

inCarlow

# **CARLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028**

**ISSUES PAPER**

The purpose of the County Development Plan is to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

have  
your  
say



CARLOW  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHEATHARLACH

# Foreword



The review of the County Development Plan is one of the most significant and broad strategic functions of Carlow County Council. The new Carlow County Development Plan will be for the period 2022 to 2028 and will set out a vision for the development of Carlow to 2028 and be a platform for development beyond 2028.

During the period of the current plan Ireland has seen significant growth in its economy and population. The recent pandemic has stalled that growth and presented new economic and social challenges that could not have been envisaged until recently. This review of the County Development Plan is an opportunity to meet those challenges as we plan for the future.

The review of the County Development Plan begins on 24th June 2020 and will take two years to complete. This process will deliver a vision for the strategic spatial development of the County for the following six years. It will offer an opportunity to re-examine our rural and urban landscape and to bring forward innovative ways to improve the County for the benefit of all.

The publication of this issues paper is the first step in the plan-making process and it sets out the key development issues impacting the County that need to be addressed in this review. This paper will encourage public engagement and facilitate conversations on these issues and any others that arise through public engagement and participation.

I encourage any individual or group with an interest in the long-term development of County Carlow to engage with this process at this early stage to ensure that the final Plan reflects the aspirations and vision of everybody with an interest in the long-term development of the County to its full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen Holohan', written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Holohan  
Chief Executive

# HAVE YOUR SAY

Submissions should be marked  
"REVIEW OF COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN"  
and sent by post to the following address:

Senior Executive Officer  
Review of County Development Plan  
Planning Department  
Carlow County Council  
Athy Road  
Carlow

Or by email to: [carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie)

online at: [consult.carlow.ie](http://consult.carlow.ie)

Public Information Sessions will be held at the following locations:

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS	DATE	TIME
Muinebheag Library	Tuesday 11th August	3 - 7.30pm
Tullow Library	Wednesday 12th August	3 - 7.30pm
Carlow Library	Thursday 13th August	3 - 7.30pm

Please make your submission by 5.00pm on the 20th August 2020  
and by one medium only i.e. hard copy, online or by email.

These sessions must comply with Government Guidelines regarding Covid 19. In order to facilitate social distancing, attendance will be by appointment only. Please ring 059 9170310 to book your appointment time or email [carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie).

All relevant requirements regarding Covid 19 as appropriate will apply to these meetings and you will be advised of same with your allocated appointment time.

The public consultation sessions will be an opportunity for you to discuss any issue that you may have with a member of the Forward Planning Team and possibly help frame future policies and objectives of the County Development Plan.

Notice Covid 19: In the event, that future Government Guidelines regarding Covid 19 advise against the holding of public meetings, alternative arrangements will be put in place to ensure effective engagement with the public is facilitated. Any changes will be advertised and communicated to any attendees who may have registered for a public inform.

Please make your submission by 5.00pm on the 20th August 2020 and by one medium only i.e. hard copy / email or via the online consultation portal. Please note these submissions will be published along with your name in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), but **your contact details will not be published.**



Carlow County Council  
Athy Road, Carlow. R93 E7R7  
Tel: +353 59 9170300  
[www.carlow.ie](http://www.carlow.ie)

## Table of Contents

1	Background	3
2	Strategic Planning	7
3	Population and Housing	11
4	Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment	17
5	Movement and Transport	23
6	Infrastructure (Water/Wastewater and Environmental Services)	27
7	Environment and Climate Change	31
8	Sustainable Communities	37
9	Heritage, Amenity and Landscape	43
10	Design and Regeneration	49
11	Rural Development	53



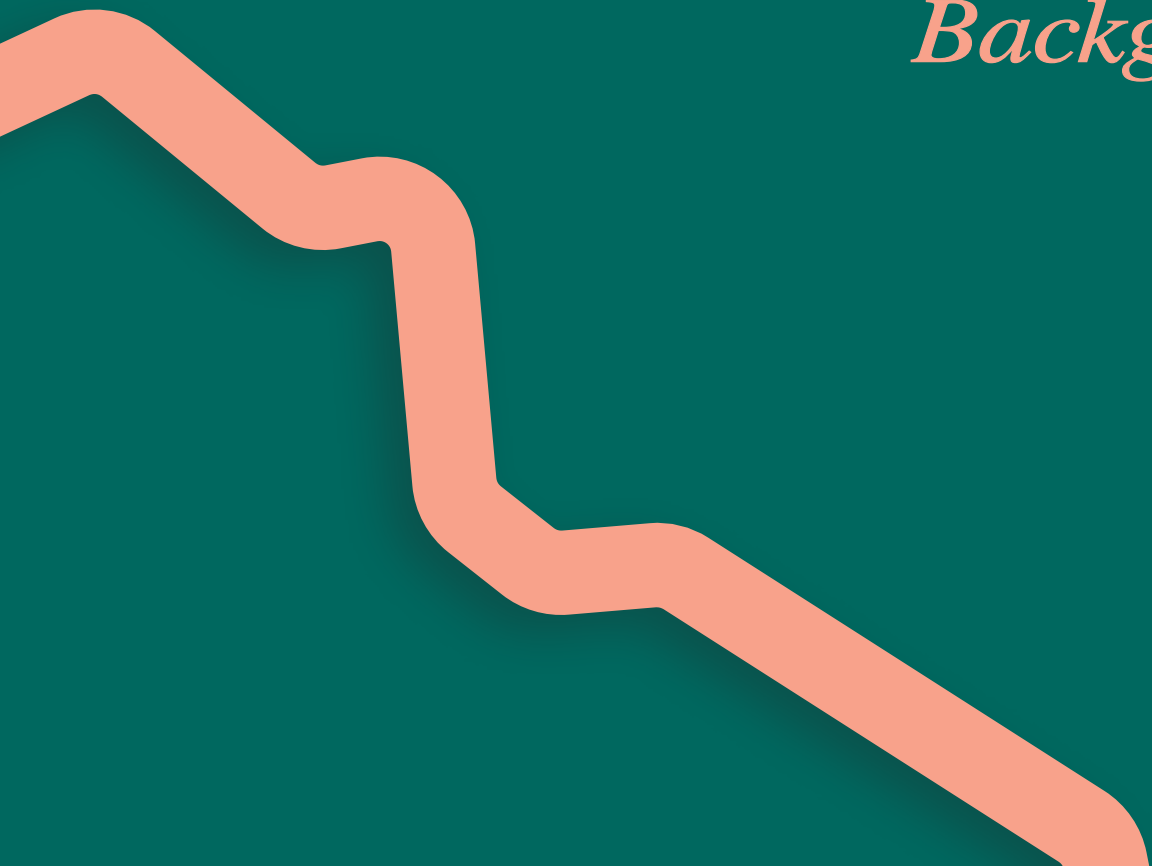
“The purpose of the County Development Plan is to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.”



# inCarlow



## *Background*



# BACKGROUND

**In collaboration with the community, Carlow County Council is commencing a review of the Carlow County Development Plan 2015-2021, which will lead to a new County Development Plan that will shape the future growth of the County over the six-year period 2022-2028. The purpose of the County Development Plan is to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.**

**The review begins on 24/06/20 and the plan making process will take up to two years, concluding with the publication of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028. To inform the process this booklet has been prepared in order to give a broad overview of the main development issues currently impacting on County Carlow.**

## Focus of Development Plan

The focus of the County Development Plan review at this early stage is on the “big picture” planning issues that affect the county. These will include development policies, objectives, guidelines and standards, together with the strategic planning context for the zoning of lands. It will deal with important issues such as housing, enterprise and employment, climate action, energy, biodiversity, heritage, transportation, environmental protection, social inclusion, community, tourism, recreation and regeneration.

### We encourage you to get involved in establishing:

- A vision for the County;
- Aims that the plan should seek to achieve;
- Policies and proposals for sustainable development;
- Land use objectives and development control standards;
- A balance between development and conservation objectives.

**Please note that a request or proposal for zoning of particular land for any purposes will not be considered at this stage.**

## What stage are we at now?

In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the preparation of the County Development Plan will comprise of five main stages;

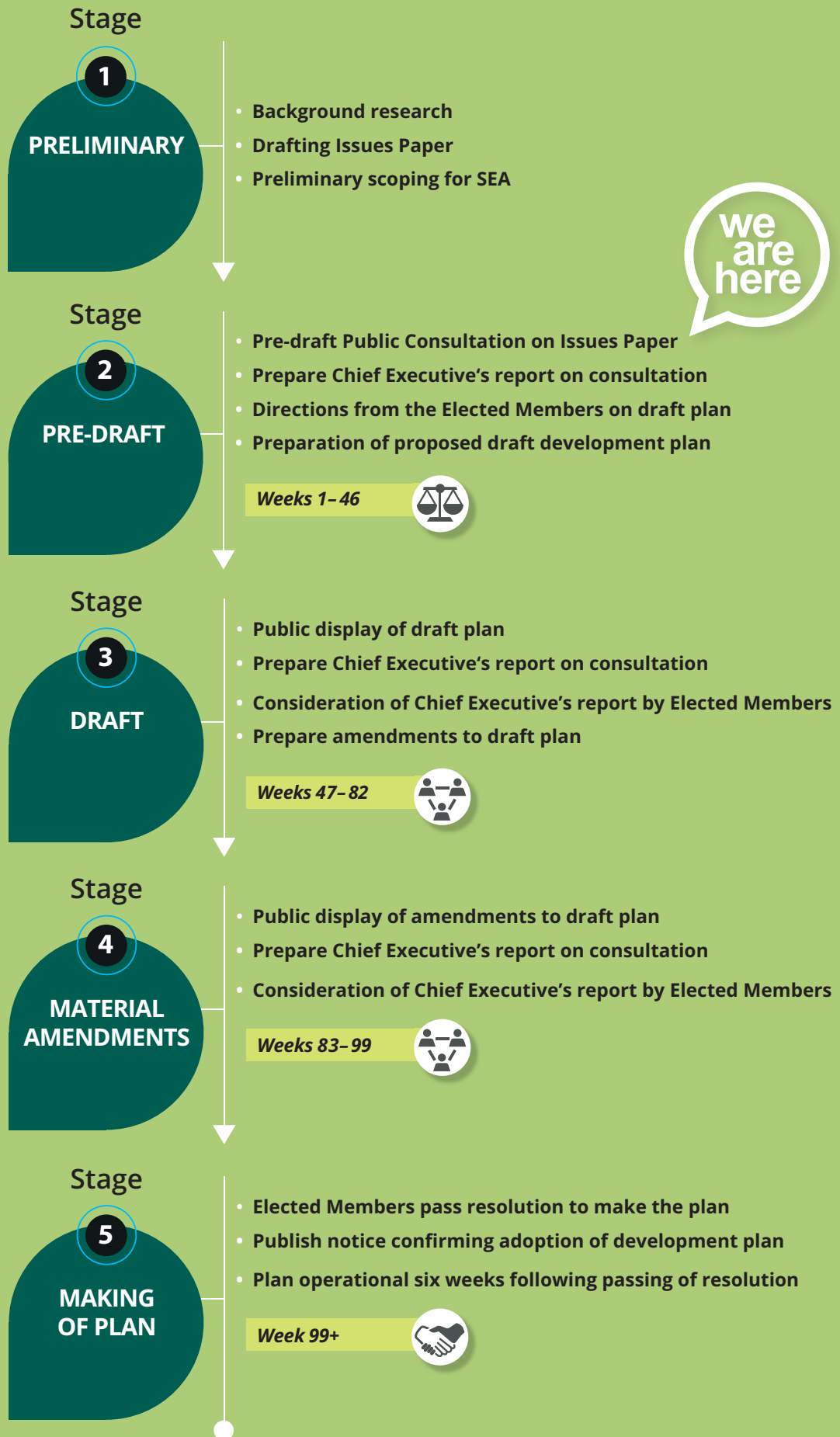
- 1 Preliminary**
- 2 Pre-draft Plan Consultation**
- 3 Preparation of Draft Plan with further consultation**
- 4 Material Amendments with further consultation**
- 5 Making of New Plan**

We are currently in the second stage of the process. Your input can inform the initial stages of preparation, in advance of the preparation of the Draft Plan. We must receive your submission by 5.00pm on the 20th August 2020.





# DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS



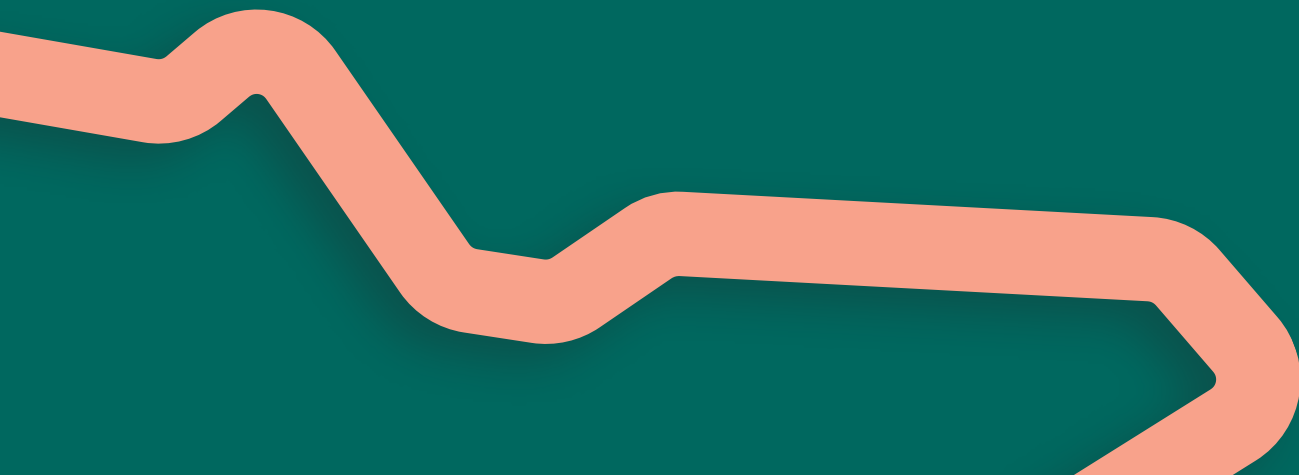
“The Growth of County Carlow will be in line with the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.”



# inCarlow



## *Strategic Planning*





## Strategic Planning

**The County Development Plan will set out a strategic planning framework for the growth of the County in line with higher level policies in the National Planning Framework “Project Ireland 2040” and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.**

### National Planning Framework (NPF)

The Government published the National Planning Framework, Project Ireland 2040, in May 2018. The document guides at a high-level strategic planning and development for the country over the next 20+ years. Project Ireland 2040 establishes the framework to guide future growth patterns and to ensure that as the population grows, it is sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms.

### Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

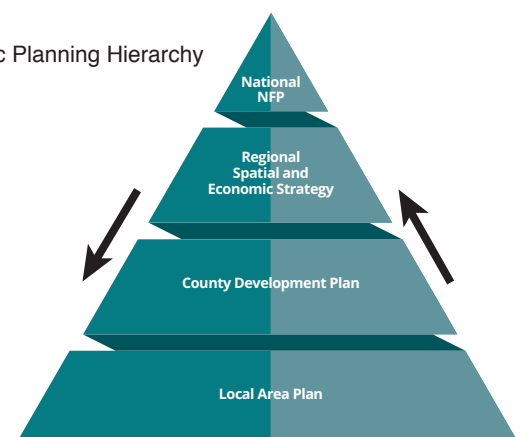
The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 - 2032 seeks to implement the NPF at a regional level and is based on a vision to:

- Nurture all places to realise their full potential;
- Protect and enhance the environment;
- Work to achieve economic prosperity and improve quality of life for all;
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Promote the region’s international reputation as one of Europe’s most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions.

### Key strategic issues for Carlow as contained in the RSES include;

- Designation of Carlow Town as a key Town to function as an economic self-sustaining regional driver and a focus of significant growth within the county. The inter-regional role of Carlow is acknowledged given its location to the north of the Southern Region and adjacent to the Eastern Midlands Regional Assembly Region.
- Recognition of the opportunities afforded to Carlow as part of a network of regionally significant drivers of collaboration and growth located on the Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/Rail Network/Axis.
- Supporting the preparation of a cross-boundary Joint Urban Area Plan with Laois County Council for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area.
- Acknowledging Carlow as an important regional center of education and research, supporting the establishment of a Multi-Campus Technological University for the South East.
- Population target of 63,000 (+6,000 (10%)) by 2026 and 65,500 (+8,500 (14%)) by 2031.
- Supporting the strong network of towns, villages and diverse rural areas in achieving the objectives of the NPF.

### Strategic Planning Hierarchy



## Overall Approach

Having regard to the strategic planning context the forthcoming Carlow County Development Plan will be guided by the National Planning Framework (NPF) Project Ireland 2040 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES).

The finalised County Development Plan will consist of a written statement and accompanying maps including a Vision Statement, Policies and Key Objectives to achieve balanced and sustainable growth in County Carlow over the plan period and beyond. The strategic importance of Carlow Town (former Town Council area) will be recognised through the inclusion of strategic objectives and an accompanying land-use zoning map to facilitate future development of the town over the plan period.



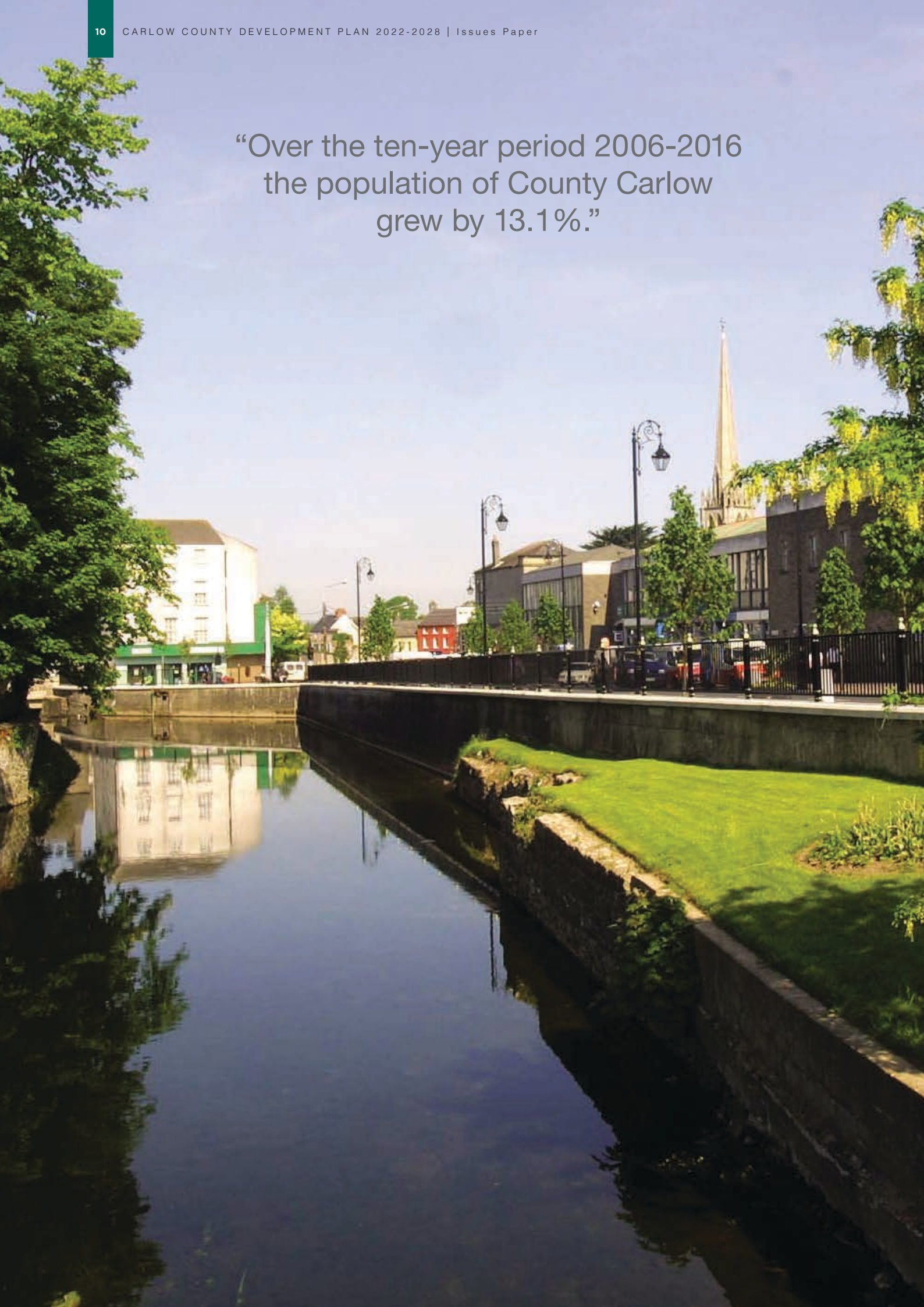
### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is your vision for County Carlow?
- How can the overall settlement structure of County Carlow be physically, economically, socially and culturally enhanced by the Development Plan so as to make it an attractive place to live, work and visit?



“To ensure that as the population grows, it is sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms.”

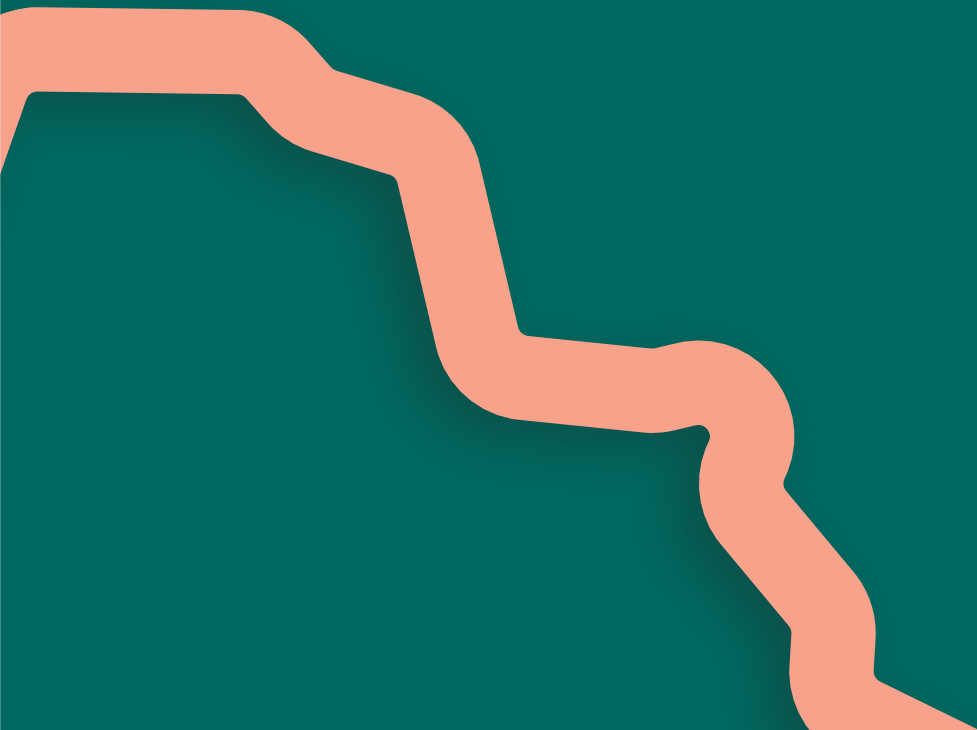
“Over the ten-year period 2006-2016  
the population of County Carlow  
grew by 13.1%.”



# inCarlow



## *Population and Housing*





## Population and Housing

**Relative to the State and the South-East Region, County Carlow's demographics are characterised by, an above-average level of population growth, particularly over the past decade; a younger age profile; and greater demographic vitality.**

### Population Change

County Carlow's population in the 2016 Census stood at 56,875, an increase of 2,263 (4.1%) persons on the recorded 2011 Census (54,612). Over the ten-year period 2006-2016 the population of County Carlow grew by 13.1%.

The influence of the Greater Dublin Area is evident in Carlow's spatial patterns in respect of population change. Growth rates are consistently highest in those parts of Carlow that are most accessible to Dublin. These include towns and villages in the north of the county, namely Tullow, Palatine and Rathvilly, and settlements along the M9 in the west and northwest of the county, including Ballinabrannagh, Kernanstown and Leighlinbridge. The outskirts of Carlow Town has also experienced population increases, and there is evidence of a demographic recovery in the town core as well.

In contrast, population levels are more stagnant in rural Carlow, and areas of decline persist in parts of the south. Population decline was greatest in Tinryland and across rural parts of County Carlow generally. Above-average levels of decline were experienced in Rathanna and Killedmond – between Borris and Mount Leinster. Decline also occurred, although to a lesser extent, in Graiguenamanagh and St Mullin's and in the rural areas surrounding Hacketstown and Bagenalstown.



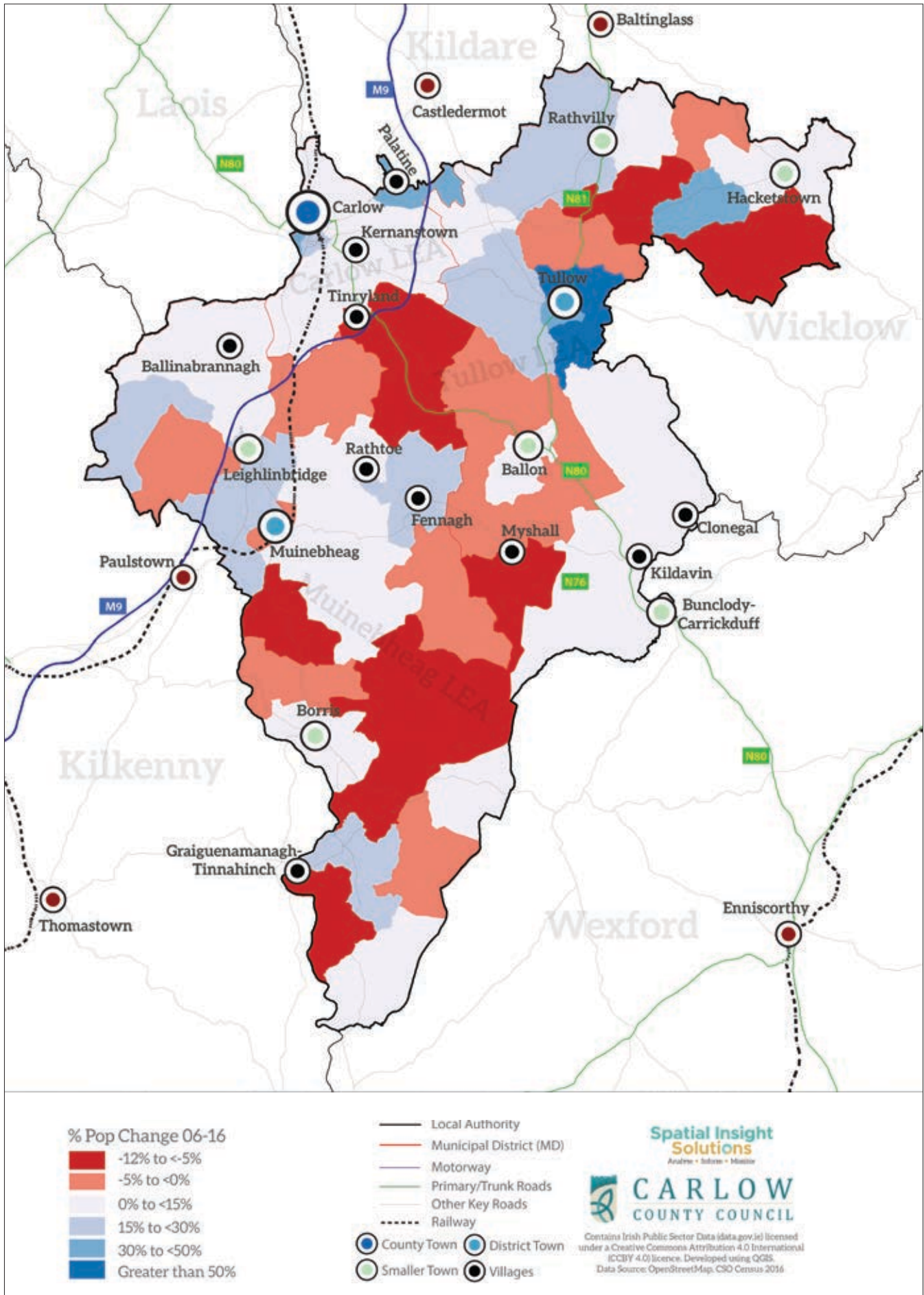


Figure 1: Population Change 2006-2016 (source; A Socio-Economic Profile of Co. Carlow 2019)



### Population Profile

Carlow has a younger age profile than Ireland as a whole. The county has proportionately more persons in all five-year age cohorts up to age 24. Carlow has proportionately fewer persons in their late twenties and thirties, and fewer persons aged 65+. The specific age profile of the county places varying demands on public service provision including childcare, education facilities and healthcare.

In terms of family lifecycle Table 1 indicates an older age profile in the Bagenalstown MD, and to some extent in the Tullow MD, relative to the Carlow MD. The Bagenalstown MD has the highest proportions of families in the three most mature stages of the family life cycle namely, families with adult children, empty nesters and retired households.

In contrast, the Carlow MD has proportionately more households with children. Indeed, the proportions in the Carlow MD are higher than the regional average in respect of the four child-related stages in the family life cycle. In addition, the Carlow MD has a higher proportion of families in the pre-family stage.



	Pre-Family	Pre-School	Early School	Pre-Adolescent	Adolescent	Adult	Empty Nest	Retired
State	9.2%	10.0%	11.9%	11.4%	12.3%	25.1%	10.0%	10.0%
SE Region	6.9%	9.3%	11.6%	11.9%	13.4%	24.7%	11.5%	10.8%
Carlow County	7.3%	9.9%	11.9%	12.5%	13.1%	24.9%	10.8%	9.6%
Carlow MD	8.7%	10.7%	12.4%	12.4%	13.3%	22.3%	10.4%	9.8%
Tullow MD	7.1%	9.9%	12.3%	13.3%	13.1%	24.4%	10.9%	9.0%
Bagenalstown MD	5.7%	8.8%	10.9%	11.7%	12.9%	28.9%	11.1%	9.9%

Table 1: Family Life-Cycle State – Carlow in comparative context, 2016 (source; A Socio-Economic Profile of Co. Carlow 2019)

## Housing

There were 23,274 units in County Carlow in 2016, an increase of 16% since 2006. About two thirds of homes are privately owned. Houses (detached, semi-detached and terraced) and bungalows represent the dominant type of housing comprising 87% of units in Carlow, 10% comprising flats and apartments with other types of housing representing the remaining 3%. In County Carlow 33% of the housing stock has been built since 2001. Less than 3% of the housing stock in the county was built between 2011-2016.

## Housing Tenure

The number of socially rented households in Carlow increased by over 21% between 2011 and 2016. Households in this category constitute almost one-in-eight (11.8%) of all households in County Carlow, and this rate is above the State average (9.4%).

The spatial pattern in respect of social housing in County Carlow is one of higher concentrations in the urban centres and low values in rural areas. The highest tier of values (>18%) are in Carlow Town, Tullow, Rathvilly and Bagenalstown/ Muinebheag. The second highest tier encompasses Carlow towns immediate environs, Hacketstown, Leighlinbridge and the environs of Bagenalstown. Values are below average in the rest of the county, with the lowest values being in areas of open countryside.

## Future Growth - Core Strategy

The current County Development Plan 2015-2021 put in place a core strategy which guides where new development should take place in the county. This includes a settlement strategy for the county which was closely aligned with the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022. As part of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 a new core strategy will be prepared which will be informed by the National Planning Framework including the Implementation Roadmap

(July 2018) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020-2032 (RSES). In accordance with the RSES the core strategy will allocate appropriate levels of population growth having regard to the NPF allocation (see Table 2) and identify a settlement strategy for the county acknowledging the strategic role of various settlements within the county.

Carlow town given its strategic designation as a key town will be recognised for significant growth within the county. Larger settlements like Tullow and Bagenalstown will be considered for growth given the size, location and nature of these settlements and the enhanced role of these settlements supporting their immediate hinterlands. Smaller towns i.e. Hacketstown, Rathvilly, Borris, Ballon, Carrickduff and Leighlinbridge will be subject to Small Town Plans within the new County Development Plan with appropriate levels of zoning identified to facilitate their sustainable development into the future. Smaller villages / settlements within the county will be identified where appropriate for lower levels of growth to support the viability of towns and rural settlements. The scale of growth in all settlements must be considered in light of their capacity to absorb development with the necessary supporting social, community and physical infrastructure. The availability / capacity of Irish Water infrastructure (water and wastewater) is a significant constraint in many small towns and villages throughout the county.

## Population Projections Co. Carlow

Year	Target
2026	63,000 (+6,000 (10%))
2031	65,500 (+8,500 (14%))

Table 2: Transitional Population Projections to 2031  
(Source: NPF Implementation Roadmap – July 2018- DoHPLG)



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Where in Carlow should additional population be focused and how can we ensure that both social and private housing contributes to the creation of sustainable communities?
- Are there settlements that could absorb greater development and what criteria should be used to determine where it should be provided?
- How can we overcome unevenly distributed growth patterns throughout the county?
- How can the housing needs of all sectors of our community be adequately addressed?
- What policies should be integrated into the plan in order to provide the range of family and housing size needs?

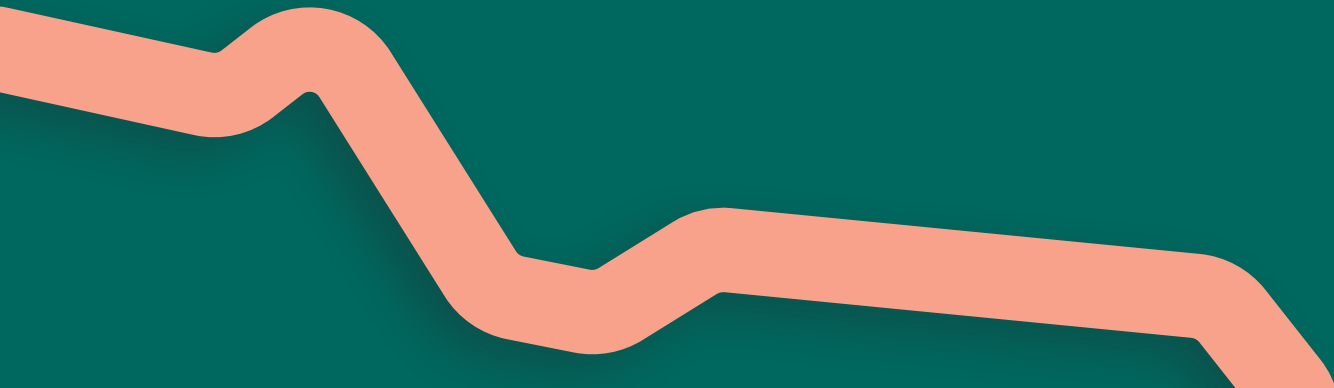


“The county has a skilled and educated workforce, high quality educational facilities and an excellent quality of life.”

inCarlow



*Economic Development,  
Enterprise and Employment*





## Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment

**In recent years, Carlow has experienced an increase in economic activity across most sectors. While the local economy is expanding and is diversifying it is taking place at a slower pace than the national average.**

Carlow has a strategic location proximate to Dublin and its economy is expanding and diversifying albeit at a slower pace than the national average. Traditionally the economy of the county has been characterised by education, engineering, manufacturing and food manufacturing, based on commodities produced in a rich agricultural hinterland. The industrial base is slowly expanding and is now made up of a wider variety of industries ranging from multi-national enterprises employing skilled workforces to smaller indigenous enterprises serving local to international markets. Total local jobs in the county were recorded in excess of 16,000 in 2016. However, over 6,000 people commute from County Carlow to work. Those who commute to work outside of the county are more likely than those who live and work in Carlow to have a third-level qualification and to work in professional services. It is recognised that there is significant potential for investment in County Carlow at a local, national and international level. The county has a skilled and educated workforce, a central and accessible location, a clean environment with attractive towns, villages and countryside, high quality educational facilities and an excellent quality of life.

### Employment Profile

Carlow Town is a strategic economic base for the county with a wide range of businesses and commercial uses throughout the town of local and national origin. East Carlow’s economic

profile is characterised by a strong agricultural sector, which is driving economic activities in food processing and transport. Across Central Carlow, (most notably Bagenalstown, Fennagh, and Carrickduff) manufacturing industries, almost all of which are small and medium scale, represent a significant employment base. The uplands of Western Carlow – west of the M9 have a mixed economic profile with agriculture remaining a locally important employment activity. Southern parts of Carlow have the narrowest economic base of any part of the county with a reliance on farms of smaller scale with less intensive agriculture than the rest of the county.

### 2016: CSO COUNTY CARLOW – Summary Jobs Profile

- 21,800** resident workers
- 16,009** local jobs in Carlow (68.5% live in and work in Carlow, 31.5% live outside the county and commute in)
- 28.9%** of resident workers are external commuters (6,290)

## Labour Force Participation

The unemployment rate as recorded in County Carlow in the 2016 census is illustrated in Fig 2. Between 2012 – 2019 there was a consistent decline in the number of persons on the live

register nationally, in the South-East Region and in County Carlow. The recent unprecedented events arising from the Covid 19 Pandemic will impact on employment levels at a local, national and regional level.

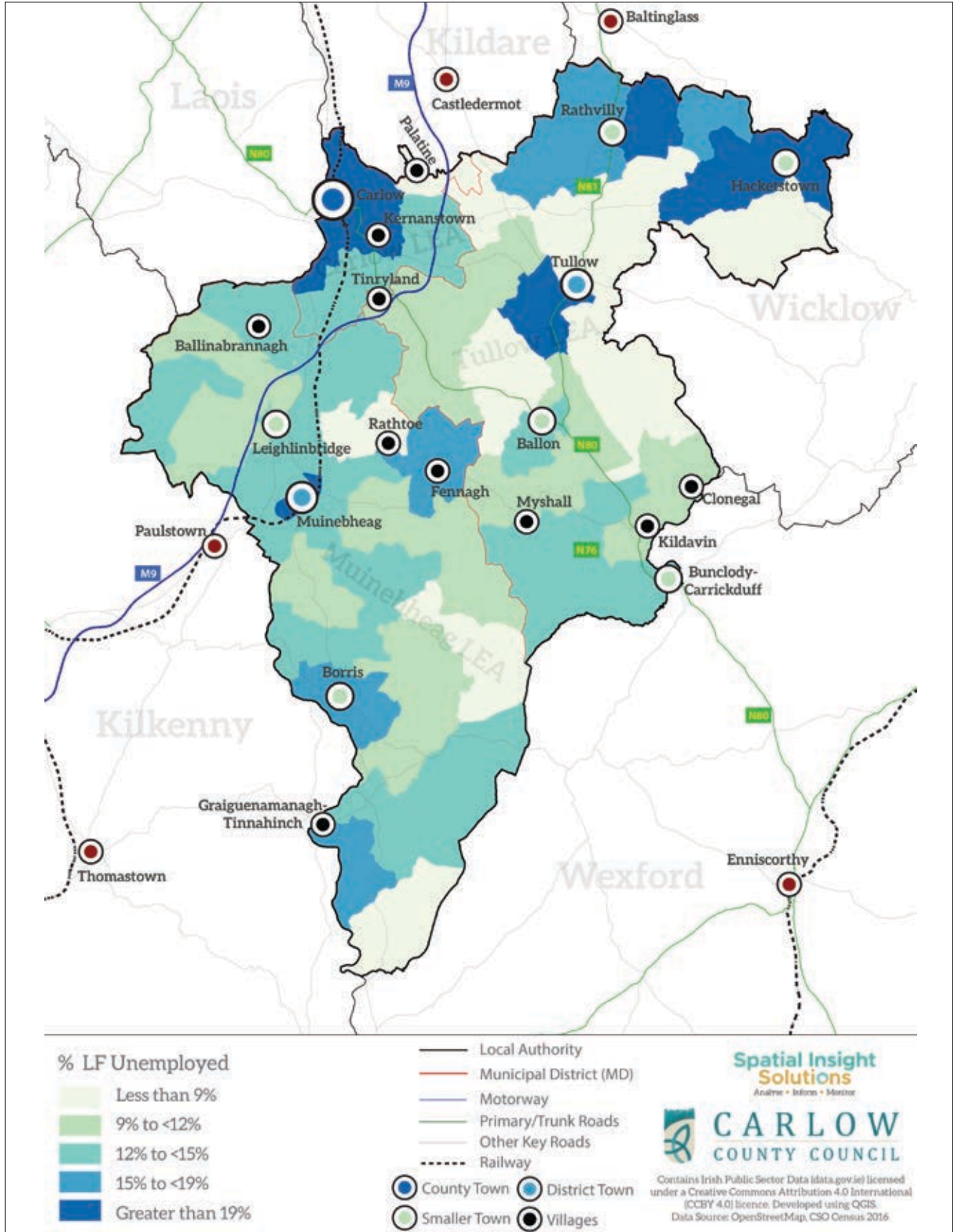


Figure 2: % Labour Force Unemployed (source; A Socio-Economic Profile of Co. Carlow 2019)



## Tourism

Tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy in Carlow. In 2017, 79,000 overseas visitors contributed €45 million to the local economy and 1,215 full time jobs. This represents a growth of 4,000 in visitor numbers, €6 million in revenue and 216 full time jobs on the previous year.

Carlow Tourism's mission for the sector is to enrich its visitors by offering a unique holiday experience through the provision of the ideal base for active holidays set against the natural panoramic backdrop of Carlow's rich heritage.

Carlow County Council and Carlow Tourism recognises their role in Tourism by:

- Acting as primary developer of a range of public tourism infrastructure;
- Acting as a link between the State tourism agencies and communities by supporting community effort for major national tourism initiatives;
- Supporting community effort in destination development, including assisting communities to align their efforts with the tourism agencies brand architecture and consumer segmentation model.

Development of the tourist product has been supported through significant investment in the Arts and Cultural Offering of Carlow Town which has taken place including development of the Cultural Quarter in Carlow Town in an area around the George Bernard Shaw Theatre, Visual Art Gallery, County Museum and Carlow Cathedral. Further investment in the tourist offering will continue in the coming years with €500,000 provided for the development of the tourist product in Carlow Town under Fáilte Ireland's Destination Town Funding call in 2019 and €650,000 for the Borris Railway Viaduct walking product funded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

The preparation of the Carlow Tourism Strategy and the Carlow Outdoor Recreation Strategy both currently being drafted will further support the development of the tourist industry / product throughout the county.

The Carlow County Development Plan will seek to maintain and facilitate the expansion of the tourism product by;

- Facilitating the expansion of the existing tourism product;
- Identifying strategic sites capable of accommodating new tourism ventures while ensuring the preservation of the natural landscape;
- Seeking the enhancement of the appearance of towns through appropriate development;
- Seeking the enhancement of the public realm in our towns and villages;
- Ensuring a high-quality design in the delivery of the tourism product; and
- Facilitating the development of alternative products such as eco-tourism, craft, artisan studios etc.





## Retail

The retail environment is changing and continued leakage to higher order centres and migration to online sales rather than through traditional on street outlets is posing a significant challenge to town centres. As a result, many of the county's town centres have suffered from increases in levels of vacancy and dereliction rates and higher numbers of lower value retail users in their core retail streets. There is a clear need to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres which is supported in the RSES for the Southern Region. As such it is important to develop quality commercial environments that will in turn improve the vibrancy and enhance traditional on street experiences in towns and villages throughout the county.

## Role of the Local Authority in Economic Development

With the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office, Carlow County Council has a more direct role in supporting economic development and enterprise. The Council aims to facilitate economic development and employment opportunities by providing or supporting the delivery of infrastructure, implementing urban and rural economic initiatives, by the zoning of appropriate lands for employment purposes and by ensuring that planning policy and objectives are supportive of business.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What policies should the Plan include to promote enterprise and employment?
- What are the most optimal locations in Co. Carlow for additional employment and new enterprises?
- How can the county broaden new types of economic activities such as from the knowledge economy and hi-tech industries?
- How can the county position itself to attract enterprises to places with the lowest levels of employment (Southern Carlow) in order to create new jobs?
- How can we encourage greater links between employment, 3rd level and further education within Carlow town and throughout the county?
- How can we increase support for rural enterprises?
- What can the Plan do to promote and encourage tourism in the county?
- What policies should be introduced to further support town centre retailing and commercial activities that enhance the vitality and vibrancy of our town and village centres?

“It is essential to have an efficient strategic transport system integrated with appropriate use of land to support the sustainable economic, social and physical development of the county.”



# inCarlow



## *Movement and Transport*





## Movement and Transport

**Movement and transport policy will seek to implement national and regional policy regarding all modes of transport including pedestrian, cyclist, public transport and the private car.**

### Land Use and Transportation

Co-ordination of transport and land use planning plays a central role in the sustainable development of the local economy. Where and how we build our residential and work environments and supporting transport infrastructure including roads, footpaths, cycle ways, buses and rail infrastructure impacts, on the creation of sustainable communities, climate change and quality of life considerations. It is essential to have an efficient strategic transport system integrated with appropriate use of land to support the sustainable economic, social and physical development of the county.

### Public Transport

One of the key elements of the transportation policy for County Carlow will seek to create more sustainable traffic movements with less car dependency as advocated by policy at a national and regional level. Despite Carlow being situated on the main Waterford-Dublin rail network, only a very small proportion of the county commuters use public transport. Travel-to-work patterns indicate persistently high reliance on private cars. This pattern has the potential to create long term social and environmental problems including increased emissions, reduction in competitiveness and reduction in quality of life.

Outside the main urban centres communities are poorly serviced by public transport and the dispersal of employment means that for many, the private car is the only convenient or practical means of transport to work.

The provision of the Carlow Town Bus Service will improve sustainable travel patterns within the town area. The detailed design of bus stops and associated infrastructure together with the rail access study to facilitate improved accessibility to the railway station are currently being progressed. The provision of appropriate transportation infrastructure including road and rail infrastructure with an appropriate level of services together with other public transport projects must be integrated with a sustainable settlement strategy.

### Local Links

Local Link Carlow provides Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services for passengers living in rural areas across County Carlow. It is funded through the National Transport Authority (NTA) with funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Social Protection. Local Link seeks to provide a quality nationwide community based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs. The key priorities include addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services. The NTA in conjunction with Local Link offices will continue to identify improvements in existing services and develop appropriate new routes based on the availability of resources. Greater integration with existing public transport services between towns / villages will also continue to be a key focus of the Programme.

## Roads

The provision of a safe and efficient road system is required to facilitate the development of the economy and to protect road users. Carlow currently comprises over 1,214km of roads;

- Motorway (24km)
- National Secondary Roads (54km)
- Regional Roads (187km)
- County Roads (949km)

The M9 Motorway and the National Road Network (N80 / N81) are strategically important for the county and for the safe and efficient movement of long distance traffic. In addition to maintenance and upkeep of the national, regional and local network, specific roads projects which are currently being advanced include the upgrade of the N80 National Road east of Castletown Cross Roads extending to Graiguenaspodogue Cross and completion of the Carlow Relief Road Scheme (CRR). The CRR road will extend from the already constructed portion of roadway located at the Junction with the R726 (Hacketstown Road) orbiting Carlow Town (to the south crossing the N80, the Railway line, the R448, the River Barrow, the local and regional road network) and joining with the already constructed portion in Co. Laois. The proposed Relief Road project is currently subject to appraisal under National Strategic Outcome 3 of "Project Ireland 2040 – National Development Plan 2018-2027."

New or upgraded roads and streets in Carlow require compliance with standards as contained in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). In this regard, greater priority shall be given to accommodating the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. The manual places new emphasis on creating a "sense of place" and provides a range of design measures to control vehicular speeds.



## Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling have the lowest environmental impact of all travel modes, however in County Carlow both these modes of transport play minor roles in contributing to sustainable travel patterns. Walking and cycling networks need to be further developed and should be appropriately designed, continuous and cover large areas of towns with links to longer distance routes. Protecting the alignment of existing walking and cycling routes is imperative if such networks are to achieve maximum usage. The Council will continue to promote and facilitate the development of walking and cycling facilities in the county.

## Car Parking

A key consideration in the review of the County Development Plan is to ensure adequate car parking provision while encouraging a changeover to other forms of transport particularly in our bigger urban centres. In working towards better integration of land use and transportation a review of existing car parking standards will be undertaken.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can better coordination between land use and transportation be achieved?
- What are the key transport and movement issues affecting residents, workers and visitors?
- What interventions could be introduced to alleviate traffic congestion in our bigger towns at peak times and school drop off / pick up times?
- How can we create more successful streets that easily facilitate the needs of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians?
- What public transport infrastructure measures are required to achieve more sustainable travel patterns?
- How can we maximise and make best use of existing capacity in our road and rail system?
- What other measures do you think could support the reduction in CO2 emissions?
- Do you think that parking standards for new developments should reflect the need to reduce car dependency?



“The availability of high quality infrastructure networks and environmental services plays a key role in securing economic development, creating sustainable and attractive places, in ensuring health and wellbeing and in safe guarding the environment.”

inCarlow

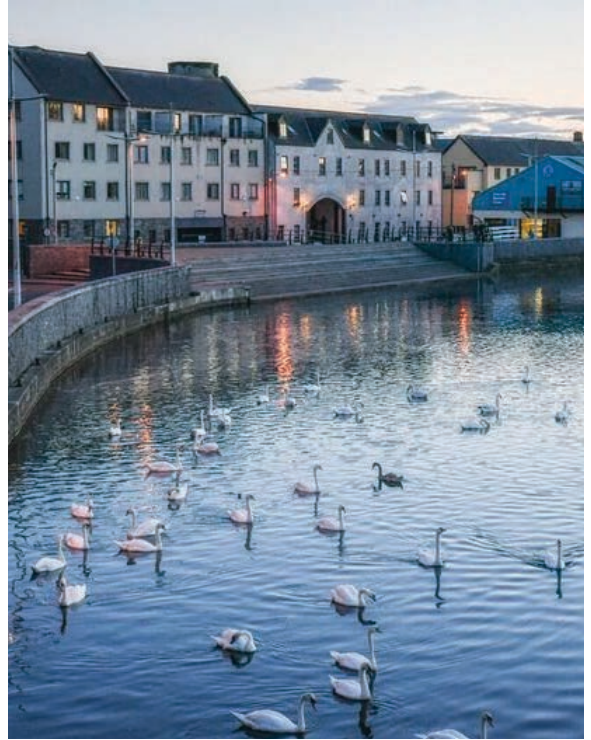


*Infrastructure  
Water/Wastewater and  
Environmental Services*



# Infrastructure (Water/Wastewater and Environmental Services)

**The availability of high quality infrastructure networks and environmental services will play a key role in securing economic development, creating sustainable and attractive places, in ensuring health and wellbeing and in safe guarding the environment. While Carlow County Council is not directly responsible for all aspects of infrastructure provision, the County Development Plan 2022-2028 will provide the framework to facilitate infrastructure planning for the county.**



## Drinking Water and Wastewater

Since January 2014 Irish Water has responsibility for the development and operation of public water services in Ireland. Investment in new or additional capacity in water services will be informed by national, regional and local planning policy and addressed through Irish Water's Capital Investment Plans.

Carlow County Council currently delivers an average of just over 14,000m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water per day from the twelve treatment plants operated on behalf of Irish Water. Water supplies in the county are sourced from surface water abstraction points with the principal sources being the River Burren and the River Slaney and groundwater supplies. Long term investment is required in the upgrading of the North Regional Water Supply Scheme at Rathvilly and the replacement of the trunk main from Rathvilly to the main population centres. The proposed upgraded Moate Reservoir Site, Rathvilly (Knockevagh Td) reservoir is of strategic significance to County Carlow and will provide for 24-hour storage of drinking water.

The water network programme throughout the county also includes various projects for decommissioning of old mains, the upgrade and / or replacement of water mains as appropriate. Works completed to-date have addressed water leakage in several areas in the county and have contributed to a significant reduction in required water distribution input.

Wastewater treatment (Irish Water assets) is provided through twenty-four waste water treatment plants within the county. The main population centres (i.e. Carlow Town, Tullow and Muinebheag/ Bagenalstown) are serviced by wastewater treatment infrastructure, all of which require upgrade.

These comprise;

- Mortarstown (Carlow) wastewater treatment plant - capacity 36,000 PE. Planned upgrade to 58,000 PE.
- Tullow wastewater treatment plant -capacity 5,442 PE. Planned upgrade to 9,200 PE
- Bagenalstown wastewater treatment plant - capacity 5,000 PE. Planned upgrade to 9,200 PE.

Many of the smaller towns and villages have inadequate or insufficient capacity and investment is required to ensure the sustainable development of these areas into the future.

## Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Surface water drainage is the responsibility of the Council. All new development applications must account for how the surface water runoff will be managed on development sites. As such, the County Council aims to control runoff from such sites through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS aims to contain surface waters on site for gradual release back to watercourses or public drainage systems. SuDS thereby reduces the rate and quantity of surface water runoff and also improves water quality by removing pollutants in surface water from developed sites by replicating, as closely as possible a 'greenfield' situation. It is however important to follow best practice, including the use of "treatment trains" and a number of SuDS techniques. Use of oil interceptors should be considered where appropriate, to ensure that surface water runoff does not increase flood or pollution risk, both of which negatively impact on watercourses and downstream developments. The use of SuDS will become more important as predicted climate change scenarios take effect.



## Waste

Carlow is located in the Southern Waste Management Region, governed by the Waste Management Plan 2015 – 2021. Waste Management is heavily regulated by National and European Legislation with policy and enforcement operated between the Department, the EPA and Local Government. There are many challenges in Waste Management including:-

- The provision of adequate facilities within each area to ensure that waste is sustainably managed.
- Minimisation of waste generation.
- Ensuring adequate facilities are in place to support development and the construction industry.
- Ensuring material arising from developments can be used as a useful by product or can be deemed as end of waste in accordance with the directive.
- Ensuring that developments provide adequate facilities for the storage, segregation and management of waste arising.
- Waste Management is planned at pre-development stage to minimise waste and facilitate more sustainable development.
- That industry and commerce sections produce goods in a sustainable manner that demonstrates leadership in production.
- Ensure more sustainable consumption patterns are observed.
- Working with Industry to ensure that material is collected in a manner to maximise recovery/reuse and disposed of/recovery at authorised facilities.

Carlow County Council also provides an educational and awareness role among various different groups and operates the Green Schools Programme to promote Environmental Education from a young age.

## Energy Infrastructure

The supply and distribution of electricity and gas throughout County Carlow is an important factor in the provision and location of employment and the creation of sustainable communities. The Council will continue to work along side key energy providers in facilitating the future development of networks throughout the county. The Council is also cognisant of National Policy which seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050. The County Development Plan will provide for the sustainable development of energy infrastructure throughout the county subject to appropriate planning and environmental considerations.



## Telecommunications and Broadband

The provision of telecommunications and broadband has been fully driven by commercial interests, this will change under the National Broadband Plan (NBP), a government led initiative to deliver high-speed broadband to all premises in Ireland.

This NBP will be achieved through investment by telecoms companies and a state intervention to bring access to high-speed broadband to locations where commercial investment is not guaranteed. Carlow, like all rural counties has a rural-urban divide for high speed broadband services which has left rural communities disadvantaged for their living and working requirements. In Q3 2019, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment indicated that there were;

- 8,088 premises identified in Carlow as target areas for state intervention under the National Broadband Plan.
- 19,948 premises identified in Carlow as areas where commercial operators are delivering or have indicated plans to deliver high speed broadband services.
- 68 premises where eir has committed to commercial rural deployment plans to rollout high speed broadband.

The availability of high quality broadband is necessary to support sustainable economic development.



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can the Council best work with other agencies to ensure infrastructure delivery?
- Are there environmental issues arising out of infrastructure capacity that affect you?
- How can the Development Plan contribute to the promotion of renewable energy use and generation?
- How can the Development Plan build upon the implementation of the Regional Waste Management Plan?
- What can we do to promote waste reduction in the County?



“The County Development Plan must ensure that a balance is achieved in terms of land use and development and the protection of the environment.”

inCarlow



*Environment and  
Climate Change*





## Environment and Climate Change

**The County Development Plan must ensure that a balance is achieved in terms of land use and development and the protection of the environment. The necessity to transition to a low carbon economy cuts across all policy areas and will be addressed throughout the Plan. Environmental considerations will also inform the drafting of the County Development Plan through the preparation of environmental assessments which will be carried out in tandem with the Plan.**

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory formal process carried out in order to fully incorporate environmental considerations into the plan making process with a view to promoting sustainable development. The process seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the plan. It is a separate parallel process carried out in tandem with the preparation of the County Development Plan.

### Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to protect a number of habitats with flora and fauna of European importance by designating these as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. Carlow has three of these sites (River Barrow and River

Nore, Slaney River Valley and Blackstairs Mountain) and it is a requirement of the directive that an Appropriate Assessment be carried out on the implications of any plan or project for the protected conservation sites. The draft County Development Plan will have to be screened to ascertain whether it would be likely to have any significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site.

### Flood Risk Assessment

The EU Floods Directive and the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities" set out the requirement for a development plan to be accompanied by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. These guidelines state that inappropriate development that cannot meet the "Justification Test" should not be considered at the plan making stage. The Council will carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the policies and objectives of the Draft County Development Plan. This assessment will provide a broad assessment of flood risk within the county and inform strategic land use decisions.

## Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015 Ireland became 1 of 193 signatories to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a set of 17 agreed global goals for a sustainable future to be achieved internationally by 2030. Within the 17 Goals there are 169 measurable targets for each Country to assess their progress. Carlow County Council as a SDG Champion acknowledges its role in the promotion and achievement of the goals. It is

recognised that strong policy measures aligning to the targets set out in the Goals will ensure that County Carlow will develop sustainably in the protection of the Biosphere, Society and Economy.



Carlow County Council acknowledges that sustainable development will protect our planet and people, promote peace and partnership and ensure continued prosperity.

# Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

## Water Quality

Water quality is a key issue that affects everybody and its protection is the responsibility of all sections of society. Ensuring that our local natural water bodies are clean and well protected is critically important to our health and wellbeing. A healthy catchment provides high quality drinking water and supports local livelihoods such as agriculture, food production, tourism and water based recreational activities (walking, swimming, angling and water sports). It also sustains and supports water-dependent ecosystems (plants, animals, fish and insects) that depend on clean, healthy waters to survive.

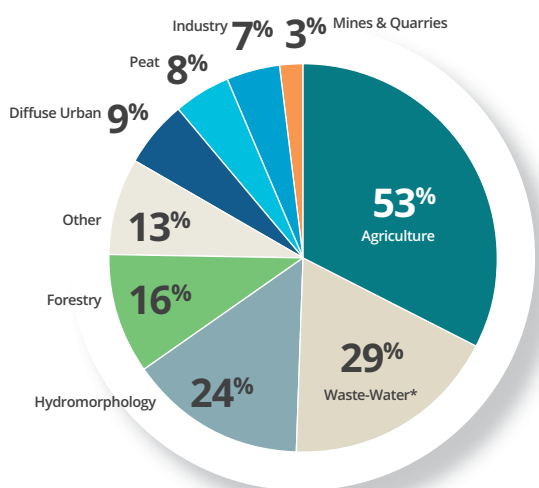


Figure 3: Pressures impacting on Water Bodies that are "At Risk"

Water quality trends for water bodies (rivers, streams, lakes, etc) nationally show a net decline of 4.4% over the period 2013-2018. In County Carlow the current position is as follows:

- High Status: 1 waterbody
- Good Status: 15 waterbodies
- Moderate Status: 21 waterbodies
- Poor Status: 4 waterbodies

The National River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 published in 2018 seeks to ensure full compliance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This requires;

- restoring water quality to at least good status,
- the prevention of deterioration in water quality,
- implementation of objectives for designated protected areas and
- an overall focus on protection of water quality.

The National River Basin Management Plan summarises the significant pressures where waterbodies are at risk of not meeting Water Framework Directive objectives. Figure 3 shows the frequency of significant pressures on "At Risk" water bodies. While agriculture is the most prevalent pressure, it is also the largest land use. The significant pressures impacting on the 1,460 water bodies that are At Risk of not meeting their objectives include agriculture (53%), hydromorphology (24%), urban waste-water (20%), forestry (16%), domestic waste-water (11%), urban runoff (9%), peat (8%), extractive industry (7%) and mines and quarries (6%).

A targeted approach is being taken focusing on identified risk areas (catchments) known as Priority Areas for Action. The targeted catchments in County Carlow include all or part of the following rivers:

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| • Slaney | • Mountain |
| • Burren | • Dinin    |
| • Dereen | • Lerr     |
| • Derry  |            |

High status objective sites are waterbodies that are at pristine and near pristine condition, or have been at this status in recent years, and support important species such as Atlantic Salmon, or support economic and recreational activities associated with unspoilt areas. These waterbodies across Europe are under significant threat. There are two areas within County Carlow (the headwaters of the River Burren and the headwaters of the River Clody). They require additional care, and developments in these areas need to reflect their sensitive nature. A network known as the Blue Dot Catchments Programme has been set up to support the protection of these sensitive water bodies. A targeted programme of measures is being developed for these waterbodies.

## Climate Change and Adaptation

In line with global trends, Ireland's climate is changing and scientific consensus is that more changes are on the way. It is accepted that action is required in terms of both mitigating the causes of climate change and in adapting to the inevitable consequences of our changing climate.

Carlow County Council has adopted a Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 in accordance with the provisions of The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 and the National Adaptation Framework (NAF), 2018. Climate action will continue to be driven by the need to limit global temperatures, improve energy efficiency, increase energy consumption from renewable sources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, replacement of fossil fuels of high embedded carbon products with sustainable alternatives such as bio-based products and also enhancing carbon sinks.

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Carlow is based around nine thematic areas with high level goals identifying the desired outcomes which are further supported by specific objectives and adaptation actions. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy represents a proactive step by Carlow County Council in the process of adaptation planning to build resilience and respond effectively to the threats posed by climate change. Climate change adaptation and mitigation is an overarching consideration that will inform policies and objectives throughout the plan review process with increased emphasis on reducing the impacts of climate change at a local level through settlement and travel patterns, energy use and protection of green infrastructure.

## Thematic Areas and High-Level Goals

### Theme 1 Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations

**GOAL:** Climate Change adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated successfully into all functions and activities of the local authority ensuring operational protocols, procedures and policies implement an appropriate response in addressing the diversity of impacts associated with climate change.

### Theme 2 Infrastructure and Built Environment

**GOAL:** Increased capacity for climate resilient structural infrastructure is centered around the effective management of climate risk, informed investment decisions and positive contribution towards a low carbon society.

### Theme 3 Land Use and Development

**GOAL:** Sustainable policies and measures are devised influencing positive behavioural changes, supporting climate adaptation actions and endorsing approaches for successful transition to low carbon and climate resilient society.

### Theme 4 Drainage and Flood Management

**GOAL:** Great understanding of risks and consequences of flooding and successful management of a co-ordinated approach to drainage and flooding.

### Theme 5 Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure

**GOAL:** Fostering meaningful approaches to protecting natural and key cultural assets through an appreciation for the adaptive capacity of the natural environment to absorb the impacts of climate change.

### Theme 6 Community Health and Wellbeing

**GOAL:** Empowered and cohesive communities with strong understanding of climate risks, increased resilience to impacts of climate change with capacity to champion climate action at a local level.

### Theme 7 Mobility

**GOAL:** Sustain transport networks throughout impacts of climate change and develop more sustainable adaptation methods of mobility.

### Theme 8 Economic Development

**GOAL:** Protect the economy of Carlow with communities acknowledging the benefits which can be gained from adjusting to a 'Green Economy'.

### Theme 9 Resource Management

**GOAL:** Promote awareness on importance of resource management and explore actions on becoming more efficient within the workplace and community.

Source: Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Carlow 2019-2024



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What do you think are the important environmental issues in the county?
- What additional measures should be taken to protect the environment?
- What measures or strategies can be included in the County Development Plan to support the River Basin Management Plan?
- What measures can be taken to improve water quality?
- Are there significant factors contributing to deterioration in the water quality of groundwater or rivers and how can this be addressed through the Plan?
- How can the County Development Plan best address the challenges of climate change?
- How do you suggest that the transition to a low carbon economy could be best achieved?
- What types of renewable energy should be supported in County Carlow?



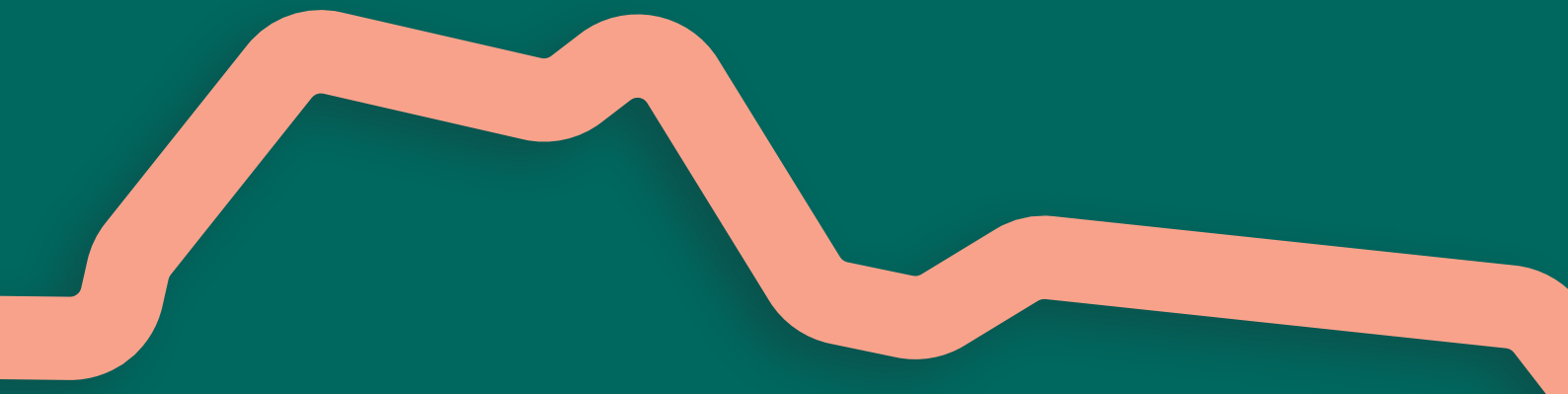
“Creating a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge.”



inCarlow



*Sustainable Communities*





## Sustainable Communities

**A strategic objective of the County Development Plan is to seek to promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities through land use planning to support the provision of services and to accommodate community, leisure, recreational and cultural facilities.**

Sustainable neighbourhoods need a range of community facilities that are fit for purpose, accessible and adaptable. This includes facilities that address the social, community and cultural requirements of the population and incorporate schools, libraries, community centres, health care facilities, childcare facilities, parks and open spaces. The provision of a sufficient range and capacity of such facilities has a positive impact on social cohesion, enhancing quality of life and helping to create attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods. The review of the County Development Plan provides an opportunity to assess community infrastructure provision in towns and villages across the county and to plan for future needs in a strategic and evidence-based manner.

### County Carlow 2021 (LECP)

The County Carlow 2021 Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 was prepared by Carlow County Council and Carlow Local Community Development Committee. It is the primary vehicle for the coordination of local and community activity within the county and aims to improve the well being of the people and economy of County Carlow. This is achieved through enhanced strategic planning, targeting of resources and more meaningful impacts for local communities. It provides the strategic framework for all publicly funded economic, local and community development programmes in the county with the objective of maximising the social, community, cultural, sporting and economic development of County Carlow on a regional level. The policy framework to achieve the vision and workable actions as provided for in the LECP will be reviewed in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

### Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is about the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups and communities. Social inclusion seeks to ensure that minority groups, people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities, the elderly, children and young people are recognised as valuable members of the community.

Carlow County Council is aware of demographic changes and an increasing ageing population within the county. In this regard an age friendly plan of action has been developed as a result of consultation with the older people of Carlow and with the agencies and service providers involved in the delivery of services to older adults throughout the county. This plan will inform the preparation of the County Development Plan.

Currently, 6,880 non-Irish nationals and persons of dual nationality are resident in Co. Carlow. This represents an increase of 7% since 2011. The Carlow Local Community Development Committee, along with partner agencies have recently launched the "Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy". The three-year strategy seeks to promote the integration of foreign-born nationals who live in Carlow and to make Carlow a more welcoming and inclusive place for all residents of the county.

Creating a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge.

Access to services, promotion of good placemaking, connectivity and permeability all impact on creating more inclusive communities.



## Education

County Carlow has forty-two primary schools and eleven second level schools. There are two 3rd-level education institutions in Carlow (Institute of Technology Carlow and Carlow College St, Patrick's). It is estimated that the third-level student population in Carlow is in excess of 7,500 with a combined full-time equivalent staff of around 850 in institutions of higher education. Carlow is recognised within the RSES as an important regional centre of education and research with IT Carlow and St. Patrick's College located within the town as well as the Teagasc Agricultural Centre located on the outskirts of Carlow town. The Institute of Technology Carlow plays an important role in the South East and the Mid-East / Greater Dublin Area. The role of the IT as part of a Multi Campus Technological University for the South East will further support the provision of internationally recognised higher education, research opportunities and in the development of enterprise and industry.

## Childcare

There are 1,536 children attending childcare facilities in the county. Of these, just over one-third (35%) are attending community-owned facilities, while the majority (65%) are attending privately owned or commercial childcare facilities. Community owned facilities are important in enabling those from the lower socio-economic groups to access childcare and in building social capital in communities.

## Health Care

Data from the Health Service Executive indicates that there are five private nursing homes in Co. Carlow. An appropriate distribution of nursing home facilities relative to projected populations over 65 years is required to ensure residents can remain within their established community network.



## Arts and Culture

Carlow County Council's Arts Office provides a range of support services to artists and groups. Sixteen projects to-date have been successful in securing funding under the Carlow Culture and Creative Strategy 2018-2022 which focuses on;

- Connecting People;
- Ideas and Communities;
- Celebrating County Carlow;
- Cultivating Young Futures; and
- Cherishing County Carlow's History and Heritage.

Other initiatives to support the arts include supporting Music Generation Carlow, establishment of the Carlow Writer in Residence Programme facilitating creative writing, management of Carlow Youth Theatre and the Take A Part Carlow initiative focusing on the development of the arts in the Tullow Road Area of Carlow.

The vision of the Arts Office is to seek to:

1. Develop and implement the Local Arts Development Plan;
2. Manage the Arts Programme;
3. Support Independent Arts Organisations; and
4. Support Artists and Communities.

All of these activities serve as an investment for the community, the local economy and the tourism and heritage sector. The County Development Plan has a role in terms of continuing to explore possibilities for the development of further cultural facilities across the county and to encourage the creative sector to continue to contribute to the prosperity of the county.

## Library Service

Carlow Library Service aims to provide a quality, accessible service, which enhances the lives of citizens and communities of County Carlow. It provides for the information, cultural, education, recreational and learning needs of people throughout the network of library branches in Borris, Muinebheag, Carlow Town and Tullow. The redevelopment of the central library to include extension, adaptation and refurbishment of Presentation Buildings which houses Carlow Central Library is a priority for Carlow County Council in the short to medium term. It is envisaged that the Presentation Building will form part of the urban space that ties into and enhances the existing Cultural Quarter of Carlow Town, Public Realm Plan and fulfils the cultural needs of the town and surrounding areas.



## Fire Service

The Central Fire Station is located on Green Lane, Carlow Town. There are four stations within the county located at Carlow, Muinebheag, Tullow and Hacketstown. A firefighting training centre is also located within Hacketstown Village.

## Other Services

Other local services such as small shops, post offices and local public houses provide an important service for communities and their retention is an important consideration in the sustainable development of communities. Significant development proposals throughout the county must have regard to appropriate social infrastructure to support the potential increase in population.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can the County Development Plan assist in meeting community infrastructure needs?
- How can the value of existing community facilities be maximised?
- What policies should be included in the County Development Plan to support the delivery of education, healthcare and childcare facilities throughout the county?
- Can a more equitable distribution of social and community infrastructure be achieved?
- What policies are needed in the Development Plan to cater for the differing housing, retail, economic, religious and recreation needs of the county's diverse population?
- How can the County Development Plan assist in promoting social inclusion in all its communities?



“The County Development Plan is an important medium that brings the various forms of heritage and landscape protection together.”

# inCarlow



## *Heritage, Amenity and Landscape*





## Heritage, Amenity and Landscape

**The County Development Plan will seek to manage change by protecting important habitats, flora and fauna and by balancing the need for development with the preservation of important landscapes, amenity of places and features of heritage significance and natural beauty.**

### Heritage

Heritage plays an essential role in maintaining a high quality of life by way of promoting biodiversity, providing features of interest and contributing to the history, character and identity of areas. Heritage includes, buildings, rivers, trees, landscapes, archaeological sites together with their interrelationship with mankind. Some aspects of Carlow's heritage are important in their own location and some are of national or international importance and contribute to the overall biodiversity of the wider region. Mechanisms for the protection of heritage features, landscapes and sites are provided through Planning and Development legislation together with Wildlife, National Monuments and Habitats legislation. The County Development Plan is an important medium that brings the various forms of heritage and landscape protection together.

### Natural Heritage

Designated nature conservation sites located in County Carlow provide important habitats for flora and fauna and contribute to the overall biodiversity of the area. Designated natural habitats in County Carlow include the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) comprising the Blackstairs Mountains, Slaney River Valley and River Barrow and River Nore. The basic designation for wildlife is the Natural Heritage Area (NHA). This is an area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. Within Carlow there are four Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, namely, Ardristan Fen, Ballymoon Esker, John's Hill and Oakpark. Sites of geological interest have also been designated by the Geological Survey of Ireland. Preservation of these resources not only enriches quality of life and the identity of Carlow but also provides a unique selling point in terms of tourism and thus the local economy.



## Built Heritage and Architectural Conservation

Architectural heritage is afforded protection through the Record of Protected Structures as contained in the County Development Plan which gives protected status to all structures that are deemed of special interest. Categories of special interest include architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical and social interest. There are 546 structures on the County Development Plan list and 115 on the list of the Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban area. One overall list will be incorporated into the forthcoming County Development Plan at which time additions/deletions may be made in light of further survey work conducted.

Areas of the county which have a special character and architectural interest may also be protected through the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's). An ACA is a place, area or group of structures or townscapes, whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve. Currently, there are ACAs contained within the Carlow Town Area and Borris village. An ACA provides a framework that will permit a degree of flexibility in terms of design consistent with the maintenance and improvement of the special character of the area.



Archaeological heritage is afforded protection through the National Monuments Acts. Currently there are c.950 recorded monuments within the county. Urban Archaeological Surveys have also been conducted for a number of settlements in the county. These surveys have identified areas containing a significant number of recorded monuments and therefore have the potential to contain more undiscovered sites. Areas within these settlements have been identified as Zones of Archaeological Potential.





## Landscape

The landscape of County Carlow is characterised by four main character areas, namely the Central Lowlands, River Slaney – East Rolling Farm land, Blackstairs and Mount Leinster Uplands and the Killeshin Hills. The importance of these Character Areas, together with protected views and prospects and their ability to accommodate development has been assessed as part of the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) contained within the existing Carlow County Development Plan 2015-2021. The LCA provides the basis for informed decision making and policy formulation and for the conservation and protection of the landscape. Carlow County Council

recognises its responsibility to manage lands in the county on a sustainable basis. Sustainable land management requires an understanding of the nature and components of the landscape that create distinctive character and an understanding of the capacity of different landscapes to accommodate different forms of development. The County Development Plan will contain guidance together with policies and objectives that will seek to ensure that changes arising from developments will be sympathetic to the county's landscape and provide a basis for landscape planning and management consistent with the principle of sustainable development.

## Green Infrastructure

The term Green Infrastructure (GI) describes the interconnected networks of land and water all around us that sustain environmental quality and biodiversity and enrich quality of life. These areas include conservation areas, parks, open spaces, gardens, rivers, streams, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland and mountainous areas. The provision of green infrastructure contributes to environmental, economic and social benefits through natural solutions that support ecological processes thereby reducing dependence on “hard” infrastructure. As part of Project Ireland 2040, the importance of green infrastructure planning to inform the preparation of county development plans is recognised and supported. The County Development Plan will seek to address the importance of green infrastructure and recognise its multi-functional role performing several functions in a single shared space thereby enhancing opportunities for recreation and tourism, encouraging new business to invest and contributing to climate change adaptation.

### Benefits Provided by Green Infrastructure



#### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Provision of clean water
- Removal of pollutants from air and water
- Pollination provision
- Protection against soil erosion
- Rainwater retention
- Increased pest control
- Improvement of land quality
- Mitigation of land take and soil sealing



#### SOCIAL BENEFIT

- Better health and human well-being
- Creation of jobs
- Diversification of local economy
- More attractive, greener cities
- Higher property values and local distinctiveness
- More integrated transport and energy solutions
- Enhanced tourism and recreation opportunities



#### CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION BENEFITS

- Flood alleviation
- Strengthening ecosystems resilience
- Carbon storage and sequestration
- Mitigation of urban heat island effects
- Disaster prevention (storms, landslides)



#### BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS

- Improved habitats for wildlife
- Provision of ecological corridors
- Landscape permeability
- Reducing habitat fragmentation
- Providing a buffer against climate change for habitats and species



#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Are there any buildings, group of buildings, amenity areas, views that you consider to be of merit and should be afforded protection?
- How can change to the quality, character and amenity value of our landscapes be managed?
- Do you think high amenity areas should be designated in the County Development Plan? If so, what areas merit such designation?
- How can natural heritage and biodiversity be enhanced?
- How can greater access to natural, built and archaeological heritage be facilitated, while having regard to the sensitive nature of many sites?
- How can the Council best promote, support and increase awareness of the benefits of Green Infrastructure?
- What greening initiatives do you think should be considered for the county and incorporated into new development proposals?



“The County Development Plan will seek to promote architecture and design which complements and reinforces the existing character of our towns, villages and rural landscapes.”

# inCarlow



## *Design and Regeneration*





## Design and Regeneration

**The County Development Plan will seek to promote architecture and design which complements and reinforces the existing character of our towns, villages and rural landscapes. The creation of more sustainable communities and vibrant centres will also be achieved with an increased focus on renewal and regeneration of vacant, derelict and brownfield sites throughout the county.**

### Urban Design

Through the planning process, local authorities have a key role to play in relation to the formation of the built environment. Urban design is essentially a tool to assist in the craft of creating quality urban spaces; it is about how buildings are put together to shape and enliven our streets and civic spaces. Good urban design includes;

- (i) Respecting the character of an area;
- (ii) Creating a clear distinction between public and private open space and ensuring that public areas are suitably supervised by adjoining buildings;
- (iii) Ensuring the area is permeable and connected to adjoining areas / services;
- (iv) Facilitate diversity in terms of uses and appearance;
- (v) Facilitate longevity and adaptability; and
- (vi) Encourage visual identity and interest.



### The County Development Plan will incorporate urban design principles which seek to ensure that:

- Development is based on the concept of integrating and consolidating existing town / village cores;
- Sustainable urban expansions are provided where necessary;
- Development of derelict (brownfield) and key infill/gap sites within the vicinity of the core areas of towns and villages is prioritised;
- The physical environment and streetscape is enhanced; and
- Vibrant zones of activity are created.

The urban design approach will seek to realise the full potential of the inherent character of Carlow's towns and villages.

### Rural Design

Rural design is mostly manifested in terms of single dwellings in the countryside. Rural house design needs to recognise and respond to the character of the environment, by being guided by landscape, environmental and design considerations. Architecturally, rural housing should respond to a specific site and area, embrace what is good about traditional rural design and deliver this in a contemporary form. The forthcoming County Development Plan will incorporate Rural Design Guidelines to promote architecture and design which complements and reinforces existing character of the rural landscape. Guiding principles will be outlined to achieve good quality design and sustainable development in the rural countryside.

## Regeneration

Regeneration and renewal are inherent in the proper planning and sustainable development of the county's settlements. An emphasis on high quality and well-designed developments make places more attractive and in turn contributes to healthy place-making and quality of life. Urban place making is about improving the attractiveness of the public realm. An erosion of the sense of place can occur due to urban sprawl and the hollowing out of town centres due to a focus on the quantitative aspect of building outwards rather than the creation of sustainable communities. Placemaking is a people centred approach to the planning, design and management of all public spaces and areas including streets and thoroughfares. The quality of our built environment affects the quality of our living environment and is an important component in creating attractive vibrant spaces in our towns and villages.

In Carlow town the framework to facilitate and support the regeneration and renewal is being addressed through the preparation of the *Carlow Town - Regeneration Vision and Implementation Strategy (RVIS)*. The strategy is being funded through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) which is a flagship element of the National Planning Framework, Project Ireland 2040 which seeks to support more compact and sustainable development, through the regeneration and rejuvenation of Ireland's five cities and other large towns. The RVIS aims to develop a detailed plan for a 'Shared Vision' for Carlow Town's physical development over the next 20 years which is based on key economic development opportunities; urban spaces and amenities for all. The document once finalised will inform key policy directions for the future development of Carlow Town ensuring Carlow can deliver as a Key Town and a Regional Growth Driver.

Carlow County Council will seek to secure continued funding over the planned lifespan of the URDF to 2027 to help achieve a greater proportion of residential and mixed use development in the built up area, to improve the public realm and to create a more attractive and vibrant place in which people choose to live and work, as well as to invest and to visit.

## Town and Village Development

The social and economic fabric of our towns and villages has changed significantly in the last 10 years. Retailing and in particular the way retail activities are conducted have changed with increasing pressure for 'edge of centre' development rather than reinvesting in the historic town / village centre. These issues coupled with high levels of vehicular traffic, vacancy levels, dereliction and unsympathetic shop fronts have had a negative impact on our towns and villages. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly has an impetus to strengthen the role of and improve quality of life in our diverse rural places and communities, valuing our rural areas as dynamic, resilient and outward looking areas of potential. Revitalising rural areas will be achieved through repurposing our small towns and villages and increased collaboration between networks of settlements. Sustainable rural communities are dependent on viable and vibrant towns and villages. Many rural areas of County Carlow have experienced population decline and reduced services negatively impacting on the viability of these areas into the future. The RSES recognises that in the absence of a targeted planning strategy and associated pro-active infrastructure and support actions, this decline will continue. Rural areas need diversity and innovativeness to ensure economic resilience and job creation. This requires an integrated approach to rural economic development, including support for public services.

Since 2016 Carlow County Council has benefited from over €1.76m of funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and is part of a package of national and local support measures to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. The scheme is specifically targeted at rural towns and villages with populations of less than 10,000. Various projects have been funded including infrastructure provision, community facilities, tourist projects etc. Carlow County Council will continue to seek funding which will have a positive impact on creating more sustainable and attractive towns and villages throughout the county.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can the County Development Plan promote improvement in the quality of the built environment in urban and rural areas?
- How can we make our towns and villages more attractive places to live in?
- How can we sustain and improve service provision in our urban and rural areas?
- How can we achieve higher quality rural housing design?
- How can we achieve more sustainable design and efficient use of land?



“Strengthened rural economies are essential for rural development.”



# inCarlow



## *Rural Development*



# Rural Development

**The County Development Plan will seek to promote rural activities and enterprises and to strengthen rural communities in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.**

Strengthened rural economies and communities are essential for rural development. Rural areas can make a vital contribution to economic development within the county. This involves utilising the resources of rural areas, particularly agriculture/food, tourism, forestry, horticulture, renewable energy and varied agri-business services. Simultaneously, rural areas capitalise and draw strength from neighbouring urban communities in a complementary manner.

## Agriculture

In 2016 the number of farms in 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. 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.

## Forestry

Afforestation has become a significant feature in the county over the last decade. Plantations are in public (primarily Coillte owned) and private ownership. It is estimated that there is over 2,503ha of land under private forestry. It is considered that the continued development of this sector should be promoted in a sustainable manner, compatible with the protection of the environment. 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.

## Diversity in the Rural Economy

Many opportunities exist for diversification including tourism, renewable energy production as well as leisure and recreation development. Growth is anticipated in the Irish Agri-Food Industry with growth of 23,000 additional direct jobs projected nationally between 2015-2025. Other relevant policy supports and initiatives for rural areas include delivery of hi speed broadband (National Broadband Plan), forestry (Growing for the Future and Business Area Unit Strategic Plans), energy (White Paper-Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030), tourism (Ireland's Ancient East), enterprise development by the Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland, IDA and actions under the South East Action Plan for Jobs.



## Sand and Gravel Extraction

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. However, 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.



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What role can the Development Plan play in ensuring that sustainable agricultural production and rural based industry is supported and enhanced?
- What type of development and services are required in rural areas in order to support existing rural communities?
- How can the rural environment be protected from the loss of habitats and adverse visual impacts from inappropriate development?
- What are the most significant issues relating to the extractive industry and how can the Development Plan support the industry whilst also safeguarding the environment?

# HAVE YOUR SAY

Submissions should be marked  
"REVIEW OF COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN"  
and sent by post to the following address:

Senior Executive Officer  
Review of County Development Plan  
Planning Department  
Carlow County Council  
Athy Road  
Carlow

Or by email to: [carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie)

online at: [consult.carlow.ie](http://consult.carlow.ie)

Public Information Sessions will be held at the following locations:

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS	DATE	TIME
Muinebheag Library	Tuesday 11th August	3 - 7.30pm
Tullow Library	Wednesday 12th August	3 - 7.30pm
Carlow Library	Thursday 13th August	3 - 7.30pm

Please make your submission by 5.00pm on the 20th August 2020  
and by one medium only i.e. hard copy, online or by email.

These sessions must comply with Government Guidelines regarding Covid 19. In order to facilitate social distancing, attendance will be by appointment only. Please ring 059 9170310 to book your appointment time or email [carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:carlowcdp@carlowcoco.ie).

All relevant requirements regarding Covid 19 as appropriate will apply to these meetings and you will be advised of same with your allocated appointment time.

The public consultation sessions will be an opportunity for you to discuss any issue that you may have with a member of the Forward Planning Team and possibly help frame future policies and objectives of the County Development Plan.

Notice Covid 19: In the event, that future Government Guidelines regarding Covid 19 advise against the holding of public meetings, alternative arrangements will be put in place to ensure effective engagement with the public is facilitated. Any changes will be advertised and communicated to any attendees who may have registered for a public inform.

Please make your submission by 5.00pm on the 20th August 2020 and by one medium only i.e. hard copy / email or via the online consultation portal. Please note these submissions will be published along with your name in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), but **your contact details will not be published.**



Carlow County Council  
Athy Road, Carlow. R93 E7R7  
Tel: +353 59 9170300  
[www.carlow.ie](http://www.carlow.ie)



Carlow County Council  
Athy Road  
Carlow. R93 E7R7  
Tel: +353 59 9170300  
[www.carlow.ie](http://www.carlow.ie)