

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: CLW-C10-86

Údar: Margaret Brennan

Stádas: Submitted

Submission: Environment Natural Heritage

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028

Chapter 9: Landscape and Green Infrastructure

Caibidil: Volume 1: Written Statement » Chapter 9: Landscape and Green Infrastructure

I am asking you to please provide a biodiversity officer for the county. It is an absolute necessity at this point. We are in the midst of a huge crisis for our wildlife. We humans are only a species among species and all of our lives and well-being is intertwined. A biodiversity officer is the absolute minimum needed at this point to provide a focal point and leadership for projects to address the various species declines.

I would like to see the benefits of biodiversity being clearly stated in this plan and in turn adequate funding be provided for projects contributing to biodiversity enhancement. Project Carlow 2040 acknowledges the link between access to nature/biodiversity and human health and well-being.

At a minimum all existing green spaces need to be protected. We need lots more suitable trees in our urban settings all over the county. Further acquisition of land for planting of native woods will address the biodiversity and climate crisis whilst providing some amenity for communities.

Swift populations in the county need monitoring and protection. We need to protect existing colonies and enhance their nesting opportunities. We are very lucky to have existing populations in Carlow town and in Leighlinbridge, Ballon, Bagenalstown, Tullow and Clonegal. Perhaps an opportunity exists for Carlow to take a lead in Ireland on swifts, and establish a Swift town or county. New public buildings could incorporate swift bricks providing inbuilt nesting opportunities for swifts. Refurbishment of old buildings needs to take existing populations into consideration before any work commences.

A workshop for architects and planners could raise awareness around the need to take swifts, bats and other wildlife into consideration at the early stages of planning developments. There could be a requirement built into the planning laws to ensure minimum requirements for biodiversity are met as new developments proceed.

There is an opportunity here around wastewater treatment too, constructed wetlands could be used to treat wastewater whilst simultaneously providing habitat for wildlife. Public amenity access might also be possible here, making triple use of the area.

Peatlands are very scarce in Carlow so special consideration and protection of existing areas in Drummin and the Red Bog adjacent to Coillte owned land in Tomard Upper should be given, in consultation with the local communities and adjacent landowners. Wonderful and special wildlife exists or has existed here (such as the marsh fritillary butterfly, red grouse, golden plover, snipe and so on, along with rare plants).

All of the different habitats within the county do provide opportunities for nature based tourism if properly managed and sustained.

Carlow has adopted the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan so it should now be quickly enacted on all public lands. This will provide a lead to other sectors of the community to get involved.

We have a problem with several invasive species in Carlow so we need a plan and implementation of same for the county.

Documents Attached: Níl