

October 2023

**To the Mayor and Elected Members of Carlow Municipal District**

**Development of Volunteer Hub on Sleaty St , Graiguecullen , Co. Carlow**  
**Proposed Part VIII Planning Application**  
**Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) Part XI**  
**Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) - Part VIII**

It is proposed to develop a volunteer hub on Sleaty St, Graiguecullen, Co. Carlow in partnership with Carlow Volunteer Centre. The proposal aligns with Our Rural Future by supporting the following Vision & Objectives from the Plan:

- Assisting the regeneration, repopulation and development of rural towns and villages
- Nurturing our culture and heritage
- Investing in rural towns and villages as hubs of economic and social activity

It is proposed that by the creation of the hub which has the volunteer services meeting and facilities serves to enhance and sustain the spirit of volunteering by fostering collaboration and networking, promoting professional development, and providing advocacy for leaders in community engagement.

The decline of volunteers has been identified as a critical factor for communities across County Carlow and the creation of a hub will act as a catalyst to support community groups across the County by providing a very visual public facing volunteer hub.

A physical volunteer hub for a county serves as an invaluable nexus that fosters community engagement, social cohesion, and collective progress. By bringing together volunteers, non-profit organizations, and local initiatives, it streamlines the recruitment and coordination of volunteers, efficiently matches individuals with opportunities that align with their skills and interests, and ultimately bolsters the capacity to address pressing societal issues.

**It is our vision that by creating a hub, Carlow County Council and the department are making a statement that is:**

- Investing in the future of volunteerism through capacity building and being strong and viable in the communities.
- Honor current relationships within the field of volunteering and build new ones by creating a place for general volunteer activity.
- Creating a space that will build alliances that encourage innovation, creativity, vision, and passion.

The hub will contain:

- Office Accommodation for the Volunteer Centre who will be the anchor tenant in the building.

- Meeting Spaces & Interview Rooms for the wider community sector in County Carlow.
- Shared facilities which can be used for informal gatherings.

The purchase of the property was supported under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Building Acquisition Measure.

It is proposed to apply for development funding under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme for the renovation of the property and works will include:

- Renovation of property in terms of use for office and meeting rooms.
- Upgrade of kitchen facilities in the property.
- Upgrade of building in terms of renewable energy, security and ICT.
- Purchase of furniture and ICT equipment for virtual engagements.

The development of the property will be subject to funding being made available to Carlow County Council under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme. Drawings have been prepared in-house with the assistance of Housing, Community & Amenity and a QS has been appointed to assist with the development of the project.

Kieran Comerford  
Head of Economic Development & Enterprise