



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

in conjunction with



**O'Brien Road / Ashgrove Pedestrian & Cycle
Scheme, Carlow Town.**

**Proposal Summary to Accompany
Public Consultation**

September 2022

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

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1. Description of the Proposed Development

The project involves the upgrade of existing sub-standard cycleway and footpaths along the L4035 (O'Brien Road), Carlow Town. The upgrades extend over a length of approximately 450m, commencing at the Eire Og Roundabout and running alongside the Ashgrove and Mt. Leinster Park Housing Developments before terminating at the Tullow Road Roundabout.

The project will greatly improve pedestrian and cycling facilities along O'Brien Road and will improve access for vulnerable road users to nearby retail premises, educational facilities and recreational amenities. 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 road verge
- Provision of approx. 1km of new raised cycle lanes
- Provision of approx. 1km of new / improved footpaths
- Provision of a new bus stop
- Upgrade of existing pedestrian crossings to accommodate pedestrians & cyclists.
- Junction tightening
- Road resurfacing
- Installation of associated signage and road markings as necessary.

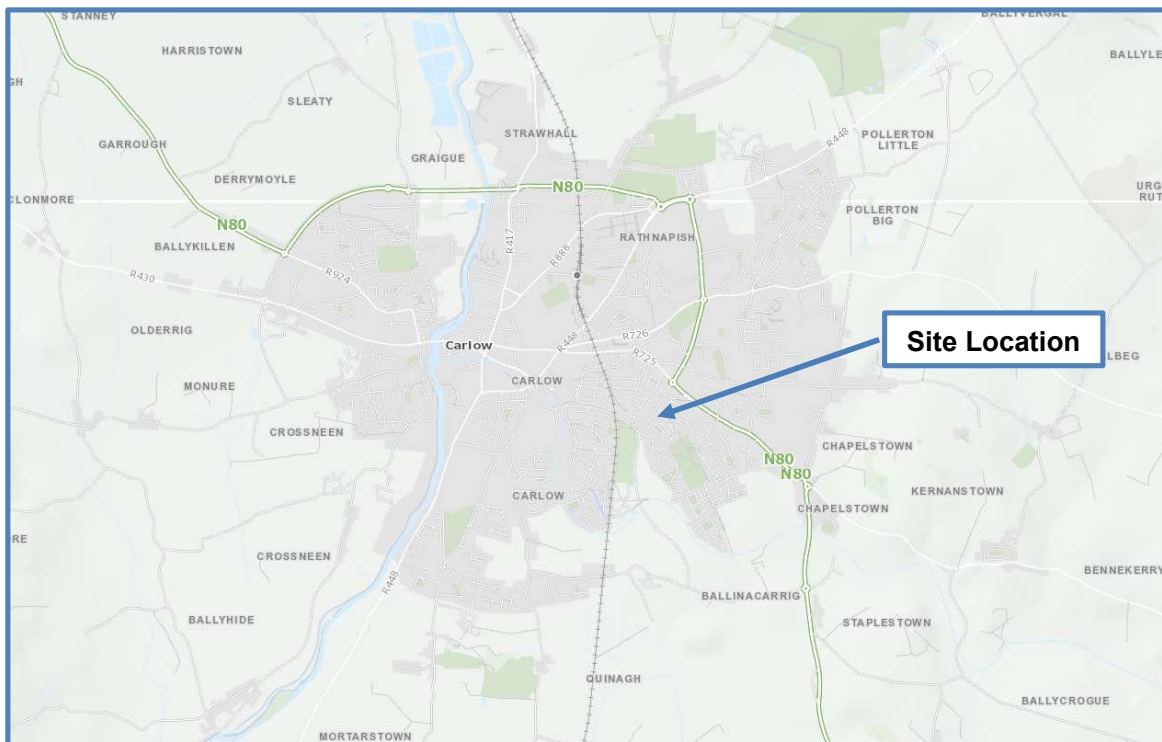


Figure 1 - Site Location

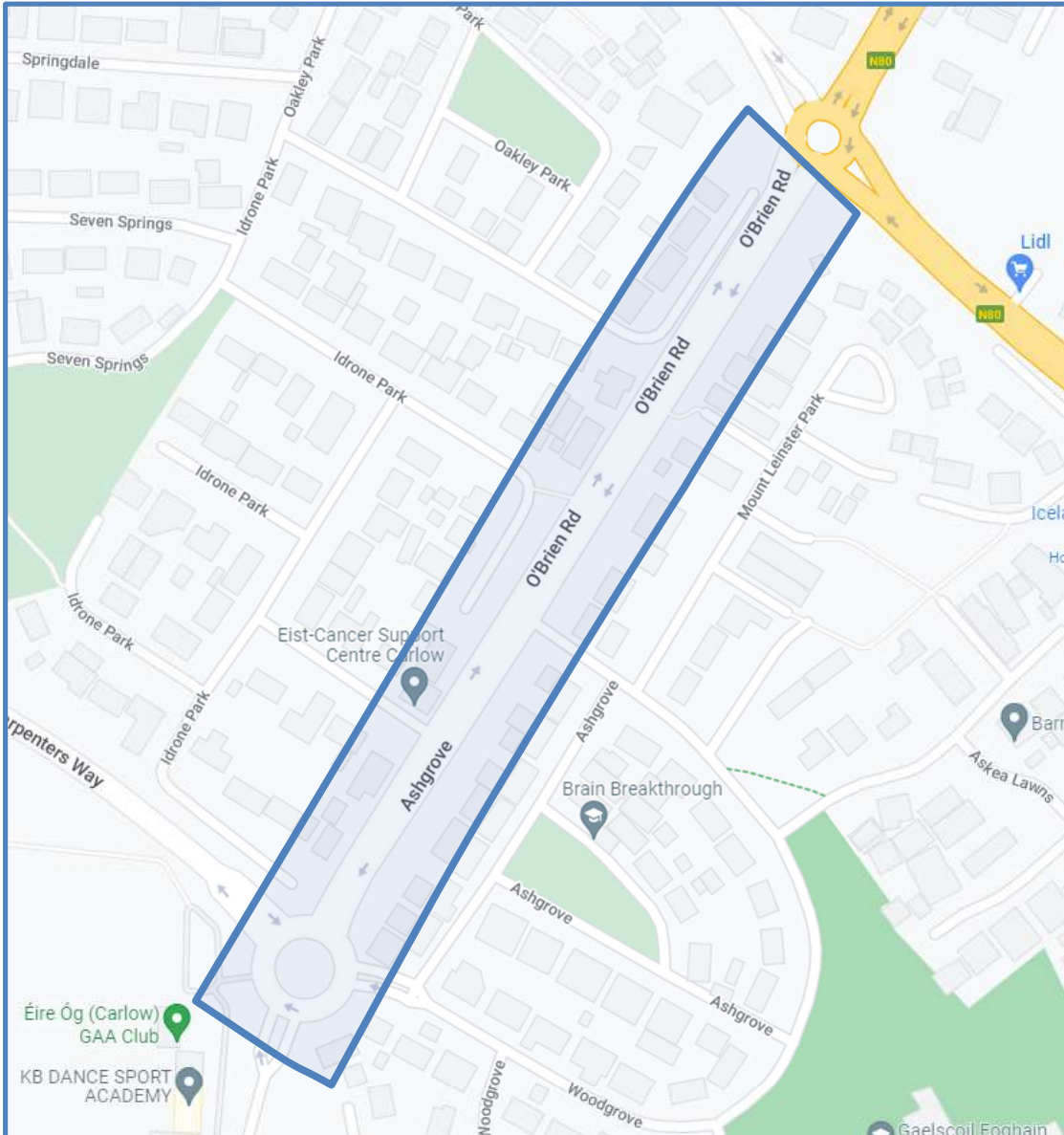


Figure 2 - Scheme Extents

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

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

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

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

The proposed development is in compliance with the policies and objectives of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018 (extended to 2022). In particular the following policies and objectives, which are set out in the following sections of those plans:

Draft 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.

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.

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.

Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018 (extended to 2022)

Part 3 - Section 2: Transport Movement and Access

Transport Objectives:

- TRANS O02: Support the implementation of national transport policy as expressed in Transport 21, Sustainable Transport Future –A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 and The National Cycle Policy Framework.
- TRANS O04: Establish the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area as a cycling demonstration town showing best practice in cycle-friendly urban planning, design and engineering in accordance with the National Cycle Framework Policy.
- TRANS O05: Facilitate spatial development and land use patterns along with traffic management arrangements that make sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and an intraurban bus service) safe, practicable and feasible alternatives to the private car and reduce traffic congestion and associated emissions.

Transport Policies:

- TRANS P05: Implement project recommendations following the preparation of a Sustainable Transport Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area, in liaison with the National Transport Authority, including
- a) the re-working of traffic management system within the Greater Urban Area,
 - b) the enhancement of the pedestrian and cycle transport network and,
 - c) the provision of town bus services
- TRANS P19: Support the development of a new vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access points between specific housing estates and the surrounding transport network to remedy the current deficiencies in permeability and access.
- TRANS P24: Prioritise 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 and promoting walking routes.
- TRANS P25: Provide a coherent cycle network with emphasis on safety and keeping distances between origin points and key destination points as short and as direct as possible.

Part 3 - Section 4: Environmental Management

Air Quality Policies:

- ENV P02: Ensure a sequential approach to land zoning and deliver good-quality high-density development and adequate pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to support improved air quality

Part 3 - Section 6: Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

Recreation, Amenity and Open Space Objectives:

- REC O01: Work towards the development of a network of linked open spaces across the Greater Urban Area insofar as practicable, which are

universally accessible, with cycling and pedestrian facilities and subject to Appropriate Assessment

Open Space Policies:

REC P14: Improve walking and cycling linkages between and within areas of open space to increase their accessibility

Conclusion

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

- It will provide improved access to retail 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.

3 Scheme Justification

The O'Brien Road / Ashgrove / Mt. Leinster Park areas of Carlow Town have seen substantial population growth over the last 20yrs +, and is predicted to see further population growth 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. There are also issues around possible conflicts between vehicular traffic and vulnerable road users wishing to access town centre services and amenities.

This scheme will encourage modal shift by enabling shorts trips, currently being made by car, to be made by more sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling. The scheme will also provide a safer environment for all through the separation of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular traffic and provides the potential for future new permeability links which will result in shorter distances for pedestrians and cyclists between this mainly residential area and nearby schools, recreation areas, and the town centre.

4 Impact of the Proposed Scheme

Impact on traffic

It is envisaged that this scheme will have a minor impact on traffic during construction, however no long-term negative impacts are expected. The construction of mostly segregated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, allowing sustainable transport in a safe environment will allow residents make 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 retail premises, recreational amenities, educational facilities and town centre services. The scheme will provide improved connectivity in a safe and comfortable environment.

Impact during construction

The following impacts during construction will be temporary:

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

Impact on landscape and visual amenity

The works will take place 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 also enhance and improve the existing streetscape at the works location.

Impact on ecology

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

Impact on built and cultural heritage

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

- The National Monuments Service Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) – 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.

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- 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 vicinity of the proposed works.

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.

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