



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

in conjunction with



**Dublin Road (R-888) Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme,
Dublin Road, Carlow Town.**

**Proposal Summary to Accompany
Public Consultation**

May 2024

Carlow County Council,
County Buildings,
Athy Road,
Carlow,
R93 E7R7.

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1. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of the provision of a high-quality pedestrian & cycle infrastructure, which will provide improved and safer walking and cycling facilities on the Dublin Road (R888) area of Carlow Town. This route is indicated as an Urban Primary Route on the draft National Transport Authority Cycle Connects Scheme, connecting a number of schools in the area with the housing areas on the north-eastern side of Carlow Town. This development is being funded under the NTA's Active Travel Investment Programme. It is being carried out under the regulatory provisions of Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994.

The scheme will include the following elements:

- Site clearance of existing road verge, including a number of existing trees,
- Construction of 400m of Raised Cycle Lanes,
- Construction of 495m of 2-Way Cycle Tracks,
- Construction of 50m of Combined Footpath & Cycle Path,
- Provision of 5 No. controlled Pedestrian/Toucan crossings,
- Tightening of Junction with Green Lane (R-448)
- Provision of traffic signals on the approach to the railway bridge to establish a single lane shuttle traffic system across the railway bridge,
- Upgrading of 1300m of Footpaths,
- Landscaping to include planting of trees to replace those removed.
- Installation of associated signage and road markings as necessary.

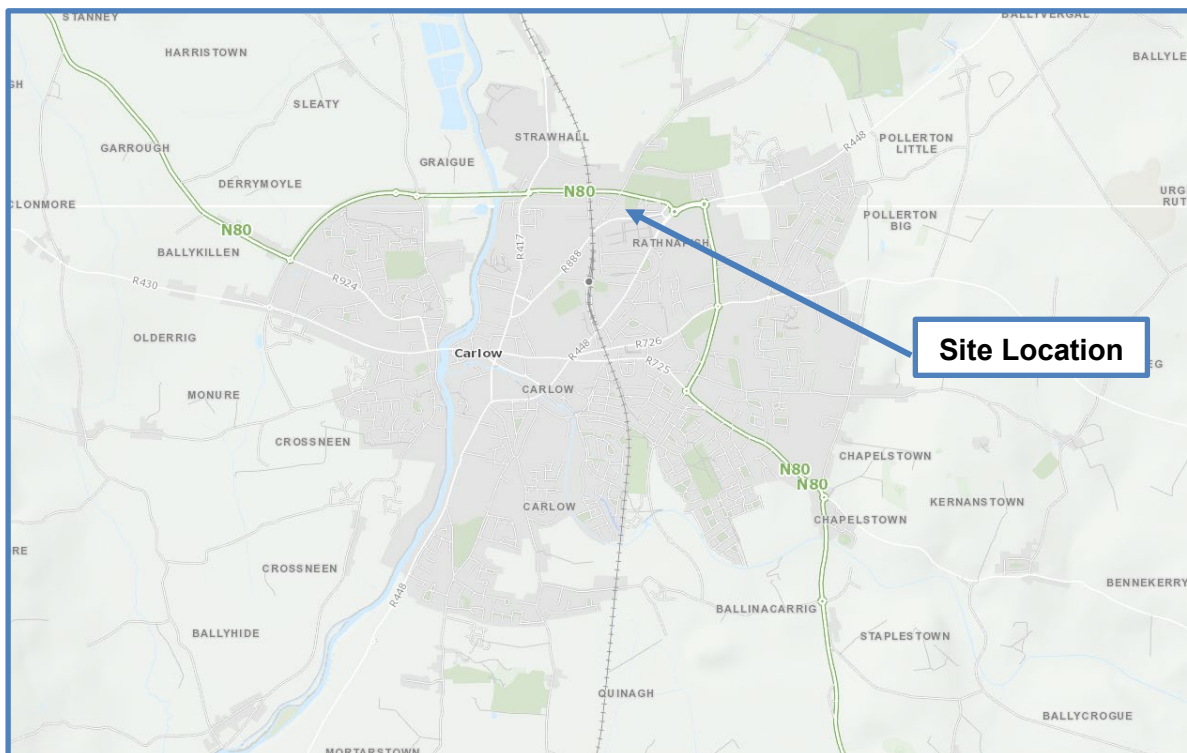


Figure 1 - Site Location



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Figure 2 - Scheme Extents

2. Consistency with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and the County Development Plan

Carlow Town is the county town of County Carlow. It is an inland town sited on low-lying land, straddling the large River Barrow and a smaller watercourse, the River Burrin and is located to the east of the Castlecomer Plateau. The population of Carlow town was 24,272 in the 2016 census.

The town is located 80 kilometres from Dublin with nine daily train services and numerous bus services to and from the capital. It is also within easy reach of other mid-sized towns in the Midlands and South-East being located 40 minutes from Portlaoise, 30 minutes from Kilkenny, 45 minutes from Enniscorthy. Wexford Town and Waterford City are approximately one hours drive from the town, with Rosslare Port and Waterford Airport located beyond.

The recently adopted **Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028** identifies Carlow as a Key Town in the Settlement Hierarchy. This tier corresponds to large population scale urban centres functioning as self – sustaining regional drivers. Strategically located urban centres with accessibility and significant influence in a sub-regional context.

The proposed development is in compliance with the policies and objectives of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Draft Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030. In particular the following policies and objectives, which are set out in the following sections of those plans:

Carlow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Context:

It is a strategic objective of the Council to:

- S. O11: Promote the provision and maintenance of high quality infrastructure and infrastructural networks and environmental services which seek to complement the overall economic and settlement strategy and contribute to the sustainable development of the area.
- S. O12: Ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning through the increased use of sustainable transport modes and the minimisation of travel demand to achieve a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system.

Chapter 2: Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy:

It is an objective of the Council to:

- CS. O11: Promote the integration of spatial planning and transport policy, ensure the maintenance of the strategic function of the national roads' network in the County, and promote sustainable public transport including a public bus service for Carlow town and active travel alternatives throughout the County.

Chapter 5: Sustainable Travel and Transportation:

It is the policy of the Council to:

- MS. P1: Seek investment in sustainable transport solutions, improved walking and cycling connectivity routes, the provision of a public bus service in Carlow Town and the expansion of rural transport initiatives throughout the county.

It is an objective of the Council to:

MS. O1: Support modal shift at a County level from private vehicles to sustainable modes (walking, cycling Bus or Train) to access work, school, college from 23% in 2016 (Ref: Table 5.1) to 28% in 2028.

It is the policy of the Council to:

WC. P1: Prioritise and promote more sustainable and convenient modes of travel by the development of high quality walking and cycling infrastructure including greenways within a safe environment.

WC. P3: Ensure that connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is maximised in new communities and improved within existing areas particularly towns and villages throughout the county including associated infrastructure, to maximise access to local shops, educational facilities, public transport services, employment locations and other amenities.

WC. P4: Provide for safer routes to schools within the County and promote walking and cycling as suitable modes of transport as part of the Green Schools Programme and other local traffic management improvements.

It is the objective of the Council to:

WC. O2: Ensure that all streets and street networks seek to facilitate permeability, are designed in accordance with best practice standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the National Cycle Manual which seek to prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists within a safe and comfortable environment for a wide range of ages, abilities and journey types.

WC. O4: Prioritise where required the upgrade and maintenance of footpaths, cycleways, public lighting, traffic management and public realm works and supporting signage on public roads / paths.

WC. O6: Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to rail station locations and other public transport interchanges within the county.

Chapter 7: Climate Action and Energy:

It is the policy of the Council to:

CA. P1: Promote and support the implementation of European, national, regional, and local objectives for climate change adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents and taking into account all other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land-use planning, sustainable travel and transport, and flood risk management and drainage);

CA. P2: Support the transition of the County to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.

EC. P1: Promote and support initiatives aimed at reducing the level of energy consumption across all sectors in the County.

Chapter 8: Community Development:

It is an objective of the Council to:

- PD. O2: Ensure that all footpaths and public areas are accessible and safe for people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility.

Draft Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030:

Chapter 2: Carlow - Graiguecullen Strategic Planning and Vision:

It is an objective of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

- SO. 4: Prioritise integrated transport and land use, supported by investment in public transport, active travel networks and shared, low-carbon mobility options, which will improve people's travel choices and support safe, sustainable, and healthy lifestyles.

Chapter 3: Core Strategy and Housing:

It is an objective of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

- CS. O6: Support the transition of Carlow-Graiguecullen to a low-carbon and climate resilient urban area through the promotion of sustainable development patterns, sustainable and active travel, and sustainable energy use, in accordance with the NPF, the RSES' for the Southern Region and Eastern and Midlands Region, and the National Climate Action Plan.

Chapter 6: Sustainable Travel and Transportation:

It is the policy of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

- LT. P1: Actively support an integrated approach to land use and transport planning in Carlow-Graiguecullen that promotes a shift towards a sustainable, healthy, and low carbon joint urban area with a reduced need for car-based travel, and through the prioritisation of development that is within reasonable walking and cycling distances from key employment, service, educational, and recreational areas, and key public transport nodes.
- LT. P2: Ensure the design of all streets and roads in the joint urban area complies with the principles, approaches and standards as appropriate in the Design Manual for Urban Road and Streets (DMURS Updated 2019 and Supplementary Interim Advice Note Published in 2020) and TII Publications, and any subsequent updates to this Design Manual.
- AT. P1: Support the role of the Councils' Active Travel Teams in the promotion and delivery of sustainable and active travel infrastructure and options in Carlow-Graiguecullen, including the provision of new and enhanced walking and cycling routes, widened footpaths, and pedestrian crossings.
- LTP. P1: Progress the delivery of the appropriate measures and interventions within the JULAP area as outlined in the Carlow – Graiguecullen Local Transport Plan (LTP) on a phased basis and subject to the availability of funding having regard to the LTP land use transportation and guidance and in consultation with the NTA and TII as appropriate, in order to support the shift towards sustainable travel and transport throughout the joint urban area and to accommodate anticipated transport demand due to planned population growth.

WC. P1: Support and promote enhanced connectivity where appropriate for pedestrians and cyclists in Carlow-Graiguecullen in order to improve accessibility throughout the joint urban area and to the town centre, employment areas, residential areas, local schools including the Carlow Educate Together National School on the Athy Road and other educational facilities, recreational facilities, and public transport nodes.

WC. P4: Ensure that pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is based on principles of Universal Design, and that all footpaths in Carlow-Graiguecullen are accessible to all members of the community, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with young children.

It is an objective of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council:

W. O1: Support and facilitate the delivery of new and improved walking and cycling network in Carlow-Graiguecullen, which delivers permeability enhancements and connections where appropriate as identified in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and in Figures 6.4 and 6.5, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority, other statutory agencies, and relevant stakeholders. Final design details shall be subject to appropriate environmental assessment and undergo a separate public consultation process where applicable.

Chapter 8 - Sustainable Communities:

It is the policy of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

CC. P1: Promote and support the development of connected communities and the attainment of the 10-Minute town, having regard the findings of the 10-Minute Towns Study for Carlow, and with an emphasis on active travel and shorter walking and cycling timeframes to social and community facilities, improving permeability in the built environment, and encouraging a reduction in car dependency.

It is an objective of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

ET. O2: Provide new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure and vehicular traffic calming measures in the vicinity of schools.

Chapter 10 - Natural Heritage Green Infrastructure & Landscape:

It is the policy of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

GI. P8: Promote a network of pedestrian and cycle paths to enhance accessibility to the green infrastructure network in Carlow-Graiguecullen, while ensuring that the layout, design, and operation of the routes responds to the ecological protection needs of each site.

Chapter 11 - Climate Action:

It is the policy of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council to:

LU. P1: Secure climate resilience and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Carlow-Graiguecullen by actively implementing policies which support integrated land use planning and sustainable travel, and maximise such opportunities through development location, form, layout, and design.

Conclusion

The proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in that it:

- Prioritises and promotes more sustainable and convenient modes of travel by the development of high quality walking and cycling infrastructure,
- Supports a modal shift from private vehicles to access work / school / college,
- Provides traffic management arrangements that makes the sustainable transport modes of walking and cycling safe, practicable and feasible alternatives to the private car and reduce traffic congestion and associated emissions,
- Prioritises the movements of pedestrians and cyclists within the public realm by measures including the redistribution of car space to non-car modes of transport, retrofitting road junctions to make them more cycle and pedestrian friendly,
- Takes advantage of investment sought through the NTA Active Travel Investment Programme, for improved walking and cycling connectivity routes,
- Provides for safer routes to St. Leo's, Bishop Foley, St. Mary's Academy, St. Joseph's, St. Lazerian's & Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal schools, and promotes walking and cycling as suitable modes of transport,
- It is designed in accordance with best practice standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the National Cycle Manual which seek to prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists within a safe and comfortable environment for a wide range of ages, abilities and journey types,
- Improves pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Carlow Rail Station.

3 Scheme Justification

The Dublin Road (R-888) is an important route into the northern sections of the town centre. It provides access to the large number of schools, and Carlow Railway Station. Previous cycling infrastructure provided included white lining to indicate cycle lanes and pedestrian walkways. This existing infrastructure is regularly ignored by much of the public when events at Dr Cullen Park, funerals, etc. are taking place and cars park on these cycle lanes. The existing infrastructure also does not meet current design guidance or best practice and for reasons of safety and encouragement of sustainable transport modes it needs to be upgraded.

This scheme will provide high grade cycling and pedestrian facilities designed to the guidelines of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Street (DMURS) and the National Cycling Manual. The inclusion of a short section of single lane shuttle traffic system across the railway bridge allows for the redistribution of car space to non-car modes of transport to help prioritise the movements of pedestrians and cyclists, a transport policy in the current Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area.

4 Impact of the Proposed Scheme

Impact on traffic

It is envisaged that this scheme will have a minor impact on traffic during construction, however no long-term negative impacts are expected. The construction of mostly segregated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, allowing sustainable transport in a safe environment will allow residents make much more journeys by walking or cycling which they previously would have made by car. This will result in fewer car journeys, and will therefore balance out any negative effect on traffic flows from the installation of a single lane shuttle system across the railway bridge, and therefore should result in a long-term positive impact on traffic.

Impact on pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users

The proposed works will have a significantly positive impact on pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users seeking to access educational facilities, Carlow Railway Station, retail premises, recreational amenities, and town centre services. The scheme will provide improved connectivity in a safe and comfortable environment.

Impact during construction

The following impacts during construction will be temporary:

- Site mobilisation and operations
- Temporary traffic management
- Construction traffic and materials deliveries
- Construction dust and noise
- Temporary hoarding/fencing/barriers/traffic cones
- Temporary site lighting, if deemed necessary

Impact on landscape and visual amenity

The works will take place primarily within an existing road corridor. It is envisaged that this scheme will have a minor impact on landscape and visual amenity during construction, however no long-term negative impacts are expected. All trees removed during construction will be replaced with semi-mature trees of at minimum the same number. New and improved public lighting, road signage, road markings and landscaping in the vicinity of the works will also enhance and improve the existing streetscape at the works location.

Impact on ecology

The proposed works do not lie within or affect any existing ecologically sensitive areas.

Impact on built and cultural heritage

The following information sources were checked as part of a desktop exercise to check for possible impact on built and cultural heritage:

- The National Monuments Service Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) –
 - CW007-021 – Enclosure.
- The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) –
 - CW007-021 – Enclosure.
- The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Carlow – Appendix 2, Chapter VIII of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.

The site of the Enclosure is located within the existing St. Mary's Cemetery. The proposed scheme will have no impact on this enclosure.

Conclusion

It is expected that the proposed development will have some short-term negative impacts during construction but no longer-term impacts requiring mitigation are expected to arise.

5 Flood Risk Assessment

No flooding or surface water management issues have been identified for the site. The site is not indicated in a flood risk area as per the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The site was also in the area examined in the CFRAM Study carried out by RPS Consulting Engineers on behalf of the OPW and the site is not in the flood risk area.