

**CHAPTER 2**  
**CORE STRATEGY AND**  
**SETTLEMENT STRATEGY**

## Chapter 2 Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy

**Aim:** To direct and facilitate appropriate levels of growth and development throughout the County that promotes sustainable development, a more consolidated urban form, a high-quality living and working environment with supporting infrastructure that meets the needs of all residents, in accordance with the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

### 2.0 Introduction

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out an evidence-based strategy for the future spatial development of the Plan area. Its primary purpose is to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land at the right locations to meet population and housing targets. It is a statutory requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to ensure consistency with the national and regional objectives as outlined in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

### 2.1 Legislative Context

The requirements of the Core Strategy as contained in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) include:

- Defining a settlement hierarchy that is consistent with the NPF and RSES.
- Transposing the prescribed NPF, RSES and Section 28 (Housing Demand

Methodology) housing demand targets to urban and rural centres identified in the settlement hierarchy.

- Providing an evidence-based rationale for land proposed to be zoned for residential and mixed-use development having regard to the capacity of existing zoned land and the phasing of development taking account of the location of public transport and services.
- Demonstrating how the Planning Authority has had regard to the statutory Retail Planning Guidelines in setting out objectives for retail development.
- Depicting key elements of the Core Strategy on a diagrammatic map.

### 2.2 Policy Context

#### 2.2.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework is a high level, 20-year strategic plan for future growth of the Country to 2040, the objectives of which are to:

- Establish a broad national plan in relation to the strategic planning and sustainable development of urban and rural areas;
- Secure balanced regional development by maximising the potential of the regions; and
- Secure the co-ordination of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and City and County Development Plans.

The NPF identifies a set of goals built around the themes of wellbeing, equality and opportunity. These are expressed as National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and are aligned with the UN

Sustainable Development Goals, which underpin the overarching vision for the Country.



The NPF strategy represents a significant change to current development trends and growth patterns referred to as “business as usual” by implementing a policy of “regional parity” whereby projected growth of the Eastern and Midland Region must be at least matched by the combined growth of the Northern and Western and Southern Regions. In this regard the strategy focuses on:

- Building “centres of scale” with a focus on Dublin (25% of growth) and the cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford (accommodating a further 25% of growth);
- Remaining 50% of growth to occur in key regional centres (Athlone, Sligo,

Letterkenny and cross border networks of Letterkenny-Derry and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry), towns, villages and rural areas;

- Securing compact and sustainable growth with a focus on reusing previously developed “brownfield” lands together with the development of infill sites and buildings.
- Enabling people to live closer to where they work, moving away from the current unsustainable trends of increased commuting;
- Regenerating rural Ireland by promoting environmentally sustainable growth patterns;
- Planning for and implementing a better distribution of regional growth, in terms of jobs and prosperity;
- Transforming settlements of all sizes through imaginative urban regeneration and bringing life / jobs back into cities, towns and villages;
- Co-ordinating delivery of infrastructure and services in tandem with growth, through joined-up NPF/National Investment Plan and consistent sectoral plans.

The NPF emphasises the importance of sustainable urban development and connectivity in the Southern Region, ensuring economic growth activating and realising potential in wider rural towns and dispersed communities. The South-East (comprising Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford, and the southern part of County Tipperary) is identified as having a strong urban structure as well as some of Ireland’s most productive agricultural land. Regional opportunities identified to leverage growth in the South-East include national and international connectivity,

strengthening higher education, and further balanced employment and housing development in key settlements and county towns. The NPF emphasises that growth in the South-East must be based on infrastructure and quality of life, rather than long distance commuting to Dublin, as is apparent in parts of Counties Carlow and Wexford in particular.

Specific targets are set out related to securing compact and sustainable growth in Ireland’s towns and cities. A major new policy emphasis is placed on renewing and developing existing settlements rather than continual expansion and sprawl out into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages.

The NPF further states that there is scope for potential growth in all towns in Ireland and this will largely be determined by the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for each Regional Assembly area, also taking into consideration the potential of smaller settlements and rural areas.

### **2.2.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) (Jan 2020)**

The RSES sets out a 12-year strategic framework for development, and the way in which society, the environment, economy and use of land should evolve, while identifying key priorities for investment. Within the Southern Region there are three Strategic Planning Areas (SPA Ref: Map 2.1). Carlow is located in the South East SPA with Waterford being the principal urban centre connected to a network of large and strong urban centres.



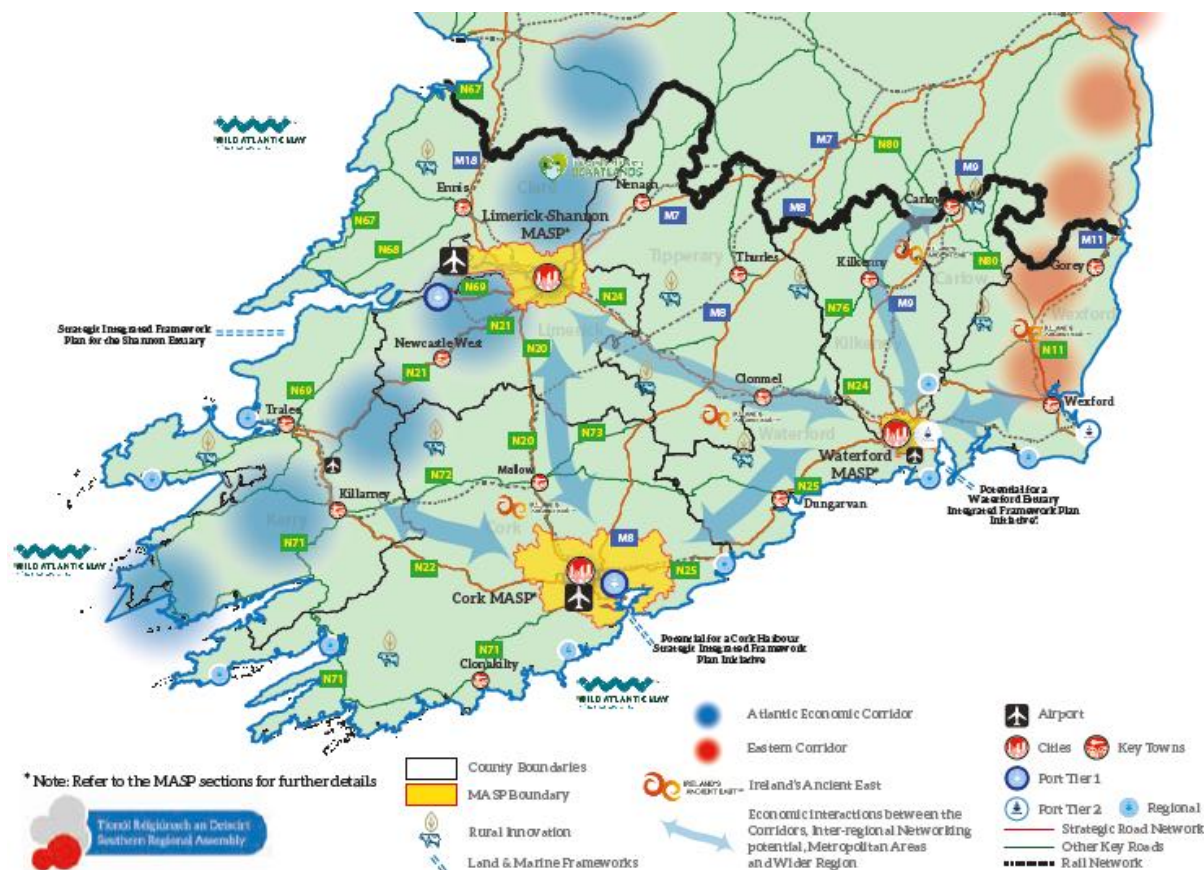
Map 2.1 Southern Region – Strategic Planning Areas

The overarching purpose of the RSES is to support implementation of the NPF, the NDP, government economic policies and to ensure co-ordination of planning and development policy matters through the Development Plan and Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) processes.

The RSES outlines 11 strategic principles which seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve the shared goals set out in the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF. In the context of the development strategy the RSES focuses on:

- growth of cities and other settlements throughout the Region,
- broadening the base of the economy,
- improving accessibility and connectivity,
- provision of infrastructure and services,
- conserving energy and transitioning to a low carbon economy,
- maintaining the role and character of smaller towns and villages,
- revitalising rural areas,
- safeguarding the environment,
- building an inclusive region and
- achieving a high quality of life for residents.

The RSES strategy for the Region is illustrated in Map no. 2.2.



Map 2.2: RSES Strategy

### 2.3 RSES Principles for the Core Strategy

The RSES also indicates that the local authority will have regard to the settlement typology and apply the following guiding principles when allocating future growth in the Core Strategy:

- Scale of population and existing performance;
- Extent to which a settlement is located inside or outside a Metropolitan Area;
- Scale of employment provision, number of jobs, jobs-to-resident workers' ratio and net commuting flows;
- Compliance with the NPF (NPO 72) on a standardised, tiered approach that differentiates between zoned land that is serviced and that which is serviceable within the life of the plan;
- Linking Core Strategies to an evidence base on the availability and deliverability of lands within the existing built up footprints.
- Extent of local services and amenities provision, particular higher education institutes, health, leisure and retail;
- Extent to which sustainable modes of travel can be encouraged (walking, cycling or public transport);
- Rate and pace of past development and the extent to which there are outstanding requirements for infrastructure and amenities;
- Accessibility and influence in a regional or sub-regional context;
- Sub-regional interdependencies, e.g. location of a settlement in relation to nearby settlements and scope for

collaboration including cross-boundary collaboration for settlements adjoining local authority boundaries;

- Character of local geography and accessibility as a service centre for remote and long-distance rural hinterlands;
- Track record of performance and delivery, as well as ambition and scope to leverage investment;
- Environmental and infrastructural constraints;
- The appropriate density and scale of development relative to the settlement and location, incl. differing rates and nature of development experienced; and
- Need for attractive, alternative options to rural housing within smaller towns and villages.

#### 2.4 RSES Strategy and Influence on Future Growth of County Carlow

It is a mandatory requirement that there is consistency in the spatial planning hierarchy between national, regional and local plans. Carlow’s framework for growth is therefore guided and directed by the NPF, the RSES and Section 28 Guidelines.

Strategic elements of the growth strategy of the RSES that will influence growth and development in Carlow are as follows:

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. A population growth rate of more than 30% by 2040 relative to CSO 2016 figure is targeted for Carlow Town. This entails also delivering important infrastructure and services, ensuring that it can grow as a successful regional employment centre and service hub. RPO 11 sets an objective for delivering population growth and infrastructure provision in Key Towns, as well as promoting sustainable transport, culture,

placemaking, tourism development, education, sustainable development, and water infrastructure.
Supporting <b>Town centre led regeneration</b> , and the development of underutilised lands with improvements to the public realm, investment in infrastructure together with sustainable transport solutions.
Delivering new homes on <b>urban infill and brownfield land</b> to support urban regeneration with at least 30% of all new homes targeted in settlements (other than the Cities and their suburbs) shall be delivered within their existing built-up footprints.(RPO 35)
Provision of a <b>coordinated planning framework (JUAP)</b> for the Greater Carlow Urban area to strategically plan for the growth and development of the town, to identify and deliver strategic sites and regeneration areas for the future physical, economic and social development of Carlow in conjunction with Laois County Council.
Supporting the <b>strategic employment development</b> potential of Carlow Town and facilitating economic integration between urban centers throughout the regions including Tullow and Muine Bheag.
Acknowledgement of the <b>inter-regional role</b> of Carlow town given its location to the north of the Southern Region and adjacent to the Eastern Midlands Regional Assembly region. Opportunities afforded to Carlow are noted as part of a <b>network of regionally significant drivers of collaboration and growth</b> located on the Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/Rail Network/Axis.
Identification of Carlow as an important <b>regional centre of education and research</b> , supporting the establishment of a Multi-Campus Technological University for the South East.
<b>Towns</b> and villages with populations of <b>1,500 or above</b> are recognised as providing a housing, employment or service function. In County Carlow these comprise Tullow and Muine Bheag which act as District Towns serving a wider rural hinterland.
Supporting a <b>strong network of towns, villages and diverse rural areas</b> in achieving the objectives of the NPF.

## **2.5 Strategic Aims of the Core Strategy**

The strategic aims which relate to the advancement of this Plan comprise:

- (i) To guide the future development of County Carlow in line with national and regional objectives set out in the NPF and RSES and other national guidelines and policies.
- (ii) To promote and facilitate the development of the County in accordance with the provisions of the Core Strategy, including directing development in line with the settlement hierarchy and promoting development at an appropriate scale that is reflective of the terms of the Core Strategy Table and accompanying land-use zoning maps.
- (iii) To apply the Settlement Hierarchy to determine the scale, rate and location of proposed developments and apply appropriate development management measures to ensure compliance with the Settlement Hierarchy including the population targets for the County.
- (iv) To promote the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements within their existing built-up footprints.
- (v) To support the achievement of more self-sustaining towns and villages through residential and employment opportunities together with supporting social and community facilities.
- (vi) To monitor and maintain a record of residential development permitted in the County in line with the Settlement Hierarchy in order to ensure compliance with the population allocations defined

by the Core Strategy and to adjust the approach to permitting development proposals in instances where Core Strategy objectives are not being met.

## **2.6 Content of the Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy outlines:

- The Settlement Hierarchy for County Carlow;
- Population targets and associated housing demand;
- Core Strategy with required land use zoning requirements;
- Policies to support delivery of the Core Strategy; and
- The Core Strategy Map.

## **2.7 Carlow's Settlement Hierarchy**

Section 10(2A)(f) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires the County Development Plan to contain a settlement hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy must be consistent with the NPF, RSES and the policies of the Government. The RSES framework is based on the pillars of the three cities, supported by a network of strategically located key towns, towns, villages and rural areas. Below the category of key town, the RSES indicates that it is a function of the County Development Plan to categorise settlements with reference to the key attributes for the settlement category.

Table 2.1 sets out the settlement hierarchy for County Carlow within the framework of the RSES settlement typology. In developing a settlement hierarchy for County Carlow, an Asset Based Approach has been adopted. Such an approach acknowledges that the population and employment size are not the sole determinant of a settlement's functional role or of its

strategic regional significance. Broader considerations have also informed the tier configurations, as follows:

- Scale: The scale of population, growth rates and local ambition for sustainable compact growth;
- Function: The scale of employment provision and commuting flows; Particular sub-regional interdependencies and influence;
- Human Capital: The extent of local services provision;
- Levels of relative affluence or deprivation;
- Enterprise: The availability of economic development assets and clusters;
- Placemaking: This is linked to 'Functionality' in terms of provision of suitable sites and property solutions to meet enterprise and labour force expectations;
- Connectivity: Transport accessibility and trip profiles, including internal trips;
- Environmental / Natural Capital: Environmental sensitivities, resources and assets; and
- Infrastructure: Current and planned infrastructure capacity.

This approach identifies and builds on a combination of social, economic and natural assets and potential that is available within towns and smaller settlements in the County. This has also been informed by the criteria listed in the Hierarchy of Settlements and related Infrastructure considered by the NPF (see Figure

2.1 ). These criteria are grouped under eight overarching themes, with criteria graded according to the size of the settlement in question (i.e. smaller settlements and rural areas; smaller towns and villages; large towns; and cities).



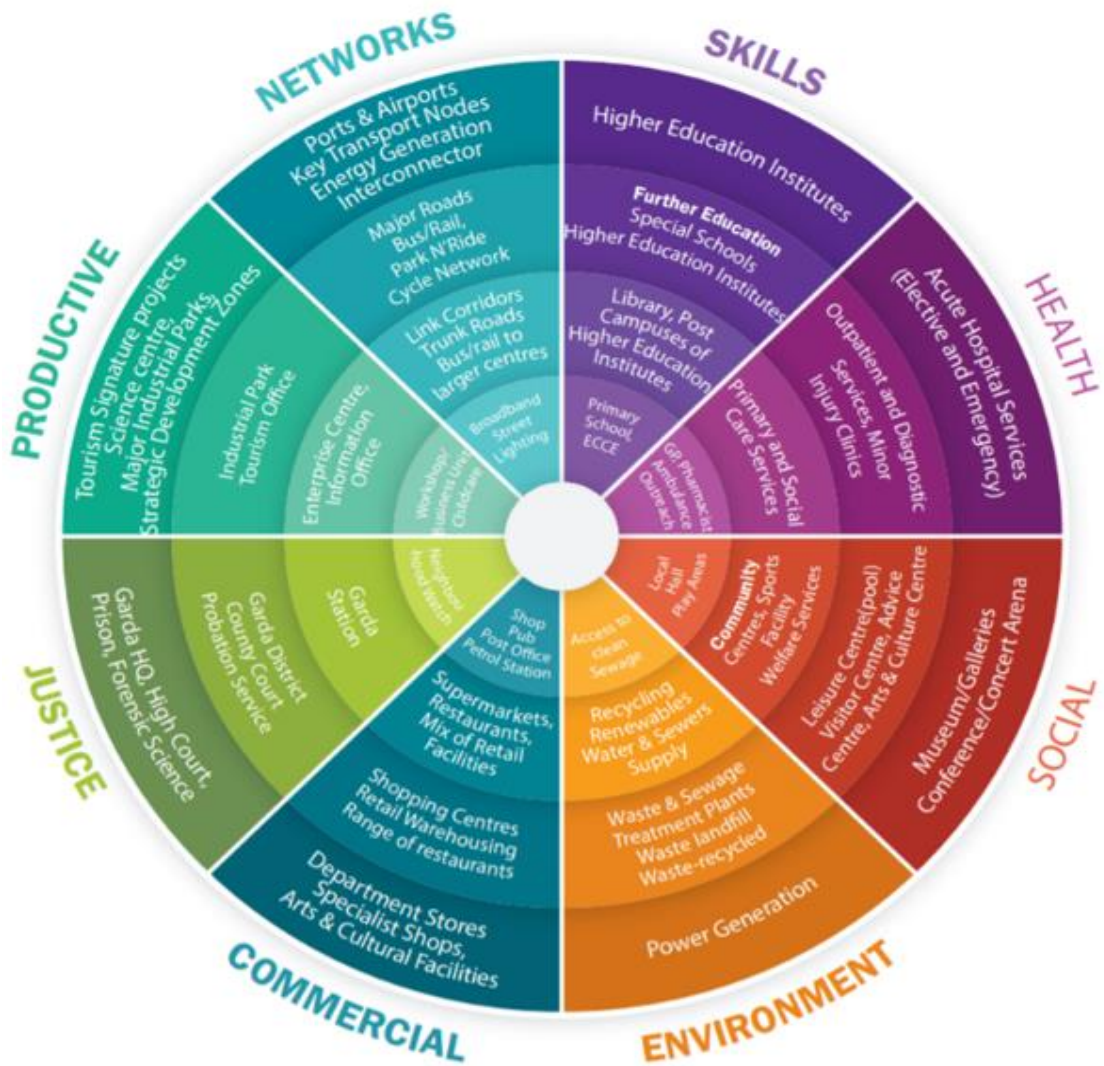


Fig 2.1 Hierarchy of settlements and related infrastructure considered by NPF

Table 2.1 outlines the Settlement Hierarchy for County Carlow. It acknowledges the strategic role of Carlow Town as a regional and inter-regional growth driver, followed by the towns of Tullow and Muine Bheag which provide important housing, employment and service functions at a district level. The RSES recognises that rural areas include settlements less than

1,500 (pop) together with the wider rural areas. A range of settlements related to their nature and function together with the provision of services have been identified. These include smaller towns, larger serviced villages, smaller serviced villages and rural nodes.

Settlement Tier	Settlement Typology	Description	Settlements
1	<b>Key Town</b>	Large population scale urban centre functioning as self – sustaining regional drivers. Strategically located urban center with accessibility and significant influence in a sub-regional context.	Carlow Town
2	<b>District Towns</b>	Well-developed serviced settlements with a moderate level of jobs supporting services and community facilities with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.	Tullow Muine Bheag
3	<b>Small Towns</b>	Smaller towns with an urban structure providing local services and employment functions catering for a wider rural hinterland area.	Rathvilly Leighlinbridge Ballon Borris Hacketstown Carrickduff Tinnahinch
4	<b>Larger Serviced Rural Villages</b>	Serviced villages with established populations circa. 200 and settlement structure which provide important local level services.	Palatine Ballinabrannagh Rathtoe Fennagh Myshall Clonegal Kildavin Tinryland
5	<b>Smaller Serviced Rural Villages</b>	Villages with more limited services established populations <200 and settlement structure which provide important local level services and community facilities.	Bennekerry Old Leighlin Nurney Ardattin Glynn Tiknock Ballinkillen Bilboa St Mullins Clonmore
6	<b>Rural Nodes</b>	Villages with established populations <200 and a weaker settlement structure but contain important local services and community facilities e.g. local schools, churches and community facilities	Grange Drumphaea Ballymurphy Garryhill Rathanna Newtown Newtown Fennagh

Table 2.1 Settlement Hierarchy County Carlow

## 2.8 Settlement Hierarchy Policies

### 2.8.1 Key Town – Carlow

As the RSES highlights, Carlow Town is strategically located in the south-east with strong links to the Midlands and Greater Dublin Area and is a regional centre for education, healthcare, public services, retail, arts, culture, and leisure for a wide sub-regional area.

In 2016, Carlow Town’s population was 24,272, an increase of 5.4% from 2011. In 2016, the town had a total of 7,868 jobs and a ratio of jobs to workers of 0.881. Carlow Town has strong attributes including its strategic location on the national road and rail networks, education facilities including IT Carlow and Carlow College St Patrick’s College, healthcare facilities including St. Dymphna’s Hospital and Carlow District Hospital, and strong retail, pharmaceutical, engineering and finance sectors.

Carlow Town is a key focus for urban regeneration in the county. “Project Carlow 2040: A Vision for Regeneration” sets out a strategy for delivering regeneration in Carlow Town. The strategy seeks to reinforce the critical role of the town centre as the heart of Carlow Town, providing attractive and accessible public spaces with new pedestrian linkages. A thriving, vibrant and sustainable town centre will establish the town as a destination not just for shopping but also for tourists attracted to the unique architectural, cultural and heritage attributes of Carlow’s townscape. This vision supports increased town centre living and increased building occupancy, which will in turn improve the wellbeing of the local economy and community life. Key interventions are proposed that will reintegrate the River Barrow into the public realm through the development of pedestrian walkways and the development of key opportunity sites along the river.

### Key Town – Carlow Town Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- CS P 1: Support the continued growth and sustainable development of Carlow Town to act as a regional and inter-regional growth driver in the region and to fulfil its role as a Key Town, focussed on sustainable development, quality of life and economic investment.
- CS P2: Deliver compact and sustainable growth in Carlow Town with at least 30% of new homes delivered within the existing built-up footprint including development of strategic brownfield sites.
- CS P3: Prepare a statutory Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP) for the Greater Carlow Urban Area with Laois County Council which will be informed by the preparation of a local transport plan prepared in consultation with NTA and TII. The UAP will align with the aims of this Core Strategy while having regard to the regional policy objectives as contained in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RPO 11 and 14) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (RPO 4.75).
- CS P4: Support the town centre regeneration of Carlow Town and the delivery of the objectives of the Project Carlow 2040, A Vision for Regeneration.
- CS P5: Protect, strengthen and enhance the biodiversity and ecological function of the green infrastructure network in Carlow Town, including the River Barrow, which is a designated Special Area of Conservation.

## **2.8.2 District Towns**

Tullow and Muine Bheag (Bagenalstown) are designated as District Towns in the Settlement Hierarchy. This tier corresponds to the Towns and Villages tier of the RSES, which are described as settlements over 1,500 which provide a housing, employment or service function.

Tullow is the second-largest town in the County with a population of 4,673 in 2016. It saw substantial population growth of 17.6% (701) between 2011 and 2016. It is well located on the national road network including the N81 and with proximity to the M9. As a market town, Tullow has a strong employment and service base serving surrounding areas, including industry and agricultural services such as Tullow Mart as well as important retail services. While there is capacity for growth in the town, there is also a commensurate need to develop supporting services and in particular to support sustainable travel and alternatives to car-based commuting.

Muine Bheag (Bagenalstown) is the third-largest settlement in County Carlow. It benefits from excellent transport links through its location on the Dublin-Waterford rail line and its proximity to the M9 as well as a strong employment base. However, it faces demographic challenges, with the town's population declining by -3.8% (113) between 2011 and 2016 and with the Muine Bheag Urban Electoral Division classified as 'disadvantaged' (Ref: HP Pobal Deprivation Index). There is therefore a need to consolidate and support the role and viability of the town through targeted growth, maximising the potential of its transport links and service capacity.

## **District Towns - Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CS P6: Promote consolidation in District Towns along with targeted investment to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options, building on existing assets.

CS P7: Promote social and economic development and new homes in District Towns in accordance with the requirements of the settlement hierarchy and the aims and population targets of the Core Strategy Table and the Housing Strategy.

CS P8: Promote compact growth, sustainable development, and urban regeneration in District Towns through maximising the delivery of new homes and development on brownfield and infill land and in locations with strong sustainable transport links.

CS P9: To support the continued growth and sustainable development of Tullow and Muine Bheag with appropriate levels of growth as provided in Table 2.7 Core Strategy. As part of the review of the Local Area Plan sustainable compact growth of town centre zoned sites will be prioritised together with a renewed focus on the town centre first principles and the appropriate development of regeneration / opportunity sites.

## **District Towns - Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

CS O1: To carry out an Area Based Transport Assessment for the District Towns of Tullow and Muine Bheag as an iterative process with the review of the relevant Local Area Plan which will support and

inform the implementation of transport, demand management and land use measures to ensure the sustainable integration of land use and transport planning with an emphasis on enabling sustainable transport and mobility objectives for the Plan area.

### **2.8.3 Small Towns**

Carlow's Small Towns comprise Borris, Ballon, Leighlinbridge, Rathvilly, Hacketstown, Carrickduff, and Tinnahinch. Of these, Ballon, Leighlinbridge and Rathvilly all saw population growth between 2011 and 2016, while the remainder saw steady or declining population over this period.

These towns have important roles to play in providing services for surrounding local areas and supporting the viability of small towns. Facilitating housing in existing towns is paramount to ensuring the sustainability, vitality and viability of the rural places of the Region, according to the RSES. Support for housing will also include provision of serviced sites and / or lower density residential schemes which will act as a viable alternative to rural one-off housing, contributing to the principle of compact growth.

Carrickduff falls within the wider settlement of Bunclody, while Tinnahinch falls within the wider settlement of Graiguenamanagh. Sustainable development of both towns will be supported by co-operation between Carlow County Council and Wexford and Kilkenny County Councils. A Joint Local Area Plan has been prepared for Graiguenamanagh – Tinnahinch.

#### **Small Towns- Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CSP 10: Promote consolidation coupled with targeted housing and investment

policies in Small Towns to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to support small town viability.

CS P11: Co-operate with Wexford County Council and Kilkenny County Council in planning for sustainable development in Bunclody-Carrickduff and Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch respectively, and to implement a joint Local Area Plan for Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch with Kilkenny County Council.

### **2.8.4 Larger and Smaller Serviced Villages**

This tier comprises eight Larger Serviced Villages of approximately 200-500 residents and ten Smaller Serviced Villages (for which no population is available as they were not defined in Census 2016). Population change ranged greatly in the Larger Serviced Villages between 2011 and 2016, from 19.8% growth in Ballinabrannagh to 9.6% decline in Tinryland.

Carlow's serviced villages will play an important role in delivering housing including low density housing / serviced sites as a viable alternative to rural one-off housing. However, service provision including water and wastewater capacity is a challenge and constraint for some villages.

#### **Serviced Villages – Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CS P12: Promote Serviced Villages as an attractive housing option for rural areas of the county through the promotion of quality of life, placemaking, and sufficient local service and infrastructure provision.

### 2.8.5 Rural Areas

There are seven Unserviced Rural Nodes in Carlow, comprising small settlements with services supporting the surrounding rural area including schools and other community facilities. These form the lowest tier of the Settlement Hierarchy and are appropriate locations within which to locate one-off housing for persons who comply with the local need criteria, small scale community facilities and services catering for the rural hinterland.

In the rural areas the NPF seeks to support the overall pattern of rural and small-town development in Ireland. The NPF seeks to protect areas that are under strong urban influence from unsustainable over-development on the one hand, and to encourage population to be sustained in weaker areas, that have experienced low growth or decline in recent decades, on the other, while sustaining vibrant rural areas. Through National Policy Objective 19 of the NPF a clear distinction is to be made between areas under urban influence and elsewhere in providing for the development of rural housing.

In establishing rural area typologies for County Carlow, analysis was undertaken at Electoral Division (ED) level and incorporated a combination of socio-economic indicators and an assessment of demand for one-off housing across the County as well as considerations around proximity to the commuting catchment of large cities and towns or employment centres. The following core areas were examined:

- Population change
- This is deemed a core consideration in the determination of rural typology areas according to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)
- Economic Structure of the County
- The relative strength of the economic structure of the County's EDs was established through analysis of the Pobal Deprivation Index<sup>1</sup> ED analysis for 2011 and 2016)
- % of the Labour Force Unemployed (2016)
- Commuter Catchments (CSO 2016 POWCAR)<sup>2</sup>
- >15% of workflows out of ED for employment purposes to other settlement(s) for work purposes.

A historic overview of rural housing development and one-off housing in the county indicates that one-off housing as a proportion of total housing delivery has fluctuated greatly over the period 2006-2019. However, past trends reflect previous market and policy drivers and may not reflect recent emphasis on compact growth through the NPF and RSES. Therefore, projection of need based on historic patterns have been balanced against the broader needs of the county in allocating rural homes in the Core Strategy. The HNDA, as set out in Appendix IV (Housing Strategy), accounts for the potential demand for single rural

<sup>1</sup> The index provides a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from various censuses.

<sup>2</sup> POWSCAR (Place of Work, School or College - Anonymised Records) uses CSO data to output information on the commuting patterns/counts of residents at electoral division (ED) and county level, including the origin and destination of their journeys. This approach is consistent with the NPF and RSES, which use a standardised EU/OECD definition to define a commuting

catchment i.e. if more than 15% of the resident population of an electoral division travel to a large town (over 10,000 population) or centre of employment (over 2,500 jobs) to work they are considered to be within the commuter catchment of that town or centre of employment. From an analysis of Census 2016 POWSCAR it has been concluded that apart from three geographical areas - Hacketsown ED, Cranmore ED and Kyle ED, the remainder of the County is under urban influence.

dwelling over the lifetime of this Development Plan in accordance with NPO 20 of the NPF.

Two rural policy zones are applicable to the rural area as outlined in Table 2.2 and Map 2.4. Policy criteria applicable to each zone is contained in Chapter 3 Housing.

<b>Rural Policy Zone</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Areas Under Urban Influence	Well-developed town and village structures and a strong agricultural base  Generally stable or growing population levels  High levels of commuting to employment centres (>15% of working population of ED)
Other Rural Areas	High levels of unemployment  Designated as disadvantaged  <15% workflows out of ED  Experiencing persistent population decline <sup>3</sup> in urban centre with limited population growth in rural area

**Table 2.2 Rural Policy Zones**

**Rural Areas- Policies**

It is the policy of the Council to:

CS P 13: To support the sustainable development of rural areas in Carlow by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

<sup>3</sup> Hacketstown: -16% population decline between 1991-2016

## 2.9 Population Trends

A review of historical trends is an important consideration in understanding future growth targets. County Carlow’s population in 2016 was 56,932 comprising 1.2% of the State’s population. Between 2011-2016 the population increase was in the order of +4.2% (+2,320). This

was the twelfth fastest of any local authority in the State and in excess of the national average of 3.8%. Over the decade 2006-2016 the population of the State grew by 12.3%, that of the South East Region grew at a slower pace (10.4%) while that of County Carlow grew by 13%.

Year	Population	Population Increase	Inter-censal period	% Increase in the inter-censal period	Average annual increase
2002	46,014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2006	50,349	4,335	2002-2006	9.4%	1,083
2011	54,612	4,263	2006-2011	8.5%	1,065
2016	56,932	2,320	2011-2016	4.2%	464
2006-2016	N/A	6,583	2006-2016	13%	658

Table 2.3 Population Growth County Carlow

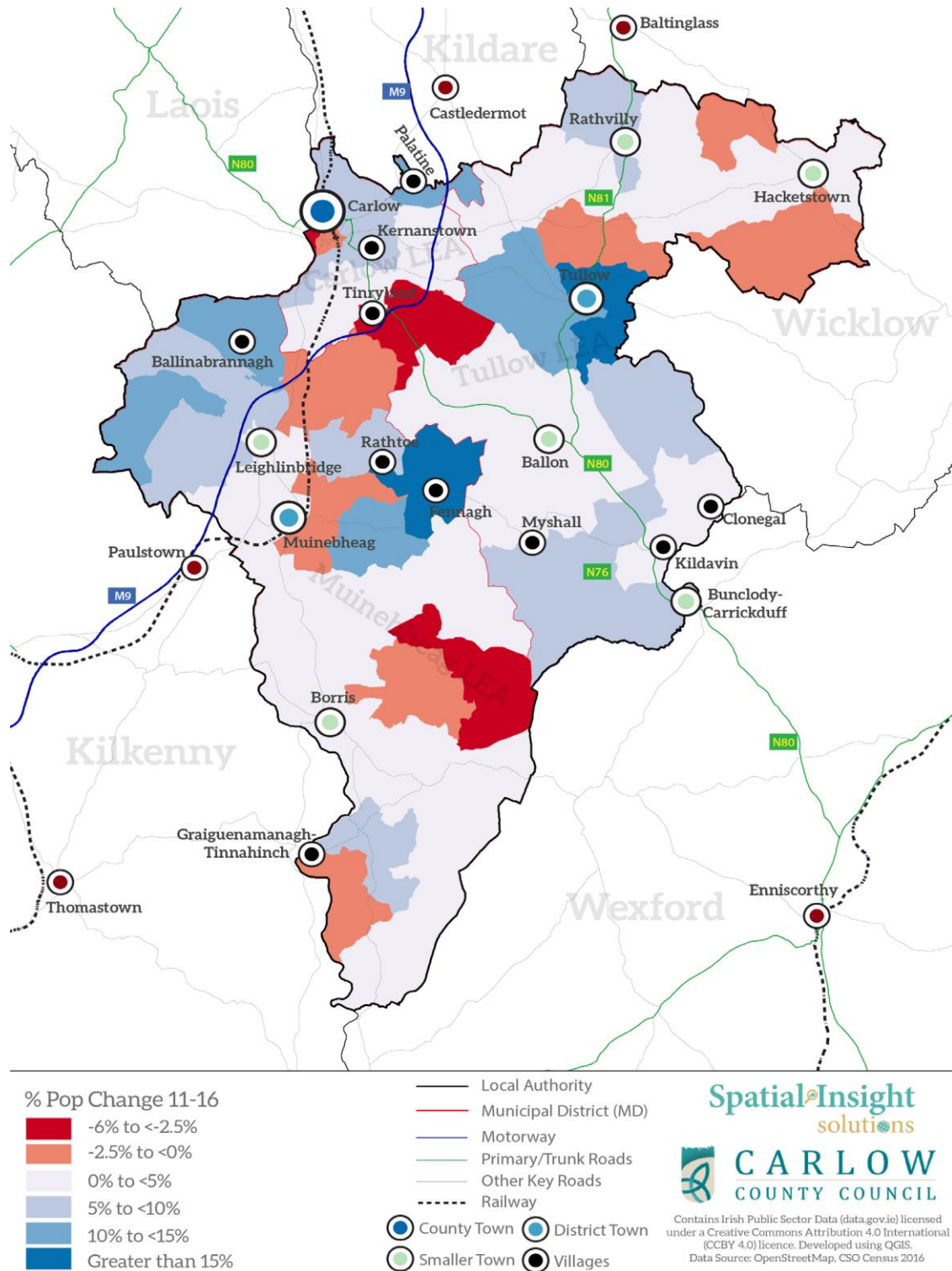
## 2.10 Population Increase 2011-2016

Between 2011-2016, the population of County Carlow increased by 2,320 persons.

Approximately one-third of Electoral Divisions (EDs) in County Carlow experienced a level of growth that was broadly similar to the county average (i.e. up to 5%). Population growth was generally more prevalent in the north west of the county, particularly in

the communities’ closest to Carlow Town and the M9, with the exception of Tinryland (largely due to wastewater treatment infrastructural constraints). The highest levels of growth were concentrated to the east of Tullow, around the rural areas associated with Fennagh, Rathoe followed by Ballinabrannagh, Palatine, west of Tullow and in the rural areas east of Muine Bheag. Notable areas of population decline were also recorded.





Map 2.3 % Population Change 2011-2016

In line with the settlement hierarchy the majority of the growth occurred at a higher level in the Settlement Hierarchy, however Muine Bheag a District Town, the Smaller Towns of Hacketstown, Tinnahinch and Carrickduff

together with the serviced villages of Myshall, Kildavin and Tinryland experienced population decline.

Settlements	Population 2011	Population 2016	Actual Change	% Change	% of Growth 2011-2016
<b>County Carlow</b>	<b>54,612</b>	<b>56,932</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	
<b>Key Town</b>					
Carlow Town <sup>i</sup>	18,941	19,994	1,053	5.6%	45%
<b>District Towns</b>					
Tullow	3,972	4,673	701	17.6%	30%
Muine Bheag	2,950	2,837	-113	-3.8%	-
<b>Small Towns</b>					
Rathvilly	881	944	63	7%	2.7%
Leighlinbridge	828	914	86	10%	3.7%
Ballon	684	712	28	4%	1.2%
Borris	646	652	6	0.9%	0.3%
Hacketstown	600	597	-3	-0.5%	-
Carrickduff	448	442	-6	-1.3%	-
Tinnahinch	315	306	-9	-2.9%	-
<b>Larger Serviced Villages</b>					
Ballinabrannagh	389	466	77	20%	3.3%
Fennagh	384	402	18	4.7%	0.8%
Palatine	351	398	47	13%	2%
Tinryland	418	378	-40	-9.6%	-
Rathtoe	303	304	1	0.3%	0.3%
Myshall	302	286	-16	-5.3%	-
Clonegal	245	278	33	13.5%	1.4%
Kildavin	194	184	-10	-5.2%	-

Table 2.4 Population Change by Settlement 2011-2016

### 2.11 Urban and Rural Population Distribution

Carlow town is the largest urban centre and accounts for over one-third (35.1%) of the County's population. Including Graiguecullen the population of Carlow Town extends to 24,274

making it the thirteenth largest urban area in the State.

The District Town of Tullow accounts for 8% of the county's population while Muine Bheag accounts for 5%.

The smaller towns accommodate 8% of the overall County population with the eight serviced villages accommodating 4.7% of the overall population of the County.

Overall population density is greatest to the north of County Carlow in and around Carlow Town extending to Palatine, Tinryland and Ballinabrannagh, the environs of Muine Bheag, Ballon and Tullow.

Based on the CSO definition of aggregate urban<sup>4</sup> and aggregate rural<sup>5</sup> areas 48% of the population in Carlow reside in urban areas with the remaining 52% residing in rural areas.

As a comparison, urban settlements in the Country, of which there are 200, accounted for 63% of the population. Outside of the five cities of Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Galway and Limerick, 29% of Ireland’s population lives in towns and villages of at least 1,500 or more people.

CSO Categorisation	Settlement Category	Settlement	% of Total Population	Overall County %
Aggregate ‘Town’ Areas	Key Town	Carlow	35%	48%
	District Town	Tullow and Muine Bheag	13%	
Aggregate ‘Rural’ Areas	Small Towns	Borris, Ballon, Leighlinbridge, Rathvilly, Hacketstown, Carrickduff and Tinnahinch	8%	52%
	Serviced Villages c.200 - 470 pop	Palatine, Ballinabrannagh, Rathtoe, Fennagh, Myshall, Clonegal, Kildavin and Tinryland	5%	
	Rural Serviced Villages (<200 Pop),	Bennekerry, Old Leighlin, Nurney, Ardattin, Glynn, Tiknock, Ballinkillen, Bilboa, St. Mullins and Clonmore.	39%	
	Rural Nodes and Open Countryside	Grange, Drumphaea, Ballymurphy Garryhill, Rathanna, Newtown, Newtown Fennagh and open countryside		

**Table 2.5 Population Distribution Urban and Rural Areas County Carlow**

<sup>4</sup> The term **Aggregate Town** Area or **Urban** area refers to settlements with a total population of 1,500 or more

<sup>5</sup> The population residing in all areas outside clusters of 1,500 or more inhabitants is classified as belonging to the **Aggregate Rural** Area.

## 2.12 Population Growth Targets Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (2018)

The Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework highlights the Government’s focus on achieving alignment between national, regional and local planning policy and practice. In recognition of the time it will take for Development Plans and current growth patterns to shift from the “business as usual” approach towards a pattern of more compact growth, the Roadmap has factored in a “transition period” that takes account of current land use zonings and extant permissions. It provides transitional population projections for the period up to 2031 for all regions and counties. The Implementation Roadmap provides for population growth of 280,000-343,000 across the Southern Region between 2016 and 2031. It projects that County Carlow will have a population of 62,000-63,000 by 2026 and of 64,000-65,500 by 2031, as shown in Table 2.6 – an increase of 12%-15% by 2031. It also sets out mechanisms to ensure that Development Plans will broadly align with the NPF and RSEs to address the six-year period up to 2026/2027.

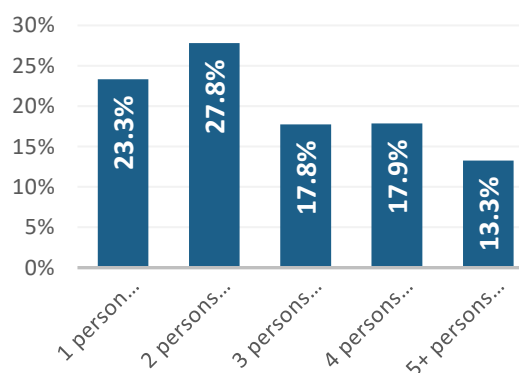
The years 2026/2027 will see the first full assessment of Development Plans prepared in accordance with the NPF and the RSES and establish the success in implementation of both the national and regional policy objectives.

	Projected Population			Increase from 2016	
	2016	2026	2031	2026	2031
<b>County Carlow</b>	57,000	62,000-63,000	64,000-65,500	5,000-6,000	7,000-8,500
<b>South - East</b>	509,500	561,000-572,000	581,500-598,500	51,500-62,500	72,000-89,000
<b>Southern Region</b>	1,585,000	1,781,000-1,820,500	1,865,000-1,928,500	196,000-235,500	280,000-343,500

**Table 2.6 Projected Population Growth 2026 and 2031, Carlow, South-East and Southern Region**

## 2.13 Housing Stock and Completions

The 2016 Census recorded a total of 23,274 dwellings in County Carlow, an increase of only 109 on 2011. Of these, 20,584 homes were permanently occupied, 528 temporarily empty, 298 were vacant holiday homes, and 1,864 were other vacant homes. As with much of Ireland, Carlow’s housing stock is primarily composed of houses or bungalows, which made up 92% of all dwellings, while apartments comprised only 5.6% of the stock. Homeownership remains the dominant tenure with 67.5% of households within this category. 15.3% of households were in the private rental market while 11.8% were living in social housing. The average household size was 2.76 persons, broadly in line with the national rate of 2.75.



CSO data indicates that house completion output increased by 114% between 2016-2020 as compared to 2011-2015.

## **2.14 Projected Housing Demand 2022-2028**

*Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* were issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in December 2020 under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The guidelines seek to strengthen the relationship between national and regional population projections and their integration into the development planning process at local authority level.

This ESRI research applies a projection model to four different development scenarios:

- Baseline – projecting a ‘business as usual’ scenario which is based on current trends and medium-term projections for the Irish economy;
- NPF 50:50 City – consistent with the NPF strategy;
- High Migration – incorporating assumptions around high international migration flows into Ireland based on higher economic growth than the baseline; and
- Low Migration – incorporating assumptions around lower international migration flows into Ireland based on lower economic growth than the baseline.

The ESRI research model is intended to enable structural household demand levels for each local authority area to be set out under the four different scenarios for each year to 2040. The Section 28 Guidelines state that “The NPF 50:50

City scenario is broadly consistent with the National Planning Framework strategy and consequently, the 2018 NPF ‘Roadmap’ document”. As such, the Section 28 Guidelines further indicate that the housing demand scenario to be used by planning authorities in their planning functions in order to plan for the provision of housing to meet projected levels of demand in their administrative area, in accordance with the NPF strategy.

It is a requirement that planning authorities demonstrate the manner in which their core strategy and other elements of the plan are consistent with the established NPF Roadmap population projections for their local authority area and with the related NPF 50:50 City<sup>6</sup> housing demand projection scenario identified by the ESRI. The calculation of housing demand for the plan period (including an adjustment to 2026 as provided for in the Guidelines to align with the NPF to 2026) comprises a **total housing supply target of 3,107** for the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028. (See Appendix IV). This adjustment provides an additional 31 units i.e. 1% over the NPF 50:50 scenario. This nominal increase will help address shortage in supply of housing with additional growth being accommodated in Carlow Town a designated Key Town. Carlow Town has the physical and social infrastructural capacity to cater for the additional development arising from this adjustment. Directing additional growth to Carlow Town also accords with the RSES (RPO 14) which targets Carlow Town for significant growth while also acknowledging its economic role at a regional and inter-regional level with emphasis on regeneration and placemaking.

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<sup>6</sup> 50:50 distribution of growth between the Eastern and Midland region, and the Southern and Northern and Western regions, with 75% of the growth to be outside of Dublin and its suburbs. Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford.

targeted for 50% of overall national growth between them, with Ireland’s large and smaller towns, villages and rural areas accommodating the other 50% of growth.

### **2.15 Compact Growth**

An overriding objective of both the NPF and the RSES is the need to achieve ambitious targets for compact growth. Projected population growth must be planned in accordance with NPF National Policy Objectives 3a, b and c, which target infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements, in particular the objective to target at least 30% of all new homes in settlements within their existing built-up footprints. In satisfying this target for compact growth, an analysis of appropriate brownfield and infill sites with potential capacity to deliver new homes was completed for Carlow Town, Tullow, Muine Bheag and the Tier 3 Small Town Settlements. Details of the potential capacity of infill and brownfield lands are set out in Table 2.7.

In terms of zoned land sites have only been identified for development where they are able to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development. These lands are also positioned within the existing built-up footprint of established settlements or contiguous to existing developed lands.

### **2.16 Core Strategy Table**

The Core Strategy Table sets out the target population and households at settlement level for County Carlow over the plan period and the land requirements that will arise.

These population targets are based on an allocation of population projections detailed in the HNDA (aligning with the high-range targets for Carlow in the NPF Implementation Roadmap and RSES to 2026 and 2031, extrapolated for the plan period), while the household targets are based on an allocation of housing demand

calculated in accordance with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” Guidelines. Allocations are based on a proportional allocation of growth across the settlement hierarchy.

Following the population and household allocations set out in the Core Strategy Table, zoning maps are provided to reflect these figures and to indicate the quantum and locations of future development for the plan period. Lands have been identified for residential development in order to meet the population targets set out in the Core Strategy Table and reflect each settlement’s role in the Settlement Hierarchy. The amount and location of zoned lands required in each settlement was determined using an evidence-based settlement typology and asset-based approach, as detailed in Section 2.7. Consideration was also given to potential environmental impact (including SEA, HAD, EU Water Framework Directive, River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management requirements); availability of services and infrastructure; potential for economic and social development of the settlement; the sequential test; ground and surface water vulnerability; planning history and market availability/choice.

The amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and promote more compact forms of growth. The achievement of this has the potential to make a transformational difference. It can bring new life and footfall to existing settlements, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as supporting a more sustainable transport mode shift.

***Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy***

In line with the NPF and RSES the release of lands will be prioritised in a sequential manner and monitoring will be employed to promote

development patterns in line with the Core Strategy.

SETTLEMENT TYPE	SETTLEMENT NAME	Population and Housing						Land Zoning Required					
		Census 2016 Population	Census 2016 (%)	Projected Population Increase 2028	Housing Target (units)	Housing Target (%)	Residual Provision (units/ha) <sup>7</sup>	Housing Yield on Existing undeveloped Zoned Land in Existing Plan	Quantum of undeveloped zoned Town / Village Centre that can accommodate an element of Residential 2022-2028 (ha)	Quantum of Land Zoned New Residential (ha)	Potential Units deliverable on town Centre / Village Centre Lands 2022-2028	Quantum of Housing Units for land zoned new Residential	% of Units that can be accommodated on brownfield / infill (inc-Residual provision)
County		56,932		7,068	3,107								
Key Town	Carlow Town <sup>8</sup>	19,994	35%	3,017	1330 (900 within TC area)	42.8%	333	790 <sup>9</sup> 1087 <sup>10</sup>	8.75	17	370	530	100% <sup>11</sup>
District Towns	Tullow	4,673	8%	919	404	13%	101	514	4.31	21 <sup>12</sup>	52	295	Subject to LAP Review (2023/24)
	Muine Bheag	2,837	5%	671	295	10%	74	494	2.42	32.5 <sup>13</sup>	52	362	Subject to LAP Review (2023/24)
Small Towns*	Rathvilly	944	1.7%	141	62	2%	16 (0.8ha)	N/A	1.4	5.8	10	68	75%
	Leighlinbridge	914	1.6%	226	99	3%	-	N/A	0.2	4.42	6	93	100%
	Ballon	712	1.2%	141	62	2%	10 (1.0ha)	N/A	1.8	3.0	22	50	100%
	Borris	652	1.1%	141	62	2%	12 (1.2ha)	N/A	3.93	3.72	32	40	83%
	Hacketstown	597	1%	127	56	1.8%	13 (1.1ha)	N/A	1.0	6.05	16	53	48%
	Carrickduff	442	0.8%	76	33	1%	5	N/A	0	3.4	0	38	29%
	Tinnahinch	306	0.5%	60	26	0.8%	-	26	0	2.4	0	26	100%
Larger Serviced Villages*	Palatine	398	0.7%	57	25	0.8%	-	N/A	2.34	1.23	11	14	64%
	Ballinabranagh	466	0.8%	55	25	0.8%	6 (0.6ha)	N/A	1.37	4.86	4	27	30%
	Rathoe	304	0.5%	41	18	0.6%	8 (0.7ha)	N/A	0.59	2.0	6	20	23%
	Fennagh	402	0.7%	57	25	0.8%	-	N/A	1.8	0.69	15	10	80%
	Myshall	286	0.5%	51	23	0.7%	-	N/A	0.8	2.17	2	20	52%
	Clonegal	278	0.5%	21	9	0.3%	-	N/A	0.87	2.5	0	9	100%
	Kildavin	184	0.3%	35	16	0.5%	5 (0.5ha)	N/A	0.7	1.5	6	15	29%
Tinryland	378	0.66%	27	12	0.3%	-	N/A	2.21	1.49	4	8	75%	
Smaller Serviced Villages	Bennekerry, Old Leighlin, Nurney, Ardattin, Glynn, Ticknock, Ballinkillen, Bilboa, St. Mullins, Clonmore												
				271	119	3.8%							
Rural Areas	Rural Nodes and Rural One Offs Grange, Drumpeha, Ballymurphy, Garyhill, Rathanna, Newtown, Newtown- Fennagh.												
				934	406	13%							

Table 2.7 Core Strategy Table

<sup>7</sup> Additional units to be accommodated on serviced, zoned lands in settlements, over and above the minimum required in order to allow a degree of choice and to reflect the fact that not all zoned lands will be released for development during the lifetime of the plan.

<sup>8</sup> Allocation includes Carlow Environs which will be subject to a Joint Urban Area Plan with Laois County Council. This plan provides an allocation of 900 units to the former Town Council Area with the balance of units to be provided in the Carlow Environs Area.

<sup>9</sup> Town Council Area.

<sup>10</sup> Carlow Environs LAP Area.

<sup>11</sup> Town Council Area.

<sup>12</sup> As per Core Strategy of existing Tullow LAP 2017-2023- Zonings will be reviewed as part of LAP process in 2023/2024.

<sup>13</sup> As per Core Strategy of existing Muine Bheag / Royal Oak LAP 2017-2023- Zonings will be reviewed as part of LAP process in 2023/2024.



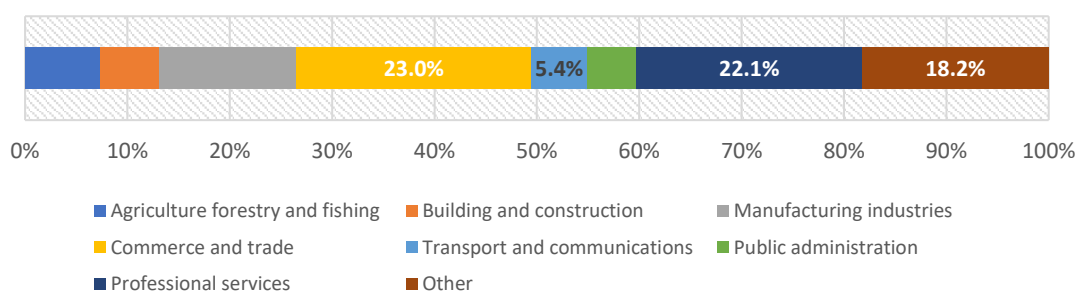
## 2.17 Economic Development

According to the 2016 census, 21,973 persons aged 15 and over (49.6%) residing in Carlow recorded their principal economic status as being employed. 4,507 persons or 10.2% reported being unemployed (including those 'Unemployed having lost or given up previous job' and those 'Looking for first regular job' as

recorded by the CSO). By contrast, Census 2011 recorded 5,908 or 13.9% as being unemployed.

Fig 2.2 shows the industry of employment of Carlow residents in work in 2016. This indicates that Commerce and Trade is the largest single industry with 23% of Carlow residents employed in the sector, followed by Professional Services (22.1%) and Other Industries (18.2%).

Figure 2.2 Persons at work by industry, 2016



Carlow Town and the two District Towns of Tullow and Muine Bheag form important employment centres for the County. Of these three, Muine Bheag has the highest jobs to resident workers ratio at 1.466, while Carlow Town has a ratio of 0.881 and Tullow a ratio of 0.703. All three towns present opportunities for economic development building on their strategic location and existing strengths, particularly in sectors such as engineering, manufacturing and IT.

## 2.18 Retail Development

Section 10(2A)(e) of the Act requires a Core Strategy to contain information to show that, in setting out objectives regarding retail development the Planning Authority has had regard to Section 28 Guidelines that relate to retail planning. The Retail Strategy for the County has been prepared in accordance with Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning

Authorities (2012) and is contained in Appendix V of this Plan.

The Retail Strategy addresses shopping habits, the retail environment as well as wider changes in the economy such as the impacts of Brexit and the Covid 19 pandemic. It has been informed by policy analysis, retail and economic trends, the retail hierarchy, identification of core retail areas, updated floorspace and household survey, qualitative and quantitative analysis. The strategy is aligned to the core strategy and settlement hierarchy seeking to maintain and develop Carlow Town and District Towns as the main retail centres in the county. The strategy establishes capacity, a vision, policies and actions relating to retailing in County Carlow, in line with the requirements of the RSES.

## 2.19 Ecosystems Services Approach and Natural Capital

Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing. The Ecosystems Services Approach followed by the Plan provides a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Ecosystem Services Approach principles include:

- Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function (considered in preparing Chapters no. 6 (Infrastructure and Environmental Management), 7 (Climate Action and Energy), 9 (Landscape and Green Infrastructure), 10 (Natural and Built Heritage) and 11 (Tourism and Recreation)).
- Taking into account the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic wellbeing, such as flood and climate regulation (considered in preparing Chapters no. 6 Infrastructure and Environmental Management), and 7 (Climate Action and Energy), resources for food, fibre or fuel (considered in Chapter 14 Rural Development), or recreation, culture and quality of life (considered in preparing Chapters no. 9 (Landscape and Green Infrastructure), 10 (Natural and Built Heritage) and 11 (Tourism and Recreation)).
- Involving people - those who benefit from ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them. Public consultation has informed the

preparation of the Plan, taking into account submissions /observations at each stage of the plan-making process.

Natural capital consists of renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) which need to be managed. In recognition of this, policies / objectives have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards the management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, pollination, flood risk, water bodies and river basins and natural resources supporting energy production and recreation.

### Ecosystems Services Approach and Natural Capital Ecosystems – Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

- ES P1: Promote an Ecosystem Services Approach in the preparation of lower-level Plans, Strategies and Development Management.

## 2.20 Core Strategy and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

This Plan has been subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)*. The SFRA is contained in Appendix III and has informed land-use zonings throughout the County.

## 2.21 Climate Action

Ireland's Climate Action Plan (DCCAE, 2019 and 2021) outlines the current challenges across key sectors including electricity, transport, built environment, industry and agriculture and outlines a co-ordinated approach towards ambitious decarbonisation targets. Carlow County Council in the preparation of this Plan is conscious of the need to carbon proof policies to reduce the impacts of climate change through

settlement and travel patterns, energy use and the protection of green infrastructure. Climate action in County Carlow will continue to be driven by the need to 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.

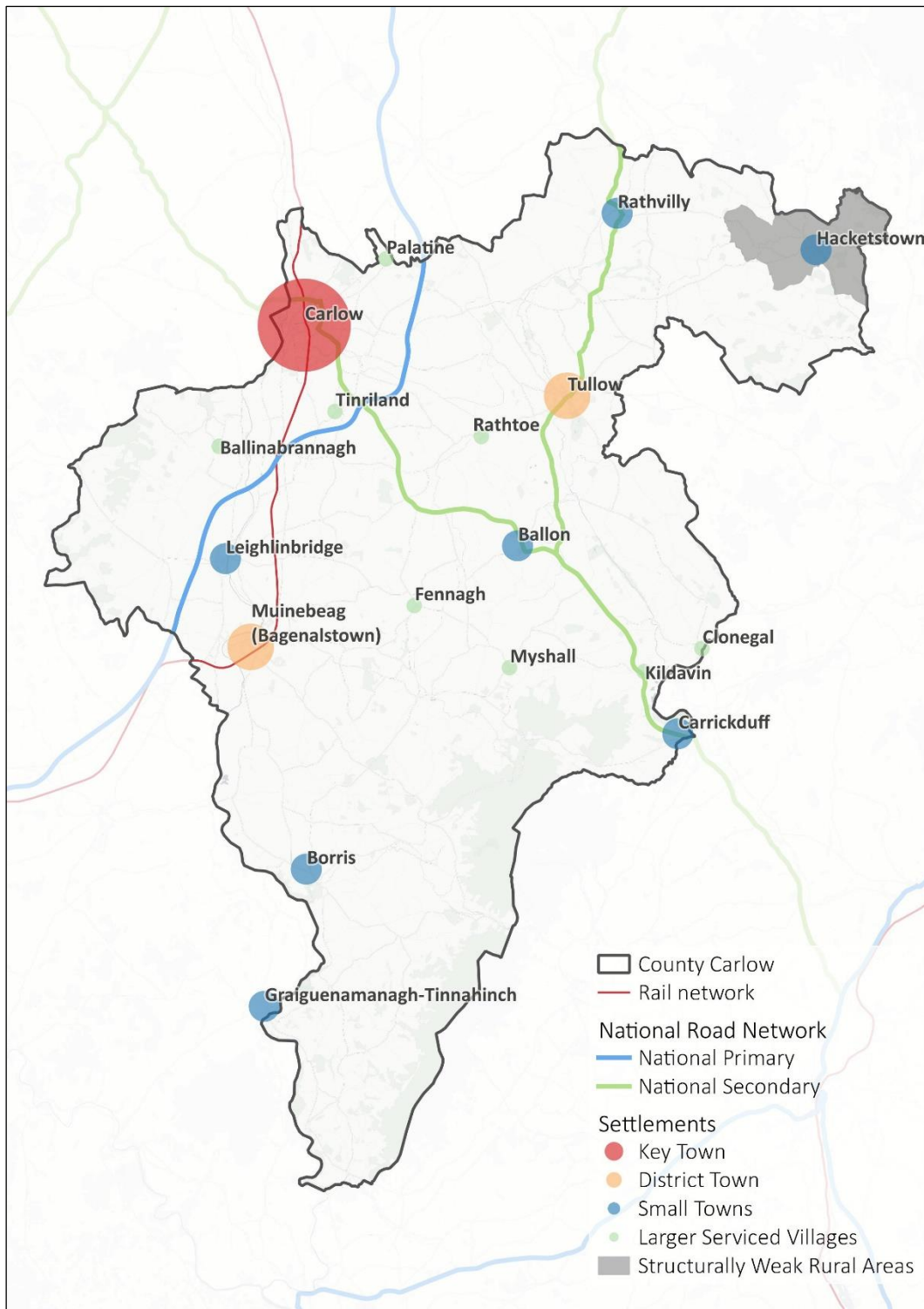
As part of this Plan *A Renewable Energy Strategy for County Carlow* has been prepared (Appendix VI). This strategy has informed the preparation of this Plan and seeks *“to encourage and support the transition of Carlow to a sustainable county through community engagement, energy efficiency and the sustainable development of renewable energy, whilst providing environmental and economic benefit at local and national level in accordance with all relevant planning and environmental considerations”*.

The Council has also adopted a Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 which seeks to ensure an understanding of the risks of climate change, advance planned climate resilient actions and ensure climate adaptation considerations inform all decisions including the drafting of policies which facilitate future development.

Climate action informs all chapters of this Plan and is specifically addressed in Chapter 7.

## **2.22 SEA /AA**

An iterative process has taken place in the preparation of the Development Plan, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Appropriate Assessment. Recommendations / changes arising from the SEA and AA have been incorporated into the Core Strategy.



Map 2.4 Core Strategy Map

## **2.23 Implementation and Delivery**

The implementation and delivery of the Core Strategy is a key strategic objective of the Planning Authority. The County Development Plan adopts a multi-faceted approach to support the delivery of the Core Strategy through: putting in place the appropriate planning policy framework at a local level to guide the sustainable development of settlements; the identification of brownfield lands and implementation of active land measures to support sequential development, compact growth and regeneration; and, the requirement to monitor and review implementation of the Plan.

### **2.23.1 Plan-Making**

This Plan establishes the strategic framework for the future development of the County in line with the NSS and RSES. Statutory Local Area Plans must also comply with higher order plans and are required for designated towns with a population in excess of 5,000. In the context of County Carlow, a statutory Local Area Plan / Urban Area Plan will be prepared for the **Greater Carlow Urban Area**. This will be prioritised following the adoption of this Plan and will be prepared in partnership with Laois County Council. The Joint Urban Area Plan will incorporate the existing urban area as provided for in Chapter 15 together with Carlow Environs and Graiguecullen area as deemed appropriate to support a compact sustainable settlement pattern. A single overall planning framework for the Key Town of Carlow will seek to deliver on the key strategic objectives as contained in the RSES for the Southern Region and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly so as to function as an economic self-sustaining regional driver and focus of sustainable growth. Preparation of the UAP will also be informed by a local transport plan, in accordance with the

requirements of the regional policy objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.

**Tullow and Muine Bheag/ Royal Oak** comprise two key urban settlements which provide important residential, employment and community services for a wider rural area. A review of both Local Area Plans (to commence in 2022/23) will be carried out as required to ensure a co-ordinated plan-led approach informs future development, facilitates regeneration and renewal and promotes economic development while ensuring the protection of environmental qualities, including bio-diversity.

The **Graiguenamagh-Tinnahinch** Joint Local Area Plan 2021-2027 provides a co-ordinated plan-led approach to the overall settlement between Carlow and Kilkenny County Council. The Joint Plan as currently drafted is in compliance with the Core Strategy of this Plan.

Any further Local Area Plans within the County may be considered pursuant to Section 19(1)(a) of the Act. In this regard provision exists to facilitate preparation of a Local Area Plan in respect of any area which the Planning Authority considers suitable, while having regard to the specific criteria outlined in Section 2.1 of 'Local Area Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2013) including full compliance with the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan.

### **2.23.2 Active Land Management**

The delivery of the Core Strategy will be supported through the implementation of an active land management strategy. The Planning Authority will adopt a multi-faceted approach to active land management including leveraging central government funding streams including, amongst others, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to activate and support

the delivery of the Core Strategy and policy objectives of the Plan. Furthermore, the Council will seek to incentivise development and working collaboratively with key stakeholders to support the achievement of these objectives.

It is an objective of the Council to:

CS O2: Seek to secure competitive funding under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and any other funding streams that may become available to support regeneration projects in Carlow Town as provided for in Project Carlow 2040: A Vision for Regeneration to address building vacancy and refurbishment, public realm improvements, enabling infrastructure, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future.

CS O3: Seek to secure EU and National funding opportunities including those made available under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund / Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and any other funding streams that may become available to support job creation address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in eligible towns and villages throughout the County.

CS O4: Seek to implement any forthcoming government programme for new homes in towns and villages (NPO 18b) in conjunction with infrastructure agencies and local communities subject to the availability of financial resources.

CS O5: Promote an active land management approach through enhanced co-ordination with relevant stakeholders and infrastructure providers in the delivery of enabling infrastructure in order to accelerate the development of

higher order settlements and regeneration areas.

CS O6: Actively promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas in need of regeneration through appropriate active land management measures including availing of statutory powers under the Derelict Sites Act, Housing Act, Vacant Site Levy and supporting implementation of the Residential Zoned Land Tax together with other statutory provisions to actively promote regeneration of urban and rural areas within the County.

## **2.24 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The NPF Implementation Roadmap states that the transition level of population growth detailed to 2026 will provide sufficient scope to enable City and County Development Plans to be reviewed, land zonings to be prioritised and Local Area Plans and planning permissions to be worked through, 'while also allowing for agility and ambition, as well as monitoring and review, as we move towards full implementation of the NPF and NDP'.

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

CS P14: Monitor and review the operation and implementation of this Plan including housing delivery across all settlements/ tiers of the settlement hierarchy including one off dwellings in the countryside and to adjust as needed to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy objectives. Any Variation required during the lifetime of this Plan will be in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

CS P15: As part of the two-year progress report to review and report on the implementation of active land management measures within the County, to monitor progress in activation of lands and to establish measurable targets thereafter for monitoring on an annual basis.

## **2.25 Core Strategy Objectives**

Carlow County Council will pursue the future spatial and economic development of County Carlow through a plan-led approach, directing development to locations in the settlement hierarchy in accordance with national and regional policy. This will favour development in places with environmental carrying capacity, and development which can support investment in public infrastructure and services, and which is sensitive to the character of the built and natural environment. In order to deliver this, the following Core Strategy Policy Objectives will be pursued.

### **Core Strategy - Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- CS O7: Ensure that the future spatial development of County Carlow is in accordance with the National Planning Framework 2040, including the population targets set out under the Implementation Roadmap, and the Regional, Spatial and the Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.
- CS O8: Deliver the identified housing supply target of 3,107 homes over the course of the plan period in accordance with the “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” Guidelines and in compliance with the Core Strategy.
- CS O9: Implement all land use planning policy and objectives in a manner which takes account of and is consistent with the Core Strategy and the county settlement hierarchy in order that development over the plan period shall strengthen the role of the settlement hierarchy and deliver compact growth and sustainable development.
- CS O10: Restrict development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG/OPW 2009).
- CS O11 : Promote the integration of spatial planning and transport policy, ensure the maintenance of the strategic function of the national roads’ network in the County, and promote sustainable public transport including a public bus service for Carlow town and active travel alternatives throughout the County.
- CS O12: Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres and targeted settlements in the county.
- CS O13: Promote County Carlow in its transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient County through the promotion of sustainable energy, sustainable settlement patterns, and reduced travel demand in accordance with the RSES, NPF and Climate Action Plan.
- CS O14: Promote new homes and serviced sites in villages as an attractive alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside, and to provide for one-off homes in the countryside only where consistent with national policy and the rural area

designations of this Core Strategy and Chapter 3  
Housing.

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<sup>i</sup> Excludes Graiguecullen (Laois Co Co)