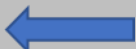



2022 National Enforcement Priorities Progress Report

National Enforcement Priority:	GOVERNANCE - RMCEI Review & Reporting
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity <u>in the previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RMCEI Plan frequency of reviews should be bi-annual at a minimum. The review frequency and the outcomes should be included in the progress report. • RMCEI reviews should evaluate progress of NEPs and assess if planned inspection targets are on track. • RMCEI reviews should provide reasons for any deviation from targets, planned activities or objectives set out in the plan. • RMCEI reviews should be presented to the Director of Services/Senior Engineer/Senior Management/Environment Strategic Policy Committee at least once during the earlier part of the year, to facilitate plan review. • The RMCEI Plan, RMCEI Data Return and NEP Progress Report should be submitted to the EPA on schedule. 	<p>The RMCEI Plan was also the subject of discussion between the Senior Management Group in Environment and the Director of Services at regular meetings throughout the year and specifically around the continued availability of identified staff to carry out the planned inspections.</p> <p>In addition the two Senior Executive Engineers who head up the Water, Waste/Air/ Noise held weekly meeting with their respective teams when progress of NEPs was evaluated and targets tracked and deviations identified and corrective actions put in place – an example of this was in respect of Planned Farm inspections when it became clear that GAP inspections were becoming a priority for the EPA; during our reviews we prioritised GAP inspections over Catchment Analysis. Despite one of our staff being on long term Sick and paternity leave and essentially losing 0.53 FTE, we maintained and even increased our GAP Farm inspections. This was however at the expense of Catchment Analysis where we did not get to carry out as many assessments and sampling rounds as we had planned to do.</p> <p>Also as part of the review there was a deviation of targets in respect of household & commercial kerbside waste collection regime including brown bins, for while 250 inspections were planned as per column 6.1.11 this increased to 911 following clarification that inspection of each individual house could be regarded as an inspection and not counting an overall estate as just one inspection.</p> <p>The need to revise the number of inspections was circulated to and approved by the Director of Services.</p> <p>Details of the National Enforcement Priorities and the activities for focus in 2022 were presented to the elected members of the full Council through the Chief Executives monthly report when notification of same was received, and members of the Environment Strategic Policy committee were also briefed on the objectives of the Plan and the NEPs at their first meeting in 2022 – presentations in respect of elements from the NEPs were made at each of the quarterly SPC meetings.</p>

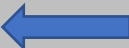
The RMCEI Plan and associated documents were submitted to the EPA ahead of schedule.

National Enforcement Priority: GOVERNANCE - Environmental Complaint Handling	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment of a dedicated Environmental Complaints Co-ordinator. • Implementation of the National Environmental Complaints Procedure. • Appropriate systems in place for recording and tracking environmental complaints. • Adequate resources assigned to complaint investigation in the RMCEI Plan. • Appropriate handling of EPA referred complaints and Section 63 Notices received by the local authority. • Ensuring timely investigation of complaints and reporting of complaints outcomes. This should include progress on complaints outstanding from previous years and the timeframes for complaint investigation. • Analysis of complaints numbers and inspection intelligence that may have potential impacts on NEPs and other thematic areas. • Details of environmental complaint handling should be provided in the appropriate section of the NEP Progress Report. • Reporting of complaint numbers and investigation for each thematic area in the RMCEI Data Returns. 	<p>Meath County Council have in place a dedicated Environmental Complaints Coordinator and a backup Coordinator to cover absences.</p> <p>The Senior Executive Engineers assign responsibilities for complaint investigation to staff from their teams depending on the nature of the complaint and relevant expertise, and also assess the volume and impacts on the NEPs overall and reassign as necessary.</p> <p>All 3261 complaints received in 2022 were processed in accordance with the Procedure Manual for Investigation and Resolution of Environmental Complaints and whether received by letter, email, social media or telephone are recorded on the Councils call management system called SUGAR.</p> <p>Following investigation of complaints by an assigned officer a recommendation is made to the Senior Executive Engineer who determines the next most appropriate action such as service of a statutory notice requiring specified measures to be undertaken, that no further action is required, or that the matter be referred to the Councils legal advisors to initiate legal proceedings in which case a Chief Executive Order or Delected Officers is prepared authorising such action.</p> <p>The environment department are trialling an enhanced version of the SUGAR system which allows us to capture all the information broken down into different environmental categories and including ones which are outside the scope of the RMCEI returns including Dogs & Horses and Derelict sites.</p> <p>The enhanced SUGAR system provides for a grading system whereby calls classified as low, medium or high degree of urgency as determined by the Customer Service Department who if in doubt refer the matter to the Complaints Coordinator. The classification of the complaint will determine the number of days within which is to be investigated and closed off and failing which the complaint will automatically pass up the line to a more senior member of staff.</p>

	<p>While no section 63 notices were served by the EPA on Meath County Council in 2022 the new grading system will be applied for such notices and almost inevitably be classified as urgent as it is appreciated that these notices are only served where the environmental risk is high.</p> <p>The Council also continue to use the FFASTFIELDS recording system which integrates into the existing IT & SUGAR Systems and involving the use of Smart Phones and Tablets in carrying out inspections, preparing written reports and securely and instantly transferring data and asset information.</p> <p>When analysing complaint numbers attention is paid to complaints which are opened from the previous year and while many are overhangs from late in the previous year and can be closed out following full investigation, there are circumstances where a small number of complaints continue to remain open and by way of example septic tanks where advisory notices have been served but the property owner may be in a nursing home or the property is the subject of family disputes.</p>
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NEP Assessment Criteria		
A	For regulated / authorised sites, a compliance rate documented and compared over the previous years, and analysed or explained;	CORE
B	Demonstrate appropriate site selection methodology and inspection implementation and/or early interventions;	
C	Demonstration that non-compliances/unauthorised activities are being detected and are being followed up – and some progress in the NEP is shown;	
D	Clear example(s) of a positive environmental outcome(s) – something was achieved to improve the environment (not simply reached a target of inspections);	
E	Clear useful learning in a NEP area (positive or negative e.g. what to do, or what not to do, or identification of illegal sites or unauthorised operators);	plementary Comple
F	Collaborative work with WERLA, NTFSO, RWMPO, LAWPRO, EPA, Catchment Care Projects, inter-departmental within the local authority or with other local authorities; cross cutting NEP collaboration;	

G	Demonstration of a proactive approach , or innovation in dealing with a problem or demonstration of an enforcement curiosity ;	
H	Compliance promotion and awareness raising activities;	
I	Activities on data validation, data analysis, systems development, website development ;	
J	Significant enforcement actions/prosecutions and the outcomes such as remediation, sharing of lessons learnt to aid national consistency of enforcement;	
K	Case studies written up and shared that encompass any of the above properties.	

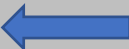
National Enforcement Priority:		WATER – Pressures from Agriculture (slurry/soiled water collection and storage)	
Local Authority:		Activities	
 Looking back at the year		<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>	
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections of farmyards in areas where agriculture is identified as a significant pressure, with a small percentage in other areas, as defined in the National Agricultural Inspection Programme for local authorities. • Undertake targeted agricultural inspections specific to the pollutants of concern (P, N and organics), using the EPA Pollution Impact Potential (PIP) maps and EPAs Targeting Agricultural Measures Map. • Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance, including follow up and close out of non-compliances. • Cross reporting of non-compliances to DAFM. • Document and report results for all farm inspections to the EPA. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slurry/soiled water collection and storage compliance was investigated in 83 farmyards in 25 waterbodies. • Management and storage of FYM was checked on 77 inspections of 56 farmers. Eight were non-compliant with uncontrolled FYM run-off and closed season field storage of FYM leading to 2 farmers being Cross Reported; 4 received a compliance letter, and 2 verbal instructions. One farmer was given a verbal warning first but after failing to move FYM as requested, a cross compliance report was issued to DAFM. • Slurry Collection & Storage was checked on 71 inspections of 57 farmers. Non-compliances were found in 10 inspections. Further information is required for 9 yards visited. Inadequate management of storage led to 1 cross report being issued. Five farmers were issued with compliance letters and instructed to increase slurry storage capacity or repair/replace slurry storage tanks. Two storage issues were closed out in 2022, 8 are still in progress. • Control of Soiled Water was checked on 96 inspections of 64 farmers. This was the most common non-compliance, found on 51 inspections. In 25 instances soiled water was not being properly collected, 5 had soiled waters running to surface waters which were Cross Reported. Direct piped contaminated discharge to surface waters led to 1 cross report. Silage effluent discharging to ground or surface waters led to 2 farmers being cross reported. Twelve of these non-compliances were rectified and closed out in 2022. <p>Scheduled routine inspections focused on 11 waterbodies where water quality was 'at risk' and agriculture was a significant pressure. Spatiotemporal analysis of investigative monitoring chemistry data was used to identify areas where elevated nutrients were occurring. In 2022 we also adopted a new approach of calculating the loadings of nutrients across 8 waterbodies. This approach allows us to identify tributaries/areas with high P, N or Ammonia loadings indicating that organic fertilisers may have been applied inappropriately. By combining chemistry data findings with PIP maps, LPIS data, and Conceptual Models (based on EPA/LAWPRO guidance), we focused our farm inspections on areas with CSAs upstream</p>	

- of high nutrient samples. Knowledge of e.g., where dairy expansion has happened and pressures on storage capacity may be higher was also used to focus efforts.
- The agricultural inspections were specifically targeted to address pollutants of concern: For example, inspections were undertaken in e.g., parts of the Nanny, Skane, and Killary catchments where N leaching is of particular concern. In these areas the focus was mainly on derogation farms (40 inspections). Issues discussed included ensuring slurry storage and in particular soiled water storage (18 farms) was calculated and deficits identified and keeping soiled water sprinklers away from areas with high PIP-N risk (three farms).
- We continued to use our new proactive approach of engagement with farmers in 2022 (instead of solely relying on Cross Compliance) when carrying out initial inspections (96). Our inspection regime is as follows: after identifying a focal area, we call the farmers to arrange times inspections. We create a map portfolio for each farmer with information on how their land parcel overlaps with different soils and PIP zones, identify previous issues and the farmyard layout (including previously calculated storage capacity overlain with recent satellite images of the yard). During the visit we discuss these with the farmer and query them on current and future storage requirements. Our initial inspections have a strong emphasis on identifying any main sources of nutrient loss and recommending mitigation measures.
- In farmyards where issues were found, the non-compliances were discussed with the farmers and Cross Report and/or Compliance Letters sent out. All Compliance Letters included a table of issues found and actions to take alongside a map locating the issues and areas of high PIP risk to help ensure future compliance. A total of 60 initial inspections and 45 follow up inspections were carried out in farmyards with 15 non-compliance mitigation measures completed.
- One example of a clear positive environmental outcome was when, following a stream walk to investigate the source of excessive algae in one our 'Good' quality waterbodies (Devlin's_010), subsequent farm inspections upstream resulted in run-off from one silage pit and two soiled water tanks being fixed with discharge stopped into the river. The farm in question was subsequently cross reported and the discharges to water stopped.
- Calculating storage capacity was time consuming but worthwhile in identifying deficits and subsequent risk for water quality. Our approach is to identify issues and discuss measures on-site with farmers. An excel-based Storage Calculator Tool shared with us by Monaghan County Council is a useful tool in calculating storage and identifying storage deficits. When discussing storage issues with farmers we not only calculate storage capacity but also e.g., highlight how rainwater falling on a roof without gutters adds to storage pressure.

An example of a positive outcome is the Nanny_010 Waterbody where poorly draining soils and intensive agriculture has led to historically high phosphates and ammonia readings in sampling point RS08N010090.

- MCC carried out a series of farm inspections in this waterbody between 2019 and 2022. In 2022 the EPA OEE provided water quality data showing that between 2019 and 2022 the ammonia readings (annual means) decreased at this sampling point and the phosphate readings stabilised. This suggests that reductions in point-source pollution from farmyards is being seen in the monitoring programme d/s of this waterbody.
- Four staff carrying out agricultural inspections attended two modules of Catchment management training provided by LAWPRO and EPA where issues relating to e.g., storage deficit was also discussed.
- A staff member from MCC is participating in the Working Group on Agricultural Inspections established by the EPA in 2022.
- In June, 2022 staff from MCC carried out a joint farm inspection with staff from Fingal Co Co in order to demonstrate our farm inspection techniques. We demonstrated how storage capacity is calculated in order to assist Fingal CC develop their own inspection programme.

The results for all farm inspections carried out in 2022 were recorded in the EPA designed excel spreadsheet and will be reported to the EPA before the 28th, February.

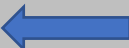
National Enforcement Priority:	WATER – Pressures from Agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading)
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the ‘RMCEI data returns’ or your ‘RMCEI Plan’.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections of farmlands in areas where agriculture is identified as a significant pressure, with a small percentage in other areas, as defined in the National Agricultural Inspection Programme for local authorities. • Undertake targeted agricultural inspections specific to the pollutants of concern (P, N and organics), using the EPA Pollution Impact Potential (PIP) maps and EPAs Targeting Agricultural Measures Map. • Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance, including follow up and close out of non-compliances. • Cross reporting of non-compliances to DAFM. • Document and report results for all farm inspections to the EPA. 	<p>WATER – Pressures from Agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slurry and fertiliser spreading compliance was investigated in 133 inspections of 88 farmers in 42 waterbodies (31 of which are ‘At Risk’ with agriculture as a significant pressure; 20 of ‘Poor’ status and five ‘Good’). Out of the inspections, 123 were deemed compliant regarding the spreading of fertilisers and 10 non-compliant: 4 farmers found spreading during the closed season were Cross Reported to DAFM; others received a compliance letter with reminders of buffers. 13 inspections took place in a ‘Not at Risk’ waterbody with one non-compliance reported to DAFM. • Of the 88 individual farmers inspected, 86 were found to be compliant regarding spreading. • Two of the non-compliances reported to DAFM were discovered using a new approach: carrying out 31 drone surveys of 30 unique farmlands (see case study for more details) • Scheduled routine inspections focused on 11 waterbodies where water quality was ‘at risk’ and agriculture was a significant pressure. Spatiotemporal analysis of investigative monitoring chemistry data was used to identify areas where elevated nutrients were occurring. In 2022 we also adopted a new approach of calculating the loadings of nutrients across 8 waterbodies. This approach allows us to identify tributaries/areas with high P, N or Ammonia loadings indicating that organic fertilisers may have been applied inappropriately. By combining chemistry data findings with PIP maps, LPIS data, and Conceptual Models (based on EPA/LAWPRO guidance), we focused our farm inspections on areas with CSAs upstream of high nutrient samples. Knowledge of e.g., where dairy expansion has happened and thus fertilizer use is likely higher was also used to target our efforts on a risk-basis. • Slurry and fertiliser spreading were a key focus in our farm inspections in 2022. We continued to use our new proactive approach of engagement with farmers (instead of relying on Cross Compliance) when

carrying out initial inspections (96). Despite the pro-active approach, we did encounter 2 farms where a non-compliance found during a follow-up inspection led to cross report being issued.

- The agricultural inspections were specifically targeted to address pollutants of concern: For example, 14 farmland inspections of 9 derogation farmers were undertaken in the Killary and Nanny_030 where N leaching is of particular concern based on PIP-N maps. Source reduction issues were advised with farmers including reducing N fertiliser use and keeping soiled water sprinklers away from areas with high PIP-N risk.
- In areas of high risk of P run-off such as in the Upper Nanny and Hurley catchments, 25 inspections of 19 farmers were carried out. Issues related to pathway interception were discussed and included reminders of statutory buffers, suggestions of supplementary extended buffer distances or no spread areas and fencing of stretches of river to restrict animal access.
- Where issues were found, the non-compliances were discussed with the farmers and warning letters sent out. Compliance letters were issued and included a list of actions to take alongside a map locating pressure points and areas of high PIP. In 34 inspections 21 derogation farmers were advised of spreading buffers and timing of slurry spreading.
- 10 complaints received from members of the public in relation to land spreading were investigated in 2022 and enforcement action taken where warranted. In the case of one complaint received, it was found that slurry had been applied inside a 200m buffer surrounding a drinking water abstraction serving >500 people. This drinking water source was found to be a private regulated supply and was not mapped on our GIS system. The farmer was also unaware of the requirement to maintain a buffer of 200m from the well as they were renting the land and had not been informed by the owner. A meeting was held with the farmer and the requirements set out in GAP Regs, 2022 explained and a warning letter followed. This incident has highlighted the need to have all private regulated water supplies mapped and an awareness campaign with neighboring farmers will be instigated in 2022 for the larger abstractions where appropriate.
- Walking the lands with the farmers to discuss topics such as land spreading was time consuming but proved worthwhile. It enabled us to learn from and show farmers where extra care should be paid to spreading (e.g., ground-truthed PIP-P pathways). Some examples of clear positive environmental outcome relating to land spreading were e.g., agreements by 5 farmers to maintain an extended 10m buffer from rivers in high PIP-P areas; and on one occasion a farmer suggested works to break the surface flow pathways on his land by filling in areas with soil thus minimising risk of nutrient run-off into a nearby stream.
- We also queried farmers on when and where they spread, and whether they employ a contractor to spread on their behalf. We record the details of the contractors they use and in early January 2022 we wrote to 36 slurry spreading contractors in Co. Meath reminding them of buffers, dates, and unsuitable conditions for spreading.

- Four staff carrying out agricultural inspections attended two modules of Catchment management training provided by LAWPRO and EPA where pressures such as land spreading and mitigation thereof was also discussed. No LAWPRO referrals were received in 2022.
- In June, 2022 staff from MCC carried out a joint farm inspection with staff from Fingal Co Co in order to demonstrate our farm inspection techniques with particular emphasis on land spreading risk assessments and assist Fingal CC develop their own inspection programme.

The results for all farm inspections carried out in 2022 were recorded in the EPA designed excel spreadsheet and will be reported to the EPA before the 28th, February.


National Enforcement Priority:	WATER – Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems / Septic Tanks
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the ‘RMCEI data returns’ or your ‘RMCEI Plan’.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake the allocated number of DWWTS / Septic Tank inspections under the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2022 - 2026. • Take all necessary steps to follow up and ensure advisory notices are closed out. • When selecting households for inspection, consider areas where LAWPRO have issued letters of grant eligibility and homeowners have not taken action. 	<p>Meath County Council (MCC) expected to carry out 53 inspections in 2022 in accordance with the NIP. A county inspection plan was prepared using the EPA’s risk zone maps. Properties for inspection were selected based on their location on the risk-based maps provided by the EPA on the DWWA system on EDEN. Staff were assigned geographic areas and an allocation of number of properties to select.</p> <p>127 Inspections in total were carried out on DWWTS in County Meath in 2022. 73 new (full) inspections were carried out in 2022 compared to 72 in 2021. Of the 73 full inspections carried out, 31 were in Zone 1, 13 in Zone 2 and 29 in Zone 3 meeting the risk-specific requirements of the NIP. We found it difficult to select sufficient sites in certain risk zones and this issue has been referred to the EPA who are now considering an extension of the area covered by zone 1 (Environment). There are no High-Status waterbodies in Meath and no referrals from LAWPRO were received in 2022 therefore, all the inspections were carried out as per the NIP.</p> <p>73 full inspections were carried out in 2022, which includes 20 additional inspections carried out to compliment the requirements of the NIP. Of these 73 inspections, 44 failed (60%) compared to 94% in 2021. The reasons for failure were as follows; 61% due to failing percolation areas, 18% due to discharges to surface waters, 2% due to sludge levels and the remaining 16% due to broken system components and other reasons. These reasons for failure are broadly like those found in 2021 and the high rate of percolation area failures is indicative of the poorly draining soils in many parts of County Meath.</p> <p>In 2022 54 verification inspections were carried out which led to the closure of 54 advisory notices. Of these 54 notices, 28 related to ‘historical’ inspections carried out prior to 2022 and 26 related to notices served in 2022 and closed out within the same calendar year. Of the notices closed in 2022 but issued prior to 2022, 12 were issued in 2021, 8 in 2020, 1 in 2019, 1 in 2018, 1 in 2017, 2 in 2016 and 2 in 2015. Based on feedback from the EPA, Meath County Council wrote to all homeowners who have not complied with advisory notice time frames and followed this up with either a phone call and/or site visit to discuss progressing the necessary works. These efforts resulted in the closing of 7 ‘historical’ notices issued prior to 2020. Our Staff regularly liaises with Stephen</p>

McCarthy EPA regarding issues of concern/ best Practice in enforcement and the operation of the DWWA system on EDEN and most specifically historic 'open' notices.

The 54 notices closed in 2022 represent 54 individual cases where direct discharges to surface waters (12) were ceased or additional protections to private wells (30) were provided through the installation of new treatment systems and polishing filters.

There are 46 historical open Advisory Notices (issued pre-2022) requiring further enforcement actions by MCC in 2023. This compares to 54 reported in February 2022. Over 90% of these require full system replacement and homeowners have failed to comply with the notice for a variety of reasons; inability to pay (replacement cost of > €10,000) and no access to the grant scheme being the most common reasons reported. The EPA have planned a workshop for March, 2023 where the issue of historical advisory notices is to be discussed and further advice given.

Public engagement activities are ongoing with pre-site visits, leaflet drops and website information.

National Enforcement Priority: WATER – Discharge Licences / Misconnections	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all Section 4 Discharge Licence conditions are consistent with the requirements of the Surface Waters and Groundwater regulations. • Undertake risk based inspections/monitoring of Section 4 Discharge Licences. Inspect all licences in areas where discharge licensing is a significant pressure. • Ensure that all licensable discharges are authorised by a Section 4 Discharge Licence. • Ensure compliance with discharge licence conditions and follow up and close out non-compliances and LAWPRO referrals on Section 4s and misconnections. • Follow up on misconnections that have been identified as impacting on water quality, to ensure that works are undertaken by property owners to remediate such misconnections. 	<p>Discharge Licences:</p> <p>Discharge licence sampling in 2022 was carried out in accordance with the schedule determined from the RMCEI Risk Rating Tool, based on licence compliance assessment and review of risk data for the previous year. Medium Risk facilities (Cat B) are sampled 4 times per year by Meath CC and Low Risk facilities (Cat C) are sampled twice per year. There are no High Risk facilities (Cat A) among the licensed sites. 137 site inspections were carried out, compared to 118 planned inspections for 2022. The additional inspections arise in response to non-compliance and follow-up on addressing identified compliance issues.</p> <p>2022 monitoring data shows 35 licences out of 46 (76%) are categorised as Compliant or with Minor Non-Compliances. This is similar to compliance rates in 2021 (78%, 35 of 45 licences) and represents a gradual improvement in compliance rates over the last 5 years, compared to 29 licences (62%) in that category in 2018.</p> <p>Where discharge sampling results or site inspection indicates a deterioration in the treatment performance of a licensed WWTP, this is raised directly with the licensee and WWTP service contractor, as a means of early intervention. The licensee is requested to take corrective action and to advise Meath CC on measures taken and any further measures proposed to return the WWTP to discharge compliance. Typically this entails WWTP servicing or repairs or improvements to site operational practices. Evidence on the service or repair works and other measures taken to achieve compliance are recorded on the licence file as a track on corrective actions, along with subsequent discharge monitoring data.</p> <p>In 2022 Meath CC has engaged with 3 licensed facilities where effluent volumes arising have increased as a result of increased numbers of persons (refugees) being accommodated in emergency accommodation. Meath CC has liaised closely with the licensed sites to manage compliance in the context of additional flows to WWTP. In one case the licensee arranged additional upgrade and control of the WWTP, and increased P removal rates through increased ferric dosing, as a means to treat effluent to standards better than the licence ELVs, and agreed additional monitoring and reporting procedures, as a means to manage mass load emissions to waters (R. Delvin), while proposals are developed for potential connection to foul sewer (St. Claires NH, DL 05/07).</p>

In another case the licensee agreed to increased WWTP oversight and maintenance to ensure plant performance was maintained (RBC discharge to sand polishing filter), with provision for off-site tankering as back-up if non-compliance with ELVs or discharge volume limits became an issue (Dept. of Defence, DL 15/02). In a third case, the licensee has agreed interim upgrade works to improve P removal and increased desludging frequency (activated sludge plant with ferric dosing), and has been advised on options to seek a licence review to accommodate increased discharge rates long-term, and is currently engaging with Meath CC on the requirements to pursue this, with particular attention on increased P removal efficiency to achieve a mass emission under increased discharge rates which is compatible with WFD objectives (Gormanston College, DL 89/02).

Discharge licence DL 22/01 granted to MSD Ireland (Dunboyne Biologics) in 2022, involved treatment of effluent from site de-watering during a major construction project, with high levels of in-line control and monitoring on the effluent stream and innovative use of automated CO2 dosing to treat potential elevated pH in the effluent from contact with curing concrete. The control and treatment systems worked well, with reporting arrangements demonstrating licence compliance and tracking treatment adjustments in response to changes in incoming de-watering pH.

Discharge licence DL 18/01 (Axial Properties Ltd) is operating with P removal since 2018, following licence review, and this may have contributed to an improvement in Q Value on R. Tolka at 09T010600 to Q3-4 in 2019, which has been maintained in 2022.

Discharge licence application assessment follows guidance outlined in LASNTG and EPA manuals (LASNTG, 2010, 2011 & EPA, 2011). A high proportion of the licences granted / reviewed in recent years involved upgraded WWTPs with discharge to groundwaters where this was feasible as an appropriate alternative to discharge to surface waters of limited assimilative capacity.

There were no referrals from LAWPRO in 2022 in relation to discharge licences.

The discharge licensing programme seeks to deploy limited monitoring and enforcement resources in proportion to assessed risks to water quality, with discharges with significant nutrient load potential or to sensitive waters given particular weighting. However Meath CC would expand activities in this work-stream if additional resources allowed and has engaged with CCMA project on LA resources for natural waters functions.

Misconnections:

Meath CC carried out misconnection surveys at a residential estate in Duleek, with blockages reported on the storm line by Meath CC Water Services. Initial inspections (visual inspections of manholes) identified foul

sewage in the storm line and narrowed the scope of investigation to a line serving 19 of the 57 houses in the estate.

The storm line outfalls to the main channel of the R. Nanny, immediately upstream of WFD monitoring site 08N010500, which was classed as Q3-4 in 2018 and deteriorated to Q3 in 2020. EPA Biological survey report for R. Nanny in 2020 notes filamentous algae and siltation issues along its entirety, however misconnections affecting this storm line are assessed as a significant pressure at this location.

The misconnection surveys in this estate were carried out by calling to the possible identified misconnected houses, following manhole inspections, over a 2-day period, explaining the nature of the visit/inspection and requesting to perform a dye test on the day, if allowed and feasible. There was a very positive reaction to this request with every available homeowner facilitating these inspections.


In total 36 visits were made over the 2 days with dye tests performed at 14 houses (including 3 houses outside the initial scope to verify that the area of investigation was correctly identified). Of the identified 19 houses (14 inspected including 3 outliers), 4 were found to be misconnected, with 8 houses remaining to be inspected. The foul sewerage is directed to the storm water line.

The estate in question was granted planning permission in 2000 (36 apartments and 120 houses) and was taken in charge by Meath CC in 2011, and it appears that checks in advance of the TIC process to ensure that foul and storm lines were constructed correctly were not adequate to identify these problems.

The works required to rectify matters at this estate will involve 2 possible options - individually connecting the misconnected properties to the foul line, this would involve extensive works (digging up front gardens, footpath, roadway, possible electrical services etc) or to connect the section of the identified misconnected storm line to the foul line, both of which are on the public road within close proximity of each other. At this point, it is assessed that as the misconnections do not arise from actions or faults of the individual homeowners the approach of connecting this section of storm line into foul sewer may be preferable. On completion of remaining dye tests and investigation, the findings will be flagged with Meath CC Planning Section regarding the need for robust procedures in the TIC process to prevent a recurrence of similar issues.

In November 2022 Meath County Council engaged with Richard Fitzpatrick, Project Manager, Dublin Urban River LIFE (DURL) Project, who kindly offered to give a talk and meet with Meath CC Environment Section on the approach undertaken by South Dublin County Council to investigate and address urban misconnection issues. A key aim of the DURL project is to improve water quality and aquatic biodiversity in urban areas by finding domestic misconnections and to develop efficient methods for identifying and rectifying these issues. A comprehensive methodology was explained and discussed and a template received in how to approach and address misconnections issues, and Meath CC plans to incorporate these methods in future misconnections

	<p>works. We have agreed with Richard that he will assist us in investigating Misconnections in The Downes and College Park Estates in Dunshaughlin and adopting best practice. These estates drain into the headwaters of the Skane River which is a Meath County Council Priority Area for Action in the 3rd Cycle RBMP.</p>
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National Enforcement Priority: WATER – Local Priorities and Water Quality Monitoring	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the ‘RMCEI data returns’ or your ‘RMCEI Plan’.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete statutory monitoring for WFD surveillance and operational monitoring, investigative monitoring and bathing water monitoring. • Inspect and follow up any local issues (not covered by other NEPs), including non-compliances with water quality standards and LAWPRO referrals. • Address any climate related water quality issues, e.g. impacts due to extreme weather events. • Registration and monitoring of all private drinking water supplies. Investigate supplies that fail to meet drinking water quality standards and take necessary enforcement action. • Engage with LAWPRO and Regional Committees on the implementation of RBMP Actions. 	<p><u>WFD Monitoring:</u> Meath CC implemented the WFD Operational and Surveillance monitoring programme for rivers and lakes in full in 2022. 414 samples were taken in 2022 representing 100% compliance with the sampling programme. Meath CC coordinates with neighbouring LAs and EPA on the sampling schedule to ensure that rivers which cross county boundaries have their sites sampled on the same day. Sample results contribute to classification / WFD status and to the assessment of pressures, impacts, risks and measures in the draft 3rd cycle RBMP. In Nov 2022 Meath CC engaged with EPA Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Unit to propose phys-chemical WFD Operational monitoring sites be added or reinstated at 5 river sites in Meath to address gaps in monitoring as part of the review of WFD Operational monitoring programme by EPA, (the review was flagged through Midlands & East Regional Operational Committee). The 5 sites were accepted by EPA and have been added to other changes to the national WFD Operational monitoring programme for 2023 onwards</p> <p><u>Investigative Monitoring:</u> In 2022, Meath CC carried out investigative surveys in low flow conditions (July 2022) in the Nanny_010, Nanny_020, Nanny_030, Hurley_010, Hurley_020 and Hurley_030, and in high flow conditions (Nov 2022) in Killary_010 and Killary_020 (part of proposed Areas for Action for Meath CC in draft 3rd cycle RBMP). These surveys focused on water chemistry and calculated nutrient loads in sub-catchments in low flow conditions for NH4, PO4, TON and Chloride, (alongside in-situ measurement of D.O, Conductivity, Temperature.) Nutrient loads per sampling site (sub-catchment) were calculated using stage-discharge relationships to downstream hydrometric sites and estimated flows on the sampling day from HydroTool nodes. This data was also used to derive estimated nutrient export rates via GIS (nutrient load per area), as an additional potential insight. The sampling results, derived nutrient loads and export rates were combined with PIP maps, LPIS data and previous survey data to select catchment sections for follow up farm surveys in the upper Nanny, Hurley and Killary. While it is acknowledged that the derived nutrient loads and export rates are indicative estimates only, or</p>

largely snapshots, reviewing the data does indicate it has value in comparing relative load contributions and as an additional screening tool. Survey results from 2022 and 2021 (low and high flow conditions) indicate significant and multiple nutrient sources (mainly agricultural) upstream and downstream of Kentstown, with specific tributaries and sub-catchment sections identified primarily for renewed farm surveys. Although Kentstown MWWTP was subject to upgrade works in 2019 and ELV compliance has improved, it is still assessed as a potential significant pressure due to intermittent but relatively frequent stormwater overflows which can be ecologically significant, particularly in summer flow conditions.

SSRS investigative surveys carried out in summer 2022 in the Devlin's_010 and Devlin's_020 (Good Status, protect function) led to follow up farm inspections. An example of an issue identified in these inspections is a derogation farm (dairy) where a modest strip of beneficial riparian habitat (native scrub vegetation, with watercourse channel meanders) along the river was dug up and replaced with newly seeded grassland sloping down to the river, with channel meanders removed and straightened. The farmer advised this was done following DAFM inspection which outlined the land in question was ineligible for farm payment. This land is located close to a WFD monitoring point, with the mitigating riparian zone, and beneficial channel meanders now removed. This farm also has > 90% of it's land at P index 4.

Follow up actions, primarily farm visits were carried out in Nanny_010, Nanny_020, Nanny_030, Killary_010, Killary_020, Skane_010, Skane_020, Toberultan_010, based on investigative survey findings of 2021 and/or 2022.

The investigative survey methods are informed by EPA guidance on the Local Catchment Assessment process and increasingly avails of insights from EPA PIP maps, CSAs, LPIS data, conceptual models and focussed flow delivery pathways. Meath CC staff involved also undertook the Catchment Science & Management training course (LASNTG / EPA / LAWPRO) delivered in 2021/2022 and acknowledge the course is a welcome resource in aiding this work.

The number of staff-days committed to investigative surveys in 2022 was significantly lower than planned for under the 2022 RMCEI Plan. This arose as the planned figures may be seen to have been overly optimistic, from some resourcing constraints and from a conscious re-focussing and prioritising of work on farm inspections and follow up and close out of significant numbers of issues identified in previous year's investigative surveys. This reflects an assessment that the pace of investigative survey work should not markedly out-strip the pace of the resulting follow-up and resolution actions, where staff resources are limited and efforts necessarily prioritised. The 2023 Plan is amended to better reflect this balance.

In terms of environmental outcomes, the investigative surveys and catchment assessment data are effective at identifying high risk farms and site-specific significant pressures and pollution sources. The resulting remedial measures - addressing farmyard effluent runoff, parlour washings, cattle access, farm roadways, buffer zones, landspreading risks - should contribute to reduced impacts on water quality, noting however that some commonly identified mitigating actions rely on purely voluntary agreement, with variable take-up. Of 117 waterbodies in Co. Meath, 17 have improved in monitored status and 14 have declined, comparing 2013-2018 status to 2016-2021 status, representing a modest positive trend. While the data indicates some improvements in catchments subject to Meath CC investigative surveys and farm surveys in previous years (e.g Kilmanhamwood, Moynalty PAAs), there have also been declines in surveyed catchments which have seen livestock (dairy) intensification (e.g Nanny). The overall modest improvement in status in Meath waterbodies could be assessed as a definite positive achievement set against a 10 year trend of agricultural (dairy) intensification in Meath (51% increase in dairy cows in Meath over 2010 – 2020, (DAFM) and recent increasing Nitrate loads seen for example in R.Boyne). Without these efforts it is quite plausible that WFD monitoring would portray a different picture of significant net declines in WFD status in Meath, accompanying the tide of increasing stock intensity and increasing N and P farm imports and farm-gate nutrient surpluses. Meath CC would advocate that catchment investigative and follow up work is a necessary part of WFD efforts, along with increased regulatory farm inspections and further strengthening of GAP Regs and cross-policy coherence, in efforts to improve water status, particularly in the context of the intensification, continuing since circa 2012/2013.

In terms of collaboration, Meath CC continues to draw on experience from catchment investigative surveys and wider WFD work in it's engagements under the RBMP process, such as:

Participation and contributions at the Midlands & East Regional Operational Committee,
Participation in public engagements alongside LAWPRO on the draft RBMP and Tolka Visioning meetings,
Participation on National Agricultural Inspections Programme Working Group,
Participation on the Steering Group of EPA-convened project to develop a Framework for River Restoration and Nature-Based Solutions for Integrated Catchment Management (RPS / CBEC as consultants), with Boyne as one of 3 pilot catchments to test the framework outputs,
Engagement with EPA Catchments Unit on updates for 3rd cycle RBMP,
Participation on CCMA project reviewing LA resources for natural waters functions (Sub-Comm 1),
Meath CC submission made to DHLGH in March 2022 on the draft 3rd cycle RBMP. Meath CC did not receive any referrals from LAWPRO in 2022.

In terms of climate-related water quality issues such as extreme weather events, 2022 did not bring marked drought conditions in Meath as had been experienced in the summers of 2018 and 2020. (2018 and 2020 saw widescale ad-hoc pumped abstractions from rivers and streams at low flow conditions in Meath for crop irrigation against marked soil moisture deficits). However, a trend towards increased river abstractions for crop irrigation is seen, particularly in East Meath. Meath CC has highlighted this issue in RBMP submissions and notes the recent legislative measures on this issue. A parallel issue of sporadic but increasingly frequent and intense heavy rainfall events within dry spells may also be contributing further pressure on waterbodies through more intense stormwater overflows and sewer scouring, potentially presenting challenges for existing foul and storm sewer networks and the associated WWDA process. By it's nature, this pressure / impact is difficult to confirm in investigative surveys, however Meath CC Environment Section records sewer network overflows (reported by MCC Water Services) to further inform our understanding of localised catchment pressures.

Bathing Water Monitoring:

Meath CC sampled the designated bathing water at Laytown/Bettystown in accordance with the scheduled monitoring calendar for 2022 (weekly sampling). This is a higher frequency than the statutory minimum frequency but which affords increased temporal resolution and surveillance across the bathing season. Laytown/Bettystown bathing water achieved a classification of "Excellent" in 2022, based on 4 year rolling percentiles for 2019-2022. This is the third consecutive year that the bathing water has achieved excellent status and represents an improvement from the "Good" classifications achieved over previous periods from commencement of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations up until 2019.

Mornington beach, sampled 6 times per year by Meath CC under the Green Coast initiative (not a designated bathing water), also maintained the "Excellent" bathing water standard required in Green Coast criteria following the 2022 season.

Gormanston beach is not a designated bathing water, however it was sampled 6 times in 2022 on an investigative basis, in response to local interest in having the beach designated as a bathing area. While designation is not anticipated for the 2023 season, due to current drawbacks in terms of public access, parking, lack of facilities and lifeguard provision, the investigative monitoring undertaken is beneficial in helping characterise water quality and the beach profile in advance of a possible future designation. The 6 samples of 2022 achieved Excellent standard.

While the Bettystown bathing water may still be vulnerable to short-term pollution associated with extreme rainfall events, the long-term data confirms the trend towards improved water quality. The 2022 bathing season saw high rainfall in early Sept, however subsequent samples maintained Good or Excellent individual sample

standards. While it is not possible to be definitive on the reasons for improvement, given the tidal regime and alternating influence from catchment estuaries north and south of the bathing water, it is noted that long-term efforts by the LA such as Section 4 discharge licence enforcement, targeting DWWTS inspections, pollution investigation and misconnection surveys and careful management of the local sewer network by Meath CC Water Services Section may have contributed to the improved status.

Meath County Council completed the Bathing Water Expert Group questionnaire on “out of season” bathing, providing feedback and suggestions on the issues raised.

Private Water Supplies:

A total of 143 private regulated water supplies were monitored in 2022, all of which had 100% compliance for e.coli results in the compliance monitoring for 2022. This continues the 100% compliance for e.coli results that was achieved in 2021 when 123 private regulated water supplies were monitored

Before premises such as schools re-opened after the summer holidays, a letter was sent to them informing them that issues can arise when buildings are left un-used for a period of time.

This communication recommended the supply owner to:

- Clean all drinking water outlets with suitable disinfectants;
- Inspect all water storage tanks and drain, clean, disinfect and refill as necessary;
- Flush water pipes by running taps until fresh water is drawn through the system;

These premises were also advised to get their water treatment systems serviced prior to re-opening.

The Meath County Council social media accounts were used to promote the registration of new/unregistered supplies along with an advertisement published in the Meath Chronicle newspaper. This notification to register a private supply was issued twice, in the beginning and middle of the year

At the beginning of the year a monitoring sampling plan was created which listed all the registered supplies. As each supply required at least two site visits, the monitoring plan was useful in ensuring that the sampling of individual supplies was varied, i.e. supplies were not monitored in the same season.

As there may be unregistered supplies in the county and if they didn't see the notices on the Meath County Council website and social media platforms along with the newspaper advertisement, a proactive approach was taken to identify unregistered supplies. Focusing on areas of the county that are rural and using the maps of

the public water supply network we were able to identify public/commercial places that must have their own water supply. This desk based study also utilised Google Maps to identify the public/commercial premises.

22 Audits of private regulated supplies were also undertaken in 2022 which was an increase on the 12 audits undertaken in 2021. The private regulated supplies that were audited were either newly registered supplies, selected randomly or if there was a serious issue with water quality (multiple parametric exceedances and/or an E. coli exceedance) recorded.

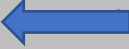
The random selection of audit sites was to identify areas of improvement on the selected supply such as source protection and water treatment where recommended improvements could safeguard the quality of the water supply.

8 of the 22 supplies were audited due to e. coli exceedances in the drinking water following compliance monitoring of the drinking water. In three of these cases there was no disinfection on the supply, following the audits, UV disinfection was installed at these three supplies.

14 of the 22 supplies that were audited were found to have inadequately protected boreholes. These 14 premises were instructed to improve the source protection due to potential contamination from surface water and the resulting improvements undertaken also protected the groundwater in these areas.

A total of 307 drinking water quality monitoring visits to private regulated water supplies were undertaken. All parametric exceedances were followed up with requests for public health advice sent to the HSE. Following receipt of public health advice from the HSE, the results were issued to the supply owner informing them about the parametric exceedance and measures to be undertaken to resolve the water quality issue. An adequate timeframe was given for completion of the necessary works and then a follow up visit was arranged for re-sampling of the water supply.

The microworks website was updated with information such as the relevant legislation, annual EPA drinking water quality reports and information on drinking water quality. Meath County Council social media accounts were used to promote the registration of new/unregistered supplies

National Enforcement Priority: WASTE - Tackling significant illegal waste activities & Multi-Agency Sites/Operators of Concern	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting though the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'. Note that Criteria A (to provide a compliance rate and comparison with previous years) is not specifically applicable under this NEP.</p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted inspections and follow up enforcement actions of unauthorised collectors and site operators using intelligence from waste data flows, complaints and other available data. • Co-ordination with, and input from Revenue/Social Protection/An Garda Síochána in relation to unauthorised activity and identified sites of concern. • Multi-agency investigations for sites of concern. • Roadside check points. • Relevant Anti-Dumping Initiatives implemented. • Traceability requirements to be enforced at Permitted/Licensed sites. • Focus on those who are facilitating the unauthorised treatment of waste. 	<p>Targeted inspections and follow up enforcement actions of unauthorised collectors and site operators</p> <p>In 2022, Meath County Council (MCC) carried out 30 inspections under this heading. This represents an increase of 8% on the 2021 figure. In 2022, MCC identified 'illegal waste sites', 'unauthorised waste collectors' and 'operators of concern' utilising the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from the public. Reporting from the public continues to provide crucial information in identifying operators and sites of Interest. Dialogue with the complainants although not necessarily admissible as evidence provides essential intelligence on operators and landowners allowing a more focussed investigation and greater probability of quality evidence. • Identification of anomalies within AER'S / C&D inspections of construction sites, WFP registers Anomalies within AER reporting identifies operators of concern. C&D inspections of construction sites may support these concerns and prompt surveillance of an operator to identify • Collaboration and intelligence sharing. A close working relationship with MCC Planning Enforcement yields valuable information regarding sites and operators of interest. Complainants often contact the planning department believing the operator or are authorised. Information sharing within the waste enforcement department via regular meetings is essential. Meath County Council also has close links with the WERLA, NTFSO, Gardai and our counterparts in adjoining counties. • Surveillance of waste collectors. With the above shared intelligence operators/ hauliers operating outside of predicted patterns are more identifiable and subject to surveillance and roadside inspections. <p>In 2022 a total of 31 no section 14 directions were issued. Cases of a minor nature where a commercial dimension is not involved are usually resolved via section 14 directions. In 2022, MCC initiated 5 no. summary court cases relating to Waste Offences. In total, 4 no. unauthorised waste activity cases came to a conclusion. A case was referred to the DPP by the District Court Judge due to the scale and severity of the accusations.</p>

Successful Enforcement Action 2022

In 2022, Meath County Council successfully convicted a land owner for the importation of approximately 1,500 tons of C&D waste onto agricultural lands. The land owner failed to comply with a section 55 Notice within the specified time frame. Prior to the Court hearing the landowner remediated the site to the authority's satisfaction at an estimated cost of €12,000. Twelve charges were brought against the individual under the 1996 WMA . The landowner pleaded guilty and was convicted, fined €6,000 plus legal costs of 1,310 and council costs of €2,972.

In 2022, Meath County Council detected an authorised waste collector operating a transfer station without a Waste licence Authorisation. Meath County Council and the Planning Enforcement Section opened legal files on the director and Company responsible. A section 14 direction was issued and prior to the Court hearing the individual remediated the site removing approximately 1,600 tons of Construction and Demolition waste. An independent Environmental report was also commissioned at the accused's expense. The report concluded that further to soil and surface water sampling that there were no long term adverse environmental effects. In March 2022, in relation to the unauthorised waste activities the accused pleaded guilty to four charges under the WMA 1996, however the Judge did not impose a conviction but ordered the accused to make a charitable donation of €5,000 and awarded MCC their legal cost of €5,000.

In 2022, the Council initiated legal proceedings against an individual whom it was believed imported 1,500 tons of C&D onto lands in his ownership. A section 14 direction issued and was not complied with. The case was contested, and evidence was presented over three court sittings. The accused produced 6 witnesses including family members and consulting Engineers to make the case the waste was historical and as a result of farming activity. The Judge dismissed the case stating that the evidence did not meet the threshold of being proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

In 2022, MCC carried out an investigation which related to hauliers from Northern Ireland dumping waste on unregistered wetlands in North County Meath. It is estimated that over 4500 Tons of C&D were deposited on the site. The site was monitored with covert CCTV for over two months and numerous images of evidence were captured. MCC WEO followed a number of vehicles and witnessed C&D waste being loaded on construction sites in Dublin which were later deposited on the unauthorised land being investigated. MCC carried out intrusive site investigations at the unauthorised site which and encountered C&D waste and also buried tromelled municipal fines. Laboratory analysis of waste sampled exceeded hazardous waste levels under some of the parameters tested. Legal proceedings were initiated against the haulage company, its director and the individual who operated the machinery on the site. In 2022 the District Court referred the case to the DPP. The Council intends to continue to pursue this matter and try and get site remediated or if leaving in situ pending a Tier 1 and 2 assessment.

In 2022, a brown field site located outside of Clonee had become the location for significant dumping of bulky household and commercial waste including municipal waste and hazardous waste oils. MCC suspected that a significant proportion of the waste was attributable to unauthorised waste collectors (man in a van). MCC with the consent of the property holder erected covert cameras. Two separate individuals were recorded making multiple trips to the site and depositing bulky household waste. The images identified the person involved and also vehicle registration details which enable MCC to establish the vehicle owners. Assistance from local Garda allowed for positive identification of the individuals responsible. Two separate court cases were in Court in 2022 for mention where disclosure has been presented and are scheduled for hearing in March 2023.

Multi-Agency Unauthorised Sites of Interest

In January 2021, a Meath County Council (MCC) Waste Enforcement Officer (WEO) observed Waste Collection lorries transporting soil and stone in County Meath which travelled into County Cavan. The lorries were into County Cavan by the WEO which resulted in a multi-agency operation involving Meath County Council, Cavan County Council and An Garda Síochána. Cavan County Council WEO took 'Cautioned' memo of interviews from six lorry drivers relating to the unauthorised activity. In 2022, as a result of the investigation the case was heard in Cavan District Court on Summary Proceedings. Waste Enforcement Officers from Cavan and Meath County Council attended Cavan District Court on three dates where the Summary Proceedings Case was fully contested by the Waste Collection business. The Waste Collection business was convicted on offences under the WMA 1996. They were fined €4500 and €14,000 in expenses, and no longer have a Waste Collection Permit. Refer to case study for further details.

In September 2022, approximately 1300 litres of waste oils and in excess of 55 no. waste tyres were dumped on land along the public road outside Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath. MCC examined the location and discovered evidence which indicated that the waste originated from South Dublin. MCC WEOs took 'cautioned' interviews from a member of the public and a from garage owners who were operating in South Dublin. The investigation was carried out in conjunction with WEO's from South Dublin County Council. The investigation revealed that the garage was not Circol ELT compliant and had incomplete waste collection docket books from an authorised waste tyre collector. MCC engaged extensively with Circol ELT on the matter and the manager of the waste tyre collection company attended the office of MCC where he was interviewed. The company indicated that a number of waste collection docket books had gone missing and it was being used by unknown. While it is suspected that the tyres were collected by a man in van at the garage and they had a WCP docket. The waste tyre WCP company have carried out a full investigation of the issue and have improved traceability requirements when allocating collection docket books to drivers. In this case Meath County Council felt that the burden of proof against the Garage was not sufficient in order to bring a prosecution. However, the garage are now a compliant member of Circol ELT and are being monitoring by SDCC. The waste was removed from the illegal dumping location by MCC at a cost of €1,600 and the landowner has since improved security on the land to deter illegal dumping.


Relevant Anti-Dumping Initiatives implemented.

In 2022, Meath County Council delivered four anti-dumping schemes directly related to illegal dumping at a cost of €94,887. Working in partnership with the relevant stakeholders the sites were rehabilitated and preventative measures both physical (signage and barriers) and organisational (Buy in form stakeholders to maintain going forward) were implemented to prevent repetition.

Regulating New and Reviewed Waste Collection Permits

In October 2022, Meath County Council were notified of a New WCP application by the NWCPO. As MCC were familiar with the applicant they made a submission to the NWCPO outlining that in March 2017, one of the Company Directors was convicted on Indictment in Trim Circuit Court for holding, transporting and disposing of waste in a manner that causes or is likely to cause Environmental Pollution. In summary Meath County Council strongly objected to this Waste Collection Permit being granted to the Company, as they do not fulfil the requirement of 'fit and proper person' outlined in Section 34D of the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended.

The NWCPO refused the waste collection permit application as it was determined that the Director, as a relevant person, did not meet fit and proper person criteria pursuant to Section 34D(1)(a)(ii) of the Waste Management Act, 1996 as amended as been convicted of "holding, transporting, recovering or disposing of or treating waste in a manner that cause or is likely to cause environmental pollution, contrary to section 32(1)(b) and 32(6)(a) of the Waste Management Act, 1996 as amended by Article 16 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011" at Trim Circuit Court on in 2017. The applicant was notified of the decision by a registered letter dated and may appeal the decision.

National Enforcement Priority: WASTE - Construction and Demolition Activity	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk based inspections of construction sites using WERLA intelligence and inspection templates. • Inspection of Article 27 sites of origin and destination to include material notified under Article 27 being accepted at WFP/Licensed sites. • Inspection of soil recovery sites to ensure only appropriate materials accepted. • Validation and inspection of WCP/WFP and licensed sites dealing with C&D waste. • Take all necessary steps to resolve non-compliant issues including the selling of crushed concrete from WFPs/Licensed sites without EoW decision. • Incorporate proposed improvements to the Article 27 notification system. • Tracking of waste delivered to Licensed sites. • Based on researched data and local knowledge, identify authorised operators for further investigation and/or enforcement action. • Focused monitoring of the resources and systems available for gathering and reporting waste data to be carried out as part of site audits at waste facilities/waste collectors. 	<p><u>Risk based inspection of construction sites</u></p> <p>During 2022, MCC carried out a total of 118 C & D inspections which included reviewing the Waste Management Plans prior to site visits and on-site inspections. Development commencement notices sent to the Planning Department were risk assessed by Waste Enforcement Officers (WEOs) for C & D using the MCC SUGAR call management system. The compliance rate for C & D inspections for 2022 was 46% (37 sites) versus 40.6% the previous year. Non-compliances included amendments to be made by developers to WMPs, segregation of waste and record keeping for all waste removed from the C & D sites.</p> <p>Year 2022 highlighted the fact that a lot of WMPs were generic and a significant amount of time was spent by WEOs to aid Contractors and Consultants /Architects with the amendments at commencement notice stage with planning. One change that has been introduced is that the amendments to the WMP must be made prior to the removal of waste and emphasis on waste segregation. Additional conditions were added to the planning conditions by WEOs to notify the Council prior to site-clearance. All sites must maintain a completed detailed waste removal register. Guidance and awareness were given to developers on best practises with reference made to 'The EPA BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects'. In 2022, MCC liaised extensively with Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council and Louth County Council in relation to source sites for waste generated.</p> <p>During one inspection at a large construction site consisting of 300 houses, waste was observed deposited on a laneway offsite with no waste authorisation. The waste consisted of soil and stone, concrete and timber (EWC 17 05 04, 17 01 01 and 17 02 01). MCC, issued a Section 14 direction to the Developer and the groundworks Company. Documentation was submitted for the removal of the waste and confirmation was received by the LA of the destination facility. Approximately 400T of waste was removed from the laneway.</p> <p>Another site of concern resulted in the developer not interpreting the ground investigation report correctly. The site was brownfield (made ground) and consisted of mixed C & D. 12 loads were followed by MCC to a WFP and rejected by MCC upon inspection due to physical contaminants consisting of concrete EWC 17 01 01, bituminous mixtures EWC 17 03 02 within the soil and stone EWC 17 05 04. These loads were segregated and removed and the Soil and stone was transported to an EPA licensed site following further WAC analysis. Tar and concrete were removed to a neighbouring LA WFP (825T</p>

removed = >5 % contaminants). From this development 16,380 tonnes in total was removed to the EPA licensed facility. Confirmation of acceptance was received for traceability. MCC instructed the developer to segregate the remaining waste streams and to quarantine until further testing (WAC) was carried out on the waste before transporting to a soil recovery site. Documentation was submitted for the removal of mixed C & D and vehicles were also followed to the waste facility in conjunction with liaising with the relevant neighbouring LAs. The total tonnage remaining on the construction site is approximately 35,000 tonnes. Inspections are ongoing.

Another major construction site was advised to follow vehicles removing waste to verify destination and has been implemented by this developer. Traceability audits carried out at the source sites and destination sites by MCC concluded that total tonnage was not accounted for in some WFPs. This was a result of no weighbridge at the facilities under the old permit template. A planning condition for weighbridges is now applicable to all WFP applications ensuring that MCC can capture the exact tonnages going forward. This condition was recommended by the Environment Section to MCC Planning. Communications were also made with the Planning Section to add planning conditions at C & D sites e.g silt traps. This condition was added to identify the drainage network to include the locations for planned installations such as settlement ponds, silt curtains and any other measures deemed necessary to ensure no silty water discharges from the construction sites into surface waters occurs.

Validation and inspection of Waste Collection Permit (WCP)/Waste Facility Permit (WFP) (including Soil Recovery Sites)

In 2022, there was 27 no. soil recovery sites active in County Meath (21 WFPs and 6 CoRs). In 2022, 33% of the installations (8 WFP and 1 CoR) were non-compliant (On first inspection or over the year). Non-compliances included the presence of physical contaminants, lack of documentation and failure to quantify tonnage accepted. At the end of 2022, only one facility remained non-compliant and inspections are on-going.

At the beginning of the 2022, all waste facilities were Environmental and H&S Risk Assessed by MCC EOs and rated based on the type of waste accepted and the nature of the site for the likelihood of environmental pollution. Through the NWCP portal the AER data for these sites were validated and audits carried out for cradle to grave purposes through registers on construction sites and verification at the authorised facilities. Waste collection permits were also audited for total tonnages removed from C & D sites. This involved liaising with the EPA licensed sites for full traceability and following vehicles transporting waste.

A multi-agency inspection was carried out with the EPA in 2022 at two soil recovery sites based on the new WERLA Soil Recovery template and the guidance given by the EPA. MCC availed of topographical equipment in 2022 (Trimble GPS) to examine WFP levels at Permit application stage and as part of WFP monitoring. Conditions were also added to the permits for the submission of topographical surveys which are carried out by the permit holders and the Council separately to ensure the site has not been overfilled. Documentation comprised of weighbridge dockets, letters of suitability, WAC results and on-site testing for greenfield and brownfield sites as per the guidance. Issues raised at the authorised sites included lack of information on the registers for the source sites of waste, incorrect tonnages whereby no weighbridge was present and physical contaminants in loads. WEOs rejected loads in 4 facilities during inspections and followed up

with WAC results from the source of which two sites were contaminated. This waste was quarantined and transferred to an authorised facility.


In 2022, there was 129 WCP holders in County Meath of which 51 no. collect C & D waste. 13% of WCP Holders (17 No) were non-compliant in relation to the Annual Return including not submitting the return. 9 no. WCP holders were marked as inconclusive. The Regional Waste Planning Offices identified 3 no. C & D waste collectors as priority collectors. MCC carried out joint audits with WERLA for the annual return and the main issue with the data was sub-contractors used for the main collection permit holder going to EPA licensed facilities. In total, 8 FPNs (Fixed Payment Notices) were issued for non-submission of annual returns of which 4 have been referred for legal proceedings. MCC made 6 submissions to the NWCPO on initiated WCP reviews. In 2022, one WEO from Meath County Council became a member of the Annual Return Working Group.

Article 27 Notifications Activity (Sites of Origin and destination)

In 2022, there was 59 no Article 27 submissions referred to MCC by the EPA of which 20 no. related to soil and stone. This compares to 56 no. Art27 referrals in 2021. In 2022, MCC made a submission on all of the soil and stone notifications & recommended that the EPA decline 4 no. of the notifications. MCC carried out desktop inspections for all notifications including documentation for the source and destination sites, ground investigation reports and planning. MCC inspected all relevant sites in Meath relating to Article 27. In one of the notifications there was no soil analysis results submitted. The source site was inspected, and a vehicle was followed carrying topsoil to an unauthorised site not mentioned in the application and outside the jurisdiction. The TFS were notified and MCC made a submission to the EPA to decline approval for the ART-27. The Article 27 was declined by the EPA and a warning letter issued to the collector and landowner. The load was removed to an authorised facility and documentation received for verification.

In 2022 MCC liaised with Louth County Council in relation to Article27 by-product leaving a site in Meath where the destination site was Louth. This was in order to confirm tonnages applied for in the Article 27 notification. This article 27 was accepted as all appropriate documentation was submitted as part of the notification, the activity was considered lawful and the by-product was free from physical contaminants. In 2022, MCC encountered issues with Art-27s including no conditions to ensure that the roads were kept clean, registers for tonnages and late notifications made to the EPA.

One site whereby an article 27 notification was made to the EPA was non-compliant (Source and Destination was Meath) for 9,500m³. The site was overfilled and extended outside the boundary outlined in the application. MCC issued a Section 14 Direction to the Contracting Company towards the end of 2022 to cease importation of the soil and stone and proposals for the removal of material on lands that were not authorised. Inspections are ongoing for 2023.

National Enforcement Priority: WASTE - End-of Life Vehicles (ELV) & the Waste Metal sector	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk based inspections of Authorised Treatment Facilities and other ELV sites using WERLA intelligence and inspection templates (at least one inspection per annum of permitted sites). • Validation and inspection of records for WCP/WFP and licensed operators dealing with ELV and metal waste. • Take all necessary steps to resolve non-compliant issues. 	<p><u>ELVs and Metals</u></p> <p>Authorised ATF sites.</p> <p>There were 9 active ATFs in Meath in 2022. Only 1 facility was compliant on first time inspection in relation to the management of ELVs. 7 ATFs were ranked as high risk due to the nature of the facilities (crushing on site, proximity to a watercourse, groundwater vulnerability, scale of activity, history of non-compliance) and types of waste generated during the dismantling of ELVs. All ATF permitted sites were inspected in 2022, a total of 22 inspections was carried out. Inspections carried out using the WERLA template at ATFs involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake Records – registration of collector importing ELVs, copies of identifications, waste codes and quantity accepted. In 2022 MCC instructed all ATFs to only accept waste from WCP holders or individuals whereby the activity is ancillary to their business, (General Public entries). • Facility Site Inspection – Management of incoming and outgoing wastes and hazardous waste, WCP dockets and WTF documentation, interceptor maintenance reports and dockets, vulnerability to water courses and groundwaters, storage of different waste codes in particular WEEE segregation. • Annual monitoring is carried out on all of the ATF sites for surface and groundwaters, interceptor integrity testing, weighbridge calibration, equipment maintenance and dust monitoring. Some sites (3) were instructed to carry out additional monitoring for noise and dust as a result of noncompliance history. These conditions were included in review of permits in 2022. Quarterly returns were submitted to MCC and reviewed. These returns are cross checked against the AR made the following February to the NWCPO. Q reports are also checked for intake of unauthorised EWC codes, tonnage exceedance, hoarding on site, unaccounted waste in mass balance examination and unauthorised collectors removing wastes i.e. batteries, CATS. Compliance rates in relation to permit conditions was lower in 2022 compared to previous years, possibly as a result of lower scrap metal value and increased hoarding on site. It was noted that operators were not maintaining equipment and carrying out monitoring on time either. This was due to increased fuel and energy prices putting pressure on businesses to cut costs.

- All 6 ATFs dealing with ELVs are registered with CIRCOL ELT and collection dockets for tyres are examined during inspections. The new Circol **ELT enforcement portal** was used to update REPAK on suspected non registered operators.
- In 2022 the **Guidance Manual for Removing AC gases** issued by the EPA was circulated to all ATFs for their information and to encourage safe dismantling practices on the sites. To ensure the authorised collection and correct disposal of the hazardous gases a list of the authorised facilities catering for the gas recovery was also circulated. MCC wrote to all PHs and attached guidance document with details of training available.
- During 2022 MCC EOs identified 2 ATF sites that were failing to have groundwater tested. One ATF was not conditioned to test GW and a review of the permit was initiated. The PH subsequently arranged for borehole testing to be carried out. It was discovered the other ATF was testing surface water and submitting results as GW. A non compliance letter was issued and PH subsequently tested GW borehole.
- Comparisons were carried out with the **Department of Transport COD** yearly notifications for the number of CODs issued against the number of ELVs imported at ATF sites as per NWCPO AR returns. The WERLA provide this information to Meath. As a result MCC carried out spot checks at the facilities on ELVs marked as de-polluted and a full traceability on same. Facilities were queried if anomalies were detected i.e. high number of CODs issued by Shannon for an ATF but low ELV acceptance on AR

ATF Validations and ‘Cradle to Grave’ investigations

- In 2022, the 9 ATF WFP 2021 Annual Returns were validated on the NWCPO portal. 2 were deemed inconclusive due to inconsistencies between WCP return and WFP return, 1 remains reversed for attention. 3 metal facility ARs were validated resulting in 1 being deemed inconclusive, 1 remaining reversed and the other completed.
- An Annual Return audit was conducted with the RWMPO for one of the scrap metal operators. They were included in the EPA top 100 Priority list. A desktop validation and an onsite inspection was carried out by MCC and the RWMPO. A non-compliance letter was issued to the PH, by MCC and the RWMPO and the AR was deemed inconclusive for 2021. The operator has since invested in a new IT system for improved recording of waste in and waste out of the facility. It is anticipated there will be less anomalies detected in the 2022 AR as a result.

Waste Oil Disposal from ATF sites

Waste oil disposal off site was inspected at all facilities and MCC discovered that documentation was lacking information i.e. waste codes, quantities and WTFs. MCC issued a warning letter to waste oil collector and liaised with the **TFS** re the collector, an audit of paperwork was carried out and the collection company have since improved traceability of waste oil collection and disposal. Recent documentation was submitted for waste oil to include the waste code. One permitted ATF was known to have a significant quantity of cables on site and this waste code was not included in their permit. MCC contacted **WERLA** to agree on the appropriate waste code for the cables and waste generated from processing. A **technical amendment** was made to the waste facility permit for the addition of the waste codes.

Waste Metal Authorised Facilities

In 2022, there was **3 no. waste metal facilities** WFPs operating in County Meath. One was deemed as high risk due to acceptance of hazardous waste types and large volumes imported and 2 as low risk due to non hazardous waste imported. WEEE was accepted at one facility and inspections ensured that WEEE was being stored inside the building and being accounted for and disposed of through **WEEE Ireland or ERP**. Inspections (9) were carried out at these facilities to ensure only WCP holders and businesses were importing waste metals. One facility was issued a non-compliance letter and failure to address non compliances of permit conditions resulted in legal file for **prosecution** being brought forward. The Judge failed to convict in lieu of a donation to charity. During this investigation MCC liaised with a Waste Metal Theft Task Force in An Garda Siochana, The WERLA, TFSO and other Local Authorities. The PH is now addressing non compliances and has engaged with Environmental Consultancy firm to remedy paperwork anomalies and issues on the site i.e. bunded diesel tanks, additional noise and dust monitoring (see case study for full details).

ELV Enforcement Work


- A **targeted approach** is taken to the inspection of unauthorised ELV sites. MCC received no sites of interest from the TFSO during 2022 for inspection. There were 17 unauthorised EO inspections carried out in 2022 on 8 different sites. 4 of these sites were **complaints** from the public. The other sites were carried out as a result of ad hoc inspections on **problem legacy sites** which Meath had dealt with before. A problem identified by EOs is that it is very difficult to ensure activity on unauthorised sites completely ceases or does not start up again after a few years since first identified. Legacy sites are periodically checked by EOs to ensure compliance and determine if **Permit is required and/or prosecution**. EOs issued 2 S14 Directions, and 2 warning letters.
- In April 2022, an unauthorised ELV site operator near Kilcock, Co. Meath was convicted in the District Court and was fined a total of €12,000 on four charges including S32, S34, S39 & S55. A section 55 notice had been served on the operator but he failed to comply. In 2018, the operator was convicted of similar WMA offences at the same location and fined €16,500 plus legal costs. The fine was paid but the operator continued to operate but since the case in April 2022 the site has been substantially remediated.
- In 2022, 3 other cases were closed and 3 operators are working with MCC to remove ELVs from the site. EOs have been liaising with the sites remaining open but progress is being made with one site having so far removed 42 ELVs where the site was being used by tenants to hoard vehicles which had accumulated over a number of years. The removal of these vehicles has reduced the **risk to surface and groundwaters** in the vicinity of the site.
- The Environmental Patrol Officer liaised with the WE Section about an ongoing issue with **dumped tyres, bumpers and car seats in the East Meath area**. These car parts are worthless and cost an operator money to dispose of.

Garages and Hazardous Waste Inspections

- In 2022, a list of garages and **potential sources of the waste** was drawn up by EOs. During 2022 15 garage operators were inspected. 9 were first time compliant with Tyre, Hazardous Waste, ELV, Air Pollution, Hazardous Waste Oil Burning and Deco Paint Regs. 3 warning letters, 1 S14 Direction and 2 verbal warnings were issued to operators under the Hazardous Waste Regs. 3 warning letters were closed out after being brought into compliance, 1 S14 Direction was closed out when the garage operator was evicted and the 2 verbal warning cases were closed out when operators complied with instructions.
- The following was examined during these inspections; storage, on site management and collection of waste oils, waste oil filters, batteries, CATS, waste tyres, shells, scrap and bumpers. **Collection permit and destination docket**s were requested for all these waste types. General housekeeping and presence of spill kits was also noted in an attempt to reduce the risk of oil spillages and containment of same. A total of 32 tyre inspections were carried out with 5 warning letters issued to non compliant operators, 3 new operators joined REPAK ELT ensuring waste tyres were collected by an authorised collector and correctly disposed/recovered.

In 2022, there was an increased focus in Meath on the **validation of collectors and facilities dealing with waste metal and high value waste streams**. Meath have liaised with the **RWMPO and the Crime Task Force of AGS** in an effort to detect illegal activities associated with collection and/or recovery of metals. 3174 ELVs collected in Co Meath by authorised collectors in 2021. 134 authorised WCP collecting EWC 160104* in Co Meath. There are 6 Meath WCP holders collecting EWC160104* in Co Meath. Annual Returns for 2021 were validated resulting in 2 deemed inconclusive, 1 remaining reversed and 3 validated/completed. There was no improvement in AR validation completion since 2021 and more time and resources will have to be given to this issue in 2023.

During 2021, MCC EOs initiated correspondence with AGS re the collection and storage of S41 vehicles by **unauthorised collectors in unauthorised sites** in Co Meath. Unauthorised sites being used by AGS were identified in Kells, Trim *2, Dunshaughlin and Dunboyne. This information was passed to AGS and in 2022 a procurement document for the collection and storage of crashed, immobilised and S41 vehicles was prepared by AGS for tender. Invitations for tender were **restricted to WCP holders and authorised COR/WFP sites**. Two WFP sites in Meath applied for the tender resulting in an authorised WCP with an authorised WFP being awarded the tender for all of Co Meath. This resulted in less ELVs being stored at unauthorised sites and less risk of environmental pollution from these high risk sites.

National Enforcement Priority:		WASTE - Waste Collection - Household & Commercial
Local Authority:	Activities	
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>	
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of WCP operators for provision of 3 bin system. • Surveys of retail, hospitality and industrial sectors to ensure proper use of 3 bin system, segregation and use of authorised collectors. • Sampling/analysis of treated waste outputs • AER Validations on WCP and WFP priority lists. • Maintenance of register of households with/without a waste collection service and targeted inspections in areas with low compliance. • Focused monitoring of the resources and systems available for gathering and reporting waste data to be carried out as part of site audits at waste facilities/waste collectors. • Monitoring of waste acceptance criteria at authorised sites e.g. WFP, Waste Transfer Sites, Landfills and Waste to Energy Plant. 	<p><u>WASTE COLLECTION – HOUSEHOLD WASTE</u></p> <p>In 2022, Meath County Council received data from the WERLA and NWCPO in relation to household waste collection services. This data indicated that in County Meath there is 63860 number of households (2016 CSO), 60307 households serviced by bin companies, 40849 number of households in agglomerations >500 serviced by bin companies, 34340 households in agglomerations >500 with 3 bins system. This is an 84% compliance rate but only a 54% compliance rate when set against total population which is a low compliance rate for the whole county (rural and urban). For 2021 each household in Meath produced an average of 0.17T of food waste per year, the 2022 data will not be available until February 2023. This data will be reviewed to check if upward trends in food waste segregation have continued.</p> <p>From this AR return data Meath has 8 HH bin collection companies operating in the county. Data on the number of customers, number of general waste bins, number of recycling waste bins, number of organic waste bins and the number of glass waste bins is provided for each of the 8 companies. There are 3 large scale collectors, 2 medium scale collectors and 3 small scale collectors providing a choice of collector to the residents of Meath depending on the municipal area.</p> <p>Data from the NWCPO waste collection reports page was utilised to examine the level of compliance amongst the 8 household waste collectors in Co Meath. The NWCPO portal reports identified that 9152T of organic waste EWC 200108 was collected in Co Meath in 2020. This tonnage increased to 10,257T in 2021 showing an increased amount of food waste separately collected by bin companies. There were 32228 organic bins being provided by bin companies in 2020. The % compliance with the EU (HH Food waste & Biowaste) Regulations 2015, varied between 0% for the 3 smaller operators to 79% for one of the largest operators. 3 household bin collectors were identified as not collecting any organic waste in their returns. Of the 5 large and medium scale collectors the kgs per customer collector varied between 241 and 345 kgs organic waste per brown bin collected for the year 2020.</p>	

WASTE COLLECTION – COMMERCIAL WASTE

In 2022, Meath County Council carried out 35 Food Waste inspections under the Commercial Food Waste Regulations, S.I. No: 508 of 2009 using the WERLA Commercial Food Waste inspection form. 4 no. premises were non-compliant on first time inspection. The premises inspected were class 5, 6 and 7. In 2022, all nursing homes (class 7) located in County Meath were inspected as per the WERLA list.

MCC noted that all premises inspected had a baler for cardboard and bins for recyclables. In total, 4 no warning letters were issued for no Brown Bin in place and for lack of documentation for proof of Food Waste /Fats Oils Greases (FOGs) removal. The issues were addressed within the specified timeframe and the premises deemed as compliant.

The compliance rate (first time inspection) for 2022 was 88.6% compared to 71.8% in 2021. MCC have found that in general fast food outlets showed poor compliance. Any premises that was deemed compliant by MCC presented a 3-bin system and furnished documentation for commercial waste removed. Inspections involved emphasis on waste segregation – bins labelled inside and outside the premises.


In 2022, a complaint was received in relation to a coffee shop / Café discarding of FOGS incorrectly. A joint inspection was carried out with MCC, Irish Water and the HSE. It was deemed non-compliant with the regulations as they did not have a brown bin or furnish documentation for disposal of FOGs. A warning letter was issued and the premises availed of a BB service and FOGs collector. Documentation was submitted for same and a re-inspection verified compliance. Irish Water/Water Services inspections are ongoing in relation to the drainage system of the complex.

There are two Waste Facilities in County Meath operating under the same Company accepting food waste (WFPs) and in particular out of date food from Supermarkets, The company are also the holders of a waste collection permit. In 2022, MCC introduced an environmental checklist in order to monitor leachate emanating from food waste facilities under EWC codes 02 02 03, 02 03 04, 02 06 01 and 02 07 04. In summary all facilities were compliant in 2022 following a non-compliance in 2021 for insufficient management of leachate.

In 2022, the EPA identified certain facilities as priority for the purposes of the Annual Returns. MCC carried out the audit of these facilities and established that there was discrepancies in relation to the WFP AR and the WCP AR. One destination site did not have authorisation to accept waste and MCC advised the relevant party to apply for an article 11. This is ongoing and an application may be made for a CoR with MCC. The WCP did not account for the waste accepted at the facility. The returns were reversed and all documentation was submitted in order to validate. A total of 40,522 tonnes of food waste was accepted between the two facilities in 2022 which was transported to Anaerobic Digestion plants in Northern Ireland. TFS documentation was also inspected during visits in 2022.

In 2022, 3 no Certificate of Registrations were granted for 'Pay to Use '(PTU) compactors. Only one of the PTU were operational and was found to be non-compliant on first-inspection as there was no compartment for food waste. A non-compliance letter was issued and within the specified timeframe. A PTU for food waste was put in place and signage for same erected. At the end of 2022 the CoR PH was fully complaint.

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National Enforcement Priority: WASTE - Producer Responsibility Initiatives and additional local priorities	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting through the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and inspection of all suspected producers who require registration. • Examination of potential for information exchange between Local Government Sector and other Agencies, where appropriate. • Relevant PRIs with local impact and local priorities, not covered by the other waste NEPS, should be reported (e.g. where suspected producers are not registered or are non-compliant). • (RMECI PRIs: WEEE Regs, Battery Regs, Suspected Vehicle Importers (ELV Regulations 2016), Farm Plastics, Plastic Bag Levy, Packaging Regs – Suspected Major Producers and Registered Self Compliers, Tyre Regs – Tyre Retailers). 	<p><u>Producer Responsibility Initiatives - PACKAGING</u></p> <p>In 2022, there was five Major Producers registered with Meath County Council under the Packaging Regulations. These producers submit quarterly packaging returns to Meath County Council which are review by Eos. The data is used to collate the national waste report.</p> <p>In early 2022, Meath County Council (MCC) were notified of three Suspected Major Producers (SMPs) by the Eastern Midlands WERLA. All three site were subsequently investigated by Meath County Council as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A MCC WEO made contact with the three SMPs and explained the role of the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 2014 in promoting the reduction and recycling of packaging waste. The WEO explained the obligations the Regulations place on all producers to segregate and recycle packaging waste as well as the additional obligations the Regulations place on Major Producers. In order to determine if the companies were Major Producers under the Packaging Regulations, • Each SMP were verbally requested to submit evidence of turnover. It was explained that if their turnover was greater than 1 million euro annually and they placed greater than 10 tonnes of packaging on the market, they were deemed to be a Major Producer of Packaging. • After initial engagement, one company immediately identified themselves as a Major Producers and Meath County Council WEO assisted them in the appropriate next steps of contacting Repak. Subsequent engagement with Repak confirmed that the company had been confirmed to be a Major Producer and were working with Repak to become compliant. • Two of the companies failed to produce evidence of turnover following initial engagement and MCC served Section 25 notices on each of these companies. • Following this step, one company was able to confirm through evidence of turnover that they were not a Major Producer. The status of each of these companies was communicated to the WERLA and Repak via the Packaging Portal. • The third company has failed to respond to the Section 25 notice and is avoiding phone calls and emails from the WEO. An unannounced inspection was made to the premises on the 17th of December at which time a copy of

all emails and letters that had been sent to the CEO, but not acknowledged, were hand delivered to a member of staff.

- The WEO continues to try to engage this company and assist them in becoming compliant but legal action may be required in 2023.

During 2022, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) announced that self-compliance with Local Authorities would no longer be available to Major Producers and they would instead need to join Repak. In 2022, MCC issued advisory letters to each of the five self-complying companies in Meath County Council to inform them of this change and ask that they submit any outstanding reports by December 2022 as per the DECC circular.

Producer Responsibility Initiatives - WEEE

In 2022, Meath County Council (MCC) carried out 19 no WEEE inspections, of which 15 no were first time inspections of WEEE operators. Only 3 operators were first time compliant. Four on site re-inspections were carried out. This resulted in a 20% compliance rate which is a reduction on previous years compliance rate with WEEE Regulations. A reason for this is that MCC focused on smaller retailers for inspection whereby they may not be part of a franchise and are not aware of the Regulation obligations. MCC are engaging and assisting these retailers become compliant.

MCC found that it was very important to communicate and emphasise to the retailers the importance of keeping a register of incoming WEEE returned and outgoing registers for WEEE collections by authorised collectors. It was explained to retailers the issues with WEEE leakage at stores where staff and/or the general public may take WEEE for dismantling and sale of parts.

In late 2021 a warning letter and Fixed Payment Notice was served by MCC under the WEEE Regulations 2014 and the operator was issued with a €2000 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). There was no statutory notice on display in store, no registers being maintained, no vEMC on most appliances for sale, no ERP membership displayed. Waste was being stored open to the elements outside a warehouse. During 2022 MCC liaised with this operator and the FPN breaches were complied with. The operator failed to provide a weatherproof area to store the WEEE at the warehouse and was served with another warning letter.

In late 2022, the operator had not complied with this warning letter and was issued a final warning letter advising that they must apply for a Certificate of Registration as the activity of storing WEEE at the warehouse (which was not the store) was considered a permitted activity under the Waste Facility & Registration Regulations. MCC are liaising with this operator and are arranging for an on site inspection with management.

In 2022, four multi-agency inspections were carried out with the EPA under the WEEE & Battery Regulations, 2014. Only 1 premises out of the 4 was compliant. The non-compliant issues included:

- No statutory notice displayed.

- Environmental Management Costs were not displayed.
- No take back boxes at the premises.
- No register for acceptance/storage or removal of WEEE and batteries.
- Receipts/invoices did not contain information for take back.
- The Registration Certificate was not on display.
- Incorrect storage of WEEE.

Warning letters were issued by Meath County Council and follow up inspections concluded that two premises remained non-compliant in 2022. Re-inspections and follow up letters are scheduled for 2023.

The management of WEEE at the civic amenity sites and waste facility permits in Meath was also inspected by EOs. As per Regulations it was ensured that WEEE was being stored appropriately and was not exposed to the weather elements due to its hazardous nature. One WTF was instructed to build a canopy for the storage of WEEE as they did not want to store it inside paper recycling shed due to fire risk. The WFP holder complied with non compliance letter and erected a lean-to for WEEE storage under canopy.

Producer Responsibility Initiatives - Tyres

Every year REKAK ELT now Circol ELT (September 2022) issue a list of operators for MCC to inspect and confirm status of activity and if membership is required. This list focused inspections during in Q1 and Q2 of 2022. In 2022 MCC carried out 30 first time inspections of tyre operators not including ATFs. Of these inspections 19 were first time compliant, a total of 6 on site re inspections were carried out and by the end of 2022 all operators were either compliant (23#), closed (4#) or not selling tyres anymore (3#). Compliance rate achieved was 77%. This was a very successful year in terms of Tyre operators complying MCC enforcement work.

Of the list for priority 16 were inspected, 9 were closed off due to closure or not dealing with tyres anymore, 5 are working with Circol to re-establish membership and 2 remain outstanding. Follow up work carried out in Q4 included 6 waste tyre operator obligations reminder letters as per WERLA template and one warning letter.

During 2022 MCC detected 3 new tyre operators which were not registered with Circol ELT and were unaware of the Tyre Retailer obligations. All 3 joined Circol ELT in 2022 and are satisfied with the service.

These outcomes compare to 21 tyre inspections completed in 2021, 14 of these were compliant by end of 2021. Compliance rate achieved was 66%

The following criteria were checked during inspections of tyre operators in compliance with Tyre Regulations 2015:

- Member of REPAK ELT now Circol ELT

- Membership certificate displayed with unique number
- Tyre supplier/s
- vEMC on receipt to customer
- waste tyre storage condition and location
- number of waste tyres stored at premises
- waste collection dockets for waste tyre collections
- Statutory Notice for take back policy displayed in premises

One large tyre operator did not have adequate storage for the company's waste tyres and on inspection of the premises it was noted that the tyres were being stored at another warehouse in Co Meath. The operator was issued with a warning to have all waste tyres removed from the second unauthorised site and cease using this warehouse for surplus waste storage. An extra storage shed was built at the tyre depot and collections of tyres were requested more frequently. This investigation led to a positive outcome and the operator complied with S39 of the WMA 1996 as amended.

An outcome of the tyre inspections was the finding that smaller operators i.e. garages mainly servicing cars, change a relatively small amount of tyres and are therefore reluctant to pay the €70 yearly Circol ELT fee for free waste tyre collection.

During the 2022 inspections operators advised that improvements had been made with the scheme and collections of tyres were happening quicker than in previous years and operators did not have to store large amounts of tyres on site waiting for collection and causing a fire hazard. Registered collectors were now also collecting a smaller number of waste tyres from operators.

MCC liaised with Circol ELT and used the enforcement tool on the website portal to update REPAK on the membership status of operators. The WERLA were liaised with for guidance purposes and understanding the legislation and retailer obligations. For instance clarity was sought on the storage of waste tyres at tyre retailer premises. MCC were instructing tyre retailers to ensure that waste tyres were not stored in unsecured areas where the public could access them. This was an issue particularly around the Halloween period and more recently with lower incomes members of the public are taking part worn tyres for reuse on their cars. WERLA were able to confirm that under the "environmentally sound management of waste tyres" the collection, storage, treatment and recovery or, as appropriate, disposal of waste tyres in a manner which does not endanger human health or harm the environment, would constitute secure storage and reduce risk of unauthorised collectors accessing waste tyres.

Local Priority 1

Man, In a Van:

The detection and prevention of illegal waste collectors is advanced under the following ways

- **Inspections.**

In 2022 Meath County Council carried out the following inspections

6.1.5 Multi Agency inspections including Vehicle and Multi vehicle inspections 5.No

6.1.12 Inspection of WCP holders 238.No

3.2.5 Inspection in relation to Unauthorised Waste collectors (Man in a Van) 118.no

- **Reporting from the public.**

Reporting from the public continues to provide crucial information in identifying operators and sites of Interest. Dialogue with the complainants although not necessarily admissible as evidence provides essential intelligence on operators allowing a more focussed investigation and greater probability of quality evidence collection.

- **Collaboration and intelligence sharing.**

A close working relationship with Gardai and our counterparts in adjoining counties.

- **Use of Covert Surveillance (CCTV)**

Due to the sporadic nature of the incidents and the secluded locations involved, the use of CCTV has proven to be an essential tool in gathering evidence to secure convictions.

- **Public Information Campaigns**

Meath County Councils community Warden has featured on Radio 1, Newstalk Today FM and LMFM on numerous occasions in 2022 specifically addressing the topic of unauthorised waste collectors. He advises on how to identify them and the potential liabilities attached to using them.

- **Social Media**

Meath County Council monitor social media and have fostered an excellent relationship with Facebook. In particular. 76 adverts for illegal waste collectors were removed for failure to display legitimate NWCPO number in 2022.

Successful Man, In a Van Investigations

In 2022, Meath County Council secured a conviction for dumping of household waste onto bog land. Under Section 32 WMA (General duty of a holder of waste). The accused admitted to unauthorised collection and disposal of third parties waste for profit. He was found guilty under section 32 charges under the WMA and fined €500 plus €2,158 legal costs. MCC became aware of the dumping on bog land via its complaints system. Examination of the waste and the scale of the dumping made MCC suspect an unauthorised waste collector was responsible. Covert CCTV was deployed, and enough evidence gathered to secure a conviction.

In 2022, a brown field site located outside of Clonee had become the location for significant dumping of bulky household waste and waste oils. Suspecting that a significant proportion of the waste was attributable to unauthorised waste collectors (man in a van) MCC with the consent of the property holder erected covert cameras. Two separate individuals were documented making multiple trips to the site and depositing bulky household waste. Vehicle registration details

allowed identification of the vehicle owners. Assistance from local Garda allowed for positive identification of the individuals responsible. Two cases are scheduled for hearing in March 2023.

Local Priority 2 – Civic Amenity Site Audit

Whilst drafting the National Waste Stats Survey 2021, Meath County Council (MCC) required Annual Return data to be submitted from our Navan, Kells and Trim Civic Amenity Sites, which are managed by Oxigen on behalf of MCC. In reviewing the data submitted, some anomalies were identified, and clarification was required on how waste streams were being recorded. Using the NWCPO portal a spot check was carried out on the waste destination sites of a selection of waste streams collected and sent for onwards treatment from the CAS.

It came to light that the green waste had not been collected and sent for onward treatment to the authorized facility recorded on the CAS return. This had been the case for some years. A full audit of all waste management paperwork regarding collections and destination sites was planned for and organized.

The audit was carried out at the Civic Amenity Sites head office in Kells, Co. Meath in October 2022. All records of incoming and outgoing waste streams was maintained at this office.

There were 23 different waste streams collected from the CASs in 2021. The Annual Return data submitted to MCC as the yearly return was interpreted and compared to waste documentation maintained on site by Oxigen. The waste documentation was being stored in folders by date and was not separated into the different waste streams which lead to a time consuming audit.

14 main issues were identified during the audit;

- No waste transfer form for hazardous waste movements off the site
- No waste collection permit dockets for some of the waste movements off site
- No destination site dockets for any waste types
- Copies of Waste Collection Permit holders permit no kept on file – permit Appendices never checked to verify if codes authorized, destinations listed, counties of origin included in permit
- One waste collector did not have a waste collection permit at all
- The green waste stream was being sent for onward recovery at a transfer station and then an EPA licensed site, information supplied on AR was incorrect
- Estimated weights were being used for many waste streams
- Some waste streams were being mixed ie lead acid batteries and alkaline batteries
- Waste codes not recorded for all waste streams leaving site
- No dockets or confirmation of return of Flo Gas/Calor Gas cylinders
- Tonnage for aerosols estimated and incorrect
- WCP not providing CAS with collection dockets
- Incorrect collector recorded for clothes waste stream
- Polystyrene not declared on CAS 2021 return

Some failures in the recording and reporting of waste data was found in the 2021 Waste Return. The main concerns relate to:

- Incorrect tonnages due to lack of waste dockets kept on site and estimated weights for certain waste types i.e. aerosols, paints, fluorescent tubes.
- No waste transfer forms for hazardous waste collections i.e. Enva
- Lack of traceability regarding knowing and keeping end destination/transfer dockets
- Lack of traceability regarding requesting collection permit dockets from waste collectors
- Using hauliers to collect waste without first ascertaining if they possess a waste collection permit
- Out of date information submitted on the Waste Return i.e. Cleary Composting

Some recommendations made by MCC in enforcement letter to Oxigen required Oxigen to improve on traceability and compliance issues identified:

1. Monthly waste reports to be submitted to MCC to include the EWC, waste description, tonnage, collector details including NWCPO number, transfer station name and waste authorisation reference number and end destination site name and waste authorisation reference number, if applicable.
2. Oxigen are only authorised to transfer the control of waste to collectors who have submitted their waste collection permits to the Oxigen for reference.
3. Oxigen are to maintain a copy of each waste collector's waste collection permit in the Kells office.
4. Oxigen are to maintain details of each transfer station or destination site used for the recovery/disposal of waste on file in the Kells office.
5. Oxigen are to ensure that all waste removed off site is accompanied by an Oxigen CAS docket detailing the EWC and waste description, tonnage, collector used and destination site.
6. Oxigen are to ensure that collectors of waste from the site provide Oxigen with a waste collection permit docket before waste departs the site. (Waste material should not be removed off the sites unless the CASs know where it is going).
7. All hazardous waste leaving the site is to be accompanied by a Waste Transfer Form, copy of this form is to be maintained by Oxigen in Kells office.

The total tonnage declared by Oxigen for 14 waste streams was 1174.53T while the audit concluded a tonnage of 1178.002T which was a small difference in the total declared and the tonnage counted from dockets on site by MCC EOs. This data comparison did not include 10 waste streams for which comparison WCP and destination dockets could not be located to verify CAS tonnages submitted. Particular emphasis was placed on these waste streams in the months following the audit and WCP dockets and destination dockets with exact tonnages were acquired by Oxigen and resubmitted to MCC.

The waste collector employed to collect the printer cartridges was not able to produce proof of a waste collection permit and was required to cease collection immediately. ENVA are not liaising with Oxigen on the collection of this waste stream.

This audit was carried out to ensure wastes were collected by an authorised collector, brought to an authorised site (end destination WFP or EPA licence or transfer station) and waste was handled and managed in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended.

To date the following improvements have been made:

- Oxigen have contacted all WCP holders employed to collect waste from the CAS sites and received dockets and WTF dockets.
- Tonnages from WCP dockets have been revised and discrepancies have been addressed.
- Polystyrene code has been added to the CAS EPA return.
- Alternative collector has been employed to collect printer cartridges.
- Batteries are now been classed as non hazardous and hazardous by the WCP and Oxigen.
- Estimated tonnages have been changed to exact tonnages provided by end destination site docket
- Monthly returns are now submitted to MCC
- Copy of all WCP holder permits is now on file in the Kells office

Once rectified, the result was a vast improvement on the 'chain of custody' of waste streams through the CAS to the final destination and therefore an improvement in the quality and traceability of future Annual Return data.

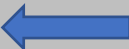
Local Priority 3 - Burning Permits

In 2020 MCC received an increase in the number of complaints from members of the public in relation to the burning of agricultural waste. A review of the application form was completed and in 2021 a new procedure for assessing the applications was finalised. All applications were to be reviewed by technical staff using a desktop assessment for approval.


In 2021, 299 burning applications were received by MCC, 25 of these applications were refused and 22 on-site inspections were carried out by EOs. In 2022, 266 burning applications were assessed with 25 refusals issued resulting in a 9% refusal rate (increase from 8% in 2021). There were 15 burning permit on-site inspections carried out by EOs in 2022, a 6% inspection rate, (reduction from 7% in 2021). These targeted inspections were carried out using prior knowledge of applicant non-compliance issues, concerns about bonfire location and to assess contents of bonfire material.

Of these 15 inspections carried out by EOs 2 applications were refused due to proximity to field hedgerow and waste material in proposed bonfire.

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National Enforcement Priority: AIR - Solid Fuel Inspections	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting though the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle the sale of non-compliant fuel and its use via compliance promotion, inspection and enforcement of fuel merchants and retailers. • Participate in multi-agency operations investigating the sale of non-compliant fuels. • Develop and implement a programme for the sampling and analysis of fuel types (this can be carried out per individual local authority or a joint approach can be adopted with other local authorities). • Carry out awareness programme to promote compliance by increasing the awareness of how the choices people make in heating their homes impacts on their air quality and health and legal obligations. • Establish and/or maintain a list, including the number and profile of solid-fuel merchants operating in each local authority area, including those using social medial platforms to market solids fuels. • Build capacity through engaging, collaborating and sharing with colleagues in other local authorities via networks and working groups and participating in training events. 	<p>In early 2022, in order to promote compliance and raise awareness of the change in the Regulations, Meath County Council applied to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to provide funding for a Meath County Council awareness campaign to include a radio campaign/ social media/ leaflet drops and talking to retailers. By enlarge the grant application was unsuccessful as we were informed that there would be a national awareness campaign being carried out.</p> <p>In 2022, Meath County Council carried out a total of the 59 inspections under the Solid Fuel Regulations of which only one retailer was non-compliant.</p> <p>The Air Enforcement Team in Meath County Council developed a new protocol for Solid Fuel inspections. The protocol outlined steps to follow during the 1st visit, 2nd visit and 'things to look out for'. This protocol was informed by the 'FAQ for Retailers' documentation circulation by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, as well as labelling requirements outlined in the Regulations.</p> <p>Following approval of the protocol among the team, the steps outlined in the protocol were then integrated in to a 'fast fields' inspection form. This inspection form once again highlighted the 'things to look out for' to insure non-compliant items for sale were being detected.</p> <p>In May 2022, a MCC Enforcement Officer (EO) on a routine patrol observed a solid fuel delivery vehicle in the Low Smoke Zone of Navan, Co. Meath. The Operator was observed delivering unspecified bituminous coal to a dwelling. The product was noted to be 'Black Emerald Coal' and while the bag was appropriately labelled it was <u>not deemed</u> a 'low smoke fuel'. The bag also stated that the 'content comply with the Air Pollution Act Regulation'. The operator of the vehicle was interviewed where full admissions were made that he supplied an unapproved product in a Low Smoke Zone. He removed the product from the dwelling and replaced it with a low smoke Coal Product. Meath County Council issued a warning letter to the operator and continue to monitor his activity when he's delivering Solid Fuel Products.' Cognisance was taken to the imminent introduction of the National Ban on Smoky Coal.</p>

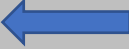
	<p>On the 31st of October 2022, the Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 529 of 2022) came in to effect, replacing the Air Pollution Act (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 326 of 2012) as amended. This resulted in a Nationwide Ban of Smoky Coal.</p> <p>Of the 59 inspections carried out in 2022, 26 no of these were carried out after the introduction of the new regulations. During the inspections, a number of sold fuel retailers were selling ‘fibra flame’ and ‘perfect flame’ firelog products that did not comply with the labelling requirements of the new regulations. MCC engaged with the retailers, distributors, and manufacturers of this product. MCC initiated a collaborative effort with the EPA and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications to determine if corrective action was required in relation to these products. It was ascertained that the manufacturer was registered with the EPA and a transitional period was being allowed to change labeling. The ‘lessons learned’ from this exercise was circulated among the team.</p> <p>The Air Enforcement Team in Meath County Council also had to contact the EPA in relation to a polish coal product on sale in Meath. One retailer had made a complaint against another retailer stocking the product. The product was labelled ‘contents comply with the air pollution act’ however with no date on the product and no requirement to state ‘smokeless’ on the label under the new regulations, it was unclear if the product was a low smoke product that complied with the 2022 regulations. The EPA were contacted and were able to provide us with the product register of the supplier and we were then able to ascertain the product was a compliant product. Meath County Council continue to investigated this matter..</p> <p>Meath County Council EOs’ attended a number of Solid Fuel working group meetings in 2022 and also attended the DECC Air Quality Workshop at the end of 2022 to discuss the implementation of the Solid Fuel regulations 2022. Following the workshop, MCC set out to carry out initial inspections to promote and raise awareness among all retailers and distributors of coal, turf and wood burning products. The FAQ for Retailers document was distributed as well as contact details for the EOs should the retailer require any assistance in the future.</p> <p>In 2022, the one non-compliant retailer was selling open bags of wood that had no labelling. The store was asked to remove the wood product from point of sale. A reinspection was carried out and the retailer is now compliant.</p>
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National Enforcement Priority:	AIR - Air Quality Monitoring Activities and Data Use
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work

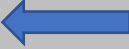
	<p>completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting though the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the EPA to complete the expansion of the Ambient Air Monitoring Programme network including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist EPA to determine viable locations for air quality monitoring stations. 2. Assist EPA to progress the siting of air quality monitoring stations. 3. Assist EPA to troubleshoot issues at existing air quality monitoring stations including the nomination and notification to the EPA of a primary and secondary contact person. 4. Assist (where possible, to the best extent possible) EPA to maintain existing and new air quality monitoring stations. • Review local air quality data to identify hotspots and to prioritise sites/areas for action. • Ensure local air quality data, including a map, is made available to the general public as soon as technically possible for each local authority. As a minimum, a link to the relevant page(s) of the EPA site should be placed on each local authority website. 	<p><u>Air Quality Monitoring & Data Usage</u></p> <p>At the beginning of 2022, the EPA in partnership with Local Authorities had established 97 ambient air quality monitoring stations in Ireland. A further 19 were scheduled to be operational by end 2022. County Meath had one station in Navan Town and two new non-EPA stations in Trim town which were installed in 2022. Under the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 Navan has been allocated to Zone C (other cities and large towns) of the 4 air quality monitoring zones. Air quality monitoring results in Ireland showed that fine particulate matter PM_{2.5} from the burning of fossil fuels in our homes and NO₂ from vehicle emissions were the main threats to clean air quality in our larger towns.</p> <p><u>Navan Air Quality Station</u></p> <p>The Air Quality station in Navan was commissioned in 2019 and is located at the Fire Station on the Inner Relief Road in Navan town. It is one of the Local Monitoring Network stations which monitors for particulate matter PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. In 2022 the Navan station recorded just one exceedance of PM₁₀ which has a limit of 50 ug/m³. The limit is deemed breached if more than 35 exceedances occur during the year. On Saturday 26th March the AQIH was deemed to be an Index 4 with results of NO₂ 83.2 ug/m³ PM₁₀ 82.59 ug/m³ and PM_{2.5} 50.35 ug/m³. The main sources of NO₂ emissions are from the burning of fossil fuels and vehicle emissions. High levels of NO₂ can lead to emphysema as it can damage cells in the throat and lungs.</p> <p>During 2022, 27 no. Smokey Coal inspections were carried out by EOs at Navan town retail outlets selling coal in an effort to reduce the use of Smokey coal by consumers and improve the air quality of Navan town.</p> <p>Monthly reports are submitted by the EPA to MCC on monitoring results and are examined by technical staff. Due to the proximity of the station to the Inner Relief Road the exceedance for PM₁₀ is deemed to be because of the high traffic volumes passing by the site.</p> <p>The MCC webpage consists of a link to the Air Quality Mapping. Members of the public can access a link to the EPA map and check the air quality of Navan town which is updated every 2-5 minutes. The Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH) is calculated and advises the public on whether at any particular time the air quality is very poor, poor, fair, good. Average results for PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀ and NO₂ are also displayed. A colour coded calendar month format may also be viewed showing air quality AQIH on any given day of the month.</p> <p><u>Trim Air Monitoring Stations</u></p>

	<p>Trim was chosen as a Decarbonisation Zone, the project aims to reduce emissions within the town by 51% by 2030 in line with national targets, and Global Goals for Cities – the European URBACT project.</p> <p>The project was funded through the Department of Rural & Community Development’s Digital Innovation Fund to monitor the air quality in Trim over a 20-month period.</p> <p>In 2022, Climate Change established two NEW air quality monitoring stations. They were up and running in 2022 but were relocated early December 2022.</p> <p>These installations are on Patrick Street and on Market Street in the town Trim, Co Meath.</p> <p>There are 2 types of monitors being used at these locations. One of the stations functions with a high end monitor; Earthsense Zephyr’s and is analysing the following parameters: NO, NO2, PM1, PM2.5, PM₁₀, O3, H2S, SO2 & CO (it only excludes Co2).</p> <p>The other station functions using an Enlink Monitor and is analysing the following parameters: PM1, PM2.5, PM₁₀, O3/NO.</p> <p>There is an SO2 module on this location but results have so far been unreliable. In time the decision may be made to establish an NO2 module at this location and trial its use and results.</p> <p>Live air quality data will be available in 2023 on a dashboard service. Efforts are being made to make this information available to the public on the MCC website for real-time data public interaction.</p> <p>The Trim Air Quality Monitoring stations data results are being reviewed and analysed by a consultancy firm specialising in data science. The consultancy team will publish a report from the dashboard information gathered in January 2024. The report will include possible methods and solutions to improve the surrounding air quality in the town. The consultancy team and MCC’s Climate Change team will also be engaging with the schools on local air quality projects in an effort to promote awareness and increase children’s interest in the air quality of their town.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>As the new Trim Air Monitoring Stations have been set up as a trial running two different modules. A comparison of dashboard results will be carried out to compare consistency and accuracy of both monitors. MCC may roll out additional Air Monitoring locations in the County, particularly in areas which have been the subject of air quality complaints to the EPA and Environment Section in the past.</p>
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National Enforcement Priority:	AIR - Environmental Noise Directive (END) Activities/ Noise Plans
Local Authority:	Activities

 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting though the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity <u>in the previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Round 4 Noise Mapping requirements as set out in the Environmental Noise Regulations of 2018. This includes the timely submission of any relevant datasets and information in the required format as requested by the RMO/Urban Agglomeration Project Team and/or any other specified body. • Prepare and submit the Annual Noise Action Plan Progress Report to the EPA by 28th February. • Annual Noise Action Plan Progress Report should demonstrate progress on the key issues and priority areas for action. 	<p>Submission of the local authority Noise Action Plan (NAP) Progress Report by the 28th of February 2022:</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

National Enforcement Priority:	AIR - Air & Noise Controls in Planning Assessments
Local Authority:	Activities

 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting though the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-planning assessments of air and noise impacts. • Environment staff assist in follow up of air and noise issues including use of Section 107 and 108 of the EPA Act, the Air Pollution Act and liaising with planners where planning enforcement is more appropriate. • Increased public awareness of noise induced health impacts. 	<p>In Meath County Council planning applications pertaining to non-residential, Strategic Infrastructure Developments, Large scale residential & one-off domestic planning applications located within prior agreed areas, where the risk to ground and/or surface waters is deemed significant are referred to the Environment department for assessment and recommendations.</p> <p>In a majority of the larger scale developments pre-application meetings are conducted to establish the detail & requirements required to assess the potential for environmental risk and the mitigation of same. In addition, this allows for the reduction in the requirement for further information requests overall.</p> <p>In 2022, 204 planning applications were assessed by the Environment Department and reported on, a further 45 were assessed and a verbal recommendation relayed to the Planning Department. During 2022, further information was requested from the applicants in 25 of the referred applications. Conditions are then recommended to the Planning Department taking cognisance of the relevant guidance and legislative requirements pertaining to Air (Dust & Odour) and Noise. In addition to conditions that aid in day-to-day issues encountered by the waste enforcement team.</p> <p>Over the years the Environment department has developed and fine-tuned conditions that are applicable to a large swathe of planning applications from residential both one-off and large-scale housing developments to commercial and industrial developments regarding the impact from Air (Dust & Odour) and Noise. Each development is assessed on the potential impact during the both the construction phase and the operational phase. Emission limit values are included in the conditions for both construction and operational phases of the development, in addition to the onus being placed on the applicant to demonstrate that no tonal component exists to any noise generated during both stages of the development.</p> <p>Regarding the construction aspect of developments this year saw the introduction of the following planning condition as follows. Prior to the commencement of site clearance, the applicant shall notify the Environment Department, Meath County Council regarding a commencement date for same.</p> <p>Post final grant compliance submissions are submitted to the Environment Department for assessment. There were several instances where applicants were requested to revisit compliance submissions pertaining to noise</p>


impacting on residential amenity. Please refer to case study were there was significant issues raised by submission pertaining to noise and air.

During 2022 issues relating to noise compliances were raised regarding a previously developed windfarm. The developer was requested to submit a Noise Assessment which was found to be compliant about the conditions issued at the time of grant of Planning Permission. However, through engagement with the complainant and the consistency of the issues described by several residents in the area the issue of infrasound, presently accepted by the WHO. from such developments was examined via Planning Enforcement and the operator. This has led the Environment department to request all similar developments to address this phenomenon in their applications.

During 2022, 6 soil and stone recovery facilities and 1 Article 27 by-product applications were referred to the Environment Department. Specific conditions are imposed on such facilities in line with the DEHLG guidelines for Planning Authorities for Quarries and Ancillary Activities, 2004 and the EPA guidelines on Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry. Through the year 2022 there have been no non-compliances relating to dust from these applications. In addition, the sites requiring authorisation under the waste management acts have certificate of registration and waste facility permit conditions tied into the conditions of the grant of Planning Permission.

In 2022 Meath County Council received 5 complaints in relation to noise pollution at Construction sites. MCC carried out inspections at the 5 sites and instructed the developer to carry out noise monitoring. Planning were notified in relation to 1 site as the complaint was alleging that the developer was working outside of operating hours. A warning letter was issued and works occurred within the specified timeframe. 4 construction sites were compliant following MCC warning letters. 1 site implemented monthly noise monitoring and the complaints were resolved.

Constant communications between Planning Enforcement and Planners are commonplace and this ensures that non-compliances are being detected and addressed. Robust conditions and controls for noise and air helps in establishing the risks at the outset and the mitigation of same thereby reducing the need for enforcement and action under the EPA Act Sections 107 & 108 & the Air Pollution Act.

National Enforcement Priority:		AIR – Local Enforcement Issues
Local Authority:	Activities	
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This is an opportunity to capture the impacts of the work completed to drive compliance. You are not required to duplicate data that you are submitting though the ‘RMCEI data returns’ or your ‘RMCEI Plan’.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>	
<p>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect and carry out any required enforcement actions of facilities/activities as specified in the RMCEI template and/or as otherwise determined by the local authority. Make available on their websites, the EPA vehicle refinishers video and use appropriate channels to promote it. Inspect and carry out any required enforcement actions under Sections 107 and 108 of the EPA Act 1992, in order to limit noise nuisance. Build capacity through engaging, collaborating and sharing with colleagues in other local authorities via networks and working groups and participating in training events. 	<p><u>AIR - Deco Paints Regulations</u></p> <p>In 2022, two WEOs in Meath County Council undertook training on the enforcement of S.I. No. 564/2012 - European Union (Paints, Varnishes, Vehicle Refinishing Products and Activities) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>In 2022, Meath County Council (MCC) waste enforcement officers identified poor compliance with S.I. No. 564/2012 - European Union (Paints, Varnishes, Vehicle Refinishing Products and Activities) Regulations 2012. Many operators who held a Certificate of Compliance were allowing their Certificate to lapse and not applying for a renewal. A WEO in Meath County Council identified that part of the problem was the vehicle refinishers database. It was difficult to see at a glance, which operators Certificates had expired. It was identified that there was also a need to be more proactive in reminding operators to renew their Certificates instead of relying on enforcement action once the Certificates had lapsed.</p> <p>This Waste Enforcement Officer first addressed the issue by overhauling the vehicle refinishers database to include a colour-coded warning system to inform WEOs, at a glance, when a Certificate was due to expire within the next 60 days. This simple system changed the operators Certificate of Compliance expiry date from green to red when less than 60 days remained on their Certificate, at which time a reminder letter would be sent by the WEO.</p> <p>In order to target operators who were allowing their Certificate to lapse, in 2022, Waste Enforcement Officers continued to place a greater emphasis on sending renewal reminder letters to compliant operators. The reminder letters promoted compliance and raised awareness of the obligations S.I. No. 564/2012 placed on operators. In 2022, 10 operators due for renewal received reminder letters (100% of operators due for renewal in 2022), compared to eight reminder letters sent in 2021 and none in 2020.</p> <p>Throughout 2022 the success of the reminder letter system was reviewed. It was reported by Vehicle Refinisher operators that scheduling issues within Enviroguide meant operators were waiting weeks for their inspection by Enviroguide and as a result, their applications for Certificate of Compliance were submitted late to Meath County Council. The decision was made to increase the automatic warning system lead in time from 60 days to 90 days prior to the lapse of the current Certificate to allow for this delay with Enviroguide.</p>	

In 2022, MCC continued to identify and inspect operators who did not hold a Certificate. WEOs searched the internet and social media relating to vehicle refinishing services in County Meath and carried out unannounced inspections of premises to look for evidence of spraying activities (e.g. spraying equipment, paints, gun cleaning equipment, spray booths, presence of paint odour). In summary, five operators that were operating without a Certificate of Compliance were identified. Following site visits and numerous phone calls with the operators, and consultation with Enviroguide, four of the five were issued with their first Certificates of Compliance in 2022. One FPN was issued to an operator who failed to comply with two warning letters in this regard. This operator has since contacted Certification Europe to prepare a VR application to be submitted to MCC.

As a result of efforts in 2022, the number of Vehicle Refinishing operators that hold a valid Certificate of Compliance in County Meath, increased from 20 in 2021 to 31 in 2022. Meath County Council are satisfied that by encouraging these operators to become Certified, the steps they have had to take to improve the VOC emission limits of their guns and responsibly discard their hazardous waste (oil rags, thinners, paint etc.) in line with the regulations, reduce the risk of impacts to air and water and have a positive impact on the receiving environment.

AIR - Solvents Regulations

During 2022 MCC EOs completed 27 inspections on 7 Dry Cleaning (DC) operators. 5 of the operators inspected were no longer dry cleaning at their premises. The main reason for this was due to Covid with less uniforms and wedding attire to dry clean. Clothes were being sent to larger contractors. Two DC operators were non-compliant as they did not have the required Certificate of Compliance issued by MCC under the EU (Installations and Activities using Organic Solvents) Regulations 2012. Both operators were issued with warning letters, Fixed Payment Notices of €500 and reminder letters. Both FPNs have not been paid. By end of 2022 neither operator had applied for a Certificate and it is anticipated legal prosecution files will have to be drafted.

In 2022, four applications were received for Certificates of Compliance by existing operators. Approved Assessor reports from Enviroguide and application forms were assessed by examining Major, minor non compliances and observations in AA report. Certificates were issued ranging from 2 – 3 years depending on AA report degree of compliance.

The MCC Solvent website page was also periodically updated as new Certificates were granted and old Certificates expired. The spreadsheets are viewable to the public.

AIR – Vehicle Refinisher

Meath County Council endeavor to continuously improve and develop in its efforts to protect the environment through the enforcement of waste legislation. In 2022, two WEOs in Meath County Council undertook training on the enforcement of S.I. No. 564/2012 - European Union (Paints, Varnishes, Vehicle Refinishing Products and Activities) Regulations 2012.

In 2022, Meath County Council (MCC) waste enforcement officers identified poor compliance with S.I. No. 564/2012 - European Union (Paints, Varnishes, Vehicle Refinishing Products and Activities) Regulations 2012. Many operators who held a Certificate of Compliance were allowing their Certificate to lapse and not applying for a renewal. A WEO in Meath County Council identified that part of the problem was the vehicle refinishers database. It was difficult to see at a glance, which operators Certificates had expired. It was identified that there was also a need to be more proactive in reminding operators to renew their Certificates instead of relying on enforcement action once the Certificates had lapsed.

This Waste Enforcement Officer first addressed the issue by overhauling the vehicle refinishers database to include a colour-coded warning system to inform WEOs, at a glance, when a Certificate was due to expire within the next 60 days. This simple system changed the operators Certificate of Compliance expiry date from green to red when less than 60 days remained on their Certificate, at which time a reminder letter would be sent by the WEO.

In order to target operators who were allowing their Certificate to lapse, in 2022, Waste Enforcement Officers continued to place a greater emphasis on sending renewal reminder letters to compliant operators. The reminder letters promoted compliance and raised awareness of the obligations S.I. No. 564/2012 placed on operators. In 2022, 10 operators due for renewal received reminder letters (100% of operators due for renewal in 2022), compared to eight reminder letters sent in 2021 and none in 2020.

Throughout 2022 the success of the reminder letter system was reviewed. It was reported by Vehicle Refinisher operators that scheduling issues within Enviroguide meant operators were waiting weeks for their inspection by Enviroguide and as a result, their applications for Certificate of Compliance were submitted late to Meath County Council. The decision was made to increase the automatic warning system lead in time from 60 days to 90 days prior to the lapse of the current Certificate to allow for this delay with Enviroguide.

In 2022, MCC continued to identify and inspect operators who did not hold a Certificate. WEOs searched the internet and social media relating to vehicle refinishing services in County Meath and carried out unannounced inspections of premises to look for evidence of spraying activities (e.g. spraying equipment, paints, gun cleaning equipment, spray booths, presence of paint odour). In summary, five operators that were operating without a Certificate of Compliance were identified. Following site visits and numerous phone calls with the operators, and consultation with Enviroguide, four of the five were issued with their first Certificates of Compliance in 2022. One FPN was issued to an operator who failed to comply with two warning letters in this regard. This operator has since contacted Certification Europe to prepare a VR application to be submitted to MCC.

As a result of efforts in 2022, the number of Vehicle Refinishing operators that hold a valid Certificate of Compliance in County Meath, increased from 20 in 2021 to 31 in 2022. Meath County Council are satisfied that by encouraging these operators to become Certified, the steps they have had to take to improve the VOC emission limits of their guns and responsibly discard their hazardous waste (oil rags, thinners, paint etc.) in line with the regulations, reduce the risk of impacts to air and water and have a positive impact on the receiving environment.

AIR - Petroleum Vapour Regulations:

In 2022, Meath County Council Fire & Rescue Service received 13 no. Dangerous Substance Licence (DSL) Applications. All applicants upon receipt were written to with a list of requirements prior to an inspection being carried out. A total of 10 No. inspections were carried out by Meath County Council Fire Officers and four applications were granted with conditions. The other applications are still ongoing with engagement with the applicants

AIR - Licenced sites under the Air Pollution Act:

In 2022 MCC carried out a review of the Air Emission Licences (AEL) which were granted in previous years. There were 6 AELs on file for review, 3 of these plants were still active in 2022 and 3 had been closed. The 3 plants which are now closed were issued letters of closure under Section 36 of the Air Pollution Act 1987 as they had not commenced operations for 3 years.

Those that remained opened had their Licences reviewed and monitoring and fees were requested by letter for 2022. Conditions contained in the Licence obligated the Licensee to carry out the following monitoring and site works:

- Enter into a contract with a competent specialist air emission engineering firm to carry out air emission monitoring
- Monitor and maintain records of results at exhaust vent on the mixing plant
- Dust deposition monitoring to be carried out between June and September using the Bergerhoff method at agreed site layout locations
- Submit fuel certificates confirming sulphur content of fuel source
- Noise monitoring to be carried out- as per agreed locations on site layout map

MCC engaged with Licensees and their consultants and as a result monitoring results for stack emissions, dust, noise, sulphur free oil and boiler maintenance were submitted during 2022. Monitoring results were within the limits as set out in Appendix A of the Licences.

One AEL has complied with advisory and non-compliance letters throughout 2022 and is now deemed fully compliant with their AEL conditions.

MCC are liaising with the other two AELs in order to achieve compliance and aims to have all 3 Licence holders fully compliant by 2023.

LOCAL AIR & NOISE ENFORCEMENT

NOISE

In 2022, Meath Co. Council carried out 50 inspections regarding Noise complaints, which decreased from 63 the previous year. The figure for non-routine noise complaints where an on-site inspection was not required for a significant number of complaints. The complaints in this cohort could be dealt with by providing advice on the regulations. Noise cases where inspection and intervention were warranted are addressed via the protocol. Meath Council did not progress any cases to court under section 108 of the 1992 EPA act in 2022.

In 2022, Meath County council received complaints regarding the use of a large diesel generator operating at a hotel in an urban area and running consistently throughout the night causing nuisance noise to adjoining property owners. The property was inspected, and the hotel manager interviewed. It was explained that the emergency back-up generator was being used as the primary source of electricity on economical grounds. He was advised of his obligations under the 1992 EPA act, and that he was in breach of his planning conditions as the generator primary function was as a short-term emergency backup system and not as the primary energy supply. The activity ceased.

AIR

In 2022, Meath County Council received multiple complaints regarding the release of emissions from industrial/commercial units located in Duleek and Oldcastle. The first case is in a business park on the outskirts of a large town. The adjoining premises (office space) were complaining that noxious odours emanating from the premises were causing health issues such as headaches and nausea. The Unit in question is occupied by a composite plastics manufacturer. An unannounced inspection of the property was conducted. It was observed that the solvents, paints and resins were in use and best practice was not being applied to storage use and disposal of these products. It was noted that a ventilation system serving the factory floor was present and vented to atmosphere at roof level. A spray booth with a separate ventilation motor vented to the common outlet at roof level. The premises were not registered under the solvent regulations. A second inspection of the

premises was arranged in the presence of the owner. An inspection of the party walls between the units was carried out in the presence of Meath Councils fire department.

In 2022, MCC Environment Section served one section 26 Notice under the air pollution act including the list of chemicals used on site and the volumes consumed per annum, maintenance records pertaining to the ventilation system and spray booth, design calculations for both these systems and a records of hazardous waste disposal.

An extension of time for submission of the technical appraisal was requested and granted. Meath County council have secured assurances from the technically qualified individuals that they have been engaged. Complainants have been updated on progress and MCC are currently awaiting technical reports. Subsequent inspections have shown an improvement in housekeeping regarding the storage, use and disposal of chemicals at the facility.