

---

***Laois County Council***

***Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018***

*Chief Executives Report in accordance with Section 19(1)(d) of  
the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended*

---

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
Comhairle Chontae Laoise



***Laois County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Laoise***

**September 2017**

---

---

<b><i>Contents</i></b>	<b><i>Page</i></b>
Section 1: Introduction	3
Section 2 – Consistency with the Objectives and Core Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023	5
Section 3 – Assessment of the Objectives of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018	11
Section 4 – Conclusion	21

## Section 1: Introduction

The Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area 2012 -2018 (JSP) comprises a Town Development Plan (under sections 9-12 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act)) and two Local Area Plans (LAP) (under Sections 18-20 of the Act). The individual plans were prepared jointly between Carlow and Laois County Councils and became effective on the following dates:

- The Carlow Town Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 - 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2012
- Carlow Town Development Plan 2012-2018- 1st November, 2012.
- Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012-2018 - 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2012.

Each of the individual plans will expire in 2018, unless the Elected Members resolve to defer the commencement of the review process. Section 19(d) of the Act provides the option for a planning authority to defer its review of a local area plan for a period not exceeding 5 years provided this resolution is made within 5 years of adoption. It states:

*(d) Subject to paragraph (e), not more than 5 years after the making of the previous local area plan, a planning authority may, as they consider appropriate, by resolution defer the sending of a notice under section 20(3)(a)(i) and publishing a notice under section 20(3)(a)(ii) for a further period not exceeding 5 years.*

Officials from both Carlow County Council and Laois County Council have met with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in order to discuss mechanisms for the extension of the JSP and in this regard have been advised as follows:

The Carlow Town Development Plan 2021-2018 cannot be reviewed at this time as a LAP but must be reviewed as part of the review of the Carlow County Development Plan 2015-2021. As such, the Carlow Town Development Plan, as contained in the JSP, will remain operative until a new plan is adopted as part of the new Carlow County Development Plan 2021-2027. The two remaining LAPs (Carlow Town and Environs and Graigucullen) which form part of the JSP may be extended, in accordance with the provisions of Section 19(d) of the Act.

The recommendation of this Chief Executive's Report is that the Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 should be extended for a further 4-year period.

The effect of the extension of both the Carlow Town and Environs and Graigucullen LAPs is that the JSP could be maintained in its current form for a further 4-year period, whilst a new single LAP for the entire area is prepared.

This Chief Executive's Report deals with the proposed extension of the Graigucullen LAP.

A resolution in relation to the extension of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 must be passed before **5th December 2017** (an additional 45 days are allowable relating to the Christmas period for each year of the life of the Plan, as per Section 251 of the Act).

The process set out in Section 19(e) of the Act requires that the members can only resolve to extend the life of a LAP, following receipt from the Chief Executive of:

- (i) An opinion that the LAP remains consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the relevant development plan,*
- (ii) An opinion that the objectives of the LAP have not been substantially secured, and*
- (iii) Confirmation that the sending and publishing of notices to commence the review of the LAP may be deferred and the period for which they may be deferred.*

The purpose of this report is, therefore, to accord with Section 19 of the Act and to set out in the following sections the opinion of the Chief Executive that:-

- (i) The Graiguecullen Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018 remains consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 – 2023; and*
- (ii) The objectives of the Graiguecullen Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018 have not been substantially secured.*

## **Section 2 – Consistency with the Objectives and Core Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023**

### **Introduction**

The Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023 was adopted by the Elected Members of the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017. It sets out policies and objectives to guide and control the development of the county over its six-year lifetime. In order to examine whether the Graiguecullen LAP remains consistent with its objectives and Core Strategy, it is necessary to analyse whether the LAP can be regarded as being consistent with its provisions.

This section initially considers consistency of the LAP with the Core Strategy, followed by consistency of other policies and objectives which are relevant to Graiguecullen.

### **Core Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023**

A Core Strategy is required to show how the development plan and the housing strategy are consistent with the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022, Government policies and Ministerial guidelines / directives with particular regard to:

- The settlement strategy for the County (including rural housing provisions)
- National and regional population targets
- The amount of land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses
- The retail strategy and objectives
- Roads and rail objectives.

The Government has undertaken an *Issues and Choices* public consultation on the *National Planning Framework*, which will replace the National Spatial Strategy in providing the framework for future development and investment in Ireland. There is no confirmed date for publication of the National Planning Framework but the most recent advice from the Department indicated that a draft document would be published later in 2017. It is anticipated that a finalised document will be published in 2018. The Eastern Regional Assembly has also commenced the preparation of a new *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* for the Eastern region, which includes County Laois, to replace the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines. It is understood that a draft Strategy will be published in early 2018. The Council will review the policies and objectives of both the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and will, as necessary; prepare a variation(s) to the Laois County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 in order to ensure that it is consistent with Government policy.

### **Settlement Strategy and Growth Provisions**

Graiguecullen is designated as a *Service Town* within the Core Strategy (chapter titled as the *Development Plan Strategy*), in line with the Regional Settlement Strategy set out within the RPGs. Service Towns are so designated

because they are important resources for their hinterlands, providing community and infrastructural facilities and services and the population base to maintain them.

Policy CS 1 outlines the Council’s approach to development within the county. It states that it is the policy of the Council to “encourage housing development to locate in designated towns and villages as indicated in the Settlement Strategy, where social and infrastructural services exist or will be provided as resources become available and ensure that all development takes place in tandem with the provision of adequate service such as waters supply and wastewater treatment.”

In terms of housing development, Graigucullen is allocated a total of 215 additional houses of the total of 3,216 planned for in the county over the lifetime of the Development Plan. This allocation requires that 23ha of land should be zoned (including 50% headroom), in order to accommodate the identified need. The allocation of additional houses is set out in Table 5 ‘Core Strategy Table’ of the Development Plan, as set out below, which also outlines the land capacity in the area.

**Table 5: Core Strategy Table**

	CSO 2011	POP 2011	PROJECT POPULATION 2023	Projected Population Growth Up to 2023	PROJECTE D increase in Household s up to 2023	DENSIT Y (per ha)	HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENT Up to 2023 (Includes 50% headroom)	Area (ha) proposed Zoned Residential Development 2017-2023
<b>County Laois</b>	<b>80,559</b>	<b>89,790</b>	<b>9,231</b>	<b>3216</b>				
<b>PRINCIPAL TOWN</b>								
<b>Portlaoise</b>	<b>20,145</b>	<b>25,382</b>	<b>5,237</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>78</b>	
<b>KEY SERVICE TOWN</b>								
<b>Portarlington</b>	<b>7,788</b>	<b>8,567</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	
<b>SERVICE TOWNS<sup>5</sup></b>								
<b>Mountmellick</b>	<b>4,735</b>	<b>5,478</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	
<b>Graigucullen</b>	<b>3,966</b>	<b>4,584</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	
<b>Abbeyleix</b>	<b>1,827</b>	<b>2,112</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>Stradbally</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Mountrath</b>	<b>1,661</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>Sub—total</b>						<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	
<b>LOCAL SERVICE TOWNS</b>								
<b>Rathdowney</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>1,395</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Durrow</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Sub-total</b>						<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>Villages less than 800 population</b>			<b>929</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	
<b>Open Countryside</b>								
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>9,231</b>	<b>3,216</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>240</b>	

County Laois has a history of exceedance of population targets set out within the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 (RPGs), arising from high levels of housing delivery and in-migration. The population target for 2016 set out within the RPGs had been exceeded by 2011 and Laois County Council agreed a revised population target of 83,656 people for 2016 with the Eastern Regional Assembly (previously the Midlands Regional Authority), in order to provide for continued population growth within the county over the lifetime of the Plan. Census 2016 results have now confirmed that the 2016 population target for Laois was again exceeded, with the population of the county standing at 84,697 (excess of 1,041). This represents an exceedance of 1.24%. It should be noted that at the time of preparing the County Development Plan Census 2016 population statistics were not available, although it was acknowledged from preliminary data available to the Council that the 2016 population target had been exceeded.

The growth strategy for the county, as set out within the Core Strategy and the Housing Strategy, is based on a high growth scenario for the county. Having regard to the exceedance of the population target for 2016, in order to plan positively for population growth in the county over the next six years, it is considered reasonable to increase the 2023 target population by an equal amount (1.24%), in order to ensure that the Council's overarching growth strategy remains on a sound footing. Failure to ensure that future housing needs can be accommodated on zoned lands may negatively affect the Council's economic strategy, in particular in the area of facilitating employment creation.

Applying the additional growth, the 2023 population target would therefore be **89,905<sup>1</sup>**. The proportional split of total population growth and housing to be allocated to each settlement within the county should also be revised, in order to account for the uplift in total provision. Taking this approach, Graigucullen would be provided with a total allocation of **218** additional houses for the period up to 2023. This would require a total of **24ha** of land to be zoned for Residential 2 purposes, based on an average density of 14 units per hectare.

The calculation of residential land requirements based on an average density of 14 units per hectare is conservative and represents a very low-density form of development. In this respect it should be noted that this density is not considered to represent a maximum allowable density and, in fact, it would be expected that this density would be significantly exceeded, where possible. The Chief Executive is satisfied that densities in the order to 16 – 20 units per hectare, which would continue to provide a low-density form of development, would be deliverable on all Residential 2-zoned lands. For example, the development at Ballickmoyler Road, Graigucullen approved under planning Ref. No. 08/1277 (subsequently granted extension of duration under planning Ref. No. 14/396) would provide 77 units at a gross density of 32 units per hectare. Thus, the actual land requirement to accommodate planned population growth will fall far below 24ha.

### Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018

The Graigucullen LAP zones a total of 20ha for Residential 2 purposes in order to accommodate planned growth up to 2018. The target population for Graigucullen for 2018 is 2,924. This target population has been significantly exceeded by actual population growth, according to Census 2016 data, which confirmed that the population of

<sup>1</sup>  $(9,231 * 1.24\%) + 89,790 = 89,905$

Graigucullen now stands at 4,692. However, it should be noted that the bulk of this excess population growth occurred in the period 2006-2011, before the LAP was adopted. Up to date population statistics pertaining to Graigucullen, from Census 2011, were not available to the Council in the preparation stages of the LAP and, as such, this excess growth was not factored into the LAP growth strategy. In the period since the LAP was adopted, population growth of 726 people has occurred at Graigucullen. However, and of importance in the context of this report, this growth in population occurred without the development of any of the Residential 2 zoned lands. The Planning Department undertook a survey of all Residential 2 zoned lands in the town in August 2017 and confirmed that the entire quantum remains undeveloped.

In the context of the current proposal to extend the lifetime of the Graigucullen LAP, where there continues to be 20ha of land appropriately zoned and available to accommodate planned population growth, the Chief Executive is satisfied that the existing quantum of Residential 2 zoned lands is capable of accommodating planned growth in the town for the period 2017 – 2023.

An updated Table 5 Core Strategy Table, taking account of the previous paragraphs, is set out below to provide an updated strategic context for Graigucullen.

	CSO Pop 2011	CSO Pop 2016	Projected population 2023	Projected population growth up to 2023	Projected increase in households up to 2023	Density (per ha)	Housing Land Requirement Up to 2023 (Includes 50% headroom)	Area (ha) proposed Zoned for Residential Development 2017-2023
<b>County Laois</b>	<b>80,559</b>	<b>84,697</b>	<b>89,905</b>	<b>9,346</b>	<b>3,257</b>			
<b>SERVICE TOWN</b>								
Graigucullen	3,966	4,692	4,590	624	218	14	24	

Other policies within the Core Strategy in respect of residential development at Graigucullen include:-

*CS27 Direct population growth in line within the settlement hierarchy;*

*CS28 Promote densities on average 12 per ha (higher densities will be considered at appropriate locations particularly in town centre locations subject to good urban design and proximity to public transport facilities) having regard to Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas (DEHLG, 2009) and ensure that any plan or project associated with the provision of new housing is subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in compliance with the Habitats Directive, and subsequent assessment as required which has the potential to significantly effect a Natura 2000 site is assessed with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in order to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the site;*



CS29 *Ensure that population grow this appropriate in pace and scale and diversity of uses and services within its identified role in the settlement hierarchy.*

Having regard to the foregoing, **it is the Chief Executive’s opinion that the Graigucullen LAP remains consistent with the Core Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023.**

### ***Other Objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023***

The Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023 (the Development Plan), adopted by the Elected Members on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017, sets out a spatial planning framework for the County, within the context of the National Spatial Strategy (2002) and the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022. The stated vision for the county over the lifetime of the Plan is as follows:-

*“County Laois will be a cohesive and sustainable community of people enjoying distinct but interrelated urban and rural environments, where the natural environment is protected, cultural and built heritage is safeguarded, where opportunities for existing residents and future generations to live, work, visit and enjoy safely and as equals, without compromising the environmental integrity of our county.”*

The Development Plan contains a range of policies and objectives, each of which contributes to achieving this vision.

The vision for the Greater Carlow Graigucullen urban area is as follows:-

*“A high-functioning, inclusive, compact and accessible greater urban area, underpinned by a robust and diverse local economy comprising retail, commercial, industrial, education and tourism uses; with characteristics including a strong sense of place, a vibrant and vital town centre, opportunities for education and cultural experiences for all, a network of linked open spaces, recreational uses and other social infrastructure elements to provide for a good quality of life and increased emphasis on sustainable forms of transport and patterns of development”*

**It is the Chief Executive’s opinion that the vision set out within the Graigucullen LAP is consistent with the overarching considerations for the Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023.**

There are a number of policies and objectives within the Development Plan, of relevance to Graigucullen, as follows:-

HP 14 *Implement the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 by entering vacant housing sites on the Laois Register of Vacant Sites and thereafter imposing levies in accordance with the Act within lands zoned Residential 1 or Residential 2 in Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Mountmellick, Graigucullen and any other Laois towns with an identified housing need, as appropriate*

The LAP provides the Residential 1 and Residential 2 zonings, against which the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 will be implemented. As is set out in further detail later in this report, the

extent of Residential 1 and Residential 2 zonings are sufficient to cater for identified housing needs in Graiguecullen over the next five years and the composition of these zonings will allow the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 to be implemented.

*TM 23 Support in principle and investigate the feasibility of, subject to compliance with the habitats and Birds Directives, developing and marketing the Barrow Blueway by Waterways Ireland and if consented facilitate related commercial opportunities in Vicarstown, Portarlinton, Graiguecullen and Portlaoise as well as opportunities to link the Barrow Blueway with Portarlinton or Portlaoise;*

*OBJ7 Support the principle of delivering a cycling link between the towns of*

*A.1 Tullamore – Mountmellick*

*A.2 Mountmellick - Portlaoise*

*A.3 Portlaoise - Stradbally*

*A.4 Stradbally - Graiguecullen/Carlow*

*Routing any link away from the N80 and tying into the Barrow Way*

Policy ECN O09 of the LAP provides a commitment to promoting, encouraging and facilitating sustainable tourism development within the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area and is consistent with policies and objectives within the County Development Plan.

**It is the Chief Executive's opinion that policies and objectives within the Graiguecullen LAP are consistent with the overarching considerations for the County Development Plan 2017 - 2023.**

## **Section 3 – Assessment of the Objectives of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 - 2018**

Part 4 of the JSP sets out the Sub-Area Spatial Strategy for Graigucullen.

### ***Spatial Strategy for Graigucullen***

The Core Aim of the strategy is as follows:-

*“Continue to perform important retail, residential, service and amenity functions within Graigucullen and for its hinterland as well as supporting the settlement hierarchy as envisaged in the Midlands and South-East Regional Planning Guidelines 2010.”*

Whilst this is not in itself an objective of the LAP, the Core Aim is of considerable importance to the development strategy for Graigucullen. All policies and objectives are framed with a view to achieving this Core Aim.

Section 2 provides a number of key objectives, each of which will contribute to achieving the Core Aim of the Spatial Strategy.

*GL O1 Advance the completion of the Northern Relief Road between the Castlecomer Road and the Crossneen area and the construction of an associated multi-modal bridge between Graigucullen and Carlow in association with Carlow County Council and in accordance with the Midlands and South-East Regional Planning Guidelines, subject to Appropriate Assessment*

The Northern Relief Road was extended by approximately 750 metres, to connect to the L-7917 in 2016, but has not been extended into the Crossneen area. **Extension of the Relief Road and the construction of an associated multi-modal bridge between Graigucullen and Carlow remains an objective of the Council, given it is yet to be fully achieved.**

*GL O2 Drive economic development of Graigucullen, having regard to its status as Service Town in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines*

The Council has zoned lands at Graigucullen for a variety of economic development purposes, including enterprise and employment and retail development purposes and has worked positively to promote the development of these lands. The table below outlines the quantum of land zoned for each economic development purpose (note these quantum include land which has already been developed). There continues to be land available for economic development within the town and the Chief Executive considers that this land is sufficient to accommodate economic development opportunities in the medium term.

Zoning Category	Area (Ha)
Enterprise and Employment	24.32
Neighbourhood Centre	0.73
District Centre	3.62
Retail Warehousing	4.94

Elected Members are advised that in the event of an economic development opportunity being presented to the Council but which cannot be accommodated on existing zoned lands; the Council would have the opportunity to consider a Material Contravention of the LAP or of the County Development Plan, as appropriate, in order to accommodate such an opportunity. Any such Material Contravention proposal would need to be considered in light of the statutory requirement to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**Driving economic development continues to be an objective of the Council, given the quantum of lands zoned for such development within the town has yet to be fully developed for such purposes.**

*GL O3 Consolidate the urban form of Graiguecullen, County Laois in the interests of sustainable transport, sustainable communities and efficient use of public infrastructure subject to appropriate assessment*

*GL O4 Improve the relationship between Graiguecullen, County Laois and the River Barrow*

*GL O5 Support community development and community cohesion in Graiguecullen*

Objectives GL 03, GL 04 and GL 05 are ongoing objectives of the Council and will not be ‘secured’ over the lifetime of the LAP, in the same fashion as other objectives within the LAP. The Council will continue to seek the implementation of these objectives over the extended lifetime of the LAP. The Laois Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2021 also contains a number of goals and actions, which are designed to improve and foster community development in the Graiguecullen, together with other areas of the county.

## **Transport**

Section 2 provides a number of policies in relation to transport, as follows:-

*GL P1 Liaise with the Carlow County Council, the National Roads Authority and other relevant agencies in order to progress the extension of the Northern Relief Road and alleviate traffic congestion on the Killeshin Road and Numbers Road, dependent upon clear demonstration that there will be no impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*

The Northern Relief Road was extended by approximately 750 metres, to connect to the L-7917 in 2016, but has not been extended into the Crossneen area. **Extension of the Relief Road and the construction of an associated multi-modal bridge between Graiguecullen and Carlow remains an objective of the Council, given it is yet to be fully achieved.**

*GL P2 Provide for pedestrian linkages between the Leighlin Road and the Barrow Track and between the Town Park north to Bill Duggan Bridge as well as improving pedestrian facilities and provide cycle ways along the Northern Relief Road, on the Portlaoise Road (within the Northern Relief Road) and along Church Road*

*GL P3 Provide for enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along radial routes from Graiguecullen Village to Northern Relief Road and in particular along Sleaty, Portlaoise, Castlecomer and Numbers Road as resources allow and prioritizing transport links associated with schools*

The projects identified within these policies have yet to be delivered and will continue to be promoted by Laois County Council over the extended lifetime of the LAP. A cycle track was constructed as part of the extension to the Northern Relief Road between R430 Castlecomer Road and Numbers Road Roundabouts.

### ***Economic Development***

Section 2 provides a number of policies in relation to economic development, as follows:-

*GL P4 Encourage the full use of vacant or under-used commercial and retail warehousing space at Doyles of the Shamrock and on the Sleaty Road*

*GL P5 Encourage economic development opportunities using opportunity site briefs prepared for the Glanbia Site, Sleaty Road District Centre and related Retail Warehousing and Barrowside Business Park*

*GL P6 Provide for a neighbourhood centre on the Numbers Road*

There has been very limited economic development in Graiguecullen in recent years but the recent upturn in the economy has seen a number of proposals for development. The Council is currently considering an application for a large-scale business park development at Killeshin Road, which has the potential to create substantial employment. The Council will continue to seek to secure these policies, over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

### ***Consolidated Urban Form***

Section 2 provides a number of policies in relation to consolidating urban form within the town, as follows:-

*GL P7 Seek the completion of unfinished residential housing estates, where considered appropriate by way of site resolution plans or other means, subject to resources*

The Council actively seeks to have all residential housing estates completed to a satisfactory standard and will continue to seek the implementation of this policy over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

*GL P8 Ensure a sequential approach is adopted in the development of residential areas in the interests of compact development and sustainable transport*

There has been very limited housing development at Graigucullen over the lifetime of the LAP. The Council will seek to ensure that future proposals for housing development are delivered in an orderly and sustainable fashion.

### ***Relationship with River***

Section 2 provides a number of policies in relation to improving the relationship between Graigucullen and the River Barrow, as follows:-

*GL P9 Provide for the development of further river-based recreational activities, including commercial recreational activities in Crossneen north of the proposed new bridge and also to the south of Bill Duggan Bridge, dependent on clear demonstration that there will be no impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive or significant adverse effects on other environmental receptors*

The Council continues to support all clubs who utilise the River Barrow for recreational activities. The Council will continue to seek the implementation of this policy, to facilitate improvement and extension of the range of such activities provided in the town, over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

*GL P10 Seek the improvement of the surface and appearance of the Barrow Track south of Graigucullen Bridge, dependent on clear demonstration that there will be no impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive or significant adverse effects on other environmental receptors*

There is a current planning application under the joint consideration of Carlow, Kildare and Laois County Councils, which proposes a multi-use shared leisure route (Blueway) along the route of the existing towpath (Laois Co. Co. planning Ref. No. 17/37). If delivered, this Blueway project would provide a significant improvement to the surface and appearance of the existing towpath. **This policy has not been secured to date.**

### ***Community Development***

Section 2 provides a number of policies in relation to community development, as follows:-

*GL P11 Support the establishment of Saint Fiacc's Activity Centre in Graigucullen*

The Council has the establishment of Saint Fiacc's Activity Centre in Graigucullen and will continue to seek the implementation of this policy over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

*GL P12 Provide for campus-based community facilities, which could include a secondary school or primary care centre in Graigucullen in an accessible location*

The Council has identified and zoned lands as part of the Fruithill Manor development, which would facilitate a campus-based community facility, including a secondary school or primary care centre. The Council will seek to

facilitate such development opportunities over the extended lifetime of the LAP, working with key stakeholders in this regard.

*GL P13 Foster community cohesion within newly developed areas and between old and new parts of Graigucullen*

*GL P14 Facilitate the provision of joint services or shared services to the Graigucullen community, where feasible*

Policies GL P13 and GL P14 are ongoing policies of the Council and the Council will continue to seek their implementation over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

### ***Other Objectives of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018***

Part 2 of the JSP, Core Strategy, provides a number Cross-Cutting Core Objectives, which are of relevance to each of the separate administrative areas subject to its provisions. Subsequent policies and objectives pertaining to the individual areas are prepared, with a view to contributing to achieving these objectives. Core Objectives CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4, CO6, CO9 and CO10 have informed the preparation of those policies and objectives pertaining to Graigucullen.

These Core Objectives are longer term objectives, designed to guide and control the orderly development of the area in the long term. These objectives will not be ‘secured’ over the lifetime of the LAP, in the same fashion as other policies within the LAP.

### Retail

Part 3, Section 1 of the JSP outlines that Carlow Town Centre provides the primary retail area for the town and its hinterland. Policies thereafter seek to preserve the primacy of the area and to ensure that retail proposals are determined having regard to the Joint Retail Hierarchy. Retail policies can be summarised as follows:

- Ensure retail proposals are determined having regard to the Joint Retail Hierarchy
- Support the retail primacy of Carlow Town Centre within the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area
- Provide for the development of an appropriate quantum and type of retail uses at district centres and neighbourhood centres in accordance with the Joint Retail Hierarchy
- Facilitate the take-up of purpose-built retail warehousing units for the sale of bulky goods in appropriate locations.

These policies are still relevant despite the fact that the Laois County Retail Strategy has been revised and updated in the new County Development Plan 2017-2023. Graigucullen remains designated as a Tier III Service Town, providing zonings for retail warehousing and neighbourhood centre.

It is considered the policies and objectives of the retail section of the LAP are still relevant and do not warrant any changes.

### Physical Infrastructure

Policies and objectives for physical infrastructure in the LAP are set out under the following headings:

- Potable Water
- Waste Water
- Storm Drainage
- Electricity and Gas
- Recycling
- Telecommunications and
- Ducting

The majority of objectives and policies are high-level and longer term, designed to guide and control the orderly development of the area in the long term. These objectives will not be ‘secured’ over the lifetime of the LAP, in the same fashion as other policies within the LAP.

There is sufficient waste water treatment capacity in the WWTP at Carlow, to accommodate planned growth in the long term.

There continues to be a need to seek improvements in physical infrastructure at Graiguecullen and, in this respect, it is not considered that objectives and policies within the LAP have been secured.

### Environmental Management

Policies and objectives relating to environmental management can be summarised as follows:-

- Deliver sustainable land use patterns
- Ensure development does not have serious or cumulative adverse effects on the quality of air, water, soil, protected species or habitats, biodiversity or cause serious noise or light pollution
- Address issues of mitigation of and adaptation to climate change
- Encourage the use of Sustainable Design and Construction methodologies
- Create an integrated and coherent green infrastructure network to enhance biodiversity and quality of life
- Ensure that the functioning of Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area does not cumulatively adversely effect water quality
- Protect groundwater quality
- Protect the Greater Urban Area from flooding
- Implement Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Policy
- Restrict development generating noise in excess of best practice standards
- Encourage waste prevention, minimization, reuse and recycling

Policies and objectives relating to environmental management provide a mixture of high-level, long term measures. The Chief Executive will continue to seek to secure these objectives and policies over the extended lifetime of the LAP.



## Education and Skills

Policies and objectives relating to education can be summarised as follows:-

- Improve access to education and educational attainment for all
- Support the provision of primary, secondary, third and fourth level education services in accessible locations
- Support the concept of multiplex learning campuses in accessible locations
- Support the growth and development of third and fourth level education and research institutions and specialist learning establishments
- Encourage targeted education programmes tackling social exclusion, providing labour activation measures, up-skilling, re-skilling and life-long learning opportunities
- Encourage the use of education buildings and ancillary structures outside term time for educational, community development, amenity or tourism purposes
- Ensure that adequate and appropriate lands and services are zoned and reserved to cater for educational facilities in the County
- Ensure special attention is paid to the location of new schools in accessible locations
- Liaise with the Department of Education to assist in the identification of suitable sites for schools and ancillary facilities

The majority of objectives and policies are high-level and longer term, designed to guide and control the orderly development of the area in the long term. These objectives will not be ‘secured’ over the lifetime of the LAP, in the same fashion as other policies within the LAP.

In terms of ensuring sufficient zoning to accommodate educational needs, the Chief Executive is satisfied that existing zonings are sufficient to cater for planned growth in the period up to 2023.

## Recreation, Amenity and Open Space

Policies and objectives relating to recreation, amenity and open space can be summarised as follows:-

- Work towards the development of a network of linked open spaces across the Greater Urban Area
- Ensure that where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are grouped or clustered
- Ensure the provision of green open spaces link with and address the Burrin and Barrow Rivers
- Liaise with community groups, interest groups, commercial organisations and partnerships and support initiatives to improve or provide additional recreational and sporting facilities or amenities
- Utilise zoning objectives, the development contribution schemes and development standards to ensure adequate sporting and recreational facilities and open spaces are provided
- Carry out an audit of the type and quantum of open spaces in the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area
- Seek the preservation of public rights of way which give access to lakeshores, rivershores or other places of natural beauty or creational utility.
- Protect existing sporting facilities against encroachment or redevelopment
- Promote the provision, maintenance and management of high quality indoor and outdoor sporting facilities

- Improve the quality and quantity of public open spaces within the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area
- Protect trees within the public realm in light of their amenity value and their contribution to the character of an area
- Seek to establish a linear public open space linking the Barrow Track with Oak Park
- Reserve lands in order to provide a walking and cycling track along the River Burrin between the N80 and the town centre
- Reserve lands for a district public park with playground to the east of the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area

Policies and objectives relating to recreation, amenity and open space provide a mixture of high-level, long term measures and short-term specific measures.

High-level, long term measures are intended to guide and control development and will not be ‘secured’ over the lifetime of the LAP, in the same fashion as other policies within the LAP.

Owing to the limited level of development and investment in infrastructure over the lifetime of the LAP, proposals for the creation of additional recreational space have not been realised. The Chief Executive will continue to seek to secure these objectives and policies over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

### Sustainable Communities and Social Inclusion

Policies and objectives in relation to sustainable communities and social inclusion can be summarised as follows:-

- Make the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area an attractive place to live and work
- Provide for the particular and diverse needs of specific groups in society
- Provide for the coordinated delivery of community services
- Encourage capacity building within local communities
- Support the development of Local Agenda 21 Plan for the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area
- Improve the quality and functioning of residential areas by implementing the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines
- Minimise anti-social behaviour by creating a welcoming urban environment
- Ensure community facilities are located in areas where they can be easily accessed
- Support the development of multi-purpose, shared or campus-based community facilities
- Ensure that new community facilities are provided in conjunction with new residential areas
- Encourage and facilitate the provision of quality, accessible childcare services of different types
- Ensure ease of access for emergency vehicles including fire service vehicles to newly developed areas
- Facilitate the provision of new burial grounds, extension of existing burial grounds and crematoria

Policies and objectives relating to sustainable communities and social inclusion provide a mixture of high-level, long term measures. The Chief Executive will continue to seek to secure these objectives and policies over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

### Housing

Policies and objectives in relation to housing can be summarised as follows:-

- Require that up to 12% of land zoned for residential developments or for a mix of residential and other uses, is reserved to meet social and housing needs.
- Ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned in the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area for residential use
- Ensure a choice of house types and sizes to cater for all categories
- Encourage the provision of small scale community facilities in new housing developments
- Explore mechanisms to address the issue of incomplete developments
- Implement the objectives of the relevant Traveller Accommodation Programmes
- Encourage the provision of housing for the elderly in appropriate locations
- Encourage the provision of smaller dwelling units in new housing developments to allow for lifestyle transition
- Provide for the housing needs of those with disabilities through the provision or adaption of appropriate accommodation

As has been set out in the previous section, there has been only very limited housing development in Graigucullen over the lifetime of the LAP, to date. The Chief Executive will continue to ensure that such housing proposals in the future comply with relevant policies and objectives of the LAP.

With regard to the requirement that 12% of land zoned for residential development is reserved to meet social housing needs, the Chief Executive notes that within the new County Development Plan this requirement has been reduced to 10%. In cases of conflict between the LAP and the County Development Plan, Section 18(4)(b) of the Act outlines that the conflicting provision of the LAP shall cease to have any effect. The Chief Executive is therefore satisfied that there should be no ambiguity in this respect.

### Built and Natural Heritage

Policies and objectives in relation to built and natural heritage can be summarised as follows:-

- Encourage the conservation, interpretation of and promotion of the heritage of the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area
- Protect and foster terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and protect against invasive species
- Seek to create a green infrastructure network of ecological stepping stones and ecological corridors
- Ensure the protection of the special interest or character of all structures on the Record of Protected Structures
- Preserve and enhance the special character of Architectural Conservation Areas
- Preserve the integrity, character, value and settings of Recorded Monuments from inappropriate development
- Ensure new developments respond to the character of the surrounding landscape and landscape features

- Protect the proposed National Heritage Area at Oak Park from developments that would adversely affect its special interest
- Maintain and enhance the quality of the natural environment in its entirety
- Seek to provide an ecological linkage as well as an amenity linkage between Oak Park Forest Park and the Barrow Track
- Encourage the imaginative and sensitive design of proposals to extend or modify protected structures or develop new structures within their curtilage
- Seek to retain historic street furniture and mature trees that contribute to the character of ACAs
- Conserve and enhance the built heritage of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area and ensure new development is sensitive to the character of the Area
- Encourage the retention of historic building fabric

Policies and objectives relating to built and natural heritage provide a mixture of high-level, long term measures. The Chief Executive will continue to seek to secure these objectives and policies over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

### Urban Design and Built Form

Policies and objectives in relation to urban design and built form can be summarised as follows:-

- Deliver a high-quality built environment
- Foster the development of attractive, usable, durable and adaptable structures, spaces and places
- Create and maintain a network of high-quality public open spaces in urban and suburban areas
- Prepare development briefs and urban design framework plans to steer development
- Ensure development proposals are designed with special regard to landmark buildings and views
- Encourage the siting of telecommunications antennae in discrete locations
- ensure that development is not carried out in front of established building lines
- Ensure extensions are positioned and scaled to avoid significant adverse effects
- Encourage infill development, particularly within the town centre
- Seek to retain existing active street frontages at ground floor level
- Require a high-quality of design for new and replacement shopfronts

Policies and objectives relating to urban design and built form provide a mixture of high-level, long term measures. The Chief Executive will continue to seek to secure these objectives and policies over the extended lifetime of the LAP.

### Land Use Zonings

Part 2, Section 11 outlines objectives that are specifically applied to sites throughout the plan area and include the uses that are acceptable in a particular area and it reduces the potential for conflict between uses in particular areas. The zoning objectives are continually considered for all applications throughout the plan area and should remain in the plan and are consistent with the County Development Plan 2012 - 2023.

## Section 4 - Conclusion

The Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area 2012 -2018 was prepared jointly between Carlow and Laois County Councils, with the individual Town Development Plan and Local Area Plans adopted on the following dates:

- The Carlow Town Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 - 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2012
- Carlow Town Development Plan 2012-2018- 1st November, 2012.
- Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012-2018 - 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2012.

Each of the individual plans will expire in 2018, unless the Elected Members resolve to defer the commencement of the review process. Section 19(d) of the Act provides the option for a planning authority to defer its review of a local area plan for a period not exceeding 5 years provided this resolution is made within 5 years of adoption.

Section 19(e) of the Act requires that the members can only resolve to extend the life of a LAP, following receipt from the Chief Executive of an opinion that the LAP remains consistent with the objectives and core strategy of the relevant development plan, an opinion that the objectives of the LAP have not been substantially secured, and confirmation that the sending and publishing of notices to commence the review of the LAP may be deferred and the period for which they may be deferred.

This Chief Executive's Report provides an examination of the consistency between the provisions of the Graigucullen LAP 2012 - 2018 and the objectives and Core Strategy of the Laois County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, in accordance with legislative requirements. Based on the analysis above, it is the opinion of the Chief Executive that:

- The provisions of the Graigucullen LAP 2012-2018 remain consistent with the Core Strategy and other provisions of the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023
- The objectives of the LAP have yet to be fulfilled

It is appropriate that the life of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan be extended by a period of 4 years, during which time the objectives identified may be achieved. Accordingly, it is recommended that the following resolution be passed:

*'To extend the life, by a further 4 years (i.e. up to and including 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022), of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018 as contained within the Greater Carlow Graigucullen Urban Area 2012 – 2018), in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended which provides for the extension of the valid life of a Local Area Plan. The extension of the LAP is sought to provide Laois County Council and all other relevant stakeholders adequate time and opportunity to realise the strategic objectives of the Graigucullen Local Area Plan which is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area'.*