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Carlow to SETU Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme Phase 1 Report for Section 38 Application



BUILT ON KNOWLEDGE

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1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development will consist of the provision of a high-quality pedestrian and cycle facility along the R448, Kilkenny Road, Carlow, linking the recently completed pedestrian and cycle facility at Hanover with the South East Technological University (SETU) refer to Figures 1-1 and 1-2. Additionally, it is proposed to remove the existing vehicular entrance to the university campus and provide a new or relocated signalised junction at a new entrance location, with a dedicated right turning lanes for vehicles to service both side of the road. This development is being carried out under Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994.

The scheme will include the following elements:

- Site clearance of existing front of university road verge, removal of central median island and relocation of existing vehicular access entrance access and removal of existing signalised pedestrian crossing.
- Construction of 300m of 4m wide 2 Way-segregated Cycle Track and 60m of 1 way Cycle Track
- Construction upgrading of 360m of Footpath
- Provision of 30m Shared Footpath Surface
- Designation of 20m of paved set-down area
- Construction of New Signalised controlled junction with phasing for vulnerable road users, pedestrians, cyclists to permit safer crossing at a relocated entrance/exit to and from SETU.
- Upgraded existing Public Lighting in areas where required
- Landscaping including provision of central median and 1m verge between road edge and new cycle track
- Installation of associated signage and road markings as necessary



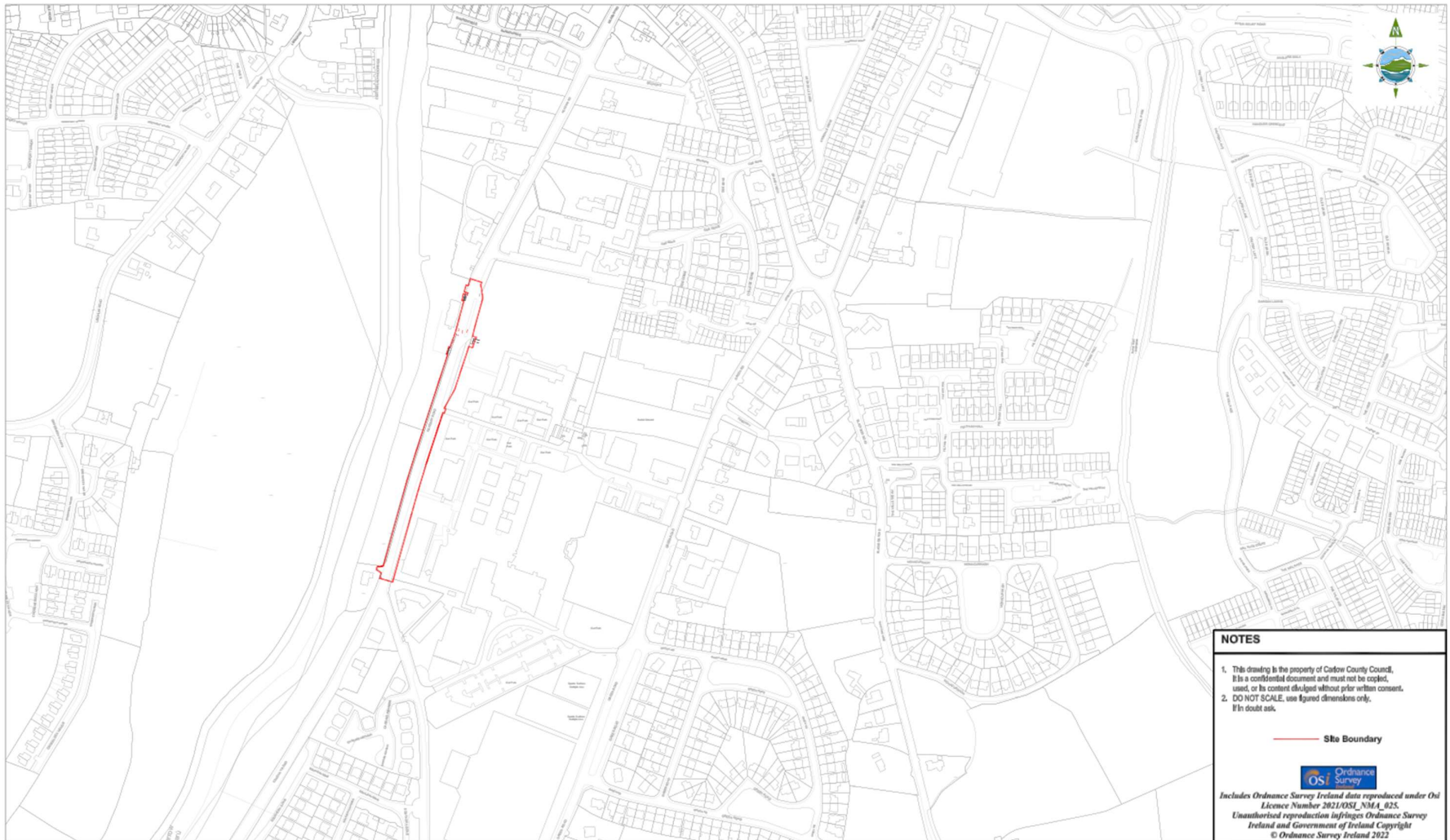


Figure 1.2: Scheme Extents



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. The population of Carlow town was 27,351 in the 2022 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 Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030. In particular the following policies and objectives, which are set out in the following sections of those plans:

2.1 CARLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, CH.5: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

5.3 Sustainable Mobility / Modal Shift

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 a modal shift from private vehicles to access work / school / college from circa 23% (2016) to 28% (2028).

5.4 Walking and Cycling

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. P2: Work with the National Trails Office, Coillte, relevant Government Departments, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking and cycling.

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. O1: Seek the implementation of the Walking and Cycling Strategy for Carlow Town and specific projects as contained in Project Carlow 2040 “A Vision for Regeneration” creating more sustainable communities, with an emphasis on encouraging active travel to reduce car dependency.

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. O3: Reduce walking and cycling distances to areas of employment, community services, schools, shops, public transport and other community facilities through implementation of the 10 Minute Town Concept, the provision and maintenance of high-quality linkages and the delivery of local permeability links within existing communities.

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.

WC. O6: Secure the development of the following specific schemes:
Improved permeability and accessibility to the residential areas of John Sweeney Park, The Laurels, Burrin Manor, Willow Park and the wider Carlow town environs / road network. The optimum solution(s) will be informed by relevant engineering and environmental studies, engagement with key stakeholders and will inform the statutory land use plan for the area.



5.8.5 Urban Roads and Street

It is the policy of the Council to:

UR. P1: Ensure that all urban roads and streets in our towns and villages, including residential streets in housing estates are designed in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the ‘Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets’ (2013/2019) and any further update to the Manual during the life of this Plan and to implement TII Publication Standard DN-GEO-03084 ‘The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads’ as appropriate.

UR. P2: Consider, and, where appropriate to seek the implementation of a wider 30kph speed limit zone in urban environments in order to create a safer, calmer and more pleasant urban environment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, fostering opportunities for active travel and protecting vulnerable road users.

5.13 Street Lighting

It is the policy of the Council to:

SL. P1: Ensure that public lighting is provided in accordance with relevant EU Norms, National Standards or best guidance documents as appropriate, including any forthcoming Council Public Lighting Specifications and Policy documents.

It is the objective of the Council to:

SL. O1: Improve the efficiency of public lighting assets in order to minimise electricity usage.

5.17 Accessibility

It is the policy of the Council to:

AC. P1: Support suitable access for people with disabilities, including improvements to buildings, streets and public spaces.

2.2 JOINT SPATIAL PLAN FOR THE GREATER CARLOW GRAIGUECULLEN URBAN AREA 2024-2030

Chapter 6 – Sustainable Travel and Transportation

6.1 Integrated Land Use & Transport Planning

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 in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS 2013-2019) and any subsequent updates to this Design Manual.

Planning for Sustainable Travel and Transportation in Carlow-Graiguecullen

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

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.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) – Overarching Policy

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

LTP. P1: Progress the delivery of the appropriate measures and interventions as outlined in the Carlow-Graiguecullen Local Transport Plan (LTP) on a phased basis and subject to the availability of funding, 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.

Walking and Cycling – Policy

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

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 and other educational facilities, recreational facilities, and public transport nodes.

WC. P2: Ensure that all development where appropriate within Carlow-Graiguecullen provides for connectivity (pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular) to adjacent lands in accordance with the National Transport Authority’s Permeability Best Practice Guide (2015) and any subsequent update to this Guide.



- WC. P3:** Ensure all new development proposals are permeable for walking and cycling and seek the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling connections and facilities in existing neighbourhood, where feasible and appropriate, in order to support and encourage a shift to sustainable travel modes.
- 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.
- WC. P5:** Provide adequate and secure bicycle parking facilities subject to demand analysis at appropriate locations in the joint urban area.
- WC. P6:** Develop and promote in conjunction with local communities and relevant stakeholders in the joint urban area, short walking routes such as looped walks, heritage trails and Slí na Sláinte routes.

Walking and Cycling – Objectives

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.

Road Infrastructure – Policies

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

- RI. P1:** Maintain, improve, and extend the public road network in and around Carlow-Graiguecullen to ensure a high standard of connectivity and safety for all road users.
- RI. P2:** Co-operate and liaise with the Department of Transport, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to securing appropriate improvements/ extensions as appropriate to the public road network within Carlow -Graiguecullen.



- RI. P3:** Provide for traffic calming and speed reduction measures throughout the joint urban area, where necessary as funding allows, and ensure that all new developments are designed to incorporate appropriate traffic calming measures as set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS 2013-2017), and any subsequent updates to this Design Manual.

- RI. P4** That all medium to large scale and complex planning applications (30+ residential units, commercial development over 1,000sq.m., or other development proposals as required by Carlow County Council and Laois County Council) shall be accompanied by a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) carried out in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland’s (TII) Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014) and any subsequent updates this Guidelines.

Road Infrastructure - Objectives

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

- RI. O1:** Support and facilitate the delivery of the preferred road infrastructure improvements identified in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Figure 6.8, with associated benefits for sustainable travel and transport and multi-modal solutions.

- RI. O2** Support and facilitate the planning, design, and completion of the Carlow Southern Relief Road N80-R448 including a new bridge crossing over the River Barrow, to enhance connectivity between the South-East and Midlands Regions, and to address and alleviate traffic management considerations thereby making a positive contribution to the local economy and urban environment of Carlow-Graiguecullen.

In addition to the foregoing, the interventions identified in *Project Carlow 2040 A Vision for Regeneration* will support more sustainable travel patterns through public realm initiatives that aim to reduce overall car numbers and allow for more green space for walking and cycling with a focus on greater use of outdoor space and increased use of public transport.



2.3 CONCLUSION

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

- It will provide improved access to premises, recreational amenities, educational facilities and town centre services for pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users.
- It will facilitate modal shift away from private car use towards more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling and walking.
- It will facilitate permeability and improved connectivity between residential areas for pedestrians and cyclists.
- It will provide pedestrians and cyclists within a safe and comfortable environment by reducing interactions with motorised traffic and through the provision of new and improved public lighting.

3. SCHEME JUSTIFICATION

Carlow Town has seen substantial population growth over the last 20yrs +, and is predicted to see further substantial population growth from within the life of the current County Development Plan. There is a need to develop supporting services and in particular to support sustainable travel and alternatives to car-based commuting.

This section of the R448 has been identified by Carlow County Council for improvement given the sub-standard pedestrian and cycle facilities. The section of the R448 identified for improvement is sited in a primarily community/educational and existing residential area and currently has substandard or no designated provision for cyclists. It is car and vehicle dominant, which is restrictive to the potential for any future development given the lack of consistent modern and legible active travel facilities and crossings. There are also issues around possible conflicts between vehicular traffic and vulnerable road users wishing to access from the educational centres to and from town centre services and amenities.

This scheme will help to create a more sustainable mode of transport in this area, along with new permeability links which will result in improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between this residential area, the nearby schools, recreation areas, and the town centre. In addition to this, the vast majority of the proposed cycle infrastructure is segregated from the vehicular traffic, thereby increasing levels of road safety in this major residential area.



4. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

4.1 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 journeys by walking or cycling which they previously would have made by car. This will result in fewer car journeys and result in a long-term positive impact on traffic.

4.2 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 premises, recreational amenities, educational facilities and town centre services. The scheme will provide improved connectivity in a safe and comfortable environment.

4.3 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

4.4 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. 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.








4.5 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) – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.



- The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- 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 immediate vicinity of the proposed works.

CT64	10000223	Barrowville, Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A house with dormer at roof level and a conservatory. Date circa 1839		R	A
CT65	10000859	Garryowen Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A detached house, u-shaped in plan, with two projecting full height bays, set back from the road. There is a conservatory to the south Date circa 1840		R	A
CT66	10000860	Grosvenor Place Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A semi-detached house, set back from the road, facing east and backing to The river Barrow, a three storey breakfront is two metres forward of the Four storey block and has an entrance porch to the side. Date circa 1870 – 1890		R	A
CT67	10000862	Galaroga Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A semi-detached house, set back from the road, part used as doctor's surgery. Possibly this house with RPS No. CT68 were a single unit originally. Date circa 1800		L	A
CT68	10000863	Borlum or Roseville Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A semi-detached house, set back from the road, possibly originally a single unit with RPS No. CT67 Date circa 1800		L	A
CT69	10000865	The Rectory Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A detached house, set back from the road, having two gables at the road and a half octagon bay window, single storey to the west. Date circa 1840		R	A
CT70	10000866	Otterholt Kilkenny Road	Kilkenny Road	A rectangular house, three storey to the rear, overlooking the River Barrow. This house may be on the site of an older structure. Date circa 1830		R	A

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These sites will not be affected during this project. It was determined that the works will not impinge on or affect any built and cultural heritage.

4.6 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. APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (AA)

Stage 1 Screening was carried out in accordance with Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).

This is transposed in Ireland primarily by the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (S.I. No. 477/2011) (hereafter the Birds and Habitats Regulations) and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 as amended.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required if likely significant effects on European Sites arising from the proposed development cannot be ruled out at the screening stage, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Following an examination and evaluation of the relevant information, including in particular, the fact that the proposed works will not impinge or impact on any European Sites, it is possible to rule out likely significant effects on all European Sites.

The AA screening process has identified that no European Sites are within the potential zone of influence of surface water discharges from the proposed development either during construction or upon completion of the works.

On the basis of the AA screening process, the project has been screened out from proceeding to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.



6. 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 is located outside of the Office of Public Works (OPW) 1/100 and 1/1000 flood risk zones identified for Carlow Town under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. There is no requirement for a site specific flood risk assessment for this scheme.

Appendix A LAYOUT PLANS

