is your responsibility. Sweep it clean and cut the grass on a regular basis.
- Keep our countryside clean and beautiful by only using registered waste removal companies to remove waste including builder's rubble, old fridges, white goods and furniture.
- Don't let your dog or pet wander or stray in public areas. If it fouls the public park, open space or footpath use your scooper to pick it up and bring it home for safe disposal.

I am a member of the public.

What are my responsibilities when it comes to litter?

The Litter Pollution Act puts legal responsibilities on members of the public to control litter. The following are examples of offences under the Act:

- Failure to keep private property which is visible from a public place free of litter
- Dropping cigarette butts, chewing gum, paper, food, etc. on the ground
- Failure to clean up dog litter when walking one's dog in a public place
- Placing household waste in a public litter bin

I am a business person.

What are my responsibilities when it comes to litter?

The Litter Pollution Act puts legal responsibilities on businesses to control litter. The following are examples of offences under the Act:

- Failure to keep the footpaths, pavements and gutters for certain outlets, a distance not exceeding 100m from, the location of the premises located within a speed limit area free of litter
- Failure to secure transported material on a trailer or truck
- Dumping material (fly-tipping) in an area other than a waste receptacle or authorised waste facility
- Putting up posters or signs without authorisation
- Placing advertising flyers on cars
- Placing commercial waste in a public litter bin
- There are additional responsibilities on persons operating mobile outlets and organisers of major events.

County Westmeath – Relevant numbers

Population
(Census 2022)

96,221

Area

1840
sq km

Greenway

Mullingar Athlone
Rail Trail

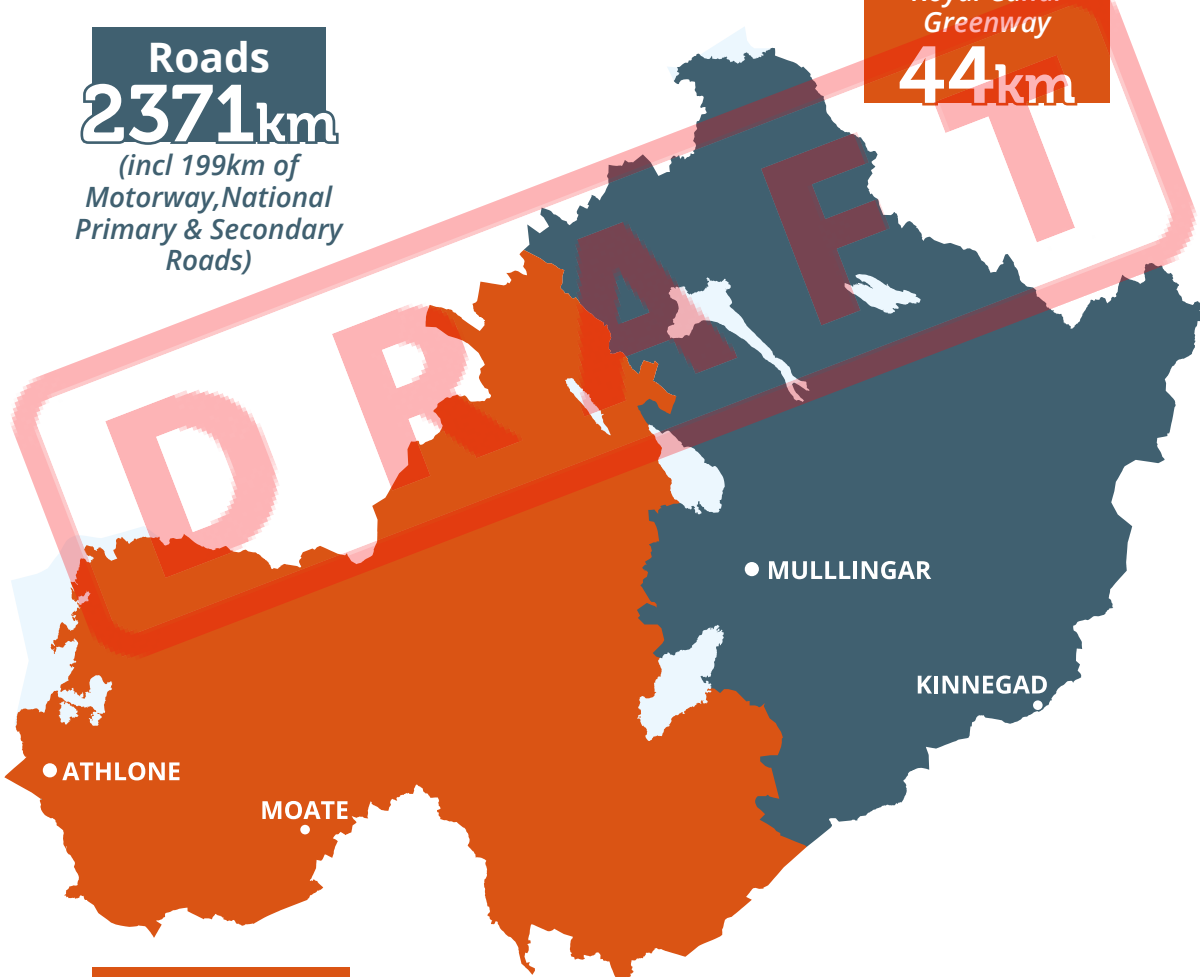
42km

Royal Canal
Greenway

44km

Roads
2371km

(incl 199km of
Motorway, National
Primary & Secondary
Roads)



**Number of
Bring Banks**

48

Number of Litter Bins

390

*in the Municipal
District of Mullingar-
Kinnegad*

313

*in the Municipal
District of Athlone-
Moate*

**Civic Amenity
Sites**

2

*(Mullingar and
Athlone)*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 General

This Litter Management Plan is presented by Westmeath County Council for the period 2024 to 2026. The Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 replaces the existing Litter Management Plan 2020 - 2022. Under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 individual plans must be prepared for the municipal districts of Athlone-Moate and Mullingar-Kinnegad. The plans set out our objectives for the prevention and management of litter within the municipal districts through a programme of prevention, enforcement, education & awareness.

Westmeath County Council has an established programme of works to manage litter through litter-picking, provision of street bins and a street sweeping schedule. Litter continues to be a challenge locally and nationally and the emphasis will continue to be an emphasis on preventing, reducing and managing litter effectively. Litter pollution is still a very visible form of environmental pollution. It is not only ugly, but it can have detrimental effects on wildlife, on our enjoyment of amenities and on the quality of life of the residential population. Its presence creates a negative impression on an area which impacts on individuals, tourism and investment in the county.

This latest Litter Management Plan outlines the objectives to prevent and control litter, encourage public awareness and sets objectives for the next three years.

It is acknowledged that the primary enforcement responses must come from the Council however, the co-operation of all members of the community is required to raise awareness of the harmful effects of litter. The Council recognises that the participation and support of all sectors of society is required if littering is to be successfully eradicated. Consequently, the plan recognises the need to work in partnership with individuals, communities and businesses throughout the county to prevent and remove litter and also in relation to educational initiatives. Tidy Towns groups, resident associations and other voluntary initiatives offer invaluable support to the Council's street cleaning teams. Individuals and businesses all need to take responsibility for the litter which we generate, and how we dispose of it.

When people commit an offence under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, (as amended) or the Waste Management Act 1996, (as amended) they are liable to enforcement measures including prosecution as provided for in the legislation. Westmeath County Council is actively engaged in the issuing of litter fines and prosecutions relating to littering.

The purpose of the Litter Management Plan 2024 to 2026 as set out in Section 11 of the Litter Pollution Act is:

- To review the previous Litter Management Plan 2020-2022.
- To outline the objectives designed to prevent and control litter.
- To list the measures and actions required to attain these objectives.
- To include information on all waste facilities available to the public for the disposal and recovery of waste.

An important aspect of drafting a Litter Management Plan is statutory consultation, including discussion at Area Committee meetings, SPC meetings and public submissions. The statutory consultation informs the local authority of the concerns of key stakeholders including businesses, residential/community groups and individuals.

The process for the Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 is as follows:



1.2 Corporate Plan

The Strategic Goal as identified in the Westmeath County Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024 Climate Action & Protecting our Environment is to:

“Protect and further enhance our environment and contribute to combating and adapting to climate change.”

Supporting strategies for the above strategic goal are:

- Strategy 3.6 *“Implement a robust regulatory framework in respect of Waste Management, Litter Control, Planning Enforcement, Building Control, Dog and Horse Control, Food Safety & Disposal of Animal By-Product.”*
- Strategy 3.8 *“To actively encourage waste prevention, especially reduction in the use of single use plastics, and to support the EU Circular Economy proposal, where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised to develop a sustainable, low carbon, resource efficient and competitive economy.”*

In developing this Litter Management Plan, this strategic goal and supporting strategies have been considered and incorporated as cornerstones within the implementation plan.



1.3 Draft Climate Action Plan

The themes and goals as identified in the Westmeath County Council Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 shown below have a strong link to the Strategic Goal and strategies identified above from the Westmeath County Council Corporate Plan.

These themes include the following:

- Theme 1.8 *“Ensure that climate action policy is mainstreamed and translated into all WCC functional plans, strategies and projects.”*
- Theme 5.1 *“WCC shall assess management of our own waste and seek to minimise waste through reuse of materials and the circular economy, whilst ensuring waste management activities are undertaken in accordance with the Waste Management Act and in a manner that does not result in negative environmental impacts or nuisance.”*
- Theme 5.6 *“Develop a strategy to encourage a circular economy in Westmeath in partnership with Social Enterprise/Community Enterprise, whilst ensuring waste management activities are undertaken in accordance with the Waste Management Act and in a manner that does not result in negative environmental impacts or nuisance.”*
- Theme 5.7 *“Explore possibility of installing plastic recycling bins throughout the county.”*
- Theme 5.11 *“Regulate and enforce the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) which focus on delivering positive” environmental outcomes for air quality, water quality and waste management.”*

These themes inform the development of this Litter Management Plan.

2.0 Consultation Process

(This section is to be finalised after the consultation process)

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3.0 Review of Litter Management Plan 2020-2022

3.1 Review

An essential part of the preparation of this new litter management plan is the review of those plans implemented previously and which will now be superseded. The purpose of the review is to identify the efforts that have been made to combat litter during the life of previous plans and to establish their effectiveness.

During the lifetime of the previous litter management plans significant effort was expended by the Council in the area of environmental awareness & education particularly around all aspects of litter/waste reduction and management. To this end there was significant investment of resources in the fostering of relationships with schools, community groups, residents associations, tidy towns groups, the business sector and the general public who could work with the Council in achieving the targets of the Litter Management Plan. Efforts were made to ensure that the Council was seen as a focal point for environmental information and as a resource for the organisation and delivery of assistance to these groups.

The Litter Management Plan 2020-2022 has been prepared at a time when the world faced huge challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and locally Westmeath County Councils ability to respond to incidents of litter had been reduced due to restrictions imposed to help curb the spread of the virus. The outbreak of Covid 19 had an impact on development and implementation of the Litter Management Plan 2020-2022 including the following objectives:

Education & Awareness Measures

- All Green Schools Visits planned after March 2020 cancelled.
- Green Schools Awards ceremony cancelled.
- Tidy Schools Competition planned for Summer 2020 cancelled.
- Gum Litter Taskforce 2020 planned for June 2020 cancelled.
- All Green Schools Visits for 2021 were carried out virtually.
- National Spring Clean (NSC) planned for April 2020 suspended until July 2020.
- NSC clean ups scaled down to maximum of 15 participants with social distancing restrictions in place.
- Litter Leagues Surveys planned for 2020 and 2021 cancelled.
- National Litter Pollution & Quantification Surveys suspended until October – December 2020.

Enforcement Measures

- Litter & Waste Complaint Investigations & Enforcement curtailed.
- Increased patrols and maintenance of Recycling Bring Centres required during that period.

Partnership with Communities and Businesses

- Increased maintenance of the Recycling Bring Centre Network.
- Essential services provided by the two Civic Amenity Centres maintained in compliance with HSE Guidelines.
- Interaction with local voluntary groups including Tidy Towns Groups reduced.

3.2 Litter Statistics 2020-2022

The Council has responsibility for Cleansing (the collection and disposal of litter), Enforcement of control of litter legislation, and also through its Environmental Education & Awareness programme responsibility for the promotion of awareness of the polluting effects of litter and encouraging participation by the public in preventing and overcoming the effects of litter. The Council has and will continue to invest significant financial resources in tackling the problem of litter.

The Municipal District of Athlone-Moate spent an average of €739,035 per annum on litter control over the period of the previous Litter Management Plan. That is an average of €466,598 per annum on street sweeping and an average of €305,770 per annum on litter bin collections/litter clean ups and disposal.

Statistics for the period of the 2020-2022 plan are illustrated in the following tables 1 to 5 below.

Municipal District of Athlone-Moate			
Description	2020	2021	2022
Statistics for the Litter Enforcement Section			
Number of Complaints Received	294	225	149
Number of Complaints Investigated	294	225	149
Number of on-the-spot fines	109	45	19
Number of Litter Enforcement Procedures taken (Section 9's)	14	10	15

Table 1 Enforcement Statistics 2020-2022

Quantities of Litter/Waste Disposed of by the Municipal District of Athlone-Moate			
Description	Municipal District of Athlone-Moate		
	2020	2021	2022
Street Cleaning Residue, Litter Picking on roads and public spaces, Clean-ups after fly-tipping & Community Clean-ups.	260	351	301

Table 2 Quantities of Litter/Waste Disposed

Spend on Litter Control & Street Sweeping			
Description	Municipal District of Athlone-Moate		
	2020	2021	2022
Street Sweeping	€382,997	€436,594	€453,205
Litter Bin Collection, Litter Cleanup, Litter Picking Along Roads, Disposal	€371,460	€278,775	€267,075
Total	€754,457	€742,369	€720,280

Table 3 Expenditure on Litter Control & Street Sweeping

Litter Inspections			
Litter Inspections	Municipal District of Athlone-Moate		
	2020	2021	2022
Litter Quantification Surveys	13	14*	11*
Litter Pollution Surveys	14	16*	18*
Town & Village Inspections	468	468	858
Bring Bank Inspections	364	364	1014
Amenity Areas – Jet Ski / Lakeshore Bye Laws	312	312	468
Abandoned Car Investigation and Removal	8	5	10
Unauthorised Signage Inspection and removal	**	**	**

Table 4 Litter Inspections

*1 Community Warden assigned in MDAM in 2020 & 2021, 2nd CW assigned in Aug 2022

**This is done on a routine basis and is not recorded

Community Support			
Litter Inspections	Municipal District of Mullingar-Kinnegad & Athlone-Moate		
	2020	2021	2022
Providing support to community groups during litter clean ups.	76	89	43
Green School Visits	9	1	5

Table 5 Community Support

4.0 Litter Management Resources

4.1 Resources

In the Municipal District of Athlone-Moate there is a dedicated team of who staff work under the supervision of an Executive Engineer that are tasked with works relating to street cleaning, litter picking and general public realm maintenance work within the district of Athlone-Moate.

The cleansing programme includes the following:

- Street-sweeping with handheld brushes and with suction road sweepers,
- Emptying and upkeep of litterbins,
- Removal of waste matter from the roads and footpaths.
- Weed management on roads, streets and footpaths.
- Gully cleaning and flood response.
- Monitor & Maintain the areas in the vicinity of bring banks.
- Clean-up after illegal dumping in public areas.
- Collection of litter gathered following Community, Tidy Towns, Residents Association, and individuals involved in clean ups and litter picking.
- Disposal of collected litter at authorised waste facilities.

The Cleansing Section operates a cleaning rota and this arrangement ensures areas are kept clean on a continuous basis, especially at weekends.



Photo Westmeath County Council Road Sweeper



Photo Westmeath County Council Litter picking crew in operation

4.2 Anti-Litter Task Force

An Anti-Litter Task Force was piloted in 2021 to improve coordination of approach across the municipal districts in dealing with the issue of litter. The focus of this group was to ensure that learnings from successful initiatives as well as input from the many stakeholders were harnessed to it's maximum effect in delivering this Litter Management Plan. The committee consisted of staff representatives from the Municipal Districts, Environment and Housing Sections. This Task Force in turn reported on progress to a sub-committee of elected members.

4.3 Community Warden & Housing Liaison Officer

Among the recent initiatives trialled during the lifetime of the previous plan, was the coordinated approach of the Community Wardens and the Housing Liaison Officer in dealing with litter hot spots by direct engagement with the residents in some of the larger estates. This has proven to be particularly effective in the Athlone-Moate Municipal District and will be considered for roll out across the county.

4.4 RMCEI

On an annual basis, this Council produces an RMCEI (Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspection) plan which sets out in detail how this authority proposes to achieve the Environmental Priorities as set out by government. This public document commits this council to carrying out a number of routine inspections in targeted areas to improve public compliance with the Waste and Litter legislation. As part of this RMCEI Plan, this Council commits to the carrying out a minimum of 3,629 routine inspections across all municipal districts in the area of Litter durig 2024.

5.0 Education and Awareness

5.1 Anti-Dumping Initiative

The Programme for Government contains a specific commitment to work with local authorities to tackle the problem of illegal dumping and to develop effective deterrents to discourage people from engaging in this anti-social behaviour. In accordance with this commitment the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment launched the Anti-Dumping Initiative to work in partnership with local community organisations in identifying high risk or problem areas, developing appropriate enforcement responses and carrying out clean-up operations. A range of projects were undertaken over the duration of the plan, and these include amnesty days at the civic amenity sites, clean ups of litter black spots in conjunction with local communities. See list below in table 6 of Anti-Dumping Initiative Projects carried out between 2020 and 2023.

Funding under the Anti-Dumping Initiative 2020 - 2023		
Year	Location/Project	Funding
2020	No ADI – Covid 19 restrictions	€0
2021	Renaun Bog Clean Up	€15,572.20
	Glenwood Bog Clean up	€17,677.63
	Bikes for Africa Mullingar/Athlone Amenity sites	€13,593
	Oaklawn's Mullingar, Clean up and Orchard Planting	€20,925.11
	Battery Height's Athlone, Clean up and Orchard Planting	€13,284.65
	Amenity Patrol	€17,656.77
2022	Bulky Waste Collection 2022	€11,160.71
	Seasonal Amenity Wardens 2022	€13,161.00
	Fleadh 2022	€18,327.00
	Milltown pass Bog Clean up	€12,778.92
	Sarsfield Square Greenway Entrance	€6,329.83
2023	Fleadh Waste Management 2023	€17,002.75
	Single use Plastics	€11,292.00
	Solar Bins (MDAM)	€35,000.00
	Abbeylands Clean Up (MDMK)	€9,750.00
	Two Minute Litter Picker Boards	€2,160.00
	Brown Bin Promotions	€11,205.00

Table 6 Anti-Dumping Initiative Projects between 2020 & 2023



RECYCLING POINT
RECYCLING POINT

Green Fleadh
WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Recycling
Point

general

recycle

Green Fleadh

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Green Fleadh
WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Recycling
Point



GO
GREEN

Recycle today for a greener tomorrow

Photo Fleadh 2022 Bin Hub

5.2 Circular Living

The “Choose to Reuse” conscious cup campaign was introduced in 2019 to assist and support Tidy Towns Groups in the county tackle the issue of single use cups and dashboard dining. This initiative was carried through into the National Fleadh Cheoil festival in 2023 by promoting reusable cups during the festival.

Circular living campaigns such as ReLove fashion has been promoted and encouraged in all Westmeath secondary schools from 2020 – 2023.

The Bikes for Africa project was launched in 2021, whereby unwanted bicycles are donated to and collected from Mullingar & Athlone Civic Amenities; they are then delivered to and repaired at Loughan House Open Centre, Co. Cavan, made road worthy and then shipped to Africa. Students in Africa then use the repaired bicycles to travel to school – some children have to walk long distances to get to school so a bicycle would improve their educational opportunities.

Promotional radio and social media campaigns have been run each year to educate people on the benefits of circular living. During the month of October each year a specific campaign to highlight circular living is run in conjunction with ‘Reuse Month’.

5.3 National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean is Ireland’s biggest anti-litter campaign, which encourages people from all walks of life to take pride in their local environment and to take action against litter. The Environment Department has supported communities by supplying community clean-up kits and facilitates the collection and disposal of litter collected.

5.4 Green Kilometre Scheme

The Green Kilometre scheme was launched in Westmeath in 2021. The Green Kilometre scheme invites individuals/groups to choose a rural kilometre or longer stretch of road/loop in their area. The individual/group then commit to maintaining the chosen stretch of road over the course of a year and advise what they will do for the year e.g. litter pick, verge maintenance etc. To assist participants a clean-up kit including litter pickers, hi vis vests, bags and gloves are available and can be requested on registration. The Green Kilometre scheme offers the opportunity to get involved and make a positive contribution to the local area.



Photo Litter picking pack going for a local community project

5.5 Two Minute Litter Picking Boards

The Two Minute Litter Picking Board scheme was launched in Westmeath in 2023. This was a grant funded initiative, funded under the annual Anti Dumping Initiative grant for 2023. Five mobile litter picking boards were placed at various locations around Westmeath County and members of the public are welcome to borrow a litter picker from the board and take part in a litter pick while out in the local area. The aim of this scheme is to assist communities in tackling litter in their local area and it is hopeful that these boards will also be a visual reminder to people visiting our beautiful towns and amenities to leave no trace and dispose of their waste correctly.



Photo Litter Picker Boards Launch

5.6 Solar Bins

The Municipal District of Athlone and Moate launched the Solar Bin project in 2023 under the Anti Dumping Initiative grant for 2023. The locations for this trial installation of the solar bins had been identified as they are high traffic areas for visitors throughout the year but particularly during the summer period with good weather. These sites attract locals and visitors. Bins tend to fill quickly and can become unsightly and spread litter. Solar Technology powered bins allow the bins to compact and store more waste meaning they are more effective than standard outdoor bins. The performance of these solar bins on this trial will inform proposals to roll out further bins.

5.7 National Tree Week

Each year in conjunction with Tree Council of Ireland, Westmeath County Council supports National Tree Week by supplying free saplings to community groups/ schools & Tidy Towns groups. Along with supplying free saplings to members of the public there are also plenty of events taking place around the county which are promoted on social media. In 2023 Westmeath County Council supplied 500 saplings to the public.

5.8 Picker Pals Programme

Westmeath County Council is a proud sponsor of the Picker Pals programme for National schools in Westmeath. Delivering Picker Pal kits to schools enables young people to get involved in their local community and educate people from a young age about the benefits of creating a cleaner and more sustainable future for their family, friends and local community in the future. This interactive programme encourages each child to take home a Picker Pal kit each week, complete a clean up and then report back to their class on their experience. Throughout the school year the students will also be involved in workshops and games. The outcome of this programme should provide the motivation and tools for children, teachers and families to create a better environment for our shared future.

5.9 Anti- Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Initiatives

The anti-litter and anti-graffiti awareness grant received from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment has fallen from €19,000 in 2018 to €16,600 in recent years. This funding has been used to raise awareness of personal responsibility to target littering.

The projects undertaken ranged from seasonal radio campaigns, community clean ups, dog fouling initiatives, school's poster competition, tidy towns information evenings, radio and cinema advertising.

5.10 GAA Reusable Plastic Bottle project

Under the Anti Dumping Initiative grant 2023, the Environment Department in Westmeath County Council supplied 2,300 reusable bottles to the juvenile members of each of the 5 local GAA clubs in Mullingar town area in 2023. Every bottle came with a letter which was given to the parents or guardians advising them that their club has gone Single Use Plastic Free and single use plastic bottles were no longer permitted on the club grounds. The growing use of single use plastic bottles was becoming a problem particularly with the younger generation of GAA players, since covid people had started to revert to single use bottles. It was estimated that over 30 tonnes of plastic was being disposed of across 5 clubs in Mullingar town.



Photo GAA Reusable Plastic Bottle Launch

5.11 Food Waste segregation

Awareness & educational campaigns focusing on the benefits of food waste segregation have been facilitated by Westmeath County Council Environment Department in previous years. Schools, community groups and commercial premises have engaged with campaigns and workshops to assist in the roll out of brown bins in county Westmeath. Promotional radio, newspaper and social media campaigns have taken place in previous years and will continue going forward.

5.12 Green Schools Programme

Green Schools is an international education programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. The Environmental Awareness Officer visit schools throughout the year to raise awareness on the harmful effects of littering and graffiti to ensure that the educational benefits and awareness achieved at primary and secondary level are retained and developed in the long-term. Support is given to schools and teachers through educational material such as posters, information booklets and newsletters on litter awareness as well as clean-up supplies for community clean-ups.

Schools work on progressing their way through a number of themes and each theme runs for a period of two years in which work is done that makes a difference to the environment. Flags awarded over the period of the plan are detailed in Table 7 below.

Green Schools Programme				
Green Flags	2020	2021	2022	2023
Litter & Waste	10	2	1	2
Energy	13	1	0	0
Water	1	0	2	1
Travel	2	1	1	4
Biodiversity	4	1	1	3
Global Citizenship Litter & Waste	3	0	2	1
Global Citizenship Energy	1	3	1	1
Global Citizenship Marine	1	2	1	1
Global Citizenship Travel	1	0	0	2
Total	36	10	9	15

Table 7 Green Flags Awarded

While the uptake in the Green School programme declined in 2021 & 2022 due to the effects of COVID-19 restrictions, a strong emphasis has been put on supports and communication with schools going forward with the aim of increasing uptake in the Green Schools programme in future. School visits will be encouraged by the Environmental Awareness Officer, promotion of competitions and workshops will be sent to schools, ongoing support and guidance will also be offered to schools going forward.



Photo Seasonal Wardens on patrol

5.13 Responsible Dog Ownership Policy:

Under the Anti Dumping Initiative grant 2023, the Environment Department in Westmeath County Council supplied 2,300 reusable bottles to the juvenile members of each of the 5 local GAA clubs in Mullingar town area in 2023. Every bottle came with a letter which was given to the parents or guardians advising them that their club has gone Single Use Plastic Free and single use plastic bottles were no longer permitted on the club grounds. The growing use of single use plastic bottles was becoming a problem particularly with the younger generation of GAA players, since covid people had started to revert to single use bottles. It was estimated that over 30 tonnes of plastic was being disposed of across 5 clubs in Mullingar town.

The continuation of the implementation of the “Responsible Dog Ownership” policy adopted in 2012 continued throughout the lifetime of the plan. The following are some of the initiatives undertaken to date:

- Provision of dog fouling bag dispensers.
- Schools Environmental Awareness Calendar - specific topic on dog fouling.
- Animal husbandry talk in schools including responsibilities of dog owner.
- Continuation of the implementation of the Green Dog Walkers initiative - toolkit provided to communities.
- Cinema advert relating specifically to dog fouling.
- Restricted breeds signs.
- Audio devices to remind dog walkers to clean up after their dog.

5.14 Tidy Towns & Community Groups

Tidy Towns & community groups work tirelessly to improve their environment and reach out to the greater community. The Tidy Towns competition has eight categories that include a category dedicated to “Tidiness & Litter Control” (see Appendix 3). The full results and adjudicators reports for recent tidy towns competitions can be found at <https://www.tidytowns.ie/reports/>

Tidy Towns results have improved over the lifetime due to the hard work, commitment and dedication of the groups and their volunteers who work tirelessly to be the difference in their communities. In previous years, a Tidy Towns adjudicator was engaged to give advice and assistance to Tidy Towns groups taking part in the competition and this will be facilitated in the future subject to available resources.

This community involvement is evident in the increase in groups participating in the National Spring Clean and National Tidy Towns Competition which has seen Tidy Towns Groups win awards in recognition for their endeavours.

Both the Tidy Towns Network and community and voluntary groups also provide invaluable information to the Council in relation to extent of litter in their areas. This information enables the Council to address incidences of littering and illegal dumping at a local level.

There are still a number of towns and villages who are not actively involved with Tidy towns and Westmeath County Council will continue to encourage these areas to get involved.



Photo Tidy Towns crew at work

5.15 Free Waste Collection Days

Each year the Westmeath County Council Environment Department aims to deliver a specific free collection day at each of the Civic Amenity Sites. These initiatives range from Mattress Amnesties, Nursery/ Toy collection, Bulky household waste & Hazardous waste collection days. Free Collection days carried out between 2020 and 2022 are listed below in Table 8.

Free Collection Days at Recycle Centres		
Year	Location/Project	Cost
2020	No event - Covid-19 restrictions	€0
2021	Mattress Amnesty - Athlone Recycling Centre	€6,962.00
2021	Mattress Amnesty - Mullingar Recycling Centre	€6,962.00
2022	Bulky Waste Collection - Athlone Recycling Centre	€6,495.70
2022	Bulky Waste Collection - Mullingar Recycling Centre	€4,665.02
2023	Mattress Amnesty - Mullingar Recycling Centre	€2,516.00
2023	Mattress Amnesty - Athlone Recycling Centre	€2,584.00

Table 8 Free Waste Collection events



Photo Mattress Amnesty 2023

6.0 Litter Monitoring

6.1 IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter)

IBAL was set up in 1996 as an alliance of companies who believe that litter has a significant impact on our economic well-being. One of the main initiatives operated by Irish Business Against Litter is its annual ranking, in a league table format, of the performances of major towns in the country in their battle against litter pollution. The league table results are shown below in table 9:

League Table Results			
Year	Town	Position	IBAL Comment
2020 Round 1	Athlone	2nd out of 40	Cleaner than European Norms
2020 Round 2	Athlone	16th out of 37	Clean to European Norms
2021 Round 1	Athlone	15th out of 40	Clean to European Norms
2021 Round 2	Athlone	18th out of 40	Clean to European Norms
2022 Round 1	Athlone	4th out of 40	Cleaner than European Norms
2022 Round 2	Athlone	16th out of 40	Clean to European Norms
2023 Round 1	Athlone	22nd out of 40	Clean to European Norms
2023 Round 2	Athlone	22nd out of 40	Clean to European Norms

Table 9 IBAL League Table Results

Athlone Town had made significant progress since its participation in the IBAL League. There are two rounds of IBAL surveys each year and Athlone has fluctuated in the rankings throughout the years. The results show at the end of 2023 that Athlone Towns status had fallen to 22nd out of 40 towns surveyed but it is still classed as “Clean to European Norms”. The IBAL surveys identified a number of locations where there was scope for improvement. Based on the findings of these Anti-Litter Leagues, Westmeath County Council will direct resources towards addressing the problems of littering and illegal dumping in these areas.

Access to the IBAL league tables can be found here: <https://ibal.ie/anti-litter-league/>

6.2 National Litter Pollution Monitoring System (NLPMS)

NLPMS is a system for monitoring the extent and severity and causes of litter pollution. Tobin Consulting Engineers, on behalf of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment administer the system. Local authorities feed data into the system annually following regular surveys. 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.

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?

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:

- Unpolluted i.e. litter free L1
- Slightly polluted, L2
- Moderately polluted, L3
- Significantly polluted, L4
- Grossly polluted, i.e. level of litter expected after a major sporting or entertainment event, L5

A total of 83 surveys were undertaken throughout the county in 2022. The areas surveyed are town centres, suburban areas, national and non-national routes and rural roads.

The results in Table 10 below detail the level of litter pollution in the Council's area from 2020 to 2022 compared with the National Average for 2022.

National Litter Pollution Monitoring System	Westmeath 2020	Westmeath 2021	Westmeath 2022	National Average 2022
Unpolluted or Litter Free (LP1)	14.0%	22.2%	30.1%	21.1%
Slightly Polluted (LP2)	74.6%	68.5%	43.4%	58.0%
Moderately polluted (LP3)	9.6%	8.3%	18.1%	17.0%
Significantly polluted (LP4)	0.9%	0.9%	6.0%	2.5%
Grossly polluted (LP5)	0.9%	0.0%	2.4%	0.3%

Table 10 Litter Pollution Survey results

As can be seen in table 9, 30.1% of the surveys carried out in Westmeath are above the national average of 21.1% for areas defined as "Unpolluted or Litter Free-LP1"

43.4% of the surveys carried out in Westmeath are below the national average of 58% for areas that defined as "Slightly Polluted (LP2)"

However, 6% of areas surveyed in County Westmeath are above the national average of 2.5% for areas that are defined as "significantly polluted (LP4)" and 2.4% of areas surveyed in County Westmeath are above the national average of 0.3% for areas that are "grossly polluted (LP5)".

Westmeath County Council will direct resources towards addressing the problems of littering and illegal dumping in these areas affecting above.

As can be seen in table 10, 30.1% of the surveys carried out in Westmeath are above the national average of 21.1% for areas defined as “Unpolluted or Litter Free-LP1”

43.4% of the surveys carried out in Westmeath are below the national average of 58% for areas that defined as “Slightly Polluted (LP2)”

However, 6% of areas surveyed in County Westmeath are above the national average of 2.5% for areas that are defined as “significantly polluted (LP4)” and 2.4% of areas surveyed in County Westmeath are above the national average of 0.3% for areas that are “grossly polluted (LP5)”.

Westmeath County Council will direct resources towards addressing the problems of littering and illegal dumping in these areas affecting above.



6.3 NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission)

The statutory functions assigned to NOAC include the scrutiny of the performance of local government bodies against relevant indicators. One of those 42 Performance Indicators is “% LA area within the 5 levels of litter pollution”. The results shown in Table 9 above reflect the survey results over 2020 to 2022. An extract from the NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report for 2022 is included at Appendix 1 which shows this Council's comparative performance against other local authorities, in this regard.

6.4 Litter Quantification Surveys

The 2022 survey results also identify the composition of litter pollution prevailing in the Council's area. This data is based on the most recent published data from the Litter Monitoring Body containing data from litter quantification surveys carried out in 2022:

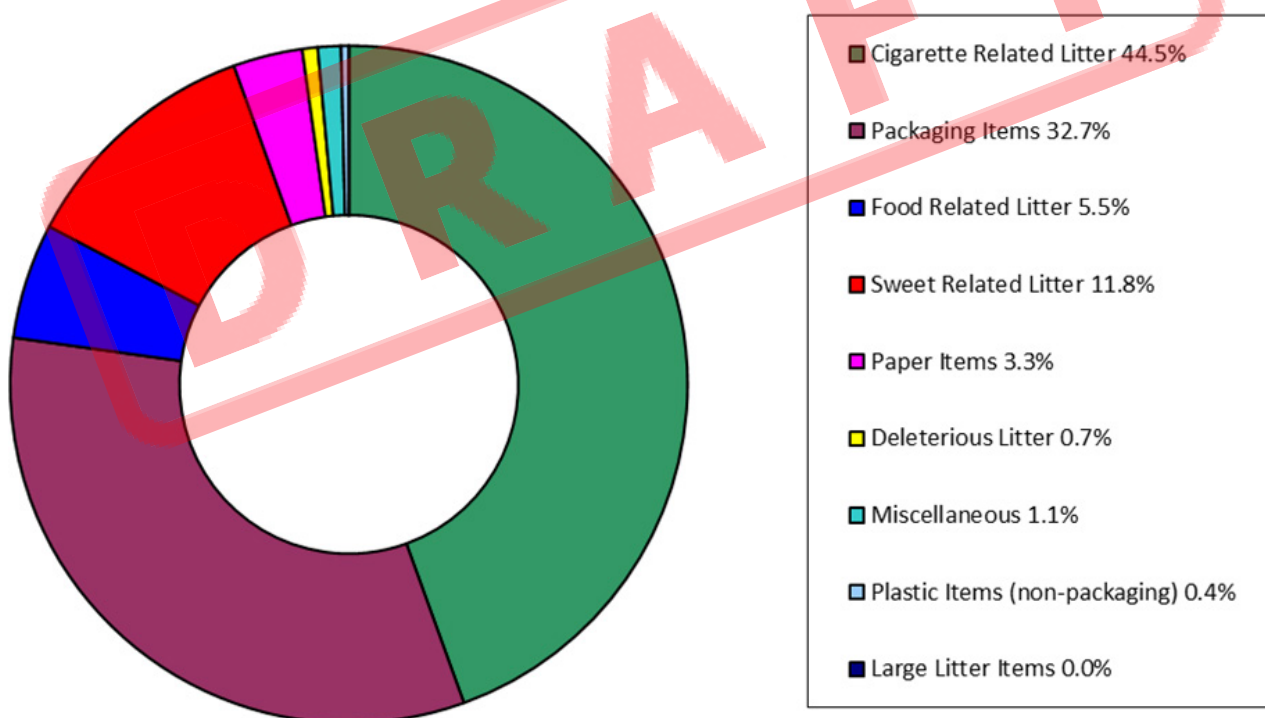


Figure 2 Litter Pollution Composition Westmeath 2022

The results in Figure 2 indicate that Cigarette related litter constitutes as the highest percentage of litter in the locations surveyed which is 44.5% while Packaging items constitute 32.7% of the overall litter composition in Westmeath.

The following figures are extracts taken from the Tobin Consulting Engineers Monitoring System report. These figures are assessed further down in this report.

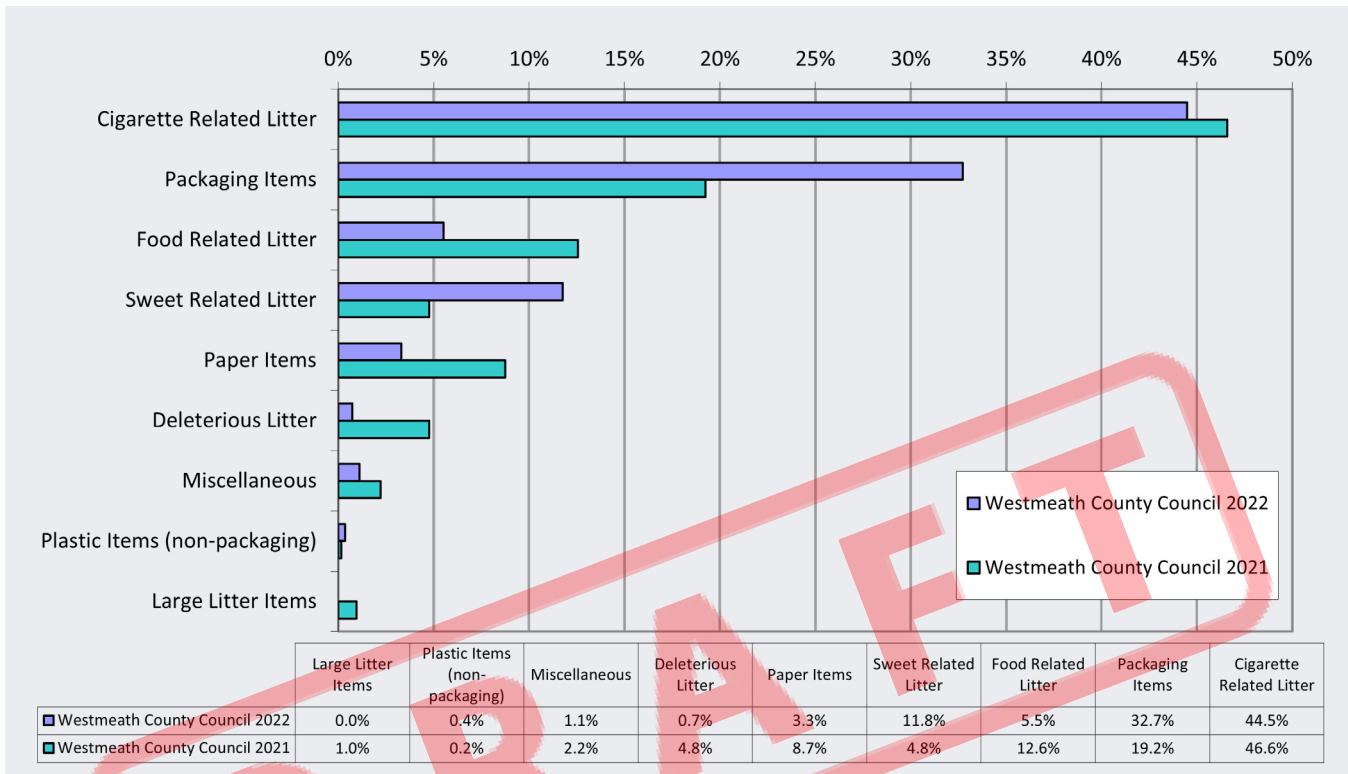


Figure 3 Comparison of Litter Composition in Westmeath between 2021 and 2022

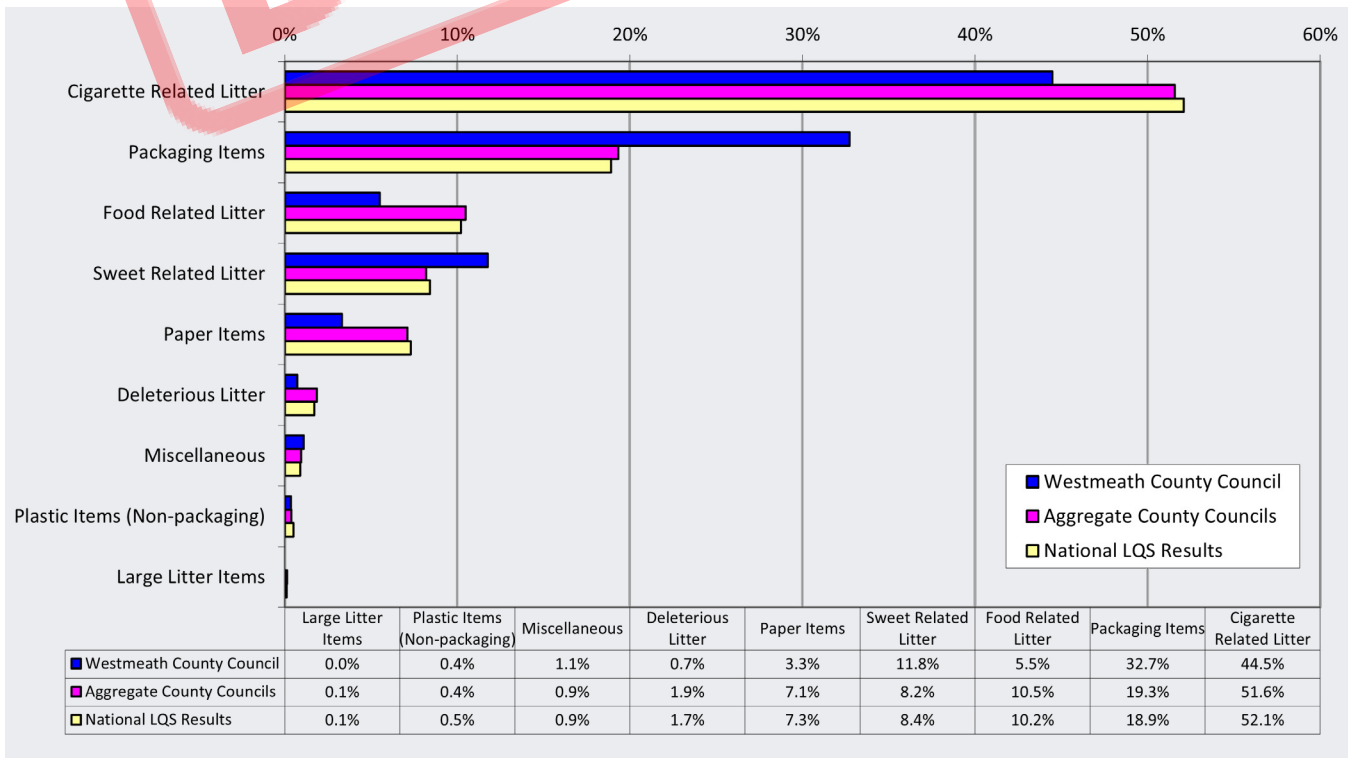


Figure 4 Litter Composition in Westmeath with Aggregate Results for County Councils and National Results for 2022

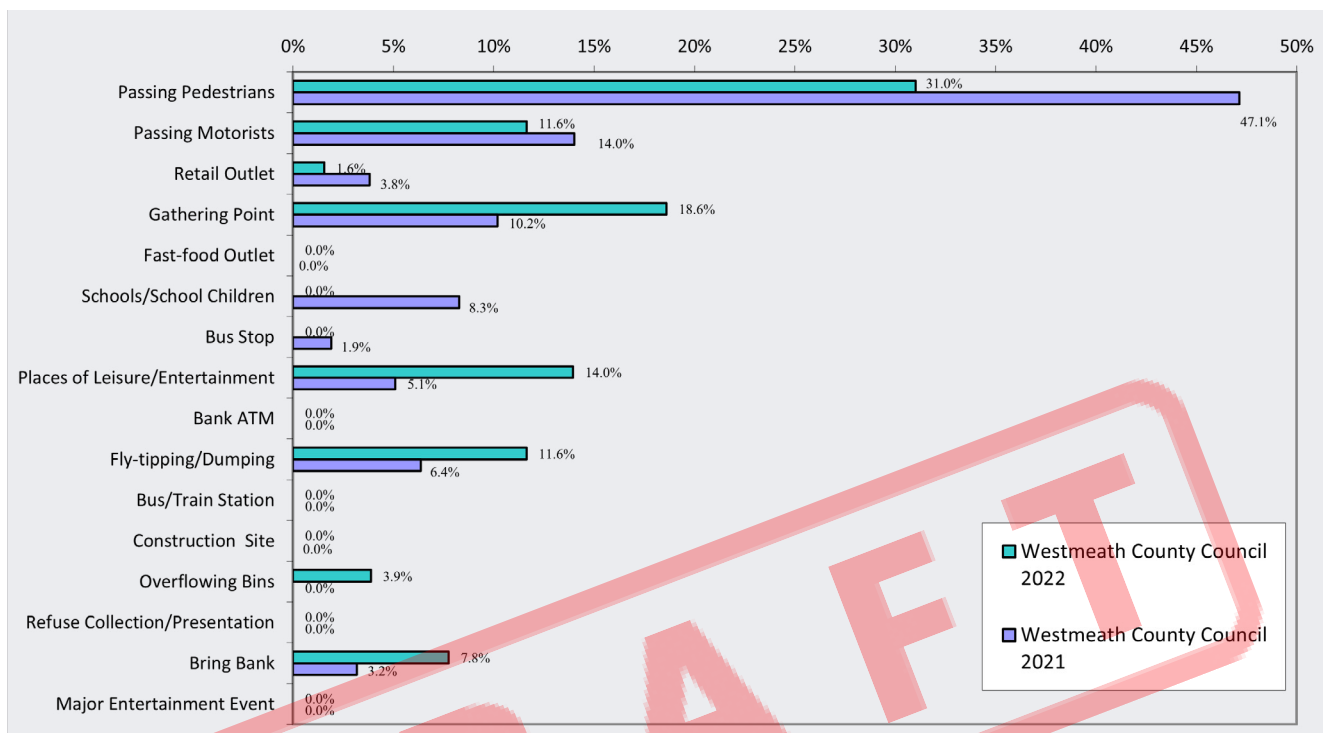


Figure 5 Comparison of Causative Factors of Litter Pollution in Westmeath County in 2021 and 2022

Figure 3 shows a Comparison of Litter Composition in Westmeath between 2021 & 2022. The results indicate that Cigarette related litter and Packaging items are the biggest contributing factor. Packaging items rose considerably from 19.2% to 32.7%. while cigarette related litter dropped slightly from 46.6% to 44.5%.

Figure 4 shows a breakdown of the Litter Composition in Westmeath with Aggregate Results for County Councils & National Results for 2022. Again, Packaging litter is a standout issue for Westmeath in comparison to the national results which will need to be addressed in the future. Packaging litter stands out at 32.7% compared to the national average of 18.9%

Figure 5 shows a Comparison of Causative Factors of Litter Pollution in Westmeath County and the results in figure 4 suggest that passing pedestrians appear to be biggest contributor at 47.1% of the total.

Based on these survey results, the main challenges facing the development of the Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 are:

- Cigarette related Litter & Packaging items & discarded vapes.
- Bring Banks: Littering and illegal dumping
- Unauthorised Waste Collectors: leads to an increase in fly-tipping
- Illegal Dumping: Particularly in rural areas
- Available Resources
- Dog Fouling
- Roadside Litter
- Maintaining Litter Free Greenways
- Providing for Continued Community Participation
- Awareness of Personal Responsibility
- Increase the % of unpolluted litter free locations

7.0 Waste Recycling Facilities



Photo Athlone Civic Amenity Site

7.1 Civic Amenity Sites

Westmeath County Council has two civic amenity sites (Golden Island, Athlone & Clonmore, Mullingar). Barna Recycling Ltd is the current service contractor operating the Athlone Civic Amenity Site and Mulleady's Ltd is the current service contractor operating the Mullingar Civic Amenity Site. Westmeath County Council will continue to work with the operators of the centres to advertise and promote the scope of their services through open days, promotions and advertising through radio, local printed press and digital media. Details of these facilities can be seen in Appendix 2.

A number of very successful events were held at the Civic Amenity sites over the period of the 2020 – 2022 plan under the Anti-Dumping Initiative. This initiative is subject to approval and funding by the Department of Communication Climate Action and the Environment and targets the problem of illegal dumping. The projects included the following:

- Free mattress collection amnesty days in 2021 & 2022 in both Mullingar & Athlone Civic Amenity Sites.
- Free Bulky Waste Collection days in 2021 & 2022 in both Mullingar & Athlone Civic Amenity Sites.
- Free mattress collection amnesty days in November 2023 in both Mullingar & Athlone Civic Amenity Sites.

Further amnesty days are proposed for 2024, 2025 and 2026 subject to funding.

7.2 Bring Bank Sites

Bring banks are located at 48 sites throughout the county, where glass, steel & aluminium cans can be deposited. Textiles banks are located at 41 of these bring bank sites. Householders are encouraged to bring their recyclables to these centres which are free of charge. The increased activity at Bring Centres has brought with it an increase in the incidence of dumping and littering of the Bring Bank sites continues to be a problem. The sites are inspected regularly by the Community Wardens to ensure a rapid response to illegal dumping. Various signage at the bring banks highlights the fines and prosecutions applicable to persons who litter these sites.



Photo Littering at Bring Bank Site



Photo Underground Bring Bank facilities at Ballinahown



Photo Underground Bring Bank facilities at Athlone

CCTV monitoring has been used successfully to deter, monitor, and prosecute littering in the past. Changes in the legislation under the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 which came into effect on the 15th of February 2024 will now allow CCTV monitoring to continue for the purposes of enforcement.

The use of CCTV at litter black spots and bottle banks, for the purposes of targeting litter offenders and reducing instances of littering and illegal dumping in these areas will be adopted.

There are underground Bring Bank facilities at Ballinahown and at the Fair Green in Athlone. See Appendix 2 for details of locations and waste items accepted at these facilities.

To report littering bring banks or to advise Westmeath County Council if banks are full, you can contact us on 044 9332166 or by email to the following addresses:

- clothesbanks@westmeathcoco.ie
- bottlebanks@westmeathcoco.ie

7.3 Street Litter Bins

Westmeath County Council service and maintain a significant number of street litter bins throughout the county. Westmeath County Council continues with the policy to reduce the number of litter bins in some public areas, under circumstances where this will improve litter management and cleanliness and to encourage people to bring their litter home for disposal. In all cases, the Council will strive to ensure that litter bins are maintained to a high standard and are serviced as required.

In order to ensure that the stock of bins is properly managed and appropriate to the location, this Council will develop a management system which will inventorise all litter bins assets.

7.4 Single Use Plastics

Single use plastics are plastic products that are used once and then discarded. They represent a particular challenge. Plastic takes centuries to break down and, if not managed properly, can pollute marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments.

Typical single use plastics include plastic cutlery, straws, beverage containers and food containers.

In recognition of this huge challenge, an EU Directive was published in 2019, with the aim of reducing the volume and impact of specific plastic products on the environment. The EU Directive 'on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment' is commonly referred to as the 'Single Use Plastics Directive'.

The Directive addresses the 10 most common single use plastics referred to above, and commits EU Member States to introduce a range of measures to deal with these plastic products.

Since July 2021, the following single use plastic items can no longer be placed on the market in Ireland: Cotton bud sticks, Cutlery, Plates, Stirrers, Straws, Balloon rods, Expanded polystyrene single use food and beverage containers. Responsibility for enforcement of the single use plastics regulations has been assigned to the local authorities.



7.5 Deposit Return Scheme

The Deposit Return Scheme, a Circular Economy Initiative, is due to be introduced throughout the Country in February 2024. When you buy a drink in a plastic bottle, aluminium or steel can that features the Re-turn logo, you pay a small deposit in addition to the price of the drink. When you return your empty, undamaged container to any retail outlet, you get your deposit back in full.

It is anticipated that this scheme will significantly reduce plastic drinks bottle and aluminium can litter across the country. The Council will encourage the public to participate in the scheme and return their plastic bottles and aluminium cans to return point retailers and reverse vending machines.



Photo Deposit Return Scheme – Reverse Vending Unit

7.6 Waste Collectors

All Waste Collectors must have a valid Waste Collection Permit in order to collect and transport waste. Waste Collection Permits are granted through the National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO). Customers should exercise their right to view a waste collector's permit, a copy of which should be on board each waste collection vehicle.

We have seen an increase in the level of unauthorised waste collectors in the county. These are usually the "man in a van" type collectors who advertise on social media to remove waste at a low cost. However, most of this waste does not end up in an authorised treatment facility and has led to an increase in "fly-tipping". Westmeath County Council will take appropriate enforcement actions against any person found to be engaging in such unauthorised waste activities.

Waste Collection Permits are available to view on the National Waste Collection Permit website at www.nwcpo.ie

8.0 Objectives

The objective of this plan is to provide a strategy for the prevention, control and management of litter within the Municipal District of Athlone-Moate by:

1. Continuing to develop education and awareness programmes within communities and schools.
2. Preventing and controlling litter pollution in the Municipal Districts with a particular focus on litter black spots
3. Identifying any new initiatives or potential funding sources to improve overall litter management.
4. Ensuring rigorous and effective enforcement of litter management legislation.

To achieve this objective, the following Implementation Plan has been provided in section 9 of this report.



Photo Green School Visit

9.0 Implementation Plan

Measures	Actions
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">To prevent and control litter through education & awareness (31)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Employ cost-effective methods to spread the anti-litter message e.g. website, regional and national campaigns. b) Planned review and revamp/update of WCC Website to ensure ease of access to make litter complaints by the general public. c) Deliver An Taisce's Green Schools Programme that promotes and acknowledges long term, whole school action of the environment with litter and waste forming a fundamental element of the programme. Encourage those schools not registered to get involved in the programme. d) Run school competitions / workshops to promote litter awareness. e) Issue litter awareness articles in school newsletters. f) Promote awareness of community wardens and assistance they can provide to local groups and schools. g) Encourage and support local residents and groups to keep their area clean by provision of equipment and assistance by community wardens. h) Continuation of the "Adopt a mile/kilometre" initiative where home and business owners can adopt the public footpath and/or grass margin in front of their home or business premises and keep it clean. i) Promote responsible disposal of gum in conjunction with National Gum Litter awareness campaign. j) Engage with environmental groups in targeted anti-litter campaigns. k) Work in partnership with IBAL to reduce littering. l) Encourage participation in, and promote, Tidy Towns competition m) Participate in the National Spring Clean initiative to encourage all sectors of society to actively participate and take responsibility for litter by conducting clean ups in their area. n) Promote a clean environment and publicise anti-littering initiatives by utilising all available media including local printed press, internet (www.westmeathcoco.ie), social media, bill boards, murals, street paving, cinema, radio, promotional goods and leaflets to promote anti-littering advertising campaigns and initiatives o) Encourage the reporting of illegal dumping and littering to Westmeath County Council by all methods, including social media. p) Respond to the increasing problem of dog fouling by implementing and promoting the responsible dog ownership policy. Community Wardens will take enforcement action against dog owners where necessary. q) Liaise with veterinary practices and pet shops in relation to dog owner's responsibilities to prevent dog fouling. r) Possibly facilitate use of audio device systems to remind dog owners to clean up after their dog (subject to grant funding).

Measures	Actions
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">To prevent and control litter through education & awareness (31)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s) Reinforce the “Any Bag Any Bin” policy in relation to dog fouling. t) Provision of additional dog fouling bag dispensers, subject to resources. u) Investigate and trial further dog fouling clean up initiatives. v) Work and liaise with the local business community and local Chamber of Commerce in relation to litter prevention and legal requirements. w) Apply for government anti-litter / anti-graffiti grants and Anti Dumping Initiative grants. x) Promote 24 hour Free Phone Line 1800 819 000 & the National Environmental Complaints Line 1850 365 121 y) Participate in regional and national litter prevention and awareness programmes. z) Increase public awareness of waste facilities including litter bins, bring banks, recycling centres. Advertise and promote waste facilities at every opportunity. aa) Keep Westmeath County Council website updated with anti-litter initiatives and projects. bb) Continue the branding of Westmeath County Council vehicles with Litter Free Phone number. cc) Provide additional information on new Litter Warning signage including the Litter Freephone number. dd) Promote the use of authorised waste collectors -householders should be encouraged to ask their waste collector for their waste collection permit number . ee) Engage with groups organising and planning community events to minimise the generation of litter and waste at these events.
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Provision of Waste Recycling Facilities (11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide public recycling banks for glass, cans and textiles available at suitable locations to meet the needs of the County. Maintain, promote and audit Westmeath Local Authority Waste Facilities as listed under appendix 2 of this plan. b) Continue to operate 2 no. Civic Amenity Sites in Mullingar and Athlone. c) Facilitate running of amnesty collection days at the Civic Amenity sites as opportunities arise. d) Maintain and extend 48 Bring banks network throughout the county. e) Street litter bins. f) Consider the provision of additional underground Bring Banks, subject to available resources. g) Promote the roll out of the Deposit Return Scheme. h) Consider further use of segregated street bin system where appropriate i) Seek to condition any new off-licence developments to provide or contribute toward the cost of provision of bring bank facilities. j) Impose planning conditions for the provision of litter facilities on new developments with potential to generate litter. (k) Provide & maintain Community Signage Boards.

Measures	Actions
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Management of litter (17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Delivery of street sweeping schedule b) Maintain street litter bins in good condition and empty as required c) Develop & maintain appropriate Litter Facilities at Lakes and other Public Amenity areas. d) Continue participation in National Litter Pollution Monitoring System e) Maintain staff presence on the ground and provide administrative support to Community Warden service f) Support Community groups in clean up and maintenance of their area through the provision of bags/gloves/equipment and by the collection and disposal of waste collected following a community pick up. g) Encourage the reporting of littering offences via the website, community warden, Free Phone Line 1800 819 000 or by email to litter@westmeathcoco.ie h) Display the freephone number & contact details for reporting litter offences on County Council vehicles. i) Seek to maximise funding opportunities available j) Consider options for the removal of discarded chewing gum from footpaths and streets. k) Reduce the use of herbicides in public open spaces. l) Provide dog litter bins along greenways & within parks. m) Continue to support the Anti-Litter Task Force and implement it's recommendations n) Further develop the coordination between Community Wardens and Housing Liaison Officer in dealing with litter hot spots in larger residential areas o) Consider the further installation of solar compactor bins subject to funding p) Develop management system for all litter bin assets. q) Target for improvement, the areas that are identified as moderately and grossly polluted in the Litter Pollution Survey results. Implement recommendations of Anti-Litter Task Force

Measures	Actions
Enforcement (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Investigate all complaints b) Manage complaints through the Environmental Complaints Management System c) Issue on-the-spot fines d) Prosecute offenders under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended and Waste Management Act 1996, as amended. e) Provide high visibility Community Warden service f) Undertake enforcement against illegal waste collectors g) Continue to work with An Garda Síochána to tackle anti-social behaviour relating to dumping of waste and litter h) Litter Black Spots to be monitored regularly. Develop CCTV surveillance programme, in line with Codes of Practice. i) Share information on Litter Black Spots with An Garda Síochána for incorporation into patrols by local Gardai j) Identify premises and businesses that may be prone to the creation of excessive litter and, in line with Section 16 of the Litter Pollution Act, agree the imposition of special measures to positively control litter at these locations k) Carry out Enforcement under the Deposit Return Scheme. l) Remove unauthorised advertising signage and issue fines to offenders.

10.0 Conclusion

Failing to properly dispose of your rubbish is careless and incredibly damaging to our county. The litter that ends up on our streets and in our waterways is polluting the earth and damaging communities. Westmeath County Council continues to work to decrease the amount of litter that ends up on our streets, making the area more attractive and cleaner for both visitors and residents. While most of us are aware that littering has a negative impact, many do not realise the full extent of that impact on the health and vitality of the community.

While Westmeath County Council plays a very important role in litter prevention and control, the continued co-operation of local communities, business associations and the general public cannot be underestimated, and this cooperative approach is vital to achieving this objective.

The success of this Plan depends on maintaining and strengthening already established partnerships, and bringing about a change in the behaviour of those who continue to litter and to dispose of their waste in an irresponsible manner.

As individuals, we all must take responsibility for our own role in the prevention of litter. By doing so, some of the funding which is currently tied up with litter removal and disposal, could be diverted to other deserving needs such as housing, roads and other essential services.

Ultimately it is a collective responsibility of all people living, working within and visiting the county to act responsibly to protect our environment for the present and future generations.

11.0 Appendix 1

E3 Percentage of local authority area within the 5 levels of litter pollution

Authority	% Area Unpolluted or Litter Free	% Area Slightly Polluted	% Area Moderately Polluted	% Area Significantly Polluted	% Area Grossly Polluted
Carlow County	51	49	0	0	0
Cavan County	29	71	0	0	0
Clare County	17	73	9	0	0
Cork City	12	79	8	1	0
Cork County	35	39	24	2	1
Donegal County	51	44	6	0	0
Dublin City	11	56	27	6	1
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown	13	56	26	4	1
Fingal County	16	52	32	1	0
Galway City	8	66	25	1	0
Galway County	20	39	33	8	1
Kerry County	29	71	0	0	0
Kildare County	74	25	1	0	0
Kilkenny County	63	25	13	0	0
Laois County	21	76	2	0	0
Leitrim County	0	90	10	0	0
Limerick City and County	2	81	16	2	0
Longford County	42	47	10	1	0
Louth County	4	74	8	14	0
Mayo County	48	41	10	0	0
Meath County	18	39	30	11	2
Monaghan County	47	54	0	0	0
Offaly County	5	61	32	2	0
Roscommon County	22	51	24	2	0
Sligo County	43	48	8	1	0
South Dublin County	17	62	21	1	0
Tipperary County	1	59	40	0	0
Waterford City and County	11	64	22	3	1
Westmeath County	30	43	18	6	2
Wexford County	24	63	11	1	0
Wicklow County	9	67	18	4	1

(Source NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report for 2022)

12.0 Appendix 2

Waste Recycling Facilities in Westmeath

<p>Mullingar Civic Amenity Site Zone C, Mullingar Business Park, Mullingar. N91 X768 044 9344155</p>	<p>Athlone Civic Amenity Site Rear of Golden Island Shopping Centre, Athlone, N37 T625 090 6477397</p>
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Items accepted

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers & magazines • Aluminium & steel cans • Cardboard • Wood • Textiles • White goods (fridges, cookers, washing machines) • All electrical appliances (TVs, radios, computers, monitors, toasters etc) • Mobile phones • Glass • Flat Glass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engine and cooking oils • Oil filters • Batteries (incl. car batteries) • Tyres • Gas cylinders • Green waste / garden waste • Paint and paint cans • Varnishes • Weed killer • Herbicides, pesticides • Aerosols 	<p><i>Additional materials accepted include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household refuse • Food waste • Bulky items (couches, beds, mattresses, carpet/lino, garden furniture etc.) • Plastic bottles and packaging • Tetrapak containers • Polystyrene • Fluorescent tubes
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Note – Gate Fees Apply – Other fees apply to specific items.

Gate Fees for Civic Amenity Sites

Recycling Centre Fees 2023-2024

General Recyclable Materials

Materials	Charge (incl. VAT)
Batteries	Free Entry (WEEE)
Fluorescent tubes	Free Entry (WEEE)
Mobile Phones	Free Entry (WEEE)
White Goods (Fridges, Washing Machines, Cookers etc) WEEE	Free Entry (WEEE)
Gate Fee	€3
Car and small trailer (single axle, low sides)	€10
Car/Van Double axle trailer	€20
Aluminium and Steel Cans	Gate Fee
Cardboard	Gate Fee
Car Batteries	Gate Fee
Car Tyres (max 4no per visit)	Gate Fee
Cooking Oil	Gate Fee
Engine Oil	Gate Fee
Flat glass	Gate Fee
Gas Cylinders	Gate Fee
Glass bottles/Packaging	Gate Fee
Newspapers/Magazines/Paper	Gate Fee
Oil Filters	Gate Fee
Plastic Bottles/Packaging	Gate Fee
Polystyrene	Gate Fee
Scrap Metal	Gate Fee
Tetra paks	Gate Fee
Textiles	Gate Fee
Wood	Gate Fee

Hazardous Waste (max 5 items per visit)

Material Type	Charge (incl. VAT)
Aerosols	Gate Fee
Bleaches	Gate Fee
Glue and Adhesives	Gate Fee
Paint Cans	Gate Fee
Pesticides (Herbicides, Insecticides, Molluscicides, Rodenticides)	Gate Fee
Varnishes	Gate Fee

Mullingar: Collection Monday to Friday only
Athlone: Collection last Friday and Saturday every month (10am – 1pm)



More info see:
www.westmeathcoco.ie
 Telephone: 044 93 32166

Mullingar Civic Amenity Site
 Zone C, Mullingar Business Park,
 Mullingar N91 X768.
 Tel. 044 9344155

Athlone Civic Amenity Site
 Golden Island,
 Athlone N37 T625.
 Tel. 090 6477397

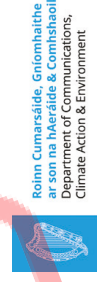
Opening Hours:
 Monday – Saturday inclusive
 9am – 5pm (last entry 4.40pm)
 Open during lunch;
 Closed Sunday/Bank Holiday

Bulky Waste (Charges Apply)

Materials	Charge (incl. VAT and gate fee)
Furniture - Armchair	€10
Furniture - Bed	€10
Furniture - Couch	€14
Furniture - Suite	€30
Furniture - Wardrobe	€10
Large Carpet/Lino Large Roll	€20
Large hard plastic toys	€6
Mattress - single	€10
Mattress - double	€18
Plastic Garden Furniture	€5

Residual Waste (Non-Recyclable)

Residual Waste (Black bag 12kg max)	€4
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Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaíthe
 ar son na hAeráide & Comhshoil
 Department of Communications,
 Climate Action & Environment

Municipal District Mullingar Kinnegad Bring Bank Locations

Town/Village	Location	Clear, Green & Brown Glass & Cans	Textiles
Castlepollard	Council Buildings	✓	✓
Clonmellon	Allied Waste entrance	✓	✓
Collinstown	Church Carpark	✓	✓
Coole	Beside Tennis Courts	✓	✓
Delvin	EMO Petrol Stat. Clonmellon Rd.	✓	✓
Finea	Beside River	✓	✓
Killucan	Opposite Rathwire Church	✓	✓
Kinnegad	Supervalu (2sets)	✓	✓
Lismacaffery	Street Community Centre	✓	✓
Milltownpass	Near School	✓	✓
Mullingar	Blackhall Carpark	✓	✓
Mullingar	Buckleys Carpark	✓	x
Mullingar	Dunnes Stores Carpark	✓	✓
Mullingar	Shop, Millmount	✓	✓
Mullingar	Nat.School, Delvin Rd	✓	✓
Mullingar	Opposite Marshalls Supermarket	✓	x
Multyfarnham	Beside holiday homes	✓	✓
Raharney	Beside School	✓	✓
The Downs	Flynns Fuel Depot	✓	x
Whitehall	Ringtown GAA	✓	✓

Municipal District Athlone Moate Bring Bank Locations

Town/Village	Location	Clear, Green & Brown Glass & Cans	Textiles
Athlone	Marina, North Gate Street	✓	✗
Athlone	College Park Car Park	✓	✓
Athlone	Coosan Church	✓	✗
Athlone	Dunnes Stores Montree	✓	✓
Athlone	Fair Green Carpark	✓	✓
Ballinahown	Beside Gardai Station	✓	✓
Ballymore	Main Street	✓	✓
Castledaly	Community. Centre	✓	✓
Drumraney	Ardnagrath School	✓	✗
Glasson	Spollens Petrol St.	✓	✓
Horseleap	Church Carpark	✓	✓
Loughnavalley	Graveyard Carpark	✓	✓
Lilliput	Car park	✓	✓
Moate	Clara Road(2 sets)	✓	✓
Mount Temple	Community Centre	✓	✓
Rosemount	Community Centre	✓	✓
Streamstown	Killare Road,	✓	✓
Tang	Church Carpark	✓	✗
Ballinalack	TOP Petrol Station	✓	✓
Ballynagore	Pub Car Park	✓	✓
Ballynacarrigy	Mullingar Road	✓	✓
Castletowngeoghan	Opposite Drakes Pub	✓	✓
Dysart	Near Church	✓	✓
Kilbeggan	Filling Station, Dublin Road.	✓	✓
Milltown	Opposite Church	✓	✓
Moyvore	Near Eircom Stat.	✓	✓
Tyrellspass	Kilbeggan Rd	✓	✓
Rathowen	Ferricks Pub Carpark	✓	✓

13.0 Appendix 3

Tidy Towns Competition Results: Tidiness & Litter Control Category

Location	Category	Mark awarded in 2021	Mark awarded in 2022	Mark awarded in 2023	Gain over period assessed
Athlone	G	52	53	55	3
Ballinagore	A	n/a	63	64	1
Ballinahown	A	68	69	70	2
Ballinalack	A	n/a	61	62	1
Ballykeeran		n/a	58	n/a	n/a
Ballymore	B	61	62	64	3
Ballynacargy	B	59	59	60	1
Baylin	B	50	51	53	3
Castledaly	B	60	61	62	2
Castlepollard	C	64	64	67	3
Clonmellon	B	50	51	51	1
Collinstown	B	58	58	59	1
Coole		61	62	n/a	1
Crookedwood	A	58	59	60	2
Drumcree	A	62	63	64	2
Dysart	A	48	48	49	1
Glasson	B	63	63	64	1
Kilbeggan	C	51	52	53	2
Kinnegad	D	n/a	50	51	1
Loughnavalley	A	61	62	63	2
Milltownpass	A	59	59	60	1
Mount Temple	B	60	61	62	2
Mullingar	G	56	57	60	4
Multyfarnham	B	63	63	64	1
Raharney	A	63	63	64	1
Rochfortbridge	C	53	53	55	2
Rosemount	A	62	62	63	1
Streamstown	B	61	62	64	3
Tang	B	60	60	61	1
Tubberclair	B	59	59	60	1
Tyrrellspass	B	58	59	61	3
Delvin	B	n/a	n/a	52	n/a
Finea	A	n/a	n/a	58	n/a

14.0 Appendix 4

Summary of Submissions

This section is to be finalised after the public consultation period

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WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

Municipal District of Athlone- Moate
Civic Centre
Church Street, Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Tel: 090-6442100

Freephone Litter Hotline:
1800 819 000

www.westmeathcoco.ie