

Annual Report 2023



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

A young girl with a braid is looking through a magnifying glass at purple flowers in a garden. She is wearing a light blue shirt and a pink watch. The background is filled with green foliage and purple flowers.

Mission Statement

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 in the quality of life.

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Joint Foreword Note

Welcome to Carlow County Council's Annual Report 2023. Carlow has a massive amount to offer socially, economically, and aesthetically for people who choose to work, live, visit and do business in the County.

In 2023, Carlow County Council delivered a significant amount of work for the citizens of the County. The attached report highlights the progress that has been made across all areas of Council service delivery and as can be seen from the report that follows, the projects and work programmes delivered in 2023 will improve the County for all.

Challenges remain in several areas and there is still work to be done. Carlow County Council is committed to meeting these challenges head on and doing everything we can to engage with Councillors and citizens collaboratively in an effort to develop solutions to the various challenges society faces.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their continued hard work and dedication in the delivery of effective services for the County. Carlow County Council is recognised nationally as an exemplar in many areas of local government service delivery, and we are committed to maintaining and improving these standards in 2024 with an overarching strategic focus in the areas of improved infrastructure, economic expansion and social inclusion.



Andrea Dalton
Cathaoirleach



Coilín O'Reilly
Chief Executive



About Our Council

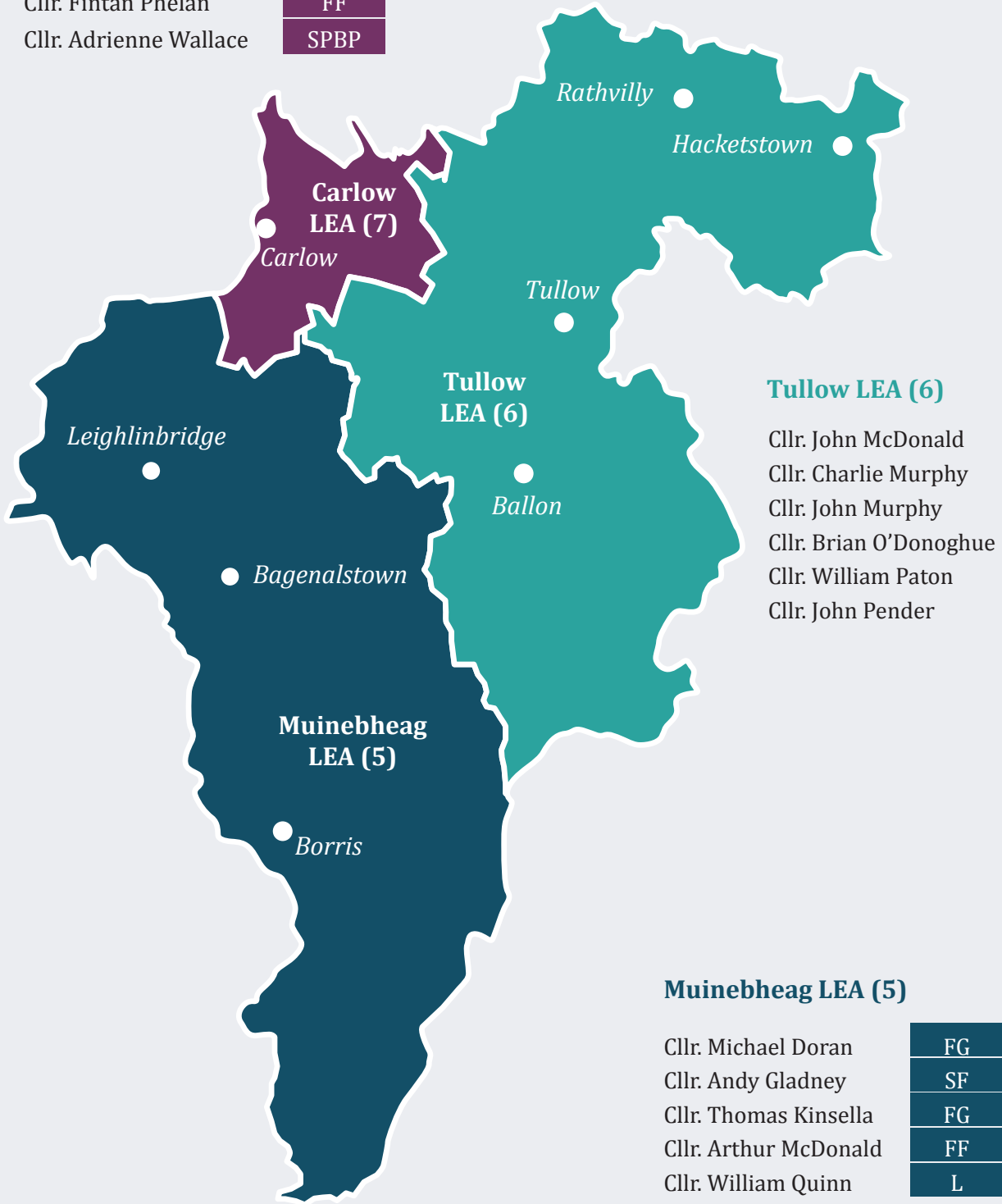
The County of Carlow (Contae Cheatharlach) is located inland within the Southeast of Ireland in the province of Leinster covering an area of 896 square kilometers. The County is strategically located and has excellent access to transport infrastructure through its location on the M9 Dublin Waterford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

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

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

Carlow LEA (7)

Cllr. Fergal Browne	FG
Cllr. John Cassin	No Party
Cllr. Andrea Dalton	FF
Cllr Ken Murnane	FF
Cllr. Tom O'Neill	FG
Cllr. Fintan Phelan	FF
Cllr. Adrienne Wallace	SPBP



Tullow LEA (6)

Cllr. John McDonald	FF
Cllr. Charlie Murphy	No Party
Cllr. John Murphy	FG
Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue	FG
Cllr. William Paton	L
Cllr. John Pender	FF

Muinebheag LEA (5)

Cllr. Michael Doran	FG
Cllr. Andy Gladney	SF
Cllr. Thomas Kinsella	FG
Cllr. Arthur McDonald	FF
Cllr. William Quinn	L

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CARLOW



Cllr. Fergal Browne



Cllr. John Cassin



Cllr. Andrea Dalton



Cllr. Ken Murnane



Cllr. Tom O'Neill



Cllr. Fintan Phelan



Cllr. Adrienne Wallace



Cllr. John Cahill
co-opted June to
December 2023



Cllr. John McDonald



Cllr. Charlie Murphy



Cllr. John Murphy

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TULLOW



Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue



Cllr. William Paton



Cllr. John Pender

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF MUINEBHEAG



Cllr. Michael Doran



Cllr. Andy Gladney



Cllr. Thomas Kinsella



Cllr. Arthur
McDonald



Cllr. William Quinn

Council Meetings 2023



13 Plenary
Council



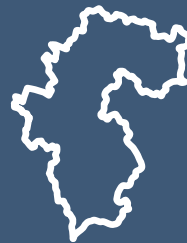
16 SPC
Meetings



3 JPC



11 Carlow
Municipal
District



13 Tullow
Municipal
District



11 Muinebheag
Municipal
District



12 Corporate
Policy Group



11 LCDC/ LAG
Meetings



Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

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

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

Planning, Environment, Climate and Bio-Diversity Action, Energy and Agriculture Strategic Policy Committee



Chaired by:

Cllr. Fergal Browne

Council Members:

Cllr. Thomas Kinsella, Cllr. Charlie Murphy, Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue, Cllr. William Paton, Cllr. Fintan Phelan, Cllr. Adrienne Wallace.

External Members:

Brian O'Farrell, Ian Sewell (PPN), Eamonn Moore (PPN), Willie Murphy (PPN), George Collier (Agriculture Farming IFA)

Housing, Community and Wellbeing Strategic Policy Committee



Chaired by:

Cllr. Arthur McDonald

Council Members:

Cllr. John Cassin, Cllr. Andrea Dalton, Cllr. Andy Gladney, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. Tom O'Neill, Cllr. William Quinn.

External Members:

Joe Butler (PPN), Mary Redmond (PPN), Ahmed Adam (PPN Social Inclusion) Eileen Brophy Development/Construction/ Chambers Ireland, John McHugh PPN Environment

The SPC met four times in 2023, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Annual Works Programme 2023
- Rollout of Decarbonization Zone
- Preparation of a Local Authority Climate Action Plan
- Draft Carlow Biodiversity Action Plan
- Croí Cónaithe – Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant
- Carlow/Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan
- Draft National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy-Launch of Statutory Consultation

The SPC met three times in 2023, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 to 2024 Mid Term Review
- Local Authority Housing Stock – Fuel Poverty – Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme Draft 2022 – 2030
- Housing Disability Strategy Policy 2022-2027
- Healthy Carlow
- Amendments to Planning Legislation relating to LA Housing Developments
- Policy on replacement of windows – Housing Aid for Older People Grant
- Tenant In-Situ Scheme
- Homeless Plan
- Nationwide Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme



Culture, Libraries and Digital Development, Tourism, Enterprise and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee

Chaired by:

Cllr. Michael Doran

Council Members:

Cllr. Andrea Dalton, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. John Murphy, Cllr. Tom O'Neill, Cllr. John Pender.

External Members:

Brian O'Farrell, Business/Commercial/Chambers Ireland, Eileen O'Rourke, PPN Community/Voluntary, Jolly O'Rock, PPN Social Inclusion



Transportation & Infrastructural Strategic Policy Committee

Chaired by:

Cllr. William Paton (Jan to June 2023)/ Cllr Adrienne Wallace (Cllr. John Cahill)

Council Members:

Cllr. Michael Doran, Cllr. Andy Gladney, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue.

External Members:

Rowena Dooley Dev./Construction/Chambers Ireland, John Brophy Business/Commercial/Chambers Ireland, Jackie Meally (PPN) John Tully, PPN Environment/Conservation

The SPC met five times in 2023, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Local Economic and Community Plan
- Update on St. Willibrord
- Carlow Digital Strategy (2021 – 2024)
- Carlow Heritage Plan
- Library Collection Development Policy
- Cruinniu na nÓg
- National Library Strategy
- InnoCom – Regional Policy Paper
- Carlow County Council new website
- Draft Heritage Plan

The SPC met four times in 2022, the following is a summary of the issues discussed:

- Green Infrastructure Policy
- County Road Safety Plan 2023-2030
- Nature Based Suds Project (SUDS)
- PPN Update
- Carlow County Bus Service
- Carlow Town Bus Service
- PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project)
- Carlow URDF Project
- Review of Fire Services Area Risk Categorisation
- Carlow County Council Public & Exterior Lighting Specification



Joint Policing Committee

The Garda Síochána Act 2005 (Section 36) provides for the establishment of a Joint Policing Committee (JPC) in each local authority. The purpose of these committees is to provide a forum where a local authority and the senior Garda Officers responsible for policing that area can consult, discuss and make recommendations on matters of policing for that area.

Chairperson:

Cllr. Michael Doran

Council Members:

Cllr. Fergal Browne, Cllr. John Cassin, Cllr. Andrea Dalton, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Tom O’Neill, Cllr. Fintan Phelan, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. John Murphy, Cllr. Brian O’Donoghue, Cllr. William Paton, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Arthur McDonald

Oireachtas Members:

Malcolm Noonan TD, Jennifer Murnane O’Connor TD

Executive Members:

Coilín O’Reilly, Chief Executive, Michael Rainey, Director of Services Planning, Economic Development & Corporate

PPN Community Representatives:

Martin Tuite, Michael Nolan and Caroline Dargan

Garda Representatives:

Chief Superintendent Anthony Pettit, Waterford/Kilkenny and Superintendent Anthony Farrell, Carlow

Other Community Representatives:

John Brophy, Chamber of Commerce, Anton Scheele, Carlow Women’s Aid, Michael Lyons, Carlow Town Community First Responders PPN, William Roche, Develop Tullow Association Gemma Hughes, Amber Women’s Refuge, Caroline Dargan, Carlow Town Community First Responders, Michael Nolan, Carlow Travellers Forum





Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The LCDC consists of 19 members both statutory and non-statutory including four elected members. 10 LCDC meetings were held in 2023.

Carlow LCDC held 11 meetings during 2023.

Statutory Interests	
Cllr. Andrea Dalton	Elected Member
Cllr. Thomas Kinsella	Elected Member
Cllr. Tom O'Neill	Elected Member
Cllr. Willie Quinn	Elected Member
Coilín O'Reilly	Chief Executive, CCC
Kieran Comerford	Head of Enterprise, CCC
Vacant	Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
Sarah Barron	Kilkenny/Carlow Education & Training Board Health Service Executive
Joan-Ita Murphy	Health Service Executive
Non-Statutory Interests	
Damien Howard	Myshall Muintir na Tíre, Community and Voluntary (PPN Representative)
Pdraig Dooley	Carlow Historical & Archaeological Society (Community and Voluntary PPN Representative)
Lynda Stacey	Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre (Social Inclusion PPN Representative)
Áine Gahan	Carlow Childcare Committee (PPN)
Vacant	(Environmental Sector PPN Representative)
Annette Fox	Carlow County Development Partnership CLG
Rowena Dooley	Carlow Chamber (Business Employer)
George Hatton	Agricultural/Farming
Agnita Kelly	Civic Society/Arts Sector, Artist
Eileen O'Rourke	Tourism Sector



Corporate Affairs



5

No. Subject
Access Request

78

No. of Freedom
of Information
applications
received



45,983

No. of Electors
registered to
vote



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

- Management of Council, Corporate Policy Group, Carlow MD and JPC Meetings, Attendance of Councillors at Conferences
- Payment of Councillors Allowances and Expenses, Civic Receptions, Linkage with National Bodies such as LAMA and ACCC, and Joint Policing Committees
- Preparation of Statutory Reports; Chief Executive Monthly Report, Annual Report, Service Delivery Plan, Corporate Plan
- Register of Electors & Local Elections
- Customer Service, Corporate Communications – Press Releases
- Co-Ordination of Customer Service Performance Indicators
- Coroners Court
- Management of Council Property
- Corporate Governance, Ethics & Donation Register
- Freedom of Information, Ombudsman, Data Protection, Protected Disclosures, Archive Services
- Irish Language Scheme, Disability Plan
- Schools Business Programme Partnership
- Service Indicators co-ordination
- Major Emergency Management – Communications. Liaison with public, media and Councillors including during severe weather conditions.

Civic Receptions

There were two Civic Receptions held last year, one for The Carlow & District Juniores League Under 14 Academy 2023 for their achievement in winning The Gaynor Cup 2023 which was held on the 18th of October 2023. The event took place in the Town Hall Theatre and was attended by Elected Members, officials, family members and friends.

The second event was an evening of celebration and appreciation of Carlow Foster Carers held on 6th December 2023 in the Town Hall Theatre. This event was attended by a large number of family members, friends, officials and Elected Members.

Mayoral Reception

The Mayor of Carlow Municipal District, Cllr. Fintan Phelan and members of Carlow County Council hosted a Mayoral Reception, to honor local groups and individuals for their outstanding achievements and work within the community. This event took place on 1st June 2023 in the Town Hall Theatre, Carlow. The following received Mayor awards:

- enCÓRe
- Carlow Town First Responders
- Carlow Mental Health Association
- Carlow Darkness into Light
- Carlow Pan Celtic Festival Committee

- Tullow Road Community Development Group
- Carlow Pride Festival
- Jordan Morrissey
- Tommy Payne
- Carlow Town Park Run
- Shauna Delaney
- Mary Reddy

Cathaoirleach Awards Night

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue and members of Carlow County Council hosted an inaugural Cathaoirleach Awards Night, to honour local groups and individuals for their outstanding achievements and work within the community. This event took place on 24th May 2023 in the Link Gallery at the Visual, Carlow. The following received Cathaoirleach awards:

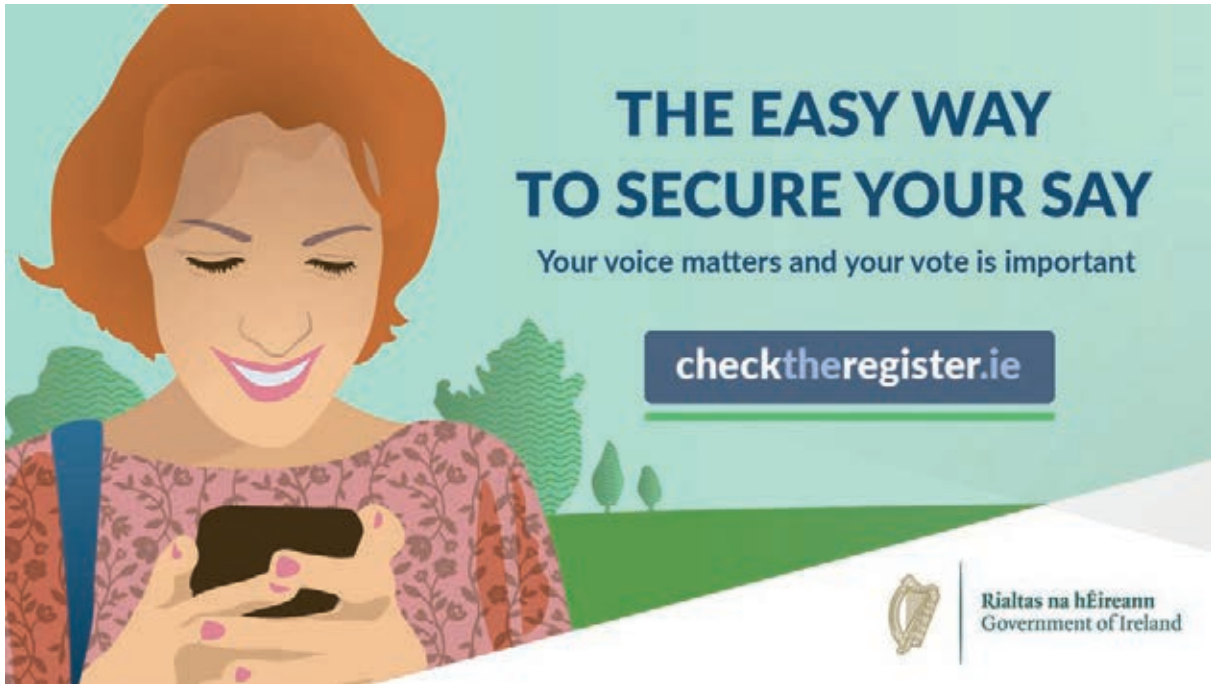
- Paul Doogue – for his contribution to the promotion of Community Games and Sporting within the County of Carlow
- Leila Colfer – for her outstanding achievements in athletics
- Anton Scheele – in recognition of his services to social needs within the County of Carlow
- Alan O'Reilly – in recognition of his outstanding service to Carlow as a volunteer meteorologist
- Eric Osbourne – in recognition of his contribution to the promotion of rural Carlow



Cathaoirleach Brian O'Donoghue presenting Paul Doogue with his award



Cathaoirleach Brian O'Donoghue presenting Leila Colfer with her award



Register of Electors

The Council is responsible for the compilation of the Register of Electors for the County of Carlow. Under the new Electoral Reform Act 2022, a national program ‘Modernisation of the Electoral Register’ was carried out to reform the electoral registration process. It provides for a rolling register or continuous registration which means electors can register to vote up to 15 days before polling day.

The total number of electors registered to vote in 2023 was **45,983** with a total of **17,233** in Carlow Local Electoral Area (LEA), **13,462** in Muinebheag LEA and **15,288** in Tullow LEA.

Presidential Electors	43,803
Dáil Electors	44,339
European Electors	44,821
Potential European Electors	66

Customer Services

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

Corporate Property

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

Data Protection

Carlow County Council processes all personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018. 5 Data Subject Access Requests were received in 2023. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) has actively engaged across the organisation to minimise risks to personal data, maintain compliance and respond to a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

Records Management & Archives

Corporate Affairs is responsible for the implementation of the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records, and for development of the County Archives Service. 14 transfers of non-current records to the Council’s Records Centre took place in 2023. 8 Destruction Certificates were issued. The County Archives Service engaged with sectoral strategic planning and survey work.

Council Meetings

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

Chief Executive Monthly Progress Report to Council

The Chief Executive prepares a monthly report (In accordance with Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) of each directorate/section, detailing service delivery and important achievements across the organisation during the month. This report is an agenda item at every monthly Council meeting and questions are taken from members on any aspect of the report. This report also serves as a mechanism through which members have oversight of the progress on the implementation of the Corporate Plan and Annual Budget.

The National Performance Indicators for 2023

The council's performance is measured by a series of Performance Indicators (44) set out nationally by the National Oversight and Audit Commission. Carlow was selected for a random evaluation process in which Corporate Affairs facilitated.

Privacy Statement

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

Official Language Act 2003

Carlow County Council continues to implement the Official Language Act 2003 and it is committed to delivering on all aspects of Carlow County Councils Irish Language Scheme. This included working with all departments to assist them in compliance with the legislation and promotion of the Irish language in all elements of service delivery and informing

staff of the Councils obligations regarding Carlow County Councils Language Scheme.

Freedom of Information

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

Applications Received	78
Requests Granted	27
Requests Refused	36
Requests Part-Granted	13
Requests Withdrawn	2
Carried Over 2022	23
Internal Reviews	4
Appeals to Information Commissioner	2

Journalists	30
Business/Interest Groups	5
Oireachtas/Public Members	1
Staff	0
Clients	32
Other	10

Ombudsman

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

Carlow County Council received 9 complaints in 2023.

Closed Cases	7
Open Cases	2
Total Cases	9

Ethics Register

The role of Ethics Registrar is set out in Part 15 of Local Government Act, 2001 and is managed by Corporate Affairs and

Governance. Annual Declarations for 2023 from all relevant employees and elected members were received and made publicly available within the statutory period.

Local Elections Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure Act 1999

Pursuant to this requirement, Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no donations and expenditures for 2023. Copy of declarations submitted were published on the website along with all payments made to Councillors, including the representational payment, the allowance and travel and subsistence payments.

Protected Disclosures

Section 22 of the Protected disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of an annual report relative to Protected Disclosures received. Pursuant to this requirement,

Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no protected disclosures received in 2023.

Southeast First Citizens Forum

In March 2022 the Cathaoirligh and Chief Executives of five local authorities of the South East (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford) teamed together to address the structural challenges facing the South East. This regional collaboration initiative of the five local authorities is the first of its kind in Ireland and is aimed at developing a prosperous future for everybody in the region.

The Forum conduct meetings with Oireachtas members once a quarter and in June 2022 Carlow County Council took the lead role in facilitating meetings. One meeting was held in March 2023 and the lead role was handed over to Kilkenny County Council in June 2023.





Health And Safety

In 2023, Carlow County Council continued to implement its Occupational Health and Safety Management System and seek continuous improvement in Health and Safety.

A particular focus was put on the implementation of a health and safety document control app for the management of health and safety documents and forms such as SSWPs, Traffic Management Plans, Vehicle and Equipment checks implementing it initially in the Transportation Department with the objective being to extend it for use in other departments. The app is also being used to carry out safety inspections as per the council's ongoing safety inspection programme. TBC no. health and safety inspections were carried out in 2023.

Tablets are now being used to deliver and record compliance with health and safety requirements with the mechanism to report incidents online. There were no serious incidents reported with a significant decrease in IR1 reportable incidents. Continuous consultation and communication with staff during the year and proactive checking ensures safety, health and welfare best practice is adhered to. Update required.





Human Resources



406

Headcount as at
31/12/2023



Full Time
Employment

317.87

Including 46
retained fire fighters



40

No. of Interviews
Held



Gender Breakdown

218

Males

188

Females



78 Joiners,
40 Leavers,

34 Joiners and Leavers

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

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





Planning & Development



517

No. of Planning Applications Received



330

No. of Valid Applications



187

No. of Invalid Applications



4

Total no. dangerous structures complaints received



6

Housing developments were taken in charge during 2023



3

Enforcement Notices Served

10

Total no. complaints received for potential breach of the Short-Term Lettings Regulations



29

No. of Derelict Site notices issued

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

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Applications

Carlow County Council received a total of 517 planning applications during 2023. The following is a breakdown of decisions made during 2023 by Carlow County Council:

Number of valid applications received	330
Number of invalid applications received	187
Number of applications granted	302
Number of applications refused	37
Number of pre-planning consultations held	92
Number of Compliance Requests Processed	158

An Bord Pleanála Appeals

An Bord Pleanála issued decisions on 15 no. Planning Appeals in Carlow County Council Administrative Area in 2023. Carlow County Council's decision was upheld in 13 of these cases.

Declarations, Exemptions & Licences

The Development Management Section of Carlow County Council processed a number of Applications for Exemptions and Licences in 2023:

Section 5 Exempt Development Applications	43
Section 254 Furniture Licence Applications	2
Section 254 Scaffolding Licence Applications	7
Section 254 Broadband & Telecommunications Licence Applications	4
Section 57 Declarations for Protected Structures	3
Section 97 Part V Exemption Applications	10
Forestry – Tree Felling Licence	24
Forestry – Planting Approval Licence	5
Forestry – Forest Road & Native Woodland Schemes	4
SI 75 Residential Exemption	7

Preliminary Part VIII, Part VIII & Section 179A Projects

The Development Management Section of Carlow County Council managed the process for a number of projects for Local Authority Own Development – Part VIII in 2023:

Preliminary Part VIII	9
Part VIII	9
Section 179A	2

FORWARD PLANNING

Carlow-Graigucullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2023-2029

Carlow County Council, in conjunction with Laois County Council commenced the process to review the Joint Urban Area Plan for the Carlow-Graigucullen Greater Urban Area in late 2022. The Draft Carlow-Graigucullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan (Draft JULAP) was finalised in Q4 2023. Briefings on the content of the Draft Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2023-2029 were presented to the Elected Members of Carlow County Council and Laois County Council Municipal District Areas i.e., Carlow Municipal District and Portarlinton/Graigucullen Municipal District in November 2023. The Public Consultation period for the Draft Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2023-2029 commenced on 5th December 2023 with a closing date for submissions 5th February 2024. The plan will be finalised for adoption in 2024.

Tullow and Muine Bheag/Royal Oak Local Area Plans

Pursuant to Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) a review of the Muinebheag – Royal Oak Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (as extended) and the Tullow Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (as extended) commenced in Q4 2023. Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Scoping Reports were prepared for both Local Area Plan 2024-2030 and referred to Prescribed Bodies with a closing date for submissions being the 11th of December 2023. Drafting of Issues Paper for both Draft Plans commenced in December 2023 with publication of the Draft Plans due in Q2/3 of 2024.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

Action 15.2 of Housing for All specifically identified the introduction of a new tax to activate vacant land for residential purposes, known as the Residential Zoned Land Tax and replaced the vacant site levy. The principal purpose of the residential zoned land tax is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced residential development land for housing.

All Local Authorities were tasked with preparing maps which identify land falling within the scope of the tax. The draft mapping was placed on public display in the Council Offices, Libraries and on the Online Consultation Portal. Submissions on the Draft Map were invited up to 1st January 2023 and subject to further information requests where appropriate. Following same, the Planning Authority issued determination letters to landowners on 28th March 2023 regarding the inclusion and/or exclusion of their lands from the RZLT Maps and regarding the timescale for the assessment of and rezoning requests received. A further supplemental map was published in November 2022 identifying additional land for inclusion, with the Final RZLT Maps published on 1st December 2023. An annual review of the map continues in 2024.

The first liability date for the tax has been deferred from 1st February 2024 to the 1st of February 2025 which will be administered by the Revenue Commissioners.

ENFORCEMENT

91	No. of Enforcement Complaints
8	No. of Derelict Sites Complaints
4	No. of Dangerous Structures Complaints
3	No. of Enforcement Notices Served
29	No. of Derelict Sites Notices Issued
10	No. of Potential Breach of the Short-Term Lettings Regulations
10	Developments Taken in Charge

The Planning Department in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) seeks to ensure that planning permissions are complied with.

Written complaints of unauthorised development, where they appear to be well founded, are investigated. Following an investigation of a bone fide complaint the commencement of the enforcement steps

is initiated by the issue of a Warning Letter followed by the issue of an Enforcement Notice should the matter not be satisfactorily resolved following the issue of a Warning Letter

In the event of non-compliance with the Enforcement Notice legal proceedings are initiated.

A total of 91 complaints were received during 2023.

Warning letters issued	88
Enforcement notices served	3
Legal proceedings initiated	1
Cases closed	122
Ongoing Court Proceedings	8

TAKING OF ESTATES IN CHARGE

Taking of Estates in Charge Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requests to take estates in charge can be made by the Developer or the majority of the owners residing in the development. The Planning and Development Act 2010 allows the Local Authority to take part of an estate in charge. A total of 2 request to take developments in charge was received in 2023.

The following housing developments were taken in charge during 2023.

No.	Estate TIC	Address	MD Area
1	Rivercourt (Phase 1)	O'Brien Road, Carlow	Carlow
2	Tanner Hall	Athy Rd., Carlow	Carlow
3	St. Mullins Close	Tinnahinch, Co. Carlow	Muinebheag
4	Bramble Court	Tullowhill, Tullow	Tullow
5	Abbey Close	Tullow, Co. Carlow	Tullow
6	Kylemore Hill	Rathoe, Co. Carlow	Tullow

DERELICT SITES

Derelict sites are dealt with in accordance with the Derelict Sites Act 1990. The Register Lists 16 properties. During 2023, 3 properties were added to the register with a further 5 removed.

DANGEROUS STRUCTURES

The Planning Department implements the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964 in relation to Dangerous Structures & Places. The department co-ordinates the follow-up with Building Inspectors, Law, Property Management, various government agencies and the public to minimise risk. A total of 4 complaints were received in 2023.

CLIMATE ACTION

The Carlow County Development Plan, aligning with the National Climate Action Plan 2024 and the new Carlow Climate

Action Plan 2024, integrates climate considerations into its daily operations. This alignment ensures that sustainability is a pivotal factor in evaluating planning applications, promoting green building practices, energy efficiency, and the adoption of renewable resources. With a dedicated chapter on Climate, the Development Plan outlines policies and objectives for planning and sustainable development. It addresses a spectrum of interconnected economic, social, and environmental issues, all within an overarching framework that emphasizes sustainable development and social inclusion. Additionally, the plan, recognizing its role as a former UN SDG champion 2019/2020, gives due consideration to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), emphasizing a holistic approach to adapt to climate change and achieve broader sustainable development objectives.





Regeneration

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

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

- Town Centre First
- Town Plans
- Addressing Vacancy & Dereliction
- Carrying out Data Vacancy Survey
- CPO Activation Programme
- Croí Cónaithe – Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant & Ready to Build Scheme
- Urban Regeneration Development Fund – Call 3
- Rural Regeneration Development Fund
- Town & Village Renewal

TOWN CENTRE FIRST

“The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community”.

Tullow Town Centre First Plan

Tullow Town Team, in partnership with Carlow County Council supported under the “Our Rural Future” Programme, appointed a multi-disciplinary team to prepare a Town

Centre First Plan for the town of Tullow and the plan received final approval in July 2023.

A fundamental component in the development of a Town Centre First Plan is engagement with local residents, stakeholders, business owners etc. in order to gain their feedback, comments, local knowledge and insights. There was a Public Workshop, 2 Public Consultations, 3 on-line surveys which resulted in the receipt of over 1,200 comments from the people of Tullow, 6 meetings with the Town Team, 3 meetings with the MD Members and 4 meetings with the internal multi-disciplinary working group in Carlow County Council.



A Collaborative Process to inform the Vision - A sample of comments provided by the local community

Environment

The Market Square is a nice feature with upgrade potential such as the creation of outdoor dining areas.

The Market Square feels like a car park.

Shopfront design / signage could be better.

Vacant buildings affects visual aspect of the town.

Buildings should retain traditional appearance.

Develop natural amenities around the River Slaney.

Asset being situated on River Slaney.

Increased planting.

Better lighting.

TCF Plan Response: The Market Square is a central project for the Tullow TCF Plan, in terms of its visual and environmental quality, use and location in the Town Centre. Projects have also been identified around the River Slaney which is an under-utilised natural resource. Amenity areas are also key in improving Tullow's urban environment.

Economy

Shops and the Square are a strength.

Good level of services, businesses and education.

Vacancy on Main Street.

Re-use of former Bank of Ireland as a remote working hub / tourism centre, business uses.

Restore Courthouse - could be a tourist attraction for Tullow.

Range of services needed (for e.g. too many hairdressers and takeaways).

High business costs.

Loyalty scheme to promote the town.

Re-use vacant buildings in the Square for SMEs.

TCF Plan Response: A key objective for Tullow's economy is restoring vibrancy and vitality to the Town Centre - this is critical to regenerating the Town Centre. Tullow's Town Centre should be characterised by a diverse range of uses and functions that will underpin its future economic resilience. The other themes also feed into the local economy.

The four key themes of this plan are Environment, Economy, Movement and Urban Structure. These 4 themes then played into the process of providing details in respect of the proposed project interventions.

The 11 project interventions within the plan are –

1.	The Market Square
2.	Court House
3.	Heritage Garden & Exemplar Housing
4.	Four Biodiversity Walking Loops
5.	River Walk
6.	Riverfront Amenity Area
7.	Water Activity Area
8.	Pedestrian & Cycle Bridges
9.	Laneways & Alleyways
10.	Captain Murphy Memorial Hall
11.	Town Park





Urban Regeneration Development Fund – Call 3

Carlow County Council have been approved for a programme of 10 properties under the above funding stream to the value of €1.5m. This funding support will act as a dedicated revolving fund designed to address the financial barrier and risk faced by Carlow County Council in seeking to address long term vacant and derelict properties across Carlow Town. This funding is being made available to acquire long term vacant or derelict properties for onward sale or re-use. The Revolving URDF Fund will be replenished from the proceeds received from the sale or reuse of properties and sites, allowing a local authority to establish a rolling programme of acquisitions to tackle long term vacancy and dereliction.

The Regeneration team have activated the 10 properties approved and engaged with the owners to assist them in bringing the property back in to use themselves, or where necessary, such as where a property is unregistered or engagement with the owner is not possible, to acquire the property compulsorily.

These properties are not being targeted with a view to retaining them as Local Authority stock for use as Social Housing, they are solely being targeted for onward sale.

Properties approved by the Department	10
CPO commenced	2
Vested	1
Owner has engaged	7

Data Vacancy Survey

The Regeneration Office commenced a data vacancy survey of Carlow in January 2023 only in towns and villages within a 1km buffer zone. There were 473 vacant and/or derelict properties identified. 348 of these properties have been activated, with 14 Compulsory acquisitions commenced, 2 of which have been vested. 14 properties have been brought back into use.

CPO Activation Programme

At a time of high housing need, it is imperative that existing houses and properties are being fully used. While the reasons for vacancy are often complex, the re-use and regeneration of vacant properties in our towns, villages and rural areas can provide much needed housing while also transforming areas and the communities living in them.

The CPO Activation Programme was launched in April 2023. Under this Programme, Carlow County Council have a key role to play in the activation of properties and bringing them back into use. This is done through engagement with owners, using the schemes and measures in place. Compulsory acquisition is one of the measures that Carlow County Council use, particularly when other forms of engagement with owners of vacant and derelict properties have been unsuccessful.

CPO Commenced	14
CPO Withdrawn	5
CPO Referred to An Bord Pleanala	6
Properties Vested	1

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

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



The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

This Scheme was launched in July 2022. This is one of the measures which has been implemented to address vacancy and bring properties back into use. It benefits those who wish to turn a formerly vacant house or building (as per scheme outlined) into their principle private residence or to make it available for rent.

A maximum grant of up to €50,000 is available for the refurbishment of vacant properties. There is also a further maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be structurally unsound and dangerous, or if the property is already on the local authority's Derelict Sites Register.

Once an applicant receives approval in principle of the grant, they can then proceed to complete their project. On completion of all works, the grant is then drawn down and paid directly to the applicant.

67	Croí Cónaithe applications were received during 2023.
31	were approved in principle.
1	grant was paid.

Ready to Build Scheme

Carlow County Council are to make available serviced sites in towns & villages where there is sufficient provision of services and amenities and where there is direct access to adequate infrastructure. Sites will be available at a discount on the market with a value up to €30,000.00.

Carlow County Council are to develop

existing sites in their control or purchase sites and make them available for development by providing services and access to the sites concerned.

The scheme is exclusively available to individuals or households for which the property built on the purchased site will be their principal private residence.

15 potential sites identified.





Local Enterprise Office, Economic Development & Special Project Development



27

Financial Support Packages



18

Lean for Business Vouchers



42

Green for Business Vouchers



31

Trading Online Vouchers



1869

Total Training



140

Start Your Own Business Participants



225

Management Development Clients



1504

General Training & Networking



247

Mentoring



3

Export Development Clients



7

Digital for Business Clients



6

Micro Finance Ireland Applications



2

Clients Transfers



5

Green Efficiency Grants

Enterprise Ireland - Service Level Agreement

The financial approval output for 2023 in respect of the Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland in respect of the operation of the Local Enterprise Office was as follows:

GRANT APPROVED (Ytd)	No.	€
Financial Assistance to Manufacturing & International Services Companies		
Business Expansion Grants Approved	10	€422,607
Priming Grants Approved	4	€62,395
Feasibility Grants Approved	2	€7,400
Trading Online Vouchers Approved (Ytd)	31	€68,396
Technical Assistance Micro Exporters Grants	10	€17,341
Lean for Micro Grants Approved	19	€44,000
Green for Micro Vouchers Approved	43	€69,855
Digitization Vouchers Approved	7	€24,400
Energy Efficiency Grant	5	€18,633
Agile Innovation Grants Approved		
Grad Start	1	€30,000





Economic Development

Ireland South East

Ireland South East Office Carlow County Council provided funding to the Ireland South East Office for the coordination of a variety of actions in the area of economic development and business support.

Carlow Tourism

Carlow County Council supported the Annual Plan for Carlow Tourism under their MOU with Carlow Tourism and strategic framework for the future support of the Tourism Sector in County Carlow.

Carlow Generations Cookbook

The Economic Development Unit in partnership with the Library Service published a book called Generations which is focused on food and family.

Economic Marketing

Carlow County Council commissioned a variety of publications in association with the Sunday Business Post, Sunday Independent, KCLR and the Nationalist during 2023 including the Your Seat is Ready Campaign.

The Council redeveloped its marketing materials for investment in 2023.

Communications & Engagement Group

The Council developed a Communications & Engagement group of business sector agencies and support bodies to ensure a coordinated approach to business community and engagement. The group hosted the first Carlow Business Day in October 2023 which was attended by over 200 people.

Enterprise Space Development

The Council worked with Carlow Community Enterprise Centres CLG to develop a series of projects to provide Enterprise Space in the County. These projects are supported by Enterprise Ireland & Town & Village Renewal Scheme. Construction commenced on the Station House – Community & Enterprise Hub in Hacketstown with pre-development carried out in respect of the Catalyst Project in Carlow Town and Presentation House in Bagenalstown.

Development & EU Funding

The Council concluded the Creative Europe Craft Hub Project. Craft Hub was shortlisted as a finalist in the EU Enterprise Promotion Awards.

The InnoCom project was commenced which is a project in respect of business engagement under Interreg Europe. A detailed survey of clients was completed to form the foundations for the work in 2024.

Christmas 2024 Programme

Carlow County Council enhanced the Christmas Programme which a series of activities under the brands Lightfest and Shop Local Shop Carlow. Events were attended by over 10,000 people.



Ciara Stanley Powerhouse WIB Awards Winner



Launch of Carlow Generations Cookbook



Shop Local Shop Carlow Campaign



Environment & Climate Action



28

No. of bring sites operated by CC



2

Civic Amenity Sites at Powerstown & Kernanstown



6

No. of Agri Pollution 'Warning Letters'



160

No. of Fines issued under the Litter Pollution Act



900

No. routine Waste Inspections



99

No. non routine waste inspections

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

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



- Environmental Education & Awareness
- Climate Change
- Biodiversity



- Environmental Complaint Management
- Litter Prevention & Control



- Environmental Planning
- Energy Management & Targets



- Air Pollution
- Noise Pollution



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



- Burial Grounds



- Control of Dogs



- Integration of Sustainable Development Goals



Inspections 2023

Inspections	Planned	Completed
Routine Waste Inspections	761	1053
Non-Routine Waste Inspections	49	121
Routine Litter Inspections	1020	1030
Routine Water / Waste Water Inspections	328	413
Non-Routine Water / Waste Water Inspections	16	20
Routine Air / Noise Inspections	77	94
Non-Routine Air / Noise Inspections	5	56
Routine Producer Responsibility Inspections	88	45

Environmental Planning

Planning Environmental Inspections (Routine)	
Inspections (environmental) of existing planning permissions	13
Inspections (environmental) in advance of grant/refusal of planning permission	260
Quarry Inspections (e.g., relating to noise, dust, surface/groundwater emissions, vibration etc.)	30
Other planning inspections relating to environmental issues	73
Subtotal Planning Inspections (Routine)	376

Enforcement Actions	
Waste	
Waste 'Warning Letters'	43
Section 14 WMA (Direction)	3
Section 18 WMA (info)	2
Section 55 WMA (measures)	2
Section 56 WMA	0
Section 71 WMA (abandoned. cars)	22
Article 25 Notices under Packaging Regulation	2
Article 12 of the Commercial Food Waste Regulations 2009	0
Number of Fixed Payment Notices under the Waste Collection Permit Regulations	8
Number of Fines issued under the Litter Pollution Act	31
Number of recommendations to NWCPO to review waste collection permits	0
Other	54
Total Waste Enforcement Actions Initiated During Reporting Year	167
Water/Wastewater	
Water & Waste Water Inspections	
Discharges licenses to waters (Section 4)	14
Audits of private water supplies	12
Farm Inspections under GAP Regulations conducted by LA (not including farm inspections by DAFM)	14
Farm Inspections Other e.g., Routine farm inspection but not GAP inspections BIOSOLIDS	60
WFD investigative monitoring samples and analysis by Local Authorities	236
Bathing Waters	20
DWWTS Inspections under National Inspection Plan Septic Tanks	19
DWWTS Engagement Activities	18
Other Surface & Groundwater Protection Inspections [e.g., drinking water source protection, zoc monitoring, etc.]	6
Misconnection Surveys	8
Inspections relating to water pollution incidents/complaints excluding non-routine farm inspections	8
Non-routine farm inspections, e.g., on foot of pollution incident or complaint	0
Unauthorised Discharges Investigated	12
Total Inspections in categories above	427
Agriculture	
Agri Pollution 'Warning Letters'	6
NONCs to DAFF	0
Section 26(8) GAP Regs	0
Section 12 Notice WPA	0
Section 23 Notice WPA	0
Total Agricultural Enforcement Actions during reporting year	6

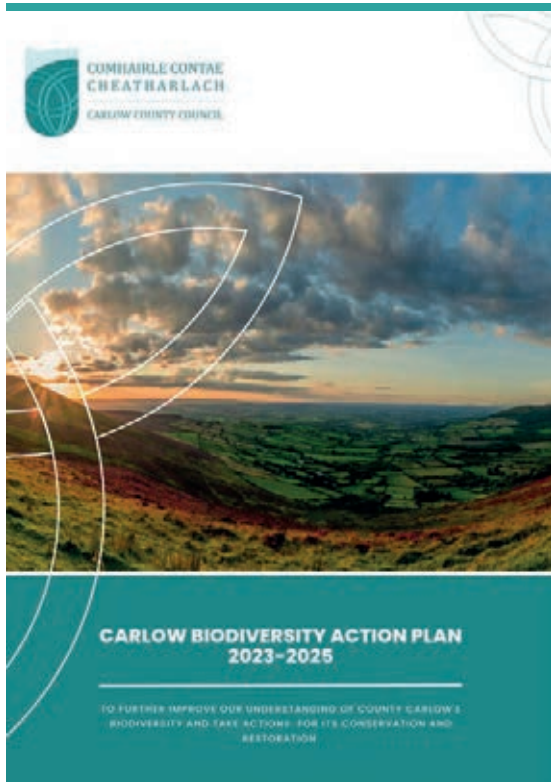
Air (incl. Odour/Dust)	
Air 'warning letters'	34
Solvents 'warning letters'	1
Deco Paints 'warning letters'	2
Section 16 APA (info)	0
Section 26 APA (measures)	3
Enforcement actions under solid fuel regulations (S.I. 326 of 2012)	0
Fixed payment notices under solid fuel regulations (S.I. 326 of 2012)	0
Section 110 Notices Public Health Act	0
Total Air Enforcement Actions Initiated during reporting year	40
Noise	
Noise 'warning letters'	5
Section 107 EPA (notice)	0
Total Noise Enforcement Actions Initiated during reporting year	5
Producer Responsibility Initiatives	
PRI Fixed Payment Notices (Waste Management Act)	0
Total PRI Enforcement Actions Initiated during reporting year	0
Grand Total Enforcement Actions Initiated during reporting year	645

Rural Water Grants 2023

Grants	Received	Approved	Total Value
Domestic Well Grants	67	60	€190,000
Domestic Septic Tank Grants	0	0	0
Domestic Lead Remediation Grants	0	0	0
Total	67	60	€190,000

Annual Dog Stats 2023

Strays	139
Surrenders	18
Reclaims	24
Re-homed by Shelter	56
Directed to Rescue	67
Put To Sleep	4

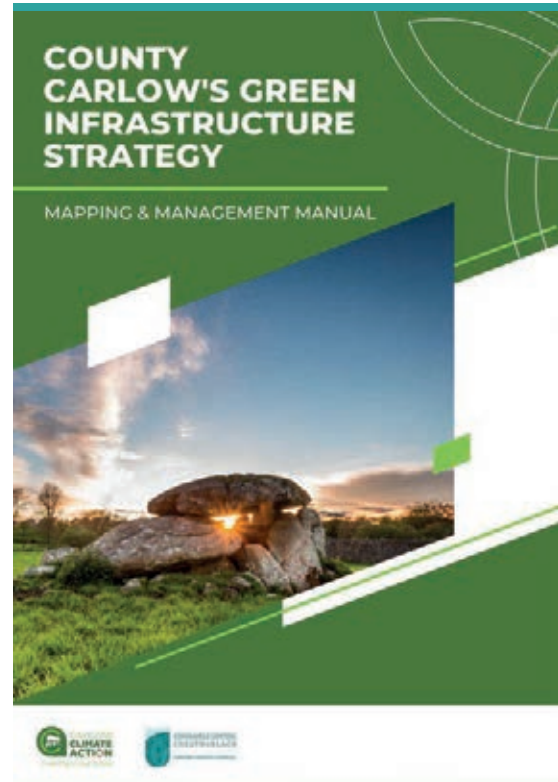


County Carlow Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2025

In March 2023, Carlow County Council adopted their first Biodiversity Action Plan. The vision of the plan is to further improve our understanding of County Carlow's biodiversity and take action for its conservation and restoration. A number of projects were funded under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023 and launched by Minister Malcolm Noonan. The projects launched included: Carlow Town Edible Pollinator Patch at Carlow College; Powerstown Stream Restoration Project; Hare's Corner Wildlife Pond and the Bagenalstown Biodiversity Classroom.

Carlow County Council Green Infrastructure Strategy

The County Carlow Green Infrastructure Strategy was adopted on April 17th, 2023. The innovative urban policy approach that "no pollinator in any Carlow town will have to travel more than 200 metres in order to find a space that is managed for biodiversity",



caught the attention of the All-Ireland Pollinator. Carlow County Council was asked to prepare knowledge transfer materials on the approach, such that the All-Ireland Pollinator could share nationwide as an example of good practice.

Environmental Inspection Plan Outcome 2022

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications set the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) annually. Each local authority must submit to the Environmental Protection Authority its inspection plan to respond to the NEP's and a detailed return for inspections and outcomes for the preceding year (called the RMCEI Plan).

The EPA concluded the evaluation of all Local Authority performances concerning National Enforcement Priorities for 2022. Carlow County Council delighted not only to have met the stipulated standard but also attained a commendable 70%, surpassing the national average of 59%.



Kernanstown Civic Amenity Access for All

Waste Management – Anti Dumping Initiative 2023

Carlow County Council successfully secured €90,000 under the Anti-Dumping Initiative in 2023. The funding was allocated towards several approved projects aimed at combating illegal waste activities and promoting environmental sustainability within the county. These projects included hiring a private investigator to gather evidence on suspected local illegal waste collectors, providing recycling access for all at the Kernanstown Civic Amenity Site, removing illegal fly-tipping from laneways and blackspots, supporting voluntary cleanup groups, implementing smart signage for preventing illegal dumping, and contributing bikes for Africa.

Access for All

The Access for All recycling project in Powerstown Civic Amenity Site was shortlisted for the All-Ireland Community & Council Awards (LAMA Awards). The project was shortlisted in the top 4 projects in the country under the category of Most

Inclusive Project 2022 and received a highly commended certificate.

Age Friendly Ireland shortlisted the project under the AGE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT AWARD Category for recognition at the National Age Friendly Achievement Awards ceremony. The project went on to win the award for the best in its category, marking a tremendous accomplishment and garnering national recognition for its innovative environmental initiative. This initiative was replicated in Kernanstown Civic Amenity site, which launched in December 2023.

Energy Efficiency

The latest figures for Carlow County Council show:

- An energy efficiency improvement of 37.6% compared to the 2009 base line.
- 5% reduction in thermal and transport emissions compared to 2016-2018 base line.
- 28% reduction in total GHG emissions compared to 2016-2018 base line.

Energy Improvements at Powerstown Civic Amenity Site

In 2023, 20 photovoltaic (PV) solar panels, were installed at Powerstown. Complementing this green energy solution, an air-to-water heat pump was integrated to provide sustainable heating for the office space, reducing reliance on conventional heating methods. Furthermore, an electric vehicle (EV) charger was installed, promoting the adoption of electric vehicles and contributing to the overall environmental sustainability of the area. These upgrades not only showcase a commitment to renewable energy but also demonstrate a proactive approach to reducing the carbon footprint in Powerstown.

Climate Action



Local Authorities have a particularly important role in the delivery of both climate mitigation and adaptation. This is reflected in the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021, which requires each Local Authority to prepare a Local Authority Climate Action Plan, specifying the mitigation and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the Local Authority.

In 2023 Carlow County Council undertook the preparation of the Carlow Local Authority Climate Action Plan which would set out how Carlow County Council would be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets by reducing its' greenhouse gasses by 51% and increasing energy efficiency by 50% by 2030.

The Local Authority also aspired to exhibit a broader role of inspiring, leading and facilitating, other sectors to meet their own climate targets and ambitions. Carlow Town, including the District Electoral Divisions of Carlow Rural, Carlow urban and Graiguecullen Urban were selected to be the Carlow County Council Decarbonising Zone for inclusion in the proposed plan.

A baseline inventory was commissioned in 2023 to establish the carbon baseline on which reductions would be based. The baseline for Carlow County Council was established as 2.81ktCO₂eqm.

A draft Carlow Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was prepared including 5 strategic goals with 73 ambitious actions setting a pathway for Carlow to reach its mandated targets and assist the community of Carlow in playing an active role.



Emergency Services & Building Control



193
Commencement
Notices

95
Building
Control
Inspections



59
Fire Safety
Certificates

41
Disability
Access
Certificates



County Council maintains Fire Brigades in four Fire Stations located in Carlow Town, Muine Bheag, Tullow and Hacketstown. A Fire Service Training Centre utilised by Fire Services from across Ireland is also based in Hacketstown Fire Station.

The dedicated crews, together with modern vehicles and equipment, ensure delivery of a prompt, efficient and effective service responding to a total of 567 separate emergency incidents resulting in 751 mobilisations by Carlow Fire Brigades in 2023. This represented a welcome 9% reduction in attendances at emergency incidents when compared to the total figure for 2022. There were no fire fatalities recorded in Co. Carlow in 2023. The operational response is supported by the Eastern Regional Control Centre located in Dublin Fire Brigade HQ in Townsend St, which receives calls from the public through the 999/112 service and mobilises the appropriate fire service resources in County Carlow.

Services such as administration, fire prevention activities, Building Control, Major

Emergency Management etc. are delivered from the Fire Service Headquarters at Green Lane, Carlow Town.

Key Performance Indicators

The Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2022 carried out by NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Commission) which was published in September 2023 highlighted the fact that Carlow Fire Authority had the 6th lowest cost per capita for the entire country at €38.24 per head of population. This compares favourably when compared against the national average of €42.48 per capita for the operation of Retained Fire Stations.

The NOAC report also highlighted that in 87% of mobilisations, a crew from Carlow County Fire Service arrived at the scene of an emergency incident within 20 minutes from time of mobilisation.

Applications for Fire Safety Certificates were granted within the statutory period of 2 months in 46% of cases, broadly in line with the national average of 47%.

Safety, Health & Welfare

In December 2023, Carlow Fire Service’s Safety Management System was certified to ISO45001 by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. This is confirmation of the safety management system in Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service complying with international best practice and also recognition of the work and dedication across all sections and levels of the service required to achieve this standard.

In order to achieve this award, a 2-day audit was completed by the National Standards Authority of Ireland of the Fire Services Occupational Health and Safety Management System. The awarding of ISO 45001 means that the organisation is internationally recognised in an elite category of businesses, one of a small number of fire services that have attained this standard in Ireland.

Capital Funding

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O’Brien TD, announced funding of €20.8 million for the provision of 40 new ‘Class B’ fire appliances, which will be allocated across the country’s 27 Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. Carlow County Fire Service received an allocation of 1 new Class B Appliance as part of this announcement which is scheduled for delivery in Q1 2025. Work continues on the building of a new Class B appliance for the County Fire Service which is scheduled for delivery in Q2 2024.

Carlow Fire Service received final approval to proceed to tender for design and engineering services for the refurbishment and upgrade of Muine Bheag Fire Station which will greatly enhance the working conditions for firefighters within the station.

Carlow County Fire Service received funding from the National Directorate for a number of Capital Projects during 2023 including:

- Purchase of Battery-Operated Rescue Equipment.....€188,000
- Purchase of Combined Hiab/ Prime Mover Vehicle€210,000
- PPE & Equipment Decontamination Washer €40,000
- Flood Response & Water Rescue Equipment..... €46,000
- Replacement Fire Behaviour Training Units €42,000
- Class B Fire Appliance (Delivery expected Q1 2025).....€465,000

Extensive capital works were completed in Hacketstown Training Centre during 2023. Works included drainage improvements, installation of underground rainwater harvesting, surfacing and boundary works to the value of €210,000. Approval in principle has been received for funding for additional improvement works to the centre involving construction of specialist working at heights training and vehicle storage buildings.

Training

A range of specialist Training Courses were delivered to operational firefighters during 2023. Officer Training as well as training in the operation of pumps, Breathing Apparatus, Confined Space Rescue, Emergency First Responder and Cardiac First Responder was delivered to all crews. Recruit Firefighters completed initial basic recruit training as well as training in the use of Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour.

Carlow Firefighters completed a total of 3,200 hours in a range of training disciplines during 2023.

Operations

Crews from across County Carlow attended a total of 567 separate emergency incidents resulting in 751 mobilisations by Carlow Fire Brigades in 2023. This represented a welcome 9% reduction in attendances at emergency incidents when compared to the total figure for 2022. There were no fire fatalities recorded in Co. Carlow in 2023.



A notable 27% increase in attendances at Road Traffic Collisions in 2023 compared to 2022 posed challenges for the County Fire Service. Accidental activations of monitored fire alarms in commercial and domestic premises continue to create issues for the fire service and initiatives are being developed to try to reduce them.

Two new recruit firefighters commenced operational duty with Carlow Town Fire Brigade, whilst Muine Bheag, Tullow and Hacketstown Fire Brigades all saw one new firefighter join their ranks. A new Assistant Chief Fire Officer joined Carlow County Fire Service during the year. There are currently 46 operational firefighters and 3 Senior Fire Officers employed in Carlow Fire Service.

Community Fire Safety & Fire Prevention

In addition to its operational activities, Carlow Fire Service was also very active in promoting fire safety and continues to inspect public-assembly buildings in an

effort to meet the obligations under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003.

Carlow Fire Service has taken a more proactive role in promoting Community Fire Safety in particular during Fire Safety Week which took place on October 9th – 15th and Positive Ageing Week which took place on October 1st – 7th as part of Fire Safety Week, members of the public were invited into Stations to view our equipment and appliances, speak to Fire Prevention Officers and view fire safety demonstrations and displays. Daily Fire Safety messages were published on social media pages as well as radio interviews undertaken with KCLR and Beat FM. Carlow County Fire Service began a new Home Fire Safety Check initiative during 2023. Firefighters visit older persons in their homes, carry out a home fire safety check, provide advice to the homeowner in relation to fire safety and install smoke detectors where required. Over 150 Home Fire Safety Checks were completed by County Firefighters in 2023.

The annual licensing and inspection of premises was completed in September with publicans, dance and restaurant license renewal applications before the Courts. In total 46 premises were inspected in the run up to the Court date in late September. A large body of work was undertaken to comply with the provisions of the Fire Services Act along with the administrative duties associated with issuing certificates, letters and conditions of license. A number of enforcements were carried out on public premises as well as warning letters issued to premises owners and occupiers following inspections on foot of complaints by members of the public and issues that were highlighted post incident that may have been brought to the Fire Officers attention.

Building Control

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

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

Hacketstown Training & Development Centre

Hacketstown Training & Development Centre is now regarded as the leading facility in Ireland for the delivery of firefighting training for operational firefighters and fire officers. Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training

courses were hosted in the facility for firefighters from Carlow, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow Fire Services as well as the Irish Air Corps and Irish Defence Forces. The LASNTG (Local Authority Services National Training Group) hosts regular QQI accredited Training Courses in Firefighting Skills, Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour in the Training Centre.

In total, Hacketstown Training Centre hosted training courses for a total of 188 days during 2023, the number of training courses hosted in Hacketstown will see an increase in 2024 due to an additional 400 retained firefighters being recruited nationally as a result of a recent WRC Recommendation.

Rescue Organisation Ireland

Firefighters from Carlow County Fire Service continue to lead the way nationally and internationally in terms of its extrication and trauma teams. At the Rescue Organisation National Challenge which took place in Newbridge Fire Station in May, the team placed 1st overall as well as placing 1st in the Technical and Medical elements of the Rescue Challenge. Carlow County Firefighters competed at the World Rescue Challenge in Lanzarote in October and represented both Carlow and Ireland at the highest level in this international competition. The Carlow team competed against 72 of the leading Fire Services from around the world in the competition.

Climate Action

Carlow County Fire Service continues to support Carlow County Council's Climate Action Plan to achieve the target of reduction of 51% of carbon output by 2030. The County Fire Service introduced a number of Climate Action measures during 2023 including the construction of rainwater harvesting facilities for cleaning Fire Appliances in Carlow Town and Muine Bheag Fire Stations as well as underground rainwater harvesting storage for pump training in Hacketstown Fire Station. An area



of Hacketstown Training Centre is being managed for wildflowers and biodiversity. A number of beehives were installed in the wildflower area which has seen a number of swarms make their home there. It is hoped this measure will improve biodiversity in the Hacketstown area. The County Fire Service is also working on developing new innovative technical solutions to reduce the carbon output from our operational fire service vehicles in the future.

National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management National Resilience Fleet

Carlow Fire Service continues to support the work of the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management through the management of the Directorate's fleet of 11 Resilience and Training Fire Appliances. These 11 fire appliances are managed and maintained through Carlow Fire Service and are used by the National Directorate for the delivery of the Fire Service National Training Programme across Ireland for fire officers at all ranks from Recruit to Senior Fire Officer ranks.



Roads, Transportation & Special Projects



1,329km

No. of road network within the county of Carlow



25

No. funding Recoupment claims in the amount of €11,378,171



95

No. competitions (prepared documents, advertised, assessed & awarded)



120

No. Chief Executive / Director of Services Orders



55

No. Priority 1 Winter Services Treatments using 333 tonnes of salt



33

No. Priority 2 Winter Services Treatments using 1,066 tonnes of salt



371

No. Road Opening Licences processed



117

No. Abnormal Load Applications processed



€466,733

Claimed for National Road Maintenance Works



€1,461,176

Claimed for National Road Improvement Works



€4,347,453

spent on Regional & Local Roads Strengthening



€1,020,499

spent on Regional & Local Roads Strengthening



€280,915

spent on Regional & Local Road Bridge Maintenance & Improvement



€716,263

spent on Regional & Local Road Drainage, Road Safety & Improvement works



6,552

Public Lights in the County



2,929

LED Public Lights in the County



1,557

No. Public Lighting Repairs & Upgrades undertaken



€729,684

Public Lighting energy & Imp. costs

Roads, Transportation

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

The policy of the Council is to maintain, develop and improve existing roads and to construct new roads as financial resources permit. The administrative area of Carlow has a road network of 1,329 km (comprising 24km of Motorway, 54 km of National Secondary, 186km of regional and 1,065km of Local roads.

Motorway Network

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

National Secondary Road Network

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) provides funding for national roads. Initially, in 2023 Carlow received an allocation of €2,276,040 for maintenance and improvement works for bridges and carriageways, and to meet costs associated with supervision, public lighting and general maintenance of the national road network. The identified projects consist of:

Funding Category	Project	Allocation
Pavement Improvement Scheme Locations identified based on a comprehensive survey of the national road network. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects assessed & designed in 2022, works scheduled to commence on site in 2023. • Projects assessed & designed in 2023, works scheduled to commence on site in 2024. 	N80 Rathcrogue/M9	€1,143,550
	N80 Clonmackshane/Ballykealy	€1,587,518
	N81 Bough/Co Bounds	€920,000
National Road Safety Improvement Scheme Allocation to progress Safety Improvement Scheme through the PMG Phases 1-7	N80 Leagh Bends Improvement Scheme	€120,000

Subsequently, Carlow Co. Co. applied for and was awarded additional funding for maintenance and improvement schemes on the National Roads in the amount of €184,000.

Funding Category	Project	Allocation
Defects Maintenance Scheme Additional funding for urgent remedial measures, typically within the range < €50k	Works to 6 locations on the National Road Network	€184,000

Regional & Local Road Network

The Department of Transport provides funding for maintenance and improvement works on Regional & Local roads. In 2023 Carlow received an allocation of €8,603,923 for improvement works and general maintenance of the non-national road network. This programme targets much needed remedial measures on regional and local roads in the county under the following:

Funding Category	Allocation	Status
Restoration Improvement. This programme targets improvements to the structural integratory of Regional & Local Roads.	€3,914,500	41 projects completed
Restoration Maintenance. This programme targets improvements to the surfaces of Regional & Local Roads.	€1,020,500	31 projects completed
Discretionary Grant. This Grant contributes to meet costs associated with supervision, public lighting, winter & general maintenance signage installations, road markings, footpath improvements /repairs of the non-national road network	€1,078,000	45 specific projects completed, including general maintenance activities
Bridge rehabilitation. This programme targets repairs to bridges on Regional & Local Roads throughout the county.	€264,945	6 projects completed
Specific Improvement Grant. The Specific Regional & Local Road Improvement Grant Scheme with a total estimated project cost of up to €5 million, aims to contribute to undertaking the necessary assessments to progress Junction Improvements on the R448, Kilkenny Road.	€882,980	1 project - R448 @ Munnelly's Junction Improvement works Completed.
Strategic Improvement Grant. The Strategic Regional & Local Road Improvement Grant Scheme with a total estimated project cost of over €5 million, aims to contribute to undertaking the necessary assessments to progress the Carlow Southern Relief Road.	€100,000	Undertaking Preliminary Business Case for Carlow Southern Relief Road
Safety Improvement Works. This programme targets improvements to specifically identified safety issues of Regional & Local Roads.	€227,300	11 projects completed
Drainage Works. This programme targets improvements to surface water drainage of Regional & Local Roads.	€267,500	17 projects completed
Former National Road. This programme targets improvements to the structural integratory of Former National Roads in the county.	€720,000	2 projects – Designed & Procured, on-site works to be progressed in 2024
Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience Works. This Grant aims to undertake a targeted programme of improvement works to Regional & Local Roads	€221,200	7 projects completed
Community Involvement Scheme. This programme targets improvements to the structural integratory & surfaces of Local Tertiary Roads in the county in cooperation with the associated property owners.	€180,442	4 projects completed



Surface Dressing Operation



Surface Water Drainage Remediation

Improvement Scheme

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

Announcement	Allocation	Status
LIS - Round 1 (April)	€304,736	11 projects completed
LIS - Round 2 (August)	€263,036	10 projects completed

Risk Remediation Works Programme

Carlow Co. Co. met with representatives of Irish Public Bodies (IPB) insurance to discuss potential risk remediation work proposals designed to combat/reduce future potential public liability claims. Based on historical/current public liability claims data and considering the potential risk of such future claims, the Municipal District Engineers prepared a 2 programme to upgrade footway infrastructure. Subsequently, funding was received facilitating the remediation of high-risk areas throughout the county over a 2-year period (2022 & 2023) in the amount of circa €2million.



Bioretention Areas (Rain Gardens)

Bioretention Areas (Rain Gardens) have been retrofitted (Pollerton Road) and currently being retrofitted (Old Dublin Road).

Bioretention is an important technique that uses soil, plants and microbes to treat stormwater before it is infiltrated or discharged. Bioretention Areas are shallow depressions filled with suitable material and planted with vegetation. Stormwater runoff flows into the area and slowly percolates through the soil (which acts as a filter) and into the groundwater; some of the water is also taken up by the plants.

Project Objectives

- Provide water quality treatment; remove suspended solids, metals, nutrients.

- Increase groundwater recharge through infiltration.
- Reduce total runoff volume.
- Enhance streetscapes.

Bioretention areas can provide excellent pollutant removal and recharge for the “first flush” of stormwater runoff. They remove suspended solids, metals, and nutrients, and can infiltrate an inch or more of rainfall. Retrofitted at locations throughout Carlow Town, vegetated bioretention areas can massively enhance streetscapes. Routine maintenance is simple and can be handled easily by trained operatives. Carlow Municipal District Office were the first Municipal District to retrofit Bioretention Areas within an urban area throughout Ireland.



Before and After photos of Bioretention Area (Rain garden) at Pollerton Road

Kilkenny Slip Road Junction (commonly known as Munnelly Junction, Kilkenny Road)

The project forms part of an overall scheme of transportation improvement works to the Kilkenny Road in Carlow Town. The purpose of the project was to provide junction improvement works together with pedestrian and cycle facilities at the Slip Road Junction commonly known as Munnelly's Junction. This element of the overall Kilkenny Road scheme consists of modification to the existing mini roundabout junction between the Kilkenny Road R448 and Link Road L4020, to facilitate the revised junction footprint to allow for HGV movements.

The revised junction was designed to cater for considerable vehicular traffic from both directions on the R448, including peak

flows accessing the ITC via the Slip Road. Additionally, the completed scheme needs to cater for Active Modes of travel and the integration of the active travel infrastructure with the existing and proposed infrastructure bounding the junction. A Specific Improvement Grant to the value of €875,000 was allocated to the project which was completed in October 2024.

Projects Progressed by Carlow County Council Roads Department Carlow Town Bus Park and Town Bus Service

Preceding the commencement of the new Carlow Town Bus Service upgrading of the Carlow Bus Park was completed. The Carlow Town Bus Service was officially launched by Minister Eamonn Ryan T.D. and commence operating on Sunday June 30th.



Special Projects

Carlow County Council's Special Projects Division is comprised of three separate teams encompassing Capital Works, Active Travel and The Carlow Town URDF Project. The teams are involved with a diverse range of initiatives, encompassing both large-scale, multi-million-euro projects funded by the **Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)** and smaller projects funded by the **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)**, the **Active Travel NTA Funded Investment Programme**, the **Town and Village Renewal Scheme**, and CCC's own resources.

Capital Works

In September 2023, the Capital Works Team was re-established and managed several capital works projects through the various stages of development.

- **Tullow Courthouse - €200K**
 - Management of construction phase to refurbish roof, windows and doors on this listed structure part funded by an Historical Structures Fund (HSF).
- **County Buildings Carpark - €700K**
 - Provision of 90 spaces.
 - Designed in-house and Part 8 granted.
 - Procurement of construction phase commenced.
- **Bagenalstown Public Realm Improvements Budget - €500K**
 - Public Realm enhancement at Market Square.

- Design in-house and Part 8 submitted in December.
- Procurement of construction phase commenced.
- **Carlow Library Roof & Chimney Repair - €500K**
 - Procurement of construction phase.
 - Contractor appointed.
 - Works to commence Q1 2024 part funded with HSF Grant.
- **VISUAL Public Realm Enhancements - €500K**
 - Public Realm Enhancement works at VISUAL.
 - Part Funded by Fáilte Ireland.
 - Procurement and Management of construction stage.
- **Heritage & Trail Way finder Signage - €250K**
 - Interpretive and wayfinding signs in Carlow Town.
 - Part funded by Fáilte Ireland.
 - Signs designed, procured and contractor procured to install.

In addition, the team assist with technical guidance and supervision with other sections including the "Sky Lakes" project by the Arts Office in Carlow Town Park and the development of Enterprise Centres at Hacketstown, Bagenalstown and Carlow with the LEO office.



Active Travel

Active Travel is “travelling with a purpose using your own energy”. Generally, this means walking or cycling as part of a purposeful journey and can also include the use of non-motorised scooters which are increasingly being used for urban transport, especially by school children. So, walking as part of a commute to work, cycling to the shop or scooting to school are all considered active travel, whereas walking or cycling for purely leisure purposes is not.

Active Travel is a positive climate action and is seen as a critical component of Ireland’s Climate Action Plan. The delivery of Active Travel projects will contribute to tackling climate change by providing the opportunity

to use “green” and sustainable transport options. Walking or wheeling instead of travelling by car is a great way to reduce our impact on the climate.

In December 2022 the National Transport Authority (NTA) invited applications from Carlow County Council (CCC) for schemes to be considered for funding under the 2023 Active Travel Programme.

In February 2023 the NTA allocated funds of over €290M to Ireland’s local authorities for spending on walking and cycling infrastructure. CCC received an allocation of approx. €2.7M for the delivery of projects across the county and staff costs. The following table shows the amount spent on each Active Travel project in 2023.

Scheme	Amount (€)
Active Travel - River Burren Walking & Cycle Track	136,000
Active Travel Pathfinder - Carlow to SETU Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme	109,000
Tullow Road Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme, Carlow	710,000
Staplestown Road/Pollerton Road Permeability Link, Carlow	142,000
Tullow Town Orbital Walking & Cycling Scheme	564,000
Carlow / Graiguecullen Local Transport Plan	124,000
Gore's Bridge, Active Travel Measures	135,400
George Semple Bridge Active Travel Measures, Tinnahinch	28,000
Footpath Scheme, Fenagh Road, Borris	161,000
SRTS - St Brigid’s National School, Muinebheag	36,000
SRTS - St Patrick’s National School, Rathvilly	225,000
SRTS - Queen of the Universe, Muinebheag	34,000



Carlow Town Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF)

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

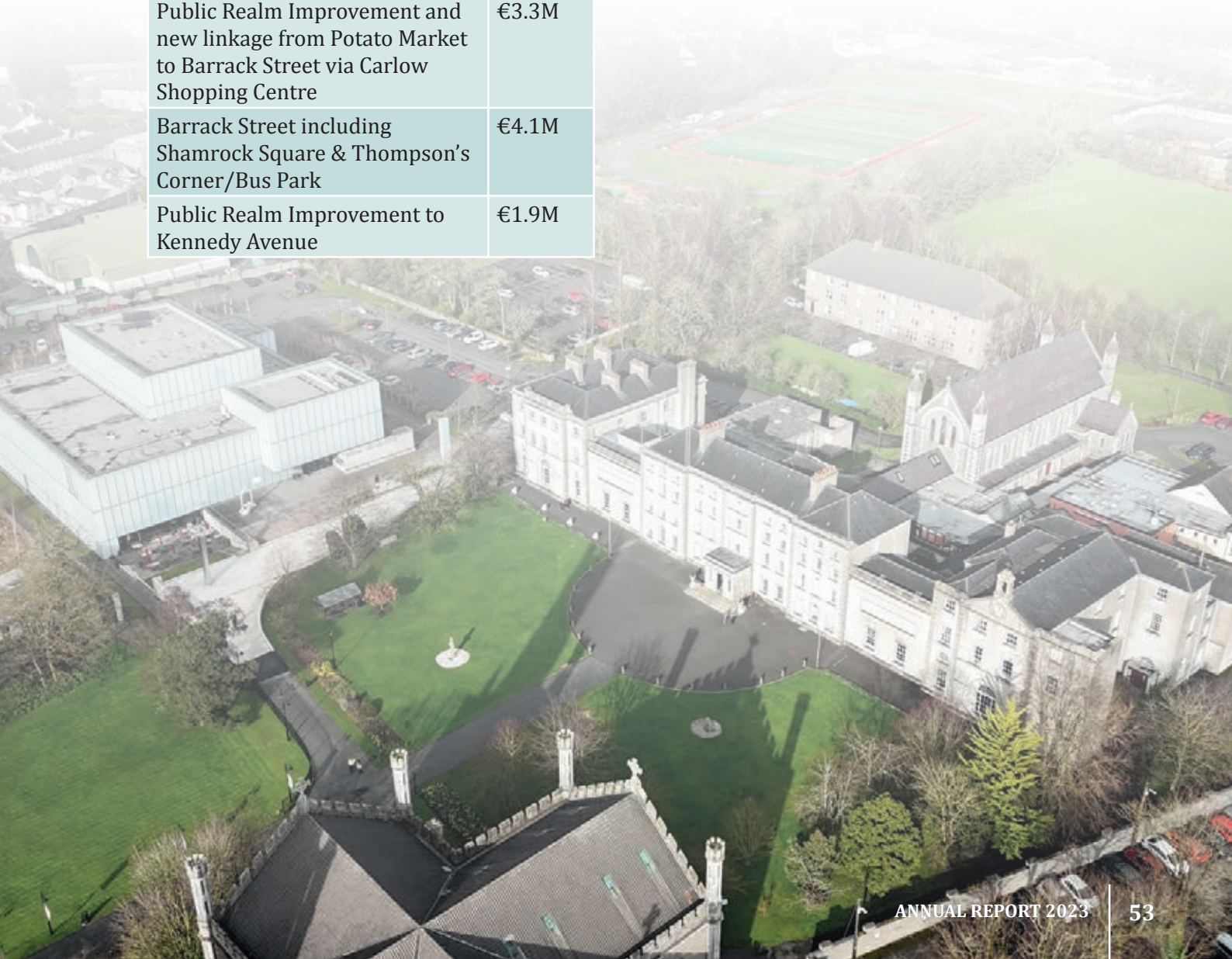
The total value of Carlow Town URDF projects is €22.78M, 75% of which would be grant aided through the URDF fund. This fund focuses on the following projects, creating a more compact, sustainable, and vibrant core:

Schemes	Amount
Railway Link and Public Realm Improvement through Carlow College to Town Centre	€2.9M
Public Realm Improvement to Tullow Street and Dublin Street	€2M
Public Realm Improvement to Potato Market	€8.5M
Public Realm Improvement and new linkage from Potato Market to Barrack Street via Carlow Shopping Centre	€3.3M
Barrack Street including Shamrock Square & Thompson's Corner/Bus Park	€4.1M
Public Realm Improvement to Kennedy Avenue	€1.9M

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

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

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





Carlow County Civil Defence

Carlow County Council is the Civil Defence Authority for the administrative area of County Carlow. The 2003 Civil Defence Act sets out a number of roles for Civil Defence. Among these roles are providing a backup service to the Primary Emergency Services; Community Service; Training in Casualty; Radio Communications; Rescue; Welfare; Fire Fighting and Boating Skills (search and recovery). Civil Defence also provides service to the Local Authority, Health Service Executive, and the Gardai in the event of severe weather conditions such as flooding and snow. Civil Defence also provide in emergency situations Radiation Monitoring.

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

The members of Carlow Civil Defence are all volunteers except for the Civil Defence Officer who is employed as CDO on a part-time basis by Carlow County Council. At present we have over 34 volunteer members ranging from locations such as Carlow town, Muinebheag, Borris and Rathanna. Weekly training on subjects such as First Aid to CPR level, First Aid Responder, Emergency First Responders, Emergency Medical Technician, Fire Fighting skills, Swiftwater Rescue techniques, Technical Rescue, Search Skills, Welfare etc., are taught and practised. On our training schedule at weekends the subjects taught are exercised and the skills resulting from this are pitched against other counties in competition at various venues.

Also, our training at field days is used for searching in open country, AFS firefighting events, and Search Skills training on land and with boats in the river Barrow and Slaney. The Civil Defence Headquarters, completed in September 2009, is fully operational, making the Carlow operations more efficient and so providing an effective and quick response.

In 2014 Carlow Civil Defence rolled out a new Search Skills Training Course for its volunteers. It was taught in the Garda College and Carlow volunteers were among the first to embrace this activity and we gained status to Instructor level. Since mid-2014 we also have Instructor level at Water Awareness and Swift Water

Civil Defence Boat units provide backup assistance to the (PRAs) Fire service and Gardai in River Search and Recovery (RSR) situations. Volunteers are trained in Boating skills, River and land search and recovery techniques for back up situations to Gardai. Water awareness and Swift Water Flood Response courses are run throughout the year.

In 2023 Carlow Civil Defence we were winding down the help with Covid-19 operations.

Covid operations consisted of looking after the Health and Welfare and delivery of patients to Various Hospitals.

Carlow Civil Defence were involved in the Setting up of Rest Centre for the arrival of Displaced persons from War torn Ukraine and continue to help as required during 2022 and are available in the event of any emergency.

In 2020 Assistant Civil Defence Officer (Part time) was also appointment to help with all the new duties and call outs.

A new Voluntary Emergency Management System computer registration system known

as VEMS was rolled out this year to manage volunteers in training courses, Equipment, Vehicles and the management of all operations.

The following is a list of some of the activities covered by Carlow Civil Defence in 2023:

Date	Activity	Venue
07/01/2023	Call out from AGS to search river Barrow for missing male.	River Barrow Carlow Town area.
14/01/2023 15/01/2023	Search Continues for another weekend	Graigucullen and south bound.
22/01/2023	Drone search of river Barrow and land close bounding	Carlow to Milford area
12/02/2023	Call out for missing Female from local Hospital from AGS	Carlow Town area
17/03/2023	Safety and Traffic Management at 2 number St. Patrick's Day Parades Bagenalstown and Carlow town.	Road Traffic Management and First Aid assistance. Bagenalstown and Carlow
07/04/2023	Boat Safety and First aid at Dragon Boat Races on River Barrow Carlow town area.	River Barrow Carlow town area.
15/04/2023	Emergency Management Training for South East Region	Dolmen Hotel and on ground training.
22/04/2023	Search for missing Person Carlow town and River area. Including Drone searching	Carlow town area.
11/05/2023	Boat Crew assisting AGS and RTE. Providing boating facilities for programme on Crimecall.	River Barrow Carlow town and surrounding area.
03/06/2023 04/06/2023	Safety Operation for Carlow Regatta on river Barrow.	River Barrow, Carlow town
11/06/2023	Safety Boat operations for Dragon Boat operation on River Barrow	Carlow Town
15/06/2023	Call out from AGS for Drone operations for missing person Kilkenny Castlecomer area.	Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny
02/07/2023	Safety Boat on River Barrow for Carlow Pride Festival	Carlow Town area.
16/08/2023	Safety Boat on River Barrow Bagenalstown for 1 mile community annual Swim.	Bagenalstown





Housing Department



2,026

Total housing stock



612

Total HAP (down 8)



289

Total RAS



777

Housing Applications



93

Long Term Lease Properties



15

Repair and Lease Scheme



340 (309)

Homeless Presentation



40

Transfer Applications



108 (109)

Total Placed in Emergency Acc.



189

Houses Allocated



91

New Build Units



€2,408,000

Value of Mortgages Drawdowns



53

Re-Lets



24.61 weeks

Average Re-Let Time



260

Anti-Social Behaviour Complaints



€2,025,335

Grant Value



2606 (2605)

Number of Maintenance Requests



€7.79 (6.4) million

Rents Collected



€35.91 million

Total Capital Spend



106

Energy Retrofits



15

Mortgages Approved in Principle



295

Grants Approved under Housing Aid for Older People



107

Grants Approved under Mobility Aids Grant Scheme



15

Housing Adaption Grants Approved



€2,862,195

Energy Retrofit Spend



23

LA House Purchases



41

CAS / AHB House Purchases



22

Total Tenant in Situ Purchases

New Build Programme 2023

An overall delivery of 91 new build units was achieved in 2023. There was a combination of delivery including Part V new build units, AHB Turnkey, Local Authority Build and Buy and Renew (Conversion of Vacant/Derelict Units). In total 90 units was the build target under housing for all. There were also over 100 additional commencements in 2023 of new build units for delivery in 2024 and 2025.

Acquisitions/Tenant in Situ Purchases

In 2023, purchases were completed of 64 properties throughout County Carlow. 23 of the properties were purchased directly by Carlow County Council with an additional 41 properties purchases being facilitated through the Housing Department. 22 of the properties were purchased as tenant in situ, where the tenant was issued with notice to quit. The remainder of the purchases were under various programmes including START, Housing First, Long Term Complex and Aftercare Programmes and for specific purposes including Traveller Accommodation, Disability and Elderly.

Private Grants

Over €2 million was paid out under the Private Grants Schemes, Housing Aid for the Elderly, Mobility Aid Grants and Housing Adaptation Grant. This represents the approval of over 400 grants applications in 2023. The grant has proven very popular to provide essential upgrades and repairs to



External Insulation being fitted under the EERP Programme

homes which in many cases allow people with disabilities or older people to remain in the home longer.

Capital Expenditure

€35.91 million was spent in the Capital Programme in 2023, representing a 47% increase in Capital spending since 2022. The expenditure is across various areas including New Build, Acquisitions, Grants, Energy Retrofit, Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) purchase/build and extensions. Additional staff provide under 'Housing for All' has facilitated the increased output.

Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP)

Carlow County Council has a target of 490 properties to be completed under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme by 2030.



3 New Build Properties at Lackabeg on a Derelict Site

In 2023, 106 properties were completed which is double the target for the year. In total €2,862,195 was spent representing an investment of an average €27,002 per house. Works completed includes window, doors, insulation, heating systems and other energy improvement. The target is to get achieve a B2 Rating.

Casual Vacancies/Relets

53 units in current stock that were vacated and returned to stock in 2024. It took an average of 24 weeks to clear property, tender pre letting works, carry out works, offer property and complete tenancy agreements. Many of the properties required extensive upgrades as they are older properties. The Housing Department returns all vacant units into stock in a timely, efficient manner and up to private rental standard.

Housing Stock

The Council Housing stock increased by a nett of 73 in 2023 bringing the stock total to 2026, the first-time housing stock exceeded 2000. The figure includes the addition of new build units, acquisition and a property through Improvement Works in Lieu of Social Housing (IWIL) and the removal of 11 properties, 8 sold through tenant purchase, 2 expired IWILs and 1 redundant demountable unit.

Housing Applications/Transfers

There were 777 applications for housing supports in 2023 with 40 applications to transfer property. The cumulative effect of the change to band 2 raising the income limit by €5,000 in October 2022 and the additional €5,000 income limit rise in January 2023 led to a substantial rise in applicants. The Housing Department are obliged to process valid applications within 12 weeks and in 2023 all valid applications were processed within this timeframe.

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

The rental market in County Carlow continues to be challenging with limited numbers of properties being made available for letting. Changes made to the HAP limits for single persons and with a discretionary top up have helped meet some of the rising

cost. In total the overall number receiving HAP support is 612, down 8 from 2023. This number reflects over 100 new HAP set ups reflecting the continued work of the HAP team and Place Finder Service. The numbers in RAS continue to fall with 289 RAS properties remaining and no new RAS units being taken on. This represents a fall of 31 units since 2022, with 4 of those units acquired through the Tenant in Situ Scheme.

Homeless

Carlow County Council continues to work under the Southeast Homeless Region where a new Homeless Action Plan was published covering 2022 – 2026. Carlow currently has 2 Temporary emergency facilities with 28 rooms in total and over 50 beds. The overall number of presentations increased by 31 to 340 from 2022. Homeless prevention is a key piece of work carried out by the Homeless Team and 231 of those presenting were immediately assisted and prevention work diverted them away from emergency accommodation. The number entering emergency accommodation increased by 1 to 109 where temporary accommodation was provided, and full care and case management provided to enable those entering the service to find an exit.

Tenant Liaison Service

Complaints regarding anti-social behaviour rose in 2023 to 260. Many of this number are repeated complaints and a number of eviction/exclusion cases are now underway in the courts to address repeated offenders. In 2023 a second Tenant Liaison Officer was employed, and this new member of staff works primarily of proactive, preventative tenancy management. There is a particular focus of new tenancies to ensure the success of all new tenancy sign up, address common issues and assess any early issues in the tenancy.

Mortgage

The Housing Department continues to provide home loans at fixed rates to people that have been refused by their banks but demonstrate a repayment ability to the Local Authority. In total 38 applications were received in 2023 with 15 applications approved in principle. In total €2,408,000 was drawdown in 2023.



Ukrainian Humanitarian Response

Community Response Forum

The Community Response Forum was set-up to provide a co-ordinated response to support fleeing the war in Ukraine. The Community Response Forum is chaired by the Chief Executive of Carlow County Council and the membership is multi-agency in nature, bringing together representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies operating in communities across the county. The Community Response Forum held 8 meetings during 2023. In addition, a sub-group of the Community Response Forum was also established and held 18 meetings throughout the year.

Rest Centre

A Rest Centre to provide temporary accommodation facilities to Ukrainian Beneficiaries of temporary protection arriving in Ireland was operated by Carlow County Council during 2023 whereby 344 Ukrainian Beneficiaries were accommodated on a short-term basis.

Pledged Properties

Following an appeal by the Irish Red Cross during 2022 members of the public pledged shared or vacant properties to accommodate Ukrainian persons fleeing war in Ukraine. 11 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection continued to be accommodated throughout the County in properties pledged to the Red Cross during 2023.

Offer A Home Scheme

The Offer A Home Scheme is part of a government initiative, led by local authorities, to make use of unoccupied houses, apartments or holiday homes to house Ukrainian people and families. 58 vacant properties were offered in County Carlow by property owners during 2023 to accommodate Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. 49 properties deemed

suitable were allocated resulting in 175 persons from Ukraine being provided with accommodation under the Offer A Home Scheme.

Community Car Initiative

The Community Car Initiative continued to operate during 2023 by Carlow County Development Partnership in accordance with a Service Level Agreement arrangement with Carlow County Council. The purpose of this initiative is to support persons from Ukraine living in Offer A Home or Red Cross Pledged properties in areas more removed from urban centres, and in places where rural transport links are not fully connected. A total of 58 journeys were completed and 236 persons availed of the service.

Healthy Ireland Fund

The Department of Health under the Healthy Ireland brand provided funding of €19,050.00 for the purpose of promoting health and wellbeing of Ukrainian refugees who have sought protection in Ireland, as part of the international humanitarian crisis arising from the war in Ukraine. This fund was delivered through agencies represented on the Community Response Forum. Projects completed in 2023 included Spring Socials, Woodland Walks, Orienteering for Families and Children, Foraging Walks, Forest Bathing and a Knit & Chat project.

Community Recognition Fund

The Community Recognition Fund was introduced in 2023 by the Department of Rural and Community Development in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. The fund aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities that will be used in the future by all members of the community.

In accordance with this funding scheme Carlow County Council received an allocation of €937,967.00 with 9 projects being approved throughout County Carlow. The projects which commenced during 2023 are:

Municipal District	
Carlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Enhancement works to Parks and Open Spaces in Carlow Town → Enhancement works to Hanover Activity and Bike Park → Improvement works to Oak Park Forest Park → An Gairdin Beo - Community Garden Enhancement Works → Carlow County Development Partnership development of Carlow Women’s Centre Holistic Hub → Carlow Volunteer Centre - Building Refurbishment Works
Tullow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ballon Community Infrastructure Project
Muine Bheag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Bagenalstown Outdoor Classroom Biodiversity Park → Creation of Recreation and Amenity Space in Moneybeg, Bagenalstown





Community, Recreation and Amenity



133

Grants Awarded (Env/Amenity Grant Scheme 2023-Totalling €65,000)



Pride of Place Applications

81



268 Grants awarded under the CCC Discretionary Funds to the value of

€123,545.79



16

Events held during Positive Ageing Week 2023 involving over 1,000 people



€845,800

SICAP Budget for 2023



€267,099

Funding received under the CLÁR Scheme 2023

Carlow's Pride of Place 2023

Carlow's Pride of Place competition was launched in the Arboretum, Leighlinbridge on 2nd February 2023. As part of this launch a workshop of planting trees and how to care for them was held with guest speaker Gary Graham and Eamonn Wall, Head Gardener of the Arboretum.

A total of 81 applications were received under the various categories and the pleasant but difficult task of judging took place over the summer months.

The Pride of Place awards night was held on Thursday 7th December in the Woodford Dolmen Hotel where a full-to-capacity audience attended. County Carlow communities were lauded and thanked for their efforts.

There were many prizes given out to the hard-working groups but the overall winners in the Towns and Villages Category was awarded to the community of Ballon and the overall winners in the Estates Category was awarded to Barrowlough Residents Association.

The Michael Deering Cup was presented to the Rathvilly Tidy Towns. The Individual Award was presented to Mary Nolan of Newtown in recognition of her hard work and dedication over the years.

Carlow County Council presented over 60 prizes worth €17,500 to community groups throughout the County. Categories included Towns & Villages, Estates, Community Garden, Front Garden, Commercial Premises, Individual and Youth Awards.



Overall winners of the Estate Category, Barrowlough Residents Association with Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrea Dalton



Youth Winner, Hilary Minchin with Eleanor Deegan, Judge of Carlow's Pride of Place



Carlow's Pride of Place workshop in the Arboretum



Winner of the individual award, Mary Nolan with PPS rep. Eileen Doyle, sponsors of the category

Environmental/Amenity Grant Scheme 2023

A total of 133 grants were awarded to Community Groups/Residents Associations and schools throughout the county. Work carried out included:

- Grass cutting, hedge trimming, tree trimming, planting of new native trees and shrubs.
- Enhancement of common green area for all estate members.

- Pollinator Friendly Planters and Window Boxes.
- Provide seating and benches in the picnic area.
- Signage, repair and replace paths and developing Pollinator Friendly beds.

Grant funding of €65,000 was awarded in 2023.

Discretionary Funding 2023

A total of 268 grants were awarded by Elected Members to residents' associations, Tidy Towns groups, community and voluntary organisations, schools, and sporting organisations from their Discretionary Funds to the value of €123,545.79.

Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The LCDC consists of 19 members both statutory and non-statutory including four elected members. Regarding membership, John Murphy (PPN Social Inclusion) and Noel Barry (Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection), long standing, valued members retired in February 2023 and November 2023 respectively.

The following vacancies were filled in the 1st quarter of 2023 by Damien Howard who was elected by the PPN to fill the Community and Voluntary vacancy, Agnita Kenny, to fill the Civic Society/Arts Sector and Áine Gahan who was elected by the PPN to fill the Social Inclusion PPN vacancy. Coilín O'Reilly as Chief Executive of Carlow County Council replaced Michael Rainey, Interim Chief Executive. 10 LCDC and 11

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2023 – 2029

The development of the new 6-year LECP (2023 – 2029) was delivered through the work of consultants, People and Place Ltd, working with the LECP Advisory Steering Committee, in delivering a comprehensive consultation programme of the Socio-Economic Profile of Carlow, the draft Socio-Economic Statement and 6 draft High-Level Goals throughout December 2022 to April 2023. In May 2023, the draft Socio-Economic Profile and the 6 High Level Goals was brought before the LCDC and Culture, Libraries and Digital Development, Tourism, Enterprise and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee for approval. From May to September, the Objectives and Outcomes and the Implementation Plan were developed and agreed with the key stakeholders in respect of actions led by the Consultants and the LECP Advisory Steering

Committee. Also, the draft LECP Framework Document underwent an Appropriate Assessment Screening in July/August where it was found not to require an Appropriate Assessment. This report and the draft LECP Framework Document were submitted to the Regional Assembly in August and received approval at their 8th September Assembly meeting, with the acknowledgement that it was a good quality document. It was then brought to all 3 Municipal Districts in October for review and official notification. At the November Council meeting, held on Monday 13th November, the Carlow LECP Framework Document 2023 – 2029, along with the 2-year Implementation Plan received approval. Carlow was the 3rd County, nationally, to have successfully completed their LECP development and approval process.

Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (LEADER) and Transitional LEADER Programme 2021 – 2022

The LEADER programme 2014-2020 and Transitional LEADER Programme 2021 – 2022 officially came to end on 31st December 2022. An extension was granted by the Department of Rural and Community Development up to 31st December 2023. By the end of August, the deadline for project submission/approval, €20,000 of the budget remained. Small non-capital projects continued to apply for funding up to the December deadline. The processing of applications and the completion of projects have a deadline of June 2024 to draw down the allocated funding.

Procurement and Development of Rural Development Programme 2023 – 2027 Programme

A tendering process to develop the Carlow LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS) was undertaken and concluded on 12th April 2023. People and Place Consultants were appointed. There was a robust 3-week consultation that included 5 public meetings, geographical and thematic focus groups, interactive and facilitated sessions, online meetings, a survey and one to one meeting with key stakeholders. Consultation with the



2LCDC members with (L to R) Chief Executive Coilín O'Reilly, Chair of the LCDC Lynda Stacey and CEO of Carlow County Development Partnership Annette Fox at the signing of both the LEADER and SICAP contracts

LCDC took place at their 9th May meeting. At the 11th of July meeting, the draft LDS was presented to the members and discussed which resulted in approval for submission. On 30th August, it was announced that Carlow and Tipperary were the first 2 Counties to receive approval of their LDSs from Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys. The Funding agreement was signed by the relevant partners, the LAG, Carlow LCDC, the Implementing Partner, CCDP and the Financial Partner, Carlow County Council after the LCDC's 12th December meeting.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

2023 is the 6th year of the SICAP Programme covering the period of 2018 to 2023 that includes an extension to 31st December 2023. The LCDC is the contracting authority and Carlow County Development Partnership is the Programme Implementer. County Carlow is one Lot for the purposes of this programme. The budget for 2023 was €845,800.00.

Procurement of new Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024 - 2028

The call for Tenders for the new Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024 to 2028 worth €5 million to Carlow, was published on eTenders on Monday 17th July and the deadline for receipt of tenders was Friday 8th September. After a rigorous evaluation period and negotiation by the SICAP Evaluation Team, chaired by Carlow County Council's Procurement Officer, Gerard Dooley throughout September and October, Carlow County Development Partnership CLG (CCDP) were deemed the successful bidder and were appointed the Programme Implementor. The new contract was signed between Carlow LCDC and CCDP after the LCDC's 12th December meeting. An increase in the 2024 Annual Budget was approved at this December meeting which was from an Annual Budget of €655,941 to €700,184 with additional budget for newcomers of €120,098 bringing it to a total of €820,282.

Community Support Fund 2023

- Carlow LCDC, in 2023, was allocated €283,141.00. This was broken into €138,739 for Current Funding for use towards energy running/operating costs, €141,570 for Capital Funding and €2,831 ring-fenced for Women's Sheds. The LCDC approved, in accordance with the Department's guidelines, that the Capital Fund to be split for 70% targeted funding through the Social Inclusion Forum of €99,099.00 and 30% funding of €42,471.00 for grants of €2,000 or less. The Department approved a reallocation of the previous year's underspend for Capital spend, which amounted to €35,106.83. This was assigned to the small Capital Fund bringing it to a total of €77,577.83.
- In total 116 community groups/ organisations received funding across the three Municipal Districts.

Community Development Officer

The community development officer worked closely with community groups, residents' associations and organisations in Carlow throughout 2023. A newly developed Residents Association Guidelines Handbook was delivered to groups across Carlow through the Pride of Place 2023 Awards.

In June 2023, over 500 People engaged in Bagenalstown in Bloom workshops and activities. This event has grown year on year with 16 workshops taking place in 2023 and the addition of a yarn bombing treasure hunt across the town and festival events in The Community Garden. These events were supported by Carlow County Council Community Section, Creative Places Bagenalstown, SICAP, and KCETB.

In July 2023, Carlow Community Section collaborated with Carlow Sports Partnership for National Play Day events based on the theme 'Wonder and Discovery'.

In October 2023, Positive Ageing Week Events led by the Community Section engaged 203 people in 2 Positive Ageing Park Walks and 350 people in 12 community

led Positive Ageing Coffee Mornings. And 37 professionals from 22 organisations across Carlow completed Decider Skills Training.

In November 2023, 35 people engaged in a Dementia Awareness Training in the lead up to the launch of the Cabin Café, Carlow's first Dementia Café which is affiliated to the Irish Dementia Café Network. The HSE and Understanding Together delivered training for both members of Carlow Older Persons Forum and Staff from Carlow County Council.

In December 2023, a collaborative project with Carlow Community Section, Healthy Carlow, Carlow Regional Youth Services and Carlow Garda Station developed an outdoor cinema experience for young people and their families. This event screened a trail made by young people in Carlow Youth Service to show what their service is about and was followed by a Christmas themed film and a Santa visit.

Age Friendly Carlow

The Carlow Age Friendly Interagency Alliance, chaired by the Chief Executive of Carlow County Council, met on a quarterly basis during 2023 to improve planning and services for older people in County Carlow. Key outputs from the Age Friendly Carlow actions in 2023 included: the completion of a procurement process to select a consultant for the review of the previous strategic plan and development of a new strategic plan; expansion of the Alliance to include key stakeholders; supporting the development of the Carlow Older Persons Forum; the delivery of 16 events involving over 1,000 people during Positive Ageing Week 2023. Following a short-listing process Faith Amond was appointed as the Carlow Age Friendly Ambassador during Positive Ageing Week. This is an honorary position to promote and highlight the age-friendly programme and local age friendly initiatives. In addition, two projects from Carlow County Council, from Environment and Libraries were shortlisted for recognition at the National Age Friendly Achievement Awards ceremony, and the Environment submission won in their category.

Comhairle na nÓg

In 2023, the Comhairle Na nÓg members prioritized 'Discrimination' as their theme and their output in communicating their actions on this theme included: moviemaking, podcasts, leaflets and social media. The members of **Comhairle Na nÓg** ran their AGM in November 2023 with 87 young people participating from 12 schools. The new topics chosen for 2024 were Body Image and Cyber-bullying. €25,000 funding under the Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund 2023 from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to support the operation and facilitation of Carlow Comhairle na nÓg was secured.

Carlow Traveller Interagency Group



The Carlow Traveller Interagency Group works to ensure that the relevant statutory agencies and state supported initiatives involved in providing a range of services to Travellers focus on improving the integrated delivery of such services. Inputs for 2023 included: the completion and launch of the Carlow Traveller Interagency Group Assessment of Need and Strategic Plan 2023-2026; providing support to the interagency and cross-departmental participation in strategy actions; secured

funding from Dormant Accounts for Traveller cultural awareness training; and liaison with the Department on reporting and funding requirements. CTIG members, agencies and local communities play a crucial role in accessing information and building relationships with Travellers across the county. The information captured in relation is used for service planning and future development of the CTIG to secure better outcomes for Travellers and improve the use of resources. Secured €18,228 from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth linked to the Carlow Traveller Interagency Group. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will provide a grant of €18,228.00 under the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement for the implementation of the project for services for Traveller and Roma Initiatives. This funding is provided to advance the objectives contained in the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Healthy Carlow

2023 is the first of a three-year strategy for Healthy Carlow. Carlow County Council has secured €236,000 over the three years. All programmes supported under Healthy Ireland funding for the duration of the strategy are focusing on increasing levels of positive mental health for those in our three identified target groups: adolescents, older people, disadvantaged families and one parent families.

In 2023 Healthy Carlow supported a number of very positive programmes including the following examples: The Cabin Cafe, a dementia cafe offering support and a social opportunity for those with dementia and their carers; Social Farming giving disadvantaged people an opportunity to undergo a supportive, healthy and inclusive experience on farm life; Singing for Wellbeing, a group singing initiative which has been fantastically received in Carlow; A swimming programme for Muslim Women and their children provides a safe space to engage in a social opportunity and encourage integration into communities.

691 people in Carlow engaged in

programmes, training and events funded through Healthy Carlow in 2023.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Carlow applied for funding for the following projects in 2023:

- Nine Stones upgrade – enhancement works which would include provision of public toilets and catering facilities – applied for €447,480.
- Borris Village Link phase 2 – completion of construction of footpath that connects the South Leinster Way at Borris to the Barrow Way at Ballytiglea Bridge – applied for €175,000.

Still awaiting a decision on both applications.

CLÁR

Under the CLÁR scheme 2023, Carlow received funding for the following projects.

Project	Amount
Ballymurphy Hall	€42,791
Ballymurphy National School	€22,829
Drumpeha National School	€40,680
Garryhill Handball Club	€40,500
Old Leighlin GAA	€49,950
Drummond Community Basketball Court	€41,729
St. Michael’s National School	€28,620

Capital Play and Recreation Grant Scheme 2023

A capital grant was awarded to Carlow County Council in the sum of €14,873 for the installation of an accessible mini basketball court and associated works in Hanover Activity Park, Carlow Town.

Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme

Carlow County Council was successful in being granted €250,000 under the Shared Island Local Development Funding Scheme in 2022. The funding was to provide an All-Ireland feasibility study to scope the development and economic return of a fully

connected Columban Way walking route, traversing North and South. Carlow County Council, as the lead Council with Ards and North Down Borough Council being the main partner along with 9 other Local Authorities (6 from the South and 3 from the North), formed a Steering Group to oversee the delivery of the Project.

After a procurement process the contract to carry out the Feasibility Study of the All-Ireland Columban Way was awarded to Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) in late March 2023. There were 5 meetings between ORNI and the Steering group throughout the year for reviews of drafts which were discussed and amended. The completed Feasibility Study and Business Case for the All-Ireland Columban Way was completed in November 2023 and subsequently submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach.

Entente Florale

Due to unforeseen circumstances the competition was put back to another year and the Judging will take place in July 2024. In the meantime, after a walk of the agreed route, works were undertaken throughout 2023 by the Town Engineer, Barry Knowles and his team to get ready for 2024.

Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN)

Carlow PPN received total annual funding of €120,700, comprised of €35,000 from Carlow County Council and €85,700 from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

A total of 358 active member groups were registered with Carlow PPN at end of 2023.

Colleges	No. of Members
Environmental College	13
Social Inclusion College	37
Community & Voluntary College	308

- Carlow PPN has community representation comprising 32 seats representing a variety of boards and

committees bringing the voice of the community to the decision-making table on the following: 4 SPCs comprising 1. Planning, Environmental, Climate and Biodiversity Action, Energy and Agriculture, 2. Transportation and Infrastructure, 3. Housing, Community and Wellbeing, Culture, Libraries and 4. Digital Development, Tourism, Enterprise, and Economic Development

- The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Carlow Tourism Board
- The South-East Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force
- The Joint Policing Committee
- The Carlow Development Forum

A small number of representatives' vacancies existed at the end of 2023, the PPN is actively seeking representation to fill those seats.

Carlow PPN input into 12 consultations and surveys on a wide range of local and national issues, for example: Ireland's Fourth Open Government National Action Plan 2023-2025, The Housing Commission Public Consultation, Seanad Eireann Public Consultation on the Future of Local Democracy, The Law Reform Commission - Liability of Clubs, Societies and other Unincorporated Associations, Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 – 2029, Carlow County Council Temporary Closure Of Roads Notice Of Intention, Carlow County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and the Carlow County Council Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

EU50

Secured a grant of €7,500 from the Department of Foreign Affairs for funding under the Local Authority led **EU50 Events** programme. This funding scheme will support events/projects led by local authorities, that will deepen public awareness of the role that the European Union plays in our daily lives at a local and regional level. The event took place on Europe Day, 9th of May 2023.

Africa Day

Secured €7,400 towards the organisation of events to celebrate **Africa Day 2023**. Africa Day, designated by the African Union as an annual celebration of the continent's unity, falls on 25th May each year. The Department of Foreign Affairs has been the driving force behind Africa Day celebrations in Ireland since 2006 and Irish Aid supports a programme of community-based and policy-focused initiatives around the country on an annual basis.



Carlow Sports Partnership (CSP)



3,074

Number of participants in 111 Carlow Sports Partnership programmes and initiatives



47,113

Digital views were reached on 49 weekly e-bulletins



22,061

Views were reached on www.carlowsports.ie



€57,500

Funding distributed to 58 clubs and community groups



€153,500

Funding secured via the Dormant Accounts Fund



12

National campaigns promoted and supported by Carlow Sports Partnership

In 2023, the Carlow Sports Partnership celebrated a year of remarkable success and community engagement. From empowering women through the popular Hike for Women in Sport Week, where 40 women conquered the challenging Slievenamon, to fostering cultural diversity with the Introduction to Cricket programme, which attracted women from various nationalities and led to the formation of a social cricket team in Bagenalstown.

The year also saw the continuation of the Buggy Buddies programme, providing new parents with opportunities for physical activity and a supportive environment. ‘Her Outdoors’ Week in August witnessed over 150 women and teenage girls participating in a range of activities, showcasing the partnership’s commitment to outdoor recreation.

The rollout of programmes like “Wise and Well” and “Active Agers”, and the establishment of the “Wednesday Wanderers” walking series underscored

the partnership’s dedication to promoting active ageing and social connectivity. The Carlow Sports Partnership also coordinated and facilitated a range of inclusive physical activity programmes across Carlow. Inclusive camps during Easter, Summer and Halloween allowed children with disabilities to take part in a wide range of activities. Learn to Cycle Camps set over 150 children off on their cycling journeys.

The Primary Schools programme was rolled out in September 2023, offering many different activities to primary schools,

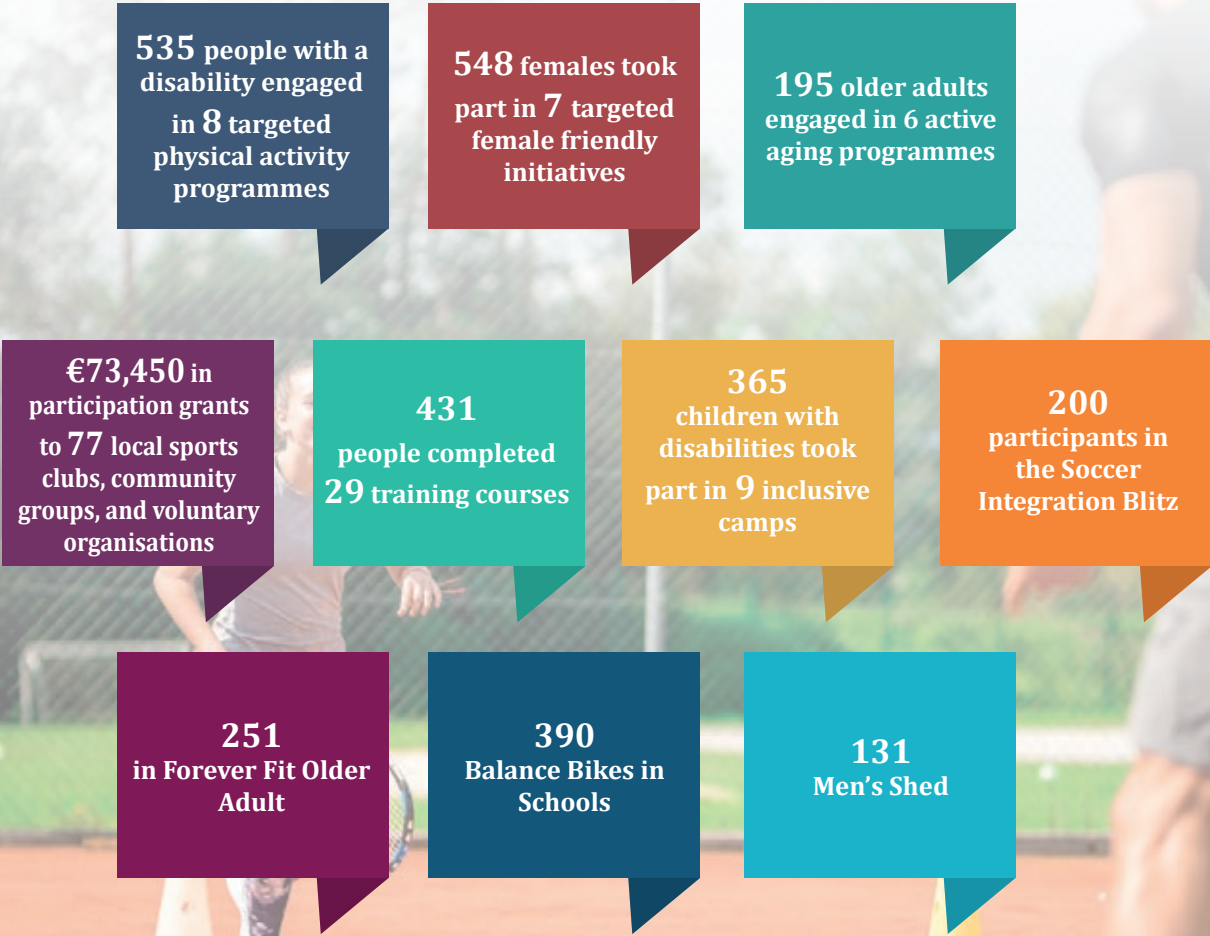
including Basketball Coaching which is run in conjunction with SETU. The School Hall athletics programme proved very popular among schools as it gives the senior classes a chance to take on leadership roles as they coach the smaller children in the school. The schools' programmes got over 600 students moving as part of their school day.

With Safeguarding, First Aid, Rescue Emergency Care and Disability Awareness Courses facilitated by the Sports Partnership educated 431 people through 29 courses.

“The thought and consideration that goes into allocating our children and young people to suitable supports is quite incredible. My daughter has a new medical condition, and she was supported by a volunteer with extensive knowledge about it. The opportunity to play, interact with others and gain valuable exercise is priceless. And yet these camps are affordable and accessible to all. Couldn't recommend highly enough!”

“My 5-year-old daughter did the learn to cycle camp in St. Patrick's college. Brilliant experience gave her such confidence & she is flying it ever since! The instructors all have a great attitude & easily adapt to suit the ability of each child. 100% recommend.”

Carlow Sports Partnership undertook a wide range of actions with the aim of increasing sport and physical activity participation levels in local communities.







Arts Service



34

Carlow artists & groups supported through arts grants and bursaries



68

Number of artists supported by 33 events managed by the Arts Office through Culture Night 2023



4,000

Number of children engaging weekly in Music Generation at 22 primary and 3 secondary schools



6,000

Audience numbers entertained at Carlow Arts Festival



€194,161

Total Funding allocated to Creative Ireland Carlow Programme

Carlow Arts Service plays a vital role in sustaining local arts development working closely with communities and artists across the county representing inclusion, diversity, and equality. We nurture and support our artists to help develop their artistic practice and processes. In 2023 two key areas of work include the Creative Ireland Carlow programme and the Carlow Arts Office programme.

Creative Ireland Carlow Programme for 2023

The local authority Culture Team published a new Culture and Creativity Strategy for County Carlow which is the road map for the next five years. Carlow successfully secured a total funding allocation of €194,161, which included €161,161 Core funding and €30,000 **Cruinniú na nÓg** funding. **Cruinniú na nÓg** Carlow was managed also

by the Arts Service and saw 28 separate events taking place across Carlow in June 2023, for with and by children and young people. Events were attended by **1,500** people, engaged with **14** different schools, worked with **23** partner organisations and delivered by **60** artists/facilitators.

Other initiatives under Creative Ireland that we supported included an Open Call to community groups with **23** countywide

successful diverse cultural projects. In addition to the core funding, a further €15,000 was secured that supported Mobile Music Machine to deliver Care Concerts in Nursing Homes and Day Care Centres across Carlow, with 23 concerts taking place. €19,000 was also secured towards a Cranavane Holy Wells project collaborating with the Heritage Office under the Creativity in Older Persons Scheme. €10,000 was secured for an arts participation project called Cycles that happened across Hacketstown, Rathvilly, Graiguecullen and Tullow, Co. Carlow and an additional €29,000 was secured for Music Generation, Carlow Library Rambling House Project, Social Prescribing and Wellbeing and a pilot project working with CAHMS (Carlow HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Finally working with an artist and young people who co designed and created a print project called Cozy Collective – a collaboration with Carlow Regional Youth Services John Sweeney House, Tullow Road and Youthreach Carlow.

Carlow Arts Office Programme 2023

Working in partnership with the Arts Council of Ireland €100,000 was secured. **Under the Arts Acts Grants – Artists**, 35 applications were received and a total budget of €78,436.52 was sought. The total budget under the Arts Acts Grants for individuals Artists was €36,400. Following a competitive assessment process, **22 artists** received grants. **Under the Arts Acts Grants – Community Groups / Organisations**, 33 applications were received and a total of €79,856 was sought. The total budget under the Arts Acts Grants for community groups and organisations was €13,600. Following an assessment process **12 community groups** were awarded funding, and some groups were referred for Creative Ireland funded supports.

EU Craft Hub

Carlow Arts Service secured 2 international opportunities for artists/craft makers to travel to Matera, Italy and Oslo, Norway to highlight the work that originated through

the indigenous craft, Borris Lace. Working closely with the lace makers, artists and international partners, Borris Lace Exchange project was designed by the Arts Service and was showcased internationally. This project grew out of Borris Lace by Post project and both projects won the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2023 – Sustaining the Arts Award.

Culture Night 2023

Managed by the Arts Office saw **33 events**, with the first Culture Night taking place in Tullow County Carlow, led by community groups and supported by the Arts Office. Culture Night was hugely successful participatory, accessible, and inclusive. **15,000** people attended Culture Night Carlow and 68 artists were supported throughout. **Culture Night Late** took place in VISUAL Carlow.

In 2023 we supported **Carlow Arts Festival** through funding of the **Carlow Live and Local** stage that saw **18** local Musicians, from solo acts to bands perform during the festival with audiences of over 6000 in attendance. We also supported the **Carnival of Collective Joy** with the participation of over 700 young people parading through Carlow town in June.

“Gnathog na durtha” (Natural Habitats Project)

In collaboration with the Arts Council of Ireland and Creative Ireland we continued to support the role out and implementation of “Gnathog na durtha” (Natural Habitats Project), a long-term arts development project led by Carlow County Council Arts Service in partnership with Kildare and Meath County Councils. In 2023 the project supported three artists working across Drummin Bog County Carlow, Rathangan Bog County Kildare and Girley Bog County Meath exploring rich histories, heritage, folklore, traditions and rituals, storytelling, music, poetry and, through their arts practice included intensive community mapping, eco-literacy training and artist happenings/ events on each site. This artist led project



Culture Night 2023 Launch, Tullow

takes a ground up approach and at the forefront of the project these important Bog sites are extremely important for climate change mitigation as they store millions of tonnes of carbon. Peat forming plants such as sphagnum moss and sedges remove carbon from the atmosphere and this project provides accessible ways for us all to explore climate action and environmental concerns, open up awareness and education, support community led initiatives and artists development and encourage social cohesion and active participation/consultation.

Creative Places Bagenalstown

Awarded 10 grants to support the establishment of new projects across the community, including a community choir, pop-up cinema, music programmes, archival projects and youth engagement. **Creative Places Bagenalstown** also participated in Crinniu na nOg in partnership with local schools deciding on a film screening attended by over **500** local people. **Creative Places Bagenalstown** worked with local organisations to deliver 2 days of workshops, storytelling, live music and community events as part of “**Bagenalstown in Bloom**”. In 2023 Creative Places Bagenalstown built strong local partnerships with Community Section Carlow County Council, Carlow

Sports Partnership and Healthy Carlow, Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre, Bagenalstown Library, Bagenalstown Improvement Group, Bagenalstown Bloom, to establish strong local networks. Artists’ workshops and gatherings were organised throughout the year.

Music Generation Carlow

Continued to work across the county with participation of over 4000 young people engaging in performance music education **weekly**, working in **22** local primary schools and 3 secondary schools along with community/outreach centres across the county. In 2023 Music at Mount Leinster Festival was hosted in Borris County Carlow that saw over 180 young musicians attend from across the country.

2023 saw the work of **Take a Part Carlow** put on solid strategic footings with the launch of a five-year Strategic Plan setting out its roadmap going forward. A new **Community Writer in Residence** programme, led by poet, Clifton Redmond commenced, delivering writing workshops at Carlow Youth Reach with young early school leavers and at New Oak Community Centre and Visual Carlow. A culmination of this work was showcased at an “Open Mic”



Take a Part Carlow Strategy Launch 2023

style event where participants presented their work on Culture Night in September 2023 with the publication of a Broad Sheet newspaper, entitled **#Right to Write**. **Take A Part Carlow** presented the premier of a newly commissioned film “RUBBISH” made in collaboration with Outlandish Theatre Platform, Carlow Youth Reach and members of the Tullow Road Community attended by **200** local people. Take A Part Carlow worked with residents of Dereen Heights, Tullow Road to present a “Fun on The Green” event for Cruinniu na n’Og this included a performance of “SWARM”, A comedy show for all ages, The AHA African Story Tellers, Quentin the Magician’s magic show, Pop Up Stories with Clifton Redmond and Paper Flower making with members of St. Catherines Traveller Support programme., face painting and outdoor games for everyone!

County Carlow Youth Theatre

Managed by the Arts Service saw 2 groups of young people who meet weekly in VISUAL Carlow. Aged 11-14 and 14 -18 years old. Participation took place in workshops and performances throughout the year as well as site specific performances during Carlow Arts Festival. Youth theatre is designed to nurture confidence in young people to express themselves through drama.

In 2023 we continued to support Festival in a Van that performed in Bagenalstown Creative Places event in the autumn and in Tullow and at the same time supported pop up cinema events for Ukrainians in the Exchange Carlow. In 2023 artist Remco de Fouw completed installation of his site-specific sculpture in Carlow Town Park called Sky Rivers, a homage to scientist John Tyndall.



Museum



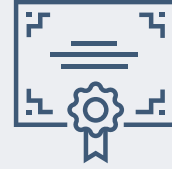
15,000 plus

No. of Visitors



Four & AGM

Museum Board Number of Meetings



Museum Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI) Status

Awarded Full Accreditation in July 2023

The Board of Carlow County Museum

The Board of Carlow County Museum held four meetings throughout the year. At the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Board Cllr Andrea Dalton was elected Chairperson for 2023 replacing Mr Padraig Dooley.

Carlow County Museum is 50 Years Old

Carlow County Museum first opened its

doors fifty years ago to the public on Sunday December 2nd 1973.

The Museum was founded and operated by the Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society (CHAS), and they operated the Museum until 2002 when the operations were taken over by the Carlow County Council to create our county's official county museum.



The photograph from the front page of the Nationalist of December 7th, 1973, showing some of the CHAS and Museum Committee at the opening day of the Museum on Sunday December 2nd, 1973 (L to R) Kevin Kennedy, Sean O'Leary, Mrs. B Crombie, John Moriarty, Iona McLeod, Alec Burns, Seamus Murphy and Michael Dooley. Photo: Karl McDonough

Heritage Council MSPI Award



On July 13th, Carlow County Museum achieved a top national award from the Heritage Council on day of recognition for the Irish museum sector. Thirteen museums from across the country were celebrated at a ceremony in Kilkenny Castle, having achieved official accreditation under the Heritage Council's Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI). Established to promote professional standards in museums, selection under the MSPI is a major accolade with accredited museums considered to be in keeping with best international practice. Carlow was one of two museums receiving the top award, Full Accreditation.

Cllr Andrea Dalton Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council and Chairperson of the Board of Carlow County Museum accepted the award on behalf of the Museum saying "Full MSPI Accreditation is a major accolade and a fully independent attestation of the

high standards of excellence in operation in our County Museum. Its achievement is due to the hard work and professionalism of our museum staff and volunteers under the expert guidance of our excellent and most committed curator Dermot Mulligan. Full accreditation is the culmination of a number of years of work and we in the Museum will now strive to ensure these high standards are maintained going forward".

Dermot Mulligan, Museum Curator, said "Achieving Full Accreditation under the MSPI programme has been a major objective for County Museum. By developing the various policies and implementation plans to achieve the standards we have a clear road map for our future and for the continuing



Photograph of all the MSPI Award recipients with the Heritage Council in the Rose Garden of Kilkenny Castle.



development of the Museum, it's collection and our services. The hard work involved is a team effort by the Museum staff, the Museum Board, the Members and staff of Carlow County Council, the Carlow Historical & Archaeological Society, our committed volunteers, Carlow Tourism, County Carlow Development Partnership, and the Graiguecullen Killeslin CE Scheme. It is a proud day for the Museum”.

Pat Delaney, Director of Services at Carlow County Council and head of the Cultural Team, said “Carlow County Museum is an important part of the community services provided by Carlow County Council. It was founded by CHAS as a community run museum and community engagement is still at the heart of what the Museum does. The museum building was home to the Presentation Convent, an educational facility in the heart of our town. The Museum carries on that educational

tradition which promotes a sense of pride and understanding about our local history and heritage.

Returning from the ceremony in Kilkenny to Carlow County Museum there to congratulate the Museum Board and Staff on their achievement was Kevin Kennedy, the last of the founder members of the Museum in 1973.

Commenting at the ceremony, Chief Executive of the Heritage Council Virginia Teehan said: “the MSPI has become an integral part of the sector. Seeing the variety of museums represented at the ceremony, along with the increase in participants year on year, further underline its importance.”

Crinniú na nÓg 2023

Crinniú na nÓg, the national day of free creativity for children and young people under 18, took place on Saturday June 10th. Crinniú na nÓg is coordinated in County Carlow by the Arts Office. The Museum hosted the Big Dig experience in the Museum car park. This was a series of archaeological workshops for children to experience what is to be an archaeologist by excavating a Viking house.

The Museum teamed up Create School, who coordinate workshops and courses in creative digital media, and Bennekerry National School, to create a series of short local history podcasts. The two 5th classes visited the Museum and following a guided



tour and assistance from Museum staff the pupils worked with Create School to develop their scripts and record and upload their Carlow histories under the podcast title 'Curious Carlow'. The recordings range from the Sugar Factory to St Willibrord, Frank O'Meara, Kevin Barry, Carlow Castle, and the Brownhill Dolmen.

Heritage Week 2023

As part of Heritage Week, a fantastic display case of GAA trophies was unveiled in Carlow County Museum. The display contains the retired senior trophies from Carlow GAA's football and hurling championships.

Derek Kent, Cathaoirleach Comhairle Laighean, ably assisted by Cllr Andrea Dalton, Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council and Chairperson of the Board of Carlow County Museum; Jim Bolger, Cathaoirleach of Cumann Luthchleas Gael Cheatharlach, Malcolm Noonan TD, Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Cllr Tom O'Neill, Mayor of the Municipal District of Carlow, and Tommy Murphy, Uachtarán Cumann Luthchleas Gael Cheatharlach, unveiled the Carlow GAA Trophy Cabinet on the first floor of the Museum on Thursday August 17th.

Later that evening, Cumann Luthchleas Gael Cheatharlach and the Museum teamed up again to present an evening of nostalgia in the Seven Oaks Hotel where many of the clubs proudly displayed some of their clubs' historical objects from minutes books, county champion team photos, and trophies. Top of the bill was a wonderful lecture by Dr Siobhan Doyle on *The History of the GAA in 100 Objects and the Carlow Connections* where she wrote about some of the objects including Carlow's Haughney Cup that is featured in the book and graces its front cover.

Culture Night 2023

Culture Night took place across the country on Friday 22nd with the programme in County Carlow coordinated by the Carlow Arts Office. We launched a new exhibit in the Museum in association with Carlow Pride Festival. It is an interactive screen of videos, photographs and archival collections which have been carefully sourced and curated to tell the stories of LGBTQ+ people in Ireland.



This is a collaboration by the National Museum of Ireland with the Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN), the twelve local authority museums located all around the country. The interactive was launched by Carlow native, Izzy Kamikaze, who has been active in the LGBTQ+ movement over forty years. Izzy was invited to launch the interactive and was delighted to do so in both her hometown and in her old alma mater!



At the unveiling of the interactive display are (L to R) Cllr Andrea Dalton, Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council and Chairperson of the Board of Carlow County Museum, Carlow's Izzy Kamikaze with Ryan Shannon and Mary Fleming of the Carlow Pride Festival.

2023 Notable Visitors

June 23rd was Luxembourg's National Day. The Luxembourg Embassy in Dublin hosted Xavier Bettel, Luxembourg Prime Minister, and Yuriko Backes, Luxembourg Minister for Finance. They led a delegation to Dublin to officially inaugurate their new

embassy. They held their Luxembourg National Day Celebrations with an evening in the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. Carlow's connection was acknowledged over the course of the visit by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, and Prime Minister Bettel. Photograph: Copyright Ministère d'Etat Luxembourg.



In September Her Excellency, Florence Ensch, Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Ireland, visited County Carlow in the company of Patrick Dondelinger, Chargé d'Etudes Dirigeant, Patrimoine Culturel Immatériel, Ministère

de la Culture, the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Senior Research Officer, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, The Government of the Grand



Carlow County Library

139,949

Physical Visits to Library Branches



270

No. of Visits from Primary & Secondary School Classes



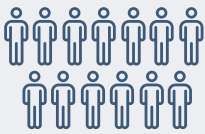
89,218

Physical Items issued in 2023



2,850

No. of participants in 89 national initiatives



292 from 17 national schools

Submissions to LEO Right to Read Primary School Short Story Competition Project

37,576

Number of Online Services accessed



207,000 views

9,327 Social Media followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram



Reading & Literacy:

Dormant Accounts-funded literacy programmes with matched funding from Carlow County Council:

→ The *Towards a Literacy Friendly County Carlow* initiative was shortlisted for the All-Ireland and Council Awards 2023. The report on the follow-up *Literacy Ambassador in the Workplace* pilot was launched by Cathaoirleach Andrea Dalton in July. 14 people participated in this pilot programme and have shared their learning to introduce literacy-friendly

practices in their workplaces. The Carlow Library programme model has recently been adopted by Dublin City and Longford Libraries.

→ A family learning project for members of the Ukrainian community featured a series of interactive workshops and concluded with an author visit. The programme ran in partnership with Carlow Adult Learning Service and KCETB. Due to its success, KCETB provided a further series of workshops from April to June.

Libraries for all

Library Development Plan

Work commenced on the development of a five-year plan for Carlow County Library Service. A consultant was appointed in October and began the consultation process by engaging with internal and external stakeholders. The plan will aim to ensure that our libraries are multi-purpose social and educational places for all members of the community to enjoy.

Assistive technologies and equipment

All branches now stock:

- Fact Factory – the world’s first audio magazine for children. Targeted at young, marginalised readers the kit has been developed in collaboration with the Dyslexia Association of Ireland and the NCBI.
- C-PENs - portable scanning pens that read printed text out loud, scan and save text, record voice memos, and provide word definitions. These promote active and independent reading, supporting people with reading difficulties. Pens are now available to borrow and try out at home.
- Classmate Tablets – preloaded with software designed to engage children with special educational needs.
- Sensory equipment supported by the 2023 Dormant Accounts Fund, matched by Carlow County Council.

Irish Language Acquisitions

In 2023 the decision was taken to set aside 4% of the Library Branch stock budget to develop our Irish Language collections in each location, and the Service will continue to guarantee this funding into the future. In conjunction with Áis, the wholesalers acting on behalf of Foras na Gaeilge, we have been able to create a modern, engaging collection of books for Irish speakers of every level and age. We look forward to further developing this collection in 2024.

Cathaoirleach’s Bursary

Now in its second year, the Cathaoirleach’s Bursary for Postgraduate Students was launched in May. Applications are invited from postgraduate students who live or have an address in Carlow and the successful applicants will be presented with a MacBook Air to assist with their studies.

The Library as Centre of the Community

As always, the County Library Service hosted and organised a range of events over the year in all branches. Some programme highlights:

Culture Night took place on Friday 22nd September 2023. To celebrate the night, there was a fusion of African music with Greg McLennan and Ola Oladimeji. African culture was also celebrated with Jolly O’Rock and the AHA Storytellers providing dance, music, singing and poetry performances





This was followed by the well-known Carlow Storytellers who provided an evening of miscellany of songs, dance and culture. Tullow Library screened a documentary about creativity and collaboration in County Carlow by the well-known Form Craft Group who displayed pieces from their Exhibition “Tensions”. Tullow Library also hosted an Exhibition called “Celebrating My Culture”, a cultural collection of Artwork by local schools, creches and Tullow Organisations.

Lunchtime in the Library:

The 2023 programme, supported by Creative Ireland funding ran over eight Friday lunchtimes from September to December. In its second year, a musical element was added and featured speakers included award winning writers Angela Flannery, Eoghan Daltún and Emilie Pine. 149 people enjoyed the sessions.

Book Clubs: Carlow and Tullow libraries established their first book clubs in January, meeting monthly. Due to popular demand, a second club began in Carlow during April. Training was also held in April with Down Syndrome Ireland ahead of a book club for people with Down Syndrome being established in Carlow.

The Healthy Ireland at Your Library

programme aims to contribute to improving the health, wellbeing and overall quality of life of communities and individuals at all stages. Funding from Healthy Ireland has enhanced health and wellbeing book collections and provided for the events and programming in 2023 including:

- Carlow County Library Service collaborated with HSE Primary Care and Child Psychology Services to deliver a series of seven parenting workshops to the community covering anxiety, managing strong emotions and parenting positively.
- Participation in the *Hello How Are You day* in March, a campaign about connection and engaging in open conversations about mental health.
- Three talks were hosted in May with ASIAM, Ireland’s national autism charity. Topics included acceptance and neurodiversity, Autism and sensory accessible environments and Autism and girls.
- A Singing for Wellbeing pilot programme was held in Carlow Library during October and November 2023. This was an 8-week series of singing workshops

for people of all ages and abilities. A professionally trained tutor led the group in a relaxed atmosphere with the focus on enjoyment. The initiative was funded by Healthy Carlow. The tutor, Regina Hanley, took the lead in making the group a welcoming, fun and safe space for participants. Library coordinators managed the programme and provided ongoing support throughout the programme.

Age Friendly Services: The Library Service was shortlisted at a national level for the Talking Newspaper project during the pandemic period. The Age Friendly Recognition awards ceremony took place in the Clayton White Hotel in Wexford in November

Events Snapshot	No. of Events
Author Visit	6
Book Club	33
Book Launch	3
Class Visit	307
Classes IT	8
Club/Meeting	45
Community Information Provision	18
Community Outreach/Inclusion Event	360
Competitions	15
Concert/Musical Event	26
Library Exhibition	4

Our Buildings

Funding was secured from the Historic Structures Fund to perform remedial works on the roof and chimneys on Presentation Building. A competition was run, and contractor appointed with work to commence early in 2024.

My Open Library Service

Borris My Open Library Service received a “soft” launch to trouble-shoot the service in March 2023 and was officially launched in

October. Since its introduction, 63 members have joined the service, and in 2023 the library was accessed 466 times during My Open Library hours. €17,000 remains to be drawn down from the committed budget, and this will be used to pay for lighting upgrade works which have recently been completed, taking total expenditure on the project in under the approved €129,850 budget.

Works commenced in Tullow in July, when a new exterior door was installed by Autom8. These works ensured that the library had its own entrance independent of the Municipal Building. The installation of the MOL software (Bibliotheca) followed, along with the installation and upgrade of IT equipment. Outstanding works concern electrical works, furnishings and décor, and the project is well on course to come in under the approved €104,000 budget.

Climate Action and Energy:

Carlow County Council Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was prepared in 2023 to facilitate the transition of Carlow Town and County to a low carbon and climate resilient County. This will be achieved by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action at local level. This aim is aligned to the Government’s overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. The branch library network was the venue for consultations on the draft plan whereby staff from Carlow County Council were available to speak about the plan and answer queries. The Draft Plan was made available for inspection in all our libraries.

Home Energy Awareness information session was held in Carlow Central Library in May

Community Energy Hub Carlow Libraries entered a partnership with the South East Energy Agency, which will see the introduction of a “Community Energy Hub” in Carlow Library in the first quarter of 2024. The initiative will see the creation of

a research space in the library which will be reserved for members of the public accessing a specially curated platform focused on energy conservation.

Community Information As part of the County Carlow Climate Action Plan the Library Service committed to develop a countywide climate-related educational and awareness programme to include information events, communication campaigns and guidance documentation. Work on delivering on this commitment has already commenced.

SEAI Clinic In September 2023, the LGMA sought expressions of interest in holding SEAI Home Energy events in libraries across the Southeast. Carlow Libraries was chosen to host an event to take place in 2024.

Electrical Works My Open Library Funding allowed electrical works to be carried out in Borris Library, which saw the installation of energy saving motion sensors and timers for all lighting in the building.

Biodiversity Week 2023 was marked by workshops in Borris, Bagenalstown and Muinebheag Libraries to learn about the diverse range of animals and plants in our natural world. These were delivered by Úna Halpin (Wildways Adventure) who used the new library Biodiversity Kit, supported by Carlow Heritage Office and the Heritage Council.

Our Digital Offer

In 2023, Carlow Libraries maintained its very high standard of online services provision, offering improved and expanded stocks of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers, online classes and educational programmes.

The Service availed of a €12,000 grant to upgrade public PC services, and the equipment received will be formatted and introduced into branches in early 2024. The grant has allowed the work that was commenced in early 2023 to be completed, namely the complete upgrade of all public PCs in the four branches.

Another key improvement was the installation of Footfall Cams in all 4 branches, allowing for more reliable and accurate measurement of visits to our libraries.

Also installed as part of the My Open Library works in our Borris and Tullow branches were information screens, which are used to broadcast messages to our patrons in our branches, particularly during out-of-staffed hours.

Culture & Heritage

Local Studies/ County Archive:

400 people visited the Local Studies Department during 2023 including visitors from Australia, United States, United Kingdom and New Zealand as well as local and Irish researchers. Enquiries spanned a large variety of areas to include genealogical research, academic research, newspaper consultation and second and third level students researching projects. Research support is provided by library staff to visitors and access provided to research original, microfilm and electronic material in our reading room. Work continued on the Sugar Factory publication which will be published and launched in 2024.

Book launches:

- 'Carlow Castle: A History' by Gala Hutton was launched in Carlow Library in December. The book, which is fully illustrated with original pictures and paintings by Gala, spans centuries of Carlow's history. It tells the story of the castle in comic book format.
- 'Generations – A County Carlow Story of Family and Food' was launched in Carlow Library in October.

Acquisitions:

- Three Miles of Road: Tales of Country Life in the Sixties *Tom Byrne*
- County Carlow Football Club 1873-2023 – 150 years of rugby *Eugene Carbury*
- Ros Bruc *Mary Crowe*
- Today in Fairy Land *Vonnie Bolton*

- *Different Words Same Old Pen Patrick Mitchell*
- *Holy Cross Church and Community Pat Whelan*
- A large file of documents was acquired at auction, all signed by James Bessonnett, Assistant Barrister for the County of Carlow 1816 – 1831, including petitions, appeals, depositions and decrees.
- A large file of original Manuscript Legal documents was acquired at auction relating to property transactions in County Carlow, 1600's to 1940's.
- A large file was also acquired at auction relating to tree planting in County Carlow, 1825 – 1916. By the late 17th Century, most of Ireland's natural woodland had been felled. In 1765, an Act was put in place to encourage replanting. These documents allowed those vacating property to claim the value of the lands they had planted.
- Several manuscript legal statements were acquired at auction relating to Lord Kilwarden/ Lord Norbury covering the period 1801 –1817.
- An intriguing file of document discovered in Carlow Jail in the 1940's was acquired at auction. These documents relate to the early 19th century.
- Christopher Power's article on *The Grace Mausoleum, Arles* was published in *Carloviana* 2023.

Heritage:

Carlow Library Service was delighted to be associated with the Heritage Council National Heritage Week which took place from August 12th to 20th. The library in Carlow hosted an 'Introduction to Photogrammetry' day with Gary Dempsey, Borris Library hosted an exhibition of Rathanna NS Memories as part of Rathanna ICA Heritage Project, and Muinebheag Library facilitated a Heritage event from Carlow Military Museum. The Heritage Forum met in Borris Library for their meeting in May which was followed with a kind invitation from Morgan Kavanagh, Borris House to view the gardens and see the progress of roof restoration works to outbuildings, funded under the Build Heritage Investment Scheme 2023





Genealogy

Carlow County Library signed a new contract with Irish Family History Foundation (IFHF) in November to provide a genealogy service for County Carlow. The service is operated by library staff who meet researchers in person and answer online queries. A member of Carlow Library staff commenced the genealogy course, Certificate in History of Family and Genealogical Methods (Irish Research Ancestry Centre IARC) This certificate programme is designed to provide a supportive and stimulating context for history of family research. It is a one-year, part-time course, which caters for the continuing education needs of those who wish to undertake study in the theory, methodology and practice of history of family and genealogical methods and who require supervision in carrying out research particularly as it might be applied to an understanding of familial heritage in the context of local, regional and national identity.

Local History Projects Bursary:

The local history projects bursary is a scheme to aid authors and researchers in pursuing projects which will culminate in the publication of a book relevant to the history of the county.

- The aim of this scheme is to encourage new local research and local history studies as a means of recognising the significant contribution of local historians

in furthering fields of study relating to the history of County Carlow and its environs.

- The scheme aims to make the outputs of the research freely available to the public with a view to contributing to a significant and publicly accessible legacy for County Carlow history.
- The purpose of this grant is to provide support for the direct costs of research and publication up to the maximum of €3,000.

Decade of Centenaries

2023 saw the conclusion of the Decade of Centenaries programme, which commemorated the historic people and events of 1913-1923 in Co. Carlow. Events included:

- James Lillis Commemoration, at Dunleckney Graveyard in January 2023, remembering his execution during the Civil War.
- The distribution of a collection of historically themed jigsaws throughout the schools of Co. Carlow.
- The continuing presentation of Centenarians Medals (2 recipients).
- Publication of *Carlow's Decade of Centenaries, 2015-2023*. This book took note of all events held under the auspices of the 1916 and Decade of Centenaries Committees, was published by Alhaus and launched in December in the Chamber by Cathaoirleach of the Committee, Cllr. Charlie Murphy.



Heritage Services



2

Carlow Heritage Forum Meetings Held



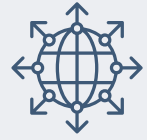
7

Community Heritage Funding Applications Supported



8

Public Consultations Events Organised



28

Public Heritage Outreach Events Organised

Carlow Heritage Forum

The members of the Carlow Heritage Forum meet on three occasions in 2023. It was agreed by the members of the Forum that two meetings would take place in locations around the County proposed by the Heritage Officer as a means of engaging with the heritage projects and heritage issues that would benefit from the Forum’s attention. The first meeting took place on 24 May 2023 in Borris Library followed by a visit to the conservation works on a vernacular farmyard building to the rear of Borris House. Access to Borris House, a tour and refreshments were kindly arranged by our host, Morgan Kavanagh. The second meeting took place on 8 November in the Delany Museum in Tullow. The meeting was a session dedicated to discussing and agreeing on the Draft of the County Carlow Heritage Plan. The group were treated to a tour of the Delany Museum and buildings led by Christopher and Mary Quinn. The final meeting took place on 13 December in the County Council Chamber, County Buildings, Athy Road and was followed by a light Christmas Lunch hosted by Carlow Heritage Office.

County Carlow Heritage Plan (2024-2029)

The final draft of the County Carlow Heritage Plan 2024-2029 went to its second and final phase of public consultation in December 2023. The consultation consisted of a series of in-person public consultation workshops in Tullow, Muine Bheag, Borris and Carlow Libraries and an online meeting. The Draft County Carlow Heritage Plan was available through the consult carlow website. The in-person and written submissions were positive towards the draft plan and relevant suggestions were reflected in the final plan.

Historic Structures Fund 2023

One Protected Structures in County Carlow received funding for necessary conservation works from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The structure was Sherwood House for the conservation of the slate weather cladding to the gable and rear of the structure and internal stripping of plaster to expose and access the gable wall and chimney and wooden floor beams. The conservation of the building ensures that the protected structures are resilient to the increased threats associated with climate change and future proofed for future generations.



Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2023

Three protected structures in County Carlow received funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and ensure private investment in the structures. The structures were a vernacular outbuilding in the yard of Borris House, Borris; Installation of a suitable heating system to ensure the use of Currane Tower, Borris and the conservation of the fascia and barges and the reinstate the lath and plaster at Lorum Rectory, Lorum, Borris.

Community Monuments Fund 2023

Myshall Muintir Na Tir with the support of Carlow Heritage Office successfully secured funding under the Community Monuments Fund 2023 for the community group to engage the services of a conservation team to prepare a Conservation Management Report for the upstanding remains of the medieval St. Finian’s Church, Myshall and the associated holy well. The group intends to apply for funds in 2024 to implement the conservation steps outlined in the Management Report and ensure the medieval church is resilient to effects of climate change for generations to come.

Launch of ‘How Ireland Saved Motor Sport’ Heritage Videography

Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan launched the videos of ‘How Ireland Saved Motor Sport’ – Gordon Bennett Race Videos in Visual,

Carlow on 16 June 2023. The Heritage Offices of Carlow, Kildare and Laois secured funding from the Heritage Council to production of two research-based videos telling the heritage story of the significance of the Gordon Bennet Race.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023

The Carlow Heritage secured funding for the delivery of three biodiversity projects in 2023. The Heritage Office engaged Birdwatch Ireland to carry out a County Carlow Swift Survey to build on from the Tullow Swift Survey and provide us with the required baseline data on nesting sites numbers and locations and populations around the County. Birdwatch Ireland were also engaged to carry out a Barn Owl Survey for County Carlow. The results of these surveys form an integral part of the natural heritage of County Carlow. Funding was secured to purchase copies of a Barn Owl booklet to be distributed to National Schools around the County. The creation and sharing of the baseline data to inform future conservation actions and raise awareness with the younger generation of biodiversity will assist with the implementation of the County Carlow Climate Action Plan.

Community Heritage Grants 2023

The Carlow Heritage Officer supported three successful Community Groups in their applications for and progress of Heritage Council funded Community Heritage



Projects. The Drummin Bog Project secured funding for an oral recording project that enabled community members recount their lived experience with the bog and cultural memories of the bog. The Rathanna ICA Guild secured funding for a cultural heritage project about the memories of their school days in Rathanna National School. The community group upskilled and received oral recording training from Dr. Ida Milne, Carlow College, which was implemented in the project. The project culminated in a video of the heritage of the school and the local memories of the days, activities and people in the National School. The Cranavane Holy Well Committee secured the professional services to work with the community to carry out a Heritage Audit of Kildavin (Barragh) and identify future heritage actions that would benefit from the care and attention of the community.

Biodiversity Week 2023

Biodiversity Week is a national celebration of biodiversity in Ireland offering communities an opportunity to discuss and engage with aspects of biodiversity. To celebrate Biodiversity Week 2023, the Carlow Heritage

Office organised a series of free workshops for the public to learn about the diverse range of animals and plants in our natural world. The workshops were delivered by Una Halpin (Wildways Adventures) and took place on 23 and 24 May 2023 in Muine Bheag/Carlow Libraries and Borris/Carlow Libraries respectively.

Heritage Week 2023

Heritage Week is the national celebration of heritage in Ireland. The Heritage Office working with community groups and various Departments in the County Council produced a varied programme of over forty events around the County. The events ranged from lectures, workshops, demonstrations and guided walks for all age groups. The lecture delivered by Paul Curran of Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society on the Heritage of the Carlow Ambulance Service earned him the Heritage Council's County Heritage Week 2023 award. Several events took place in Carlow town based in the Exchange, Carlow town being used a hub and included a public screening of the Gordon Bennett Race videos, launch of the Carlow Placenames Project and face painting and music event.



National Heritage Week Award winner – Brigid Fox - Heritage Hero 2023

Carlow Heritage Office was delighted when we heard the news that Brigid Fox of Myshall was awarded the National Award of Heritage Hero 2023 from the Heritage Council. Brigid is a well know heritage enthusiast and volunteer and the Award acknowledged her years of dedication to raising awareness and protect the heritage of County Carlow. Brigid was officially awarded the title at a formal reception in Gloster House, Offaly on 20 October 2023.

Carlow Heritage Office Projects

The Heritage Officer secured funding from the Heritage Council for two heritage projects in 2023. A pilot study of Carlow Placenames (Carlow Placenames Project) was formally launched during Heritage Week by Dr. Eve Campbell. The project was a development of a survey of placenames of Carlow town published by members of the Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society in recent years. The pilot aimed to engage with communities around the environs of Carlow town and equip them with the maps to record their locally known



placenames. The project involved a series of public consultations to inform people about the significance of placenames. The final report of the project is publicly available, and the collated placenames are now archived digitally with the Placename database of Ireland for public usage and online reference.

The Carlow Heritage Office engaged the services of Louise Maher to carry out a Heritage Audit of publicly accessible Water Pumps in County Carlow. The water pumps are often a forgotten communal heritage feature of rural and urban life. The heritage audit generated much public engagement and resulted in an accurate descriptive and photographic record of water pumps in County Carlow, showing foundries from which the pumps were made, descriptions of the condition of the water pumps and details of the surrounding and associated heritage features within the curtilage of the water pump.

Historic Towns Initiative Plan – Heritage-Led Regeneration for Carlow Town

The Carlow Heritage Office secured funding from the Heritage Council under the Historic Towns Initiative to produce a Heritage-led Regeneration Plan for Carlow Town. The process of research, public consultation and community engagement of listening to and incorporating their views was carried out by the Conservation Architect led team in Urban Scale Interventions. The plan will be the focus of the Heritage Officers future applications for suitable funding schemes for heritage-led regeneration in Carlow town.

Opening the Door to Ireland’s Heritage

The launch of the booklet ‘Opening the Door to Ireland’s Heritage’ by Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan took place on 7 December in Kilkenny. The booklet marks the 25th Anniversary of the Local Authorities Heritage Officer Programme in 2024. To mark the occasion the Heritage Council produced a booklet showcasing the diversity of Heritage Projects (Built, Natural and Cultural) delivered around the country, by the Local Authority Heritage Officers. The Carlow entry was based upon the Community Heritage Project delivered by Rathanna ICA Guild looking at people’s memories of the school days in Rathanna National School.



Motor tax

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

The public office is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 12.30pm and the online service is available 24/7 – 365 days per year at www.motortax.ie and accounts for circa 80% of all transactions.

In 2023 18,586 transactions were processed

in the Motor Tax public office to a value of €3.033 million.

In addition, 72,516 transactions were processed online to a value of €9.97 million. Total 91,102 transactions to a value of €13.003 million.



Appendices



Appendix 1

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) at 31st December 2023

	€	€
	2023	2022
Fixed Assets	1,118,262,756	1,102,143,351
Work in Progress and Preliminary Expenses	5,823,915	9,447,814
Long Term Debtors	60,552,334	57,293,979
Current Assets		
Stocks	0	0
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	9,305,234	7,528,765
Short Term Deposits	59,550,052	54,600,188
Cash at Bank	296,146	3,565,354
Cash on Hand	150,283	133,474
Total Current Assets	69,301,714	65,827,781
Current Liabilities		
Bank Overdraft	0	
Creditors & Accruals	16,896,772	16,349,341
Finance Leases	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	16,896,772	16,349,341
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	52,404,942	49,478,440
Creditors		
Loans Payable	32,023,634	34,330,967
Finance Leases	0	0
Refundable Deposits	3,996,938	3,439,533
Other	21,229,834	18,443,720
Total Creditors	57,250,406	56,214,220
Net Assets	1,179,793,540	1,162,149,364
Financed by		
Capitalisation Account	1,118,262,756	1,102,143,351
Income WIP	4,137,568	5,570,745
General Revenue Reserve	949,612	860,054
Other Balances	56,443,605	53,575,214
Total Reserves	1,179,793,540	1,162,149,364

Appendix 2

Statement of Comprehensive Income (Income & Expenditure Account Statement) For year ended 31st December 2023

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

Expenditure by Division	Gross Expenditure 2023	Income 2023	Net Expenditure 2023	Net Expenditure 2022
	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	18,815,530	22,934,867	(4,119,337)	(2,849,847)
Roads Transportation & Safety	13,941,676	9,339,267	4,602,409	4,469,975
Water Services	4,174,704	3,984,236	190,468	241,590
Development Management	8,427,077	4,349,695	4,077,382	3,829,498
Environmental Services	8,118,709	1,959,323	6,159,386	5,675,175
Recreation & Amenity	4,920,071	159,883	4,760,188	4,152,787
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	300,252	60,537	239,715	199,189
Miscellaneous Services	4,738,795	5,929,678	(1,190,884)	(340,511)
Total Expenditure/Income	63,436,814	48,717,486	14,719,328	15,377,855
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax.			14,719,328	15,377,855
Rates			15,730,993	15,061,941
Local Property Tax			6,322,843	6,341,370
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers			7,334,508	6,025,456
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(7,244,951)	(5,984,105)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			89,557	41,352
General Reserve @ 1st January 2023			860,054	818,701
General Reserve @ 31st December 2023			949,612	860,054

Appendix 2a

Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

Introduction

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

I certify that the financial statements of Carlow County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents fairly the financial position of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the local authority under which they purport to have been carried out. The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Carlow County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Carlow County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

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

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

	Current Year	Previous Year	Variance
Goods & Services	16,315,240	15,312,055	1,003,185
Grants & Subsidies	31,835,878	27,039,092	4,796,786
Other Contributions (as appropriate)	566,368	423,834	142,534
Rates	15,730,993	15,061,941	669,052
Local Property Tax	6,322,843	6,341,370	18,527
Total	70,771,322	64,178,292	6,593,030

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year
Income	70,771,332	64,178,292
Expenditure	63,436,813	58,152,835
Transfers to Capital	7,244,951	5,984,105
Exceptional Item		
Surplus/(Deficit) for Prior Year Adjustment	89,558	41,352
Opening Revenue Reserve	860,054	818,702
Closing Revenue Reserve	949,612	860,054

Income in 2023 increased by € 6.593 m represented principally by increases of € 1m in goods and services, € 4.79 m in grants and subsidies and € 0.7 m in commercial rates income (*Note: commercial rates income is shown gross. Write offs in respect of vacant premises are included in expenditure*)

Expenditure in 2023 amounted to € 63.436 m excluding transfers from/to reserves. The closing balance on the Income and Expenditure account at the 31st December 2023 was € 949,612 (credit) With a surplus of € 89,557 (0,14% of expenditure) recorded within the year.

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

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

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

The Net Assets of Carlow County Council at the end of 2023 total **€ 1,179 m** and are as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year	Variance
Fixed Assets	1,118,262,756	1,102,143,351	16,119,405
Works in Progress	5,823,915	9,447,814	3,623,899
Long Term debtors	60,552,334	57,293,980	3,258,354
Current Assets	69,301,713	65,827,780	3,473,933
Current Liabilities	16,896,772	16,349,341	547,431
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	52,404,941	49,478,439	2,926,502
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	57,250,406	56,214,220	1,036,186
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	1,179,793,540	1,162,149,364	17,644,176

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

System of Internal Financial Controls

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

Financial control environment

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

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

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

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

Procurement compliance

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

Internal audit and Audit Committee

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

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

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

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

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

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability.

They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

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

Risk and control framework

Carlow County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

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

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2024 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2024.

Signed by:

Colin O Reilly
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Chief Executive

Dated:

9th April 2024
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Appendix 3

Conferences/Seminars/Training Attended by Councillors in 2023

Date	Training / Conferences/ Seminars	Venue	Councillors in Attendance	Travel/ Sub/ Expense	Conference Fee
7th - 9th of February 2023	Association of Irish Regions, "Shaping Ireland's Regional Development"	4 Seasons Hotel, Monaghan	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Andy Gladney	€1,542.42	€160.00
25th February 2023	AILG Module 1, "A Briefing on the Electoral Reform Act"	Radisson Blu Hotel, Limerick, Co. Limerick	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Andy Gladney	€1,285.82	€75.00
2nd - 4th March 2023	LAMA Conference "Apprenticeship and Future Building Initiatives Recruitment and Training",	Westcounty Hotel, Bantry, Co. Cork.	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Andy Gladney, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. Brian O'Donoghue, Cllr. Willie Quinn	€4,001.36	€180.00
23/03/2023	AILG Module 2, "Local Authority Climate Action Plan - Building Sustainable Communities"	Claytons Hotel, Wexford, Co. Wexford	Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. John McDonald	€140.11	€80.00
25/03/2023	AILG Module 2, Local Authority Climate Action Plan "Action Focused Ambition at Local and Community Levels"	Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth	Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Andy Gladney	€774.10	€80.00
05 & 06/04/2023	Suck Valley Conference "Inspiring Rural Creativity"	Gleasons Hotel, Co. Roscommon	Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. John McDonald	€504.14	€140.00
19th & 20th April	AILG Annual Training Conference Hotel Kilkenny 19th & 20th April 2023	Hotel Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny	Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane	€332.64	€80.00
21-23/04/2023	Celtic Conference on Protecting your Mental Health as a Public Representative, O'Donovans Hotel, Clonakilty	O'Donovans Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	Cllr. Willie Quinn	€579.63	€100.00
5th May 2023	Irish Public Bodies Insurance AGM 2023	Cork County Hall, Co. Cork	Cllr. Arthur McDonald	€392.10	

Date	Training / Conferences / Seminars	Venue	Councillors in Attendance	Travel/ Sub/ Expense	Conference Fee
17th June 2023	AILG OPR Elected Members Module 3 Training Castlecomer Kilkenny 17th June 2023	Castlecomer, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny	Cllr. John Pender, Ken Murnane	€94.84	€80.00
20th July 2023	AILG Elected Member Training Module 4 "Uisce Eireann" Radisson Hotel, Cork July 2023	The Radisson Hotel, Co. Cork	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. Ken Murnane	€1,777.61	€80.00
13 & 14 September 2023	AILG Autumn Training Seminar Sligo Park Hotel	Sligo Park Hotel, Co. Sligo	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. Andy Gladney, Cllr. Fergal Browne	€3,953.29	€165.00
21st October 2023	AILG Module 5 Training The Rose Hotel Tralee	The Rose Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Andy Gladney	€2,091.25	€80.00
25th & 26th October 2023	LAMA Autumn Training Seminar Ard Rí Hotel, Tuam	Ard Rí Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. John McDonald, Cllr. Andy Gladney	€2,254.34	€160.00
6th October 2023	IPI Planning Seminar Malahide Hotel	Malahide Hotel, Co. Dublin	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender,	€461.99	€305.00
18th November 2023	AILG Module 6 Training	Clayton Hotel, Galway, Co. Galway	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender, Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Andy Gladney	€1,675.72	€80.00
1st - 3rd December 2023	Celtic Conferences 1st - 3rd December Irish Social Welfare System Clonakilty Cork	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	Cllr. Arthur McDonald, Cllr. John Pender	€1,031.82	€125.00
24th/25th & 26th November	Celtic Conference "Modular Housing in Ireland" Carlingford	Carlingford, Co. Louth	Cllr. Andy Gladney, Cllr. Tom O'Neill, Cllr. Fergal Browne	€1,736.70	€125.00

Appendix 4

Elected Members Attendance at Meetings held in 2023

Councillor Name	Total Meetings Held	No. of Meetings Attended	%
Fergal Browne	39	37	94.87
John Cassin	30	29	96.67
Andrea Dalton	50	50	100.00
Michael Doran	46	46	100.00
Andrew Gladney	27	22	81.48
Thomas Kinsella	37	36	97.30
Arthur McDonald	41	39	95.12
John McDonald	35	31	88.57
Ken Murnane	30	28	93.33
Charlie Murphy	26	23	88.46
John Murphy	31	30	96.77
Brian O' Donoghue	40	38	95.00
Tom O' Neill	41	39	95.12
William Paton	38	34	89.47
John Pender	33	33	100.00
Fintan Phelan	29	27	93.10
William Quinn	38	31	81.58
Adrienne Wallace	27	26	96.30

Appendix 5

Local Elections Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure Act 1999

Pursuant to this requirement, Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no donations and expenditures for 2023

Candidates	Donations	Expenditure
Fergal Browne	0.00	0.00
John Cassin	0.00	0.00
Andrea Dalton	0.00	0.00
Michael Doran	0.00	0.00
Andrew Gladney	0.00	0.00
Thomas Kinsella	0.00	0.00
Arthur McDonald	0.00	0.00
John McDonald	0.00	0.00
Ken Murnane	0.00	0.00
Charlie Murphy	0.00	0.00
John Murphy	0.00	0.00
Brian O' Donoghue	0.00	0.00
Tom O' Neill	0.00	0.00
William Paton	0.00	0.00
John Pender	0.00	0.00
Fintan Phelan	0.00	0.00
William Quinn	0.00	0.00
Adrienne Wallace	0.00	0.00



Appendix 6 Payments to Elected Members in 2023 (Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001)

Elected Member	Representational Payment	Local Representational Allowance	Allowance (Lra Travel Rep)	Phone	Educational Fees	Spc Allowances	Md Chair	Cathaoirleach Allowance	Leas Cathaoirleach Allowance	Conference Travel (Home)	Training Travel (Home)	Foreign Travel	Total Payment
Fergal Browne	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€663.30	€220.14	€0.00	€5,979.48	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€187.58	€239.41	€0.00	€41,173.91
John Cassin	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€663.30	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€34,547.30
Andrea Dalton	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€555.52	€831.23	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€9,582.50	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€44,853.25
Michael Doran	€28,724.00	€1,739.87	€663.30	€104.97	€0.00	€5,979.48	€0.00	€0.00	€2,069.82	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€39,281.44
Andrew Gladney	€28,724.00	€3,960.00	€795.43	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€386.08	€2,475.68	€0.00	€36,341.19
Thomas Kinsella	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€1,110.24	€728.36	€0.00	€0.00	€2,874.76	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€38,597.36
Arthur McDonald	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€817.18	€1,199.40	€0.00	€5,979.48	€3,104.74	€0.00	€0.00	€533.92	€1,876.56	€0.00	€47,395.28
John McDonald	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€663.30	€680.57	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€448.76	€991.20	€0.00	€36,667.83
Ken Murnane	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€555.52	€777.22	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€832.28	€1,650.05	€90.59	€37,789.66
Charlie Murphy	€28,724.00	€5,104.93	€1,469.71	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€3,104.74	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€38,403.38
John Murphy	€28,724.00	€2,860.00	€1,150.70	€324.40	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€33,059.10
Brian O' Donoghue	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€951.88	€653.25	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€10,349.10	€0.00	€0.00	€249.98	€1,258.28	€47,346.49
Tom O' Neill	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€555.52	€954.31	€0.00	€0.00	€5,749.50	€0.00	€0.00	€160.84	€0.00	€0.00	€41,304.17
William Paton	€28,724.00	€4,260.00	€552.52	€403.55	€0.00	€3,104.73	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€115.87	€0.00	€37,160.67
John Pender	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€663.30	€947.98	€0.00	€0.00	€2,874.76	€0.00	€0.00	€590.92	€2,537.02	€0.00	€41,497.98
Fintan Phelan	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€663.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€6,209.46	€0.00	€1,916.50	€0.00	€0.00	€1,291.92	€43,964.88
William Quinn	€28,724.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€245.63	€280.86	€0.00	€29,250.49
Adrienne Wallace	€28,724.00	€5,160.00	€277.76	€356.20	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€34,517.96
John Cahill	€13,078.74	€2,068.32	€1,110.24	€119.97	€0.00	€2,874.75	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€19,252.02
	€530,110.74	€81,913.12	€13,881.72	€8,301.55	€0.00	€23,917.92	€23,917.96	€19,931.60	€3,986.32	€3,386.01	€10,416.63	€2,640.79	€722,404.36

Appendix 7

Protected Disclosures 2023

Section 22 of the Protected disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of an annual report relative to Protected Disclosures received. Pursuant to this requirement, Carlow County Council hereby confirms that there were no protected disclosures received in 2023.

Appendix 8

Human Rights

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

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

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



Appendix 9

Senior Management Team



Coilín O'Reilly
Chief Executive
Appointed September 2023.



Michael Rainey,
Interim Chief Executive
January to September 2023.



Pat Delaney
Head of Finance: Finance,
Information Systems, Arts
and Culture



Michael Brennan
Director of Services:
Community, Housing,
Recreation & Amenity



Kieran Cullinane
A/Director of Services:
Corporate/HR, Planning,
Health & Safety, Economic
Development/LEO



Fiona O'Neill
A/Director of Services, Ukrainian
Humanitarian Response

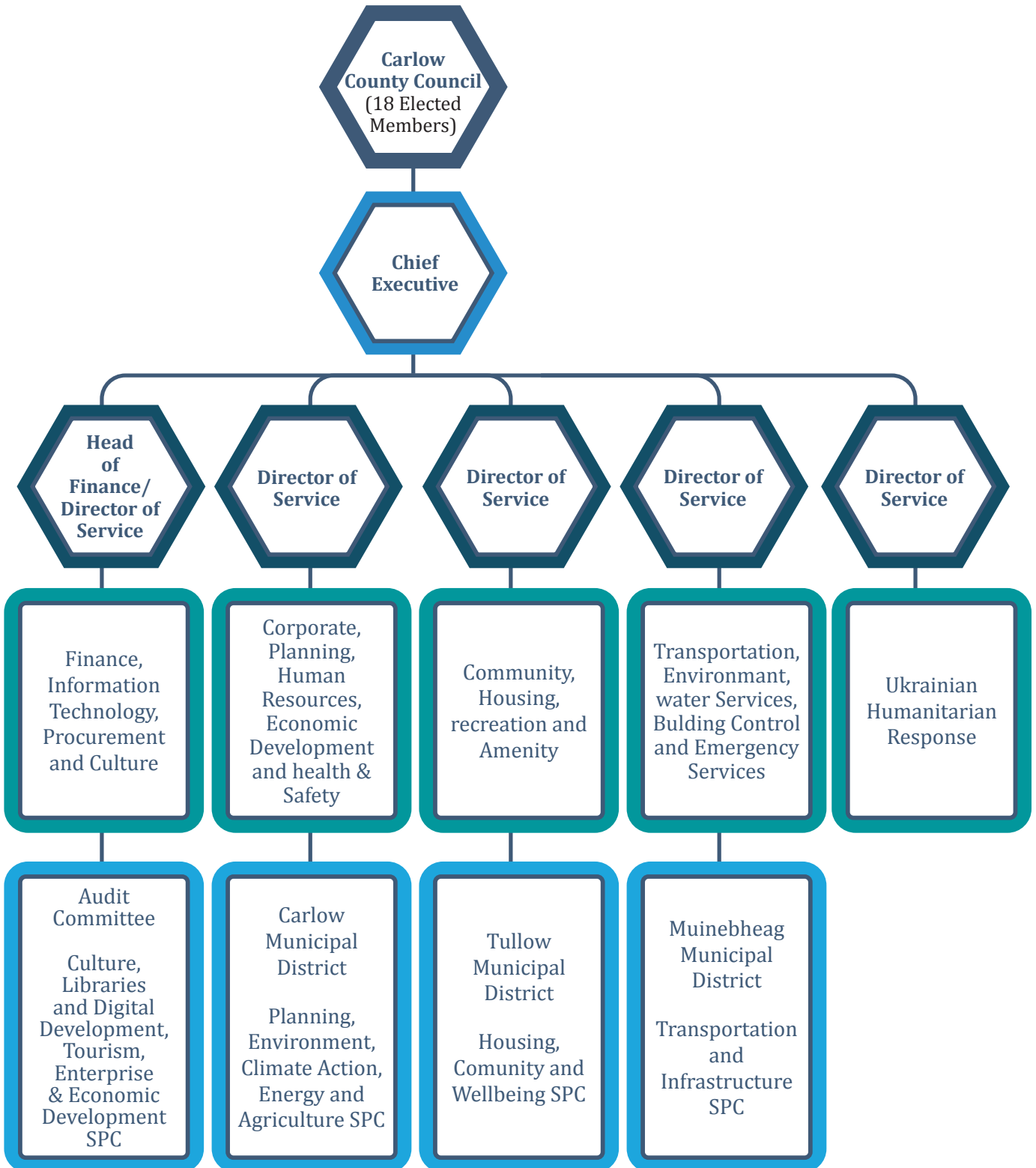


Padraig O'Gorman
Director of Services: Transportation,
Environment & Water Services, Building
Control & Emergency Services



Appendix 10

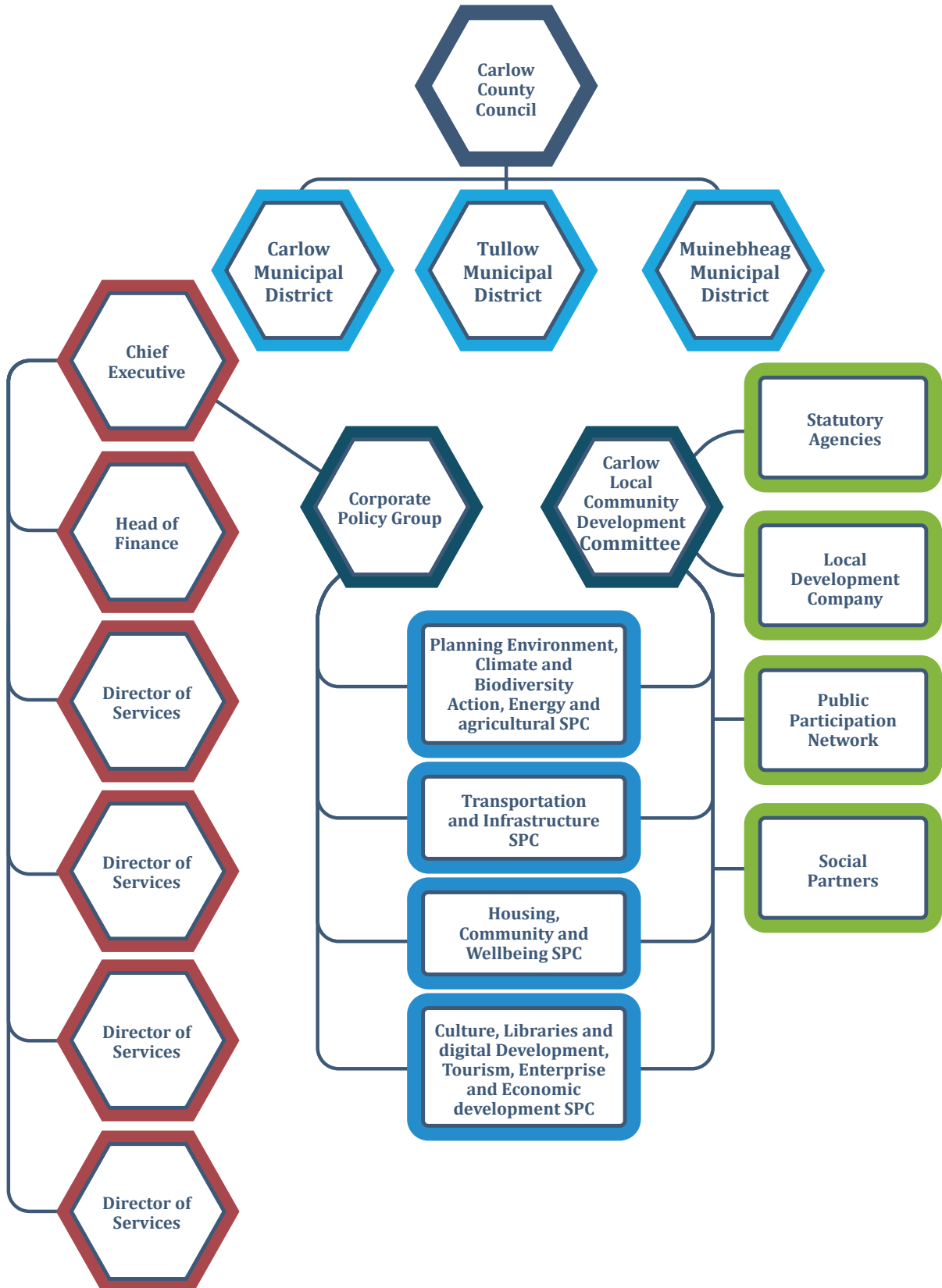
Local Operating Environment





Appendix 11

Organisational Structure





Notes

Lined writing area consisting of 26 horizontal lines.



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

County Buildings
Athy Road
Carlow
R93 E7R7

059 9170300

www.carlowcoco.ie



@Carlow_Co_Co