



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

**Project Report,
Rail Link Project,
Carlow,
Co. Carlow**

Date	Revision	Remarks	Author	Checked	Approved
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**Urban Regeneration and
Development Fund (URDF)**

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Appendix A – Site Drawings

1 INTRODUCTION

Carlow County Council are proposing to create a new pedestrian link from Carlow train station to Carlow town centre. It will go from St. Joseph's Road, through the grounds of St. Catherine's Centre, St. Josephs School, St. Leo's College and the grounds of Carlow College to College St.

The project is being submitted for planning permission under Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

This project report has been prepared to support the Part 8 Planning Application.

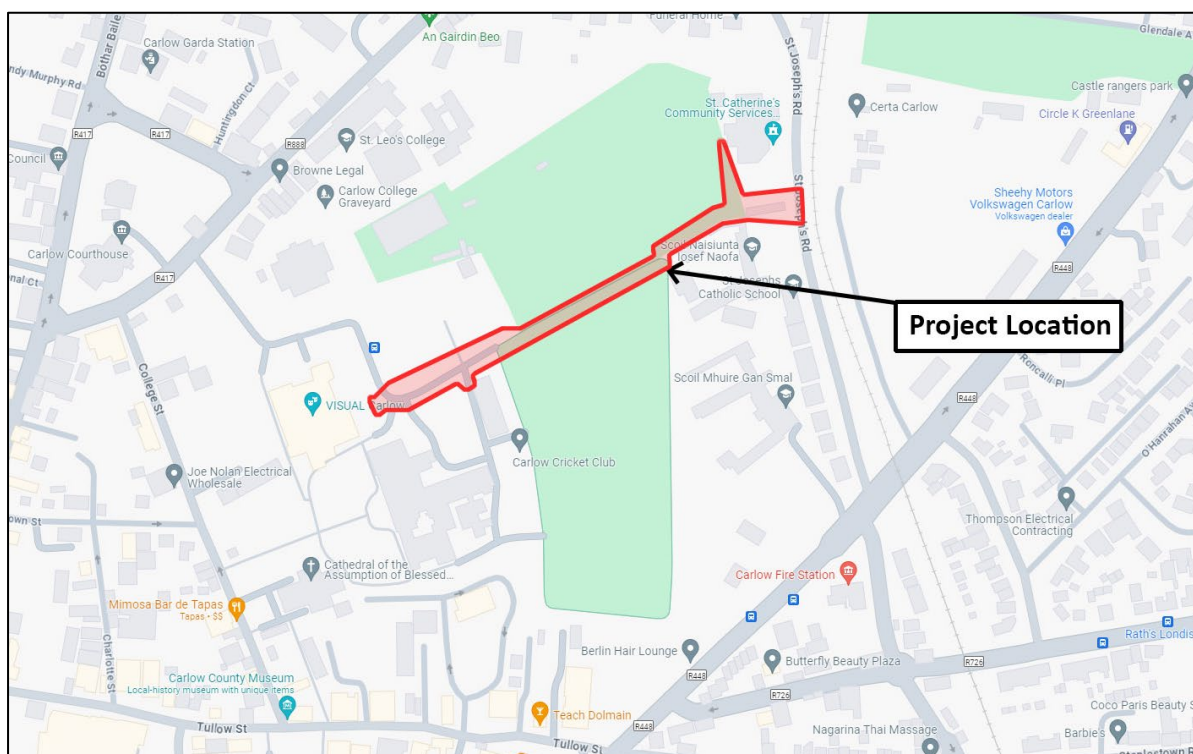


Figure 1: Project location (Source Google Maps)

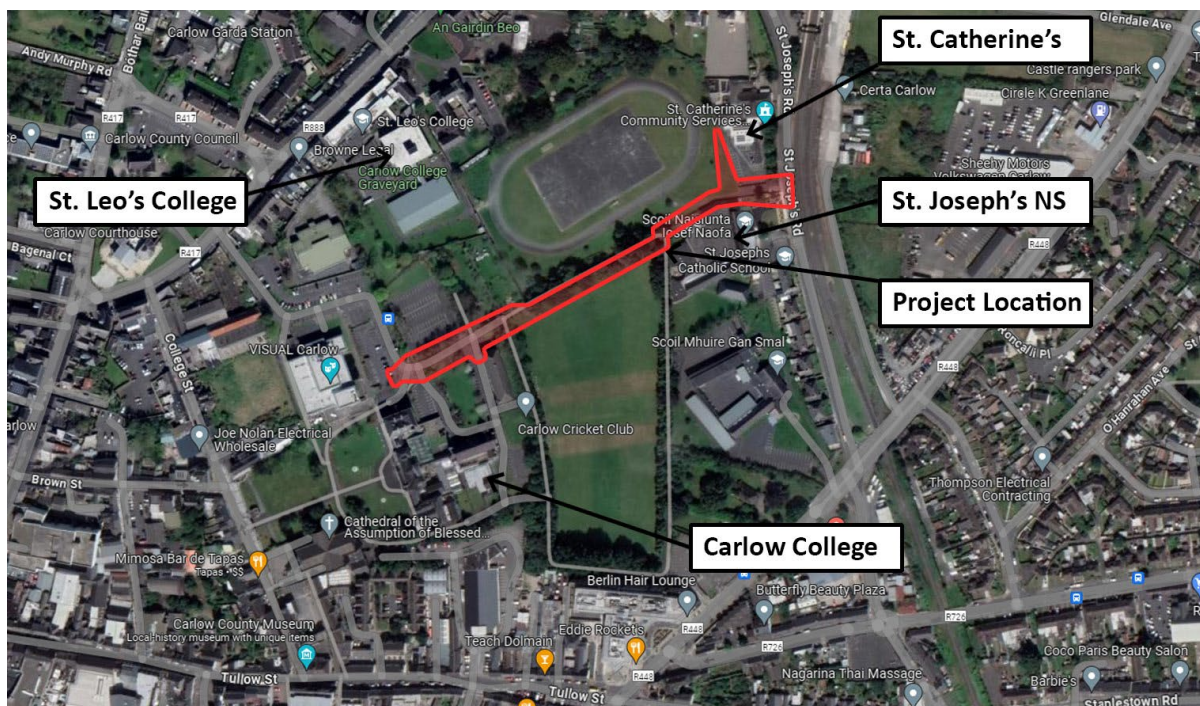


Figure 2: Works area outlined in red (Source Google Maps)

2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 EXISTING STREETScape AND ACCESS ROUTES

The proposed works area is located in an existing urban setting. The area of the works is zoned S5 – Mixed / General Community Services/ Facilities and M2 – Town Centre / Central Area . Town Centre in the JSP for Carlow and under the JULAP.

The majority of the work involves the restructuring and resurfacing of the existing streetscape and hardstanding. The will also be some new footpaths and boundary treatments, as well as new public lighting and reconfigured vehicular circulation and improved pedestrian permeability.



Photo 1: View looking east at the proposed pedestrian crossing location at the start of the proposed works area within the grounds of Carlow College.



Photo 2: View from beside Lennon Hall looking west towards Visual along the vehicular entry exit route.



Photo 3: View looking east from beside the orchard, looking east along the existing pedestrian path towards St. Joseph's Road.



Photo 4: View of existing condition of the proposed entry point from the grounds of St. Leo's into the grounds of Carlow College.



Photo 5: View of boundary treatment on the shared boundary between Carlow College and St. Leo's College.



Photo 6: View of the existing boundary conditions on St. Joseph's Road looking west.

2.2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Carlow County Council propose to carry out upgrading works to create a new public realm space on St. Joseph's Road and also the resurfacing of the existing pedestrian route through Carlow College, between St. Joseph's Road and College Street. The proposed works will create a public realm space on St. Josephs Road. This will improve the pedestrian access to St. Josephs school, St. Catherine's, Carow College and St. Leo's College. Please refer to Appendix A for proposed site drawings.

Within the grounds of Carlow College, the existing footpaths are to be renewed within the existing footpath footprint. The majority of the works involve the restructuring and resurfacing of the existing hardstanding.

It is also proposed to improve the boundary treatment along the shared boundary with St. Leo's College. Our preference is for a rendered and capped block wall subject to the protection of the tree root systems. If the block wall presents too much of a risk to the trees root systems then we propose the use of a solid post and panel fence.

Along the new pedestrian route it is proposed to create several new planter beds, planted hedges and new trees planted where at risk trees are to be removed. There will be a number of linger opportunities provided along the new pedestrian route with a number of proposed seating areas.

It is also proposed to reconfigure some of the existing carparking in the grounds of Carlow College in order to install the new pedestrian footpath beside the existing tree lined avenue, without the need to remove trees. One of the key principals of the proposed design was to accommodate the pedestrian route arounds the existing established trees. This allows the new works to integrate with the already established landscape and flora. To achieve this, the existing parking arrangements will need to be amended.

Within the new public realm space off St. Joseph's Road, it is proposed to create a self-illuminated totem to highlight the public route from the train station exit. This area will be well illuminated with public lighting and bollard lights, inwall footpath washer lights. The space is also proposed to be monitored by CCTV cameras. A number of the surrounding landowners a will also have access and use of this space which will increase its passive surveillance and therefore minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour.

A new pedestrian crossing will be created across the new vehicular route from St. Leo's . The pedestrian crossing will be a raised table, giving pedestrians priority and better protection at this junction.

It is proposed to give St. Joseph's School a new pedestrian gate onto the new public realm space. This will allow parents to congregate outside the gate without blocking the pedestrian footpath.

It is proposed to create a new entry / exit gate option for St. Catherines centre. It provides them with the option of a better entry exit point from their site without crossing over a pedestrian path. The existing controlled access point crossed over an existing pedestrian path and has very poor visibility in both directions, which presents a risk to all other road and footpath users.

It is proposed to provide St. Leo's with a separate vehicular gate. The proposed works will also provide better sight lines overall for the vehicular access coming out onto St. Joseph's Road. Part of the proposal also includes for a separate pedestrian gate for St. Leo's College off the new public pedestrian path. By keeping the pedestrian gate separated from the main vehicular gate it improves safety and allows better access control.

An earlier iteration of the proposal included a cycle lane but both St. Leo's and Carlow College requested its exclusion for different reasons. St. Leo's did not want the crossover of their pedestrian students with the cycle path at their pedestrian access gate. Carlow College don't allow cyclist on their grounds and therefore did not want cyclists being directed through their paths via the new access. If at some point in the future their positions on cycle access changes, we have allowed enough space in the pedestrian paths to install a cycleway.

On the grounds of Carlow College where we are proposing to renew and resurface the existing paths. We will be using a flexible surface, such as a bonded bead or tarmac. The existing surface has deteriorated significantly due to root damage. We are also proposing an improved shared boundary wall, on the northern side, as well as an improved planted boundary to the green area side of the path. Carlow College have requested that we install a traditional "estate type fence" with native species planting hedging along the treeline.

When we get further into the grounds of Carlow College, we are proposing to pave pedestrian areas where several paths and crossing points intersect. We are also proposing to improve the quality of the paving, lighting, planting and public realm space. We are using a number of drought resistant, pollinator planter beds and fencing to direct pedestrian traffic and separate pedestrian users from vehicular traffic. The renewed and new surfacing in this area will include a new pedestrian crossing to Lennon House, as well as a raised table crossing over the access to the car park, prioritising pedestrian users. The new paved path beside the carpark provides a very safe route along the current desire line for pedestrians from the car park to the main college building. The final pedestrian crossing connects to the pedestrian access from the car park beside Visual. It then leads onto the new public realm project delivered as part of Destination Towns.

The key purpose of this project is to deliver a quicker and new pedestrian route from the train station to Carlow town centre, while also connection with existing civic infrastructure.

The project will also include all associated works such as lighting, paving, railings markings and signage. The existing road drainage will be modified which will include the removal and installation of gullies.

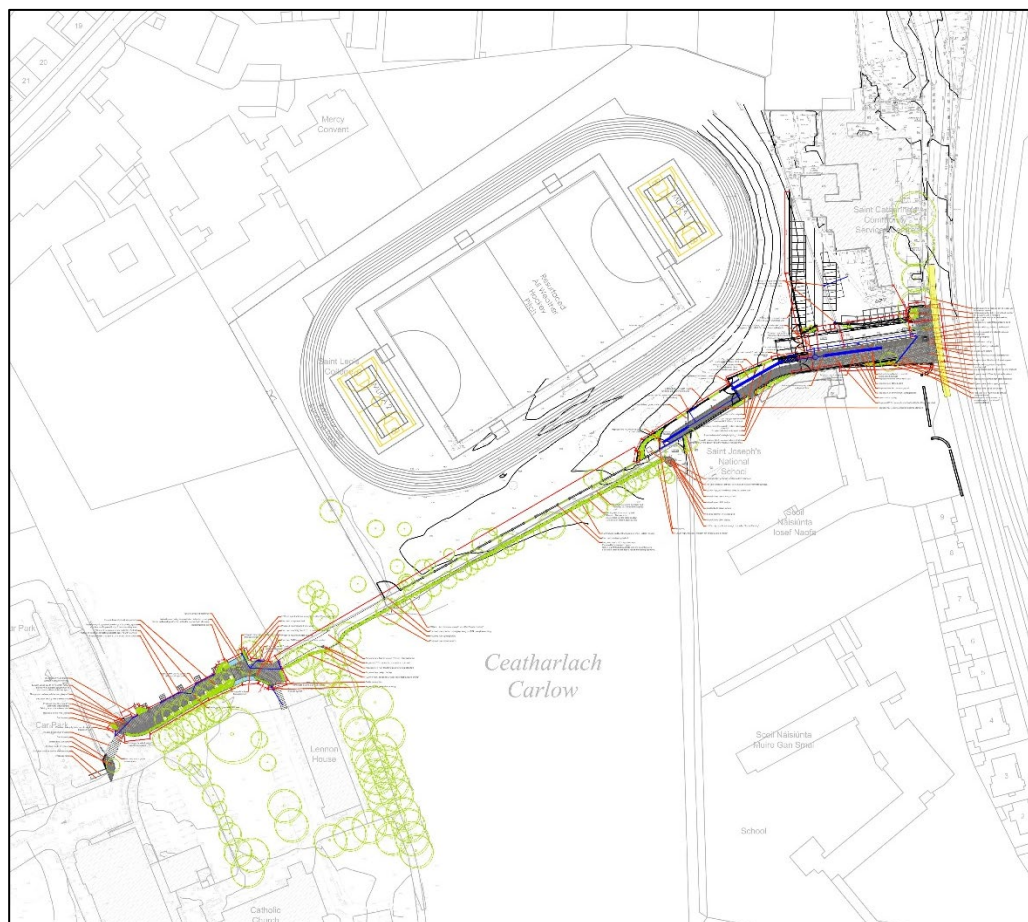


Figure 3: Extent of Proposed works

3 SITE DETAILS

3.1 SITE TOPOGRAPHY

The site topography along most of the works area is relatively level. Levels range from +54.90 at the eastern end, on St. Joseph's Road, to +51.21 adjacent to Visual, at the western end of the proposed works. The works to the streetscape on Market Square will not significantly alter the existing levels and the works will largely fit into the existing topography.

The only area with a slope of note is along the boundary between St. Leo's college and St. Joseph's school. The slope here is no steeper than 1:30.

3.2 NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND PROTECTED STRUCTURES

There are several protected structures adjacent to the works area. The protected structures were determined from the Carlow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The protected structures at the site boundaries are:

- RPS CT73 - St. Patrick's College (NIAH 10400608)

- RPS CT74 - Rear Extension of St. Patrick's College
- RPS CT3 - St. Leo's Convent of Mercy
- RPS CT2 – Entrance Gates of St. Leo's Convent of Mercy.
- RPS CT8 – Carlow Train Station

The works will not have any effect on these protected structures as the works relate to paving and streetscape works. There are no National Monuments within or adjoining the works area. Please refer to the attached Archeological Heritage Impact Assessment and the Architectural Impact Assessment.

3.3 EXISTING SERVICES

According to map's sourced from Irish Water Web Map, Gas Network Information and ESB Networks there are some underground utilities running through the proposed new sites. In addition, the area office was consulted in relation to surface water sewers.

Prior to the works commencing, the utilities companies will be contacted. Any additional works required will be programmed into the works.

4 DESIGN METHODOLOGY

For the design of the project several guidance documents and regulations were used.

The proposed new road layout for the public realm space off St. Joseph's Road and within the grounds of Carlow College was created using the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

The specification and construction details of the paving to be used for the project will be in accordance with the DMURS Advice Note 2 – Materials and Specifications.

The existing northern footpath along St. Josephs Road is currently **2m** wide. The new footpath will be the same width as the existing kerb line will be maintained. Three parklets will be incorporated into the footpaths. The parklet at the intersection of Carlow College and St. Leo's will accommodate a seating feature on the planter wall.

The western area of the works is where we are introducing a new paved surface adjoining the internal carpark on the grounds of Carlow college so we don't interfere with the existing established trees. The existing kerb line will be maintained. However, a new section of kerbing will be created to redefine pedestrian areas at the intersection of pedestrian crossings. This area will have planting and railings that will provide greater protection to pedestrians using the crossing point. The new paving will extend into the existing footpath through the treelined avenue.

The paving to be used for the footpath resurfacing and build outs will be tan/grey granite and will be similar to the paving used as part of the Visual Public Realm project.



Photo 5: Proposed paving type(Tan / Grey Granite with Dark Grey Granite or Blue / Grey Limestone features) or similar approved. Source Stonepave

As part of the works, it is proposed to install new pedestrian crossings. The crossings will be zebra type crossings and will be constructed in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland Standard Details CC-SCD-05125. The new crossings will have Belisha Beacons with lanterns fitted to illuminate the crossings as per Transport Infrastructure Ireland Standard Details CC-SCD-05138. The crossings will be constructed at the following locations:

The pedestrian crossings in the area of the car park entrance and Lennon House junction will be extended to create a tighter radius. This will also allow a larger landing for the upgraded pedestrian crossing. The kerblines at the car park entrance will be extended to create a tighter radius. At the exit from the car park, the kerblines will be tightened and extended.

It is proposed to alter the existing public lighting. Please refer to the attached Signify drawings and report for more detailed information on the proposed lighting proposal.

Please refer to Appendix A for site specific drawings and details.

5 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

An appropriate assessment screening was carried out by Paula of Panther Environmental, dated March 2024. The screening report concluded that “...It is considered that there would be no significant risk of negative impact, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, a Natura Impact Statement is not required.” The report also concluded that the proposed project will not have an impact on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site.

In addition, an Environmental Impact Assessment screening was carried out in accordance with the Office of the Planning Regulator practice Note PN02. The screening determined that the project did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out.

6 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

A flood risk assessment was not carried out for the proposed project, as the proposed works are outside the recorded flood zones for Carlow Town.

7 PLANNING APPRAISAL – CDP AND LOCAL AREA PLAN

Below are extracts from the Pre-Part Planners report.

The Carlow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 was reviewed to assess if the proposed works meet the objectives set out in the plan. The following is a list of policies and objectives that the proposed project will meet:

- The majority of the land is located on land zoned as “Community / Education”. The purpose of this zoning is to provide for and safeguard community, educational and civic facilities and uses which contribute to the creation of viable and sustainable communities, including healthcare, childcare, schools, places of worship, community facilities, recreational facilities, and ancillary neighbourhood uses and services.
- The south west section of the site is zoned “Town Centre” in the Carlow Town Land Use Zoning Map as contained in the CDP. The purpose of this zoning is to protect and exchange the character and vibrancy of existing town and village centres and to provide for and strengthen as appropriate retailing, residential, commercial, cultural, tourist and other appropriate uses.
- The overall principal of the proposed new pedestrian link from St. Joseph’s Road to the Town Centre is permitted in principal within the relevant zonings and uses set out in Table 16.9 Land Use Zoning Categories, Objectives and Land Use Acceptability contained in Chapter 16 of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028.



Figure 2 Map highlighting the land zoning surrounding the site.

Relevant CDP Policies and Objectives:

- **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 or rural transport initiatives throughout the country.
- **WC-P1:** Prioritise and promote more sustainable and convenient modes of travel by the development of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure including greenways within a safe environment.
- **WC-P3:** Ensure the 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-O2:** Ensure that all streets and street networks seek to facilitate permeability and 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 new 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-O6:** Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to rail station locations and other public transport interchanges within the county.
- **WC-O7:** Secure the development of the following specific schemes: "Improved accessibility to Carlow Rail Station".
- **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).
- **UD-P2:** Apply the following key attributes when considering public realm enhancements:

- Attractive and visually pleasing urban spaces with high quality design, materials, and installations (street lighting, furniture and signage)
- Distinctive urban spaces with reference to local context and existing built heritage, character and identity.
- Accessible, connected and linked permeable urban spaces that facilitate ease of movement.
- Functional urban spaces that foster activity and are safe and adaptable.
- HW-P3: Support and promote the development of healthy and attractive places by ensuring:
 - Adherence to high quality urban design and placemaking principles which are integrated into the layout and design of new developments.
 - Development proposals prioritise the need for people to be physically active and promote walking and cycling in the design of streets and public spaces.
 - New schools and workplaces are linked to walking and cycling networks.
 - The provision of open space considers different types of recreation and amenity uses that are connected through safe and secure walking and cycling routes.
 - Developments are planned for on a multi-functional basis to include ecosystem services, climate change adaption measures, green infrastructure, and key landscape features in their design.

Relevant Draft Carlow – Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan Policies and Objectives (Draft JULAP)

- **WC-P1**: Support and promote enhanced connectivity where appropriate for pedestrians and cyclists in Carlow- Graiguecullen in order to improve accessibility throughout the joint urban area and to the town centre, employment areas, residential areas, local schools and other educational facilities, recreational facilities, and public transport nodes.
- **WC-P4**: Ensure the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is based on principles of Universal Design, and that all footpaths in Carlow-Graiguecullen are accessible to all members of the community, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with young children.
- **URD-P10**: Improve the public realm and attractiveness of the town centre through development and connectivity of key urban regeneration locations in the town centre with improved accessibility from the historic town centre to the Railway Station and Fairgreen.
- **URD-01**: Support and facilitate the implementation the Implementation of Project Carlow 2040 – A Vision for Regeneration, as set out in its Regeneration Action Plan and Urban Design and Implementation Plan, and actively seek further funding from relevant agencies and Government sources including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) to secure financial support for all regeneration and urban development projects in Carlow Town.
- **URD-02**: Support, advance, and facilitate the regeneration and development of the 6 no. Intervention Areas detailed in project Carlow 2040 – A Vision for Regeneration, and in accordance with the urban design and implementation framework detailed in the regeneration strategy:
 - **Town Centre** – Potato Market and Barrack Street
 - **Cultural Quarter** – Including links to the Railway Station
 - **The Barrow Track Civic Spine**
 - **The Pembroke District**
 - **The Burrin Riverfront**

- **Link Streets (Dublin Street and Tullow Street)**

The creating of the public realm on St. Joseph's Road, and the upgraded pedestrian route are in line with and meets many of the objectives that are set out in the County Development Plan, Local Area Plan for the renewal of streetscape and the promotion of walking by the creation of a new, easily accessible pedestrian linkages by the creation of new crossing points.

Planning History:

There were 26no. planning files associated with the site; Some of the most relevant applications are listed below.

19/28 – Permission granted for the construction of a single storey extension incorporating 1 no. mainstream classroom and a new entrance lobby. (Total floor area of proposed extension = 101.4m.sq) to the front of the existing single storey school building, realignment / setting back of part of the existing roadside boundary wall to provide a bus set down area, provision of a second vehicular access in order to provide a one way traffic policy, provision of 5no. additional car parking spaces, together with all associated site works. Applicant: The Board of Management, St. Joseph's National School).

19/138 – Retention permission granted for the existing installation of a single storey portacabin. In the grounds of an existing community centre. The portacabin comprises of additional general meeting room and office and all associated works. (Applicant: Niall Morris on behalf of St. Catherine's Community Services Centre)

21/332 – Permission granted for development consisting of resurfacing of the existing hockey pitch (63m X 101.4m) with artificial grass and the existing 400m running track with a polymeric surface with upgrade to the existing drainage arrangements, the installation of mesh ball stop fencing to the hockey pitch and construction of two Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) pitches with associated drainage and mesh ball stop fencing. The site is located within the curtilage of a Protected Structure, St. Leo's Convent of Mercy (RPS CT3). The proposed development will not impact on this structure. This site is bounded by the St. Joseph's Road to the east and St. Leo's College, Carlow to the west. (Applicant: St. Leo's College).

22/218 – Permission granted for the construction of a single storey extension (being a replacement / reduction of permission granted under 17/339) to existing community centre comprising of: additional consultation rooms/ family room, additional offices, toilets, hallway to the front of creche, removal of the existing portacabins and associated site works. (Applicant: Niall Morris on behalf of St. Catherine's Community Services Centre).

23/60300 – Application seeking the erection of 12no. LED lighting poles (approx. 15m in height and max 500lux output) so as to provide lighting to the hockey pitch and all associated site development works. The site is located within the curtilage of a protected structure, St. Leo's Convent of Mercy (RPS CT3) (Applicant: St. Leo's College).

8 CONCLUSION

This project report has been compiled to support the Part 8 planning application being made with respect to the proposed public realm upgrading works on the grounds of St, Joseph's School, St. Catherine's, St. Leo's college, Carlow College. and also the resurfacing of the pedestrian linkage through the grounds of Carlow College.

This report provides a narrative of the works, the additional reports carried out to support the works and how the project will meet a wide range of policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, Draft JULAP.

In conclusion this report supports the conclusion that this project will help to deliver key objectives for Carlow 2040 and overall will be a very positive addition to the public realm infrastructure within the town

9 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SITE DRAWINGS

Site Location