



Carlow County Council

Annual Report 2025



Annual Report 2025



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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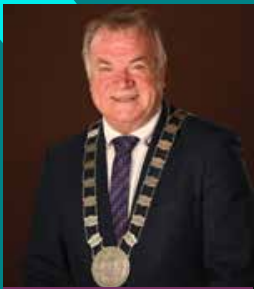
Joint Foreword Note

Carlow is a progressive, vibrant County which is attractive, inclusive and accessible.

Carlow County Council (CCC) is committed to providing the highest quality public services for local residents, visitors and for new and existing companies. Creating an environment for economic growth and excellent quality of life for all is a priority for this Council.

We are pleased to introduce the Carlow County Council Annual Report 2025, which outlines the work of the Council in delivering important public services during the year, all of which contribute to making County Carlow an attractive place in which to work, live, visit and do business.

As we move from 2025 into 2026, we look forward to continuing to deliver the Council's Services, efficiently and effectively to all our customers. 2026 will also see an accelerated focus on climate change, active travel, heritage and biodiversity initiatives in addition to the Council's regular services and supports to individuals, businesses and communities.



Ken Murnane
Cathaoirleach



Coilín O'Reilly
Chief Executive

About Our Council

The County of Carlow (Contae Cheatharlach) is located inland within the South East of Ireland in the province of Leinster covering an area of 896 square kilometers. The County is strategically located and has excellent access to transport infrastructure through its location on the M9 Dublin Waterford motorway, the Dublin Waterford main rail line and the N80 national road linking Rosslare Europort to the Midlands.

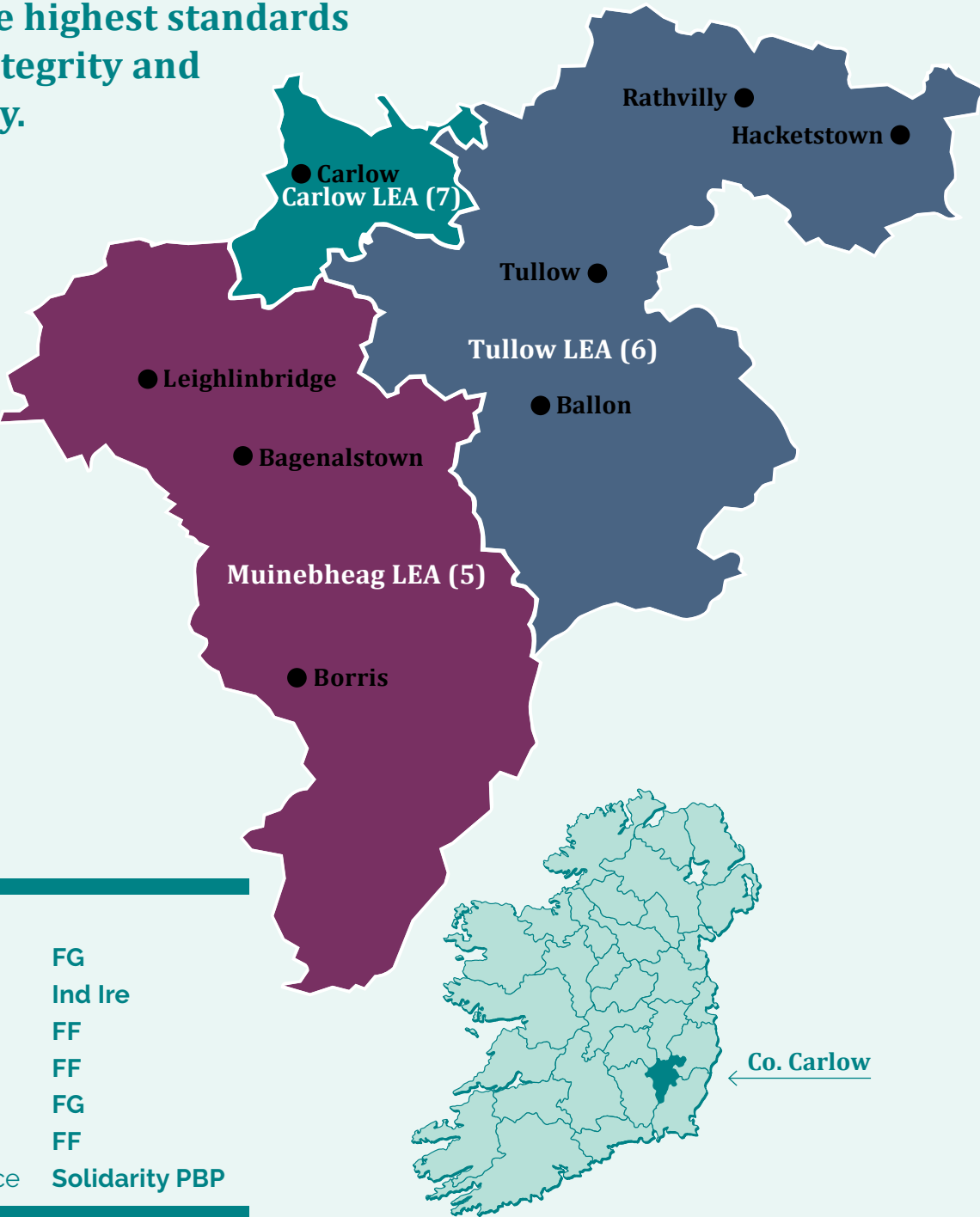
Carlow Town Park



The population of County Carlow recorded in the 2022 census was 61,931. The county town of Carlow is located in the northwest of the County along the border with County Laois. The Council is made up of 18 elected members within 3 municipal districts (Carlow, Tullow and Muinebheag). With the Cathaoirleach elected by the members annually.

Along with the Corporate Policy Group, 4 Strategic Policy Committees develop and recommend policy to the Council. Committees are made up of elected members and representatives designated external sectoral interests.

Carlow is a place in which to live, work, visit and invest, whilst upholding the highest standards of honesty, integrity and accountability.



Carlow LEA (7)	
Cllr. Fergal Browne	FG
Cllr. John Cassin	Ind Ire
Cllr. Andrea Dalton	FF
Cllr. Ken Murnane	FF
Cllr. Paul Doogue	FG
Cllr. Fintan Phelan	FF
Cllr. Adrienne Wallace	Solidarity PBP

Tullow LEA (6)	
Cllr. Ben Ward	FG
Cllr. Charlie Murphy	Non Party
Cllr. Jim Deane	SF
Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue	FG
Cllr. William Paton	Non Party
Cllr. John Pender	FF

Muinebheag LEA (5)	
Cllr. Michael Doran	FG
Cllr. Andy Gladney	SF
Cllr. Thomas Kinsella	FG
Cllr. William Quinn	LP
Cllr. Daniel Pender	FF

Municipal District of Carlow



Cllr. Fergal Browne



Cllr. John Cassin



Cllr. Andrea Dalton



Cllr. Paul Doogue



Cllr. Ken Murnane



Cllr. Fintan Phelan



Cllr. Adrienne Wallace

Municipal District of Tullow



Cllr. Charlie Murphy



Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue



Cllr. Ben Ward



Cllr. William Paton



Cllr. John Pender



Cllr. Jim Deane

Municipal District of Muinebheag



Cllr. Michael Doran



Cllr. Andy Gladney



Cllr. Daniel Pender

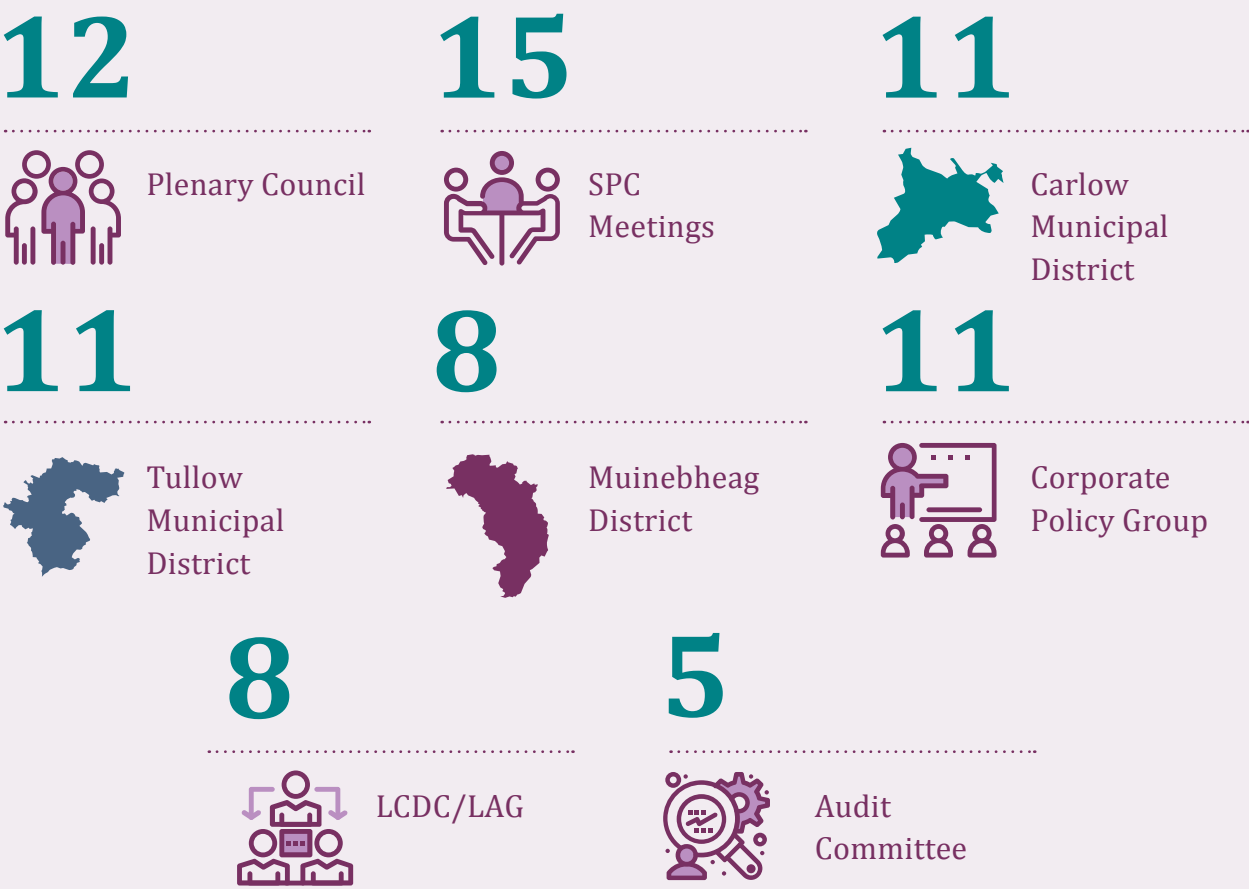


Cllr. Thomas Kinsella



Cllr. William Quinn

Council Meetings



Launch of the Carlow Local Community Safety Partnership



Strategic Policy Committees

The purpose of Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) is to formulate, develop, monitor, and review policies which relate to the functions of Carlow Council and to advise the Council accordingly.

Carlow County Council operates 4 SPCs, each served by a Director of Service. The Chairs of the SPCs are selected by the Council at the AGM.

Planning, Economic Development, Regeneration, Finance and ICT Strategic Policy Committee

Chaired by:
Cllr. Michael Doran

Council Members:
Cllr. Tommy Kinsella, Cllr. Charlie Murphy, Cllr. Daniel Pender, Cllr. William Paton

External Members:
Eoin Keogh (Business Commercial /Chambers Ireland, Lisa O'Shea (Development/Construction, Chambers Ireland) Sue Philips (Environment/Conservation/PPN) John Duffy (Agriculture Farming IFA)

The SPC met 4 times in 2025, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Taking in Charge & Bonds Policy
- Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019
- Directorate Annual Service Delivery Plans 2025

- Green Festival & Event Strategy
- InnoComm Peer Review Process

Housing and Integration Strategic Policy Committee

Chaired by:
Cllr. Andrea Dalton

Council Members:
Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Fergal Browne, Cllr. John Cassin, Cllr. Adrienne Wallace

External Members:
Lisa O'Shea (Development/Construction) Niall Ryan (PPN Social Inclusion) Amanda Shasha (Community & Voluntary, PPN) Vacant Environment/Conservation PPN

The SPC met 4 times in 2025, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025
- Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme
- Local Authority Integration Support Service
- Draft Housing Allocation Policy 2025-2030
- Review of Housing Allocations
- Update on Housing Delivery Programme 2025
- Update on Housing Allocations 2025
- Update on Integration Support
- Elected Members Housing Representation Policy

Community Development, Recreation Amenity Sports, Arts & Culture, Libraries, Museum & Heritage Strategic Policy Committee
Chaired by: Cllr. Willie Quinn
Council Members: Cllr. Ben Ward, Cllr. Fintan Phelan, Cllr. Jim Deane
External Members: Deirdre O'Connell (Trade Unions/ ICTU), Aisling O'Halloran (Community/ Voluntary/PPN) Eileen Doyle (Community/Voluntary/PPN) Trish Doyle (Social Inclusion/PPN)

The SPC met 3 times in 2025, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Strategic Policy committee Scheme 2025-2029
- Draft Service Delivery Plan 2025
- Draft Library Plan 2025-2029
- Historic Towns Initiative – Draft Heritage Led Regeneration Plan for Carlow Town
- Draft Sports Plan
- Draft Community Gardens and Allotment Policy
- Carlow County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030
- Carlow County Council Strategic Arts Plan 2025-2035
- Carlow Age Friendly Carlow Strategy 2025-2029

Transportation Environment, Emergency Services & Capital Projects Strategic Policy Committee
Chaired by: Cllr. John Pender
Council Members: Cllr. Paul Doogue, Cllr. Willie Quinn, Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue
External Members: John Brophy, Business/Commercial/ Chambers Ireland, Jackie Meally (PPN Community/Voluntary) John McHugh (Environment/Conservation/PPN) Michael Purcell (Agriculture/Farming IFA)

The SPC met 4 times in 2025, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- SPC Work Programme 2024-2029
- Local Authority Climate Action Plan
- SPC Work Programme 2024 – Carlow Fire & Rescue Service Communications Plan
- Speed Limits Review
- Roadside Memorial Policy
- Carlow PPN Update
- SPC Members Training Update
- South Southern Relief Road
- CCTV Policy
- Carlow Mobility Hub Proposal
- Active Travel Programme
- Statutory Fire Safety Plan 2026-2030 Decarbonisation Zone Working Group

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.

Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024, builds on the role of local government in Ireland and incorporates specific actions to do so which include:

- 1 Showcasing, sharing, and building on existing initiatives
- 2 Capacity building and awareness raising
- 3 Embedding the SDGs in Governance and reporting frameworks
- 4 Incorporating the SDGs within local planning frameworks
- 5 Community Engagement

Furthermore, local authorities are recognised as one of Agenda 2030's nine 'Major Groups', which play a crucial role in sustainable development and Agenda 2030 also highlights the role of local authorities and communities in sustainable urban development.

Carlow County Council were appointed as one of the first Local Authority SDG Champions in 2019 and currently holds the role of SDG Ambassador.

The role of SDG Ambassador includes:

- Advocate and promoter of the SDGs and sustainable development
- Acts as a good practice example of how an organisation or group can contribute to the SDGs and integrate the SDGs into their work or activities
- Shares learnings with others

Pádraig O'Gorman, Director of Services currently holds a position on the National SDG Localisation Working Group.

The objective of this group is to develop and oversee SDG localisation in Ireland, building on the work already underway at local level, and as set out in the SDG National Implementation Plan.

Carlow County Council continues to work to advance the SDGs, including through:

- the incorporation of the SDGs into our policy documents,
- joining/establishing local and/or international partnerships,
- the holding of information events with external groups including Universities, PPNs, Tidy Towns and Creative Ireland.

The 2025 Annual Report presents a breakdown of the SDG Goals and Targets supported by each Department.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Carlow County Council Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014 for the purposes of developing, coordinating, and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development in the County.

The LCDC consists of 19 members both statutory and non-statutory including 4 elected members.

Carlow LCDC held 8 meetings during 2025

Statutory Interests
Cllr. Andrea Dalton Elected Member
Cllr. Thomas Kinsella Elected Member
Cllr. Fergal Browne Elected Member
Cllr. Andy Gladney Elected Member
Coilín O'Reilly Chief Executive, CCC
Aisling Dollard Carlow Children's and Young Persons Services
Sarah Barron Kilkenny/Carlow Education & Training Board Health Service Executive
Joan-Ita Murphy Health Service Executive

Non-Statutory Interests	
Damian Howard	Myshall Muintir na Tíre (Community and Voluntary PPN)
Padraig Dooley	Carlow Historical & Archaeological Society (Community and Voluntary PPN)
Lynda Stacey	Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre (Social Inclusion PPN)
Áine Gahan	Carlow Childcare Committee (Social Inclusion PPN)
Ian Sewell	Carlow Environmental Network (Environmental College PPN)
Annette Fox	Carlow County Development Partnership CLG
Patrick Carroll	Carlow Chamber (Business)
George Hatton	IFA (Agricultural/Farming)
Lisa Brooks	Arts & Culture - Civic Society
Eileen O'Rourke	Carlow Tourism

Corporate Services and Governance

12



No. Subject
Access Request

67



No. of Freedom
of Information
applications
received

48,050

No. of Electors
registered to vote

Corporate Services provides an effective and efficient support service to An Cathaoirleach, the Elected Members and Senior Management along with general services to members of the public. Monitoring and reviewing the Council's policies and procedures on an ongoing basis. It is also responsible for the provision and management of a wide range of services which include;

- Management of Council, Corporate Policy Group, Carlow MD and SPC Meetings, Attendance of Councillors at Conferences
- Payment of Councillors Allowances and Expenses, Civic Receptions, Linkage with National Bodies such as LAMA, AILG Celtic Conferences, Irish Planning Institute and ACCC
- Preparation of Statutory Reports; Chief Executive Monthly Report, Annual Report, Service Delivery Plan, Corporate Plan
- Register of Electors & Local Elections

- Customer Service, Corporate Communications – Press Releases
- Co-Ordination of Customer Service Performance Indicators
- Coroners Court, Management of Council Property
- Corporate Governance, Ethics & Donation Register
- Freedom of Information, Ombudsman, Data Protection, Protected Disclosures, Archive Services
- Irish Language Scheme, Disability Plan
- Schools Business Programme Partnership , Service Indicators co-ordination
- Major Emergency Management – Communications. Liaison with public, media and Councillors including during severe weather conditions





Bennekerry/Tinryland
ladies Football Team

Receptions

A Reception was held on the 27th February 2025 to honour the tremendous achievement of Bennekerry/Tinryland Ladies Football Team on winning the AIB All-Ireland Intermediate Championship Final. The event took place in the Visual Centre and was attended by Elected Members, officials, family members and friends.

Cathaoirleach Award

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fergal Browne, presented Michael O'Rourke with a plaque in recognition of his thirty years of photography services to the people of Carlow at the Carlow County Council Annual meeting on 16th June 2025 in the Council Chamber.

Mayor Awards

The Mayor of Carlow Municipal District, Cllr. Fintan Phelan and members of Carlow County Council hosted a Reception, to honour local groups and individuals for their outstanding achievements and work within the community. This event took place on 29th May 2025, in the Town Hall Carlow.

The following received Mayor awards:

- Carlow Choral Society, in recognition of celebrating 60 years of Choral Music in Carlow
- Spotlight Stage School, in recognition of celebrating 30 years of and arts in Carlow
- Elderflower Garden Club, in recognition of achieving the Age

Friendly Communities Award at the IPB Pride of Place Awards

- Carlow Regional Youth Services, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to young people in Carlow
- Beatrice Byrne, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to young people and twinning relations with Tempe, Arizona
- Lara Gillespie, in recognition of her outstanding achievements in cycling
- Amy Dooley, in recognition of her outstanding achievements in basketball as an Irish Senior Women's International Player
- Con Scully, in recognition of his outstanding achievement of being selected for the Senior Irish Men's team for the Rás Tailteann
- Carlow County Youth Darts, in recognition of their outstanding achievement of winning the INDO Inter-Counties Championship for the third consecutive time



Moldovan Presidential Election

Carlow County Council were delighted to receive a request from the Moldovan Ambassador to Ireland, Larisa Miculet, to be one of limited number of centres throughout the country to provide Polling Stations for the Moldovan General Elections which took place on 28th September 2025.

Register of Electors

The Council is responsible for the compilation of the Register of Electors for the County of Carlow. Under the new Electoral Reform Act 2022, a national program 'Modernisation of the Electoral Register' was carried out to reform the electoral registration process. It provides for rolling, or continuous registration, which will standardise and simplify the process.

To support greater participation, several additional features were also provided for, including the facilitation of anonymous registration for persons whose safety may be at risk if their names are published in the register; provisions to enable pre-registration for 16 and 17 year olds; arrangements for those with no fixed address; and bringing better and more flexible options for people who because of mental health difficulties are not able to attend polling stations to vote.

In 2025, one electoral event, Presidential Elections, which took place on Friday 24th October 2025. The overall count of registered voters in 2025 reached 48,050, comprising 18,011 in the Carlow Local Electorate area, 14,015 in Muinebheag, and 16,024 in the Tullow area.

Presidential Electors	44,959
Dáil Electors	45,582
European Electors	46,302
Potential European Electors	62

Register of Electors National Data Cleansing Project

The Franchise Team are actively participating in a National Data Cleansing Project. This has involved contacting electors with possible duplicates on the register, updating details for townlands, updating elector details, organising returned polling cards, and issuing correspondence to electors.

Carlow County Council began their Register of Electors Campaign in 2025. Throughout the Campaign Carlow County Council members of staff from the Franchise Team were available to assist people to update their details on checktheregister.ie or register for the first time. The Franchise team attended many events and locations as part of their campaign. These included all the libraries and fire stations across the county as well as Carlow College St. Patrick's, The Woodford Dolmen Hotel and Fairgreen Shopping Centre. The emphasis of the campaign is that the people of Carlow are being encouraged to update their details on the register with their PPS Number, date of birth and Eircode. Electors are encouraged to contact the Franchise Team to discuss any queries they may have.

The changes to the Register in 2025 have included the following:

Additions 2025	1,197
Deletions 2025	2,820
Modifications 2025	2,868
Total Changes	6,885

Voters are urged to check the register at www.checktheregister.ie to ensure they are registered, and their details are correct.

Customer Services

The staff at the Customer Services desk in County Hall continue to provide front-line services to the public whether it be in person, by email or by phone.

Customer Service Presentations	9,131
Telephone Calls Received	14,410
Website Visitors	578,647
Media Queries	79

Corporate Property

The Corporate Services Section is responsible for all Corporate Property (Except Social Housing and Roads) and the maintenance and upkeep of same. Property related supports and services were provided including, conveyancing of sales, purchases and leases of property to and from other parties, Section 183's, land-related queries, insurance, and facility management.

Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI)

Carlow County Council are working jointly with Business in the Community Ireland and Tyndall College, Carlow for the delivery of the Towards Your Future Programme. This nationwide programme provides students with an opportunity to meet officials from the Local Authority in order to learn about and prepare for the workplace. The Programme consists of a number of steps including Meet & Greet, Programme Overview; Day in the Life, sharing team roles & daily duties; Local Authority Site Visits; Interview Preparation and review.

To complete the 'Day In The Life' Sessions which are an integral element of the Programme, Students & Teachers attended site visits to the Fire Station, Carlow and the Council Chamber, County Buildings where presentations were provided from service areas including Climate Change; The Library; Sports Partnership & Corporate Governance.

Data Protection

Carlow County Council processes all personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018. The CCTV Oversight Board was established in 2025, with the first implementation of targeted monitoring for offences under the Waste Enforcement and Litter Pollution Acts. The Data Protection Officer has continued to actively engage with sections in carrying out Data Privacy Impact Assessments. 29 staff members received data protection training, delivered over 6 days.

Records Management & Archives

Corporate Services is responsible for the implementation of the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records. 569 boxes of non-current records were transferred to the Records Centre in 2025. A new framework contract for provision of confidential shredding services to 2029 was activated. The Archivist joined Carlow Heritage Forum and represented Local Authority Archivists at the Heritage Council's Local Authority Heritage Practice seminar.

Council Meetings

Carlow County Council has 18 Elected Members which represent 3 municipal districts of Carlow, Tullow and Muinebheag. Corporate Services manages CCC Council Meetings, Carlow Municipal District Meetings, Corporate Policy Group meetings and Deputation.

Chief Executive Monthly Progress Report to Council

The Chief Executive prepares a monthly report (In accordance with Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) of each directorate/section, detailing service delivery and important achievements across the organisation during the month. This report is an agenda item at every monthly Council meeting and questions are taken from members on any aspect of the report.

This report also serves as a mechanism through which members have oversight of the progress on the implementation of the Corporate Plan and Annual Budget.

Privacy Statement

Carlow County Council is committed to protecting and respecting privacy. Carlow County Council's Privacy Statement lets you know how we look after your personal data. It also informs you as to our obligations and your rights under data protection law.

Official Language Act 2003

Carlow County Council continues to implement the Official Language Act 2003 and it is committed to delivering

on all aspects of Carlow County Councils Irish Language Scheme. This included working with all departments to assist them in compliance with the legislation and promotion of the Irish language in all elements of service delivery and informing staff of the Councils obligations regarding Carlow County Councils Language Scheme.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 gives legal rights to those seeking access to information held by public bodies covered by the Act.

The following is the breakdown of decisions made on these requests.

Applications Received	67
Requests Granted	25
Requests Refused	30
Requests Part-Granted	8
Requests Withdrawn	3
Carried Over 2025	24
Internal Reviews	4
Appeals to Information Commissioner	3
Journalists	14
Business/Interest Groups	10
Oireachtas/Public Members	5
Requests Part-Granted	8
Requests Part-Granted	8
Staff	0
Clients	37
Others	1

Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman was established under the *Ombudsman Act 1980*, to examine complaints from members of the public who feel they have been unfairly treated in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities.

Closed Cases	9
Open Cases Carried over to 2026	9
Total Received in 2025	18

Ethics Register

The role of Ethics Registrar is set out in Part 15 of Local Government Act, 2001 and is managed by Corporate Services and Governance. Annual Declarations for 2025 from all relevant employees and elected members were received and made publicly available within the statutory period.

Local Elections Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure Act 1999

Pursuant to this requirement, Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no donations and expenditures for 2025. Copy of declarations submitted were published on the website along with all payments made to Councillors, including the representational payment, the allowance and travel and subsistence payments.

Protected Disclosures

Section 22 of the *Protected Disclosures Act 2014* requires the publication of an annual report relative to Protected Disclosures

received. Pursuant to this requirement, Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no protected disclosures received in 2025.

Members Expenses

Payments made to Councillors under Section 142 of the Local Government Act.

Member Expense	
Representative Payments	€557,299.68
Local Representation Allowance	€97,684.38
Annual Expenses Allowance	€44,253.76
Strategic Policy Committee Chairperson's Allowance	
Total	€23,931.07
Security Allowance	€32,950.24
Cathaoirleach & Mayor Allowance	€47,857.11
Training and Conferences	€30,222.01
Foreign Travel	€4,469.90

National Voter Registration Day in Fair Green Carlow on Wednesday 30th April



Health And Safety



In 2025, Carlow County Council continued to progress its Occupational Health and Safety Management System with a focus on safe working practices, compliance with health and safety legislation and the promotion of a positive safety culture across all service areas.

ProWork continues to support the management of operational health and safety documentation within the Transportation Department, including Safe Systems of Work Plans (SSWPs), traffic management plans and plant, vehicle and equipment inspection records. The use of the system has improved the management and accessibility of safety documentation and supports the electronic completion of inspections and incident reporting. The potential to extend the use of the system to other service areas continues to be examined.

Health and safety inspections were carried out during the year in line with the Council's workplace inspection

programme. A total of **113** workplace inspections were completed during 2025. Tablets continue to be used to record inspection findings and assist with the electronic reporting of incidents and safety observations.

During 2025, **20** no. workplace incidents were recorded, including **3** no. IR1 reportable accidents and **0** no. IR3 dangerous occurrences.

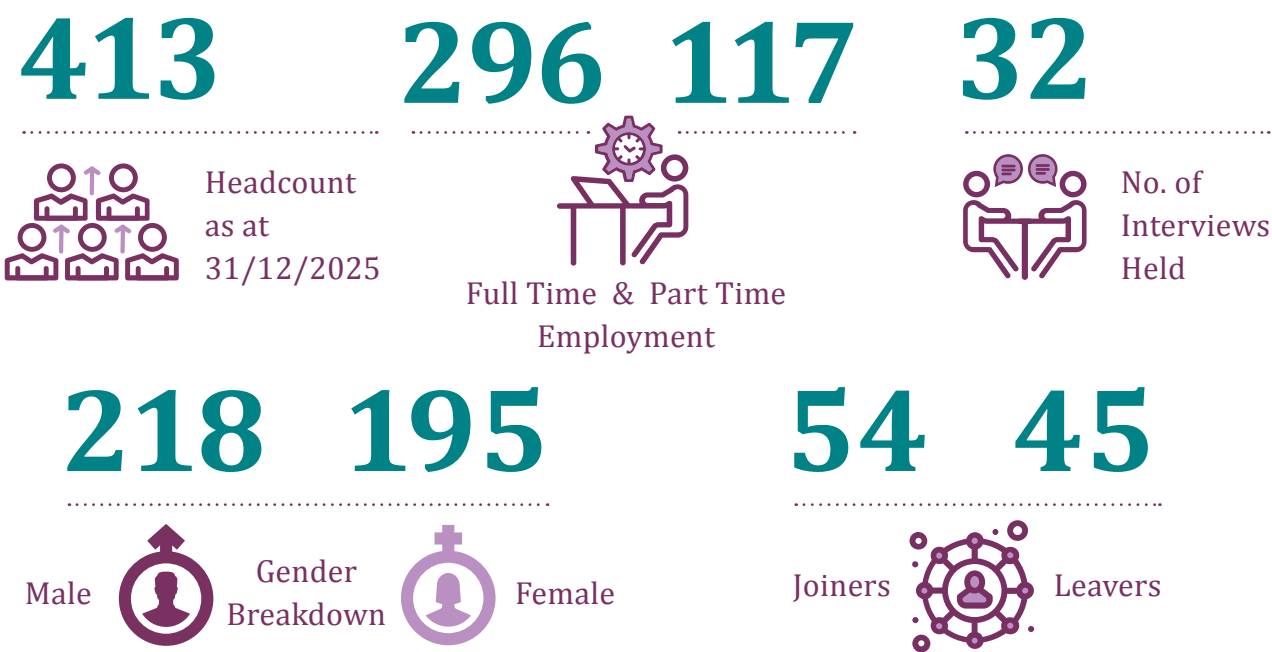
Engagement and consultation with staff continued throughout the year, supported by ongoing monitoring of work activities, to help ensure that safety, health and welfare standards are maintained across the organisation.

Health and safety training continued to be provided to staff during 2025 in line with operational requirements and statutory obligations.

The Council also continued to support employee wellbeing during 2025 through workplace wellbeing initiatives, helping to promote a broader focus on staff health, well-being and welfare across the organisation.



Human Resources



The Human Resources Section (HR) is involved in the administration of statutory employment provisions, and the staffing policies, procedures and schemes adopted by Management.

The Section is also responsible for Recruitment, Training and Development, Time & Attendance Management, Superannuation, effective Employment Engagement, Industrial Relations, Equality & Diversity, Work Life Balance, delivery of the Staff Wellbeing Service and provision of support to the organisation.



Planning

474



No. of Planning Applications Received in 2025

360



No. of Valid Applications

16



Total No. of Dangerous Structures Complaints Received

7



No. of Properties listed on the Derelict Register

13



Enforcement Notices Served

7



Housing Developments Taken in Charge in 2025

The overall objective of the Planning Department is to promote the development of the County in a manner which facilitates sustainable economic and social progress. The day-to-day operation of the department covers a number of functional areas namely development management, forward planning, planning enforcement, compliance, taking in charge of residential developments, derelict sites and dangerous structures.

Development Management Planning Applications

Carlow County Council received a total of 474 planning applications during 2025.

The following is a breakdown of decisions made during 2025 by Carlow County Council:

No. of Valid Applications Received	360
No. of InValid Applications Received	114
No. of Applications Granted	326
No. of Applications Refused	27
No. of Pre-planning Consultations held	82
No. of Compliance Requests Processed	182



Short-Term Lettings

In accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) and associated *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended), short-term letting is defined as letting all or part of a property, where the property owner or 'host', may or may not be present, for periods of up to 2 weeks at a time. It is also defined as a material change of use that may, in certain circumstances, require planning permission. In 2025 a total of 5 no. properties were identified as potentially in breach of Short-Term Lettings Regulations which resulted in 1 no. Warning Letter issuing following completion of investigation and assessment.

An Coimisiún Pleanála Appeals

An Bord Pleanála issued decisions on 16 no. Planning Appeals in Carlow County Council Administrative Area in 2025. Carlow County Council's decision was upheld in 11 of these cases.

Preliminary Part VIII, Part VIII & Section 179A Projects

The Development Management Section of Carlow County Council managed the process for a number of projects for Local Authority Own Development – Part VIII in 2025

Preliminary Part VIII	6
Part VIII	5
Section 179A	0

Declarations, Exemptions & Licences

The Development Management Section of Carlow County Council processed a number of Applications for Exemptions and Licences in 2025:

Section 5	
Exempt Development Applications	46
Section 254	
Furniture Licence Applications	3
Section 254	
Scaffolding Licence Application	14
Section 254	
Broadband & Telecommunications Licence Applications	2
Section 57	
Declarations for Protected Structures	3
Section 97	
Part V Exemption Applications	7
Forestry –	
Tree Felling Licence	13
Forestry –	
Planting Approval Licence	3
Forestry –	
Forest Road & Native Woodland Schemes	4
SI 75	
Residential Exemption	8

Development Contribution Scheme 2025-2029

Pursuant to Section 48(4) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended), the *Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2025-2029* went to public consultation, from Tuesday 29th April 2025 to Wednesday 11th June 2025.

Forward Planning

Following consideration of the Chief Executive's report dealing with submissions received, the *Development Contribution Scheme 2025-2029* was adopted at the July 2025 meeting of Council.

The Development Contribution Scheme 2025-2029 became effective on 1st August 2025.

Muine Bheag/Royal Oak District Town Plan 2025

Variation No. 2 of the *Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028* to incorporate the Muine Bheag/Royal Oak District Town Plan 2025, was formally approved by the Elected Members at the Council meeting on the 10th November 2025 and became effective immediately. The Muine Bheag/Royal Oak District Town Plan 2025 was subject to public consultation and material alterations in 2025 prior to the formal adoption.

The District Town Plan has been incorporated into the County Development Plan 2022-2028 through the variation process as set out in Section 13 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). The *District Town Plan*, in conjunction with the *Carlow County Development Plan*, will provide a land use strategy and framework that will guide the future sustainable development of Muine Bheag/Royal Oak.

Tullow District Town Plan 2025

Variation No. 3 of the *Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028* to

incorporate the *Tullow District Town Plan 2025* was placed on public display on the 16th December 2025. Submissions or observations regarding the proposed variation and associated reports were invited from the public and interested bodies. *The Tullow District Town Plan 2025* will establish the strategic planning framework to guide the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation Requirement Guidelines

The Chief Executive's Report pursuant to the NPF Implementation Requirement Guidelines was considered by the Elected Members at Full Council Meeting on 13th October 2025. This outlined the way Carlow County Council intends to implement the objectives of the Guidelines in a plan led manner to ensure sufficient land is zoned for residential development to meet housing growth requirements. The recommendations outlined in Section 7.0 of the report are being progressed as **Proposed Variation No. 4** to the *Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028*.

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The principal purpose of the residential zoned land tax is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced residential development land for housing. The proposed measure is to activate existing planning permissions and zonings where housing is permitted and where the land is connected to, or has access to services, but remains undeveloped.

The Residential Zoned Land Tax Annual Draft Map for 2026 was published on the 1st February 2025 and was subject to public consultation. The map identified land that meets the relevant criteria for inclusion on the map, as set out in legislation. Submissions were invited up to 1st April 2025 to identify additional land that may fall in scope, challenge the inclusion of land on the map, challenge the date from which the land is considered to be in scope and / or support the proposed exclusion of land. Two submissions were received during the public consultation period, the details of which were considered and determinations on the submissions issued in accordance with the legislative requirements on the 26th June, 2025.

The Final Map for 2025 was published on the 31st January 2025 and identified land that may be liable to tax in 2025. Owners of such land were open to making a request to Carlow County Council to change the zoning of the land until 1st April 2025. If certain conditions were met, a landowner may be exempt from the 2025 liability on foot of such a request. One submission was received during the public consultation period for the Final Map for 2025. A re-zoning request acknowledgement letter issued in response to the landowner which can be used to support a claim for an exemption from the tax for 2025.

Enforcement

The Planning Department in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act*

2000 (as amended) seeks to ensure that planning permissions are complied with.

Written complaints of unauthorised development, where they appear to be well founded, are investigated. Following an investigation of a bone fide complaint, the commencement of the enforcement steps is initiated by the issue of a Warning Letter followed by the issue of an Enforcement Notice should the matter not be satisfactorily resolved following the issue of a Warning Letter. In the event of non-compliance with the Enforcement Notice legal proceedings are initiated. A total of 82 Enforcement cases were opened during 2025.

Warning Letters Issued	51
Enforcement Notices Issued	13
Cases Closed	123

Taking in Charge of Estate

Section 180 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) sets out the responsibilities of local authorities regarding the taking in charge of housing developments. Requests to take estates in charge can be made by the Developer or the majority of the owners residing in the development.

A total of 7 no. estates were taken in charge in 2025.

Phase 2 Brownhill Wood, Carlow
Slaney Bank, Rathvilly
Phase 1 & 2 Milford Park, Ballinabranna
Station Place, Pound Lane, Borris
Phase 1 Phelim Crescent, Tullow
Phase 2 Phelim Crescent, Tullow
Phase 2 Phelim Crescent, Tullow

Derelict Sites

A 'Derelict Site' refers to land that is in such poor condition that it detracts from the character and amenities of the area.

Dublin Street, Carlow



Derelict sites are dealt with in accordance with the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

The Derelict Register Lists 7 properties at 31st December 2025. Work continued in this area in partnership with Town Regeneration Team.

Dangerous Structures

The Planning Department implements the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964 in relation to Dangerous Structures and Places.

A total of 16 complaints were dealt with in 2025 with notices being served in 3 cases.

Regeneration

The following is a synopsis of the functions of the Regeneration Office

- Town Centre First
- Town Centre First Plans
- Addressing Vacancy & Dereliction
- Carrying out Data Vacancy Surveys
- CPO Activation Programme
- Croí Cónaithe – Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant & Ready to Build Scheme
- Urban Regeneration Development Fund – Call 3
- Non URDF Fund
- Rural Regeneration Development Fund
- Town & Village Renewal
- THRIVE EU Funding
- Various Funding Stream applications



Dublin Street, Carlow

Town Centre First

“The Town Centre First policy seeks to ensure that town centres develop as vibrant, attractive and sustainable places where people can live, work and visit, while continuing to serve as key service, social, cultural and recreational hubs for their communities.”

Muine Bheag Town Centre First Plan

Carlow County Council, with support from the *DRCD Suite of Supports 2024* – Measure 3 and the 'Our Rural Future' Programme, continued the development of a *Town Centre First Plan for Muine Bheag*. The Town Team, made up of 12 community members representing various stakeholders, guided the process. The public and the Town Team were actively involved in the design of projects. Engagement throughout the development

of the plan, included over 76 in-person public workshop participants and 110 online survey responses, generating more than 500 individual comments. Emerging from these engagement events there was a total of 16 projects identified for the town. At the end of 2025 the Plan was nearing completion with the final Plan expected in early 2026.





TCF Plan Engagement



Carrigduff Playground

Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS)

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) is a key driver in revitalising rural towns, focusing on strengthening economic activity, enhancing social vibrancy and advancing regeneration at the heart of communities. This is delivered through targeted projects including town centre regeneration, streetscape enhancement and the refurbishment of vacant or derelict properties to create multi-purpose community facilities.

In 2025, two projects received approval for the following locations and funding allocations:

Tullow Town Park	€500,000
Rathoe Recreation Area (Pre Development Funding)	€43,875

Projects were also ongoing in the following locations during 2025:

Tullow	€406,600
Clonegal	€110,240
Carrigduff	€277,770
St. Mullins	€130,000



Clonegal Wicklow Way Park



St. Mullins Graveyard Footpath

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

Schoolhouse Community Centre, Rathvilly

In 2025 works continued on the RRDF Call 5 Category 1 funding which was approved from the redevelopment of a former school building in the heart of Rathvilly into a multi-purpose community hub. The estimated cost of the project is €2.7 million.



Schoolhouse Community Centre, Rathvilly

Market Square, Tullow.

In 2025, Carlow County Council secured pre-development funding under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) to advance the proposed Market Square project in Tullow. This project is a key action identified in the *Town Centre First Plan for Tullow* and represents an important step in strengthening the town centre as a vibrant social, cultural and commercial hub. The RRDF funding will enable the Council to undertake the full suite of preparatory work required to bring the project to a deliverable stage. This

includes the development of detailed design proposals, the facilitation of public consultation to ensure strong community input, and the progression of the project through the Part VIII planning process.



Market Square, Tullow

The pre-development phase will help shape a clear and well-informed vision for Market Square, supporting long-term revitalisation of Tullow's town core and improving public space for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

THRIVE Funding

In December 2025, Carlow County Council secured funding for a major regeneration initiative under the THRIVE Programme, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing revitalisation of Carlow Town Centre. The project focuses on the redevelopment of the former Bank of Ireland building, a strategically located and architecturally important property within the town's historic core.

The overall project investment totals €6,750,000, of which €3,900,000 has

been awarded through THRIVE funding. This substantial support enables the Council to advance a transformative scheme that will deliver a high-quality, multi-functional civic and community facility.

The project comprises the sensitive refurbishment of the protected structure fronting the streetscape, together with the deep retrofit and reconfiguration of the modern rear extension.

Once completed, the building will accommodate a mix of Local Authority administrative functions and dedicated community spaces, strengthening the civic presence in the town centre and providing new opportunities for public engagement, collaboration and cultural activity. The public realm surrounding the building will also be enhanced, with improved pedestrian and cycle access and a high-quality landscape design that contributes positively to the wider urban environment.



Former Bank of Ireland Building

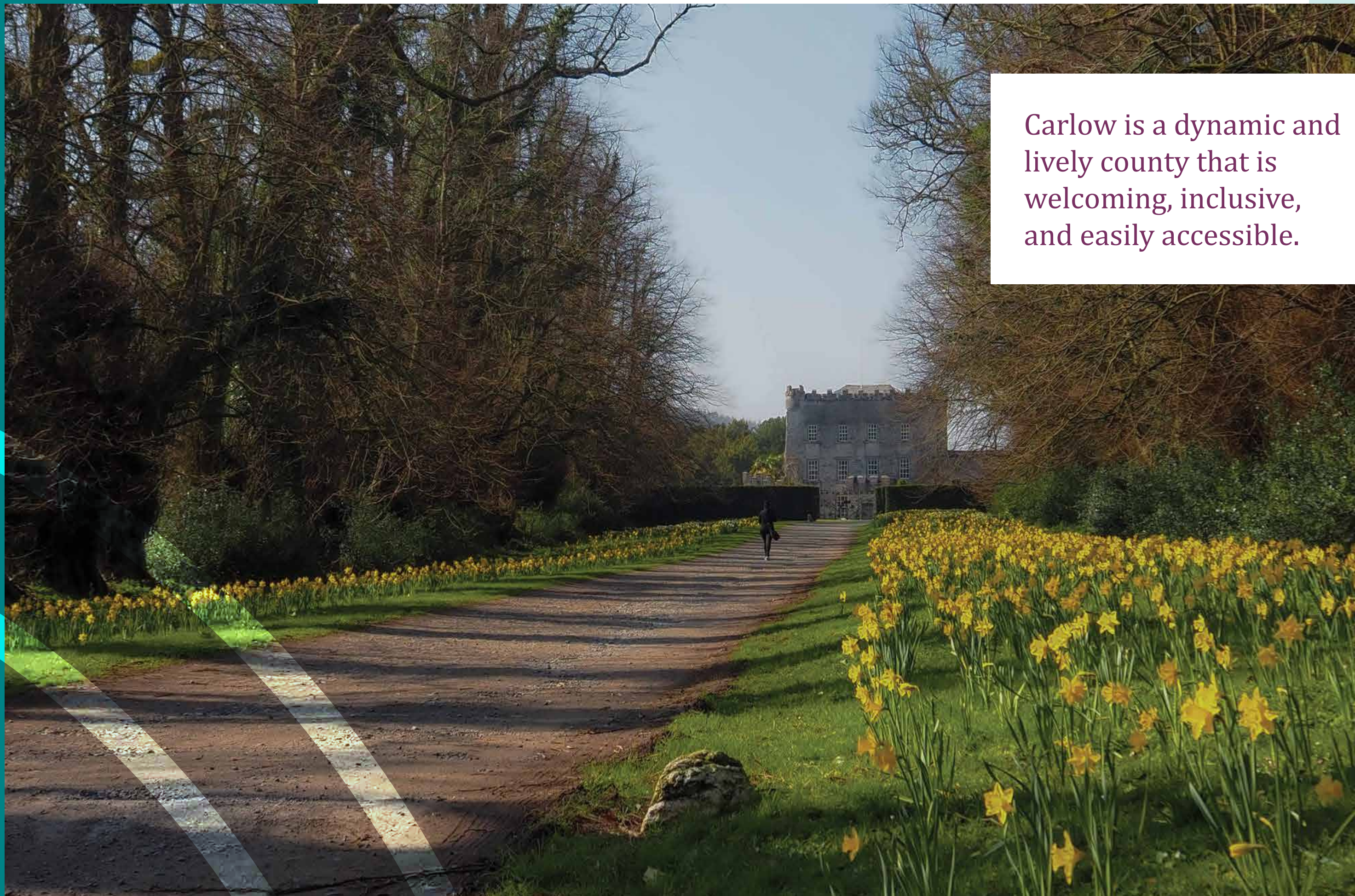
DRCD Suite of Supports 2024 – Measure 3

A project involving the enhancement of the 1798 Park in Tullow, including the creation of a new accessible play area received funding of €45,718 under this Suite of Supports to support the pre-development activities and to bring the project to the planning stage. The project progressed to community and stakeholder consultation during 2025. Following this process, the Council is now actively reviewing alternative suitable locations within Tullow to ensure the delivery of a high-quality and accessible play facility for the community.

Urban Regeneration Development Fund – Call 3

During 2025, significant progress was made on the programme of 14 long-term vacant and derelict properties supported under the Revolving URDF Fund. Building on the activation and initial engagement work carried out in 2024, the Regeneration Team advanced each property through the next stages of the process.

Active negotiations with property owners continued throughout the year, resulting in several owners confirming their intention to refurbish and bring their properties back into productive use. Where engagement remained unsuccessful or ownership issues persisted, the Council progressed the necessary preparatory steps for compulsory acquisition to ensure that these strategically located sites could be returned to use.



Carlow is a dynamic and lively county that is welcoming, inclusive, and easily accessible.

The revolving nature of the fund continued to support this work, with initial acquisitions moving towards onward sale or re-use, enabling the cycle of reinvestment to begin. This approach is helping the Council keep a steady, long-term programme going to tackle vacancy and dereliction in Carlow Town.

As in previous years, the properties within this programme are being advanced solely for onward sale and reactivation and are not being considered for retention as Local Authority housing stock.

Properties approved by the Department	14
Vested	4
Voluntarily Acquired	1
Sale Agreed on the open market	5

Sample Sale Agreed properties



9 Browne Street



27 Dublin Street

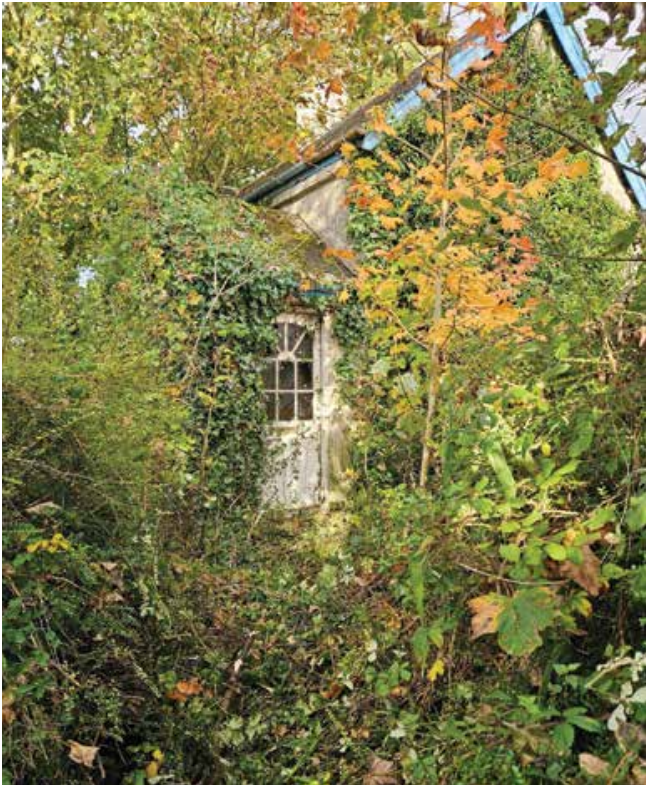
Internal Flipping Programme

In addition to the properties targeted within the URDF area, the Council also carried out an exercise to identify long-term vacant or derelict properties located outside the designated URDF boundary that could be brought to the open market. Through this pilot, three suitable properties were identified and proceeded through the compulsory purchase process. All three properties have now progressed to sale agreed, demonstrating the potential of this approach to help bring additional vacant properties back into active use.

Sample Sale Agreed Properties



Ballyvergal



Tinryland

CPO Activation Programme

Throughout 2025, the CPO Activation Programme continued to make steady progress, with a strong focus on advancing properties already activated and identifying new cases where engagement was required. The Regeneration Team worked closely with owners to encourage voluntary action wherever possible, resulting in several properties moving closer to refurbishment or reoccupation.

Where communication remained unsuccessful or properties presented ongoing vacancy or dereliction issues, the Council advanced the necessary preparatory steps for compulsory acquisition. This included title investigations, valuation work,

issuing Section 8(2) and 8(7) Notices in accordance with the *Derelict Sites Act* and drafting documentation to ensure files were in a position to proceed to CPO if required.

More properties are now progressing through the pipeline than in previous years, demonstrating the growing impact of the initiative and its role in bringing empty homes back into productive use.

Properties Activated	562
CPO Commenced	35
Properties Vested	19

Vested property



5 Staplestown Road

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) fund is a key initiative which underpins the policy and objectives set out in Pathway 4 of *Housing for All* programme.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

In 2025, demand for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant continued to grow, with a steady increase in applications and approvals across the county. The team completed a higher volume of site visits, assessments and eligibility checks, resulting in more projects moving from initial enquiry to approval in principle.

Several applicants who received approval in previous years reached completion during 2025, allowing grant payments to be drawn down and the properties returned to use either as principal private residences or rental homes. This has contributed to a visible reduction in vacancy in key areas and supported the wider regeneration objectives for towns and villages.

Work also continued on supporting new applicants through the process, including guiding owners of derelict properties through the additional top-up grant requirements. The scheme remains an important driver in encouraging private owners to bring vacant and structurally unsound buildings back into productive use, and 2025 saw continued momentum in conversions, refurbishments and re-occupancy.

Applications Received	53
Applications Approved	22
Works Complete awaiting payment	4 valued at €260,000
Grants Paid 19 valued at	€1,101,247



Before



After

Ready to Build Scheme

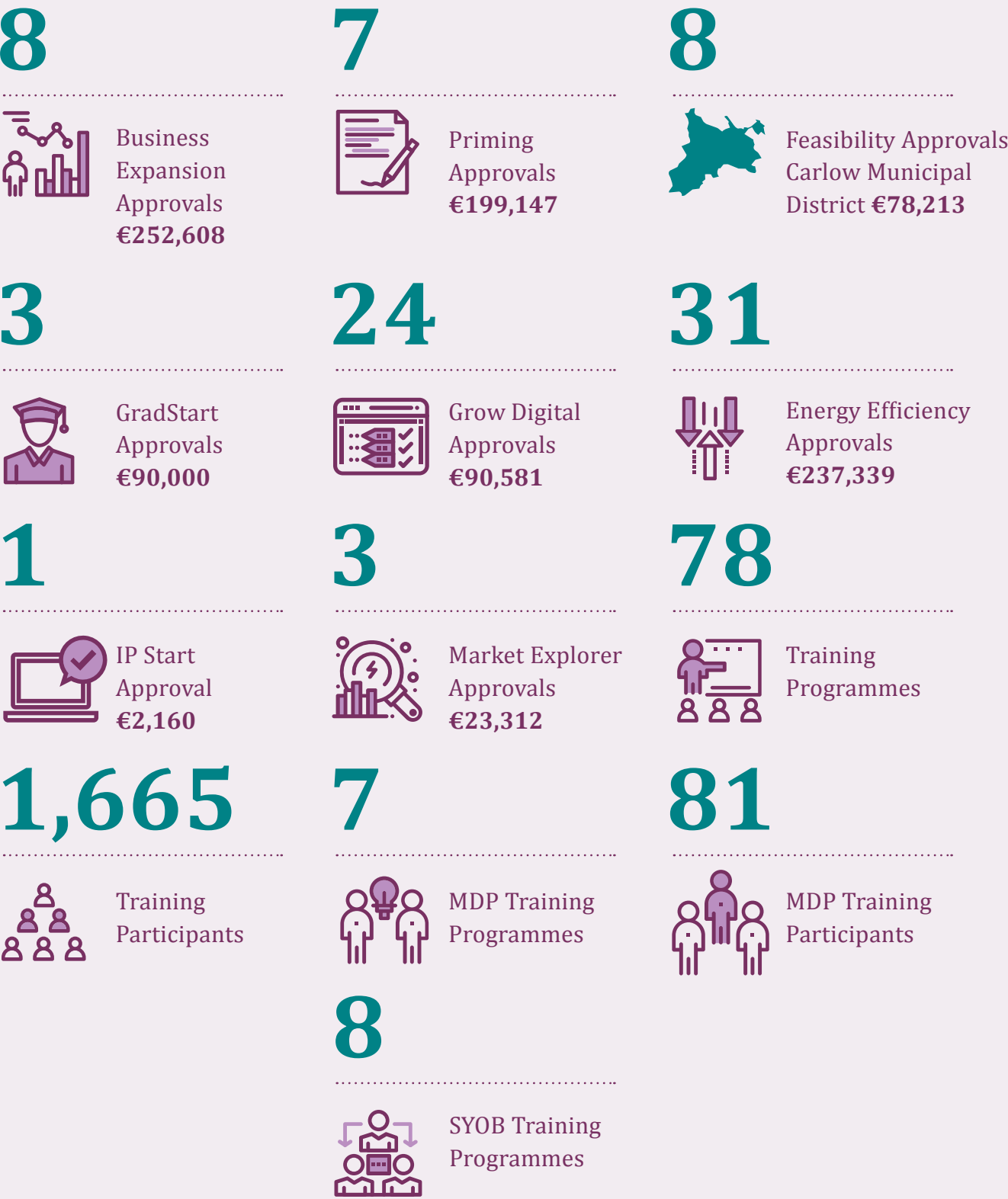
During 2025, detailed assessments were carried out on some of the potential sites originally identified for the *Ready to Build Scheme*. This included site investigations and full costings for the provision of services and access infrastructure.

Certain sites continue to be progressed, with further technical, planning and servicing requirements being examined to determine their suitability for release. This work will support the ongoing aim of making fully serviced, good-quality sites available to individuals and households wishing to build their principal private residence. Carlow Co Council is actively identifying additional viable sites for the scheme.

Nine Stones Viewing Point Sunset
Photo Credit - Carlow Weather



Economic Development



Ireland Southeast

Carlow County Council actively partnered with the Ireland Southeast Development Office to position the region as a primary destination for high-value investment and sustainable economic growth.

Carlow Tourism

Carlow County Council actively worked with Carlow Tourism to strengthening the 'Wander Off the Track' brand to increase visitor footfall across the county's natural and heritage sites.

Streetfest

Carlow County Council delivered the 'Streetfest' initiative on Tullow Street, utilizing vibrant street animation and performance to drive town centre footfall and support local retail vitality.

Economic Marketing

Carlow County Council commissioned high-profile national media campaigns with the Business Post and Virgin Media to showcase the county's unique 'Shop Local' incentives and enterprise-friendly environment.

From Local Stories to Global Markets: Carlow Launches Creativity Chats Podcast to inspire Makers and Artists



Communications & Engagement Group

Carlow County Council facilitated the Communications & Engagement Group to bridge the gap between local government and the business community, ensuring streamlined access to grants and supports.

InnoCom

Carlow County Council progressed the Interreg Europe 'InnoCom' project, focusing on improving communication strategies that help SMEs better access innovation-driven public policies.

Craft Work 4.0 All

Carlow County Council led the 'Craft Work 4.0 All' initiative to empower local artisans

Lightfest 2025 Carlow



by integrating traditional craftsmanship with digital manufacturing and Industry 4.0 technologies.

Hands Across Generations

Carlow County Council successfully coordinated the 'Hands Across Generations' Erasmus+ project, fostering social enterprise by transferring traditional skills from older mentors to younger entrepreneurs.

Féile Lonrach

Carlow County Council curated 'Féile Lonrach' (Festival of Glow), an innovative winter light festival designed to extend the tourism season and provide a significant seasonal boost to the local economy.



Launch of Samhain Festival 2025

Samhain Festival

Carlow County Council hosted the 'Samhain Festival', drawing thousands of visitors to the county through cultural storytelling and events that celebrate Carlow's ancient heritage.

Pan Celtic Festival

Carlow County Council delivered the prestigious International 'Pan Celtic Festival', generating substantial economic impact through international tourism and the promotion of the Celtic arts.

SMART Regions (Catalyst HQ)

Carlow County Council advanced the development of 'Catalyst HQ', a flagship €8 million innovation hub dedicated to scaling high-growth startups and fostering a tech-enabled regional economy.

Station House (Hacketstown)

Carlow County Council transformed the 'Station House' in Hacketstown into a modern enterprise hub, providing rural businesses with critical digital infrastructure and links to higher education research.

Environment & Climate Action

Environment Department of Carlow County Council has a wide range of functions that are growing annually as new legislation is introduced, new national priorities emerge and work practices within the organisation change. The following is a non-exhaustive list of functions: -

- Waste Management – Enforcement & Licencing
- Operation of Civic Amenity Sites and Bring Centres



- Climate Change
- Biodiversity
- Circular Economy



- Environmental Complaint Management
- Litter Prevention & Control
- Environmental Education & Awareness



- Energy Management & Targets



- Air Pollution
- Noise Pollution



- Environmental Planning
- Water Pollution/Water Framework Directive
- Rural Water/Small Private Supplies
- Farm Inspection and Nutrient Management



- Burial Grounds



- Control of Dogs
- Dog Breeding Establishments
- Dog Warden Service



Complaints 2025

Complaint Type	Complaints	Investigated	Active	Resolved
Air/Odour	40	41*	0	34
Litter	382	379*	6	338
Noise	23	24*	1	27
Waste C&D	24	27**	3	44
Waste not C&D	206	202***	14	360
Water/Wastewater	26	26*	1	27
Other	64	60*	1	79
Total	765	759	26	746

* Includes 1 complaint carried forward from 2024

** Includes 4 complaints carried forward from 2024

*** Includes 2 complaints carried forward from 2024

Enforcement 2025

Legislation	Advisory Letter	Warning Letter	Notice	Fines issued
Litter Act			7	44
Air Pollution Act		24		
Water Pollution Act	13	26	2	
Waste Management Act		49	30	
Environmental Protection Act		1		
Total	13	136	39	44

Environmental Planning 2025

Planning Environmental Inspections (Routine)	Number
Inspections (environmental) of existing planning permissions	44
Inspections (environmental) in advance of grant/refusal of planning permission	360
Quarry Inspections (e.g. relating to noise, dust, surface/ groundwater emissions, vibration etc.)	4
Other planning inspections relating to environmental issues	9
Subtotal Planning Inspections (Routine)	417

Rural Water Grants 2025

Grants	Received	Approved	Total Paid
Domestic Well Grants	71	47	€128,659.33
Domestic Septic Tank Grants	10	10	€108,477.62
Domestic Lead Remediation Grants	0	0	0
Total	81	57	€237,136.95

Waste Enforcement 2025

Waste Inspections Routine Waste Inspections	Number
Waste Permitted Facilities	6
Inspections of Cert of Registration sites (private)	2
Registration of Sewage Sludge Facility Inspections	2
Inspections of LA Cert of Registration sites e.g. bring centres and bottle banks	691
Multi-agency inspections, including vehicle insp and multi agency site inspections	13
Hazardous waste sectoral inspections (e.g. WTF, garages, mini-labs, industrial healthcare, POPs & others):	4
Inspections in relation to segregation, recovery and disposal of C&D handling waste at inspections at construction/development sites to include major public projects (eg. Waste Mgt Plans, Gypsum handling, etc)	4
Household Waste Surveys	195
Inspections in relation to the household & commercial k/s waste collection (incl Brown Bin)	70
Other inspections of waste collection permit holders to include eg validation audits, not included above	34
Commercial Food Waste Inspections - original waste producers (hotels, nursing homes, restaurants etc)	11
Inspections in relation to authorised ELV facilities (ATFs) with an emphasis on traceability requirements (SI 320 of 2014)	2
Other routine inspections (not included in above numbers) - please specify (e.g. unauthorised ELVs)	4
Sub Total	1039

Non Routine Waste Inspections	
Investigative inspections of fly tipping or illegal dumping, excluding unauthorised C&D, ELVs & Tyres	2
Investigative Inspections in relation to unauthorised C&D sites (sites with no permit)	10
Inspections in relation to Unauthorised waste sites excl above incl PTUs & crashed vehicles inspections etc	31
Inspections in relation to Waste Facility Permits continuing to operate after their permit has expired	2
Inspections in relation to extractive industries	4
Household Waste/waste presentation Inspections arising from complaints, including backyard burning	2
Inspections of sites notified under Article 27	2
Investigative Inspections in relation to unauthorised Tyre dumps (no permit in place)	1
Other non-routine inspections (not included in above numbers)	8
Litter Patrols/Investigations	750
Litter Pollution Monitoring Surveys	104
Litter Pollution Quantification Surveys	36
Visits in relation to Green Schools Programme	8
Providing support to Community Groups during Litter Cleanups	114
Sub Total	1074
Water/Wastewater Routine Water Wastewater Inspections	
Discharges Licenses to Waters (Section 4)	13
Audits of Private Water Supplies	13
Farm Inspections under GAP Regulations conducted by LA (not including farm inspections by DAFM)	152
Farm Inspections Other e.g. Routine Farm Inspection but not GAP Inspections BIOSOLIDS, Follow Up Farm Visits	72
No. of Days of locally lead investigative assessments (including SSRS, sampling, river walks etc)	6
WFD investigative monitoring samples and analysis by Local Authorities	340
No. of Days of Engagement with LAWPro and Communities Programme	5

Bathing Waters	24
DW/WTs Inspections under National Inspection Plan Septic Tanks	27
DW/WTs Engagement Activities	33
Other Surface & Groundwater Protection Inspections (e.g. drinking water source protection, zoc monitoring, etc)	7
Misconnection Surveys	5
Sub Total	23
Air/Noise Inspections	
Routine Air/Noise Inspections	
Inspections of Air Pollution Licenced sites	2
Number of inspections carried out under the Solid Fuel Regulations	6
Solid fuel campaign	1
Inspections of sites under 2012 Deco Paints Regulations (S.I. 564 of 2012) – Vehicle Refinishers	1
Inspections of sites under 2012 Solvents Regulations (S.I. 565 of 2012) –e.g. Dry cleaners, surface cleaning etc.	1
Inspections of sites under Petroleum Vapours Regulations	15
Ambient Air Monitoring Programme (AAMP).	4
Other routine air/noise inspections	1
Sub Total	31
Non Routine Air/Noise Inspections	
Incident/complaint related inspections	8
Sub Total	8
Producer Responsibility Inspections (Raoutine)	
WEEE Inspections	8
Battery Inspections	3
Inspections on suspected vehicle importers (ELV Regulations 2016)	4
Farm Plastics	5
Plastic Bag Levy	3
Inspections under the Packaging regulations – Suspected Major Producers	13
Inspections under the Tyre Regulations – Tyre Retailers	4
Inspections carried out under the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) Regulations	
Sub Total	48
Total	3,337

During 2025, Carlow County Council received €93,000 funding under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) on foot of six separate funding request applications submitted by the Environment Section. The grant funding included an initiative to facilitate the installation of CCTV for the purposes of detecting offences relating to littering and illegal dumping across the County. The total number of littering and waste offences detected by CCTV installation during 2025 is detailed below:

CCTV Location	Number of Offences Detected
1 Hacketstown Bring Bank	14
2 Tullow Bring Bank	15
3 Tullow Bring Bank	6
4 St. Mary's Cemetery	16
5 Mt. Leinster	0
6 The Laurels	0
Total Number of Offences 2025	51

Annual Dog Stats 2025

PCCTV Location	Number of Offences Detected
Strays	201
Surrenders	25
Reclaims	60
Re-homed by Shelter	19
Directed to Rescue	145
Put To Sleep (specify reason) – Welfare of Dog	0
No. of registered Dog Breeding Establishments	10

Control of Dogs

Carlow County Council, together with Kilkenny County Council oversee the operation of the Kilkenny Carlow Dog Shelter in Paulstown, Co. Kilkenny by way of a Section 85 Agreement. In 2025, Carlow County Council received €56,099.00 of Capital Funding under the Dog Control Support Initiative towards the employment of an additional Dog Warden for the county. This has had a hugely positive effect, resulting in the increased visibility of a Dog Warden around the county and contributing to an increase in revenue by way of dog licences purchased during the period of employment of the additional Dog Warden.

Year	Dog Licence Fees
2024 May to Dec	€28,020.00
2025	€64,260.00

Environmental Awareness
Spotlighting Food Waste

The EPA estimates that Ireland generated the equivalent of 162kg of food waste per person in 2023, higher than the EU average of 132kg of food waste per capita. As a result, food waste became the main theme for the environmental awareness officer during 2025, with a focus on the circular economy.

During the late winter/spring, food waste workshops were organised for four Carlow groups as taster/tester sessions. This was followed in the summer by a series of community-based 'Master Composting workshops' where 22 volunteers from 11 groups around the county learned about food waste and composting. With thanks to Composting Ireland who worked with us on this programme, master composting areas were created in seven locations from tidy

towns to schools, culminating in over 80 volunteers participating.

In July, the first of three planned 'Embracing Change' events took place in each of the Municipal Districts in conjunction with the Community Department where we organised the Food Cloud Food truck to talk to and feed over 50 attendees with a main course, dessert and a drink created from surplus food waste.

During September to November, County Carlow Environmental Network were supported to run a popular series of three fermenting workshops, targeting people who grow their own food at home, in allotments or community gardens. The course was substantially over subscribed which has given them the confidence to work with KCETB on future environmental courses.



Turning policy into practice - Carlow County Council supported composting project taking shape in Carlow Town

Finally, during climate action week in October, a regional Plate to Planet conference was organised focussing on the hospitality industry with 65 attendees listening to internationally respected panellists, who provided several calls for action.

Spotlighting Textile Waste

Alongside food waste, textiles account for around 110,000 tonnes of waste each year. To raise awareness, Carlow County



Clothes swap event

Council purchased a clothing swap kit that groups and organisations can borrow free of charge for not-for-profit events, to encourage people to keep clothing in circulation for longer.

Ten swaps took place with around 1,520 items of clothing exchanged in colleges, schools and community groups and networks. This resulted in an estimated saving of 11.4 tonnes of CO₂ saved. Two of the events were co-organised with Community section under the 'Embracing Change' umbrella.

Spotlighting Schools

Eight primary and post primary schools were awarded the An Taisce green flag during the year and Carlow County Council again supported Picker Pals who work directly with primary schools in the county on a family litter picking and awareness programme. 21 classrooms from 17 schools took part, with six supported by Carlow County Council, 13 by DECC and two by corporate/ philanthropic donations. We also supported the Create Schools Rubbish Film Festival for TY Students, increasing school participation from four post primary schools in 2024 to seven in 2025.

Other Initiatives

During July a 'Gum Litter Awareness day' took place in Carlow town. During September we joined forces with Carlow Municipal District to fit ReTurn bin surrounds on all 25 Carlow MD Big Belly Bins, encouraging people to place their empty cans and bottles on the outside of the bins where they could be recycled.

We launched the Eco Chats podcast during 'Climate Action Week' in October, an 8-part series that focuses on the work that groups around the county are undertaking to tackle environmental awareness and climate change. From it's launch until the end of December, 467 downloads had taken place and the spotlight was placed on groups working on landscapes, accessibility, men and women's sheds, sports clubs, tidy towns and improvement groups, young people, environmental networks and Carlow County Council's own green initiatives.

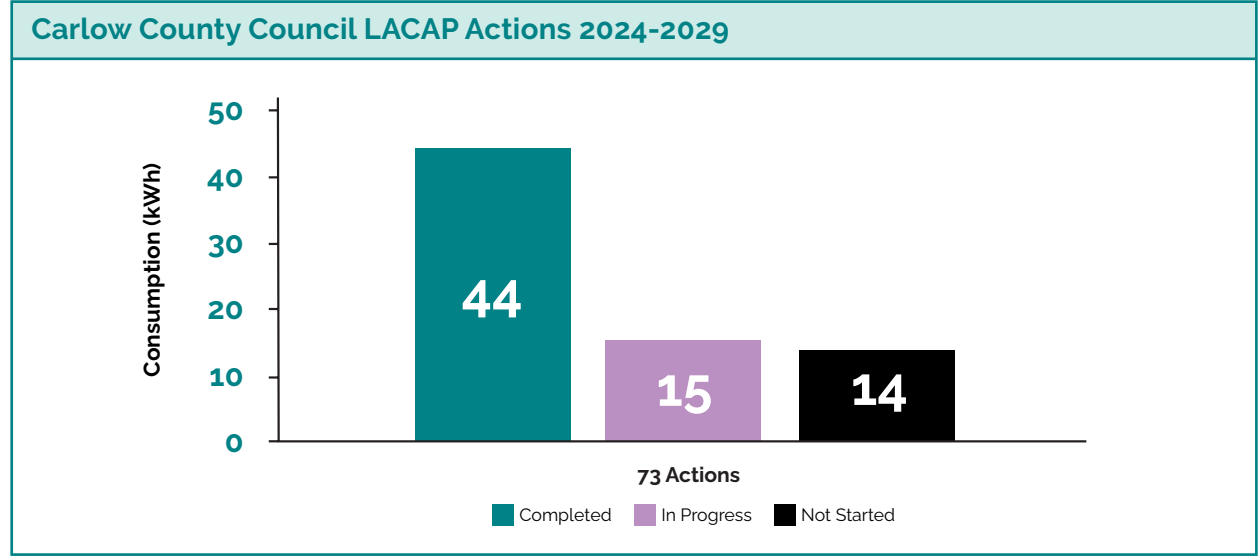
Spotlight on Climate Action

Adopted in January 2024, *Carlow Local Authority's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* outlines 73 actions designed to meet national climate obligations, cut emissions, build climate resilience, and support a just transition for the people of Carlow.

The LACAP includes both Single-Implementation Actions, which are delivered once within the plan's timeframe, and Recurring Actions, which are carried out on multiple occasions. Together, these action types ensure the plan delivers one-off foundational projects as well as ongoing activities that maintain momentum and support continuous climate action.

As at 31st December 2025

- 44 actions have been completed
- 15 are in progress
- 14 have not started



The Annual Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) process, required under SEAI regulations and SI 426 of 2014, obliges public sector bodies to report their energy performance each year. The report is published with a one-year delay to allow for the verification and validation of energy data. Prepared in partnership with the Southeast Energy Agency, the 2024 M&R data is now available on the SEAI website. Annual Energy Statement | Public Sector Energy Performance | SEAI

In 2024, total CO₂ emissions for Carlow County Council was 1,716,525 kgCO₂, 38.9% below the 2030 baseline of 2,808,667 kgCO₂. To achieve the 2030 target, Carlow County Council CO₂ must reduce by another 51.5% from 2024 level within 6 years.

The figure below provides a detailed overview of Carlow County Council total GHG emissions (electricity, transport & thermal) reduced by 1,085,750 kgCO₂ or 39% in 2024 from the baseline period 2016 to 2018.

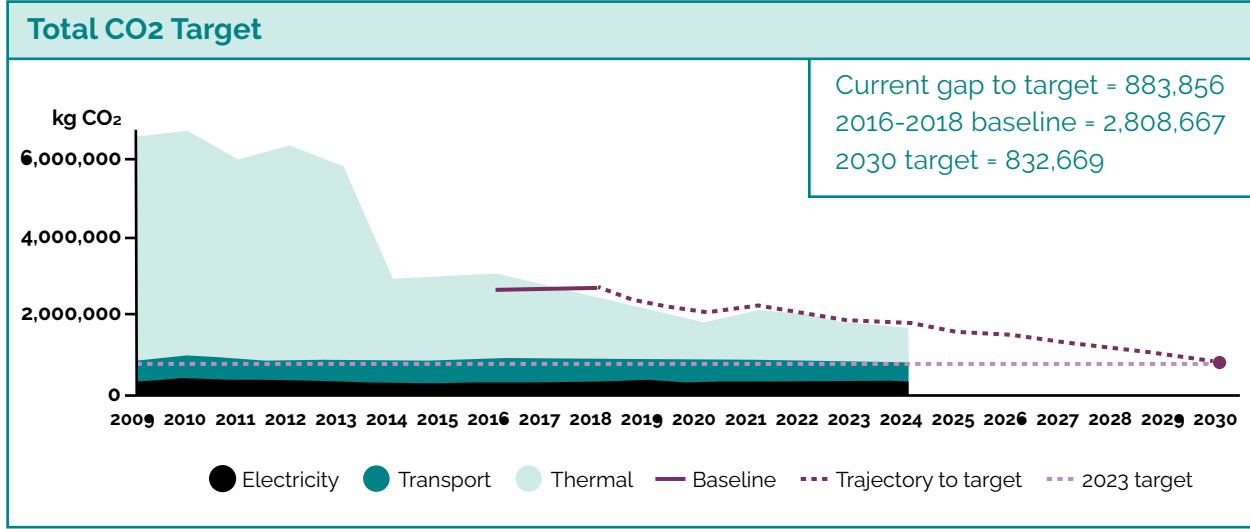


Figure 1. Total GHG Emission – 2024

Carlow County Council has improved its energy efficiency by 41% from the baseline year (2009) and is therefore on target to meet 2030 targets, which is a 50% improvement in energy efficiency.

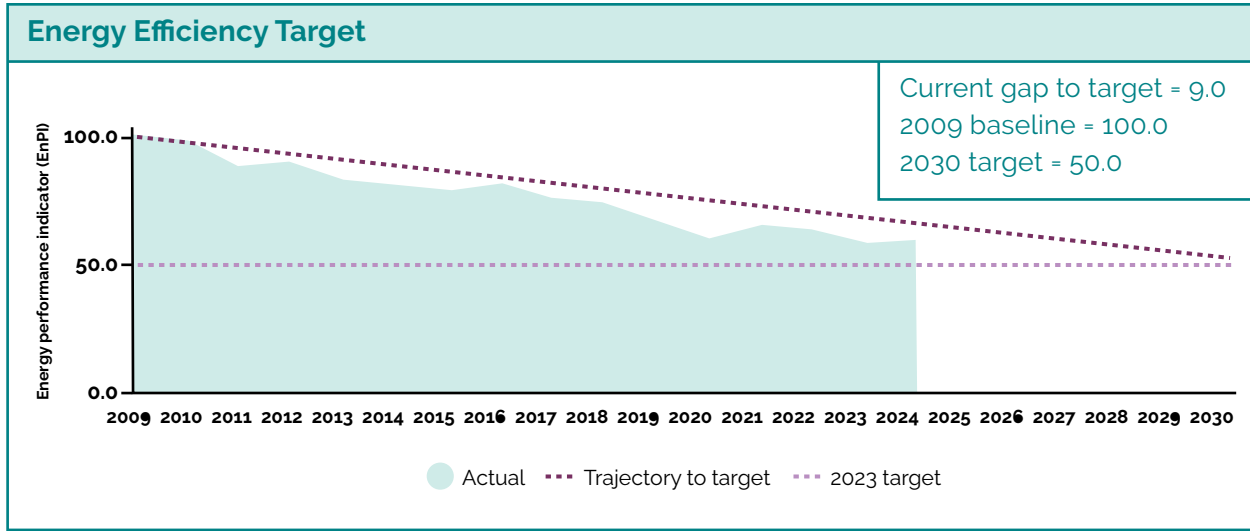


Figure 2. Energy Efficiency – 2024

As shown in figure 3 below, the non-electricity (thermal + transport) related emissions have reduced by 117,241 kWh or 14% from baseline (2016-2018). In 2024 0% of the thermal demand was produced by renewable energy sources. The target is 50% of heat is to come from renewables by 2030.

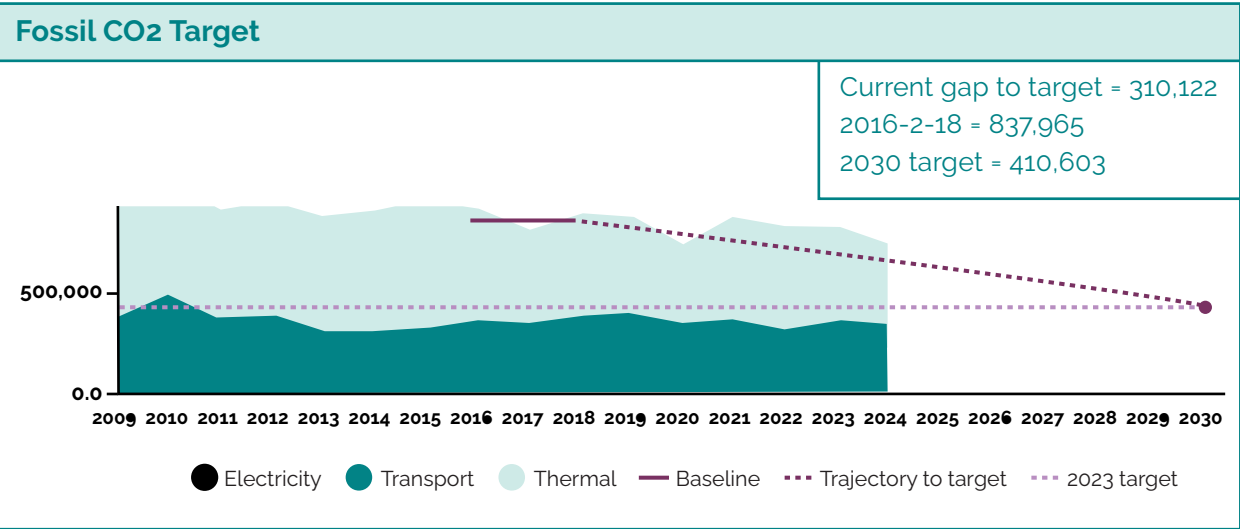
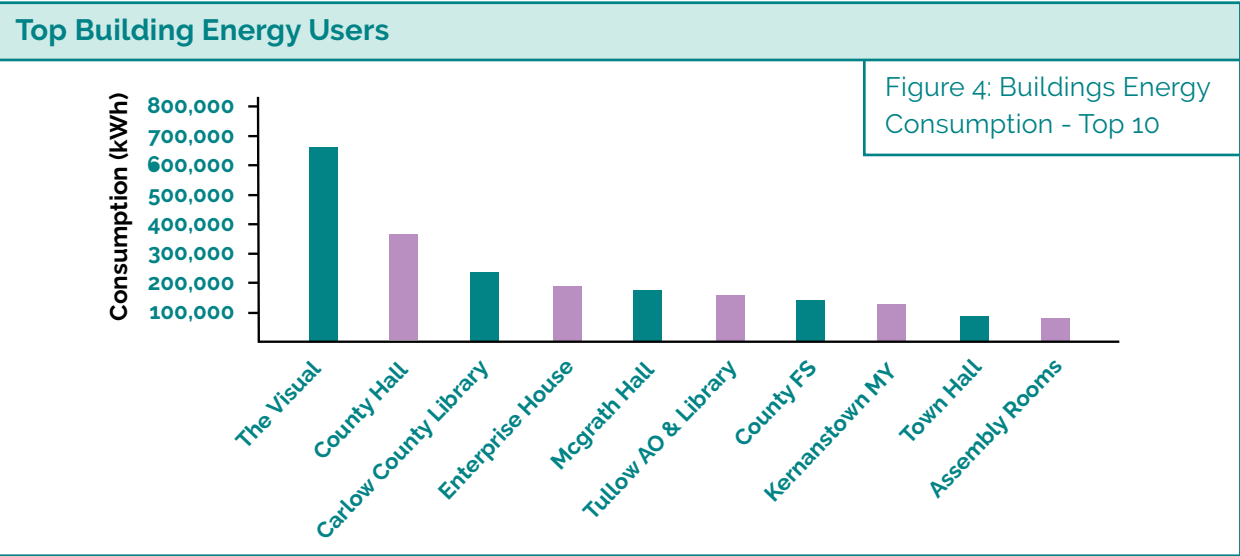


Figure 3. Non-Electricity GHGs (thermal and transport) – 2024

Carlow County Council is currently on track to meet the 2030 energy efficiency targets; however, progress must continue in the form of decarbonisation of the building and services provided by the council to meet the GHG emission targets.

Building Energy Users

In 2024, the council buildings consumed 2,494,502 kWh of energy, which accounts for 36% of the organisation Total Final Consumption (TFC) or 34% of the organisation primary energy consumption (TPER). 62% of the energy consumed by the buildings was thermal energy. Figure 4 shows the top 10 energy consumers which represent 88% of the council building energy consumption as shown below. Electricity and gas information were extracted from the SEAI M&R system. Unmetered thermal fuel data were extracted from Display Energy Certificate (DEC) data collected from county council and energy audits



SEAI Pathfinder Programme

Carlow Local Authority has engaged with the 'SEAI pathfinder programme'. The 'SEAI Pathfinder Programme' is an initiative led by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to support public sector organisations in improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. It provides technical and financial support for retrofitting and upgrading public buildings, aligning with *Ireland's Climate Action Plan* and 2030 energy efficiency targets. Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford and Tipperary County Councils have established the 'South East Energy Unit' and a funding application has been approved under the 'Pathfinder programme'.

Carlow County Council completed a register of opportunities identifying priority retrofitting projects that will yield the greatest energy and CO₂ savings at the lowest cost. This structured approach ensures that resources are directed towards high-impact projects, maximizing both environmental and financial benefits.

Carlow County Buildings and VISUAL Carlow were identified to participate in the 'SEAI Pathfinder programme'. The inclusion of both in this Programme allows Carlow County Council to address a substantial share of its overall energy use across two distinct public-sector building types. The projects will support progress towards BER B standards, generate robust measurement and verification data, and directly contribute to achieving the Council's *Climate Action Plan* targets for 2030.

Community Climate Action Fund

Carlow County Council was allocated €378,000 under the 'Community Climate Action Programme' (Strand 2) to support eligible community led climate action projects. Applications were invited between 21st October and 16th December 2025.

A total of 23 eligible applications were received and as anticipated, the scheme was significantly oversubscribed, requiring projects to be prioritised based on merit and available budget. An evaluation committee was established which will meet in Early 2026 to assess Projects assessed score against the agreed criteria.

Carlow Climate Action Week 2024

'Carlow Climate Action Week 2025', held from 6th–13th October, brought communities, local organisations, and businesses together to promote practical, everyday climate action. The week featured a diverse programme including organic vegetable growing workshops, sustainable floral design sessions, tree and fruit bush planting, creative events such as the 'Clothes Swap & Eco Fashion Show', and engagement with local food producers, all aimed at encouraging healthier, low-carbon lifestyles and stronger community resilience. It also supported local innovation through the Carlow Community Climate Action Fund and hosted the 'From Plate to Planet' conference to help the hospitality sector reduce food waste. Collectively, these activities strengthened public awareness, empowered grassroots action, and



'The Three Billy Goats Gruff of Carlow' crosses into the classroom

highlighted the environmental, economic, and social benefits of sustainability across County Carlow.

Carlow County Council also supported other climate teams across the Country by hosting an online webinar with Dr Shane Timmons, Senior Research Officer at the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI), working within the Behavioural Research Unit (BRU). His role focuses on applying behavioural science to public policy across areas such as environmental behaviour, financial decision-making, health, and climate-related behaviours. The session, titled '*The Psychology of Community Change*', explored how behavioural science can support climate action by examining why some individuals adopt climate-friendly practices quickly while others delay, and how communities and policymakers can help close this gap.

Staff from Carlow County Council and local stakeholders visited Teagasc Grange AD plant which is a pilot-scale biogas facility designed to research the environmental and economic sustainability of producing biomethane from grass silage and cattle slurry. It is part of Ireland's efforts under the Repower EU plan to expand renewable gas and reduce reliance on fossil fuels

A visit was also conducted to Kildare County Council's Demo House in Maynooth which is a fully retrofitted 1990s home designed to showcase practical,

accessible and sustainable retrofit measures. The house demonstrates upgrades such as internal wall insulation, airtightness improvements, triple glazing, an air-to-water heat pump, heat-recovery ventilation, EV charging, and rooftop solar panels, alongside universal-access features and circular-economy approaches that prioritised reuse of materials. The garden also models biodiversity-friendly design, including pollinator planting, a wildlife pond and sustainable drainage.

Carlow Decarbonising Zone Working Group

In 2025 Carlow County Council established a 'Decarbonising Zone working group'. The DZ working group comprises of stakeholders who can effect change of the community who live, work, learn, do business and visit the Decarbonising Zone.

Organisations represented on the Carlow Decarbonising Zone include:

- Carlow County Council
- HSE
- Carlow Kilkenny ETB
- Carlow Chamber of Commerce
- IDA Ireland
- Enterprise Ireland
- TFI Local Link Carlow Kilkenny Wicklow
- Gas Networks Ireland
- Teagasc
- South East Technological University
- Merck Sharp & Dohme

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Carlow County Council is explicitly recognised as an SDG Ambassador, having been part of the Government's inaugural SDG Champions Programme. The Council continues to hold this ambassadorial role. Carlow County Council participates in SDG localisation at national level through the 'National SDG Localisation Working Group', which helps embed SDGs across local authority governance and reporting. The Council is represented on this group through Director of Services Padraig O'Gorman, representing the CCMA.

During 'SDG Week 2025', Carlow County Council shared a series of short, food-focused information sessions across its social media platforms, highlighting how growing and sourcing local food supports and advances the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs).

OECD Policy Coherence Scan of Ireland

As part of the OECD Policy Coherence Scan of Ireland (PCSD), designed to strengthen SDG implementation at national and local levels, Carlow County Council was required to present on the Local Authority experience of integrating SDGs across their functions. Input was also requested as follows:

- How can Irish local governments translate SDGs into concrete cross-sectoral actions?
- What mechanisms are needed to better enable SDG localisation?

- Are current national frameworks enabling the localisation of the SDGs? What can be improved?
- How can local data and indicators be strengthened to track SDG progress

Carlow PPN hosted an introductory SDG workshop focused on helping community groups understand how to translate the *Sustainable Development Goals* into practical, local actions.

Carlow PPN included regular SDG updates in its 2025 bulletins, ensuring that community and voluntary groups remained informed about SDG opportunities, training, and resources.

Biodiversity

The Carlow Biodiversity Officer successfully secured €97,378 grant funding under the *Local Biodiversity Action Fund (NPWS)*, and €20,000 grant funding under the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Fund (Heritage Council), to progress implementation of Actions under the *Carlow Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2025*.

These included:

- **Carlow Hare's Corner Project** – to facilitate landowners to create a space for nature on their properties. Outstanding response from the Carlow public, with over 150 applicants across the county, and 28 Plans for Nature, 8 Plans for Water, 5 ponds, and over 6,000 native trees for Woodlands, Heritage Orchards and Hedgerows approved.



Launch of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff of Carlow' with Students from Tinryland NS

- **Urban Pollinators Foraging Network Management**, including 'Lawns into Lunch' Initiative, which saw a herd of Old Irish Goats visit several town and villages across the county, and engagement with over 3,500 people. A children's book, 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff of Carlow' was also published, which featured on RTE's New2Day television programme.
- **Carlow Otter Survey** – to map the extent of their distribution on the River Burrin, River Mountain, and urban sections of the River Barrow. A highlight from this was video evidence of otter markings high up in a tree above the R. Barrow, which was shared widely through social media.
- **Carlow Farming for Nature Celebration** - recognising the contribution of four local families to our local landscape, following collaboration between Carlow County Council, Carlow IFA, Carlow ICA, Tegasc, ACRES, NPWS, and partner organisations operating in the county, with the intention of having a Carlow representative in the National Farming for Nature Ambassador Awards in 2026.
- **Orchard River & Riparian Restoration** – restoration works to reinstate spawning gravels and strengthen the riparian zone. A Before & After video was widely shared through social media.
- **Carlow Wetlands Survey** – to establish the extent of wetland habitat in Carlow and categorize them in terms of conservation value.

- **Carlow Invasive Species Control** – to restore riparian habitat through the control of rhododendron and cherry laurel.
- **Carlow Catchments Hedgerow Survey** – to assess hedgerows with a water quality function, i.e. parallel to rivers, and the bottom of sloping land, and with a good base structure.
- **Carlow Protected and Rare Flora Survey** – to assess the current status of rare flora records.
- **Carlow Mayfly Recording Project** (part of application with 27 other Local Authorities and LAWPRO)

A book, 'Significant Trees of Carlow', was published based on results of the 2024 Carlow Significant Tree Survey, funded through Creative Ireland.

Powerstown Landfill and Civic Amenity Site

Powerstown Civic Amenity Site provided waste management services to small businesses and the general public during 2025. A total of 34,097 customers visited the site during 2025. 3,250 tonnes of material was accepted and removed from the site for further treatment. Two successful amnesties were operated in Powerstown during 2025 from funding received as part of Anti-Dumping Initiatives. 260 customers availed of a mattress amnesty during which 623 mattresses were sent for recovery. 397 customers availed of a bulky waste amnesty which amounted to 70 tonnes of material.



Powerstown mattress amnesty

Throughout 2025, 10 educational groups were facilitated by staff in Powerstown. The groups were given a tour of the facility and the importance of segregating waste and returning WEEE to suitable facilities was discussed. Information regarding further treatment of materials was discussed and students engaged with fun quiz questions, sorting of recyclable materials and planting seeds. Circular Economy, sustainability and biodiversity were all aspects of waste management that were encouraged and promoted. A competition for primary schools was hosted, and three successful schools were awarded prizes of street cleaning trollies.



St Brigid's National School



During 2025 the textile recycling banks within the county were upgraded. Two units designed and fabricated specifically for Carlow County Council were installed onto two sites in Carlow. These units are the first of their kind in Ireland and were designed as a result of recent changes to legislation and to alleviate the problem of overflowing textile banks.



Textile recycling banks

During 2025 staff in Powerstown introduced a circular economy reuse of old bottle banks. The banks were refabricated into flower planters. School groups assisted with the planting of seeds and were encouraged to submit new ideas for reuse of old bottle banks. Community groups have since engaged with the idea and refabricated bottle banks have been distributed for community gardening projects.

During 2025, 86 bikes were sent for refurbishment and further distribution to the Gambia as part of the bikes to Africa project enabling children an opportunity to receive an education.

Powerstown Civic Amenity Site became a member of the *Paint Reuse Network Ireland* during 2025. The network is funded by the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices and delivered in partnership with the Rediscovery Centre, Ireland's National Centre for the circular economy. Staff from Powerstown visited the Rediscovery Centre following which on-site training was provided to staff in Powerstown. 300kg of paint was donated for reuse as part the program during 2025.

The EPA carried out two site inspections in Powerstown during 2025. A comprehensive survey of the gas collection network was undertaken by staff and submitted to the EPA. All compliance monitoring and reporting was completed as per EPA licence requirements. The total number of documented environmental compliance inspections carried out by staff in

Powerstown during 2025 was 681 inspections.

An electric vehicle was purchased by Carlow County Council during 2025 for use in Powerstown as part of the councils climate action initiatives.

Staff attended *Carlow Older Peoples Council Information Roadshow* promoting waste awareness and services offered in Powerstown Civic Amenity Site.



Carlow Older Peoples Council Information Roadshow

Powerstown Civic Amenity Site and closed landfill continues to be a significant site of biodiversity. A survey carried out in early 2025 identified 30 species of winter birds using the site. Carlow beekeepers continue to use Powerstown as their base for the development and training of beekeepers. An upgrade of their facilities on site was carried out during 2025 enabling them to facilitate and operate a training, research and development facility from Powerstown.

Transforming leftovers into living foods at a community fermenting workshop



Emergency Services & Building Control



County Council maintains Fire Brigades in four Fire Stations located in Carlow Town, Muine Bheag, Tullow and Hacketstown. A Fire Service Training & Development Centre utilised by Fire Services from across Ireland, The National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management, The Irish Defence Forces and The Irish Air Corps is also based in Hacketstown Fire Station.

The dedicated crews, together with modern vehicles and equipment, ensure delivery of a prompt, efficient and effective service responding to a total of 628 separate emergency incidents resulting in

875 mobilisations by County Carlow Fire Brigades in 2025. This represented a 14% increase in attendances at emergency incidents when compared to the total figure for 2024. There were no fire fatalities recorded in Co. Carlow in 2025. The operational response is supported by the Eastern Regional Control Centre located in Dublin Fire Brigade HQ in Townsend St, which receives calls from the public through the 999/112 service and mobilises the appropriate fire service resources in County Carlow. Services such as administration, fire prevention activities, Building Control, Major Emergency Management etc. are delivered from the Fire Service Headquarters at Green Lane, Carlow Town.

Key Performance Indicators

The *Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2024* carried out by NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission) which was published in September 2025

highlighted that Carlow Fire Authority has a cost per capita of €65.68 per head of population. A 29% increase has been observed when compared to 2023 due to the WRC retained firefighter pay agreement and increase in number of calls. Although below the 2024 national average of €74.85 per capita for the operation of Retained Fire Stations. The NOAC report also highlighted that the average mobilisation time, from time of firefighters being alerted to a fully crewed fire appliance leaving a fire station was 06:09 minutes. Also, in 88% of mobilisations, a crew from Carlow County Fire Service arrived at the scene of an emergency incident within 20 minutes from time of mobilisation.

Emergency Services & Building Control

The *Code of Practice for Inspecting and Certifying Buildings and Works* in relation to inspections of new buildings, for which valid commencement notices have been received, sets a minimum requirement of 12 – 15%. The *Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2024* carried out by NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission) which was published in September 2025 highlighted that County Carlow Building Control Authority achieved an inspection rate of 16%. Applications for Fire Safety Certificates were decided within the statutory period of 2 months in 58% of cases, above the national average of 45%.

Safety, Health & Welfare, Quality & Environmental Management Systems:

In December 2023, *Carlow County Fire*

& Rescue Service's Safety Management System was certified to ISO 45001 by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. This is confirmation of the safety management system in Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service complying with international best practice and recognition of the work and dedication across all sections and levels of the service required to achieve this standard. The awarding of ISO 45001 means that the organisation is internationally recognised in an elite category of businesses, one of a small number of fire services that have attained this standard in Ireland. In 2025 the County Fire Service maintained its commitment to this standard and underwent an internal audit in preparation for the 3-day recertification audit by the *National Standards Authority of Ireland* in Q4 of 2025. Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service also applied for registration to the ISO 9001 Quality Management System standard which sets out the essential requirements for a practical and effective quality management system (QMS) which is, in essence, a system for minimising risk and maximising opportunity. The standard is the first port of call for almost all organisations, large or small, public or private, that have decided to strengthen, streamline or review their management procedures. It can be used to focus on improving performance in a particular department, plant or site. To achieve this award, the County Fire Service underwent an internal audit in 2025 in preparation for the 3-day registration audit by the National Standards Authority of Ireland in Q1 of 2025. The County Fire Service was



successful in attaining this accreditation and became one of very few nationally with both ISO 45001 & 9001 standards.

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service also applied for registration to the ISO 14001 Environmental Waste Management System standard which is an internationally recognized standard that outlines the requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining, and improving an environmental management system (EMS). It helps organisations manage their environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner, ensuring they minimize their environmental impact while complying with relevant laws and regulations.

To achieve this award, the County Fire Service underwent Environmental Aspect Reviews for each of the Fire Stations and Training Centre followed by full review of the current ISO procedures and practices to integrate requirements of ISO 14001. In addition to working towards developing new practices and procedures within the County Fire Service to meet the standards required.

An internal audit is scheduled for Q1 2026 in preparation for the 3-day registration audit by the National Standards Authority of Ireland in Q1 of 2026. Should the County Fire Service be successful in attaining this accreditation they will become the first and only Fire Authority nationally with three ISO standards, ISO 45001, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

Capital Funding

The then Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, announced funding of €20.8 million for the provision of 40 new 'Class B' fire appliances, which will be allocated across the country's 27 Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. Carlow County Fire Service received an allocation of 1 new Class B Appliance as part of this announcement which is scheduled for delivery in Q3 2026. Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service received additional capital funding to the value of €2.788m and final approval to proceed to full design, Part VIII and tendering for works for the upgrade of Muine Bheag Fire Station which will greatly enhance the working conditions for firefighters within the station. Carlow County Fire Service received funding from the National Directorate for a number of Capital Projects during 2025 including:

Purchase of combined Hi-Ab/Prime Mover HVO HGV	€248,000
Purchase of 100% Electric Van	€68,000
Upgrade & Development of the Fire Services Learning & Development Centre, Hacketstown	€4.566m
Class B Fire Appliance	€465,000

Extensive capital works were completed in the Fire Services Learning and Development Centre, Hacketstown during 2025. Works included upgrade to a Breathing Apparatus training building, improved changing areas for students

and instructors' and improved facilities for decontaminating Breathing Apparatus Sets and PPE.

Approval in principle has been received for €4.566m funding for additional improvement works to the centre involving construction of specialist working at heights training tower, underground confined space training unit, site fencing, lighting and delineation markings. A new car park and administration/fire appliance storage building in addition to the first carbonaceous fire training facility with smoke capture and filtration system in the country.

Training

A range of specialist Training Courses were delivered to operational firefighters during 2025. Officer Training as well as training in the operation of pumps, Confined Spaces, Emergency Service Driving, Emergency First Responder and Cardiac First Responder was delivered to firefighters. Drone Pilot training, each Fire Station was supplied with a thermal imaging Drone enabling aerial assessment of structural fires, wildland fires with the thermal imaging camera in addition to aiding search operations too.



Training exercise in Hacketstown Training Centre



Fire fighting exercise

Operations

Crews from across County Carlow attended a total of 628 separate emergency incidents resulting in 875 mobilisations by Carlow Fire Brigades in 2025. This represented a welcome 14% increase in attendances at emergency incidents when compared to the total figure for 2024. There were no fire fatalities recorded in Co. Carlow in 2025. A notable 17% increase in attendances at Road Traffic Collisions and a 60% increase in wildland/ Forest/Grass fires in 2025 compared to 2024 posed challenges for the County

Fire Service. Accidental activations of monitored fire alarms in commercial and domestic premises continue to create issues for the fire service and initiatives are being developed to try to reduce them.

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service became the first Fire Authority in Ireland to achieve the full complement of 12 firefighters in all stations as per the 2023 WRC agreement and these crewing levels were maintained in 2025. There are currently 49 operational firefighters, 4 Senior Fire Officers, 1 Building Control Inspector and 2 Administrative staff employed in Emergency Services & Building Control Section of Carlow County Council.

The County Fire Service established a Women's Fire Service Network in 2025 bringing the three female firefighters together to meet with Senior Management to discuss, identify and improve uniform/PPE, facilities and culture.

6% of Carlow County Fire & Rescue Services operational firefighting staff are female compared with the 3% national average in the Retained Fire Service. This forum both maintains and actively promotes women in the fire service for future recruitment campaigns. A female Carlow Firefighter also represented Ireland by travelling to take part in the Women in the Fire Service Training event at the Fire Service College UK.

The County Fire Service represented the executive of Carlow County Council

in October at a *Sister Cities* event in Tempe, Arizona, USA. This provided an excellent opportunity to visit the Tempe Fire Department to share learning with regard to delivery of a modern-day fire service meeting similar and comparable challenges. In Q2 2026 Fire Officers from Tempe, Arizona, USA and Trollhattan, Sweden, both members of the Sister Cities will travel to Carlow where the County Fire Service will lead a weeklong programme demonstrating and promoting our County Fire Services approach as international leaders to modern day service delivery.

Community Fire Safety & Fire Prevention

In addition to its operational activities, Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service was also very active in promoting fire safety and continues to inspect public-assembly buildings in an effort to meet the obligations under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003. Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service has taken a more proactive role in promoting Community Fire Safety in particular during 'Fire Safety Week' and 'Positive Ageing Week' which took place on September 30th to October 6th 2025, members of the public were invited into Stations to view our equipment and appliances, speak to Fire Prevention Officers and view fire safety demonstrations and displays. Daily Fire Safety messages were published on social media pages as well as radio interviews undertaken with KCLR and Beat FM. Carlow County Fire Service continued to deliver the Home Fire Safety Check initiative during 2025. Firefighters

visit older persons in their homes, carry out a home fire safety check, provide advice to the homeowner in relation to fire safety and install smoke detectors where required. Over 950 'Home Fire Safety Checks' were completed by County Firefighters in 2025.

As part of our ongoing commitment and aim in ensuring every home in County Carlow has working smoke alarms, Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service have successfully secured an increased allocation of smoke alarms from the NDFEM, rising from an initial allocation 250 to 1000 smoke alarms for County Carlow. This increase reflects our strong commitment and strong track record for carrying out home fire safety visits and installing smoke alarms in homes across our communities.

With a continued focus and emphasis on Community Fire Safety, Carlow County Fire and Rescue Service developed a new home fire safety video in 2025 that was shared across all social media platforms. This video explains the Home Fire Safety Visit process and outlines our vision and goal to have working smoke alarms in every home in County Carlow.

The annual licensing and inspection of premises was completed in September with publicans, dance and restaurant license renewal applications before the Courts. In total 46 premises were inspected in the run up to the Court date in late September. A large body of work was undertaken to comply with the provisions of the Fire Services Act along with the administrative duties

associated with issuing certificates, letters and conditions of license. A number of enforcements were carried out on public premises as well as warning letters issued to premises owners and occupiers following inspections on foot of complaints by members of the public and issues that were highlighted post incident that may have been brought to the Fire Officers' attention.

The Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service Primary Schools Programme seeks to educate primary school children about Fire Safety in the home. The programme is designed to teach children about the dangers of fire, smoke alarms, and how to use a simple home safety check. As a result of the programme, approximately 46 schools and 1300 children in Carlow are being educated about fire safety each year and they in turn are expected to convey the message to their families. The programme is delivered by local firefighters to third class primary school students (8-9yr olds). The programme is based on evidence that the particular message in this format to this age group was most effective.

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service in collaboration with Carlow's Age Friendly Alliance have committed to partner with the Older Persons Council and deliver Fire Safety talks and coffee mornings in the Local Fire Stations promoting an age friendly environment, offering advice relating to Fire Safety in the Homes for Older Persons and making our Service more age friendly as detailed in Carlow's *Age Friendly County Strategy 2025-2029*.

The County Fire Service also attended various other Community Fire Safety events including the Tullow Show demonstrating the Chip Pan Fire Unit.



Community fire safety event, Tullow Show

During 2025 the County Fire Service updated the Statutory Fire Safety and Community Fire Safety Plans.

Building Control

The Building Control section actively manages the Building Control Management System and carries out routine inspections of construction projects to ensure compliance with all parts A to M of the Building Regulations during construction stage, validating Commencement Notices, Certificates of Compliance on Completion and technically examining Disability Access Certificates as well as advising members of the public on the system. All Fire Safety Certificate and Disability Access Certificate Applications are now being made through the Building Control Management System.

The Building Control Section worked closely with the National Building Control and Market Surveillance Office which monitors the quality and standard of construction products offered for sale within County Carlow. A number of inspections of premises who offer construction products for sale within County Carlow received unannounced initial and follow-up inspections.

Fire Services Learning & Development Centre, Hacketstown

Fire Services Learning & Development Centre, Hacketstown is regarded as the leading facility and a critical piece of strategic infrastructure in Ireland for the delivery of firefighting training for operational firefighters and fire officers. The facility provides Recruit Firefighter Training, Breathing Apparatus Training, Compartment Fire Behaviour Training, Road Traffic Collision Training, Medical Training and Working at Heights Training. A 'National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Compartment Fire Behaviour Instructor Training Course' was also hosted in 2025 which developed the newest instructors in this skill set for the Country. The Training Centre is the only Training Centre in Ireland that can host two/three courses being ran simultaneously.

Courses were hosted in the facility for firefighters from Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow Fire Services as well as the Dublin Airport Fire & Rescue Service, The Irish Air Corps and Irish Defence Forces.

The LASNTG (Local Authority Services National Training Group) hosts regular QQI accredited Training Courses in Firefighting Skills, Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour in the LASTNG/QQI approved Training Centre. In total, Fire Services Learning & Development Centre, Hacketstown hosted training courses for a total of 346 days during 2025 for over 1,200 firefighters. This was the busiest year on record at the Training Centre.

In 2025 The County Fire Service ran a pilot Transition Year weeklong programme bringing Transition Year students to the training centre where they experienced the role and training involved to become a firefighter whilst qualifying in the use of a Defibrillator as a Community First Responder and being certified for manual handling.

Rescue Organisation Ireland

Firefighters from Carlow County Fire Service continue to lead the way nationally and internationally in terms of its extrication and trauma teams. At the Rescue Organisation National Challenge which took place at the Dublin Fire Brigade OBI Training Centre in May, the team placed 2nd overall as well as placing 1st in the CPR event.

Carlow County Firefighters competed at the World Rescue Challenge In Croatia in September and represented both Carlow and Ireland at the highest level in this international competition.



Transition Year Programme Fire Service Learning & Development Centre, Hacketstown



Transition Year Programme Fire Service Learning & Development Centre, Hacketstown

Climate Action

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service continues to support *Carlow County Council's Climate Action Plan* to achieve the target of reduction of 51% of carbon output by 2030. The County Fire Service introduced further Climate Action measures during 2025, with Fire Station urban gardens being developed to provide an area for firefighters to decompress post attendance to traumatic incidents while promoting biodiversity, sustainability and the circular economy. Fire service equipment destined for land fill has been upcycled into garden furniture and various features. A new air-to-water heating system and wall insulation have been installed at Carlow Fire Station HQ replacing a fossil fuel burning heating system.

In 2025 the County Fire Service also took delivery of new combined H-Ab/ Prime Mover HGV. This vehicle is fuelled by Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil instead of diesel and replaces two heavy diesel 30-year-old vehicles. The County Fire Service also took delivery of a new and first 100% Electric Van further reduced the sections CO2 emissions. The County Fire Service is also working on developing further new innovative technical solutions to reduce the carbon output from our operational fire service vehicles and equipment in the future.

The County Fire Service also worked in collaboration with the Environment section on a number of projects including hosting a joint Environment and Community Fire Safety event at the Fire Services Learning & Development Centre with a small herd of

Old Irish Goats promoting fire safety and managing of urban lawns with promotion of pollinator habitats.



Visit from Old Irish Goats promoting biodiversity & community engagement

National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management National Resilience Fleet

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service continues to support the work of the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management through the management of the Directorate's fleet of 8 Resilience and Training Fire Appliances. These 8 fire appliances are managed and maintained through Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service and are used by the 'National Directorate for the delivery of the Fire Service National Training Programme' across Ireland for fire officers at all ranks from Recruit to Senior Fire Officer ranks.



Roads & Sustainable Transportation

1,358km



Road network within the County of Carlow

32



Funding recoupment claims in the amt of €11,806,415

155



Chief Executive/ Director of Services Orders

61



Priority 1 Winter Services Treatments using 342 tonnes of salt

39



Priority 2 Winter Services Treatments using 1,273.2 tonnes of salt

540



No. Road Opening Licences

134



Abnormal Load Applications processed

€272,588



Spend on National Secondary Road Maintenance Works

€1,879,744



Total Spend on National Secondary Road Improvement Works

€5,338,581



Spend on Regional & Local Roads Improvements

5,359



Number of LED Public Lights in the County

€2,758,766



Spend on Regional & Local Roads Maintenance

€267,176



Spend on Regional & Local Road Bridge Maintenance and Improvement

€577,026



Spend on Regional & Local Road Drainage, Road Safety & Other Works

6,727



Number of Public Lights in the County

1,628



Number of Public Light Repairs undertaken

€2,556,824



Public Lighting Energy & PLEP Improvement Costs



Having a good road and rail network is integral to the economic prosperity of a county. It is essential to have good access to the capital, the ports, and the large towns of the region. For local economic, social and recreational purposes it is also essential that the regional and local road asset base is maintained to the highest possible standards consistent with available funding.

The policy of the Council is to maintain, develop and improve existing roads

and to construct new roads as financial resources permit. The administrative area of Carlow has a road network of 1,358 km (comprising of 26km of Motorway, 55 km of National Secondary, 188km of regional and 1,089km of Local roads. The Roads Schedule/Road map in County Carlow was fully surveyed and updated in 2025 in consultation with the Department of Transport, TII and the Roads Management Office.

Motorway Network

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) manages and provides funding for all motorway schemes.



Dublin Road Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme, Carlow

National Secondary Road Network

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) provides funding for national roads. In 2025 Carlow received an allocation of €1,455,653 for maintenance and improvement works for bridges and carriageways, and to meet costs associated with supervision, public lighting and general maintenance of the national road network. Additional funds were received in respect of application for defects and other works to bring the total spend to €1,879,744. The identified projects for 2025 consisted of:

Funding Category	Project	Allocation
Pavement Improvement Scheme Locations identified based on a comprehensive survey of the national road network.	N80 Whitemills Pavement	€295,000
	N80 Whitemills Pavement	€490,000
	N81 Balyoliver to Rathvilly Pavement Scheme	
National Road Safety Improvement Scheme Allocation to progress Safety Improvement Schemes	N80 Leagh Bends Improvement Scheme	€45,000
	N80 O'Brien Road RSIS	€4,500
	N80 fixed Site Safety	€22,500
	Camera Pilot	

Regional & Local Road Network

The Department of Transport provides funding for maintenance and improvement works on Regional & Local roads. In 2025, Carlow received an allocation of €8,946,800 for improvement works and general maintenance of the non-national road network. This programme targets much needed remedial measures on regional and local roads in the county under the following:

Funding Category	Status	Allocation
Restoration Improvement. This programme targets improvements to the structural integratory of Regional & Local Roads.	37 projects completed	€4,468,720
Restoration Maintenance. This programme targets improvements to the surfaces of Regional & Local Roads.	26 projects completed	€1,020,119
Funding Category	Status	Allocation

Discretionary Grant. This Grant contributes to meet costs associated with supervision, public lighting, winter & general maintenance, signage installations, road markings, footpath improvements /repairs of the non-national road network	Projects completed include maintenance, drainage, bridge works, signage & winter maintenance	€1,101,335
Bridge rehabilitation. This programme targets repairs to bridges on Regional & Local Roads throughout the county.	11 projects completed	€267,176
Specific Improvement Grant. The Specific Regional & Local Road Improvement Grant Scheme with a total estimated project cost of up to €5 million, aims to contribute to undertaking the necessary assessments to progress the project.	R448 Royal Oak Junction Traffic Calming Section 38 in 2025	€4,668
Strategic Improvement Grant. The Strategic Regional & Local Road Improvement Grant Scheme with a total estimated project cost of over €5 million, aims to contribute to undertaking the necessary assessments to progress the project.	Carlow Southern Relief Road Competition of Phase 1	€620,237
Safety Improvement Works. This programme targets improvements to specifically identified safety issues of Regional & Local Roads.	11 projects completed	€247,500
Drainage Works. This programme targets improvements to surface water drainage of Regional & Local Roads.	16 projects completed	€239,943
Former National Road. This programme targets improvements to the structural integratory of Former National Roads in the county.	R448 Project completed over 837m	€411,657
Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience Works. This Grant aims to undertake a targeted programme of improvement works to Regional & Local Roads.	7 projects completed	€225,655
Community Involvement Scheme. This programme targets improvements to the structural integratory & surfaces of Local Tertiary Roads in the county in cooperation with the associated property owners.	8 projects completed	€220,453

Strategic Improvement Project - Carlow Southern Relief Road

Following a tender process for engagement of Technical Consultancy Service, AECOM ROD Technical Consultants were appointed in January 2025 to lead the development and design of the **Carlow Southern Relief Road** (CSSR) through Phases 1 -4 as set out in the TII Project Management Guidelines, in collaboration with the Department of

Transport and Laois County Council. The CSRR remains a key long-term strategic transport proposal for the town of Carlow.

Throughout 2025, substantial progress was achieved with the successful completion of Phase 1- Concept and Feasibility. The Department of Transport subsequently granted approval to advance to Phase 2 – Options Selection, which will identify the emerging preferred corridor for the project.



Active Travel

Active Travel refers to 'travelling with a purpose using your own energy'. This generally means walking and cycling as part of a functional journey, as well as the use of non-motorised scooters. Replacing private car trips with 'green' and sustainable transport options such as walking to work, cycling to the shop or scooting to school, can be considered positive climate action. Active Travel serves as a critical component of *Ireland's Climate Action Plan* and is vital to its success.

The delivery of Active Travel projects in County Carlow is essential to meeting national targets: reducing car journeys by 25% and ensuring that walking, cycling, and public transport account for 50% of all journeys by 2030.

In January 2025, the National Transport Authority (NTA) continued its commitment to sustainable infrastructure by allocating significant capital funding to local authorities. Carlow County Council received a total allocation of €3,137,000 in 2025. This funding supported a diverse portfolio of projects, ranging from large-scale segregated cycleways to critical safety improvements under the *Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programme*.

Completed Safe Routes to School Scheme at St. Brigid's National School, Station Road, Bagenalstown



The following table details the funding allocated to Active Travel in 2025:

Scheme	Amount (€)
Active Travel Pathfinder - Carlow to SETU Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme (Phase 1)	€1,110,000
Active Travel Pathfinder - Carlow to SETU Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme (Phase 2)	€470,000
Dublin Road Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme, Carlow	€1,067,000
Active Travel Staff Costs	€245,000
SRTS - Queen of the Universe, Muinebheag (Round 1)	€180,500
Hillbrook Estate Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme, Tullow (Tullow Orbital)	€6,500
Ballyellen Footpath Scheme	€58,000
Total 2025 Allocation	€3,137,000

These projects are funded by the Department of Transport through the NTA's *Active Travel Programme* and are managed and delivered locally by Carlow County Council's Active Travel Team.

Transparency and engagement are central to our mission. To keep residents, businesses, and stakeholders informed, the Active Travel Team provide regular updates through the Carlow Active Travel Monthly e-Bulletin. This digital publication serves as a vital link between the project team and the public, offering real-time updates on construction milestones,

safety initiatives, and the ongoing transformation of our county's transport network in respect of Active Travel. To maximise accessibility, all bulletins are also shared across Carlow County Council's social media platforms and www.carlow.ie ensuring our community remains active and engaged in the future of local travel.



Dublin Road Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme



Launch of the Tullow Road Active Travel Cycle & Pedestrian Route



Pathfinder



Official Launch of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) - Holy Family Girls & Boys NS, Asklea



Speed limit changes

The year commenced with the introduction of the **New Rural Default speed limit of 60km on rural local roads** the implementation for which was the 7th Februrary 2025. New signage was erected in all three municipal districts in advance of the implementation date.

A **Special Speed Limit on Carlow National Secondary Roads** came into effect on the 18th December 2025, introducing a **speed limit of 80kph in the rural areas** for mechanically propelled vehicles on the public roads the N80 and N81 within the jurisdiction of Carlow County Council.

Following initial consultation with An Garda Siochana and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Carlow County Council in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 9 of the *Road Traffic Act, 2004* (No. 44 of 2004), as amended, gave notice of its intention to review the *Special Speed Limit Byelaws* that are applied to certain roads within the administrative area of County Carlow and advertised the draft County Carlow Road Traffic National Secondary Road, the N80 and N81 Speed Limit Byelaws of 2025.

Following public consultation, liaison with An Garda Siochana and the approval of Transport Infrastructure Ireland the draft byelaws were brought before Council in November 2025. The *Bye Laws* were passed by resolution of the Council at their Meeting of 10th November 2025 to come into effect on Thursday 18th December 2025.



Deerpark Roundabout

Continuing the improvement of Carlow Roundabouts incorporating *Sustainable Development Goals*, The Deerpark Roundabout received a fantastic makeover in 2025.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and communities which calls for efforts to protect cultural and natural heritage worldwide, ensuring historic sites, traditions and landscapes are preserved for future generations was the theme.

The keeping of deer has been ongoing for centuries in Ireland and indeed deer in Carlow recorded as early as 1305 in a law case at Ballydonegan (now Oak Park), *'A History of Deer Management In Ireland With Special Reference To The Glenarm Deer Parks'* by Terence Reeves-Smyth.



Deerpark Roundabout

Local Improvement Scheme

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, announced funding for Local Improvement Schemes (LIS) to undertake a programme of targeted improvements to the structural integratory & surfaces of private roadways in the county in cooperation with the associated property owners, for which Carlow received –

Announcement	Allocation	Status
LIS – 2025 Round 1	€373,479.00	18 projects completed
LIS – 2025 Round 1	€328,537.00	18 projects completed

Age Friendly/Rest Location Seating in Tullow

A scheme to provide age friendly and rest location seating was implemented in Tullow providing 15 new seats at various locations in the Town to provide a safe spot for rest and reflection.



Launch of the Age Friendly Carlow Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Rain Garden and Biodiversity Planting in Muinebheag

Improvement works including pavement enhancements and drainage works in Muinebheag have included a new rain garden at the junction of Kilree street/ Stationhouse Road/Church Street and also a new biodiversity planting bed at Mcgrath Hall.



Rain Garden, Bagenalstown



Hanover Park Playground

Hanover Natural Playground, Carlow

The design of this natural playground was shaped with the input of the Green School Committee of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál. Their creativity, environmental awareness, and enthusiasm have left a lasting mark on the layout and features of this space.

This project was made possible through a successful combination of funding from Community Recognition Funds, Multiple Councillor Discretionary Funds, Council Revenue Funds and Capital Grant Scheme for Playgrounds and Recreation.

This playground celebrates nature, imagination, and creativity. Encouraging children to explore, climb, learn, and play in a safe and inspiring environment. It enhances Hanover Park as a vibrant community space for families and future generations.

Paint Enhancement Scheme

The shop front painting scheme was managed by Carlow Municipal District



Dublin Street Paint Scheme Before and Afters

Office in 2025 and saw the enhancement of buildings on Tullow Street and Dublin Street.



Dublin Street Paint Scheme Before and Afters

Carlow Town Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF)

Carlow Town URDF aims to revitalise and rejuvenate the town, creating a thriving urban centre that meets the needs and aspirations of the community.

The total value of Carlow Town URDF projects is €23.2M, 75% of which would be grant aided through the URDF fund.

This fund focuses on the following projects, creating a more compact, sustainable, and vibrant core:

Schemes	Amount (€)
Railway Link and Public Realm Improvement through Carlow College to Town Centre	€3.1m
Public Realm Improvement to Tullow Street and Dublin Street	€2.1m
Public Realm Improvement to Potato Market	€8.6m
Public Realm Improvement and new linkage from Barrack Street to Carlow Shopping Centre	€3.3m
Barrack Street including Shamrock Square & Thompson's Corner/Bus Park	€4.2m
Public Realm Improvement to Kennedy Avenue	€1.9m

The projects will be delivered in two bundles.

The first is the Rail Link Project, which will be delivered by Carlow County Council's own in-house Design Team. The second is the Town Centre Project, which will include the rest of the funded URDF projects.

In June 2024 Carlow County Council successfully completed the Part 8 planning process for the Rail Link project. In 2025, we completed the tender process and secured Departmental approval to appoint GLAS Civil Engineering Ltd. The project is scheduled for construction during 2026.

In October 2023 Carlow County Council announced the appointment of Urban Agency as the external design team for the Carlow Town Centre Project, marking an important milestone in the transformation and enhancement of Carlow Town.

Urban Agency are responsible for developing a comprehensive design proposal that encompasses architectural design, landscape design, urban planning, and the integration of sustainable practices.

There has been extensive public consultation at all stages of the project process, from its inception with 'Carlow 2040' during the design process through 'Your Carlow' and the statutory Part 8 planning process, which was completed in Q2 2025. Preparation of detailed design was progressed thereafter in 2025. It is expected the scheme will be tendered and construction will commence in Q4 2026.

In addition, the URDF team assist with technical guidance and direction with other sections, including the LEO office, conservation advice, the THRIVE application with the regeneration team, as well as consulting with the planners on some town centre planning applications.

Carlow Town Centre Project



Civil Defence

Carlow County Council is the Civil Defence Authority for the administrative area of County Carlow. The 2003 Civil Defence Act sets out a number of roles for Civil Defence. Among these roles are providing a backup service to the Primary Response Agencies in the areas – Medical Response, Search & Rescue, Emergency Response, Radiation Monitoring, Community assistance, Communications & CISM. Civil Defence also provides service to the Local Authority, Health Service Executive and the gardai during severe weather events such as flooding, snow and wind storms Civil Defence also provide Radiation Monitoring during emergency situations and carry out a national radiation monitoring exercise yearly with the EPA.

The *Major Emergency Management Framework* document also sets out roles and responsibilities for Civil Defence in the event of emergencies, such as setting up Welfare Centres, Registration of Casualties, responsibility with HSE for transportation to various Hospitals and Secondary Line back up to the Principal Response Agencies.



The members of Carlow Civil Defence are all volunteers except for the Civil Defence Officer and the Assistant Civil Defence Officer who are employed as CDO/ACDO on a part- time basis by Carlow County Council. At present we have over 34 volunteer members ranging from locations across the county. Weekly training on subjects such as Medical (CFR, First Aid Responder, Emergency First Responder, Emergency Medical Technician) Floodwater Pumping, Swiftwater Rescue techniques, Technical Rescue, Boating, Map Reading, Search Skills, Drones, Sonar, Welfare etc, are taught by Civil Defence volunteer instructors locally. During our scheduled weekend training the skills learned during weekly training sessions and courses are practiced and honed.

In 2014 Carlow Civil Defence rolled out a new 'Search Skills Training Course' for its volunteers. It was taught in the Garda College and Carlow volunteers were among the first to embrace this activity and we gained status to Instructor level. Carlow Civil Defence Boating unit provide back-up assistance to the (PRAs) Fire service and Gardai in River Search and Recovery (RSR) situations. Volunteers are trained in Boating skills, Search Sonar, River and land search and recovery techniques. Water awareness and Swift Water Flood Response courses are run throughout the year.

Carlow Civil Defence were involved in the Setting up of Rest Centre for the arrival of Displaced persons from War torn Ukraine Setting up rest centres is an activity that

is practiced a number of times a year to ensure rest centre equipment and volunteers are ready when needed.

In 2020 Assistant Civil Defence Officer (Part time) was also appointed to help with all the new duties and call outs. A new computer based management system know as VEMS was rolled out in 2024 to manage volunteers in training courses, equipment, vehicles and the management of all operations.

Drone Operations

Carlow Civil defence operates drones in the Open Category operating under the IAA registered organisation 'Carlow County Council'.

Carlow Civil Defence currently operates three different drones manufactured by DJI. The three drones are different sizes and have different roles. Drone technology is always changing and improving and we are keeping up with this by upgrading our drones and equipment. In 2024 a new mobile charging unit was added to our equipment and in 2025 the Civil Defence College replaced our largest oldest drone with a new DJI Matrice 4DT at a cost of approximately €15,000. There are currently four trained pilots in Carlow Civil Defence and we have a number of support staff trained also.

Date	Activity	Venue
4th to 7th January 2025	Snowstorm – Patient transfers to hospital, welfare checks, stranded motorists, public health nurse transport	Countywide
23rd to 24th January 2025	Storm Eown – 4 x 4 transport standby for rest centre	Oak Park, Carlow
26th January 2025	5-mile charity road run – supporting gardai with traffic control	Countywide
27th January 2025	Missing person Kilkenny – assisting Kilkenny Civil Defence with missing person search	Kilkenny City
7th February 2025	Missing person search – land and water search for missing person	Bagenalstown and Carlow Town
17th March 2025	St. Patrick's Day Parades – first aid and support to Gardai at Bagenalstown and Carlow Town St Patrick's Day parades	Bagenalstown and Carlow Town
2nd April 2025	Willie Mullins Homecoming – first aid and support to Gardai at Cheltenham homecoming and parade of winners	Leighlinbridge

24th May 2025	Scouts Water Activity Day – demonstration and safety boat cover for Scouts Water Activity Day	River Barrow, Bagenalstown
31st May 2025	Scouts Water Activity Day – Aid support to Kilkenny Civil Defence	Nolan Park, Kilkenny
7th June 2025	Bagenalstown in Bloom – first aid and support to the local authority.	Bagenalstown
8th June 2025	Dragon Boat Races – 2 x safety boats to cover Dragon Boat Races in Carlow	River Barrow, Carlow
17th June 2025	Missing person search – water search	River Barrow, Carlow
12th July 2025	St. Columbanus Way Walk – first aid and support to Gardai and the local authority	Mt. Leinster, Carlow
13th July 2025	Pride Festival Carlow – safety boat	River Barrow, Carlow
14th July 2025	St. Mary's Graveyard Mass – support to Gardai and Local Authority	St. Mary's Graveyard, Carlow
26th July 2025	Camogie Semi Final – First Aid and support to Gardai and Local Authority	Nolan Park, Kilkenny
28th July 2025	Quarter Mile River Swim – 2 x Safety Boats	River Barrow, Bagenalstown
30th July 2025	Half Mile River Swim – 2 x Safety Boats	River Barrow, Bagenalstown
5th August 2025	Three Quarter Mile River Swim – 2 x Safety Boats	River Barrow, Bagenalstown
7th August 2025	One Mile River Swim – 2 x Safety Boats	River Barrow, Bagenalstown
15th August 2025	Borris Fair – First Aid and support to Gardai and Local Authority	Borris, Carlow
7th September 2025	Fenagh Steam Rally – First Aid cover with assistance of Kilkenny Civil Defence	Fenagh, Carlow
12th October 2025	Barrow Challenge – safety Boat cover for rowing race	St. Mullins, Carlow



Lightfest 2025

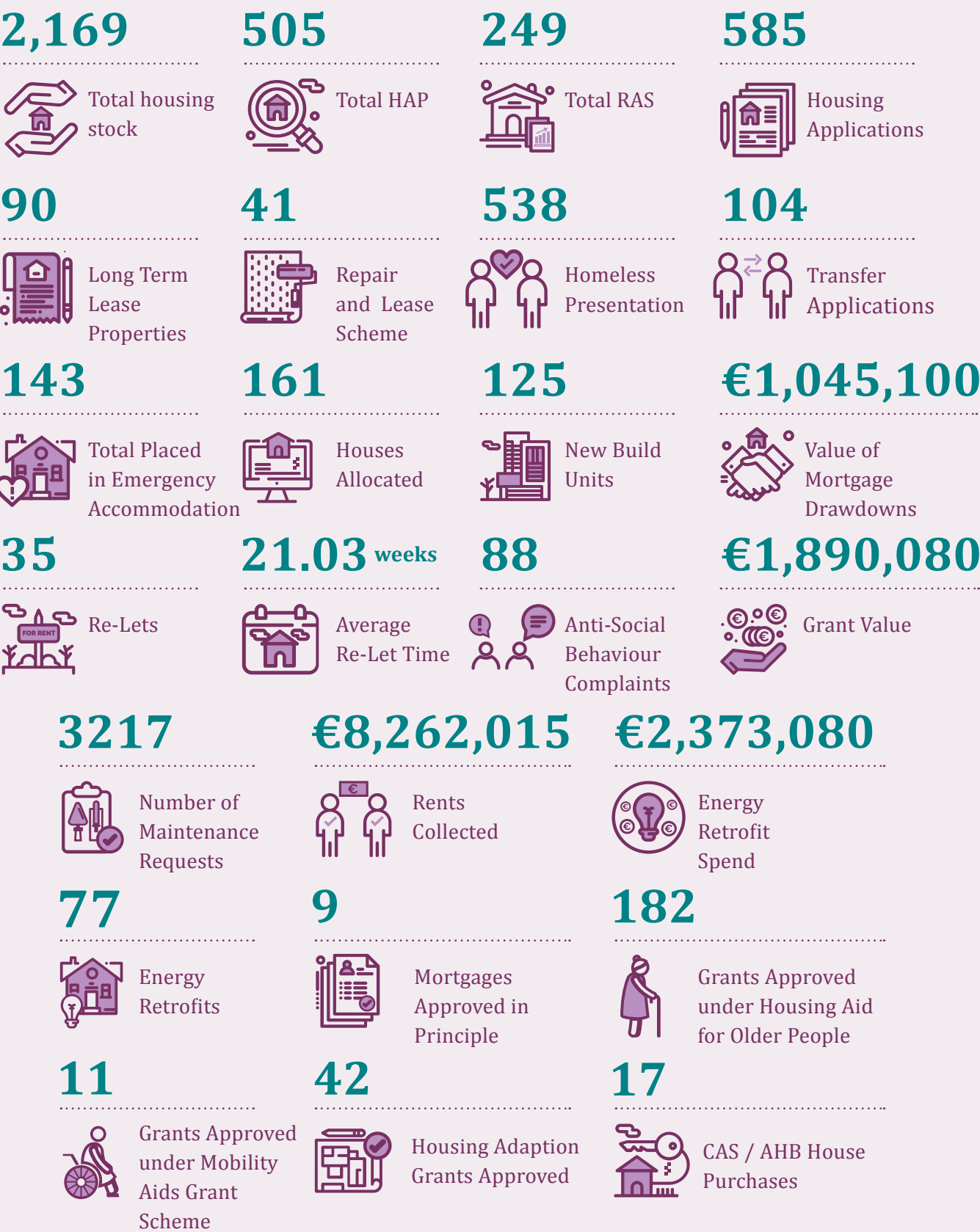


Carlow Civil Defence



Training Day

Housing



New Build Programme 2025

An overall delivery of 125 new build units was achieved in 2025. This includes a combination of Part V new build units, AHB Turnkey, Local Authority Build and Buy and Renew (Conversion of Vacant/ Derelict Units). The build target under Housing for All was 99.

Private Grants

A total of €1,890,080.00 was allocated under Private Grants Schemes, including Housing Aid for the Elderly, Mobility Aid Grants, and Housing Adaptation Grants. This represents 235 approved grant applications, ensuring essential upgrades and repairs to homes, allowing elderly and disabled individuals to remain in their residences longer.

Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP)

Carlow County Council's target remains 490 properties by 2030. In 2025, 77 properties were completed. A total of €2,373,080 incl VAT was invested, averaging €30,819.22 incl VAT per unit. Works included insulation, window/door replacements, heating system upgrades, and other energy improvements, aiming for a B2 BER Rating.

Casual Vacancies/Relets

In 2025, 35 vacant units were returned to stock. The average turnaround time was 21.03 weeks, ensuring properties met private rental standards before reallocation.

Housing Stock

The Council housing stock increased by 40 in 2025, bringing the total to 2169. This includes additions through new builds, acquisitions, and improvement programs, with 5 properties removed due to sales, expired programs, or decommissioning.

Housing Applications/Transfers

There were 585 new applications for housing supports in 2025, alongside 104 transfer applications. The Housing Department continued processing valid applications within 12 weeks.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)/ Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The number of active HAP tenancies at 31/12/2025 was 505, reflecting a decrease of 61 active tenancies from 31/12/ 2024. The number of RAS properties decreased to 249 over the same period in 2025.

Homeless Services

Carlow County Council remains part of the Southeast Homeless Region, implementing the 2023–2026 Homeless Action Plan. In 2025, there were 538 homeless presentations, an increase of 52 from 2024. Homeless prevention efforts assisted 427 cases, diverting them from emergency accommodation. Emergency accommodation placements comprised of 111 adults and 32 children, who all received full care and case management.

Tenant Liaison & Anti-Social Behaviour

In 2025, the Tenant Liaison Team received 88 complaints relating to Anti-Social Behaviour, with 10 cases progressing to legal action. A further 9 referrals were submitted to the Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service as part of early-intervention efforts to prevent eviction and maintain successful tenancies. During the year, the team continued to expand its proactive approach to tenancy management, placing a strong focus on early engagement and new-tenancy success programmes. Volunteers are ready when needed.

Mortgage Services

The Housing Department received 20 applications for local authority home loans in 2025, with 9 approved in principle. A total of €1,045,100.00 was drawn down during the year.

Official Opening of Cox's Lane by Minister James Browne TD with Cathaoirleach Fergal Browne and Mayor Fintan Phelan on 14th June 2025



Dublin Street, Carlow



Integration Support

Local Authority Integration Team

The role of the 'Local Authority Integration Team' is to help our new arrivals access supports and services within their community. This is done through providing advice, guidance and information to empower International Protection Applicants, Refugees and Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection to live independent lives within the County of Carlow. The Integration Team works in partnership and collaboration with multiple agencies including government departments, state agencies, NGO's and Volunteer Groups in fulfilling the integration role.

- In supporting the New Arrivals, the Integration Team held **information clinics** in all accommodation centres throughout the county with 58 clinics being held in 2025.
- Several events and information sessions were held in partnership with other agencies during 2025 an example of which is as follows:
- **One Stop Shop** - all local supports and services under one roof with a total of 123 participants
- **Multi-Cultural Supper Clubs** - where new arrivals could experience food, music and dance from other cultures with a total of 94 participants
- **Woodlands for Health** – a six-week programme to promote mental health wellbeing by getting out into nature with a total of 86 participants



- **Stay and Play** – a six-week programme for 3 to 6 years of age where children experience song, rhythm and dance with a total of 24 participants
- **Capuchin Garden Project** – a six-week programme promoting mental health wellbeing through nature with a total of 23 participants
- **Christmas Cinema** – two Christmas movie showings with 130 participants

Community Integration Forum

'The Community Integration Forum' continues to provide strategic leadership in co-ordinating supports and services locally to International Protection Applicants and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection newly arrived in County Carlow. The membership of the Community Integration Forum consists of representatives of Community, Statutory and Voluntary agencies working in partnership to provide key integration supports. A total of 7 meetings of the Forum were held during 2025.

'The Integration Workers Network' which is a sub-group of the CIF also continues to work well with a total of 7 meetings were held during 2025.

Community Recognition Fund

The *Community Recognition Fund* is a scheme funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development introduced to support the development of community facilities in towns and villages hosting the majority of new arrivals. Projects approved under this scheme are for the benefit of all members

of the community. Outlined below are the projects that received funding for in Window 2 and Window 3 of the fund:

Town/Village	Project Approved
Carlow	Carlow Volunteer Hub – Building development
Tullow	Tulow Mens Shed - Refurbishment
Carlow	St. Lazerians Special School – Provision of accessible walking track and upgrade of playground equipment
Carlow	Éire Óg GAA Club – Refurbishment of walking track
Tulow	St. Patrick's GAA Club – Sustainable grounds enhancement project
Bagenalstown	Bagenalstown Cricket Club – Purchase of equipment for enhancement works
Carlow	Carlow County Development Partnership – Purchase of accessible minibus
Carlow	Carlow Lawn Tennis Club – Resurfacing works to car park
Tulow	Parkville Utd – Refurbishment and enhancement of existing facilities

Offer A Home Scheme

The *Offer A Home Scheme* is a government initiative, led by local authorities, whereby property owners offer vacant houses, apartments and holiday lets to the Local Authority to accommodate Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. During 2025 this scheme provided accommodation to 151 Ukrainian persons in County Carlow

Community, Recreation and Amenity

137



Grants Awarded (Env/ Amenity Grant Scheme 2024-Totalling €62,315)

55



Pride of Place Applications

€139,952.15



305 Grants Awarded (CCC Discretionary Funds)

€123,340



Funding Received under CLÁR Scheme 2025

€881,910



SICAP Budget for 2025

329



No. of Active Member Groups with Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN)

Carlow's Pride of Place

Carlow's Pride of Place Programme continued to strengthen community engagement throughout 2025, supported by two well-attended workshops. The first workshop, held on 26 March in the Lord Bagenal Hotel, brought together 61 participants for sessions on application development, the Sustainable Development Goals, biodiversity enhancement and intergenerational project ideas. A second workshop on 10 October in Gáirdín Beo welcomed over 40 attendees and revisited these themes with a practical focus on preparing communities for the winter season.



The annual **Carlow Pride of Place Awards Ceremony** took place on 4 December in the Woodford Dolmen Hotel and drew an impressive crowd of over 350 people, reflecting the strong community spirit across the county. **Ballymurphy** was named the overall County Winner in the Towns and Villages category for 2025, while Oaktree Court Residents Association claimed the top award in the Estates category. The Community Project Award, recognising innovative initiatives that fall outside population-based categories, was presented to Bagenalstown Improvement Group

Awards were presented by the Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council, Cllr Ken Murnane, alongside



representatives from each Municipal District. The prestigious Michael Deering Cup was awarded to the **Harrow Cross/ Oldtown Residents Association** in recognition of their exceptional contribution. The Youth Award went to John Keogh, nominated by the New Oak Residents Association, while the Individual Award honoured Pat Breen of Carlow Tidy Towns for his long-standing dedication to community enhancement. This award was sponsored by the Carlow Public Participation Network Secretariat.

Carlow County Council also presented four special recognition awards to Rathanna Village, Carlow Town, Carlow Regional Youth Services and the Cáirdeas Centre for their outstanding achievements in the IPB Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Competition held in Limerick on 7 November.

In total, 50 prizes valued at €19,750 were awarded to community groups across the county, spanning categories such as Towns & Villages, Estates, Community Garden, Front Garden, Commercial Premises, Individual and Youth Awards celebrating the creativity, commitment and pride that define Carlow's communities.

IPB Ireland Pride of Place

The IPB Pride of Place Competition, delivered in partnership with Co-operation Ireland, is a flagship all-island initiative celebrating the dedication, creativity and community spirit that define local communities across Ireland. The competition invites groups to showcase their "pride in their place" through



presentations that highlight local culture, volunteerism, partnership with their Local Authority and the inclusive nature of their community work.

Carlow County Council nominated four outstanding entrants for the 2025 competition. National Judges visited Rathanna Village on 13th June, during which the village was assessed in the Village (population under 300) category, and Carlow Regional Youth Services presented their Community Roots Programme in the Community Youth Initiative category. A second visit by the Judges took place on the 19th July whereby Carlow Town was judged in the Large Town category and the Cáirdeas Centre, Tullow in the Inclusive Community category.

Carlow enjoyed a remarkable night of success at the **National Awards Ceremony** on 7 November in Limerick's Strand Hotel. **Rathanna Village** secured first place in their category, **Carlow Town** was awarded runner-up in the Large Town category, and Carlow Regional Youth Services received a Special Recognition Award for their innovative Community Roots Programme. **The Cáirdeas Centre** was also commended for the strength and impact of their project.

These achievements reflect the exceptional commitment of Carlow's communities and the strong partnerships that continue to drive positive change across the county.



Environmental/Amenity Grant Scheme 2025

A **total of 137 grants** were awarded to community groups, residents' associations and schools across County Carlow, supporting a wide range of local environmental and enhancement projects throughout 2025. Funded initiatives included the landscaping and development of open spaces, amenity improvements along river and stream corridors, and a variety of environmental protection measures. Many projects placed a strong emphasis on biodiversity, recycling, waste minimisation and water-harvesting solutions, reflecting the county's growing commitment to sustainability.

Overall, **€62,315 in grant funding** was distributed, enabling communities to continue improving and enriching their local environments.

Discretionary Funding 2025

In 2025, Elected Members continued to provide vital support to local initiatives through their Discretionary Funds. A total of 305 grants were awarded to residents' associations, Tidy Towns groups, community and voluntary organisations, schools and sporting bodies across the county. These allocations, amounting to €139,952.15 helped strengthen community activity, enhance local amenities and empower groups to deliver projects that enrich daily life in Carlow.



Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is made up of 19 members drawn from both statutory and non-statutory sectors, including four elected members. The Committee is chaired by **Ms Lynda Stacey**.

The LCDC/LAG provides strategic oversight and programme management for a suite of key community-focused initiatives, including:

- **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024–2028** Supporting individuals and communities experiencing disadvantage through targeted social inclusion actions.
- **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023–2029** Guiding the long-term social, economic and community development of County Carlow.
- **Healthy Carlow** Promoting wellbeing, active living and health-enhancing initiatives across the county.
- **Local Enhancement Programme 2024** Delivering **€156,073** in funding to strengthen community facilities and support local groups.

Together, these programmes reflect the LCDC's central role in driving inclusive, sustainable and community-led development throughout County Carlow.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2023–2029

In November 2023, the *Carlow LECP Framework Document 2023–2029*, together with the accompanying **two-year Implementation Plan**, came into effect, marking the beginning of a structured and phased approach to delivering the county's long-term economic and community development goals.

The implementation of the *Local Economic and Community Plan* (LECP) is structured across three consecutive two-year phases. The first phase, the *Carlow LECP 2023–2025 Implementation Plan*, sets out a focused strategy to drive sustainable economic growth and strengthen community development across the county.

This phase is built around six **High-Level Goals (HLGs)**, each targeting a core area of Carlow's long-term development sustainability, community empowerment, social inclusion, education and skills, economic resilience and infrastructure enhancement.

Throughout 2025, numerous **Lead Agencies** presented their progress and planned actions under each of the six HLGs to the LCDC, ensuring strong oversight, active collaboration and a shared commitment to delivering meaningful outcomes for communities across Carlow.

Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 (LEADER) and LEADER Programme 2023–2027

County Carlow continued to benefit in 2025 from the **€4.97 million LEADER**

allocation under the 2023–2027 programme, supporting projects across three core themes: **Economic Development & Job Creation, Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion, and Sustainable Rural Environment & Climate Action**.

Carlow County Development Partnership CLG issued calls for applications under all three themes, inviting community groups, social enterprises and rural businesses to bring forward ideas that strengthen local economies, enhance community facilities and support climate-resilient development. Throughout 2025, the **Carlow Local Action Group (LAG)** reviewed and approved Expressions of Interest and full project applications, helping to move a diverse pipeline of rural initiatives toward delivery.

This ongoing investment is already shaping a more vibrant, inclusive and sustainable rural Carlow supporting local enterprise, improving community infrastructure and empowering rural communities to adapt, grow and thrive.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)** is Ireland's flagship, locally driven social inclusion initiative, designed to support individuals and communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage. SICAP plays a central role in empowering marginalised groups and strengthening community participation.



Members of Carlow Regional Youth Service, Comhairle na nÓg and students from Tempe Sister Cities twinning programme at the launch of Carlow's first pocket library at Carlow Garda Station Community Garden.

Under this programme, the **LCDC acts as the contracting authority**, while **Carlow County Development Partnership** delivers the programme on the ground. County Carlow operates as one Lot for the purposes of SICAP delivery.

In 2025, the programme was supported by a core budget of **€722,240**, with an additional **€159,670** allocated to address the needs of **New Arrivals**, reflecting the programme's responsiveness to emerging social challenges and demographic changes.

SICAP continues to be a vital mechanism for promoting equality of opportunity, building community capacity and ensuring that the most vulnerable residents of County Carlow are supported to participate fully in social, economic and community life.

Local Enhancement Programme 2025

The Department of Rural and Community Development's *Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2025* continued to provide vital capital supports to community groups across County Carlow. The programme focused on helping organisations particularly those in disadvantaged areas carry out essential repairs, upgrade facilities and invest in equipment that strengthens local services and community participation. From tools and signage to laptops, canopies, lawnmowers and training equipment, the funding enabled groups to enhance their spaces and deepen their connection

with local residents. The programme also aligned closely with the priorities of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), ensuring strategic impact at community level.

County Carlow received the following allocations:

- **€133,777 of capital funding** to use towards carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency type projects, purchase of equipment etc.
- **€22,296 for groups** to use towards covering energy and running costs, to help them continue their important work within the community.

In line with national guidelines, the Carlow LCDC approved a funding split of:

- 70% targeted funding delivered through the Social Inclusion Forum
- 30% allocated to small grants of €1,000 or less

In total, 147 community groups and organisations across the three Municipal Districts benefited from LEP funding, helping to sustain vibrant, inclusive and well-resourced communities throughout County Carlow.

Community Development

Throughout 2025, the Community Development Officers worked closely with community groups, residents' associations and local organisations, providing hands-on support and guidance to strengthen projects and build local capacity.



Launch of the Community Garden and Allotment Policy at the Biodiversity Garden in Hacketstown.

In May 2025, Carlow County Council became the first local authority in Ireland to launch a **Community Garden and Allotment Policy**, unveiled in the Biodiversity Garden in Hacketstown. Developed with local communities, multiple Council departments and through Carlow's involvement in the **URBACT European Project**, the policy recognises a wide range of community growing models from orchards and therapeutic gardens to biodiversity and educational spaces.

The policy positions community gardens as much more than food-growing sites. They are recognised as places of **wellbeing, learning, environmental action and social inclusion**, supporting stronger, healthier and more connected communities.

Crucially, the policy aligns with the **Planning and Development Act 2024**, which formally recognises community gardens in Irish law for the first time, and complements both the **County Development Plan 2022–2028** and the **Climate Action Plan 2024–2029**.

Community gardens and allotments now sit at the heart of Carlow's vision for a vibrant, sustainable and climate-resilient county nurturing pride of place, strengthening local identity and empowering communities to grow together.

The 2025 **Community Roots Programme** offered 24 young people from Carlow

Town a vibrant three-day experience focused on leadership, civic awareness and practical life skills. Delivered in partnership with **Carlow County Council, Carlow Regional Youth Service, Carlow Sports Partnership** and **County Carlow Development Partnership**, the programme blended hands-on workshops with real-world learning.

The programme opened in the **County Council Chamber**, where participants met local leaders and gained insight into how community services and decision-making work. Over the following days, they took part in team-building, creative arts, STEAM activities, a Cricut workshop, pickleball, and completed certified **Manual Handling** and **First Aid** training.

A highlight was a **Political Leadership visit to Dáil Éireann**, where 44 young people from Carlow Town, Tullow and Bagenalstown toured Government Buildings, observed the Dáil in session and met local TDs. A certificate ceremony at Carlow County Council marked their achievements.

Community Roots earned **two national awards in 2025** - a **Judges' Special Award** at the All-Ireland IPB Pride of Place Awards and the **Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local** recognising its strong youth leadership focus and high levels of engagement.

The programme continues to empower young people to become confident, informed and active contributors to community life in Carlow.



The **Embracing Change** programme, delivered by Carlow County Council through the *Healthy Ireland Period Dignity Fund*, brought communities together in 2025 for a series of uplifting events focused on women's health, confidence and sustainable living. The initiative was a standout example of **cross-Council collaboration**, with the **Community, Environment, Active Carlow** and **Municipal District Office** teams working together to create inclusive, empowering and environmentally conscious experiences.

Two flagship events shaped the programme:

- **Embracing Change – A Celebration of Wellbeing, Sustainability & Community:** Held on 3 April 2025 at Duckett's Grove, this full-day event featured gardening workshops, guided tours, Pilates, adapted physical activities, African storytelling, a Zero Waste food initiative and a Free Clothes Swap. Guest speaker Ashleigh Tobin delivered a menopause-focused session on improving sleep and energy.
- **Embracing Change – Confidence Never Goes Out of Style:** Hosted on 23 November 2025 at The Step House, Borris, this evening event celebrated sustainable fashion, nutrition and women's hormone health. Highlights included an 'Eco Chic Fashion Workshop' with stylist Faith Amond, a hormone

health session with nutrition expert Lorraine Demetriou and a community-led sustainable fashion showcase.

Across all activities, the programme championed **circular fashion**, environmental responsibility and accessible wellbeing supports. Embracing Change strengthened community connection, increased awareness of period dignity and menopause, and equipped participants with practical tools to enhance confidence, health and quality of life.

The **2025 Tempe Sister Cities Student Exchange**, coordinated by Carlow County Council, strengthened international friendship through a vibrant 4 week cultural and civic programme. Three students from Tempe, Arizona were welcomed by Carlow host families and immersed in local community life.

Their programme included cultural visits to **Carlow Town, Carlow Arts Festival** and **Bagenalstown in Bloom**, introductions to **SETU Sports Campus**, the **GAA** and the **Community Roots Programme**, as well as civic learning through a visit to **Dáil Éireann**, Dublin cultural experiences and tours of local public services.

Heritage trips to **Kilkenny Castle** and other local landmarks, along with family-led outings to Duckett's Grove, Kilkea Castle, Kilkenny City and Waterford, rounded out the experience.

Supported by local partners and featured across social and local media, the exchange received excellent feedback,



with students highlighting the warmth of Carlow's welcome and the value of hands-on cultural and civic learning. The 2025 programme further strengthened Carlow's long-standing relationship with Tempe.

In 2025, Carlow County Council strengthened local emergency response through the rollout of the **Loc8code Public Safety Initiative**, giving first responders precise location information in areas where traditional addresses fall short.

Phase One launched along the **River Barrow** during Bagenalstown in Bloom, introducing Emergency Access Point signage that has already shown clear life-saving potential. **Phase Two** extended the system to **Brownshill Dolmen** and **Oak Park**, improving safety across popular heritage and recreation sites.

A strong awareness campaign supported the rollout, with Loc8code creator **Gary Delaney**, National Ambulance Service volunteer **Christy Ward**, local businesses, KCLR and students from **St Joseph's National School** helping embed the initiative across the community.

Together, both phases show how Carlow County Council is using practical innovation and community collaboration to make the county safer for residents and visitors alike.

The Yarn Bombing Treasure Hunt which took place during Bagenalstown in Bloom

The **fourth annual Bagenalstown in Bloom festival** brought colour, creativity and community spirit to the town from 5–7 June 2025. Organised by the Bagenalstown Area Community Development Group with strong local support, the festival delivered a lively mix of free, family-friendly events.

The weekend opened with **Jitterbug Jackson**, a community music session led by **Angela Keogh**, and the launch of the new **Outdoor Swim Infrastructure** and **Loc8code Public Safety Initiative** along the River Barrow.

Highlights included workshops, live performances such as The Children of Wolves, a Fun Run & Walk at McGrath Park, kayaking and SUP sessions, and creative activities from pottery to the popular **Yarn Bombing Treasure Hunt**. KCLR's live broadcast and local exhibitions added to the buzz.

Bagenalstown in Bloom 2025 showcased the town's vibrant arts, heritage and community life, reinforcing its reputation as an inclusive and environmentally conscious cultural hub.

In 2025, Carlow County Council supported the pilot of '**Ceolway**', a new community music initiative designed to spark social connection, creativity and wellbeing. Running from June to October, **Ceolway** created a weekly 'social route' through Doyle's Ice-Cream Parlour, Moka Coffee House and Coppengagh House Farm, where more than **320 people** from local residents to tourists and day-centre



groups came together to share music and stories. Led by community musician **Angela Keogh** with guest performers, the pilot built a loyal core group and encouraged intergenerational participation. Feedback highlighted increased confidence, social connection and a strong sense of belonging, with participants taking real ownership of the sessions. The project also strengthened links with local musicians and wider networks such as **Sing Ireland**, showcasing Ceolway's potential as a creative tourism and wellbeing initiative.

Local Community Safety Partnership

In late 2025, the **Carlow Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)** was formally established under the national community safety framework, creating a coordinated, multi-agency structure to strengthen safety and wellbeing across the county. The Partnership brings together representatives from **An Garda Síochána, Carlow County Council, statutory agencies, the business community, and the community and voluntary sector**. A total of **27 members** were appointed by **Minister Jim O'Callaghan TD**, reflecting a strong commitment to collaborative local leadership.

The **inaugural meeting** of the Carlow LCSP took place in **December 2025**, marking the formal start of its operational work.

Key actions included:

- **Confirmation of membership**, with 26 members appointed by Minister O'Callaghan
- **Election of officers**, with **Cllr Michael Doran** elected Chairperson and **Cllr Fintan Phelan** elected Vice-Chairperson
- **Setting out a framework** for developing a countywide Strategy for Improving Community Safety

During 2025, **South East Technological University (SETU)**, in partnership with Carlow County Council, secured **€142,500** through the **Community Safety Fund** to deliver a new **Bystander Intervention Training Project** across schools in Carlow town and county.

The establishment of the LCSP, combined with member induction and the successful inaugural meeting, provides a strong platform for coordinated, evidence-based action on community safety. The Partnership well positioned to advance its work programme and deliver targeted, meaningful responses to safety needs across County Carlow.

Age Friendly Carlow

2025 was a landmark year for **Age Friendly Carlow**, marked by the completion and launch of the **Age Friendly Carlow Strategic Plan 2025–2029**. Developed through extensive consultation with older people, statutory partners and community organisations, the Strategy sets out a clear roadmap to ensure Carlow remains an inclusive, accessible and supportive place to grow older.



Launch of the Not Around Us Campaign

The **Carlow Older People's Council (OPC)** continued to be a strong voice for older people locally and nationally. Members engaged actively in the Age Friendly Alliance, contributed to national networks, and represented older people on key structures including the Public Participation Network and Community Safety Partnership. Their input shaped walkability audits, service design discussions and health-related consultations throughout the year.

A major highlight was the continued success of the **OPC Information Hub at Avoca House**, which received a national Age Friendly Ireland Award for Communications. The Hub hosted weekly activities such as the Dementia Cabin Café, the Elderflower Garden Club and community information sessions, while also serving as a base for wider support services.

Community outreach remained central, with three rural Pop-Up Café roadshows, the annual **Living Well Expo** during Positive Ageing Week, public information stands and multiple group presentations. These initiatives generated more than **1,000 public interactions**, helping reduce isolation and increasing awareness of local supports.

Strong collaboration with Carlow County Council, the HSE, An Garda Síochána, community groups and other statutory partners ensured that the priorities of older people were embedded across local planning and service delivery.



Overall, 2025 delivered greater visibility, engagement and influence for older people in County Carlow, supported by a clear strategic framework to guide Age Friendly development through to 2029.

Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg Carlow delivered a dynamic programme of local and national initiatives, ensuring young people's voices were heard across key decision-making spaces during 2025. The year began with the launch of the **'Not Around Us'** campaign in Carlow and Kilkenny, where members spoke alongside Healthy Ireland ambassadors and local TDs to promote smoke- and vape-free spaces for young people. Carlow's Comhairle showcased their work at the **National Showcase in Dublin Castle**, presenting their two-year project on Social Media and Body Image –including their youth-led podcast and receiving national recognition. Working with **CYPSC**, members developed an awareness campaign on intimate image sharing, creating age-appropriate school resources. Under the **CBDi initiative**, planning advanced for a countywide 'Well-Fest' for secondary schools, and members produced a striking visual display on the impact of vaping for their **Annual Youth Conference**.



Launch of Farmers Wellbeing Event

The November conference brought young people together from across the county, with **transport and youth facilities** emerging as priority issues for 2026.

Carlow Comhairle members also represented the county nationally, speaking at the **Growing Up in Ireland Conference** and participating in **Seanad na nÓg** in Leinster House, where cost of living and equality were highlighted ahead of Ireland's EU Presidency.

Through creative campaigns, national representation and strong local engagement, **Comhairle na nÓg Carlow** continued to champion meaningful youth participation and leadership throughout 2025.

Carlow Traveller Interagency Group

During 2025, the **Carlow Traveller Interagency Group (CTIG)**, facilitated by Carlow County Council's Community Development Section, continued to drive the implementation of its **Strategic Plan 2023–2026**, strengthening coordination between statutory agencies and community partners to improve outcomes for Travellers in County Carlow.

Key actions included enhanced cross-departmental collaboration across housing, health, education and youth services, alongside the delivery of **Traveller Cultural Awareness training** funded through Dormant Accounts. The Group also maintained full compliance with national reporting and governance requirements.

Funding secured from the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth** supported a range of local Traveller and Roma initiatives, ensuring continued investment in community-led supports. While progress is evident, significant challenges remain – particularly in relation to accommodation delivery, health inequalities, educational disadvantage, discrimination and the rising cost of living for Traveller families. Addressing these issues remains central to CTIG's work, with a strong emphasis on coordinated service delivery, accountability and meaningful Traveller participation.

Healthy Carlow

Throughout 2025, **Healthy Carlow** continued to deliver a strong programme of health and wellbeing initiatives under the extended **Healthy Ireland Round 4** funding. The focus remained on supporting positive mental health, physical activity and social connection among priority groups including adolescents, older people, disadvantaged families and one-parent families. Collaboration with community and social partners remained central, ensuring programmes were accessible, inclusive and rooted in local needs.

Healthy Carlow supported a wide range of physical activity initiatives that promote mobility, confidence and overall wellbeing. These included **Swimming Women** for disadvantaged women and children, **Forever Fit** community-based resistance training, and **He Swims, He Lifts**, which combines physical activity with social connection for men.



Carlow Water Activity Centre

A suite of socially engaging wellbeing programmes also continued to thrive. These included **Look Good, Feel Good, Yoga and Yap, Social Farming** offering disadvantaged participants a supportive and inclusive farm-based experience and the **Community Roots Programme**, which builds leadership skills and strengthens community participation. The **Carlow Farmer Wellbeing** event, held at Tullow Mart in October 2025, provided farmers with practical supports for physical health, mental wellbeing and farm safety.

Healthy Carlow also delivered impactful health campaigns. The **Not Around Us** initiative aimed at de-normalising smoking and vaping around children was formally launched in April 2025 by Minister of State Jennifer Murnane O'Connor. The **Carlow Period Dignity** campaign continued countywide, providing free period products and promoting awareness, supported through the **Embracing Change** events in Duckett's Grove and the Step House Hotel. Healthy Carlow also supported the **Living Well Expo** in October 2025, offering wellbeing talks and onsite health checks for older people.

Additional community-focused initiatives included **My Garden, My Fork**, helping disadvantaged families grow their own produce; the **Multicultural Supper Club**, celebrating diversity and connection; and a series of **Community Get-Togethers** designed to strengthen local social ties and increase engagement with community groups.



Tullow Road Multi-Functional Community Hub

Together, these programmes highlight Healthy Carlow's commitment to building a healthier, more connected and more resilient county.

Community Capital Projects

In 2025, Carlow County Council continued to advance an ambitious programme of **Community Capital Projects**, each designed to strengthen local infrastructure, expand community access and create vibrant, inclusive spaces for people of all ages. These projects at various stages of planning, development and delivery—represent a long-term investment in the social, recreational and economic wellbeing of communities across the county.

The **Tullow Road Multi-Functional Community Hub** is progressing as a flagship project, set to provide a modern, flexible space for social inclusion, social enterprise, cultural, social, recreational, youth development, education, community or general development. Once complete, the Hub will act as a vital anchor for the surrounding neighbourhoods, supporting participation, connection and lifelong learning.

Along the River Barrow, the **Carlow Water Activity Centre** continues to move through key development stages. This project will open up new opportunities for water-based recreation, outdoor education and tourism, while promoting active lifestyles and strengthening Carlow's reputation as a destination for adventure and wellbeing.



Work also advanced on the development of **Community Support Centres**, ensuring that communities have reliable, rapidly-deployable facilities during severe weather events or local emergencies. These centres will provide essential supports from power and connectivity to welfare services enhancing resilience and safeguarding vulnerable residents when they need it most.

Together, these capital projects reflect Carlow County Councils commitment to building a county that is **active, connected and future-focused**. As they progress, each project will deliver long-lasting benefits strengthening community life, supporting local participation and creating spaces where people can thrive.

CLÁR

Under the **CLÁR Programme 2025**, County Carlow secured funding for a series of targeted rural development projects designed to enhance safety, strengthen community facilities and improve the quality of life in rural areas. This investment continues to support communities in some of the county’s most geographically disadvantaged locations, helping them deliver practical, high-impact improvements.

Carlow received funding for the following projects:

Project	Amount
Killoughternane Community Hall	€9,270

Newtown Hall Committee	€21,420
St. Mullins Heritage and Tourism	€16,200
Glynn Bohana Community Group	€22,950
Garryhill Handball Club	€53,500

These projects reflect the ongoing commitment to ensuring that rural communities remain vibrant, well-supported and equipped with the facilities they need to thrive.

Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN)

Throughout 2025, **Carlow PPN continued to grow as a strong and active voice for community participation**, supported by total funding of **€140,540** with **€40,000** provided by Carlow County Council and **€100,540** from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Carlow PPN represented a vibrant network of **329 active member groups** across the Environmental, Social Inclusion, and Community & Voluntary Colleges, reflecting the depth and diversity of community activity across the county.

The PPN also played a central role in local decision-making, with **30 community** representatives contributing to key boards and committees, including:

- Four **Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)**
- The **Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**



- **Carlow Tourism Board**
- **Local Community Safety Partnership**
- **Carlow Development Forum**

Throughout the year, Carlow PPN engaged in over **35 consultations and surveys** on local and national issues. This active participation ensured that community perspectives continued to shape policy, planning and service delivery at every level.

Capital Play and Recreation Grant Scheme 2025

A capital grant of **€19,998** was awarded to Carlow County Council in 2024 for the installation of a **natural sand pit** as part of a new **inclusive and accessible natural playground** in **Hanover Park, Carlow**. This investment enhances play opportunities for children of all abilities and adds an inviting, nature-based feature to one of the town's key community spaces.

Making Spaces for and with Teenagers Scheme 2025

Carlow County Council secured €50,000 to develop a new **Outdoor Interactive Teen Space in Bagenalstown** through Making Spaces for and with Teenagers Scheme 2025 from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. The scheme gives local young people a dedicated place to meet, socialise and enjoy positive recreation. This project forms part of Carlow's ongoing commitment to creating inclusive, youth-friendly public spaces shaped by the voices of teenagers themselves. This

Community Roots Programme

investment will help deliver a vibrant, safe and engaging environment designed with and for the young people of Bagenalstown.

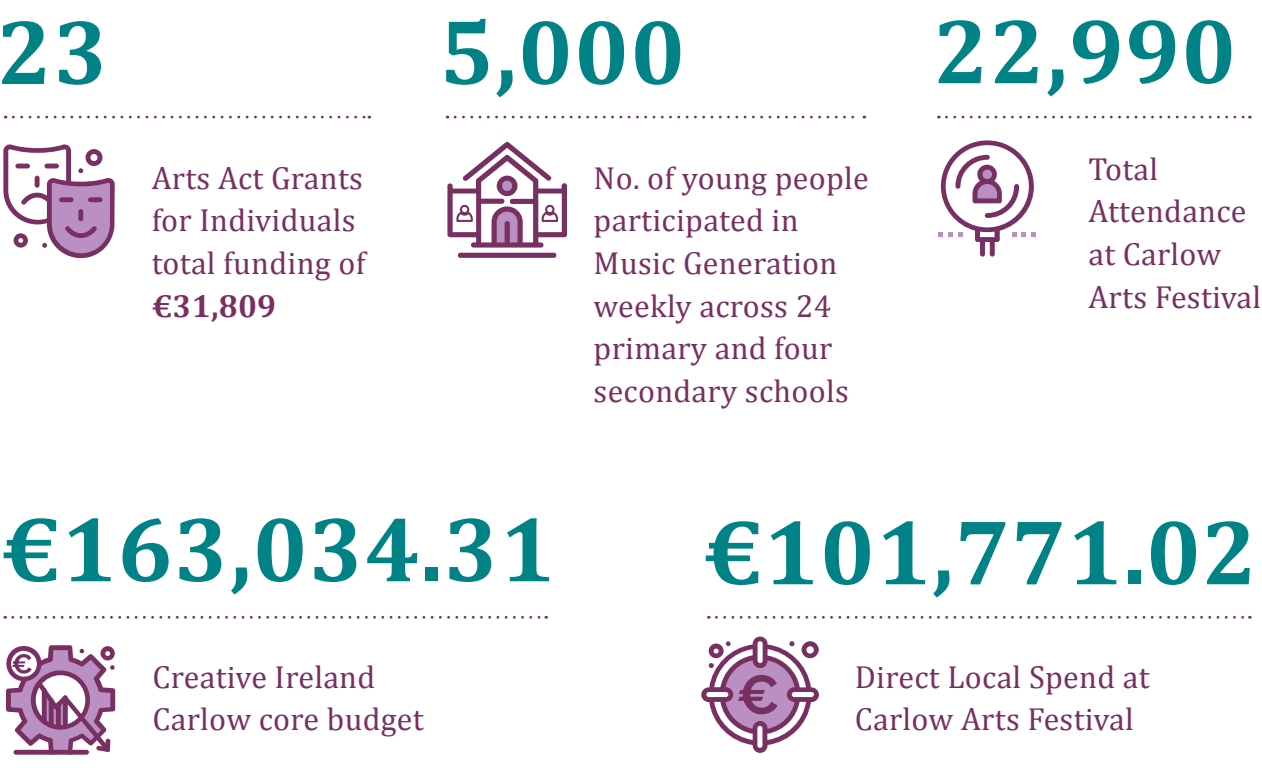
Africa Day

Carlow County Council secured **€7,400 from the Department of Foreign Affairs & Irish Aid** to support a vibrant programme of **Africa Day** celebrations across the county. To encourage strong community participation, local organisations were invited to apply for funding, supported through a series of in-person and online information sessions attended by almost 20 representatives.

Following assessment, funding was awarded to **St. Catherine's Community Services Centre** and the **Carlow African Support Group**, both of whom delivered inclusive, community-led events showcasing African culture, music, food and family-friendly activities. These celebrations created valuable opportunities for intercultural dialogue and significantly enhanced the visibility and engagement of African communities in Carlow.

While some challenges emerged around organisational capacity and local dynamics, these insights will help shape future planning and strengthen supports for groups wishing to participate. Overall, Africa Day 2025 highlighted the richness of Carlow's cultural diversity and the positive impact of community-driven celebration.

Arts Service



Carlow Arts Service serves as a cornerstone for artistic and cultural development in the County, providing a range of services that help develop, sustain, and promote the arts in our region. Every year we support artists, arts organisations and communities across the county to engage in the arts, to develop skills and make new work, often in response to or in the context of their lives, places, or situations, and to share it with audiences.



Public Engagement was a huge focus in 2025 as the Arts Office developed the new *Strategic Development Plan for the Arts* which was passed by Council in October.

Encompassing a holistic vision for the county and all its citizens was made a reality through hosting **5 public consultations across the county** to encourage members of the public to come along and share with us their views and comments in relation to what the priorities for strategic developments for the Arts in Carlow might be in the coming years. Individual opportunities were created to engage the Traveller Community, Age Friendly Carlow, Comhairle na nÓg and new communities in the county to ensure all voices were present in our strategy.

This momentum was continued into December as Arts Office staff hosted a Meet and Greet information morning where **over 60 artists and creatives** joined us as we shared information on the Arts Service distinct role in the county and announced our new funding opportunities for 2026.

Below delves into a range of services provided by the Arts Office in 2025:

Further nurtured artistic talent & practice

Funding Opportunities	Applications Supported	Funding Total
Arts Act Grants for individuals	23	€31,809
Arts Acts Grants for Arts Organisation/Community Groups	14	€23,191
ArtLinks	10	€19,400

Carlow Live and Local

The **2025 Carlow Live and Local programme** delivered a successful **series of five performance events** across the three Municipal Districts, **showcasing twenty local performers**. The programme strengthened cultural engagement across the county, provided valuable performance opportunities for local artists, and attracted diverse audiences to a range of venues.



Launch of Carlow Live and Local

Building on this momentum, planning progressed for the 2026 programme under the new banner **Carlow Beo!** a countywide celebration of live performance. Carlow Beo! is designed to support a broad spectrum of artistic activity, including music, theatre, comedy, dance, street arts, and spectacle, with events eligible to take place in venues, libraries, parks, and community centres throughout County Carlow.

Breaking the Patterns

The *Breaking the Patterns* programme, funded through the Invitation to Collaboration award, continued to deliver significant professional development and international opportunities for emerging artists in 2025. Twenty-four South East artists who had each completed a three-month residencies in Europe, participated in a professional development day at VISUAL, Carlow, while an exhibition of work by 13 of these emerging artists, including Carlow’s Cian Lawler, opened in Farmleigh House in February. Two Carlow artists also completed residencies in Lisbon, exhibiting both locally and internationally. The programme culminated in the Breaking the Patterns exhibition at GOMA, Waterford in October, with Carlow artist Ally Nolan highlighted for her innovative textile-based practice. This project was devised and developed by Capacity Ireland and Carlow Arts Office, providing residencies, exhibition opportunities, mentoring, and professional development, strengthening Carlow’s leadership in collaborative arts development.

New funding opportunities in 2025 included:

Performing Arts Forum Gathering

Carlow Arts Service sought applications from Theatre Arts practitioners based in County Carlow to attend the Performing Arts Forum Gathering in Limerick on 27 and 28 May 2025.

Irish Writers Centre National Mentoring Programme 2025

Carlow Arts Service supported two writers from Co. Carlow to take part in this year's Irish Writers Centre National Mentoring Programme. This is an exciting opportunity to receive sustained creative and professional mentoring from an established Irish writer of their choosing.

Belfast TradFest Bursary

Carlow Arts Service and Creative Ireland announced a new bursary opportunity in collaboration with Belfast TradFest for three young musicians aged 18-23 to immerse themselves in a week of high-quality Traditional Irish Music workshops and music-making in Belfast in July.

Fostered young people's voices in the arts:

Carlow Youth Theatre:

Throughout 2025 CYT delivered its outstanding programme of workshops on Monday evenings in Visual, Carlow. **29 young people** through their senior theatre group and **15 young people** through their junior group. Three free workshops

were held over October Mid Term for young people interested in theatrical performance. The 52 spots were filled within 24 hours showing the demand for this programme.

Carlow Youth Theatre now enter 2026, under the direction of Crooked House Theatre company who were successful in their bid to manage the CYT programme over the coming 3 years. An exciting new step for CYT which will see an elevation in the programme, along with an increase in number of participants who can engage with the programme, free of charge!

Music Generation Carlow:

Music Generation Carlow's 2025 activities reflected significant growth, with approximately **5,000 young people** participating weekly across 24 primary and four secondary schools, as well as multiple community hubs. Traditional, wind, brass, and pop/rock programmes all expanded, highlighted by ReelÓg's national festival performance, increased afterschool wind and brass provision, and the launch of **MGC: Rocks the Tower**, a new youth-led rock concert series attracting strong teenage audiences. A hugely popular new initiative, Vocal Playshop, an inspiring, large-scale collaborative vocal experience was introduced for primary school children. Major events such as the **10th annual Music @ Mount Leinster festival**, sold out at Visual Carlow and contributions to Carlow Arts Festival further showcased the county's musical talent and created meaningful performance opportunities for young musicians across Carlow.

Carlow Arts Festival:

Carlow Arts Office continued to work closely with Carlow Art Festival in 2025 supporting the festival to achieve the following statistics:

Attendance & Access:

22,990 total attendances, 21,971 free attendances and 1,019 ticketed attendances

Artistic Investment:

100 artists engaged, 10 countries represented, 51 additional cultural workers employed plus new commissions and Irish premieres presented

Economic Impact:

€101,771.02 direct local spend, €13,000 generated by food vendors and €1,500 generated by craft vendors

Funding & Leverage:

€50,000 Carlow County Council subvention

Over €600,000 total festival income

National, international, and private investment leveraged

Engaged communities and cultivated audiences:

Culture Night

Culture Night in Carlow was a vibrant celebration of local creativity and community spirit, featuring **33 events across 27 venues** throughout the county. Audiences enjoyed an exciting mix of music, art, theatre, and family-friendly

activities, with **48 artists** taking part in the festivities. Feedback from event organisers showed the programme drew an **impressive 3,280 attendees**, highlighting the strong public enthusiasm for arts and culture in Carlow.

Carlow Writer in Residence Programme

Carlow Arts Service in collaboration with the Library Service demonstrated its commitment to literary development by appointing Irish Times bestselling author Caroline Busher as Writer in Residence. The residency centred on establishing a writers' collective for County Carlow, bringing together amateur and emerging writers who strengthened their skills under Caroline's mentorship. The collective provided a supportive space for writers to meet, exchange ideas, develop their craft and seek guidance, reflecting the programme's focus on long-term, inclusive, community-based initiatives.

Caroline initially delivered a sixweek series of workshops that booked out within hours of being announced. Owing to the overwhelming success of this pilot programme, Carlow Arts Service extended the residency into 2026, with weekly workshops continuing in Carlow Library.

Creative Ireland Carlow:

In 2025, Creative Ireland Carlow received a **core Budget of €163,064**. **31 Initiatives** were funded from this Core Budget. **4,323 people** engaged with these Initiatives, in which **100 creatives received funding**.

The Initiatives were spread across all three Municipal Districts and included a wide range of genres, including spoken word, Visual Art, Promotion of the Irish Language, poetry, creative writing, multi-disciplinary arts and cultural/ community development.

Three Initiative were completed in 2025 which were funded **through Additional Funding Streams with Carlow Arts Office securing over €191,500.**

1. St Columbanus Festival marked the culmination of a Shared Island Creative Ireland initiative supporting two major events honouring the legacy of St Columbanus. The programme provided funding for both the Columbanus Weekend in Carlow Town and Myshall and the long-established Columbanus Festival in Bangor, Co. Down, with each celebration highlighting the shared monastic heritage that links the two regions.

2. Live Music in Residential Care Settings: 18 concerts took place across 9 Residential Care Homes. 12 creatives received funding. The concerts were a huge success with a beautiful eclectic mix of music from Traditional, guitar, vocals, piano, ukelele to a Baritone.

3. Living Artfully, led by Carlow Arts Office funded 9 projects spanning across Kilkenny, with 4 in Carlow, under Creative Ireland Health and Wellbeing. It was an 18-month Initiative with a

budget of €156,500. 15 creatives received funding working with 85 participants, from specific targeted such as, young traveller men, a singing group for people suffering from Dementia, the Tullow Traveller womens group and a group from the Delta Centre, Hanover street. The 18 months culminated in an exhibition in Borris House in November. Testimonials from the group stated the long-term impact that this Initiative has had on their lives with one person stating ***“this has changed my life; it’s the thing I look forward to every week. This group is my lifeline.”***

In September 2025, Philip Cullen began a residency in Tullow, hosted in Forward Steps Family Resource Centre, bringing with him years of expertise. Philip is a highly skilled artist who trained in The Crawford college of Art and Design specialising in sculpture, film and creative writing. The group, which have creatively named themselves Blathra, meet every Thursday morning in Forward Steps FRC. Led by Philips expertise, they have grown in confidence and have created a supportive and expressionist environment. Philip’s work shows what is possible when an artist doesn’t just work in a community but works with it. Creative Ireland and Carlow County Council Arts office are delighted to support this residency and create a space where art belongs to everyone.

By supporting artists to collaborate, imagine, and create alongside local

people, we **champion artistic excellence while ensuring that creativity is accessible, inclusive, and rooted in shared experience.**

Championed Place-based Practice:

Take a Part Carlow:

Take A Part Carlow continued to strengthen its role as a key socially engaged arts organisation in the Tullow Rd area, delivering community focused arts activity focused on creativity, youth engagement, and cross programme collaboration.

The community worked alongside **Writer in Residence Clifton Redmond** to produce a graphic novel documenting his two-year engagement with them, which was launched on Culture Night 2025. Young people from CRYS in the Tullow Road and Bagenalstown performed a new commission together by artist Hugh Brown, a well-attended youth led performance as part of Carlow’s Cruinniú na nÓg Programme deepening a connection between TAPC and Creative Places Bagenalstown. The year’s programme closed off with a new project with artist Tom Meskell and Carlow Arts Office, based on the theme of habitat protection and caring for ‘our place’ with the community learning how to build large scale lanterns, working towards a procession event later in 2026-**in-Residence Clifton Redmond**-year engagement.

Creative Places Bagenalstown:

In 2025, CPB continued to deepen its roots across the town, nurturing a dynamic, people-centred arts ecology shaped through collaboration, curiosity and sustained community engagement. The year was marked by a vibrant programme of projects, including the *Children of Wolves Project* co-created in collaboration with Take A Part with young people of Carlow Regional Youth Service in Bagenalstown and the wider community, which activated public space and celebrated collective imagination. Supports were also provided to the Bagenalstown in Bloom festival through commissions and practical investment where funding for locally led initiatives, music entertainment from new emerging artists and strengthened the quality and accessibility, of cultural activity in the town.

Based on the research recommendations from Strand 1 funding, an emerging framework was created. *Cultivating a Creative Ecology 2025–2027*, champions a shift from transactional engagement to transformational co-creation introducing 5 interconnected Pillars. **The Pillars: The Activator, The Advocate, The Ambassadors, The Architects and The Associates** – recognise the vital importance of ‘people as pillars’ each playing a distinct yet collaborative role in cultivating a vibrant creative ecology in Bagenalstown.

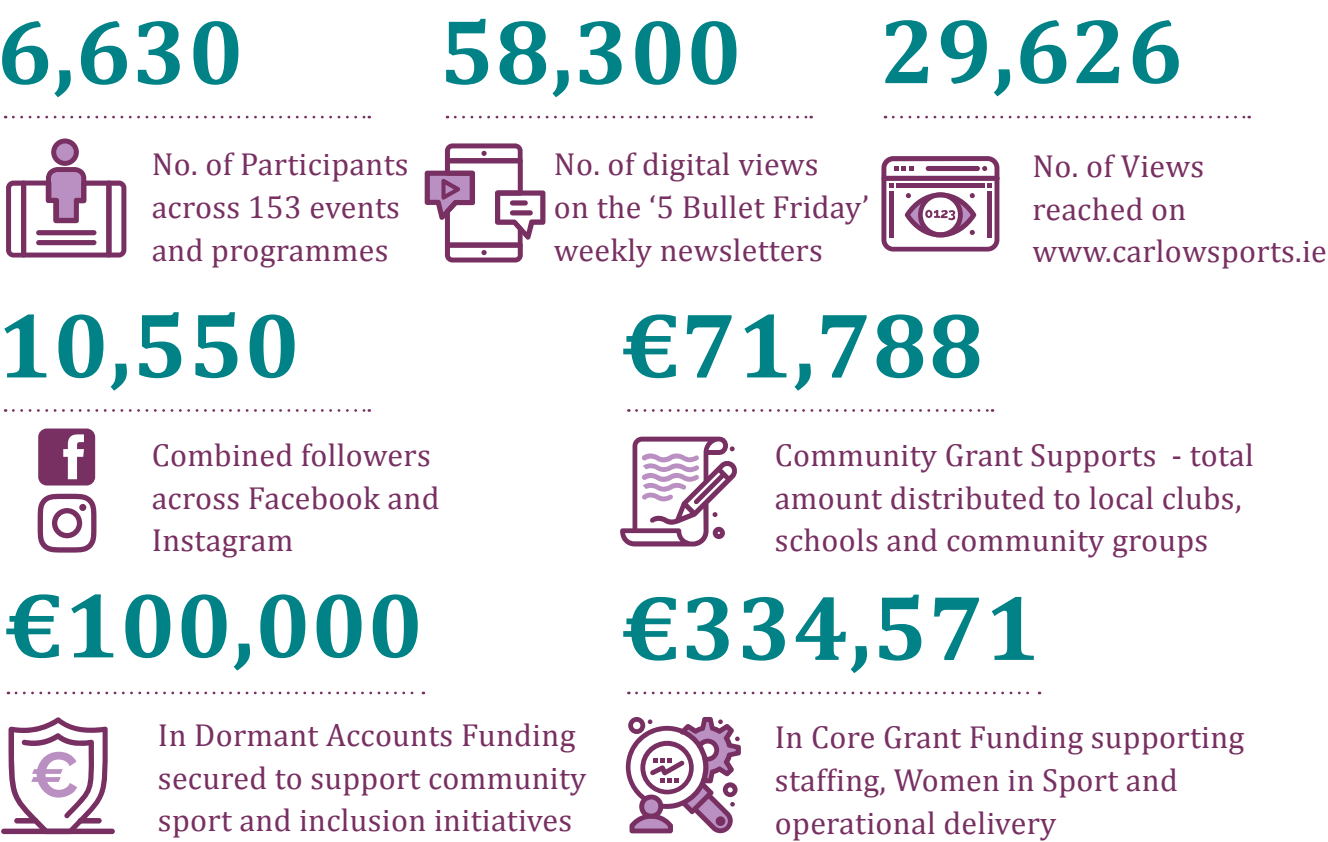
A funded Associateship agreement with Muine Bheag Arts as partners reflected this commitment and recognition until 2027. To strengthen the **Ambassador Pillar** a community connector role in supporting communities with artists was created and funded until 2026.



Arts Strategy Projection at the Town Hall



Active Carlow (Sport & Physical Activity) 2025



Active Carlow: Strengthening Inclusion, Participation and Community Life in 2025

In 2025, Active Carlow, as part of Carlow County Council, continued to strengthen opportunities for sport, physical activity, and community wellbeing across the county. **A total of 153 programmes, events, and training initiatives were delivered,** engaging 6,630 participants across all ages, abilities, and community groups.

A significant milestone during the year was the transition from Carlow Sports Partnership to Active Carlow, alongside



the launch of Carlow County Council's *Local Sports and Physical Activity Plan 2025–2029* and the *Active Carlow Strategic Plan*. These developments marked an important step in aligning local delivery with national policy while reinforcing a shared vision of 'Moving Together' to support lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.

Older adult engagement remained a key priority, with programmes such as ForeverFit, Active Agers, and community-based activity sessions supporting active ageing, social connection, and overall wellbeing. These initiatives provided accessible and welcoming opportunities for older adults to remain active while fostering strong community connections.



Women in Sport Hike
Mount Leinster

Supporting the participation of women and girls continued to be a central focus throughout 2025. Initiatives including Her Outdoors, Women in Sport Week, the Women's Hiking Series, and targeted female participation programmes created inclusive and encouraging environments for women and teenage girls to build confidence, develop skills, and engage in regular physical activity.

Inclusivity remained embedded across all areas of delivery, with inclusive camps, disability-focused initiatives, and targeted community programmes ensuring that children, young people, and adults with additional needs had meaningful opportunities to participate in sport and recreation in safe and supportive settings.

Strong collaboration with schools, clubs, community organisations, and national partners supported continued youth engagement through school-based programmes, balance bike initiatives, and youth activity programmes, encouraging lifelong participation in sport and physical activity from an early age.

Outdoor recreation and community wellbeing initiatives also continued to expand, with walking programmes, cycling initiatives, outdoor activities, and community events encouraging people to utilise local amenities and natural assets while supporting both physical and mental wellbeing. Training and education remained a key pillar of delivery, with safeguarding, disability awareness, autism in sport, first aid, and CPR & defibrillator training provided to coaches, volunteers,

and community leaders, strengthening local capacity and ensuring inclusive, safe, and sustainable programme delivery across the county.

Overall, 2025 represented a year of both strategic progress and strong programme delivery, highlighting Active Carlow's role within Carlow County Council in supporting inclusive participation, community wellbeing, and active living across County Carlow.

2025 at a Glance

- 153 programmes, events & training initiatives delivered
- 6,630 total participants engaged
- 3,800+ participants reached through core participation programmes
- 400+ participants supported through training and education initiatives
- 2,000+ participants engaged through targeted interventions and inclusion programmes
- Launch of the *Local Sports & Physical Activity Plan 2025–2029*
- Publication of the *Active Carlow Strategic Plan*
- Rebrand to Active Carlow (formerly Carlow Sports Partnership)

St Columbanus Weekend Day 2





Carlow continues to prioritize promoting positive mental health, encouraging physical activity, and fostering social connections.

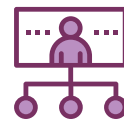
Museum

20,000 plus



No. of Visitors

4 plus AGM



Museum Board
Number of Meetings



Museum Standards Programme of Ireland
(MSPI) Status Awarded Full Accreditation in July 2023

The Board of Carlow County Museum

The Board of Carlow County Museum held four meetings throughout the year. At the 18th Annual General Meeting of the Board Gary Hughes was elected Chairperson for 2025 replacing Cllr. Andrea Dalton.

Carlow Methodist Church Unveilings

On Saturday March 1st, Cllr. Fergal Browne, Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council, and Rev. John Alderdice, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, unveiled two objects of historical significance for the Carlow Methodists community in Carlow County Museum. The two items are a limestone plaque from 1789 commemorating the last visit to the town by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and the second item is a beautiful 1899 tablecloth containing the hand stitched signatures of one hundred and eighty-three people.

The conservation and relocation of the 1798 plaque was funded by a Heritage Council's Heritage Stewardship Fund grant while the conservation of the tablecloth



Cllr. Fergal Browne and Rev. John Alderdice unveiling a tablecloth from 1899

received funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, through its Regional Museum Exhibitions Scheme.

Lucinda Sly 190th Anniversary

On Sunday March 30th, Mother's Day, the one hundred and ninetieth anniversary to the day of Lucinda Sly's execution for murder at Carlow Gaol in 1835, Rev Paul Fitzpatrick, St Mary's Church, Fr Thomas O'Byrne, Carlow Cathedral, and Cllr Fergal Browne, Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council, lead a dignified commemoration at in the Carlow Shopping Centre, which was coordinated by Carlow County Museum.

Pan Celtic International Festival

Once again, the town successfully hosted the International Pan Celtic Festival, coordinated by Glór Cheatharlach. The Museum had a special bilingual tour for visitors to the festival. The Museum played hosts to a display by the Borris Lacemakers, which allowed people to experience this 19th century County Carlow craft that has been successfully revived in the recent decade.

Dreamtime Ireland Exhibition

The Summer Season at VISUAL and Carlow Arts Festival 2025 was launched in June. The main exhibition in Visual is Dreamtime Ireland, an exhibition and research project by artist Sean Lynch at both VISUAL and Carlow County Museum.

Drawn from historical and contemporary artworks and artefacts, over thirty presentations are spread throughout Carlow's gallery and museum spaces, each exploring art's potential to provoke, investigate and critique the shape and purpose of Irish culture.

With an emphasis on public art, social and conceptual practice, Dreamtime Ireland reveals an undercurrent of exchange and interaction between art and society, proposing artmaking as a way to live, make and share the complex world and environments we encounter today. The exhibition in the Museum displayed works by Seanie Barron, David Beattie, Sean Lynch, Nollaig Mollo, Olivia Pender, Johanna Robles and Michael Higgins.

Crinniú na nÓg

The annual national day for children, Crinniú na nÓg took place on Saturday June 7th. The day is coordinated in the county by the Carlow Arts Office. The Museum had a busy day, hoisting the ever popular The Big Dig, where children up to the age of twelve experience what it's like to be an archaeologist. Inside in the Museum, TY students for St Leo's College, hosted a medieval Carlow display. They had recreated Carlow Castle and Clonmore Castle with the game Minecraft, allowing people to explore what they had created. Their project is part of the Burlandschaft Education and Information Centre, Eschau, Germany, whose aim is to make monuments more accessible through projects and events.

Curious Carlow Podcasts

As part of the preparations for Crinniú na nÓg in Carlow County Museum, through Crinniú na nÓg, engaged Create School to work with one 4th class in Askea Boys and Askea Girls schools to create Series 3 of the Curious Carlow Podcast looking at the history and heritage of the county.

Hopping Procession in Honour of St Willibrord

From Sunday 8th to Wednesday 11th of June the Museum coordinated the visit of twenty-one people to partake in the annual Hopping Procession in Echternach, Luxembourg. As well as pilgrims led by Fr Thomas O'Byrne, Administrator of Carlow Cathedral, the group was led by Cllr Fintan Phelan, Mayor of the Municipal





*Annual Hopping Procession
in Echternach, Luxembourg*



Visit to Echternach, Luxembourg

The Carlow Local Enterprise Office, through Kieran Comerford, Head of Enterprise, and Seamus Doran, Deputy Head of Enterprise, led an economic delegation of Norah Ryan, President of the Carlow Chamber of Commerce, Nicola Doran, Chief Executive of the Carlow Chamber of Commerce, and Gemma Purcell, SETU. The group were met by Her Excellency Jean McDonald, Ireland's Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and Caoimhe McCarthy, Deputy Head of Mission, at the Irish Embassy.

On Monday June 9th, the group travelled to the medieval town of Vianden, and

hometown to Her Excellency Florence Ensich, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg's Ambassador to Ireland where Mayor Francy Weyrich, Mayor of Vianden, hosted a reception for the group.

On Tuesday June 10th the group were in Echternach and took part in the annual UNESCO World Heritage status Hopping Procession in honour of St Willibrord. Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg, included a welcome for the group from Carlow and thanked us for sending them St Willibrord. Over the course of the morning nearly 10,000 people hopped through the streets of Echternach.

The Luxembourg Embassy celebrated their national day on Thursday June and a Carlow delegation was invited to attend.

In July as part of his official visit to Luxembourg, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin was escorted by Luxembourg Prime Minister Luc Frieden on a visit to Echternach where they explored the connection between Carlow and Echternach and heard about the recent re-connection over the last twenty-five years.



*An Taoiseach Micheál Martin with
Luxembourg Prime Minister Luc Frieden*

Chinese Embassy Visit

The Museum welcomed Ms Shujie Chen, First Secretary for Culture and Tourism, and Ms Yaodan Hu, Second Secretary for Cultural and Tourism Affairs, from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, who were visiting Carlow Town.

Exhibition Launch: Ireland and the Birth of Europe

As part of County Carlow hosting the XXVI Columbanus Weekend celebrations the Museum was the first venue to hold an event for the weekend, with the launch of the exhibition 'Ireland and the Birth of Europe' in partnership with the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, the Shared Ireland Initiative and Creative Ireland, Carlow. The very well attended exhibition was launched by Professor Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, University of Galway, and Bishop Denis Nulty.

The exhibition explores the early Irish monastic scholars who left Ireland for the continent, including Carlow born St Columbanus. Among the large crowd gathered for the launch was Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, Papal Nuncio and Her Excellency Florence Ensich, Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Ireland.

Sugar Factory 1925 Poster

The Museum presented a copy of the 100th year old Carlow Nationalist printed poster seeking public support for the establishment of the Sugar Factory in

Carlow, for display in the Town Hall where the famous meeting took place on July 24th, 1925. The original poster is on display in Carlow County Museum. The meeting was pivotal in demonstrating to Lippens, the Belgium company chosen by the Irish government to establish a sugar factory in Ireland, that Carlow was the place to build the factory.

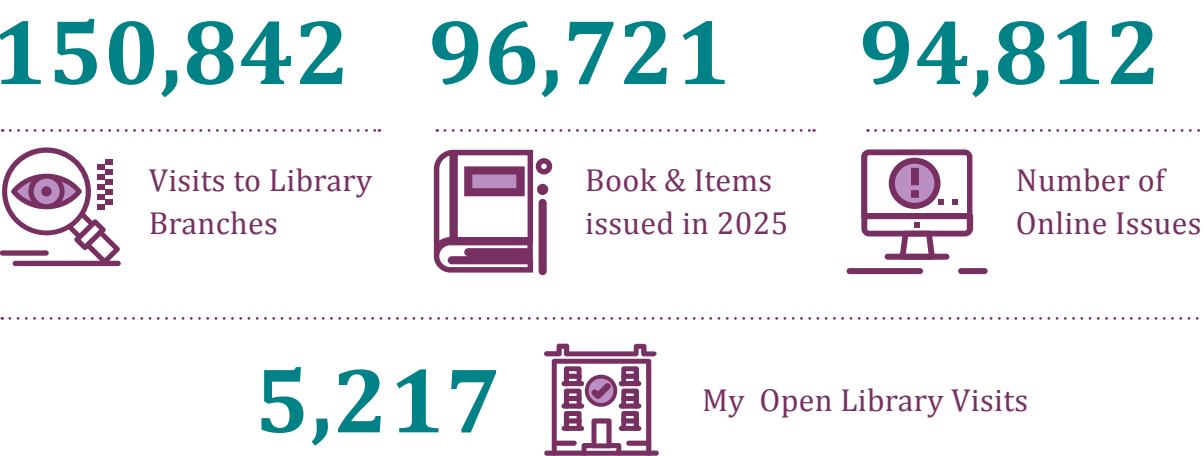
Local Authority Heritage Professionals Seminar

Museum staff attended the Heritage Council's 'Local Authority Heritage Professionals Seminar' hosted in the National Gallery of Ireland. This is the first such seminar that the Heritage Council have organised. A variety of local authority heritage professionals attended the event. Coilin O Reilly, CE, spoke on Carlow County Council's experience of developing its heritage resource, including Carlow County Museum.

Carlow Historical & Archaeological Society (CHAS) Lecture

Dermot Mulligan presented the November CHAS public lecture in the Seven Oaks Hotel on 52 Years of Collecting: The Evolution of Carlow County Museum. The lecture reviewed how CHAS pioneered the development of the Museum from the early 1970's and the three locations the museum has been since it opened in December 1973, including the present one on College Street operated by Carlow County Council.

Carlow County Library Service



Events

Pan Celtic Festival

Carlow Libraries welcomed 228 attendees to family storytelling sessions and a performance by the Carlow Storytellers. The Shaw Room hosted an exhibition by the Barrow Valley Art Group and the festival was featured in a live Ireland AM broadcast from the library.

Cruinniú na nÓg

Almost 100 students from St. Laserian's School took part in six weeks of sensory workshops delivered in collaboration with the Arts Office. The final workshop was open to all, with a focus on neurodivergent children. Additional events included AHA Storytellers in Bagenalstown Library and a Creative Craft Workshop in Borris Library.

Heritage Week

Carlow Libraries facilitated 15 events, attended by over 150 children, featuring crafts and traditional skills workshops.



Carlow Central Library hosted two adult talks, and the Local Studies department supported a guided tour of Ballyellen Graveyard.

National Public Libraries Open Day

Events showcased library services across the county, including themed storytimes with Wibbly Wobbly Wendy, Storytellers of Oak Park, and author J.J. Kennedy. A total of 64 children attended.

Culture Night

Nearly 250 attendees participated in cultural events including poetry, African and Ukrainian singing, children's crafts, and performances by the Carlow Storytellers. Tullow Library hosted an exhibition featuring ten local craft practitioners.

Samhain Festival

Over 190 participants attended Halloween-themed events across the county, including arts and crafts, cookery classes, clay workshops, Dave's Jungle, and children's storytelling.



Clay Monster Workshop for Samhain 2025

An adult talk, From Murder to Miscarriage, explored the secrets buried in ancient bones.

South East Science Festival

In partnership with Calmast (SETU), Carlow Libraries hosted three Science Week events - The Fascinating World of Gemstones, Dave's Jungle, and The Nutty Scientists - with over 100 attendees of all ages.

Lunchtime in the Library

The annual talk series returned with three speakers: bestselling author Carmel Harrington, local author and GAA aficionado John Kelly, and author, playwright and documentarian John MacKenna. 42 attendees engaged with the authors and enjoyed the opportunity to meet the authors and hear them reading their own work.

Irish Design Week

A full-day Jewellery Design Workshop led by Liga Valge invited participants to explore techniques and create bespoke pieces.

Féile Lonrach

The Shaw Room became a festive Santa Room for December. Across the county, over 320 children and adults attended 12 events including letter-writing, storytimes, carol singing, and craft workshops.

Age-Friendly Initiatives

Cancer Prevention Talk:

Ann Bray, HSE Health Promotion Officer, delivered a session on cancer prevention and symptom awareness.

Singing for Wellbeing:

Funded by Healthy Carlow, this popular programme ran across all library branches, with over 500 participants attending 40 workshops from February to October.

Device Advice Clinic:

Responding to local demand, Muinebheag Library piloted a four-week digital support clinic. Fourth-year students from PDLS Muinebheag assisted older users with mobile phone and tablet skills, receiving very positive feedback.

Women's Midlife Health Talk:

For International Women's Day, Breeda Bermingham - Menopause Educator and author - delivered an informative talk on midlife health and menopause.

Chair Yoga:

Chair-based yoga sessions in Carlow and Borris libraries attracted 148 participants across 16 classes from July to September.

Exhibitions

More than 600 people viewed exhibitions in the Shaw Room. Displays included:

- 'A Moment in Time' – Barrow Valley Art Group
- Tullow Men's Shed – 'Bealtaine Living Earth Festival'
- Carlow Choral Society – '60-Year Retrospective'
- Chroma Art Group – Carlow Arts Festival
- Refugee Week – LAIT collaboration with Ukrainian artists
- 'A Day in the Life of a Foster Family' – Tusla photographic exhibition
- 'Carlow in the Snow' – local artist Caoimhe Kelleher
- 'Christmas Wreath Project' – a KCETB community initiative involving service users from Park Lodge and Elm Park Rehabilitation Services

My Open Library Services

Tullow – 'My Open Library' Launch

County Carlow's third *My Open Library* (MOL) service was officially launched in Tullow Library on 22 May 2025 by the Cathaoirleach of Tullow Municipal District, Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue. The event was led by Branch Manager John Patton and featured contributions from Gemma Loughman (Forward Steps Resource Centre) and Eileen Doyle (Cairdeas Centre). Musical performances by pupils from Scoil Phádraig Naofa highlighted the library's strong community connections.



Launch of My Open Library Tullow

Borris Library – Meeting Room Usage

Since the introduction of *My Open Library* in October 2023, use of Borris Library's Meeting Room has increased significantly. The space now supports nine community groups, up from two before MOL, covering activities such as arts and crafts, youth programmes, and Fáilte Isteach. Five groups meet outside staffed hours, highlighting the value of extended access. The room also hosts one-off events including information sessions, community meetings, and library programmes. It accommodates around 30 sessions per month, involving an estimated 200 participants.

In 2025, 1,501 *My Open Library* members used the service, and the library recorded 14,453 visits in total.

Feedback has been very positive, emphasising the room's accessibility and its importance as a shared community resource. The continued growth in use demonstrates MOL's role in strengthening participation, inclusion and access to public services.

The installation of *My Open Library* services was funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with matched funding from Carlow County Council.

Local Studies, Genealogy and Archive Services

Local History Bursary

The Local History Bursary continued to support the documentation and celebration of Carlow's heritage, enabling the publication of significant works that contribute to local historical understanding and cultural preservation.

Three major publications supported by this Bursary were launched during October and December:

- **'The Last Irish Wolf'** – John MacKenna, illustrated by Faye Tucker. Launched on 14 October in Carlow Library with over 80 attendees, this bilingual children's book recounts the killing of Ireland's last wild wolf on Mount Leinster in 1786.
- **'Tullow Through the Ages'** – Christopher McQuinn, launched by historian Turtle Bunbury. This 600-page volume charts the history of Tullow from the Bronze Age to the present, based on extensive local research.
- **'Just Try It! A History of Carlow Little Theatre Society 1945–2025'**. Launched to mark the Society's 80th anniversary with special guest, actor Patrick Bergin. The book includes an introduction by former President Michael D. Higgins.



Heritage Stewardship Grant

Carlow's Heritage Stewardship Fund secured €7650 for the conservation of three important collections: Vigor Papers, Braganza House Papers and Douglas River Map series. These fragile documents were professionally conserved to safeguard valuable insights into Carlow's social, economic, and geographic history. This grant was supported by matched funding from Carlow County Council.

Virtual Treasury Roadshow

In February, Carlow Libraries and Carlow County Archives hosted a fully booked Virtual Treasury Roadshow in Carlow Library. Speakers explored Carlow's history through materials preserved in the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland.

Presentations were delivered by:

Louise Kennedy – Carlow County Archives
Christopher Power – Carlow Local Studies
Dr Ciarán Wallace – Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland
Dr Lynn Kilgallon – VRTI Research Fellow
Dr Brian Gurrin – VRTI Research Fellow

Decade of Centenaries Programme

Carlow County Council received €15,155 to support a series of commemorative projects:

Carlow Sugar Factory

- A one-hour radio documentary and podcast by Marc-Ivan O'Gorman exploring the social and economic impact of the Carlow Sugar Factory.

*Little Girl collecting
My Little Library Bag
August 2025*



The campaign centred on five core programmes - **My Little Library Bag**, **Spring into Storytime**, **Summer Stars**, **Children's Book Festival**, and **Family Time at Your Library** - all delivered in partnership with local organisations and supported by professional facilitators. Participation grew across all initiatives. Summer Stars increased by 25%, engaging 796 children, and over 80% of eligible school starters received their My Little Library Bags.

Attendance at literacy events rose throughout the year, reflecting increased public engagement with library services.

Additional literacy supports were enhanced, including continued provision of TTRS and Lexia licences and further expansion of the *Class Novel Sets* scheme, ensuring locally accessible reading resources for primary schools. The annual *Right to Read Short Story Competition*, delivered in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), concluded with an awards ceremony at the Dolmen Hotel in December. Teachers, students, families, and elected members attended to celebrate young writers, with remarks from Writer in Residence Caroline Busher.

Story Streets – National Pilot

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) selected Story Streets, a Carlow Library initiative, as one of two programmes for national roll-out. Designed to support

Scheduled for release in early 2026.

- A curated, digitised selection of archival images documenting the Sugar Factory from 1925 to the early 2000s. A travelling exhibition will tour the county.

A play focused on the 1931 Irish Sugar Beet Growers Dispute developed by Carlow Writers' Group with guidance from Writer in Residence Caroline Busher. The script, based on primary sources and correspondence, will be available for community performance.

Drummond Bridge Restoration

To mark its centenary in 2025, Drummond Bridge in St. Mullins underwent conservation works, including vegetation clearance, plaque cleaning, and restoration. A community celebration took place on 17 August, followed by a gathering in the village hall.

Centenarians' Medals

Carlow County Council presented Centenarians' Medals to six recipients: Margaret Kenna (Ballickmoyler), Carmel Ward (Tullogh), Liam Mullins (Carlow Town), Eileen O'Leary (Carlow Town), Catherine Leahy (Bagenalstown) and Noel Alcock (Bagenalstown).

Supporting Reading and Literacy

Right to Read

In 2025, the Library Service continued to implement the national *Right to Read Action Plan*, delivering a strong programme of literacy-focused events across all branches.



disadvantaged children and families, the project is funded through the Children's Fund, with the long-term goal of refining the model, expanding to additional counties and ultimately establishing Story Streets as a national public library programme.

In 2025 - the second year of the pilot - programme evaluation was completed, support materials were developed, and the initiative expanded to an additional four library branches, marking a significant step in its phased national development.

Skills for Life

In 2025, Carlow County Council Library Service delivered a strong programme under the national Skills for Life initiative, a key action of the national Public Library Strategy. This is a nationwide initiative which aims to empower individuals at all stages in their lives to develop and maintain essential skills needed to navigate the changing world successfully.

From mid-July to mid-December, 688 participants engaged in Skills for Life events across the four library branches. The programme included:

- 4 courses delivered in partnership with KCETB Community Education

- 7 talks on Media Literacy, Financial Literacy, Sustainable Lifestyles, and Environmental Awareness
- 34 wellbeing workshops across three libraries, in collaboration with Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Healthy Carlow, including Singing for Wellbeing and Chair Yoga
- Media Literacy workshops with Eimear Ní Bhraonáin in all four branches for International Literacy Day, attended by 59 participants

This initiative places strong emphasis on empowering people of all ages to develop essential life, digital and wellbeing skills.

Lego Stop Motion Animation Club

A new *Lego Stop Motion Animation Club* was launched in Bagenalstown Library for children aged 8–12. Held monthly, the club supports digital creativity and media literacy through hands-on learning.

Participants use tablets, free animation software, and Lego materials to create short films. Sessions introduce the principles of stop-motion production before children independently design and animate their own projects. Completed films are shared digitally with parents.

The club has generated strong engagement and imaginative outputs, leading to the creation of additional sets and backgrounds to support more complex storytelling.



Askea Afterschools Programme

CRYS Afterschools Programme

A new partnership with Carlow Regional Youth Service (CRYS) supported regular library visits for a group of 10–12-year-olds from February to May. Across six sessions, children took part in literacy-focused activities including scavenger hunts, book-display creation, and 'little librarian' tasks. The programme aimed to familiarise participants with library services while supporting their literacy development.



Askea Afterschools Programme



Climate Action

Energy Advice Clinics

Energy Advice Clinics were held in Carlow Central Library in January and February, facilitated by the South East Energy Agency. Attendees received personalised guidance on home energy efficiency, insulation, heating systems, upgrade options and reducing energy costs. The clinics were well attended and received very positive feedback.

The LEAF Project

Funded by the Environment Section of Carlow County Council, two organic gardening workshops for adults and children took place in Carlow Library in March. Led by sustainability consultant Aoife Munn, the workshops introduced participants to organic planting techniques. The Green Schools Committee of Scoil Muire Gan Smál attended the children's session and brought home their own mini gardening projects.

Flip It, Fix It, Flaunt It

In collaboration with Dee Sewell, Environmental Awareness Officer, Carlow Library hosted a workshop for ages 12–16 focused on sustainable fashion. Under the guidance of Athena Brownrigg, participants learned how to repair, revamp, and creatively upcycle their clothing.

Bealtaine Living Earth Festival

As part of the festival, Carlow Men's Shed showcased furniture made from donated and sustainable materials in a display

hosted in Carlow Library in partnership with Calmast.

Biodiversity Week

Carlow Central Library delivered an aquatic wildlife workshop for local schools, facilitated by David Rafter, Carlow Community Water Officer, and Shane Casey, Carlow Biodiversity Officer.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff of Carlow

In December, RTÉ visited Carlow Library to record a feature on **The Three Billy Goats Gruff of Carlow**, a Carlow County Council publication. This local retelling replaces the traditional troll with an 'evil lawnmower' roaming a small Carlow town. The 28-page book is available to borrow from all library branches.

Electric Van

2025 marked the first full year of operation of the Peugeot Partner Electric which replaced the former diesel Ford Transit. The transition has delivered clear environmental, operational and financial benefits.

The electric vehicle has contributed to reduced carbon emissions and improved local air quality, supporting the library service's sustainability objectives and the wider climate targets of Carlow County Council.

Operational costs have also decreased, reflecting lower electricity prices compared with diesel and reduced maintenance requirements typical of electric vehicles.

A dedicated charging point installed at the Tullow Street premises has enabled efficient, on-site charging, ensuring reliable daily operation and improved service planning. The van's climate-action branding further enhances public awareness of our commitment to environmental responsibility and visibly promotes climate action within the community, marking the first full year of operation, the electric vehicle has helped to reduce carbon.

Investing in Technology

Printing System Upgrade

In February 2025, Carlow Libraries completed a significant upgrade of its public printing service. Working in partnership with SurfBox, new public printers were installed across all four library branches, with printing capacity in Carlow Central Library doubled to meet growing demand. The new system has delivered faster, more reliable, and more responsive printing for the public, while also improving staff workflows by reducing delays and simplifying system management.

ScanEZ Installation

In early 2025, Carlow Central Library introduced SurfBox's ScanEZ system, providing a much-needed modern and user-friendly scanning solution. The ScanEZ offers advanced features including translation tools capable of converting scanned documents into over 100 languages, text-enhancement technology to improve clarity and

editability, and built-in accessibility supports such as screen magnification, audio guidance, and high-contrast display options. The system has benefited both the public and staff, who are increasingly using it to support daily administrative tasks.

Digital Display Screen

In May 2025, Carlow Central Library installed a new digital display screen supplied by AllVision. The high-brightness screen ensures clear visibility even in daylight and supports dynamic content including images, videos, and announcements. It has proven to be an effective tool for promoting library programmes as well as initiatives from other Council sections, including Community and Tourism. A similar display is planned for installation in Tullow Library in 2026.

Cathaoirleach’s Bursary

The 2025 Cathaoirleach’s Bursary, announced by Cllr. Fergal Browne in partnership with Carlow County Council Library Service, provided six bursaries to support postgraduate students living in County Carlow. Each recipient received an Apple MacBook Air to assist with research and study, reflecting the Council’s commitment to promoting academic progression and innovation at master’s and PhD level. The bursary attracted strong interest and is scheduled to run again in Spring 2026.

Library Staff Training Seminar

The Library Service held its inaugural Staff Training Seminar in May. The programme featured presentations on Digital Media Literacy, the Role of Libraries, and Personal Wellbeing, followed by an afternoon of staff feedback, discussion, and shared learning.

This was the first occasion since 2020 that all library staff gathered in person, marking an important step in supporting continuous professional development across the service. The seminar is intended to become an annual event.

Social Media Engagement

Social Media Platform	Followers
Facebook	5,670
Instagram	1,567

Online Issues

eBooks	8,324 downloads
eAudiobooks	17,669 downloads
eMagazines	13,667 downloads
eNewspapers	55,152 articles read

Events

Library Branch	No. of Events
Muinebheag Library	140
Borris Library	358
Carlow Library	371
Tullow Library	277
Total 1,146	

Coffee Morning - Tullow Fire Station



Heritage Services

4



Carlow Heritage
Forum Meetings
Held

14



Community Heritage
Funding Applications
Supported

50



Heritage
Week Events

Carlow Heritage Forum and County

The members of the 'Carlow Heritage Forum' had four quarterly meeting in 2025. The Forum meetings were formal meetings in the County Chamber and two meetings around the county with a focussed site visit to discuss community projects. In June 2025 the Old Leighlin Tidy Towns hosted the Forum with a visit to St. Lazerians Holy Well; a tour of

Old Leighlin Cathedral led by Padraig Dooley and a visit to the biodiversity garden. This was followed by the Forum meeting in the Old Leighlin Community Centre. In September 2025 the Hacketstown Development Association and Hacketstown Biodiversity Garden hosted the Forum, with a visit to the Biodiversity Garden and followed by the Forum meeting in the recently opened Hacketstown Business Hub.

Heritage Forum at St. Lazerians Holly Wells



Carlow Heritage Seminar 2025

The second annual 'County Carlow Heritage Seminar' took place in the Woodford Dolmen Hotel in Carlow town on Saturday 12 April 2025 and was opened by Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fergal Browne. The seminar consisted of a range of invited speakers from representatives of community groups with ongoing heritage projects to staff of heritage organisations that are involved with groups in County Carlow. The invited speakers included Dr. Deirdre Nuttall on the topic of Oral Histories and Ethnology; Eoin Sullivan, Aisling O'Connor and Clifton Redmond on Creative Carlow's Holy Wells Project; Carmel Owens on the Conservation of Sherwood Park House; Lorna Elms of the Irish Community Archive Network; Louise Maher and Adrian Roche on the Carlow Water Pumps Project; Margaret Doyle on the Audit and Communication of the Heritage of Kildavin; Nial O'Neill on the Archaeological Excavation at Ballymoon Castle; Liam Furlong and Liam Furlong on their Tinryland Heritage App and Shane Casey on the Nature of our Heritage. The papers as presented were recorded by a visual scribe and the image is now on permanent public display in the Carlow County Library Headquarters, Tullow Street, Carlow.

Historic Town Initiative Plan – Heritage -led Regeneration for Carlow Town

The Historic Towns Initiative Plan - *Heritage-led Regeneration Plan for Carlow Town* was adopted by Carlow County Council at the February meetings. The

HTI Plan outlines a comprehensive set of actions reflective of the wishes of the community through the extensive public consultation in preparation of the plan. The plan will now form the basis for future HTI funding applications to address vacancy and dereliction in historic properties in Carlow town. The HTI plan formed part of the successful THRIVE application for Court Place, Carlow Town.

Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)

The inaugural Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) in-person meeting for the Carlow community groups took place in Carlow County Library Headquarters, Local Studies and Archive on 3 July 2025. The groups of Naomh Eoin GAA Club, Myshall; Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society (CHAS) and Barragh and Cranavane group, Kildavin met with the Lorna Elms (iCAN Development Officer) to discuss the steps involved in setting up the County Carlow iCAN website. The groups were welcomed by John Shortall, Carlow County Librarian, Louise Kennedy (Carlow County Archivist) and Christopher Power (Local Studies/ Genealogy).

Irish Community Archive Network

Funding awarded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the *Built Heritage Investment Scheme* ensured the delivery of much needed conservation works to several historic structure in County Carlow in 2025. The grant scheme leveraged investment from property owners (Drohan house,

Borris; 59 Dublin Street, Carlow; Blacklion RIC Barracks, Ardattin and Old Rectory, Killedmond, Borris), businesses (O'Dúinn Butchers, Muine Bheag and Ballykealey House, Ballon), community groups such as Borris Tidy Towns Group (Kavanagh Monument, Borris) and church bodies (Holy Trinity Church, Bilboa, Carlow).

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025

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Archaeological Excavation at Carlow College, St. Patrick's

Carlow County Council through the Carlow Heritage Office undertook a test archaeological excavation in the grounds of Carlow College, St. Patrick's, College Street, Carlow town. The area was identified by the Carlow Heritage Office as a significant site for research and potential investigation as part of a **Carlow Town Wall project**. The site was subject to a geophysical survey in 2024 with

funding secured under the *Community Monuments Fund*. The excavation, with the support of the Carlow Area Engineer and his crew, took place in August 2025 within a cordoned off portion of the front lawn of Carlow College, St. Patrick's. The excavation under the Direction of Barry Lacey revealed shallow archaeological strata truncated by a shallow ditch, the morphology of which would suggest a defensive nature. The preliminary dating at the time of the excavation is suggestive of the ditch being built with the Cromwellian times and indicates the location of a defensive ditch to protect the town of Carlow at this period in the history of the town. One of the aim of the project was to communicate the value of archaeological research and excavation to the public. A series of short videos recounting the progress of the excavation are available on the Carlow County Library YouTube channel – **carlowcountylibrary - YouTube**. Carlow County Council thanks the President and Registrar of Carlow College St. Patrick's for granting their consent for the geophysical survey and subsequent excavation to take place on their property. Thanks also to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for issuing the excavation licence and funding the initial geophysical survey.

Heritage Week 2025

'National Heritage Week 2025' took place from Saturday 16 - Sunday 24 August 2025. Fifty events took place around County Carlow, related to the theme of 'Heritage at Risk'. The events

were organised by Carlow Heritage Office in collaboration with community groups, individuals and invited guests, Active Carlow and County Carlow Library Service. Several events were delivered by community groups that had ongoing heritage funded projects in 2025. The week started in County Carlow with a tour of Ballyellen Graveyard and an event celebrating the respiration of a stained-glass window in St. Patrick's Church, Newtown. The community in Drummin held an event celebrating the cleaning of a bridge in the village and the family events offered children and parents an opportunity to take in old style games. The Borris Lacemakers brought the village to live with their event '**Lace on the village green**' and the Rathanna community held a public screening of their final video that tells the story of people's school memories of their national school days. The County Carlow Library Service organised a series of popular child and family friendly events from jewellery making, old fashioned butter and jam making to crocheting hats. Carlow County Museum and Carlow Military Museum ran a series of engaging events and Huntington Castle hosted a lecture on the heritage of Clonegal and a guided walk of the grounds.

Culture Night 2025

As part of Culture Night 2025, the project team involved in the Creative Carlow's Holy Wells Project held a night-time event at St. Lazerians Holy Well in Old Leighlin, Carlow. The event consisted of a short account of the history of the site

by Eoin Sullivan (Heritage Officer) and Caroline Busher, the role of wellbeing in our everyday life by Aisling O'Connor and poetry reading by Clifton Redmond.

Creative Carlow's Holy well – Life Springs Eternal

The '**Creative Carlow's Holy Wells**' project progressed in 2025 to consider the impact that engaging with a Holy Well might have on a person's wellbeing. The project was CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL designed around two free coach trips, with volunteers being given the option to take part in the study. The participants visited two Holy Wells, St. Lazerian's in Old Leighlin and Cranavane Holy Well, Kildavin and this was repeated on the second day. The groups were provided with lunch in the recently opened Tinryland Community Hub. The visits took place in September and October 2025. Those attending the visits, were treated to some of Clifton Redmond's poetry readings of his poems that reflect the progress of the project, as opposed to just the Holy Wells themselves. The quantitative survey designed and analysed by Aisling O'Connor, revealed a lower in participants anxiety as the they spent more time at the Holy Wells. It is intended to publish a booklet of the poems as the creative response to the project. The project was funded by Creative Ireland and Carlow County Council and was a collaboration between the Arts and Heritage Offices.

Shackleton Connections

The Carlow Heritage Office was pleased to work with a community group in Carlow town centred around St. Mary's Church of Ireland, Church Street. The church was the wedding location of the parents of the explorer, Ernest Shackleton. The group has undertaken research into the Shackleton connections with Carlow town and the County. As part of the project, a cultural event of music, song and some of the Shackleton family history was presented in St. Mary's Church in September 2025. This project will progress over the coming year to investigate the Shackleton Connections to Carlow town and environs.

Motor Tax

Carlow County Council's Motor Tax Department delivers a high standard of service.

The public office is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 12.30pm and the online service is available 24/7 - 365 days per year at www.motortax.ie. and accounts for circa 82.45% of all transactions.

In 2025 14,366 transactions were processed in the Motor Tax public office to a value of €2.86 million. In addition, 67,505 transactions were processed online to a value of €10.4 million. Total 81,871 transactions to a value of € 13.26 million.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) at 31st December 2025

	2025 €	2024 €
Fixed Assets	1,161,579,710	1,142,113,240
Work in Progress and Preliminary Expenses	9,605,660	7,473,106
Long Term Debtors	64,384,002	63,219,422
Current Assets		
Stocks	0	0
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	14,304,512	16,197,077
Bank Investments	55,350,002	53,600,014
Cash at Bank	3,223,451	2,543,428
Cash in Transit	81,222	65,245
Total Current Assets	72,959,187	72,405,765
Current Liabilities		
Bank Overdraft	0	0
Creditors & Accruals	17,106,413	16,811,256
Finance Leases	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	17,106,413	16,811,256
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	55,852,774	55,594,509
Creditors		
Loans Payable	30,788,272	31,976,383
Finance Leases	0	0
Refundable deposits	4,187,629	4,611,703
Other	26,500,095	24,030,106
Total Creditors	61,475,996	60,618,192
Net Assets	1,229,946,150	1,207,782,086
Financed by		
Capitalisation Account	1,161,579,710	1,142,113,240
Income WIP	8,109,579	5,041,209
General Revenue Reserve	1,043,195	997,435
Other Balances	59,213,665	59,630,202
Total Reserves	1,229,946,150	1,207,782,086

Appendix 2

Statement of Comprehensive Income (Income & Expenditure Account Statement)

For year ended 31st December 2025

The income and expenditure account statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus (deficit) for the year.

Expenditure by Division

	Gross Expenditure 2025 €	Income 2025 €	Net Expenditure 2025 €	Net Expenditure 2024 €
Housing & Building	21,890,269	25,213,988	-3,323,719	-3,990,163
Roads Transportation & Safety	15,188,712	9,732,105	5,456,607	5,181,927
Water Services	15,188,712	9,732,105	5,456,607	5,181,927
Development Management	9,156,872	3,917,069	5,239,804	4,725,993
Environmental Services	11,489,838	3,535,572	7,954,266	7,490,071
Recreation & Amenity	5,834,728	200,730	5,633,998	5,270,036
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	330,618	148,714	181,904	221,935
Miscellaneous Services	5,277,491	6,157,764	-880,273	-1,027,820
Total Expenditure/Income	72,378,266	52,017,906		

Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax

Tax	20,360,359	18,058,567
Rates	16,199,156	15,767,962
Local Property Tax	9,120,597	9,114,381

Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers	4,959,394	6,823,776
Transfers from/(to) Reserves	-4,913,633	-6,775,953
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	45,760	47,823
General Reserve @ 1st January 2025	997,435	949,612
General Reserve @ 31st December 2025	1,043,195	997,435

Appendix 3

Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

For year ended 31st December 2025

Introduction

I, Coilín O Reilly, Chief Executive (CE) of Carlow County Council am responsible for the Annual Financial Statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the *Local Government Act, 2001*.

I certify that the financial statements Carlow County Council for the year ended **31 December 2025**, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents fairly the financial position of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the local authority conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out. The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Carlow County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Carlow County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2025.

The **Statement of Comprehensive Income** represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of Carlow County Council.

The key sources of income for Carlow County Council are as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year	Variance
Goods & Services	15,283,824	14,967,136	316,688
Grants & Subsidies	35,972,630	14,967,136	-2,884,863
Other Contributions (as appropriate)	761,452	836,238	-74,786
Rates	16,199,156	15,767,962	431,194
Local Property Tax	9,120,597	9,114,381	6,216
Total	77,337,659	79,543,210	-2,205,551

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2025 is as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year
Income	15,283,824	14,967,136
Expenditure	35,972,630	14,967,136
Transfers to Capital	761,452	836,238
Exceptional Item	16,199,156	15,767,962
Surplus/(Deficit) for	45,760	47,823
Prior Year Adjustment	77,337,659	79,543,210
Opening Revenue Reserve	997,435	949,612
Closing Revenue Reserve	1,043,195	997,435

Income in 2025 decreased by €2.2 m represented principally by a decrease of €2.88 m in grants and subsidies, arising from once-off exceptional funding of €5.6 m received from the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment for the *Increased Cost of Business* and *Power Up Grant Schemes* in 2024. (Note: commercial rates income is shown gross. Write offs in respect of vacant premises are included in expenditure)

Expenditure in 2025 amounted to €72.38 m excluding transfers from/to reserves. The closing balance on the Income and Expenditure account at the 31st December 2025 was €1,043,195 (credit) with a surplus of €45,760 (0.6% of expenditure) recorded within the year.

The Statement of *Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets.
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank.
- Current and long-term liabilities-mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets of Carlow County Council at the end of 2025 total €1,230 m and are as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year	Variance
Fixed Assets	1,161,579,710	1,142,113,240	19,466,470
Work in Progress	9,605,660	7,473,106	2,132,554
Long Term Debtors	64,384,002	63,219,422	1,164,580
Current Assets	72,959,187	72,405,765	553,422
Current Liabilities	17,106,413	16,811,256	295,157
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	55,852,774	55,594,509	258,265
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	61,475,996	60,618,192	857,804
Net Assets/(liabilities)	1,229,946,150	1,207,782,086	22,164,064

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As CE of Carlow County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by Carlow County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Carlow County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial control environment

As CE of Carlow County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As CE of Carlow County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented.
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement compliance

Carlow County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As CE, I can confirm that Carlow County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Carlow County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Carlow County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it.
- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function.

- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report, or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings.
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Carlow County Council.

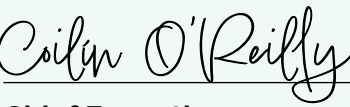
Risk and control framework

Carlow County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks. A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies. The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2026 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2026.

Signed by:


Chief Executive

Dated:

30th April 2026

Appendix 4
Governance Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this governance statement is to provide relevant information on the governance structures and governance arrangements within the local authority including on council, committees, senior management and related areas. It demonstrates our commitment to effective governance, recognises key legislative and good governance requirements and affirms the Council's compliance with the *Local Government Code of Governance* obligations.

Good Governance

Fundamentally, good governance in the local government sector and wider public sector is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations. Governance refers to the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes by which the local authority is directed, controlled and held to account and whereby authority within an organisation is exercised and maintained. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship and leadership, direction and control.

Good Governance Principles

- **CORE PRINCIPLE 1** - Good governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on outcomes that deliver sustainable economic, community and wider societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.
- **CORE PRINCIPLE 2** - Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- **CORE PRINCIPLE 3** - Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.
- **CORE PRINCIPLE 4** - Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and fulfil the purpose of the organization.
- **CORE PRINCIPLE 5** - Good governance means taking well-informed and transparent decisions and managing risks and performance.
- **CORE PRINCIPLE 6** - Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.
- **CORE PRINCIPLE 7** - Good governance means actively contributing to the furtherance and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by delivering on the priorities and actions within the Climate Action Plan and the provisions of the Climate Act.

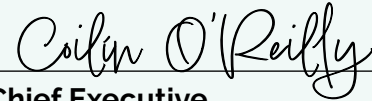
Our Commitment to Good Governance

As the Cathaoirleach/Mayor and Chief Executive of the council, and on behalf of the elected members, management and staff we confirm that;

1. We have adopted the governance principles as the fundamental bedrock and philosophy on how we operate as a governing body and as an executive.
2. The Local Government Code of Governance has been adopted and the extent to which the Council is in compliance with the Code has been reviewed and assessed.
3. The Statement of Internal Financial Control is submitted by the Chief Executive to the Elected Members and to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee reviews the SIFC and provides an assurance on an annual basis to the Elected Members. Mechanisms are available to the Audit Committee to notify the Elected Members of any issues that arise outside of the normal annual reporting.
4. Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are acknowledged and adhered to.
5. There is clarity of roles and responsibilities based on the reserved and executive functions and based on committee terms of reference.
6. Codes of Conduct and ethics declarations for members and employees are in place.
7. Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the *Protected Disclosures Act 2014* and confirmation that the annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published.
8. The Council and Committees review their own performance on a periodic basis.
9. We have instituted appropriate governance oversight arrangements in respect of subsidiary, associated and related companies.
10. As part of our commitment to effective oversight and accountability, we have developed and continue to enhance our overall assurance framework utilising external and internal assurance sources to ensure good performance as part of our governance culture.

Signed by:


Cathaoirleach


Chief Executive

Dated:

30th April 2026

30th April 2026

Appendix 5

Conferences/Seminars/Training Attended by Councillors in 2025

Training and Conferences attended in 2025 by Carlow County Council Members

Training	Venue	Date	Delegates	Expend
LAMA Spring Training Seminar	Kilford Arms Hotel, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny	30th & 31st January	Cllrs. J. Pender, D. Pender & K. Murnane	€1,024.35
AILG Training Module 1	Newpark Hotel, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny	20th or 22nd February 2026	Cllr. J Pender, K. Murnane, J. Deane	€714.35
AIR Annual Training Seminar	Radisson Blu, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.	5th & 6th February 2025	Cllr. J Pender	€632.61
AILG Training Module 2	The Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Co. Clare	20th or 22nd March 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender, K. Murnane, J. Deane	€1,514.91
AILG Training Module 3	The Rose Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry	24th May 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender, K. Murnane, J. Deane, A. Gladney	€2,750.97
IPB AGM		2nd May 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender	€392.92
AILG Module 4	Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan	19th or 21st June 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender, K Murnane, A. Gladney, J.Deane	€2,325.61
ILG SPC Training	Hotel Kilkenny	3rd September 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender	€154.23
AILG Autumn Training Seminar	Westport Woods Hotel	17th & 18th September 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender, A. Gladney, J.Deane, W Quinn	€3,727.39
AILG Training Module 5	Arklow Bay Hotel /Horse & Jockey, Tipperary	9th or 11th October 2025	Cllrs J. Pender & K. Murnane	€443.74
LAMA Autum Seminar	Amber Spring Hotel, Gorey, Co. Wexford.	16th & 17th October	Cllrs. J. Pender, K. Murnane	€875.61
AILG Training Module 6	Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	15th November 2025	Cllrs. J. Pender, K Murnane, J.Deane	€1,382.36

Celtic Conferences	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	7th, 8th & 9th March 2025	Cllr. W. Quinn, A. Gladney	€1,555.32
AILG Conference	Limerick Strand Hotel	2nd & 3rd April 2025	Cllrs. J Pender, K. Murnane, A. Gladney, J. Deane	€2,646.99
IPI Annual Training Conference	The Salthill Hotel, Co. Galway	10th & 11th April 2025	Cllr J. Pender	€1,200.50
Celtic Conferences	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	5th, 6th & 7th December 2025	Cllr J. Pender	€881.07

Appendix 6

Elected Members Attendance at Meetings held in 2025

Councillor Name	Total Meetings Held	No. of Meetings Held	%
Fergal Browne	40	39	97.50
John Cassin	26	23	88.46
Andrea Dalton	45	41	91.11
Michael Doran	35	35	100.00
Andrew Gladney	38	29	80.56
Thomas Kinsella	32	32	100.00
Ken Murnane	31	27	87.10
Paul Doogue	26	25	96.15
Ben Ward	25	24	96.00
Charlie Murphy	26	22	84.62
Brian O' Donoghue	26	24	92.31
William Paton	26	24	92.31
John Pender	37	37	100.00
Fintan Phelan	25	25	100.00
William Quinn	29	26	89.66
Daniel Pender	24	23	95.83
Adrienne Wallace	26	26	100.00
Jim Deane	25	25	100.00

Appendix 7

Protected Disclosures 2025

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of an annual report relative to Protected Disclosures received. Pursuant to this requirement, Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no protected disclosures received in 2025.

Appendix 8
Human Rights

In preparing the Plan the Council has been cognisant of cross cutting issues such as Social Inclusion, Equality, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Objectives, and Sustainable Development together with Quality Service and Community Leadership. The Council is also cognisant of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights duty as set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. This duty obliges the Council to have regard to the need to;

- A. Eliminate discrimination.
- B. Promote Equality of Opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and
- C. Protect the Human Rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services Carlow County Council is committed in this Plan to supporting the Transforming Lives Programme in relation to people with disabilities to support participation in cultural, recreation, leisure and sporting activities and in fulfilling its role in ensuring that housing for people with disabilities is an integral part of mainstream housing efforts.

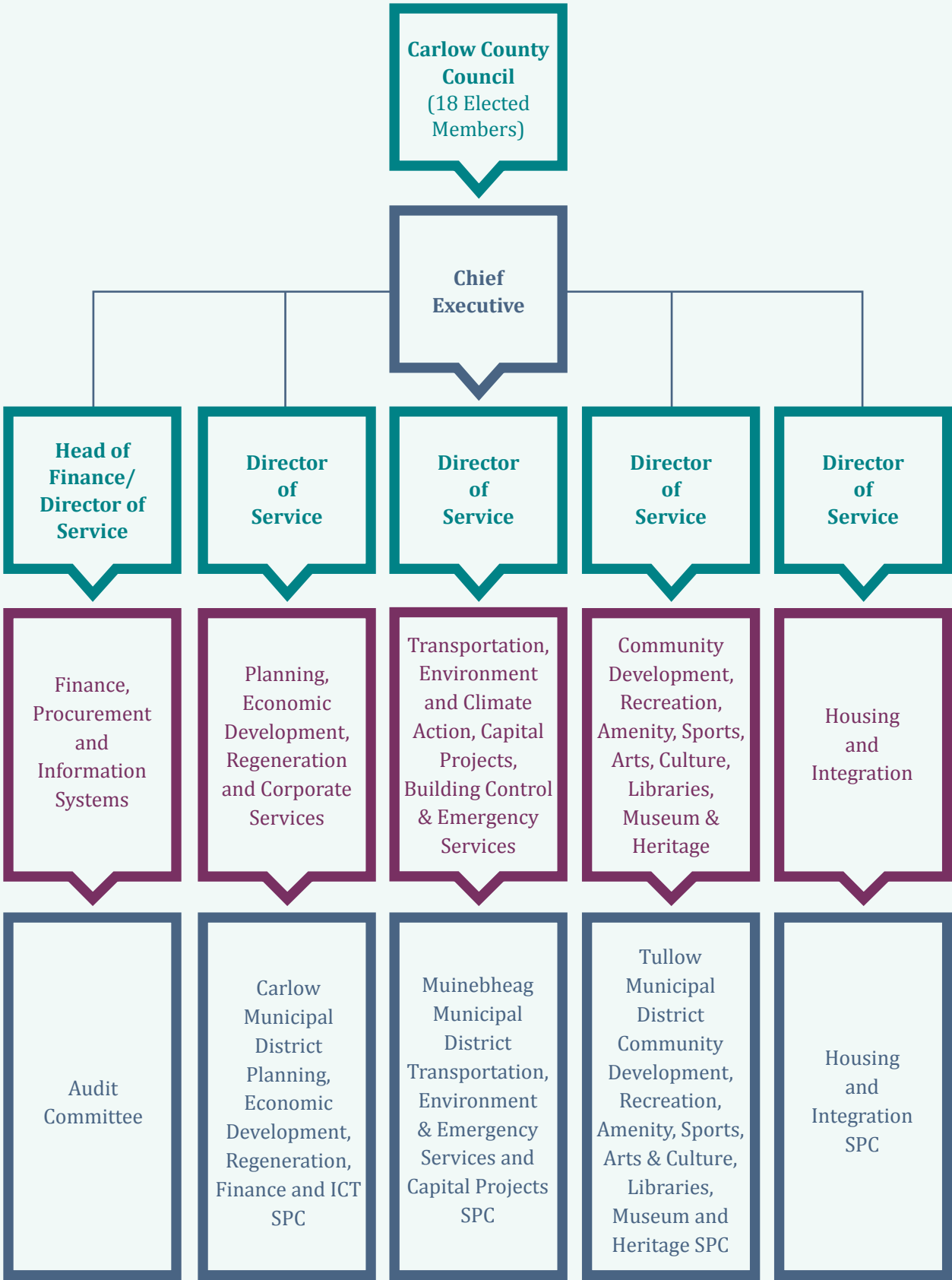
The Council's role in relation to migrants and new communities is reflected in the Corporate Plan and Carlow's Migrant Integration Strategy 2020.

Appendix 9
Senior Management Team



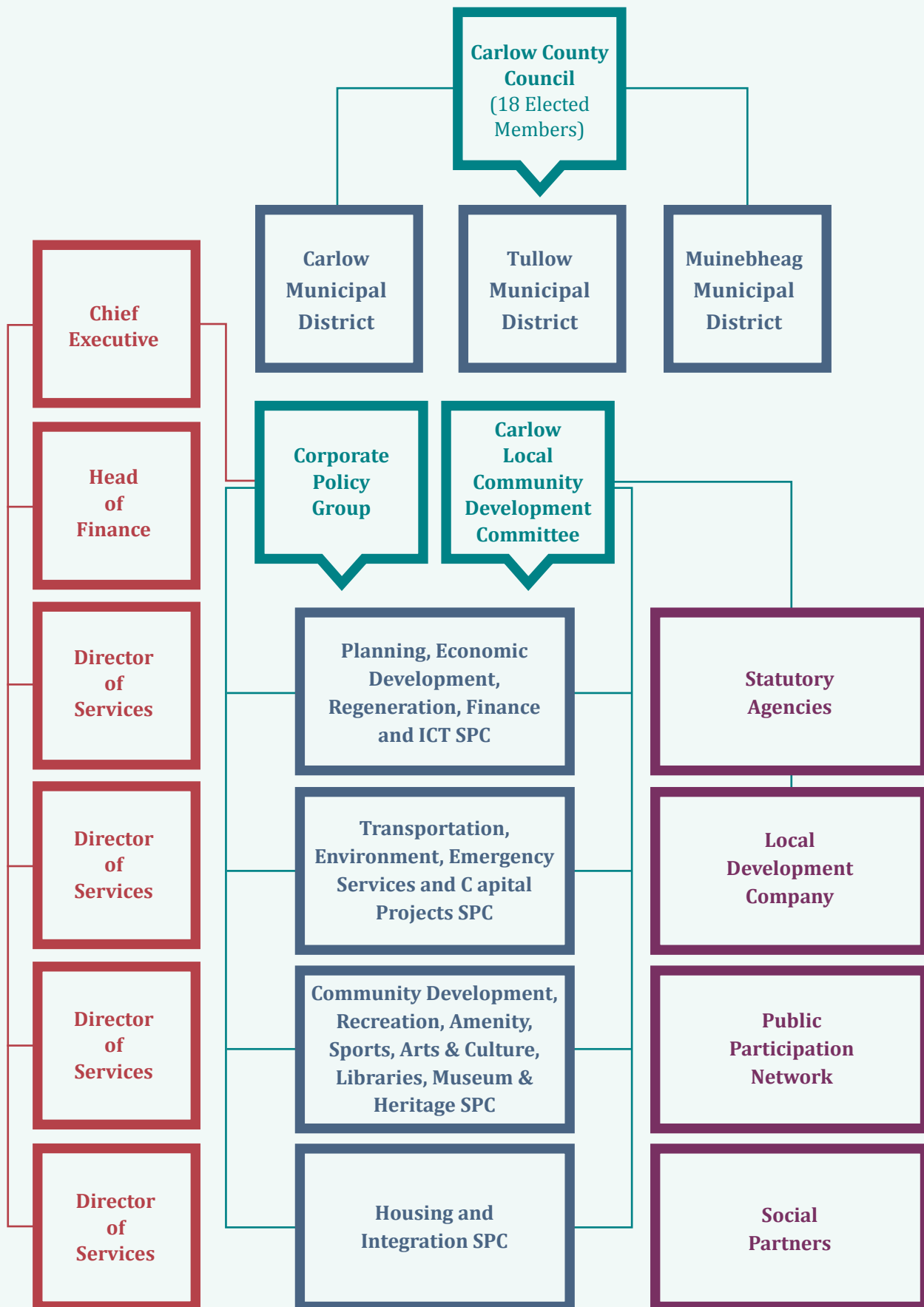
Coilín O'Reilly	Chief Executive
PJ Leonard	Director of Finance and Information Systems
Michael Brennan	Director of Service: Community Development, Recreation, Amenity, Sports, Arts, Culture, Libraries, Museum & Heritage
Paula O'Brien (commenced July 2025)	Director of Service: Corporate Services, Human Resources, Planning, Regeneration, Health and Safety, Economic Development/LEO
Kieran Cullinane (acting from October 2024)	
Fiona O'Neill	A/Director of Service: Housing & Integration
Padraig O'Gorman	Director of Service: Transportation, Environment and Climate Action, Capital Projects, Building Control & Emergency Services

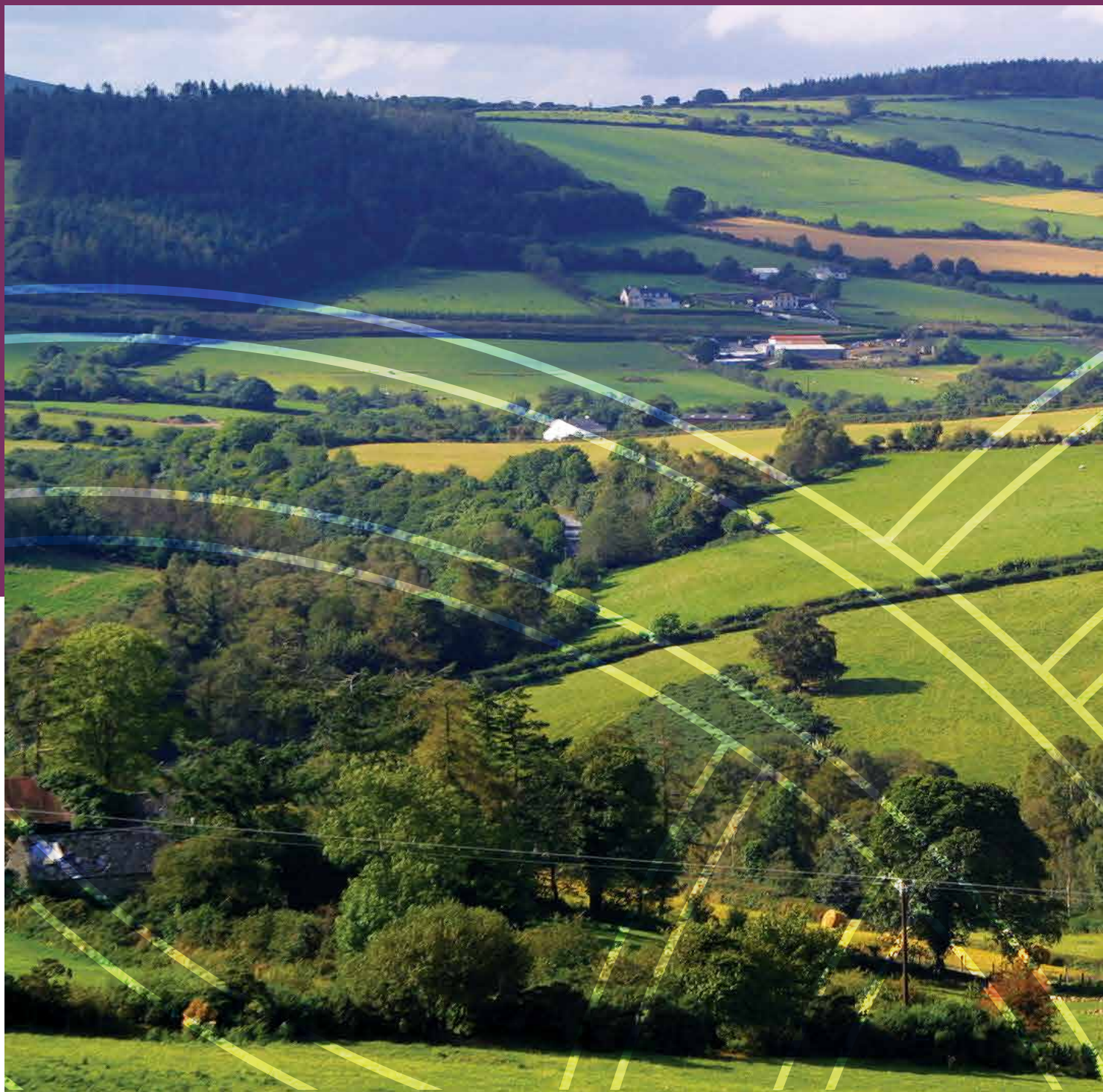
Appendix 10
Local Operating Environment



Appendix 11

Organisational Structure





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