



Chapter 2

Carlow-Graiguecullen Strategic Planning and Vision

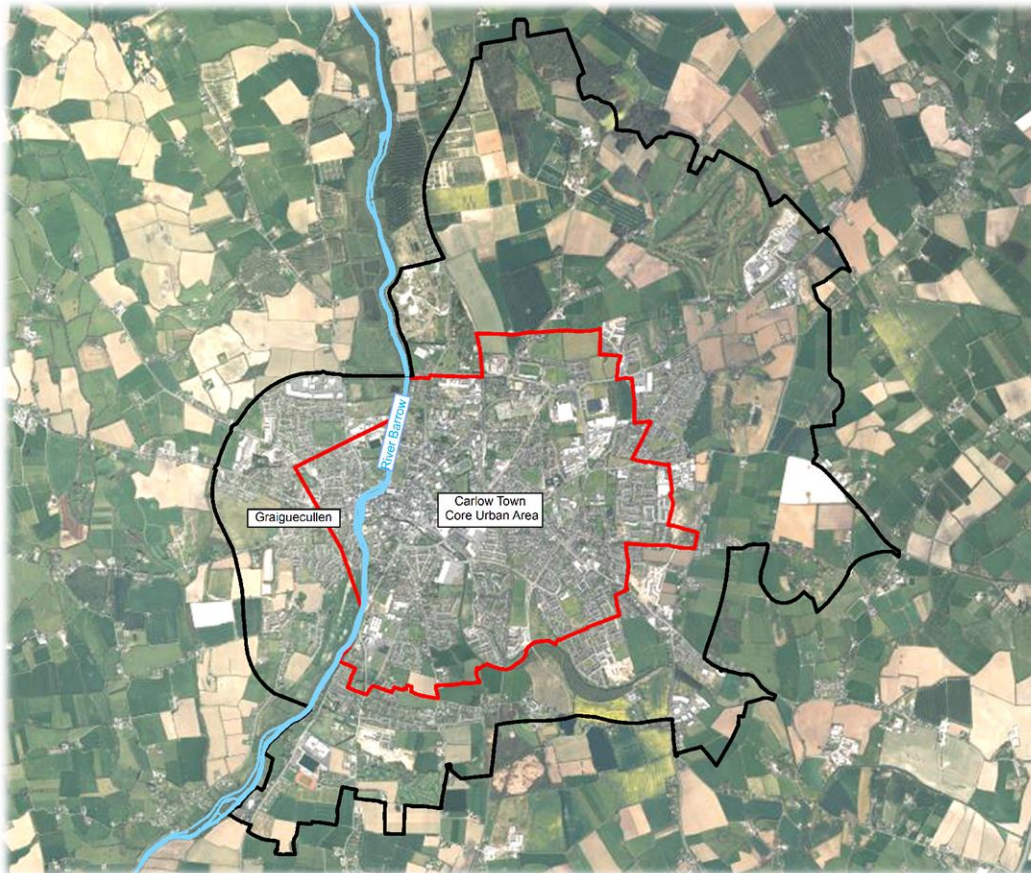
Chapter 2: Carlow – Graiguecullen Strategic Planning and Vision

Vision

To ensure that Carlow-Graiguecullen maximises and builds on its Key Town designation, strategic accessible location, regional and inter-regional connectivity, and existing inherent strengths, prioritising quality of life considerations, the economic and employment potential of the town, town centre led urban regeneration, focusing on a low carbon and compact pattern of development, while seeking to conserve and enhance the town's existing natural and built heritage assets.

2.1 Carlow-Graiguecullen in Context

The combined urban area of Carlow-Graiguecullen functions as a key regional centre for economic activity, education, healthcare, public services, retailing, arts, culture, and recreation. The core of the urban area in Carlow-Graiguecullen (i.e., Carlow Town) is located to the east of the River Barrow and within County Carlow. A part of the urban area comprising Graiguecullen is located to the west of the river and is partly located within County Laois. Being strategically located c.90km from Dublin and Waterford city, the joint urban area benefits from strong ties with the Greater Dublin Area, the Midlands, as well the Southern Region.



Map 2.1: Carlow-Graiguecullen Urban Area Context



2.2 Spatial Planning Context

This Draft JULAP has been informed by a number of strategic spatial planning policy documents. Fig. 2.1 identifies the key policy documents in this regard, from a national to local level. This Draft JULAP seeks to combine the strategic ‘top-down’ policy framework at a national and regional level with the more detailed ‘bottom-up’ approach to policy development at the local level.



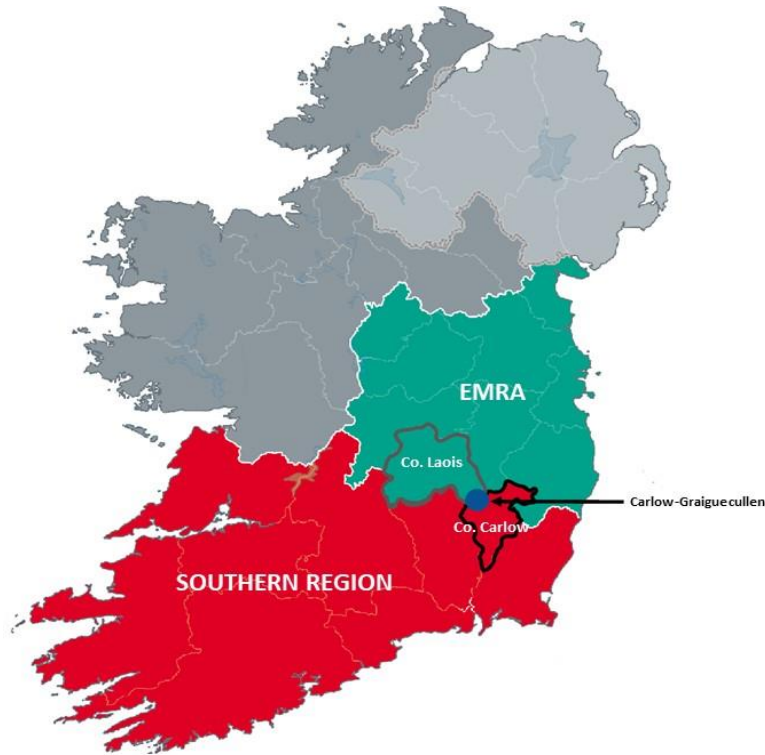
Fig. 2.1: Spatial Planning Hierarchy

2.2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out the Government’s high-level strategic vision for shaping future growth and development in Ireland. The companion document, the National Development Plan, provides the investment strategy that aligns with the strategic objectives of the NPF. The NPF, through National Policy Objective 7 (NPO 7), includes specific support for the implementation of a coordinated plan led approach to the development of towns like Carlow-Graiguecullen, which straddle the functional areas of two local authorities.

2.2.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES)

Carlow-Graiguecullen includes the functional area of two local authorities and two regional assemblies. The area of the town around Graiguecullen in County Laois is in the functional area of the Eastern and Midlands Region (EMRA), while the greater area of Carlow Town within County Carlow is located with the Southern Region.



Map 2.2: Carlow-Graiguecullen within Regional Strategic Planning Areas

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES') for the Southern Region and the Eastern and Midlands Region (EMRA) seek to implement the NPF at a regional level. The designation of Carlow-Graiguecullen as a Key Town is a strategic issue for both regional policy documents and is recognition of the population, and the economic and employment scale of the town. These factors contribute to the town's role as a self-sustaining regional driver and its inter-regional role due to its strategic location in both regions. At the regional level settlement hierarchy, it is a function of Key Towns like Carlow-Graiguecullen to ensure a consolidated spread of growth beyond the five cities.

The key attributes of Carlow-Graiguecullen can be summarised as:

- Road network connectivity to Dublin, Waterford via the M9, and to the Portlaoise, the midlands and the Southeast via the N80.
- Rail connectivity to Dublin and Waterford.
- Direct access routes available to Ports of Dublin, Waterford, and Rosslare, and to Dublin and Waterford Airports.
- Regional centre for education and research with third level institutions at SETU and Carlow College, St. Patricks, and Teagasc Agricultural Centre.
- Diverse employment base including pharmaceutical, engineering and finance sectors.
- Strong retail sector.
- Health and public services provision, including St. Dymphna's Hospital, and educational facilities located in Graiguecullen.

- Attractive destination for Arts, Culture and Heritage.
- Recreational assets including the River Barrow, Burren River, and Oak Park.
- Sporting facilities including GAA, soccer and others as detailed in later chapters.

National Policy Objective (NPO 7) in the NPF as referred to in the foregoing has therefore translated into specific regional support for the preparation of a Joint Urban Local Area Plan for Carlow-Graiguecullen. This is through the Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) contained in the RSES', namely RPO 14 for the Southern Region and RPO 4.75 for Eastern and Midlands Region.

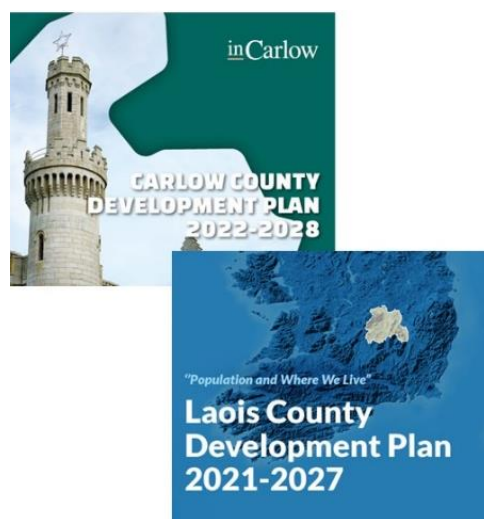
2.3 County Development Plans

The Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 provide the overarching spatial planning frameworks for both counties. In accordance with regional level policy, the settlement strategy in both County Development Plans identifies Carlow-Graiguecullen as a Key Town. The Key Town designation for Carlow-Graiguecullen is defined in both development plans in terms of the town's:

- Self-sustaining economic regional driver role
- Sub-regional influence
- Large population scale
- Large economically active service and/or county town
- Employment provision
- High-quality transport links
- Capacity to act as a growth driver

Carlow County Council and Laois County Council both recognise that Carlow-Graiguecullen must be in a position to leverage its Key Town

designation. The national and regional level support for the preparation of a JULAP for Carlow-Graiguecullen is therefore further underpinned at a County level in the policies and objectives included in the adopted County Development Plans for Carlow and Laois. To this end, it is a policy/objective of both County Development Plans to prepare a JULAP for Carlow-Graiguecullen. This is specifically reflected in the provisions of Policy CS. P3 in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Policy Objective CS O9 in the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.



2.4 Climate Considerations

Climate change forms a key basis for policy development at a national, regional, and local level. The current Carlow and Laois County Development Plans both incorporate a suite of policies, objectives, and related provisions to ensure that climate action, including adaptation and mitigation measures, are integrated into land use planning policy. This has been in addition to the finalisation of Climate Adaptation Strategies by both County Council's and more recently the preparation of new Climate Action Plans. Climate change and climate action considerations are therefore at the forefront of

the preparation of this JULAP. This includes support for and requirements in relation to compact urban growth, town regeneration, active travel, reduced car dependency, a decarbonisation zone, and the protection of natural and built heritage assets. Further details in relation to the aforesaid can be found in Chapter 11.



2.5 Carlow-Graigucullen History and Evolution

Carlow-Graigucullen has a rich and varied history. The town was founded by the Anglo-Normans and developed under the protection of Carlow Castle, which was built in the early 13th century. The town was granted a charter by the Earl of Pembroke towards the end of the 13th century and walled by Lionel Duke of Clarence when he established the exchequer of the kingdom in Carlow in 1361. The medieval town included Dublin Street, the western part of Tullow Street, Castle Street, and Charlotte Street, the layout of which probably have remained unchanged since that time. During this period the urban area was confined to the north bank of the Burren River, with the castle isolated from this area by a marsh known as the Moreen. The castle is the only known surviving medieval building in the area. Its original form survived up to the early 19th Century, during which time an attempt to remodel its interior as an asylum by using explosive charges to thin walls and enlarge windows almost led to its complete destruction.

At the beginning of the 18th century the original core of the urban area had extended little beyond its medieval limits, with the exception of Graigucullen and Burren Street, whose development followed the building of bridges across the River Barrow and Burren River. In this regard, Graigucullen Bridge over the River Barrow (formerly Wellington Bridge) represents an important historical and present-day link between Carlow Town and Graigucullen that dates back to the 16th Century. Graigucullen developed as a suburb of Carlow Town along what was essentially one long street running parallel with the west bank of the River Barrow.

The establishment of third-level education in the urban area dates back to the 18th Century, when in 1782 Carlow College, St. Patricks was founded. The college has the distinction of being the second oldest third level institution in Ireland and was established following the relaxation of the Penal Laws. As part of the 1798 Rebellion 600 United Irishmen were killed in the town in an attempt to free their fellow countrymen. Those killed are buried in the Croppie Graves in Graigucullen, and the battle in the Potato Market was commemorated by the erection of the Liberty Tree Monument.

Advancements in architecture came in the 19th century, visible today in landmark buildings such as Carlow Courthouse, Carlow Cathedral and St. Dymphna's Hospital, which emphasised the importance of the urban area as a county town and regional centre. The mid part of this century also witnessed the arrival of railway infrastructure with the opening of the Carlow Railway Station in 1846, thereby enhancing the social and economic life of the urban area.

By the 20th century there was a new era of development that greatly impacted on the social and economic activity of Carlow-Graigucullen.



This can be traced to the opening of Carlow Sugar Factory in 1926. The factory dominated the commercial life of the area, providing employment and training for almost 80 years until its closure in 2005. By the 1970's international investment arrived in Carlow-Graiguecullen in the form of a number of manufacturing industries. However, by the early 21st century some of these industries had also closed. Today, the growing pharma industry is one of the largest employers in the area, following the opening of the MSD factory in 2008, with manufacturing / engineering industries growing significantly throughout the urban area.

2.6 Socio-Economic Profile

The future development of Carlow-Graiguecullen requires an understanding of the attributes and key challenges for the area. Like many comparable regional and county towns throughout Ireland, Carlow-Graiguecullen faces challenges with regard to town centre vitality, retail competitiveness, employment opportunities, infrastructure (road, rail and communications), public transport, and town centre living. The urban area however has many assets as a place to live, as a regional and interregional centre and as a tourist destination. These assets include a critical mass in terms of population, a central role in hosting arts and culture events, quality of life and as a key centre for educational / third level educational facilities.

2.6.1 Demographics

The study of demographics enables an analysis of population change over a period of time and can include population size, composition and spatial distribution. Limited data has been published from the most recent census of population in 2022. Where data is yet to be

published under the 2022 Census reference as appropriate will be made to the most recent Census data available in 2016.

In addition to the details provided in Sections 2.6.2 to 2.8.2, the infographic provided as Figure 2.2 on the following page provides a high-level overview of key socio-economic data arising from Census 2022.

Carlow-Graiguecullen Population in 2022
27,351
 +3,079 (+12.7%) from 2016
 +1,052 (+3%) 2022 to 2028



82.3% in Carlow
22,496
17.7% in Laois
4,855

Carlow Town and Environs in Co. Carlow accounts for 36.3% of Co. Carlow population (61,968)
 Graiguecullen part in Co. Laois accounts for 5.3% of Co. Laois population (91,877)

Jobs and Commuting



Resident Workers (11,409)
Local Jobs (9,231)
 Jobs located within the Settlement

0.81 Jobs Ratio
 Jobs to Resident Workers

Getting to Work*

- 9.8% (910)
- 10.6% (1,212)
- 2.2% (256)
- 2.8% (234)
- 6.4% (724)
- 53% (6,033)

Note: excludes not stated

CDP Population Projections



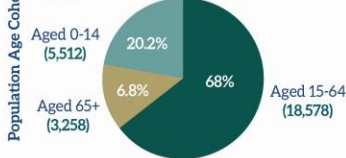
*2016 and 2022 population is based on Census results. 2027/28 is based on Carlow and Laois CDPs.



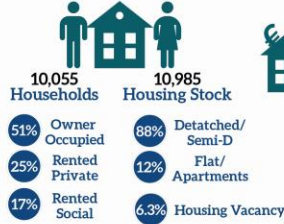
Commuting Flows (2016)

Live In & Work/Educate In Settlement = 62%
 Live In Settlement & Work/Educate elsewhere
 Rest of Carlow = 8%
 Rest of Laois = 4%
 Other Counties = 26%

47.2 Age Dependency Rate
 (Pop 0-14 + 65plus / Pop 15-64)



Data sourced from CSO Census 2022



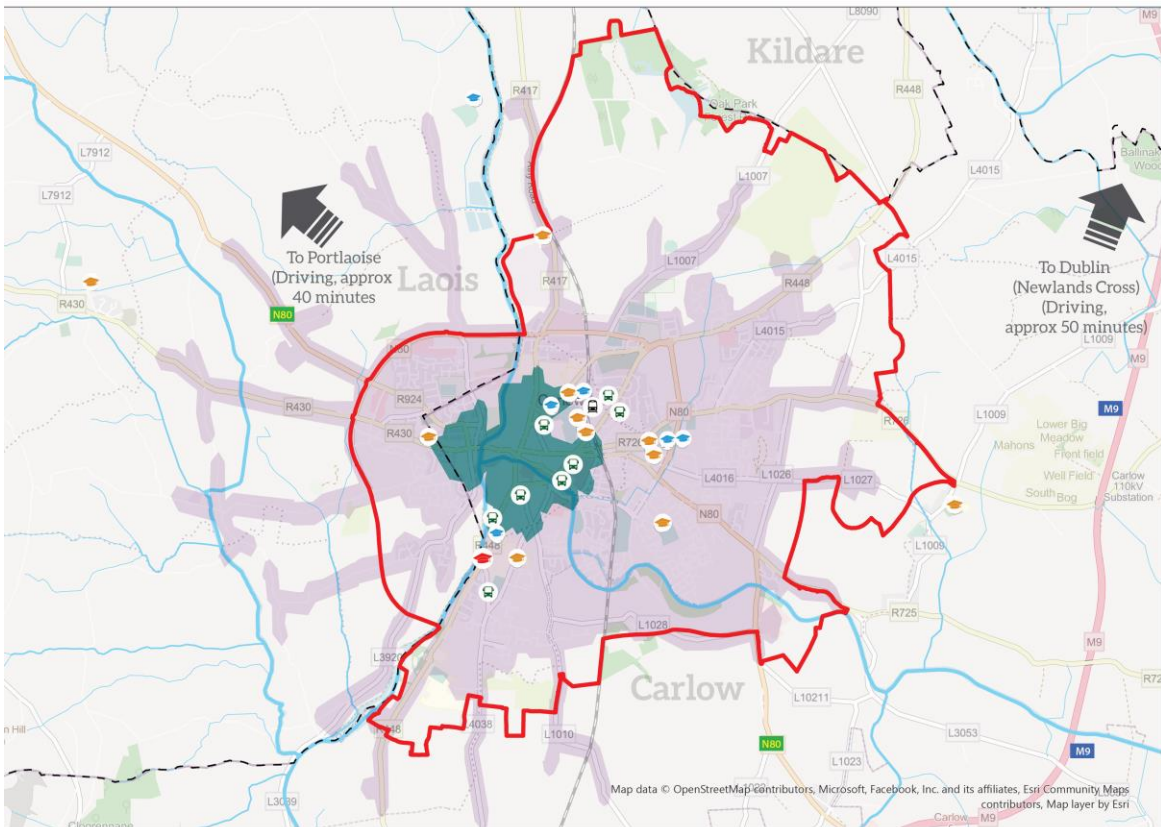
Sales & Rental Prices

€245k Median Sale Price
 All Dwellings M10 2023
 (R93: Carlow)
€1,080.27 Average Rental Price (PCM)
 Q1 2023
 Carlow Town

Pobal HP Deprivation Index, 2022



21.9% of population are living in disadvantaged areas (Small Areas)



- Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan (JULAP)
- Local Authority boundary
- Rivers
- Trainline
- 10 Minute Walking Catchment
- 15 Minute Cycling Catchment

- South East Technological University (SETU)
- Secondary Schools
- Primary Schools
- Bus Stops
- Train Station



Contains Irish Public Sector Data (data.gov.ie) & OpenStreetMap licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CCBY 4.0) licence (www.peoplandplace.ie)



Figure 2.2: Carlow-Graiguecullen Key Data Infographic (Source: Census 2022 SAP Statistics)

2.6.2 Population Trends

A review of historical trends is an important consideration in understanding future growth targets. The population of the joint urban area has continued to increase as illustrated in Table 2.1. Over the period 2011-2022 the population of the town has significantly increased by over 18%. Excluding the five cities, Carlow-Graigucullen now represents the seventh largest town in the Country.

Year	Population	Population Increase	Inter-censual period	% Increase in the inter-censual period
2002	18,487	N/A	N/A	N/A
2006	20,724	2,237	2002-2006	12%
2011	23,030	2,306	2006-2011	11%
2016	24,272	1,242	2011-2016	5%
2022	27,351	3,079	2016-2022	12.7%
2011-2022		4,321	2011-2022	18.7%

Table 2.1 Population Growth Carlow-Graigucullen

2.6.3 Population Structure

An analysis of the change in the age profile between the 2016 to 2022 Census shows an ageing of the population, with a reduction in the number of people aged 0-14 and an increase in the number of people aged 35+.

While the 2022 Census shows that there was an overall increase in population in the joint urban area during the intercensal period from 2016 to 2022, this was not universal across all age cohorts, and was distributed as follows:

- The number of children aged 0-4 decreased by 329 people (-17%), representing c. 6% of the population in 2022 vs c. 8% of the population in 2016.
- The number of children aged 5-14 increased by 340 (+9%) to represent 14.4% of the population in 2022 (14.8% in 2016), contributing to 11% of the population growth in the settlement.
- The number of people in the 15-19 age cohort also increased, by 450 (+29%), making a c. 15% contribution to the population growth in the settlement.
- The 20-34 age group decreased by 175 individuals (-3%). This decline, coupled with the previous c. 900 individuals decrease in 2011-2016, is a key challenge to be addressed to ensure that a greater proportion of this population group is retained in the town. This trend is evident across the State and as a result of long-term demographic cycles – this cohort is due to

increase in population as the decade proceeds.

- The 35-64 age group increased by 2,023 individuals (+22%) contributing to 66% of the population growth in the settlement. This is a possible indication of the return of people who had moved away earlier in their lives for education or work-related reasons.
- The 65+ age group increased by 770 individuals (+31%) contributing to 25% of the population growth in the settlement. This intercensal growth is the highest amongst all age groups and is consistent with national trends on an ageing population.

As a comparison with the age profile of the state, with a rate of 27.5% the town has a marginally younger population (0-19) than the State average (26%). A higher percentage of those aged 20-34 was also recorded for the town (20.3%) in comparison with the State average (18.2%). The high proportion of young people in Carlow-Graiguecullen may be attributable to the presence of two third-level educational institutions (SETU Carlow and Carlow College, St. Patrick’s) and more affordable housing prices, making the area more attractive for students, young professionals, and young families.

Although increasing in both number and proportional size, the percentage of those in the 65+ retirement age group in the town (11.9%) is significantly lower than the figure recorded for county Carlow (15%), county Laois (13%) and the State (15.1%).

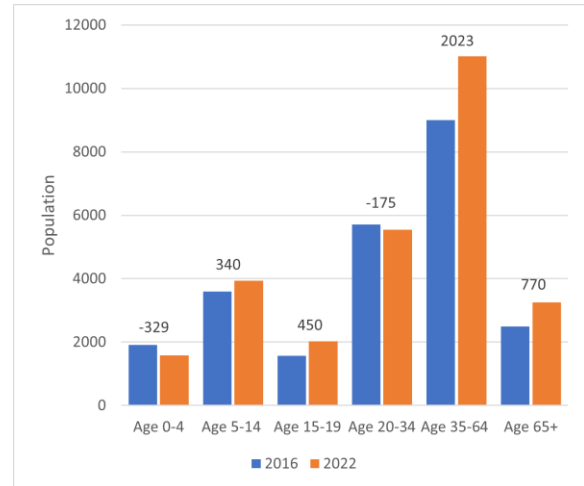


Figure 2.3: Population Profile Census 2016 and 2022 (Source: Census 2022 SAP Statistics)

Age Group	Population	Carlow-Graiguecullen Population %	Carlow Population %	National Population %
0-4	1,578	5.8	5.7	5.7
5-14	3,937	14.4	14.2	13.9
15-19	2,020	7.4	7	6.6
20-34	5,540	20.3	17.4	18.2
35-64	11,018	40.3	40.7	40.6
65+	3,258	11.9	15	15.1
Total	27,351			

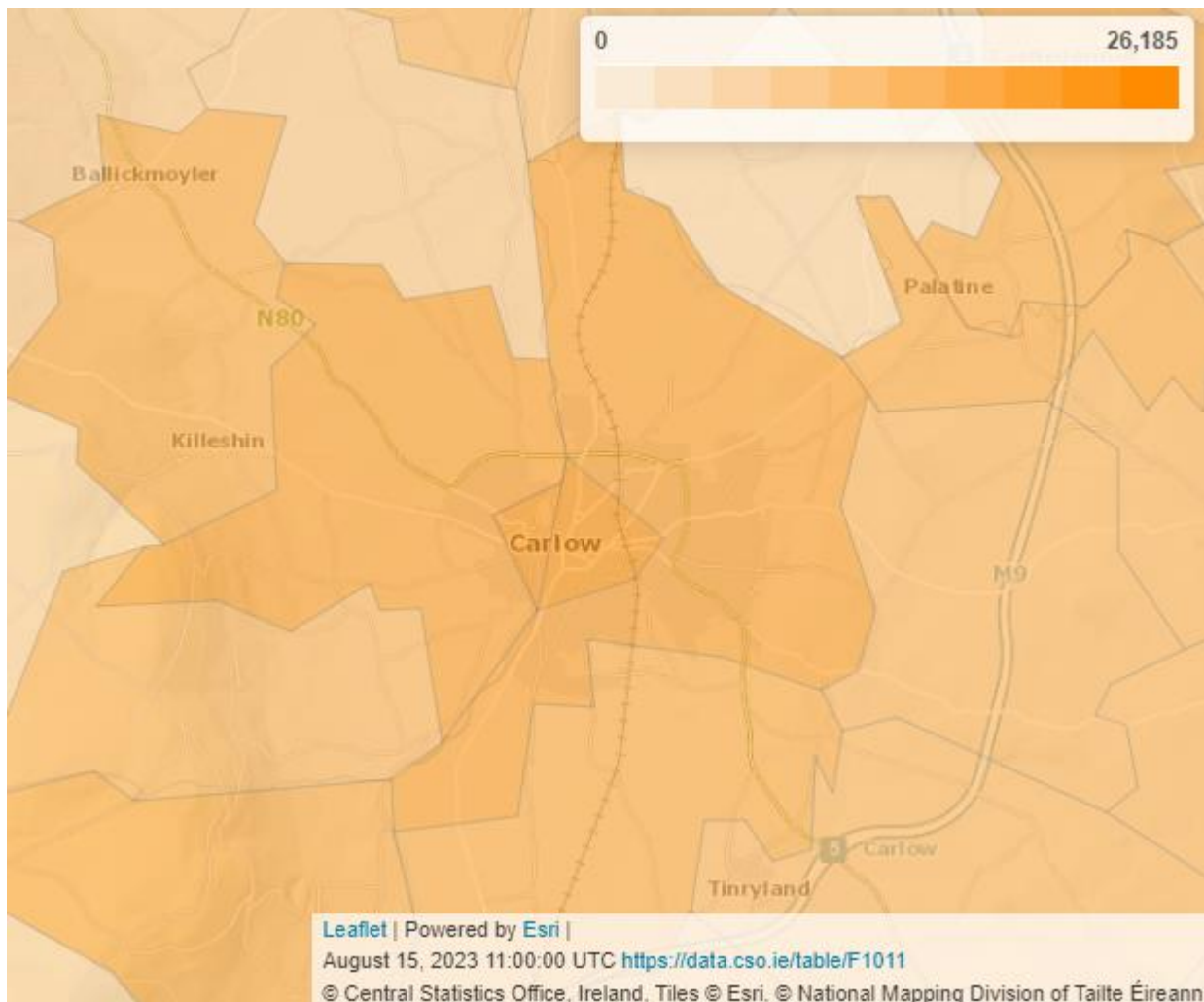
Table 2.2: Population Profile Census 2022 (Source: Census 2022 SAP Statistics)

2.6.4 Spatial Distribution and Density of Population

Map ref. 2.3 below indicates the population densities around Carlow-Graiguecullen as recorded in the 2022 Census. In Census 2022, the population density of the State was 73 people per km². Within Carlow-Graiguecullen the population density was 2,334 people per km², an increase from 2,100 persons per km² in 2016. As shown on the map, population densities vary from approximately 2,735 (Carlow Urban) to 3,180 (Graigue Urban) people per km² in the town centre, the focus of commercial activity, and from between 300-700 persons per km² in

residential areas outside of the Town Centre. At the Small Area (SA) level, several areas to the east of the town have densities in excess of 5,000 people per km².

The spatial distribution of the local population generally highlights the effects of urban sprawl and represents the challenge in addressing the future urban development of the town in a way that supports and promotes climate action measures, compact growth, town centre living, urban regeneration, and the protection of the town's vitality and vibrancy.



Map 2.3: Population Density

2.7 Housing Profile

2.7.1 Housing Stock and Size

A total of 10,055 private households were recorded in the joint urban area in the 2022 Census, an increase of 1,017 (+11.2%). Of the total figure, 8,869 (or 88.2%) comprised of houses / bungalows, which is reflective of house types that predominate across the state and in other county towns. Conversely, only 1,180 (or 11.7%) of the total household figure was accounted for by flats / apartments, an increase of 311 units (+35%) since 2016.

The predominance of houses / bungalows is also reflected in the high percentage of 3-4 bedroom households (6,574 or 65.4%) in comparison to 1-2 bedroom households – (1,781 or 17.8%).

According to the CSO New Dwelling Completions database, between 2017 to 2022 a total of 647 new houses were constructed within the defined CSO settlement boundary for Carlow-Graiguecullen. Over half of these (52.2%) were completed in 2021 and 2022.

2.7.2 Household Structure

In 2022, married and cohabiting couples with children comprised 3,021 (or 30%) private households out of a total of 10,055, which is below the figure that was recorded for the state (33.7%). In comparison, the figure for one person households amounted to 2,436 (or 24.2%), which was higher than the state level of 23.1%.

2.7.3 Housing Tenure

According to the 2022 Census 51% of households (5,135) in Carlow-Graiguecullen were owner

occupied - below the figure for County Carlow (64.8%), County Laois (71.1%) and the State (65.9%). Since 2016, owner occupation has declined in all areas across the State with rates declining from 52.3% in Carlow-Graiguecullen, 68.7% in Carlow and 72.7% in Laois.

In terms of the proportion of households in rented accommodation, 24.9% (2,500) were renting privately (up from 24.2% or 2,190 in 2016), whereas 17.5% were socially rented i.e. from local authority or voluntary housing body combined, an increase from 15.5% in 2016 (+352 households). Occupancy in the socially rented housing sector was made up of 70.6% local authority properties (1,241 – down from 1,257 in 2016) and 29.4% voluntary housing body properties (517 - up from 149 in 2016).

The total share of the households of the town that are in rented accommodation (private and social), at 42.4%, was notably higher than that for County Carlow (28.7%), County Laois (23.6%) and the State (28%). The rental sector as a whole has increased in all areas since 2016.

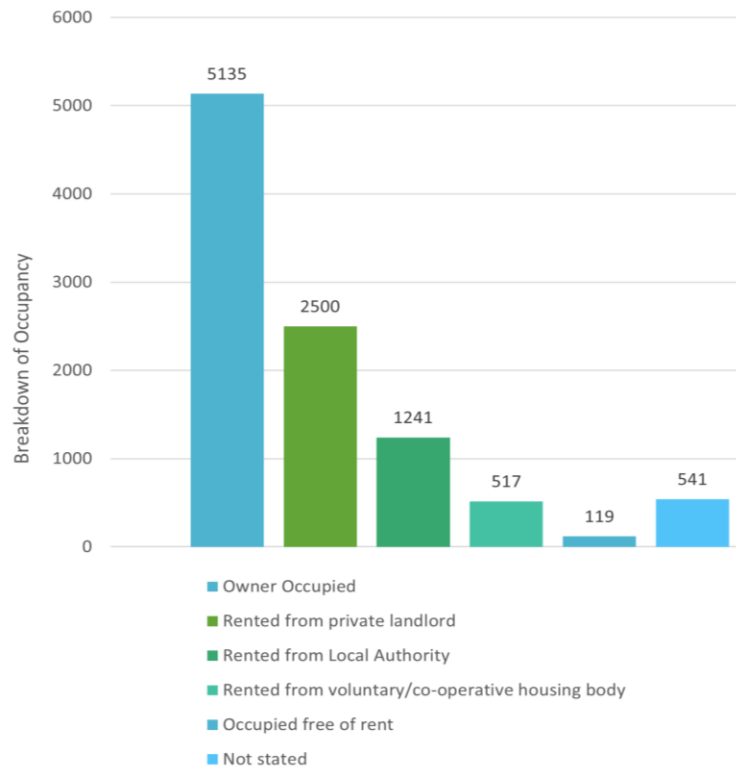


Fig. 2.2: Housing Tenure Carlow-Graiguecullen (Source: Census 2022 SAP Statistics)

2.8 Economic Profile

Census 2022 revealed that Carlow-Graiguecullen is a significant employment base. The economy of the joint urban area is driving and shaping the economic profile of much of County Carlow, and particularly the villages and rural areas that adjoin it, including those settlements proximate to the urban area in County Laois. While Carlow-Graiguecullen is a predominant driver of employment, it also has above average unemployment of 11.9% in 2022 (State is 8.3%), and the traditional core of the town has been negatively affected by the suburbanisation of commercial activities. Census 2022 also revealed that many workers, particularly those in higher level occupations, opt to commute to and from the town. Access to motorway and national road routes, as well as the Waterford-Dublin railway

line, also contribute to workers’ abilities to access employment further afield.

The 2022 Census recorded the labour force participation rate (active working age population 15 yrs and over) for Carlow-Graiguecullen at 59.7%, which was below the state figure of 61.2%. In terms of the proportion of the labour force at work, the average was 88.1%, below the state figure of 91.7%. The spatial pattern that emerges for an urban centre such as Carlow-Graiguecullen is that it has below average levels of the labour force at work, indicating that people who work there opt to live in surrounding villages and rural areas.

Census 2022 recorded that a 11.9% (1,554) of the labour force (At work and unemployed) was unemployed (down from 2,245) in Carlow-Graiguecullen was well in excess of that of the

State 8.3%, County Carlow 9.5% and County Laois 8.9%. The figures reflect a spatial pattern of unemployment that is one of urban concentration, with high levels in Carlow-Graiguecullen despite it being a main employment centre.

2.8.1 Education and Training

The level of education in an area is often a determining factor for businesses when assessing new locations for their operations. In order to grow the employment base of Carlow-Graiguecullen and build in resilience to external impacts, there must be a drive to upskill in terms of educational attainment.

According to the 2022 Census, 41.9% of the population aged 15 and over had a low level of education, upper secondary or below, a decrease of 8.5% since 2016. The 2022 rate is relatively high compared to other settlements such as Kilkenny (39.6%) or Dublin (34.7%) but is similar to the State average of 41.1%. The proportion of university graduates (bachelor, postgraduate and doctorate levels) at 27.5% was also low compared to other settlements such as Kilkenny (35.3%) and Dublin (41.6%) and is notably lower than the State average of 33.7%.

In contrast to the above, the proportion of the population in Carlow with an intermediate level of education, technical/advanced/higher certificate, at 21.8% is greater than in other settlements such as Kilkenny (18.9%) and Dublin (14.9%). It is also higher than the State figure of 18.7%.

Encouragingly overall is that the 2022 Census indicated that the number of people with a low level of education tended to decrease, while the

number of people with a high level of education increased.

Carlow-Graiguecullen is well served by educational facilities at primary, post-primary, and 3rd levels. There are a total of 10 primary schools and 6 secondary schools serving the urban area. These are detailed in Table 2.3 below, along with their total enrolment numbers for 2022/2023.

Carlow-Graiguecullen has the significant benefit of having two 3rd level education institutions, SETU and Carlow College, St. Patrick's. It is estimated that the third-level student population in the area is in excess of 7,500.

	Name	Enrolment 2022/2023
Primary	Bishop Foley NS	213
	St. Joseph's NS	118
	Carlow Education Together NS	413
	Gaelscoil Cheatharlach	466
	Askea Boys NS	286
	Askea Girls NS	312
	Carlow National School	127
	Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál	367
	St. Fiacc's NS	550
	St. Laserians	153
Post Primary	Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach	359
	Presentation College	803
	St. Leo's College	944
	St. Mary's Academy CBS	449
	St. Mary's Knockbeg College	478
	Tyndall College	794

Table 2.3 : Educational attainment for the population of Carlow-Graiguecullen (Source: www.cso.ie)

Further education and training beyond secondary level is also available in the Carlow Institute of Further Education. 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 in the recent past moved to a new 10,000sq.m. campus with a state-of-the-art design that provides realistic working environments for students.

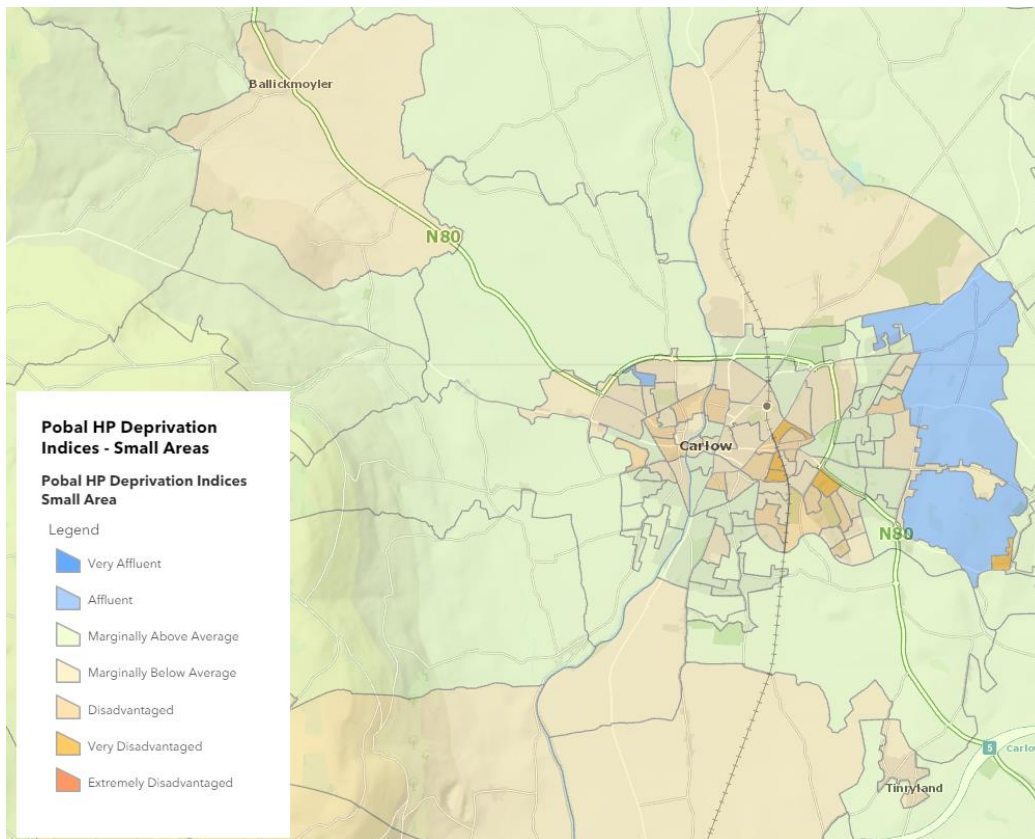
Education and training are considered further in Chapter 8.

2.8.2 Social Affluence and Deprivation

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2022 data is available from Pobal Maps. This is the primary dataset on social deprivation in Ireland and is a key indicator for all local authorities. The available mapping for 2022 indicates (See Map 2.4) that most of County Carlow and a large part of County Laois, in particular the rural areas in both counties, are classified on the Pobal HP

Index as being either ‘marginally above’ or ‘marginally below average’. It is notable that only three small areas within the JULAP boundary are identified as being ‘affluent’. Parts of the urban area classified as ‘marginally below average’, ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘very disadvantaged’, also appear to outnumber those classified as ‘marginally above average’.

Within the settlement a total of 21 of the 91 Small Areas are classed as ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘very disadvantaged’. As such, approximately 21.9% of the population in the settlement are classed by Pobal as residing in ‘disadvantaged’ areas. In contrast, the relevant rate in county Carlow is 18.5% and county Laois is 15.4%.



Map 2.4: Pobal Deprivation Index 2022

2.9 Transport and Movement

Carlow-Graiguecullen is an accessible urban centre, with good access and transport infrastructure that includes road network connectivity to Dublin and Waterford via the M9, and to the Midlands and South-East via the N80. These main road routes are supplemented by a network of regional roads further linking Carlow-Graiguecullen to surrounding towns, villages, and rural areas in both counties. Together with this road infrastructure, the urban area is situated on the Dublin-Waterford railway line, with Carlow Railway Station located proximate to the town centre. Services from Carlow are infrequent, with an hourly frequency at peak times and gaps of up to three hours between services during the day. Improvements to frequency and timetabling would improve rail connectivity for Carlow-Graiguecullen with the wider eastern, midlands and southern regions.

In terms of bus transport, JJ Kavanagh operate on the Dublin-Waterford route, with 13 daily services from SETU Carlow and Carlow Coach Park to Dublin Airport. Bus Eireann – Expressway routes 4 and 4X link Carlow-Graiguecullen with Dublin Airport as well. Other services to regional destinations such as Wexford, Portlaoise, Tullamore, Athlone, and Naas, are less frequent. Local Link runs a number of demand-responsive services that connect the urban area with towns and villages in its hinterland. More recently and following a lengthy period of consultation between Carlow County Council and the NTA, a local bus service in Carlow Town became operative in August 2023 (See Chapter 6 for further details).

An analysis of Census 2016 data (Census 2022 data not available) on morning commuting for work and education travel patterns to and from

Carlow-Graiguecullen provides a number of insights:

- Over half (62%) of all work and education trips associated with Carlow-Graiguecullen stay within the town’s Urban and Rural Electoral Divisions (EDs), including Graiguecullen. This is due to the combination of commercial activity within both the urban and rural areas and the high concentration of schools within the urban centre.
- 8% of trips are to other areas of Carlow County. 20% of trips are external to County Carlow: 5% to County Kildare; 4% of trips are to County Laois, 3% to Dublin City; 3% to Dublin County; 3% to Kilkenny; and 2% to County Wicklow.

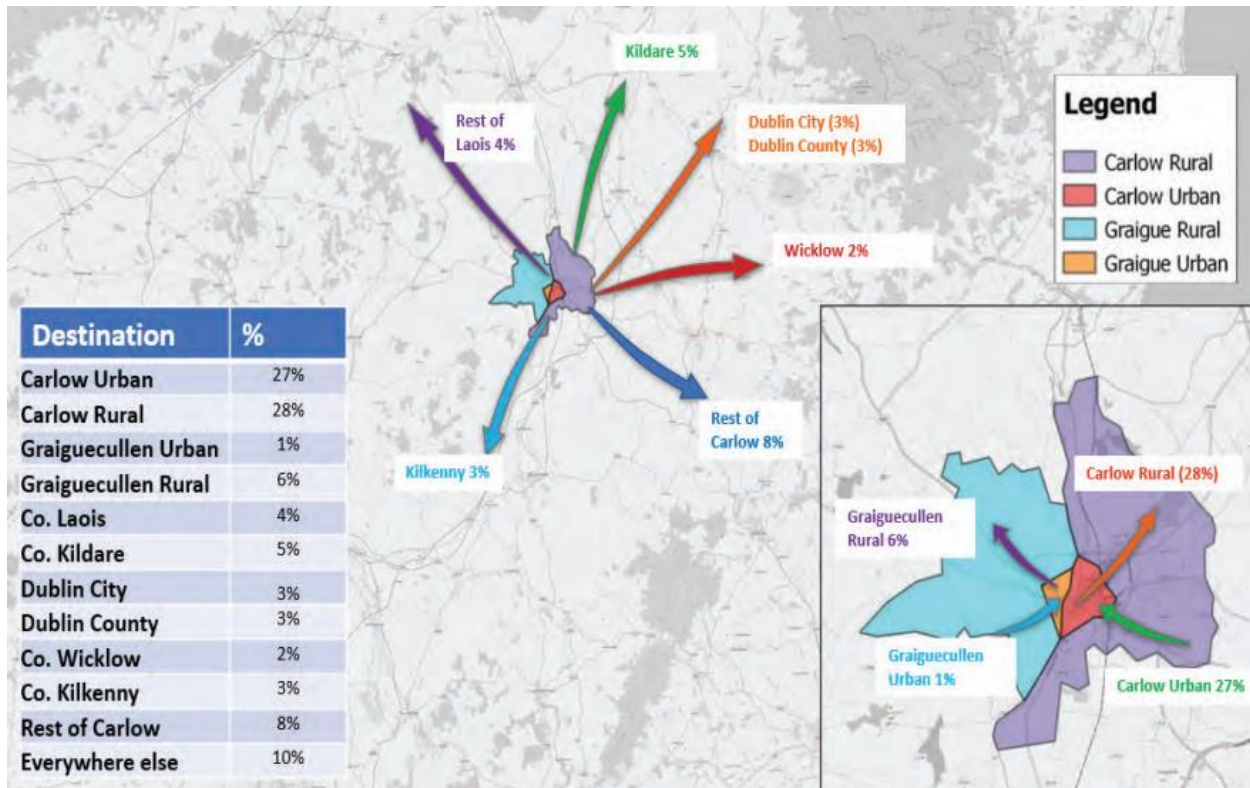


Figure 2.4: Trip Destinations from Carlow-Graiguecullen 2016

In terms of the modes of travel among the local population and particularly active travel (See also Table 2.4), Census 2022 revealed that:

- A considerable percentage of people (17%) walked as a means of transport, which is higher than 13% figure for the state. This reflects the substantial level of local trips made within the urban centre and its environs.
- 2.5% of trips were made by bicycle, which is slightly below the State average of 2.7%. High volumes of traffic and limited cycle provision in Carlow-Graiguecullen means cycling within the urban area is not currently an attractive option.
- There are low levels of bus and train usage within Carlow-Graiguecullen. This is typical of a regional town where the private car affords flexibility for making trips and where

public transport routes and frequency options are often limited.

- A high number of people rely on car usage (driver and passengers) for commuting and education trips (56.6%) which is above the State average (53.8%).

Mode	Carlow-Graiguecullen	State
On foot	16.8%	12.6%
Bicycle	2.5%	2.7%
Bus	3.2%	9%
Train	1.3%	2.4%
Car (Driver and Passenger)	56.6%	53.8%
Work from Home	4.9%	7.4%

Table 2.4 : Modal Split CSO 2022 (to Work and Education)

2.10 Water and Wastewater

Uisce Éireann is responsible for public water services (water supply and foul drainage),

including the delivery, integration and implementation of strategic water and wastewater projects and infrastructural improvements. Carlow-Graiguecullen is served by the Mortarstown Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) which has a capacity of 36,000PE. While Irish Water confirm through their current capacity registers that the WWTP has spare capacity, improvement and upgrade works are planned to bring it up to 58,000PE, with anticipated completion towards the end of 2025.

The public water supply for Carlow-Graiguecullen is provided by surface and ground water sources in the Carlow North Water Resource Zone. This includes surface water abstraction from the River Slaney at Rathvilly Water Treatment Plant (WTP – capacity of 11,500m³/day), and from the Burren River at Sion Cross WTP (capacity 3500 m³/day). Groundwater abstraction is provided from a borehole at Oak Park WTP at the northern end of the joint urban area (2,000 m³/day), and from a borehole at Derrymoyle WTP to the west of Graiguecullen (1,205 m³/day).

2.11 Strategic Objectives and Priorities

The policies, objectives and related provisions contained in this JULAP have been formulated to facilitate the planned and co-ordinated development of Carlow-Graiguecullen in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. This will facilitate balancing the needs of local communities in a manner that addresses the key social, economic, and environmental issues facing the urban area.

To contribute to the delivery of the vision for Carlow-Graiguecullen as detailed at the beginning of this chapter, and in order to maximise on the designation of the joint urban area as a Key Town a number of cross-cutting

strategic objectives and priorities have been identified. These are intended to guide the future growth of the joint urban area in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. They have been formulated to reflect and build on the town’s attributes, while also taking account of key issues and challenges into the future.



Fig. 2.5: Strategic Objectives and Priorities to Deliver Vision

2.11.1 Town Centre Led Urban Regeneration

Carlow-Graiguecullen is a key service provider and growth driver at a county and regional scale. The town faces a number of challenges in relation to vacancy, dereliction, and the underutilisation of sites and buildings. It is therefore critical that the principal streets and spaces that comprise the joint urban area are functional, attractive, and inviting. The joint urban area also has a number of key locations and sites in need of regeneration, which can deliver enhanced connectivity within the town, improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, and promote compact growth and sustainable activities such as active travel.

Strategic Objective

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

SO. 1: *Encourage and support town centre led urban regeneration for Carlow-Graiguecullen, focusing on the appropriate redevelopment and reuse of key derelict, vacant and underutilised sites and buildings, the consolidation of the town through the use of brownfield, infill and backland sites, the conservation of historic building stock, and the implementation of streetscape and public realm improvements.*

2.11.2 Economic Development and Employment

Like many regional and county towns, Carlow-Graiguecullen faces challenges with regard to issues such as town centre vitality and retail competitiveness. Equally, the town has many positive economic attributes such various levels of employment opportunities, third level education provision, regional transport connectivity, tourism, arts and cultural facilities, and many others. Overcoming these challenges and developing these attributes is central to the future economic development of the town.

Strategic Objective

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

SO. 2: *Encourage and facilitate balanced economic development and employment opportunities in Carlow-Graiguecullen, ensuring a vibrant local economy that maximises business and investment opportunities and the existing economic attributes of the town, and supports the*

development of a diverse range of economic sectors.

2.11.3 Urban Design

Renewing and improving streets and urban spaces is a constant feature of urban development and it is essential that each time changes happen that they bring benefits that realise a more accessible and pedestrian friendly environment. However, towns like Carlow-Graiguecullen, have increasingly become less people friendly places that are dominated by the private car. With a 'people first' approach to urban design and planning, the public domain will be given back to the people residing and visiting in the town while still ensuring high levels of accessibility.

Strategic Objective

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

SO. 3: *Improve the public realm and attractiveness of Carlow-Graiguecullen through the delivery of high-quality urban design outcomes, taking account of the need to respond to the social and physical characteristics of the existing built environment and those features that should be protected and/or enhanced by, and inform, new development.*

2.11.4 Sustainable Travel and Transport

A well performing transport network will underpin the economic, spatial, social, and environmental success of Carlow-Graiguecullen. It will also facilitate the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient local economy. Failure to deliver an efficient transport network that supports sustainable and active travel, acts as a

barrier to economic growth, reduces quality of life and has a negative impact on the environment. Building on the town's strategic location and existing assets, the prioritisation of integrated transport and land use, supported by investment in public transport, active travel networks and shared, low carbon mobility options, will improve people's travel choices and support safe, sustainable, and healthy lifestyles. These issues are further expanded upon in Chapter 6, including the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) prepared as part of this JULAP.

Strategic Objective

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.*

2.11.5 Housing and Communities

To remain an attractive place to live and retain its high quality of life, the joint urban area needs to plan for diverse, inclusive, and healthy communities through the provision of affordable and accessible housing, education, community and health facilities, and access to amenity and recreation spaces.

Strategic Objective

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

SO. 5: *Promote Carlow-Graiguecullen as a priority location for regional level community and social infrastructure and*

support the expansion and enhancement of existing community facilities, the provision of residential development, and a range of new community facilities in tandem with population growth to meet the needs of future residents in the joint urban area.

2.11.6 Climate Action

Climate action is integrated into the planning system to support national targets and objectives for climate policy mitigation and adaptation. Measures that focus on issues such as compact growth, urban regeneration, active travel, and the protection of natural heritage, will contribute to the delivery of a sustainable low-carbon and climate resilient future for Carlow-Graiguecullen.


Strategic Objective

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

SO. 6: *Transition Carlow-Graiguecullen to a low-carbon and climate resilient town through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation measures, in addition to maximising opportunities for energy efficiency, renewables, and decarbonisation.*

2.11.7 Protection of Natural and Built Heritage

The natural and built heritage of Carlow-Graiguecullen is integral to the identity and image of the town. This includes but is not limited to, key natural assets such as the River Barrow, the historic built core of the town, and recorded archaeological features located throughout the joint urban area. As well as being tangible representations of the history of Carlow-Graiguecullen, these assets and features



are a key element in ensuring that the town is an attractive place in which to live, work, and visit.

Strategic Objective

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

SO. 7: *Manage the development of Carlow-Graiguecullen in a manner that protects, conserves, and enhances the natural and built heritage of the area.*

2.11.8 Arts, Culture and Tourism

Carlow-Graiguecullen is a centre for arts and culture, accommodating significant modern arts and performance spaces as well as hosting renowned events such as the Carlow Arts Festival and Pan Celtic Festival. The many arts and cultural festivals that take place in the town every year also make a positive contribution to the local economy and to a strong community spirit. The arts and culture offering in Carlow-Graiguecullen, in addition to its natural and built heritage, are the key assets upon which to develop the town's tourism industry.

Strategic Objective

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

SO. 8: *Support the development of, and investment in new and existing arts, culture and tourism infrastructure and amenities in Carlow-Graiguecullen.*