



COMHAIRLE CONTAE  
CHEATHARLACH

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

**in conjunction with**



**Safe Routes to School Scheme,  
Holy Family Boys NS & Holy Family Girls NS,  
Askea, Carlow.**

**Proposal Summary to Accompany  
Public Consultation**

**June 2024**

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

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## **1. Description of the Proposed Development**

Carlow County Council are proposing to carry out a Safe Routes to School scheme at Holy Family Boys National School & Holy Family Girls National School, Askea, Carlow.

The proposed development will consist of 'front of school' interventions in the form of Schools Zones to increase road users awareness of the presence of vulnerable road users. The School Zones will create safe protected areas outside the school gates where vehicular drop off is discouraged. The School Zones will use identifiable design features to highlight the presence of the school and encourage traffic to slow down, prevent parking on pavements and encourage drivers to make legal and safe drop-offs outside of the School Zone area.

This development is being funded under the National Transport Authority's Active Travel Investment Programme. It is being carried out under the regulatory provisions of Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act, 1994, as amended.

The School Zones will include the following features:

- School Zone gateway road markings to communicate to all road users that they are entering a space where vulnerable road users should be prioritised
- Coloured roundel road markings within the School Zones
- Pencil shaped bollards to protect vulnerable road users spaces from driver intrusion
- Upgrade of the existing pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Holy Family Girls National School
- New double yellow lining to prevent parking within the School Zones
- Refresh of existing road markings
- New road signage
- New road crossing and junction tightening at Brownhill Road Lower to improve safety for pedestrians.



**Figure 1 - 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 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 Carlow-Graigucullen 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:

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## **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:**

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- 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 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

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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:

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*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.



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## Conclusion

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

- 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,
- 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,

### 3 Scheme Justification

An Taisce's Infrastructure Officer for Safe Routes to School conducted a Safety Audit for both the Girls and Boys National Schools, Askea where they identified safety issues to the front of both school's. These audits was further expanded to a consultation process with parents and guardian's whose dependants are attending the school's.

On behalf of An Taisce the school's issued a Safe Routes to School Parent Survey to all families of the Holy Family Girls and Boys National School's. This parent survey had a 28.9% response rate for both school's. (this survey had a 5.5% Margin of Error at 95% Confidence level)

Of the responses received 66.4% of parents surveyed agreed that road safety is a problem around the school, 94.0% of parents would support works at the front of school that improve student safety, putting pedestrians and cyclists first, 96.3% of parents would support works that would improve the walking and cycling routes to school.

Parents also selected the following, when asked, what improvements would support them walking, cycling or scooting to school:-

<b>Safer crossing points</b>	<b>64.9% of parents surveyed</b>
<b>Reduced traffic speed</b>	<b>56.0% of parents surveyed</b>
<b>New or improved cycle paths</b>	<b>41.8% of parents surveyed</b>
<b>Fewer cars at the school gate</b>	<b>34.3% of parents surveyed</b>
<b>New or improved footpaths</b>	<b>32.8% of parents surveyed</b>
<b>Cycle parking at the school</b>	<b>26.9% of parents surveyed</b>
<b>None of these</b>	<b>7.5% of parents surveyed</b>

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Based on the outcome of the Safety Audit and the results of the consultation undertaken for the school the Active Travel Department of Carlow County Council undertook a design to address the safety issues identified outside of the school and the findings raised during the parent survey.

#### **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 will allow sustainable transport in a safe environment allowing school users and residents to make journeys by walking or cycling which they previously would of made by car. This will result in fewer car journeys and 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. 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. New road signage, road markings and landscaping in the vicinity of the works will 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) –
  - Nothing recorded

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- The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
    - Nothing recorded
  - The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) –
    - Nothing recorded

It was determined that the works will not impinge on or affect any built and cultural heritage.

### **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.