

CHAPTER 8  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

## Chapter 8 Community Development

**Aim:** To promote, develop and maintain sustainable communities in the County, through the provision of a range of facilities and services to meet the diverse and expanding needs of all residents, thereby supporting community participation and social inclusion, and improving the quality of life for everyone.

### 8.0 Introduction

The creation of healthy, inclusive, and vibrant communities, with a focus on sustainability and accessibility, is central to achieving a high quality of life for all residents of County Carlow. Whether in the towns, villages or rural areas of the County, the provision of and the availability of access to, community services and social infrastructure, is integral to societal well-being, to social inclusion, and ultimately to fostering sustainable communities and the delivery of successful places.

At a local government level, the Council is closest to communities, and therefore is ideally placed to support and facilitate their needs. At the same time, the identification of these needs and the provision of corresponding services and infrastructure, most often requires a collaborative approach between relevant stakeholders, including the state, community groups, voluntary organisations, and the private sector.

### 8.1 Policy Context

The key policy documents that informed this chapter of the Plan includes (inter alia):

- Project Ireland 2040 The National Planning Framework 2018 (NPF)
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 – 2032 (RSES)
- Government of Ireland, Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities 2019-2024
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2019
- Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, 2001
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Age Friendly Principles and Guidelines for the Planning Authority, Age Friendly Ireland (2020)
- Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, including best practice guidance series, National Disability Authority, 2012
- Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland, National Disability Authority, 2015
- Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021
- Carlow County Council's 'A Socio-Economic Profile of Carlow 2019
- Carlow Age Friendly Strategy: Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022
- County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020-2024
- The County Carlow Local Arts Development Plan 2016-2021
- Carlow Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024.

### 8.2 Sustainable and Inclusive Communities

Both the NPF and the RSES place a strong emphasis on achieving and maintaining sustainable and inclusive communities that will contribute to a high quality of life and

meet the diverse needs of the people within existing and future communities. Effective sustainable and inclusive communities are interlinked with improving the quality of life for everyone within the community, with promoting inclusion by offering choice and accessibility to facilities and services for everyone, and by providing a vibrant economy while protecting the environment. Depending on a person’s own circumstances, the elements that support quality of life can differ, but can generally be categorised as per Figure 8.1.



**Figure 8.1: Elements Supporting Quality of Life (Source: NPF).**

### 8.3 Local Development / Community Groups

Arising from the Government’s ‘Putting People First’ Action Programme and the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014. It brings together representatives from the Council, state agencies, and people actively working with local and community development. The LCDC ensures that there is a more coherent, integrated, and meaningful approach to the

participation of all stakeholders in the scoping, planning and implementation of local and community development programmes. It functions as a committee of the Council but is independent in the performance of its functions. The functions of the LCDC are:

- To prepare, adopt, implement, monitor and review the community elements of a 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).
- To improve the co-ordination of publicly funded programmes including the Local Community Development Programme Rural Development Programme (LEADER) and Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP).
- Oversight of local and community development programmes
- Avoidance of duplication.
- To prepare an annual report on the performance of its functions.

The LECP sets out the Council’s vision for local community, economic and social development throughout the County. It sets seven principles to underly social and economic development:

1. A developmental ‘bottom up’ approach;
2. Promotion of enterprise and employment development;
3. Harnessing of existing community infrastructure;
4. Best use of available resources;
5. A clear focus on social inclusion;
6. Voluntary activity and active participation by individuals; and
7. Achieving value for money.

The LECP also sets strategic high-level goals for the County to 2021, including building thriving, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive communities; strengthening and promoting a

thriving and sustainable enterprise culture; ensuring access to education and skills; optimising the tourism product and message of Carlow; providing necessary infrastructure, and maximising external investment into Carlow.

### **Local Development/Community Groups - Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

LDC O1: Support the work of the Carlow Local Development Committee.

LDC O2: Work with the Carlow Local Development Committee and all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Carlow LECP 2015-2021, and any subsequent plan.

## **8.4 Social Inclusion**

Promoting and supporting social inclusion and community participation in the County is a key aim of this Plan. Social inclusion has been defined in many ways, but it is commonly understood that by acting inclusively, society ensures everyone, regardless of ability, age, nationality, religion, or other diverse societal characteristics, has equal opportunity to fulfil their potential, to access key services such as education and health, and to participate in and contribute to community life. Social inclusion also requires an emphasis on ensuring all environments, whether living, working or recreational, are designed and maintained in a manner that everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, can achieve equality of access to the services and facilities they need to achieve their potential in life.

The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) provides funding to tackle poverty and social inclusion at a local level

through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The SCIAP is informed by the LECP and is managed by the LCDC and implemented by County Carlow Development Partnership with support from the Council. The current programme for Carlow runs from 2018-2022 and brings in excess of €2.7 million to the County over its 5-year period. The programme engages with the most difficult to reach in the most disadvantaged areas and supports these individuals to improve the quality of their life through the provision of lifelong learning and labour market supports. Local community groups and target groups are also supported to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues and creating more sustainable communities.

## **Social Inclusion - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

SI P1: Promote social inclusion and tackle disadvantage through equality of access to facilities and services for all residents of the County, so as to assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.

SI P2: Work with all target groups, including young people, older people, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, including the Traveller Community, to advance their full participation in society.

## **8.5 Social Enterprises**

Social enterprises are businesses that work primarily to improve the lives of people. Their core objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact. Like other businesses, social enterprises pursue their

objectives by trading in goods and services on an ongoing basis. However, surpluses generated by social enterprises are re-invested into achieving their core social objectives.

While the term “social enterprise” is relatively new in Ireland, the country has a long tradition of non-State intervention in community and social life which is consistent with the ethos of social enterprise. Many social enterprises have emerged from the community and voluntary sector and build on the work of that sector. In other cases, social enterprises have been established by entrepreneurs who have chosen to use the social enterprise model to maximise their social impact and/or their contribution to society.

Social enterprise is receiving increased interest in Ireland due to the emphasis being placed on the wider social economy at EU level.

## 8.6 Social Enterprise Development Fund

The Social Enterprise Development Fund is a €3.2 million Fund being delivered from 2018 – 2022. The objective of the fund is to fund and back social enterprises that add to the social and economic fabric of their community by way of social impact. The fund will make available up to €400,000 in cash grants and will provide critical support to the most innovative and impactful social enterprises across Ireland. This is of particular importance in a period of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Social Enterprises - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

SE P1: Support and promote an awareness of Social Enterprise as a tool for

community and economic development.

SE P2: Support the transition of community facilities where appropriate to social enterprise centres and co-operatives.

SE P3: Support the development of services for business development utilising a social enterprise methodology i.e. enterprise hubs/centres

SE P4: Support the development of rural co-operative enterprises in the areas of tourism and recreation.

### Social Enterprises - Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SE O1: Develop a Social Enterprise Strategic Plan for the County.

## 8.7 Community Participation

Community and voluntary groups work tirelessly to support and enhance their local communities, from both a physical and a social perspective. Sustainable communities are built and safeguarded through the work of community and voluntary groups, which accrues a social capital through their active participation in the life of their communities. The Council recognises the essential contribution these groups make to the quality of life in the County, and their value to community development is acknowledged.

### 8.7.1 Carlow PPN

Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) was set up under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. Its role is to advance community and voluntary interests by utilising community development principles, and it works in partnership with the Council and local development agencies to deliver

meaningful community led local development that benefits local communities. The PPN advances these interests by functioning as an inclusive networking body to promote equality, active citizenship, and regular public participation. In this regard, the PPN enables people and community groups to articulate their diverse views within the local government system and is therefore one of the main links through which the Council connects with the community. The PPN also gives recognition to the essential contribution that voluntary and community groups make to the quality of life in the County, many of which work tirelessly to support and enhance their local communities.

### 8.7.2 Carlow Volunteer Centre

The Carlow Volunteer Centre was established by Carlow County Development Board in 2006. It is a community organisation set up to promote and support volunteering in County Carlow, both for individuals and for voluntary groups. Their core work is the Placement Service of volunteers and includes the following areas;

- Support and advice for those with extra support needs
- Placement and brokerage
- Recognition and appreciation events
- Text-message alerts
- Media profiles/Awareness raising
- Schools Transition Year Volunteering
- 3rd Level Outreach Volunteering
- I.T Carlow Volunteering Award
- Corporate volunteering team days
- Presentations on specific volunteering themes i.e. environmental, disability, unemployment

Their work with the Voluntary Organisations includes the following;

- Advertising volunteer vacancies

- Advice and support
- Documentation templates – e.g. volunteer policies, role descriptions etc.

### Community Participation - Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

CP P1: Promote and support the work of volunteers and community groups in their roles in local communities, and to promote volunteerism and community participation through the Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) structure.

### Community Participation - Objective

It is an objective of the Council to:

CP O1: Actively engage with the Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) in the preparation and implementation of this Plan and other local authority policies and programmes, to ensure that they represent and respond to the needs of all residents of the County.

## 8.8 Planning for Diversity and Inclusivity

Providing access of opportunity to all residents of the County is not a finite exercise, particularly where specific and tailored solutions are required to meet the needs of a diverse population. Inclusivity, in a broad sense, refers to how easily all people can access, understand, and use places, products or services, regardless of (inter alia) age, disabilities, or ethnicity. Planning affords an opportunity to support, facilitate and deliver on a more inclusive society, and there are a number of groups who have specific design and planning needs, including:

- Children and young people
- Older people

- People with disabilities
- Ethnic minorities
- The Traveller Community

The Council recognises the importance of planning for a diverse population, including the needs of these groups.

### **8.8.1 Children and Young People**

Relative to the State and the South-East Region, County Carlow's demographics are characterised by a younger age profile. The 2016 Census indicated that 34.5% of the population was aged between 0-24 years, a percentage that is higher than all other counties in the South-East Region. Babies and infants (persons aged up to four years) represented just over 7% of the County's population, which is just slightly above the national and regional levels. The proportion of the population under 18 years of age was identified as 26.1%, which represents a 5% increase from the 2011 Census. These statistics highlight the particular need to recognise and provide for the childcare, educational, play, sports and recreational needs of a young population in the County.

#### **8.8.1.1 Carlow Regional Youth Services**

Carlow Regional Youth Services (CRYS) is a local voluntary service affiliated to Youth Work Ireland. It was set up in 1988 to support and promote community-based youth work. The CRYS provide direct programmes and services for young people at risk and support young people by representing their interests on the agendas of the decision makers. They also provide a wide range of services and opportunities through (inter alia) community-based youth work programmes, drop in, specialised services for young people at risk, and leadership training.

#### **8.8.1.2 Carlow Comhairle na nÓg**

Carlow Comhairle na nÓg is one of 31 such child and youth councils in the country, which give children and young people (<18yrs) the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies. It facilitates young people to have a voice on the services, policies and issues that affect them in their local area. In recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and well-being, Carlow Comhairle na nÓg distributed Youth Mental Health Packs to children and young people in the County. Separately, they are working on Climate Activism in the community, and previously conducted a transport needs analysis in the County to identify gaps in transport services and the impacts of these on young people.

#### **8.8.1.3 Carlow Youthreach**

Youthreach is a Department of Education and Skills official education, training and work experience programme for early school leavers aged between 15-20. The programme offers young people the opportunity to identify options within adult life and provides them with opportunities to gain a qualification and become more confident. As it operates on a full-time, year-round basis, Youthreach has a continuous intake policy. There are 110 Youthreach centres around the country. The Carlow Youthreach centre is located in Carlow Town.

#### **8.8.1.4 County Carlow Children and Young People's Services Committee**

This Inter-agency committee is responsible for improving the lives of children and families at local and community level through integrated planning, working and service delivery, which ensures that professionals and agencies work together so that children and families receive better and more accessible services.

## Children and Young People - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

YP P1: Support the work and role of community agencies, groups and organisations, in the delivery of facilities and services in local communities for children and young people.

YP P2: Consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor play and recreational facilities and to consult with relevant stakeholders as maybe appropriate regarding design considerations for local authority developments.

### 8.8.2 Older People

The 2016 Census identifies that 12.9% of the County's population is aged 65 years and older, which is below the State and Regional averages of 13.4% and 14.6% respectively. In line with the national norm, rural Carlow has a higher proportion of older persons (13.9%) than for example Carlow Town (11.1%). A number of towns and villages in the County have proportions of persons aged 65 and over that are considerably higher than the County average, including Borris (25.3%) and Graiguenamangh-Tinnahinch (20.3%). It is therefore important to assess the needs of older people in the community. It is equally important to maintain a good quality of life as people grow older by ensuring that available resources are optimised, and necessary facilities are provided.

The need to meet the needs of an ageing population in their own homes and communities, through optimum housing choices and an attractive and safe built

environment, is recognised in the NPF (NPO 30) and the RSES (RPO 182). It is also further supported in the Policy Statement "*Housing Options for Our Ageing Population*" (DHPLG, published in 2019) and The Age Friendly Principles Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Age Friendly Ireland, 2021).

#### 8.8.2.1 Carlow Age Friendly Strategy: Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022

Carlow's Age Friendly County is an initiative implemented by a number of local organisations, which began in 2011 to work together across all the areas that impact on the quality of life of older people. The programme helps Carlow as a county to be more inclusive and ensure that older people are involved in the planning and delivery of solutions. In 2014, Carlow participated in the National Age Friendly Town programme and in 2015 was the first County in Ireland to launch Age Friendly parking spaces for older drivers.

The Carlow Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2022 outlines Carlow County Council's plan for implementing the Age Friendly County Initiative. This aims for Carlow to be a place where communities are designed to be age friendly and where older people live life to their greatest potential. The two core aims are:

1. County Carlow will be a great place to grow old in, enjoyed and appreciated by everyone.
2. Carlow will be a county that enables its people to age with security, dignity and the capacity to participate as citizens to their fullest potential.

Housing is a key part of building an age-friendly County and the Strategy finds some over-70s report difficulties maintaining their homes, with adaptation of existing homes and



providing age-appropriate new homes identified as key issues. The Strategy also recommends inter-agency cooperation between the Council and the HSE and other organisations in providing housing services and grants for older people.

### Older People - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

OP P1: Ensure that residential care homes for older people, retirement homes, nursing homes, independent living units, assisted living units, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation are located within defined settlement boundaries and are appropriate in scale to the size of the settlement. The provision of residential care homes and nursing homes within the open countryside is considered only in such cases where it is clearly demonstrated that due to the nature of the services to be provided, the open countryside is necessary and that no suitable alternative sites are available within a nearby settlement.

OP P2: To work with developers, communities and relevant stakeholders to achieve accessible and age-friendly facilities and amenities in communities across the County.

### Older People - Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

OP O1: Support the Carlow Age Friendly Initiative, and the implementation of the Carlow Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2022, and any subsequent such

initiatives, programmes, or updated plans.

### 8.8.3 People with Disabilities

According to Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Carlow County Council is cognisant of the 'National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022 and ratification by Ireland in 2018 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The 2016 Census revealed that 14.5% of the population of the County had a self-declared disability, which is one percentage point above the State average, but is equivalent to that of the South-East Region.

Planning related issues that can affect older people can be reflective of those encountered by people with disabilities. This includes the need to facilitate independent living, access and mobility in terms of the built environment, and more generally integration with, and participation in, society. More specifically, for people with mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, it is important to ensure facilities such as quiet rooms and sensory gardens are incorporated into development proposals where appropriate and that the needs of this group are taken into consideration in the selection of building materials. For people with mobility impairments, ensuring level/ramped access to buildings, dished kerbs and the provision of appropriate parking and toilet facilities are important. For people with visual impairments, tactile paving that can be felt

underfoot and audible signals at pedestrian crossings are also necessary.

### People with Disabilities - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

PD P1: Seek to ensure that all buildings, public and open spaces, and recreational and amenity areas, are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to Part M of the Building Regulations, and 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' (National Disability Authority).

### People with Disabilities - Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

PD O1: Ensure that parking spaces provided for people with disabilities are appropriately indicated, and are located in a manner which has regard to dismounting, safety of driver and passengers, etc.

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

#### 8.8.4 Universal Access and Design

Planning affords an opportunity to facilitate and deliver a more inclusive society by ensuring the environment of the County (including any building, product, facility, information, or service) is designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. In this regard, universal design is the design and composition of the environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. A universal design approach also

assumes that every person experiences barriers, reduced functioning, or some form of disability, temporary or permanent, at some stage in life. For these reasons universal design is not deemed to be a special requirement for the benefit of only a minority of the population but is seen as a fundamental condition of good design.

The National Disability Authority (NDA) is the independent state body providing expert advice on disability policy and practice to the government and the public sector and promoting universal design in Ireland. One of the Strategic Priorities of the NDA Strategic Plan 2019-2021 is to continue to build awareness and adoption of the concept of universal design, maximising independence and participation for all.

In the consideration of universal access and design in the environment, including key areas such as housing, education, health and transport, the Council shall have regard to:

- Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, including best practice guidance series (National Disability Authority, 2012).
- Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland (National Disability Authority, 2015)
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2019).
- Part M of the Building Regulations.
- Any revisions to or new versions of these documents which become available during the lifetime of this Plan.

### Universal Access and Design - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

UD P1: Consider universal access and design in the assessment of development proposals, as appropriate, in accordance with the best practice, policies and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012), Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland (National Disability Authority, 2015), the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2009), and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2019).

UD P2: Continue to carry out improvements to the public realm to create a safe and barrier free environment that can be accessed by all.

UD P3: Require an Access Statement to be submitted with planning applications for significant development proposals in accordance with Appendix VI of Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012), demonstrating how access for all has been considered within the development.

#### 8.8.5 Nationality, Ethnicity and Language

In terms of nationality, ethnicity, and language, Carlow is one of the most diverse counties in Ireland. The 2016 Census reveals that the County is home to 6,880 non-Irish nationals and persons of dual nationality. This group increased in number by 7% since 2011,

and the County is now home to people of 124 recorded nationalities. A total of 6,521 people speaks a language other than English or Irish in their daily lives, which increased from a 2011 figure of 5,519.

Non-Irish nationals and those with dual nationality account for 12% of the County's population. Polish nationals account for the single largest cohort, followed by UK nationals. Latvian and Romanian nationals constitute the third and fourth largest cohorts respectively, and these have experienced significant increases since 2011.

There have also been growing numbers coming into the County from Brazil and the Indian Sub-Continent. Carlow's Rohingya community is settled in Carlow for over ten years, and more recently the County has welcomed refugees from Syria. Figure 8.2 shows the 2016 percentage breakdown of ethnic groups in the County relative to the State.

#### 8.8.5.1 County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020-2024

The Strategy examines the County's migrant population, identifying their experiences and attitudes, along with the issues they face in making the County their home. While acknowledging the overwhelming positives associated with migration in the County, the Strategy highlights challenges faced by migrants, including:

- A vulnerability to social and economic exclusion.
- Under-representation in civil society and political structures.
- Racism, xenophobia, and prejudice.



A needs analysis underpinning the Strategy identifies the importance of:

- **Language** (competency in English to enable migrants to integrate and feel more fully part of Carlow society)
- **Children and young people** (the importance of engaging with this group in promoting integration)
- **Interculturalism** (a resolve to resist any tendency towards assimilation and to enable, empower, and encourage all ethnicities)

Over sixty actions emerged from extensive consultation and in-depth research, which gives the Strategy a robust evidence base. The LCDC plays an important role in driving the Strategy, particularly in respect of agency inputs, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination.

### Nationality, Ethnicity and Language - Policy

It is a policy of the Council to:

NEL P1: Consider ethnicity and cultural diversity in planning for the needs of communities, and to support the provision of services and community facilities that reflect the varying needs of ethnic minority groups to facilitate ease of integration into local communities.

### Nationality, Ethnicity and Language - Objective

It is an objective of the Council to:

NEL O1: Support the implementation of the County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020-2024, and any subsequent editions of the Strategy.

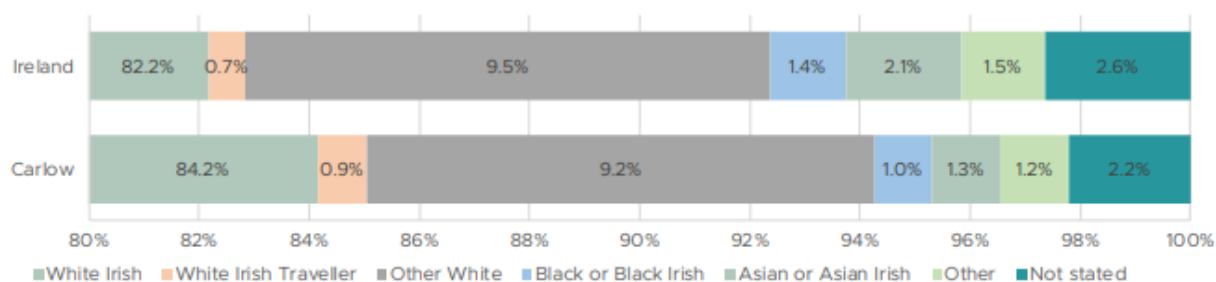


Figure 8.2 : Population by Ethnicity, Ireland and Carlow, 2016

### 8.8.6 LGBTI+ Community

LGBT Ireland, set up in 2010, is the national organisation that together with its network members, aims to improve the lives of LGBT+ people across Ireland, Ireland by providing support, training and advocacy services to them, their families and friends. LGBT Ireland also delivers LGBT awareness training to other services and community groups, to enhance the support received by LGBT people accessing these services and groups.

#### 8.8.6.1 National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021

The Department of Justice and Equality published the Strategy, which contains over 100 actions that are aimed at promoting inclusion, protecting rights and improving the quality of life and wellbeing of LGBTI+ people. It reflects the commitment in the Programme for Government to create an equal, fair and inclusive society for all, target discrimination and enable LGBTI+ people to overcome the barriers they face.

#### LGBTI+ Community – Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

LGBTI P1: Support the role of Carlow Pride Festival for the LGBTI+ community.

LGBTI P2: Support the publication of the “The Out Mag”, a voluntary community project and online magazine supported by the Carlow Pride Festival committee, which aims is to document and celebrate LGBTI+ people, life and stories from Carlow.

LGBTI P3: Support the implementation of the key recommendations of “LGBTI Voices in Carlow”, a report produced by the Carlow County Development Partnership.

LGBTI P4: Support the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021, as published by the Department of Justice and Equality, and any subsequent or updated strategy.

### 8.8.7 The Travelling Community

Travellers are recognised as an ethnic minority, and while not all have the same lifestyle, some do have particular housing requirements on the basis of their economic activity and kinship. Census data for 2016 shows that Irish Travellers constitute 0.9% of the County’s population, which is above State and regional levels of 0.7% and 0.8% respectively. With the exception of Laois, the County has a higher proportion of Travellers than is the case in all its neighbouring

Counties. Carlow's Travellers also have a young age profile, with over half (54%) under the age of 20.

#### **8.8.7.1 Carlow Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024**

The Council recognises the specific requirements of providing accommodation for the Traveller Community. It also recognises its role in empowering and facilitating the community so that it can provide for its own accommodation to a greater degree. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 places a statutory obligation on the Council to prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme, subject to periodic review, to meet the existing and projected needs of the Traveller Community in the County.

#### **8.8.7.2 Local Traveller Accommodations Consultative Committee (LTACC)**

Membership of the LTACC consists of Traveller representatives, Traveller Development Groups, Elected Representatives of the Council and Council officials. The role of Carlow's Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee is to provide a forum where Traveller Accommodation issues and policy can be addressed in a timely and co-ordinated manner and where policy decisions can be made.

#### **8.8.7.3 St. Catherine's Traveller Programmes**

St. Catherine's is a community and voluntary agency in Carlow Town. Their Traveller Programmes aim to achieve social justice and improve equality outcomes for the Travelling Community in Carlow and its environs. They focus on working in partnership with the community at local, regional and national levels to effect this change. There are three

key programmes delivered by the Traveller Programmes Team with the support, strategic guidance and supervision of a Traveller Family Support, Community Development and Health Programmes Manager. The programmes are devised, planned, delivered, evaluated and reviewed within an equality and diversity framework that sees anti-discriminatory work practice at its core. The programmes include Traveller Community Development, Traveller Men's Health Work, and Community Travellers Health Workers.

#### **The Travelling Community - Policy**

It is a policy of the Council to:

TC P1: Support the role of community organisations, groups and programmes in the delivery of facilities and services and to members of the Travelling Community.

#### **8.9 Community Facilities**

The term 'community facilities' covers a variety of amenities which are responsive to and meet the needs of individual communities, in areas such as for education, childcare, sports and recreation, healthcare, and a good quality-built environment. A large range of these facilities are owned and/or managed by local communities themselves, and are of paramount importance to quality of life, wellbeing and social interaction in their respective areas. The loss of community facilities can have a major impact on a community, especially in areas where no other dedicated facilities exist.

The County Carlow Local Sports Partnership (LSP) is at the forefront of the development and promotion of sporting and recreational facilities for communities in the County. The LSP works with clubs, schools and community

groups to ensure that structures are in place to enable participation for all community members in a wide range of sport or physical activity options.

The Council is committed over the period of this plan subject to resources, to providing an appropriate range of shared, inclusive and accessible community facilities to serve the needs and expectations of a growing and diverse population. In order to prevent the loss of community facilities, the Council will discourage their change of use to non-community uses.

Refer also to Chapter 11 of the Plan in relation to recreation facilities.

### **Community Facilities - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CF P1: Assist in the provision of community facilities by reserving suitably located land, through the provision of finance for their development (where available and appropriate), and/or by the use of the development management process to ensure provision is made for such facilities as considered appropriate.

CF P2: Optimise existing and proposed community facilities and infrastructure by facilitating the co-location and shared use by community groups of such facilities, including amenities and schools, ensuring land is used more efficiently and communities are active during the day and into the evening, and facilitating opportunities for further inclusion of community participation.

CF P3: Recognise the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community facilities, and encourage increased involvement of local groups, both independently and in association with the relevant stakeholders, in the future provision of such facilities.

CF P4: Encourage the siting of community facilities in suitable locations, especially within residential, town and village centre areas, or close to existing facilities/services and public transport routes.

CF P5: Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards proposals for the provision of community facilities within a wide variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, town centre and mixed-use zones, residential development and commercial/enterprise uses. Any such proposals should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community. It is also acknowledged that some community facilities may be accommodated in rural areas, subject to relevant site suitability and environmental considerations.

CF P6: Promote the highest levels of universal access and design in all community facilities.

### **8.10 Education Facilities**

Strong educational attainment is a basis on which to develop and maintain thriving and sustainable communities. The provision of quality education and training is also central

to a skills, knowledge and innovation based economy, all of which underpins future prosperity. In addition, the availability of adequate education facilities can enhance the attractiveness of an area for families and can encourage businesses and employment to locate in a particular place.

#### **8.10.1 Primary and Secondary Schools**

The Council recognises that schools are a key part of social and community infrastructure, and that they act as an anchor to wider social and community facilities in many areas. The County currently has forty-two primary schools and eleven secondary schools. The secondary schools are located in Carlow Town, Muinebheag, Tullow, Hacketstown and Borris. The primary schools are located in the main towns of the County, but are also spread across smaller towns, villages, and rural settlements.

The Department of Education is responsible for the delivery of education facilities. In accordance with 'Provisions for Schools and the Planning System – Code of Practice 2008', it is the Council's role to ensure that adequate serviced lands are available in appropriate locations, to facilitate the development of primary and secondary schools. The Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Education under the 2012 nationally agreed Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the proactive identification and acquisition of school sites and in support of the Department's schools building programme, into the future.

The provision of education facilities in tandem with new development is critical to supporting sustainable communities. For example, the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG (2009), highlight the importance of schools and their provision in tandem with residential development. School provision

should therefore be an integral part of compact sustainable urban developments, where the opportunities to walk or cycle to school are maximised.

Existing schools have an invaluable role in their local communities/neighbourhoods. The Council will continue to support the role of these schools by facilitating, as appropriate, the improvement and/or extension of existing school and ancillary facilities.

Schools and other educational premises also represent a valuable resource in terms of land and buildings, which generally are only used on a partial basis. The multi-use of educational buildings and facilities will therefore be encouraged where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service.

#### **8.10.2 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Education and Further Education**

Carlow has the significant benefit of having two 3rd-level education institutions in the County, the Institute of Technology (I.T.) Carlow and Carlow College, St. Patrick's. These two institutions, together with the Teagasc Agricultural Centre on the outskirts of Carlow Town, have contributed to the recognition given to Carlow as a regional centre for education and research in the RSES. It is estimated that the third-level student population in Carlow is in excess of 7,500, with a combined full-time equivalent staff of around 850 in institutions of higher education.

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training is a specialist college located in Carlow Town. The Institute is a constituent of the Kilkenny and Carlow Educational and Training Board (etb) and is the largest provider of further education and training courses in the region. It has recently moved



to a new 10,000sq.m. campus with a state-of-the-art design that provides realistic working environments for students. The Institute also has progression agreements with IT Carlow and Waterford IT.

### 8.10.3 Technological University of the South East

I.T. Carlow and Waterford I.T. are currently engaged in a project to create a multi-campus Technological University of the South East (TUSE). The overall goal is to build on the respective histories and distinctive strengths of the two Institutes, leveraging the ideas and resources of both, to create a unique and distinctive institution of higher learning of international repute. The TUSE will serve the whole of the Greater South-Eastern Region (a population of over 1.6m), offering wide-ranging opportunities to learners, and collaborating with a broad range of civic, academic and industry partners for improved socio-economic development. The role of I.T. Carlow as part of a multi-campus TUSE will further enhance its standing as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level institution and will strengthen and reinforce Carlow's regional and inter-regional role in education, research, and innovation capacity.

#### Education Facilities - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

EF P1: Liaise with and to facilitate the Department of Education in the provision of education facilities, as appropriate. This includes the identification and reservation of sufficient land to meet the need for expansion of existing schools and/or provision of new schools in accordance with the County's Settlement Hierarchy, requirements of individual settlements, their

catchment area and the requirements of the relevant education authority, in accordance with 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities', the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2008).

EF P2: Support and facilitate, as appropriate, the development and expansion of education facilities and services in the County, including:

- the development of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) units throughout the County to ensure the needs of all students are met: and
- the protection of existing school sites for education use and where appropriate the land buffers adjoining them.

EF P3: Work in conjunction with the relevant education authorities to promote the provision for after-school care and the community use of educational buildings and facilities.

EF P4: Support and encourage, as appropriate, the multi-use of educational buildings and facilities outside of normal operating hours, where it does not conflict with the delivery of education services.

EF P5: Encourage the retention and expansion of all tiers of educational services and associated educational and skills training programmes, and to collaborate with relevant agencies in the delivery of youth and adult education, skills training and post-secondary school further education.

EF P6: Encourage the mainstream education provision of people with special needs, including the development, as appropriate, of necessary supporting facilities.

EF P7: Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided concurrent with the development of an education facility. Such infrastructure may include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, parking facilities, ramps and facilities for those with special needs.

EF P8: Promote the highest levels of universal access and design in all education facilities.

### Education Facilities - Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

EF O1: Promote the location of new education facilities within or close to existing settlements, and in areas accessible by walking and cycling from the main catchment areas and close to public transport.

EF O2: Promote the clustering of educational facilities and ensure that new schools are located and designed so as to facilitate walking and cycling. The transport network in the vicinity of schools should also seek to facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

EF O3: Support the development of I.T. Carlow as part of a Multi-Campus Technological University of the South East (TUSE), which will further enhance I.T. Carlow's standing as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level institution and will strengthen and reinforce Carlow's regional and

inter-regional role in education, research, and innovation capacity.

### 8.11 Childcare Facilities

The Council's 'Socio-Economic Profile of Carlow (2019) identified from 2017 Pobal data that there were 1,536 children attending childcare facilities in the County. Of this figure, just over one-third (35%) were attending community-owned facilities, while the majority (65%) were attending privately owned or commercial childcare facilities.

The provision of childcare facilities is essential to meet the needs of the County's residents. It is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure that enables people to participate more fully in society and can make a significant contribution to the early years of childhood development. Increasing workforce participation, as well as changing lifestyles, has increased the demand for childcare facilities in communities.

The Council's role in relation to childcare facilities is in implementing national guidelines and local policies and in encouraging and supporting adequate measures which are consistent with the size and scale of development proposals. The Council will have regard to the criteria specified in the Childcare Facilities for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2001) and any updates to these guidelines, regarding the provision of childcare and early years education facilities. The Council will also continue to ensure that sufficient childcare facilities are provided alongside new residential schemes and that any new facilities are suitably located, are of a high quality and are inclusive of all children, including children with disabilities or special needs. Childcare facilities will be encouraged to locate in town/village centres, convenient

to existing residential areas, at major employment areas, at neighbourhood centres, in the vicinity of schools/educational facilities, in or adjacent to community centres/facilities, and adjacent to public transport nodes.

#### 8.11.1 Carlow County Childcare Committee

At a local level, the Carlow County Childcare Committee offers a wide variety of services including; advice on setting up a childcare business; childcare information sessions; training courses for those considering a career in childcare; and advice and support on applying for government funding. They also offer services to parents, such as providing information on local childcare facilities and information on parent networks. The mission of the Committee is *“To lead, facilitate and support the development of quality, accessible childcare services in County Carlow for the overall benefit of children and their parents by taking a child-centered and partnership approach”*. The Council is committed to working with Carlow County Childcare Committee in developing optimum facilities at appropriate locations throughout the County.

#### Childcare Facilities - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CF P1: Facilitate and encourage the provision of childcare facilities at appropriate locations throughout the County, such as in residential areas, in major employment areas, and other areas as appropriate and subject to siting design considerations and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.
- CF P2: Encourage the provision of childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential

developments. The Council will have regard to the DEHLG’s Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 (as may be updated) in relation to the provision of childcare facilities.

- CF P3: Work with Carlow County Childcare Committee in delivering high quality accessible childcare at community level, and in identifying priority areas within the County for the provision of childcare facilities.

#### 8.12 Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare facilities are essential to ensure that the residents of the County have access to the care that they need. Healthcare is provided by a range of private, community and voluntary service providers. Facilities can include hospitals, health centres, pharmacies, mental health and disability services, sheltered accommodation, nursing homes, and General Practitioners.

The provision of public health care services for the County is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). St. Dymphna’s Hospital/Carlow District Hospital, which is located in Carlow Town, has an important role for healthcare provision for the County. However, more recent HSE policy has reflected a shift away from traditional hospital-based care, towards more community-based care, with an increased emphasis on meeting people’s needs at local level by primary care teams. Building on the national ‘Health Strategy Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You’, the primary care model aims to ensure everyone has ready access to a broad spectrum of care services through a local primary care team. The HSE Primary Care Centre for the County is located in Carlow Town, and this is the entry point to

community health, along with local Health Centres operating throughout other locations in the County.

The primary role of the Council in healthcare provision is to ensure there are adequate lands available in development plans and local area plans to provide for new facilities and the expansion or adaptation of existing facilities. Proposals relating to healthcare facilities will be assessed on their own merits but should reflect the County's Settlement Hierarchy with regard to scale and location and should be accessible and integrated into communities.

### Healthcare Facilities - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- HF P1: Support the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, including the development of both the system of hospital care and the provision of community-based primary care facilities.
- HF P2: Encourage the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities into new and existing communities, and to promote the location of health services and care facilities within existing settlements, on sites convenient to pedestrian and cycling paths and public transport.
- HF P3: Support the role of St. Dymphna's Hospital/Carlow District Hospital as an important facility for healthcare services in the County,
- HF P4: Support and facilitate, as appropriate, the development and expansion of

existing healthcare facilities in the County.

- HF P5: Ensure that adequate land and services are available for the provision of all types of facilities for the elderly including nursing homes/retirement centres both public and private and the improvement, expansion and establishment of health services generally such as extended nursing care, day care and respite care.

### 8.13 Emergency Services

The Council is the Fire Authority for Carlow Town and County. Carlow Fire and Rescue Service operates out of the Fire Service Headquarters, which is strategically located in Carlow Town. There are also a number of outlining stations at Hacketstown, Tullow and Muinebheag. The service responds to emergencies dealing with fire calls, vehicle accidents, chemical incidents, oil spillages, and with matters that arise under the Fire Services Acts, Building Control and Dangerous Substances Legislation. It also concerns itself with promoting and ensuring a minimum standard of Fire Safety in the community through a number of measures, including active community involvement, information campaigns, and Fire Safety Inspections. The service also provides licensing and certification of new development and monitors existing structures for compliance with current fire safety practices.

The Council also plans and prepares for major emergencies on an ongoing basis. The Major Emergency Management Section facilitates and coordinates the preparation of a Major Emergency Plan, and training for staff of the Council. The purpose of this plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable the three principal emergency response agencies, An

Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authority, to co-ordinate their efforts whenever a major emergency occurs.

### Emergency Services - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

ES P1: Improve emergency and fire service provision where required to all settlements/areas in which population and/or demands have increased subject to the availability of resources and finance.

### 8.14 Library Service

Carlow Library Service aims to provide a quality and accessible service, which enhances the lives of citizens and communities of the County. It provides for the information, cultural, education, recreational and learning needs of people throughout the network of library branches in Carlow Town (Central Library and Administrative Headquarters), Muinebheag, Tullow, and Borris.

A wide range of services are provided by the library network which include access to technology, e-services, children's services, special collections, local studies, genealogy and archives, community information, lifelong learning initiatives, and regular events and programmes.

The public library service remains an important function of the Council and will continue to be an open, accessible and democratic institution, providing a multi-faceted service to all ages of the population.

### Library Services - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

LS P1: Support the development of the library service in the County, including

the delivery of expanded facilities and services to cater for the diverse and multiple needs of local communities.

LS P2: Ensure that the County Library Service is strongly positioned to support the knowledge society, social inclusion, e-Government, life-long learning initiatives, local studies and archive services, children's services, services to rural communities, the housebound and older people.

### Library Services - Objective

It is an objective of the Council to:

LS O1: Support the re-development and extension of Carlow Central Library, subject to the availability of resources and finance, and compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.

### 8.15 Arts and Cultural Facilities

The Arts and Culture is a vibrant element of social life in Carlow impacting across a wide range of areas from tourism to cultural development. Arts and cultural facilities are wide ranging in the County and include museums, galleries, theatres, cinema, libraries, buildings and spaces of important artistic and cultural significance, halls for meetings, community and arts centres and music venues. These facilities contribute towards the intellectual, artistic and social quality of life for people in the County. They can also encourage people, tourism, businesses, and jobs to an area and enhance the image of a local area, helping to create a sense of place, enforcing local distinctiveness and contributing to the regeneration of the urban environment. The facilities themselves can provide a means for creating access to

and understanding of the County's heritage, artistic, cultural and amenity assets.

The Council supports and promotes opportunities for everyone to participate in the arts and cultural life of the County by facilitating the provision of well-managed, sustainable infrastructure, suitable for all ages, and by adopting a flexible approach to the incorporation of arts and cultural facilities in the development or refurbishment of community facilities.

Funding and support schemes for arts in the County include:

- Individual Artists and Community Groups Arts Acts Grants Scheme
- ArtLinks
- Per Cent for Art Scheme

#### **8.15.1 The County Carlow Local Arts Development Plan 2016-2021**

The County Carlow Local Arts Development Plan 2016-2021 sets out strategic objectives and actions aimed at leading, nurturing, and sustaining the arts sector in the County. This includes (inter alia) objectives and actions to maximise opportunities for arts, funding, address artists' working space, provide commissioning opportunities for artists, and nurture professional development.

#### **8.15.2 VISUAL**

The developing cultural quarter in Carlow Town includes the VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and George Bernard Shaw Theatre for contemporary and traditional productions. They include a 320-seater performing arts theatre, four principal gallery spaces (main gallery, studio gallery, link gallery and digital gallery) as well as theatre and support facilities. The building won the 'Best Cultural Building' in the RIAI Irish architecture awards 2010.

### **Arts and Cultural Facilities - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CA P1: Encourage the provision of new or improved cultural, arts and entertainment facilities, particularly in the parts of the County where there is a deficiency in such provision, and to recognise and support the role of arts and culture as a form of community infrastructure that can make a positive contribution to the public realm, including urban development, regeneration, and placemaking.
- CA P2: Promote and support the role and continued expression of local culture, arts and entertainment in the County, and to facilitate and encourage the use of public spaces in towns and villages for art events and performances.
- CA P3: Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council, are accessible to the wider community, and to promote the role of these centres as focal points for the community.
- CA P4: Promote and support local arts and cultural development and funding opportunities, and increase public awareness of, participation in, and access to the Arts, in line with the objectives and actions of the County Carlow Local Arts Development Plan.
- CA P5: Continue to promote and support the role of the VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and George Bernard Shaw Theatre as a regional and county arts asset venue of national significance, in supporting

artists in their practice and providing opportunities for new works to be commissioned, and as a venue for residents and visitors to access.

CA P6: Promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as the government supported Per Cent for Art Scheme and the development management process.

CA P7: Encourage and support the creation and display of works of art in public areas, including appropriate locations within the streetscape, provided no unacceptable environmental, amenity, traffic or other adverse issues arise.

### **Culture, Arts and Entertainment - Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

CA O1: Support the implementation of the County Carlow Local Arts Development Plan 2016-2021, and any updated version of this Plan, as a means of promoting the development of arts and culture in the County.

#### **8.16 Places of Worship and Burial Grounds**

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that places of worship and multi-faith centres have in a community context and will therefore endeavour to accommodate and facilitate their provision and/or extension, where appropriate. Given the potential noise and traffic impacts associated with these uses, the Council will seek to ensure they are suitably located so they do not adversely impact on existing amenities.

The Council has responsibility for the provision of burial grounds including, as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. Local area plans, and small-town plans within this Plan, will ensure that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with the future needs of the County.

#### **Places of Worship and Burial Grounds Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

PW P1: Support and facilitate the development of places of worship and multifaith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres.

PW P2: Provide and facilitate the provision of burial grounds or extensions to existing burial grounds, in cooperation with local communities, at appropriate locations throughout the County.

PW P3: Ensure that burial grounds throughout the County are managed and maintained in a manner which respects their associated culture and heritage, having regard to the relevant byelaws.

#### **Places of Worship and Burial Grounds Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

PW O1: Facilitate the development of new or extended burial grounds by reservation of land at suitable locations and provision of local authority burial grounds subject to appropriate safeguards with regard to

environmental, noise and traffic impacts.

### **8.17 Community Gardens and Allotments**

Community gardens and allotments<sup>1</sup> make a valuable contribution to society by improving a neighbourhood, giving a sense of community, wellbeing and connection to the environment and the overall green infrastructure network in an area. They can also have an important educational and social role in a local community. While there are numerous benefits to community gardens and allotments, it is also important to ensure that they are developed and managed appropriately.

The Council will facilitate the development of community gardens and allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. They should be located within or close to existing settlements with an adequate road network, car-parking provision and adequate water supplies.

#### **Community Gardens and Allotments - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CG P1: Support and facilitate the development of community gardens and allotments in the County subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> An allotment is defined as an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres that is let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of

vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or members of his or her family.