

# Laois County Council

## National Enforcement Priorities Report 2022


Name:  
Position:


  
Simon Walton  
Director of Services

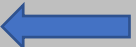
Date of Approval:

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.

## 2022 National Enforcement Priorities Progress Report

National Enforcement Priority: <b>GOVERNANCE - RMCEI Review &amp; Reporting</b>	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• RMCEI reviews should evaluate progress of NEPs and assess if planned inspection targets are on track.</li> <li>• RMCEI reviews should provide reasons for any deviation from targets, planned activities or objectives set out in the plan.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The RMCEI Plan, RMCEI Data Return and NEP Progress Report should be submitted to the EPA on schedule.</li> </ul>	<p>Although pulled together by the Local Authorities designated RMCEI Co-Ordinator, the RMCEI plan and related returns requires the time and assistance of all staff in the environment section involved in enforcement work. This takes up a considerable resource in the first two months of the reporting year, so it is therefore vital that the plan is fit for purpose and beneficial to all involved.</p> <p>Laois County Council's RMCEI Returns Template for 2021 Data was returned to the EPA on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Laois County Council's RMCEI Plan was signed by the Director of Services on the 28th February 2022 and sent to the EPA on the same date, accompanied by the relevant NEP progress reports. A copy of the plan was circulated to all staff that have responsibility for environmental inspections.</p> <p>The RMCEI Plan is based on the Operation Plans for each of the relevant sections of the Council. Therefore it is intrinsically linked with all relevant Team Development Plans and Personal Development Plans implemented through the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).</p> <p>RMCEI Plan Progress was an item on the agenda for all Environment staff meetings throughout the year and regular updates were given to the Director of Services ahead of Service Review meetings. A full mid year review was carried out for inspections up until the end of June and was again reported to and approved by the Director. A copy of this mid year review will be included with the 2022 Returns. The review helped to identify any targets that were at risk of not being met and allowed for resources to be realigned where necessary. The review was particularly important in 2022, as a number of staff (Exec. Scientist and Ass. Scientist in Waste Enforcement in particular) were taking extended leave in the second half of the year. It is key to successful implementation that a plan is not considered as an end point but rather as a start to implementation.</p>

National Enforcement Priority: <b>GOVERNANCE - Environmental Complaint Handling</b>	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment of a dedicated Environmental Complaints Co-ordinator.</li> <li>• Implementation of the National Environmental Complaints Procedure.</li> <li>• Appropriate systems in place for recording and tracking environmental complaints.</li> <li>• Adequate resources assigned to complaint investigation in the RMCEI Plan.</li> <li>• Appropriate handling of EPA referred complaints and Section 63 Notices received by the local authority.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Analysis of complaints numbers and inspection intelligence that may have potential impacts on NEPs and other thematic areas.</li> <li>• Details of environmental complaint handling should be provided in the appropriate section of the NEP Progress Report.</li> <li>• Reporting of complaint numbers and investigation for each thematic area in the RMCEI Data Returns.</li> </ul>	<p>The Administrative Officer in the Environment Section acts as the Complaints Co-Ordinator for Laois County Council.</p> <p>In August 2022, the Environment Section of LCC switched from an unsupported complaints database system to a new Environmental Helpdesk system. Complaints are received through various forms from the public, local representatives, local area offices, the EPA and other agencies by phone, emails, letters, the Litter Hotline (1 800 323230) or the National Hotline (1 850 365 121). On receipt of a complaint admin staff create a new incident on the EHS system (if not created previously), which they categorise and prioritise according to environmental impact/public safety etc.</p> <p>Main differences of New EHS System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique ID No. given to each complaint for file reference/Public reference etc.</li> <li>• Prioritises each complaint under High, Medium or Low, high priority meaning immediate action is required due to effects on the Environment/Public.</li> <li>• All complaints logged are categorised under Litter, Waste Enforcement, Water, Air or Noise and subcategorised to identify the exact nature of the complaint for ease of reporting accuracy.</li> <li>• Technician's receive notifications of any new complaints logged for their attention, with a review date and use hand-held tablets to create own log complaints during day to day monitoring/surveying, attach pictures send correspondence resulting in quicker commencement and closure of enforcement procedures.</li> <li>• Ease of tracking as conversations, notes, pictures and enforcement actions taken are logged to the complaint.</li> <li>• Reporting system is accurate and in line with WERLA and RMCEI.</li> <li>• Reporting system creates a log of open complaints and highlights any not completed by the review date. This prompts the complaints co-ordinator to follow up on reasons for same.</li> <li>• Automatic referrals are created to other departments/agencies when complaint is not for Environment.</li> <li>• System is GDPR compliant and secure.</li> </ul> <p>In 2022, a total of 922 complaints were received by the Environment section. 100% of the complaints received were investigated in the Litter, Waste, Water and Noise categories, while 89% of the complaints received regarding air/odour were investigated. 60 complaints remained opened and under investigation going into 2023, and a resource will be allocated to these in the current plan.</p>

National Enforcement Priority: WATER – Pressures from Agriculture (slurry/soiled water collection and storage)	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance, including follow up and close out of non-compliances.</li> <li>• Cross reporting of non-compliances to DAFM.</li> <li>• Document and report results for all farm inspections to the EPA.</li> </ul>	<p>1. Survey Project - River Douglas / River Barrow Waterbody Catchment</p> <p>Laois County Council commenced the River Douglas Waterbody Farm Survey project in the last quarter of 2022. The River Douglas 30 waterbody Catchment was chosen by LCC because the catchment is i) At Risk of not meeting a <b>Good water quality Status</b> by 2027 as required by the WFD ii) agriculture has been identified as the most significant pressure in the catchment and iii) the Catchment is not an Area for Action for LAWPRO or any other agencies under the Draft RBMP.</p> <p>Purpose of Farm Survey Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve Farm water quality in the Douglas 30 and Barrow Catchment</li> <li>• To introduce LCC to the farming community, liaise with and educate farmers on water quality issues</li> <li>• To train staff on inspections and refine inspection procedures</li> <li>• To assess farms based on farmyard and desktop inspections and categorise each farm based on Risk to Water Quality (through the use of PIP Mapping and other mapping tools)</li> <li>• To take appropriate enforcement action on At-Risk Farms</li> <li>• To increase the number of water monitoring stations on the river to identify high nutrient-loading hotspots and capture water quality changes.</li> </ul> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39 on-site Farm inspections and 2 reinspection's from Oct to Dec 2022 (Full Farmyard and Desktop inspection)</li> <li>• 10 Desktop Inspections (No Farmyard inspection) carried out</li> <li>• 90 Inspections carried out in total</li> </ul> <p>Environmental Outcomes and compliance:</p> <p>a) Farmers were generally willing to engage during the inspection and a good response was noted from farmers in relation to discussions regarding nutrients losses from farmlands.</p>

- b) LCC gave a presentation on water quality in Co. Laois at IFA Executive meeting in November 2022 and this was well received with a robust discussion among farmers on water quality, potential risks to watercourses, land management issues and PIP Mapping.
- c) Farmyard inspections on a small number of farms identified direct pathways to watercourses from unauthorized direct discharges and verbal and written warnings were issued on these farms.
- d) The Desktop study of each farm was critical in identifying farms with a high Pollution Impact Potential for Phosphorus and Nitrates (PIP Mapping).
- e) Based on farmyard and farmland (desktop) studies, 49 Farms were categorised into High/Medium/Low Risk with a recommendation to re-visit these farms on a priority basis to target and find solutions to potential nutrient losses from farmlands.

Farm Survey\_ Douglas 30 Project 2022

Priority*	No of Farms inspected in Catchment	Farmyard Inspection and Desktop Study	No Farmyard Inspection – Desktop Only Inspection	Farm Reinspection’s	Verbal Warning only	Written Warning and verbal warning	No. of Water Quality Awareness Discussions with farmers
High	15	12	3	1		9	12
Medium	13	10	3	1	1	3	10
Low	21	17	4	0	1	4 - minor issues	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41</b>

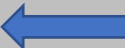
\*Criteria:

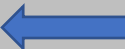
- *High Priority Farm - Direct pathway from farmyard to watercourse noted during inspection or/and High PIP Maps on farmers land holding*
- *Medium Priority - No direct pathway for pollution identified during the farm inspection but Potential direct pathway may exist due to farmyard location in areas with High PIP P and N Ranking.*
- *Low Priority – Farm located in areas with Low PIP Ranking and low intensity enterprise*

- a) It was not possible to identify any significant water quality improvements as a result of the farm survey project as the farm surveys was only completed in December 2022. Sampling planned in 2023 may show changes in water quality.
- b) 3 Staff were trained in farm inspection procedures and procedures were refined.
- c) Water Quality monitoring stations were reviewed following completion of the project and a number of new sampling points for 2023 have been located in areas downstream of high PIP Ranking Areas of the catchment.


A Catchment Report was completed, and all data from the inspections will be reported to the EPA prior to 28/02/23. LCC plan to complete the Douglas Farm Survey Project in 2023 with follow up inspections on all High and Medium risk farms.

- 2. During 2022, 26 Water Quality Complaints inspections were carried out by LCC relating to agricultural activities. From these complaints 20 initial inspections and 6 re-inspections were carried out. 9 Warning/advisory letters were issued relating to these complaints. LCC will continue to follow up on any outstanding issues relating to these complaints in 2023.
- 3. In 2022, 6 Planning applications were assessed for proposed agricultural developments in Co. Laois. Resources allocated to environmental assessment of Planning applications were diverted to the Douglas Farm survey as detailed above.

National Enforcement Priority: <b>WATER – Pressures from Agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading)</b>	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Take all necessary steps to ensure compliance, including follow up and close out of non-compliances.</li> <li>• Cross reporting of non-compliances to DAFM.</li> <li>• Document and report results for all farm inspections to the EPA.</li> </ul>	<p>With regards to pressures from agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading), these were addressed in the Douglas 30 River Waterbody Survey as detailed above in the <i>WATER – Pressures from Agriculture (slurry/soiled water collection and storage)</i>. During the Farm Survey Project, Desktop studies were carried out as part of each farm inspection.</p> <p>During each farm inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspectors Assessed Slurry Storage Capacity of each farm</li> <li>• Inspectors had a discussion with the farmer regarding the amount and timing of their application of slurries and chemical fertilisers used on the farmland</li> <li>• Inspectors assessed PIP P and PIP N Maps, as well as groundwater vulnerability maps and soil drainage maps to identify areas of the farm which could be considered potentially at risk of losing significant levels nutrients to the watercourses.</li> <li>• If internet connection allowed, LCC showed the farmers on the IPAD the <a href="http://www.catchments.ie">www.catchments.ie</a> website. LCC had a discussion about his/her lands and which fields were more susceptible to significant nutrient loss to waters</li> </ul> <p>Water monitoring data was analysed for 2022 and extra sampling locations in the catchment are now in place for 2023 to take into account waterbodies downstream of areas in the catchment with High PIP P Ranking i.e. downstream of farms with potential pathways for significant Phosphorus loss to waters.</p> <p>LCC Meeting with the IFA Executive was a good platform to demonstrate to the farming community how water pollution occurs and demonstrated on the <a href="http://www.catchments.ie">www.catchments.ie</a> website how to access information on maps for potential pollution impact areas. The meeting proved to be a good place to get the message across to the farming community that it is not all about farmyard pollution but losses from lands must also be considered, getting 'The Right Measure in the Right Place'.</p> <p>A Catchment Report was completed and all data from the inspections will be reported to the EPA prior to 28/02/23.</p>

National Enforcement Priority: WATER – Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems / Septic Tanks	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake the allocated number of DWWTS / Septic Tank inspections under the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2022 - 2026.</li> <li>• Take all necessary steps to follow up and ensure advisory notices are closed out.</li> <li>• When selecting households for inspection, consider areas where LAWPRO have issued letters of grant eligibility and homeowners have not taken action.</li> </ul>	<p>As part of the EPA's 'National Inspection Plan Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems 2022 – 2026', Laois County Council were required to carry out 9 inspections in 2022. Sites were selected using the EPA's Risk Zone Maps and taking account of the risk, significant pressure and prioritisation for action for each waterbody. In 2022, 9 inspections were carried out, 3 inspections were carried out in Zone 2 and 6 inspections were carried out in Zone 3. Laois County Council are not required to carry out any inspections in Zone 1 locations.</p> <p>In consultation with LAWPRO, inspections were not carried out in Priority Areas for Action in 2022. To date, Laois County Council have not received any letters of grant eligibility from areas where LAWPRO have been active.</p> <p>Prior to Covid, a pre-inspection visit and leaflet drop off would have occurred to take home owner details explaining the inspection process and the site selection process. This sets the homeowners at ease and provides a less confrontational atmosphere to the process. Since Covid, land registry and Eircode Finder are utilised to find the correct name and addresses and letters with a proposed date and time of inspection are issued, including 3 information leaflets to inform the person selected what to expect from the inspection. The recipient of the letter is asked to confirm the inspection and provide contact details to allow the inspector complete the inspection form.</p> <p>Currently there is only 1 person trained in Laois County Council as a DWWTS Inspector. Inspections were carried out towards the end of the year, as it was considered a good time to inspect, when ground conditions were at their worst. Where an inspection fails, the owner is told the reason for the failure on the day and given a certain time to rectify the issue and is informed that they will receive an advisory notice outlining the reason for the failure and given a date for completion of all works.</p> <p>Where possible, the inspections were entered to EDEN the same week as the inspection and any advisory Notice/Cert of Compliance plus a memo were sent to the Senior Executive Engineer for their approval. The Advisory notice/Cert of compliance and inspection reports were issued within 21 days of the inspection. On completion of the works, a verification inspection was carried out and a cert of compliance was issued where the system was in compliance. 5 advisory notices were issued in 2022 and 3 of these were closed out during the year, a closure rate of 60% for the year. It is believed the other 2 notices will be closed in early 2023.</p> <p>As stated above, inspection targets set out in the National Inspection Plan were met in 2022. The non-compliance rate of 55% was higher than in previous years, 2021 (24%), 2020 (47%) and 2019 (29%). However, with the reduction of required</p>

	<p>inspections in 2022, the figures may be skewed and not directly comparable. Common reasons for failure include sludge level being too high and ponding around soakage / percolation area.</p> <p>Work was undertaken in 2022 to close out pre-existing Advisory Notices including phone calls to property owners and visits when in the specific areas. However, we are aware that there are still 23 open advisory notices (88 issued and 65 closed) and these will be given priority in the first 6 months of 2023 for resolution, especially the older historic ones.</p> <p>Public engagement activities are ongoing, with pre-site visits where appropriate, leaflet drops and website information. A review of the website will be carried out in 2023.</p>
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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 though the 'RMCEI data returns' or your 'RMCEI Plan'.</p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all Section 4 Discharge Licence conditions are consistent with the requirements of the Surface Waters and Groundwater regulations.</li> <li>• Undertake risk based inspections/monitoring of Section 4 Discharge Licences. Inspect all licences in areas where discharge licensing is a significant pressure.</li> <li>• Ensure that all licensable discharges are authorised by a Section 4 Discharge Licence.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with discharge licence conditions and follow up and close out non-compliances and LAWPRO referrals on Section 4s and misconnections.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discharge Licences:</b></p> <p>20 On-site and desktop Inspections of discharge licensed companies and an additional 82 Inspections during the collection of samples at Discharge licensed facilities were planned in 2022 (102 inspections in total).</p> <p>18 Inspections were planned for 2 expected new applications (Maganey Industries Ltd (Killeen) and Lagan Quarry (Spink)). No applications were received in 2022. One inspection was carried out in regard to a planning application for Lagan's Quarry. Water quality monitoring results for the watercourse downstream of Maganey Industries Ltd at Killeen indicated no significant impacts on water quality.</p> <p>In 2022, 2 inspections were planned for existing discharge licensed companies and were completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boot Concrete Ltd. – during the inspection no unauthorised discharges were noted, however the issue of monitoring groundwater was discussed. LCC issued an Advisory letter requesting monitoring of groundwater and this request was satisfactorily complied with. LCC will continue to monitor both surface water and groundwater quality at the facility in 2023.</li> <li>• Manor Stone Ltd- one inspection was carried out in 2022, during which a number of non-compliances were noted. A warning letter detailing corrective action was issued and LCC plan to follow up in 2023 with appropriate enforcement action for this facility.</li> </ul> <p>In 2022, a further 83 Inspections which included the collection of samples at Discharge licensed facilities were completed satisfactorily. Monitoring results from the Discharge License Monitoring Programme indicate that over 60% of companies are not compliant with their conditions of their license. Non compliances relate mainly to breaches in levels of Phosphorus and Nitrates levels in the discharge effluent.</p> <p>Resources dedicated to Discharge Licensed facilities was diverted to the River Douglas farm Survey project as detailed in the <i>NEP Pressures from agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading)</i> for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture is the significant pressure in County Laois</li> <li>2. Resources were directed to the Kilminchy Project as detailed below.</li> </ol>

LCC will allocate resources in 2023 to target inspections of Discharge Licensed Facilities on a priority basis.

**Misconnections:**

Kilminchy Project 2022 – Investigations into misconnections in the Kilminchy Housing development and surrounding areas in Portlaoise

There are three lakes located in the Kilminchy Housing Development which are receiving waters from the River Triogue catchment area in Portlaoise town. The Triogue river and its tributaries feed directly into the lakes before flowing northwards towards the River Barrow. Laois County Council have received complaints regarding the direct discharge of raw sewerage and contaminated surface waters as a result of misconnections from houses leading to the contamination of the lakes at Kilminchy.

In 2021, investigations by Laois County Council staff found that there were issues relating to the wastewater pipes in this area which was leading to the direct discharge of wastewater to the lakes. In September 2021, a Working group was set up including Water Services, Planning, Environmental Services and Roads Sections headed by Director of Services to investigate and remedy surface water quality and wastewater issues at Kilminchy and in the Borris Road Area of Portlaoise Town. The IFI was also consulted and assisted in the project regarding water quality issues.

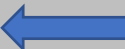
In 2022, the working group mapped the wastewater and surface water networks in the area which allowed the Environment Section to identify and confirm all the surface water and wastewater discharge points to the lakes area of the estate. The group worked together on a number of sewer lines in the area to identify problem areas of the estate, to alleviate flooding and blocked sewers in the area.

The Environment Section commenced a sampling programme in October 2021, sampling at 14 monitoring points on a fortnightly basis. The Sampling Programme was completed in June 2022 as it was agreed that satisfactory data had been collected to determine the potential contamination routes and problem areas with regards unauthorised discharges in the area to the lakes.

**Findings**

1. A number of manholes around the lake were dry for each sampling event during the monitoring programme which indicated that there was no evidence of contamination to the lakes at these points from misconnections.
2. LCC identified two areas of Kilminchy where significant levels of nutrients were consistently recorded, however these inlets receive surface waters from large parts of the town and the estate and thus it will be difficult to identify all the sources of unauthorized discharges.
3. Monitoring at the outfall from the lakes indicated poor water quality, however levels of contamination are lower than the inlets which suggest that the lakes are acting as ‘nutrient sinks’ for the river Triogue, trapping the elevated level of nutrients in its sediments and vegetation.
4. Some monitoring locations have shown intermittent contamination of surface waters and requires further investigation.

5. The Kilminchy Management Company have approached LCC regarding assistance with a project to target and potentially treat the high levels of nutrients in the lakes. A meeting to advance the project has been set for April 2023.
  6. 2 Planning Applications for new housing developments to feed into the existing wastewater network were received during the project period. These developments were assessed across all departments and recommendations made to ensure the proposed developments would not impact on water quality of the lakes.
- Environmental outcomes**
1. No significant discharges of untreated wate water to the lakes since the project commenced and no new complaints received in 2022.
  2. In 2023, LCC will continue to investigate misconnections leading to contamination at a number of identified problem areas.
  3. All remediation works and investigations at Kilminchy Estate are documented for future reference.
  4. The Environment Section issued a letter to all residents at Kilminchy and the Colliers Lane area of Portlaoise town informing them of findings from the monitoring programme and requiring them to investigate their own houses for potential misconnections - *'homeowners accepting responsibility for their own wastewater'*. 650 letters were issued to residents.
  5. In 2023, LCC will continue to work with the IFI and the Kilminchy Management Company to monitor and improve water quality in the Kilminchy Lakes.
- Separate to the Kilminchy project, in 2022 LCC received a complaint regarding the discharge of raw sewage to the river Triogue in Portlaoise town. Working with the IFI, the misconnection was quickly identified and the misconnection resolved to cease the discharge of waste waters to the river.

National Enforcement Priority: WATER – Local Priorities and Water Quality Monitoring	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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’.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete statutory monitoring for WFD surveillance and operational monitoring, investigative monitoring and bathing water monitoring.</li> <li>• Inspect and follow up any local issues (not covered by other NEPs), including non-compliances with water quality standards and LAWPRO referrals.</li> <li>• Address any climate related water quality issues, e.g. impacts due to extreme weather events.</li> <li>• Registration and monitoring of all private drinking water supplies. Investigate supplies that fail to meet drinking water quality standards and take necessary enforcement action.</li> <li>• Engage with LAWPRO and Regional Committees on the implementation of RBMP Actions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WFD Monitoring:</b> Under the Monitoring programmes, Operational and Surveillance programmes, 344 samples were taken by LCC in 2022 and uploaded to the EDEN system. Collaboration took place with Carlow County Council regarding the sharing of sampling chemicals and equipment.</p> <p><b>Investigative Monitoring:</b> In 2022, Laois County Council identified 4 waterbodies for extra investigative monitoring as detailed below: <b>In 2022, LCC planned to take 250 monitoring samples, however 306 samples were taken and analysed.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>River Douglas and River Barrow</u> LCC increased the number of monitoring locations on the Douglas 30 and Barrow waterbodies at locations upstream and downstream of potential significant pressures on water quality. This monitoring programme was completed in conjunction with the River Douglas Farm Survey Project. The following was noted from the monitoring:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant deterioration in water quality d/s of the Bruach na hAibhann WWTP in Killeen. The WWTP has a certificate of authorization and LCC will refer information to IW for their attention.</li> <li>• Sampling d/s of Coolanagh housing development WWTP indicated no water quality problems which would suggest that the WWTP is operating satisfactorily and is compliant.</li> <li>• River Barrow 160 -deterioration in water quality u/s of Hollymount – no known cause, suspected intensive agricultural enterprises. LCC plan to carry out farm inspections in this area in 2023 to identify the cause of elevated nutrients in this area.</li> <li>• For 2023, LCC will continue to monitor water quality at existing locations and 6 new additional sampling points have been added to the monitoring programme. These new sampling points are located downstream of the High PIP P areas in the catchment to assess the impact of these farmlands on water quality.</li> <li>• LCC have increased sampling from the existing quarterly basis to a monthly basis for 2023.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <u>River Fushoge</u> In 2022, Monitoring on the River Fushoge was chosen for investigative monitoring as LCC have agreed to complete the Fushoge Catchment as an <b>Area for Action</b> for the Draft RBMP. Although, the project has not commenced yet, it was agreed to get some background monitoring data prior to the project starting. Monitoring data for 2022 have</li> </ol>

indicated a deterioration in water quality downstream of Killeshin Village and LCC will continue to sample the river and investigate this area further in 2023 in an effort to identify and resolve the problem.

3. River Owenass

The River Owenass is Sampled 9 times per annum. The significant pressures on this watercourse is both Agriculture and the Mountmellick WWTP. High Phosphorus levels are continually being recorded d/s of the WWTP and this information has been highlighted with Irish Water. Irish Water are planning to upgrade the plant with phosphorus removal in 2023. LCC plan to carry out farm inspections in the Owenass Catchment in the coming years if resources are made available. Currently all LCC resources for farm inspections are diverted to the Douglas and Triogue catchments.

4. Triogue River

The Triogue River is monitored upstream and downstream of Portlaoise Town. The purpose of the monitoring is to monitor the discharge from Portlaoise WWTP and to monitor the river both u/s and d/s of Portlaoise town where agriculture has been identified as a significant pressure. The river is sampled on a quarterly basis. No farm inspections were carried out in 2022 as all resources were focused on the Douglas Catchment. LCC also carried out a number of inspections of premises in the Kyleleasha area of the catchment and all identified direct discharges were ceased as a result of appropriate enforcement action at a number of facilities. Monitoring of the river was also carried out as part of the Kilminchy Misconnection Project.

Monitoring downstream of Portlaoise WWTP is indicative of a deterioration in water quality however monitoring results from the WWTP is compliant with its license.

For 2023, LCC A. Will continue to monitor the Portlaoise WWTP and investigate further regarding the discharge from the plant. B. Have increased the number of monitoring locations on the river Triogue to include areas downstream of High PIP areas and C. Plan to commence a farm Inspection programme in the Triogue Catchment in the last quarter of 2023.

During 2022, LCC carried out 58 inspections of complaints relating to water pollution in Co. Laois.

In June 2022, LCC responded to a Red Dot Notification by the EPA Biologist regarding a pollution incident on the river Errill at Eglisk Bridge. In collaboration with LAWPRO, the source of the pollution was traced back to a farmyard approx. 3km upstream. Remediation works were immediately carried out by the farmer and follow up inspections will continue in 2023.

**Bathing Water Monitoring:**

None- no designated bathing waters in County Laois

**Private Water Supplies:**

Laois Co Co possesses a register of private water supplies encapsulating private group water schemes (PrGWS), public group water schemes (PuGWS) and small private supplies (SPS's) in its jurisdiction. This register is reviewed regularly to ensure it is contemporaneous and reflects any prospective changes. During 2022 a questionnaire was issued to all

existing private water supplies to verify authenticity of their existing details on the register. Additionally, a questionnaire was sent to 22 businesses suspected of being SPS's, as a result 8 new SPS's were identified. Nationally it is acknowledged SPS's are an inherent risk because there is no requirement for these businesses/organisations to register and generally they have inferior drinking water quality. Instead, the onus is on local authorities to identify these water supplies, Laois Co Co recognises this risk and actively identifies and engages with potential SPS's. Overall, in 2022 there were 111 private water supplies in County Laois either supplying a daily volume of  $\geq 10$  m<sup>3</sup> or with public usage comprising 9 PrGWS, 18 PuGWS and 84 SPS's.

Similar to previous years a monitoring programme was devised for private water supplies in accordance with European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations S.I. 122 of 2014 & European Union (Drinking Water Regulations) (Amendment) Regulations S.I. 464 of 2017 using a risk based approach. All private supplies were sampled and analysed for Group A (check parameters) in addition to nitrate, nitrite, lead, iron & manganese due to the relative prominence of these contaminants in County Laois. Also, selected private supplies were sampled and analysed for Group B (audit parameters). The sampling frequency for each private water supply was dictated by daily usage volume, historical performance, and vulnerability of consumers. The total number of samples taken for each private water supply category and associated compliance rate for chemical and microbiological parameters is presented in Table 1 below.

Category	No. of Samples	No. of samples compliant [Microbiological]	% Compliance [Microbiological]	No. of samples compliant [Chemical]	% Compliance [Chemical]
PrGWS	55	54	98.18%	54	98.18%
PuGWS	34	34	100%	34	100%
SPS	188	183	97.34%	180	95.74%

The nature of these microbiological and chemical exceedances along with actions and outcomes are presented in Table 2 below.

Parameter	No. of supplies affected	No. of samples failing	Actions	Outcomes
<b>Dieldrin</b>	1	1	HSE consulted drinking water restriction notice enforced & remediation plan requested from SPS	SPS connected to an adjacent public water supply (Ballinakill GWS)
<b>Glyphosate</b>	1	1	HSE consulted GWS informed to inspect water supply source and take further samples	There were no glyphosate detections in subsequent samples – ongoing monitoring for glyphosate
<b>Enterococci</b>	1	1	HSE consulted boil water notice issued to SPS & remediation plan requested.	Boil water notice remains active as further sampling by Laois Co Co revealed ongoing microbiological contamination of the water supply
<b>E. coli</b>	5	5	HSE consulted boil water notices issued in all cases and remediation plans requested. This included 1 PrGWS & 4 SPS's	Remediation plans introduced to satisfaction of Laois Co Co/HSE in 4/5 cases & boil water notices lifted. A boil water notice remains active for 1 SPS due to inadequate water treatment.
<b>Nitrate</b>	4	5	HSE consulted and drinking water restriction notices issued, remediation plans requested.	Nitrate removal process installed for 1 SPS, water restriction notices remain for 3 other SPS's.
<b>Nitrite</b>	1	1	HSE consulted and drinking water restriction notice issued to SPS, remediation plan requested.	Nitrite removal process installed to satisfaction of Laois Co Co/HSE, drinking water restriction notice lifted
<b>Lead</b>	2	2	Drinking water restriction notices issued to both SPS's – informed to identify Lead pipework & remediate	Drinking water restriction notices remain in place, Lead issue ongoing

In combination with compliance sampling Laois Co Co conducts operational and investigative sampling for private supplies, in 2022 this amounted to 141 samples. Also, Laois County Council undertakes planned audits and reactive audits in response to water quality incidents, there were 8 audits of private supplies performed in 2022. Laois Co Co has a Rural Water Monitoring Committee composed of Water Services personnel, county councillors and representatives from NFGWS, IFA & ICMSA. The premise of this group is to discuss matters pertaining to funding, operation, and performance of group water schemes in County Laois. This Rural Water Monitoring Committee meets at least biannually.

Also, Laois Co Co in collaboration with the Health Service Executive has established a Water Quality Liaison Group which meets at least biannually and provides a forum to discuss water quality issues relating to group water schemes and small private supplies.


**Public Water Supply- Proactive Source Protection**

**1. Kyle Spring PWS**

Laois County Council carry out inspections and monitor the water quality of the Kyle Spring PWS with regards to a EIRGRID site at Coolnabacky, Timahoe which is currently under development and is located above the Kyle Water Supply. An inspection of the watercourses and the site is carried out each month and a report forwarded to the Planning Section for uploading onto their Internet site. Updating the website each month is a proactive approach to inform the community and the general public in regards to the water quality of their drinking supplies. LCC sample the raw water supply from Kyle Spring twice per annum and all samples have been compliant to date. No compliance issues have been noted during the inspections of the site carried out in 2022.

**2. Set back distance La Bergerie Boreholes**

LCC are working with IW on a Pilot project to reduce Setback Land spreading distances at the La Bergerie Borehole which serves as a PWS for Portarlinton Area. The farmer is authorised to landspread slurries up to a 30 m radius of the Borehole. LCC monitor the water quality on a fortnightly basis (104 samples taken in 2022) to ensure the water supply is compliant with the Drinking Water Regulations. LCC are working with IW and the farmer on the pilot project to determine if other water supplies could reduce their set back distances thus benefiting the landowners with regards their use of lands.

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 through 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><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted inspections and follow up enforcement actions of unauthorised collectors and site operators using intelligence from waste data flows, complaints and other available data.</li> <li>Co-ordination with, and input from Revenue/Social Protection/An Garda Síochána in relation to unauthorised activity and identified sites of concern.</li> <li>Multi-agency investigations for sites of concern.</li> <li>Roadside check points.</li> <li>Relevant Anti-Dumping Initiatives implemented.</li> <li>Traceability requirements to be enforced at Permitted/Licensed sites.</li> <li>Focus on those who are facilitating the unauthorised treatment of waste.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Illegal Waste Activity</u></b></p> <p><u>Unauthorised Construction and Demolition Sites:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laois County Council Waste Enforcement Officers completed 14 inspections of unauthorised Construction and Demolition sites. These inspections originated from public complaints received. 13 out of 14 of these inspections have been resolved. Resolution included the removal of waste to an authorised facility and in some cases the sites were regularised by referring to the Planning Department and the preparation of a Waste Facility Permit/Certificate of Registration application. 1 site requires further investigation and interdepartmental collaboration.</li> </ul> <p><u>Unauthorised Waste Collectors/Man in Van Operators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste Enforcement Officers completed 3 inspections of unauthorised waste collectors/suspected Man in Van Operators.</li> <li>All 3 investigations originated from complaints about waste dumped in a remote area of the County. As part of these investigations, Litter Wardens conducted a search of the waste and discovered evidence relating to 3 individual householders in the County. Fines were issued to 2 of the individuals identified, the third requires further enquiries. Information was requested from the individuals as to how the waste was dumped. The householders cooperated and disclosed full details about the illegal waste collectors, including screen shots of text messages and phone calls. It is planned to progress all 3 cases by arranging for test purchase procedure to be carried out in accordance with the recommended procedure in Q2 2023.</li> </ul> <p><u>Site Continuing to Operate after Waste Facility Permit Expired</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building upon work completed in 2021 and 2022 the Environment Section of Laois County Council focused their efforts in 2022, on targeting a site that continued to operate after the Waste Facility Permit (WFP) expired. The Waste Facility Permit expired 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The operator was notified of this in writing on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. This notification was followed up by a combination of announced and unannounced site inspections during the period June 2021 to December 2022. These inspections will continue in order to record developments on the site until a resolution can be found.</li> </ul>

- On more than one occasion since the expiry of the WFP it was noted that the entrance gates to the facility were open and the site was operational, and waste was being accepted. Waste streams identified were cardboard packaging and mixed farm plastics.
- A Section 55 notice was issued 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The operator failed to comply with the requirements of this notice. In April 2022 Laois County Council Waste Enforcement Officers made a recommendation to initiate legal proceedings against the operator.
- Laois County Council are working in collaboration with several organisations including TFS, NWCPO, WERLA, Departments within Laois County Council and have acquired further information from industry specialists including private and semi privately operated organisations. This improved the quality of the waste flow data being analysed.
- This is a site of significant illegal waste activity, with approximately 20,000 tonnes of waste being stored at the site. Laois County Council waste enforcement staff collaborated with industry specialists to estimate the cost of removal of this waste, which is understood to be approximately €2,000,000.

In summary:

- Total site inspections carried out in 2022 was 9
- 1 Section 55 notice issued in 2022
- 4 letters issued to local business in Portlaoise supplying packaging waste to the site
- In July 2022 a letter was issued to the operator outlining that they had not complied with the requirements of the Section 55 notice and requested an update on the current status of the site in terms of quantities of ownership of the waste and an update on plans to comply with the requirements of the Section 55 notice


**Multi-Agency Sites of Interest**

- 6 multi agency inspections were completed exceeding the planned target of 1.

Completed inspections:

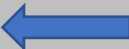
- 4 inspections completed with the NTFSO of Authorised Treatment Facilities in Laois
- 1 site audit of an ATF in relation to Annual Return Data, carried out in collaboration with WERLA and RWMPO
- 1 inspection of a Pay To Use Compactor carried out with WERLA.

Garda checkpoint plans were postponed to 2023, originally scheduled for May 2022. This was postponed due to the lack of availability of Garda resources in the locality. Checkpoint to be undertaken in Q2 2023 in close proximity to expired WFP site that continues to operate.

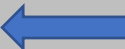
National Enforcement Priority: <b>WASTE - Construction and Demolition Activity</b>	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in Table 2 of the guidance document. This 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><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk based inspections of construction sites using WERLA intelligence and inspection templates.</li> <li>• Inspection of Article 27 sites of origin and destination to include material notified under Article 27 being accepted at WFP/Licensed sites.</li> <li>• Inspection of soil recovery sites to ensure only appropriate materials accepted.</li> <li>• Validation and inspection of WCP/WFP and licensed sites dealing with C&amp;D waste.</li> <li>• Take all necessary steps to resolve non-compliant issues including the selling of crushed concrete from WFPs/Licensed sites without EoW decision.</li> <li>• Incorporate proposed improvements to the Article 27 notification system.</li> <li>• Tracking of waste delivered to Licensed sites.</li> <li>• Based on researched data and local knowledge, identify authorised operators for further investigation and/or enforcement action.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Risk Based Inspection of Construction Sites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site selection process for these inspections was a combination of targeted prominent developments and complaint related developments.</li> <li>• <b>Prominent Development</b> - The construction of the new Lidl Store in Portlaoise. Prior to construction works starting the contractor submitted a resource and waste management plan to the Council for agreement. An inspection and waste/by-product tracking plan for the development was developed. All waste generated was segregated to assist in reducing waste going to landfill. All waste leaving the site was documented, tracked and disposed of by authorised waste collectors to authorised facilities. Council carried out periodic site inspections and the Site Manager emailed copies of all waste movements from the site each month.</li> <li>• <b>Complaint Related Developments</b> - Laois County Council Waste Enforcement Officers completed 14 inspections of unauthorised Construction and Demolition sites. These inspections originated from public complaints received. 13 out of 14 of these inspections have been resolved. Resolution included the removal of waste to an authorised facility and in some cases the sites were regularised by referring to the Planning Department and the preparation of a Waste Facility Permit/Certificate of Registration application. 1 site requires further investigation and interdepartmental collaboration.</li> <li>• <b>Outcomes</b> - Improved segregation and recycling of C&amp;D material. Increased awareness that Council is investigating and inspecting the movement of C&amp;D material. The cessation of waste material being delivered to unauthorised sites. Highlighted to contractors their waste management responsibilities and the importance of using the right mechanism (e.g., Authorised Facility/Article 27 etc.) for the movement of C&amp;D material.</li> <li>• <b>Measurement</b> – 2022 to be used as the baseline year for future comparisons etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Validation and inspection of Waste Collection Permit (WCP)/Waste Facility Permit (WFP) (including Soil Recovery Sites)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 No. Waste Facility Permits for soil recovery sites in Laois.</li> <li>• Inspection carried out at one facility as facility was reaching permitted WFP tonnages and new WFP application was being reviewed.</li> <li>• On-site inspections included office checks on soil type and quantities accepted. Drone fly over carried out to obtain visual record of site extents and degree of quarry restoration carried out.</li> </ul>

**Article 27 Notifications Activity (Sites of Origin and destination)**

- The number of Article 27 Notifications received by Laois County Council is very low.
- 2 No. Article 27 Notifications were investigated. Both related to the movement of inert soil and stone.
- The EPA Guidance on Soil & Stone By-Products Document 2019 was used as a reference. The EPA four by-product conditions were examined for each notification.
- Inspections were carried out at each of the sites of origin and destination. The sites of origin were both construction sites and the material involved was excess inert soil and stone. The further lawful use (planning & environmental aspects) of the material at the destination sites was also investigated.
- Improvements to System – Laois County Council needs to regularly up-date the EPA on its investigations and inspections of notifications received. EPA resources appear to be limited and decisions on notifications are tardy, maybe the responsibility for making determinations on the movement of inert soil and stone should be transferred to the Local Authorities.

National Enforcement Priority:	WASTE - End-of Life Vehicles (ELV) & the Waste Metal sector
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b><u>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• Validation and inspection of records for WCP/WFP and licensed operators dealing with ELV and metal waste.</li> <li>• Take all necessary steps to resolve non-compliant issues.</li> </ul>	<p>Laois County Council currently have 6 Authorised Treatment Facilities in the County. During 2022 8 physical site inspections of these facilities were completed and annual return data was reviewed.</p> <p>4 joint inspections were carried out in collaboration with the NTFSO and 1 inspection was carried out in connection with WERLA and RWMPO</p> <p>There were no complaints received about Authorised Facilities in 2022. This is an improvement on the previous year. 1 facility was inspected with an emphasis on traceability requirements in collaboration with the RWMPO and the WERLA. This site was selected based on the Annual Return data and the waste streams and quantities of waste being processed annually. The audit was completed and the annual return data for this facility was declared as conclusive and validated. Learning outcomes from this audit included the identification of common discrepancies due to multiple versions of the Waste Facility Permit and Waste Collection Permit being available on the NWCPO returns portal.</p> <p>In 2022 Waste Enforcement staff applied a new methodology for assessing compliance of the ATF permit holders. All 6 ATFs were audited against the conditions listed in the Waste Facility Permit and a compliance rate was applied. Where the permit holder could demonstrate compliance, they were assigned 1 point. Where compliance could not be confirmed they received 0 points. This consisted of physical site inspections and follow up communications between the Waste Enforcement Team and the permit holders. After each site was assessed and scored a letter was issued by email and post outlining the non-compliances and a time frame set to put in place corrective measures. 4 of the ATFs were considered to have a 'very good' compliance rate with only minor non compliances noted.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 ATF had only 2 minor non compliances. These were quickly responded to by the operator and the site achieved 100% compliance before the end of Q2 2022.</li> <li>• 2 ATFs were noted to have only 4 minor non compliances. 1 out of 2 of these facilities addressed the highlighted non compliances before the end of Q2 2022. The other site is currently developing the required policies, procedures and registers requested to be maintained. This is due for review in Q1 2023.</li> </ul>

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|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 ATF was noted to have 8 non compliances, a number of these were minor with some requiring more time and possibly investment in infrastructure on site. In this case the operator is cooperating with the Council and willing to carryout corrective actions to improve the compliance rate at the facility.</li><li>• 1 ATF had poor – moderate compliance and required 17 corrective measures to achieve compliance. A number of these non compliances were minor while some require significant training and investment on the site. At the end of Q2 2022 the operator had confirmed that an external contractor was appointed to assist in the improvement works outlined. This requires further work in 2023 to improve on the compliance rate of the site.</li><li>• 1 ATF was noted to have a ‘very poor’ compliance rate and 27 items were outlined that required corrective action. The non compliances were highlighted to the operator and they have indicated that they are working towards improving conditions on site and achieving compliance with the permit. This site requires significant attention and resources going forward and will be incorporated into the work plan for 2023.</li></ul> |
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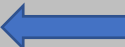
<b>National Enforcement Priority:</b>		<b>WASTE - Waste Collection - Household &amp; Commercial</b>
<b>Local Authority:</b>	<b>Activities</b>	
 <b>Looking back at the year</b>	<p><b>Tell the story of what your council did on this priority in the reporting year using the assessment criteria detailed in 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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>	
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection of WCP operators for provision of 3 bin system.</li> <li>• Surveys of retail, hospitality and industrial sectors to ensure proper use of 3 bin system, segregation and use of authorised collectors.</li> <li>• Sampling/analysis of treated waste outputs</li> <li>• AER Validations on WCP and WFP priority lists.</li> <li>• Maintenance of register of households with/without a waste collection service and targeted inspections in areas with low compliance.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Monitoring of waste acceptance criteria at authorised sites e.g. WFP, Waste Transfer Sites, Landfills and Waste to Energy Plant.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Household Waste</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Household Waste Surveys</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Environment Section continued to work with householders to ensure that they are in compliance with Laois County Council Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye Laws 2018 and the EU Food Waste Regulations 2015 (Brown Bins).</li> <li>• From survey work carried out between 2018 and 2021 within agglomeration areas, a list was compiled of housing areas which had high numbers of households that did not respond to requests for their waste management information (i.e., collected by an authorised waste collector or use of an authorised waste facility).</li> <li>• Also, housing areas where litter and illegal dumping incidents were an ongoing issue were prioritised.</li> <li>• The objective of the household surveys was to highlight to householders their statutory responsibility to manage and segregate their waste, to tackle illegal dumping incidents and to try and identify unauthorised waste collectors.</li> <li>• 21 housing estates (512 households) were surveyed. Households (44%) who could not produce sufficient documentary evidence on the inspection date to demonstrate how they managed their household waste were targeted for further investigation (i.e., reminder letters etc.).</li> <li>• The further investigation process took approximately 6-months to complete. 8% of the households did not produce satisfactory evidence of proper responsible waste management and were issued with fixed penalty notices.</li> <li>• A database of these problem households has been established for further ongoing inspections, investigation, and possible legal action.</li> <li>• These household waste surveys received media attention and the surveys will continue in 2023.</li> <li>• The outcome – The creation of a database/register of households without an authorised waste collection service, increased public awareness that the Council is carrying out household waste door-to-door inspections, an increase in the number of complaints received re households who are not managing their waste responsibly and a potential increase in recycling rates and the diversion of food waste from landfill and incineration.</li> <li>• These household waste surveys will continue into 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Targeted Household Bulky Waste Collections</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portlaoise Town has a number of problem housing estates with ongoing problems of illegal dumping of bulky waste items (e.g. furniture, mattresses, white goods).</li> </ul>	

- Having visited these estates, the reasons given for this activity is the lack of a means of transport of getting the bulky waste to an authorised facility and the cost of disposal for the items.
- The Council organised collection days and distributed information on household waste segregation and disposal and the effects of illegal dumping.
- The outcome – Collection of 36 tonnes of bulky waste, reduction in potential illegal dumping incidents, collected bulky goods recycled, increased public awareness and cooperation from households and cost savings for Council when compared to costs associated with illegal dumping incidents.
- The Council proposes to continue regular inspections of these problem housing estates, to promote public awareness and to use CCTV surveillance etc. when required and when legally authorised.

**Commercial Waste**


**Commercial Food Waste**

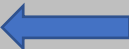
- 3 commercial food waste inspections were undertaken. 1 of the sites inspected was compliant at the first visit and 2 sites required corrective action to be taken and a follow up inspection. Non-compliances observed included poor food waste segregation practices.
- All 3 proprietors were using authorised waste collectors.
- Warning letters were issued to the proprietors outlining the non-compliances. Second inspection carried out and all corrective actions had been addressed and compliance with the Food Waste Regulations was achieved.


National Enforcement Priority: <b>WASTE - Producer Responsibility Initiatives and additional local priorities</b>	
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and inspection of all suspected producers who require registration.</li> <li>• Examination of potential for information exchange between Local Government Sector and other Agencies, where appropriate.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• (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).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022 Laois County Council Environment Section completed 8 inspections of Suspected Major Producers under the Packaging Regulations.</li> <li>• 1 historical Suspected Major Producer was resolved in 2022. This was an ongoing case from 2019 that required significant time due to lack of cooperation from the business management team. This SMP is now registered with Repak. This result was achieved through continuous reminder letters and site visits, including collaboration with Repak to outline the steps involved in becoming a member and associated costs. Once the SMP understood that the cost of noncompliance far outweighed the cost of compliance they registered with the approved body.</li> <li>• 2 out of the 3 of the 2021 SMPs recommended by WERLA were resolved in Q1 of 2022.</li> <li>• Both SMPs recommended for investigation in 2022 require further work in 2023. One of the recommended SMPs for 2022 requires significant time and resources. A direct link has been made between the SMP and an unauthorised waste facility described in the NEP – Illegal Waste Activity. This is an ongoing investigation. Correspondence was issued to the SMP in Q2 2022 advising them of their requirements under the Packaging Regulations. No response has been received to date. In January 2023, further evidence of illegal waste disposal has been collected in relation to this SMP. This SMP has been proposed as a site for multi agency inspection in 2023.</li> <li>• Laois County Council do not have any Registered Self Compliers.</li> <li>• 3 inspections under the Tyre Regulations was completed in 2022. 3 unregistered retailers were resolved during 2022. While 3 physical site inspections were undertaken a number of companies required significant desk based follow up. One example of this is an ATF that required 1 physical site inspection and 10 desk based communications to follow up on registration requirements, eventually becoming regularised in Q2 2022</li> <li>• 2 members of the Waste Enforcement Team were on extended leave for Q3 and Q4 of 2022 and so the number of inspections undertaken in 2022 was lower than that undertaken in 2021.</li> <li>• It is planned to designate appropriate time in Q1 of 2023 to undertake PRI inspections including WEEE, Battery, Farm Plastics, Plastics Bag Levy and Tyre Regulations</li> </ul>

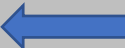
**Farm Plastics Collection Points:**


In 2022 Laois County Council authorised 6 collection points for farm plastics. These collections points were managed by the IFFPG and an authorised waste collector. 886.63 tonnes of farm film waste, 564 bags of netting and 1,170 bags of mixed plastic waste was collected as part of the 2022 farm plastics initiative.

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><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle the sale of non-compliant fuel and its use via compliance promotion, inspection and enforcement of fuel merchants and retailers.</li> <li>• Participate in multi-agency operations investigating the sale of non-compliant fuels.</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Build capacity through engaging, collaborating and sharing with colleagues in other local authorities via networks and working groups and participating in training events.</li> </ul>	<p>The enforcement of solid fuel inspections in 2022 fell between 2 regulations, 'Air Pollution Act (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012' and the 'Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuel) Regulations 2022' which came into effect on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.</p> <p>For the first 10 months of 2022, there were 2 Low Smoke Zones in County Laois, Portlaoise established in 2013 and Carlow (including Graiguecullen in Laois) established in 2011. 60 inspections under the solid fuel regulations (S.I. 326 of 2012 and as amended) were carried out in 2022, a similar number to those carried out in 2021. These 60 inspections related to 23 separate premises, which have been documented on a register over the last number of years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection of retailers were carried out across the 2 Low Smoke Zones in both the Spring and Autumn of 2022, including any premises that were previously non-compliant. All premises were deemed to be in compliance and only selling branded smokeless coal where applicable. This level of compliance is due to the inspections and information campaign carried out by Laois County Council in previous years. The council continues to be alert to new retailers in these zones and they will be added to the existing register.</li> <li>• Laois County Council placed an advertisement in both the 'Leinster Express' and 'Laois Nationalist' newspapers, promoting a cleaner air strategy. The title of the advertisement was Let's Clear The Air, choosing low smoke fuel is better for all of us.</li> <li>• Laois County Council had proposed to carry out a 'mystery shopper' exercise in Autumn 2022 and collect and analyse 2 samples from a fuel retailer. However, due to a requirement to carry out farm inspections in Q4 as part of a pilot project and also the introduction of the new regulations, it was decided to postpone this exercise until 2023.</li> <li>• The 2 Low Smoke Zones in County Laois, Portlaoise and Graiguecullen were clearly marked on the Local Authority website to promote compliance and awareness.</li> </ul> <p>A representative from Laois County Council continues to attend meetings of the Local Authority Implementation Group for Solid Fuels. The last meeting was held in Mullingar in October, followed by a site visit to a facility at the National Construction Training Centre at Mount Lucas. These meetings are vital to help build capacity through engaging, collaborating and sharing with colleagues in other local authorities.</p>

National Enforcement Priority: AIR - Air Quality Monitoring Activities and Data Use	
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><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the EPA to complete the expansion of the <b>Ambient Air Monitoring Programme</b> network including:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist EPA to determine viable locations for air quality monitoring stations.</li> <li>2. Assist EPA to progress the siting of air quality monitoring stations.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>4. Assist (where possible, to the best extent possible) EPA to maintain existing and new air quality monitoring stations.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Review local air quality data to identify hotspots and to prioritise sites/areas for action.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the National Ambient Air Monitoring Programme 2017-2022, there were 2 air monitoring sites in County Laois situated at Emo Court and Portlaoise. During the lifetime of this programme and in conjunction with the EPA, a new local monitoring site was established in the town of Mountrath.</li> <li>• As the monitoring station in Portlaoise is located in the grounds of Portlaoise fire station, a good working relationship has been built up between the Environment section of Laois County Council and the Fire Service to maintain access for both the Local Authority and EPA. Following installation of a new enclosure in 2020, issues of water ingress was identified by the EPA in 2021, in other similar facilities. Monitoring of the site in 2022 showed no such issues in Portlaoise</li> <li>• A total of 6 site visits / inspections to the Local Air Monitoring site in the town of Mountrath were carried out in 2022. Training was provided in 2020 regarding the changing of the air filter on the monitor and Laois County Council staff changed the filter in February. The Air Monitor was removed for calibration in September and reinstalled in October. For the calibration, Laois County Council removed the unit prior to collection by GAS analysis and reinstalled on delivery. For each of these visits, Laois County Council had to arrange for an electrician from our public lighting contractor to attend on site, to provide hoist access to the monitor located on a lighting pole. However, in July, Laois County Council arranged for the height of the monitoring unit to be lowered so that access by ladder would be possible. This will result in a quicker response time to access requests as liaising with the lighting contractor will no longer be necessary. Laois County Council purchased a podium ladder to allow safe access to the monitor.</li> <li>• As mentioned in 2021, a concerned resident in the town of Abbeyleix contacted Laois County Council on a number of occasions requesting that a monitoring station is erected in the town, as a large number of HGVs and other traffic pass through the town to avoid the M7/M8 toll bridge. A Nitrogen Dioxide diffusion tube survey was carried out in 2021 across Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill and this carried forward into early 2022. 2 sample tubes were placed at the AAMP site in Portlaoise to cross reference and authenticate results. Results suggest that no air quality limits are being exceeded in these towns.</li> <li>• In 2022, Laois County Council arranged for a link to the EPA's airquality.ie site to be added to it's Environment page.</li> </ul>

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><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Prepare and submit the Annual Noise Action Plan Progress Report to the EPA by 28<sup>th</sup> February.</li> <li>Annual Noise Action Plan Progress Report should demonstrate progress on the key issues and priority areas for action.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Noise Action Plan</u> Noise Action Plan Progress Report for 2021 was submitted to the EPA before February 2022</p> <p><u>Establishing “Major Roads” for R4</u> Review existing traffic data in conjunction with R3 MR extents as a baseline; New traffic counts provided by TII traffic counters on the National Road Network. RMO advised that the National Network would be mapped by TII as the relevant information was available to them.</p> <p><u>Data Capture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic flow, vehicle category, speed, direction of travel, surface materials, junction information etc was reviewed for the Non-National Roads</li> <li>Compliance with the Noise Regulations by assisting with collection of information for Noise Mapping (Round 4).</li> <li>Laois County Council have in 2022 reviewed traffic counter information available through IDASO surveys as well as TII traffic count information available and counts carried out using Local Authority traffic counters.</li> <li>The information was assimilated into the format required following receipt of guidance from the RMO.</li> <li>Breakdown on type of vehicles and speeds determined.</li> <li>The information obtained was inputted into the MapRoad system in accordance with the guidance from RMO provided.</li> </ul> <p>Attended the EPA Noise workshop in 2022</p>

National Enforcement Priority:	AIR - Air & Noise Controls in Planning Assessments
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the <u>previous reporting year</u> – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-planning assessments of air and noise impacts.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Increased public awareness of noise induced health impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was considered good practice to arrange fortnightly meetings between the Planning section and other sections of the Local Authority including Environment to discuss and highlight relevant planning applications following submission. Covid restrictions prevented these physical meetings, but all relevant planning applications are sent to the Environment section for comment. This continued to be the case in 2022.</li> <li>• There were 96 planning applications reviewed by the Environment section with resultant submissions to the Planning Department. Standard air and noise conditions have also been developed for the planners to use.</li> <li>• The Planning section and the Environment section of Laois County Council liaised on a number of occasions throughout 2022 to investigate noise complaints relating to planning permission conditions. This involved noise monitoring surveys being undertaken by the Environment section and the results / reports submitted to the planning authority for their action. These mostly involved housing estate developments and non-compliance with hour of operations and noise level conditions. One complaint related to alleged planning noise limits being exceeded by a service station in Portlaoise due to its car wash facility in particular. Noise monitoring was carried out across 4 different days in March (morning and evening), including on a Saturday, using the Environment section's Cirrus Sound Level Meter. It was determined that the noise levels being produced from the development were not in breach of its planning conditions. It was still considered appropriate that the planning section make contact and make them aware of the complaints received.</li> <li>• During 2022, 2 members of Laois County Council attended and were successful in achieving a Certificate in Planning and Environmental Legislation. This course was run by South East Technological University and was held both online and in the classroom. It helped to enhance the skills-set in the Environment section, to ensure the proper monitoring, inspections and protection of the environment, as well as the better integration of environmental issues in the planning, design and delivery of public projects within the sector.</li> </ul>

National Enforcement Priority:	AIR – Local Enforcement Issues
Local Authority:	Activities
 Looking back at the year	<p><b>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'.</b></p> <p><i>[Guideline of 500 words per priority area]</i></p>
<p><b>Describe what was carried out under this activity in the previous reporting year – e.g.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Make available on their websites, the EPA vehicle refinishers video and use appropriate channels to promote it.</li> <li>Inspect and carry out any required enforcement actions under Sections 107 and 108 of the EPA Act 1992, in order to limit noise nuisance.</li> <li>Build capacity through engaging, collaborating and sharing with colleagues in other local authorities via networks and working groups and participating in training events.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Deco Paints Regulations:</u></b>          There are currently 2 registered sites in County Laois under the Deco Paints Regulations. Corcoran Auto Body Works were granted a renewal Certificate in May 2022 and Ace Auto Body Limited were visited in April 2022 as part of a Local Authority Deco Paint and Solvent Training Workshop, accounting for 2 compliance inspections. A site in Portarlinton where a certificate had expired was visited and a warning letter sent. A fourth potential site was identified on inspection in December and will be followed up for enforcement in 2023.</p> <p><b><u>Solvents Regulations:</u></b>          There are currently no Certificates in operation in County Laois under the Solvents Regulations. Arlington Dry Cleaners was inspected in September but was permanently closed and up for sale. A new business in Portarlinton, Supreme Clean was also inspected but no dry cleaning is carried out on site as items are cleaned in their sister shop in Monasterevin, Co. Kildare.</p> <p><b><u>Petroleum Vapour Regulations:</u></b>          There are 12 service stations with a Certificate of Testing under the Air Pollution Act, 1987 (Petroleum Vapour Emissions) Regulations, 1997 in operation at the end of 2022, with 3 of these renewed during the year. A staff member from the Environment section attended a Petroleum Vapour Regulations Training Course in Stranorlar Regional Centre in October (classroom and site visit) which will be beneficial for follow up enforcement as these regs had previously been undertaken by the Fire section. Work began in 2022 in establishing a register of Petrol / Service station in County Laois. 2 applications for inclusion on an Approved Assessors list were also processed in 2022. The relevant registers were included on the Laois County Council website.</p> <p><b><u>Licensed sites under the Air Pollution Act:</u></b>          There is currently 1 site in County Laois under Schedule 3 of the 1987 Air Pollution Act. This licence was reviewed in 2022 and monitoring data from the site reviewed. A decision is due for this site in early 2023.</p>

**Local air and noise issues:**

As stated in the 2022 RMCEI Returns, Laois County Council received 42 Air / Odour complaints and 35 Noise complaints. Although many of these can be resolved reasonably quickly by making the alleged offender aware of the complaint, approx. 21 follow up inspections were carried out.

As an example, a number of noise complaints were received regarding a noise nuisance from an unauthorised structure developed at the rear of a bar in Durrow and being used as a music venue. Laois County Council both provided the use of their sound level meter and undertook independent noise monitoring on a bank holiday Sunday night at Halloween. The Environment section also liaised with the complainants in relation to their right to make a complaint to the planning enforcement section regarding the structure. Planning retention permission has now been lodged and a submission made by the Environment section.

Another local air and noise issue example was a complaint in Emo regarding excessive noise and dust being generated from a Woodworking Factory to the rear of a complainant's property. Despite a number of visits to try and resolve the situation amicably between all parties, it was considered necessary to engage an environmental consultant to undertake monitoring. Continuous noise monitoring was carried out over a 3 week period and dust monitoring over 28 days using a Bergerhoff Gauge. Results showed that Day-time average noise levels were generally below 55dB for the three-week monitoring period and a dust volume of 25.41mg/m<sup>2</sup> /day was recorded over the monitoring period, significantly below the standard level of 350mg/m<sup>2</sup> /day.