



**CARLOW COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015 – 2021**
August 2015

CARLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015 - 2021

AN PLEAN FORBARTHA CHONTAE CHEATHARLOCHA 2015 - 2021

The making of the County Development Plan is one of the most important tasks carried out by the elected members representing the people of County Carlow. Economic, social, cultural and environmental aims and objectives for County Carlow are planned and implemented through the County Development Plan.

The County Development Plan presents a vision for County Carlow and establishes the strategic priorities for the County and, when adopted, is a contract between the Council and the community to guide development throughout County Carlow. The proper planning and sustainable development of County Carlow is enshrined in the mission statement of Carlow Local Authorities Corporate Plan -

“Our mission is to provide a quality local government service for the people of County Carlow, through the protection and enhancement of the environment and improvement of the quality of life. We will achieve this by fostering a partnership between the elected members and staff of Carlow Local Authorities and all sectors of the community. In a spirit of mutual trust, we will work in an open, effective and participative way, to ensure that County Carlow becomes an environmentally sustainable county, which is economically, culturally and socially inclusive and vibrant, where everybody can live and work in a healthy and safe community and where Carlow Local Authorities earn a reputation for the quality and efficiency of our services”.

“Ár misean ná chun seirbhís rialtais áitiúil den scoth a sholáthar do phobal Chontae Ceatharlach, tríd an timpealacht a chosaint agus a fheabhsú agus cur le cáilíocht an bheatha. Aimseoidimid é seo trí rannpháirtíocht a chothú idir na baill tofa agus foireann Údaráis Áitiúil Ceatharlach agus rannóga uile an chomhphobail. Le spiorad comhhuinín oibreoidimid i slí oscailte, éifeachtach agus rannpháirtíoch chun a chinntiú go mbíonn Contae Ceatharlach ina chontae le timpeallacht inchothaithe, atá comháireamh go heacnamaíoch, cultúrtha, sóisialta agus bríomhar, áit ar féidir le cách maireachtáil agus obair I gcomhluadar sláintiúil agus sábháilte agus ar féidir le Údaráis Áitiúil Ceatharlach cliú a bhaint amach do cháilíocht agus éifeachtacht ár seirbhísi”.

The County Development Plan will endeavour to fulfill these aspirations.

A./CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Dan McInerney

Carlow County Development Plan 2015 -2021

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.0 PLAN COMPOSITION

The Carlow County Development Plan sets out Carlow County Council's policies and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County from 2015 to 2021. The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires a Planning Authority to prepare a Development Plan for its functional area every six years. In accordance with this obligation, the review of the County Development Plan 2009 - 2015 commenced in 2013. The new plan builds on the strategies, policies and objectives of the previous County Development Plan 2009-2015.

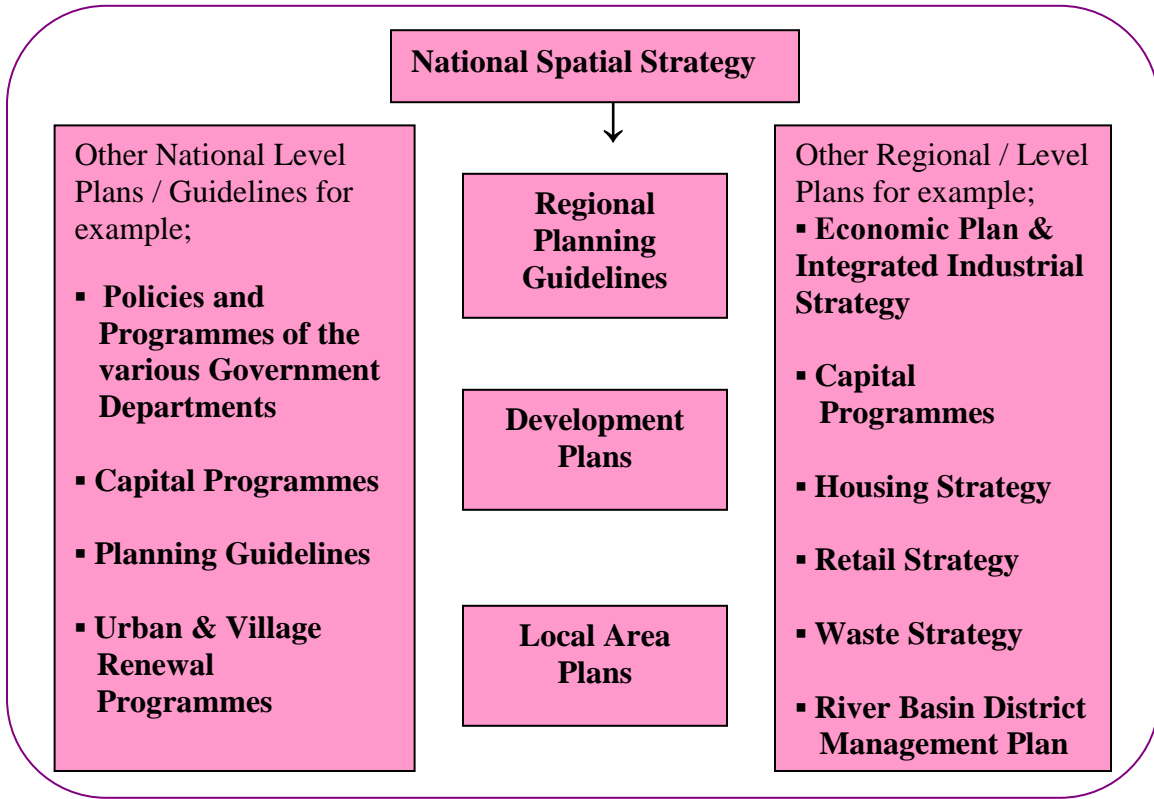
This County Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 10(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The County Development Plan addresses a wide range of interrelated economic, social and environmental issues set within an overall framework of achieving sustainable development, social inclusion and adapting to climate change.

The Plan consists of written statements and maps which include policies, strategies and actions for the County at large. The Development Plan also had regard to the proposed provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 with regard to the Core Strategy (Chapter Two). It must be noted that each chapter is not a stand-alone chapter, but should be read in conjunction with all other chapters and policies. In assessing any development in the County, the overall context will be informed by all relevant policies, including the settlement strategy, housing, community, economic, heritage and infrastructure considerations, underpinned by the Development Strategy for the County which sets out the Objectives and Strategic Goals for the county. All policies converge on sustainable development - **“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”**.

1.1 POLICY / LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In preparing the County Development Plan 2015 – 2021, the Planning Authority had regard to relevant national plans, policies and strategies which relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area as well as legislative changes, key recent development trends, such as flooding, climate change, renewable energy and the need to support economic development. It also had regard to the plans of adjoining Local Authorities. The County Development Plan also includes the mandatory objectives which are to be included in Development Plans as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Report prepared in accordance with the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004) and the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).

This Plan has been drawn up to be, as far as practicable, consistent with the DoECLG and DAHG Guidelines and relevant strategies, guidelines, plans, policies and objectives of other Ministers. Development proposals shall be subject to National guidance and policy. The main national plans, policies and guidelines, which must be considered, are:



1.1.1 The National Spatial Strategy (NSS)

This strategy sets out Government policy in relation to achieving balanced regional development over a time frame up to 2020. Carlow is part of the South East Region, which consists of counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. The South East Region is identified as a region which requires “reinforcing” and “strengthening” in the National Spatial Strategy. Carlow has significant potential for growth and development and can play an important role in regional growth and achieving balanced development. The proximate location of Carlow to the greater Dublin Area highlights Carlow's accessible location within the South East Region.

1.1.2 Ministerial Guidelines and Directives

Part II, Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, states that the Minister may, at any time, issue guidelines which Planning Authorities may have regard to in relation to the performance of their functions. Currently such guidelines include; Retail Planning, Childcare, Sustainable Rural Development, Architectural Conservation, Landscapes, Urban Design, Development Management, Quarries, Schools, Telecommunications, Flood Risk Management, Wind Energy, Tree Preservation, Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

1.1.3 Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022

The Regional Planning Guidelines provide a strategic planning framework for the South-East Region with the objective of implementing the National Spatial Strategy at regional level and achieving balanced regional development. Regional Planning Guidelines (R.P.G.) for the South-East Region were first adopted in 2004 and revised Regional Planning Guidelines covering the period 2010 to 2022 were made by the Regional Authority on 26th July 2010. The R.P.G.'s incorporate high level policies which inform and advise Local Authorities in the preparation and review of the respective Development Plans, thus providing clear integration of planning and development policy from national to regional to local level.

1.1.4 Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended (including statutory amendments)

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), hereon referred to as the Act, requires a Planning Authority to make a Development Plan for its functional area every six years. A Development Plan is required to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and must consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the development objectives for the plan area, outlining the statutory basis for the implementation of physical planning. The written statement must include a Core Strategy which shows that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022. The written statement must also include a separate statement which shows that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment. A two year review to assess the progress of the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan will then occur, as required by Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Section 10(2) of the Act sets out a list of objectives which shall be included in the Development Plan. These include:

- Zoning of land
- Provision or facilitation of the provision of infrastructure including transport, energy and communication facilities, water supplies, waste disposal and recovery facilities, waste water services and any ancillary services
- Conservation and protection of the environment
- Management of features of the landscape which are important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network
- Promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface waters and groundwater
- Integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population
- Preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest
- Preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational amenity

- Protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest
- Preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas
- Development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration
- Provision of accommodation for travellers and the use of particular areas for that purpose
- Preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities
- Control of new and existing establishments under the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive
- Provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community, including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities
- Protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht
- Promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to reduce energy demand, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change
- Provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes

1.1.5 The South East River Basin Management Plan

The South Eastern River Basin District is one of Ireland’s largest river basin districts. The rich soils of the South East are particularly suitable for agriculture and around half the land is given over to tillage and grassland. The districts waters support fishing and boating activities. Water is critical to the economy of the South East Region generating and sustaining wealth through activities such as agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, power generation, industry, services, transport and tourism. However, water is a fragile resource that needs to be protected. The South East River Basin Management Plan provides policies and objectives that strive to protect and enhance the South Eastern River Basin District.

1.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Carlow County Development Plan has been developed following extensive consultations on the issues to be addressed therein. Carlow County Council gave notice of their intention to review the Carlow County Development Plan 2009 - 2015 on 28th August, 2013. An Issues Paper entitled “Carlow County Development Plan 2015 – 2021 Issues Paper – A Guide to Having Your Say” regarding the Development Plan Review was widely distributed. A series of public consultation sessions were held where members of the public and interest groups could meet representatives of the Planning Department and communicate their views and suggestions. Written submissions were received and consultations were carried out with a wide range of stakeholders and service providers.

Public Information sessions took place at the following venues as part of the review of the County Development Plan:

Muine Bheag	Tuesday 1 st October, 2013	2.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.
Muine Bheag	Wednesday 9 th October, 2013	5.00 p.m. - 7.00 p.m.
Tullow	Wednesday 2 nd October, 2013	2.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.
Carlow	Thursday 3 rd October, 2013	2.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.

The Plan Preparation Process:

STAGE	WEEK	PROCESS
Stage 1	1-8	Initial public consultation and display of Issues Paper
Stage 2	8-16	Manager's Report on submissions to Elected Members on Issues Paper
Stage 3	16-26	Consideration of Manager's Report by Elected Members on Issues Paper
Stage 4	26-38	Preparation of Draft Plan and Environmental Reports
Stage 5	38-46	Consideration of Draft Plan by Elected Member's and make Draft Plan and Environmental Reports
Stage 6	46-48	Advertising of Draft Plan and Environmental Reports
Stage 7	48-58	Public Consultation on Draft Plan and Environmental Reports
Stage 8	58-70	Manager's Report on submissions on Draft Plan
Stage 9	70-82	Consideration of Draft Plan and Manager's Report by Elected Members Making of Development Plan unless material amendments are proposed
Stage 10	82-85	Publish Notice if Material Amendment(s) on Draft Plan
Stage 11	85-89	Public Consultation on Material Amendment(s) only
Stage 12	89-93	Manager's Report on submissions on Material Amendment(s)
Stage 13	93-99	Consideration of Manager's Report by Elected Members and making of Development Plan

1.3 ROLE OF THE PLANNING SERVICE

The provision of a high quality service is a vital and central function of a Local Authority. It both acts as a guide to Planning Authority requirements and policies for those interested in pursuing development as well as providing a way of informing the general public as to how development proposals are likely to be assessed.

The structure of the service is guided by the planning legislation and generally contains two main components (1) the Development Plan which sets general policies and (2) Development Management which is the process whereby individual applications are assessed against the policies of the Development Plan.

The Development Plan also plays a vital role as being both a tool of development promotion and regulation. Physical planning is essentially a decision making process about how to manage change in the physical environment to reach social and economic objectives and this process frequently revolves around location. The County Development Plan must therefore have a clear vision of the county, now and into the future.

1.4 CEATHARLACH AS GAELIGE / BI-LINGUAL CARLOW

With Carlow now working towards being a bi-lingual town, Irish / Gaeilge will have a more visible presence in the County as the plan for a bi-lingual Carlow is implemented. The County Council has a key role to play in this plan and will strive to provide for bi-lingual services and work as a partner in initiatives to give Irish / Gaeilge a visible presence in the County and encourage the use of the Irish language.

1.5 SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social inclusion is a process which assists people to participate fully in life from an economic, social and cultural perspective. People can be excluded from society if they do not have equal access to services, facilities, resources and opportunities. The Council is committed to developing a more social inclusive society throughout County Carlow and the County Development Plan focuses on promoting and facilitating social inclusion for everyone in the county. The Plan has identified target groups which include children and young people, carers, older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups and the travelling community.

1.6 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC), otherwise referred to as the SEA Directive, requires all Member States to systematically evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme prior to its

adoption. The carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is mandatory for the County Development Plan.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the plan and policies has been carried out as part of the Development Plan Review process in order to determine the likely environmental effects of the policies set out in the County Development Plan.

The SEA Environment Report is included in the appendices. While it is not anticipated that the Plan and policies would result in significant negative impacts on the environment, the Environmental report sets out possible mitigation measures to address all likely environmental impacts and also sets out a Monitoring Programme.

In addition to the County Development Plan, the Council will adopt policies to safeguard the environment at local level through Local Area Plans for villages and towns, some of which will be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the plan, as required.

1.7 HABITATS DIRECTIVE

The EU introduced the Birds Directive in 1979 and the Habitats Directive in 1992 to tackle the long-term decline in biodiversity across Europe. One of the main aims of the Directives is to maintain, and where necessary restore, the favourable conservation status of natural habitats and species across Europe.

A network of sites, collectively known as Natura 2000 sites, was established. This network includes European sites that are of particular importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the EU. In relation to the Natura 2000 network of European sites in County Carlow, those that are relevant are as follows:

- Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)
- Special Protection Area

SACs are selected for the conservation and protection of habitats listed on Annex I and species (other than birds) and their habitat listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. The habitats in Annex I require special conservation measures because they are under threat in the EU. A subset of these, Annex I priority habitats, are threatened with disappearance, and accordingly merit special conservation measures.

SPAs are selected for the protection of endangered species of wild birds. There are currently no SPAs within County Carlow although there are a number occurring within neighbouring counties.

In relation to Natura 2000 sites, a separate Appropriate Assessment of the County Development Plan, to determine the effects of the plan and its policies / objectives, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, on the Natura 2000 network, and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), as required by Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, was carried out and is presented as a Natura Impact Report contained within the Appendices of this plan.

1.8 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development has been defined as development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires the Carlow County Development Plan to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. The Planning Authority, for the purposes of the Development Plan, defines proper planning and sustainable development as ensuring that a balance is achieved between economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations in the interests of the common good of present and future generations of the county.

Key considerations of sustainable development are the conservation of natural resources, protection of the natural environment, environmentally friendly patterns of development, energy efficiency and high quality design. The Plan is focused on the integration of employment, transport, schools, community facilities, amenities and sustainable urban and rural settlements as key mechanisms for achieving sustainability.

Environmental considerations have been fully integrated into the preparation of the Plan through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment processes, the objectives of which are to afford a high level of protection to the environment and Natura 2000 sites respectively.

1.9 SUMMARY

In summary, Carlow County Development Plan 2015 – 2021 will provide:

- A sustainable spatial development strategy to guide the location of development
- Clear guidance on the future use of land and the pattern of development over the next six years
- A framework for the future investment in physical and social infrastructure;
- A framework for developing the county's economy
- Management and control by indicating standards to be achieved in new developments
- Ways to conserve and enhance the urban and rural environment and to protect the diversity of the natural and cultural landscape
- Guidance for public and private investors in relation to land use and development
- A framework for developing tourism in the County Carlow



CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

CHAPTER TWO – DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

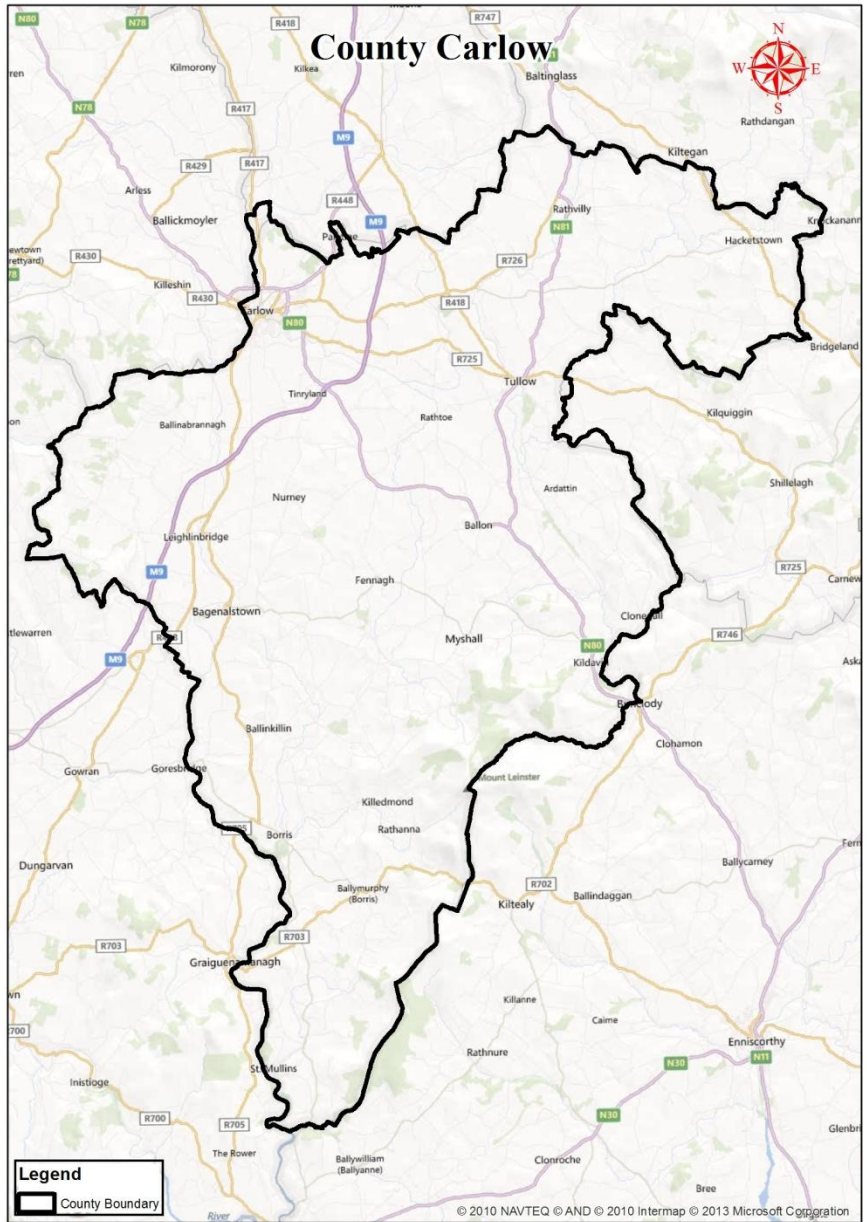
2.0 VISION FOR COUNTY CARLOW 2015-2021

At the heart of vision for Carlow is a commitment that Carlow County Council will work for the common good of the people of County Carlow in partnership with the communities and relevant agencies to deliver quality services and to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development for current and future generations. This Development Strategy for County Carlow for the period 2015-2021 builds upon the vision set out in the Carlow County Development Plan 2009-2015, to achieve a vibrant county of opportunity with a high quality of life and attractive high quality environment.

Carlow County Council will seek to develop the County through the promotion of sustainable economic, social and cultural development, taking advantage of its strategic regional location in the South-East region.

The Strategy recognises the dominance of Carlow Town to the surrounding area. With its location at the northern end of the South-East region, Carlow has established strong links to the Dublin – Mid-East and Midland regions, serving as an important centre for commerce, retail, education and culture to the South-East region and to counties Kildare, Laois, Dublin and Wicklow in the adjoining regions. The pivotal location of Carlow is now strengthened by the new M9 motorway and enhanced commuter and intercity services on the Dublin – Carlow – Waterford railway. The important national route, the N80, provides direct links between Carlow and Rosslare Europort and to the Midlands region while Carlow is also served by Bus Eireann and private bus services to principal towns.

The County Council will also support the development of cohesive communities in the towns, villages and rural areas and promote high quality environment and amenities. Carlow is also a destination for the many visitors and tourists who enjoy the natural amenities, heritage and cultural life of the County.



Map 2.1 Carlow County Development Plan Area

2.1 STRATEGIC GOALS

The Vision for the County will be achieved through the pursuit of Strategic Goals and the detailed policies contained within this plan will help to secure the successful implementation of the Strategic Goals.

Strategic Goals:

- To promote the highest quality living environment possible, in both urban and rural areas for all the citizens of County Carlow
- To sustain rural communities by supporting agriculture, rural based economic activity, promoting balanced development of rural settlements and maintaining a stable population base
- Provide for the sustainable growth of County Carlow in accordance with the settlement structure and *Core Strategy Table*
- To encourage residential development to locate on suitably zoned land in areas where the appropriate social, community and physical infrastructure either exists or is planned
- To promote balanced and sustainable economic development and employment by ensuring that a diverse range of economic sectors are developed
- To facilitate and support access to housing to suit different household and tenure needs in a sustainable manner
- To build on the tourism opportunities of County Carlow in a balanced and sustainable manner
- To support the provision of improved public transport including community based initiatives
- Facilitate the provision of and improvements to social and recreational infrastructure and provide access to new and existing community facilities throughout the County for all its residents
- Ensure a good quality of life and good health for the residents of Carlow through maintaining and improving waste water treatment and water supplies and to minimise the adverse impacts of development on the environment through policies for the management of waste and emissions
- Support the development of key infrastructure such as telecommunications, electricity, gas to enable economic development and access to the alternative energy markets
- To provide for universal access, accessibility and ease of movement along roads and footpaths as a priority
- To protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage and the landscape of County Carlow for future generations; and reinforce the distinctive character of County Carlow through ensuring that sites and species of biodiversity importance are identified, conserved and managed appropriately and by promoting awareness and enjoyment of the heritage of the County

- To promote high quality architectural design in all new buildings in urban and rural areas of County Carlow - commercial, residential and public buildings with energy efficiency designed into all new buildings
- Minimise the level of flood risk to people, business, infrastructure and the environment, through the identification and management of existing, and particularly potential future, flood risks. Flood risk will be incorporated in an integrated, pro active and transparent manner in line with evolving best practice into decision making processes for future development and use of land in the County
- Promote and support the development of the renewable energy resource of the County including in particular from wind, waste material, solar, hydro and biomass energy, subject to normal planning and environmental requirements
- To safeguard the Strategic National Road Network in the County in accordance with the provision of National Policy, in particular the DoECLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on ‘Spatial Planning and National Roads’

2.2 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Development Strategy will focus on key Strategic Development Opportunities for the County to be supported by the policies contained within the Plan.

SDO 1 Education and Research

The continuing development of Carlow as an education and research base is fundamental to the overall development of the Town and County. The growth in this sector has seen IT Carlow and Carlow College (St. Patrick’s) grow in size and status as national institutions with expertise in a number of areas. Together with Teagasc, the national agricultural research and advisory body at Oak Park, these institutions are at the heart of the local economy with important linkages with industry established. This sector will also promote lifelong learning opportunities and improve access to training and education for residents to improve the local skillbase.

SDO 2 Enterprise And Employment

The strategic economic development opportunities in Carlow are enhanced by a wider economic and social infrastructure including IT Carlow, Carlow College, Teagasc Agricultural Research Centre, the VISUAL and George Bernard Shaw Theatre. The broadband fibre network, other utilities, the railway network connecting Waterford, Carlow and Dublin, the N80, the M9 and road network have all seen improvements within the County over the last decade.

The existing diversity of commerce and higher education and research create a strong, efficient local economy, delivering growing numbers of jobs and a diverse range of industrial, commercial and retailing enterprises, which can be easily accessed by residents and visitors.

The strong retail sector in Carlow is an important and growing part of the economic base of the County and will continue to grow in influence in the surrounding region.

SDO 3 Infrastructure

The economic strength of Carlow is based on its good access to transport infrastructure, its water and wastewater infrastructure network at strategic locations and the associated network of business parks, industrial estates and land zoned for Enterprise, Employment and Industry. Carlow County Council needs to prioritise the development of strategic infrastructure to support the sustainable development of County Carlow.

Transport:

The following schemes are considered to be priority transport infrastructure:

- N80 upgrade as a key inter-regional route
- R418 upgrade Tullow to Castledermot and M9 Junction 4
- Development of National Cycle Network through County Carlow
- Kilkenny Road – Wexford N80-R448 (Southern Relief Road)

All priority transport infrastructure projects are required to comply with the principles of sustainable development and assessed in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive.

The Dublin – Carlow – Waterford railway line has seen consistent improvements to passenger services over the last 10 years. Government’s ‘Smarter Travel’ policy to promote sustainable travel and to achieve modal change from private cars to public transport will support further improvements to the rail infrastructure and services on the line.

The establishment of a freight rail base would provide for transfer of freight from road to rail and would support the implementation of PPO 5.15 in the Regional Planning Guidelines. It is an objective of the Core Strategy to identify suitable locations for the provision of a rail freight base in the county.

The existing Bus Eireann and private bus services provide important transport services from Carlow to Dublin, Waterford and many other destinations. The Ring-a-Link rural bus service also provides a crucial link to/from smaller towns and villages in county Carlow.

It is an objective of the Planning Authority to support improvement and extension of Inter City and rural bus services and to support improved integration between local bus services and inter city bus and rail services.

Water Infrastructure:

The upgrading and development of new water supply and waste water infrastructure will support the economic development of the county and provide for additional capacity where the need for such capacity has been identified.

SDO 4 Rural Economy

Agriculture has traditionally been the mainstay of rural economies and while it has experienced major change in the past 30 years, it will continue to play an important role in County Carlow. However this sector is now more multifaceted than what it was previously with a number of new emerging non agricultural resource based dependent activities such as Agri food. Small scale artisan producers have also emerged in the County many of whom have developed alternative farm enterprises. The Agri- food industry in the County needs to increase its added value, diversify its markets and increase productivity to remain competitive in the current economic climate. Encouraging food production for local markets is an objective of this plan.

SDO 5 Forestry

Afforestation has become a significant feature in the County over the last decade as a result of targeted grant aid schemes. It is considered that the continued development of this sector should be promoted in a sustainable manner, compatible with the protection of the environment. The potential for afforestation in conjunction with a species diversification programme favouring the planting of native broadleaves, carried out in tandem with the development of amenity leisure walks, looped walks and trails could become a realistic alternative to mono species coniferous developments. Afforested areas provide suitable locations for recreation pursuits such as mountain biking, hiking, orienteering and nature walks.

SDO 6 Tourism

The benefits that tourism can bring to the County are very significant. A policy framework for sustainable tourism in the County will be developed focusing on the following three broad tourism assets that the County has to offer;

- Promote and develop tourism, services and facilities for the Blackstairs Mountains and the Towns and Villages in the surrounding environs, in partnership with local communities, landowners and the relevant tourism bodies, to realize the recreational and tourism potential of The Blackstairs Uplands (including Mount Leinster) and their hinterlands. Also, with the Adelaide Church, Myshall has a significant heritage asset on the Blackstairs Heritage route from Clonegal / Huntington, to Altamont, Borris and St. Mullins.
- The archaeological heritage of the County offers tourism opportunity to be explored
- The waterways product builds on the attractive nature of the Rivers Barrow and Slaney. Key requirements needed to build on this opportunity are identification of trails along and linking into the waterways corridor, assessment of visitors requirements, identification of services hubs and nodes along the canal corridor and planning for appropriate commercial uses at these locations. Design guidance as to how to accommodate development whilst protecting the quality of the

natural and built heritage, including the safeguarding of the Natura 2000 network of sites is also important. Tourism development, particularly involving waterways will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

- Promote and encourage the development and growth of the equine industry in county Carlow and specifically tourism related projects such as riding schools, pony trekking and development of bridle paths.

County Carlow has a number of attractive towns and villages such as Bagenalstown/Muinebheag, Borris, Rathanna, Myshall, Clonmore, Tinryland, Clonegal, Leighlinbridge, St. Mullins, Tinnahinch and Tullow with notable heritage attractions. The Development Strategy will seek to develop the potential of all such locations so as to maximize the tourism offer and visitor experience.

SDO 7 Agri tourism

Tourism is a major source of rural development. Nationally, the tourism industry contributes to the vitality and sustainability of a wide variety of local enterprises, particularly in rural areas. Tourism promotes an enhanced awareness and positive appreciation of local traditions and ways of life. The Council will endeavour to facilitate the development of tourist products in rural areas in order to contribute to the sustainable diversification of the rural economy.

SDO 8 Extractive Industries

The County has a rich base of mineral resources which are of strategic importance to the local and regional economy. The Lime Quarry at Clogrennane is one of about only 4 limestone quarries in the country that has a sufficient calcium content in its limestone rock to make high grade Chemical Lime and is of national strategic importance. The County Development Plan contains a specific policy to support and protect this resource.

SDO 9 Energy

Focusing on alternative energy options, employment opportunities exist in retrofitting houses for energy efficiency, facilitating repairs workshops, developing a hardwood industry and an industry in processing recyclable materials along with providing training and education in these areas. These are all areas which can lead to sustainable forms of employment during the plan period 2015-2021.

SDO 10 Bi-lingual County

Promote the bi-lingual status of County Carlow and promote the use of Irish as a living language and as part of the County's culture through shop and street signage.

2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS IN CARLOW

2.3.1. Population Trends

The County has seen significant population growth over the last 20 years, reflecting its status as a regional centre for education, retail, industry and culture. Table 1 (below) shows population growth for the County since 1991.

Table 2.1. Population Growth in County Carlow.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1991	40,942
1996	41,616
2002	46,014
2006	50,349
2011	54,612

Source: CSO census data.

The proportion of County Carlow’s population residing within the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area also continues to increase as the table below illustrates:-

Table 2.2 County Carlow’s population residing within the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area

Census Period	Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area	Carlow County	Proportion of County Carlow Population Residing in the Greater Urban Area
1996	11,721	41,616	28%
2002	18,487	46,014	40%
2006	20,724	50,339	41%
2011	23,030	54,532	42%

2.3.2 Socio Economic profile

Traditionally the economy of the County has been characterised by manufacturing and food manufacturing based on commodities produced in a rich agricultural hinterland and also an under-developed services sector. The local economy has changed significantly in recent years. The industrial base is now made up of a wide variety of industries ranging from multi-national enterprises employing skilled workforces of upwards of 100 people to very small indigenous enterprises serving local to international markets.

The South-East Regional Authority identified deficits in infrastructure and skill levels as the principal causes for underperformance of the South-East Region and some of these deficits have impacted on the Greater Urban Area. In the last number of years national economic conditions have deteriorated significantly with growing unemployment figures. This has also been the case in Carlow, with a number of prominent companies such as Braun, Lapple and Irish Sugar closing, as well as a slump in the construction sector and

related employment. However, considerable progress has also been made in addressing the identified deficits in infrastructure and skills and re-orientating the local economy towards potential growth sectors. New companies that have moved into Carlow include MSD and Unum.

2.3.3 Review of Census Data

At the time of the 2011 census, unemployment in County Carlow stood at 23.3%, a figure that was above the national average of 19% (Source: Census 2011 – Area profile for Carlow). Unemployment has reduced since that time as a slow recovery has occurred in the local economy. Unemployment at February 2014 is at 12.1% (national average 11.9%).

Over the last 15 years, Carlow has become increasingly multi-cultural with a diverse population of migrants now living in the county. Non-nationals accounted for 11.1% of the population of Carlow in 2011 with Polish nationals the largest group, followed by UK nationals. Other significant populations in the County come from Africa and Eastern European states (other than Poland) as can be evidenced from the variety of retail outlets and cultural celebrations such as the African film Festival now held every year.

It follows that a wide range of languages is evident among the populations. After English, approximately 36% of the population could speak Irish/Gaeilge and Polish was the next most commonly spoken language at 4.2% of the population.

In terms of education, 17.4% of the population in 2011 were educated to primary level only, 58.3% to second level while 24.3% were educated to third level.

2.4 CORE STRATEGY

The Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2014 require the written statement of a Development Plan to contain a Core Strategy which shows that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and relevant Regional Planning Guidelines (South-East regional Planning Guidelines).

The current South-East regional Planning Guidelines were adopted on the 26th July 2010. They were based on revised national and regional population projections prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in October 2009.

The Core Strategy sets out the settlement hierarchy and population allocation for County Carlow, indicating where existing infrastructure and services will support future growth and development. The Core Strategy provides an evidence based rationale for determining the amount of zoned lands required in the county for the period 2010 – 2016 and provides a high level summary and description of the key statistics and priorities underpinning the Development Plan. The Core Strategy incorporates the population

targets set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 and demonstrates how the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines will be implemented in County Carlow. The Core Strategy also takes heed of Irish Water’s Capital Investment Plan (CIP 2014 – 2016).

The Core Strategy recognises each settlement and its role in the County, with potential for economic development and sustainable communities in each town, village and the rural areas of County Carlow.

The Core Strategy includes the following information:-

- Regional population targets for the County
- Information on transportation routes in the County
- The amount of land required to be zoned for residential development for the period 2010 to 2016
- It demonstrates how future development supports public transport/existing services
- It ensures that needs and priorities of existing zoned/serviced land and new zonings for the area are assessed on a plan-led basis
- It provides the framework for deciding on the scale, phasing and location of new development, having regard to existing services and planned investment over the coming years
- Population targets
- Principles for proposed existing and future distribution of population within the plan area within a settlement hierarchy

The Core Strategy also contains a Core Strategy Map and a Core Strategy Table.

2.4.1 Positioning of Carlow Town and the wider Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area

Within the national and regional policy context, the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area will continue to maintain a strong competitive economic position within the South-East Region. The *Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018* is framed by national and regional guidelines and also by the specific urban structure, functions and characteristics of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area and the South-East Region generally.

2.4.2 Regional Settlement Strategy

Under the National Spatial Strategy, regional development is driven by gateways and large urban settlements containing a critical mass of population. This critical mass enables a range of services and facilities to be supported and this in turn can attract and support higher levels of economic activity and improved quality of life.

Waterford is the designated gateway in the South-East Region. The gateways are supported by hubs which are also intended to be drivers of development. Kilkenny and Wexford are the hubs in the South-East. Unlike some other regions, in the South-East the primacy of the gateway and hubs in terms of population figures or urban functions is not pronounced. It is also noted that Carlow is the settlement with the second highest rate of

population growth within the South-East region. Table 3 sets out the population and growth rates for the main settlements in each Local Authority in the region.

2.4.3 Proposed Settlement Structure

The Settlement Structure set out in the Core Strategy is consistent with the approach taken in the County Development Plan and is consistent with the settlement strategy set out at section 3.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 for the South-East region. This sets out the regional settlement structure as follows:-

- Regional Gateway
- Hubs and County Towns
- District Towns (pop. 1,500-5,000)
- Other Towns and Villages

In accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, the rural housing policy accommodates genuine rural housing need, rather than urban generated demand. This ensures that priority is given to those who need to live in rural areas. However, it is important to state that the efficient use of limited resources for public infrastructure means that towns and villages should have capacity to accommodate urban generated rural housing for those who do not need to live in the countryside.

Table 2.3 Population Growth in South East Region

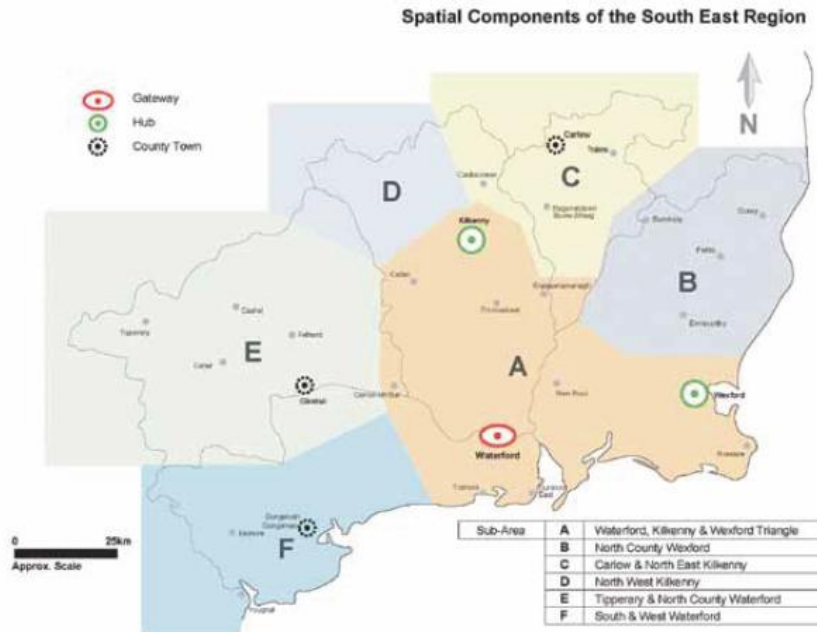
Urban Area	Status under NSS and SERPGs	2006 Population	2011 Population (growth rate as %)
Waterford City	Gateway	49,213	51,519 (4.7%)
Kilkenny	Hub	22,179	24,423 (10.1%)
Wexford	Hub	18,163	20,072 (10.5%)
Carlow	County Town	20,724	23,030 (11.1%)
Clonmel	County Town	17,008	17,908 (5.3%)
Dungarvan	County Town	8,362	9,427 (12.7%)

According to the SERPGs, ‘*there is a distinctive settlement pattern in the South–East Region which distinguishes the region from other regions where one Gateway City may be particularly dominant. Waterford, as the Gateway, is the largest city in the region but the region possesses a strong urban structure unlike other regions. There is a network of sizeable urban settlements in the region, including Hubs and County towns, each with its own hinterland and sphere of influence, and extensive services, including the presence of third and fourth-level education institutes*’.

In light of the distinct urban geography of the South-East Region, the guidelines consider that Waterford, as the Gateway, Kilkenny and Wexford as well as the **County Towns of Carlow, Clonmel and Dungarvan will drive regional growth by providing a large and**

skilled population base, substantial capacity for additional residential and employment related functions and an improving transport network.

Map 2.2 Spatial Components of the South-East region.



From a spatial perspective, the SERPG's divide the Region into six sub-areas: A-F. Carlow is located in Sub-Area C – *Carlow and North-East Kilkenny*. The principal issues associated with Area C include:

- Strong physical links to Midlands, Mid-East and Dublin Regions
- Strong population growth around Carlow Town - Influence of Greater Dublin Area is present
- Smaller towns and villages to be strengthened
- Urban generated rural housing to be carefully monitored and controlled
- Economic, Social and Cultural infrastructure to be improved

The SERPG's consider the successful development of gateway, hubs and county towns will provide the region with locations of scale that will possess the population, skills, business services', infrastructure and existing enterprise base necessary to attract Foreign Direct Investment against similar competing locations nationally and internationally and to facilitate indigenous start-ups in advanced sectors such as the ICT sector.

A number of infrastructural elements are set out in section 4.1 of the SERPGs in order to support the development of critical mass and foster a wider range of enterprise and employment creation within the hubs and county towns of the South-East Region:

- Establishment of a University in the South-East Region and further development of Higher Education Institutes (HEI's)
- Improved links between HEI's and industry, particularly research and development
- Incubation centres
- Improved public transport within and between hubs and county towns and other settlements
- Improved water services infrastructure in compliance with all environmental legislation and the River Basin Management Plans
- Availability of serviced land banks and industrial estates
- Enhanced community and recreational facilities
- High quality telecommunications and energy supply and access (road and rail)
- First class office space
- Business and enterprise support services
- Development of innovation and training centres
- Improved public realm and public facilities in support of tourism development
- Enterprise Ireland recommends that community-owned enterprise centres for the future would need to be of a higher quality with better facilities and more expertise in business development

In the provision of high-quality infrastructure in the County Towns, care should be given to the type of industry likely to be attracted and their specific needs. According to the Regional Planning Guidelines, the development of the County Towns would help to reduce travel-to-work journey times.

In relation to inter-regional issues, the Guidelines note there are towns located on or close to regional boundaries, such as Carlow Town, where the towns development will have implications for surrounding rural areas within the functional area of another Regional Authority. The Guidelines hold that these inter-regional issues need to be discussed between authorities and policies devised which will allow the orderly and sustainable development of each. The Guidelines also note, there are urban areas, such as Carlow, located at the northern end of the South-East Region, which have a hinterland in more than one region. These can act as bridges between regions and can assist the development of inter-regional linkages and co-operation.

Carlow Town, therefore, is recognised as a critical element in the regional settlement structure for realising balanced regional development and an important focus for strengthening its own area.

2.4.4 Regional Population Targets

The South-East Regional Planning Guidelines provide for the positioning of Carlow within the South-East Region and build on the regional approach set out in the National Spatial Strategy. The South-East RPGs set out population targets for County Carlow and Carlow Town as well as the rest of the Region. These population targets have been used to determine the quantum of land zoned for new residential

development in the *Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018*.

2.5 SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE FOR CARLOW

Carlow, as a County Town is recognised as a critical element in the regional settlement structure for realising balanced regional development and an important focus for strengthening its own area. Carlow Town including Graiguecullen on the western side of the River Barrow forms part of a wider urban area and extends beyond the traditional Town Council boundaries into both Co. Laois on the Graiguecullen side and into the County Council area to the east, north and south.

The wider urban area has been defined as the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area for which a Joint Spatial Plan* has been adopted by Carlow County Council, Carlow Town Council and Laois County Council. (* *Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018*.)

After Carlow, the market towns of Tullow and Mhuinebheag are the prominent towns in the county, with a network of smaller towns and villages. The physical setting of County Carlow is framed by the Rivers Barrow and Slaney, the Killeshin Hills and the Blackstairs Mountains to the south of the county. The outstanding natural beauty and ecological value of the county is recognised and protected by the designation of three candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC’s) within the County, which places them on a European wide network of Natura 2000 sites and signifies the importance of these sites for biodiversity and a high quality environment.

The scenic quality of the County’s landscape is complemented by the historic character of Carlow’s towns and villages and in the rich archaeological and ecclesiastical heritage across the county.

A Transport Plan shall be prepared as part of the review and preparation of future Town and Local Area Plans in order to provide a framework for sustainable travel and transport policies in each plan.

The settlement hierarchy for the purposes of the Core Strategy is set out on Table 2.4 and illustrated on Map 2.3 – the Core Strategy Map.

Table 2.4 County Settlement Hierarchy	
Type of Urban Centre	Town/Centre
County Town	Carlow
District Town	Tullow, Muinebheag / Bagenalstown.
Smaller Towns	Borris, Hacketstown, Rathvilly, Ballon, Leighlinbridge, Carrigduff.
Villages	Tinryland, Bennekerry/Kernanstown, Palatine, Clonegal, Grange, Kildavin, Fenagh, Myshall, Rathoe,

	Ballinabrannagh/Raheendoran, Tinnahinch, Old Leighlin, Ballinkillen, Ardattin, Nurney, Ballymurphy, Clonmore.
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2.5.1 Carlow Town & Environs

Carlow is designated as a County Town in the National Spatial Strategy and is a key driver which can help promote more balanced regional development. Under the NSS and South-East Regional Planning Guidelines, Carlow is an important regional centre with a sphere of influence extending northwards into County Kildare, north-west into County Laois as well as its role as a County Town within the South-East region. Given that the population of the Carlow Urban area stood at 23,030 in the 2011 Census, it is anticipated that the next review of the RPG's and its population target for Carlow Town of 25,000 will be amended during the lifetime of this Plan.

In order to fulfill its role as a County Town, Carlow will be the main focus for public and private sector investment within the county over the period of the Plan.

Objectives:

To implement the NSS and South-East Regional Planning Guidelines by encouraging developments of Carlow Town, Greater Carlow and Graiguecullen Urban area.

To review the County Development Plan in the light of any emerging replacement to the NSS and South-East Regional Planning Guidelines and vary the Development Plan accordingly if necessary.

2.5.2 District Towns

District towns are identified in the Regional Planning Guidelines as containing a population of between 1,500 and 5,000 in the 2006 census. The Regional Planning Guidelines included Tullow and Muinebheag in this category.

Table 2.5 Population of District Towns as a percentage of County Population

	Population 2011	% of County Population
County	54,532	
Tullow	3,972	7.29%
Muinebheag	2,950	5.41%

In general, these District Towns have well developed services and community facilities and have the capacity to accommodate additional growth (subject to certain physical infrastructural investments). Local Area Plans for Tullow and Muinebheag provide an important blueprint for the development of these Towns.

Objective:

To develop the District Towns to be, as far as practical, self-sufficient incorporating employment activities, sufficient retail services and social and community facilities.

2.5.3 Smaller Towns and Villages

For the smaller towns and villages, there are currently five Local Area Plans (LAP's) for Borris, Rathvilly, Leighlinbridge, Carrigduff and Tinnahinch. Having regard to their population and function as service centres serving a rural hinterland, it will be a priority to develop new Local Area Plans for Ballon and Hacketstown and a population and zoning allocation has been made in the Core Strategy Table for these settlements.

2.5.4 Settlement Policy

For the purposes of this core strategy, the following settlements will not be assigned a separate allocation of housing units. Table 2.8A sets out a list of other villages and rural settlements in the county.

Table 2.8.A - List of other villages and rural settlements

Settlement Name
Rathoe
Palatine
Bennekerry
Grange/Killerig
Ballinabrannagh/ Raheendoran
Bilboa
Old Leighlin
Graiguenalug/Nurney
Fenagh
Myshall
Ardattin
Ballinkillen
Garryhill
Clonmore
Newtown
Ticknock
Glynn
St. Mullins
Rathanna
Ballymurphy
Drumpeha

Each of these settlements will be subject to a map within this Plan (See Appendix 11 Settlement Development Boundaries) which depicts a settlement boundary within which development will be considered in accordance with the policies outlined below (section 2.5.5). There will be no land use zoning objectives in these settlements. Development

proposals within the boundary will be considered on their merits and against the policies and objectives contained in this core strategy and the Development Plan generally. The expired LAP's for Clonegal, Kildavin, Ballinabrannagh/Raheendoran, Grange/Killerig, Palatine, Rathoe, Tinryland and Carrickduff are no longer the statutory plans for their areas but do contain a significant amount of information on natural and built heritage and other planning issues. The expired plans will be used as supplementary guidance documents for planning purposes. Housing development within the settlement boundary of these settlements will **not** be subject to the rural housing policy as outlined in section 2.7.

2.5.5 Existing Local Area Plans

At the time of this Development Plan, LAP's are in place for the towns and villages of Bagenalstown/Muinebheag/Royal Oak, Borris, Carlow Town Environs, Leighlinbridge, Rathvilly, Tinnahinch and Tullow.

Towns with existing LAP's are targeted for growth having regard to their position within the settlement hierarchy of the County and the scale and character of the individual settlement.

As can be seen in the Core Strategy Table, these LAP's will be reviewed so as to comply with the RPG's population targets and Housing Land requirements for the population.

For each Local Area Plan this core strategy sets out a mechanism to address the over-provision of land zoned for residential development within the Plan area when the Local Area Plan is reviewed.

The Local Authority will, if the need arises, prepare Local Area Plans or other appropriate planning framework documents for areas within the County subject to the necessary resources being available.

Table 2.6 Local Area Plans Status

Settlement name.	Draft Proposal Response	Local Area Plan Projected Date for Commencement	Local Area Plan Projected Date for Adoption
1. Muinebheag (Current LAP 2010 – 2016)	Local Area Plan to be reviewed to align with Core Strategy.	February 2015	July 2016
2. Tullow (Current LAP 2010 – 2016)	Local Area Plan to be reviewed to align with Core Strategy	March 2015	August 2016
3. Leighlinbridge (Current LAP 2010 – 2016)	Local Area Plan to be reviewed to align with Core	May 2015	October 2016

	Strategy.		
4. Rathvilly (Current LAP 2010 – 2016)	Local Area Plan to be reviewed to align with Core Strategy.	July 2015	December 2016
5. Borris (Current LAP 2010 – 2016)	Local Area Plan to be reviewed to align with Core Strategy.	July 2015	December 2016
6. Tinnahinch (Current LAP 2010 – 2016)	Local Area Plan to be reviewed to align with Core Strategy.	September 2015	February 2017
7. Carrickduff (Current LAP 2009 – 2015)	New Local Area Plan	September 2015	February 2017
8. Ballon	New Local Area Plan	November 2015	April 2017
9. Hacketstown	New Local Area Plan	January 2016	June 2017

Development Objectives for smaller towns and villages

The smaller towns and villages need to be developed in a way that strengthens their role as local service centres whilst respecting their existing character. Achieving the right balance between encouraging development in smaller towns and villages and the scale and nature of such development is critical. It is important to ensure that new residential development in smaller towns and villages is of a design, layout, character and scale which fits well with the town or village involved and presents a high quality living environment.

The scale and density of development will depend on number of factors including the:

- Availability of infrastructure including appropriate waste water treatment facilities and water supply
- Contribution to the enhancement of the village form by reinforcing the street pattern
- Contribution to the protection of the architectural and environmental qualities of the village
- Capacity of the existing services in the village to accommodate the proposed development

Future growth in the smaller towns and villages will be incremental, small in scale and appropriate to the size, scale and character of the village.

Development within all the settlements of the County must be of a scale that reflects the scale and character of the particular settlement and its function within the settlement hierarchy. Housing development within the development boundary (See Appendix 12 Settlement Development Boundaries) of these settlements will not be subject to the rural housing policy.

Objectives:

To facilitate development of housing, economic development, services and infrastructure in the smaller towns and villages of the county at a scale and character which is appropriate in order to sustain and renew populations and services in these areas, subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Development Management

For villages where no LAP exists, no one proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock by more than 12.5% within the lifetime of the plan. For smaller villages of under 400 in population, any individual scheme for new housing should not be larger than about 4-12 units.

Table 2.7 Population targets for County Carlow

South-East Regional Planning Guidelines	County Carlow	Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area	County Balance
CSO Population figures 2006	50,349	20,724	29,625
SERPG Base Population figure 2010	56,155	22,126	34,029
CSO Population figures 2011	54,532	23,030	31,502
SERPGs Population Targets 2016	59,451	23,768	35,683
SERPGs Population Targets 2022	63,536	25,000	38,536

Population Targets contained within the South-East Regional Planning Guidelines were framed around estimated baseline population figures for 2010. However, the 2011 census results provided clarity on current population figures. It is clear that when the South-East Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted in 2010, the population of County Carlow was over-estimated by 1,623 people. This over-estimation influenced the plan-making process and the core strategy in the *Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018* as it relates to housing land requirement in Carlow with the actual figure for 2011 used in place of the original estimate for 2010.

Having regard to the over estimated population figure for 2011 in the Regional Planning Guidelines population targets, the Housing Strategy has examined the population targets for 2015 and 2021 and the recalibrated population targets for Carlow are as follows:

2011 Census	2015	2021	RPG 2022
54,612	57,702	62,668	63,536

Using the 2.8 average household size (2011 census) there is a requirement to house an additional population of 4,966 in a minimum of 1773 households by 2021.

2.5.6 Compliance with Population Targets

The RPGs provide a framework for regional development, population targets for each county and for principle settlements and a Housing Land Requirement (HLR) for each Local Authority. These population targets when applied to County Carlow give a total population increase of **4,966** for the period 2015-2021, with a breakdown of **2,480** persons for Carlow Town and **2,486** for the rest of the County. These targets are consistent with the growth of the Carlow Urban Area

In the case of Tullow, Bagenalstown/Muinebheag and other towns and villages with an LAP, each LAP will have to be reviewed to ensure alignment with the Core Strategy in terms of population growth, the requirement for housing land to accommodate such growth and the zoning of land to meet the requirement specified in the Core Strategy.

In this context, the **2,486** population target for the rest of the County (the remaining share) is distributed between the towns, villages and rural areas as indicated in the Core Strategy Table. Some rural housing generated demand will be accommodated within the rural areas, in accordance with the DEHLG Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Carlow County Council's Rural Housing Policy. Rural demand should also be accommodated within zoned areas of existing settlements (including provision of serviced sites), so as to allow choice in the market and provide an alternative to the one-off house in the countryside.

The rationale for the allocation of population targets within the County is based on the size of the settlement and its position within the settlement hierarchy.

In the case of Tullow and Bagenalstown/Muinebheag/Muinebheag, the population allocation has taken account of the level of vacant housing stock in Tullow including unfinished estates and the lack of choice of housing stock in Bagenalstown/Muinebheag/Muinebheag.

The classification of settlements for County Carlow is set out at Table 2.8 on the following page – the **Core Strategy Table**

2.5.7 Core Strategy Table

The implementation of the **NSS** and **RPGs** at the County level will:

- Allow the sustainable development of rural areas of the county
- Allow the sustainable growth of the District Towns, smaller settlements and rural areas within the County

- Avoid the overprovision of zoned lands
- Avoid the potential of unsustainable leapfrogging of undeveloped lands
- Avoid the pressure for excessive development in unserved areas
- Ensure that adequate land is zoned to more than meet 1.5 times the population targets set in the RPG's

Table 2.8 Core Strategy Table 2015 -2021

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Settlement Name	Core Strategy population allocation (Pop. Increase 2015-2021)	Housing Land requirement (Ha)	Existing Zoning (Ha)	Total No. of residential units required over period 2015-2021	Proposed zoning (Ha)	Total No. of residential units required over period 2015-2021 after adjustment * Note A	Proposed zoning (Ha) after adjustment
County Carlow	4,966	125.6	450.5	2,603	125.6	2274	116.8
Carlow Town & Environs	2,480	T 30 E 57 *J	T 30 E 57 *J	T 750 E 684 *J	T 30 E 57 *J	T 585 E 641	T 30 E 54
District Towns:							
Tullow	180	5.6	35	112	5.6	64	3.2
Muinebheag	440	13.7	40	275	13.7	255	12.8
Other Towns and villages with LAPs:							
Rathvilly	68	2.1	120.6	42	2.1	41	2.1
Leighlinbridge	135	4.2	20	84	4.2	77	3.9
Borris	68	2.1	19	42	2.1	21	1.1
Carrickduff	68	2.1	125.9	42	2.1	42	2.1
Tinnahinch	40	1.25	3	25	1.25	25	1.25
Settlements with LAPs now lapsed							
Hacketstown	80	2.5	Nil	50	2.5 *L	50	2.5
Ballon	60	1.9	Nil	38	1.9 *L	20	1.0

Tinryland	40	1.25	Nil	25	1.25 *L	25	1.25
Kildavin	27	0.85	Nil	17	0.85 *L	17	0.85
Clonegal	34	1.05	Nil	21	1.05 *L	15	0.75
Other Rural Settlements (see table 2.8.A)	600	-	Nil	171	-	171	-
Rural Area	626	-	-	225	-	225	-
TOTAL	4,966	125.6	450.5	2603	125.6	2274	116.8

*J Figure based on Housing Land requirement identified in the Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018

*L Residential zoning allocation should new LAP be prepared.

*A Adjustment to required number of units to take account of:

- (a) unoccupied units in unfinished estates and
- (b) extant planning permissions for residential development which may proceed during the lifetime of the plan (excluding all permissions with less than 2 years to expiry date)

In the case of Carlow Town (formerly the administrative area of Carlow Town Council) there is no reduction in the amount of land zoned as the lands are located within the urban area including infill sites between other housing estates. Taking into consideration the availability of services and infrastructure for these sites, it is considered that the zoning of these lands for development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In line with Part II, Section 15 (2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the Development Plan, including the Core Strategy, will be reviewed every two years, this being inclusive of the above table.

POLICY CS 1: To implement the provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines and to target the growth of Carlow Town, the District Towns of Tullow and Muinebheag/Bagenalstown, the other settlements in the hierarchy and rural areas to advance sustainable development

2.6 RETAIL STRATEGY

The Planning Authority will seek to ensure that all retail development permitted is in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) and the accompanying Retail Design Manual – A Good Practice Guide (2012) and the Carlow County Retail Strategy accompanying this Development Plan. This Retail Strategy sets out the Retail Hierarchy for the county and confirms the level and form of retailing activities appropriate to each town and settlement. The Retail Hierarchy for Carlow County is as follows;

Level 1 – Carlow County Town Centre

Level 2 – Sub County Town Centres of Tullow and Muinebheag (Bagenalstown)

Level 3 – Small Towns such as Hacketstown, Rathvilly, Leighlinbridge, Ballon, Carrickduff and Tinnahinch

Level 4 – All other villages / settlements

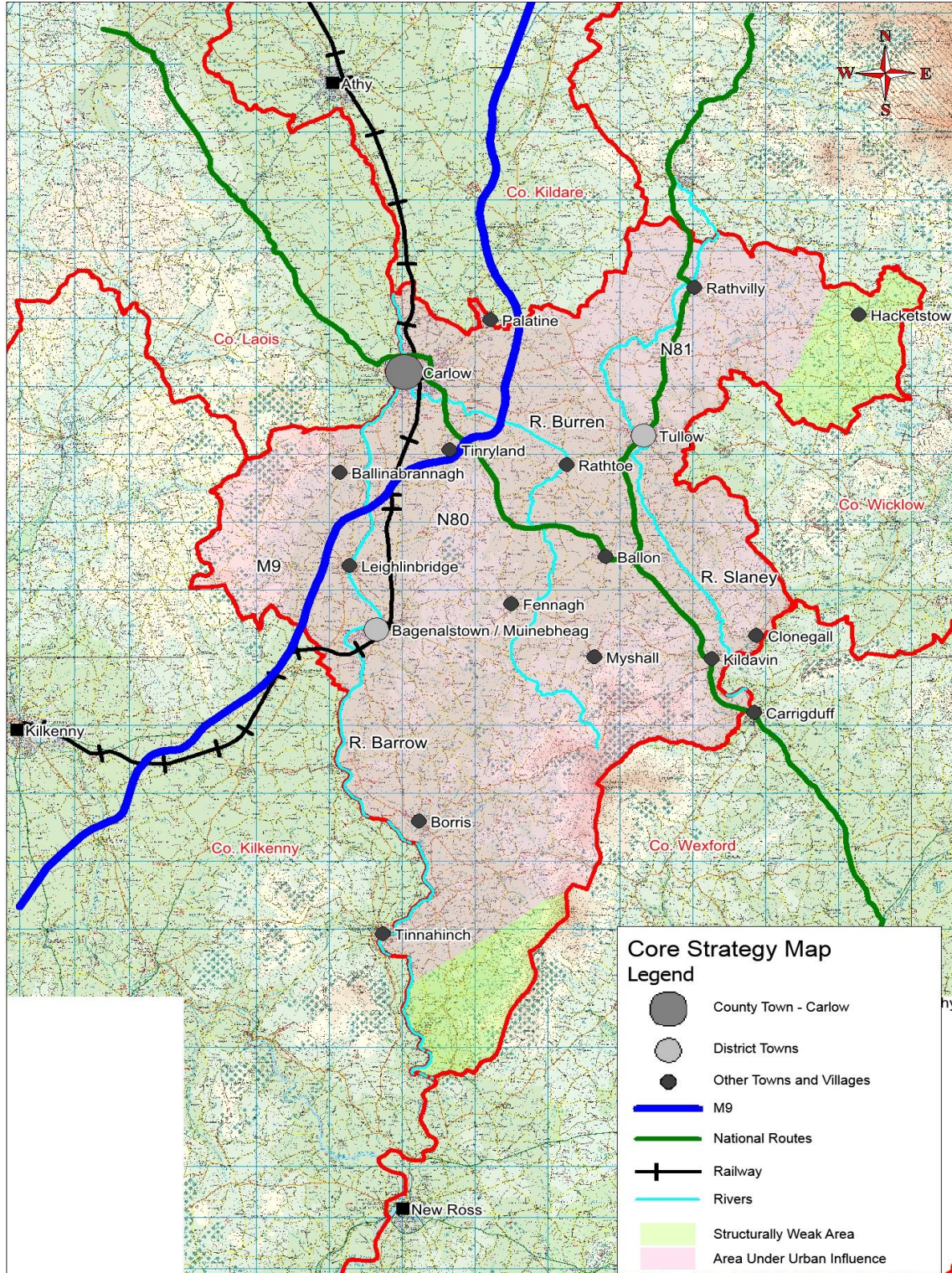
2.7 RURAL SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

2.7.1 Rural Area Types in County Carlow

Having regard to the characteristics of County Carlow, the NSS Indicative Outline of Rural Area types and the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Rural Housing, the majority of County Carlow is classified as being '*Areas under Urban Influence*'. This is based on (a) access to Carlow Town or other urban settlements with a wide range of public amenities and services (b) access to motorway or national roads (c) access to public transport services. Remote rural areas to the south and east of the County are considered to be '*Structurally Weak Areas*' on the basis of (a) limited access to public services and amenities, (b) access to main roads and public transport.

These areas are indicated in the CORE STRATEGY MAP.

Map 2.3 Core Strategy Map



2.7.1.1 Housing in Rural Settlements

There are large numbers of small rural settlements throughout the county of Carlow. These settlements perform a very valuable function in supporting and sustaining rural communities. They are the hub of community life in many areas and provide essential community and economic services through their important but sometimes limited physical and social infrastructures. Facilities available vary considerably but generally include some mixture of schools, shops, places of worship, post offices, public houses, playing fields and other community and sporting facilities.

The Council recognises the potential for such settlements to cater for limited additional development and will seek to encourage appropriate levels of development having regard to the capacity of existing services, the size and recent growth rate of the settlement and the need to ensure the sustainability of the local population and services it enjoys. The Council also recognises that rural settlements can play an important role in responding to the urban generated rural housing aspirations. To this end the Development Plan will seek to facilitate the planned and sustainable expansion of rural villages listed at Table 2.8A. The Council will encourage well designed and suitably located clusters of houses within the development boundary for these settlements. These groups or clusters will vary in size having regard to local circumstances and the nature of the development proposed and will typically comprise of 4-12 houses. No such development will be permitted unless provision is made for adequate road and pedestrian access and availability of adequate water and wastewater capacity to serve the development. The design of such cluster developments should be context driven. In general it should not be suburban in character but should be in keeping with the style and character of the rural settlement. The council will also seek to ensure the inclusion of a mix of dwelling types in terms of size and accommodation capacity and affordability. Provision of serviced sites will also be considered for such cluster developments.

It will be the policy of the Council to seek improved settlement facilities as part of any development e.g. streetscape establishment and improvement, hard and soft landscaping (especially at settlement boundaries), footpaths and lighting, open spaces/central green areas, traffic calming etc. The Council will seek to have such improvements carried out as part of any development and/or will levy development contributions as necessary to fund the cost of improving services. It will be the policy of Carlow County Council to actively promote the provision of private serviced sites at reasonable cost within the development areas of the above settlements and to facilitate the establishment of employment opportunities so as to anchor such settlements in the interests of sustainability.

2.7.1.2 Community and Housing in the Countryside

Community and recreational facilities are a key determinant of the quality of life enjoyed by any community. The Council will seek to facilitate the development of community and recreational facilities by:

- Reserving sites/land in areas of population growth for such facilities
- Encouraging the provision of new facilities within existing settlements
- Levying development contributions in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

- Providing advice and/or financial assistance to communities in the development of new and upgraded facilities

2.7.1.3 One-off Housing in the Countryside

The Council recognises the need to maintain vibrant rural communities and respond effectively to the rural generated housing needs of the people of Carlow. It shall be the policy of Carlow County Council to facilitate the development of one off rural housing throughout the county by persons demonstrating local rural generated housing needs. In this regard positive presumption will be given to the building of rural dwellings by persons in the following categories:-

- a) - The dwelling will be for the persons own occupation and is required having regard to housing need and the applicants wish to live in the local area
- b) - Good practice has been demonstrated in relation to site location and access, drainage and design
- c) – Those who can satisfy the Planning Authority of their commitment to operate a full-time business from their proposed home in a rural area. The applicants must outline how their business will contribute to and enhance the rural community and that they satisfy the Planning Authority that the nature of their employment or business is compatible with those specified in the local needs criteria for rural areas
- d) Identify existing Extraction Industry sites in relation to proposed rural housing sites
- e) The development of one-off rural housing will be subject to appropriate assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

2.7.1.4 Persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community

Such persons will normally have spent a substantial part of their lives living as members of an established local rural community and/or can demonstrate strong family ties with the local community. Examples include:

- Immediate family member of an existing householder/landowner who is intrinsically linked to the area to include son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, wishing to build a permanent home for their own use in the local area
- A farm owner or an immediate family member (son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, heir) wishing to build a permanent home for their own use on family lands
- Persons who were born and lived for substantial parts of their lives in a specific rural area who then moved away and who wish to return to their home places (returning migrants)
- An immigrant returning to their local area seeking to build a house for his/her own use not as speculation
- A son or daughter, or niece/nephew considered to merit the same position as son/daughter within the law (i.e. when the uncle/aunt has no children of his/her own) of a permanent native resident of a rural area, who can demonstrate a definable social or economic need to live in the area in which the proposal relates and not as speculation
- Persons living in rented accommodation who have been resident in the local rural area for a period not less than 3 years

- Persons wishing to downsize for his/her own use and not as speculation in the rural area in which they currently reside must:
 - Have lived in their current residence for a period of not less than 10 years
 - Demonstrate a reasonable need to downsize e.g. certain medical conditions
 - Demonstrate non-availability of alternative suitable accommodation in the immediate rural area in which they are currently residing
 - Demonstrate the unsuitability in adapting the current residence to suit their need for downsizing
 - Submit proposals outlining the future use of the existing place of residence

Should persons demonstrate the need to downsize in accordance with the above requirements applications will only be considered for properties that have a reduction of 35% in floor area in comparison to the applicants existing place of residence

- Persons wishing to upsize for his/her own use and not as speculation in the rural area in which they currently reside must:
 - Have lived in their current residence for a period of not less than 10 years
 - Demonstrate a reasonable need to upsize e.g. certain medical conditions
 - Demonstrate non-availability of alternative suitable accommodation in the immediate rural area in which they are currently residing
 - Demonstrate inability to increase the floor area of the current residence

Documentary proof will be required to be submitted with applications to show compliance with the above policies.

Three years shall be deemed to be the minimum period of residency necessary in order to be considered a member of the local community. The term local shall be construed for assessment purposes as within a radius of circa 8 km.

2.7.1.5 Persons Residing in Bordering Counties

Applications from persons in neighbouring counties who reside within a 3km radius of the Carlow County border maybe considered subject to compliance with the following:

- Must reside in their current rural area/place of residence of the neighbouring county for a period of not less than 10 consecutive years
- The intended area of residence must be within 5km of the Carlow County boundary and must be within 8km radius from the existing place of residence
- Demonstrate compliance with other requirements of the rural housing policy as set out above

2.7.1.6 Persons working full time or part time in rural areas

Consideration will be given to the persons demonstrating the following circumstances:

- A person whose principal occupation is in agriculture and who owns and farms lands in the immediate vicinity of the site
- An immediate family member i.e. son or daughter of a person who is employed in agriculture in the immediate vicinity of the site

- Persons who are fulltime farmers or employed fulltime in other rural based activity such as horticulture, forestry, bloodstock, farming, agri-tourism or other rural based activity in which they wish to build or whose employment is intrinsically linked to the rural area in which they wish to build
- Persons working fulltime or part-time on a permanent basis in a specific rural area and who has resided in the immediate area for at least 3 consecutive years prior to the application who by the nature of the work need to be close to the workplace and/or their employment provides a service to the local community. Examples include agricultural contractors providing services to the local rural area or teachers in rural schools
- Persons whose work is intrinsically linked to the local rural area and who can prove a definable social and economic need to live in the rural area and who has resided in the immediate area for at least 3 consecutive years prior to the application. Examples include medical and veterinary services
- The Council seeks to facilitate the development of rural enterprises such as the alternative use of redundant agricultural buildings for workshops operating at the micro enterprise level. The Council may also therefore have regard to the housing needs relating to small rural or cottage type micro enterprises including arts, crafts woodwork etc. In considering the latter regard will be had to inter alia the location, size, scale and nature of the enterprise and its related building requirements. Medium to large scale enterprises in terms of building size requirements and /or employment numbers are not generally considered appropriate for location in the open countryside
- The Council may also consider on a case by case basis persons whose employment type is such that they are most suitably accommodated in the rural area

Documentary proof will be required to be submitted with applications to show compliance with the above policies.

Minimum employment period of 3 years shall be deemed necessary and the term local shall be construed for assessment purposes as within a radius of circa 8km.

2.7.1.7 Social/Community, Medical and Personal Circumstances

Under certain circumstances consideration may be given to applicants who can demonstrate a social/community, medical, or personal need as outlined below:

- Permanent native resident who has to dispose of their dwelling on foot of a court order following a divorce or legal separation
- A close relative who has inherited, either as a gift or on death, an agricultural holding or site for his/her own purposes and not for speculation and who can demonstrate a definable social and or economic need to live in the area to which the proposal relates
- Any persons wishing to live adjacent to immediate family members (son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother) to provide care and support or vice versa

Documentary proof will be required to be submitted with applications to show compliance with the above policies.

2.7.2 Environmental Requirements for Rural Housing in the Countryside

2.7.2.1 Restrictions on development on regionally important aquifers.

Groundwater

Underground water supplies are used by a significant number of households in the county who are dependant on private wells. A number of group schemes are also dependant on underground aquifers. Underground aquifers are exploited commercially for bottled water, which can be a significant economic resource. Groundwater also contributes to the river system.

The Geological Survey of Ireland has completed a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Carlow. The overall aim of a Groundwater Protection Scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, for drinking water, surface water ecosystems and terrestrial ecosystems, for the benefit of present and future generations. The groundwater protection schemes are based on information provided by a suite of maps, including:

- Groundwater protection zones and Hydrogeological data
- Aquifers
- Vulnerability
- Outcrop and depth to bedrock
- Subsoils geology
- Bedrock geology

The Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidance for Carlow County Council in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater:

- Source Protection Areas
- Development within source protection zones shall be subject to more stringent requirements in accordance with the Groundwater Protection Scheme
- Developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in Inner Source
- Protection Areas of Extreme Vulnerability shall be subject to strict Development

Assessment Criteria

When new public water supply schemes come on stream, source protection areas shall be mapped as appropriate.

For multiple housing developments with private water supplies it will be the policy of the Council to identify source protection areas for that supply.

In practical terms protection of the groundwater can be achieved through the encouragement of best practice in agricultural and industrial activities and through best practice in the installation and use of wastewater treatment systems. Carlow County

Council requires that sites will be assessed in accordance with the EPA manual entitled *Wastewater Treatment Manuals: Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009)* as may be replaced or updated by the EPA's *Code of Practice – Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses*. The person carrying out the assessment will be suitably qualified.

2.7.2.2 Development Control Assessment

New developments which include on-site wastewater treatment in an Extreme Vulnerability Inner Source Protection Area shall be restricted to the following categories:

1. A dwelling for a full-time farmer
2. An existing inhabited dwelling in need of replacement
3. A second family dwelling on a farm where this is required for management of the farm

Permission may be granted in the above instances subject to the following stipulations:

- a) That an alternative site outside the Extreme Vulnerability Inner Source Protection Area is not available
- b) The existing water quality of the source is not subject to any significant nitrate and / or microbiological contamination

Policy

IE51 Ensure that septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems, where required as part of a development, comply with relevant guidelines and that they are employed where site conditions are appropriate

IE52 Adhere to the recommendations of the Groundwater Protection Scheme in decision making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater

Action

Ensure the completion of the mapping of source protection areas

2.7.3 Design Sighting Requirements

Consideration of individual planning applications will also be subject to normal design sighting requirements including:

- The need to demonstrate that the location chosen has sufficient capacity to absorb further development without a detrimental impact to the essential rural character of the area. Issues to be examined in this regard include the degree of existing or resulting ribbon development, the degree of development on the landholding and the degree to which previously approved rural housing developments have been retained in family or applicants ownership
- The need to take account of and successfully integrate proposed buildings with the physical surroundings and other aspects of the natural and cultural heritage
- The need to protect features that contribute to the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the area e.g. land cover, habitats, trees, water bodies, historical and archaeological landscape, scenic views, ridges, skylines, geological and topographical features

- The need to protect public safety and ensure that proposed vehicular access points do not give rise to traffic hazards
- The need to ensure that on site waste water treatment and disposal systems are designed, installed and maintained in a manner that protects water quality
- The need to ensure that the proposed dwelling (in terms of form, size style fenestration etc) is compatible with the vernacular of the local area

In order to provide an alternative to one off houses in areas where significant development pressure and/or extensive ribbon development has led to difficulties in accommodating rural housing needs the Council may in such circumstances permit the clustering of dwellings (usually two – five in number) to accommodate persons within the above categories. The Council must be satisfied that the dwellings are for the purposes of providing accommodation to the same categories of persons as applies for one off dwellings and normal occupancy conditions will apply.

In assessing applications for one off houses in the countryside consideration will be given where other exceptional and extenuating housing needs circumstances are established including for example exceptional health needs as set out in the sustainable rural housing guideline document. In addition where elderly local farmers land owners have no children consideration may also be given to the housing needs of one favoured relative (in anticipation of taking over the landholding). The applicant will have established affiliations or connections with the land holding and his/her residence in the area would be a service and support to the landowner.

2.7.4 Occupancy Requirements

All planning permissions granted for new one off houses in the countryside shall be subject to an occupancy condition in accordance with the provisions of section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, restricting the use of the dwelling to the applicant and/or members of the applicant's family as a permanent place of residence. The period of occupancy shall be limited to a period of 5 years from the date of first occupation and subject to written agreement.

In the event of a person needing to dispose of the property within the occupancy time period consideration to the waiving of the occupancy clause may be given in the following circumstances only and not for speculation:

- Economic difficulties
- Court order

Documentary proof will be required to be submitted with applications to show compliance with the above policies.

2.7.5 Speculative Housing Development in the Open Countryside

The Council will not permit speculative one off rural housing developments in the countryside. Applicants will be required to demonstrate the nature of their housing need and satisfy the Local Authority that the dwelling is for their own occupation and that (save in exceptional circumstances) they have not previously been granted permission for a rural dwelling and subsequently sold the dwelling or site to a unrelated third party. In this regard the Council will only consider the granting of a second or subsequent

permission where there were exceptional circumstances requiring the transfer of the first property.

2.7.6 Ribbon Development

Ribbon development is defined by reference to the Appendix 4 of the Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing (DoEH&LG – 2005). Ribbon development is undesirable as it creates numerous accesses onto traffic routes, sterilises back lands, land locks farmland, creates servicing problems (water supply, drainage, footpaths and lighting) and intrudes on public views of the rural hinterland. The Council will therefore seek to prevent ribbon development particularly in the environs of towns and large settlements. Issues to be considered include:-

- The type of rural area and circumstances of the applicant
- The degree to which the proposal might be considered infill development
- The degree to which existing ribbon development would be extended or whether distinct areas of ribbon development would coalesce as a result of the development

2.7.7 Backland Development

The Council discourages backland development. All new developments in rural areas must have minimum road frontage of 20m.

2.7.8 Infill Housing

Infill housing in built up areas of towns, rural settlements and where appropriate between existing houses in the country side will be encouraged. An infill site is described as a maximum two acre site to accommodate one dwelling only and must be situated between a fully built/occupied dwelling on either side of the site. Proposals must not give rise to ribbon development as defined and proposals should be designed to integrate successfully with existing pattern of development in terms of housing type, scale and details such as materials, finishes, building lines etc. Proposals will also be required to satisfy the Council's objective of protecting the amenities of existing developments. The applicants or proposed occupants will not be required to comply with local need criteria. It shall be the policy of the Council to prevent the creation of further infill sites and applications for permission will be refused where the development proposed would create such an infill.

2.7.9 Abandoned and Semi Derelict Dwellings

A positive presumption will be given towards the redevelopment and reoccupation of abandoned and semi derelict dwellings regardless of whether or not these buildings have been occupied in recent times. The applicants or proposed occupants will not be required to comply with local need criteria. Normal planning considerations as detailed above will be applied. The Council will require that the redevelopment, in terms of scale and design, is appropriate for the site and the overall area.

2.7.10 Replacement of Existing Dwellings

The Council will favourably consider the replacement of existing dwellings where it is demonstrated by way of report from a suitably qualified person that the dwelling is not habitable but that its replacement is the most appropriate option. The scale character and

design of the proposed replacement should be appropriate for the area and the Council will normally require by way of condition that the existing dwelling be demolished in the interests of visual amenity. The applicants or proposed occupants will not be required to comply with local need criteria and normal planning considerations as detailed above will be applied.

2.7.11 Roadside Boundaries and Hedges

It shall be the policy of the Council to seek to avoid the removal of roadside boundaries (whether hedges, sod/stone bank or stone walls) except where such removal is required for road safety reasons. Roadside boundaries are important elements of the landscape and ecology of the area and can assist of the absorbing of rural housing into its surroundings. In relation to all development, site boundaries should be completed (planting / fenced / walled) prior to occupation and all new road openings should prevent water run-off from the development site.

2.7.12 Rural House Design Guidance

A Rural House Design Guide for County Carlow will assist in providing guidance to applicants and an updated design guide for the County will be published later following adoption of the County Development Plan. It is intended that the updated design guide will act as an instrument to develop best practice in the design and siting of one off rural housing in County Carlow and will provide more detailed guidance than the existing Siting and Design Guide.

2.7.13 Ongoing Monitoring and Review

The council will monitor and access on an ongoing basis any emerging changes in settlement patterns in rural areas, the factors giving rise to such changes and the need to amend this policy in light of the same. The Council will also record in an accessible format the locations of new rural housing applications and commencements. It will publish information on decisions made each year and the detail of any significant new trends.

2.7.14 Holiday Homes and Tourism Accommodation

The Council recognises the importance of holiday accommodation to the development of the tourism industry within the county and its potential to revitalise and enhance the local economy. However, uncontrolled holiday accommodation can have a negative impact in rural areas and on the affordability of sites and houses for permanent rural dwellers. In order to achieve an appropriate balance the Council will seek to channel such accommodation to areas that can best accommodate it and can facilitate the maximisation of benefit to the local economy. In this regard new holiday home developments will not generally be permitted in the open countryside. The following however will be favourably considered:

1. The provisions of one off or appropriately scaled holiday home clusters in towns, villages and rural settlement areas where there are sufficient infrastructural, commercial and social facilities to support and benefit from the proposed development
2. The reuse of redundant farm buildings for owner run agri-tourism businesses

3. The provision of housing for tourists at golf courses or other such recreational attractions or as part of a major tourism development proposal where the proposal is of such strategic importance to be of benefit to the county. In such cases the housing units will continue to form part of an overall complex and should not normally be individually sold

Holiday home developments on unzoned lands may be subject to an agreement in accordance with section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 prohibiting the sale of individual units.

2.7.15 Sterilisation Agreements

Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides that a Planning Authority may enter into an agreement with any person for the purposes of restricting or regulating the development and use of land permanently or for a specified period. Certain agreements under this section known more commonly as “sterilisation” agreements have been used on occasion by the Planning Authority to regulate development in rural areas. In areas where very significant levels of rural housing development have taken place on the edges of cities and towns and where such areas may be tending to become overdeveloped, such agreements have provided a useful tool in enabling Planning Authorities to support rural generated development on the one hand while avoiding over development of an area on the other. In general the Planning Authority will avoid the use of sterilisation agreements and will focus instead on deciding the merits of the individual proposal in terms of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Where applications are made on lands outside of the areas of urban influence that have been the subject of sterilisation agreements in the past, the Planning Authority will assess each application on its merits having regard to the rural housing provisions of the Development Plan and the rural housing guidelines as issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

2.8 IMPLEMENTATION OF SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

The settlement strategy outlined above will be reinforced by the Council reviewing the Local Area Plans that are already made, and preparing additional LAPs and Village Design Statements and other supplementary guidance documents, where appropriate.

The settlement strategy will be underpinned by the prioritisation of investment in local infrastructure under the Council’s programmes in roads and other infrastructure and Irish Water’s programme for water services.

Objective: To monitor the trends in rural housing and population during the lifetime of the plan to ascertain if further rural housing policy responses are required during the plan period. An Implementation and Monitoring Group will be established to examine progress on the implementation of the Strategy.



CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER THREE - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.0 INTRODUCTION

We live in exciting, challenging and changing times. Above all, change has become a major feature of the lives of all of our citizens. How Carlow County Council prepares for and manages this change will greatly influence our lives and the lives of future generations.

The Irish economy is undertaking a profound transition from a failed model built around debt, construction and housing to one based on innovation, enterprise and exports. The fallout from that failed economic model was catastrophic, with competitiveness lost, markets lost and most traumatic of all was the huge rise in unemployment.

The Governments Action Plan for Jobs 2012 is a Government response to methodically and deliberately reconfigure and retool our economy so that long term sustainable jobs are created for our people and that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. Government has stated that it aims to have 100,000 more people in work by 2016 and 2 million people in work by 2020.

Alongside the Action Plan for Jobs 2012, the report on Local Government Enterprise & Jobs Strategy - Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs Locally, confirms the growing importance of Local Authorities fostering local innovation and entrepreneurship through a range of networking events, workshops and schemes that are tailored to suit local opportunities and circumstance. All of this confirms that Carlow County Council play a much broader role in enterprise support than is sometimes acknowledged and the important responsibility placed on Local Authorities to continue to do so is reflected in the “Action Plan for Jobs 2012” and the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

Role of Local Government

The overarching role of local government in integrated public service delivery is fundamental to economic development and enterprise support. Local Authorities play a significant supporting role in the delivery and implementation of national objectives, in conjunction with its primary role of effective local delivery of public services and balanced economic development.

This role manifests itself in the direct and indirect provision of services and supports as well as a key enabling role carried out by Local Authorities, in collaboration with communities, business interests and an array of national and local agencies. Direct intervention and influence through forward planning in the shape of the County and Town Development Plans, local area plans, and town centre improvement plans is the starting point for major ongoing investment in infrastructural provision in such areas as transportation and traffic management, broadband, recreation and amenity provision and visual improvement projects.

Statistics

In the April 2011 census, there were 25,410 persons in County Carlow aged 15 years and over in the labour force and of these, 76.7 per cent (19,502 persons) were at work. Of the 17,053 persons aged 15 years and over who were outside the labour force, 28.5 per cent were students, 25.8 per cent were looking after the home/family and 30.3 per cent were retired

Live Register 2014

The unemployment rate in February 2014 for Carlow County shows a steady decline over previous months which is in line with the national average of 11.9%

Census 2011

The daytime working population (resident and non-resident) of Carlow in 2011 was 19,502 with commerce and trade being the largest industry. According to Census 2011, the following pie chart and table shows a break down in persons and industries relevant to Carlow;

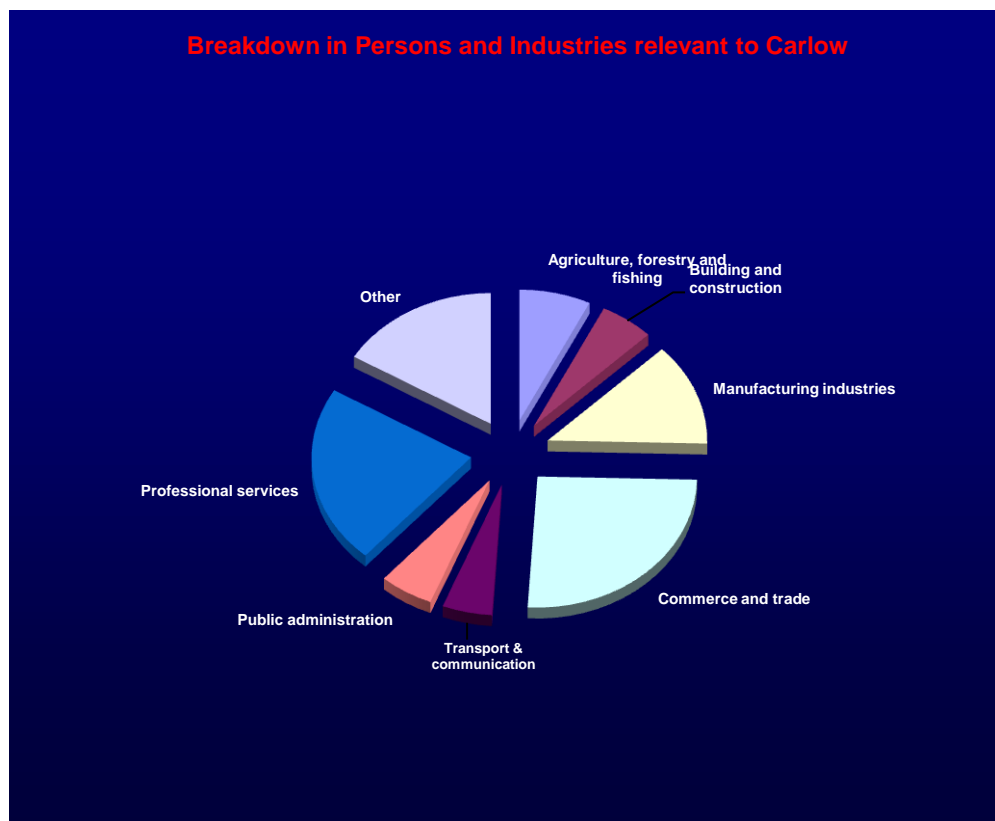


Figure 3.1 Breakdown in Persons and Industries relevant to Carlow

Industry	Population
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,411
Building and construction	1,070
Manufacturing industries	2,469
Commerce and trade	4,993
Transport and communications	986
Public administration	1,068
Professional services	4,304
Other	3,201
Total	19,502

Table 3.1 Breakdown in Persons and Industries relevant to Carlow

3.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Carlow County Council has an important role to play in facilitating development within the County. This ranges from its direct role which includes physical planning and development, undertaking socio-economic research and analysis, the provision of essential infrastructure, including transport and water infrastructure, which is vital for enterprises as well as community infrastructure. The Council is also a key agent for local delivery of national policy objectives along with close co-operation with the agencies which have an established remit for specific intervention in this area and through its direct and indirect involvement with local development companies and organisations such as Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Carlow County Development Partnership Ltd., Carlow County Chamber, IBEC and other development agencies in the County. In April 2014, the Council takes on the local micro-enterprise support service through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), integrating the services of the former County Enterprise Board with the Council's Business Support Unit, to improve and build on existing structures to sustain and create jobs

In supporting Ireland's economic recovery, Carlow County Council, the business community and a network of national and local agencies collaborate to provide a key enabling role in a myriad of activities which result in a job dividend. Factors that make a location attractive for both firms and their employees are the key to a successful economic development strategy. Carlow has a pivotal location as a County Town in the South East Region with a strong relationship to the Midlands and South Leinster Region. The county has a highly educated workforce, two Institutions of Higher Education plus the National Crops Biotechnology Research Centre at Teagasc Oak Park, substantial infrastructural developments and proximity to both Dublin and the major transport hubs, all of which present Carlow as an ideal location for business. Carlow's strategic location close to Dublin has been enhanced by the opening of the M9 motorway from Dublin to Waterford. Recent private sector investments include Merck Sharp & Dohme, one of the

world's largest pharmaceutical companies, resulting in the creation of circa 400 new jobs (between full-time and contract). Walsh Whiskey Distillery Company is investing €25million in a world-class Distillery and Visitor Centre in Bagenalstown/Muinebheag, with the creation of 55 permanent and 40 temporary jobs. US company Unum has created in excess of 100 new jobs to date, while homegrown Carlow company Netwatch has engaged in a multimillion-euro expansion at home and abroad. Other organisations in expansion mode include Integrated Communications Ltd, Autolaunch Automotive Industry and Manufacturing Plant in Bagenalstown/Muinebheag (part of Magna Inc), Keenan's Manufacturing Plant in Borris (agricultural machinery) together with continuing development by indigenous manufacturing and export companies such as Burnside Group, PB Machines, Oglesby & Butler, Tanco and Whitelite.

IT Carlow has invested hugely in the strategic development of its campus, while a substantial expansion of Enterprise House by Carlow Community Enterprise Centres Ltd. and the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) ensures facilities and supports are in place for new start-up companies.

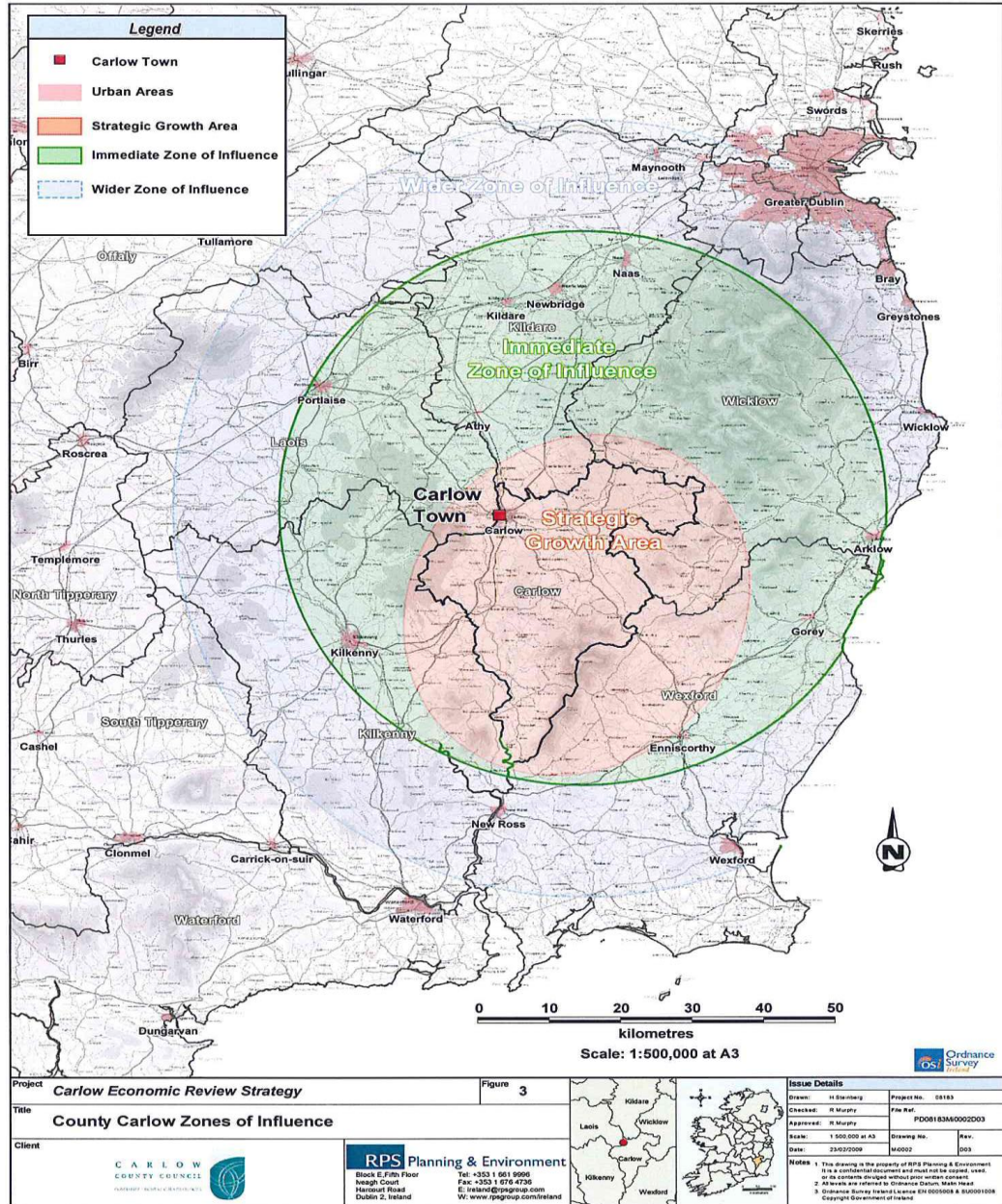
Carlow County Council will continue to aim to attract further investment and to ensure that replacement industries are found for those that have closed during the economic downturn. There has been a successful record of attracting inward investment into the County and providing other opportunities for emerging businesses through the direct provision of industrial estates and Business Parks. At present significant areas of lands for varied economic development are located in Carlow Town, Tullow and Muinebheag.

E.D.- Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Assist development of all economic sectors by the implementation of relevant policies to cater for such growth
- Provide adequate infrastructural facilities
- Promote e-business
- Zone sufficient and appropriately located lands for industrial and commercial development and their possible acquisition
- Provide enterprise areas and training infrastructure
- Zone adequate residential lands and creation of attractive towns and villages
- Develop the public realm and amenities of Carlow so that the quality of life of employees and residents can be improved
- Provide recreation / amenity facilities
- Support festivals and events
- Encourage collaborative structures focusing on economic development
- Address, where feasible, infrastructural deficiencies that may be hindering economic development and aim to ensure that sustainable infrastructural development precedes economic development

This chapter contains strategies and policies in relation to the economic development of Carlow including policies in relation to commerce, industry, information technology and retailing.



Map 3.1 County Carlow Zone of Influence

3.2 POLICY CONTEXT

3.2.1 National Spatial Strategy

In the context of the National Spatial Strategy, the economic development of Carlow Town and County can no longer be viewed in isolation from the rest of the South East Region as a whole. Ireland as a country has become an open economy and as a result the economic development of County Carlow must be considered in the context of Regional, National and global influences.

Carlow's economic performance over the past decade has been well above that anticipated for it at the time of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). Based on the economic evidence presented, it is clear that Carlow has developed a significant inter regional role well beyond its designation in the NSS. Carlow's location is best described at the centre of a national strategic growth circle comprising Wicklow, Kildare, Laois, Kilkenny and Wexford, which acknowledges its zone of influence as well beyond the South East region. Thus while the population of the county is now 54,540, the actual catchment area which Carlow serves is more like 700,000 persons today, which would correspond to a workforce of around 350,000, or 15% of the entire workforce across the State.

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) acknowledges that lengthy commuting to work has a negative effect on the quality of life for people in rural areas. The underpinning aim of the Strategy is to improve the quality of life of all citizens, bringing jobs closer to where people live, improving the environment and building a strong sustainable economic future for ourselves and our children.

The NSS recognises that trends regarding the structure, pattern and location of economic investment related as much to the skill and resource base of an area, as it does to the financial incentives, which may be offered. To this end, the NSS identifies a number of international trends emerging that have a significant influence on the location of enterprise, including:-

- The tendency towards spatial concentrations of technology
- The attraction of skilled workers and companies to urban areas
- The growing importance of services which reinforce the role of large centres of population
- The importance of supporting and strengthening the capability and quality of research and development functions at various regional locations in Ireland to sustain a competitive and innovative enterprise sector

The NSS further identifies future trends in enterprise as likely to include the following:-

- The majority of new jobs will be created in the service sector
- The increasing importance for companies in the service sector of locations at or close to major points of consumer demands

- Local services, health care, leisure and tourism will become even more significant as the population ages and disposable incomes rise
- The need to allocate additional investment in research design, innovation and development to remain competitive and viable
- Areas with a strong population base that can support high quality business infrastructure, technological development and innovation will continue to be major attractors
- A range of high quality residential locations will be necessary to attract skilled labour

3.2.2 Regional Planning Guidelines

The Regional Planning Guidelines state that the main economic drivers of the South East Region include knowledge, infrastructure and access points to the region. In each of the hubs and county towns, care should be given to the provision of high quality infrastructure that is suited to the industries likely to be attracted to these locations (Carlow being a county town).

Key Strategic Infrastructure to support development of the Hubs and County Towns are:

- Establishment of a University in the South-East Region and further development of Higher Education Institutes
- Improved links between HEI's and industry, particularly research and development
- Incubation centres
- Improved public transport within and between hubs and county towns and other settlements
- Improved water services infrastructure in compliance with all environmental legislation and the River Basin Management Plans
- Availability of serviced land banks and industrial estates
- Enhanced community and recreational facilities
- High quality telecommunications and energy supply and access (road and rail)
- First class office space
- Business and enterprise support services
- Development of innovation and training centres
- Improved public realm and public facilities in support of tourism development

3.2.3 Government Publications

At national, regional and local level there are also several other publications which the Council had regard to in compiling this Plan as follows:

- South East Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS) 2013 – 2023 – Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Governments Action Plan for Jobs 2015 and Pathways to Work 2013
- Local Government Sectoral Strategy “Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth” 2012
- Carlow Local Authorities “Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs Locally”
- Horizon 2020 – IDA Ireland Strategy (2010) “Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland”

- Food Harvest A Vision for Irish Agri-Food & Fisheries 2020 (DAFF 2010)
- Innovation Ireland: Report of Innovation Taskforce (2010)
- Delivering our Green Potential - Government Policy Statement on Growth and Employment in the Green Economy (2009)
- Barrow Corridor Study 2013
- The Report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA report).
- Draft National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2014 – 2024 (DAHG)
- Draft National Peatlands Strategy (NPWS)
- National Broadband Plan for Ireland (updated April 2014)(DCENR)
- Water Services Strategic Plan

This Development Plan supports the objectives of the key regional development bodies, including:

- The Southern Regional Assembly

3.2.4 South East Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS) 2013

Following its establishment in June, 2011, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation identified unemployment as a key priority issue that was fundamentally important in national efforts to achieve economic recovery. Among the key priorities that the report identifies for the Southeast are:

1. To ensure that the Southeast region has at least the same IDA Investment Aid as the BMW region as part of the Regional Aid Guidelines for 2014-2020
2. Support the revival of the sugar beet industry and the construction of a new bio-refinery in the region, which has the potential to create 5,000 jobs
3. The establishment of a Technological University in the region and the building of a competitive advantage through a strong research and development hub and support for innovation and creativity
4. A strategy to improve educational attainment and skills provision in the region
5. The development of a regional Transport Hub that aligns road, rail and port infrastructure
6. Investment in the roll-out of dark fibre network (Broadband)

3.2.5 Action Plan for Jobs

The Action Plan for Jobs 2015 set out over 270 separate actions with delivery spanning all Government Departments and involving a range of state and non-state actors. The Government has committed to updating its Action Plan for Jobs (ACJ) on an annual basis. Section 6.5 of the Action Plan refers to local government's role as follows:

“On 27th September, 2012, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan, published a Sectoral Strategy on Jobs, Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally. The document complemented the broader government plan, and highlights the existing contribution by Local Authorities to jobs and enterprise”. The Strategy further:

- Underpinned local government's pro-active stance in supporting enterprise and economic development

- Acknowledged that “the role of local government is fundamental to enterprise support and economic development at local level”
- Highlighted the broad range of activities where local government actively drives the local economic agenda
- Concluded that “local government support on the ground is critical to the success of initiatives ranging from support for Foreign Direct Investment and micro-enterprises, to rural broadband or major investment in wind farms and the green economy

3.2.6 Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise

In support of the Sectoral Action Plan in 2012, the County & City Managers Association (CCMA) published a report which identified over 2,000 separate local activities in 2011 which had a positive impact on local development, economic recovery and enterprise. The Report on 2011 activities was a first attempt to map the broad range of enterprise supports delivered by Local Authorities and link them to the Action Plan for Jobs. Under a renewed Action Plan for Jobs 2013, Carlow County Council produced Local Authority Support for Enterprise & Economic Development, a Report on Activities for 2012 and 2013. The added value from these reports is:

- The extent of local government’s role in this area is often undervalued and may not be fully understood by all stakeholders. The focus of the analysis is to link Local Authority actions to positive outcomes for businesses, employment and local communities
- The secondary purpose is to showcase the experience and unique capability of Carlow County Council in the area of economic development

3.2.7 Horizon 2020 – IDA Ireland Strategy (2010)

This document gives an overview of the IDA’s direction and set out targets for jobs and investments with particular focus on global services, high-end manufacturing and research development and innovation. As part of its steps to transformation, it states that 50% of foreign direct investment projects will be located outside Cork and Dublin. It states that sites need to be made attractive, infrastructural improvements in transport and energy are important and high speed broadband is a priority. The Strategy also points out that Local Authority charges and infrastructural prices should not act as a deterrent.

3.2.8 Harvest 2020 – A Vision for Irish Agri-Food & Fisheries (DAFF 2010)

This report commissioned by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food sets out a Strategy for development of the Agri-Food and Fisheries sector up to 2020 and prescribes a number of ambitious targets to be met. Harvest 2020 acknowledges the importance of the agri-food industry, which is Ireland’s largest indigenous industry, its sizeable contribution to exports and the contribution it makes to rural communities by providing sustainable jobs. Protection of the environment and conservation of biodiversity is crucial for the achievement of the targets under Food Harvest 2020, and the maintenance of a high quality of life and the attractiveness of cities, towns, villages and other locations. It is important for investment decisions by both foreign and domestic business investors.

3.2.9 Innovation Ireland: Report of Innovation Taskforce (2010)

This document, prepared by the Department of the Taoiseach, puts forward a number of requirements needed to achieve economic success. High quality physical infrastructure is particularly important for the future success of the economy. One key infrastructure is high quality broadband necessary for the Smart Economy. It also emphasises that wet laboratory space for the life sciences is at a deficit.

3.2.10 Developing Ireland's Green Economy (2009)

The report of the High-Level Group on Green Enterprise set up by the Tánaiste and the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources points to the following sectors as having employment opportunities and having export potential:

- Renewable energy
- Efficient energy use and management (including eco-construction)
- Waste management, recovery and recycling
- Water and wastewater treatment

It also identifies creating green zones and green clusters which can be used to market the economy.

3.2.11 Building Ireland's Smart Economy - A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal 2008

The Irish Government's recovery strategy prioritises five key action areas for national economic recovery which include:

1. Securing the enterprise economy and restoring competitiveness
2. Building the ideas economy – creating 'the innovation island'
3. Enhancing the environment and securing energy supplies
4. Investing in critical infrastructure
5. Providing efficient and effective public services and smart regulation

3.3 RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

3.3.1 Third and Fourth Level Institutions

In Ireland, higher education is referred to as third level education. To promote its importance and distinctiveness, graduate education is increasingly referred to as the 'Fourth Level'.

With the current global economic pressure and erosion of our competitiveness in the face of lower cost bases in emerging economies, the focus in moving forward needs to be visionary. The creation of a knowledge economy is critical for our economic wellbeing. Knowledge creation is at the core of economic activity. Key essential ingredients for the creation of a competitive knowledge economy are education, research and development (R&D) and innovation.

A significant competitive advantage for Carlow is that it is home to two Institutions of Higher Education i.e. the Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC) and Carlow College (CC), who have links with a number of international partners. These educational

facilities are significant to the economy, culture and excellence of County Carlow and its people.

Institute of Technology Carlow

Established in 1970, *the Institute of Technology Carlow* has over 6,000 students, and prides itself on being of a size that is conducive to a strong sense of community, whilst also being of a scale commensurate with excellence in higher education and research. Carlow Institute of Technology offers internationally-recognised qualifications at Higher Certificate, Degree, Honours Degree, Higher Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma, Masters Degree and Doctoral Degree level. There are over 80 courses currently offered in specialised areas of Science, Computing, Engineering, Business and Humanities. All courses are very relevant to the real opportunities in the employment marketplace as IT Carlow works very closely with employers to maintain the relevance and quality of all programmes. The External Service Department provides a supportive environment to Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in the south-east region, while liaising with Organisations and Agencies at regional, national and international level.

The continuing expansion of third level education is important to the social, cultural and economic life of the town and county. The Institute of Technology Carlow recently opened its new multi million Dargan Research, Development and Innovation Centre on campus. The Centre will provide a multi-million euro research and innovation nucleus for the South East region

The Sunday Times University Guide awarded the Institute of Technology Carlow the title of 'Institute of Technology of the Year 2014' stating that "*This enterprising institution is already playing a key role in the economy of the Southeast, a position that can only be reinforced as it seeks Technological University status in partnership with Waterford IT. Carlow is an outstanding resource for students and business alike.*"

IT Carlow facilitates and promotes interaction with enterprise providing:

- Start up supports for Business through the Enterprise Research & Incubation Campus (ERIC)
- Expertise & Consultancy Services
- Collaborative Research & Development Activity
- Commercialisation including Technology Transfer & Licencing

IT Carlow is also responsible for EU Programmes, partnering with organisations and facilities globally, opening up development opportunities and funding new research. Current Projects include INSPIRE a new EU funded initiative bringing enterprises, researchers and entrepreneurs together and the New Frontiers Programme which is a professional training and enterprise support programme aimed at entrepreneurs who have a well thought out innovative business idea or technology that has the potential to be transformed into a High Potential Start Up Company.

The Institute is also a well-recognised centre of excellence for all kinds of team and individual sports, supporting not only the elite athletes who come from all around the

country to study at IT Carlow, but also college teams and recreational users. With modern all-weather sporting facilities and fully-equipped gyms, January 2012 saw the formal opening of additional sports facilities, including new elite sports and conditioning laboratories supplemented with advanced sports analysis technologies. IT Carlow has full-time sports degree programmes in Sport Management and Coaching in association with the IRFU, GAA and FAI. This enterprising institution is already playing a key role in the economy of the Southeast, a position that can only be reinforced as it seeks Technological University status in partnership with Waterford IT.

Technological University of the South East

In accordance with the Programme for Government 2011-2016, the Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology are exploring together the establishment of a multi-campus Technological University for the South East region. New legislation, currently in preparation, will provide for the establishment of Technological Universities and for the designation of Institutes of Technology merged under the Act as Technological Universities. The next stage for both institutes is to submit an agreed plan addressing how it is proposed to meet the criteria for a Technological University. On completion, the plan will be assessed by an Expert Panel which will have regard to the capacity of the proposed consortium to achieve the objectives of consolidation as well as its position in relation to each of the Technological University designation criteria.

Carlow College (St. Patrick's) located in Carlow town offers courses in Humanities, Theology and Social Care. The College has partnered in Ireland with Trinity College Dublin and has international partnerships with Carlow University, Pittsburgh, St. Ambrose, Davenport, Iowa and the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP). Under these arrangements student and staff exchanges, staff to staff co-operation and institutional co-operation between Carlow, Ireland and its US partner colleges are agreed. Inter-institutional visits are exchanged between the two Carlows. These international links with colleges of a similar ethos open up new educational perspectives for students and staff and ensure a reliable channel of communication and support for students who may wish to pursue part of their studies at a partner college.

Teagasc also forms an important part of this sector with its Headquarters and National Crop Research Centre located at Oak Park in Carlow. The headquarters in Carlow provides training in horticulture, agriculture, forestry and equine studies.

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board provides a comprehensive range of accessible lifelong learning education and training programmes and educational support services to the local community, as well as post leaving certificate courses at the Carlow Institute of Further Education.

SOLAS focuses all its energy on planning, funding and driving the development of a new, integrated Further Education and Training service. SOLAS will strive to ensure that every learner has access to the best possible Further Education and Training (FET) and will work to build a new learner focused FET service in Ireland that is fit for purpose and

designed to meet future needs. To achieve this, SOLAS will work closely with a wide range of stakeholders including learners, employers, Education & Training Boards, Government departments, state bodies, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Institutes of Technology (IOTs) and representative organisations.

Saint Catherine's Community Services Centre Carlow and St. Annes College of Further Education, Tullow, also provide adult education courses, whilst Skillsnet through County Carlow Chamber of Commerce provide upskilling, training and development.

E.D:- Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Assist in the provision of a well educated labour force
- Facilitate and support, where possible, the further development and expansion of Carlow Institute of Technology, Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board, Carlow College and all educational facilities within the County
- Support the development of a University in the South East Region
- Support the promotion and encouragement of skills and further education in rural areas in order to reduce the skill deficit in rural County Carlow

3.4 STRATEGIC LOCATIONS FOR ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT

3.4.1 Strengths of Location within County Carlow

Within County Carlow there are several important strategic locations for enterprise in Carlow Town and Environs, Tullow, Muinebheag, Borris, Ballon, Hacketstown & Leighlinbridge. County Carlow has many strengths as an attractive location for industry which are promoted by Carlow County Council Local Enterprise Office, Carlow County Development Partnership Limited and similar agencies in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, IDA, County Carlow Chamber and the business sector.

The strengths of Carlow County in attracting industry and business are as follows;

- Excellent infrastructure in terms of roads, rail, access to airports and seaports - only 85k from Dublin, 79km from Waterford and 88km from Rosslare
- Excellent social and leisure amenities with good quality urban and natural environment
- Proximity to various third level colleges and the critical educated population mass to support large scale economic enterprise
- Promotes research and development and particularly encourage innovation;
- Continuous monitoring and upgrading of the County's information technology infrastructure
- Encourages indigenous and foreign investment across all sectors of the economy
- Ensures that an adequate quantity and range of suitable land is available for enterprise development
- Assist Local Enterprise Offices and it's component agencies to promote Carlow as a town for investment and growth of industry
- Provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations thereby promoting labour market participation
- Encourages the development of unique high technology units
- Provision of improved public transport services and development of quality cycle facilities and walking routes

3.4.2 Employment Opportunities in the County Carlow

It is the policy of the Planning Authority to facilitate the creation of new employment opportunities in the county by:-

- Ensuring that sufficient serviced lands and structures are allocated for industrial purposes; and
- Facilitate where possible, the expansion of existing industries and businesses;
- Co-operating with the specialist agencies in attracting new industries to Carlow;
- Promote home based working through the provision of high speed internet services.

E.D.- Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Facilitate the creation of new employment opportunities in the county where feasible
- Ensure that sufficient serviced lands and structures are allocated for industrial purposes
- Facilitate where possible, the expansion of existing industries and businesses
- Co-operate with specialist agencies in attracting new industries to Carlow
- Promote home based working through the provision of high speed internet services

The Council recognises the substantial employment potential of all enterprises.

E.D.- Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage sites for small industries and services and to facilitate home-based economic activity

3.4.3 Promotion of Employment Opportunities in Carlow

The promotion of economic development in general, and industry and enterprise in particular, depends heavily on the policies, objectives and guidelines set out in this and other sections of this Development Plan.

E.D.- Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Facilitate the creation of new employment opportunities in the county and support economic development, which requires a multi-pronged approach
- Accelerate the provision of water, sewerage, roads and information technology services to eliminate any delay in the progression of development
- Ensure that sufficient land is zoned for industrial and commercial development
- Earmark key settlements for focused growth
- Facilitate the expansion of existing industries and businesses and the development of new industrial or service sector undertakings
- Facilitate and encourage the establishment of small scale light industries
- Support the Local Enterprise Office in the fostering and promotion of indigenous enterprises
- Support the IDA in the promotion of foreign investment and establishment of new industries in the County
- Support rural development projects in conjunction with the LEADER programme and the Carlow County Development Partnership Ltd
- Support Enterprise Ireland in the promotion of inward investment in the County
- Prepare an Economic Plan and integrated industrial development strategy for the County
- Facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations thereby promoting labour market participation among parents and supporting parents in accessing training, education and employment
- Ensure the availability of high-speed telecommunications, especially for enterprise
- Ensure the availability of clean and reliable sources of energy
- Promote and facilitate appropriate educational / training measures to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce
- Encourage research and development linkages between industry / business and local third-level and fourth-level institutions
- Secure high standards of landscape and environmental protection / enhancement
- Ensure that towns and villages remain attractive to investment
- Offer a good quality of life to those who live and work in the County
- Support / Implement the Government's Action Plan for Jobs

3.5 CARLOW RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural areas make a vital contribution to balanced regional development. This involves utilising the resources of rural areas, particularly agriculture/food, tourism, forestry, horticulture, renewable energy and varied agri-business services. Simultaneously, rural areas capitalise and draw strength from neighbouring urban communities in a complementary manner. Rural development will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 11 of this plan. Rural based industry and agri-business, with adequate infrastructure can be located in rural areas.

E.D.- Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Provide an adequate range of locations for both large and small scale new industrial development throughout the County
- Promote and facilitate rural industries generally and to facilitate certain kinds of rural industry, especially those that are natural resource dependent (e.g. associated sugar beet, forestry or crops) to be located outside towns in appropriate locations with due consideration to the protection of the Natura 2000 network of sites
- Promote farm enterprises associated with diversification and sustainable agri-business
- Support the revival of the sugar beet industry and the construction of a new bio-refinery, which has the potential to create 5,000 jobs, outside of town
- Commit to ensuring consistency of the Rural Development Programme for Ireland 2014 – 2020, in the context of this Plan
- Support and encourage the growth of the equine industry throughout County Carlow

3.5.1 Manufacturing

Carlow's central location, highly educated workforce, two Institutions of Higher Education, substantial infrastructural developments and strategic location close to Dublin enhanced by the opening of the M9 motorway from Dublin to Waterford, all present Carlow as an ideal location for the manufacturing industry. Recent private sector investments include Merck Sharp & Dohme, Hot Irishman's, US company Unum along with homegrown Carlow companies such as Netwatch, Burnside Group, Integrated Communications Ltd, Autolaunch Automotive Industry and Manufacturing Plant in Bagenalstown/Muinebheag, Richard Keenan & Co. in Borris (agricultural machinery) together with PB Machines, Seery's and Oglesby & Butler, Tanco and Whitelite.

Carlow County Council will continue to aim to attract further investment and to ensure that replacement industries are found for those that have closed during the economic downturn.

E.D.- Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage and facilitate the provision of manufacturing developments at appropriate locations providing the proposed manufacturing / industrial use is complementary to any other existing employment based use in the proximity of the site

3.5.2 Pharmaceutical Industry

The Institute of Technology's school of Science and Health has developed strong links with the pharmaceutical industry and has significant research capabilities. The largest pharmaceutical industry in County Carlow, Merck Sharp and Dohme was established in 2007, with Carlow being their first stand-alone human vaccine facility. Located on the edge of Carlow town, it is a state of the art, 200,000ft, two biologics operation in which the company invested €220 million. There are currently approximately 400 people (full-time and contract) employed by this company in Carlow which formulates and fills vaccines and biologic products which are used by millions of people across the world.

E.D.- Policy 8

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage and facilitate the development of such specialist industries at appropriate locations, in accordance with the relevant development and environmental standards
- Support and strengthen the capability and quality of research and development functions in the County

3.5.3 Agri-Business

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

The main agri-businesses currently within County Carlow are Kepak, Ballon Meats Ltd., Leinster Marts, Tullow Livestock Sales, Richard Keenan & Co., Hi Spec Engineering, and Tanco Autowrap.

The performance of the agri-business sector is critical to Ireland's economic well-being and Carlow County Council will promote and aid such business accordingly. A primary response of Carlow County Council to the promotional needs of agri-business is to set their Development Contributions at a level which will stimulate development. The Scheme will fund only infrastructural elements essential to rural development. This funding distinction between commercial development in towns requiring a high level of service will mean a considerable appropriate reduction in the Contributions required for various important agri-businesses.

Having a small domestic economy may be seen as a disadvantage, it also may be the sectors greatest advantage, forcing agri-businesses to develop export markets at an early stage. The continued development and growth of this section will be driven by product

innovation, embracing different cultures, building relationships, developing high quality and competitive products supported by well established distribution channels in key markets, all supported by the Local Authority.

The area of agri-business is dealt with more comprehensively in Chapter 11 of this Plan.

E.D.- Policy 9

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Continue to support the development and growth of the agri-business sector in County Carlow and aid such businesses where feasible

3.5.4 Rural Policy

The Council is committed to the overall strategy for rural development as outlined in the National Spatial Strategy, National Development Plan and the White Paper on Rural Development. The Council recognises the need to manage rural change and to guide development in order to:

- a) Maintain and enhance the existing rural community to ensure vibrant sustainable rural areas
- b) Support the maintenance of a sufficient income and employment opportunities to allow individuals and families to live with dignity
- c) Allow rural communities to participate effectively in the structures and decision making processes affecting them in an inclusive way
- d) Maintain the cultural identity of rural communities
- e) Ensure that the rural environment will be respected and that development in rural areas will take place in a sustainable manner
- f) Support initiatives to tackle poverty and social exclusion in rural areas
- g) Achieve a vibrant and sustainable rural community where individuals and families have a choice as to whether to stay in, leave, or move to urban areas
- h) Promote a broad concept of rural development and not one based solely on agriculture or other dominant natural resource
- i) Adhere to the findings and recommendations of the most recent Report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA Report)

The framework within which the Council will seek to achieve these goals is through the Government's National and Regional development strategy as outlined in the National Spatial Strategy and the South East Regional Planning Guidelines. The strategy will be to focus on the indigenous strengths of the rural economy and, at the same time, to facilitate wider economic development.

E.D.- Policy 10

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote a broad concept of rural development and not one based solely on agriculture or other dominant natural resource
- Maintain and enhance the existing rural community to ensure vibrant sustainable rural areas
- Ensure that the rural environment will be respected and that development in rural areas will take place in a sustainable manner
- Rural Development will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

3.5.5 Tourism

Situated in the South East of Ireland, approximately 80km from the ferry and airports of Dublin, Rosslare and Waterford, Carlow is one of Ireland's most charming inland counties.

Carlow tourism is an area which is constantly growing in terms of visitor numbers into the county and services being offered to those visitors and residents alike. With mountains, scenic countryside, river valleys, outdoor adventure and a rich cultural heritage all close at hand, Carlow has a lot to offer from a tourism perspective. Carlow's central location also offers the perfect base to explore the surrounding counties of Wexford, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Kildare and Laois.

Carlow is home to three of Ireland's key national walking routes, The South Leinster Way, the Barrow and the Wicklow Way, thus offering hundreds of miles of excellent and varied walking routes. The golfing visitor has an impressive variety of golfing facilities to suit all levels whilst the River Barrow and River Slaney and their many tributaries provide exciting and varying activities for the passive and active water enthusiast. The Carlow Garden Trail is another attraction for visitors, featuring a collection of eighteen gardening attractions including that of Altamont House and Gardens and a number of smaller gardens dotted throughout the county. There are also forest walks and several award winning garden centres to experience in County Carlow. Duckettsgrove is the ruins of the 18th Century, 19th Century and early 20th Century home of the Duckett family, which was formerly at the centre of a 12,000-acre (49 km²) estate, that has dominated the landscape of Carlow for over 300 years. Walled gardens at this estate have been restored in recent years and are host to various events and fairs throughout the year. The County of Carlow is steeped in historical and archaeological artifacts from pagan sites such as the Brownhill Dolmen to ecclesiastical settlements, many of which are of national significance.

The policies and objectives of tourism for County Carlow will be dealt with more comprehensively in Chapter 8 of this Plan.

E.D - Policy 11

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Continue building on the strengths of the County, giving priority to sustainably developing the tourism product, festivals and events and to consolidate the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors in County Carlow
- Encourage new investment in the Tourism sector with specific reference to accommodation in terms of choice, location and quality of product

3.5.6 Renewable Energies, Energy Crops and Sustainable Construction

Renewable energy constitutes a core element of the Government's overarching energy policy. As outlined in the Government's Energy White Paper (2007), this policy is built around the three important pillars of:

- Security of supply
- Environmental sustainability
- Economic competitiveness

It is widely acknowledged that renewable energy has a significant role to play in meeting all three of these objectives. As the White Paper states:

“Renewable energy is an integral part of our climate change strategy and sustainability objectives. The additional diversity which renewables bring to Ireland’s energy demand will also make a direct contribution to our goal of ensuring secure and reliable energy supplies.”

With rising fuel costs, climate change and the opening of the electricity and gas markets to new suppliers, the requirement to monitor and reduce energy consumption is more important than ever before for industry in Ireland.

Carlow County Council will continue to promote and support businesses, industry and home owners interested in converting to renewable sources of energy.

The Local Authority will promote the following;

- New buildings designed with minimum energy use in mind. This can be achieved through passive design techniques
- Renewable energy measures such as solar thermal / heat pumps / biomass boilers / stoves
- Existing buildings such as hospitals, leisure centres and council offices which could be successfully retro-fitted with solar panels for space and water heating
- Buildings designed to create a comfortable working environment with the minimum of artificial heating, cooling and lighting which would have lower energy costs and environmental impacts. Existing buildings can also be addressed in this respect
- Support the installation of solar collectors, which can be particularly economical for space or water heating in large buildings. Even in Ireland’s variable climate, solar panels can provide around 60% of the hot water requirements for homes and buildings

Carlow County Council will also support the growth of Bio-energy crops, which are grown for the production of liquid transport fuels. Different conversion techniques are used to produce biodiesel, bioethanol and biomethanol. Biodiesel is derived from oil crops such as oilseed rape and camelina (an oil-seed crop with an oil yield similar to that of oilseed rape). Bioethanol is produced from crops such as wheat, sugarbeet, sweet sorghum and woody crops. Liquid biofuels can be incorporated as blends with petrol/diesel fuels or used on their own as a replacement fuel.

Other energy crops such as hemp and miscanthus (elephant grass) have been investigated for their suitability as a source of biomass fuel. Cultivation of hemp has the advantage in that being an annual plant, farmer’s experience of dealing with annual tillage crops could easily be applied to it and existing farming machinery used for harvesting.

E.D.- Policy 12

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage and facilitate the development of ‘green’ industries, including industries relating to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, and waste recycling and conservation
- Work under the guidance of the South East Regional Authority’s Bioenergy Implementation Plan

Section 3.5.7 Aggregate Resources, Mining and Extractive Industry

Carlow County Council recognises the importance of sand and gravel extractions in the economic life of the county and its importance as a valuable source of employment in parts of the county. However, it is also recognized that exploitation of deposits or mining (open cast or underground) can have significant environmental impacts on the amenities of surrounding areas. The Planning Authority will have regard to the provisions of the DoEHLG's "Quarries and Ancillary Activities; Guidelines for Planning Authorities" in the assessment and determination of development proposals.

In relation to mining, a new Minerals Development Bill is currently being drafted which will consolidate existing legislation and bring certain aspects up to date and in line with current best practice.

Whether it is a new quarry or an extension to an existing, Carlow County Council must determine the need for the development in terms of national importance and the impact of the development on the local economy whilst maintaining a satisfactory balance between the needs of the building industry and the need to protect the environment. The suitability of any extraction enterprise shall be assessed on the basis of the sensitivity of the local environment to such impacts, the scale of the development proposed and the capacity of the road network in the area to accommodate associated traffic.

The requirements to be submitted with planning applications are dealt with further in Chapter 11 of this Development Plan under Extractive Industries.

3.5.7.1 Clogrennane Lime

Clogrennane Lime has operated at Clogrennane since 1816, reflecting the valuable natural resource available at this location. Clogrennane Lime Limited is Ireland's only producer of Quicklime and Hydrated Lime products which are supplied to industries ranging from Drinking Water Treatment, Alumina Production, Waste water sludge pasteurization to the environmental cleaning of incineration flue gases, particularly at the ESB station in Moneypoint. In this respect the Clogrennane facility is considered to be of Strategic National Importance.

The unique high quality limestone outcrop found at Clogrennane is used to provide lime products for a wide variety of end uses including:

- The production of alumina
- Human drinking water treatment
- Municipal sludge treatment
- Flue gas desulphurisation
- Waste water treatment including heavy metal and phosphate precipitation

E.D.- Policy 13

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Provide for quarry and extractive development where it can be demonstrated that the development would not result in a reduction of the visual amenity of designated scenic area, to residential amenities or give rise to potential damage to areas of scientific, geological, botanical, zoological and other natural significance including all designated European Sites
- Ensure compliance with the overall objectives of the Water Framework Directive in the context of quarries, mining and extractive development.

3.5.8 Agriculture & Food

Carlow is a rich agricultural county in which tillage, sheep and dairy farming are all found. Crops grown include barley, wheat, potatoes and soft fruits. Sugar beet was also widely cultivated for many years because of the sugar processing industry in Carlow town. The agriculture sector is a significant source of economic activity throughout the county, it contributes to exports, provides the raw materials for the food processing industry and has potential for providing more added value in the artisan food sector. It is Council policy to capitalise on the potential for the growth in food processing in the county.

It is noted however that there will be significant changes to livestock and tillage over the lifetime of this plan. There will be crossover with the Energy Strategy with the growth in the production of energy crops likely including willow over the lifetime of this plan. In the dairy industry the biggest anticipated driver of change is the ending of the milk quota system, this may give rise to a re-organisation of farmholdings. It is anticipated that a new Common Agricultural Policy will be developed and will be in operation within the lifetime of this plan, this could bring further changes to agricultural practices and bring new development pressures.

All of these changes may require changes to existing farmyards and the need for new buildings on Greenfield sites.

E.D.- Policy 14

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Take a positive approach to applications for agricultural developments generally, subject to the protection of groundwaters, residential amenities, designated habitats and the landscape, rural amenities, conservation areas and scenic views
- Capitalise on the potential for the growth in food processing in the county
- Support the redevelopment and reintroduction of the sugar beet and associated industry into County Carlow

3.5.9 Fisheries and Aquaculture

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

- Protection of the aquatic environment
- The need to guard against escapees
- The avoidance of any genetic threats, potential disease and parasitic implications to local fish stocks (there is a need to source seed from certified disease-free stock)
- Potential conflicts in relation to water supply, which can become critical during low-flow periods

The aquaculture and inland fisheries industry faces many challenges on the environmental front, and the County Council, in its limited capacity, will seek to promote sustainability and waste management programmes within the sector.

Carlow is recognised as being an excellent fishing holiday destination in Ireland. There is a vast variety and quality of fishing throughout the county, from sport angling to coarse fishing (freshwater species other than the salmon and trout family), with a great mixture of cold and warm water fish species, capable of exciting the specialist or casual angler on the annual family holiday.

E.D.- Policy 15

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote and assist the further development of the fishing industry in County Carlow, as a major attraction throughout the County and beyond
- Promote and assist the further development of services provided along the rivers Barrow and Slaney and their tributaries for enhancing the growth and promotion of this industry further, especially as a tourist activity
- Ensure any new major aquaculture projects will be environmentally sustainable and have a limited impact on the visual amenity of the area
- Develop services along water courses which will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with appropriate environmental assessments including Habitats Directive Assessment
- Ensure that the development of services along watercourses will also be subject to, and consistent with, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the relevant South Eastern River Basin Management Plan

3.5.10 Financial Services

The financial services sector is a steady employer in County Carlow and Carlow County Council will assist this sector and promote this type of business in appropriate sites, within existing town centres where possible.

E.D.- Policy 16

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Recognise the importance of financial services companies and facilitate their development

3.5.11 Public Sector

The public sector, including health and education, is a big employer in County Carlow. The Council will seek to facilitate further government investment in the County and will work with the relevant departments as required.

E.D.- Policy 17

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Recognise the contribution of the public sector to the economic life of the county and to facilitate the future location of new public services in the county

3.5.12 Forestry

Currently in County Carlow there is a land area of 2,288 hectares under private forestry. Forest developments should follow current best practice and the Forest Service's, Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines (July 2000) where landscape objectives should focus on compatibility with, and enhancement of, existing local landscape character. The Council will seek to accommodate afforestation throughout the county where it is deemed appropriate, (native broadleaf and coniferous species) and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

Planting in the vicinity of public roads should be carried out in strict accordance with Forest Service Guidelines. Roadside planting should aim to enhance and complement existing visual amenities, without impeding views and prospects, particularly in sensitive highly scenic areas.

Afforestation projects should be designed and implemented in a manner likely to enhance existing local amenities however any adverse impacts of afforestation on watercourses and sources of water supply should be prevented.

Forestry is dealt with further in Chapter 11 of this Development Plan.

E.D.- Policy 18

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Seek to accommodate afforestation throughout the county where it is deemed appropriate, both native broadleaf and coniferous species and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county
- Recognise the recreational and tourism potential of forestry including Coillte's 'open forest' policy allowing visitors to access and enjoy woodland areas
- Support forestry providing it does not obstruct existing public rights of way, traditional walking routes or recreational and tourism amenities and facilities.
- Have regard to *Forestry Development – Guide for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG 1997).
- Engage with Coillte in developing off road cycling trails in accordance with Coillte's Off-Road Cycling Strategy (2012)
- Co-operate with Coillte in the protection of and the development of additional forest amenity sites and walks and ensure that Coillte roads are maintained on a regular basis

3.5.13 Arts and Crafts

The VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and the George Bernard Shaw Theatre are a dynamic multi-disciplinary arts facility presenting the best of local, national and international work in the visual and performing arts. Standing in a strategic location in the centre of Carlow Town, it rivals its contemporaries throughout the country in terms of its scale and architecture.

Carlow County Council acknowledges the importance of the arts and craft sectors to Carlow for tourism, employment and quality of life and supports the development of the arts and crafts sector whilst liaising with the Crafts Council of Ireland, Carlow Leader and other interested bodies. Craft fairs, food markets and open air plays / concerts have in recent years become major attractions throughout the county, some of these occurring

in the grounds of architecturally prominent buildings such as Duckettsgrove, Lisnavagh House and Borris House. The Carlow Arts Festival (Eigse) is also a growing festival in the County.

The area of arts and crafts is dealt with more comprehensively in Chapter 8 of this Plan.

E.D.- Policy 19

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support and promote the importance of the arts and the craft sectors in Carlow for tourism, employment and quality of life

3.5.14 E-working and Home Based Economic Activity

The communications /electronic commerce sector is a key input to continued economic development. It provides the basic infrastructure for new information communications and digital industries and is already altering the modus operandi of traditional industries, the way in which work is organised, the interaction between consumers and business and visa versa. Carlow County Council will actively support and facilitate the provision of advanced communication networks and services. This may include the determination of appropriate infrastructure for the location of broadband, wireless and communications equipment.

Home-based employment activity assists in dispersing economic activity and sustaining smaller, more rural settlements within the county. The economic benefits associated with the location of ‘start-up businesses’ within the home throughout the county is also recognised. The Council recognises that as businesses grow and activity intensifies to the level where additional employees, beyond the homeowner and immediate family, that they will need to relocate to more suitable premises within commercial areas of the County’s settlements. It is important that this is communicated to prospective business owners at the outset.

E-working carried out in isolation at home does not require planning permission, however home based economic activities require a change of use application. Such uses would include childcare provision (other than that which falls within the exempted development regulations), surgeries for medical practitioners (doctors, dentists, physiotherapists) and small scale enterprises. The assessment of planning applications for home based economic activity is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 11 of this Plan.

E.D.- Policy 20

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Actively support and facilitate the provision of advanced communication networks and services throughout the County, providing installation of such does not negatively impinge on the landscape or local environment
- Support start-up businesses within the home throughout the county
- Advise on and support the relocation of home based businesses to alternative, more suitable locations within the County, if required

3.6 URBAN DEVELOPMENT / URBAN RENEWAL

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to promote town centre business activity. Measures will continually be implemented to facilitate the upgrading and availability of town centre sites for appropriate development.

3.6.1 Brownfield Sites in Rural and Urban areas

Throughout the county’s urban settlements and at limited rural areas, are a number of sites with ‘antecedent’ uses.

E.D.- Policy 20

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Look upon favourably and promote the redevelopment of brownfield sites for industrial, energy-related uses or suitably deemed appropriate uses

3.6.2 Derelict Sites Act

Local Area Plans identify individual sites and areas in need of renewal and will recommend specific interventions in each case. Obsolete areas within towns and villages are classified as “derelict” within the meaning of the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

E.D.- Policy 21

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Prepare renewal advice briefs and schemes, in respect of obsolete and derelict areas, with a view towards their redevelopment
- Strive to develop the amenities and the infrastructure of towns and villages throughout the county with the aim of encouraging redevelopment

3.7 CONCLUSION

POSITION IN HIERARCHY	ROLE	SETTLEMENT	SECTORS TARGETED
County Town	Principal driver of economic growth, employment generation, and service provision in the	Carlow Town & Environs	Pharmaceuticals, Engineering, Electronics, Shared Services (Multi-lingual), Logistics, Retailing – Higher order comparison and

	County		Wholesale Retail Trade, Knowledge based economy, Tourism & Hospitality, Conferences, Manufacturing Consumer Products, Office based Industry, Financial Services, Shared Services (multi-lingual), R&D, Agri-Food Production, Public Administration, Healthcare,
District Towns	Acts as an important driver for local economies in the Central Development Area, including a large rural hinterland, and provide complementary role in tandem with gateway towns	Tullow, Bagenalstown/Muinebheag	Engineering, Agri-Food, Tourism, Convenience retailing, Distilling, Manufacturing
Smaller towns and villages	Perform important local level retail, residential, social, leisure, service and amenity functions for rural hinterlands and support the upper tiers of the urban hierarchy.	Ballon, Leighlinbridge, Rathvilly, Hacketstown, Carrickduff, Borris, Fenagh	Engineering, Hospitality, Convenience Retailing, Agriculture/Agri-Foods, Tourism, Wood Production, Manufacturing, Retailing, Small-scale Commercial Enterprises, Logistics, Indigenous industry and Micro Enterprise.

Rural Centres	Provide sustainable rural employment and community services		Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, energy production, rural resource based enterprises.
Rural Areas			Tourism, Agriculture, Agri-Food, Energy, Small-scale enterprises, Rural Resource based industry.

3.7.1 Economic Objectives for Carlow Town, Tullow and Bagenalstown / Muinebheag

- Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities
- Promote e-business
- Zoning of sufficient and appropriately located lands for industrial and commercial development and their possible acquisition
- Provision of enterprise areas and training infrastructure
- Zoning of adequate residential lands and creation of attractive towns
- Developing the public realm and amenities of these urban areas so that the quality of life of employees and residents can be improved
- Provision of recreation / amenity facilities
- Support for festivals and events in the towns or surrounding hinterlands
- The encouragement of collaborative structures focusing on economic development



CHAPTER FOUR

HOUSING

CHAPTER FOUR - HOUSING

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. Sustainable communities require not only economic development, but also provision of and access to education, health and community support services, amenities and leisure services and a good quality built environment. The Council's role is to formulate a planning policy for housing, consider planning applications for private housing, ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand and provide houses or facilitate the provision of social housing for those unable to house themselves. Carlow County Council is both the housing authority and the Planning Authority. In these roles it has the capacity to influence the supply, location and scale of new housing within its functional area.

Hsg – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Facilitate the provision of housing in a range of locations to meet the needs of the county's population, with particular emphasis on facilitating access to housing to suit different household and tenure needs in a sustainable manner
- Enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and as far as possible at the tenure of its choice

4.1 HOUSING STRATEGY

Carlow Local Authorities have prepared a Housing Strategy for the Plan period 2015 – 2021 and this is an update of the County Carlow Housing Strategy 2009 - 2015. This Strategy is included in the appendices of this Plan. Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that housing strategies be drawn up by Planning Authorities and integrated into their Development Plans.

The Housing Strategy shall:

- Include an estimate of, and provision for, the existing need and the likely future need for housing in the area covered by the development plan. The Planning Authority shall ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned in its development plan or Local Area Plans for residential use (or for a mixture of residential and other uses), to meet the requirements of the Housing Strategy and to ensure that a scarcity of such land does not occur at any time during the period of the Development Plan
- Take into account the need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income and in particular for those in need of social housing in the area. A Housing Strategy shall therefore provide that as a general policy a specified percentage, not being more than 15% of the land zoned in the development plan for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for social housing
- Ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households, as may be determined by the Planning Authority, including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities
- Counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds

The needs of various groups, including the homeless, travellers, people with special needs and the elderly are addressed as part of the Housing Strategy. A Housing Strategy has been prepared for the period 2015 – 2021 for both Carlow Town and County Councils. The principal features to emerge from the analysis presented in this housing strategy are as follows:

More than 4,000 new households are expected to be formed in County Carlow during the period 2015 to 2021. In Carlow County, the typical waiting list for social housing at the moment ranges from 300 to 550 applicants. The availability of zoned land is not expected to act as a constraint over the course of the Development Plan 2015 – 2021.

Hsg – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Implement the Housing Strategy contained in the appendices of the County Development Plan
- Require 15% of the land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, be made available for the provision of social housing
- Have regard to the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 and the Carlow Inter Agency Strategy for services to the Travelling Community
- Recognise the important role played by the Voluntary Sector in meeting social housing need and will support and facilitate the expansion of that role as appropriate

4.2 PLANNING PERMISSION

Conditions attached to certain planning permissions for residential development will require developers to enter into an agreement with the Council in relation to the provision of social housing in accordance with the Housing Strategy. The various options for compliance are set down in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002. The following preferred options are available to satisfy the requirements of the Housing Strategy –

- Transfer of the required number of completed dwellings on the site
- Transfer of a portion of the site subject to the planning application
- Transfer of fully or partially serviced sites on the site which will enable the Council to provide the appropriate number of units thereon
- Payment of a monetary contribution
- Transfer of completed dwellings elsewhere
- Transfer of serviced sites at another location
- Transfer of land at another location
- Transfer of houses can be by purchase or lease depending on the availability of finance

An agreement may provide for a combination of the above. The Council will continue to meet social housing needs in the towns, villages and rural areas of the county in a balanced way.

4.3 MEANS OF ACHIEVING SOCIAL HOUSING NEEDS

Carlow County Council recognises the important role played by the voluntary sector in meeting social housing need and will support and facilitate the expansion of that role. Carlow County Council will seek to cater for social accommodation in a number of ways;

- Affordable housing/joint venture schemes
- The Local Authority's house building programme
- The sale of sites scheme
- The Voluntary Housing Sector, the Rental Subsidy Scheme and leasing schemes
- The Capital Assistance scheme available to voluntary housing sector for people with special needs
- Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Leasing Scheme for Private Landlords
- Housing Adaptation Grant
- Mobility Aids Grant
- Housing Aid for Older People Grant

Hsg – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Implement the policies contained in the DoEHLG document ‘*Building Homes, Sustaining Communities*’
- Provide the necessary infrastructural investment to facilitate the overall level of housing output required to meet the current and anticipated levels of demand;
- Zone adequate amounts of land for housing to provide a locational choice and allow for the probability that not all zoned land will be made available for development
- Strive for the highest quality built environment when assessing development proposals
- Encourage economy and efficiency in the use of land and services
- Promote a high standard of architecture, siting and design for new housing developments
- Encourage a variety of house types, sizes and tenure in individual schemes and to encourage variety, interest and social mix in private and social housing developments
- Ensure that the Council’s housing policy and objectives are linked with employment, environmental and infrastructural policies and objectives with the aim of improving the quality of life and the attractiveness of the county’s towns, villages and open countryside;
- Counteract undue social segregation in the housing market
- Work with various voluntary, community and public interest groups to improve access to education and Improved Public Transport and Accessibility
- Raise awareness of the challenges of peak oil, climate change and economic contraction with a view to empowering communities to plan a transition to a lower carbon community
- Support and nurture intergenerational and cross cultural relationships through the development of community initiatives such as community gardens / allotments

4.4 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Core Strategy, as set out in Chapter 2, outlines the range of settlements within the county. The Core Strategy also deals in detail with the County’s residential development within the county’s settlement hierarchy. Local Area Plans will deal with residential development, where appropriate. Carlow County Council will ensure that it achieves quality in terms of neighbourhoods and homes and choice in terms of location and tenures. Quality in this context means the development of sustainable, integrated neighbourhoods which are easily served by public transport if possible. Additional features of sustainable neighbourhoods include:

- compact, energy efficient and high quality urban development

- accessibility via public transport networks while meeting the needs of the pedestrian and cyclist
- provision of amenities and services within reasonable distance

The sustainability of communities is dependent on a balanced pace of development. Associated social infrastructure must be provided to ensure that a coherent sense of place and sense of community is preserved. This approach will ensure new development will respect the character of the Town or Village. Local Area Plans will provide detailed design guidance on new developments for specific settlements. Over the period of the previous Carlow County Development Plan 2009 – 2015, the Council prepared Local Area Plans for a number of settlements throughout the county. During the evolution of that process, policies and objectives were devised to include linking the development of new housing with the provision of essential supporting physical and social infrastructure and services. Within each Local Area Plan, guidance is given on the achievement of high quality urban design appropriate to the particular settlement coupled with the development of a compact and sustainable settlement.

An appropriate residential development in any location will be determined by the following:

- The nature of the zoning applied at relevant lands
- The extent to which the design and layout follows a coherent design brief resulting in a high quality residential environment
- Compliance with qualitative and quantitative criteria set out in the subsequent Development Management Section
- Proximity to points of access to the public transport network;
- Existing topographical, landscape or other features on the site; and
- The capacity of the infrastructure, including social and community facilities, to absorb the demands created by the development.

The emphasis will be on providing quality housing environments based on innovation and a design-led approach but appropriate to each specific site and location.

4.5 DERELICT SITES ACT, 1990

“An Act to make provision with respect to land to prevent it being or becoming a derelict site, to enable Local Authorities to require the taking of measures on derelict sites by the owners or occupiers and, in certain circumstances, to acquire derelict sites compulsorily, to establish registers of derelict sites, to enable the Minister to give directions in relation to derelict sites, to provide for a derelict sites levy and to provide for other matters connected with the afore-said and to repeal the Derelict Sites Act, 1961”.

In this regard “derelict site” means any land which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land in question because of –

- The existence on the land in question of structures which are in a ruinous, derelict or dangerous condition, or
- The neglected, unsightly or objectionable condition of the land or any structures on the land in question, or
- The presence, deposit or collection on the land in question of any litter, rubbish, debris or waste, except where the presence, deposit or collection of such litter, rubbish, debris or waste results from the exercise of a right conferred statute or by common law

It shall be the duty of every owner and occupier of land, including a statutory body and a State authority, to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the land does not become or does not continue to be a Derelict Site.

Hsg – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Take all reasonable steps (including the exercise of any appropriate statutory powers) to ensure that any land situate in their functional area does not become or continue to be a Derelict Site
- Extend it's Derelict Sites Register during the period of the plan and will use the positive intent of the Act to generate town and village renewal

The assessment and advice in relation to required actions will be managed by the Planning Authority and will be, at least, self financing, using the levies appropriate to particular sites.

-“There shall be charged, levied and paid for each local financial year beginning with such year as may be prescribed, in respect of all urban land in relation to which a market value has been determined and stands entered on the register on the first day of January of that local financial year, a levy to be called the Derelict Sites Levy”.

4.6 PART V HOUSING STRATEGY

4.6.1 Requirement of Housing Strategy

The Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) require each Local Authority to adopt a Housing Strategy for their administrative area. Further, the Housing Acts 1966 – 2009 and the 2011 Housing Policy Statement serve as a framework for a sequence of legislative and policy initiatives in the short to medium term. Based on a number of fundamental principles and goals that will form the foundation of a substantial reform programme, the new framework of housing policy responds to current and emerging conditions in the housing sector, taking account of the dramatic cycle of rapid growth and sudden collapse in the residential property market. The centre piece of the approach is to chart a way forward for housing policy in Ireland by placing greater emphasis on: choice; equity across housing tenures; and delivering quality outcomes for the resources invested.

A summary of the measures outlined include:

- More equitable treatment of housing tenure
- Transfer of responsibility for long term recipients of rent supplement to Local Authority housing
- New mechanisms for the delivery of permanent social housing
- All affordable housing schemes stood down
- Formal review of Part V
- Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities

Hsg – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Seek to meet individual accommodation needs in a rapidly changing environment

4.6.2 Future Part V Housing Development

The Core Strategy sets out the framework for future housing development in Carlow. Part V housing refers to social and affordable housing provided in accordance with Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and is provided for as an integral part of the housing allocations prescribed for each of the settlement areas. The Core Strategy provides that through its projected population growth and alignment to appropriately zoned lands there are adequate lands zoned to provide for housing needs for Part V within the County over the plan period (2015-2021).

From a landuse and settlement structure perspective future housing development highlights three core challenges and priorities and these include the need to:

- Fully support and promote population growth and development of Tullow and Bagenalstown/Muinebheag, in order for these towns and all of County Carlow to attract people, jobs and services to compete on a National and International stage
- Conserve, enhance and strengthen the town and village structure within the County
- Re-balance growth patterns in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy

Delivery of Part V housing must adhere to achieving these strategic priorities.

4.6.3 Part V Provision

As per the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the options open to negotiate between the Council and a developer for a 'Part V' agreement for the provision of Part V housing includes the following:

1. Transfer of part of land subject of planning application
2. Building and transfer on completion of houses on land subject of planning permission
3. Transfer of fully or partially serviced sites on land subject to application for permission
4. Transfer of the ownership of any other land within function area of Planning Authority

5. Building and transfer on completion of houses on other land within functional area of Planning Authority
6. Transfer of fully or partially serviced sites on other land within functional area of Planning Authority
7. Payment of Money
8. Provision of special needs accommodation via approved housing bodies under Capital Assistance Scheme, or other scheme as appropriate
9. Rental accommodation agreement or leasing of houses agreement
10. Combination of transfer of land subject to the conditions of planning application and any other option above
11. Combination of two or more options

A 'Part V' agreement may provide for a combination of any of the above. The preferred option of Carlow County Council is the payment of money or for the transfer of lands for future development. However, each proposal will be considered and assessed based on individual merit, in line with Council policy as contained in Carlow County Council, Guidelines for the Implementation of Part V of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) adopted in 2003 and revised in 2009 and government policy.

Developers are advised to consult with the Housing Section of Carlow County Council at an early stage in order to obtain up-to-date information on options in light of changing circumstances and policy.

15% of all lands zoned for residential use, or a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for Social Housing and all residential developments should ensure that a range of house sizes and types are provided in schemes.

In addition to the various options under Part V as outlined above, Local Authorities will be able to take houses on a temporary basis either under the Rent Assistance scheme or the long term leasing initiative.

In considering these details, the Planning Authority must consider each of the following:

- Whether such an agreement will contribute effectively and efficiently to the achievement of the objectives of the Housing Strategy
- Whether such an agreement will constitute the best use of resources
- The need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social background in the area of the authority
- Whether such an agreement is in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan
- The timeframe within which housing is likely to be provided

4.6.4 Application for 'Part V' Exemption Certificate

In accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended), an exemption from 'Part V' requirements may be sought from the Council in the case of small housing developments i.e. those of four or fewer houses, or on land of 0.1 hectares or less. This may be subject to conditions, where necessary.

4.7 SPECIAL NEEDS ACCOMODATION

The Council continues to address particular identified needs through the provision of purpose built, adaptable dwellings, where feasible. This includes provisions for the needs of the elderly, people with physical disabilities and persons with learning disabilities. Additional pressures will develop in the future having regard to the HSE's requirements to de-congregate facilities currently accommodating 4(four) or more residents into the community.

4.7.1 People with Disabilities

The Voluntary Housing sector and other agencies are active in the County in terms of identifying and meeting the needs of those with disabilities. The County Council works in partnership with various voluntary sector groups and associations to facilitate further identification of needs and provision of housing for those with disabilities. The voluntary sector / approved housing bodies have successfully accommodated in excess of 200 household needs over the past 7 years. Additionally the Council adapts, as appropriate and as funds allow, Local Authority dwellings in instances of special need. Private households can apply for financial assistance under the Housing Grant Schemes for assistance. These applications are prioritised in accordance with the applicant's medical requirements.

Hsg – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Provide for the housing needs of those with disabilities through the provision or adaption of appropriate accommodation
- Work with the voluntary sector in the identification and provision of special needs housing for those with disabilities
- Ensure that developments provide appropriate public transport points adjacent to accommodation for people with disabilities
- Comply with the government document "The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016"

4.7.2 Older People

Carlow County Council is active in the provision and upgrading of accommodation for older people within its housing stock. Voluntary agencies have also had a lead role in providing for this sector of the community with several successful schemes up and running around the County. With an ageing population and increasing demand for housing the elderly, the Council is conscious of the need to increase provision.

Greater emphasis is now placed on the provision of lifetime adaptable housing, the provision of housing units in centrally located areas where there is access to all amenities such as shops, medical facilities, churches, etc. Provision through sheltered housing schemes is also an option that is encouraged. The special needs of the elderly such as security, medical care, and personal safety, amongst others is fundamental to the

adequate provision and locational aspects of accommodation for this group within society.

Hsg – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the provision of housing for the elderly in appropriate locations which will facilitate their continued integration in local communities and meet the needs of the aged population
- Meet the needs of the elderly by providing accommodation in central, convenient and easily accessible locations to facilitate independent living where possible
- Encourage a range of housing types in town centre and village centre locations
- Encourage the provision of smaller dwelling units in new housing developments to allow for lifestyle transition
- Encourage the provision of lifetime adaptable housing in order to ensure that people have the choice to stay in their own homes
- Provide appropriate transport points adjacent to accommodation for older people

4.8 TRAVELLER ACCOMODATION NEEDS

Carlow County Council recognises the needs of the Travelling Community within the county and will continue to take a flexible approach to the location of accommodation for Travellers. Carlow County Council will also adhere to the provisions of the Traveller Accommodation Programme required to be undertaken in accordance with the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998. The Council will continue the process of providing housing and Traveller Accommodation Facilities for indigenous traveller families and will make provision also for transient families where there is evident need. These are addressed and delivered within the context of an adopted Traveller Accommodation Programme, subject to funding. This Programme states that to meet the accommodation needs of the Travelling Community within the county, a range of accommodation options will be considered, including: -

- Standard Local Authority Housing
- Group Housing Schemes
- Halting Sites – Permanent, Temporary, and Transient
- Single House Purchase
- House Purchase Loans
- Voluntary Housing Scheme

The Council will participate in the preparation and implementation of the Government's Traveller Accommodation Strategy. Carlow's current Traveller Accommodation

Programme 2014 - 2018 was accepted by Carlow Local Authorities in February, 2014. The scope of the programme was in response to Government guidelines and included;

- The setting up of a Traveller Accommodation Committee for the duration of the Programme
- The assessment of accommodation and related needs among the travelling community in County Carlow and the projected need for a five year period; the lifetime of the programme
- The canvassing of Travellers, Traveller Support Groups and individuals for viewpoints relating to Traveller Accommodation in the Carlow administrative area
- The employment of appropriate support staff in order to facilitate transition and related issues among travellers in County Carlow
- The provision of accommodation appropriate to the needs of traveller households within the duration of Carlow's Accommodation Programme
- Co-ordination of development of the programme between implementing authorities

Carlow County Council will implement the objectives of the relevant Traveller Accommodation Programme adopted by Council during the period of this Plan.

4.9 SOCIAL INCLUSION

The National Anti Poverty Strategy 2007-2016 (NAPS) provides a framework for anti poverty initiatives within Local Authorities and its implementation enhances the work that Local Authorities already carry out. The NAP inclusion sets out a wide-ranging and comprehensive programme of action to address poverty and social exclusion. The overall policy approach, based on a lifecycle approach, is to:

- Ensure children reach their true potential
- Support working age people and people with disabilities, through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation
- Provide the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high-quality standard of living
- Build viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital

Carlow County Council has put in place a number of measures to support the mainstreaming of social inclusion in order to ensure that social inclusion is reflected as a core value in plans and programmes and policies of the organisation and in service delivery.

4.9.1 Balanced Communities

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes are provided in each residential development. House design and layout reflect the requirements of different categories of households around the County - particularly those with special needs. An indication of house types required for social housing is available with the “Assessment of Need” undertaken by the Housing Section of Carlow County Council in May 2013.

4.9.2 Homeless Persons

Where possible Carlow County Council will actively promote integrated social housing solutions including Accommodation provision to relieve the problem of homelessness (as defined in the Housing Act 1988) and will promote the provisions of the Carlow Housing Strategy with regard to provision of housing for Homeless persons.

4.10 UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES

Following a survey conducted by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in 2013, Carlow has a total of 44 unfinished housing estates. Carlow County Council will continue to implement a range of powers available to it under planning, building control and other relevant legislation in an integrated way and will work proactively with developers, financial institutions and local communities in securing satisfactory resolution of unfinished housing developments. Carlow County Council will assess and monitor unfinished housing developments and will play a key role in the co-ordination of Site Resolution Plans with other key stakeholders.



CHAPTER FIVE

TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

CHAPTER FIVE – TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Transport plays a central role in the economy. The development of an efficient strategic transport system in line with national policy is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of the county. The provision of a full range of transportation services is critical if County Carlow is to continue to develop as an attractive location for business and residential development. Achieving spatial balance by developing the potential of areas will depend on enhancing capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy and information between different places. The attractiveness of particular locations depends on their relative accessibility and connectivity which in turn depends on the quality and quantity of the transport infrastructure. Carlow County Council will continue to endeavour to provide those elements of the transportation system which are within its remit and to facilitate the development of transportation elements provided by others.

Carlow County Council acknowledges that the current trends in transportation are unsustainable, in particular the increase in private car traffic. The Council is strongly committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel including public transport, walking and cycling, and the encouragement of modal change from private car use to these means. This chapter sets out the strategy for County Carlow for Sustainable Transport and Accessibility for the lifetime of the plan period.

Trans – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Develop an accessible county, well-connected internally and with national strategic transport infrastructure
- Play a positive role in promoting sustainable transport to reduce levels of car dependency, and maintain an efficient and safe road and public transport network

5.1 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Carlow County Council recognises that the provision of sustainable, efficient and effective transport networks in the county is a major determinant of its level of competitiveness and its capacity to address some of its major social and environmental needs. The pursuit of sustainable transport and accessibility in Ireland and indeed County Carlow is underpinned by a national policy context that seeks to integrate landuse and transportation policy.

This chapter was informed by Department of Transport policy documents, such as:

[Smarter Travel – Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 - 2020](#)

This is a National Policy document that recognises the importance of investment in transport, to ensure continued economic growth and social development. The Smarter Travel national policy sets out how the vision of sustainable travel and transport can be achieved in Ireland by 2020. It sets out objectives to increase walking, cycling and public transport use and reduce car demand, which stood at 65% of all journeys in 2006, to 45% in 2020.

Five key goals have been identified in the Smarter Travel policy document which seek to:

1. Reduce overall travel demand
2. Maximise the efficiency of the transport network
3. Reduce reliance on fossil fuels
4. Reduce transport emissions
5. Improve accessibility to transport

[National Cycle Policy Framework](#)

Ireland's first National Cycle Policy Framework was launched in April 2009. It outlines 19 specific objectives and details the 109 individual but integrated actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed in Ireland to the extent that, by 2020, 10% of all journeys will be by bicycle. This policy aims to create a strong cycling culture which would provide health benefits, a more friendly environment for cycling and improved quality of life.

[Transport 21](#)

Transport 21 is an Irish infrastructure plan which aims to greatly expand Ireland's transport network. The plan includes continuing investment in Ireland's road network, along with investment in public transport in the form of buses and rail.

[Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012](#)

These guidelines set out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside the 50-60 kmh speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages.

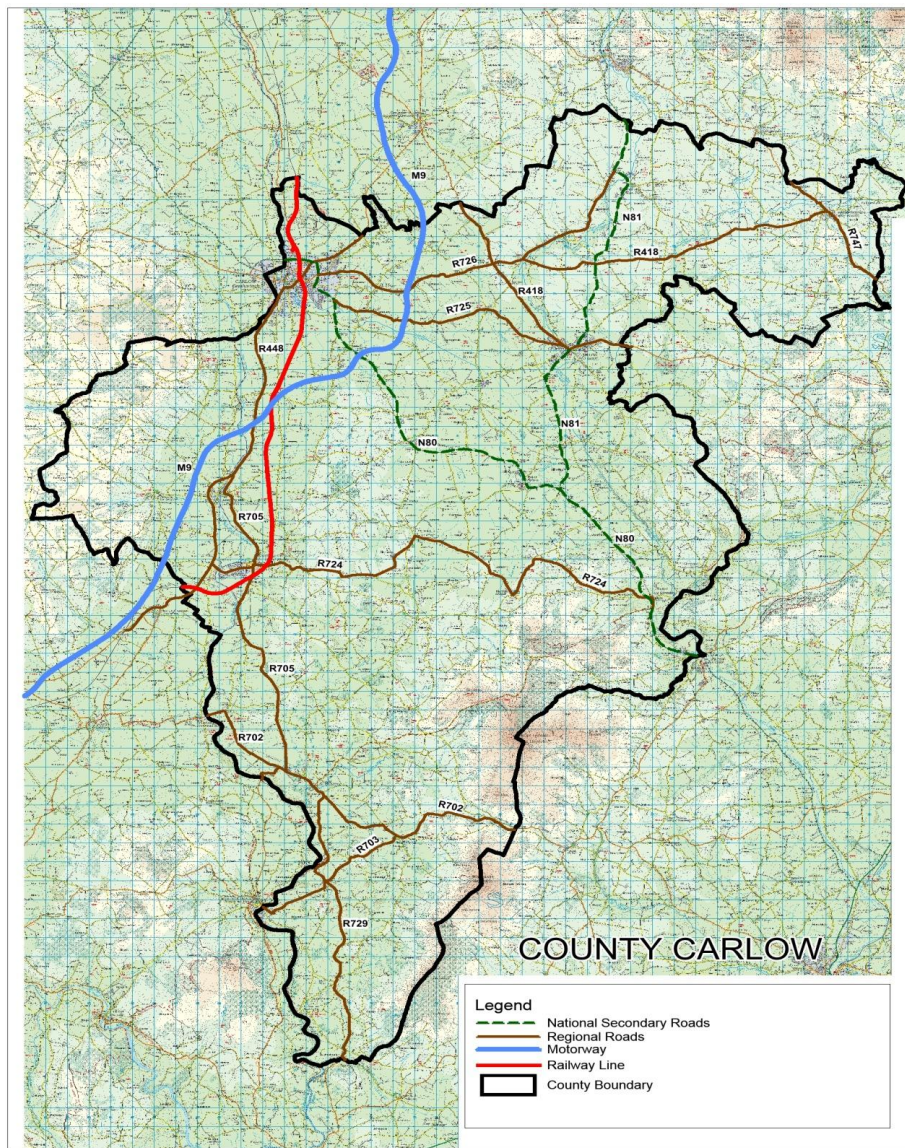
[Fáilte Ireland: Strategy to Develop Irish Cycle Tourism](#)

This strategy was developed to determine how best to renew the popularity of cycling in Ireland, how to encourage visitors to come to cycle in Ireland, and how to ensure that cycle tourism can generate visitor spend in rural areas. This strategy forms a subset of the Fáilte Ireland Tourism Product Development Strategy within the National Development Plan. It focuses on a number of areas within a destination with particularly high potential for holiday cycling, and describes various measures to make them attractive to both domestic and overseas visitors. It also suggests the development of some longer more challenging routes and sketches out the framework for a National Cycle Network.

5.2 ROADS

The Council recognises the importance of providing a safe and efficient road system in the county in order to facilitate the development of the local and national economy, to protect the safety of users of public roads and to safeguard public investment in their provision. It is important to protect and maintain the carrying capacity of the road network throughout the County. As at 2014, County Carlow currently comprises over 1,214 kilometres of roads, which are shown in Appendix 9 of this plan and categorised as follows:

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



Map 5.1 Road and Rail Network in County Carlow

5.2.1 Motorway Network

A section of the M9 Motorway route traverses through County Carlow thus presenting strategic opportunities for the County. These opportunities must be balanced against compliance with Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2010.

Given the development of an extensive national motorway network, there is a clear need for the provision of service areas for fuel, toilet and food needs. Service areas perform an important road safety function in providing opportunities to take frequent breaks thereby reducing fatigue-related traffic accidents. However, it is important that service areas do not become destinations in their own right because this can lead to congestion at interchanges, interference with road safety and the reduction in the flow of long distance travel. It is also important that development at interchanges does not undermine town-based development. The NRA anticipates that service areas will be provided off-line (accessible by ordinary road network as well as motorway) and on-line (accessible from motorway only). National Roads Authority (NRA) Circular 4/2010 indicates the up to date position of the NRA with respect to provision of online and offline service areas on the national road network. Proposals being brought forward by private sector development interests to provide offline service areas will be subject to normal planning requirements and procedures and consultation with the NRA.

Trans – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Further examine the potential of the national road interchanges for appropriate uses and zonings in consultation with the National Roads Authority and in accordance with the provisions of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines during the Plan period
- Restrict development seeking access directly onto the Motorway network
- Maximise the beneficial return of public investment in the national motorway network by protecting the carrying capacity of the M9, including associated junctions, through County Carlow
- Co-operate with the NRA in the upgrade of existing Interchanges on the National Routes where appropriate and to restrict development immediately adjacent to Interchanges to provide for the future enlargement of Interchanges
- Promote the development of lands for enterprise and industrial uses within existing settlements such as Tullow and Bagenalstown/Muinebheag. Such development will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive
- Direct residential development and applications for single-family dwelling units away from Motorway interchanges

5.2.2 National Road Network

The National road network through the county caters for the efficient and safe movement of long distance traffic through the country. The Council is aware of the vital importance of the national routes to the economic and social development of the County and the Country at large. The network also provides strategic links for the towns within the county and within the South-East region and beyond, due to the N80, National Secondary

Route, linking Rosslare to the M9 and midlands and being classed as a Euroroute E-01. To maintain their primary function in an era of rapid growth in car ownership it may be necessary to restrict access and junctions to the network. This can be achieved by;

- Safeguarding the capacity of the National Road network within the county by the restriction of access points to the network
- Implementing the Government's strategy for road safety
- Facilitating the development of the National road network in accordance with Transport 21 and with the policy of the National Roads Authority as it applies to the provision of national routes and their ancillary roads and services
- Specific policy protection for all national road improvement routes in the County

The Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2010 state that no access to the national network is permitted.

The only conditions appropriate for exemption per the guidelines, are where:

- Traffic volumes are low and are forecast to remain below 3,000AADT (as verified by the NRA) for the next 20 years
- There is no other suitable alternative non-national public road / private laneway access available
- The development otherwise accords with the Development Plan
- Safety issues and considerations can be adequately addressed in accordance with the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

Consideration will also be given to existing permitted developments accessing directly onto National Roads, where expansion is proposed, subject to relevant traffic assessments submitted and where it is demonstrated that no traffic or public hazard is presented.

It is the intention of the Planning Authority during the term of this plan, to develop and agree a policy with the National Roads Authority relating to access onto sections of the National Road Network.

Location Policy

Lands adjoining National Roads to which speed limits greater than 60 km/ph apply:

To avoid the creation of additional access point from new development or the generation of increased access to national roads for all development types.

Transitional Zone i.e. sections of national roads on the approaches to or exit from urban centres that are subject to a speed limit of 60 km/ph before a lower 50 km/ph limit:

To provide for a limited level of direct access to facilitate orderly urban development. Proposals must be subject to a road safety audit carried out in accordance with the NRA's requirements and a proliferation of entrances, which would lead to a diminution in the role of such transitional zones must be avoided.

Lands adjoining National Roads within 50 km/ph speed limits:

Access will be considered by planning authorities in accordance with normal road safety, traffic management and urban design criteria for built up areas.

***Source: National Roads and Spatial Planning, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2012**

Trans – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Protect its transport network against development that would have a serious adverse effect on the capacity or operational efficiency and create serious traffic congestion or potentially give rise to traffic hazard
- Request Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTA's) on new developments where they may have traffic implications
- Safeguard the strategic role of national roads including associated junctions
- Be mindful of further development of established farm activity along national roads, also extensions to commercial or industrial development or new / intensification of equine related industries outside the speed limits on such roads where a road safety hazard is created
- Require all proposed developments in urban and rural areas accessing the road networks to comply with the requirements of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) or Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)
- Avoid the creation of additional access points from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 50 kph apply. This prohibition will not necessarily apply to developments of national and regional strategic importance in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines, which by their nature are most appropriately located outside urban areas. Exceptions to this policy would only be brought forward in a plan led manner, as indicated in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines and be with the agreement of the National Roads Authority
- Presume against large scale retail development adjacent to or close to existing, new or planned national roads
- Apply the requirements of the NRA TTA Guidelines (2014) including sub-threshold requirements, where development proposals may impact on National Roads

5.2.3 Regional Road Network

Regional roads provide important strategic links within the county and the region. These roads serve rural development and diversification, indigenous industry, local enterprise agriculture, agribusiness and tourism. The regional roads from Carlow to the East Coast have a very high volume of petro/aggregate/container content in a region where there are no National roads from the East Coast to the Midlands. The Bagenalstown/Muinebheag to New Ross route via Borris links the growing port of New Ross to the Midlands, the National Road Network and the Euroroute E-01 / N80.

To maintain their strategic function, it will be necessary to exercise control over new development requiring access to regional roads. In particular, the heavily trafficked regional road between Carlow Town and Killerig Cross (R726), from Killamaster to Tullow (R418), from Carlow Town to the Kildare Border (R448), Carlow to Tullow (R725) and from Carlow town to Royal Oak (R448) will have access for development restricted to the same categories as those for National roads.

Trans – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Exercise control over new developments requiring direct access to regional roads by restricting new access points to a minimum to preserve their strategic function and in the interests of traffic safety

5.2.4 Local Roads

Carlow County Council will prioritise available resources on the more heavily trafficked routes and those found to be structurally deficient in accordance with the nationally developed Pavement Management System (PMS). The Council will have regard to the transportation needs of development generally, particularly those associated with agribusiness, tourism and rural development.

5.2.5 General Road Policy

Outside Carlow town and its environs, County Carlow has a rather dispersed population living in rural areas and small settlements throughout the county. The road network is essential as private vehicles remain the main mode of transport for the majority of the population, as well as for commercial and industrial activities. Whilst the emphasis in Carlow town and Environs is on encouraging public transport, cycling and walking, private vehicle travel is likely to remain the main mode of transport in the County during the life of this Plan. Maintenance and upgrading the road network remains a priority for Carlow County Council. The Council works with the National Roads Authority (NRA) and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DDTAS) for the improvement of all roads. Funding of road maintenance and improvement works is provided by Central Government as well as from the Council's own resources. The Central Government funding is channeled from the DDTAS through the NRA to the Local Authority. Where development is permitted, the Council will require that it can be accommodated without the creation of a specific traffic hazard and that sight distances, road widths and distances from junctions comply with the appropriate geometric design standards as adopted by

Carlow County Council. Proposals should comply with the NRA Design Manual on Roads & Bridges (current edition) (NRA DMRB) and Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013).

Trans – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage and facilitate investment in the road network at National, Regional and Local level and prioritise delivery to maximise the economic benefit to the County and ensure that any plan or project associated with transportation (roads, rail or other forms) which has the potential to significantly affect a Natura 2000 site is appropriately assessed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in order to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the site
- Promote road and traffic safety measures in conjunction with relevant Government Departments and other agencies through the provision of appropriate signage, minimising or removing existing traffic hazards and preventing the creation of additional or new traffic hazards
- Provide, extend and maintain street lighting on the public road/footpath network throughout the county in accordance with best international practice
- Facilitate the development of on-line or off-line ‘Motorway Services Areas’ within the County in line with the NRA Policy on Motorway Services Areas (NRA Service Area Policy - August 2014) and subject to appropriate assessment and assessment of all environmental issues.’
- Regulate, control and improve signage throughout the County, in conjunction with the National Roads Authority and other relevant agencies
- Ensure that flood risk management measures are incorporated into the provision of transport and emergency planning infrastructure
- Require developers to provide a detailed Traffic Impact Assessment, as carried out by competent professionals in this field, where new developments will have a significant effect on travel demand and the capacity of surrounding transport links. Where a Traffic Impact Assessment identifies necessary on and off site improvements for the development to be able to proceed, the developer will fund the improvements to the satisfaction of the Council
- Bring national roads up to appropriate standards, as resources become available, and continue improvement works on non-national roads, so as to develop a safe and comprehensive road system for the county
- When designing or inputting into road schemes, the importance of hedgerows and roadside boundaries for wildlife and bio-diversity shall be recognised. Retention of such features should be incorporated into design and where this is not possible, replacement planting with native species of indigenous provenance will be provided
- Seek to ensure access to the highest possible category of the road network hierarchy when considering applications for quarries
- Improve deficiencies in pavement surface, riding quality and general alignment to protect the heavy investment in existing facilities

- Ensure that necessary new entrances are located in such a manner as to provide effective visibility for both users of the entrance and users of the public roads so that opportunities for conflicting traffic movements are avoided, in the interests of public safety
- Support the upgrade of the N80 Enniscorthy – Carlow road and improvements to linkages from the South East Region and Midlands, in line with Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010 – 2022, Strategic Objective PPO 5.12

5.2.6 Urban Roads and Streets

Urban roads and streets should be places where people want to live, and spend time rather than just being seen as traffic corridors. The key is to improve street design for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and to reduce the impact of vehicles on residential streets. A well designed network of streets, which are place-based in their scope and design, has the ability to promote active transportation. As a result, they encourage improved public health while shifting transportation towards sustainability, mitigating the impacts of climate change in the process.

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets as published jointly by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in March 2013 outlines practical design measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in urban areas. The Manual sets out design guidance and standards for constructing new and reconfiguring existing urban roads and streets, incorporating good planning and design practice and supercedes the ‘Design Manual for Roads and Bridges’ (DMRB) for urban areas.

The Council acknowledges the achievement of a better balance in how urban roads and streets are designed and used and will actively implement the principles, approaches and standards set out in the Manual in seeking to achieve best practice design outcomes with regard to street networks and individual streets.

5.2.7 Bridges

Over 250 bridges are dispersed throughout County Carlow which support the non-national road network. The Council continues to adopt a proactive role in maintaining, preserving and strengthening these bridges as necessary. The majority of the structures are of considerable age. The Council must have due regard to the historical value of this component of the built heritage of the county in the manner and methods engaged in maintaining the bridge stock and associated structures.

5.2.8 Objectives during the Lifetime of Plan

Carlow County Council is developing relief roads around the principal towns. These roads will improve traffic movement in the towns by relieving traffic congestion. The quality of life of the towns will also be enhanced by taking heavy vehicles out of the town centre. The new roads will benefit the economic development of the towns by opening up for development lands contiguous to the road lines. These projects will be funded by a combination of grant aid from the Department of Transport and through locally raised development levies. The proposed projects are:

- Carlow Southern Relief Road (N80 / Euroroute E-01 / Rosslare to Midlands)

- N80 Re-alignment (Whitemills to Ballykealy and Castletown to Glynn's Cross)
- Tullow Relief Road. (East Coast to Midlands and Tullow to N80)
- Muinebheag Relief Road (linking New Ross Port to the Midlands)

5.3 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

5.3.1 Aim

Carlow County Council will endeavour to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and the integration of land use planning with sustainable transport systems and will support the development of a safer, more efficient transport system within County Carlow, with improvements to the road network, rail network, public transport, cycleways and pedestrian ways.

5.3.2 Integrating Landuse and Transportation

A key issue for sustainable development is the relationship between transportation and land use. Transportation networks affect land use patterns in how people choose to locate their homes and businesses and equally landuse patterns direct transportation and provide the demand for transportation systems. Dispersal of land uses places an increase in demand for transportation because of greater travel distances, and this is unsustainable. Also traffic is increasingly becoming a problem with the growth of urbanisation leading to greater car dependency. Measures need to be taken at a number of levels (local, regional and national) to mitigate the effects of transport, in particular private car traffic, and reduce the need and demand for travel.

Decisions on land use and development must take account of existing and public transport networks and support the emergence and development of new integrated transport systems. The integration of land use and transport is the most effective way of providing an efficient transportation system and is essential in the provision of a sustainable spatial framework for economic, social and cultural development. Notwithstanding the significant investment at national level in developing an extensive motorway network, the focus of national transport policy (Smarter Travel 2009-2020, National Cycle Framework Policy) is being re-orientated to more sustainable forms of transport including rail transport, bus transport, cycling and walking.

Integrating landuse and transportation represents a challenge for County Carlow to embrace (given the predominantly rural nature of the county dispersed settlement pattern and high car ownership levels. The key challenge is to facilitate smarter ways of meeting needs and linking it to landuse. Within this context, high densities and mixed uses will be encouraged to locate within walking distance of public transport nodes and at accessible sites throughout the County, such as those within town centres. The provision of an integrated land use and transportation system, is a long term process, that is supported by a range of central government policies including the National Spatial Strategy, National Development Plan and Regional Planning Guidelines and is guided by planning guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Council recognises the need to build on and further invest in transport infrastructure recognizing that its provision is crucially

important and needs to be linked with overall landuse to continue the promotion of growth in the county and in the south east region. The Council, acting primarily as facilitator rather than the direct provider of some sustainable transportation networks, will, nevertheless, have a significant role to play both in the development of an efficient transportation system and in planning for the future transport needs of the County.

Trans – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support co-ordination by transport providers to promote linked up transport services enabling complete coverage of the County through the creation of integrated transport hubs in the larger towns:
 - By providing bus stations or stops in or around train stations
 - By providing cycle parking stands at stations and stops
 - By providing good pedestrian facilities
- Request a Mobility Management Plan with larger planning applications, detailing accessibility measures and measures to encourage sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, car-sharing and public transport. In the case of schools measures might also include a school bus or a walking school bus
- Integrate transportation planning and land-use planning in order to reduce the need to travel (especially by car), by promoting the consolidation of development in a network of settlements with existing services and facilities
- Support the creation of an integrated and environmentally-sound transport system, in particular with regard to accessibility and choice of transport, with a quality intercity bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements
- Encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following:
 - Sustainable transport
 - Provision of open space amenities
 - Sustainable management of water
 - Protection and management of biodiversity
 - Protection of cultural heritage
 - Protection of protected landscape sensitivities

In the interest of consistency with national policy on smarter travel, sustainable transport and accessibility will address transport in order of sustainability focusing on the following areas:

1. Trip Generation/Modal Shift
2. Walking & Cycling
3. Public Transport i.e. rail and bus
4. Rural Transport Programme
5. Air Transport
6. Electric Cars

1. Trip Generation/Modal Shift

Smarter Travel policy acknowledges that achieving sustainable transport will require a course of actions that will have supporting impacts in terms of travel demand and associated emissions. The course of actions to reduce the distance travelled by private car encompasses a broad range of areas including:

- Focusing of population and employment growth in urban areas
- Providing alternatives to the car are available i.e. public transport
- Improving fuel efficiency, promoting energy efficient driving and alternative technologies
- Strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver targets

There is a high rate of car dependency in County Carlow which can be attributed to the predominantly rural nature of the settlement pattern of the County. However, the challenge for Carlow within the lifetime of this plan is to integrate landuse and transportation policy and give proper emphasis to the factors that have a positive role in promoting sustainable transport to reduce levels of car dependency such as:

- Promoting higher densities at appropriate locations
- Mixing landuses
- Designing for compact settlement forms
- Concentrating appropriate development on transport corridors and linkages

Trans – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage better integration of transport services in the County where possible with the aim of reducing car trips and to encourage improved consultation and co-operation between both public and private providers of transport services operating in the County and in the South East Region, including all providers of bus and rail services. In this regard, the Council shall be open to supporting, where practicable, initiatives to facilitate discourse and co-operation between transport service providers with a view to facilitating better integration of public transport services
- Locate appropriate development in appropriate locations to make best use of transportation networks and to ensure that the carrying capacity of roads, operational efficiency, safety and significant investment is protected
- Invest in public facilities such as schools, community/health centres and sports/amenity facilities taking account of the need to give priority to walking, cycling and public transport as a primary means of accessing these facilities
- Promote regeneration and economic vitality by relieving traffic congestion and improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need and for those without a car
- Improve access to transport services and facilities in order to enable people with disabilities and people with mobility impairments to participate fully in public life
- Improve pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment
- Improve and develop a walking and cycle network in County Carlow
- Support improvements to the public transport network
- Facilitate modes of transport that reduce carbon emissions e.g. by incorporating charging points for electric vehicles, subject to their appropriate design and location
- Prepare a Local Transport Plan in accordance with guidelines set out in “*Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future*”, to include Targets for Modal Change to more sustainable means of travel over the Development Plan period, in accordance with Regional PPO 5.1 of the South East Regional Planning Guidelines. This Plan shall be screened for the possible requirement for Appropriate Assessment of Strategic Environmental Assessment

In pursuing the objective of encouraging modal shift the Council will co-operate closely with other relevant agencies and stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority

2. Walking & Cycling

Cycling and walking have the lowest environmental impact of all travel modes however in County Carlow both these modes of transport play minor roles due to long trip distances related to the predominately rural nature of the County. Cycling and walking have many benefits including promoting healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability and community development. Cycling and walking are more environmentally sustainable as they reduce the stress on the environment from mechanised transport and also reduce incidents of traffic congestion and pollution. Community development benefits from

encouraging people to walk or cycle as they keep people fit and healthy and in doing so improves quality of life.

An essential element of any integrated transport system is to provide for the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. The promotion of walking and cycling requires pedestrian and cycle facilities that form a coherent network, placing a strong emphasis on safety, serving the main areas where people wish to travel (including tourist and recreational areas of the County), ensuring obstruction free routes and where necessary cycling and pedestrians are given priority over vehicular traffic where the modes converge. The Council will therefore endeavour to make provisions for walkers and cyclists in both urban and rural areas of the County. Carlow County Council is aware however that providing such routes can cause concern, as these may give rise to anti-social behaviour, particularly along unsupervised and secluded laneways. Every effort shall be made to avoid such situations, through public lighting, appropriate layout and landscaping.

The vision of Department of Transport's *National Cycle Policy Framework*, published in April 2009, is that all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be bicycle-friendly and the target is that by 2020, 10% of all journeys will be by bicycle. The Department of Transport has also committed to publishing a *National Walking Policy*. Carlow County Council will implement the relevant policies and actions contained in these plans, where feasible, over the period of the plan. Carlow County Council along with Kilkenny County Council, under the National Cycle Network (NCN) program, has provided a dedicated on road cycle route 35km in length between Carlow and Kilkenny. The route is located on the R448/R712 (previous N9/N10). The route starts/ends on the Northern edge of Carlow Town which links to the extensive network of cycling routes in Carlow Town itself which links to many of the major attractions within the Town and County. Carlow Active Travel Towns Programme was launched in 2013 with its principle objective being to increase cycling and walking in Carlow Town and Graiguecullen and to make safe and convenient alternatives to car travel available particularly when undertaking short journeys. Appendix 10 shows the cycle paths currently in Carlow.

Carlow County Council will use its powers under the Planning Acts to preserve and maintain existing rights of way, to create new ones where appropriate, and to promote their greater use in amenity areas. In addition the Council may seek to incorporate the provision of pedestrian ways as a condition of planning permission to link amenities, facilities and points of interest.

Trans – Policy 8

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote walking and cycling, subject to appropriate environmental assessments, including Habitats Directive Assessment, as an alternative mode of transport for travelling to work and for recreational purposes, to require the provision of cycle ways and walkways and associated facilities as part of new development and to support safer walking and cycling routes to schools under the Green Schools Initiative where feasible
- Consider the development of off-road routes, such as disused railway lines and bridle paths, for both walking and cycling to improve access to rural tourist attractions and support the development of the ‘Barrow Corridor’ in County Carlow in connection with adjoining Local Authorities
- Introduce minimum cycle-parking standards for retail, commercial, residential and community development and public transport stops and stations
- Implement the relevant policies of the Department of Transport’s *National Cycle Policy Framework* and support the provision of a national cycle network
- Provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and for people with special mobility needs in line with the aims of the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights
- Implement the relevant provisions of the Department of Transport’s *Walking Policy Plan* and make provision for the safe and efficient movement of cyclists and pedestrians in and around built-up areas
- Prohibit the intrusion of development along public walking routes and public rights of way, particularly those in scenic areas and along inland waterways
- Protect the integrity of walking routes and potential routes and take the impact of proposed development into account when considering planning applications
- Encourage walking to become the principal method for shorter journeys through arranging land uses and by utilising good urban design
- Provide a comprehensive network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths (both road-side and segregated) within new residential areas with links to schools, local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces which will encourage people to walk
- Support pedestrianisation in town and village centres where appropriate
- Establish new Walkways and cycle routes on a legal and permanent basis and ensure that Walking/Cycle Routes are signposted/waymarked, where possible and appropriate
- Provide, improve and extend cycle and pedestrian routes on existing roads, proposed roads, roads being upgraded and green corridors (including river corridors), where feasible and practical, subject to compliance with Habitats Directive, to create a more convenient, pleasant and user friendly environment. The needs of walkers and cyclists will be given full consideration in proposals to upgrade any road network
- Implement standards of Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets for urban street developments

- Ensure that all surfaces used by cyclists are maintained to a high standard and ensure the provision of new cycle paths as part of development proposals by developers in urban or suburban areas or as part of road development schemes in urban areas by the County. Where possible these cycle lanes should be segregated from vehicular transport corridors and ensure the upgrading of national roads will not impact negatively on the safety and perceived safety of cyclists
- Promote the expansion of cycle facilities and liaise with Failte Ireland, the Sports Council, the National Transportation Authority and other bodies in the development of cycle touring routes throughout the county and adjoining counties, in particular in areas of high amenity
- Provide parking areas for bicycles in urban areas throughout County Carlow

3. Public Transport – Rail and Bus

The provision of a high quality public transport network is paramount to achieving a high quality of life standard in the county and in providing a viable sustainable alternative transport mode. By encouraging employment and residential development to locate in existing development centres, it will be possible to take full advantage of existing and future investments in public transport. Public transport plays a key role in sustaining the vitality and viability of rural communities in County Carlow. Alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements, quality bus and rail services can reduce car dependency within and between settlements. Responsibility for local public transport is divided between the public and private sectors. The Council supports community transport services, in particular the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI), which is aimed at people who are excluded or who may become excluded because transport is not available, accessible or affordable to them locally.

Trans – Policy 9

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the provision of public transport services by reserving land in suitable locations for public transport infrastructure and ancillary facilities, such as park-and-ride
- Support local, community transport services in consultation with the local communities
- Continue to work with the service providers to reduce the need for car trips by improving the availability, reliability and quality of public transport
- Work with the relevant organisations to develop and maintain bus stops, waiting areas, and up to date travel information for the local population and tourists alike. The availability of such services should be promoted

Rail Infrastructure

Carlow is served by the Dublin to Waterford intercity line which over the last few years has improved journey times and safety across the network. Further investment provided new rolling stock which allowed improved service frequencies with potential also for additional carriage of freight via the rail Network. The increased use of the rail network during the night for freight will be essential. A modern, efficient and dependable passenger and freight rail network has a crucial role to play in terms of promoting County Carlow for business, industrial, residential and recreational purposes. There are other benefits too in terms of sustainability, reduced congestion and reduced car generated pollution.

The 2030 Rail Network Strategy Review, published in October, 2011, provides the Government with a basis for establishing a strategic policy framework for the future development of the rail passenger and rail freight sectors in Ireland. This review informs of the strategic priorities and future investment strategy which would see three phases up to 2030 and all three phases would bring about improvements in rail services to County Carlow including the improvement of InterCity journey time to 2 hours or less on the Dublin to Waterford route.

Trans – Policy 10

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the maintenance and enhancement of rail infrastructure and associated facilities in County Carlow
- Encourage coordination by providers to promote linked up services enabling complete coverage of the county independent of private vehicular transport and promote the provision of bus stops at train stations
- Encourage the development of rail freight facilities / sidings at strategic locations for road to rail freight transfer, as per the South East Regional Planning Guidelines PPO 5.15

Bus

In areas of low to medium population, bus-based public transport can offer the most flexible means of providing services both for urban and inter-urban travel and can be introduced within a short time frame and at relatively low cost. Both public and private companies operate bus services in County Carlow. Bus services play a vital social role in rural communities, linking rural areas with settlements and essential services, such as schools and healthcare. Carlow County Council will facilitate the improvement and expansion of public bus services where they strengthen linkages to other areas of the county, the South East Region and the rest of the country.

Carlow County Council will support the provision of bus services which:

- Connect principal towns in Carlow with Dublin, Dublin Airport, Waterford, Kilkenny, Portlaoise, Kildare, Naas, Newbridge, Wexford and other towns
- Support the development of an Urban Bus Service within the Greater Carlow and Graiguecullen urban area

- Connect principal and key towns within the County
- Provided as part of the Rural Transport Initiative, serve to improve access to principal and service towns and counteract rural isolation

Trans – Policy 11

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the provision of shared bus stop facilities in appropriate locations in urban centres such as Train Stations to facilitate public and private operators, as designated in the County Settlement hierarchy
- Work with Rural Transport Providers to research and promote sustainable options for rural transport given the increased running costs with the rising cost of fuel
- Work with transport providers to develop an urban public bus service for the Greater Carlow and Graiguecullen Urban Area

4. Rural Transport Programme

In July of 2013 the Department of Transport / National Transport Authority *Restructuring Plan* for rural transport was launched with plans for restructuring outlined in the document “Strengthening the Connections in Rural Ireland”. The restructuring was introduced to;

- Protect the provision of rural transport services into the future
- Ensure that the provision of rural transport services is mainstreamed as a subsidised public transport service and better integrated with other services
- Reduce the administrative overhead in the provision of those rural transport services in line with the recommendations of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Rural Transport Programme (RTP) Report
- Establish a structure to facilitate the national integration of rural transport
- Develop further the professional management of transport services in support of the strong community participation structures
- Develop a consistency in the management, the delivery and the quality of services
- Put in place a formal structure that will address social exclusion and facilitate the consideration, measurement and monitoring of the social inclusion aspect of the programme in a holistic manner, through Local Authority structures

The Rural Transport Programme restructuring will result in the National Transport Authority taking a direct role in the procurement of rural transport services, along with 18 Transport Co-Ordination Units (Units) being set up to replace the existing 35 RTP Groups. A Unit will perform similar work to a Rural Transport Group but as well as managing services to those at risk of social exclusion, Transport Co-ordination Units have a broader role in that they will be expected over time to increase the supply of local and rural public transport to the wider community to reduce car dependency. Where feasible, the Units will be housed in Local Authority offices and stronger ties will be developed at a local level between the managers of rural transport services and the Local

Authority planners, with the aim also of reducing administration costs and forging the links in local service provision.

Applications from Fleet-Ownning RTP Groups will be considered for Direct Award Contracts (i.e. contracts awarded by the Authority without competitive tendering) for the delivery of transport services into the future.

Local Authorities will also be required to carry out strategic transport needs assessment in their area including for those who are socially excluded and will develop annual Transport Plans to be delivered to the National Transport Authority.

Trans – Policy 12

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support initiatives in rural areas which will help to improve communications and reduce isolation
- Development annual Transport Plans and submit to the National Transport Authority
- Co-operate with the various public and private agencies who are transport providers within the County in the provision of and co-ordination of new services and supporting infrastructure

5. Air Transport

The Smarter Travel national policy document recognises that aviation provides a key transport link for Ireland. Connectivity and access through international and regional airports are vital for our tourism industry in particular. It also acknowledges Government support for the development of a network of regional airports to assist balanced regional development.

Carlow County Council recognises the significance of the role that Regional Airports have in promoting balanced regional development and supports the Regional Airport located in Waterford, as the South East Region's airport.

Trans – Policy 13

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the Regional Airport located in Waterford, as the South East Region's airport and the measures to improve access to the Regional Airport

6. Electric Cars

To assist Ireland in meeting EU targets on carbon emissions, the Electric Transport Program 2008 was launched by the government in an attempt to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The target for the program is to see 10% of the National Road Fleet electrically powered by 2020. The shift to electric vehicles requires the installation of charging points across the Country and the provision for chargers in homes. Developing the infrastructure for alternatively fuelled vehicles will be a vital step in encouraging consumers to make more environmentally friendly transport choices. The Council will

promote and support the development of appropriate infrastructure to accommodate a change to electrically powered vehicles and to assist in achieving the 10% target for County Carlow.

Trans – Policy 14

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the Government’s Electric Transport Programme 2008-2020 by facilitating the roll-out of battery charging infrastructure for electric vehicles where considered appropriate
- Promote and support the development of appropriate infrastructure to accommodate a change to electrically powered vehicles and to assist in achieving the 10% target for County Carlow
- Require all new car parks and extensions to existing car parks to include electric car charging points at a rate of 1:50 spaces
- Introduce for developments with Private Car Spaces (residential and non-residential) including visitor car parking spaces e.g. office spaces
 - At least one parking space should be equipped with one fully functional EV charging point in accordance with IEC 61851 Standard for Electric Vehicle Conductive Charging Systems. This should be capable of supplying 32A 230V single phase AC electricity and be equipped with Mode 3 protection. It should be fitted with a Type 2 socket as defined by IEC 62196.
 - It should be possible to expand the charging system at construction stage (e.g. by installing appropriate ducting now).
- Introduce for developments with Publicly Accessible Spaces (e.g. supermarket car park, cinema etc.)
 - At least one parking space should be equipped with one fully functional EV charging point in accordance with IEC 61851 Standard for Electric Vehicle Conductive Charging Systems. This should be capable of supplying 32A 230V single phase AC electricity and be equipped with Mode 3 protection. It should be fitted with a Type 2 socket as defined by IEC 62196.
 - It should be possible to expand the charging system at construction stage (e.g. by installing appropriate ducting now).
 - The Charge Point parking space(s) should be clearly marked as being designated for EV charging.
 - Appropriate signage indicating the presence of a charge point or points should be erected.
 - All charge points fitted in publicly accessible areas should be capable of communicating usage data with the national charge point management system and use the latest version of the Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP). They should also support a user identification system such as RFID.

As the use of electric vehicles continues to increase the Council may increase the number of parking spaces to be equipped with fully functional charge points in either of the above cases.

5.4 PROVISION FOR THE MOBILITY IMPAIRED AND DISABLED

The Local Authority has a significant role in promoting accessibility and supporting the transport / access / egress needs of mobility-impaired people and people with disabilities, including the elderly and parents with children. The Local Authority will have regard to the National Disability Authority guidance document 'Building for Everyone' (2009) under the Disability Act, 2005, adopted by the Department of Transport and the DoEHLG.

Trans – Policy 15

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Seek to develop networks inclusive of facilities for people with disabilities and / or mobility impairments which link key public buildings, shopping streets, public transport points, tourist and recreational attractions

5.5 CARLOW LOGISTICS PARK

Recognising the strategic location of Junction 5 on the M9 (the interchange of the M9 Dublin to Waterford and N80 Rosslare to the Midlands), as a suitable location, Carlow County Council will support the provision of a Regional Logistics Park in County Carlow.

The actual location of this logistics park will be determined during the lifetime of the plan. A Masterplan will be required for the chosen site which will include for the provisions of an Appropriate Assessment, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

5.6 EMERGENCY SERVICES

The County Council is the Fire Authority for Carlow Town and County. The Central Fire Station is located on Green Lane, Carlow Town. There are 4 brigades within the county located at Carlow, Bagenalstown/Muinebheag, Tullow and Hacketstown, The service responds to over 500 emergencies each year dealing with Fire calls, vehicle accidents, chemical incidents, oil spillages, and with matters that arise under the Fire Services Acts, Building Control and Dangerous Substances Legislation. The service also provides licensing and certification of new development and monitors existing structures for compliance with current fire safety practices.

Carlow Fire and Rescue are actively involved in community safety campaigns both at local and national level. Great emphasis is placed on focusing more attention on

education and raising awareness amongst the most vulnerable people within the community in order to reduce the suffering caused by fires and other emergencies. The success of Carlow Fire and Rescue is based on a move from re-active to pro-active intervention.

The County Carlow Major Emergency Plan is linked to emergency planning for the South East Region. Emergency call-out systems are linked to the Eastern Region Control Centre, which County Carlow supports technically and financially. Carlow County Council will adapt and co-operate with the implementation of improvements to the Emergency Services systems as will be advanced during the Plan period.



CHAPTER SIX

ENERGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

CHAPTER SIX – ENERGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

ENERGY

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The ability of the economy to perform successfully depends critically on the supply of adequate, affordable and environmentally sustainable energy. The Government's White Paper - *Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland* (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) 2007, due for renewal in 2014) sets out the Energy Policy Framework for the period 2007-2020. It outlines a number of strategic goals to ensure security of energy supply, enhance competitiveness and promote sustainability of energy supply and use. Central to this is the need to address climate change and reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by promoting renewable energy sources and maximising our energy efficiency.

In addition, this chapter has been written with consideration given to the following documentation:

- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010 - 2022
- Maximising Ireland's Energy Efficiency – National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009 - 2020 (2009)
- National Renewable Energy Action Plan for Ireland 2010
- Ireland's second National Energy Efficiency Action Plan to 2020
- Eirgrid's Programme for Investment: Grid25, Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020

The consumption of fossil fuels is now close to the rate of production, characterised in the expression "Peak Oil". Alongside rising oil prices, the Council recognises that the dependence on fossil fuels cannot continue as it is a diminishing resource. A solution to this problem is the development of a low carbon economy, which is based around the use of renewable energy resources such as wind and energy crops, which can be harnessed to meet the energy needs of the county. The ability to deliver a secure and uninterrupted sustainable energy supply at a competitive cost is critical for the county to continue to attract inward investment and to provide a supportive environment for industry.

National & International Renewable Energy Policy References

On 28th May 2012 Minister Pat Rabbitte launched the 'Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020'. The document discusses five key strategic goals reflecting the main dimensions of the Renewable Energy challenge to 2020, as follows:

- Progressively more renewable electricity from onshore and offshore wind power for the domestic and export markets
- A sustainable bioenergy sector supporting renewable heat, transport and power generation
- Green growth through research and development of renewable technologies, including the preparation for market of ocean technologies

- Increase in sustainable energy use in the transport sector through biofuels and electrification
- An intelligent, robust and cost-efficient energy networks system

To view the strategy document, go to www.dcenr.gov.ie/

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol establishes legally binding commitments for the reduction of four greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride), and two groups of gases (hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons) produced by industrialised nations, as well as general commitments for all member countries.

Ireland ratified the Kyoto Protocol on 31st May 2002, along with the EU and all other member states. As a result, it is legally bound to meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target. Under the protocol, Ireland's target is to limit the increase in emissions to 13% above 1990 levels by the first commitment period, 2008 - 2012.

The objectives of the Kyoto Protocol are complemented by European Directives and schemes such as the Large Combustion Plant Directive¹¹ and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (implemented in 2005).

Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources

This Directive sets out to ensure that 20% of EU energy consumption will come from renewable resources by 2020, with each country being assigned a legally binding individual target. The Directive required that member states prepare a National Renewable Energy Plan by June 2010. The Directive's specific target for Ireland is that 16% of the national gross final consumption of energy will comprise energy from renewable sources by 2020 across the transport, heat and electricity sectors, with a minimum of 10% of Renewable Energy consumed in transport.

The Directive requires member states to implement measures facilitating the supply and use of energy from renewable sources at all scales of operation. The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) sets out how we will achieve our overall 16% target across the electricity, heat and transport sectors. The Biofuels Obligation Act 2010; S.I. 33 of 2012 and S.I. 147 of 2011 and S.I. 158 of 2012 transpose the Renewable Energy Directive.

Government White Paper on Energy Policy: Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020

The White Paper describes the actions and target for the energy policy framework out to 2020, to support economic growth and meet the needs of all consumers. It sets a clear path for meeting the Government's goals of ensuring safe and secure energy supplies, promoting a sustainable energy future, and supporting competitiveness. The Government has also made a number of commitments related to renewable electricity micro generation; namely, to provide a Renewable Energy Feeding Tarriff (REFIT) for micro generators wishing to produce electricity for their own homes, farms and businesses, and to facilitate them to sell surplus electricity to the grid. The Renewable Energy Directive

became legally binding since the White Paper was published in 2007. A new Government White Paper on energy policy is anticipated in the short term (2014).

The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) 2010

The NREAP was prepared as a result of Directive 2009/28/EC. It sets out the Government's strategic approach and concrete measures to deliver on Ireland's target of 16% of the national gross final consumption of energy, comprising of energy from renewable sources by 2020 (under Directive 2009/28/EC). The Government plans that by 2020 the overall binding target will be delivered by approximately 40% consumption from renewable sources in the electricity sector (RES-E), 12% in the heat sector (RES-H) and 10% in transport (RES-T).

The NREAP is the national plan for Renewable Energy development in the country so as to achieve our legally binding target. It is important, therefore, that Local Authorities set their ambition with regard to Renewable Energy in this context and in the context of the progress reports on the NREAP and identify their ability to contribute to these targets, particularly in the context of the large variety in levels of Renewable Energy resources that are available in different local and regional authority areas. A progress report on the NREAP is submitted to the European Commission every two years (the first one was submitted in January 2012) and is made available on the DCENR website.

The recently published Government White Paper entitled Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland 2007 – 2020 and the National Climate Change Strategy 2007 – 2012 commit the Government to providing 33% by 2020 Building Regulations with the aim of reducing energy demand by 40% relative to current standards. The Council is committed to these targets.

Renewable energy provides a clean, sustainable solution to our energy problems. It can be used as an alternative to fossil fuels in generating electricity, heating and transport, without the direct emission of greenhouse gases.

The development of renewable energy sources and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is a priority at Local, National and European level from both environmental and energy policy prospective. The Council strongly supports national and international incentives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of renewable energy resources. The planning and land use policies in the Development Plan are intended to promote efficiency in the use of energy, transport and natural resources.

The main driver for the implementation of renewable energy policy is the Renewable Energy Directive – 2009/28/EC. This directive states that each Member State to adopt a national renewable energy action plan (NREAP) to be submitted to the European Commission.

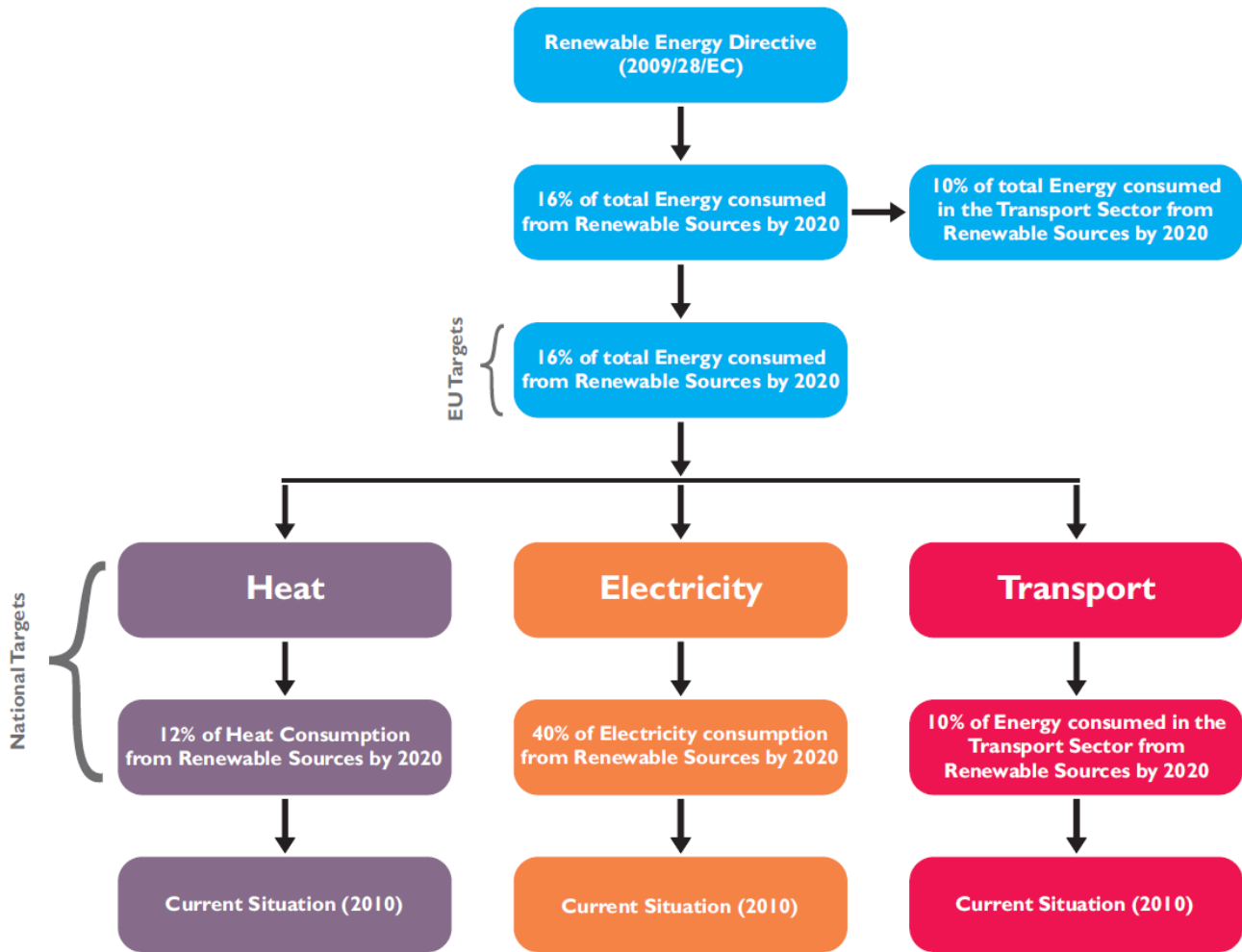


Figure 6.1 National & European Policy Drivers

Carlow County Council will support the implementation of national targets and will work with all sectors in the integration of wind, solar, biomass and hydro projects into County Carlow’s overall energy balance below.

Table 6.1 Current Energy Balance – Carlow

Carlow 2011 Energy Balance Units = TJ	Coal	Peat	Oil	Natural Gas	Renewables	Biomass	Electricity	TOTAL
Total Final Energy Consumption	157.60	117.05	3,454	692	12	145	1,006	5,591
Industry <small>Note 1</small>	44.92	0.00	264	259	0	70	386	1,031
Transport								
Road Transport <small>Note 2</small>	0.00	0.00	1,454	0	0	39	0	1,493
Public Transport, etc. <small>Note 1</small>	0.00	0.00	930	0	0	15	2	947
Residential <small>Note 3</small>	112.68	117.05	503	276	11	11	346	1,377
Commercial/Public Services <small>Note 1</small>	0.00	0.00	167	157	1	9	242	575
Agricultural <small>Note 4</small>	0.00	0.00	137	0	0	0	31	168
Fisheries <small>Note 5</small>	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note 1 Assumptions based on the fact that 10.98% of the South-East’s population resides in Carlow.

Note 2 01.40% of Irish road vehicles (private cars/motorcycles and goods vehicles) are registered in Carlow.

Note 3 Based on 2011 data: 1.16% of the nation’s households are in Carlow.

Note 4 Assumptions based on the fact that Carlow constitutes 10% of the area of the South-East.

Note 5 0% of the South-East’s Fishing Vessels are registered in Carlow.

Table 6.2 Fuel Consumption & Estimated CO2 Emissions in County Carlow

Fuel Type	% Consumption in the County	CO2 Emissions (Million Tonnes)
Coal	2.82%	0.01
Peat	2.09%	0.01
Oil	61.77%	0.25
Natural Gas	12.38%	0.04
Renewables	0.22%	0.00
Biomass	2.59%	0.00
Electricity	17.99%	0.15
TOTAL		0.46

Energy – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Facilitate, promote and achieve a balance between responding to Central Government policy on renewable energy and enabling energy resources within the plan area to be harnessed in a manner which is in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive
- Facilitate the achievement of a secure and efficient energy supply and storage for County Carlow
- Promote County Carlow as a low carbon county by 2021 as a means of attracting inward investment and to facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon outputs
- Raise awareness of the need to reverse fossil fuel dependency, to mitigate the effects of peak oil and reduce carbon emissions, to mitigate the effects of climate change

6.1 THE NATIONAL GRID

The transmission network forms the backbone of power supply. Its development is critical to ensuring that County Carlow has the necessary infrastructure to attract business and accommodate economic growth and the future development of the local economy. In support of sustainable development and efficient energy utilisation, Carlow County Council recognises and supports all energy source providers in the development of a suitable network in the South-East region capable of sustaining the scale of development proposed for the region. The development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is recognised as a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment to the area.

EirGrid's strategy GRID 25 sets out the future requirements of the electricity network up to 2025. The Strategy states that the capacity of the bulk of the transmission system will need to be doubled by 2025. In order to facilitate the necessary increase in renewable generation (40% electricity to be generated from renewable energy sources by 2020), and to adequately meet the demands of the electricity customer. And to ensure that Ireland has the electricity supply infrastructure for economic growth to maximise competitiveness. This will be achieved through major reinforcements to the existing network across all regions. In addition, The Grid Link Project is an estimated €500 million investment in the national electricity grid linking Leinster and Munster. The project consists of a new high voltage overhead power line linking Knockraha, Co. Cork to Great Island, Co. Wexford to Dunstown, near Kilcullen, Co. Kildare. This will strengthen the security of supply and provide opportunities to export and/or import electricity.

The Council will support the reinforcement of the electricity transmission grid to improve energy supply to the county. Where proposed high voltage lines traverse existing or proposed residential areas they should be located underground where appropriate, in the interest of residential and visual amenity.

Energy – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Where impacts are inevitable mitigation features have been included proposals for energy infrastructure should be assessed in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive
- Support the sustainable improvement and expansion of the high voltage electricity transmission power lines and distribution network underground, subject to human health, landscape, residential amenity, tourism, equine industry and environmental considerations
- Have regard to the requirements of the service providers in the provision of strategic infrastructure whilst also seeking to ensure that development, including the location of high voltage transmission power lines, is controlled particularly adjoining existing dwellings, except where no other alternative can be shown to exist
- Ensure that the ability of the area to absorb overhead transmission lines is considered with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment in Appendix 6 of this Plan or the Draft National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2014 – 2024 (DAHG)
- Ensure that the landscape and visual assessment of any proposal shall focus on the potential of the development to impact upon county landscape designations and important designated sites. Proposed overhead lines shall as far as possible seek to avoid areas of sensitivity (e.g. areas of high amenity, high sensitive landscape designations, scenic views, protected structures etc). Where avoidance is not possible full consideration shall be given to undergrounding the lines
- Protect areas of significant landscape importance from the visual intrusion of largescale telecommunications infrastructure
- Minimise, and avoid where possible, the development of telecommunication structures and antennae within the following areas:
 - Areas within or adjoining the curtilage of protected structure
 - Areas on or within the setting of archaeological sites
 - Within a to Natura 2000 sites

6.2 GAS NETWORK

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010-2022 (SERPGs) support the extension of the natural gas network to the centres of industry in the region that will be an extra boost to the economic growth of the region.

Energy – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the extension of the gas network within County Carlow, subject to Compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Council’s development management standards
- Support the development of Renewable Gas production on farm and landfill locations to increase the percentage of locally recovered Biogas into the national gas grid through injection
- Support the reinforcement of the gas grid to improve energy supply to the county. The Council will also support the statutory providers of the national grid infrastructure by safeguarding established strategic corridors from development that may compromise the provision of energy networks, provided these corridors do not have any negative impact on residential amenity or the surrounding environment

Development Plan are intended to promote efficiency in the use of energy, transport and natural resources.

The term renewable energy generally refers to electricity and heat supplied from renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, geothermal, hydropower and various forms of biomass. Renewable Energy deployment can address economic and environmental problems by contributing to secure jobs and income, avoiding environmental damage and providing a valid means to fight climate change.

The Renewables Directive (2009/28/EC) provides a requirement for 20% of the EU’s energy consumption across the electricity, transport and heat sectors to be from renewable sources by 2020. Different targets are given to each Member State in order to achieve this overall target for Europe. Ireland's target is 16% of all energy consumed across the three sectors to come from renewable sources by 2020. Apart from a sub-target of a minimum of 10% in the transport sector, there is flexibility for each country to choose how to achieve their individual target across the sectors. Ireland’s individual targets are set out in the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2010) as follows:

- 40% electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020
- 10% electric vehicles by 2020
- 12% renewable heat by 2020

Energy – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the development of renewable energy resources and the maximising of electricity and heat production from renewable sources. In doing so, the Council will implement the recommendations of the Methodology for Local Authorities Renewable Energy Strategies (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland April 2013) and any other relevant guidelines

6.3 RENEWABLE ENERGY

6.3.1 Wind Energy

Of the renewable forms of energy generation, wind is the most advanced with the highest penetration on the Irish energy grid. According to the Irish Wind Energy Association, in 2012 wind energy in Ireland accounted for 18% of our electricity needs. As of March 2013 there was 1763MW of wind generation installed in Ireland, enough to power 1.14 million homes. There are currently in excess of 175 windfarms in Ireland. Having regard to this resource, electricity demand forecasts and subject to the delivery of necessary transmission infrastructure, County Carlow has the potential to absorb additional wind energy developments and make a contribution to the national target of 40%.

Carlow County Council will strive to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to overall positive Government policy on renewable energy and enabling the wind energy resources within County Carlow to be harnessed in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

Site suitability is an important factor in determining the suitability of wind farms (turbines), having regard to possible adverse impacts associated with for example, residential amenities, landscape, including views or prospects, wildlife, habitats, designated sites, protected structures or bird migration paths, public rights of way and compatibility with adjoining land uses.

Currently the government is reviewing their Wind Energy Strategy Guidelines for Planning Authorities and accordingly, until such as these and possibly the Regional Wind Energy Strategy Guidelines are updated, Carlow County Council are not in a position to update their Wind Energy Strategy. The Wind Energy Strategy contained in Appendix 5 of this Plan is the strategy used in the Carlow County Development Plan 2009 – 2015.

Energy – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote and facilitate wind energy development in accordance with current Wind Energy Development Guidelines by the DoECLG and best international practices and standards and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards

6.3.2 Hydro Energy

Hydroelectricity is electricity derived from the power harnessed from the flow of falling water, typically from fast-flowing streams and rivers. Small-scale micro hydropower is both an efficient and reliable form of energy. With the right site it is a viable way of providing power to houses, workshops or businesses that need an independent supply. There is potential in County Carlow to develop small hydropower plants on historical

watermill sites. They will have all or most of the civil works needed to bring the water to the machinery still in place.

At present, the County has several permitted small-scale hydroelectric power stations on both the River Slaney and River Barrow.

In assessing development proposals for hydroelectric power stations, the main considerations are:

- Integration of the facility into the riverscape
- Non-interference with fish and wildlife
- Safe and sensitive undergrounding of power lines
- The effect on the landscape and ecology and, in particular, any potential impact on a Natura 2000 site or its conservation objectives

In responding to planning applications for hydro-electric generation schemes, Carlow County Council will expect best practice in the preparation of applications to ensure that the proposed hydro development does not present a negative impact on amenity or on the indigenous fish population, including seasonal migration. The *Guidelines on the Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries* prepared by the Central & Regional Fisheries Board & the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources recommends guidelines from a fisheries perspective which should be followed for proposed small-scale hydro-electric schemes. All proposed developments will be assessed having regard to current capacities in the national grid to accommodate such inputs. Carlow County Council will consult with all relevant service providers in this regard at a very early stage in the assessment of such proposals. Appropriate proposals for the reinstatement of mills and associated power generation will be welcomed by Carlow County Council subject to amenity considerations.

Energy – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the development of small scale hydroelectric projects, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards appropriate environmental assessments including Habitats Directive Assessment
- Ensure all new hydro energy schemes assess the potential on public rights of way and walking routes that may be affected by the development.

6.4 BIOENERGY

Bioenergy is energy derived from biofuels, such as biodiesel, biogas or biomass, which includes biological material such as plants and animals, wood and waste. Biofuels are considered to be “CO2-neutral”, not adding to the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Technologies used to produce electricity from biofuels vary widely. The Planning Authority will consider each proposal on its merits, subject to proper planning and environmental consideration.

The Council will encourage the production of trees for biomass and other initiatives for the generation of renewable energy. Burning of such biomass has a neutral greenhouse gas effect and the important advantage of providing the opportunity for farmers to diversify into new crops. Power generation from this source does not suffer from the lack of consistency in supply that affects wind power energy derived from biomass. Biomass is all organic material and can be either the direct product of photosynthesis, (for example plant matter such as leaves or stems, etc.) or the indirect product of photosynthesis (for example animal mass resulting from the consumption of plant material). Types of biomass that are used to provide bioenergy include; residues from forestry and related industries, recycled wood, agricultural residues, agri-food effluents, manures, the organic fraction of municipal solid waste, separated household waste and sewage sludge, and purpose grown energy crops (e.g. short rotation forestry & miscanthus grass). Biomass can be converted into useful heat and/or electricity through a number of processes such as gasification, but combustion and anaerobic digestion are the most common and widely used.

Combustion is the process whereby biomass (for example wood chips) is burned to produce process heat or to heat space or hot water. Anaerobic digestion involves the bacterial transformation of biomass (for example animal manure) to methane gas or biogas. The biogas can be used to fuel a stationary gas engine or gas turbine to produce electricity, or burned in a boiler to provide heat or to raise steam. Biogas can also be compressed and used as a transport fuel. The majority of current biomass-derived energy comes from wood combustion to produce heat.

Biofuel and bioenergy are the same in that both mean energy derived from biomass. Biofuel has become associated with transport fuel in Ireland - bioethanol is used in petrol spark ignition engines and biodiesel is used in compression ignition diesel engines. Biofuel produced from vegetable oils/animal fats can be used in unprocessed form or converted to biodiesel. Bioethanol is produced from the fermentation of organic materials such as sugar beet and cereals.

There is huge potential for the development of biomass in Ireland and within County Carlow. Although this industry is currently modest in scale, Ireland's growth rate, technological advances, and the deregulation of the electricity industry together with stricter controls on waste management will result in an increase in applications for biomass installations. The South-East Regional Authority has developed a Regional Bio-Energy Implementation Plan 2013 – 2020 and the objectives of this will be adhered to by Carlow County Council. The aim of this project is to establish a structured regional framework to allow the region to play its part in national compliance with EU policy and to maximise the resource potential. The overall objective of the project is to raise awareness and to increase the production and consumption of bio-energy in the Region.

Bioenergy offers significant opportunities for rural communities to diversify into the growing of energy crops. In 2010, the Government introduced a biofuel obligation on suppliers of petrol and diesel to ensure that a set percentage of their supply is composed of biofuel. The percentage is currently set at 4% by volume per annum but this rate is expected to be increased over time. This obligation on fuel blenders will be a key component in achieving the national target of 10% renewable energy in the transport sector by 2020 as set out under the Renewable Directive.

6.4.1 Combined Heat and Power

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) is the simultaneous production of heat and power. CHP is the most efficient option for producing electricity with total efficiencies of 85% or greater possible. A modern power station has an efficiency of up to 35% with a further 10% of power generated lost in transmission. CHP technologies based on biomass combustion represent a great potential to reduce CO₂ emissions since they are based on utilisation of renewable energy sources (for example wood fuels or sawdust). They also have the potential to increase local employment as fuel is sourced locally.

A district heating system provides heat from a central boiler to more than one building and is an alternative to providing separate heating systems for each building. A district heating system consists of a central boiler, a heat distribution network of insulated pipes and heat exchangers in each building.

District heating can offer reduced capital cost and increased energy efficiency. The combination of CHP and district heating is energy efficient.

Biomass district heating has many advantages:

- Contribute towards the national target of 12% for renewable heating and cooling by 2020
- Significantly reduce CO₂ emissions and help combat climate change
- Combat fuel poverty by delivering lower cost heat to low income homes
- Create employment and sustain jobs by providing lower cost heat to Customers
- Provide a secure heat supply from locally sourced biomass fuel

Energy – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support and encourage the development of the bioenergy sector within County Carlow and facilitate its development for energy production, heat storage and distribution, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards
- Support the policy objectives of the South East Region Bioenergy Implementation Plan 2013 – 2020
- Encourage the development of anaerobic digesters and biofuel processing plants, (subject to the criteria for renewable energies) energy crops, sustainable construction and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards
- Facilitate the development of Organic Waste to Energy/Combined Heat and Power schemes, subject to the criteria for location of waste management facilities and compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards
- Support and encourage the development of Biomass District Heating and facilitate its development for energy production, heat storage and distribution, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards

6.5 GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

Geothermal energy refers to heat energy stored in the ground. Solar thermal radiation is absorbed by the surface of the earth each day. This heat can be extracted by using a ground source heat pump which transfers the heat stored in the earth or in ground water to buildings in winter and the opposite in summer for cooling. The Council will encourage the provision of ground source heat pumps, also known as geothermal heat pumps. These are used for space heating and cooling, as well as water heating for both residential and commercial developments.

Energy – Policy 8

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote the use of geothermal energy products in new developments, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards

6.5.1 Solar Power

Solar energy can provide a sustainable source of energy for buildings and reduces demand for electricity supply from the national grid. Solar energy is achieved by the manner in which glass and other materials and structures are utilised to capture and magnify the sun's energy. It can be in the form of thermal solar energy (passive and active) or photovoltaic solar energy. Passive solar heating refers to the way in which buildings are designed to maximise solar gain and minimise heat loss. Active solar energy is where solar panels are used to transform solar energy into heat to provide space and/or water heating. Solar Photovoltaic Systems use daylight to convert solar radiation into electricity; the greater the intensity of light, the greater the flow of electricity.

The Council encourages such methods in the provision of renewable energy, subject to design and other considerations, over the plan period.

Energy – Policy 9

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote the use of solar technologies in new and existing dwellings, offices, commercial and industrial buildings, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards
- Promote commercial scale Photovoltaic Generators up to 10MW subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards

6.5.2 Sustainability and Energy Efficiency in Buildings

The document '*Towards a New National Climate Policy: Interim Report of the NESC Secretariat*', Report to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government 2012 along with the Government White Paper entitled '*Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland 2007-2020*' commit the Government to reviewing

the Building Regulations with the aim of reducing energy demand by 40% relative to current standards. In addition, the Government is committed to providing 33% of electricity consumed from renewable sources by 2020. Carlow County Council is committed to these targets.

Carlow County Council signed an Energy Map Partnership Agreement with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in 2012. This demonstrates Carlow County Council's commitment to achieving the public sector target of 33% reduction in energy consumption by 2020. This is being delivered with the support of the Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency. Annual reporting is completed since 2011 on all energy consumed. Currently Carlow County Council has achieved 10.4% reduction towards the overall target.

The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) (2002/91/EC) was transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2006 and the European Communities (Energy Performance of Buildings) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. A recast of the EPBD Directive was adopted in 2010 (Directive 2010/31/EU) in order to strengthen the energy performance requirements and to clarify and streamline some of its provisions. As part of the Directive, a Building Energy Rating (BER) certificate is required once a building is offered for rental or sale. The BER measures the energy performance of a building and provides homeowners with the information required in order to improve the thermal efficiency of their dwelling.

SI 243 of 2012 European Union (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2012 signed on 9th July, 2012 by Ireland requires under the Recast of the EPBD Directive that the costs optimal solution is utilised to achieve Nearly Zero Energy Buildings in public sector new buildings by 2018 and all new buildings by 2020.

Dwelling Energy Assessment Procedure (DEAP) is the official Irish procedure for calculating and assessing the energy performance of dwellings. Published by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), the procedure takes account of the energy required, for space heating, ventilation, water heating and lighting, less savings from energy generation technologies. It calculates both the CO₂ emission rate and energy consumption per annum. This is a useful tool for designers when considering and comparing options to conserve energy and reduce CO₂ emission. The right design decisions in relation to building form, dwelling layout, levels of insulation, amount and orientation of glazing, utilisation of solar energy, heating system and fuel type, use of draught lobbies, construction materials and measures to conserve potable water, can contribute greatly to sustainability. In addition these will lead to cost savings, in the long term, while raising the level of comfort for the occupants of the dwelling. DEAP is also used to calculate the Building Energy Rating (BER) of a dwelling. The BER is a label containing the energy performance of the dwelling, expressed as primary energy use per unit floor area per year (kWh/m²/per annum) and illustrated as an Energy Rating (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, etc) for the dwelling, it also includes a Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Emissions Indicator (kgCO₂/m²/yr) associated with this energy use and an advisory report. Guidance and assistance on these and other matters pertaining to the sustainable use of energy is

available from Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) and the Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency.

Part L of the Building Regulations deals with the conservation of fuel and energy in buildings. The Regulations state that a building shall be designed and constructed so as to ensure that the energy performance of the building is such as to limit the amount of energy required for the operation of the building and the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with this energy use insofar as is reasonably practicable. This can be achieved using a combination of measures including the use of renewable energy sources, limiting heat loss, availing of heat gain through the fabric of the dwelling and using energy efficient space and water heating systems.

While the Building Regulations require that new buildings achieve minimum standards of energy efficiency, higher levels are worthwhile; an energy efficient building can yield considerable savings in heat and electricity costs over its lifetime. Improving the energy performance of buildings is also a cost effective way of fighting against climate change and improving energy security, while also creating job opportunities, particularly in the building sector.

The Council will promote the use of energy efficient methods in the design of new and retrofitting of existing developments. Good design is the key to achieving the optimum energy performance of buildings at no extra cost. The primary focus is to design buildings that create a thermally efficient building envelope. Such buildings will make optimum use of free heat gains in order to minimise the requirement of space heating and, in turn, will retain this heat gain through a high standard of insulation and heat recovery systems. The use of on-site micro renewable or district heating systems also offers significant opportunities.

Energy – Policy 10

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Require all new building developments to meet low energy performance targets. Each building's energy performance, as calculated by the Building Energy Rating (BER), will have a minimum energy efficiency that meets the requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations. New buildings should incorporate renewable energy technologies in order to help achieve the rating required
- Promote innovative building design and layout that demonstrates a high level of energy conservation, energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources
- Encourage the integration of micro renewable energy sources into the design and construction of single and multiple housing developments

6.5.3 Ground Source Heating Systems

The Council will encourage the provision of ground source heat pumps, also known as geothermal heat pumps. These are used for space heating and cooling, as well as water heating for both residential and commercial developments. There are two types of geothermal energy: Deep is classified as being > 400m in depth and may be used for both

thermal and electricity generation. Shallow geothermal (also known as ground source) energy can be harnessed by either ‘closed’ or ‘open’ loop systems and is most frequently used for providing heat.

Energy – Policy 11

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the provision of ground source heat pumps, also known as geothermal heat pumps

6.5.4 Micro Renewable Energy

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) provide exemptions from planning permission for domestic wind turbines, solar panels and heat pumps within the curtilage of a house, subject to certain conditions. The Regulations also provide exemptions for micro renewable generators within the curtilage of industrial buildings, business premises and agricultural holdings including Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plants, wind turbines, solar panels, heat pumps and biomass boiler units. It should be noted that where an individual wishes to install any class of micro renewable technology that does not fall within the exemptions they are required to apply for planning permission. Also the existing restrictions on exempted development as set out in Article 9 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) apply.

6.6 ENERGY RECOVERY FROM WASTE

As our need for energy increases, the recovery of energy trapped in waste materials can benefit the environment by replacing energy from non-renewable sources. Even after extensive recycling, the residual waste stream still has a high combustible content available for energy recovery. The Review of the Waste Management Plan for the South East Region 2006-2011 reinforces policies in relation to energy from waste, and a key policy of that Plan is that an integrated waste facility incorporating thermal treatment and energy recovery will be developed in the region.

Proposals for waste to energy development will be considered, remote sites with ‘antecedent’ uses could be appropriate for these types of development. This type of development may be particularly suitable to combined heat and power developments. Subject to the assessment of the impacts on the environment and on the road network in the immediate area, such developments are generally subject to the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Licensing system, where environmental assessment will be the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Agency.

6.7 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Maximising Ireland’s Energy Efficiency: The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 (NEEAP)(Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2009) recognises that energy efficiency is the most cost effective means of reducing dependence on fossil fuels and abating Greenhouse Gas emissions. Saving energy is the

easiest, quickest and most effective way to answer the challenge of society's growing energy dependence, while helping to reduce damage to the environment. By using less energy we reduce the need to generate energy from any source, fossil or renewable. Improving energy efficiency also provides economic opportunities through the development of new markets for green technologies and services and security of supply.

The EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) Recast 2012, as transposed into Irish legislation in 2006, contains a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance in residential and non-residential buildings both new build and existing. The incorporation of good design into developments is considered as being the key in achieving optimum energy performance of buildings.

6.7.1 Energy Efficiency in Transport

The NREAP sets a target of 10% electric vehicles by 2020. The Plan states that the Government is developing an electric vehicle deployment strategy which will result in a minimum 10% of passenger car and light commercial vehicle fleet in Ireland being electrically powered by 2020. The roll out of electric vehicles will result in a reduction in GHG emissions and make a significant contribution to our national renewable energy targets.

The Government's White Paper Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland, Energy Policy Framework for 2007-2020 (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2007) highlights the need to develop a transport system which will allow for the maintenance of economic competitiveness by removing infrastructural bottlenecks and achieving security of supply through a diverse fuel mix, whilst increasing social cohesion and access for communities in peripheral rural areas and reducing environmental impacts. It is noted in the Paper that investment in national roads will remove bottlenecks, reduce congestion and improve journey times. Coupled with investment in public transport projects, this will result in significant reductions in fuel consumption and associated CO₂ emissions.

Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future (Department of Transport, 2009) also sets out a number of measures to address the negative impacts of increasing transport demand such as congestion and climate change. The document includes a number of key goals to reduce overall travel demand, maximise the efficiency of the transport network, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, reduce transport emissions and improve accessibility to transport.

Carlow County Council will continue to encourage energy efficiency through the integration of transport infrastructure and land use planning and the creation of sustainable compact settlements which reduce the need to travel for employment and services. The Council will facilitate the development of infrastructure and services required to encourage uptake of electric vehicles. Appropriate infrastructure and facilities to enable people to switch to more sustainable alternative modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking will also be provided where possible.

Energy – Policy 12

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote the development and use of electric vehicles and facilitate the provision of appropriate infrastructure, such as electric charging points, at accessible locations throughout the county, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards
- Encourage the utilisation of sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking as a measure to reduce man-made Green House Gas emissions through the sustainable settlement policies in this Plan and the provision of appropriate infrastructure, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards
- Require all new car parks and extensions to existing car parks to include electric car charging points at a rate of 1:50 spaces
- Require for developments with Private Car Spaces (residential and non-residential) including visitor car parking spaces e.g. office spaces
 - At least one parking space should be equipped with one fully functional EV charging point in accordance with IEC 61851 Standard for Electric Vehicle Conductive Charging Systems. This should be capable of supplying 32A 230V single phase AC electricity and be equipped with Mode 3 protection. It should be fitted with a Type 2 socket as defined by IEC 62196
 - It should be possible to expand the charging system at construction stage (e.g. by installing appropriate ducting now)
- Require for developments with Publicly Accessible Spaces (e.g. supermarket car park, cinema etc.)
 - At least one parking space should be equipped with one fully functional EV charging point in accordance with IEC 61851 Standard for Electric Vehicle Conductive Charging Systems. This should be capable of supplying 32A 230V single phase AC electricity and be equipped with Mode 3 protection. It should be fitted with a Type 2 socket as defined by IEC 62196
 - It should be possible to expand the charging system at construction stage (e.g. by installing appropriate ducting now)
 - The Charge Point parking space(s) should be clearly marked as being designated for EV charging
 - Appropriate signage indicating the presence of a charge point or points should be erected
 - All charge points fitted in publicly accessible areas should be capable of communicating usage data with the national charge point management system and use the latest version of the Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP). They should also support a user identification system such as RFID.

As the use of electric vehicles continues to increase the Council may increase the number of parking spaces to be equipped with fully functional charge points in either of the above cases.

6.8 CARLOW KILKENNY ENERGY AGENCY

The Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency was established to provide sustainable energy information, support and services to the people of Carlow and Kilkenny, to local businesses and community groups and to the Local Authorities. The objectives of the Agency are as follows;

- Work with all relevant agencies to support the development of alternative forms of energy where such developments are in accordance with the proper planning and land use evaluation of the area
- Encourage high standards of energy efficiency in all building developments and encouraging developers, owners and tenants to improve the environmental performance of the building stock, including the deployment of renewable energy

These objectives will be achieved through five focus areas:

1. Energy awareness and dissemination campaigns
2. Energy Management for the Councils
3. Energy efficiency and renewable energy projects
4. Sustainable energy training
5. Energy Policy Development

6.9 CLIMATE CHANGE

An important aspect of energy policy is recognising the impact that generation can have on the environment. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), energy accounts for 21.5% of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. Carlow County Council will continue to support national targets for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and implement policy that seeks to address climate change.

Two principles as espoused in the National Spatial Strategy have been applied to reduce transport-related energy consumption;

- The formulation of a settlement strategy which is intended to guide urban and rural settlement patterns and communities to reduce distance from employment, services and leisure facilities and to make use of existing and future investments in public services; including public transport
- Maximising access to, and encouraging use of, public transport, cycling and walking

In addition, Carlow County Council's support of renewable technologies and encouragement of more sustainable energy-efficient building methods will further reduce our dependence on non-renewable energy sources. All new developments must allow for Climate Change as set out in The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study Technical Documents, Volume 5, Climate Change and must take proper account of its potential effects on the existing flood regime where necessary.

6.10 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ZONES

The Guidelines for a Sustainable Energy Community (SEAI, 2011) provide Local Authorities and community leaders with information and a structure to help them to develop a Sustainable Energy Community (SEC). An SEC is a community in which everyone works together to develop a sustainable energy system. To do so, they aim as far as possible to be energy-efficient, to use renewable energy where feasible, and to develop decentralised energy supplies. It applies to all buildings including residential, public and commercial buildings. The SEC concentrates initial efforts in a defined geographic area called a Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ) but the benefits can later be expanded into and replicated in the broader community and the region. All sectors of the community work towards the same goal - implementing energy efficient measures first and then use renewable energy sources.

The SEZ's will comprise of clusters of public and private entities that agree to minimise their energy demand, increase their use of renewable energy and explore opportunities to share resources. The approach taken is to apply renewable energy resources to existing heating loads. This would create new jobs in the local economy through the displacement of fossil fuels and sustain existing jobs through increasing the competitiveness of the industry.

Energy – Policy 13

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage and favorably consider proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in order to meet national, regional and county renewable energy targets and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy, subject to compliance with development management standards and compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive
- Support the development of Sustainable Energy Zones throughout the County in accordance with Guidelines for a Sustainable Energy Community (SEAI, 2011)

COMMUNICATIONS

6.11 INTRODUCTION

Telecommunications investment is essential for furthering the social and economic development of County Carlow. The Council recognises the importance of advanced communications infrastructure for an information-based society, and as a key support for business, education and research. Intensive digitisation of telecommunications offers a competitive advantage in attracting economic development and investment. It also offers more flexible working arrangements, enabling people to work and communicate internationally from their homes. To this end, the need to build new infrastructure to provide increased capacity in order to raise the quality of coverage and to meet the

demand for services is recognised. Carlow County Council acknowledges the importance of telecommunications, particularly broadband telecommunications, in terms of capitalising on investment opportunities and will encourage the further co-ordinated and focused development and extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity in the county, as a means of improving economic competitiveness.

6.11.1 Broadband

The implementation of broadband is under the remit of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. In 2012, the Department published a national broadband plan entitled “Delivering a Connected Society - a National Broadband Plan for Ireland”. This identified high speed broadband connectivity as a core to competitiveness and has set out targets for achieving higher speeds. According to the 2011 census, 58% of households in County Carlow had a broadband connection, which represents a significant increase in uptake in recent years. However, the county still lags behind the state in terms of broadband provision, as 64% of households in the country had a connection.

Three regional broadband schemes have been rolled out to advance broadband connectivity across the country.

National Broadband Scheme

This scheme ran from 2008 to 2010. The objective of the National Broadband Scheme (NBS) was to deliver broadband to certain target areas in Ireland in which broadband services were deemed to be insufficient. Under the contract, the successful tenderer, ‘3’, were required to provide services to all premises in the NBS area who sought a service. In order to facilitate competition in the area, ‘3’ were also required to provide wholesale access to any other authorised operator who wishes to serve premises in the NBS area. The rollout of the provision of NBS services was completed in October 2010.

Rural Broadband Scheme

The Rural Broadband Scheme was established to enable a basic broadband service to be provided to individual rural premises which were not capable of obtaining a broadband service from existing internet service providers. The Scheme aimed to identify the premises that could not obtain a service and once all of these premises were identified, to ascertain whether existing telecommunications operators could provide a service directly to these premises. The application phase of the Rural Broadband Scheme closed on 29th July 2011.

Broadband to Schools

The third programme is the broadband to schools initiative. Its aim is to equip second-level schools in Ireland with 100 Mbps of broadband connectivity and Local Area Networks (LAN) on a phased basis. The initial pilot phase of this project has been completed and delivered to 78 schools throughout the country. Under this programme all second-level schools will have 100Mbps broadband installed by the end of 2014. The roll out of broadband to schools in County Carlow is currently underway.

6.11.2 Metropolitan Area Networks

The Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) is a network of ducting and fibre optic cable laid within a metropolitan area which can be used by a variety of businesses and organisations to provide services including but not limited to telecoms, Internet access, television, telematics and CCTV.

The MANs are publicly owned, while allowing all telecommunication operators open access to the networks. They are fibre-based and technology neutral resilient networks, which will ensure adequate capacity for generations to come. To date, Carlow Town has been included in the MANs.

The Metropolitan Area Network presents opportunities for the development of e-working centres in Carlow Town in line with Smarter Travel Policy of reducing the number of journeys to work by car. The development of e-working centres in the town also aligns employment and transport policies and support uptake of the MANs network.

6.11.3 Telecommunications

An efficient telecommunications system is important in the development of the economy. The deregulation of the industry has brought choice and competition but has given rise to duplication and overprovision of certain facilities.

The Planning Authority will have regard to the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, 'Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures' (1996). With regard to mobile phone network development, the physical infrastructure and structures needed to provide this service must be developed in a strategic way that minimises the impact on the environment and takes public opinion into account. Good siting and design need to become an integral part of the planning system, respecting not only environmentally sensitive areas, but also the wider context.

Antennae, their support structures, power lines, equipment containers and access roads will be assessed with respect to safety, siting and design criteria and the mitigation of intrusive impacts. In all circumstances, the sensitivity to the context of the proposed development requires consideration. Site conditions, safety aspects, technical constraints, landscape features and capacity requirements affect the design of such installations.

Options to reduce the negative visual effect of such structures include:

- Mast and/or site sharing
- Installation on existing buildings and structures
- Camouflaging/disguising techniques to integrate telecommunications equipment into the design, scale, colour and/or texture of existing buildings and landscape or using small-scale equipment.

Carlow County Council will strive to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenities, environmental quality and public health.

The Council will use the sequential approach in terms of factors to be taken into account in the control of telecommunications structures in built-up areas, as outlined in the Guidelines. The following series of "tests" will be applied to development proposals for

telecommunications infrastructure on sites in or near residential areas, education facilities, hospitals, child care facilities or nursing homes:

- Is an existing utilities site available, such as an electricity substation?
- Has the mast/antenna been designed and adapted for the specific location?
- Are possible sites in commercial or retail areas available?
- Is an existing tall building or structure available?

Any permission granted will be conditioned with respect to replacement of obsolescent technology with more environmentally acceptable designs, bonding arrangements and site restoration on cessation of service.

In the vicinity of larger towns, developers should endeavour to locate in industrial estates. In areas outside of towns/villages, masts should be placed in tree groupings or forestry plantations where such features exist, provided that the antennae are clear of obstruction and so long as ancillary facilities, such as access roads, do not impact negatively on the landscape. The developer will be required to retain a cordon of trees around the site, which will not be felled during the lifetime of the mast, with the written agreement of the owner.

In unforested areas, softening of the visual impact should be achieved through judicious choice of colour scheme and through the planting of shrubs, trees etc. as a screen and backdrop.

In general, proximity to Protected Structures, archaeological sites and other monuments should be avoided. Any proposals affecting Protected Structures or within ACAs shall have due regard to the guidance provided in the DoEHLG's Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005.

Where existing support structures are not unduly obtrusive, the Council will encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures, masts and tall buildings. Applicants must satisfy the Council that they have made every reasonable effort to share with other operators and to minimize adverse visual impact. Where it is not possible to share a support structure, the developer should share the site or an adjacent site so that masts and antennae may be clustered.

Telecom – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Protect areas of significant landscape importance from the visual intrusion of largescale telecommunications infrastructure
- Encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures and to require documentary evidence as to the non availability of this option in proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration
- Have regard to Government guidelines on telecommunications infrastructure, including Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996 (DoEHLG) and any subsequent revisions along with Circular PL 07/12 on Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures;
- Support the delivery of high capacity Information Communications Technology Infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting, throughout the county, in order to ensure economic competitiveness for the enterprise and commercial sectors and in enabling more flexible work practices e.g. teleworking
- Co-operate with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and public and private agencies where appropriate, in improving high quality broadband infrastructure throughout the county
- Achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in the interests of social and economic progress, and sustaining residential amenity and environmental quality
- Ensure that the location of telecommunications structures should minimise and / or mitigate any adverse impacts on communities, public rights of way and the built or natural environment
- Ensure that ducting for broadband fibre connections is provided during the installation of services, in all new commercial and housing schemes and during the carrying out of any work to roads or rail lines
- Encourage the provision of WiFi zones in public buildings;
- Facilitate open access to high-speed and high-capacity broadband digital networks to support the development of a smart economy within the County
- Support the co-ordinated and focused development and extension of broadband infrastructure throughout the county
- Minimise, and avoid where possible, the development of telecommunication structures and antennae within the following areas:
 - Areas within or adjoining the curtilage of protected structure
 - Areas on or within the setting of archaeological sites
 - Within a Natura 2000 sites
- Where a renewal of a previously temporary permission is being considered, the planning authority may determine the application on its merits with a time limit being attached to the permission



CHAPTER SEVEN

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

CHAPTER SEVEN – SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Local Government is the level of government that is closest to the community and, as such, is ideally placed to establish and pursue a vision for the future. In the context of change in local development, as outlined in Putting People First, Carlow County Council has an exciting and far reaching role to play in providing leadership, to ensure that the needs of the community are met and all people are included. Carlow County Council aims to facilitate the needs of the community and disadvantaged groups by supporting other agencies and organisations. Other areas of activity of the Local Authority include the provision of housing directly, or in association with other voluntary agencies, and the provision of playgrounds by working with the various community groups. Community facilities include schools, community centres, health centres and childcare facilities, religious meeting places, cemeteries, sports and recreation areas, and sports facilities, parks, open spaces and walking routes.

7.1 SOCIAL INCLUSION

It is important that all people are provided with equal opportunities to participate and have access to services in a locality and do not suffer from discrimination. Social inclusion refers to the manner in which all members of the community are integrated in an equal manner. It seeks to reduce barriers to participation in areas such as education, recreation, employment and health. It incorporates the need to ensure that minority groups, people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities, the elderly, children and young people are recognised as valuable members of the community.

[Towards 2016](#)

This is the Government's ten-year social partnership agreement for the period 2006-2015. A core objective of this Social Partnership Agreement is *"to build a fair and inclusive society and to ensure that people have the resources and opportunities to live life with dignity and have access to the quality public services that underpin life chances and experiences"*. It aims to address key social challenges by assessing the risks and hazards which the individual person faces and the supports available to them at each stage in the life cycle. The Plan sets out long-term goals for each stage of the lifecycle and identifies priority actions for each target group.

[Putting People First - Action Programme for Effective Local Government \(DoECLG – 2012\)](#)

The ultimate purpose of local government is to promote the well being and quality of life of citizens and communities, through effective, accountable and democratic representation, and efficient performance of functions and delivery of services at the local level. The representational and leadership role is relevant not only to the Local Authority's own direct functional responsibilities, but also to wider matters affecting the

welfare of people and generally mobilising action for the betterment of the area and the community and this document would address such issues.

Local Community Development Committees (LCDC)

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 was signed into law in January 2014. This Act provides a legislative underpinning for the establishment of Local Community Development Committees in 31 Local Authority areas and for the preparation and implementation of a 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan. The purpose of this committee is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. As per section 36 of the 2014 Act (new section 128D of the 2001 Act), administrative and secretariat support for LCDCs will be provided by the Local Authority.

S.I. – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Establish and provide administrative and secretariat support for the Local Community Development Committees
- Encourage and facilitate participation by a wide selection of groups and interests in the preparation of Local Area Plans, framework Plans and other projects
- Facilitate and encourage balanced economic development in a range of appropriate locations, through providing and promoting a variety of housing options, support services, Community Facilities and improvements to Recreational Amenities
- Work with various voluntary, community and public interest groups to improve access to education and improved public transport and Accessibility
- Counteract undue social segregation in the housing market
- Support and nurture intergenerational and cross cultural relationships through the development of community initiatives such as community gardens / allotments

7.1.1 Youth

The Council recognises the role of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), in giving children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies. It is recognised that a multi-agency approach is necessary in meeting the needs of the youth within the county and that young people should have an effective opportunity to influence policy and services that directly affect them and provide possible solutions to these needs. Such needs include recreational opportunities, including both formal and informal activities i.e. ‘youth cafes’, sports facilities and casual areas where young people can integrate with each other etc.

Children and Young Person Services Committee

The purpose of this committee is to bring together a diverse group of relevant agencies in local county areas to engage in joint planning of services for children in order to secure better developmental outcomes for them.

Carlow Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg is a local “youth council” designed to enable young people to have a voice on the services, policies and issues that affect them in their local area. It was devised with the expressed aim of helping to deliver Goal 1 of the National Children Strategy (2000) that “*children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.*”

County Carlow has a high proportion of young people. In 2011, 36.7% (14,871 persons) of the population of County Carlow were in the 0-18 age bracket, which was slightly lower than the national average for the same age-group of 38% (1,205,527 persons). This has a bearing on the present and future need for facilities such as childcare, play areas for children, sports facilities, schools and safe walking and cycling routes in the County. Thus the provision of youth facilities will be a priority in future planning for County Carlow.

The Local Authority recognises the importance of the provision of play areas for children as part of the development of communities. All play areas should be located where they can be overlooked by dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents. Play areas should be designed specifically for children’s play and include play equipment and safety surfacing which conforms to relevant safety standards.

Play can also be provided for in a less formal way. Children use their whole environment to play and it is possible through careful design and landscaping to provide play features that would not have the insurance, supervision, security or maintenance implications of traditional play areas. It is the intention of the Local Authority to encourage the development of built environments, where living predominates over traffic to facilitate this.

There is also a need to recognise the recreational needs of teenagers and young adults. There are a number of facilities including multi-purpose play areas which would typically provide a hard surfaced area allowing for basketball and other hard court sports, skate and bike parks, youth clubs and internet cafes. The Local Authority recognises the importance of planning for the needs of this group. Regardless of the form of play provision, planning applications will be required to contain full details of design, management and maintenance for all play provision. The Local Authority will endeavour to ensure that such facilities are inclusive and accessible to relevant age groups.

S. I. – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage all play areas to be located where they can be overlooked by dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents
- Endeavour to ensure that all play facilities are inclusive and accessible to relevant age groups
- Ensure that the voice of young people is included when services and policies that affect them are being developed
- Support the strategies and plans contained within Carlow/Kilkenny Children Services Plan 2014 -2017

7.1.2 Parents and Carers

2,156 persons (853 males and 1,303 females) provided regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability in County Carlow, according to the 2011 census. 20.7% of these provided care for more than 6 hours per day. The removal of any physical barriers to access and movement for parents, guardians or carers in County Carlow, that is, those with young children in buggies or those caring for persons with a disability, is important for any new development or for the upgrading of the existing built environment. Level access to buildings, dished kerbs, disabled parking facilities, parent and child parking facilities and baby changing and feeding facilities are important and should be incorporated into the design of buildings and the layout of developments to which the public could be expected to have frequent access. Access to services such as childcare, community facilities and public transport is also essential.

S. I. – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote and encourage an environment that provides ease of access and relevant facilities for parents and carers throughout County Carlow

7.1.3 Older People

In April 2011, Carlow had a population of 54,612 of which 6,211 persons (8.79%) were aged 65 years and over, this being slightly over the national average of 8.56%. The highest percentage per population of this age group in County Carlow is concentrated in Carlow Town, Graiguecullen, Tullow Rural and the South of the County. The Council recognises that the demand for nursing homes, residential care homes and sheltered housing accommodation is continuing to grow. The Council will support the provision of appropriate housing accommodation for older people. Such facilities should be integrated wherever possible into established residential areas in towns and villages, where residents can avail of reasonable access to local services. Good design is important in creating a safe and barrier-free environment which is easily accessible and negotiable by older people.

The National Age Friendly Counties Programme is an initiative of the Ageing Well Network which is present throughout the whole of Ireland. The key priorities of this Strategy is to implement the World Health Organisation (WHO) values and principles of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. The process will recognise the diversity of citizens as they age, encourage healthy active ageing, promote inclusion and participation, create safe accessible environments and ensure that the views and opinions of older people are valued and recognised in future policy and planning.

The Dublin Declaration was developed in 2013 through collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) following a detailed consultation with international experts in the field of age friendly communities. The regions, cities, counties and communities globally who have signed the declaration share a common set of values and principles and are prepared to commit to actions which will improve the quality of life of older people. Carlow is a signature of this declaration.

S. I. – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the strategies and plans contained within ‘Carlow Age Friendly County Strategy’ 2013 - 2016
- Aim to deliver quality services within existing structures, through co-operation and collaboration, ensuring resources are aligned and used with maximum efficiency and effectiveness for the ageing population of County Carlow
- Commit to ensuring that all citizens of County Carlow are valued, recognised, supported and enabled to live full independent lives
- Support the policies contained within the Carlow Age Friendly County Strategy 2013 – 2016 and continued integration of age friendly values and commitments as set out in the Dublin Declaration of Age Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe 2013
- Plan, develop and create life-long communities through the local provision of sustainable housing, adequate transport, social and outdoor facilities for all age groups

7.1.4 People with Disabilities

People with disabilities and impaired mobility can face particular physical barriers to access and movement. For people with mobility impairments, ensuring level / ramped access to buildings, dished kerbs and the provision of appropriate parking and toilet facilities are important. For people with visual impairments, tactile paving that can be felt underfoot and audible signals at pedestrian crossings are necessary. The NESC (National Economic and Social Council) report *Well-Being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland* (2009) indicates that nationally less than one-third of people with disabilities can enter non-residential buildings built in the last ten years and only 12% feel that Part M of the Building Regulations are being enforced. The focus therefore should be on the integration of accommodation within a mix of housing types, providing mobility and access for people with disabilities in order to remove barriers to involvement in community and employment activities.

The Local Authority will require that the design of buildings and the layout of developments incorporate measures to ensure accessibility. Access requirements for people with disabilities, the elderly and others who may be temporarily impaired must be incorporated into the design of buildings, public spaces, car parking, footpaths and general facilities and services. Developers must have regard to or comply with (as appropriate) the following criteria in the preparation of development proposals:

- Part M of the Building Regulations and the requirement for Disability Access Certificates (DACs)
- Buildings for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2008)
- Any such revisions or new versions of the aforementioned guidance which may become available in the lifetime of this Plan

One of the strategic priorities in the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015 is to promote an accessible environment and universal design. Universal Design refers to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability (Disability Act, 2005).

The Local Authority will promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in all new developments. This type of housing allows for the future adaptation of units as needs present throughout the life cycle of the occupier/owner. It is a proactive step in addressing the housing needs of people with a disability, the elderly and the diversity of the family unit, as well as increasing the value and sustainability of buildings in the long term.

S. I. – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Ensure the strategies and objectives of the Disability Act, 2005 and the National Disability Strategy 2013 are imposed throughout the various sectors of the Council in order to ensure an overall service and adequate infrastructure that promotes equality and access to services by all persons, regardless of age, ability or disability
- Promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in all new developments

7.1.5 Ethnic Minority Groups

Irish society has become increasingly diverse over the past 15 years, with many ethnic minority communities now well established here. According to Census 2011, this ethnic diversity is also reflected in County Carlow where 11.9% of the population have cultural backgrounds with roots in other countries and 0.8% are from the Traveller Community, representing a combined total of at least 6,754 people in Carlow who identify with an ethnic minority culture.

The integration of all groups in society is important in creating and maintaining sustainable communities. Ethnic Minority groups in County Carlow may face barriers to services and communities for reasons including language. The provision of services and community facilities should reflect the varying needs of these groups so as to facilitate ease of integration into the community.

S. I. – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Aim to provide services and community facilities that reflect the varying needs of ethnic minority groups so as to facilitate ease of integration into the community
- Support the strategies and plans contained within ‘Carlow integration Strategy’ 2014 – 2018

7.1.6 Travelling Communities

The provision of Traveller Accommodation and associated support services is a central part of the Housing Services Programme in Carlow County Council. The Travellers

Accommodation programme 2014– 2018 adopted by Carlow County Council assesses the needs for traveller accommodation in County Carlow. The continuing implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of Travellers. The promotion of mainstream public services that are accessible, relevant and welcoming to Travellers is vital as well as ensuring that members of the Travelling Community can easily access facilities such as shops, schools, childcare and community facilities. A detailed assessment of the need for traveller accommodation was carried out under the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018. This identified the requirement to provide or assist in the provision of accommodation across a full range of accommodation types over the period of the programme. The Council will continue to address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of travellers through the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

S. I. – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of travellers through the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme

7.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities include facilities for education, childcare, sports and recreation, arts and culture, library services, healthcare, and a good quality built environment. Communities also require opportunities to meet and interact, all essential prerequisites to the evolution of a sense of place and belonging.

This County Development Plan is concerned with improving existing facilities and making adequate and appropriate provisions for the development of new facilities.

The development and facilitation of an effective social infrastructure network is important in the promotion of Carlow as a county which offers a good quality of life, where social inclusion and community participation are regarded as necessary prerequisites to sustainable development.

7.2.1 Delivering Community Facilities

The Council is committed to providing accessible community facilities to serve the needs and expectations of a growing and diverse population. The challenge for the Local Authority will be to act with the various communities in identifying their needs, obtaining resources and supporting programmes to sustain community life. The co-operation of State Agencies and Government Departments in the delivery of certain services such as education, childcare and day facilities for the elderly is essential. The Council will ensure that local-level participation is facilitated and reinforced through stronger partnerships, thereby enabling the development of an effective social infrastructure to cater more adequately for the needs of the current and future population.

Another mechanism through which Community Facilities can be more easily achieved is the Local Area Plan process, where specific requirements and needs can be identified and addressed at the local or neighbourhood level.

Whilst Local Area Plans include lands zoned specifically for community requirements, a flexible and supportive approach will be adopted towards proposals for community facilities on suitable sites within other zoning categories (i.e. residential, village centre, industry, enterprise etc). However, any such proposal should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community.

Where additional community facilities are required as a result of new development, the developer will be expected to contribute to the cost of the provision of these facilities. This will be facilitated through the Development Contribution Scheme.

S.I. – Policy 8

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Assist as far as possible in the provision of community facilities by reserving suitably located land, by assisting in the provision of finance for their development (where appropriate), and/or by the use of the development management process to ensure provision is made for such facilities as the Council considers appropriate
- Promote the development of sustainable communities on the basis of a high quality of life where people can live, work and enjoy access to a wide range of community, health and educational facilities suitable for all ages, needs and abilities
- Encourage high standards in the design and finishes of community facilities;
- Optimise existing and proposed physical resources / infrastructure by supporting multi-functional building use and provision
- Encourage the siting of community facilities in suitable locations, especially within residential / village centre areas, or close to existing facilities / services and public transport routes
- Recognise the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community and recreational facilities, and encourage increased involvement of local groups, both independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future provision of such facilities
- Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards proposals for the provision of community facilities within a wide variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, village-centre mixed-use zones, residential development and commercial/enterprise uses. Any such proposal should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community. It is also acknowledge that some community facilities may be accommodated in rural areas, subject to site suitability
- Consider the accommodation of small-scale community enterprise developments within existing and proposed community facilities areas, subject to appropriate design, layout and servicing

7.2.2 Social Capital and Voluntary Organisations – Proposed new structure for Citizen Engagement – Public Participation Network

Social Capital may be defined as that which accrues to a person or group as a result of their active participation in the life of their communities. For example, social capital is said to be gained from neighbourliness, local area networking or volunteering. Something as simple as being known to the local shop-keeper, chemist or publican is said to have benefits for the well-being of individuals within the social capital debate. Carlow Local Authorities are committed to building partnerships between Local Authorities and other sectors to develop and implement local policies for the development of sustainable communities. This commitment involves a wide range of public consultation in the actions taken by the Local Authority from plan making and policy formulation to implementation of specific projects such as playgrounds.

The main representation currently for the voluntary sector is through the Community and Voluntary Forum in County Carlow which is the mechanism for supporting a collective voice for the community and voluntary sector. There are proposals however for a changed structure in citizen engagement in the near future but nothing has been formalized to date. There is representation on a number of structures in the county in order to inform policy, such as the Local Enterprise Office itself and its sub-committees (including SIM – Social Inclusion Measures subgroup), Strategic Policy Committees and Expanded Area Committees. It is through these measures that the Local Authority will seek to build social capital within the county.

The Communities of the county have long been a huge volunteer base e.g.

- Youth clubs
- Community Groups / Tidy Towns committees
- Various sporting organisations
- Charity Groups

The role of the Community and Voluntary Forum is recognised along with its impact on service provision for aspects of community. It is proposed however that a new structure be formed to replace the Community and Voluntary Forum in the near future. The value of these voluntary organisations cannot be underestimated in terms of its resource and service provision and overall benefits to the county.

S. I. – Policy 9

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Continue to support and facilitate voluntary organisations across the county
- Make Carlow an attractive place to live and work by building strong, inclusive communities that have a sense of place and belonging, with adequate provision of and access to services and facilities to meet the needs of the county's growing population
- Work with the Local Enterprise Office and its sub-structures, to advance social inclusion and development by developing the co-ordinated delivery of services and facilities in the county
- Promote the development of social capital by providing opportunities for interaction, participation and the co-ordinated provision of public services
- Carryout an analysis of social infrastructure provision during the course of each local area plan in order to identify deficits and according provide for social infrastructural improvement or provision

7.2.3 Healthcare

Health care provision would include medical facilities, such as hospitals, health centres, pharmacies, mental health and disabled facilities, residential care homes, and General Practitioners. HSE policy aims to reconfigure services to develop sustainable hospital and community services by delivering the majority of care in the community to enable hospitals to focus on more efficient acute and planned care.

Healthcare and medical facilities are provided by public, private and voluntary agencies within County Carlow. The Health Service Executive – South Eastern Area (previously South Eastern Health Board) is the primary organisation responsible for the delivery of health care and personal social services to the people of Carlow. The residents of the county have access to hospitals in surrounding counties such as Kilkenny, Naas, Waterford and Dublin. It is to be expected that there will be a demand for an increasing and quantum range of options and facilities within the county. There is neither Maternity nor Casualty Units in the County - worrying omissions from the County's infrastructure. The County's prosperity and quality of life is highly dependent on the ability of the County to attract high standard state and privately managed healthcare facilities. The Local Authority will seek consultation with the Health Service Executive (HSE) in planning for future Health Care needs, especially in relation to the major development in the towns.

The current population profile of the county which has a growing aging and young population is likely to place demands upon the health system both now and into the future. It is important to ensure that any redevelopment or change to health facilities does not result in inadequate provision or poor accessibility of health facilities for the residents of the County.

S. I. – Policy 10

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Consider favourably proposals for primary healthcare facilities in association with the HSE's programme of delivery. The siting of these facilities within existing Town and neighbourhood centres will be encouraged
- Encourage the integration of health services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible
- Promote the location of health services and care facilities within existing settlements, on sites convenient to pedestrian access and public transport
- Support the provision of health services and facilities for people with learning disabilities and special needs
- Accommodate the provision of accessible care facilities throughout the County to cater for the specific needs of the elderly and those of young people
- Support existing healthcare facilities in their plans to develop and expand
- Resist the loss of a health or health care facilities, unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer required to serve local needs, or unless proposals are made to otherwise meet the need
- Ensure that proposals for the change of use of residential accommodation for use by doctors, dentists and other medical practitioners does not negatively impact on residential amenity and is in keeping with the character of the area

7.2.4 Nursing Homes

In the light of an increasing ageing population, investment in developing a range of facilities for the elderly, including nursing units, has been facilitated under the National Development Plan.

S. I. – Policy 11

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Ensure that adequate land and services are available for the provision of all types of facilities for the elderly including nursing homes/retirement centres both public and private and the improvement, expansion and establishment of health services generally such as extended nursing care, day care and respite care
- Ensure Nursing homes and residential care homes are integrated wherever possible into the residential areas of towns and villages where residents can avail of reasonable access to local services

7.2.5 Childcare

County Carlow has seen rapid changes in the past 12 years. The population has grown from 46,014 in 2002 to 54,612 to 2011 a total increase of 18.68%. With this increasing population, comes increased numbers of people in the workforce and together with changing lifestyles, the demand for childcare facilities within our communities has increased. The provision of childcare facilities is recognised as being important for economic and social well being. It not only enables parents to participate in the workforce but can also make a significant contribution to child's emotional and educational development in the early years of a child's life. The Council continues to have regard to national guidelines notably 'Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. The Government's ten year framework 'Towards 2016' aims to ensure that every family should be able to access childcare services which are appropriate to the circumstances and needs of their children. Childcare is taken to mean full day care, sessional facilities and services both for pre-school and after school.

Carlow County Childcare Committee was formed in 2000 to promote cross-agency co-operation and co-ordination in the delivery of childcare services at a local level. The Committee comprises local representatives from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors, social partners, childcare providers and parents in County Carlow.

They also have a role in information provision to all stakeholders in the childcare sector and to promote the development of networking between stakeholders such as parents, childcare providers and childminders.

The mission statement of Carlow County Childcare Committee is as follows:

"To lead, facilitate and support the development of quality, accessible childcare services in County Carlow for the overall benefit of children and their parents by taking a child-centred and partnership approach".

The core values of Carlow County Childcare Committee are:

- Equality of opportunity
- Partnerships – with stakeholders in childcare
- Respect – for all stakeholders in childcare

- Professionalism – in our work
- A child centred approach

The Planning Authority's role in relation to childcare facilities is in implementing national guidelines and local policies and in encouraging and supporting adequate measures which are consistent with the size and scale of development proposals. In addition, the Planning Authority has a role in accommodating both an increase in population levels as per the county's settlement hierarchy (Chapter 2, Core Strategy) and facilitating individuals in the workforce at optimum locations i.e. within residential estates, town / village centre locations, places of employment.

S. I. – Policy 12

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage, promote and facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with national policy and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Planning Guidelines on Childcare Facilities. Ensure the provision of quality affordable childcare throughout the County in consultation with the Carlow County Childcare Committee, the County Development Board and the Health Services Executive
- Permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas provided that they do not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance. Where proposed facilities relate to properties which have been designed and built as dwellings, and are surrounded by other houses, a significant residential element should be retained
- Encourage the provision of childcare facilities in tandem with proposals for new residential developments. Generally, one childcare facility with places for 20 children shall be provided for each 75 family dwellings in accordance with national guidelines [unless it can be demonstrated otherwise, to the satisfaction of the Council, having regard to the existing geographic distribution of childcare facilities and the demographic profile of the area]. The Planning Authority will encourage developers of new residential developments to undertake prior consultation with Carlow County Childcare Committee on how best to meet the childcare needs of that area
- Promote and encourage the provision of a network of childcare facilities that reflect the distribution of the residential population in the County and to minimise travel distance and maximise opportunities for disadvantaged communities

7.2.6 Library Services

Carlow Library Service aims to provide a quality, accessible service, which enhances the lives of citizens and communities of County Carlow. It provides for the information, cultural, education, recreational and learning needs of people throughout the network of library branches in Borris, Muinebheag, Carlow Central, Tullow and local studies and genealogy service supported by the administrative Headquarters.

A wide range of services are provided by the library network which include access to technology, e-services, children's services, special collections, local studies, genealogy and archives, community information, lifelong learning initiatives, regular events and programmes.

The public library service remains an important function of the Carlow County Council and will continue to be an open, accessible and democratic institution providing a multi faceted service to all ages of the population.

S. I. – Policy 13

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support and promote library services across the County to allow the library service to fulfill many multiple roles due to the diverse and constantly expanding set of user needs

7.2.7 Education

Central Government, through the Department of Education and Skills, is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. The Planning Authority's role in education provision is in ensuring that adequate serviceable land is available in appropriate locations to meet current and envisaged future requirements beyond the plan period.

The provision of adequate education facilities can lead to the increased attractiveness of an area for the location of businesses and families and increased development and prosperity. Carlow County Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Education and Skills in the identification of suitable school sites in accordance with The Provision of Schools and the Planning System (DEHLG and Department of Education and Science, 2008).

In accordance with Sustainable Development Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (DEHLG, 2008), no significant residential development should proceed without an assessment of existing schools capacity or the provision of new school facilities in tandem with the development. New facilities should be located where possible close to or within the main residential areas and adjacent to community developments such as community centres, playing fields and libraries so that the possibility of sharing facilities can be maximised. Multi-campus school arrangements, for example 2/3 primary schools side by side or a primary and a post-primary school sharing a site, will be considered.

The multi-use of school buildings and facilities will be encouraged where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service (that is, outside school hours and during school holidays). Where new schools or other community facilities are proposed, the Council will seek to ensure that they are designed in such a way as to facilitate dual use from the onset.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Department of Education and Skills, 2011) recognises that higher education will play a central role in making Ireland a country recognised for innovation, competitive enterprise and continuing academic excellence. The Strategy highlights the opportunity to establish technical universities in which the fields of learning are closely related to labour market skill needs with a particular focus on programmes in science, engineering and technology and including an emphasis on workplace learning.

Third level educational facilities are significant to the economy, culture and excellence of County Carlow and it's people. The continuing expansion of third level education is important to the social, cultural and economic life of the town and county. Carlow has a strong educational base with third level courses offered at Carlow Institute of Technology, Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board, Carlow College (St. Patrick's), Teagasc, Saint Catherine's Community Services Centre and SOLAS.

S. I. – Policy 14

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the educational institutions in their plans to expand and develop
- Support the provision of additional land for educational uses through the consideration (on suitable sites) of such facilities in a wide variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, mixed uses and residential development
- Promote the location of new educational facilities within existing settlements and preferably near community facilities (such as community centres, playing fields and libraries) and public transport services. Only in exceptional cases will out-of-town locations be considered
- Encourage and support the development of further educational facilities and training programmes to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce, including facilities for children and adults with special needs
- Encourage facilities connected with the integration of those with special needs into the education system of streamlined schools
- Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided concurrent with the development of an educational facility. Such infrastructure may include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, parking facilities, ramps and facilities for those with special needs

7.2.8 Arts and Cultural Facilities

The Arts and Culture is a vibrant element of social life in Carlow and provides positives across a wide range of areas from tourism to cultural development. Carlow County Council supports and promotes opportunities for everyone to participate in the cultural life of the county by facilitating the provision of well-managed, sustainable cultural infrastructure, suitable for all ages, and by adopting a flexible approach to the incorporation of cultural facilities in the development or refurbishment of community facilities.

Public art is commissioned and co-ordinated by the Carlow Public Art Officer and carried out in line with the aims and objectives of Carlow's Public Art Programme.

A previous objective of Carlow Local Authority which has come to fruition is The VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and The George Bernard Shaw Theatre, a state of the art multi-disciplinary facility located in Carlow Town. The centre comprises a 294-seater performing arts theatre, four principal gallery spaces (main gallery, studio gallery, link gallery and digital gallery) as well as theatre bar facilities, a full service restaurant and concession areas.

Carlow is also host to an annual arts and cultural festival, Carlow Arts festival (Eigse) and has a vibrant youth theatre, along with several drama groups, choral societies and many more groups and societies which enhance the County's art and cultural scene.

S. I. – Policy 15

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Continue to recognise the importance of the arts in areas of personal development, community development, employment and tourism and to endeavour to create further opportunities in each of these areas
- Continue to enhance the public domain by encouraging the provision of public art, both temporary and permanent, across all art forms and artistic disciplines, in towns, villages and new residential developments through the government-supported *Per Cent For Art* scheme
- Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Local Authority are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these centres as focalpoints for the community
- Promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as the government supported Percent for Art Scheme and the development management process
- Encourage and support the creation and display of works of art in public areas, including appropriate locations within the streetscape, provided no unacceptable environmental, amenity, traffic or other problems are created

7.2.9 Allotments

An allotment is defined as an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres that is let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or members of his or her family.

Carlow County Council recognises that the public's interest in growing fruit and vegetables locally has increased significantly in recent years. This has been due to a number of reasons including economic circumstances and health benefits, along with concerns regarding sustainability and the embodied energy involved in the global production and transportation of food.

The Planning Authority will therefore facilitate the development of allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. Such locations should be consistent with the terms of the definition above and should be located within or close to existing settlements, where they will be more easily accessible to all sections of society.

S. I. – Policy 16

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Facilitate the development of allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. Any such facility should be located within or close to an existing settlement and should be easily accessible

7.2.10 Places of Worship

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that places of worship have in a community context and will endeavour to accommodate and facilitate their provision and/or extension, where appropriate.

S. I. – Policy 17

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Endeavour to accommodate and facilitate the provision and / or extension of places of worship throughout the County of Carlow, where catered for on lands zoned appropriately



CHAPTER EIGHT

TOURISM, RECREATION AND AMENITIES

TOURISM

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Overseas tourist visits to Ireland in 2012 grew modestly by 1% to 6.3 million and grew again in 2013 by 7%. After a strong 2013, the tourism industry in Ireland entered 2014 with clear positivity. There is a belief that the tourism industry will continue to grow thanks to the legacy of The Gathering, improvements in Ireland’s economic situation and the unique cultural and scenic experience which Ireland offers to the visitor.

Tourism makes an important contribution to the economy of Carlow with income derived from tourist activity being distributed across a wide range of economic sectors. The tourism industry contributes to the vitality and sustainability of a wide variety of local enterprises, particularly in rural areas, thus promoting an enhanced awareness of and a positive appreciation of local traditions and ways of life. Tourism can also be of particular significance in the diversification of the rural economy and in the regeneration of towns and villages. At the same time there is a growing concern about the impact of tourism on the environment and on local communities. Tourism can damage and destroy the assets it seeks to exploit, in particular through excessive visitor numbers, inappropriate development, various types of pollution and other forms of adverse impact. The relationship between tourism and the environment must be managed in a way that tourism continues to support local communities and remains viable in the long term.

Sustainable tourism provides a high quality product based on, and in harmony with, a high quality natural environment. The tourism sector in Ireland is continually evolving and the product offered in Carlow must reflect emerging trends and the evolving market.

Tourism – Objective 1

Carlow County Council will promote, encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism through the conservation, protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage, the protection of sensitive landscapes and cultural and community environments in order to maximise upon the economic benefits arising from the industry.

8.1 LOCATIONAL ASSETS

As a primarily rural area, Carlow is ideally positioned to maximise the benefits associated with tourism while preserving the character, natural resources and environment on which the attraction of the county as a holiday destination is built. The local cultural and social landscape, which includes interpretation of local traditions and customs, can contribute to and enhance the visitor’s enjoyment of their holiday, while also being sustainable for local people in the long term.

Carlow also benefits hugely from its strategic location on the east coast of Ireland within close proximity to Dublin, the country's main urban area and a major source of tourism business for the county. The completion of the M9 motorway provides easy access to Dublin, Belfast and the entire South East region. Additionally, the Carlow – Dublin and Waterford route is well serviced by bus and train operators. Carlow is also approximately 90km from the ferry and airports of Dublin, Rosslare and Waterford. Its central location offers the perfect base to explore the surrounding counties of Wexford, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Kildare and Laois.

Home to three of Ireland's key national walking routes – the South Leinster, the Barrow and the Wicklow Ways – Carlow is blessed with hundreds of miles of excellent and varied walking. The golfing visitor will find an impressive variety of golfing facilities to suit all levels while the Rivers Barrow and Slaney and their many tributaries provide exciting activities for the passive and active water enthusiast.

County Carlow is steeped in historical and archaeological artefacts from pagan sites such as the Brownshill Dolmen to ecclesiastical settlements, many of which are of national significance. The Carlow Garden Trail is another gem for visitors to enjoy featuring a collection of eighteen gardening attractions including great old gardens such as those at Altamont and smaller gardens which are maturing beautifully with time. Award winning garden centres and forest parks complement the joy of a visit here.

On the arts front the VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and the George Bernard Shaw Theatre is a dynamic multi-disciplinary arts facility presenting the best of local, national and international work in the visual and performing arts. The Carlow Arts Festival (Eigse) along with other Arts events provide a strong and diverse calendar of events relating to the Arts.

8.2 TOURISM ECONOMY

The number of visitors to Ireland continues to rise with overseas visitors up seven per cent, with eight million people coming to Ireland in 2013, contributing some €3.64 billion to the Irish economy. In 2012, Carlow welcomed 69,000 overseas visitors (England 40,000, Europe 16,000, North America 8,000 and Other Areas 5,000) to the county whose presence contributed €37 million to the local economy (€11 million UK, €13 million Mainland Europe, €5 million North America and €8,000 Other Areas). Based on research by Fáilte Ireland this revenue equates to 1,258 jobs in the local economy. Carlow now ranks in 14th position in terms of overseas revenue and in 20th position in terms of overseas visitor numbers to the 26 southern counties.

On a regional basis, 792,000 overseas visitors holidayed in the South East Region and 991,000 domestic holiday trips were taken in the region in 2012, generating revenues of €232 million and €180 million respectively for the regional economy.

8.3 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The Council recognises the importance of sustainable tourism development strategy as unmanaged tourism can erode the quality of the tourism product and the environmental quality of the County. This aims to develop a sustainable tourism industry which will act as a key economic driver, is socially and environmental considerate and which develops at a pace and scale which ensures that the tourism assets of the County are not diminished in the long-term.

In accordance with the Core Strategy, the principle aims for the development of a sustainable tourism sector in County Carlow are as follows:

- To maximise the potential of tourism as a ‘pillar of economic growth’ - this will contribute to the balanced economic development of the County and the tourism industry in the South East region
- To protect the County’s tourism assets and capitalise on the distinct tourism attractions that the County has to offer including natural, built and cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, rivers and forests
- To promote the development of premier tourist products
- To promote and support rapidly growing tourism sectors such as adventure, rural and eco-tourism within Carlow
- To promote the diversification of the tourism base as a development agent in the regeneration of County Carlow’s economy, whilst recognising the importance of the county’s high quality environment to the development of this sector
- To optimise the potential for development of the arts, culture and heritage of the county
- To promote and improve tourism infrastructure throughout County Carlow including tourist accommodation, amenities, access, signposting and car parking facilities
- To support and encourage inter county development of tourism, especially where Carlow is surrounded by several counties

8.4 NATURAL AMENITIES

County Carlow is an inland county, occupying a strategic location within the South East region and is bordered by counties Wicklow, Wexford, Kilkenny, Laois and Kildare. Carlow is the second smallest county in the country and the smallest of the eleven inland counties. The county is at its extremities 43.5 km long and 24 km wide covering an area of 943 sq. km.

Geographically, the county is bordered to the South and East by the granite, mountain ridge of the Blackstairs Mountains. The Blackstairs Mountains are located along the border of counties Wexford and Carlow, forming a mountain chain that runs in a northeast-southwest direction for approximately 22 km, featuring six peaks over 520 metres, with Mount Leinster the highest at 796 metres. They represent one of the most important natural attractions in the county as they provide a backdrop for much of the

county's surface area. The West of the county is bordered by the hills of the Castlecomer Plateau, composed of shale and sandstone.

The Blackstairs Mountains constitute the principal touring route in the county while the "Nine Stones" vantage point provides excellent views, from the Wicklow Hills to the North, to the Irish Sea and the extensive coastal plain to the East. While some may claim that the county lacks the dramatic scenery of more famous touring routes in Ireland, the steeply rising slopes and forested areas of the Blackstairs Mountains rivals many of these. The main rivers flowing through the county are the Rivers Barrow and Slaney and their associated tributaries which provide both angling and leisure facilities to visitors. The largest catchment area is drained by the River Barrow and its tributaries including the Burrin, the Black, the Mountain, the Aughavaud and Aughananagh. The eastern portion of the county is drained by the River Slaney and its tributaries including the Derreen, the Douglas, the Clashavey, the Derry and the Clody. The Slaney offers fine vantage points over the river, particularly in the area surrounding Aghade Bridge.

The River Barrow is Ireland's second longest river system running for 192 km from its source in the Slieve Bloom Mountains to the sea. It is navigable for 69 km between Athy and St. Mullins and this stretch is known as the Barrow Navigation. It is navigable for 69km between Athy and St. Mullins and this stretch is known as the Barrow Navigation. Above Athy, the Barrow Line of the Grand Canal links the Barrow Navigation to the main line of the Grand Canal at Lowtown in County Kildare. From there the Grand Canal crosses the country west to the River Shannon and east to Dublin, providing ready access to all of Ireland's waterways. The most attractive visual stretches of this waterway flow through the County Carlow area and the river is widely respected as the most beautiful waterway in Ireland. In its prime up to 24 barges carried consignments of malting barley to Dublin on a daily basis, as raw material for the famous Guinness stout, which was transported back downstream in its finished state, and later beet-laden barges supplied Ireland's first sugar factory at Carlow. The River Barrow thus constitutes one of the most significant industrial heritage monuments in the country with bridges, corn-mills, locks and lock-houses largely unchanged for the past 250 years and its history alone is an important tourism resource. However, the current absence of any boat hire company on the River Barrow is a factor which reduces traffic and activity. However, the Barrow remains a bustling river with a wealth of activities for the visitor to enjoy – from walking or cycling along the unspoilt Barrow Towpath, fishing, boating and canoeing to catching the regular sightings of herons and kingfishers along its banks.

All lakes in the county are man-made. There is a shallow lake located at Oak Park Forest Park, which is bounded almost completely by woodlands. Eight small islands bear coniferous and deciduous trees and the lake is a popular location for bird watchers. The lake at Altamont Gardens was constructed during famine times and forms a focal point for Co. Carlow's top visitor attraction.

Oak Park, situated on the outskirts of Carlow town, is a popular destination for walking and educational visits. There are colour-coded circular walkways of varying lengths with excellent accessible surfaces and easy gradients. The park is a mature mixed-species

woodland of about 50 hectares, with a predominance of beech, oak, Scots pine, silver fir, larch and sycamore. The proximity of the walkways to the extensive collection of ferns, mosses and woodland flora provides the visitor with an ideal opportunity to interact with nature. Boasting a rich diversity of wildlife, the lakes and their surrounds provide a habitat for swans and ducks, while the islands shelter many wild and game birds. The park also has a picnic area and a universally accessible playground.

Despite County Carlow's small size, there is a wide variety of scenery and the mountains, beautiful river valleys and fully navigable waterway provide interesting and diverse visitor experiences.

8.4.1 Forested Areas

Coillte is the statutory body responsible for the management of Ireland's public forests. Coillte's "open forest" policy allows the visitor to access and enjoy woodland areas. The most interesting and diverse forested areas within the county are situated at Bahana, Ballybeg, Ballycrinnigan, Clashganny and on the slopes of Mount Leinster, while one of Europe's largest nurseries and Ireland's National Seed Centre is located at Ballintemple. While no specific tourist facilities exist at any of the above sites, they nonetheless present important opportunities for a diverse range of tourism activities in the future due to their variety of plantation species and scenic appeal. The forested areas immediately surrounding Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs Mountains and southwards of Clashganny, form both a pleasant backdrop and central focus of the South Leinster and Barrow Way long distance walking routes.

Increasingly walking visitors to County Carlow are occasional walkers who seek short looped walks of 1.5 – 4.5 hours in duration, in areas of high physical and amenity value where they can interact with locals and savour the relaxed pace of life. In this regard, Carlow County Council will seek to improve access to the excellent walking product in the county, through the development of looped walks in co-operation with relevant stakeholders. Carlow County Council has developed a 6km looped route, through Kilbrannish Woods in the Mount Leinster area, along with further looped walks at Oak Park Forest Park. The Oak Park Woodland Walks have been laid out to encompass the broadest range of natural features, extending over 4km, including Butlers Wood Loop (700m), the Lake Path (800m), Fox Covert Track (1100m) and Sally Island Trail (1700m). All the walks are wheelchair accessible. A further looped walk was developed by Carlow County Development Partnership at Clogrennan Forest offering extensive panoramic views across County Carlow. The Local Authority will continue to support the development of tourist facilities in forested areas.

8.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Ireland's culture and heritage is fundamental to its tourism identity and has always been an integral element of holidaymakers' activities while here. In this regard, Carlow has much to offer its visitors.

8.5.1 Religious - Ecclesiastical Sites, Churches, Cathedrals, Missionaries

The *Trail of the Saints* is made up of 3 Separate driving routes which between them cover the entire County of Carlow and feature 51 ecclesiastical attractions. Many are of national significance include the Romanesque Door Way at Killeshin, the medieval Cathedral of Old Leighlin and the monastic site of St. Mullins.

There are also a number of significant early ecclesiastical sites in County Carlow with the most important being the Cathedral of Saint Lazerian in Old Leighlin and the monastic settlements at St. Mullins, Killeshin and Clonmore, all of which date to the 6th and 7th centuries. Carlow County Council will promote the sensitive development of St. Mullins and other ecclesiastical sites, in line with their original function as centres for spirituality and religious worship. St. Moling, 614 – 696, founded a monastery at St. Mullins known as Ross-Broc (Badger Wood). He had a cornmill for his monastery and dug a mile long watercourse with his own hands to power his mill. He obtained the remission of the Borama tribute which was an oppressive tax levied on the people of Leinster by the High King of Ireland. He performed many miracles during his life and times in St. Mullins. The Monastic ruins include a number of churches, domestic buildings, a 9th century granite High Cross, St. Moling's Well and Mill and the base of a round tower. Other saints associated with ancient St. Mullins were Saints Brendan James and Columbkille.

In Killoughternane, near Borris is a small roadside church of simple design founded by St. Fortchern in the late 5th century, although the existing roofless ruins are thought to date to the 8th or 9th century.

St. Patrick's College and Carlow Cathedral, both located in Carlow Town, date to the 18th and 19th centuries respectively and are of both religious and architectural importance.

The Adelaide Memorial Church is a 20th century architectural gem located in the village of Myshall. Built as a miniature of Salisbury Cathedral it features many objects of interest and fine stained glass windows depict scenes of the surrounding countryside.

Tullow holds a unique distinction in the religious history of Ireland because it was there that Dr. Daniel Delaney, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, founded two religious orders - the Sisters of St. Brigid in 1807 and the Brothers of St. Patrick in 1808. Two centuries later both communities are still engaged in missionary work throughout the world. Additionally a number of cemeteries throughout the county are of sufficient historical and religious importance to warrant their permanent upkeep.

While Carlow enjoys a fascinating ecclesiastical heritage, access to and interpretation of some of the sites is relatively poor, thus limiting potential tourism benefits. Recommendations to address and rectify this situation are outlined in the proposed product development strategy, featured later in this chapter.

8.5.2 Heritage – Castles, Historic Houses

Almost 100 castles are to be found in County Carlow, the vast majority of which are now in ruins including those at Ballymoon, Ballyloughan, Carlow and Leighlinbridge. In their present state they do not seriously rival those of neighbouring counties. Nonetheless,

these castles are interesting relics of Carlow's historical past and represent important aspects of the county's heritage and cultural tourism product.

Tourism – Objective 2

Carlow County Council will aim to improve public access to castles and other historic sites throughout the county.

County Carlow could claim the title of the most gentrified county in Ireland. Until the early decades of the 20th century, as many as sixty gentry houses dominated the architectural landscape of the county. While only three of the original families still live in their ancestral homes, a surprisingly high total of over forty houses remain occupied. The stories surrounding some of these houses are interesting and recount a rich variety of personal and historic events, in some cases spanning a period of over 400 years from the 16th century onwards. Principal houses of interest whose grounds or the houses themselves are presently open to the public include:

- Altamont Gardens, Tullow, Co. Carlow - grounds only
- Borris House, Borris, Co. Carlow – house and grounds open
- Duckett's Grove Walled Gardens and Pleasure Grounds, Duckett's Grove, Carlow – grounds only
- Mount Wolseley House, Tullow, Co. Carlow - grounds only
- Lisnavagh Estate, Rathvilly, Co. Carlow – open for private rentals, boutique weddings and bespoke events
- Hungtington Castle, Clonegal, Co. Carlow – house and grounds open and holds bespoke events throughout the year
- Ballykealy Manor, Ballon, Co. Carlow – house and grounds open and a wedding venue

Realising the significant potential of these gentry houses for tourism development, Carlow County Council took formal ownership of the ruined Gothic mansion of Duckett's Grove in September 2005, former home of the Duckett family. To date they have revived two old walled gardens and the pleasure grounds area as well as stabilising the ruined gothic mansion. The Council also worked in close cooperation with the OPW in respect of Altamont House and Gardens and in January 2014 saw the completion of the legal handover of the site to the state. Carlow County Council will continue to identify, encourage and support the development of such houses for tourism development.

Some of the above historic houses also contain impressive gardens which form part of *Carlow's Garden Trail*. This trail presently consists of 18 premises throughout County Carlow, but is expected to grow further in the short-term. The trail includes great old gardens that have been restored and maintained throughout the years, such as the grounds of Altamont House which alone welcomed 52,000 visitors in 2012, highlighting the interest in this attraction.

8.5.3 Historic Birthplaces

County Carlow is renowned for its many famous emigrants and their descendants who have made a significant impact on the economic, political and religious lives of their own and foreign countries. The village of Leighlinbridge can perhaps lay claim to the largest

number of famous ancestors with Cardinal Moran, John Tyndall and Captain Myles Keogh all originating from the local area.

Other famous descendants include Walt Disney and in more recent times Frank O' Meara, Michael Flatley and Patrick Bergin, who have made huge contributions to the arts and film world. Pierce Butler and Brian Mulroney have held pivotal positions in the world of politics while Frederick York Wolseley and the writer George Bernard Shaw enjoyed important connections with the county.

These connections present tourism opportunities in the form of Summer Schools or themed conferences. Furthermore, the renovation of important buildings or sites associated with such figures should be encouraged, the graveyard at Clonmelsh in which Walt Disney's ancestors are buried, being a prime example.

8.5.4 Archaeological Artefacts

The Archaeological Inventory of County Carlow (1993) lists some 807 sites ranging from bronze-age settlements to standing stones and Norman mottes and baileys. The vast majority of these sites are not readily accessible to the visitor, yet, a number are of sufficient importance to merit both national and international attention. These include the dolmens at Brownshill and Haroldstown, thought to form part of a mound of 10 Carlow tombs and the ecclesiastical settlements and castles previously highlighted.

The OPW is presently in ownership or holds guardianship of 15 monuments in County Carlow which include:

1. Holed stone at Aghade
2. Ballyloughan Castle
3. Ballymoon Castle
4. Rathvilly Motte and Knockroe Bronze Age Barrow (in guardianship)
5. Brownshill Dolmen
6. Carlow Castle
7. Castlemore Motte, Bailey and cross slab (in guardianship)
8. St. Fortchern's Church, Killoughternane, Borris (in guardianship)
9. Baunogenasraid Dolmen
10. Tower house (known as the Black Castle, Leighlinbridge - in guardianship)
11. Cross fragment in Lorum
12. Cross in Nurney
13. Early medieval and monastic settlement at St. Mullins
14. Straboe medieval grave slab
15. Holed stone at Ardristan

Public access is in the main guaranteed to the above sites although tourist facilities are relatively basic.

Rathgall Hillfort dates to the 8th century and is an extensive hillside fortification with a series of concentric wall fortifications intact. It is widely regarded as one of the most significant sites in the South East. On excavation in 1969, Rathgall turned out to be the first Later Bronze Age Workshop located in Ireland and more than 400 clay moulds were found there. Although located in Co. Wicklow, Rathgall Hillfort is situated in close proximity to Tullow and as such bears a closer touristic relationship with Carlow. Future development of the site has the potential to both support and further contribute to the

development of tourism in the north eastern corner of Carlow in a very meaningful manner with a potential walking route from the Wicklow Way via Rathgall into Tullow for accommodation and services for tourists.

8.5.5 Historic Settings - Towns and Villages

Riverside towns with medieval bridges, old stone built estate towns such as those at Nurney and Borris, and hillside villages all add their own individual character to the Carlow landscape. Their layout, geographic positioning and interesting architecture combine to create considerable touristic appeal and they ably represent the intimacy and relaxing atmosphere of the county. While the larger towns offer a full array of visitor facilities, some of the smaller towns and villages do not possess a suitable complement to adequately fulfill the immediate needs of the visitor.

Tourism – Objective 3

The Council will endeavour to support future development of improved tourist accommodation and amenities in Towns and Villages

The Mount Leinster Heritage Drive, developed by Carlow County Council combines the natural panoramic landscape of the Blackstairs Mountains with the well maintained heritage towns and villages along its route. It is a 75km (47 mile) driving route through the countryside or rural south Carlow, taking in the towns and villages of Borris, Bunclody, Clonegal, Kildavin, Rathanna, Myshall, Fenagh and Bagenalstown/Muinebheag.

Considerable steps have been taken by Carlow Local Authorities in co-operation with local communities to improve the physical presentation and appeal of many towns and villages throughout the county, both through the planning process and its Pride of Place initiative. Progress has been noticeable and tourism has benefited considerably as a result. Carlow town performs consistently well in the I.B.A.L. Litter League bringing positive national publicity to the county. Such competitions demonstrate that dormant civic pride can, when awakened, be a powerful force for the enhanced visual presentation of towns and villages, and in turn act as a leverage for improved visitor number and overall satisfaction levels. It is also important that the momentum and pride presently in existence amongst communities is maintained in the future.

Tourism – Objective 4

Carlow County Council will seek to further encourage and support the development of the county's towns and villages, in tandem with the needs and objectives of its residents

8.5.6 Specialist Collections

The Carlow 800 plan published in 2000, a Master Plan for Carlow Town, presented a civic vision of Carlow for the twenty first century, identifying a number of quarters within the town, including a Cultural Quarter, which has now come to fruition. Carlow County Museum, located in this Cultural Quarter of Carlow Town, is housed in the

former Presentation Convent on College Street. Located in a prime town centre location, the same building houses the County Library and Tourist Office. The museum was also an objective of the Tourism Development Strategy 2000 – 2006.

The Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society (CHAS) founded and opened the Museum in 1973 and in 2002 Carlow County Council took over the operations of the Museum, with a Museum Board devising the Museum's policies.

Among items on display is the famous and magnificent 19th Century hand carved pulpit from Carlow Cathedral; the original gallows trapdoor from Carlow Gaol which was used during the 19th Century for public executions; the wooden smoking pipe of Captain Myles Keogh, who was killed at the infamous Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876, documents belonging to the 19th Century scientist John Tyndall who was the first person to discover the greenhouse effect and has a peak in the Alps named after him; the remains of the last cigarette smoked by Kevin Barry, a medical student from County Carlow who was executed in 1920 in Mountjoy Gaol, Dublin, for his role in the Irish War of Independence.

The museum adds considerably to the tourism infrastructure of Carlow town and provides a year round weather independent visitor attraction for holidaymakers.

The Cottage Collection, located in the village of Ardattin, contains a unique display of domestic appliances, gramophones, radios, toys and household implements, many dating back to the early 1900s.

Tullow Museum features local artefacts including a collection of Fr. Murphy memorabilia housed in an attractive, former stone Church at the River Slaney Bridge while the Heritage Centre at St. Mullins displays a range of local artefacts. Tullow also houses the Bishop Daniel Delany Museum, which commemorates Bishop Daniel Delany and the religious orders of the Patricians and Brigidines which he founded.

The Military Museum in Carlow town features a wide range of exhibits relating to Carlow's military history while the Weavers Cottages in Clonegal relate the history of the area and are used from time to time for demonstrations of weaving, butter making and bread making. The absence of permanent opening hours, professional displays and sufficient space considerably limits the tourism potential of these attractions.

Nationally, there are twelve official County / City Museums in Ireland, operated by a Local Authority, who work closely with the National Museum of Ireland, particularly in the area of Archaeological finds. Under the National Monuments Act 1930 and its amendments, all archaeological objects found with no known owner is the property of the Irish State. The objects are deposited with the National Museum of Ireland, however through the Designation Status, the National Museum empowers the City / County Museums to collect, display and manage archaeological material found in their respective counties on its behalf. Carlow County Museum has been the Designated Museum for County Carlow since 2003. Therefore archaeological finds (or suspected finds) must be reported within 4 days (96 hours) to any of the following : Museum Curator, Carlow County Museum, National Museum of Ireland or the nearest Garda Station.

8.5.7 Gordon Bennett Route

The Gordon Bennett Route takes people on an historic journey through the countryside and picturesque towns and villages within counties Carlow, Kildare and Laois. The famous Gordon Bennett Route entailed a 166 km (104 mile) route raced by the world's greatest daredevils at record-breaking speeds in 1903. New identifiable road signs make the Gordon Bennett Route an easy-to-follow tour through County Carlow and adjoining Laois and Kildare. The route allows people to drive in the footsteps of motoring pioneers whilst enjoying many of Ireland's best-loved visitor attractions and scenery along the way.

Tourism – Objective 5

Formulate, in association with Fáilte Ireland, a policy and strategy on tourist signage for the County

8.5.8 Linguistic Cultural Heritage

Glór Cheatharlach was established in 2008 along with the appointment of a full time Irish Development Officer in Carlow. Glór Cheatharlach organises two main festivals in Carlow each year, an Autumn Bilingual festival called **Féile an Fhómhair** and **Seachtain na Gaeilge** as part of the St. Patrick's festival celebrations in March. A wide variety of events take place as part of the festivals each year giving those involved with the Irish language an opportunity to celebrate the language and culture while also affording the local community the chance to enjoy the various events and celebrations.

Féile an Fhómhair is a bilingual autumn festival which runs for ten days in mid October each year. This festival began over twenty years ago and has been going from strength to strength ever since. Events are organised in various locations throughout Carlow town as part of the festival programme creating a fantastic festival atmosphere on the streets of Carlow. Events are organised for every age group with drama, literature, art, music, storytelling, cinema, comedy and entertainment of every kind on offer. In addition, Féile an Fhómhair links up with Carlow Tourism for the Carlow Autumn Walking Festival and official walks are organised to many of the sights and attractions around County Carlow.

Seachtain na Gaeilge takes place in Carlow Town every year in the month of March as part of the national programme celebrating St. Patrick's Festival. An exciting range of events bring the streets alive over ten days leading up to the gala Town Parade on St. Patrick's Day.

8.6 INDIGENOUS FOOD, DRINK AND CRAFTS

8.6.1 Food and Drink

Food tourism is increasingly recognised as an important part of the cultural tourism market with tourists seeking authentic and unique experiences. Food tourism presents opportunities for the county in the future with producers winning national awards and the area becoming increasingly recognised as a location for high quality indigenous food. Carlow is really making a mark in terms of food production and food tourism.

There is also the Carlow Food Festival ‘A Taste of Carlow’ held in Summer and at Christmas of each year which displays food and crafts from County Carlow along with craft and food fairs held throughout the year in the grounds of Duckettsgrove.

Carlow was a major brewing centre in former times and the establishment of a local micro-brewery reintroduced this tradition to the county. Carlow Brewing Company, based in Muinebheag in the centre of the malt growing Barrow Valley, presently produces award winning beers, which are exported all over the world.

The Carlow Farmers Market, established with the support of C.A.N.D.O. and Carlow LEADER Rural Development Company Limited provides a range of local farm based food whilst also allowing visitors the opportunity to interact with local people and purchase high quality produce in a relaxed and informal setting. Carlow Town has a Farmers Market every Saturday morning and there are a number of Country Markets established throughout the county, amongst them, Askea, Bagenalstown/Muinebheag, Tullow and Borris Country Markets hold markets each week on Friday’s and / or Saturday’s and / or Sunday’s. A Craft and Food Fair is also held Friday to Sunday in Duckettsgrove.

With the current growth in farmers’ and country markets, organic food production and healthy lifestyles Carlow has the potential to develop food tourism as a niche tourism product through the participation in local and regional food trails, the creation of a food festival and the development of a Good Food Circle/Food Trail. Carlow County Council will support the further development of cookery schools, brewing centres and farmers/craft markets.

8.6.2 Craft Work

Carlow has an abundance of original, traditional, hand made crafts including woodturning, pottery, ceramics, ironwork and textiles, that have obvious appeal to the visitor. However, the county lacks a central venue for visitors to view and purchase local craft. Duckett’s Grove Design, a Craft and Food Emporium which includes a large craft retail display area, four craft workshops featuring woodturning, stained glass and jewellery has opened in the grounds of Duckettsgrove, however it is an aspiration that this may possibly become a permanent craft centre within the County, as currently it only opens Friday to Sunday’s.

Tourism – Objective 6

Carlow County Council will support the development of a permanent craft centre within the county

8.7 ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Arts, cultural and entertainment facilities are wide ranging in County Carlow and include museums, galleries, theatres, cinema, libraries, buildings and spaces of important artistic

and cultural significance, halls for meetings, community and arts centres and music venues. Such facilities contribute towards the intellectual, artistic and social quality of life for people in the County. They can also encourage people, tourism, businesses and jobs to an area and enhance the image of a local area, helping to create a sense of place, enforcing local distinctiveness and contributing to the regeneration of the urban environment. The facilities themselves can provide a means for creating access to and understanding of the County's heritage, artistic, cultural and amenity assets.

The Council will support the commercial development of theatres, cinemas and other cultural and entertainment uses, including facilities of national and regional importance in the County's major town centres subject to other policies in the Plan. Art and culture are vital in terms of social capital and must be understood in terms of the overall well being of the community, not solely in terms of economics or tourism.

In the physical environment the arts can be expressed in the design of buildings and urban spaces and where possible, with community involvement. The creation and enhancement of public spaces, pedestrian routes and buildings, can incorporate art into all aspects of their design and development.

8.7.1 Arts Act Grant

Carlow County Council support Professional Artists (including Writers, Composers, Visual Artists etc.) who are originally from Carlow or currently reside in Carlow, through the provision of bursaries designed to assist artists in their professional development, in the creation of art or in bringing their art to the public.

8.7.2 ArtLinks

ArtLinks is a new art resource for creative practitioners, 18 years and over, who are resident in the administrative areas of County Carlow, County Kilkenny, County Waterford, County Wexford and County Wicklow. ArtLinks is co-ordinated by the ArtLinks Director working with the five County Arts Offices. The ArtLinks programme is based on several years consultation with local creative practitioners, specialist working groups with ongoing research and is supported by the Irish Arts Council. ArtLinks aims to both provide a range of professional services to all creative practitioners and highlight their creative endeavours in this region to a wider audience.

8.7.3 Per Cent for Art Scheme

Art has a vital role to play in our environment and has become an integral part of many urban areas. A high quality environment is essential for good quality of life and high quality public art is necessary to create that environment, be it an open space, public building, hospital or education facility.

The Per Cent for Art Scheme is an opportunity for collaboration between artist and community where public art is developed and created with local ownership in mind. The Government is committed to public art through its approval of funding for this scheme and it has already achieved a rich variety of artworks throughout Carlow Town.

8.7.4 Visual

The VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and The George Bernard Shaw Theatre is a state of the art multi-disciplinary facility featuring an area of 3,130m². The centre comprises a 294-seater performing arts theatre, four principal gallery spaces (main gallery, studio gallery, link gallery and digital gallery) as well as theatre bar facilities, a full service restaurant and concession areas.

The VISUAL Centre has won the ' Best Cultural Building ' in the RIAI Irish architecture awards 2010. The external treatment is well proportioned and, while reserved, remains expressive in its urban setting.

8.7.5 County Carlow Youth Theatre

Drama for young people is widely recognised as a practical way of engaging young people in a creative environment. Taking part in youth drama is seen as a great confidence booster and a positive form of social outlet and self expression. Established in 2001 County Carlow Youth Theatre is a countywide initiative, available to all young people across the County of Carlow. There are three different groups around the County all participating in drama through County Carlow Youth Theatre.

8.7.6 Carlow Arts Festival (Eigse)

Carlow Arts Festival (Eigse) has a permanent presence in Carlow's Dublin Street, a resource for artists and art-makers every day. Established in 1979, it is the oldest of the three significant purveyors of the Arts, the others being the Visual and the County Arts Office. The festival engages with the community in a very public and accessible manner, culminating in a 10 day festival at the start of June each year. The festival displays a vibrant programme of events featuring a dynamic range of entertainment and arts and transforms Carlow into a cultural hub. The festival has something for every member of the family to enjoy, promoting cultural diversity, community spirit and establishing Carlow as a centre of artistic excellence.

Other festivals held throughout Carlow are the Barrow Arts Festival, Tullow Agricultural Show, the Festival of Writing and Ideas in Borris, St. Mullins Pattern, Fenagh Steam Rally, Borris Fair and the Bagenalstown Festival.

Tourism – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the provision of new or improved arts, cultural and entertainment facilities, particularly in the parts of the County where there is a deficiency in such provision
- Actively foster and promote the arts in order to preserve and develop the unique history and heritage of the County
- Ensure that Arts, Culture and Entertainment facilities and activities are accessible to all in both physical and economic terms
- Promote the provision of the visual arts in the county
- Work toward the provision and integration of the Public Art throughout the county including supporting initiatives undertaken by other agencies
- Continue to recognise the importance of the arts in areas of personal development
- Ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these centres as focal points for the community
- Continue the physical enhancement programme of art spaces in libraries countywide, including visual art galleries, performance and workshop facilities
- Liaise with the County Arts Officer on any development proposal that is likely to have a significant impact on the arts
- Increase public awareness of and participation in the Arts in line with the objectives and priorities of the Arts Development Plan and subject to the availability of finance
- Promote the provision of public art, including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as the government supported Percent for Art Scheme and the development management process
- Encourage and support the creation and display of works of art in public areas, including appropriate locations within the streetscape, provided no unacceptable environmental, amenity, traffic or other problems are created

8.8 TOURISM AGENCIES IN CARLOW

8.8.1 Fáilte Ireland South East

Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority. Their role is to support the tourism industry and work to sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination. They provide a range of practical business supports to help tourism businesses better manage and market their products and services. They also work with other state agencies and representative bodies, at local and national levels, to implement strategies that will benefit Irish tourism and the Irish economy.

The South East branch promotes Carlow as a holiday destination through a domestic marketing campaign (DiscoverIreland.ie) and manages Carlow's tourist information centre that provides help and advice for visitors to Carlow.

8.8.2 Carlow Tourism

Carlow Tourism is the marketing and tourism development company for Co. Carlow, whose remit is to increase the number of domestic and overseas holidaymakers to the county and maximise resultant economic benefits vis-à-vis job creation and revenue for the entire county of Carlow.

Close synergies exist between Carlow Local Authority and Carlow Tourism. The objectives of Carlow Tourism are as follows;

- To promote, develop and administer the tourism product in the whole of the county (urban and rural)
- To develop a marketing strategy aiming to generate an awareness of Carlow as a tourist destination, both in the market place and amongst the people of Carlow
- To identify, develop and promote products which will increase tourist traffic in co-operation with all relevant agencies, individuals and bodies as well as neighbouring counties
- To focus on market segments which offer the most potential while also maximising the length of stay and expenditure by tourists in the Carlow area
- To promote a distinctive image and brand identity for County Carlow which fairly reflects the county's tourism product offering
- To focus on market segments which offer the most potential whilst also maximising the length of stay and expenditure by tourists in the Carlow area

Tourism – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Promote and foster a growing sense of innovation and entrepreneurship in the tourism sector
- Encourage and support increased co-ordination, cohesion and linkages between agencies such as Failte Ireland (South East Region), Waterways Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland and the South East Regional Authority (SERA)
- Protect the natural resources upon which tourism is based through the enforcement of policies in relation to resource protection; landscape character assessment; architectural conservation areas; water quality; biodiversity
- Encourage, support, facilitate and promote the development and expansion of rural tourism including agri-tourism, eco-tourism, farmhouse accommodation, open-farms, pet farms, horse trekking centres, eco, geo and green tourism, industrial tourism sites and similar tourism developments, subject to these developments demonstrating that the environment will not be impacted negatively
- Reserve where feasible, land adjacent to river banks and lakes for public access and to facilitate the creation of linear parks to accommodate walking/cycling routes subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with habitat management plans for designated sites
- Work with the relevant authorities such as DoEHLG / National Parks and Wildlife Service to support development of recreational amenities of the Rivers Barrow and Slaney. All such developments should be undertaken in compliance with Articles 6 and 10 of the Habitats Directive and subject to an Appropriate Assessment
- Promote County Carlow's cultural, literary, historical, archaeological and architectural heritage as tourism generating opportunities
- Promote festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural and lifestyle profile of the county, and where appropriate to promote the development of new venues to host such events consistent with the preservation of archaeological and architectural heritage and the protection of residential amenity
- Support the adoption of a sub-regional focus to develop joint tourism projects between adjoining counties;
- Direct tourism based development where appropriate, into existing settlements where there is adequate infrastructure to service the development and where it can contribute to the maintenance of essential services
- Protect and conserve those natural, built and cultural heritage features which form the basis of the county's tourism attraction and to seek to restrict development which would be detrimental to scenic and identified natural and cultural heritage assets

8.9 RESORTS AND AMENITIES

Carlow County's tourism sector is significantly affected by seasonality. Tourism can be weather sensitive, which can undermine the economic sustainability of tourism in the County. This can be addressed to an extent by the development of additional weather independent activities and products such as quality hotels, leisure facilities, spas and indoor activity centres, all of which can extend the tourist season. Resorts activities,

visitor accommodation, interpretation centres, workshops and retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within established settlements thereby fostering strong links to a whole range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustaining the host communities.

There is a lack of mobile home / caravan parks / camping sites throughout County Carlow. Any parks /sites for such usage permitted or sought in the future will be required to be maintained to very high standards, as when not properly maintained, these developments can be visually intrusive, particularly when concentrated in one area.

Carlow also has the potential to attract the recent niche tourism market of glamping (glamorous camping) which is gaining popularity throughout Ireland.

RECREATION AND AMENITY

8.10 RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACES

Open space performs a wide range of roles in enhancing the quality of life of towns and rural villages. Protecting open space for its amenity, ecological, educational, social, community and tourism benefits are now well established as planning principles among Planning Authorities and wider interests. The protection of open space is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. Playing fields, parks, gardens and informal open spaces are not only important as a recreational resource but also provide valuable green areas for wildlife corridors and habitats, act as buffers between conflicting land uses, enhance visual amenity especially in developed areas and contribute to the health and quality of life of citizens.

Rec. – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Use its powers under the Planning & Development Acts to ensure that adequate recreational open space and facilities are provided for all groups of the population at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work
- Co-operate with local development organisations, community groups, educational committees, and others in the development of recreational facilities throughout the county and to enter into joint venture arrangements where appropriate for the provision of such facilities

8.10.1 Protection of Open Space

The Planning Authority will not normally permit development which would result in the loss of public or private playing fields, parks, children’s play space, amenity open space or land zoned for recreational or open space purposes. An exception may be considered where one or more of the following requirements are demonstrably met:

- There is a clear excess of playing fields or open space provision within the area. This should take into account the long-term needs of the community, the type, recreational, amenity value and accessibility of such provision

- Alternative compensatory provision is made which is both accessible to and of equal or greater quality and benefit to the community served by the existing open space
- The continued use, proper maintenance and enhancement of the amenity/facility can best be achieved by the redevelopment of a small part of the site that will not adversely affect its overall sporting, recreational and/or amenity value of the facility
- The site is indicated for an alternative use in the Development Plan or Local Area Plan

Playing fields, parks, gardens and informal open spaces are not only important as a recreational resource but also provide valuable green areas for wildlife corridors and habitats, act as buffers between conflicting land uses, enhance visual amenity especially in developed areas and contribute to the health and quality of life of citizens. Only where it is clearly established that open space and playing fields are no longer required for their original purposes, and the County Council has considered the need for other forms of recreational and amenity open space in the locality, will it permit alternative development proposals. Many existing areas of open space are of considerable value and are therefore worthy of protection in their own right.

8.10.2 Provision of Public Open Space

Carlow County Council will endeavour to make provision for a hierarchy of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation areas within the County so that the population can participate in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits within easy reach of their homes and places of work. Public open space is considered of particular importance in relation to family dwelling units to provide opportunities for play and socialisation. Specific active play areas for children can be provided as part of residential developments for small sites as well as large expansive sites. These play areas may include fixed equipment such as rockers, cradle swings, carousels, balance beams, climbing frames providing a child with an opportunity for challenging, stimulating and social play. Teenagers also benefit from specialised recreational facilities such as skate parks or informal space for peers to gather as well as more formalised sporting facilities. Outdoor gyms for adults are growing in popularity, with many Local Authorities taking the initiative to provide such facilities in existing public parks. Essentially these gyms consist of all-weather exercise equipment accessible to all, regardless of means. The intention behind the provision of such gyms is to increase public participation in exercise and improve public health. They are considered practical for use on a year-round basis.

The prerogative of the Council is to maintain and enhance existing open space, sport and recreational facilities as well as providing new facilities which permeate all levels of national planning advice.

Carlow County Council will follow a strategic approach to the development of open space amenity and recreation provision, ensuring that the current and future needs are:

- Guided by appropriate policies and recommendations
- Reflect the need to develop a hierarchy of sports and recreational opportunities
- Targeted geographically
- Implemented and promoted by all statutory undertakers in the area

- Appropriately funded

Rec. – Objective 1

Carlow County Council, with the assistance of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), Local County Development Board and the Local Sports Partnership, will seek to:

- Enhance planning of sport and recreation at local level through the Local Area Sports Partnership
- Increase levels of local participation and promote the development of opportunities for all groups to become involved in sports and amenity. This is particularly relevant in the case of disadvantaged groups and specific target groups such as older people, girls and women, people with disabilities, unemployed people and those who live in disadvantaged communities or areas lacking amenity infrastructure
- Promote Carlow as a healthy area
- Improve access to all sectors of the population, especially the socially disadvantaged to a range of sport, recreation and leisure facilities
- Encourage where appropriate better use of existing facilities and assist in the provision of new facilities
- Encourage and provide facilities to enable progression through the sporting pathway of “foundation, participation, performance and excellence”

8.10.3 District/Neighbourhood Parks

The day to day recreational provision to local communities will be provided by a series of district or neighbourhood parks. ‘Town parks’ are generally in a very central location and easily accessible. They should provide facilities for both formal and informal recreation in a parkland environment. Town Parks are presently located in Carlow Town, Tullow and Muinebheag within the County.

8.10.4 Local Parks

There are a series of open spaces throughout the built-up areas of the towns, which can provide a range of informal, passive and active recreational spaces. In the smaller villages throughout the county a similar approach should be taken to the creation of a village green or similar amenity in a central location. This may also coincide with a larger open space within which facilities can be provided.

8.10.5 River Barrow and other potential Linear Open Spaces

The River Barrow, River Slaney and River Burren hold huge potential for open space and recreation. Essentially the river bank and floodplains are largely undeveloped, with the exception of certain locations in urban areas.

Along the River Barrow, River Slaney and the River Burren there is huge potential for linear open space. There is potential to link the open space along the River Burren back to the River Barrow walking route and also develop a similar park along the River Slaney and potentially linking towns to surrounding countryside. There are many river courses

throughout the county and there is scope to form an interconnecting network of routes along these courses and as part of a network of walking and cycling routes.

The Barrow Corridor is a significant natural asset to County Carlow with great potential for tourism and recreation, subject to a sustainable approach to all development. The Corridor provides particular opportunities for;

- Boating and cruising development
- Nature and Wildlife Sites of interests
- Cultural tourism
- Activities along tourism trails
- Enhancement of the Barrow Way and South Leinster Way Trail and walks along old railway lines such as the Borris Viaduct
- Fishing and Angling

Rec. – Objective 2

- All proposals for new cycling or walking routes should be assessed in accordance with appropriate environmental assessments including Habitats Directive Assessment.

8.11 LEISURE AND SOCIAL FACILITIES

Leisure and social facilities are essential to the well-being and functioning of Carlow's communities. Such facilities include indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, schools, churches, shops, community halls, health clinics, burial grounds etc. A role of the Planning Authority is to reserve sufficient lands within the town centres to meet likely future demands for community infrastructure. One of the primary challenges with respect to the provision of this infrastructure is its timely provision in conjunction with new housing. The Development Plan along with Local Area Plans will seek to resolve this current problem by linking the provision of community facilities to increases in residential population. The preferred option for the Planning Authority is for buildings to facilitate a range of compatible community uses, thus presenting the opportunity for multi-purpose use.

Carlow County Council is aware of the considerable recreational potential which is available in the mountain areas, hills and river valleys both in the county and just outside its borders. The council will co-operate with the adjoining authorities and with other interested parties such as Failte Ireland, An Taisce, mountaineering, game clubs, and other appropriate organisations to protect the potential of these areas and to carry out appropriate developments as and when resources permit. Such developments would comprise the laying out of walks, bridle paths, access points to streams and lakes, new access roads and car parks, lay-byes and picnic sites, climbing huts and hostels.

8.11.1 Protocol for the Development of Facilities

The provision of new facilities may not always be preferred as it may be more appropriate to upgrade, refurbish and improve existing facilities, particularly in established settlements. A protocol for the development of facilities will be utilised to ensure that development occurs in an orderly, sustainable manner.

The following protocol should be considered as a sequential approach to developing or improving facilities;

- **Bring into use a redundant or infrequently used facility.** This could be a redundant sports hall or a community hall that is not used for recreational or sports facilities
- **Make better/more frequent use of existing sports facilities.** For example, bring an existing school into dual use so that it can be used outside school hours and at weekends
- **Improve management procedures within existing facilities.** This would be considered as a final opportunity to improve facilities before embarking on physical works
- **Refurbish facilities within the existing footprint.** This will usually not require planning permission and is an option before physically extending existing facilities. This may involve moving existing walls / pitches catering for other uses
- **Extend existing facilities.** This may entail physically extending facilities and the physical footprint of the existing sports facility. It may entail providing for other sports (i.e.) providing new rather than shared pitches
- **Provide a new stand-alone facility.** This should be considered as a last option once all above options have been explored

8.11.2 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside

The Council will normally permit development proposals for outdoor recreational use in the countryside where all the following criteria are met:

- It will not result in damage to sites of nature conservation importance or features of the archaeological and built heritage
- It will not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land
- It will not cause harm to the appearance and character of the local landscape and can be readily absorbed into its surroundings by taking advantage of existing vegetation and /or topography
- The amenity of the people living nearby or the enjoyment of other countryside users is not adversely affected by the nature, scale, extent, frequency or timing of the recreational activities proposed including any noise likely to be generated
- Any ancillary built development is small in scale, designed to a high standard and sympathetic to the surrounding environment in its siting, layout and landscape treatment
- Consideration is given to access to the proposed facility by means of transport other than the private car
- The local road network can safely handle the extra traffic the proposal would generate and satisfactory arrangements are provided for access, parking, drainage, litter and sewage

8.11.3 Intensive Sports Facilities

The Council will normally permit development proposals for intensive sports facilities where all of the following criteria are met:-

- The proposal is compatible with Development Plan zonings
- There will be no detrimental impact on residential amenity
- It is located so as to be accessible to its catchment population and gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport and does not generate unacceptable levels of traffic
- It is designed so as to minimise the impact of noise and light pollution
- There is no significant detrimental impact on the natural environment or features of the archaeological or built heritage
- The proposal is of high quality design and respects and contributes to the character of its location and townscape
- Public access is provided
- Ancillary facilities are provided such as childcare facilities

Intensive sports facilities include stadia, leisure centres, sports halls, swimming pools and other indoor and outdoor sports facilities that provide a wide range of activities as well as facilities attracting significant numbers of spectators and use outside normal sporting periods. The location of intensive sports facilities can often be contentious. They can attract large numbers of people, particularly in the evenings and at weekends. They often also generate high levels of noise, operate long and late hours, attract a large number of vehicle movements and can require large parking areas. Specific concerns may also arise where floodlighting is proposed. The Local Authority will normally only permit proposals for the floodlighting of recreational facilities where the amenities of adjacent residents will not be significantly impaired and the visual amenity and character of the locality will not be adversely affected.

On occasion the Council may need to be satisfied that a management plan is in place to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on surrounding residential amenity and planning conditions may be imposed to this effect.

8.11.4 Children's Play Facilities

It is the policy of the Council to provide, maintain and manage a children's play area in areas where it is appropriate as finance and resources permit. The Council will also require provision of development contributions towards providing children's play facilities in association with new residential developments. This will be required in areas where statutory plans exist or are prepared in the future. Within new residential developments where there is a significant family residential component the whole environment should be designed so as to permit children to play in safety.

Rec. – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Support the National Play Policy "Ready, Steady, Play". The policy advocates a child centered approach to the development of play facilities.
- Create a child-friendly and safe environment where the importance of play is recognised for a child's development
- Improve the quality and safety of playgrounds and play areas
- Undertake a mapping exercise that identifies existing play services, facilities and amenities as well as highlights gaps in these areas across the county

8.11.5 Major Sports Facilities and Stadiums

Proposals for, and extensions to, major sports stadia will be supported by the County Council where they will be accessible by a range of forms of transport other than the car, and will not cause unacceptable impact to the amenity of nearby residents by way of noise and disturbance. The Council requires major stadia to be in appropriate locations and to follow the principles of sustainability. For major schemes an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required. Where the Council is concerned at possible effects on traffic a Transport Impact Assessment may be required. Where it is demonstrated that proposals would generate significant impact on the transport network a Travel Plan may be required.

8.11.6 Noise Generating Sports

The Council will not normally permit development proposals for sport or recreational uses generating high levels of noise unless the following criteria are met.

- There will be no conflict with the enjoyment of areas used for informal recreation
- The ambient noise level in the area is already high and the noise likely to be produced by the new activity will not be dominant

The impact of noise is an important issue in assessing proposals for activities such as motor sports. Appropriate sites for the regular use of these sports are not easy to identify and will depend on the type of activity, the tone, level and duration of any noise generated, local topography and the amount of existing proposed screening. Proposals for noisy sports will only be acceptable where the likely impact can be contained and minimised by landform or woodland. Other suitable sites may include degraded land, former mineral workings or land adjacent to an existing source of noise. In certain cases the Local Authority may only consider it appropriate to grant a temporary permission to allow the impact of noise levels and any potential disturbance or nuisance to be more fully assessed.

8.11.7 Open Space in new residential development

Developers will be required to make provision for sports and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs generated by that development and the capacity of existing facilities in the area to cater for existing and future needs. Residential planning applications in excess of 200 units will require a recreational needs assessment. Recreation provision should form an integral element of development proposals. Where provision is not provided on-site it may be directly provided off-site.

In the interests of meeting strategic needs the Council may pool together the requirements of individual and relatively smaller developments to provide facilities and amenities of a strategic nature at the higher end of the hierarchy. Developer contributions may also be

sought and may be applied to improve existing facilities nearby. In areas where new development is proposed and the cumulative impact of the development of new houses will, or is expected to exceed the volume of housing development identified above as thresholds, developers will be required to provide financial contributions or lands towards the development of sports and recreation facilities that will be developed to meet the needs of their development in conjunction with the expected needs of other nearby developments. In instances where this includes, or is expected to include the acquisition of lands this requirement will be specified.

Rec. – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Require a Recreational Needs Assessment with all planning applications for new, large scale developments (100 or more units), to require the provision of appropriately located and designed open space, recreational and amenity areas

8.11.8 Riverside Development

It is the policy of the Local Authority to promote the natural amenity potential of the River Barrow, River Slaney and River Burren and all of the watercourses throughout the county to facilitate the development of amenity, recreational, ecological and tourism benefits for the county and region as well as quality of life for local people as well as visitors. All rivers have considerable potential both waterside and landside to be used as recreational assets. For housing developments adjacent to rivers, consideration shall be given to measures to enhance the safety of persons using the river for recreational purposes, measures to reduce the risk of accidental entry into the waters and measures to provide appropriate rescue equipment. The Local Authority will seek to ensure that proposals along the rivers will achieve an appropriate balance of uses commensurate with the sensitivity of the natural environment. Factors that will be taken into account when considering proposals affecting the rivers include:

- a) How will the proposed development enhance (or impede) the objective (Regional / Linear Parks and Corridors) to develop walking/cycle routes along the rivers?
- b) Any landscape or nature designation for the area
- c) Any proposals to increase the extent of public access
- d) The extent of any environmental improvements to the water environment and its surroundings
- e) The nature of any recreation use proposed

Rec. – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Protect and improve the natural amenity potential and accessibility of River Barrow, River Slaney and River Burren subject to appropriate environmental assessments including Habitats Directive Assessment, the Water Framework Directive and Floods Directive
- Liaise with neighbouring counties where appropriate, regarding development along the rivers

8.11.9 Development associated with Water Sports

The Local Authority will normally only permit proposals for development associated with water sports adjacent to waterways and inland lakes where all the following criteria are met.

- The proposed facilities are compatible with any existing use of the water, including non-recreational uses
- It will not result in damage to sites of nature conservation importance or features of the archaeological and built heritage
- The development can be satisfactorily integrated into its landscape or townscape surroundings
- The development will not have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity especially in areas of high amenity or other locally important scenic areas
- The development will not result in over intensification of use leading to pollution, excessive noise and nuisance
- Consideration will be given to the making of bye-laws controlling the operation of water borne craft
- Development will not result in significant negative impacts on any European site or its conservation objectives and all such development to be screened for potential impacts in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive

Water sports cover a wide range of activities from tranquil uses such as angling, sailing, canoeing, rowing and sail boarding to powered activities such as powerboat uses. The Local Authority may require Management Plans for particular water areas to address the compatibility of such varying demands. Most development associated with water sports such as slipways, boathouses, toilet and changing facilities, parking areas and access will require planning permission. In considering such development proposals the Council will assess the impact of the visual amenity and character of the area. Where permission is granted the Council will require high levels of design both in terms of layout, buildings and other structures and in the treatment of boundaries either adjacent to the road or the actual waterway. The Council will normally require details of landscaping and surface treatments to accompany all planning applications.

8.11.10 Bealach Siúlóide (Walking Routes) and Slí na Slainte

The Irish Sports Council has published an *Irish Trails Strategy*, which outlines the numerous benefits of recreational trails, including significant economic benefits. There are a number of major walking routes and Slí na Slainte through Carlow, such as at the South Leinster Way, Borris Viaduct, Clogrennane Loop and Oak Park Regional Forest Park. The countryside of Carlow holds vast potential to develop outdoor recreation activities to benefit both tourism and local residents. The Rivers running through the County and uplands to west and east provide an opportunity for establishing open spaces and networks of open spaces of strategic value. There is also scope to form an interconnecting network of routes along these water courses and as part of a greater route for walking or other existing routes along the River Barrow, River Slaney and River Burren could be extended to provide links between towns and other settlements.

Rec. – Objective 3

- It is the intention of the Local Authority to identify, promote and maintain a series of walking routes and to link these to a strategic network of trails into the county
- It is the intention of the Local Authority to research and map the existing network of traditional paths used for leisure purposes with the intention of determining the legal basis and status of their use and identify gaps or enhancements needed to link such walks into towns and villages
- It is the intention of the Local Authority to work with development agencies, landowners, other legal occupiers and potential users, to develop a sustainable policy on the use of walking routes throughout Carlow

Rec. – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the development of facilities that are accessible to those who walk and cycle
- Work with other Local Authorities, agencies and organisations to provide a network of walking routes throughout the county
- Require that development along rivers set aside land for pedestrian routes that could be linked to the broader area and any established settlements in their vicinity, subject to screening for potential impacts on European Sites in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive

8.11.11 Cycling Touring Routes

Carlow/Kilkenny Local Authorities under the National Cycle Network (NCN) program has provided a dedicated on road cycle route 35km in length between Carlow and Kilkenny. The route is located on the R448/R712 (the old N9/N10). The route starts/ends on the Northern edge of Carlow Town which links to the extensive network of cycling routes in Carlow Town itself which links to many of the major attractions within the Town and County. Carlow Town is also the most Northerly point of the River Barrow in County Carlow. There is direct access to the River Barrow towpath. This towpath runs continuously for 42km to the South of Carlow to St Mullins and 65km to the North of Carlow to Lowstown.

From Carlow heading to Kilkenny there are 2 further links to the River Barrow, the first is 7km south of Carlow Town at Milford Lock, one of the most tranquil and idyllic settings along the River Barrow. This is also the site of one of Europe's largest commercially operated mills in the 19th Century. A further 3km to the south at Rathvindon Lock which provides a direct link to the heritage town of Leighlinbridge, a multi award winning tidy town which is home to 2012's best Garden Centre in Europe Arboretum and a Boating Marina.

The Barrow Towpath intersects with the South Leinster Way at this point approximately 20kms south of Carlow which leads to the majestic Blackstairs Mountains including Mount Leinster. The Barrow walkway continues all the way to the border town of

Carlow/Kilkenny at Tinnahinch/Graiguenamanagh a major barge, boating, canoe and Kayaking centre and tourism centre on the River Barrow.

The cycling route continues to the southwest passing the R724 at Royal Oak. This route will link the users to the Town of Muinebheag and Borris, again leading to the Blackstairs Mountains and the Barrow Valley. There are many wonderful places of interests for those wishing to explore including the ancient ecclesiastical settlement of St Mullins.

At this point in the route cyclists leave County Carlow and enter County Kilkenny at Paulstown, and can follow the route to its end in Kilkenny City.

8.12 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Rights of Way provide a valuable link to some of the county's natural assets such as the rivers, bog, mountainous areas and forests to those that live and visit the county.

The Local Authority will use its powers under the Planning Acts to preserve and maintain existing rights of way, to create new ones where appropriate, and to promote their greater use in amenity areas. In addition the Council may seek to incorporate the provision of pedestrian ways as a condition of planning permission to link amenities, facilities and points of interest. Carlow County Council is aware that providing such routes can cause concern as these may give rise to anti-social behaviour particularly along unsupervised and secluded laneways. Every effort shall be made to avoid such a situation, through public lighting, appropriate layout and landscaping. The Council will examine existing rights of way, paths, access points to the River Barrow, River Slaney and River Burren and other amenity areas to determine where public rights exist and where public rights of way should be created, for the provision of walking routes along the rivers and amenity areas of the County.

There are other pedestrian rights of way within the County known as mass paths, which have existed for centuries. The Planning and Development Act 2010 as amended requires a County Development Plan to indicate locations on a map and to preserve public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility.

Off-road walkways can be established by various means, through informal agreements with landowners, through formal agreements or acquisition. In many instances walkways follow public rights of way established by custom and practice. The Council recognises that properly developed and maintained walking routes are of considerable benefit to the economies of the areas through which they run as well as providing an invaluable educational, recreational and conservation role. The council recognises that these routes cannot come into existence or remain in existence without the full cooperation of the owners of private property on the routes.

There are significant stretches of land that were formerly in use as railway lines. To the extent that these are engineering works negotiating difficult topographical obstacles, they constitute significant resources, with potential for use as corridors for amenity access, free from motorised traffic, and even have potential for a revived railway use. Carlow County Council will consider proposals for development in these areas for local heritage and outdoor activities including the provision of recreational walkways or cycling routes.

Rec. – Objective 4

- During the lifetime of this plan, the Local Authority will carry out a survey of green links, footpaths, cycle ways and assess the potential of creating new rights of ways around the County, such as along the Borris Viaduct
- It is an objective of the Council to protect potential ‘greenway’ routes along and in proximity to abandoned rail lines from inappropriate development that could compromise the delivery of a cycling or walking route in the future
- It is an objective of the Council to examine the feasibility of identifying and mapping Public Rights of way in the recreational and amenity areas of the county
- Work with the relevant authorities to ensure the provision of adequate signposting and waymarking on rights of way throughout the County

Rec. – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Preserve and protect existing rights of way and create new rights of way in the interest of amenity as the opportunity or need arises
- Encourage the provision of access routes to amenity areas in co-operation with landowners and protect amenity areas from infringement by inappropriate development
- Identify Rights of Way and established walking routes prior to any new planting, infrastructural development or any new energy / telecommunications developments
- Seek to improve the provision of local parks and play spaces and extend those spaces and pathways that can usefully form green links, footways and cycle ways to connect residential areas with parks and open spaces and with each other
- Make existing areas of open space as user-friendly as possible. As well as seeking to ensure that new open space is well integrated to proposed development it is essential that open space has good pedestrian, cyclist and disabled access
- Create new rights of way as required or extend / enhance existing rights of way either by agreement or by way of compulsory powers, in the interest of ensuring access to amenities
- Look favourably upon planning applications which include proposals to improve the condition and appearance of existing rights of way
- Promote sustainable outdoor recreation in the form of walking and cycling and improve the recreational and tourist potential of walking and cycling routes in the county whilst ensuring the protection of the environment
- Engage and co-operate with representative bodies, local groups, landowners and where relevant adjoining local authorities, in order to support the sustainable development of walking and cycling routes
- Promote the development of riverside walking routes, whilst protecting areas of ecological value and ensuring that any development takes cognisance of the aims and objectives of the Water Framework Directive and ensuring that all development is undertaken in compliance with Articles 6 and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive
- Consider proposals for development along former railway lines for local heritage and outdoor activities including the provision of recreational walkways or cycling routes, subject to feasibility and availability of funding

8.13 BURIAL GROUNDS

The primary role of any graveyard is to provide a place to bury and commemorate the dead, and to provide a focal point for mourning and religious observance. However, because they provide green oases within built-up areas, graveyards are also places for rest and contemplation in a more general sense, offering opportunities for fresh air and exercise, or simply a place for quiet communion with nature. The interweaving of architecture, sculpture, landscape, wildlife and poetry is like no other place in the historic environment. In conserving and managing these landscapes there is a need to take into account all of their special meanings and characteristics, and also the dynamics of the working cemetery receiving new burials. The Local Authority has a responsibility for the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. The Council adopted Burial Ground Byelaws in 2008, in relation to cemeteries in the functional area of Carlow County Council which the Council had acquired any estate, interest or control. The Planning Authority has a role in ensuring that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with future needs within the county. A number of these burial grounds may need to be extended and/or new sites identified over the period of this plan (2015-2021). The importance of historic burial grounds as a primary physical source for the history of the county is significant, often located in the grounds of old churches. The graveyards could, through careful management, provide additional passive amenity spaces as well as contributing to the heritage tourism potential of County Carlow. Some of these burial grounds may be national monuments or in the curtilage of protected structures, throughout County Carlow.

Carlow County Council recognises the importance of graveyards to local communities and the significant role played by communities in maintaining burial grounds. The Council will continue to work in partnership with communities in providing funding and seeking funding to safeguard the county's burial grounds.

Rec. – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Preserve and enhance the county's graveyards through improved management and access and community stewardship and to provide historical information at each location and promote the unique character of each of the burial grounds to the surrounding residents and property owners
- Protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the county and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles
- Continue to work in partnership with communities in providing funding and seeking funding to safeguard the county's burial grounds
- Implement Carlow County Council Burial Byelaws and any subsequent Burial Grounds policies;
- Consider handing Council graveyards back to communities to allow them to be cared for by the community, as appropriate
- Explore the use of environmentally sound burial sites
- Facilitate the provision of new burial grounds and the extension of existing cemeteries as appropriate to cater for the needs of a multi-cultural County
- Ensure the protection of groundwater dependant Natura 2000 sites which rely on the continued supply of groundwater resources to secure the key environmental conditions that support the integrity of the site and through protection of groundwater standards by the South East Regional Basin Management Plan
- Prohibit private Burial Grounds / Plots within the grounds of a dwellinghouse or landholding except in exceptional circumstances where it can be documented that the lands are in excess of 25ha, the family can demonstrate historic links to the property or landholding (in family ownership for 50 years or more) and the burial plot does not affect groundwater resources on the holding



NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

CHAPTER NINE – NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Heritage is integral to the identity of County Carlow and provides the county with a strong sense of place, character and distinctiveness. Heritage includes many aspects of the world around us. Landscapes, hedgerows, field systems, rivers, plants and animals are all part of our natural heritage. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures – such as houses, shops, bridges and mills are features of our built heritage. County Carlow has a rich and varied heritage, including dramatic landscapes, archaeological monuments and varied architectural design. Protection of our heritage not only has environmental and quality of life benefits for the people of Carlow, but also brings significant economic benefits. Protection of our heritage for future generations is the responsibility of us all.

Many of Carlow's heritage features are non-renewable and once destroyed, they are lost forever. Therefore, it is the duty of the Local Authority and the people of Carlow to protect heritage features, so that future generations also benefit from and enjoy this rich inheritance.

Heritage Protection Principles

The policies and objectives for the natural and built heritage have been developed in accordance with the following principles:

1. The natural and built environment, particularly those elements that are non-renewable and most valuable, need to be properly protected, managed and enhanced
2. The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and the built environment should be promoted as important elements of the long-term economic growth and development of the County
3. The protection of County Carlow's physical heritage (including archaeology and historic buildings) is a tangible representation of the County's past and is a sound basis for economic growth and regeneration
4. The *Polluter Pays Principle* and the *Precautionary Principle* are important elements of any planning policies that deal with environmental and heritage matters

9.1 NATURAL HERITAGE

The natural heritage includes the natural rather than the man made features of the county, often referred to as biodiversity. It includes plants, animals, birds and their habitats, as well as the physical and geological foundation that forms our landscape, such as rivers,

providing County Carlow with its own distinctiveness. Carlow County supports a range of diverse species rich habitats, including canals, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, eskers and hedgerows. The natural heritage and biodiversity of the county provides a valued physical, social and economic asset for those living and visiting the county and is integral to the image of the county. Protecting and enhancing the biodiversity and landscape of the county provides many benefits including fertile soils, food and clean water. The importance of these habitats is recognised in the high number of sites within the county designated by the State for their nature conservation value, and which form part of a national network of protected areas and some species of wild plants and animals hosting habitats listed in the Habitats Directive. The Council has a statutory obligation to conserve and protect these habitats. It is important that the protection of natural heritage is not limited however to designated sites only.

Throughout this Development Plan, a common thread is the protection, conservation and managing of County Carlow's natural resources in a sustainable manner to ensure that economic growth complements the county's unique environmental setting. A core objective is to ensure, wherever possible, that developments or activities do not impact adversely upon wildlife and its habitats. In general, if uncertainty exists regarding the potential impact of a proposed development, full account must be taken of the *Polluter Pays* and *Precautionary Principles*, and the proposed development will be resisted unless or until its effects are more clearly understood.

Heritage – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Ensure as far as possible that development does not impact adversely on wildlife habitats and species. In the interest of sustainability, biodiversity should be conserved for the benefits of future generations
- Protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape and environment of County Carlow in recognition of its importance as a non-renewable resource, unique identifier and character of the county and as a natural resource asset
- Promote increased understanding and awareness of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the county and aim to carry out a Biodiversity Plan during the lifetime of the plan
- Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under the EU Habitats Directive, EU Birds Directive, the Wildlife Act and the Flora Protection Order
- Impose the *Polluter Pays* and the *Precautionary Principles* which are integral components of planning policies that deal with environmental and heritage matters. Where uncertainty exists regarding the potential impact of a proposed development on the natural heritage resource, full account shall be taken of the precautionary principle
- Support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage designated nature conservation sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives. Specific regard shall be had to Conservation Management Plans and their conservation objectives/management practices, where they exist
- Provide for an intrinsic network of enhanced natural resources of clean water, biodiversity, nature conservation areas, landscape, peatlands, wetlands, greenbelts, parks, open spaces and agricultural land

- Protect and enhance the natural environment of County Carlow and recognise the important role of the environment, through its diversity, quality and integrity, in terms of enhancing the image of the County, quality of life factors and tourism potential for Carlow
- Protect designated Views, Prospects and Scenic Routes in the county as appropriate
- The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, will be implemented in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including the following and any updated/superseding documents):
 - EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)
 - National legislation, including the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2010, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011)
 - National policy guidelines, including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate Assessment Guidance 2010
 - Catchment and Water Resource Management Plans, including the South Eastern River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015
 - Biodiversity Plans and Guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016 and Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan
 - Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges

9.1.1 Natural Heritage – Legislative and Policy Context

European Directives

The European Communities Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (1992)

The Habitats Directive (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two key factors which are the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and a strict system of species protection. The directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 location based "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. The aim of the directive is *“to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies”*. Any actions taken must be designed to *“maintain or restore at a favourable conservation status natural*

habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest". The directive provides for the creation of protected sites known as **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** for a number of habitat types and certain species of flora and fauna. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94/1997.

Article 6(3) of the Directive requires that an Appropriate Assessment (AA), or screening for Appropriate Assessment, be undertaken to determine the impact of plans and projects on Natura 2000 sites. The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) has prepared guidelines on the incorporation of the Habitats Directive Assessment including the Appropriate Assessment process into Irish plan making.

The EU Birds Directive 79/409/EEC

The EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds) is the EC's oldest piece of nature legislation and one of the most important. It created a comprehensive scheme of protection for all wild bird species naturally occurring in the Union. The directive recognises that habitat loss and degradation are the most serious threats to the conservation of wild birds. It therefore places great emphasis on the protection of habitats for endangered as well as migratory species.

National Directives

The National Heritage Plan 2002

The National Heritage Plan sets out a clear and coherent strategy and framework for the protection and enhancement of Ireland's national heritage. The core objective of the Plan is to protect the national heritage as well as promoting it as a resource to be enjoyed by all.

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy places an emphasis on avoiding adverse impacts on environmental features such as landscapes, habitats and protected species, river catchments, the maritime environment and the cultural heritage of the country. It recognises that a high quality environment is a prerequisite for economic success, social cohesion and sustainable development.

National Biodiversity Plan - Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016

This Plan, issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, builds upon the achievements of the first Biodiversity Plan in 2002 and focuses on actions that were not fully completed and addresses emerging issues. The Plan recognises that conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is essential for sustainable development, and for maintaining the quality of human life. The National Biodiversity Plan sets out 102 actions under a series of strategic objectives. The objectives cover the conservation of biodiversity in the wider countryside, both within and outside protected areas, the mainstreaming of biodiversity across the decision making process in the State, the strengthening of the knowledge base on biodiversity, increasing public awareness and participation.

Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010 - 2022

These Regional Guidelines recognise the presence of a diverse range of habitat types of heritage value throughout the South East region including lakes, eskers, waterways and archaeology. The Guidelines include a number of policies and objectives relating to natural heritage.

9.1.2 European and National Designated Natural Heritage Sites

European and national legislation protects the most valuable of our natural heritage areas. A number of sites in County Carlow have been identified as being of high importance for wildlife at a European and/or National level.

Wildlife Act 1976 to 2010

Nature reserves, designated under this Act, are wildlife habitats which meet certain scientific criteria, are worthy of conservation, and where nature conservation is the primary objective and takes precedence over all other activities. Also Wildfowl Sanctuaries are designated under this Act, to protect ducks, geese and waders from hunting.

At European level, Natura 2000 sites are those which are designated under the EU Birds Directive and the EU Habitats Directive, namely Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation respectively. The Habitats and Birds Directives were transposed into Irish law through the Natural Habitats Regulations (1997). In County Carlow there are three candidate Special Areas of Conservation. No Special Protection Areas have been designated within the county.

Table 9.1: Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) in County Carlow

Site Code	Site Name	Site Characterisation
002162	The River Barrow and River Nore	River / Estuarine
000781	The Slaney River Valley	Riverine
000770	The Blackstairs Mountains	Mountain

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Special Areas of Conservation are selected according to the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EES) which lists certain habitats and species which must be protected. The main aim of this Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity and sustainable development, taking account of economic, social and cultural requirements. Where developments would affect the integrity of the above sites they will only be permitted where there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development or land-use change. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, development or land use change will not be permitted unless it is necessary for imperative reasons of human health or public safety or for benefits of primary importance for the environment. Where

development is permitted the Planning Authority will consider the use of conditions or planning agreements to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

At national level, the Wildlife Act 1976 to 2010 are the principal statutory provisions for the protection of wildlife (both flora and fauna) and the control of activities which may impact adversely on the conservation of wildlife. Under the Wildlife Act, Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance and it is proposed that sites of geological interest would in time be given statutory protection as NHA's through the Wildlife Act 1976 to 2010. The designation of these sites at national level is the responsibility of the DoEHLG, but it is the responsibility of all to secure their protection for the future. Some of these sites also have other designations, such as Statutory Nature Reserve, Refuge for Fauna, Biogenetic Reserve or Ramsar Site.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's)

Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) are heritage sites that were designated for the protection of flora, fauna, habitats and geological sites of national importance. Management of NHAs is guided by planning policy and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. It was from these NHAs that the most important sites were selected for international designation as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

There are nine Proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHAs) in County Carlow.

9.1.3 Habitats Directive Assessment (Appropriate Assessment)

The EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two key factors which are the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and a strict system of species protection. The Directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 location based "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. The aim of the directive is *"to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies"*. Any actions taken must be designed to *"maintain or restore at a favourable conservation status natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest"*. The directive provides for the creation of protected sites known as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for a number of habitat types and certain species of flora and fauna. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94/1997.

Article 6(3) of the Directive requires that an Appropriate Assessment (AA), or screening for Appropriate Assessment, be undertaken to determine the impact of plans and projects on Natura 2000 sites. The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) has prepared guidelines on the incorporation of the Habitats Directive Assessment including the Appropriate Assessment process into Irish plan

making titled *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2009).

Local Authorities are required to ensure that a Habitats Directive Assessment of the implications of proposals affecting designated conservation sites is undertaken in respect of developments requiring planning permission. This applies to all development proposals, plans and licensed activity (water abstraction, waste permits etc.), irrespective of location, likely to impact on these sites.

Circular letter SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08 issued by the DoEHLG states that any draft land use plan (Development Plans and local area plans) or amendment/variation to it proposed under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites (i.e. SACs or SPAs), to determine whether a full Appropriate Assessment of the project is required in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (1992).

The process of site designation is ongoing, with new sites being added and/or upgraded, in terms of their conservation status, and the boundaries of existing sites being adjusted, as better information becomes available. In addition, there is a range of plants and animals and their associated habitats that are protected under European and National legislation, wherever they occur.

An Appropriate Assessment means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites (including Natura 2000 sites not situated in the area encompassed by the draft plan) and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures. The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site. The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites (known as 'ex-situ' impacts) must also be included in the assessment.

If the Habitats Directive screening indicates that a plan or project arising from this Development Plan will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either directly or indirectly, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, then the plan or project must be the subject of an Natura Impact Statement as per Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (1992).

The Local Authority will consult with the Prescribed Bodies, and other Government agencies where appropriate, when considering plans or projects which are likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (or those sites proposed to be designated as Natura 2000 sites). In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive the Council will normally only grant permission in cases where it is clearly demonstrated that a proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of a Natura 2000 site or sites. Following a finding that a proposed development will adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, planning permission may only be granted in exceptional cases, in the absence of any alternatives,

for imperative reasons of overriding public interest subject to the strict requirements of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

Heritage – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Strive to protect and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with European and National legislation and in other relevant international conventions, agreements and processes. This includes sites designated or proposed as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), wild bird species and their habitats, especially rare or vulnerable species and regularly occurring migratory species
- Screen all projects and plans arising from this plan for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Carlow County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and an Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:
 1. The Plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) or
 2. The Plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000 or
 3. The Plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000
- Promote the maintenance and, as appropriate, the achievement of favourable conservation status of protected habitats and species in association with the NPWS
- Assess, in accordance with the relevant legislation, all proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect or cumulative impact) on designated natural heritage sites, sites proposed for designation and protected species

- Comply fully with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (as transposed into Irish Law by the EU Habitats Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments) and assess whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant impact upon the integrity, conservation objectives and qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site, when considering any plan or project prepared or assessed on the basis of this development plan
- Promote development that would not conflict with maintaining favourable conservation status and the meeting of the conservation objectives for designated sites, especially sites in the Landscape Character Assessment within this Plan
- Permit projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects¹)
- Support the recommendations of the Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO's) for Natura 2000 sites. This is in order to examine how the Conservation Objectives of the sites can be achieved in the context of the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. It shall be the policy of the Council to ensure that development in takes into account the relevant Management Plans for SACs and SPAs in the county
- Ensure all proposed agricultural projects and any associated improvement works or associated infrastructure, individually or in combination with other plans and projects shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites in the County
- Implement the relevant parts of the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 and the European Communities (Amendment to Planning and Development) Regulations 2011 which require planning permission to be applied for where the area impacted by works relating to the drainage or reclamation of a wetland exceeds 0.1 hectares or where such works may have a significant effect on the environment. Such planning applications would need to be supported by an Appropriate Assessment where relevant
- Ensure that all of the following proposed projects and any associated improvement works or associated infrastructure are subject to Appropriate Assessment: renewable energy projects; water supply and abstraction; wastewater and discharges; flood alleviation and prevention; new infrastructure, particularly roads, powerlines and telecommunications; and amenity and recreation provision where this could impact European Sites
- Ensure the recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment contained within Appendix 6 of this plan be adhered to at all times during the lifetime of this plan

9.1.4 Nature Conservation outside of Designated Sites

Existing nature conservation legislation provides for the protection of particular species and sites of international and national importance. There are many important wildlife habitats in County Carlow that do not meet the criteria for designations as an NHA or SAC, but are important on a county or local basis and act as stepping stones in a wider ecological network. These include rivers and river banks, ponds, small woods and hedgerows which are essential to the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. These features form a network of protected areas, ecological corridors, and ecological “stepping stones” available to support the movement of species and to sustain the habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to maintain biodiversity and the key elements in this ecological network need to be identified, protected and enhanced. Article 10 of the Habitats Directive states that Member States shall endeavour in their land use planning and development policies, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.

9.1.5 Promoting and protecting biodiversity and wildlife corridors

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive outlines obligations in relation to natural heritage in the wider countryside. It provides that, through land use planning and development policies, Planning Authorities shall endeavour to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems of marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

Heritage – Objective 1

- Minimise the impact of new development on habitats of natural value that are key features of the County’s ecological network. Developments likely to have an adverse effect on recognised sites of local nature conservation importance will be required to demonstrate the impacts on the ecological value of the site and will not be approved unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the development that outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site
- Ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive
- Ensure that proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity, wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats and by including mitigation and/ or compensation measures, as appropriate, which ensure that biodiversity is enhanced
- Ensure that no ecological networks, or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity, are lost without remediation as a result

9.1.6 Woodlands, trees and hedgerows

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows are an important natural and landscape asset in County Carlow and provide a biodiversity function in the provision of food, habitat, and shelter in exposed areas and function as pollution filters and carbon sinks. These also contribute significantly to the landscape character of the County. There are several woodlands throughout the County, such as in Oak Park, Ballintemple and Altamont.

Trees make a positive contribution to the county's landscape and townscapes. In addition they provide wildlife habitats, soften hard urban edges and provide scale and backdrops to streets and buildings. They also filter out noise, dust and pollutants and prevent flooding by retaining moisture. The Tree Register of Ireland (TROI) is a database of outstanding trees in Ireland compiled by the Tree Council of Ireland. The TROI identified significant trees in the county, based on characteristics such as age, height, diameter, historical or folklore connections and numerous trees in Carlow are included in this register.

Hedgerows constitute an important natural and historic resource, given their contribution to landscape quality, their ecological importance as wildlife habitats and historical significance as townland and field boundaries. While the relative importance of hedgerows is difficult to assess without a detailed survey, in general, the following categories are worthy of protection:

- Ancient hedgerows - field systems dating prior to the mid-17th Century
- Townland boundaries
- Hedgerows that have a farming, landscape, cultural function
- Hedgerows incorporating archaeological features
- Hedgerows that are important as wildlife corridors between habitats
- Hedgerows adjacent to roads, green lanes, tracks and wooded ground
- Banks and ditches that may have the above characteristics

Heritage – Objective 2

- Protect and manage existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character, and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management when undertaking, approving or authorising development
- Ensure, where required, that applications for development include proposals for planting and/or leave a suitable ecological buffer zone between the development works and areas/features of ecological importance
- Encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive natural boundary in rural areas. In the event that such boundary removal is unavoidable, the same type of boundary of equal or greater length will be required
- Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and to encourage tree surgery rather than tree felling where possible. To protect and preserve existing hedgerows in new developments and seek their replacement with new hedgerows with native species indigenous to the area, where their removal is necessary during the course of road works or other works
- Adhere to the provisions of the Wildlife Act 1976 to 2010 in prohibiting hedge cutting during the bird nesting season from March 1st to August 31st

9.1.7 Inland waters – lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater

The rivers and streams, wetlands and groundwater occurring within the Plan area are home to a variety of habitats and species and also contribute significantly to the character and amenity of the county and support tourism, recreation and quality of life for those living in and visiting the County.

The Barrow and the Slaney Rivers are the main water bodies in County Carlow. The banks of rivers and streams (riparian zones) are particularly important, as they contain a range of habitats and species which are different from the surrounding landscape. Riparian zones function as ecological corridors and “stepping stones” that enable species to move from place to place.

Wetlands associated with rivers and streams, such as wet grasslands and marshes, are important for biodiversity but have other benefits as well. They reduce the flow of pollutants to both surface water and ground water and ease the impacts of flooding by retaining floodwaters and releasing them slowly back into our waterways.

Rivers and streams also provide recreational benefits for local communities. Groundwater is important for supplying water and maintaining wetlands and river flows in dry periods.

Rivers and streams should be maintained in an open, semi-natural condition, wherever possible. Their corridors and valleys should be protected and maintained for their biodiversity, landscape and flood protection value. This should be achieved by strictly controlling development in river/stream corridors and valleys and by implementing sustainable drainage systems for commercial and residential developments. Groundwater resources should be protected and managed in a sustainable manner.

Heritage – Objective 3

- To protect the biodiversity of rivers, streams and other water courses and maintain them in an open state and to discourage culverting and realignment
- To ensure that the County's watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance where possible, the wildlife habitats of the county's rivers, riparian zones and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county
- To consult, as appropriate, with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to any development that could potentially impact on the aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats
- To consult with Waterways Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the DoEHLG, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Inland Waterways Association and local communities on development proposals that may affect inland waterways, rivers or other water courses
- To promote public use of the rivers where feasible and appropriate
- To require that run off from a proposed development does not result in a deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats
- To ensure that lighting proposals along water courses, rivers, streams and canal corridors, are not in conflict with bat species, in order to mitigate impacts of lighting on bats and other species
- To have regard to the South East River Basin Management Plan
- Protect the water resources, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, turloughs, groundwater, as well as aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the *EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC)*, the *European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003* (as amended), the *South Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015* and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same). Support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development

9.1.8 Riparian zones

Riparian zones are eco-systems located along the banks of rivers, streams, creeks, or any other water networks. Usually riparian zones are narrow strips of land that line the borders of a water source. Riparian flora and fauna are often distinctly different from those found in adjacent communities because of the water-rich soils found in the riparian zone. Healthy riparian zones provide a variety of important ecosystem services and they are often important habitats for wildlife. Riparian zones are particularly vulnerable to damage from inappropriate development. While this Plan does not prohibit development in a riparian zone, developments taking place in such zones must ensure the protection of

these vulnerable areas. A key requirement of an integrated watercourse protection strategy is the set-aside of sufficient land along the river margin or corridor:

For larger river channels (over 10 m), the recommended width of the core riparian zone (CRZ) is 35-60 m (18-30 m on each side of the river) and may be larger where flood plains adjoin the riparian zone.

For smaller channels (under 10 m), a core riparian zone (CRZ) of 20 m or greater (minimum 10 m on each side of the river) is recommended.

The determined width should be tailored to the specific site, river reach or lakeshore characteristics and their associated habitats. For salmonid rivers, the core riparian zone should be a minimum of 25 m on each side of the river.

It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation) and the riparian zone (bankside vegetation including trees), taking into account the historical use of the area. In identifying the Core Riparian Zone along a watercourse, regard will be had to the following criteria:

- Provision of bed and bank stability
- Protection of water quality
- Maintenance of viability of riparian vegetation
- Provision of continuity and connectivity along the riparian zone
- Integration with floodplain processes
- Management of edge effects at riparian/urban interface
- Protection of natural values within channels

Heritage – Objective 4

- Protect rivers, streams and other water courses and their associated Core Riparian Zones (CRZs) wherever possible and maintain them in an open state, capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora
- Protect and enhance the natural heritage and landscape character of river and stream corridors and valleys, maintain them free from inappropriate development and make provision for public access where feasible and appropriate
- Protect and enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development and discouraging culverting or realignment
- Ensure that all proposed greenfield residential and commercial developments use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) in accordance with best current practice, ensuring protection of the integrity of wetland sites in the adjoining area, including their hydrological regime
- Ensure that floodplains and wetlands within the Plan area are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection value
- Ensure that proposed developments do not adversely affect groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent habitats and species
- Consult with prescribed bodies prior to undertaking, approving or authorising any works or development that may impact on rivers, streams and watercourses

- Require that runoff from a developed area does not result in deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats, and that pollution generated by a development is treated within the development area prior to discharge to local watercourses
- Ensure that an appropriate ecological assessment is undertaken for developments with the potential to impact on inland waters

9.1.9 Protected species

Certain species of flora and fauna are rare or vulnerable within County Carlow and are protected by law, as they require special measures to ensure their continued survival. At national level, the Flora (Protection) Order (1999), or other such orders, list legally protected plant species. The Wildlife Act 1976 to 2010 list protected animal species.

The Habitats Directive contains Annexes for plant and animal species (other than birds) identified to be of conservation concern and for which conservation measures and regulations apply.

The Birds Directive contains a number of Annexes which list bird species for which varying conservation measures and regulations apply. This protection applies wherever the bird species are found and is not confined to sites designated for nature conservation.

The Habitats Directive and the implementing Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 require that certain species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are strictly protected. Carrying out of any work that has the potential to disturb the named species, and for which a derogation licence has not been granted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, may constitute an offence.

Heritage – Objective 5

- Protect plant species and their associated habitats listed in the Flora (Protection) Order 1999
- Protect species and their associated habitats that require strict protection under the Habitats Regulations (*S.I. No. 477/2011 - EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*)
- Protect animal and bird species and their associated habitats protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 to 2010
- Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law
- Consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DoEHLG) and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law
- Support the protection of habitats and species listed in the annexes to and/or covered by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) and European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008, and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, and species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 and the Flora Protection Order

9.1.10 Invasive species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide, after habitat destruction. They can impact negatively on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole eco-systems, causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works. To minimise the risk of accidental transfer of non-native species, it will be necessary to adhere to current best practice protocol for avoiding the spread or transfer of all invasive species and plants, in particular Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Zebra Mussel, all of which occur within the County Development Plan area.

Heritage – Objective 6

- Prevent the spread of invasive species within the Plan area, including requiring landowners and developers to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species
- Seek the control and/or eradication of invasive species, as appropriate, within the Plan area, as opportunities and resources allow. Targeted invasive species control should be informed by current distribution of species, degree of threat posed and resources available to control and/or eradicate them
- Promote public awareness and engagement with regard to invasive species through awareness campaigns and the provision of targeted information on the role of the general public in the control of invasive species

9.1.11 Geological heritage sites

The geology of County Carlow has influenced the landscapes, soils, habitats, economic activities such as quarrying and features of local cultural interest such as stonewalls, limekilns etc. The Local Authority recognises the need to identify sites of geological and geomorphological interest within the county and to protect these sites, or parts of these sites, in the interest of protecting our geological heritage. The Geological Survey of Ireland, in partnership with Carlow County Council, has developed a list of County Geological Sites (CGS), as part of the Irish Geological Heritage Programme. These are sites of local geological and geomorphological interest, or sites which contain a feature of local geological and geomorphological interest. Some of these sites, which are of national significance, may in the future, be proposed by the Geological Survey of Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, as geological Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's).

The identified sites within County Carlow are as follows;

Aclare

A number of fields with surface boulders at their margins, overlying the proven deposit below ground. The pegmatites are associated with the intrusion of the Leinster Granite approximately 400 million years ago.

Ballyellin Quarry

A large working quarry with Carboniferous Limestone includes a 15m solution pipe 15m+ deep, with clays and round quartz gravel probably derived from Tertiary weathering of the Leinster Granite.

Bannagagole Quarry

A very large and deep working quarry with Carboniferous Limestone of the Ballyadams Formation, from the Viséan Series of the Lower Carboniferous.

Ballymoon Esker, Bagenalstown/Muinebheag

An esker ridge of glacial sands and gravels which comprises of a long ridge of water sorted glacial sand and gravel.

Morrissey's Quarry, Clonmelsh

A large working quarry with extensive overburden of glacial till comprising of Carboniferous Limestone.

Clogrennane Quarry

A large and deep working quarry comprising of Carboniferous Limestone; the youngest formation in the region, with an unconformity between it and the younger shales overlying the limestone.

Kilcarrary Mine

A disused mine or mine trial adit. The mine adit is within schists of the Maulin Formation (Ordovician) adjacent to the contact with the Tullow Pluton of the Leinster Granite. Age and type of mineralisation is not clear.

Heritage – Objective 7

- Protect and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest throughout County Carlow or that may be proposed by the DoEHLG and / or the GSI in the lifetime of this Plan

9.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kind as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water. Archaeology is an irreplaceable link with our past and is found throughout County Carlow. The County's archaeological heritage, through its monuments, artefacts and environmental evidence, provides knowledge and a critical resource for the study of our historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures. Only a portion of the material remains of the past has survived, as many sites have disappeared from the landscape. Of those that do survive, some are visible in the landscape while others only survive beneath the current ground surface or have been remodeled within more modern buildings. The archaeological heritage of the County is a

resource that can be used to gain knowledge and understanding of the past and is therefore of great cultural and scientific importance.

Carlow has a rich archaeological heritage which ranges from megalithic tombs, to early ecclesiastical enclosures, medieval earthworks and buildings, to rock art in South Carlow and industrial archaeology. Brownshill Dolmen is of particular archaeological significance with very important medieval structures surviving intact above ground and the potential of archaeological finds below ground. The Council will encourage and support public access to all archaeological heritage sites and the promotion of walking routes to archaeological sites.

Heritage – Objective 8

- The Local Authority recognises the importance of preserving and protecting the archaeological heritage throughout County Carlow, while fostering a greater public appreciation of the archaeological heritage within the Plan area

9.2.1 Policy and legislation

The DoEHLG publication *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (1999) provides the national policy framework in relation to archaeological heritage.

The National Monuments Act 1930 - 2004 provides for the protection of the archaeological heritage. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments and are shown on an accompanying set of maps. A level of universal protection is afforded to all monuments listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). As well as extending protection to all known sites, now identified as Recorded Monuments, the National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 extends protection to all previously unknown archaeological items and sites that are uncovered through ground disturbance or the accidental discovery of sites located underwater. Where necessary, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will issue preservation orders to ensure protection is afforded to sites believed to be under threat.

Under the Act there are different levels of monument protection. While all known monuments are included on the RMP, a lesser number are accorded a higher level of protection. Some are entered on the Register of Historic Monuments established under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987. The highest level of protection is accorded to National Monuments, i.e. monuments deemed to be of national significance.

9.2.2 Development proposals affecting archaeology

Various types of development can impact on the visual appreciation, setting and amenity of recorded monuments. Such impacts should be adequately assessed and where possible, negated or minimised. Previously unidentified archaeological sites may be

uncovered during development works, while archaeological deposits that would be damaged by development must be investigated and recorded in great detail.

Any proposed development (due to its location, size or nature) with the potential to affect the archaeological heritage resource will be subject to an Archaeological Impact Assessment. This includes proposals close to archaeological monuments, proposals extensive in area (half a hectare or more) or length (1km or more), and development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment. Other areas of high archaeological potential may exist outside the boundaries of conventionally recognised monuments, especially in wetlands and former wetlands.

The Council will have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when considering proposals with potential to affect the archaeological heritage. The Planning Authority recommends that potential developers consult as early as possible with the relevant agencies, such as the National Monuments Service of the DoEHLG and the Planning Section of Carlow County Council, in order to ensure that archaeological concerns can be integrated into development proposals at as early a stage as possible.

Heritage – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Protect and enhance archaeological sites, monuments, their setting, appreciation and amenity within the Plan area, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or newly discovered archaeological sites and/or sub-surface archaeological remains
- Require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance, if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological deposits
- Ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument does not detract from the setting of the feature and is sited and designed appropriately
- Facilitate and enhance public access to and understanding of the archaeological heritage and disseminate information and advice on the archaeological heritage to prospective developers and the general public
- Ensure that full consideration is given to the protection of archaeological heritage when undertaking, approving or authorising development in order to avoid unnecessary conflict between development and the protection of the archaeological heritage
- Protect historic burial grounds that are recorded monuments and encourage their maintenance in accordance with conservation principles. Development may be restricted or conditions requiring substantial excavation may be imposed in and adjacent to former burial grounds
- Ensure, through the application of appropriate design standards and criteria, that land uses do not give rise to significant losses of the integrity, quality or context of archaeological material except as may be conditioned or directed by the appropriate heritage agencies

- Ensure that a suitably qualified archaeologist carries out all archaeological works required when permission is granted for development that requires mitigation of impacts on the archaeological heritage
- Require the preservation of the context amenity and visual integrity and connection of archaeological monuments to their setting. Views to and from archaeological monuments should not be obscured by inappropriate development. Archaeological visual impact assessments should be undertaken to demonstrate the continued preservation of an archaeological monument's siting and context

9.3 BUILT ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Architectural heritage includes all structures, buildings and groups of buildings including streetscapes and urban vistas which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific or technical interest together with their setting, attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings. *An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Carlow* was published by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2002, and this offers an illustrated introduction to the architecture of the county.

The principal mechanism for protection of these buildings and structures of importance is through their inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). This provides positive recognition of the structures' importance, protection from adverse impacts and potential access to grant aid for conservation works.

There are currently over 540 structures included in the Record of Protected Structures for County Carlow. As the review of the Record of Protected Structures is an ongoing process, these figures may change during the lifetime of this Plan.

9.3.1 The Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

Part 1, Section 10(2)(f) and (g) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities to include in their Development Plans objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Each Planning Authority has a statutory responsibility, under Part IV, Section 51(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to include a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in its Development Plan. Accordingly, a Record of Protected Structures is included in this plan as Appendix 8. A Protected Structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within its curtilage, any other structures and their interiors lying within that curtilage, plus all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures. Structures, or parts of structures, can be added to the Record if they are deemed by the Planning Authority to

be of special interest under one or more of the following headings: architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

In preparing the Recorded of Protected Structures for County Carlow, the Planning Authority had regard to:

- *The Architectural Inventory for County Carlow*, prepared by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) of the DoEHLG, and associated Ministerial recommendations (see www.buildingsofireland.ie); and
- *Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG 2004).

The buildings and structures identified in the RPS are irreplaceable records of the past and therefore require protection. Their presence enhances the character of the county and adds to local distinctiveness. The effect of protected structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the character of a structure are carried out in such a way that the existing character is retained and enhanced. Therefore, works which would, in the opinion of the Local Authority, have material effect on the character of the structure, require planning permission. There are now approximately 540 buildings, structures and features listed in the RPS and the Record will continue to be added to as structures, buildings and features of merit are identified and as resources permit. The Record of Protected Structures at the time of publication of the Plan is listed in the appendices of this written statement. An up-to-date RPS, incorporating any additions or deletions within the lifetime of the current Development Plan, will be maintained on the Council's website or can be checked at the Planning counter in County Buildings.

9.3.1.1 Section 57 Declaration for Protected Structures

The owner or occupier of a Protected Structure is entitled to ask the Council for a written declaration (under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended) indicating the type of works that would or would not materially affect the character of that structure or any element of it that contributes to its special interest. Declarations provide guidance as to what works would or would not require planning permission in the context of the protection of the architectural heritage.

It is recognised that in order to prolong the life of a protected structure, it may be necessary for such a building to accommodate change or new uses. With a view to encouraging the restoration of protected structures, the Local Authority will seek a 50% reduction in development contributions provided for under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, if the proposal involves restoration/refurbishment to a high architectural standard to a protected structure.

9.3.1.2 Demolition of a Protected Structure

Total or substantial demolition of a Protected Structure or any significant element of the Protected Structure will not be acceptable in principle, save in exceptional circumstances where demolition and redevelopment would produce substantial strategic benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition. The following key considerations will be taken into account when assessing proposals affecting protected structures

- The nature of the special interest of the structure, its rarity and condition
- The effort made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses for the structure
- The extensiveness of the community gain, whether the proposed development is voluntary or profit-driven and whether the proposed development is a co-operative or community endeavour or a private endeavour
- The compatibility of the proposals with wider Planning policies

9.3.2 Protection of non-habitable structures

Non-habitable structures, such as historic gardens, stone walls and street furniture, make a significant contribution to our architectural heritage. A lack of awareness of their inherent and associative value can result in the loss of these structures and subsequent erosion of heritage assets.

Stone walls are an integral part of our rural/demesne landscape, often providing significant historic reference and contributing to the character of areas. They can be vulnerable to needless damage or destruction during development, as well as inappropriate and poor reconstruction.

There are a number of significant historic garden/estate landscapes in County Carlow. It is essential that appropriate appraisal and surveying informs the consideration of development proposals for these sensitive sites.

9.3.3 Architectural Conservation Areas

Under Part IV, Section 81 (1)(a) and (b), the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, provides for the inclusion of objectives for preserving the character of places, areas, groups of structures or townscapes of special interest. Such areas are designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's). One ACA has been designated in Borris, Carlow during the preparation of Local Area Plan. Most structures in an ACA are important in the context of their contribution to the streetscape or character of an area. ACA's could encompass, for example, a terrace of houses, a whole streetscape, town centre or a small cluster of structures associated with a specific building such as a mill or country house. In ACA's, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. Any works that would have a material affect on the character of an ACA would require planning permission. A detailed survey, character appraisal, and set of policies and objectives have been produced for each ACA. The appraisal identifies works which would and would not affect the character of each ACA. The identification of new ACA's and the modification of existing ACA's may be proposed during the lifetime of the Plan. The re-assessment of existing or the designation of new ACA's will form part of each Local Area Plan throughout County Carlow where relevant.

Heritage – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Retain and enhance as appropriate the special character of each ACA
- Retain and enhance the historic street pattern, in particular historic structures and plot divisions within the ACA
- Ensure the conservation of all buildings which contribute to the special character of the ACA
- Retain the specific building lines and heights which contribute to the character of each ACA
- Protect and where necessary enhance the general character of ACAs with regard to building scales, proportions, historical plot sizes, materials, building lines and height as well as general land use
- Protect historic street furniture and paving within each ACA. Non-Protected Structures within an ACA
- Ensure that any alterations and extensions carried out are in scale with the building and its particular setting

9.3.4 Town and village Streetscapes

Carlow County Council acknowledges that many historic buildings in Carlow's towns and villages have been altered in recent years and not always in the most sympathetic manner. While individually, many buildings in Carlow's towns and villages may not warrant inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures, or even within an Architectural Conservation Area, nonetheless it is the ensemble of many ordinary traditional building types, their plot patterns, their fenestration, materials, meandering building lines and subtle variations in building height that contribute to the inherent character of a particular settlement. These details should be considered very carefully before allowing the alteration or replacement of buildings to occur.

9.3.5 Street Furniture and Roadside Features

Items of street furniture are an important part of our built and cultural heritage. They are also important elements in establishing the character and interest of an Architectural Conservation Area. Such items could include the following; lamp standards, seats and benches, bollards, railings, street signs, freestanding or wall mounted post boxes, telephone kiosks, horse troughs, water pumps, drinking fountains, jostle stones, milestones, paving, kerbstones, cobbles and setts, pavement lights, coal hole covers, weighbridges, statues, plaques and other monuments.

Heritage – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Protect and enhance historic items of street furniture and roadside features, as appropriate

9.3.6 Place Names

Place names are a very important part of our cultural heritage. They provide a link to the past and reflect the natural, built and cultural heritage of a locality. It is important that place names of all new developments reflect the local topography, history, culture,

ecology or significant people and events and incorporate traditional and Irish language place names from the locality.

Heritage – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Preserve historic place names and historic street names
- Ensure that the names of all new developments shall reflect local historical, heritage or cultural associations
- Encourage the use of bi-lingual and Irish-Language place names and signs
- Place a condition on grants of planning permission requiring the agreement of place names between the developer and the Planning Authority
- Provide guidance to developers and others in relation to naming of new developments

9.4 BUILDINGS AT RISK

9.4.1 Dangerous Structures

The Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964 provides for Local Authorities to deal with dangerous structures. Carlow County Council can serve a notice on owners of property deemed to be dangerous requiring that specific works be carried out to eliminate danger thereby rendering the property safe.

9.4.2 Derelict Sites

Under the Derelict Sites Act 1990, Carlow County Council has an obligation to eliminate and/ or prevent dereliction. Under this legislation, property owners can be pursued and sanctions imposed (including fines and property levies) for non-compliance with statutory notices. Carlow County Council can also acquire derelict sites by Compulsory Purchase Order procedures.

9.4.3 Compulsory purchase

All Local Authorities can purchase derelict sites or dangerous land in their areas (including land that is no longer dangerous because the Local Authority has carried out work on it), either by agreement with the owner or compulsorily.

Heritage – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Eliminate derelict sites and dangerous structures throughout County Carlow by invoking procedures under the Derelict Sites and Sanitary Services Acts, including compulsory acquisition proceedings, if necessary



CHAPTER TEN

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER SERVICES

CHAPTER TEN – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER SERVICES

10.0 INTRODUCTION

The provision of high quality infrastructure is essential to achieve the Local Authority's social, economic, spatial and environmental objectives. The Local Authority is a statutory undertaker for the provision of a range of physical infrastructure in the County, including waste, water supply and wastewater. Planning Authorities are required to make provision for waste water services and other matters relevant to water and waste management in Development Plans, to control developments likely to cause water, air, soil or noise pollution or be contrary to water or waste management objectives.

The effective management of the impacts of development works and land uses on the natural environment is essential to good quality of life, human health, wildlife and diverse ecological systems. The Local Authority will ensure that environmental protection measures are taken to prevent environmental pollution, that such measures are guided by international, national and regional policy.

10.1 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management is a fundamental infrastructural requirement essential for sustainable development, protection of public health and the environment. Waste infrastructure includes bring centres, civic amenity centres, waste transfer stations, material recovery facilities, biological waste treatment facilities, authorised treatment facilities for end-of-life vehicles and landfills.

10.1.1 Legislative and Policy Context

The *Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011* and the European Communities (*Waste Framework Directive*) *Regulations 2011*, provided for a number of revisions to the *Waste Management Act*, under which waste management in Ireland is regulated. The six authorities of the South East Region, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, and Tipperary, adopted a *Joint Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011*. This Plan was evaluated in 2011 in accordance with EC (Waste Framework Directive) *Regulations, 2011*. The evaluation recommended that a new plan be prepared for newly reconfigured waste regions. In accordance with the Minister's Waste Management Policy in Ireland published in 2012 "A Resource Opportunity", the waste regions were to be reconfigured to no more than three. Carlow is now part of the Southern Waste Region which includes all the Munster Counties along with Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford. A New Draft Plan for the Southern Waste Region is now in preparation and a final plan will be in place in 2015. In the intervening period the Joint Waste Management Plan for South East Region remains in force.

The Primary Objective of the Joint Waste Management Plan is to secure the best environmental management of all waste including preventing and minimising the generation of waste wherever practicable. In order of priority, waste must be re-used, recycled, recovered and disposed of safely, having regard to the best value solution, the

utilisation of waste as a resource, public health, environmental protection and occupational hazards in waste handling. The current Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region (JWMP) sets out the policies and objectives for waste management for the period 2005 to 2021. The purpose of this JWMP is to:

- Promote waste prevention and minimisation through source reduction, producer responsibility and public awareness.
- Provide a management plan for the recovery/recycling/disposal of waste arisings on a regional basis.

Section 4 of the *Waste Management Act* provides that the Development Plan in force in an area shall be deemed to include the objectives contained in the Waste Management Plan made by the Local Authority. Therefore this Development Plan is deemed to contain the policies and objectives of the Waste Management Plan (WMP).

The National Strategy on Biodegradable Waste sets out measures to progressively divert biodegradable municipal waste from landfill in accordance with EU targets set out in EU Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste. County Carlow must reduce its dependence on the landfill of municipal waste in favour of more environmentally sound alternatives.

Carlow County Council is also obliged to prepare a *Litter Management Plan* for its area. This Plan sets out objectives to prevent and control litter as well as measures to encourage public awareness of the problem.

All prospective developments in the County will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Regional Waste Management Plan and adhere to those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source segregation.

EU Waste Framework Directive

The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC provides a framework of waste management requirements and sets out the basic waste management definitions for the EU. It places an emphasis on waste prevention and on the ‘polluter-pays’ principle. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 126 of 2011). The Governments Waste Management Policy in Ireland – contain the policies and objectives of the Waste Management Plan (WMP).

National Waste Prevention Programme

Waste prevention relates to the elimination, reduction and reuse of waste. The National Waste Prevention Programme 2009-2012 focuses on raising awareness of waste prevention across all sectors, in communities and at home. The EPA has now published a draft Waste Prevention Plan 2014-2020: “*Towards a Resource Efficient Ireland*” which focuses on activities with the greatest potential to reduce waste and deliver savings”. Raising awareness is one of the keys to shifting the balance towards prevention and minimisation of waste generation. The Council is proactive in this area, in particular through the Green Schools programme and Green Business initiatives.

Local Agenda 21

This promotes sustainable development which is defined as '***Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs***'. Meeting community needs, protecting our environment and creating a vibrant economy are at the heart of a sustainable community.

Carlow County Council, as well as numerous individuals and organisations across the County, work with these inter-connected objectives in mind. We need to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Although national and local governments are expected to take the lead in ensuring the stability of our common future, everyone has a part to play. The challenge is now to move towards real participation in achieving these goals to make the vision of sustainable development a reality in our daily lives. This can only be achieved once there is a balance between environmental performance, social inclusion and economic development. It is therefore important to recognise the role that we all can play, as individuals, in achieving sustainable development.

Waste Management (Management of Waste from the Extractive Industries) Regulations 2009

The Extractive Waste Regulations provide for measures and procedures to prevent or reduce as far as possible any adverse effects on the environment, in particular water, air, soil, fauna and flora and landscape, and any resultant risks to human health, brought about as a result of the management of waste from the extractive industries. These regulations covers not only the mining sector and its hazardous wastes, but also extends to inert waste arising from quarrying, sand and gravel extraction, and related activities.

Various elements of the Extractive Waste Regulations apply at all sites operated by the extractive industry, the main requirements being as follows:

- The general obligation that extractive waste does not cause a danger to human health or an unacceptable risk to the environment or cause environmental deterioration.
- The duty on all site operators to draw up extractive waste management plans.
- The requirement that operators ensure that good practice is incorporated into an extractive waste facility's design, operation, closure and aftercare.

In terms of waste management, the Local Authority must ensure that waste facilities throughout the County do not have serious adverse environmental effects having regard to environmental indicators such as air, water, soil, noise, light, biodiversity, landscape and protected sites or species. The Council recognises that investment in innovative technologies and advancements in waste management offer job creation potential. The Council will support and make provision for changes in technology and new approaches to waste management, such as waste to energy projects. Also through the provision of recycling facilities, increased public advertisement of collections of items such as electrical waste, agricultural waste, working with schools in terms of education and programmes such as the Green Schools, will work collectively in placing greatest emphasis on waste prevention, followed by minimisation, re-use, recycling, energy

recovery and, finally, the environmentally sustainable disposal of residual waste within the County of Carlow.



Table 10.1 Waste Management Hierarchy

All waste projects must comply with the principles of sustainable development, the provisions of the Waste Management Directive, the Water Framework Directive, the South-East River Basin Management Plan and the Habitats Directive. Under the Protection of the Environment Act, 2003, Section 26(2)(c) states that the objectives of the Waste Management Plan will override the objectives of the Development Plan, where there is a conflict between the Carlow County Development Plan and the South East / Southern Waste Management Plan.

10.1.2 Waste Infrastructure

The County's Landfill and Civic Amenity site is located at Powerstown. This facility accepts all non-hazardous waste for disposal in addition to providing recycling facilities for hazardous and non-hazardous waste. A year round collection is also provided for paints and oils. It is expected that the landfill element of the facility will close during the lifetime of this plan, with alternatives outlined in the Joint Waste Management Plan.

In line with Government policy and the provisions of the Joint Waste Management Plan, the Council is actively implementing measures to recycle and recover a significant proportion of waste before disposing of the remaining residual waste.

Waste collection services in County Carlow are privatised but their activities are regulated by the Local Authority. Under the JWMP, a 3 bin collection system became mandatory from 2009 throughout urban areas greater than 1,000 persons for household, industrial and commercial waste or as otherwise determined by the Region. The third bin was eventually introduced under secondary national legislation, Household Food Waste Regulations S.I. 271 of 2013.

Carlow Local Authority also has a system of bring banks, recycling centres and civic amenity centres located across the County.

A *civic amenity centre* is where waste can be deposited by members of the public for segregation, mixing, baling, storage or treatment of waste prior to its recovery or

disposal. These centres cater for a range of waste products including electrical goods, textiles, waste oil, oil filters and scrap metals.

Bring centres are individual stand-alone receptacles, such as bottle banks, can banks, newspaper banks and textiles banks. These facilities are usually provided in neighbourhood centres and villages.

The provision of civic amenity centres and the network of bring centres across the County is allowing the Local Authority and the public to contribute to the sustainable management of waste. The Local Authority will encourage and facilitate the expansion of this network in its efforts to reduce the overall amount of waste going to landfill.

The Local Authority recognises that these types of facilities play an important role in recycling and recovering, and which also offer economic development potential. These include:

Waste Transfer Stations

This is a facility where waste materials are taken from smaller collection vehicles and placed in larger vehicles to transport to other waste facilities for recovery, treatment or disposal.

Materials Recovery Facilities

Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) recovers recyclable material from waste. A clean MRF is a facility which separates dry recyclables into separate recycling streams. A dirty MRF is a facility which separates both the dry recyclable fraction and the organic fraction of waste.

Waste Recovery Facilities

This facility refers to a specific process involving the removal of recyclable material at a materials recovery facility, and composting the organic waste to stabilise it. When the waste is stabilised it has a very low respiration or decay rate and therefore will produce little or no methane gas if landfilled.

Waste to Energy

‘Waste to Energy’ is a method of converting waste into a usable form of energy, usually through combustion or decomposition. This would include the anaerobic digestion of waste.

Waste Disposal

Through the promotion of recycling and recovery the amount of residual waste disposed to landfill should be reduced. The County waste disposal landfill is at Powerstown.

Waste Prevention

Waste Prevention is preferred to any other waste management option. By not generating waste, we can eliminate the need to handle, transport, treat, dispose of waste and avoid having to pay for these services. The Council aims to encourage waste prevention and minimization through awareness-raising initiatives.

10.1.3 Location of Waste Management Facilities

The Local Authority will direct waste management facilities such as waste transfer stations, waste material and recovery facilities and anaerobic digester units, authorised treatment facilities for end-of-life vehicles to appropriately zoned lands. The Local Authority will only consider the location of these facilities outside of zoned lands where

extensive lands are required, such as a landfill, or where the development is necessary for the proper implementation of the Joint Waste Management Plan.

Where a location outside of appropriately zoned land is proposed, it will be necessary for the following criteria to be satisfied:

- The need for the proposal at the particular location, in particular having regard to the Joint Waste Management Plans, and any other relevant national or regional waste management plan at that time
- The site should be within or as near as possible to the County Town or Larger Towns
- There should be no adverse impact on amenities
- There should be a minimal risk of pollution
- The development must comply with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the relevant River Basin Management Plan
- The development must comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive

10.1.4 Construction and Demolition Waste

This is waste arising from construction, renovation and demolition activities, such as rubble, bricks and tiles. There has been a significant reduction in the levels of this waste, which is largely attributed to the economic downturn in the construction sector. National policy recommends that this type of waste be reused and recycled where possible. The Local Authority will encourage a reduction in the overall amount of this waste generated and require that it be reused and recycled.

The Local Authority will have regard to the requirements of the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (DEHLG, 2006) and any updated version of the guidelines when assessing planning applications for developments which will generate significant levels of Construction and Demolition waste.

10.1.5 Hazardous Waste

The disposal of hazardous waste is provided for in the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008-2012 (currently being revised) prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Council will ensure that hazardous waste is disposed of in a safe manner in accordance with the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan and any subsequent amendments or revisions of this Plan.

10.1.6 Agricultural Waste

This is the waste generated by agricultural activities and includes animal slurry, spent mushroom compost and straw. It must be disposed off in a safe manner to prevent pollution of ground waters and surface waters and to protect public health. The Nitrates Directive and the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009 and 2010 are key statutory regulators in the disposal of agricultural waste.

10.1.7 Litter Management Plan

Under Section 12 of the Litter Pollution Act, each Local Authority is required to adopt a Litter Management Plan (LMP). Carlow's Litter Management Plan sets out Carlow

Local Authorities objectives to prevent and control litter. It specifies the measures being undertaken to encourage public awareness of the litter problem, with particular emphasis on educational and information strategies aimed at young people. It also indicates the measures and arrangements that are to be undertaken to obtain the objectives of the plan.

The plan includes information on, and was prepared having regard to-

- Existing litter prevention and control measures being carried out by the Local Authorities
- The policies and objectives of the Local Authorities in relation to the prevention and control of litter
- Litter prevention and control activities being carried out by agencies other than the Local Authorities
- Recycling and Recovery facilities provided for public use
- The Local Authorities enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act 1997

Carlow County Council believes that the litter problem in the county can be successfully tackled through comprehensive action in four key areas, and this plan is set out accordingly. These areas are-

- Education
- Community and Business initiatives
- Services and Facilities provided by Carlow Local Authorities
- Enforcement

A clean and well-presented local environment is a sign of good civic organisation and pride. This has been reflected locally in the good performance of the towns and villages of the county in the National Tidy Towns Competition.

10.1.8 Authorised treatment facilities for End-of-life Vehicles

EU Directive 2000/53/EC relates to the end-of-life vehicles and sets out specific measures to be put in place by Member States in relation to the collection, storage, treatment, dismantling, reuse and recycling of end-of-life vehicles.

An Authorised Treatment Facility is a facility where the collection and storage and treatment of end-of-life vehicles may take place. Such facilities must operate under waste licence or waste permit.

10.1.9 Historic Landfills

The Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 524 of 2008) provide for the certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal sites in operation between 1977 and 1996. The regulations require Local Authorities to register these facilities, to carry out risk assessments of the sites and to determine any remedial measures required. Carlow County Council has identified 1 such historic unlicensed landfill in the County. Risk assessments have been prepared and remedial measures, where required, have been proposed and submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency, who is responsible for issuing Certificates of Authorisation.

10.1.10 Sludge Management

Sludge from wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks can only be used in agriculture in accordance with the Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) Regulations, 1998 and the Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) Regulations, 2001. These regulations require that sludge is only used in accordance with a Nutrient Management Plan, which the Local Authority are responsible for assessing.

Env. – Policy 1

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Implement the provisions of the Waste Management Hierarchy and the Regional Waste Management Plan 2005-2021, and any subsequent review of this Waste Management Plan as it applies to this Council area. All prospective developments in the County will be expected to take account of the provisions of the Regional Waste Management Plan and adhere to those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities, and the capacity for source-segregation
- Ensure the provision of quality cost effective waste infrastructure and services, which reflect and meet the needs of the community and to ensure that the ‘polluter pays’ principle is adhered to in all waste management activities
- Assess planning applications with regard to the waste produced by proposed developments including the nature and amount produced and proposed method of disposal. Developments should ensure that production/disposal methods do not give rise to environmental pollution, result in undue loss of amenity or be detrimental to public health
- Ensure all new shopping centre complexes, neighbourhood centres and large-scale recreational facilities should provide a bring bank as part of the overall development
- Ensure that all significant construction/demolition projects include construction and demolition waste management plans. These plans should seek to focus on waste minimisation in general and optimise waste prevention, re-use and recycling opportunities and are required for developments of five or more housing units or commercial or industrial developments on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares
- Support the development of recycling sites/waste disposal sites or transfer stations and associated developments in appropriate locations, subject to normal planning and environmental sustainability considerations including Appropriate Assessment as required under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive. In assessing applications for these types of development, the Planning Authority will have regard to groundwater protection and appropriate response matrix
- Promote and encourage education and awareness on all issues associated with waste management, at household, industry and community level; and
- Promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community-based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices
- Support the adequate and appropriate development of water and wastewater infrastructure in order to facilitate the growth of settlements which are sustainable and consistent with the Core Strategy and Settlement Framework in Carlow

10.2 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

10.2.1 Soil Quality

Carlow County Council has prepared soil protection policies in order to protect this environmental resource which is not as resilient as other environmental receptors to pollution.

Env. – Policy 2

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Ensure good soil quality throughout the County by requiring developments of a certain nature (as specified in the relevant environmental legislation) to carry out assessments of the impact of the development on soil quality
- Recognise the significant impacts of land use, land use change and sludge generation and treatment in relation to carbon loss/stocks and recognise the function of soil assessment and management, carbon sinks, carbon sequestration and restoration of degraded lands in plan led settlement and development strategies
- Require developers to carry out a land contamination survey to determine the condition of the land where lands may have been at risk
- Continue to consult with the EPA in the remediation of contaminated lands

10.2.2 Air Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the body responsible for the monitoring of air quality in Ireland. The Local Authority is the regulatory authority under the Air Pollution Act 1997. The role of the Local Authority is to protect, enhance and control air pollution and to ensure the provision of the highest standards and is empowered to improve air quality and prevent pollution by having regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011). These regulations implement Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (this Directive replaces Council Directive 96/62/EC on ambient air quality). Furthermore, the policy approach of the Council to integrate land use planning and transportation will reduce emissions from vehicles. Air pollution can negatively affect human health and eco-systems with the main threat to air quality being emissions from road traffic. The most sensitive areas in relation to air quality are built-up urban areas and major transport developments. The Council will have regard to the EU Framework Directive on Air Quality Assessment relating to air quality standards. Regard shall also be had to the EPA document “Air Quality in Ireland”.

The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 emphasises that reducing greenhouse gas emissions will benefit air quality. The Council supports the Polluter Pays Principle and will have regard to the Local Government (Planning and Development) General Policy Directive 1988 (or as may be amended from time to time) and any regulations (such as the Smokeless Fuel Regulations and Solvent Regulations) issued by the Minister for the Environment relating to air quality standards nationally. The Local Authority has objectives in relation to air quality having regard to its importance to a good quality of life, public health and environmental sustainability.

Env. – Policy 3

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Carry out flood risk assessment for the purpose of regulating, restricting and controlling development in areas at risk of flooding and to minimise the level of flood risk to people, business, infrastructure and the environment through the identification and management of existing and potential future flood risk
- Lower tier plans shall undertake Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009)
- Apply the sequential approach which is based on the principles of avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risks when preparing town development plans and local area plans and when assessing planning applications for development proposals
- Require the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage for new development or extensions to existing developments
- Preserve appropriately sized riparian strips alongside river channels free of development and of adequate width to permit access for river maintenance
- Ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG and OPW 2009) and to ensure that the Justification Test for Development Management is applied to required development proposals and in accordance with methodology set out in the guidelines
- Integrate as appropriate the recommendations of any relevant CFRAM Studies, Flood Risk Management Plans, future flood hazard maps or flood risk maps
- Ensure that where flood protection or alleviation works take place that the natural and cultural heritage and rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced. Such works will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive
- Ensure that development proposals in areas at moderate (Flood Zone B) or high (Flood Zone A) risk of flooding which are considered acceptable in principle demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place and that residual risks can be managed to acceptable levels
- Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular Flood Zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Council shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Study in the assessment of planning applications
- Support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Carlow County Council will also take account of the South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study
- Protect water bodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine and wetland areas as appropriate. For larger river channels (over 10m), the recommended width of the core riparian core (CZR) is 35-60m (18-30m on each side of the river) and may be larger where flood plains adjoin the riparian zone. For smaller channels (under 10m), a core riparian zone (CZR) of 20m or greater (minimum 10m on each side of the river) is recommended

10.2.3 Noise Quality

Noise control is governed by the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act (Noise) Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 179 of 1994). The definition of environmental noise includes “noise which causes a nuisance, or would endanger human health or damage property or harm the environment”. Noise, which is continuous, repeated, loud can have significant impacts on the quality of life of individuals, communities and the environment, in particular, wildlife. In today’s modern world particularly with the pace of development and increased traffic volumes on road networks, the nuisance factors associated with noise is increased.

Traffic using transport infrastructure can pollute clean air and surface drainage can pollute water bodies. Noise levels and exhaust fumes can intrude on the peace and quiet that residents and users of amenities should reasonably expect to enjoy. To address the noise impact of transport infrastructure nominated authorities where relevant are obliged to comply, and to secure compliance with Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140), which transposes EU Directive 2002/49/EC. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the national supervisory body charged with advising on the implementation of the Directive and with ensuring national compliance.

The protection of noise sensitive land usage, such as residential uses is important in order to foster a good quality of life. Noise associated with construction works is considered to be temporary in nature and therefore is generally not a material consideration. The Planning Authority of Carlow County Council will seek to minimise noise through the planning process by ensuring that the design of future developments incorporate measures to prevent or mitigate the transmission of noise and vibration, where appropriate.

10.2.3.1 Noise Action Plans

EU Directive 2002/49/EC relates to the assessment and management of environmental noise. It applies to noise from industrial activity and from road, rail and air traffic, but it does not relate to domestic noise. The Directive was transposed into Irish law by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140) 2006.

The Regulations set out a two-stage approach to the assessment and management of environmental noise. Firstly, the preparation of strategic noise maps for areas and infrastructure falling within defined criteria, for example large agglomerations, major roads, railways and airports. Secondly, based on the results of the mapping process, the regulations require the preparation of noise action plans for each area concerned. The fundamental objective of action plans is the prevention and reduction of environmental noise.

The National Roads Authority will carry out noise mapping for the national road network and individual Local Authorities will carry them out on non-national roads. The Planning Authority will have regard to any noise mapping and/or Noise Action Plan relating to the area when considering planning applications.

Env. – Policy 4

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Have regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the Environmental Protection Agency Noise Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications. Regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise, other than those activities which are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency
- Ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to submit a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions
- Require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate
- Ensure that relevant planning applications comply with the provisions of any Noise Action Plan or noise maps relating to the area
- Require an assessment of impact of the developments on noise levels
- Restrict development proposals causing noise pollution in excess of best practice standards

10.2.4 Light Pollution

The limitation of light pollution is important in the interests of nature conservation, residential amenity and energy efficiency. While adequate lighting is essential to a safe and secure environment, light spillage from excessive or poorly designed lighting is increasingly recognised as a potential nuisance to surrounding properties, a threat to wildlife and can reduce the visibility of the night sky. Urban and rural locations can suffer equally from this problem. Lighting columns and other fixtures can have a significant effect on the appearance of buildings and the environment and where proposals for new lighting require planning consent, the Planning Authority will ensure that they are carefully and sensitively designed. Developments that seek to make the best possible use of natural light are inherently more cost effective than those that are designed in such a fashion so as to require lighting during normal daylight hours. Lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary for the task in hand and shield the light given out so as to avoid creating glare or emitting light above a horizontal plane. External lighting is required for security and safety. However, light spillage from inadequately designed and sited lighting systems can detract from the residential amenities of nearby properties, can pose a traffic hazard and can be a threat to wildlife and their habitats. The use of external lighting in rural areas, such as flood lighting of rural houses, can detract from the rural character of the area. External lighting positioned on gateway peers or at high elevations on building can be distracting to traffic and should be discouraged with more of a focus on directional lighting.

Env. – Policy 5

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Encourage the maintenance of dark skies in rural areas and limit light pollution in urban and suburban areas
- Require developments providing external lighting to clearly demonstrate that the lighting scheme is the minimum needed for security and working purposes
- Ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised, thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species
- Require all new developments to use LED bulbs in all external lighting

10.2.5 Control of Major Accidents Hazards Directive (Seveso II Directive)

The E.U. Directive (96/82 EC) (known as the Seveso II Directive) was adopted on the 3rd February 1999. It was introduced into Irish law through statutory instrument; the EC (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations (S.I. No. 476 of 2000). The Directive and regulations apply to establishments (commonly referred to as Seveso sites) that present a major accident hazard by reason of the presence of specified quantities of dangerous substances.

Unlike the earlier Seveso I Directive (82/501/EEC), Seveso II includes provisions relating to land use Planning. Article 12 of the Directive requires member states to ensure that the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of such accidents are taken into account in land use policies and other relevant policies. The purpose of the Directive and regulations is to ensure that, at locations where dangerous substances are handled in quantities above a specified threshold, there will be a high level of protection for people, property and the environment. This is to be achieved by

- (i) Preventing or minimising the risk of a major accident
- (ii) Taking all the necessary measures to limit the consequences of such an accident, should it occur

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) also requires the control of major accident sites and development for the purpose of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident. Land use policy must take account of the need to maintain appropriate distances between major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, buildings and areas of public use, major transport routes as far as possible, recreational areas and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

Article 12 of the Directive provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place so as to ensure that, before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of the siting of new establishments, modifications to existing establishments and new developments. The Health and Safety Authority provides such technical advice where appropriate in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. This technical advice is taken

into account in the overall assessment of the development, in addition to normal planning criteria.

There are two categories of major accident establishments: Upper Tier and Lower Tier; which are defined based on the volume of the dangerous substances present. There are currently no Major Accident / Seveso establishments presently within County Carlow. There may also be sites however in neighbouring counties that might impact on land in Carlow.

Env. – Objective 1

- To control the following for the purposes of reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident (regard will be had to the provisions of the Major Accidents Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive):
 - The siting of Major Accident Hazard sites
 - The modification of an existing Major Accident Hazard site
 - Development in the vicinity of a Major Accident Hazard site as specified in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)
- To consult with and have regard to the technical advice of the Health and Safety Authority when preparing Development Plans and Local Area Plans and assessing planning applications where the Major Accidents Directive and any associated regulations are relevant

10.2.6 Potentially Contaminated Land

Contaminated land is generally considered to be lands where there are substances which could cause significant harm and endanger health. Examples of land uses that may have caused such contamination include gas works, landfill sites and scrap yards. Development will be encouraged and facilitated where it can be demonstrated that the development of the potentially contaminated site will result in a recreational and social benefit to the local area/community provided that identified remediation measures for the lands are carried out. The Local Authority will require that a detailed investigation is carried out and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the land is treated properly before development takes place in accordance with EPA guidelines.

10.2.7 Climate Change

Climate change has been identified in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) as one of the issues to be tackled in planning policy documents such as this County Development Plan. It is widely accepted that current levels of greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are changing climates. Government policy to reduce greenhouses gases is focused on using more renewable forms of energy and driving patterns of development that are suitable for more sustainable forms of transport. Substantial changes in both transport and settlement patterns are required as is the further development of alternative energy in order to achieve the carbon savings that are necessary in order to establish County Carlow as a

low carbon generating economic entity. To achieve this there will need to be huge changes in how we use and produce energy and this has implications for the location of future development in County Carlow and indeed how these developments are carried out.

Carlow County Council has had regard to the *National Climate Change Bill 2013* and the *National Climate Change Strategy (2013-2020)* in framing its policies in this Development Plan and will seek to play its part towards the achievement of the national targets set out therein.

Env. – Objective 2

- Aim to carry out a Renewable Energy Strategy during the lifetime of this County Development Plan
- Consolidate development patterns as required under the DEHLG “Residential Density Guidelines in Urban Areas”, May 2009
- Encourage developments to use the best available technology and design in order to achieve as much energy savings as possible. This relates not just to materials but also to the operational phases of developments. The use of ecologically friendly building materials and the use of recycled materials with lower embodied energy demands than conventional materials will also be encouraged
- District heating schemes will be encouraged which could work hand in hand with local producers of bio-mass in order to begin and sustain a local bio-mass industry
- The Local Authority will investigate the preparation of a County Climate Change Action Plan over the course of this Development Plan
- The Council recognise European and national objectives for climate adaptation and will work with the EPA, the South Eastern Regional Authority and neighbouring planning authorities in implementing future Guidance for Climate Change proofing of land use plan provisions as is flagged in the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (DECLG, 2012)

10.3 WATER SERVICES

Rapid economic progress in the recent past has placed pressure on water and waste water infrastructure in the county. To meet the challenge in delivering improved water services and in accordance with Government policy, Irish Water was set up as a National Utility Company and now operates, maintains and upgrades water and wastewater services in Ireland. The challenge for Irish Water in the coming years is to sustain development in a balanced way which protects key environmental resources and public health, while meeting the demands of the customer. In January 2014 Carlow County Council entered into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water and will operate water services under this agreement until Irish Water is fully operational.

10.3.1 Legislative Context

This Draft County Development Plan 2015- 2021 has been prepared taking account of the following policy documents and legislation.

Water

- EU Water Framework Directive 2000
- Water Services (No 2) Act 2013
- Water Conservation Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 527 of 2008)
- Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan (CIP 2014 – 2016)
- European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 122 of 2014)
- Bathing Waters (76/160/EEC)
- Framework for Community Action in the Field of Water Policy (2000/60/EC)
- Management of Bathing Water Quality (2006/7/EC)
- Freshwater Fish (78/659/EEC)
- Shellfish Waters (79/923/EEC)
- Groundwaters (80/68/EEC)
- Drinking Water (80/778/EEC)
- Nitrates (91/676/EEC)

Wastewater

- EU Wastewater Treatment Directive
- Wastewater Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 684 of 2007)
- Urban Waste Water Treatment (91/271/EEC)

Flooding

- EU Floods Directive 2007
- Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009
- South Eastern CFRAMS

10.3.2 Irish Water

Established in March 2013 as a semi-state company under the Water Services Act 2013, Irish Water will bring the water and wastewater services of the 31 Local Authorities together under one national service provider. Irish Water will gradually take over the responsibilities from these Local Authorities on a phased basis from January 2014. It will take approximately five years for Irish Water to be fully established, at which point it will be responsible for the operation of public water services including management of national water assets, maintenance of the water system, investment and planning, managing capital projects and customer care and billing.

10.3.3 Water Quality

The protection of our surface and groundwater resources is one of the most fundamental challenges facing Carlow in the future as good quality water is essential in supporting diverse and varied ecosystems, sustainable communities and a developed economy. National trends indicate that the number of high quality river sites has halved over the last twenty years and that ground water is suffering significant and sustained decline in quality. In light of conclusive scientific data, it is clear that the chemical quality and availability of groundwater and chemical and biological quality of surface water are

under significant pressure. The pressures on water quality have been examined and quantified. The suspected principal causes for unsatisfactory water quality are nutrients from agricultural activities and municipal waste-water treatment. Other contributing factors include industrial discharges, wastewater from unsewered properties, quarrying, mining and landfill activities as well as water abstractions. In addition, dangerous substances used in cars, households, industry, forestry, agriculture, construction and water and waste water treatment facilities and invasive alien species can be harmful to aquatic ecosystems and climate change may present challenges to water quality management in the future.

The Local Authority shall seek to provide adequate water supply in as many towns and villages throughout the County as resources permit, giving priority to those towns and villages where further development is anticipated or where serious deficiencies are in evidence. The challenge is to ensure that existing water services infrastructure and capacity is adequately managed, which includes the ongoing implementation of a Water Conservation Programme.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has prepared a handbook on the “Implementation of Regulations for Water Services Authorities for Public Water Supplies”. This handbook explains the duty of Water Service Authorities to supply wholesome and clean water defined by standards together with monitoring requirements which must be met by the Council.

Drinking water quality in Carlow is tested in accordance with the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 and national standards. An extensive water-monitoring programme has been agreed with the EPA for all water bodies within the county. The Council will also implement the findings of Irish Water Capital Investment Programme 2014 – 2016.

10.3.4 Water Pollution

The Council operates under The Water Pollution Acts 1977 and 1990 which enables Local Authorities to:

- Prosecute for water pollution offences
- Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters
- Issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution
- Issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices
- Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects
- Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas

- Make bye-laws regulating certain agricultural activities where the Local Authority considers this to be necessary so as to prevent or eliminate pollution of waters, issue notices requiring farmers to prepare nutrient management plans with the aim of ensuring that nutrients applied to land from chemical fertilisers and organic farm wastes, e.g. slurries, take account of nutrients already available in the soil and are consistent with recommended application rates, crop requirement and the need to avoid water pollution

Since 1st January, 2014 Irish Water are responsible for attaching appropriate pollution control conditions in the licencing of effluent discharges from industry, etc. made to sewers.

Inland Fisheries Ireland, as part of their fisheries management function, are also in a position to take prosecutions for water pollution offences. However, the Boards do not have the range of powers, which are available to Local Authorities to prevent pollution.

The *Environmental Protection Agency* is responsible for water pollution insofar as activities licensable by the Agency may be involved; these concern complex industrial activities, as well as large intensive pig and poultry production units - operations having a potential to cause significant pollution which are controlled under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992.

10.3.5 Rural Water Programme

The Rural Water Programme was established by the Government to improve the quality and efficiency of Ireland's group water schemes whilst taking heed of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses and any other documentation from the EPA. Through this Programme, Irish Water facilitates the construction of new group water and group sewerage schemes, the upgrade of group water schemes and taking-in-charge of existing group water schemes, grants towards provision of new or upgrade of existing private water supply wells, and upgrades of existing water services infrastructure under the Small Schemes Programme. Grant aid is also provided from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to complete source protection plans for group water schemes.

10.3.6 Water Supply

County Carlow's water supplies are derived from both public and private supplies. The main sources of water in Carlow are surface water abstraction. Water supplies in Carlow are derived from surface water, namely The Rivers Burren and Slaney being the principal sources, and these provide a very effective source of water supply for the county. Irish Water provides a monitoring and regulatory approach in ensuring the protection of surface water supplies along with The South East River Basin District Management Plan, which is the guiding document for all practices and standards relating to water quality in the region.

Irish Water proposes to develop and extend water supply schemes to provide a potable water supply where necessary and economically viable. These supplies will be in full compliance with the drinking water regulations.

10.3.6.1 Conservation of Water Supply

Conservation is an essential element in Irish Water's Water Management Strategy even where adequate supplies exist, to ensure optimal use of natural resources. Conservation measures include not only the monitoring of usage of water and early detection of leaks but also an awareness programme for consumers.

10.3.6.2 Private Water Sources

In respect of private water sources, the Local Authority recognises the need for some developments to connect to a private water source. However, all new developments must connect to a public supply scheme or group scheme where such schemes are available.

10.3.7 Public Wastewater Treatment

In accordance with the county's settlement hierarchy, wastewater treatment plants and the provision of public wastewater schemes are provided within the county's towns and villages as resources permit. Currently, (August 2015), the county's villages have no public wastewater schemes and are therefore serviced by individual septic tanks / effluent treatment systems. Future development is contingent on the provision of adequate wastewater treatment facilities which also includes individual treatment facilities, as deemed appropriate and in accordance with the Water Services Act 2014.

10.3.7.1 Certificate of Registration/Sewage Sludge

Waste Management (Registration of Sewage Sludge facility) Regulations 2010 (SI 32 2010) provide for the registration and regulation of sewage sludge facilities in order to meet the requirements of the Wasteframework Directive. Facilities already regulated under other environmental legislation such as licenced facilities under the Waste Management Acts are excluded.

10.3.8 Surface Water Discharges

The Local Authority continues to ensure the sustainable management of surface water discharges from all developments, through the utilisation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs), in accordance with the provisions of S.I. No.272 of 2009 – European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations and international best practice.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) are a method of replicating the natural characteristics of rainfall runoff from any site. They provide hydraulic, water quality and environmental benefits. Some form of infiltration and/or retention/storage normally achieves this. The overall objective is to minimise stormwater runoff. Therefore, the area of impermeable surfaces, for example pavement and tarmac, should be minimized by careful attention to site layouts and the specification of permeable surfacing, where practicable.

The objective of SuDs drainage designs is to collect and treat the minimised amount of runoff as close to source as possible. SuDs techniques comprise a flexible series of

options, which allow the drainage designer to select those systems that best suit the circumstances of the site.

10.3.9 Groundwater

Groundwater supplies a significant number of households in the county via public and private wells. A number of group schemes are also dependant on underground aquifers. Underground aquifers are exploited commercially for bottled water, which can be a significant economic resource. Groundwater also contributes to the river system. A number of surface water bodies are protected by way of Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation. Sensitive aquifers which form part of the groundwater network also require protection and careful management. The Geological Survey of Ireland has completed a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Carlow. The overall aim of a Groundwater Protection Scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, for drinking water, surface water ecosystems and terrestrial ecosystems, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The groundwater protection schemes are based on information provided by a suite of maps, including:

- Groundwater protection zones, hydrogeological data
- Aquifers
- Vulnerability
- Outcrop and depth to bedrock
- Subsoils geology
- Bedrock geology

The Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidance for Carlow County Council in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. Some areas may not have suitable hydro-geological conditions, to accommodate a conventional septic tank or proprietary system; in addition a high density of septic tanks in an area may cause a reduction in water quality. If septic tanks or proprietary systems do not work properly or are located in areas where the geology and soil are unsuitable for percolation-based treatment systems, nutrients, organic material, chemicals and bacteria may seep from wastewater into groundwater and contaminate nearby wells and damage the quality of receiving rivers.

10.3.10 Source Protection Areas

When new public water supply schemes come on stream, source protection areas shall be mapped as appropriate. For multiple housing developments with private water supplies it will be the policy of the Local Authority to identify source protection areas for that supply. In practical terms protection of the groundwater can be achieved through the encouragement of best practice in agricultural and industrial activities and through best practice in the installation and use of wastewater treatment systems. Carlow County Council requires that sites be assessed in accordance with the EPA manual entitled *Wastewater Treatment Manuals: Treatment Systems for Single Houses (2009)*.

Env. – Policy 6

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Ensure that septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems, or other waste water treatment and storage systems, where required as part of a development, comply with relevant guidelines
- Have regard to the Groundwater Protection Scheme and to the South East River Basin District Management Plan in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater
- Ensure all Groundwater extraction shall comply with the requirements of the South East River Basin district Management Plan
- Ensure the completion of the mapping of source protection areas
- Implement relevant recommendations set out in the EPA (2012) publication Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland (and any subsequent update)
- Comply with the relevant provisions of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004 and the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007
- Development shall only be permitted once adequate and appropriate waste water infrastructure is provided. Such infrastructure shall fully comply with requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) and shall be operational and with adequate capacity to accommodate waste water arising from development, prior to developments being occupied. Discharges arising from this collection and treatment shall also comply with the requirements of the Directive
- Implement the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2014 and ensure, in conjunction with Irish Water, that water supplies comply with the 48 parameters identified in these Regulations
- Development under the Plan shall be preceded by sufficient capacity in the public water and wastewater infrastructure
- The Council, in conjunction with Irish Water, shall consult the EPA (2012) publication “The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland - A Report for the Year 2011” (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the County
- Undertake, in conjunction with Irish Water, recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failure to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA’s Remedial Action List

10.4 DIRECTIVES, REGULATIONS AND PLANS FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

The provision of water services is the responsibility of each Local Authority throughout the country. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's role is in developing and implementing Government policy in this area, making sure that the necessary funding is made available to finance the Programme and monitoring physical and financial progress on schemes. Local Authorities in turn develop their own policies for water which feed in from the National guidance and policy.

10.4.1 The Water Framework Directive 2000

In response to the increasing threat of pollution and the increasing demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches, the EU developed the Water Framework Directive. The chemical and ecological quality of water is resilient once polluting activities have ceased, however where significant degradation of the water-based habitat has occurred, significant time may lapse before the habitat can be re-established. Ambitious and rigorous targets in relation to the quality of ground and surface water are set down in the directive and these have been developed in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). The directive establishes a framework for the protection of all waters including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, groundwater, canals and other artificial water bodies for the benefit of everyone. The protection of water for wildlife and their habitats is also included under the directive. Management of water resources must be planned and implemented, through Management Plans, in a way that achieves the best possible balance between the protection and improvement of the water environment and the interests of those who depend on it for their livelihood and quality of life. Good ecological and chemical status for all waters must be achieved by 2015 with no deterioration in existing status in the meantime. Local Authorities are the relevant authorities for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Ireland. Reference can be sought from 'River Basin Management Planning – A Practical Guide for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government: June 2008). The Barrow and the Slaney catchment areas are covered by the South East River Basin Management Plan. The Local Authorities in the South East have come together to jointly implement the WFD with Carlow County Council acting as lead Authority in producing the South East River Basin Management Plan.

10.4.2 South-East River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015

The South-East River Basin Management Plan (SERBMP) is the first management plan for the District and covers the period 2009-2015. The SERBMP provides an assessment of the current status of waters in the district, the environmental objectives to be achieved, and the measures required to achieve these objectives. It also sets out the programme for measures to protect and improve water quality. The implementation of the Plan will bring incremental improvement leading to the majority of waters reaching at least 'good status' by 2027 at the latest, benefiting the whole community by providing long-term sustainable access to and use of those waters. Where waters are currently at less than

good status, they must be improved until they reach good status and there must be no deterioration in the existing status of waters.

The Local Authority is required to carry out a range of environmental monitoring and enforcement activities to ensure that the actions of other stakeholders will lead to water quality improvements. Various sections of the Council will be fundamental to the success of meeting the targets set down in the South East River Basin District Management Plans. Important elements in delivering targets include the regime of Planning permissions, waste permits and discharge licenses and enforcement of Planning law, waste management law and water pollution law as well as the provision of municipal waste water treatment and drinking water, municipal landfills, the management of the County road network and related drainage network. Activities outside the remit of the Local Authority such as agricultural and forestry development exempted from Planning permission may have a significant impact on whether targets are met. The Local Authority will work together with other government agencies such as Coillte etc. and with the community including the farming community to protect the environment through the effective management of environmental resources.

10.4.3 Nitrates Directive 1991

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), which came into force on 12 December 1991, aims to reduce water pollution caused by or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources. The Directive requires each Member State to put in place a 'Nitrates Action Programme'. This programme must be reviewed, and if necessary revised, at least every four years. Local Authorities, under the guidance of the EPA are responsible for the enforcement of Nitrates Action Programme. Ireland's first programme was given effect through a series of Regulations, including the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009. These Regulations provided strengthened statutory support for the protection of waters against pollution from agricultural sources, for example, by phosphorus or nitrogen. The Nitrates Action Programme was revised in 2010, which resulted in the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No.31 of 2014).

10.4.4 Dangerous Substances Regulations

The Dangerous Substances Regulations (S.I. No.12 of 2001) prescribe water quality standards in respect of 14 dangerous substances in surface waters, e.g., rivers, lakes and tidal waters. The substances concerned include pesticides (atrazine, simazine, tributyltin), solvents (dichloromethane, toluene, xylene) metals (arsenic, chromium, copper, lead, nickel, zinc) and other substances (cyanide, fluoride). The Local Authority will have regard to both these regulations in the assessment of all planning applications.

10.4.5 Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters

Statutory Instrument No.31 of 2014, European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2014 consolidates and provides the statutory basis for earlier recommendations/ guidelines provided for in the Nitrates Directive and the Water Framework Directive. The role of Carlow County Council shall be to ensure that agricultural practices falling under the remit of the Regulations are consistent with the Regulations insofar as they minimize the potential for water pollution.

10.4.6 Bathing Water

The most recent EPA Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland – An overview for the Year 2013 (EPA 2013) sets out the status of Irish Seawater and Freshwater Bathing areas. “The purpose of the Bathing Water Regulations is the protection of human health”, and the relevant Local Authorities, where appropriate, “should ensure that where any bathing water fails the mandatory bathing standards that the public are made aware of this fact by means of information notices posted at the bathing area.”

This Plan refers to the new “Directive on bathing water (Directive 2006/7/EC)” which came into force on 24 March 2006 and which will repeal the existing 1976 Directive with effect from 31 December 2014. The new Directive is implemented in Ireland by the new Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79) of 2008.

Env. – Policy 7

It is the policy of Carlow County Council to:

- Actively participate in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive
- Implement the South Eastern River Basin District Management Plan and the Program of Measures
- Increase public awareness of water quality issues
- Ensure the sustainable and economic provision of an adequate supply of good quality water for industrial, domestic and other beneficial uses, including the propagation of healthy fish stocks
- Ensure the protection of sources of potable water and monitoring the quality of water resources
- Prevent industrial water pollution requiring that waste water treatment facilities are adequate
- Protect existing and potential water resources for County Carlow, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), the South- East River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 and any updated version, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters, the provisions of Groundwater Protection Scheme for the County and any other protection plans for water supply sources
- Ensure that developments permitted comply with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, the relevant River Basin Management Plans and the Habitats Directive
- Promote compliance with the requirements of the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 and any other relevant legislation
- Continue to improve water quality by implementing the measures outlined in the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and the national Nitrates Action Programme
- Ensure that development permitted would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity, including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters
- Implement the EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems serving Single Houses (2009) in order to protect water quality
- Prevent pollution of water by means of development management and enforcement measures
- Ensure that developments that may adversely affect water quality will not proceed unless mitigatory measures are employed, such as settlements ponds, interceptors, etc
- Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) or any updated legislation

10.5 FLOODING

Flooding is a natural phenomenon of the hydrological cycle. There are many factors that influence flood behaviour and the degrees of risk that it possesses. Like other natural processes, flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and environmentally sustainable management. The accepted national policy response to flood protection is now to manage the risk to life and property as sustainably as possible and to consider flood risk and its related impacts on development on a catchment basis, rather than on an individual location basis. This will facilitate sustainable development through the reduction of future flood damage, and hence reduce the associated potential economic and social costs. The Office of Public Works (OPW) is charged at a national/central government level to monitor and address situations pertaining to flooding and is in the process of preparing comprehensive guidelines to enable Planners to contribute substantially to the management of flooding related issues in consultation with the Department of the Environment Heritage & Local Government and other relevant stakeholders.

10.5.1 CFRAM Programme

CFRAM is Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management. The CFRAM Programme is central to the medium to long-term strategy for the reduction and management of flood risk in Ireland. The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland and is the national competent authority for the EU Floods Directive, working in close partnership with all Local Authorities in delivering the objectives of the CFRAM Programme.

Implementation of the requirements EU Floods Directive is being coordinated with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and the current River Basin Management Plans.

The CFRAM Programme comprises of three phases:

- The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA): 2011
- The CFRAM Studies and parallel activities: 2011-2015
- Implementation and Review: 2016 onwards

The Programme provides for three main consultative stages:

- 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments
- 2013 Flood Hazard Mapping
- 2015 Flood Risk Management Plans

10.5.2 PFRA

The National Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) is a requirement of the EU 'Floods' Directive. The objective of the PFRA is to identify areas where the risks associated with flooding might be significant (referred to as Areas for Further Assessment, or 'AFAs'). This has been undertaken and the final designation list of areas of further assessment has been published since March 2012. The 'AFAs' are where more detailed assessment will be undertaken to more accurately assess the extent and degree of flood risk, and, where the significance of the risk is confirmed, to develop where possible

measures to manage and reduce the risk. The more detailed assessment, which will focus on the AFAs, will be undertaken through Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management ('CFRAM') Studies for release in 2015.

There are four AFA's identified in County Carlow, Carlow Town, Leighlinbridge, Bagenalstown/Muinebheag and Tullow.

10.5.3 The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The DoEHLG in conjunction with the OPW published guidelines for Planning Authorities in November 2009 entitled '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*'. The guidelines introduce comprehensive mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. Planning Authorities must implement these guidelines in ensuring that, where relevant, flood risk is a key consideration in preparing Development Plans and in the assessment of planning applications. The following must be considered when assessing planning applications but also indicated in Development Plans and Local Area Plans;

- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding
- Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off
- Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains
- Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth
- Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management
- Substitute less vulnerable uses where avoidance is not possible
- Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible

The Council will assess planning applications for developments located in Flood Zones in accordance with the provisions of these Guidelines and must also use flood risk evaluation and flood risk mapping to inform land use zoning. The Council will ensure that only developments consistent with the overall policy and technical approaches of these Guidelines will be approved and permission may be refused where flood issues have not been, or cannot be, addressed successfully and where the presence of unacceptable residual flood risks to the development, its occupants or users and adjoining property remains. These guidelines also require Planning Authorities to undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and enable it to act as a guidance document to inform decision making on land use zoning and general flood risk issues where required and relevant. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanies this plan and is contained within Appendix 7.

10.5.4 Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, introduced the discretionary objective to carry out flood risk assessment for the purpose of regulating, restricting and controlling development in areas at risk of flooding.

10.5.5 Flood Hazards in County Carlow

There are a number of potential sources of flood hazards in the county:

Fluvial Flooding

Carlow has an extensive network of rivers which traverse the county and therefore there are many areas vulnerable to fluvial flooding from rivers. Fluvial flooding occurs when the capacity of the watercourse is exceeded or the channel is blocked or restricted. The excess water spills out from the channel onto adjacent low-lying areas (the flood plain).

Pluvial Flooding

This type of flooding occurs when the amount of rainfall exceeds the infiltration capacity of the ground or drainage system to absorb it.

Groundwater Flooding

Groundwater flooding occurs where the level of water stored in the ground rises as a result of prolonged rainfall and flows out over the ground.

10.5.6 Managing Flood Risk

It is an objective of the Plan to carry out flood risk assessment for the purpose of regulating, restricting and controlling development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the discretionary objective provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Flood risk management will be carried out during the preparation of the town Development Plan, local areas plans and when assessing planning applications. The guidelines indicate that the precautionary principle should be applied to flood risk management to reflect uncertainties in flooding datasets and risk assessment techniques and also the ability to predict future climate and performance of existing flood defences. Developments should be designed with careful consideration of possible future changes in flood risk, including the effects of climate change so that future occupants are not subject to unacceptable risks.

10.5.7 Development Management

The Council will implement the requirements of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, OPW, 2009) when assessing planning applications for development proposals where flood risk may be an issue. The key requirements for the management of development in areas at risk of flooding are:

Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment

Planning applications for development proposals within, or incorporating, areas at moderate to high risk of flooding will require a site-specific and appropriately detailed flood risk assessment. The detail required in the assessment will depend on the level of risk and scale of development and the flood risk. The detailed site-specific flood risk assessment should quantify the risks and the effects of any necessary mitigation, together

with the measures needed or proposed to manage residual risks. Information in relation to, and the requirements of site-specific flood risk assessment and potential sources of information, is contained in the Technical Appendices of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009). This must be submitted by the applicant.

Development Management Justification Test

Where the Council is considering proposals for new development in areas at high or moderate risk of flooding that include types of development that are vulnerable to flooding and that would generally be inappropriate, the Council must be satisfied that the development satisfies all of the criteria of the Development Management Justification test as set out in Section 5.15 of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009). Inappropriate development that does not meet the criteria of the Justification Test will not be approved within the development management process.

Mitigation

Any proposal in an area at moderate or high risk of flooding that is considered acceptable in principle must demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place and that residual risks can be managed to acceptable levels. Addressing flood risk in the design of new development should consider the following:

- Locating development away from areas at risk of flooding, where possible
- Substituting more vulnerable land uses with less vulnerable uses
- Identifying and protecting land required for current and future flood risk management, such as conveyance routes, flood storage areas and flood protection schemes etc
- Addressing the need for effective emergency response planning for flood events in areas of new development

Site layout, landscape planning and drainage of new development must be closely integrated to play an effective role in flood-reduction. As such, proposals should clearly indicate:

- The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water run-off
- Water conveyancing routes free of barriers such as walls or buildings
- The signing of floodplain areas to indicate the shared use of the land and to identify safe access routes
- To ensure that adequate measures are put in place to deal with residual risks, proposals should demonstrate the use of flood-resistant construction measures that are aimed at preventing water from entering a building and that mitigate the damage floodwater causes to buildings

Alternatively, designs for flood resilient construction may be adopted where it can be demonstrated that entry of floodwater into buildings is preferable to limit damage caused by floodwater and allow relatively quick recovery. Such measures include the design and specification of internal building services and finishes. Further detail on flood resilience and flood resistance are included in the Technical Appendices of the Planning System

and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009).

Minor proposals for development, for example small extensions to existing houses of change in use, in areas at moderate to high risk of flooding should be assessed in accordance with Planning Guidelines: The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009).

Where flood risk constitutes a significant environmental effect of a proposal, a sub-threshold Environmental Impact Statement may be triggered. Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment should be an integral part of the planning applications in areas at risk of flooding.

Env. – Objective 3

- To carry out flood risk assessment for the purpose of regulating, restricting and controlling development in areas at risk of flooding and to minimise the level of flood risk to people, business, infrastructure and the environment through the identification and management of existing and potential future flood risk
- Lower tier plans shall undertake Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009)
- To apply the sequential approach which is based on the principles of avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risks when preparing town development plans and local area plans and when assessing planning applications for development proposals
- To require the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage for new development or extensions to existing developments
- To preserve appropriately sized riparian strips alongside river channels free of development and of adequate width to permit access for river maintenance
- To ensure that all development proposals comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DEHLG and OPW 2009) and to ensure that the Justification Test for Development Management is applied to required development proposals and in accordance with methodology set out in the guidelines
- To have regard to any future flood hazard maps, flood risk maps and flood risk management plans prepared as part of the South-East Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study
- To facilitate the provision of necessary suitable flood risk management infrastructure by the Office of Public Works, the Local Authority or private developers, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and development management standards
- To ensure that where flood protection or alleviation works take place that the natural and cultural heritage and rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced. Such works will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive

- To ensure that development proposals in areas at moderate (Flood Zone B) or high (Flood Zone A) risk of flooding which are considered acceptable in principle demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place and that residual risks can be managed to acceptable levels
- Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular Flood Zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks. The Council shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Study in the assessment of planning applications
- To ensure new development does not increase flood risk elsewhere including that which may arise from surface water run-off
- It is the policy of the Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010) and the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Carlow County Council will also take account of the South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study
- Protect water bodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate. For larger river channels (over 10m), the recommended width of the core riparian zone (CZR) is 35-60m (18-30m on each side of the river) and may be larger where flood plains adjoin the riparian zone. For smaller channels (under 10m), a core riparian zone (CZR) of 20m or greater (minimum 10m on each side of the river) is recommended.
- Where resources are available and subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Council will contribute towards the improvement and/or restoration of the natural flood risk management functions of flood plains



CHAPTER ELEVEN

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER ELEVEN – DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

11.0 INTRODUCTION

Development Management is one of the main implementation tools of the County Development Plan and its Core Strategy. The purpose of this chapter of the Plan is to encourage the creation of living and working environments of the highest quality by ensuring a high standard of design, layout and function for all development, to conserve and build upon positive elements in the built and natural environment, and to protect amenities. This is in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, which is designed ‘*to make provision in the interests of the common good, for the proper planning and sustainable development*’ of areas. Development Management, including all applications for planning permission, will be exercised by the Council in a positive manner, having regard to the provisions of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000, as amended, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2013 and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the County, its amenities and the Council’s policies and objectives.

The purpose of this section of the Plan is, firstly, to give general guidance to applicants on the criteria used by the Planning Authority to assess planning applications and secondly, to give guidance on criteria that will be applied in assessing particular types of development. While it is not an exhaustive list of every type of development, it contains the more frequent type of planning applications received by the Planning Authority. Reference to other agencies and national guidelines is also made and these should be taken into consideration. However, it should not be assumed that compliance with the standards contained herein will automatically or necessarily result in a granting of planning permission, since the standards are merely a statement of general principles. Decisions regarding individual applications for development rest with the Planning Authority and will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with circumstances at the time an application is submitted.

Developers are advised to consult with the Planning Authority prior to the preparation of detailed plans. There may be instances where a conflict will arise between various policy objectives, and in such cases all issues will be assessed in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

11.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

This Chapter sets out the general guidance on the criteria used by the Planning Authority to assess planning applications and gives guidance on criteria that will be applied in assessing particular types of development, particularly in relation to the following areas:

- Residential Development Management Guidelines
- Commercial Development
- Industrial Development
- Agricultural Development
- Advertising / Advertisements Signs / Lighting
- Community
- Transport
- Renewable Energy Developments
- Telecommunications
- Extraction Industry
- Archaeology
- Obsolete Structures
- Rights of Way

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Pre-application discussion is encouraged and advised as it can eliminate delays at future stages of the planning process, particularly in the case of large developments and the development of sites in sensitive areas
- Sustainability & Social Infrastructure are major considerations in planning applications as are issues such as impact on amenity, traffic safety, noise, local infrastructure and the environment
- Retention and refurbishment of existing structures, particularly in the open countryside, is favoured over demolition and new build, where practical and reasonable
- The use, scale, siting and design of new developments should be sympathetic to their surroundings. Integration of proposals into the landscape is most desirable and the removal of hedgerows and other natural features should only be proposed, if otherwise unavoidable
- The emphasis is on high quality in materials, design and landscaping
- Simplicity in materials, design and finishes should be incorporated

11.1.1 County Plan and Local Area Plans

The County Development Plan is the overarching document for the County area. Separate Local Area Plans have been prepared for various settlements in the County. These plans are consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan, and contain objectives for zoning of land and other objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the particular town or village.

11.1.2 Design Statements

The design of schemes should promote best practice in architectural design, consistent with the aims of the “Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015’ (DoEHLG, 2009). The Planning Authority will require all planning applications for 20 or more dwellings or commercial / industrial developments over 1,000 m² to include a ‘Design Statement’. A ‘Design Statement’ is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most suitable for a particular site. The

statement will usually consist of both text and graphics, but is not intended to duplicate planning application documents. It may be of special value in explaining why the context requires an exceptional – rather than a conventional – design approach. The statement should address all relevant Development Plan or local area plan design policies and objectives, and relate them to the site. The design statement could outline a justification for the development as proposed and any alternative design options considered.

11.1.3 Visual Impact Assessments / Photomontages

The Planning Authority will generally require Visual Impact Assessments (VIA's) to be completed to illustrate the visual impact of proposals likely to have an impact on protected views and other views of special amenity value. Failure to properly assess any major proposal in this regard will normally result in further information being requested. Visual Impact Assessment will be required for sites that lie within or towards views of:

- Landmark building viewing corridors
- Landmark buildings within panoramic views
- River Prospects
- Areas of outstanding landscape or townscape value

The impact of developments on important views and vistas can be accurately evaluated with CAD generated views and photomontage models. This technique allows an accurate representation of the proposed development to be superimposed on its actual surroundings, thus enabling the scale, massing and heights of proposed developments to be assessed in relation to their context.

11.1.4 Environmental Impact Assessment

Certain developments may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement at application stage, if the development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The full list of projects and threshold limits for EIA development are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. Regard shall also be had to the Draft Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment issued by the DoECLG July 2012. Sub-threshold development which is deemed to be likely to have a significant effect on the environment will also be required to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement.

11.1.5 Habitat Directive Assessment / Natura Impact Statement

Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a process of the assessment of the likely significant effects of every plan or project on the Natura 2000 network and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. The Natura 2000 network consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) both within the county and within a 15km radius of same. An Appropriate Assessment of proposed development is required in cases where it cannot be discounted that the proposed development would have a significant effect on a European site. It is the responsibility of the Planning Authority to screen proposed developments to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required. Where the Authority determines that an Appropriate Assessment is required, the applicant should submit an ecological report to enable the Planning Authority to carry out the necessary Appropriate Assessment. However where the Stage

1 Appropriate Assessment cannot screen out possible impacts on a European site, the applicant will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) with the planning application. Where the applicant considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, it is open to him/her to submit a NIS with the planning application. The screening, scoping and carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities 2009.

If the boundary of a site falls within 100 metres of a watercourse / stream / drain, a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report will be required with a planning application, carried out by a fully qualified ecologist.

11.1.6 Universal Access

The Local Authority is committed to the principle of Universal Access and will promote access for Persons with Disabilities and the Mobility Impaired. Carlow County Council recognises the need for equality of access for everybody to all aspects of the built and external environment as an essential prerequisite of equal opportunities and the development of an inclusive society. Carlow County Council will have regard to the National Disability Authority's guidelines on access and will seek to encourage the implementation of best practice standards with regard to access.

Part M of the Building Regulations sets out standards to ensure that buildings are accessible and usable by everyone, including the aged, people with disabilities and people with children. The Technical Guidance Document in relation to Part M provides guidance on the access requirements for public buildings and for residential dwellings.

All new commercial and public developments (including public places and facilities) shall provide access for persons with disabilities and those who are mobility impaired, incorporated into the design of the building as an integral part of the proposal. The Council, in all its developments, will make provision for accessibility for all persons with particular regard for measures to enhance access for persons with mobility and visual impairment.

11.1.7 Flood Risk Management

The Council will have regard to the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Local Authorities (DEHLG and OPW 2009) when preparing Development Plans and Local Area Plans and when assessing planning applications. The key requirements for the management of development in areas at risk of flooding include:

- All development proposals within or incorporating areas at moderate to high risk of flooding will require site specific and appropriately detailed Flood Risk Assessments
- All development proposals within or incorporating areas at moderate or high risk of flooding will require the developer to show how the Development Management Justification Test in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) was applied to the site

- Demonstration by the applicant that the sequential approach was applied in site layout and design where their development is acceptable. Proposals shall also demonstrate that mitigation and management measures can be put in place and that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere

11.1.8 Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS)

The Local Authority will require the use of SuDS in the design of new developments in the County. The use of SuDS will control the release of water run-off in a carefully managed way, will improve the quality of surface water run-off and will seek to ensure that the risk to the receiving water from pollution is minimised. All new developments should be designed to ensure:

The on-site collection of surface water separate from foul water;

- Surface water is appropriately collected on site to prevent flow onto the public roadway, adjoining properties or into the public foul sewer / sewage treatment plant
- The appropriate on-site disposal of surface water where the scale and amount of water generated makes this feasible for example through soak pits. For larger scale developments, it may be necessary to demonstrate through soil and subsoil tests that the site is capable of absorbing the surface water generated
- Where on-site disposal is not feasible and discharge to surface waters is necessary, that the system has been designed in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage measures (SuDS) and in particular, that run-off has been attenuated to green field conditions
- Discharges to water courses shall be channelled through adequately sized filters / interceptors for suspended solids and petrol/oils prior to discharge

11.2 URBAN DESIGN

Sustainable communities have a high quality natural and built environment. They are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. Planning for future housing must take account of the needs of a modern, dynamic and multi-cultural society, reflecting a diversity of housing needs. Reference should be made to the Urban Design Manual – A best practice guide (2009), Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007), Design Manual, Urban Roads and Streets (2014) and Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005).

Sustainability involves the construction of homes that are structurally sound, energy efficient, environmentally friendly and adaptable over time to changing household needs. Best use must be made of the County's and Town's land resources in the construction of new housing schemes by integrating housing provision with necessary transport and other

physical infrastructure, social infrastructure and amenities. Developers are required to demonstrate the integration of all development proposals in terms of water, waste water, storm water, roads, footpaths, public lighting, E.S.B., telephone cables, cable television, internet provision etc. into existing public services. Where the linkages are missing, the Council will provide for development levies to ensure the linkages.

DDS - Policy 1

It is the policy of the Local Authority to:

- Encourage the establishment and maintenance of high quality sustainable residential communities

11.2.1 Qualities of Urban Design

Design is a creative, intuitive and subjective process. For planning to promote good design, it needs to guide and control the physical form of development. By guiding the physical form of development, the Planning Authority seeks to achieve quality defined by the attributes listed below. Good urban design is rarely brought about by a Local Authority prescribing physical solutions, or by setting rigid or empirical design standards but by approaches which emphasise design objectives or principles.

The physical form of development can be described under the following headings:

Layout: urban structure

The framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one other. The layout provides the basic plan on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend.

Layout: urban grain

The pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement. The degree to which an area's pattern of blocks and plot subdivisions is respectively small and frequent (fine grain), or large and infrequent (coarse grain). The Local Authority will work with development retailers to achieve a high design standard which respects retailers needs and site characteristics – incorporating flexibility and innovation. Where possible, construction materials should be sourced locally.

Landscape

The character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, colours and elements, and the way these components combine. This includes all open space, including its planting, boundaries and treatment.

Density and mix

The amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development, and in combination with the mix of uses can affect a place's vitality and viability. The density of a development can be expressed in a number of ways. This could be in terms of plot ratio (particularly for commercial developments), number of dwellings, or the number of habitable rooms (for residential developments).

Scale: height

Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines

the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines. Height can be expressed in terms of the number of floors; height of parapet or ridge; overall height; any of these in combination; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

Scale: massing

The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces. Massing is the three-dimensional expression of the amount of development on a given piece of land.

Appearance: details

The craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure. This includes all building elements such as openings and bays; entrances and colonnades; balconies and roofscape; and the rhythm of the facade.

Appearance: materials

The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials, and how they are used. The richness of a building lies in its use of materials which contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of an area. Successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities tend to have characteristics in common. There is considerable overlap between the objectives and they are mutually reinforcing.

11.2.1.1 Building Height

The following are issues to be considered when designing a building in terms of height;

- Overshadowing and consequent loss of light caused to surrounding property
- Overlooking (particularly of residential property) and consequent loss of privacy to surrounding premises
- Disruption of scale of the streetscape
- Does it detract from historic buildings or spaces or important landmarks?
- Effect on existing buildings having special value (for example, a spire, dome, tower or other high building)
- Views obscured
- Obtrusion on the skyline
- Scale of the building in relation to its open spaces and buildings
- Is site large enough to give visual transition
- Purpose or civic importance of the building
- Effect on micro-climate
- The need to create a positive urban design
- Analyse impact at town wide and at a local scale

Where in the opinion of the Planning Authority, a location for a tall building is acceptable, the building itself should be of outstanding architectural quality, creating a building which is elegant, contemporary, stylish, and in terms of form and profile, makes a positive contribution to the existing skyline.

11.2.2 Aspects of quality

The Planning Authority wishes to guide and control development in order to achieve the following qualities in the design:

Character

A place with its own identity.

To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

Continuity and Enclosure

A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished.

To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.

Quality of the Public Realm

A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas.

To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

Ease of Movement

A place that is easy to get to and move through.

To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

Legibility

A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.

To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.

Adaptability

A place that can change easily.

To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Diversity

A place with variety and choice.

To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

11.2.3 Green Infrastructure

All new proposals seeking planning permission should address, as much as is reasonably possible best practice sustainable solutions and a sustainable site design, with emphasis on the following:

- The proposal should address how existing natural features of the site will inform sustainable urban design, by exploring the potential for the integration of existing natural features of merit such as watercourses, mature planting and topography. Such an approach ensures that the landscape character of the area is maintained whilst also assisting biodiversity maintenance and more natural forms of surface water drainage
- Effectively, the layout of the proposed development will be informed by the inherent natural characteristics of the site. Connectivity between proposed open spaces and adjoining existing open space or natural features should also be considered in the site design
- Proposals in relation to larger sites should be cognisant of any ecologically sensitive areas where it may be appropriate to retain or integrate into a landscape plan

- Ensure that any new development will not damage, degrade, fragment or prejudice the green infrastructure development.

11.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Planning applications for residential development shall have regard to the following standards, guidelines and policies of the Development Plan.

11.3.1 New Residential Development in Urban Areas

Applicants for residential development in urban areas are referred to the following documents which will be used, inter alia, by the Planning Authority in assessing such applications:

- ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ DEHLG May 2009 and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide’
- ‘Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities’ DEHLG 2007 and associated guidelines
- ‘Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities’ DEHLG 2007
- ‘Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas’ DEHLG 1998
- ‘Traffic Management Guidelines’ Department of Transport and the Dublin Transportation Office, 2003
- ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments’ Guidelines for Planning Authorities, September 2007
- ‘Manual for streets’ UL Department of Transport, 2007

Definition: A housing estate for the purpose of these standards will comprise of 5 or more new dwellings.

Best Practice Design Guide criteria which shall be used to guide appropriate development are summarised below:

1. Context: How does the development respond to its surroundings?
2. Connections: How well is the new neighbourhood / site connected?
3. Inclusivity: How easily can people use and access the development?
4. Variety: How does the development promote a good mix of activities?
5. Efficiency: How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?
6. Distinctiveness: How do the proposals create a sense of place?
7. Layout: How does the proposal create people-friendly streets and spaces?
8. Public realm: How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?
9. Adaptability: How will the buildings cope with change?
10. Privacy/amenity: How do the buildings provide a decent standard of amenity?
11. Parking: How will the parking be secure and attractive?
12. Detailed design: How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

The Planning Authority will require a high level of residential amenity conducive to a good quality living environment in new residential developments. The following are general good practice guidelines in the development of housing estates:-

- House design should be simple, visually pleasing with the avoidance of use of too many finishes and over elaborate details. The Design Statement should explain the context of the proposal with the existing urban setting. It should demonstrate a rigorous design process and show why alternative designs and layouts were rejected by the applicant. It should state the rationale why an exceptional or different design approach is taken if applicable
- Provision of a variety (within an overall common theme) of house types, sizes, designs, layouts, building lines (staggered/stepped) in any one housing development. Housing estates, particularly large ones should cater for a variety of house types to ensure social mix, large and small detached, semi detached, terraced houses, single storey houses, and apartments. A statement of house mix will be required
- Houses should be designed in such a manner as to minimise overlooking and overshadowing of adjoining residences and to facilitate future extensions to do likewise. Energy-sensitive siting will be encouraged e.g. south facing developments where possible. Sunlight and daylight studies at a number of points in a housing estate will be required
- In the case of detached and semi-detached houses, pedestrian access to the rear should be provided (other than through the house), however the creation of back lanes will not be permitted
- Provision of cul-de-sac developments should be avoided unless they form part of a well connected road network. Connected road networks help reduce the sense of isolation and encourage walking and cycling
- Where open plan estates are proposed, these shall be designed in an integrated manner where the pedestrian has priority. Open plan estates require a better level of road surface treatment such as areas of paviers, cobblelock etc
- Roads should not dominate the layout of development. Long straight roads should be avoided as these can lead to increased vehicular speed. Vehicle speeds should be managed by buildings and space with physical traffic calming measures being only used as a back-up measure. Well-designed spaces can effectively filter traffic without the need for speed humps or other measures. Details and constructional drawings of watermains, sewer, telecommunication and fibre technology will be required
- New housing developments will be required to provide for visitor car parking as per standards set out below
- Through traffic should be eliminated through the provision of a road hierarchy (as detailed below) where possible. Housing layouts, which give priority to the pedestrian, are preferable
- Adequate and strategically located open space (standards outlined below) fully landscaped with safe pedestrian access is required including appropriate amenity areas, children's play areas and incidental amenity spaces
- Possible linkages with existing and future residential developments and community and service facilities will be encouraged whether by pedestrian links,

cycle ways or locating open space adjacent to existing development subject to good design and high levels of natural surveillance for safety and security. The applicant will be required to submit an assessment of the connectivity of the proposal with existing development and facilities

- In the provision and design of pedestrian links, unlit long narrow straight links with high walls either side, between or at the rear of properties should be avoided
- Residential development adjacent to watercourses shall be designed to address the watercourse by fronting dwellings to the river. Proposals shall incorporate suitable public walkway to safety standards by the river with a view to linkages with existing settlements

11.3.1.1 Construction Standards

Standards for site development works and, in particular, footpaths, sewers, drains and water supply shall be in accordance with the Building Regulations and the *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (1998) published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

In addition the following are the requirements of the Planning Authority:

- Road carriageway construction shall be of flexible type with bituminous surface or other approved paving
- All pavement kerbs shall be ramped at pedestrian crossing points to facilitate ease of access
- Grids on gullies shall be of lockable type and shall be set at right angles to the roadway
- Nameplates to streets and estates to a standard satisfactory to the Planning Authority shall be provided and erected. The proposed name of the housing estate should be lodged with the planning application. All nameplates shall be bilingual, preferably making use of established local places names
- Street furniture should be carefully located so as not to obstruct footpath users with prams or wheelchairs
- Traffic signs shall be provided as required by the Planning Authority
- All sewers to be taken in charge by the Planning Authority shall have a minimum diameter of 225mm

The Planning Authority will normally require that all wires and cables for the provision of public utility services shall be ducted underground to preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety.

11.3.1.2 Daylighting and Solar Gain

The creation of a satisfactory microclimate for a housing scheme requires a balance between the provision of wind shelter and optimising the availability of daylight, sunlight and solar gain. The orientation of the dwelling on site, the internal layout of the dwelling and window orientation, can affect significantly the level of daylighting within the dwelling and the impact of solar gain on internal temperature. Where feasible, the main habitable rooms should have south and / or west facades. It is also desirable that bedrooms have a southerly or easterly aspect. Circulation and ancillary areas may be located on the north side. For all dwellings, including apartments, at least one main living room should be facing within 90° of due south. As high a proportion as practicable of the

glazed areas of the dwelling should be facing within 30° of due south so as to maximise solar gain. The amount of north facing glazing should be minimised. Depending on site layout and degree of over shading by trees or other buildings in summertime, it may be necessary to make provision for shading against excessive solar gain. For rooms likely to experience high levels of solar gain, at least some elements of the room enclosure should have high thermal capacity, e.g., masonry or concrete components.

11.3.1.3 Rain Water Harvesting

Rainwater Harvesting is the collection and storage of rain from roofs or from a surface catchment for future use. The water is generally stored in rainwater tanks or directed into mechanisms which recharge groundwater.

Rainwater Harvesting in urban areas can have a number of benefits, and harvested rainwater can be used for flushing toilets, watering gardens and washing laundry. In a number of countries houses away from the larger towns and cities routinely rely on rainwater collected from roofs as the only source of water for all household activities.

Traditionally, rainwater harvesting has been practised in arid and semi-arid areas of the world, and has provided drinking water, domestic water, water for livestock, water for small irrigation and a way to replenish ground water levels.

As rainwater may be contaminated, it is not considered suitable for drinking without treatment. Rainwater harvested from roofs can contain animal and bird faeces, mosses and lichens, windblown dust, and other unpleasant materials, the highest concentrations occurring in the first rain immediately after a dry spell. The concentration of contaminants is reduced significantly by diverting the initial flow of water to waste. Devices to achieve this are commonly known as 'first-flush' diverters, and are used to increase the chance that the large-particle residue that might accumulate on the collection surface is washed away from (and not into) the storage tank. Such a system also compensates for the fact that the initial minutes of a rainfall can include airborne pollutants being washed from the sky, and likewise minimizes contamination of the captured supply. Simple but regular inspection and maintenance of such a device is usually necessary.

11.3.2 Site Coverage

The purpose of site coverage control is to prevent over-development, to avoid overshadowing and to protect rights to light of adjoining properties. The maximum normal site coverage for uses in all areas is 65%. In some cases, a higher percentage may be allowed, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the site. Site coverage = Ground floor area divided by gross site area.

11.3.3 Plot Ratio

Plot ratio is the relationship between site area and the total floor area of the buildings erected on it. The plot ratio is calculated by dividing the gross floor area of the building by the site area. Plot ratio = Gross Floor Area divided by gross site area. The purpose of plot ratio is to prevent adverse effects of both over-development and under-development

on the amenity and the layout of buildings, to achieve desirable massing and height of buildings, to balance the capacity of the site and street frontages. A maximum plot ratio of 1.0 is set for the county. The Planning Authority will permit higher plot ratios only in cases where exceptional standards of design are achieved. Local Area Plans may apply higher plot ratios to certain locations if it is warranted on planning grounds.

11.3.4 Density

The emphasis in County Carlow will be on providing quality-housing environments based on innovation and a design led approach. Local Area Plans may designate maximum or minimum densities particular to the areas for which plans are being prepared depending on the particular planning issues relevant at the time of making the plans. Densities will be decided on in the context of the policies and objectives as set out in the relevant Local Area Plan for any particular location. A high standard of architectural design and layout will be required. The Planning Authority will seek to ensure that new developments have individuality and a sense of place, which is generated by the interaction between the physical characteristics and features of the site and its surroundings and the layout, landscaping and design of the new housing. Residential density will be determined in principle by reference to the good urban design referred to above in conjunction with the following factors: -

- Existing densities in adjoining residential areas
- Compliance with quantitative and qualitative standards
- Capacity of the infrastructure to absorb the demands created by the development
- The extent to which the site may, due to its size, scale and location, propose its own density and character, having regard to the need to protect the established character and amenities of existing adjoining residential areas
- Existing topographical, landscape or other features on the site
- The capacity of the infrastructure, including social and community facilities, to absorb the demands created by the development

11.3.5 Design

Any new housing must show how the proposed design relates to the principles of urban design from the document ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ May 2009 and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide’

Applications for housing in urban areas should adhere to the following;

- Submit a design statement with the detail of this statement proportionate to the size or complexity of the proposed development
- Show how the proposal promotes sustainable approaches to housing developments by spatial planning, layout, design and detailed specification
- Demonstrate how the development has provided a housing mix to cater for different household types and age groups and caters for affordability
- Demonstrate consideration of the housing needs of persons with disabilities, special needs and elderly within the proposal and that it is guided by the principles of “universal design”
- Submit a mobility and disability statement for the proposed development

11.3.6 Open Space in New Residential Development

Integrated pleasant, attractive and landscaped open space should form an intrinsic element of new residential development. The County Council will not normally permit new residential development unless open space is provided within the development to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population or greater. Where a proposed development is located in close proximity to an established park area or zoned open space this may be relaxed depending on the nature and quality of existing provision. This relaxation will only be considered where the development pays a financial contribution towards the improvement of the open space so as to improve its quality and carrying capacity. Developers will be required to make suitable provision for the future management and maintenance of open space where spaces and facilities are not taken in charge by the Local Authority. Reduced provisions may only be acceptable in urban locations where there are more sustainable patterns of development and maximum use can be made of urban land or redevelopment schemes where open space is already available. With relatively high densities such as townhouses or apartments, good quality landscaped open space should be provided. Open space provision for smaller residential developments and schemes catering for special needs such as accommodation for the elderly will be considered more flexibly on its merits and having regard to the requirements of likely future residents. Adequate areas of open space should be an integral part of any new residential development to meet the needs generated by that development. In developments, which are adjacent to and provide for easy access to significant areas of existing public open space, a lesser standard of provision may be acceptable.

All open spaces proposed by developers should be designed and set out so as to ensure a high standard and consistency with good design and layout practice. The Planning Authority will normally expect all public open space provision to take account of the following general principles:

- Public open space should be provided in a comprehensive and linked way and designed as an integral part of the development, rather than as an afterthought
- Wherever possible the majority of open space should be multi-functional. Areas providing for informal amenity and children's play can often successfully be combined
- Public open space should be well designed from a visual perspective as well as functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings within the residential area
- Attractive natural features should be protected and incorporated into open space areas
- Public open space areas should be provided with a maximum amount of surveillance from dwellings within the estate
- Open space should be suitably proportioned and narrow tracts, which are difficult to manage, are not acceptable
- The use of hard landscaping elements such as paving or cobbled areas should play an increasingly important role in the design and presentation of open space concepts

- The provision of open space to serve new residential developments should be on a hierarchical basis varying in size from large regional parks to small children's play area and passive recreation spaces close to peoples' homes

To ensure implementation of open space provision, the Council will attach appropriate planning conditions to permissions, and where necessary will enter into agreements with developers. These will provide for the laying out and landscaping of open space areas in accordance with a details scheme to be agreed with the Council.

11.3.6.1 Public Open Space

Public open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. It provides passive as well as active amenity and has important ecological and environmental aspects. In calculating the area of the open space, the area of roads, grass margins, roundabouts, footpaths and visibility splays shall not be taken into account. Developers will be required to make provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development as an integral element of their proposals. Such provision should include direct provision on or off site or a development levy to enable the Council to make appropriate alternative provision. It is an objective that where residentially zoned lands linked to / dependant on the amenity of lands zoned for recreation and amenity purposes are proposed to be developed – the lands zoned for recreation and amenity will simultaneously be made available for that purpose. Such development applications shall detail how this availability will be achieved including a timeframe.

11.3.6.2 Play Space

A standard of a minimum of 10 sq. m. of dedicated playable space per residential unit is to be provided as an integral part of each new development. This playable space can form part of the overall open space provision of a development but must be dedicated to play. This space is to be distributed throughout the development and should take into account the presence or lack of existing off-site provision. The total space requirement should be broken down into the relevant typologies taking account of the maximum walking distances from residential units given below. All children and young people should have access to play space which should be within a reasonable and safe walking distance from home. To ensure that children and young people are guaranteed this access to play space the following standards should be observed when new residential developments are being laid out:

Play Space Type Maximum walking distance from residential unit

Doorstep Playable Space 100m²

Local Playable Space 400m²

Neighbourhood Playable Space 800m²

Youth Space 800m²

Doorstep playable space suitable for younger children can be included in smaller areas while the other play spaces will require larger areas. The doorstep playable space should be laid out to include a mixture of fixed equipment such as rockers, cradle swings,

carousels, slides and junior multi units together with the use of sand, water and other materials for creative play. The use and manipulation of a site's topography and existing features such as trees, rocks, water courses etc. should be an integral part of the creation of the play space. The local playable space should include a mixture of rockers, swings, carousels, multi units, space nets and balance beams among other items of fixed equipment suitable for children up to 12 years of age together with the use of sand, water and other materials for creative play. The use and manipulation of a site's topography and existing features such as trees, rocks, water courses etc. should be an integral part of the creation of the play space. A neighbourhood playable space should be an extension of both the doorstep and local playable space with a wider range of play equipment and range of play opportunities providing a challenging, stimulating play environment. Youth space should include detailed proposals to provide for the recreational requirements of young people over 12 from an area. Any set of proposals shall take into account the existing level of provision in the surrounding area and will attempt to deal with existing deficiencies. The provision of playable space will be required as part of the overall Framework plan for any new residential development. It should be included in the proposed development from the outset to ensure that there is clarity about the location, size and function of facilities.

11.3.6.3 Private Open Space

An adequate amount of private open space should be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling, in order to ensure that most household activities are accommodated and at the same time offers visual delight, receive some sunshine and encourage plant growth. The boundaries of rear gardens should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier with a minimum height of 1.4 metres. Where rear gardens back onto public areas, excluding a public roadway, this height should be increased to 1.8 metres. It should be noted that in the case of apartments and duplex apartments private open space will be provided in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards, terraces/patios and balconies. Roof gardens will also be considered provided they are easily accessible, secure and attractively landscaped. The following private open space requirements apply:

Type of Unit	Minimum Required Open Space
3/4/5 bedroom house	60-75m ²
1/2 bedroom house	48m ²

11.3.7 Bin Storage Standards

Each residential unit shall have adequate storage for three wheeled bins. Residential units with no rear access shall provide adequate storage for the bins to the front of the development, in contained units. In apartment schemes, bin storage shall generally be on the ground floor level of development, be adequately ventilated, screened from public view and adjacent to the block it serves. Where appropriate, the bin storage area shall be a separate structure to the apartment building.

11.3.8 Separation Distance between Houses

A minimum of 2.6 metres shall be provided between the side walls of detached, semi-detached and end of terrace dwellings to ensure privacy and ease of access. A property boundary should ideally occur mid-way along this dimension.

11.3.9 Boundary Treatment of House Sites

Where the front flank or rear boundaries of house sites abut roads, pedestrian ways or public open space, suitably designed boundary walls shall be provided. All boundary walls shall be of cement block, rendered and plastered on both sides and capped appropriately.

Generally boundary walls shall be 2 metres high and shall be provided along the rear garden boundary of each dwelling and along both side boundaries extending from the rear boundary to the front building line. The finish of the walls shall be consistent with the external finishes of the dwelling house or of a sympathetic material.

Proposals for alternative boundary treatment such as planting combined with appropriate fencing will only be considered in exceptional circumstances if it can be demonstrated that it will “soften” the development.

11.3.10 Parking

Car parking for detached and semi-detached housing should be within the house site and not on the public road. Car parking for apartments and terraced housing should be in informal groups overlooked by housing units. The visual impact of large areas of car parking should be reduced by the judicious use of screen planting, low walls and the use of textured or coloured paving for parking bays.

11.3.11 Naming of Housing Developments

It is the policy of the Council that the naming of new residential development should reflect the local and historical context of its siting as far as possible such as local names which reflect the landscape, its features, culture or history of the area in which the development is located. Also considered will be the names of historical persons associated with the area. All naming of new developments should be in Irish only or in Irish and English. The naming of residential developments shall be approved by the Planning Authority prior to the launching of any advertising campaign for a development.

11.3.12 Part V

Part V as set out in Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) applies to lands zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses. The Planning Authority in implementing Part V will have regard to the Housing Strategy in place for the County at the time of implementation and the zoning objectives for the sites concerned. At pre-planning stage, discussions should take place regarding compliance with the requirements of Part V. These guidelines recommend that an agreement in principle on compliance should be reached in advance of any planning application being lodged.

11.3.13 Street Lighting

Lighting shall be provided in accordance with guidelines contained in *Recommendations for Site Development Works in Housing Areas* published by DoEHLG. Street lighting in

residential schemes will normally be required to comply with the ESB's publications *Public Lighting in Residential Estates*. All new street lighting should use LED bulbs.

11.3.14 Development Contributions

Carlow County Council, taking into consideration the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of infrastructure, will require financial contributions by way of conditions attached to planning permissions in relation to drainage, roads, open space and car parking which facilitate the proposed development. The amount of financial charge will be in accordance with the relevant development contribution scheme. Contributions may also be required by way of a special contribution condition attached to planning permissions towards the cost of any public service or project which is carried out that is of benefit to the proposed development. Carlow County Council will liaise and co-operate with the promoters of development to ensure that contributions are fully made and in a manner which respects the requirements of all parties. It will be necessary to review the scale of development contributions during the Plan period in order to ensure that the required facilities for development are provided.

11.3.15 Bonds

To ensure that developments undertaken by the private developers are satisfactorily completed developers will be required to provide cash deposits or submit a bond from an insurance company or other financial institution acceptable to the Planning Authority for the satisfactory completion of developments and their ancillary services. This bond or surety is to be submitted before development is commenced and shall not be released until the estate has been taken in charge by the Local Authority.

11.3.16 Taking in Charge of Residential Developments

Carlow County Council will endeavour to take in charge developments as soon as is possible, in conjunction with the compliance of development conditions and in accordance with Carlow County Council's Taking In Charge Policy.

11.4 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – SERVICED SITES

To help strengthen and consolidate the settlement structure and reverse the decline in the smaller towns and villages in the County, residential serviced sites will be promoted in settlements where services already exist. Residential serviced sites offer a real alternative to individuals wishing to build and design their own houses in small towns and villages rather than the open countryside. Land will be zoned for such purposes through the Local Area Plan process, where considered appropriate.

It is desirable that serviced sites of not less than 0.10 hectares (0.25 acres) are provided on this land, except in exceptional circumstances. Larger sites may be required for housing exceeding 250m² to allow sufficient space for private amenity space, parking and landscaping.

Whilst individual house design on serviced sites is encouraged, the overall design of the scheme must be consistent in terms of boundary treatments and landscaping. House designs and layout features, which are overtly suburban in character, will not be acceptable. Traditional forms and materials appropriate to the setting should be used.

A Master Plan should be produced by the developer showing the overall layout, infrastructure, services and landscaping for the whole of the serviced site during the planning application stage. All future development should be constructed thereafter in accordance with the Master Plan, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

Where there are no sewerage facilities or where the existing facilities are inadequate and there are no immediate plans to improve them, a limited number of one off houses, using treatment systems, may be permitted on suitably sized sites. This would be subject to normal environmental site assessment requirements and the sites would be for “local rural persons” only with a “local rural housing need”. The amount and location of these sites would be controlled to ensure that they would not significantly impact on the fabric and character of the village and its sense of identity and place would be retained. The development would also need to ensure the definition of a strong urban edge resulting in a clear distinction between the urban area and open countryside. Where local area plans / zoning maps exist for towns and villages these sites may only be located on suitable zoned lands.

11.5 APARTMENTS

Apartment developments contribute to meeting the range of accommodation needs in a county, can facilitate town and village centre (particularly when located above ground floor commercial and community uses) and can have a positive role in creating attractive new streetscapes in urban areas. The design and layout of new apartments should provide satisfactory accommodation for a variety of household types and sizes – including families with children - over the medium to long term. The Planning Authority will have regard to Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities (DEHLG, 2007) and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2007) when assessing proposals for apartment development. The subdivision of existing dwelling houses into apartments/flats will not generally be permitted within residential estates designed and developed for single family occupancy.

In general, apartments will be required to have the following minimum floor areas measured internal wall to wall:

- One and two bedroom 73m²
- Three bedrooms 90m²
- Four bedrooms 105m²

The above standards also set specific minimum floor areas for different room types and should be adhered to in all developments.

The standards apply to units on one floor; duplexes should provide the additional floor area required to provide for stairways and landings in accordance with the Building Regulations (approximately 10m²). All living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms should minimise overlooking of adjoining / adjacent residences and should be so located so to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls.

11.5.1 Mix of Units

All apartment schemes should provide for a mix of units; comprising of one-bedroom, two-bedroom and family units, to encourage diversity rather than uniformity and as far as possible to relate the kind of housing to the different needs of the population.

11.5.2 Internal Layout

All living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms should minimise overlooking of adjoining / adjacent residences and should be so located so to avoid facing towards nearby high boundary or gable walls. Kitchens should have external windows to provide for natural ventilation.

11.5.3 Apartments Open Space

Private open space can be provided in the form of rear gardens or patios for ground floor units, and balconies at upper levels. It is important that in the latter case adequate semi-private or communal open space, in the form of landscaped areas, should also be provided. Roof gardens offer only limited potential in this regard, due to climatic and safety factors, and should not form the major share of such space. Private open space at ground floor level should receive some sunlight, but also needs some form of screening to ensure privacy. Balconies (or glass-screened “winter gardens”) need to be of a certain minimum width to be useful from an amenity viewpoint, being able to accommodate chairs and a small table. The recommended minimum standards for private open space in this situation will depend on the location of such, as follows;

One bedroom apartment close to town centres - 20m²

Two, three or more bedroom apartment - 25-30m²

While wide balconies might be desirable in certain cases, this has to be balanced against the need to avoid overshadowing the living room. Site conditions, such as elevations facing north or overlooking busy streets, or tall buildings, may diminish the amenity value of balconies. Balconies may not be appropriate in historic areas. In such cases, it will be the designer’s responsibility to provide some form of compensating amenity for the occupants. This might take the form, for instance, of above-average sized living rooms and generous landscaped communal open spaces. Balustrading to balconies should be safe for children. Vertical privacy screens should generally be provided between adjoining balconies.

11.5.4 Daylight and Sunlight

The amount of sunlight reaching an apartment significantly affects the amenity of the occupants. When designing apartments, as many as possible shall be Dual-aspect, as this design maximises the availability of sunlight, but this solution may not always be possible (e.g. with corner units). Single-aspect apartments should allow the main living rooms to face south or west; north-facing units should be excluded. Particular care is needed where windows are located on lower floors which may be overshadowed by

adjoining buildings. The orientation of buildings within the site should maximise energy efficiency.

11.5.5 Entrances and Lobbies to buildings.

Entrances shall be clearly identified. Lobbies should be spacious, welcoming and a form of communal space that contributes to the quality of a development. Lobbies and stairways should be naturally lit and ventilated.

Lifts should be provided for all apartment blocks of three or more storeys. There is a need to provide two lifts where the apartment building has more than six storeys and serve more than 60 apartments, where it would be unreasonable to expect people to climb stairs in the event of a lift breakdown. Lifts should provide access to basement car parks.

11.5.6 Storage Areas and Communal Facilities

Provision should be made in apartments for general storage areas (additional to minimum kitchen presses and bedroom furniture) for bulky items not in daily use, as the table below outlines.

One bedroom 3m²

Two bedrooms / 3 persons 5m²

Two bedrooms / 4 persons 7m²

Three or more bedrooms 9m²

11.5.7 Bicycle Storage

Provision is to be made for inside storage of bicycles, one per bedroom, per apartment, floor to ceiling height distance to be flexible.

11.5.8 Bin Storage

Fuel and bin storage shall be provided in accordance with the Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, Sept 2007 and any subsequent documentation. A communal refuse storage area shall be provided and shall:

1. Be sufficiently sized to satisfy the 3-bin system for the collection of mixed dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste
2. Be laid out to allow for sufficient access for waste collectors, proximity of, or ease of access to, waste storage areas from individual apartments and access by disabled people
3. Have facilities for washing down waste storage areas, with wastewater discharging to the sewer
4. Have appropriate signage and instructions with respect to communal waste storage and collection services
5. Have adequate ventilation of waste storage areas so as to minimise odours and potential nuisance from vermin / flies

11.5.9 Car Parking

2 bedrooms or less per residential unit - 1 space.

3 bedrooms or more per residential unit - 2 spaces.

Note: Where development is likely to involve significant letting, an innovative parking layout should be proposed to accommodate increased car parking within the curtilage of the site above the standards outlined above.

11.5.10 Communal Satellite Dishes

To avoid subsequent demands for the installation of numerous individual satellite dishes on apartment complexes, developers should be encouraged to consider the potential for locating communal dishes as part of the overall design, e.g. at roof level.

11.5.11 Details to accompany planning applications

- All applications for apartment developments shall be accompanied by a summary schedule of all apartment types, sizes, floor areas, principle room areas, etc. in table form (see eg. *Design Standard for New Apartments* (DoELG 2007). This shall form part of a Residential Amenity Assessment Report to accompany the application
- A schedule outlining the construction and completion of works programme, which will relate to the phased sale of properties, will be submitted for approval.
- Planning proposals will be required to include high quality traffic management proposals as part of their application data along with adequate car parking and amenity space provision, waste management plan and landscaping proposals
- Proposals for on-going management of the apartment development are required to be submitted at the planning application stage

11.5.12 Gated Communities

Gated residential developments will generally be discouraged and in most cases will be prohibited as they negate against the Council's vision of a permeable, connected and linked town that encourages integration and generally fail to address the existing streetscape. However only in exceptional circumstances will these be considered, such as nursing homes / care homes.

11.6 HOUSE EXTENSIONS

In assessing an application for a house extension, the Planning Authority will have regard to 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas', 2009 and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide' in considering the existing site density and remaining private open space.

High quality designs for extensions will be required that respect and integrate with the existing dwelling in terms of height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions etc.

The Council will require proposals for extensions to comply with the following guidelines:

- The extension should generally be subordinate to the main building
- The form and design should integrate with the main building, generally following window proportions, detailing and finishes, including texture, materials and colour

- The extension shall be designed to ensure that no overshadowing, overlooking or invasion of privacy of adjacent residential properties occurs. Sunlight and daylight assessment may be required
- Where an extension increases the potential occupancy of the dwelling, the adequacy of the on-site sewage treatment (in unsewered areas) should be demonstrated by the applicant. Where adequacy cannot be demonstrated, the applicant will be required to upgrade the existing on-site wastewater treatment system to comply with the provisions of the EPA's *Code of Practice – Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)* (2009)
- The ability to provide adequate car parking within the curtilage of the house must be demonstrated
- Pitched roofs will be required except on some single storey rear extensions. Flat roof extensions visible from public areas will not normally be permitted
- Extensions will not generally be allowed to break the existing front building line. However a porch extension which does not significantly break the front building line will normally be permitted
- In terrace and semi-detached situations, extensions which significantly protrude beyond the front building line and/or along the full front of the house will not be permitted
- Existing public drains should not be built over, except where the applicant has consulted and agreed with the Area Engineer that the public drain has been safeguarded in the proposed design

11.6.1 Granny Flats & Ancillary Family Accommodation

A 'family' flat refers to a sub-division or extension of a single dwelling unit to accommodate a member of the immediate family and is generally acceptable, provided it is not a separate detached unit and that it is possible to provide direct access to the remainder of the house. There shall be no permanent subdivision of the garden. The flat shall not be let or sold, other than as part of the overall property and shall revert to being part of the original house when no longer occupied by a family member. The design should ensure that the flat forms an integral part of the main dwelling unit capable of reintegration for single family use.

11.6.2 Subdivision of Dwellings

Large areas of suburban residential development in Carlow have retained a pattern of use as single family dwelling units. In many cases the conversion of such dwellings to two or more units could lead to deterioration in the amenities and change in the character of these areas and therefore will not generally be permitted. In other locations, however, principally those along main routes into the towns, the subdivision of large family sized dwellings may be permitted. Such subdivision may involve the subdivision of dwellings into individual distinct units on each floor. Where subdivision is being considered, factors such as the extent of open space within the site boundaries, landscaping schemes including the retention and planting of trees, the provision of onsite parking, the retention of existing railings and gates and screened refuse storage areas will be evaluated as part of the assessment. When subdivisions are allowed, they should be compatible with the

architectural character of the building. An appropriate mix of accommodation in particular areas will be determined by Carlow County Council taking account of the mix of residential accommodation in an area.

11.6.3 Infill Housing within established Residential Areas

Within and around established built-up areas, single replacement houses and infill development may be permitted. The design of infill development must be sympathetic to the character of the area. While well-designed, modern buildings will be considered, they should have regard to their setting and be capable of integrating into the streetscape/townscape context.

Infill development will be required to maintain established building and rooflines and proportions. Infill within existing terraces will also be required to take cognisance of roof pitch, fascia level, parapet, eaves and cornice lines, the line of window heads and string courses.

11.6.4 Demolition of Buildings

Permission is required for the demolition of any habitable dwelling, protected structure or proposed protected structure under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Permission shall not be granted for the demolition of a protected structure or proposed protected structure, save in exceptional circumstances.

11.6.5 Corner / Side Garden Sites

The Planning Authority will take into consideration the following in assessing proposals for the development of corner/side garden sites.

- Does it reflect the character of the street
- Integration and compatibility of design and scale with adjoining dwellings, paying attention to the established building line, proportion, heights, parapet levels and materials of adjoining buildings
- The maintenance of the front and side building lines where appropriate
- Impact on the residential amenities of adjoining sites
- Impact on the character of the streetscape
- The maintenance of open space standards and refuse storage for both existing and proposed dwellings
- The provision of a safe means of access to and egress from the site which does not result in the creation of a traffic hazard
- The provision of appropriate car parking facilities
- In general apartment blocks will not be considered for corner/side garden sites

11.7 RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to substantiate a rural housing need the following documentation will be required:

- Justification for location as proposed
- Land registry maps and associated documentation
- Proof of local connection to an area

- All applications for one-off houses must be accompanied by a Landscaping Plan
- Required sightlines must be shown on a site layout plan
- All other relevant documentation as required by the Planning Authority

11.7.1 Assimilation of Development into Landscape

All permissible buildings should avoid locally obtrusive elevated locations and should be located on mid slopes or lower slopes of rising ground where possible. Development should seek to preserve traditional field patterns and established hedgerow and woodland. A visual impact assessment may be required where the proposal is located in or bounding a Special Area of Conservation or an area designated as scenic in the Landscape Character Assessment for the County (Appendix 6).

11.7.2 Site Size for Single Houses using On-Site Waste Water Treatment Systems

A minimum site size of 2000m² (½ acre) will be required for a single house so as to provide for adequate effluent treatment, parking, landscaping, open space and maintenance of rural amenity.

11.7.3 Tree and Hedgerow Preservation

Carlow County Council will encourage the protection of all mature trees and hedgerows which occur on development sites and roads, and as part of the application process may require the submission of tree and hedgerow surveys to accompany applications for development. All trees with a diameter of 75mm and above (measured at a height of 1.4m above ground level) should be included in the survey. Hedgerows should be surveyed by reference to species, branch canopy, spread, shape, height and condition. Remedial works should also be indicated where appropriate and trees should be identified on site with suitable tags.

Where trees or hedgerows are to be preserved on a development site, it is essential that the trees and hedgerows be protected by the erection of secure fencing prior to any site or engineering works commencing and that no materials be stored within the fenced area and that no vehicles have access to the fenced area. Development will not generally be permitted where there is likely damage or destruction either to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or those which have a particular local amenity or nature conservation value. Development that requires the felling of mature trees of amenity value, conservation value or special interest will be discouraged. The Council will have regard to BS 5837 1991 ‘Guide for Trees in relation to Construction’ and BS 3998 ‘Tree Works’ in the assessment of any planning application. Where felling of trees is unavoidable, new planting will be required using native species.

Trees of local provenance (i.e. grown from seed from plants growing locally) are preferable because they will be best adapted to growing in County Carlow. Carlow County Council will promote the planting of native tree and shrub species, by committing to using native species (of local provenance wherever possible) in its landscaping work and on County Council property. It is important that new planting in the county serves not just to contribute to tree regeneration generally, but ensure that the age mix of trees within the county guarantees that there is always replacement stock at differing stages of growth.

In relation to all new development, site boundaries should be completed (planting / fenced / walled) prior to occupation and all new road openings should prevent water run-off from the development site.

11.8 HOME BASED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Home-based activities are defined as small-scale commercial activities, which are secondary to the use of the premises as a residence. They are permitted where the primary use of the dwelling remains residential and where the amenity of surrounding residences is not adversely affected. The Planning Authority, in considering applications for such uses, will consider the following:

- The nature and extent of the work
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining properties particularly as regards hours of operation, and general disturbance
- The anticipated levels of traffic generation
- The generation, storage and collection of waste

Over the counter services, the repair of vehicles, business signage, advertising hoardings, security gates/grills and excessive security lights are not normally appropriate in a residential area and should be subject to appropriate restrictions. The Local Authority may grant a temporary permission of two/three years for home-based economic activities to facilitate on-going monitoring of the activity.

11.8.1 Live Work Units

A live work unit is a single unit or space within a building that is both a place to live and a place of business or commerce. It is distinct from a purely residential use. The development of live work units will be encouraged as they can lead to a more sustainable land use pattern in an area by providing for a mix of uses, ensuring a balance between day and night time activity and reducing commuting. They will be permitted in town centre and enterprise and development zones, subject to complying with appropriate development standards.

The provision of live work units will be considered in other zones, assessed on their individual merits, in particular on sites which have a frontage onto main or radial routes into the town.

In considering applications for live work units, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- Live work units in residential areas and residential blocks shall be located at ground floor or street level, unless a local plan or framework plan for an area has identified the street for retail use or complementary uses such as cafés, restaurants or bars
- Live work units shall constitute part of the overall quantum of residential units in relation to Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended
- The residential component of a live work unit shall comply with Design Standards for New Apartments (DoEHLG, 2007). The commercial component of each live

work unit shall have a minimum floor area equivalent to or greater than the residential floor area of the live work unit. The two separate elements must be integrated and the commercial element should not be physically separated or divided from the residential element

- The live work units shall be assessed as a single unit for the purpose of determining financial levies/contributions
- The minimum internal floor to ceiling height of live work units shall be 4 – 4.5 metres and the architectural design should be sufficiently open and transparent to allow the commercial use to illuminate and enliven the street
- Separate provision shall be made for storage and refuse storage for the residential and commercial components of live work units
- Ventilation ducting and other services shall be incorporated into the design and construction of buildings to allow for the use of ground floor units as live works units
- The design and construction of such units shall incorporate noise insulation measures to standards consistent with the need to minimise noise and protect residential amenities
- The use of the commercial component of live work units shall be compatible with the protection of amenities of adjoining residential properties
- Car parking requirements for each unit shall be assessed as the equivalent of one residential unit

11.9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Carlow County Council recognises the importance of providing a diverse range of community facilities to ensure the development of sustainable local communities.

11.9.1 Schools

The Technical guidance document TGD-027 (or any such updated document) on the identification and suitability assessment of sites for post primary schools shall be complied with in respect of post primary schools while technical guidance document TGD-025 (or any such updated document) shall be complied with in respect of primary schools. School buildings shall exhibit a high quality contemporary design, finish and materials.

In accordance with Sustainable Development Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (DEHLG, 2008) and The Provision of Schools and the Planning System (DEHLG and DES, 2008), all applications for significant residential development shall be accompanied by an assessment of existing schools capacity. Applications for new and extended primary and secondary schools must provide details of safe queuing and drop-off facilities for bus and car, adequate road and footpath network to the site, bicycle and vehicular parking on site and adequate recreational facilities as appropriate. Land adjacent to existing schools should, where possible, be protected for possible future educational use to allow for expansion of these schools, if required, subject to site suitability and agreement of the various stakeholders.

11.9.2 Play Areas

The Council will require the provision of suitably designed and landscaped play areas in all new housing developments over 75 dwellings. Play facilities may include playgrounds, basket ball courts, tennis courts, hurling walls or other facilities considered appropriate by the Council. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria that may be taken into account include the existing geographical distribution of play facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. Play areas should be located where they can be overlooked by dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents. Such facilities should be inclusive and accessible to all children.

11.9.3 Childcare Facilities

Childcare is taken to mean full day-care and sessional facilities and services for pre-school children and school-going children out of school hours. It includes services involving care, education and socialisation opportunities for children and therefore includes pre-schools, day-care services, crèches, playgroups and after-school groups. Carlow County Council recognises the social, educational and economic importance of encouraging the development of a broad range of childcare facilities in urban and rural areas throughout the county. It also recognises that childcare must be conveniently located. The Local Authority will promote the provision of childcare facilities within new or existing places of work, residential areas, educational establishments, town centres and adjacent to public transport nodes.

Childcare facilities will be required to be provided in new residential developments in accordance with Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 and We Like This Place: Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities 2005. The indicative standard is one childcare facility, accommodating 20 children, for approximately 75 dwellings. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria that may be taken into account in such an assessment include the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

Where childcare facilities are proposed to be located within established residential areas, applications for such uses will be assessed having regard to the likely effect on the amenities of adjoining properties, the availability of space for off-street parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points and outdoor playspace. In some cases, it may be necessary to attach a condition that would require some residential content to be maintained in the premises.

Applications for childcare facilities should identify / show the following:

- Nature of the facility (full day care, sessional, drop-in and/or after school care)
- Numbers of children being catered for, the age range of the children and the number of staff proposed
- Access arrangements and parking provision for both customers and staff
- Proposed hours of operation
- Open space provision and measures for management of same

- Internal floor areas devoted to crèche, excluding areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas
- Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed
- Ease of accessibility for all

11.9.4 Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes

The need for nursing homes and residential care homes in County Carlow is anticipated to grow into the future and these facilities should be integrated wherever possible into the established or planned residential areas of the County where their residents can avail of reasonable access to local services. In considering applications for these developments, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- The existing social facilities and demand within the area. In locations where there is a grouping of a particular user group, applications should include an assessment of the impact on local services
- The impact on the physical character of the area such as car parking levels and private amenity space
- The impact on noise and disturbance from additional traffic in the area
- A high level of residential amenity (including well designed open space) can be provided for residents of nursing homes. In large development or developments which are not located adjacent to local facilities the provision of pray rooms/chapels, shops will be required
- Whether the size and scale is appropriate to the area
- Creation of an alternative living environment with views from all bedrooms to landscaped/ planted areas
- Impact on amenities of adjoining properties

11.9.5 Medical Centres / Surgeries / Health Centres / Veterinary Surgeries

Medical centres / surgeries, local health centres and veterinary surgeries which meet the needs of and are easily accessible to local service users will be favourably considered in existing built up areas provided they do not impact on residential amenity and have adequate parking availability. One-stop primary care medical centres, General Practitioner practices and veterinary surgeries will be encouraged at locations which are easily accessible to members of the wider community. Currently premises for general practice, medical related consultants and veterinary practices include a wide variety of building types ranging from adaptations of domestic premises for single-handed practitioners to purpose built premises for large group practices. In line with the Health Board's policy on primary care, Carlow County Council will support the provision of health care consultants in district and neighbourhood centres.

Change of use applications from residential to health care facilities / surgeries (both medical or veterinary) will only be considered where the privacy and amenity of adjacent occupiers can be preserved and the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on local amenity by way of an increase in traffic, car parking or noise. In this regard, a residence does not include any part of a dwelling unit within a block of apartments.

In assessing proposals for conversions in residential areas Carlow County Council will normally permit conversion of part of a dwelling to a medical, veterinary or related consultancy provided the dwelling remains as the main residence of the practitioner and where a local need has been demonstrated. Carlow County Council will also take into account:

- Amenity and privacy of adjacent occupiers
- Adequate off street parking facilities

11.9.6 Care Facilities

A change of use from residential to a care facility, to care for more than six persons with an intellectual or physical disability, will require planning permission and will be dealt with sympathetically, considering factors such as accessibility, traffic, safety and proximity to community and shopping facilities. Single-storey detached houses with adequate private and secure open space and on-site parking are the preferred locations for such uses.

11.9.7 Provision of Sports and Recreation Facilities

Developers will be required to make provision for sports and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs generated by that development and the capacity of existing facilities in the area to cater for existing and future needs. Planning applications for community facilities such as sports grounds, golf courses, playing fields and community halls / centres will be considered based on:

- The need for the development and its role in the development of local facilities
- The appropriateness of the site in terms of location, traffic, accessibility and the impact on amenities of properties in the vicinity
- The potential for multi-use by other groups/members of the community

Residential planning applications with 100 or more units will require a recreational needs assessment. Recreation provision should form an integral element of large scale residential development proposals.

11.9.8 Floodlighting of Sporting and Recreational Facilities

The provision of external floodlighting will be carefully considered by the Council in order to protect residential amenity, nature and traffic safety. Floodlights shall have fully-shielded light fixtures with cowl accessories to ensure that upward light levels are low. Planning applications shall include:

- Details of horizontal and vertical luminance levels (lux levels) of the lights
- Proposed hours of use

11.10 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the construction and layout of agricultural buildings the Council will require that buildings be sited as unobtrusively as possible and that the finishes and colours used will blend the development into its surroundings. The Planning Authority will require that agriculture developments will be constructed and located so as to ensure that there is no

threat of pollution to ground or surface waters. In assessing planning applications for agriculture developments the Council will have regard to the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2006.

In visually sensitive areas the Council will seek to group together and site buildings in an appropriate manner, and require the use of harmonious external materials to minimise obtrusion on the landscape. The use of dark coloured cladding, notably dark browns, greys, greens and reds are most suitable for farm buildings, and roof areas should be darker than walls.

11.10.1 New Buildings / Structures

New buildings for industrial or commercial enterprises on farm holdings may be acceptable if they are small-scale and can be satisfactorily integrated into an existing group of farm buildings.

11.10.2 Reuse of Existing Buildings

Planning permission may be granted for the reuse of redundant farm buildings for small-scale rural enterprise, provided the Planning Authority is satisfied about the following matters:

- That the building was previously in agricultural use for a reasonable period of time
- That it is no longer required for agricultural purposes
- That the use can be largely contained within the existing building

11.10.3 Agricultural Related Industry

Agricultural related industrial development may be permitted where it does not conflict with the amenity or viable use of farm holdings. Other considerations include traffic safety, pollution and waste control, and the satisfactory treatment of effluents, smells and noise, the size and form of building and the extent to which they can be integrated into the landscape.

11.10.4 Intensive Agriculture

Intensive agriculture proposals may be permitted where such proposals would not result in a traffic hazard or have an unacceptably adverse environmental impact on soil, ground water or rural amenities. Such applications must demonstrate that wastes and slurries can be treated in an environmentally sustainable manner.

11.10.5 Equine Developments

The equine industry is an established and growing industry throughout County Carlow in recent years. 14 stud farms are recorded in the county in the Irish Field Directory 2014, with 14 licensed trainers along with several breeders. At present, in County Carlow there are 2 riding clubs, 6 equestrian centres, 1 pony hunt club and 2 hunting clubs. The point to point racing was founded in County Carlow, when originally horses were raced between the steeples of two churches, i.e. point to point.

The erection of an unroofed fenced area for the exercising or training of horses or ponies, together with a drainage bed or soft surface material to provide an all-weather surface are all exempt from planning, subject to conditions. Accordingly, stud farms, sand-arenas, training arenas, all weather gallops, the uses associated with breaking and riding horses

along with the training of horses i.e. thoroughbred and showjumping horses, are all defined as agricultural activities thus do not require planning permission.

11.10.6 Piggery Developments

SI 610 of the EPA Acts 1992-2011 deals with IPPC Licensing. Every pig unit will be required to have applied for an Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) license if it exceeds 750 places for sows in a breeding unit, 285 places for sows in an integrated unit or 2000 places for production pigs. These limits apply whether the stock is within the same complex or within 100 metres of the same complex.

All piggery developments must comply with all relevant regulations in relation to farmyard pollution and waste, with particular reference to the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 as amended and the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts (1977 and 1990) to ensure that agricultural developments such as piggeries will not cause pollution to watercourses taking into account the requirements of the South Eastern River Basin Management Plan. Issues such as noise, traffic, road access, odour and spreading of slurry will also be required to be addressed in a planning application.

Additional environmental legislation which the Council shall refer to include the management of manure to comply with SI 378 – EC Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Water Regulations of 2006, the Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Directive.

New piggery developments exceeding 3000 pig units (1 sow litter = 10.p.u, 1 pig = 1 p.u.) shall preferably be sited a minimum distance of 5km from existing population centres exceeding 200 persons.

11.10.7 Forestry

Given the need to restructure agricultural practises the Council will assist the development of forestry, particularly deciduous forestry, as an alternative agricultural land use, while also protecting residential amenities of rural dwellers by the establishment of an appropriate area free from afforestation. Forest developments should follow current best practice and the Forest Service's "Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines" (July 2000) where landscape objectives should focus on compatibility with and enhancement of, existing local landscape character. Landscape design plans should be prepared where sensitive high amenity areas are concerned. Afforestation projects should be designed and implemented in a manner likely to enhance existing local amenities. Any adverse impacts of afforestation on watercourses and sources of water supply should be prevented.

Forest owners should prepare and maintain a forest fire defence strategy, including provision and maintenance of adequate prescribed firebreaks, water supply reservoirs and forest access. Fire plans should be prepared for each forest and reviewed annually.

The Council will not favour the development of forestry in locations which would adversely impact upon Protected/Listed Views within the county, or would adversely impact upon recorded monuments, Natural Heritage Areas, archaeological sites or geological sites.

11.10.8 Land Reclamation

Land Reclamation is exempted under Class 11, Schedule 2 Part 3 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001(as amended). The exemption applies to the carrying out

of works on lands which is used solely for the purposes of agriculture or forestry, where such works include:

- Field drainage
- Land reclamation
- The improvement of existing fences
- The improvement of hill grazing
- The reclamation of estuarine marsh or callows, where the preservation of such land or callows is not an objective of the Development Plan for the area

Where land reclamation works take place in the form of land filling the applicants must, in order to avail of the exemption, be in a position to demonstrate to the Planning Authority that the land filling is necessary for reclamation works and does not involve lands subject to preservation (SAC/SPA/PNHA/NHA/ Wetlands).

11.10.9 Micro Enterprises / Rural Diversification

The Council will consider rural micro-enterprises in areas outside of designated settlements where the following criteria are adhered to:

1. The business is a start up, micro enterprise and there are intrinsic links between the proposed development and its location and / or cottage industry
2. All applicable development control standards are satisfied
3. The proposal does not adversely affect traffic safety
4. The proposal shall be limited to manufacturing, production or processing
5. For cottage industries limited retailing may be provided for
6. The proposed building / use does not impact negatively on adjoining landuses
7. The proposal is accompanied by a business plan
8. The proposed building / use would not detract materially from the rural character or residential amenity of the area

11.10.10 Allotments

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, describes an allotment as ‘an area of land comprising not more than 1,000m² let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or a member of his or her family.’

The Planning & Development Act, 2000, as amended, also allows for a Local Authority to indicate in a Development Plan an intention to reserve land for use and cultivation as allotments and regulating, promoting, facilitating or controlling the provision of land for that use.

11.11 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Mixed use developments within the areas identified as appropriate in the County’s towns and villages will be considered on the merit of each application. The following mechanism for securing mixed-use developments in appropriate locations will be applied:

- (a) No less than two separate planning uses will normally be allowed (i.e. retail / residential or retail / offices etc.)

(b) Where more than two separate uses are proposed, no one singular use will prevail in terms of >50% of the total gross floorspace

Without such a mechanism it is recognised that one predominant use may prevail on such designated lands. Mixed use developments in town / village centres are appropriate in attaining sustainable development objectives, creating opportunities to live, work, shop etc. within urban environments.

11.12 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

New commercial and retail development shall be provided for in areas that are specifically zoned for such purposes. The Council will seek to maintain the vitality and viability of town and village centres and will have regard to the Carlow County Retail Strategy 2015 - 2021 (or any amendment of same) in the assessment of any applications for retail development.

In some cases, the Council may require the applicant to submit a Retail Impact Assessment to demonstrate that a proposal complies with the County Retail Strategy and the Retail Planning Guidelines, and that it will not have an adverse impact on existing town or village centre developments, or result in displacement.

In new commercial developments, adequate provision shall be made on site for storage and stacking space (in addition to provision for parking of vehicles). Where possible storage and stacking areas should be located to the rear of the building.

The maximum site coverage permitted for commercial and retail development is 75%, whilst the maximum plot ratio permitted is 1:5.

11.12.1 Shop Fronts

In order to conserve the distinctive character of County Carlow's traditional shopfronts it is the policy of the Planning Authority to encourage the maintenance of original shop fronts, or the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts where poor replacements have been installed. Traditional signage, lettering and use of the Irish Language in signage should be considered in all cases and will be the preferred signage by the Council for most shopfronts.

In new buildings the proposed shop fronts should have regard to the existing shop fronts in the vicinity and should complement both the building and the location. In existing buildings the original fascia line should be maintained and not excessively enlarged or lowered. Modern 'multiple' formats which have adopted a 'corporate image' will not necessarily be allowed to use their standardised shopfront design, corporate colours and materials. Such companies should be encouraged to ensure that their particular fascia takes account of the character of the street and local area. The construction of nameplate fascias linking two or more buildings of different architectural design and character is generally unacceptable. The removal of street doors giving separate access to upper floors will not be permitted unless alternative separate access is provided.

11.12.1.1 Security Shutters

The installation of security shutters can visually destroy the shopping street at night and thereby detract from the environment of a town or village. The erection of a security

shutter and its associated screening requires planning permission. The Planning Authority will discourage the use of such shutters. Where security shutters are considered to be essential because of the type of business transacted or goods stored the Planning Authority may permit them provided that they meet the following criteria:

- They must be open grille type (not perforated or solid)
- They must be painted or coloured to match the shopfront colour scheme
- Where possible they must be located, together with their associated housing behind the window display

Alternatives to roller shutters such as the use of demountable open grilles will be preferred where security needs are involved.

11.12.1.2 Canopies and Blinds

Blinds were traditionally incorporated into the shop front fascia and designed to retract into it when not required. This is still the best way to handle a blind where one is required. The curved or Dutch canopy is unsympathetic to the traditional streetscape. They also obscure the shopfront detail neighbouring advertising and they deteriorate with age so will not be permitted and the use of plastic canopies will also be discouraged.

11.12.1.3 Lighting

Internally illuminated fascias or projecting box signs will not be permitted. Concealed strip or flood lighting of fascias and traditional hand painted signs lit by spotlight may be an acceptable alternative.

11.12.2 Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood centres serve immediate local needs only and provide for primarily convenience goods within residential, commercial or mixed use areas. The floor space of each unit would be relatively small in size and it is envisaged that a number of units would be grouped together to form a more sustainable centre. The typical type of use considered for a neighbourhood centre would be a crèche, medical centre, pharmacy, small local convenience store, community centre/building, hairdressing salon and café.

11.12.3 Retail Warehousing

Retail warehousing comprises of large single storey stores specialising in the sale of household goods and bulky items catering mainly for car-borne customers. They have a maximum of 6000 square meters and a minimum of 700 square metres. The sub division of units will generally not be permitted as it may result in unit sizes less than the minimum recommended size.

Bulky household goods include carpets, DIY items, furniture, white electrical goods, garden equipment etc. Acceptable uses may also include the sale of computers, toys and sports goods. Items which should be restricted from sale include grocery and food items (including alcohol), footwear, clothing, books, magazines, mobile phones, music (i.e. compact discs, tapes, mini-discs etc.), toiletries, cosmetics, artists' materials, jewellery, gifts and china. Conditions will be attached to prevent the sale, by subdivision or change of content, of goods normally sold in town/city centre shops where they would thereby compete with the use of the town/city centre to seriously injure its viability. A limit on the range of goods sold will normally be imposed and individual units will be subject to

an upper floor space limit. Retail warehousing is generally located at edge of town locations. Applicants may be required to submit a Retail Impact Assessment applying the Sequential Test to the proposed site.

11.12.4 Large food stores

Large food stores generally serve the weekly convenience goods shopping requirements of families. They require large areas of floorspace with adjacent car parking. The majority of this type of bulk convenience shopping is undertaken by car, but a significant proportion of customers visit by other means. Therefore large food stores should be well served by public transport. These stores should be located in accordance with the sequential test, with town centre sites being considered the most suitable locations. Where applications include significant amounts of non-food items, the accompanying drawings should clearly indicate the area to be devoted to convenience goods. The national floor space cap of 3,000m² applies.

11.12.5 Discount Food Stores

Discount food stores are single level self service stores primarily selling foodstuffs, but which also sell a limited range of bulky and non-bulky goods on a once off basis. They are normally between 1,000 and 1,500m² of gross floorspace selling a limited range of goods at competitive prices, often with adjacent car parking. Discount foodstores may be located within or adjoining existing district or neighbourhood centres in accessible locations, or where they can form part of a new mixed use centre, or on town centre or commercially zoned lands. Such outlets tend to carry an increasing amount of comparison goods and conditions restricting the range of goods permitted to be sold may be applied.

Applicants may be required to submit a Retail Impact Assessment applying the Sequential Test to the proposed site.

11.12.6 Offices

The Local Authority will encourage over-counter office development to locate in the town/village centres. The use of vacant or under-utilised upper floors for office development will be encouraged. Outside the centres, applications for office development will normally be considered within the areas zoned for such development.

Change of use from shops to offices in the town/village centre will not normally be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances. There will be a presumption in favour of the granting of planning permission for the conversion of offices, currently in former dwellings, back to residential use.

All new office developments outside town / village centres will be required to provide a minimum of 10% open space. Where offices are proposed on lands zoned for business / enterprise / industry, such development will be required to provide the minimum 10% open space **in addition to** adequate (determined at pre-application stage) landscaped open space along all roads.

11.12.7 Petrol filling stations and ancillary uses

A petrol station may include the following: petrol pumps, diesel pumps, gas dispenser, storage tanks, hose pipes and other vehicle services i.e. car washing, oil, water and air. It may also include the sale of goods related to motor trade, a cash kiosk, and a canopy over

the pumps and provision of minor repairs, oil and tyre changes. Ancillary retail uses may be considered such as small convenience type shops, selling confectionery, groceries and newspapers, with a floor area generally not exceeding 100m² net sales space. However, planning applications for the provision of such shops shall be applied for specifically. The layout of the station forecourt should be arranged to allow dedicated parking for those availing of the shop facilities. The most suitable location for petrol filling stations and associated commercial developments is on the outskirts of a town and within urban speed limits. They will not be permitted at locations where because of their appearance, noise, fumes etc. they would be injurious to the amenities of the area, nor will they be permitted in areas where there are traffic hazards or where hazards might be likely to arise. Any application for a new petrol filling station should provide sufficient road frontage, clear visibility, two points of access, sanitary convenience for public use, and the surface of the forecourt shall be graded, surfaced with bitumen macadam or other suitable material and drained to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. All surface run-off from forecourt areas generated on site shall be discharged to adequately designed interceptors. Class 1 type interceptors shall be required for all discharges to the Local Authority surface water drainage system or to surface waters.

When considering all applications of this nature, attention should be given to the safety aspects of circulation and parking within the station forecourt. A minimum street frontage of 30 metres will be required. A low wall of approximately 0.6 metres in height shall be constructed along the frontage, with allowance for two access points, each 8 metres wide. No advertising or commercial signage shall obstruct visibility over the site access points or front boundary/wing walls. The pump island shall be not less than 7 metres from the footpath/road boundary.

11.12.8 Automatic Teller Machines

The Planning Authority will strictly control the location of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) having regard to the following:

- The need to protect the character of the street, building or shop front into which they are to be incorporated into especially buildings on the Record of Protected Structures
- The design and location must be such that they are safe and easily accessible
- Canopies, signs and logos shall be discreetly incorporated into the overall design
- Satisfactory arrangements are made in relation to litter control

The provision of ATMs at petrol stations will be encouraged to facilitate drivers wishing to use them. In general, ATMs will not be provided where customers queuing may cause disruption to pedestrians.

11.12.9 Fast Food Take-aways

Planning applications for new fast food take-away uses will be considered on their own merits. However, the Proliferation of hot-food take-aways will not be permitted in any particular area. Regard will be had to the impact of hot-food take-aways on the amenities of an area, including noise, odour and litter.

Full shopfront details will be required at application stage to assess the visual suitability of proposals in the area. The Planning Authority may impose restrictions on opening hours as a condition of planning permission. The location of a fast food take-away in

neighbourhood centres, together with complementary uses such as the convenience shop, chemist, DVD rental unit, etc., would cut down on multiple trip generation in an area.

11.12.10 Bars / Nightclubs / Disco-bars / Amusement Centres / Casinos

In order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and protect night-time amenities in towns, the Local Authority will, through the appropriate use of its development management powers, prevent an excessive concentration of pubs, bars, nightclubs and amusement arcades in any one area. The Council will ensure that the intensity of any proposed use is in keeping with both the character of the area (i.e. residential, mixed use, etc.) and with adjoining businesses, when development proposals are being considered. Along with general planning issues such as traffic, waste etc., the following issues will also be considered in the assessment of applications for new premises and extensions to premises:

- Noise at the boundaries will be carefully monitored and noise insulation measures will be required at the time of the submission of the planning application. Other effects of the development on the amenity of nearby residents must be assessed prior to the granting of planning permission, i.e. general disturbance, hours of operation, car parking, litter and fumes
- New buildings must be designed to prevent noise escaping, and with adequate provision for refuse disposal, storage and collection
- The need to retain a suitable diversity of uses in the town centre throughout the day and evening to maintain the vitality and viability of the town
- Facade design will be carefully controlled by the Planning Authority and in particular the type and degree of advertising signage and lighting. The design shall respect the character of the street and the buildings

11.12.11 Betting Offices / Bookmakers

The Council shall seek to avoid a concentration of betting offices in the core retail centres of towns. In controlling the provision of betting offices, the Council shall have regard to the following, where appropriate:

- The need to safeguard the vitality and viability of the defined retail area and to maintain a suitable mix of retail uses
- The number / frequency of such facilities in the area
- The existing number of similar non-traditional retail service outlets in core retail areas such as internet cafés, call centres, amusement arcades and takeaways
- The effect on the amenities in the area arising from noise, hours of operation and litter

11.12.12 Market Casual Trading

Farmers or local country markets are an increasingly popular retail element of towns and villages providing an effective means of selling locally sourced produce and opportunities to expand the rural economic base. The Council will seek to protect the economic and social benefits these markets offer on account of their ability to sustain and reinforce rural areas and support their role as visitor attractions. In considering applications for such facilities, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The impact the market would have on town centre vitality and viability and retail policy provisions for that area
- The likely impact on residential amenity, conservation areas, the general environment or existing shops
- The capacity of the existing road structure to take any additional traffic generated by the proposal and parking requirements. Arrangements for customers' / traders' parking, servicing, storage, disposal and recycling of refuse and storage of stalls
- The Casual Trading Act of 1995 and specifically any Bye-Laws made by Carlow County Council under Section 6 of the Act

11.12.13 Shops in Rural Areas

The emphasis is on the need to build up the retailing core of settlements. Accordingly there will be a general presumption against shops in rural areas i.e. outside town and villages. Exceptions to this include:-

- Small-scale shops attached to a permitted tourist or recreational development
- Retail outlets associated with other rural activities where the retail aspect is secondary to the operation - shops selling agricultural produce, crafts, etc
- The development of a small shop in association with an existing post office will generally be permitted

11.13 ADVERTISING AND SIGNPOSTING

Advertising signs, separately, or more particularly in groups, can often cause injury to visual amenities, and can detract from the appearance of an area or a building; this is especially so when they are out of scale and character with their surroundings. They can also be a major distraction to road users and frequently result in traffic hazard. It is the policy of the Planning Authority to strictly control all advertising signs in relation to their location, design, materials and function.

Advertising shall be controlled as follows:

- Signs will not be permitted where they interfere with the safety of pedestrians, the safety and free flow of traffic or if they obscure road signs
- Signs shall be sympathetic in design and colouring, both to the building on which it will be displayed and its surroundings
- Signs shall not obscure architectural features or details
- Signs will not be permitted above eaves or parapet levels
- Traditional painted sign writing or solid block individual lettering will be encouraged as will traditional or wrought iron hanging signs. The use of neon, plastic, PVC, Perspex flashing, reflectorised or glitter type signs on the exterior of buildings or where they are located internally but visible from the outside will be prohibited
- Projecting signs, banners and flagpoles will be restricted in size and number to prevent clutter
- Temporary hoardings may be approved where they can be used for the screening of building sites or land, which is unsightly

- Signs attached to buildings are preferable to those on freestanding hoardings
- Signs shall not be permitted to project above the roofline of buildings
- Favourable consideration may be given, in consultation with business groups, to the erection of composite advance signs on which the facilities available in the town, towns and villages will be declared. Due to the damage which a proliferation of large, competitive advance signs can cause to the appearance and image of the important entrance routes into the towns and villages, individual advance signage will be phased out and well-designed and located composite signage will be sought as the opportunity arises
- 'Bed & Breakfast' signage will be restricted to 1 sign per premises and no directional finger post signs will be permitted.

11.13.1 Finger Post Signage

The erection of fingerpost signs may require a licence or planning permission from Carlow County Council and should comply with the following:

- Directional signs for major tourist attractions and community purposes will be considered but product advertising will not be permitted
- Signs must have a standard size and colour
- Signs which interfere with the Local Authority's directional signs or which contribute to visual clutter will not be permitted

11.14 INDUSTRIAL & BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT

It is an objective of the Planning Authority to seek to achieve the following standards with regard to new development in Industrial and Business Parks:

- It is desirable that an adequate proportion of sites be left without covered structures for parking, loading, air circulation, refuse storage etc. In Industrial estates, site coverage of 60% shall generally apply
- A maximum plot ratio of 1:2 will be imposed. Plot ratio is defined as the gross floor area of buildings on a site divided by the gross site area. Provision of rear access to business premises may also be required. Business parks shall be laid out in an open parkland setting with a high level of landscaping and provision shall be made for pedestrian and cycle paths

The following design issues should be taken into consideration:

- Individual buildings should exhibit a high quality contemporary design and finish.
- Car parking shall be provided in a discreet, landscaped and well-screened environment with a view to minimising its visual impact, particularly when viewed from approach roads
- Proposals shall incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other measures that address adaptation to climate change including the creation of integrated wetlands, the construction of green/living roofs whereby opportunities for existing solar energy and wind energy are taken

- In order to ensure an attractive open parkland setting, the building line on all principal road frontages shall not be less than 15 metres from the road. There shall be a minimum planted strip of a width of 5 metres on all principal road frontages. Where a proposed development is located within convenient walking distance of a high quality public transport network the above requirement may be varied so as to achieve a scale of development and density of employment appropriate to the proximity of the site to a high quality public transport network

11.15 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

11.15.1 Caravan, Camping Parks & Glamping Sites

Caravan parks, camping and glamping sites are to comply generally with the guidelines published by Bord Failte in 1988, namely; ‘*Guidelines for Development of Caravan and Camping Sites*’. In general, a density of not more than 14 no. caravans and / or tent pitches per usable acre may be permitted. All proposed sites must have adequate water, sewerage, refuse collection and electricity services. Proposals for such sites / parks shall show detailed landscaping proposals for such developments covering both planting on the site boundaries, and the periphery of the site generally, and within the site, in order to ensure that such developments can be fully integrated and assimilated into their environments. Caravan, camping and glamping sites should be located adjacent to public roads which are of adequate width, alignment, and capable of being developed without giving rise to traffic hazards or adding to or creating a risk of increased congestion on such roads. Caravan parks should be located on sites that are adequately screened from the public road, and will not generally be permitted where there is no natural screening.

The Council requires that planning applications for these types of development should demonstrate that the proposal complies with the following:

- Does not place unsustainable demands upon the existing or planned infrastructural capacity for the area
- Creates minimal disruption to local residents by means of noise, litter or traffic
- Does not conflict with the maintenance of the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- Reinforces the provision of non-residential tourism facilities in the County either through integration with established facilities or by the provision of new facilities
- Minimise the need for additional vehicular journeys to/from visitor facilities in the immediate environs

11.15.2 Bed and Breakfast, Guest House, Hotel, Hostel

Planning permission is required for the conversion of more than four bedrooms in a dwelling house into a bed and breakfast establishment, in accordance with Article 10(4) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

In determining planning applications for change of use to bed and breakfast, guest house, hotel or hostel in residential areas, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following:

- Size and nature of facility

- The effect of the amenity on neighbouring residents
- The standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises
- The availability of adequate, safe and convenient arrangements for car parking and servicing
- The type of advertising proposed
- The effect on protected structures and / or conservation areas
- The number of existing such facilities in the area

11.15.3 Holiday Homes

Clustered Holiday Home Developments shall only be considered in areas zoned for such purposes or in associated with an Integrated Rural Tourism and Recreational Complex such as a hotel or golf complex.

11.15.4 Adventure Activities requiring Special Natural Features

There are a range of recreational activities that require resources that are generally only available in rural areas. The following standards and guidelines relate to these activities and to their appropriate setting.

- All planning applications for these adventure / recreational activities involving special natural features should be accompanied by a management plan indicating projected numbers of users, hours of operation, seasons of operation, and an undertaking to protect the natural environment in the form of a risk assessment with proposed amelioration measures in respect of flora, fauna, hydrology, geology and soils
- All proposals should be accessible insofar as possible by sustainable means of transport including public transport and by modes other than the car
- Where the traffic generated is likely to exceed the capacity of the local road network or require changes to the road network that would adversely affect the character of the area, these will not be permitted
- Where the activity is likely to be noise generating, a noise assessment will be required in connection with the application, measuring likely noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive recipients. Noise sensitive uses include all residential uses, passive public amenities, and the bloodstock industry. Where the development involves significant disturbance to any of these noise sensitive uses, it will not be permitted in that location

11.15.5 Sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation

The Council will promote sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation in the countryside of County Carlow. These include theme holidays and group based activities that take advantage of local and natural resources in a way that enhances the appreciation of place, minimises disturbance to the local environment, and improves the prospects for tourism in the long term. This will be linked to the development of non-vehicular routes through the countryside. Cultural Tourism will also be promoted, as we need to pay particular attention to how our heritage and culture is presented to the visitor, how it is interpreted and animated and how it is made both physically and intellectually accessible. Fostering this living heritage for tourism purposes can provide new employment

opportunities, help alleviate poverty, curb rural migration, and nurture a sense of pride amongst communities. Furthermore, it offers a powerful incentive for preserving and enhancing cultural heritage itself, since the revenue cultural tourism generates can be channeled back into initiatives to aid cultural heritage's long term survival.

Land uses can be associated with particular farms or forests, or special natural features. As a general preference, facilities should be in existing settlements, or in buildings of character requiring renovation or in traditional farm houses. Where new buildings are permitted outside of this framework, they should be modest in scale, sensitively located and designed having regard to existing buildings, topography and landscape, they should be adequately serviced, and suitably managed.

11.15.6 Facilities and amenities ancillary to tourism and recreational attractions

Certain facilities and amenities, and associated services, are often required to support the enjoyment of tourism and recreational attractions. Facilities of this type would often include car parks, viewing points, and might include toilets and cafes. Facilities will be permitted, only where it can be demonstrated that they involve as appropriate:

- A simple form and function and unobtrusive siting and design so as not to interfere with the visual setting of sensitive visual attractions
- The particular facilities are justified by reference to anticipated demand of the public for the local environmental attractions
- Where based on the popularity of an attraction to the public it would be reasonable to provide certain services such as restroom and refreshment facilities to cater for the public, they should be of appropriate location, design, landscaping and management, to be effective in their immediate purposes and to divert anticipated pressure away from sensitive areas or features
- Where it would require washing facilities and toilets, the facility is properly serviced in keeping with Objective IN O34, EPA guidance and licensing requirements
- There should be adequate capacity in the local public road network to accommodate vehicular and non vehicular traffic generated by the tourist and recreational attractions. This would involve where possible off road car parking sufficient for anticipated demand and strategically located to avoid traffic hazard and nuisance
- Adequate signage, and interpretation panels, to inform and enhance the visitor experience and assist in proper site management
- Inclusive access to basic restroom and refreshment facilities, to certain walks and open areas, taking into account local topographical constraints

It is imperative that both the facilities themselves, and downstream environmental impacts, are non-obtrusive with respect to the intrinsic character of place and setting that is essential to the amenity value of the attraction; and with respect to local biodiversity, and historic and archaeological potential that is associated with the environment.

11.16 EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

The Planning Authority will have regard to the 2004 provisions of the DECLG's "Quarries and Ancillary Activities; Guidelines for Planning Authorities" in the assessment and determination of development proposals. These Guidelines are also a practical guide to the implementation of Section 261 and Section 261A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, concerning the control of quarries. The Planning Authority will have regard to these Guidelines when assessing all quarry and mining related proposals. Regard shall also be had to the Waste Management (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries Regulations) 2009, EPA Guidelines for Extractive Industries 2006.

Quarry and mine owners and operators will be aware of the public concern to which certain extractive industries can give rise and should therefore take the earliest opportunity to discuss their proposals with the Planning Authority by means of a pre-application consultation. This will facilitate an assessment as to whether the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan for the area, along with other relevant government guidelines and policies.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required for the proposed development, depending on its nature and extent. The relevant thresholds for the requirement of submission of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2013 (Part 1, Class 19 and Part 2, Class 2), i.e. development exceeding 5 hectares in area. Where the application is sub-threshold development, the Planning Authority, shall determine the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment with reference to "Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development" (DoEHLG 2003), by virtue of its scale, location and/or impact on the surrounding environment.

In assessing an application for development (whether for a new or extension to an existing quarry or mine) the need for the development, the extent of existing authorised quarry or mining supplies available and the impact of the development on the local environment shall also be taken into consideration, together with the following:

- Developments, including associated processes, which would have a negative impact on existing / established rights of ways, walking routes or tourist, natural or recreational amenities will not be looked upon favourably
- Nature and quantity of aggregate(s) to be extracted, including total and annual tonnage of excavated aggregate(s)
- Location – relative to dwellings or other developments, aquifers and groundwater
- Environmentally sensitive areas, protected structures, special amenity areas and areas of archaeological potential
- Impact on the environment, agriculture, tourism, recreational activities in the area, landscape and residential amenities
- Noise generation and control
- Dust generation and control

- Impact on water table: minimisation of disturbance to the existing surface and subsurface hydrological regime shall be ensured on site and in proximity to the quarry
- Ecology; due consideration shall also be given to sites of ecological value and designated species which lie outside designated sites
- Transportation arrangements for products and road network in the area
- Effects on amenity of the area and in particular residential, visual amenity
- Natural and proposed screening of site
- Restoration and aftercare with particular emphasis on protecting and facilitating bio-diversity

11.16.1 Duration

In evaluating applications for permission for new quarries, consideration may be given to limited duration permissions, to allow for the re-evaluation of the development in light of unforeseen environmental implications and in light of changes in environmental standards and technology.

11.17 ARCHAEOLOGY

It is the policy of the Local Authority to ensure that archaeological material is not disturbed so that an opportunity will be given to investigate and record any material of archaeological value that may be found or to protect them in-situ on sites. In areas designated of Archaeological Interest in the Sites and Monument Record or the Urban Archaeological Survey by the Office of Public Works, developers shall consult with the Planning Authority at the earliest possible stage prior to development works, including the digging of trenches or foundations. Where development is permitted on or in the vicinity of a listed archaeological site, or within an area of known archaeological interest, it shall be normal to require the developer to make provision for archaeological remains to be retained in situ below new development. In cases where permitted works will impinge on known archaeology, the developer will be required to:

- Employ a licensed archaeologist at the applicant's expense to carry out trial excavations and submit an excavation report in advance of development
- To liaise and consult with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on all matters affecting the sites and monuments in its charge
- Adjust building lines and construction methods to avoid damage to remains so far as practicable

Developers may be required to contribute to and allow a reasonable time for excavation, monitoring, recording, consideration of excavation report and/or removal of any features prior to the commencement of development. Important sites shall be left physically intact wherever feasible. Carlow County Council will refer any planning applications that may impact on or lie close to sites listed in the Record of Monuments and Places for County Carlow to Development Applications Unit of the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government. A copy of any archaeological excavation and historical reports should be submitted to Carlow County Museum. As a Designated Museum, Carlow

County Museum should be informed of archaeological objects found as part of such excavations so they and the National Museum of Ireland can give consideration to the long term repository for these archaeological finds.

According to the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, all archaeological objects found with no known owner are the property of the Irish State and an archaeological object is an object "whether in a manufactured or partly manufactured or an unmanufactured state which by reason of the archaeological interest attaching thereto or of its association with any Irish historical event or person has a value substantially greater than its intrinsic (including artistic) value, and the said expression includes ancient human, animal or plant remains".

11.17.1 Development in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

Planning applications within ACA's should have regard to "Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities" prepared by the Heritage Council.

In Architectural Conservation Areas, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The effect of the proposed development on buildings and the surrounding environment, both natural and man-made
- The impact of development on the immediate streetscape in terms of compatibility of design, scale, height, plot, width, roof treatment, materials, landscaping, mix and intensity of use proposed
- New alterations and extensions should complement existing buildings/structures in terms of design, external finishes, colour, texture, windows, doors, roof, chimney, design and other details
- In dealing with advertisements in Architectural Conservation Areas, the overriding consideration will be the enhancement and protection of the essential visual qualities of the area

11.17.2 Development in relation to Protected Structures

In assessing proposals for development affecting Protected Structures it is the intention of the Planning Authority to require planning permission for all works, both to the exterior and interior, which materially affect the character of a protected structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest. What might be regarded normally as minor alterations to buildings may not necessarily be regarded as such in the case of protected structures.

Such works can include:

- Window replacement and fenestration changes
- Wholesale plastering/pointing/painting or the painting of previously unpainted elements
- Modifications of brickwork and stonework
- The removal/alteration of architectural detailing including joinery and decorative plasterwork
- Inappropriate interior works including the removal of walls, the creation of openings and partitioning of rooms
- Works to roofs and railings involving the removal of original materials and replacement with inappropriate materials

11.17.3 Alterations / Additions to Protected Structures

In considering applications for alterations and/or additions to a protected structure, the Council shall have regard to the various elements of the structure which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted upon by the proposed development. In the case of a proposal to materially change the use of a protected structure, the suitability of such use will be assessed having regard to the potential impact on the structure, including works necessary to comply with Fire & Building Regulations, the reversibility of the proposed alterations and in the case of buildings within the curtilage of a protected structure, whether such buildings are of heritage values or not.

The replacement of existing windows in protected structures with windows of inappropriate design, or manufactured of materials inconsistent with the character of the protected structure will not be approved. Where possible the retention of original windows will be encouraged and particularly so in the case of original twentieth century metal windows or sash windows.

11.17.4 Conservation Report

A detailed conservation report shall accompany planning applications for works to protected structures. This report shall:

- Outline the significance of the building
- Include a detailed survey of the building, including a photographic survey
- Detail the proposed works it is intended to carry out
- Contain a full assessment on the materials and method proposed to carry out these works, their impact on the character of the structure and the reversibility of the proposed works

The detail required to be submitted will be dependent on the significance of the building and the nature of works proposed. All works to protected structures shall be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.

11.17.5 Development within the curtilage and setting of Protected Structures

In considering applications for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, the Planning Authority shall have regard to:

- The various elements of the structure, which gives the protected, structure its special character and how these would be impacted upon by the proposed development
- The proximity of any new development to the main protected structure and any other buildings of heritage value
- The design of the new development, which should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure

High quality design will be a foremost consideration when assessing proposals for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, with particular emphasis on siting, building lines, proportions, scale, massing, height, roof treatment and materials.

This does not preclude innovative contemporary buildings. Development proposals should include an appraisal of the wider context of the site and structure.

11.18 RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Carlow County Council is committed to assisting in the development of alternative energy sources for environmental as well as energy policy reasons. The development of renewable energy sources, together with measures aimed at a reduction and more efficient use of energy, are priorities, nationally and at European level, on both environmental and energy policy grounds.

New Planning Exemptions for Solar Panels and other Micro Renewable Technology were published in 2007 by the DoEHLG. These Regulations will provide exemptions from planning permission for solar panels, heat pumps, wind turbines and wood pellet burners, subject to certain conditions.

11.18.1 Telecommunications Masts

The Planning Authority in assessing planning applications for telecommunication apparatus shall have regard to the DEHLG's publication Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996 or any future guidelines. Chapter 6, Energy and Communications, contains policy in relation to telecommunications masts.

Telecommunications masts, monopoles and antennae should be located so as to minimise any negative visual intrusion on the surrounding area, especially on landscapes or streetscapes of a sensitive nature. The preferred location for telecommunication structures is in industrial estates, areas zoned for industry, within forest plantations, or in areas already developed for utilities. The use of tall buildings or other existing structures is always preferable to the construction of an independent telecommunication support structures. Operators should seek to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast, or if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form.

Telecommunications cables and wire connections shall be located underground. Particular constraint will be exercised in areas of archaeological importance, recorded monuments, areas of ecological importance and other environmentally sensitive designated areas.

Planning permission for telecommunication structures, antennae and support structures shall be for a temporary period, generally not more than five years.

Planning applications relating to the erection of antennae and support structures shall be accompanied by:

- A reasoned justification as to the need for the particular development at the proposed location in the context of the operator's overall plans for the County having regard to coverage
- Details of what other sites or locations in the county were considered, and reasons why these sites or locations are not feasible

- Written evidence of site-specific consultations with other operators with regard to the sharing of sites and support structures. The applicants must satisfy the Planning Authority that a reasonable effort has been made to share installations. In situations where it not possible to share a support structure, the applicants will be encouraged to share a site or to locate adjacently so that masts and antennae may be clustered
- Detailed proposals to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development, including the construction of access roads, additional poles and structures

11.18.2 Wind Development

All planning applications for wind energy turbines or windfarms shall be assessed against the DoEHLG's publication Wind Energy Development Guidelines, 2006 (and any subsequent guidelines) and Carlow County Council's Wind Strategy (see Appendix 5) and the following:

- The Landscape Character Assessment for the County (Appendix 6)
- Whether an area has significant wind energy potential on the basis of the nature and extent of the wind resources in the area
- The suitability/strength of the grid and accessibility to it
- Road access to the site during the construction phase
- The suitability of the site, having regard to other land use policies, including the need to protect areas of important built and natural heritage from inappropriate development
- Any other planning considerations, including measures to minimise the impact of proposed wind farms in the local environment
- Distances to national primary and secondary roads
- Zone of visual influence and visual impact of the structures
- Noise Impact
- Potential Shadow flicker
- Density of residential development in the area

11.18.3 Hydro Energy

Planning applications for hydro-electric generation schemes should show best practice in the preparation of applications to ensure that the proposed hydro development does not present a negative impact on amenity or on the indigenous fish population, including seasonal migration. The *Guidelines on the Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries* prepared by the Central & Regional Fisheries Board & the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources should be followed for proposed small-scale hydro-electric schemes. All proposed developments will be assessed having regard to current capacities in the national grid to accommodate such inputs. Carlow County Council will consult with all relevant service providers in this regard at a very early stage in the assessment of such proposals. Appropriate proposals for the reinstatement of mills and associated power generation, subject to amenity considerations, should be addressed in planning applications.

11.19 TRANSPORT

The provision of residential access to National and other Roads will have regard to the following:

- Chapter 5: Roads and Transportation of the GCDP 2015-2021 (and any other applicable policies, objectives, standards or guidelines in the Plan) and to any specific objectives as contained within each of the Local Area Plans
- Part 4, article 28 (j)(i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001
- DECLG Spatial Planning and National Road, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012
- Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007
- Road Link Design Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1, NRA TD9/12, Feb 2012
- Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads, Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, NRA td 41-42/11, November 2011
- Guidance on Minor Improvements to the National Roads, Volume 6, Section1, Part 1, NRA TA 85/11
- Road Safety Audit, Volume 5, Section2, Part 2, NRA HD 19/12
- Metric Handbook Planning and Design Data (3rd Edition)

including any updated / superseding versions of the above listed documents that may be published during the lifetime of this Plan.

11.19.1 Vehicular entrances

Increasing traffic, higher safety standards and limited capacity require that in depth consideration is given to the approval of access onto any road. Vehicular entrances and exit points must be designed by the developer as part of a planning application with adequate provision for visibility, so that drivers emerging from the access can enjoy good visibility of oncoming vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Where a new entrance onto a public road is proposed, the Planning Authority must consider traffic conditions and available sight lines. Road junction visibility requirements shall comply with the *Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads*, Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, NRA td 41-42/11, November 2011 (including any updated/superseding document).

The Sight Distances required for accesses onto National, Regional and Local Roads are set out below:

Road Type	Speed Limit (km/hr)	Distance Required (metres)
National Road	100 / 80	210
Regional Road	80 / 60	150
Local Road	80 / 60	90

Table 11.1 Minimum Sightline Requirements

For significant and complex developments, suitably competent road designers should be used in the design layout where the development interfaces with the public road.

Within built up areas, sightlines may be reduced, at the discretion of the Area Engineer.

11.19.1.1 Distance of entrances from road junctions

New rural entrances should not be located within the following distances of junctions:

- National Primary Roads 150 metres
- National Secondary Roads 100 metres
- Regional Roads 100 metres
- Local Primary Roads 40 metres

The development by itself or combined with another or other development shall not give rise to a traffic hazard.

11.19.2 National and Regional Roads

It will be the Council's policy to prohibit development requiring access onto the National Primary or National Secondary routes where the maximum speed limit applies.

The National and Regional Road network should provide safe and efficient links between the principle towns and villages and thus contribute significantly to the economic prosperity of the county and state as a whole. Chapter 5: *Transportation and Movement* provides specific policies and objectives with regard to development on National and Regional Routes. The policy relates primarily to proposed developments located on national roads outside the 50 kph speed limit zones for towns and villages, but also addresses development proposals planned for other locations which, because of their potential to generate high volumes of traffic, could have significant implications for national roads in the area concerned. Development control shall seek to channel traffic from new development onto existing local roads and in this way use established access points to gain entry onto national roads and shall have regard to the Policy Document, *Spatial Planning and National Roads, Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, (January 2012) published by the DoECLG.

11.19.3. Local Roads

In general, only the minimum interference with existing roadside boundaries and hedges shall be permitted in relation to visibility splays on Local Roads. Visibility splays to be stipulated at 90 metres unless a safety audit is submitted to justify a reduced sight distance. Any works required to obtain visibility, such as trimming hedging, removing hedging, trees, walls or fencing shall be shown clearly on a site layout plan or other suitable drawings with a planning application. 3rd Party consent letters for works not on an applicants land is also required with the planning application.

If a development is up a private laneway, the onus of maintenance of the laneway is on the local residents who own the lane or who have shared right of way on a private laneway.

11.19.4 Car Parking

All developments shall be required to provide adequate provision within the site for the servicing of the proposal and for the parking and maneuvering of vehicles associated with it. Parking accommodation will be expected to locate within, or in close proximity to, the

site of the proposed development, and will normally be established behind the building lines in each development.

The layout and design of roads in housing developments shall have regard to the "Traffic Management Guidelines" issued jointly by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Transport and the Dublin Transportation Office (2003):

- In dealing with planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings, allowance will be made for the former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by the new development.
- Where the provision of on-site parking is not possible, the Council may, in exceptional circumstances, accept a financial contribution in respect of the shortfall in the number of spaces. This will however be at the discretion of the Council, and is likely only to apply to small scale town centre locations where the Council has provided, or intends to provide additional public car parking spaces
- Planting and landscaping of all car parks shall be required
- Parking facilities for mobility impaired drivers and their vehicles shall be provided at the general rate of 2 to 5 per 100 spaces. Such spaces shall be proximate to the entry points of the proposed buildings. The allocated spaces shall be clearly delineated and shall also display a relevant upright sign
- The parking spaces shall be proximate to the entry points of the proposed buildings
- The parking standards for residential development will be reviewed in town / village centre locations and where innovative design principles are adopted. In such cases grouped parking will be encouraged. Where reference is made to floor area, it refers to gross floor area, unless otherwise indicated
- Standard / Minimum parking dimensions shall be 2.5 X 5.0 metres
- For Primary and Secondary schools a bus circulation area may be required

Car parking areas shall be constructed having regard to drainage, surfacing and ancillary matters. They should be provided with proper public lighting facilities and shall be clearly demarcated. All car parking areas should be properly landscaped by the provision of trees, shrubs and grassed areas in order to ensure that damage to the visual amenities is avoided. Underground car parking facilities may be an alternative solution to the provision of car parking for inner town developments, subject to archaeological investigations. New schools must also have all parking requirements contained on the site with no on-street parking. In all developments of an industrial or commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading or unloading facilities sufficient to meet the demand of such development. Off-street loading facilities shall conform to the following requirements:

- Each required space shall not be less than 3.75m in width, 6.0m in length and 4.25m in height, exclusive of drives and manoeuvring space and located entirely on the site being served
- There shall be appropriate means of access to a street or road as well as adequate manoeuvring space
- The maximum width of the driveway opening onto the street boundary will be 6m and the minimum width shall be 3.75m

The Planning Authority may modify the requirements of loading and unloading facilities in any particular case where it considers it would be in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area to do so. Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent street obstruction and should be located where possible to the rear and side of the buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

The following table outlines the guidelines for the desirable level of car parking spaces and bicycle parking to be achieved for particular types of developments:

Land Use	Parking Spaces per Unit	Bicycle Parking
Dwelling House	2 car space per unit	1 per unit
Apartments	1.5 car spaces per unit	1 per unit
Primary School	1 car space for every classroom, plus staff and visitor spaces and set down area	1 per 5 students
Secondary School	2 car spaces for every classroom plus staff and visitor car spaces and set down area	1 per 4 students
Third level educational facility	0.5 car space for every 1 student plus staff and visitor spaces	1 per 3 students
Creche / Childcare facility	1 car space per staff member + 1 car parking space per 4 children	1 per 5 staff on duty
Churches, theatres, public halls	1 car space per 6 seats	1 per 10 seats
Cinema	1 car space per 10 seats	1 per 20 seats
Hotels, B+B and guesthouses	1 car space per bedroom	1 per 20 beds
Hostel/Motel	1 car space per bedroom or 1 car space per 10 bed dormitory	1 per 10 beds
Public houses, incl. hotel bar	1 car space per 10 m ² of bar and lounge floor area	1 per 75m ²
Hotel function rooms	1 car space per 10 m ²	
Private dance Clubs	15 car spaces per 100 m ² g.fl.area	1 per 100m ²
Leisure Centre	1 car space per 50m ² of g.fl.area	1 per 10m ²
Community Centre	1 car space per 10 m ²	1 per 10m ²
Conference Centre	1 car space per 25m ²	1 per 20 seats
Shopping centre, supermarkets, Department store	1 car space per 25 m ² g.fl.area	1 per 100m ²
Shop	1 car space per 20 m ² g.fl.area	1 per 75m ²
Cash & Carries	1 car space per 100m ²	1 per 150m ²
Restaurants	1 car space per 20 m ² g.fl.area	1 per 75m ²
Cafes	1 car space per 10m ² dining area	1 per 50m ²
Takeaways	1 car parking space per 18m ² g.fl. area	Nil
Banks & Financial Institutions	1 car space per 20 m ² of g fl.area and additional car space to be	1 per 50m ²

	determined by the Planning Authority	
Offices (Town Centre)	1 car space per 25m ² of gross floorspace	1 per 5 employees
Office (Business Park or other)	1 car space per 20m ² of gross floorspace	1 per 10 employees
Industry	1 car space for every 60m ² of gross industrial floor area and operational car space to be determined by the Planning Authority.	1 per 500m ²
Warehousing	1 car space per 100m ² of gross floorspace	1 per 500m ²
Retail Warehousing	1 car space for every 35 m ² of net retail floor space.	1 per 500m ²
Out of town / regional shopping centres	6 car spaces per 100sqm floor area	1 per 100m ²
Factory Outlet / Garden Centres	2 car spaces per 100 m ² g.fl.area	1 per 150m ²
Car show rooms	1 car space per 50m ² of gross floorspace	Nil
Garages / Filling Stations	1 car space per 50m ² of gross floorspace	1 per 50m ² for shop area
Library / Museum / Gallery	3 car spaces per 100 m ² g.fl.area	1 per 50m ²
Golf Course	4 car spaces per hole	Nil
Par 3 golf courses or Pitch and Putt courses	2 car spaces per hole	Nil
Sports grounds and sports clubs	20 car spaces per pitch / 2 spaces per court	5 per field
Golf driving ranges, Shooting ranges	1 car space per bay / trap plus 3 spaces	Nil
Swimming Pool	5 car spaces per 100 m ²	1 per 10m ²
Gym	1 car space per 10 m ²	1 per 10m ²
Clinics and Medical Practices	3 car spaces per consulting room plus staff	1 per consulting rm
Hospital	1.50 car spaces per bed	1 per 20 beds
Funeral Home	1 car space per per 6m ²	1 per 25m ²
Nursing Home	1 car space per 2 bedrooms plus staff car spaces	1 per 5 bedrooms
Allotments	1 car space per plot in areas located outside towns or villages (within towns or villages a relaxation of this standard shall apply on a case by case basis).	Nil
Tennis Courts	2 spaces per court	1 per court
Bowling Alley	2 spaces per lane	1 per lane

In the case of any use not specified above, the Planning Authority will determine the parking requirements, having regard to the traffic levels likely to be generated as a result of the development. Where a number of uses are contained within one development, the various uses shall be separated and the overall parking requirements for the development shall be assessed relative to each separate use in order to compute the overall parking requirement for the development (e.g. in a hotel the function rooms, bars etc. shall be assessed as separate from the bedroom provision). However, where a developer can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that parking spaces will be utilised throughout the day by a number of different users, availing of different facilities within a proposed development, the Planning Authority may, in the interest of sustainability, take this multi use into account when assessing parking needs. In addition to the above requirements, developers will be required to provide and maintain loading and circulation facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of each development.

11.19.5 Guidelines for Pigeon Lofts

Location

Pigeon lofts should be located as far as possible from neighbouring dwellings. In general, they should be a minimum distance of 10 metres from adjoining residential units, but in locations where this is not possible, the particular circumstances of each case will be considered.

Construction

Pigeon lofts should be of sound construction with a concrete floor or sub-floor. They should be constructed so as to ensure ease of cleaning and to provide adequate ventilation, while being secure against rodents.

Design

The external design and finish of pigeon lofts should be of good quality and they should be maintained in good condition.

Height and Area

The appropriate size of a loft would depend on the nature of the property and the proximity of neighbours. As a general rule, pigeon lofts should not exceed 25 sq m in area, and should have a maximum height of 3 metres with a pitched roof, or 2.5 metres with a flat roof.

Restrictions

In no circumstances will an open loft be permitted. (An open loft is one which pigeons may enter or leave at any time).