

Carlow County Council in partnership with Carlow Community Enterprise Centres

Preliminary Report

Firehouse Remote Working Hub, Hacketstown, County Carlow

Part VIII Process

Date: 08/05/2023
Proposing Department: Local Enterprise Office
Departments to Circulate to: Transportation/Roads/Tullow Municipal District Office
Environment Department/Water Services
Community, Recreation, & Amenity Department
Fire Services Department/Building Control
Planning Department

Context

The proposed project will develop a new community space and remote working hub called “The Firehouse”, formerly known as the Crisp Centre or “The Core”. The name “Firehouse” comes from the former use of the building on-site which was a former Fire Station.

In 2020 the Hacketstown community in partnership with Carlow County Council engaged in the development of a Village Led Design Statement which involved significant stakeholder engagement to design and develop a 10-year framework for development of the Town. As part of this work one issue which was identified was the requirement for community/enterprise and remote working space in the Town to service the needs of the community.

In respect of potential users of the building Carlow County Council surveyed 200 existing businesses in the County, 300 remote workers in County Carlow and 700 in the surrounding Counties and 1,000 commuters which established that there was a demand and need for these small-scale facilities aimed at:

- Remote Workers
- Small Office Based SMEs

Carlow County Council in partnership with the community examined the main street and potential sites for a proposed solution. On the main street is a historic former fire station that was converted into an ICT training hub during the 80s which closed 5 years ago. The site and the building are currently underutilized by the community. The street the building is located on has 12 business units, 7 of which are vacant and in need of development. Carlow County Council owns two premises on the main street (1) a former pub which is being considered for housing (2) the former fire station building.

Under the Town & Village fund 2021/22 it is proposed to redevelopment the former fire station which will be called the Firehouse Community Space & Remote Working Hub and be part of the Connected Hubs Network. The facility will contain 4 business and remote working units and facilitate up to 12 users. The development will be carried out by a partnership between Carlow Community Enterprise Centres, Carlow County Council, and the Local Community.

The development will comprise of:

- Retaining as much of the existing building fabric as possible
- Minimal work to the building exterior

- Renovation and reconfiguration to the internal layout
- Remove and dispose existing furniture, sanitaryware, built-in fittings, floor wall and ceiling finishes, joinery, redundant walls
- Painted external render. New Double glazed window system and doors. Decorative timber panelling to front window for privacy
- New partitions where indicated; new doors, frames, architraves and ironmongery; decoration to walls, doors, etc; Tiling to Kitchen splashback and WC sinks
- Floor finishes to include for non-slip tiling to all wet areas, Vinyl flooring to entrance, with new painted softwood skirting. Retain existing carpet tiles to existing meeting room and offices
- Modifications to existing roof to allow for new extension
- New suspended Ceiling to accessible WC, Female WC, Store, Kitchenette, and lobby (moisture resistant to wet areas). Retain existing suspended tile and grid ceilings to Meeting room and Office
- Supply and installation of new kitchenette
- New stud partitions; doors, frames, architraves and ironmongery; decoration to walls, doors, etc
- Floor finishes to include for Vinyl flooring to entrance, Carpet to office areas with new painted softwood skirtings
- Trocal or similar roof finish on insulation, timber joists including necessary flashings, rainwater goods
- Suspended Ceiling throughout
- Removal and relocation of artwork sculpture, removal of existing fence, and paved area
- New fencing to front and back gate; New retaining wall to support steps
- Provision of new concrete ramp and stairs. New paving to parking areas
- Removable bollards at parking spaces
- Landscaping, Topsoil and seeding to back of site
- and associated services including landscaping and boundary treatment

Detail drawings/maps of the area have been completed by ODLA Architects and will be included with this report.

Hacketstown is recognised as performing important local level functions including retail, residential, social, leisure, service and amenity. Development of the economy, community facilities, services and infrastructure in this urban centre is supported in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The inclusion of a remote working hub will help support the achievement of the objective of the Council to develop and strengthen this town as a local service centre. Furthermore, the proposal is in accordance with the policy of the Council for economic development which seeks to promote e-business, provide enterprise areas, encourage collaborative structures focusing on economic development and address infrastructural deficiencies that may be hindering economic development.

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