



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin
Wicklow County Council

Litter Management Plan 2026 – 2029



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1. INTRODUCTION

County Wicklow is populated by 155,258 people (2022 census) and covers a land area of approximately 2,024,000 hectares. Within the county there are five municipal districts:

- Bray (largest town Bray population 33,512),
- Wicklow (largest town Wicklow 12,957) and
- Arklow (largest town Arklow population 13,399).
- Greystones and Delgany (largest town Greystones population 22,009)
- Baltinglass (largest town Blessington population 5,611)

No other town has a population greater than 5,000. Fourteen towns, from Kilcoole (population 4,569) down to Newcastle (population 1,010) have between 1,000 and 5,000 people. Approximately two thirds of the population live in towns and villages. Further and more detailed information on the profile of the county is available in the County Development Plan.

County Wicklow is known as the garden of Ireland. Geographically the county is dominated by the Wicklow Mountains. It has the largest mountain area and the largest national park in Ireland. It is located thirty minutes south of Dublin. It's unique landscape including distinctive features such as the uplands, coastal beaches and headlands, woodlands, river catchments and wetlands. The Sally Gap, Powerscourt, the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk, Tomnafinnoge Woods and the early monastic site of Glendalough, Blessington lakes and Brittas Bay are some of the popular places that make it a popular tourist and recreational user destination.

Litter contributes to the degradation of our local environment. Being highly visible it is a blight on the landscape of our towns, rural communities and natural resources. It detracts from Wicklow's reputation for a natural clean environment and can leave a lasting impression on visitors. Litter impacts on biodiversity in the county with micro plastics increasingly evident in our ecosystems, most notably in the marine environment. Dog fouling can result in vegetation changes on sensitive habitats. The cost of dealing with litter is a very significant drain on local funds and human resources.

The plan aims to deliver on the mission statement of Wicklow County Council's Corporate Plan to "actively protect the planet, promoting wellbeing and quality of life for all people, and make Wicklow the best place to live, work, visit and grow older.

Wicklow County Council is committed to delivering on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and Production is a key consideration as consumption generates waste and litter. This SDG includes targets on recycling, reducing all waste going to landfill sites and incinerator facilities, and the socially unacceptable issue of litter. Litter not only relates to SDG 12, but it also relates to SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 14 Life below Water and SDG 15 Life on land. Goal 17 Partnership for the goals underpins the delivery of this plan. As all of the SDGs are interlinked, an action like litter is far reaching in terms of environmental damage.

In September 2020, the Government published A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy - Ireland's National Waste Policy 2020-2025. This is Ireland's new roadmap for waste planning and management. The ambition for Ireland is a circular economy where waste and resource use are minimised; the value of products and materials are maintained through good design, robustness and repair; and when a product has reached the end of its life, its parts are recycled to create further useful products. The Plan addresses how we look at our resources more broadly, capturing and maximising the value of materials that may in the past have been discarded. The Circular Economy should underpin Wicklow County Councils approach to prevention of litter.

The vast majority of people in Wicklow are actively committed to the prevention and eradication of litter in our communities, local environment and the marine environment. Litter can make our county less attractive for leisure, tourism and investment. The absence of litter is an important part of keeping County Wicklow beautiful and maintaining its vital tourist trade. A cleaner environment contributes to the health and wellbeing for all in the county.

Wicklow has an Enforcement Section in place since 2004, which has led to more incidents of illegal dumping being investigated and enforcement proceedings being taken against identified offenders. An Environmental Awareness officer has been employed since 1998, developing anti-litter initiatives including Green Schools, National Spring Clean, Tidy Towns, dog fouling campaigns and waste prevention initiatives.

This plan sets out measures to prevent and control litter, ensure enforcement of litter legislation and measures to encourage public engagement with the issue of litter. The Litter Management Plan takes into account the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 and the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.

The plan is a statutory plan prepared as prescribed in Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997. Statutory consultation is done through the Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Strategic Policy committee and through public consultation in the form of submissions. The plan sets out:

Policies and objectives of the local authority in relation to preventing litter including:

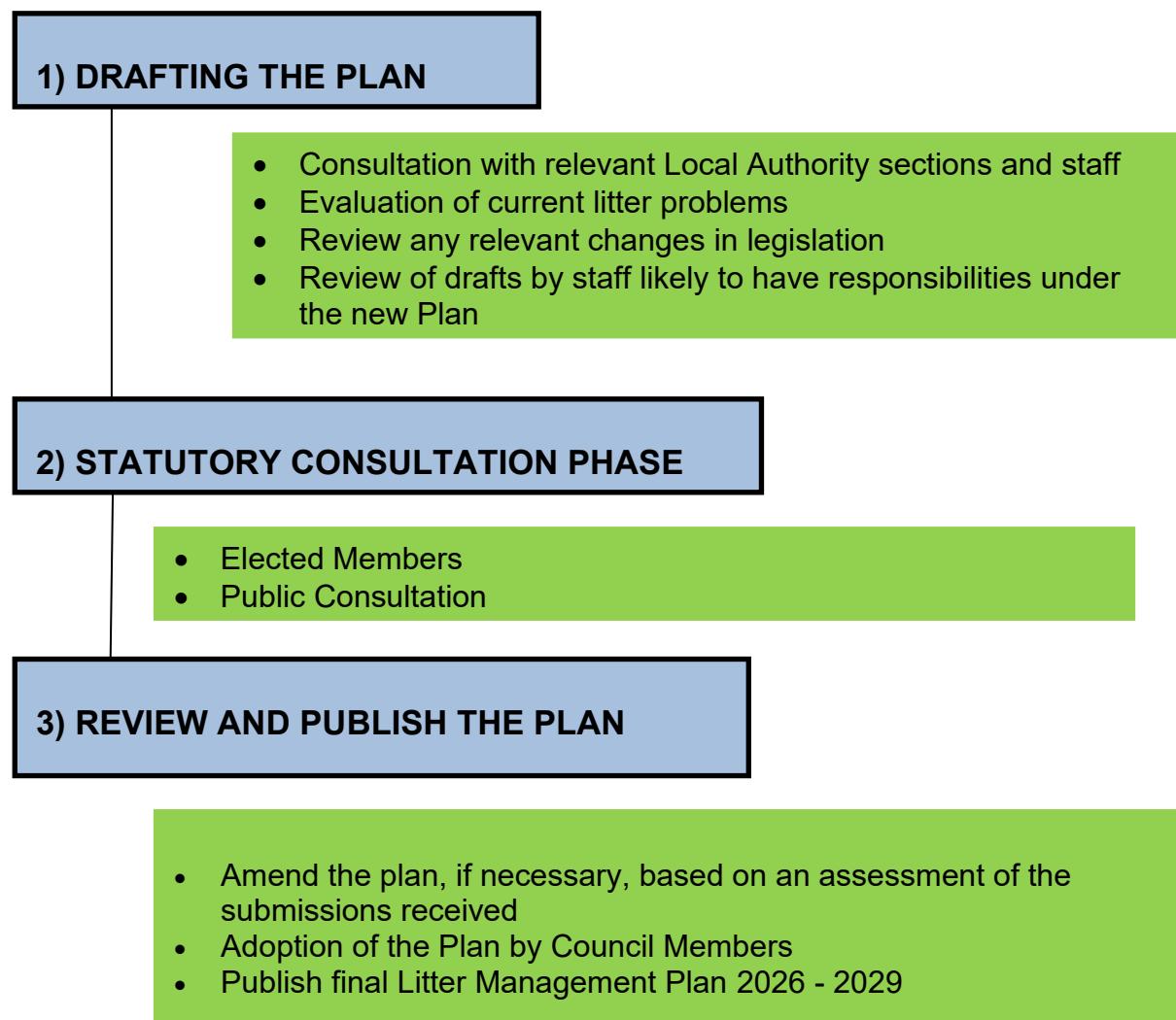
- **Enforcement and regulation measures**
- **Litter prevention and control measures.**
- **Educational and awareness measures.**
- **Community Participation**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Legislation

The Litter Pollution Acts 1997 was introduced to address the issue of littering and defacement of the public realm in Ireland. It provides for penalties for people who litter. It also sets out the responsibilities of local authorities, businesses and the general public. The main objectives of the Act are to define littering as an offence, assign responsibility for litter control to producers, retailers and business owners, to facilitate the enforcement of litter offences, to define local authority responsibilities with respect to litter management planning, supervision and to define collection systems for litter. The Act gives local authorities extensive powers to deal with litter. Section 10 of the act requires that a Local Authority must prepare and adopt a litter management plan in respect of its functional area.

The Process for drafting the Litter Management Plan 2026 -2029 is as follows:



The following is an outline of the other main legislation relating to litter:

- Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992
- Waste management Acts 1996
- Waste Management Regulations 2015
- Air Pollution Act 1987
- Local Government (water pollution) Act 1977
- Local Government (water pollution) (amendment) Act 1990
- Protection of the environment act 2003
- County of Wicklow Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste Bye-laws 2018
- Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022

Litter and Fines

Local authorities are responsible for implementing the litter laws in their administrative areas. They have the power to take enforcement action against individuals who break or ignore these laws.

Leaving or throwing litter in a public place is an offence which can be subject to an on-the-spot fine of €150 or a maximum fine of €4,000 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, disposal of waste and bringing the prosecution.

2.2 What is litter?

Litter is defined in **Section 2(1)** of the Act as *'a substance or object, whether or not intended as waste that, when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or other place lawfully designated for the deposit, is or is likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any other such substance or object, and regardless of its size or volume or the extent of the deposit'*.

Litter is a visible form of pollution and creates an overall negative impression. Its presence devalues our living environment, impacts on its biodiversity, generates a negative impression of our County and places a huge financial burden on County Council finances. Litter pollution does not just affect towns and villages but also our roadsides, protected areas, amenity areas, beaches, rivers etc. By allowing this very visible form of pollution to continue, it will have an adverse effect on all who live and work in the county and also those who visit us.

2.3 Responsibilities relating to the prevention of litter

The Responsibilities of the Local Authority are:

- To take all practical measures to allow for the prevention, control and correct disposal of litter,
- Take steps to promote awareness of litter pollution and its effect on the environment,
- Encourage participation from the public and businesses of the county in preventing and overcoming litter pollution,
- To provide access to appropriate facilities/receptacles and waste bins for its citizens and to arrange for regular emptying and cleaning,
- Enforce the law and apply the necessary penalties and legal sanctions.
- Routine and non-routine inspections
- Delivery of communications, education and awareness programmes

Responsibilities of businesses include:

- To keep the immediate area and up to 100m of the premises litter free,
- To keep any private land visible from public place free from litter,
- Persons owning, operating or in charge of mobile outlets and those who organise major events have additional responsibilities including provision of bins and keeping the site litter free,
- To ensure there is no placement of unauthorised advertisements or public notices in public places, including signage or flyers,
- To remove graffiti from their property,
- To ensure that transporting material including waste, goods and quarry material does not cause litter and is secured to not cause litter.

Responsibilities of the public include:

- Any owner or occupier of property which can be seen from a public place is obliged to keep the property free of litter. Failure to keep property free of litter can result in a fine or prosecution by Wicklow County Council.
- Not to create litter in a public place or a place visible from a public road.
- The public must ensure that waste material is disposed of in a waste receptacle or bin, or in an authorised waste facility.
- Dog owners shall be responsible for the removal of dog faeces from a public place and ensure it is disposed of properly.
- The public must ensure that they only give household waste including recyclable materials to collectors with the necessary authorisations to collect such waste and exercise caution in leaving out waste items based on leaflet drops through their letter box from individuals and companies purporting to represent charitable or authorised organisations.
- Refrain from disposing of household waste in public bins.
- Responsible disposal of garden waste and food waste through brown bin collection or composting.

2.4 Evaluation of litter and main causes of litter

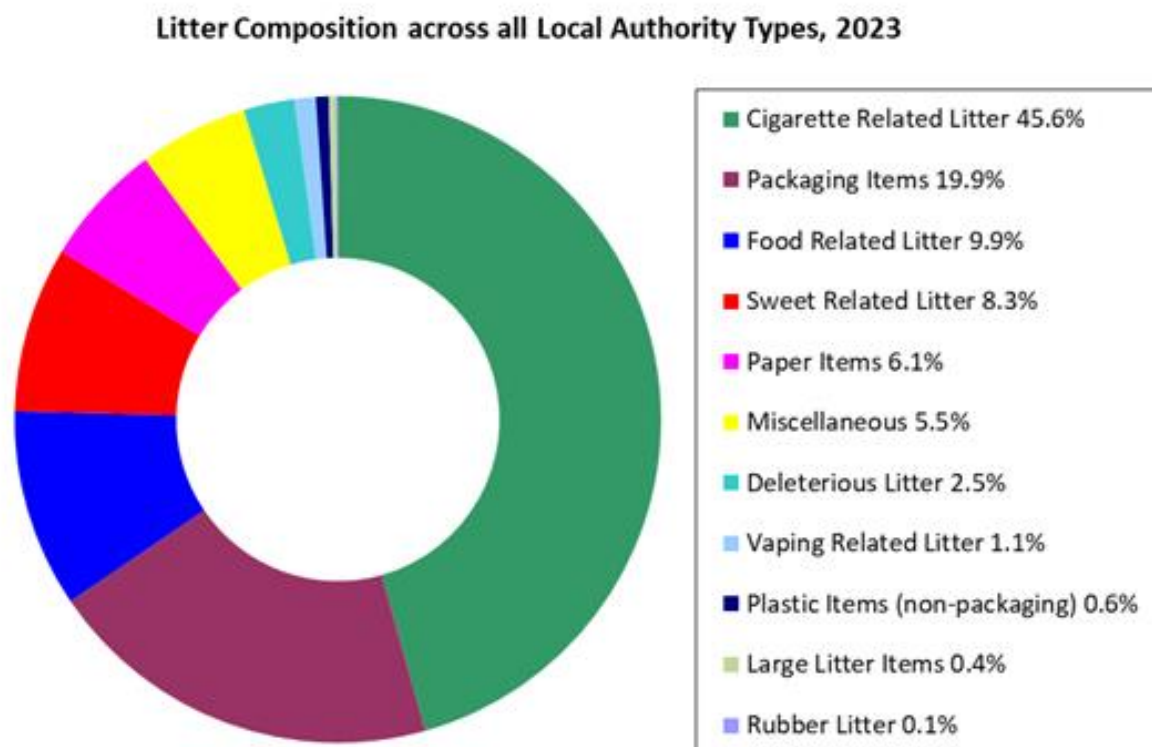
This section of the plan sets out how litter is measured and what surveys of the litter problem have been taken in recent years.

For evaluating the existing litter problem in the county the following methods of evaluation were referred to:

- Complaints raised and logged on e-complaints including calls and e-mails forwarded through the EPA litter line and e-mails calls made directly to Wicklow County Council.
- Surveys carried out by our enforcement staff, IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter) and the National Litter Pollution monitoring survey
- Submissions and complaints received from voluntary representative groups including Tidy Towns and PURE mile groups.

Both Arklow (June) and Bray (January) were included in the 2024 IBAL league surveys and both ranked 16th in Ireland out of 40 towns in their respective surveys. Both were judged to be clean to European norms. Brittas Bay and Bray Seafront both featured in a 2023 survey of coastal sites and waterways with both being found to be clean to European norms.

The pie chart below show litter composition from surveys undertaken throughout the country in 2023



What are the Main Causes of Litter Pollution?

The main causative factors of litter pollution identified in the *litter pollution* surveys in Ireland, in order of significance, were as follows:

Cigarette related litter 45.6%

`Packaging Items 19.9%

Food Related Litter 9.9%

Sweet related litter 8.3%

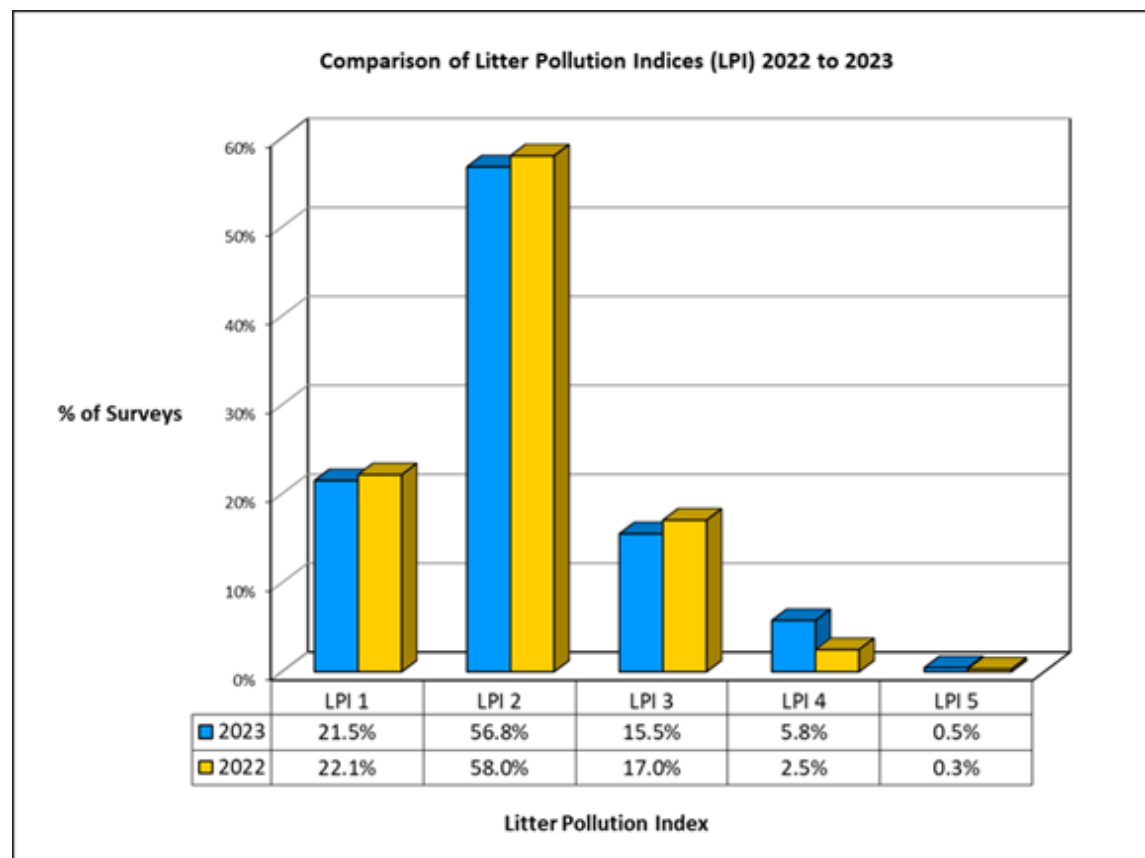
It is worth noting that vaping related litter is a new category of litter recorded and accounts for 1.1 % of litter.

How Littered is the Country at National Level?

Under the system, the extent and severity of litter pollution is measured by using a Litter Pollution Index (LPI), which is a scale of 1 to 5 as described below:

1. Unpolluted or litter free
2. Slightly polluted
3. Moderately polluted
4. Significantly polluted
5. Grossly polluted

Based on litter pollution surveys carried out by local authorities in 2023, the extent of litter pollution in the surveyed areas is set out below:



2.5 Priority issues to address in Wicklow

This section of the plan looks at the various scenarios that are likely to generate litter within County Wicklow. They are not ranked by actual level of litter found. Current activities to tackle problems are identified together with possible future actions.

Pedestrians

On urban streets, pedestrians continue to be the largest group of offenders of litter pollution in County Wicklow. Public places, footpaths, walkways and other public areas suffer from litter items dropped. Smoking, drinking, and eating all result in litter items being dropped. Cigarette butts and chewing gum are the most common items of litter found in urban areas. Urban streets account for much of the spending for cleansing. Focus is required on key blackspot locations including eating areas and public transport stops and hubs.

Motorists

Passing motorists and their passengers are significant offenders in all parts of County Wicklow. Quantities of litter are frequently found on roadside verges, with IBAL noting it as a particular issue on approach roads. Eating and drinking in vehicles or 'dashboard dining' is a common feature of modern life. Packaging items such as bottles, hot drink containers, food wrappers are the most common items of litter dropped by passing motorists.

Fly tipping by visitors and recreational drivers is an issue in many scenic locations with popular locations such as beaches, the uplands and forest entrances particular prone to this issue.

The collection of litter from public road verges is a costly exercise. Traffic passing at high speed causes safety risks for both staff and members of the public.

Illegal Dumping/Fly tipping

Fly-tipping and illegal dumping is common in rural and mountain areas. It is usually the most visible, costly and damaging type of litter and the subject of the largest number of complaints. Prompt removal of bags dumped can help to prevent more widespread littering when bags get torn apart. Dumping of bulky items and construction and demolition waste is prevalent. Wicklow County Council was the lead authority in the establishment of the PURE project. Through the project Wicklow County Council works with key partners who are major landowners and stakeholders in rural and upland communities to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling dumping and fly tipping. The use of unauthorised collectors, commonly referred to as a "man with a van" leads to dumping without householders and businesses being aware of where their waste is deposited. The dumping of garden waste is a significant problem with large scale dumping in rural areas along with persistent dumping of small quantities in estates leading to accumulations of waste.

Dog Fouling

Dog fouling is an issue that has been a top priority in many parts of the county particularly in urban areas and popular walking routes. Dog owners are responsible

for cleaning up after their pets in public areas, but unfortunately some ignore their responsibilities. Toxocariasis is a disease found in animal faeces and is caused by the eggs of the roundworm toxocara. These can be passed from dogs to humans through contact with animal faeces and contaminated soil. Children are particularly at risk and infection can lead to illness and even partial loss of sight. Accumulation of dog fouling in natural settings has been shown to alter vegetation, impacting on biodiversity. It is a common occurrence that people bag the dog faeces then leave the bag in an inappropriate location creating another form of litter.

Illegal and Unauthorised signage

The proliferation of unauthorised signage along the public road for events, businesses, sales, public announcement etc are the cause of many complaints. Illegal signs are removed and fines issued which must be paid before signs can be retrieved. Property owners are required to prevent defacement of property with advertising and take steps to remove and remedy unauthorised advertising.

Abandoned Cars

Cars are often abandoned on roadsides and on public open spaces, including residential estates. End of Life Vehicles are classed as hazardous waste. Abandoning a vehicle is an offence under Section 71 of the Waste Management Acts 1996. Under Section 9 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 abandoned vehicles in public places can be ordered to be removed to prevent the creation of further litter, and fines may be issued for contravention of Section 6 of the same Act.

Major Events / Open Air Events

Patrons at major events/open air events consume large quantities of food and drink. Used packaging and non-consumed items are invariably left on the ground.

Under Section 18 of the Litter Pollution Acts 1997, the promoters and organisers of major events/open air events are required to implement litter control measures at the venue and in the surrounding area. Promoters and organisers are required to implement these controls before, during and after an event. Major events would include festivals, parades, concerts, sporting occasions. All events must adhere to Wicklow County Council's Events Management Guidance Document and should be guided by Wicklow County Council's Greener Events Policy.

Poorly Covered Vehicles Carrying Loose Items

Vehicles carrying waste are required, under the relevant waste collection permit, to keep the waste covered during transit. Poorly covered trucks - either through torn nets or no nets at all will often lead to windblown litter. This type of litter is especially hard to pick up as it can be spread over quite a distance on busy roads. All trucks carrying goods or materials are required to take measures to prevent spillage during transit on roads.

Public Houses

Smoking is commonly associated with Public Houses and Bookmakers. It can also be an issue outside some work places. As patrons spend extended periods of time in

these premises they are forced to go outside to avoid breaching the smoking ban. Some proprietors of these premises have taken measures to ensure that patrons have easy access to receptacles when they discard cigarette related litter. Vapes are now also becoming more common items of litter. Vapes need to be disposed of correctly as an electronic waste containing batteries.

Schools workplace lunchtime litter

Litter generation can be an issue adjacent to some work places and secondary schools where large numbers are eating on the go between the school/businesses and local shops. Green areas can sometimes see an accumulation of this type of litter during the summer months as more people eat outdoors.

Retail Outlet and Take Away consumption of food and drink

The retail sector can contribute to litter particularly with relation to food and drinks consumption. A growing trend of eating take away food or consumption of drinks on the go is leading to increased numbers of complaints about its impact. Many local groups report concerns about the growing numbers of disposable coffee cups, drink bottles and cans and take away packaging being found on our streets and roadside verges. Being larger items they often make a very visible impact. The return bottles and cans scheme is helping to reduce the number of bottles and cans but other forms of consumption litter remain at high levels. Retail outlets can also contribute to litter through poor provision management of bins.

Torn refuse bags. Over flowing and overturned wheeled bins

In County Wicklow, some customers of waste collectors use plastic bags for their waste instead of wheelie-bins when exempt from use of a wheeled bin due to access issues for use of a wheeled bin collection service. Exemptions from wheeled bins collections can only be granted by Wicklow County Council under strict national criteria. Bags are sometimes left out for a couple of days before collection and on other occasions the actual collection does not take place. In such circumstances it is not uncommon for bags containing food to be torn apart by animals. Overflowing wheeled bins or bins that are toppled over can cause similar issues with bins left out to early increasing the risk, particularly during windy weather.

Overflowing litter bins and recycling banks

Over flowing bins can end up generating litter rather than helping to control litter. It is important to place bins in suitable locations with appropriate collection regimes. The design of the bin should not facilitate the disposal of household waste. Recycling banks can have related issues at times of peak demand.

Places of leisure and gathering point

Outdoor recreation and leisure is important for both residents of the county and for many visitors. Particularly in good weather many locations including beaches, coastal walks, heritage sites and the uplands can attract significant gatherings or large numbers of visitors leading to heavy littering on sites that have difficult access and are not easily cleaned.

Garden Waste

The dumping of garden waste or food waste outside the curtilage of a property which as well as being unsightly may lead to localized pollution, enrichment of the environment in a manner which may cause alteration of the local habitat and the spreading of invasive species.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN 2026– 2029

The Wicklow County Council Litter Management Plan sets out objectives in four main areas for 2025-2030. These objectives are discussed in:

3.1 Enforcement and regulation.

3.2 Litter prevention and control.

3.3 Education and Awareness.

3.4 Community Engagement.

3.1 Enforcement and Regulation

Enforcement of all relevant legislation is a key priority for Wicklow County Council's strategy to deal with litter. The council is fully committed to enforcement of the Litter Pollution Acts 1997, as amended and the Waste Management Acts 1996, as amended and all other relevant legislation, regulations or bylaws.

Four enforcement staff with office support patrol the county on a daily basis investigating littering and illegal dumping offences. All reports of littering and dumping received directly by Wicklow County Council or through PURE and the EPA are recorded through the environmental complaints system where they are tracked from complaint, through investigation, clean up, and enforcement. Fixed penalty notices plus cleanup costs are issued whenever adequate evidence is found or provided. Direct prosecution is used when deemed appropriate. Prosecution is also taken against those who don't pay. Enforcement carries out duties under the Waste Management Acts, including enforcement of waste segregation bye-laws and the various producer responsibilities initiatives.

The PURE project led by and part funded by Wicklow County Council remains a key partner to the enforcement unit in tackling illegal dumping. The project allows for a partnership approach engaging stakeholders who are members of PURE. Current partners are the local authorities of South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Coillte, The National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Wicklow Uplands Council.

The Litter Pollution Acts 1997 provide for a range of offences.

Enforcement of the provisions of the Act is the responsibility of the Waste Management and Environmental Services Section of Wicklow County Council, part of the Climate Environment, Recreation and Amenities directorate. The number of fines issued and paid for the past 4 years is as follows:

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fines issued	244	177	101	93
Fines paid	180	130	101	59
Prosecutions	25	26	17	17

Aim:

To enforce the legislation to its fullest extent in order to prevent and control litter and illegal dumping.

Objectives:

- To maintain a visible enforcement presence throughout the county.
- To record and investigate as needed all complaints and enforce regulations and legislation in full for all cases received directly by Wicklow County Council or through either PURE or the EPA.
- To pursue illegal waste collection activities and take action to stop any activities found.
- To provide a targeted approach on known litter generators focusing on times or locations of known occurrence
- To ensure that all complaints are fully tracked from reception until complaints are closed on the environmental complaints system.
- To continue a strategic partnership, approach to tackling illegal dumping in rural area and the uplands with key stakeholders and landowner through PURE.
- To operate and promote the litter hotline (1800 365 123 ensuring a swift and effective follow up to all calls.
- To engage all sectors of the business community in the implementation of regulation and ensure compliance with responsibility under the Litter Pollution Act.
- To ensure the general public complies with relevant legislation and regulations with relation to litter and bin collections.
- To prevent the proliferation of illegal signage and defacement of the public realm with advertising through enforcement action.
- To ensure major events comply with requirements to manage their waste and litter during and after event.
- To use CCTV, drones and other technology including smart phones, tablets, apps and data collections systems where permissible in order to improve the success of enforcement monitoring and action against offenders in line with regulations and GDPR guidance.
- To liaise with other local authorities, the EPA, the Eastern Regional Enforcement Office, the Eastern & Midlands Waste Management Office ensuring effective coordination and implementation of best practice.
- To monitor and implement regulations relating to annual priorities identified by WERLA including C& D material, household and commercial waste, and illegal dumping. To carry out litter quantification surveys in conjunction with the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System.
- To continue to work closely with An Garda Síochána and other government agencies to pursue enforcement measures in relation to litter, transfer of waste and abandoned cars.

3.2 Litter Prevention and Control

Wicklow County Council operates litter prevention and control measures throughout the county. The five municipal districts of Bray, Greystones, Wicklow, Arklow and Baltinglass work with Waste Management, playing a key role in delivering this service at local level. They have taken on many of the duties previously undertaken by town councils and ensure that all towns in the county have equal access to a range of services appropriate to their size. Services include street cleaning, litter bin maintenance the removal of illegal dumping and maintenance of signage.

Aim:

To deliver an integrated approach to the prevention and management of litter, protecting the environment with reduced levels of dumping.

Objectives:

- To ensure bins are inspected and serviced as appropriate as needed.
- To maintain adequate numbers of bins, adapting locations where placed to suit local needs ensuring priority litter types are addressed.
- To maintain bins ensuring they are in good working order, replacing open top bins with covered bins when necessary.
- To provide street cleaning services as appropriate in town centres.
- To ensure adequate resources in the municipal districts for litter control.
- To monitor and ensure that litter prevention services are provided to an acceptable standard.
- To operate a fast and efficient process of investigating and removal of illegal dumping.
- To support the work of PURE in tackling illegal dumping and litter in upland and rural communities.
- To tackle the issue of dog fouling with signage, awareness campaigns, enforcement, investigation of new techniques for enforcement and where appropriate bins for disposal.
- To prevent the proliferation of unauthorised advertising signage in public areas.
- To monitor and control litter in identified litter black spots.
- To encourage relevant businesses to provide bins for cigarette waste and packaging waste produced in association with their business activities.
- To ensure litter management plans are put in place for festivals and large events.
- To ensure that any event advertisement is only done following prior agreement with Wicklow County Council and that signage is removed within two days of the end of the event.
- To ensure provision of bins and adequate litter control on Blue Flag beaches during the bathing season.
- To ensure that bring banks are serviced and maintained to a high standard,
- To explore the use of technology including solar powered bins and smart technology to increase efficiency of bin maintenance programmes
- To deliver targeted projects through the Anti-Dumping Initiative at community level that address local blackspots deliver better enforcement outcomes and

provide opportunities to remove the waste streams that lead to increased dumping.

3.3 Education and Awareness

The environmental awareness office of Wicklow County Council delivers education and awareness on litter throughout the county. All sectors of society including schools, businesses, communities and the general public are included in the programme. Anti-litter campaigns aim to raise consciousness about the impact of littering, dumping and other deleterious activities on the environment in which we live. The programme encourages personal responsibility and engagement by the people of Wicklow in tackling the issues and fosters a sense of pride in the county and at local level. The issue of litter is linked to wider issues in protecting our environment including better waste management practice and prevention, and protecting the natural resources and biodiversity of the county.

Aim:

To promote a litter prevention and control message that fosters responsible citizenship in the protection of the environment.

Objectives:

- To promote targeted litter prevention campaigns on relevant issues including dog fouling, graffiti, cigarette butts, gum litter and general litter.
- To assist schools in delivering a litter prevention and control message to students, using Green Schools as the primary mechanism for delivery.
- To provide educational materials and support for teachers on litter and associated themes.
- To provide workshops for schools and community groups through the Anti-litter grant and Waste Prevention budget that encourage a better understanding of waste and the role of all in litter prevention and control.
- To encourage best practice in different sectors of the community through annual awards recognizing groups engaging with litter prevention and control.
- To promote awareness of campaigns that tackle litter, promoting citizen engagement, including the national Tidy Towns competition, the PURE mile, Leave No Trace and National Spring Clean.
- To use all relevant media including local papers, radio, social media, and the website to promote litter prevention and engagement.
- To develop awareness among householders and businesses of their responsibilities and obligations to prevent and control litter.
- To liaise with waste enforcement ensuring synergies in the message being delivered on litter.
- To deliver actions through the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy that prevents consumption of disposable items that lead to litter.

- To promote better management of organic waste including opportunities to use the brown bin or composting. Raise awareness of the harm caused by dumping of garden waste.

3.4 Community Engagement

Wicklow County Council recognises that local community engagement is a key driver for change in delivering both prevention and control of litter. Wicklow County Council aims to work with citizens to facilitate their engagement as equal partners in tackling the challenges presented by littering and dumping in our communities. Working with local groups and empowering them to take action ensures that communities can play a key role in tackling the issues associated with litter. Action at community level is essential to ensure that prevention and control can reach all communities of County Wicklow engaging all sectors of society. Support is provided by the Environmental Awareness Office, Waste Management team, Climate Action team and the municipal district offices.

The growing focus on Climate Action, Single Use Plastics and the Circular Economy is creating opportunities to focus on the elimination of waste at source rather than dealing with its consequences. The National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy deals with this work in more detail but it is important to note its impact here and that it underpins much of our work in community engagement particularly our partnership with Tidy Towns groups in the county.

Aim:

To empower local groups to take part in the control and prevention of litter within their own community.

Objectives:

- To encourage community engagement by a diverse range of actors including Tidy Towns, residents associations, Coastcare rural communities, schools, businesses, youth groups etc.
- To provide materials for cleanup events including bags, litter pickers and gloves when required.
- To arrange prompt collection of materials following cleanups when given sufficient notice of events.
- To promote the National Spring Clean campaign providing the above logistical support to participants.
- To support the efforts of Housing to engage residents association in management of litter on their estates.
- To liaise with Town Teams on litter control in town centers and on approaches.
- To involve key community groups such as Tidy Towns in disseminating a litter prevention message at local level.
- To encourage active participation at youth level in tackling litter.

- To provide funding for and support to PURE.
- To provide recognition to participating groups through an annual awards.
- To work with and support Tidy Towns and other conscientious citizen groups on the development of campaigns and projects that focus on prevention or elimination of waste, with particular emphasis on materials that lead to litter



generation.

- To consider the impact of litter in the selection of Local Authority Prevention Network projects, where the primary focus is on reducing waste generation.

4. COSTS AND RESOURCES

Since September 2004, Wicklow County Council has retained a waste enforcement section. The waste enforcement section is grant assisted through the Waste Enforcement Grant from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The key objectives of the Section are to enforce Waste Management Regulations. Wicklow County Council currently employs four enforcement officers with office support, who actively enforce litter legislation within the Local Authority. The current work programme of the section involves the development of existing activities including monitoring for illegal waste activities, conducting inspections with regard to waste permits and waste collection permit regulations, conducting a planned programme of inspections to ensure compliance with the packaging regulations and enforcement of litter legislation. The annual RMCEI plan sets out the work of the waste enforcement section. The annual work plan is based on priorities issued by the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (WERLA) which is based in Dublin City Council for the Eastern Midlands region and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)

There are currently a number of parking wardens contracted to work in Arklow, Bray, Greystones and Wicklow who are also authorized under the Litter Pollution Acts. . The waste enforcement section is working closely with these wardens to ensure they receive all relevant training and that they are engaged in issuing fines as part of their routine duties of parking management.

Fines/Prosecutions

In 20, 2024 Wicklow County Council received € 14,733.00 through the issuing of 93 fines. A person convicted of a litter offence may also be required to pay the local authority's costs and expenses for investigating the offence and bringing the prosecution to Court. Wicklow County Council will endeavor to utilize fines and prosecutions to their full extent and to provide an enhanced street cleaning service to prevent areas being spoilt by litter. In the Wicklow area the majority of litter fines are issued for offences under Section 3 (1) of the Act— Litter in Public Places (50 fines issued in 2024) and Section 19 -Illegal signs erected on poles/structures (37 fines issued in 2024)

The remaining litter fines are issued for the following litter offences:

- Section 6 - Failure to keep area litter-free;
- Section 20 Graffiti/defacement of structures
- Section 22 – Dog Fouling

Surveillance/CCTV

The Council is currently preparing to re-introduce the operation of surveillance/CCTV systems throughout the functional area. in order to prevent and detect offences in relation to dumping and the illegal depositing of litter. This involves the preparation of a suite of measures required to comply with Data Protection legislation including seeking the views of the public via a public consultation process. It is proposed to install CCTV/surveillance systems at litter/dumping black spots where there is a history of dumping in order to both prevent and catch offenders. This may include Bottle banks, civic amenity sites, rural and urban areas where there is a history of dumping or littering. In previous years, mobile and fixed cameras have been used

and have seen significant success at the time. Drones may be used to examine sites of concern.

Free Phone Number

Members of the public can report litter offences/complaints to Council Staff and Litter Wardens by contacting Waste management on 0404 20127 or the Freephone Litter Line on 1800 365 123. Litter offences can also be reported via email to envcomplaints@wicklowcoco.ie or by writing to the Council.

Municipal District Offices

Wicklow County Council is divided into 5 Municipal Districts – Arklow, Blessington, Bray, Greystones and Wicklow

The Areas are also responsible for street cleaning and regional road cleaning. Funding is provided by the Environment Directorate.

Waste Management cleanup collections

The Water and Environmental Services Directorate provides additional resources for the removal of fly-tipping, abandoned cars, etc. from the public road network. A pickup and driver are employed on a permanent basis for this work.

5. Actions

Waste Enforcement

Actions	Responsibility	Indicator
Maintain a team of Waste Enforcement Officers	Waste Enforcement	No of Enforcement Officer in situ
Maintain an e-complaints system to manage all complaints received	Waste Enforcement	No of complaints received and number of complaints closed
Operate targeted campaigns to tackle illegal waste operators	Waste Enforcement	No of campaigns
Operate campaigns that align with WERLA's annual list of priorities	Waste Management	No of campaigns
Work with PURE partners to tackle illegal dumping in upland and rural environments	PURE	Tonnes removed from uplands by PURE
Undertake inspections and campaigns to insure business compliance with regulations	Waste Management	No of campaigns with businesses
Remove unauthorised signage with fines issued.	Waste Enforcement	Number of signs removed
Ensure all events comply with waste regulations	All services or district licencing or funding events	Compliance with events guidance
Prepare new data protection compliant procedures to re-introduce the use of CCTV and other new technologies for gathering and processing evidence	Waste Management	Impact on successful prosecution of illegal activity
Liaise with WERLA and other local authorities to share experience and coordinate campaigns	Waste Management	Number of meeting
Carry out litter quantification surveys to contribute to national litter pollution monitoring system	Waste Enforcement	Survey results inputted to national database.
Liaise with Gardai, WERLA and other Local Authorities to pursue enforcement with relation to transfer of waste and abandoned cars	Waste Management	Number of meetings with Gardai
Enforce household and commercial waste segregation bye-laws	Waste Enforcement	Number of inspections

Investigate options for increasing enforcement of litter legislation with relation to dog fouling, including the use of DNA testing	Waste Management	Identify feasible options
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Litter Prevention and Control

Operate street bin inspection and servicing .	Municipal District	Tonnage collected
Review street bin locations ensuring they contribute to keeping streets clean without generating problems	Municipal Districts	Collection route for servicing
Provide street cleaning services in larger towns	Municipal Districts	Number of towns serviced
Provide annual funding to districts for litter control	Climate Environment, Recreation and Amenity	Annual budget allocation
Operate a waste removal service for illegal dumping	Waste Management	Tonnages collected
Support the partnership approach to tackling littering and dumping in upland and rural areas through PURE	Waste Management	Funding for PURE
Tackle the issue of dog fouling with signage, awareness and where appropriate bins	Municipal Districts	No. of campaigns
Operate permitting of temporary signage	Waste Management and Municipal Districts	Authorizations given for temporary signage
Provide litter control measures at Blue Flag beaches	Environment	Number of Blue Flags awarded
Maintain bring banks are kept clean and free of litter	Waste Management	Number of complaint about bring banks
Improve efficiency of bin services through the use of smart bins and technology	Municipal Districts	Number of smart bins
Seek funding from the Anti-Dumping Initiative when available to undertake projects that help tackle dumping at identified blackspot and help remove waste streams that are dumped.	Waste Management	No. of projects

Education and Awareness

Undertake anti-litter campaigns using the anti-litter grant	Environmental Awareness Office	Number of projects funded.
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including target campaigns on priority themes including dog fouling and cigarette butts		
Support anti-litter campaigns in schools using Green Schools and National Spring Clean	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of Green School flags awarded
Provide workshops and events for schools and community groups covering waste management	Environmental Awareness Office	Number of events and workshops.
Run annual awards to recognize community engagement	Environmental Awareness Office	Number of awards
Partner with Leave No Trace	Environmental Awareness Office	Number of Leave no Trace campaigns
Promote anti-litter messaging through media and social media	Environmental Awareness office	Number of press releases
Target convenience single use items in waste prevention campaigns and demonstration projects	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of projects
Run information campaigns reminding householders and businesses of their responsibilities under waste legislation	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of campaigns
Promote the Return Deposit return scheme supporting campaigns to increase usage of the scheme	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of campaigns

Community Engagement

Promote active participation by communities in anti-litter campaigns	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of campaigns
Promote and support the work of Tidy Towns groups and residents associations	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of Tidy Town entries
Promote the National Spring Clean Campaign	Environmental Awareness office	No. of registered Spring Clean events
Provide materials for cleanup events for National Spring Clean, Tidy Towns and other cleanup campaigns	Environmental Awareness Office	No of litter pickers distributed.
Promote better management of organic waste by Tidy Towns, residents associations and members of the public	Environmental Awareness office	No. of food or garden waste campaigns.
Arrange collection of litter post	Waste Management	No. of collections

event for organized clean up events		
Promote development of residents associations in local authority housing estates.	Housing	No. of local authority housing estate residents associations.
Encourage youth participation in litter management through Green Schools, National Spring Clean and Transition Year	Environmental Awareness Office	No of Green Schools flags awarded
Support the work of PURE	Waste Management	No of Pure miles
Recognize community groups through an annual awards	Environmental Awareness	No of awards
Support community initiatives on the prevention of single use items that contribute to littering	Environmental Awareness Office	No. of initiatives