



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

Draft Litter Management Plan 2016- 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF PLAN

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

A new Litter Management Plan has been drafted to replace the current plan of 2011-2014 for Mayo. As per legislation, a new plan must be drafted in accordance with the Litter Pollution Acts 1997-2009 (Sec. 10-13). The plan establishes our objectives for the prevention and management of litter, enforcement of respective litter laws in Mayo and the means to achieving these objectives. The upcoming litter Plan is largely action based with partnership, prevention, enforcement and operations our main focal points. Our primary objectives are to achieve a marked reduction in the proliferation of litter thus attaining a cleaner environment for Mayo and its residents.

The governing of Litter is an ongoing task in Mayo; often much of its management is related to street sweeping, bin emptying and general clean up. There needs to be a greater emphasis on the prevention of litter outright, this is not localised to a few sectors of the community, it requires a multi-dimensional approach; participation and communication is important between local authorities, businesses, schools and members of the public. Our dedicated Council staff work with schools, community and business groups in an effort to build awareness on litter prevention and control. Community initiatives including Tidy Towns groups are effective at communicating a positive litter image in addition to aiding our Council street cleaning crews.

The consequences of failing to dispose of litter appropriately, i.e. on the spot fines and prosecutions remain important when dealing with Litter. Our enforcement officers continue to work with litter wardens throughout the County on enforcing litter laws and informing the public. Street cleaning teams continue to work towards delivering clean towns, villages and surrounding countryside the people of Mayo can take pride in.

This litter plan is based on the principle of four pillars: Prevention, Enforcement, Partnership and Operations. These pillars and their relative successfulness are essential to the performance of the upcoming plan. Through careful implementation of our actions for each of our pillars, we can achieve our overarching vision of keeping Mayo clean. Mayo County

Council thanks members of the community, business associates, and elected representatives for their continued support on the ongoing issue of litter in the County.

1.2 PROCESS FOR PREPARATION OF LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016-2019:

1.3 LITTER AND THE LAW:

2. PERFORMANCE OF LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011-2014

2.1 REVIEW OF CURRENT PLAN:

Mayo County Council Litter Management Plan of 2011-2014 set a programme of seven measures for the control and alleviation of litter pollution in the county. Among these measures comprised building on public awareness and youth education measures in addition to enhancing community group cooperation.

a) Public awareness/ Advisory Measures;

- Environmental leaflets and newsletters were continued from the Plans of 2007-2009. Leaflets advising the public on topical environmental subjects continue to prove useful, giving concise but informative notes on a particular matter.
- Internet and social media outlets continue to play an important part in promoting a green image; Mayo.ie is continuously being updated with relevant information.
- Media campaigns were rolled out on local radio; operating a slot each week which is beneficial for spreading litter awareness. Advertising in Hospital and Credit Union waiting areas has also been used.
- As part of the previous plan, signs were proposed to be erected at litter black spots in an effort to curtail litter pollution in a specific area. This however was deemed counterproductive; highlighting a litter black spot may exacerbate the problem in that area.

- Signs were erected to curb the number of dog fouling incidents. The idea itself is merited however location and elevation of signs may have to be reviewed.
- Litter advisory letters gave counsel to the public on their rights relating to litter and proved somewhat beneficial when dealing with the problem of dog fouling; through consultation with vets, notices were placed in local veterinarian practices for dog owners.

b) Youth Education Measures;

- Anti Litter initiatives are continuously unveiled with the green schools programme particularly beneficial for developing student's environmental consciousness. At 90%; participation for this project has proven very popular.
- Photograph/Poster competitions have been less successful due to low participation levels.

c) Community and Voluntary Groups;

- Initiatives developed include Litter Action League, Best Burial Grounds, Adopt a Mile, Blooming Lovely, Clean up Mayo day and National Spring Clean. These competitions have demonstrated willingness from the public to participate and improve the appearance and litter status of their respective areas.

d) Partnership and Consultative Measures;

- Engagement with the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System continues to yield valuable perspective on litter quantity and composition in Mayo.

e) Enforcement Measures;

- Employment of additional wardens was a priority for the previous plan however this was not possible because of the embargo on public sector recruitment.
- Environmental Enforcement Officers continue to develop waste prevention strategies and work with Litter wardens on litter enforcement.

- Litter phone lines have become a popular outlet in respect to public reporting of litter and have produced useful statistics on the composition and location of waste in the county. Other methods of litter pollution reporting include the 'say it, see it' mobile phone application which was rolled out during the term of the last Litter Management Plan.
- The Customer Relations Management (CRM) database has resulted in efficient, more accurate reporting of litter offences. Additionally this system generates valuable management information to evaluate performances.
- Prosecution of offending individuals is an ongoing process, where there is sufficient evidence presented.

f) Active Control Measures;

- Street cleaning and routine bin emptying is carried out by Council staff. The establishment of Municipal Districts has resulted in the amalgamation of services provided by the former Town Councils into a unified district wide service.
- Street Litter Bin Audits have been carried out throughout the County with a view to standardising the style and specification of litter bins.
- Pilot studies were carried out, with compartmentalised bins introduced in the towns of Castlebar and Westport to promote litter segregation.

g) Miscellaneous Measures;

- Blue Flag beaches programme continues to thrive, with Beaches maintaining their status.
- Tidy Town Committees are maintaining their good work in the County which impacts positively in annual Tidy Town results. Trends in results show steady improvements year on year.
- Education of employees is ongoing in respect of all Environmental matters. Through being well-informed on environmental issues, local authority employees can pass on information to the public.

2.2 ANALYSIS OF CURRENT POSITION

2.2.1 NATIONAL LITTER POLLUTION MONITORING RESULTS:

Each year the National Litter Pollution Monitoring Body (NLPMB) organises and liaises with all local authorities in order to maintain a coordinated approach on the subject of litter. Their function is to compile and present representative data to local authorities. Comparisons and contrasts can then be drawn between results of local authorities and the national average to achieve an accurate landscape of litter in the county at present. These results focus on the causes, composition and quantity of litter. By correctly identifying the most prevalent causes of litter, efforts can be made to target groups or individuals who create this particular type of litter. The results for Mayo appear similar to that of the national picture. In terms of Litter composition, each year the main litter constituents are:

Figure 2.1 Percentage analysis of litter composition in Mayo- 2013, 2012 data respectively

Cigarette related litter and packaging items still constitute over half of litter collected in towns and villages, although efforts made by the council and local authorities have yielded a decrease in this litter over the past few years; an 11% drop can be seen with respect to cigarette related litter. This litter covers cigarette butts, boxes, wrappers, matches and lighters. There is often a misconception on the subject of cigarette litter. Many believe cigarette ends degrade naturally and therefore does not constitute littering. In reality, much of the cigarette takes potentially years to biodegrade and the filter itself may never fully degrade due to acetate being its primary component. Packaging items continues to be a problem area, amounting on average to a third of the overall composition of litter in Mayo annually. This encompasses a vast amount of litter including bottles, bags, wrappers, drink cups, tin foil etc. The remaining litter is generally split between food, sweet and paper related items and deleterious litter. Deleterious litter includes dog fouling and nappies. In addition to litter composition, data compiled revealed the main causative factors of litter are the following:

Passing pedestrians and motorists constitute over 70% of the litter build-up in Mayo. Trends have seen a drop of 10% in litter from passing pedestrians however percentage of litter from passing motorists remains somewhat static.

Figure 2.2 Assessment of causative factors of litter pollution, 2010-2013 data

Publications from the NLPMB include a Litter Pollution Index which allows for the categorisation of litter in respect to severity and quantity. These standards allow local authorities to categorise areas of the community on a scale of 1 to 5; 1 signifying a litter free area and 5 representing a zone grossly polluted. The grades are as follows:

1. Unpolluted or Litter Free;
2. Slightly Polluted;
3. Moderately Polluted;
4. Significantly Polluted,
5. Grossly Polluted.

These standards were established for each category of the LPI and circulated to all local authorities in the form of area cleanliness rating photographs. This enables each county to develop a consistent approach to measuring the extent of litter pollution in the surveyed areas on a national level. Examples of these photographs are available via the litter website (www.litter.ie).

	2013	2012	2011	2010
Litter Pollution Index:				
1: Unpolluted	23.98%	16.96%	15.12%	11.40%
2: Slightly Polluted	49.71%	56.73%	55.81%	43.40%
3: Moderately Polluted	24.56%	25.15%	29.07%	43.40%
4: Significantly Polluted	1.75%	1.17%	0.00%	1.80%
5: Grossly Polluted	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

**Figure 2.3 Summary table illustrating litter pollution index results for Mayo, expressed as a percentage-
2010-2013 data**

ANALYSIS OF LPI RESULTS:

2.2.2 NATIONAL TIDY TOWN RESULTS:

An initiative ran by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government; the Tidy Towns Awards are hugely effective at harnessing voluntary effort to improve the appearance of local communities, keeping them tidy and litter free. Mayo has positively benefited from its participation in the competition, accumulating 6 awards including tidiest large town, gold and silver medal awards and 4 special awards during its run in 2015 alone. The adjudication process involves marking each town/village under a number of criteria. For the purposes of this litter management report, special attention was given to scores achieved by each town and village in the fields of litter control and tidiness. These scores greatly contribute to the overall picture of litter in the county and give estimation on where it stands in relation to pollution.

RESULTS: In terms of participation, 34 Towns and villages competed in Mayo; 7 receiving accolades. Participation is up 1 from 2014 but remains slightly lower than other neighbouring counties. A possible reason for this is that the competition has become more technical in nature and committees are finding it more difficult to fundraise. Results in general illustrate that all towns and villages score well in these categories and show minor improvements each year.

Figure 2.4 Adjudication Marks on Tidiness and Litter Control for Category C Towns- 2014, 2015 data

2.2.3 LITTER ACTION LEAGUE:

The litter Action League, organised by the Environmental Section of Mayo County Council, is an innovative way of enabling towns and villages in the county to participate in clean-ups in their respective communities. As the title suggests, the competition is run on the basis of a league; whereby participating towns and villages score points each month and compete with other towns and villages in their individual groups. League categories are determined

in respect of populations with the league itself running from April to October. Within each group, communities compete with one another in a head to head; the winner receiving three points with the beaten town obtaining one point. Towns/Villages in each group who obtain the highest points are placed in semi-final draws with the eventual winner obtaining a monetary prize.

RESULTS: The Litter Action League Competition has harnessed significant voluntary effort in the control of litter in communities that participate. Analysis of results and surveys for towns/villages that do not participate suggest that the competition should focus on increasing participation and incentivising communities not reaching their potential to do better.

Figure 2.5 League Scores for Group A towns in Litter Action League- 2011-2015 data

2.2.4 CUSTOMER RELATIONS MANAGEMENT (CRM) DATABASE:

CRM has proved effective in dealing with the policing and monitoring of individuals who pollute, whereby members of the public can call in and report instances of pollution. Its database facilitates large quantities of information to be collected and catalogued which provides useful statistics on polluting trends.

RESULTS: Since its inception in 2009, thousands of CRM complaints have been made by the public in the county. Analysis of complaints on the database over the previous five years revealed litter constitutes 72% of the overall number of complaints catalogued. Complaint numbers in the past few years have remained static however, on average receiving 600-700 reports per annum. Better feedback on issues reported may encourage more incidents of littering to be registered. Cases that are dealt with appropriately can give confidence to the public that their complaint was dealt with promptly and professionally.

Figure 2.6 Analysis of annual litter fines– 2011-2015 data

3. PILLARS FOR 2016-2019 PLAN

3.1 OVERARCHING VISION STATEMENT:

The scope of the litter management plan 2016-2019 is to avert and control the proliferation of litter within the county. Each of us as citizens has a duty and personal responsibility in relation to litter. This Litter Management Plan requires buy in from all facets of society, from the Local Authority to businesses and members of the community. Focus will be largely

applied to prevention and awareness activities together with appropriate enforcement. Implementing each of these measures can go a long way to reducing litter. This plan will set out objectives and actions which will be implemented over the course of three years. To summarise; the vision of this plan is as follows:

3.2 PILLARS:

In order to achieve the desired results for the 2016-2019 Litter Management Plan, there must be a defined set of aims outlined. For the purposes of achieving the vision, it was determined that a partnership approach should be continued with communities and businesses and priority be given to preventive and enforcement strategies, together with the Councils operations on street cleaning and other litter management activities delivered through its four Municipal Districts. Outlined below are the four main pillars for tackling the issue of litter for the upcoming plan.

3.3 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

3.3.1 PILLAR I:

We have developed a strong partnership over the years with Community, Business and Educational sectors in the County in the area of environmental care. The partnership manifests itself through the thousands of voluntary hours labour that go into enhancing and keeping our County clean each year and the high level of participation in the green school initiative. This partnership is key to achieving the behavioural change required to deal with litter in the County.

Objectives:

Actions: Tidy Towns/Cleaner Community Campaigns

- We recognise the substantial contribution made by these groups and the wider public to combat litter in Mayo. We will continue to work with these groups, listen to their priorities and work together to tackle problem areas.
- We will identify communities who do not engage with Cleaner Community Campaigns or Tidy Towns and encourage their participation by supporting them through the initial stages.
- The Cleaner Community Campaign, Litter Action League and Tidy Burial Grounds Competitions reward residents and Community groups for their efforts in maintaining a litter-free and well presented community. We will continue to organise the awards on an annual basis and refocus them to incentivise better performances from communities not achieving their potential.

- We will continue our involvement with National Spring Clean, Good Friday Clean-ups and organise a Cleanup Mayo Day during May in advance of the tourist season commencing.

Actions: Business Sector

- We will continue to work and liaise with the local business community and Chambers of Commerce in relation to litter prevention and legal requirements adjacent to business premises.
- We will roll out the Adopt a Mile Scheme with the business Community to increase participation in local environmental care in conjunction with their communities.

Actions: Educational Sectors

- The Green schools/Green campus initiatives promote and acknowledge long term, whole school action for the environment, with litter and waste forming a fundamental part of the programme. Mayo County Council in conjunction with An Taisce will continue its co-ordination for the Green schools/Green Campus programmes. We aim to maintain high participating rates for schools in Mayo and to expand into schools which are not yet accredited.

3.3.2 PILLAR II:

Preventing litter is a key pillar of our strategy for litter management. If litter volumes decrease, our litter management resources could be refocused on other initiatives to enhance the County even more. Litter prevention needs to focus the responsibility for litter on the individual and promote a change in attitude and behaviour at that level in order to affect a societal shift towards making littering unacceptable behaviour.

Objectives:

Actions: Communicating the litter prevention message

- We will employ cost effective methods to communicate the litter prevention message by running targeted campaigns focusing on achieving behavioural change as well as using Mayo County Council website www.mayococo.ie and www.Mayo.ie.
- We will target the use of Social media to promote litter prevention activities and environmental awareness with the particular goal of engaging younger people.
- We will ring fence resources from the street cleaning budget line, increasing from 4.75% in 2016 to 10% by 2020 to fund the litter prevention campaign which will focus on achieving behavioural change, particularly in the areas of cigarette, food and beverage packaging litter.

Actions: Other campaigns

- We will continue to raise awareness around dog fouling.
- We will continue seasonal campaigns in relation to litter prevention on our beaches during the summer months and also for St. Johns night (bonfires) on 23rd June.
- We will assist with Regional and National programmes for litter Prevention and awareness in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and other Regional organisations.
- We will highlight the damaging effects of fly-tipping and illegal dumping can have, particularly in more scenic areas along National Tourism infrastructure such as The Wild Atlantic Way which is extremely important to the Mayo tourism Product.

3.3.3 PILLAR III:

We are consistently committed to enforcing the full rigours of the Litter Pollution Acts. Whilst a key strand of our litter management strategy is education; awareness and partnership with stakeholder groups to prevent litter; there is also a need to target those individuals or groups who openly disregard the law. Our litter wardens are to the fore in the battle against litter. Together with our Environmental Enforcement Officers, their skills, training and experience are used to identify those responsible for littering and illegal dumping and take action accordingly.

We adopt a proactive approach to enforcement and do not measure our performance solely on the basis of the number of fines issued or prosecutions taken, although these cases are logged and monitored on an ongoing basis. Our litter wardens play an increasingly important role in advising and educating the public and business community on their personal responsibility and legal obligations in relation to preventing litter and managing waste.

Objectives:

Actions: Litter Warden Service

- Maintain the current complement of litter wardens in each of the Municipal Districts with clearly identified priorities/black spots for enforcement in each district.
- Our litter wardens will work with Environment Enforcement staff, which affords the opportunity for improved efficiencies and a sharing of knowledge and experience.
- We will present ongoing training and support for litter wardens to provide them with the necessary skills to carry out their duties.

Actions: Litter Fines and Prosecutions

- We will issue on-the-spot litter fines and prosecute litter offenders throughout the Courts. Problematic locations will be subject to inspections and enforcement action.
- We will apply rigour in the pursuance of offenders and in the follow up on fines and notices issued to maximise payment of fines and compliance with enforcement notices.
- Our litter wardens will take action against individuals and businesses responsible for the unauthorised erection of signage.
- We will take action against those unlawfully depositing waste at recycling banks and will employ surveillance at problem sites.

Actions: Covert Surveillance Operations

- We will continue surveillance operations at litter black spots to allow the identification and prosecution of such offenders

Actions: Litter Enforcement Response System

- We will utilise the CRM system to log, track and action litter enforcement issues reported by members of the public and their interested parties.
- We will update and streamline the CRM system to improve efficiency and provide better feedback to the public on issues reported.

3.3.4 PILLAR IV:

Pollution can be often subtle, not the case with litter, it is the most visible form of pollution. This is to the detriment of environment which can impact our residents, tourists and businesses in the county. The management and monitoring of litter is a constant work in progress. Staffs for towns and villages consistently deliver first-rate cleaning services each week in an effort to keep Mayo clean. We deploy a team of cleaners from a series of

scheduled cleaning routes in addition to taking action to incidences which arise day by day. Litter can range from single, stand alone incidences to mass quantities which can make an area unsightly. Whatever the category and extent, our staff must respond.

Objectives:

Actions: **Cleaning Operations**

- Each of our Municipal Districts will prepare a litter control plan for the District detailing arrangements for street cleaning, litter bin collections and illegal dumping sites.
- Our teams will continue to operate on the basis of scheduled cleaning routes in Mayo's towns and villages; organised by each Municipal District.
- Staff will be deployed to take action on illegal dumping incidences, subsequent to investigation by the Enforcement team.
- In order to maintain cleanliness in the County, we will use the best available street cleaning equipment.

Actions: **Community and Voluntary Groups and Other Bodies**

- We will maintain our relationship with Tidy Towns and other community and voluntary bodies associated with the management of litter in the County.

Actions: **Litter black spots/Areas that need attention**

- We will organise our resources so they are flexible enough to deal with our constantly changing areas of concern. We will manage these litter management needs on a continual basis with areas in need of a clean identified and targeted e.g. litter black spots.
- We will react to incidents of illegal dumping ranging from household waste to disposal of residual waste within public litter bins. We will work to expose the responsible party and take an appropriate course of action on the matter.

- Waste is often left at recycling banks which can appear unsightly. We will endeavour to routinely inspect and tidy these bottle bank sites.
- We must continue to maintain litter control on our County's busy road network and evaluate specific locations of strategic importance for attention.
- We will ensure that street cleaning and litter management arrangements are put in place with Communities which host festivals and events

Actions: Seasonal Cleaning

- During busy months of the year, litter bins will be added to beaches to deal with usage levels.
- Beach cleaning will be intensified during the summer months in conjunction with local communities together with more frequent cleaning of open public areas.

Actions: Litter Bins

- Due to standard wear and tear, bins will degrade naturally over time. Such bins will be replaced with standardised type and specification. The option of retrofitting existing bins to meet standard specifications will also be examined.

4.0 Litter Management Plan 2016-2019 KPI's

Outlined below are the ten Key Performance Indicators for the upcoming Litter Management Plan. The main list of actions for the plan will be evaluated against the metrics and objectives. On an annual basis, a report will be carried out on how the plan is

progressing in addition to a presentation on statuses and findings to the Strategic Policy Committee.