



4. Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision has been informed following analysis and arrived at through a consensus around what stakeholders want it to represent. The Vision is clear and unambiguous in order to generate momentum, agreement and enthusiasm, but it is also practical, realistic and achievable. It aims to unify all of the component activities which make up the Strategy.

Vision for Carlow 2040:

Carlow Town Centre will be a place for its people, where residents, workers and visitors alike will be encouraged, through enhanced connections and improvements in the public realm, to access everything the Town Centre has to offer including business and retailing, education, amenity spaces and cultural heritage. The enhancement of the unique attributes and attractions of Carlow Town will significantly improve the health and wellbeing of its people, support local business, facilitate tourism and encourage people to live within the Town Centre.

Guiding Principles

The setting out of a Vision for Carlow Town to 2040 and beyond is central to the delivery of this Strategy. As a Vision is, by its nature, both broad in its remit and aspirational in its aims, a number of Guiding Principles have been formulated that provide the framework and coordination approach to deliver the Vision.

The Guiding Principles seek to address the existing challenges facing Carlow Town by building on the many assets and attractors of the Town. The application of the Guiding Principles to each of the Intervention Areas and other future projects will ensure that strategic sites are brought forward in line with, and will contribute to, the realisation of the Vision.



Potato Market/Barrack Street Link



Principle 1: Reduced Vacancy

The vibrancy of the Town Centre is a reflection of the wellbeing of the local economy and community life in Carlow. Increasing building occupancy is important to activate the Town Centre as a whole.



Principle 2: Tourism & Short Stay Visits

Carlow Town is within an hour of Dublin by car. With over a million people living in Dublin, this presents a substantial opportunity for the Town to attract more visitors, particularly on short stay breaks.



Principle 3: Realise the full potential of infrastructure (road, air, rail, bus and water)

Better utilisation of existing infrastructure and smart investment is the key to delivering new jobs and driving population growth in the right places.



Principle 4: Promote a high quality of life, health and wellbeing

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



Principle 5: A Town perceived as an exciting and safe place to live, work and visit

Carlow Town can provide a variety of safe public domains which support, celebrate and grow year-round social, arts, cultural and community activities. Carlow needs to be bold in leading and working with others to develop buildings and spaces that exemplify both innovation and energy-efficiency outcomes.



Principle 6: A Distinctive Town

Carlow must not only retain its distinctiveness but must showcase and utilise it to build positive perceptions of the Town, specifically among potential visitors and investors.



Principle 7: Increased Town Centre Footfall

By bringing more people onto the Town's streets, the feeling of vibrancy instantly increases. More people means more spend and fewer vacant units. More people also increases passive surveillance and supports the goal of achieving a people friendly place.



Principle 8: Build a resilient and adaptable economy

The future success of Carlow relies on the diversification of its economic base to build resilience to external shocks and allow it to adapt in an ever changing global economy.



Principle 9: Deliver high quality and person-centred buildings and public realm

Carlow already has an enviable public realm rich in heritage and unique features. Future development should not only strengthen and protect this but should enhance it through quality design and materials and a person-centred focus.



Principle 10: Diversity of uses in the Town Centre

The Town Centre has a range of great features. How these features are used will define the future of the Town. Town Centre vibrancy will be enhanced through diversity of use including retail, commercial, start-up, education, hospitality, social and recreation spaces.