

**CHAPTER 14**  
**RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

## Chapter 14 Rural Development

**Aim:** To support the role of rural areas with an increased emphasis on the regeneration and renewal of smaller rural towns and villages and to seek to sustain the livelihood of rural communities by promoting the development of the wider rural economy while recognising the need to sustainably manage land and resources.

### 14.0 Introduction

Rural areas will play a vital role in supporting economic development with opportunities emerging which offer the potential to ensure the countryside remains and strengthens as a living and working environment. These areas contribute to our identity and contain important economic, social, cultural and environmental attributes. They are a focus for living, working and for recreational activities and are identified as having a major role in economic development both in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

Enhancing the competitiveness of rural areas requires innovation in rural economic development and enterprise. Rural innovation will allow rural areas to successfully benefit from the key drivers of change. Strengthening traditional rural economies involves utilising the resources of rural areas, particularly agriculture, food production, tourism, forestry, horticulture, renewable energy and varied agri-business services. The emergence of new technologies and improved infrastructural connectivity

provide new opportunities for diversification which can support employment in rural areas.

The Council recognises the importance of creating and maintaining vibrant rural towns and villages which will support the wider rural areas and the need to balance appropriate forms of development in the rural areas with protection of the environment.

### 14.1 Policy Context

The key policy documents that have informed this chapter include:

- The *National Planning Framework* which places a major focus on rural areas in relation to:
  - strengthening rural fabric and supporting communities,
  - planning for growth and development with a special focus on the renewal and development of smaller towns and villages,
  - implementing planning and investment policies to support job creation,
  - addressing connectivity gaps with better co-ordination of existing investment programmes dealing with social inclusion, rural development and town and village renewal.
- The *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* which provides an overarching framework to progress the economy and quality of life in rural areas. It recognises that sustainable rural communities are dependent on viable and vibrant towns and villages. Addressing decline of

population and services in rural areas is recognised as of strategic importance. The key message from the RSES is that rural areas need diversity and innovativeness to ensure economic resilience and job creation.

- *Our Rural Future- Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* is a new whole-of-Government policy for rural Ireland. It builds on the Action Plan for Rural Development 2017-2019 by adopting a more strategic, ambitious and holistic approach to investing in and maximising opportunities for rural areas. It addresses both the challenges facing rural areas and the opportunities for rural economies and communities, including in areas such as remote working and the transition to a climate neutral society. Commitments will be implemented progressively over the five year period and will be underpinned by investment across Government in areas such as the roll out of high-speed broadband, remote working facilities, job creation, town centre regeneration, community development, improvements in regional and local roads, new cycling and walking infrastructure, expanded rural transport services, funding for tourism, culture and heritage projects, and a just transition to a climate-neutral society. *Our Rural Future* complements, and will support, the delivery of other Government policies and strategies such as Project Ireland 2040, the Climate Action Plan, the forthcoming National Economic Recovery Plan, the National Broadband Plan, the National Remote Work Strategy and the Town Centre First initiative.

## **14.2 Rural Innovation and Development**

Enhancing the competitiveness of rural areas will require supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT based industries and those addressing climate change, carbon reduction and sustainability.

Investment, including in infrastructure, is a priority if these benefits are to be sustained. The spread of highspeed internet will enable rural dwellers and businesses to connect to new markets, providing educational opportunities, increasing social connections and changing the way that land is managed, and services can be delivered. Digital connectivity and new technologies enable the collection and use of data that increases productivity and the delivery of better public services. Wide-ranging collaboration and partnership among public, private, not-for-profit and educational organisations will be important for rural innovation.

### **Rural Innovation and Development– Policy**

It is the policy of the Council to:

- RI P1: Support investment in infrastructure and to facilitate innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT based industries and those addressing climate change, carbon reduction and sustainability.

### Rural Innovation and Development– Objective

It is the objective of the Council to:

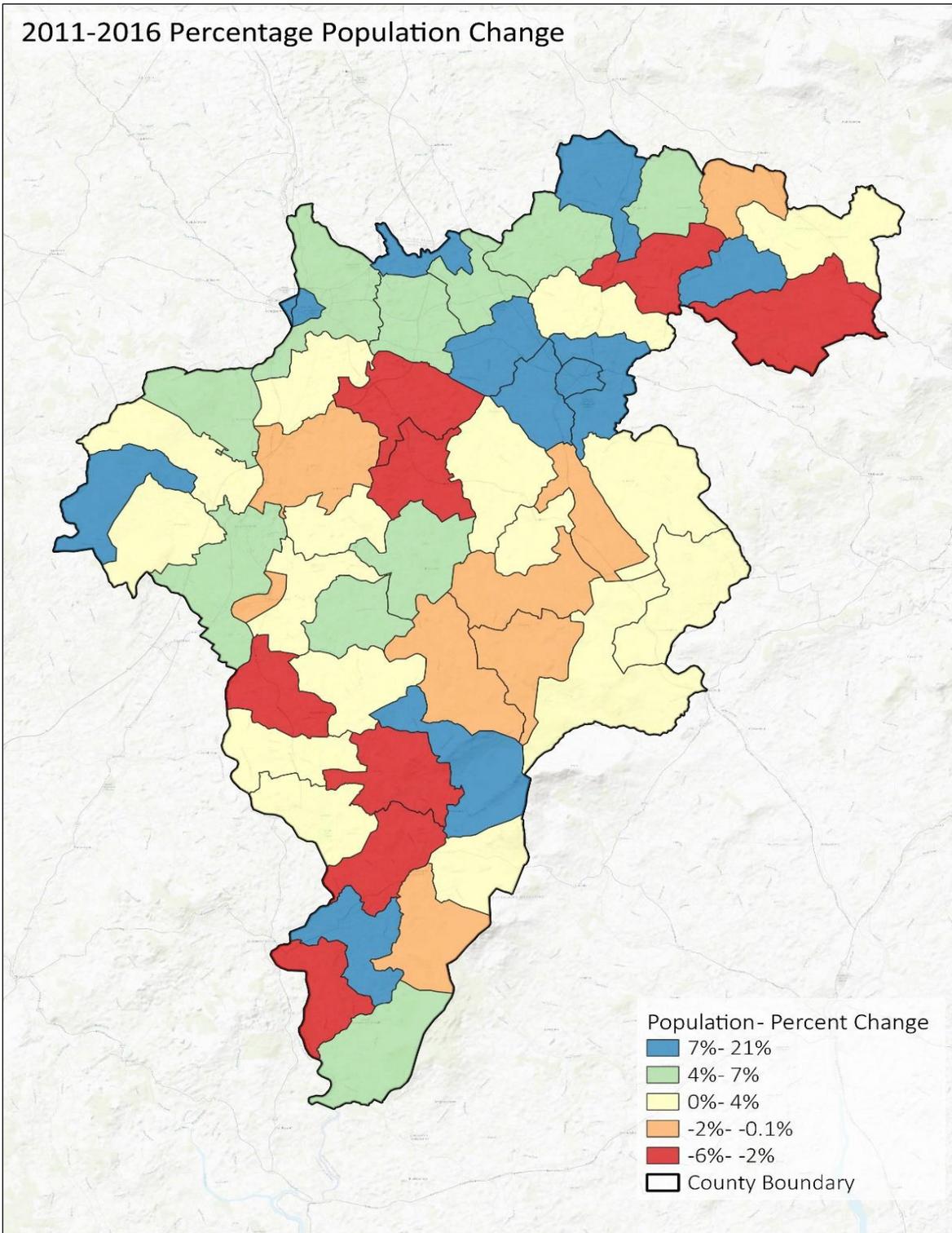
RI O1: Support the implementation of Government policy *Our Rural Future- Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* (or any updates thereto) to unlock the potential of rural County Carlow by supporting communities and by seeking to secure funding opportunities which will maximise opportunities for rural economies and communities.

#### 14.3 Towns, Villages and Rural Area

The CSO defines rural areas as those areas with a population of <1,500 persons. This includes smaller settlements of fewer than 1,500 people. With the exception of the three main urban centres (Carlow Town, Tullow and Muine Bheag) the remainder of the county falls within the definition of rural areas. The rural area accommodates 52% of the overall resident population of the county and includes a variety of small towns and villages. Population decline is of concern and has occurred in some of the EDs and smaller towns and serviced villages. Between 2011 and 2016 settlements which experienced population decline include Tinnahinch, Hacketstown, Kildavin, Myshall and Tinryland. Renewal and regeneration of our towns and villages is a key objective of this Plan.

Settlement Typology	Settlements
<b>Small Towns</b>  <i>Smaller towns with an urban structure providing local services and employment functions catering for a wider rural hinterland area.</i>	Borris
	Ballon
	Leighlinbridge
	Rathvilly
	Hacketstown
	Carrickduff
Tinnahinch	
<b>Larger Serviced Villages</b>  <i>Serviced villages with established populations circa. 200 and settlement structure which provide important local level services.</i>	Palatine
	Ballinabrannagh
	Rathtoe
	Fennagh
	Myshall
	Clonegal
	Kildavin
	Tinryland
<b>Smaller Serviced Villages</b>  <i>Villages with more limited services established populations &lt;200 and settlement structure which provide important local level services.</i>	Bennekerry
	Old Leighlin
	Nurney
	Ardattin
	Glynn
	Tiknock
	Ballinkillen
	Bilboa
	St Mullins
	Clonmore
	<b>Rural Nodes</b>  <i>Villages with established populations &lt;200 and a weaker settlement structure and more limited local services and community facilities.</i>
Drumphea	
Ballymurphy	
Garryhill	
Rathanna	
Newtown	
Newtown Fennagh	

**Table 14.1** Small Towns, Villages and Rural Nodes located in Rural Areas



Map 14.1 Population Change by ED between 2011-2016

The Council recognises that the absence of employment opportunities in many of the smaller towns and villages significantly impacts on maintaining vibrant centres. Smaller towns as designated under the settlement typology will, through land use zoning objectives in this plan and local area plans as appropriate encourage and make provision for increased employment and enterprise activity, ensuring sufficient serviced and / or serviceable land is zoned at optimum locations.

The role of micro-enterprises and the importance of securing quality communication infrastructure to encourage growth is also a significant focus. There is a need to expedite delivery of infrastructure servicing rural towns and villages to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness. The Council will support the Smart Village<sup>1</sup> concept in seeking to improve economic performance and quality of life in rural areas, potentially via digital and other technologies. This includes high-quality broadband and mobile communication services to settlements and rural locations, other infrastructure including water and wastewater facilities for the growth of settlements, sustainable energy supply, enhanced transport connectivity including rural public transport services and greenway walking and pedestrian corridors between settlements.

### **14.3.1 Towns and Villages in Rural Areas - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

TV P1: Promote sustainable rural towns and villages as the key component of delivering viable rural communities. In this regard the Council will seek to support implementation of *Our Rural Future* and to:

- Build up the capacity of towns and villages with residential, employment, social and community infrastructure to sustain viable centres and support the rural hinterland areas in line with services and infrastructure availability.
- Accommodate within the rural villages the residential needs of rural dwellers not engaged in agriculture or other rural economic enterprise in accordance with the core strategy.
- Ensure that adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is provided in accordance with the policies and objectives contained within Chapter 6 of this Plan.
- Seek to encourage investment by identifying and establishing new economic roles and functions.
- Support social enterprises which play an important role in the rural economy and social fabric of rural areas.
- Support the development of community-based enterprise development spaces.

TV P2: Support the concept of Smart Towns and Villages by promoting:

- Plans for village renewal and revitalisation of town and village centres;
- Investment in broadband infrastructure;
- Investment in social services;

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<sup>1</sup> [Smart Villages | The European Network for Rural Development \(ENRD\) \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurlife/content/smart-villages)

- Implementation of climate and energy projects at a local level; and
- Climate friendly mobility solutions.

TV P3: Direct demand for urban type economic development which seeks to locate in rural areas to appropriate sites within smaller towns throughout the rural area.

TV P4: Generally, encourage local investment and small- scale industry which are not location specific / resource dependent to small towns and villages.

TV P5: Promote the re-use and regeneration of vacant and derelict buildings and brownfield sites in towns and villages throughout the county which are recognised as essential catalysts to transforming the capacity and potential of these settlements.

TV. P6 Protect the qualities and character of natural and built heritage in towns and villages throughout the county which add distinctiveness to place-making.

#### **14.3.2 Towns and Villages in Rural Areas – Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

TV O1: Target vacant premises and facilitate regeneration in towns and villages throughout the county by supporting appropriate re-use of such properties including social enterprises which seek to develop commercial activities at appropriate locations.

TV O2: Seek investment in towns and villages through regeneration, public realm improvements and the appropriate adaptation and re-use of built heritage

structures which are of a high quality and which contribute to creating a sense of place, and more vibrant and viable settlements.

TV O3: Support the development of “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” (NPO 18(b)) through supporting the provision of serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the development boundary of small towns and villages to meet housing demand.

TV O4: Support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040, Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and any other funding streams which may become available during the period of this Plan.

#### **14.4 Agriculture**

In 2016 the number of farms in County Carlow stood at 1,806 with the average farm size extending to 39.4 ha. The overall land area farmed within the county stands at 71,142ha with 2,353 people employed at farm level. In 2016 a higher proportion of the Carlow workforce (7.3%) was engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing than was the case nationally (4.4%).

Agriculture in Carlow supports thousands of jobs in the rural economy, both directly in food and drink processing and also in the wider agri-industry, including input suppliers, agricultural contractors, jobs in auctioneering, transport and engineering and in accountancy, legal, veterinary and other advisory services.

The agricultural sector must however continue to adapt to challenges including modernisation, restructuring, market development and the

increasing importance of environmental issues such as climate change. The agricultural sector in Carlow consumes 3% of energy, higher than the 2% consumed by this sector nationally. This reflects Carlow's rural landscape and the higher proportion of land dedicated to agriculture.

Generational renewal<sup>2</sup> empowering a new generation of highly qualified farmers (male and female) to bring the full benefits of technology to sustain farming practices into the future is important for agriculture and the value-added opportunities which arise. The Council will continue to support sustainable agricultural production, farm diversification together with the promotion of new employment opportunities which contribute to promoting rural prosperity, strengthening rural value chains and investing in rural viability and vitality.

#### **14.4.1 Agriculture – Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

AG P1: Support agricultural development and encourage the continuation of agriculture as a contributory means of maintaining population in the rural area.

AG P2: Support and facilitate changes to farming practices that will adapt to climate change and a more sustainable sector, that encourage biodiversity and contribute to more sustainable methods of production.

AG. P3: Encourage the development of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside and that watercourses, wildlife habitats and

areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.

AG P4: Ensure that all agricultural activities comply with legislation on water quality, such as the Phosphorous Regulations, Water Framework Directive and Nitrates Directive.

#### **14.5 Farm Diversification**

The changing pattern of employment in agriculture has resulted in a new approach to the sustainable use of the countryside. Farm diversification has given rise to opportunities in rural tourism, renewable energy production as well as leisure and recreational pursuits. The Council will support diversification of the rural economy and in particular will seek to develop the potential of the agri-food sector, forestry, agri-tourism, the equine industry, the growth of bio-energy crops and the sustainable exploitation of natural resources. On-farm and off-farm activities will be considered, subject to the use and scale being compatible with the surrounding area.

#### **14.6 Agri- Food**

The agri-food sector (food production based on agricultural produce) will play a crucial role in the rural economy into the future. *Food Wise 2025* sets out the Government's strategic plan for the development of the agri-food sector and identifies growth projections in agri-food exports and direct jobs (23,000 jobs between 2015-2025) in the agri-food sector. The appropriate location for the processing of the raw material will generally depend on the scale of the facility and the source of the raw material. Small scale agri-food businesses with products largely sourced on site can be appropriately located on existing farms. Large scale industrial scale production facilities which

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<sup>2</sup> [Generational Renewal | The European Network for Rural Development \(ENRD\) \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/)

source products from a wide area are more appropriately located in towns and villages. Small scale shops in rural locations outside towns and villages will be considered provided they remain ancillary to and are fully incorporated within the primary rural enterprise/ farm practice and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria. The provision of farmers' markets for the sale of locally produced goods will be encouraged at appropriate locations subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

#### **14.6.1 Farm Diversification including Agri-Food– Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

FD P1: Support farm diversification which is complementary to existing agricultural practices, by supporting on-site alternative farm enterprises subject to the nature and use of any enterprise being compatible with the environment such as:

- Specialist farming practices e.g. horticulture, equine facilities, poultry, mushroom growing and specialised animal breeding;
- Farm enterprises such as processing, co-ops, farm supply stores and agri-business;
- Production of organic and speciality foods;
- Renewable energy production including the growth of bioenergy crops; and
- Conversion of redundant buildings particularly those of vernacular importance for appropriate owner run enterprises e.g. agri-tourism, small scale shops ancillary to

primary rural enterprise / farm practice etc.

FD P2: Promote the continued development and expansion of the Agri-Food Sector, by facilitating food production and processing at appropriate locations.

FD P3: Seek and support investment in the development of co-operative facilities which support the development of value added in the food chain.

#### **14.7 Horticulture**

Horticulture includes the production of fruit and vegetables, in addition to amenity products such as Christmas trees, nursery stock and cut foliage. Further growth and development of this sector will be facilitated in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

##### **14.7.1 Horticulture – Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

HO P1: Encourage the development and expansion of environmentally sustainable horticultural practices, to ensure that development does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside and that watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.

#### **14.8 Equine Industry**

The equine industry is an established and growing industry throughout County Carlow in recent years. 13 stud farms are recorded in the county in the Irish Field Directory 2021, with 13 trainers along with several breeders. At present, in County Carlow there are 6 riding clubs, 1 pony hunt club and 2 hunting clubs. Point to point racing was founded in County Carlow, when originally horses were raced between the steeples of two churches, i.e. point to point.

### **14.8.1 Equine Industry - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

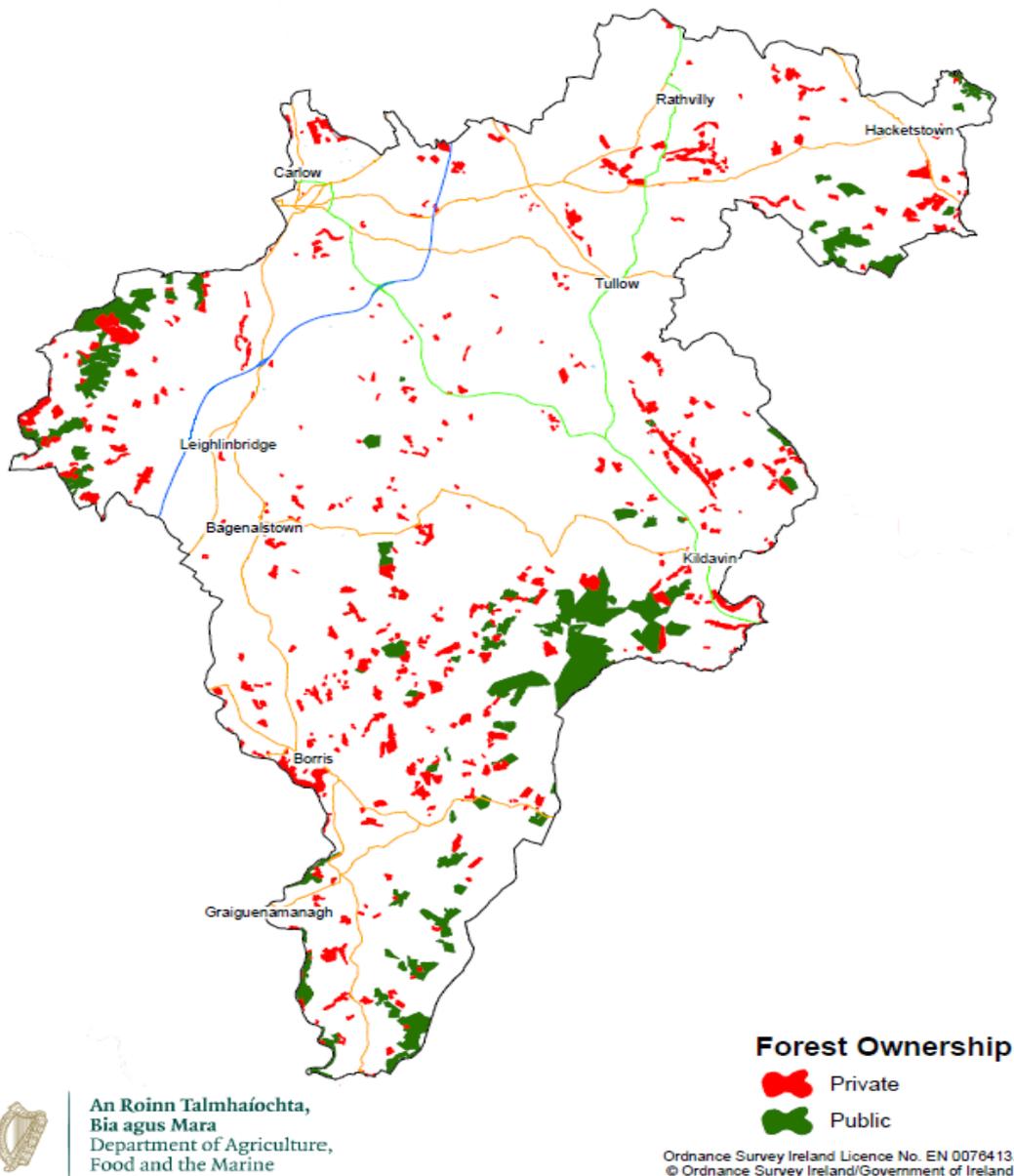
- EQ P1: Encourage the expansion of equine related activities (e.g. stud farms, farriers, bloodstock sales, etc) of an appropriate size and at suitable locations.
- EQ P2: Ensure that equine based developments are located on suitable and viable landholdings and are subject to normal planning and design considerations.
- EQ P3: Support the development of the Irish sport horse industry in the county, including breeding, competing and training.
- EQ P4: Promote and encourage the development of activities that relate to the equine industry in the county such as riding schools, pony trekking and the development of bridal paths.

ownership. In 2017 it was estimated that there was 8,403ha (9.4%) forest cover within the county (See Map 14.2).

### **14.9 Forestry**

Forestry and woodlands play an important role supporting rural employment, climate change management and carbon sequestration, biodiversity and as a source of renewable energy sources. The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme 2014-2020 aims to increase the area under forest in Ireland to 18% of total land cover. Forestry also has a significant role in terms of their recreational and amenity value. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DoAFM) published “Forest, Products and People – Ireland’s Forest Policy – A Renewed Vision” in 2014 which sets out Government policy in relation to this sector of the rural economy. It seeks to achieve an increase in the current level of forest cover from 11% (2017) to 18% in 2046 with a target of 30% broadleaf planting. Afforestation has become a significant feature in the county over the last decade. Plantations are in public and private

## Carlow Forest Cover 2017



Map 14.2 Carlow Forest Cover 2017

It is considered that the continued development of the forestry sector should be promoted in a sustainable manner, compatible with the protection of the environment. The introduction of large scale forested areas particularly conifers

can have a negative impact on an area if they are not in harmony with the environment. Forestry activities must be appropriate in terms of nature and extent so that they are not visually obtrusive or cause damage to important

habitats. The potential for afforestation in conjunction with a species diversification programme favouring the planting of native broadleaves, carried out in tandem with the development of amenity leisure walks, looped walks and trails could become a realistic alternative to mono species coniferous developments and support the recreational and tourism potential of the county. Afforested areas provide suitable locations for recreation pursuits such as mountain biking, hiking, orienteering and nature walks. In this regard, the Council will encourage and promote access to forests in co-operation with Coillte’s Recreation Policy, the Forest Service, landowners and other agencies / stakeholders as appropriate. (Refer: Chapter 11: Tourism and Recreation).

Forestry is encouraged in appropriate areas, where it will not significantly impact upon designated habitats, archaeology, visually sensitive areas, be obtrusive in the landscape or present a risk to sensitive habitats or water quality. Sustainable Forest Management will be encouraged in accordance with the Forestry Services, suite of guidelines relating to water quality, landscape, archaeology, biodiversity, harvesting, etc.

The Landscape Character Assessment of the County (Appendix VII) should also be consulted to establish areas which contain opportunities to accommodate additional forestry plantations and areas sensitive to new forestry proposals.

#### **14.9.1 Forestry – Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

FR P1: Encourage the development of a well-managed sustainable forestry sector with a diversity of species including native hardwood species, which maximises its contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the county and which is;

- compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.
- which does not detract substantially from landscape and visual amenity, protected or scenic views, , built heritage, archaeological / geological features, or cause pollution or degradation to wildlife habitats, natural waters or areas of ecological importance;
- which does not obstruct existing public rights of way, traditional walking routes or recreational and tourism amenities and
- which is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity, Water Quality and requirements regarding the protection of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel.

FR P2: Encourage access to forestry and woodlands, including private forestry, in cooperation with stakeholders for walking routes, bridle paths, mountain biking, nature walks, orienteering, hiking, recreational areas and other similar facilities.

FR P3: Promote the avoidance of deforestation or commercial afforestation within Natura 2000 sites unless directly relating to the management of the site for its qualifying interests.

FR P4: Seek to promote the tourism and amenity potential of forested areas and to retain existing public rights of way through forested lands.

#### 14.10 Fisheries and Aquaculture

Aquaculture relates to the commercial production of fish and shellfish species. The term is generally used to describe fish farming operations both on inland and coastal (marine) waters. For the purposes of the Carlow County Development Plan, aquaculture relates to fish farming on inland water bodies, such as lakes, rivers and land-based artificial ponds and tanks. Major aquaculture projects will be discouraged, unless the Council is satisfied that such proposals will be environmentally sustainable and have a limited impact on the visual amenity of the area. Carlow County Council will seek to promote sustainability and waste management programmes within the sector. Environmental concerns associated with finfish aquaculture include:

- Protection of the aquatic environment
- The avoidance of any genetic threats, potential disease and parasitic implications to local fish stocks
- Potential conflicts in relation to water supply, which can become critical during low-flow periods.

From an amenity and tourism perspective Carlow is recognised as being a destination in Ireland with a vast variety and quality of fishing, from sport angling to coarse fishing, with a mixture of cold and warm water fish species.

##### 14.10.1 Fisheries and Aquaculture - Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- FA P1: Promote and assist the further development of the fishing industry in County Carlow, as a major attraction throughout the county.
- FA P2: Require adequate provisions are made to accommodate free upstream and downstream migration of fish in development proposals.

FA P3: Promote and assist the further development of angling support services / facilities along the River Barrow and River Slaney and their tributaries to enhance growth and promotion of the industry further, especially as a tourist activity.

FA P4: Ensure any new major aquaculture projects will be environmentally sustainable and have a limited impact on the visual amenity of the area.

FA P5: Require proposed services / facilities to support fisheries along water courses to undertake the required level of Appropriate Assessment in accordance with appropriate environmental assessments including Habitats Directive Assessment and planning legislation.

FA P6: Ensure that the development of services / facilities along watercourses will seek to ensure the protection of water quality and will also be subject to, and consistent with, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the relevant South Eastern River Basin Management Plan.

#### 14.11 Rural Tourism

Tourism is a growing sector within Carlow and is addressed in detail in Chapter 11 Tourism and Recreation. The Council will seek to harness rural tourism having regard to the natural assets that the county possesses including the quality of the landscape, waterways, upland areas and built and natural heritage attributes.

In this regard, rural based farmhouse guest accommodation, agri- tourism developments, eco-tourism, equestrian centres, outdoor pursuit centres, greenway projects, passive recreation, specialised craft activities, distilleries

and breweries and other similar activities will be supported subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.

Chapter 11 – Tourism and Recreation outlines policies and objectives for Tourism and Recreation within the county, which includes rural areas.

#### **14.12 Green Energy Projects**

Rural areas have the potential to be harnessed for renewable energy projects including wind, hydro and solar energy. While the Council is generally supportive of renewable energy projects considerations to inform acceptability of proposals include landscape sensitivities, residential amenities, scenic views or prospects, public rights of way, wildlife, habitats, special areas of conservation, protected structures, bird migration paths, potential for pollution impacts etc. Appendix VI Carlow Renewable Energy Strategy and Chapter 7 – Climate Action outline policies and objectives for renewable energy within the county, which includes rural areas.

#### **14.13 Circular Bio-Economy**

The bio-economy comprises *“the production of renewable biological resources, such as crops, forests, fish, animal, and micro-organisms and the conversion of these resources and waste streams residue, by-products or municipal solid waste into value added products, such as food, feed, bio-based products and bioenergy”* (E.C. 2012). Stronger development of the bio-economy will help accelerate progress towards a circular and low-carbon economy. It cuts across a range of relevant sectors, including agriculture, forestry, water and waste management, energy, as well as biopharmaceuticals. The bio-economy has the potential to provide opportunities for rural areas to modernise and strengthen their industrial base, creating new value chains and greener, more cost-effective industrial processes, while recognising the need to protect biodiversity and the environment.

#### **14.13.1 Circular Bio-economy - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CB P1: Support the appropriate development of the circular bio-economy in the county having regard to the National Policy Statement on Bio-Economy (2018), subject to appropriate siting of any such development, protection of the environment, habitats, landscapes and all proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

#### **14.13.2 Circular Bio-economy - Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

CB O1: Support a bio-economy feasibility study for the Region as identified in the RSES (RPO 57) to identify areas of potential growth to inform investment in line with the national transition objective to a low carbon climate resilient and circular economy.

#### **14.14 Rural Enterprises**

Rural enterprises and employment opportunities will be vital in sustaining the rural economy. In accordance with the economic strategy for the overall county, employment servicing the rural areas should in general be directed to local employment centres in towns and serviced villages catering for local investment and small-scale industry. Within the rural nodes and the rural countryside, agriculture, horticulture, equine, forestry, tourism, energy production and rural resource-based enterprise should be facilitated. The Council will support rural entrepreneurship and rural enterprise development of an appropriate scale at suitable locations throughout the county and will support the implementation of the LEADER Programme for the county and initiatives from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme which

support place making, social enterprise, economic development and social inclusion.

**14.14.1 Rural Enterprises – Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

RE P1: Facilitate agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, energy production, small scale home-based enterprises and rural resource-based enterprises, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

RE P2: Direct employment servicing the rural areas including customer or employee intensive development to local employment centres in towns and villages catering for local investment and small-scale industry.

RE P3: Facilitate where deemed appropriate an extension of an existing established authorised rural based enterprise in the rural area provided that the scale and form of the enterprise is compatible with the character of the area, that there is capacity available in the local infrastructure to accommodate the expansion and that the development complies with other relevant objectives of this Plan, including normal planning and environmental criteria.

RE P4: Prohibit in general the relocation of existing “footloose” commercial or industrial activities located in serviced towns and villages to unserviced rural areas.

RE P5: Consider small-scale owner-run one-off enterprise (not related to agriculture, rural resources, small scale home-based enterprises, rural diversification or tourism) in the open countryside for an existing rural resident on the landholding only where the Council is satisfied that the location is suitable for

the development proposed and demonstrates compliance with the criteria set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Criteria for One-off New Small-scale (<200sqm) Enterprises outside Towns / Villages / Settlements**

- Submission of an evidence-based report justifying the proposed location and demonstrating why the proposal cannot be located on appropriately zoned land or within the development boundary of towns and villages in the county.
- Outline of specific characteristics of the development that require siting in the rural area i.e. locational and / or resource specific requirements.
- Demonstrate that the identified location is appropriate to the nature and scale of the development.
- Outline of how the development will strengthen the local rural economy including social and economic benefits to being located in a rural area.
- Assessment of impacts on all sensitive receptors including nearby residential properties, natural and built heritage, landscape, rural character and potential impact on other rural related and rural dependent economic activities. (It must be demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a negative impact on these receptors).
- The existing or planned local road network and other essential infrastructure can accommodate extra demand generated by the proposal.
- Adequate proposals to cater for any waste arising at the facility.
- All advertising to be kept to a minimum and appropriate in design and scale.
- Comply with proper planning and sustainable development.
- Proposal should conform to other objectives of this Plan.

RE P6: Consider larger scale enterprise proposals in rural areas (outside towns and villages) only in exceptional circumstances where the criteria in Table 1 are met and where it can be demonstrated that the development is of regional or national significance, is of a specialist nature and the site-specific

location requirements are clearly detailed and demonstrated.

#### **14.14.2 Rural Enterprises – Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- RE O1: Support the implementation of the LEADER Programme for the county.
- RE O2: Require applications for larger scale industrial and enterprise development to submit a carbon footprint calculation and demonstrate how new buildings and processes / activities will seek to achieve the targets set out in the Climate Action Plan 2019 or any amendments to these targets.

#### **14.15 Remote Working, Co-Working and Home-Based Economic Activity**

Advances in technology and the recent Covid 19 Pandemic have accelerated changes in the working environment of many affording an increased opportunity to work remotely. Remote working comprises any business function that is conducted away from the office using modern communication and information technology. The trend toward more remote working is likely to grow over the period of this Plan. In this regard, Carlow County Council will actively support and facilitate the provision of advanced communication networks and services.

Co-working facilities / digital hubs in the towns and villages throughout the county will be supported. These facilities provide flexibility in the working arrangements that will meet the needs of start -up enterprises and established business, where employees have a local base that reduces the requirement to commute long distances and will support the viability of town and village centres in the future.

The economic benefits associated with the location of ‘start-up businesses’ within the home throughout the county is also recognised. Small-scale home-based economic activities can be appropriate in certain locations, subject to the nature of the business operations and the use not negatively impacting on the character and amenities of the area in which they are located. Home based economic activity should be sited in converted outbuildings located adjacent to the main dwelling house or within the house where the primary use of the building remains as residential. The Council recognises that as businesses grow and activity intensifies to the level where additional employees, beyond the homeowner and immediate family are required a more suitable premises within commercial areas of the county’s settlements would be appropriate. The assessment of planning applications for home based economic activity is discussed in Chapter 16 of this Plan.

#### **14.15.1 Remote Working, Co-Working and Home-Based Economic Activity – Policies**

It is the Policy of the Council to:

- RH P1: To support and facilitate the provision of advanced communication networks and services, throughout towns, villages and rural areas subject to minimising impacts on landscape, the local environment and natural and built heritage.
- RH P2: To support the provision of co-working facilities and digital hubs that promote flexible working arrangement for established businesses, self-employed persons and start up enterprises.
- RH P3: To support start-up businesses within the home or converted outbuildings where it can be demonstrated that the nature of the business operation is of an

appropriate scale for its location and would not be detrimental to the character or amenities of the area.

RH P4: To support the relocation of expanding home-based businesses to appropriate sites within towns and villages in order to support the viability of these settlement centres, to facilitate appropriate expansion of the business and to seek to facilitate compact growth and place making within the settlements.

#### **14.16 Extractive Industry, Aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) and Limestone Reserves**

Extractive industries are important for the supply of aggregates and construction materials and minerals to a variety of sectors. The county has a rich base of aggregate and limestone reserves which are of strategic importance to the local and regional economy and are a valuable source of employment in rural parts of the county. The Geological Survey of Ireland Aggregate Potential Mapping (APM) shows the potential for crushed rocks and for sand and gravel deposits throughout the country. It also shows the inventory of active and historical quarries and pits, as known in 2014. It is recognised that aggregates are a tied resource and are the essential raw materials from which much of our future infrastructure will be built. Local supplies of aggregates for development within the county are vital in the drive to reduce our carbon footprint and to transition towards a more sustainable society.

##### **14.16.1 Aggregates – Stone, Sand and Gravel**

Aggregates are a significant natural resource. By their nature, aggregates can only be worked where they occur. It is important that these resources are developed with the principles of sustainable development and environmental management in mind. The operation of quarries can give rise to land-use conflicts and environmental issues which require to be mitigated and controlled through the planning system. A satisfactory balance is required between the needs of the building industry and the need to protect the environment. The suitability of any extraction enterprise shall be assessed on the basis of the sensitivity of the local environment to such impacts, the scale of the development proposed and the capacity of the road network in the area to accommodate such development. Proposals must adequately demonstrate that extraction is compatible with

the protection of the environment in terms of air and water quality, natural and cultural heritage, the quality of life of residents in the vicinity, the capacity of the road network to accommodate the development, minimising landscape impact and appropriate proposals for site rehabilitation. Extractions which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of sensitive landscapes or damage to areas of scientific importance or geological, botanical, zoological and other natural significance including all designated European Sites shall not be permitted.

The Council's considerations on quarrying matters will have regard to "Quarries and Ancillary Activities", Section 28 Guidelines issued in 2004. The detailed matters which will be taken into consideration in the assessment of planning applications for extractive and processing developments are set out in Chapter 16, Development Management Standards.

#### **14.16.2 Clogrennane Lime**

The Lime Quarry at Clogrennane has been in operation since 1816, reflecting the valuable natural resource available at this location which is a key high-quality raw material for the lime products manufactured on site. Clogrennane Lime Limited operates an advanced processing facility, producing a wide range of specialised lime products for the agricultural, construction, environmental and industrial sectors. Clogrennane Lime Ltd. is Ireland's only producer of quicklime and hydrated lime products and is considered to be of Strategic National Importance.

#### **14.16.3 Extractive Industry - Aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) and Mineral Resources - Policies**

It is the Policy of the Council to:

El P1: Facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate and mineral resources to meet the future growth needs of the

county and wider region where there is a proven need for a certain aggregate / mineral while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation.

El P2: Ensure that extractions (e.g. stone, sand and gravel pits, limestone reserves) which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of sensitive landscapes or damage to designated sites, habitat types or species shall not be permitted.

El P3: Exercise appropriate control over inappropriate development(s) that would significantly hinder the efficient or effective recovery of the county's natural resources, by seeking to prevent incompatible land-uses that could be located elsewhere from being located in the vicinity of the resource, since the extraction of minerals and aggregates is resource based.

El P4: Ensure that all existing and proposed quarries comply with the requirements of "Quarry and Ancillary Facilities- Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG) 2004 or any replacement document and to promote a whole of life plan for an extractive location, including restoration / rehabilitation plans and proper land use management. The Council will seek the delivery of environmental benefits in the form of sustainable habitat creation in conjunction with the restoration phases of development.

El P5: Ensure that extractive developments do not adversely impact on environmental quality, including water quality, tourism value, existing infrastructure, residential amenity or the amenity value of neighbouring lands.

El P6: To ensure that development for aggregates / mineral extraction, processing and associated processes does not significantly impact the following:

- Existing and proposed European Sites;
- Other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna;
- Areas of significant archaeological potential including recorded monuments;
- Important aquifers and sensitive groundwater resources;
- Sensitive landscapes; and
- Established rights of way.

El P7: Ensure that the extractive industry (aggregates and mineral resources) and associated development minimise adverse impacts on the road network in the area and that the full cost of road improvements, including during operations and at time of closure, which are necessary to facilitate those industries are borne by the industry itself.

El P8: Ensure compliance with the overall objectives of the Water Framework Directive in the context of quarry development(s) and extractive industry.

industry comply with all relevant Planning and Environmental Legislation.

El O2: Consult with the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) with regard to any developments likely to have an impact on Sites of Geological Importance listed in Chapter 10 of this Plan.

#### **14.16.4 Extractive Industry - Aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) and Mineral Resources - Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

El O1: Support RSES policy for the adequate supply of aggregate and mineral resources to ensure the continued growth of the county and region and to ensure that all quarrying activities and projects associated with extractive