



Submission:

Kildare County Council

Draft Litter Management Plan 2020-2023

Submitted by:

Kildare Public Participation Network

August 2020

Kildare Public Participation Network

County Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in July 2014 under the directive of the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and in accordance with legislation in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Section 46).

Kildare Public Participation Network is an independent organisation that acts as the main link through which local authorities connect with the social inclusion, community and voluntary, and environmental pillars in a process to facilitate communities to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system.

County Kildare PPN has 1,104 diverse member groups. PPN representatives serve as a voice for the community on structures including: the Local Community Development Committee; Economic Development Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee; Environmental Services & Water Strategic Policy Committee; Local Community & Cultural Strategic Policy Committee; Housing Strategic Policy Committee; Transportation, Safety & Emergency Services Committee; Joint Policing Committee and Co. Kildare Heritage Forum. PPN Representatives strive to ensure that the needs of the community sector is prioritised within local policy processes.

Kildare Public Participation Network (Kildare PPN) welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Kildare County Council Draft Litter Management Plan 2020-2023.

Kildare PPN held an online consultation with our member groups to gather feedback and suggestions to form this submission. The PPN member groups involved in this submission included the following:

- Allenwood Tidy Towns
- Athy Tidy Towns
- Ballymore Eustace Tidy Towns
- Kilcock Tidy Towns
- Kildare Environmental Network
- Maynooth Tidy Towns
- Monasterevin Sustainable Energy Community
- Monasterevin Tidy Towns
- Naas Tidy Towns
- Straffan Tidy Towns

Section 1.

Introduction

Litter – Facts and Figures

We suggest that along with the 'Litter Composition across all Local Authority Types' infographic on page 6, that a breakdown of litter composition solely in County Kildare is also provided.

Section 2.

Communication, Awareness, and Information

Awareness in the Community

Grants

We recommend providing information in the plan on where the public can access information about the projects that have been undertaken and funded under the anti-litter and graffiti grants scheme.

Education

In addition to the Schools Education Programme, we feel further education needs to be delivered to adults along with school age children.

We recommend targeting parents and influential adults that are involved in working with young people (e.g. GAA coach, Youth Club Volunteer) to encourage them to act as role models to young people regarding waste management and the responsible disposal of waste. We feel that education like this would make more of a positive impact for young people more than school tours of waste management facilities.

Dog fouling, signage, stencils and audio warning devices

With the increase in demand for pet dogs since the Covid-19 outbreak, this has resulted in an increase of dog fouling in some prominent dog walking areas. In some areas the problem of dog fouling has become so off-putting and is becoming such a deterrent that people are starting to avoid using these amenities because of the dog fouling. We recommend stricter enforcement with on spot fines in an effort to deter this.

Additional campaigns:

Litter signs in additional languages

As of the 2016 census (CSO 2017) almost 30,000 residents in County Kildare were speakers of foreign languages. We recommend adding popular foreign languages that are prevalent in specific areas in Kildare to any signs that are being erected to ensure that non-native English speakers understand the message.

Cigarette disposal

As cigarette related litter accounts for over half of all litter across all local authorities, we suggest running a cigarette butt disposal campaign to help encourage responsible disposal. Cigarette disposal containers that display positive messages or even polls could be used as a novelty way to encourage correct disposal of cigarette butts.



Section 3.

Prevention and Control

Litter Prevention

We recommend that Kildare County Council get involved in and support some of the national and global waste reduction initiatives like the 'Conscious Cup Campaign' and 'Plastic Free July' to promote and encourage people of Kildare to try and use less plastic in their daily lives and generate less waste. This change should then have a positive impact on the levels of plastic waste produced in the County. We feel that it is more proactive to try and address these issues at the source and encourage the prevention so there is less litter to have to manage.

Although not directly related to the draft litter management plan, we suggest that Kildare County Council install contactless drinking water fountains in towns and villages across Ireland. The installation of these drinking fountains in towns and villages should have a knock-on effect with litter production and drastically reduce the amount of plastic litter produced, with the European Parliament (2020) estimating a 17% reduction in the use of plastic bottles from public fountains.

Business Community

We also recommend that if companies start erecting posters without permission on a large scale that the fine is also significantly increased for that company e.g. circus posters, broadband company posters etc. Although we recognise that Kildare County Council is currently restricted to the amount that can be issued in the fine as part of the Litter Pollution Act (1997), we strongly recommend that there is strong repercussions for the likes of these companies.

Litter Control Strategies

Street Sweeping

The addition of smaller towns onto the street sweeper schedule is a very welcome addition to the Litter Management Plan.

Street Sweeping and Litter Bins Schedule

Every effort should be made to stick to the bin schedule as stated, although we do understand that sometimes there may be occasions when the schedule may have slight changes to it. In this case, as many of the Tidy Towns volunteer's schedule their workdays/evenings around the sweeping schedule and bin schedules, there needs to be a communication process set up in the instance that the schedule cannot be adhered to. Towns/villages should be made aware of this beforehand and furnished with the new date to help them in planning their work schedule. This communication could be done through social media or through a dedicated contact e-mail/person for each town/village.

This communication process would also allow for greater coordination with towns and villages after big clean ups, ensuring they are not left storing the rubbish from these clean ups for days/weeks until the County Council pick it up.

It was noted that in some of the towns/villages, the street sweeper will often sweep streets that are already clean. While we appreciate that the street sweepers follow a particular route, it was felt that there should be some flexibility of the route in a specific town/village.

National Litter Pollution Monitoring System

To augment the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System, we suggest officially adopting and promoting the OpenLitterMap App to encourage people to log any litter they come across, noting the type of litter and its location. This would aid Kildare County Council in tracking and identifying the exact location of dumping.

Chewing gum disposal

According to the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System results 2018 *“Chewing gum is the single largest litter component in the food related litter category, and the second largest component nationally, comprising 7.8% of all litter recorded in the LQS carried out in 2018” (Litter Monitoring Body Results 2018)*. We recommend the erection of chewing gum disposal containers in areas that may be regular black spots for chewing gum litter to encourage people to dispose of their chewing gum in a responsible manner, ideally to be recycled.



To encourage good behaviour in relation to picking up litter in public areas, there was a suggestion of offering prizes/rewards to people who are seen picking up rubbish, by the litter warden. These prizes or rewards could be small tokens by Kildare County Council to try and reward good citizenship e.g. tickets to the Riverbank.

Graffiti

We feel that the section on Graffiti in the Draft Litter Management Plan could do with improvement as it comes across as the Council are absolving themselves of responsibility with helping to deter graffiti.

We recommend that Kildare County Council implement a programme that encourages the use of art and murals on Kildare County Council bins bins and traffic light boxes, along with graffiti blackspots throughout the County to enhance the local area (see Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown Council's Dublin Canvas Project 2020)

This initiative could be done in conjunction with Kildare Arts or in conjunction with local community groups in the area, and funded as part of the Anti-Litter / Anti-Graffiti Scheme.

Anti-litter expenditure

In terms of the anti-litter expenditure, we suggest providing details within the litter plan as to where a detailed breakdown of the anti-litter initiatives can be accessed to ensure full transparency.

Section 4.

Enforcement

Major Events

For any events that are organised or funded by Kildare County Council, green procurement should be encouraged and incentivised to ensure that there is less waste generated at the end of an event (European Commission 2012).

When issuing licences for events, there should be a provision that all events provide designated bins for people to be able to sort their waste (recycle bin, compost bin etc.) instead of just one main bin that goes straight to landfill.

Litter Fines

As we feel the current amount for on the spot fines is too low to act as a strong deterrent from littering, we strongly recommend that Kildare County Council add an objective to the Litter Management Plan to lobby to amend the Litter Pollution Act (1997) or the regulations thereunder, for the amount of on the spot fines to be significantly increased from €150 to act as deterrent for littering.

Direct Prosecution

Between 2012 and 2017 less than half of litter fines issued by Kildare County Council were actually paid (Kenny & O'Brien 2019). We recommend that more resources go into the prosecution of guilty parties to act as a deterrent of future littering.

Section 5.

Community Involvement

Support for Tidy Towns

In relation to the maintenance of the community bins, specifically in relation to fixing damage to the bins caused by wear and tear/vandalism, we suggest that the Tidy Town's groups are offered more support from Kildare County Council with this, and that it is included as one of their supports to the Tidy Town's groups in the plan.

Green Kilometre Scheme

We recommend that Kildare County Council cover the insurance for the volunteers involved in the Green Kilometre Scheme.

Section 6.

Recycling and Recovery

We recommend that 'Deposit and Return Scheme's' for local community groups are promoted within the Plan.

Segregated bins for compostable materials

As more and more retailers are making the move toward compostable packaging, and a lot of organic materials that could be composted are being added to bins for the landfill, we recommend that the litter management plan mention and address this issue with recommendations on what people should be doing with it.

Green Waste

We recommend that Kildare County Council implement a mandatory community compost bin in housing estates that Kildare County Council have taken in charge, to address the issue of green waste dumping.

Monitoring and Evaluating

We recommend that there is a section on monitoring and evaluating added to the Litter Management Plan.

In both the KCC Litter Management Plan 2016-2019 and the draft Litter Management Plan 2020-2023, it references the ERM Waste Management Plan's goal to reduce household waste by 1%. With this in mind, we recommend that Kildare County Council provide their own quantifiable targets within the plan to measure their progress in reaching their own targets along with the ERM Waste Management Plan's targets. We also recommend that progress on these targets are reported on quarterly and are available to view by the public. It is also suggested, that if possible, Kildare's performance is benchmarked against other Local Authorities in relation to their litter management.

Solar Powered bins that are installed in communities need to be monitored at different times of the year to ensure that they are getting exposure to the sun. We recommend moving the bin to a location that gets the sun to ensure that the bins function correctly. The cleaning of the solar panel on the bins should also be monitored and assigned to Kildare County Council personnel to ensure the effectiveness of the bins.

We recommend adding frequent audits of the dual bins that are installed in communities to the Litter Work Plan. These dual bins need to be audited to measure their effectiveness.

General Comments

In regard to the language used in the litter plan, it was suggested that the language used should be more of a positive nature, for example 'don't dump', could be turned around to 'please leave this space clean'.

References

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