



# Public Participation Network **Kildare**

## Kildare PPN Submission

Kildare County Council

Draft Litter Management Plan 2025 - 2027

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# INTRODUCTION

Kildare Public Participation Network (Kildare PPN) was established on foot of the Report of the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government published in 2014, which recommended greater input by communities into decision making at local Government level. The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provided for the formal establishment of PPNs and they are now operational in all Local Authority areas.

Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN), representing over 800 member groups across community and voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental pillars, welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Kildare County Council Litter Management Plan 2025-2027. We recognise the considerable efforts undertaken by the Council in addressing litter pollution and in promoting environmental awareness and community involvement across the county.

Our submission aims to strengthen the plan further by offering practical and community-focused recommendations that align with the Council's stated objectives, the Litter Pollution Act 1997, and the principles of the Circular Economy as outlined in the National Waste Management Plan.

# COMMUNICATION, AWARENESS & INFORMATION

## Expand Education and Behavioural Change Beyond Schools

We welcome and support the strong emphasis on school-based programmes in the Draft Plan, including initiatives like the Green Schools Programme, Picker Pals, and the Rubbish Film Festival. These programmes are essential in shaping environmental values from an early age.

### Recommendation:

- Roll out a countywide Adult Waste Awareness Programme including workshops in community centres, libraries, and sporting clubs.
- Topics could include composting, sustainable shopping, illegal dumping reporting, and the deposit return scheme.
- Engage organisations such as GAA clubs, parent groups, and men's/women's sheds to broaden participation.
- Include high-visibility public signage campaigns such as "Take your Rubbish Home" and increase promotion of proper recycling and waste behaviours.

## Transparent Monitoring and Reporting of Litter Targets

While the plan includes data from the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System, it lacks measurable goals and regular progress tracking.

### Recommendation:

- Set clear reduction targets for major litter types (e.g., cigarette butts, packaging waste, gum).
- Publish quarterly progress reports via the Council's website and social media.
- Benchmark performance against other local authorities to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

- Improve two-way communication between Kildare County Council and residents by using Kildare PPN as a central mechanism for outreach. The Council should work with Kildare PPN to ensure that updates on public consultations, surveys, and waste-related plans are shared directly with local groups and residents' associations via email.

This level of transparency will build public trust and encourage community participation.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Invest in Community-Led Waste Solutions

We acknowledge and commend the continued support outlined in the Draft Plan for initiatives such as Tidy Towns, the Green Kilometre scheme, and National Spring Clean. These initiatives have clearly made a positive impact on community pride and environmental stewardship.

#### Recommendation:

- Establish a Community Environmental Grant Fund (separate from national grants) to support litter prevention and waste reduction projects.
- Criteria should include inclusion, innovation, and circular economy principles.
- A streamlined application process and multi-annual funding options would encourage greater grassroots participation.
- The Tidy Towns demonstrate the critical role volunteers play in keeping towns clean, without them, some areas would face significant environmental degradation. Ongoing support and recognition of these groups is essential to sustain their work.

## RECYCLING AND RECOVERY

### Improved Recycling Access Across the County

Access to recycling centres is limited, with some residents travelling 30 minutes or more.

**Recommendation:**

- Develop at least one new civic amenity site in the north-west or north-east of the county.
- Conduct an audit of under-served areas for potential installation of bring banks, battery drop-off points, or mobile WEEE collection days.
- In larger towns, there are no dedicated recycling or food waste bins, which limits responsible disposal. Install at least 2-3 public recycling and food waste bins in strategic town centre locations.
- Introduce satellite recycling points in each Municipal District. Ensure these facilities accept a full range of materials, including:
  - Paper, glass, tin
  - Textiles and clothing
  - Electrical and electronic waste (WEEE)
  - Compostable waste
  - Hazardous household waste (e.g., batteries, paints, oils)

Publish a clear, publicly accessible interactive recycling map to promote service usage.

## Promotion of Segregated Waste Collection and Public Composting

While school-based composting is acknowledged, residents lack broader organic waste disposal options.

**Recommendation:**

- Introduce community compost bins in public housing estates and town centres, starting with pilot schemes.
- Provide clear public guidance on composting methods and available disposal sites.

## Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme

We fully support the Council's ongoing Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme, as detailed in the Draft Plan. The collection of 360 tonnes of mulch and its redistribution for community landscaping is a commendable example of circular economy principles in practice. We encourage the continued expansion of this model and increased visibility of collection locations.

## PREVENTION AND CONTROL

### Recommendation:

- Kildare PPN recommends that the Council undertake a data-driven audit of bin coverage and install additional bins in areas of high footfall and recurring litter issues, rather than simply relocating existing units. This approach should be guided by litter mapping, local feedback, and seasonal usage patterns.

### Strengthen Dog Fouling and Cigarette Litter Strategies

While awareness is noted, persistent issues remain with dog fouling and cigarette litter.

### Recommendation:

- Deploy Community Litter Ambassadors (part-time or rotating roles) with authority to issue on-the-spot fines.
- Trial interactive bins (e.g., butt ballot bins) and install dog waste bag dispensers at known hotspots.
- Expand signage to include multiple languages, reflecting Kildare's diverse population.
- Kildare PPN recommends the installation of dedicated dog waste bins and bag dispensers in parks, along walking routes, and at roundabouts—locations currently underserved by waste facilities. This investment in basic infrastructure is essential to support responsible pet ownership and to reduce environmental and public health impacts.

## ENFORCEMENT

## Strengthening Public Waste Collection Oversight

The draft plan references enforcement under Waste Bye-laws but omits discussion on long-term governance of waste services.

### Recommendation:

- Consider a phased return of core waste collection to direct local authority management. This would ensure consistency, environmental accountability, and responsiveness to community needs. Private providers could continue operating in complementary roles under strict environmental and performance standards.
- Public visibility of litter enforcement is extremely limited. In towns such as Maynooth, residents report having never seen a litter warden or heard of any fines being issued. Establish at least one dedicated litter warden per major town to ensure consistent presence and active enforcement.
- Improve coordination between street cleaning, weeding, and enforcement teams to ensure more comprehensive environmental management.

## CONCLUSION

We appreciate the thoughtful and comprehensive nature of the draft plan, especially the Council's commitment to community engagement, education, and the transition to a circular economy. The recommendations outlined in this submission are designed to complement and enhance the plan's existing framework with a strong focus on access, accountability, and proactive prevention.