

ISSUES PAPER

CARLOW GRAIGUECULLEN JOINT URBAN LOCAL AREA PLAN 2023-2029

The new Joint Urban Area Local Area Plan (JULAP) will set out a land use strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Carlow - Graiguecullen Joint Urban Area.

have
your
say



Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Strategic Planning	5
3	Population and Housing	7
4	Economic Development, Tourism and Retail	9
5	Urban Design and Regeneration	12
6	Movement and Active Travel	15
7	Infrastructure (Water/Wastewater and Environmental Services)	18
8	Environment and Climate Change	20
9	Sustainable Communities	22
10	Heritage, Amenity and Landscape	26

HAVE YOUR SAY

If you are interested in planning and development issues in the Carlow-Graiguecullen Urban Area and wish to contribute to the shaping of its future, please make a submission to the Planning Authority at this stage before 5pm, Friday 14th October 2022.

Two information sessions for members of the public will be held on the following dates:

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS	DATE	TIME
CARLOW		
Shaw Room at Carlow Central Library Tullow Street, Carlow	Thursday 29th September	14:30-18:00

GRAIGUECULLEN

Talbot Hotel, Graigue, Portlaoise Road Carlow	Tuesday 6th October	14:30-18:00
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Your submissions may be made in the following ways:

- 1 Through the relevant consultation portal(s) listed hereunder.
 Carlow County Council: consult.carlow.ie
 Laois County Council: consult.laois.ie
- 2 by email to:
JointLAP@carlowcoco.ie or JointLAP@laoiscoco.ie
- 3 in writing marked "Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan Review" and sent to the following relevant address:

Carlow County Council
 Senior Executive Officer
 Planning Department
 Carlow County Council
 Athy Road
 Carlow

Laois County Council
 Senior Planner
 Planning Department
 Laois County Council
 Portlaoise
 Co. Laois

Next Steps

Following the Pre-Draft consultation process, a report on submissions received relating to the relevant functional area will be prepared and presented to the Elected Members of Carlow and Laois as appropriate. Following this, a Draft Local Area Plan will be prepared and published in Q1 of 2023. A further period of public consultation will take place and it is anticipated that the Carlow Graiguecullen Local Area Plan will be adopted Q3/4 of 2023.

1. Introduction

In collaboration with the community, Carlow County Council and Laois County Council are commencing a review of the Joint Spatial Plan for the Carlow Graiguecullen Greater Urban Area 2012-2018 (as extended). Section 18 (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) enables two or more planning authorities to co-operate in preparing a local area plan in respect of any area which lies within the combined functional area of the authorities concerned (see Map no. 1 of functional areas).

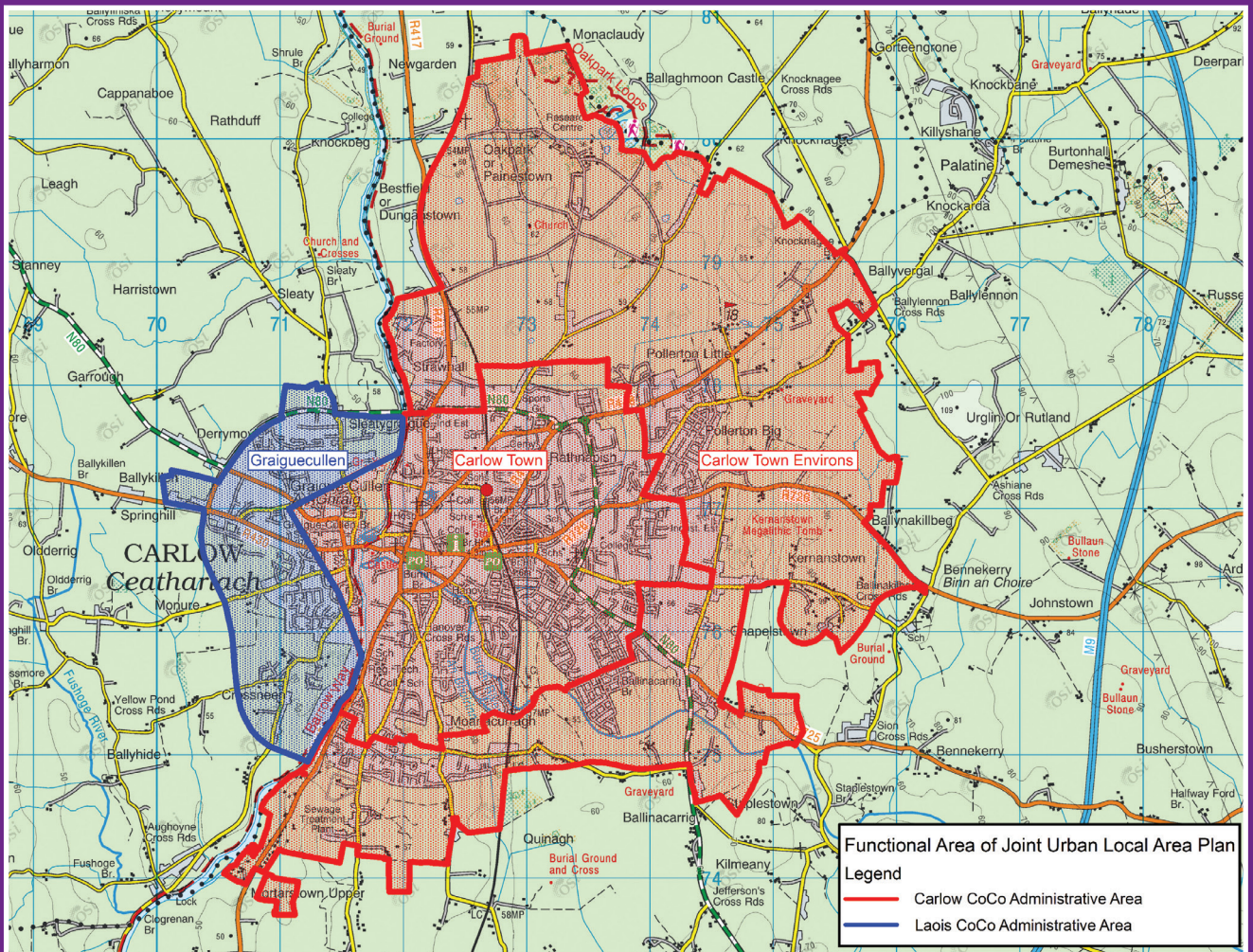
The new Joint Urban Area Local Area Plan (JULAP) will set out a land use strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. It will consist of a written statement and maps indicating objectives for purposes such as the zoning of land, economic and community development; residential development; heritage and culture; open space and recreation; transportation and infrastructure; urban design; and environmental protection.

The LAP process will involve public consultation at three stages:

- 1 Pre-Draft;**
- 2 Draft Plan; and**
- 3 Proposed Amendments stage.**

As part of the first stage, the Planning Authorities are now engaging in Pre-Draft Consultation with the general public, stakeholders and interest groups. To inform the process this booklet has been prepared in order to give a broad overview of the main development issues currently impacting on the Carlow-Graiguecullen Urban Area and identifies the issues that the next Local Area Plan could address. This document can be downloaded at consult.carlow.ie and consult.laois.ie.





Map 1: Functional Area of Joint Urban Area Plan.



2. Strategic Planning

The preparation of the Carlow-Graiguecullen Plan will be informed by policies and objectives established in higher level planning documents including the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies for the Southern Region, the Eastern and Midlands Region and the County Development Plans for Carlow and Laois, as appropriate.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

Under the settlement typology of the RSES' Carlow and Graiguecullen have been designated as a Key Town. This designation has been informed by criteria designated under the National Planning Framework including:

- Location of settlement in the context of the five city regions.
- Scale of employment provision and net commuting flows.
- Extent of local services and amenities.
- Extent of trips by sustainable modes.
- Rate and pace of previous development between 1996-2016.
- Accessibility and influence in a regional or sub-regional context.
- Track record of performance and delivery and commitment to achieving compact growth.



Fig. 1: Spatial Planning Hierarchy

Carlow-Graiguecullen is acknowledged to be an urban centre of large population scale, which functions as a self-sustaining regional driver. It is envisaged that Key Towns such as Carlow-Graiguecullen will be a focus for significant growth (more than 30%).

Key strategic issues for Carlow-Graiguecullen as defined under the RSESs are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Key strategic issues for Carlow, Graiguecullen as contained in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies include;

- Designation of Carlow-Graiguecullen as a key Town to function as an economic self-sustaining regional driver and a focus of significant growth.
- Carlow-Graiguecullen has an inter-regional role given its location within the Southern and Eastern Midlands Regional Assembly regions.
- Opportunities afforded to the urban area as part of a network of regionally significant drivers of collaboration and growth located on the Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow-Dublin M9/Rail Network/Axis.
- Important regional center of education and research, by the designation of Carlow IT as part of a Multi-Campus Technological University for the South East (now established as the South East Technological University - SETU).
- Support for town centre led economic regeneration with improvements in the public realm through development and connectivity of key urban regeneration locations.
- Need for investment in key infrastructural assets (e.g. roads, water, wastewater, public transport, active travel etc.)
- Need for investment and support in the delivery of culture, arts and tourism infrastructure together with other physical and community infrastructure.
- Supports development of under-utilised lands along the River Barrow as a strategic natural asset subject to planning and environmental considerations.

Carlow and Laois County Development Plans

Under the provisions of the statutory County Development Plans for both Carlow and Laois it is a policy of both councils to prepare a statutory Joint Local Area Plan (JULAP) for the Greater Carlow Urban Area which will be informed by a Local Transport Plan. The Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 contains strategic policies and objectives for Carlow Town which will inform the LAP, including land use zoning objectives pertaining to the former Town Council area as indicated on Map 15.1. This new JUAP will provide a coordinated planning framework to identify and deliver strategic sites and regeneration areas for the future physical, economic and social development of the area. It will seek to achieve targeted compact growth in compliance with national policy and to ensure that it has the capacity to grow sustainably and secure investment as a Key Town.

Other key strategic objectives for the Town include;

Regeneration

The long-term vision of *Project Carlow 2040 A Vision for Regeneration* is to transform Carlow Town into a sustainable high-quality urban environment that will offer business opportunities and a better quality of life for all. Through the implementation of the Strategy the Town will become:

- A town that prioritises the wellbeing of its visitors and residents.
- A centre for education, cutting edge business and high-quality retailing.
- An innovative, ambitious, and successful place.

Climate Change

Carlow-Graiguecullen has the opportunity to adapt to climate change measures through its physical urban regeneration and a focus on:

- Development in the core of the town.
- Becoming aware of our impact on the climate and making a positive change for the future.
- Placing an emphasis on healthy living through urban design practices.
- Protection and use of green and blue Infrastructure.

Economic Development

Carlow Town is the principal centre of economic activity in the area. There are also a number of established businesses in Graiguecullen that play an important role within the town. The area has many economic attributes such as its third level education provision and other educational institutes, proximity to Dublin, the River Barrow, tourism, retail services and cultural facilities. It has a role as a major employment, retail and services centre. Development of Carlow Town as a regional and inter-regional growth driver will require a significant increase in job opportunities to sustain the existing and growing population.

Residential Development

As a designated Key Town, Carlow-Graiguecullen is to play a critical role in underpinning the RSES' and ensuring a consolidated spread of growth beyond cities to the sub-regional level. The success of Carlow-Graiguecullen as a Key Town will be dependent on the delivery of targeted compact growth of a minimum of 30%, through regeneration and redevelopment of vacant, infill and/or brownfield sites. The Carlow and Laois County Development Plans seek to re-establish a residential population within the Town Centre through the promotion of and provision for Town Centre living, as well as improved public realm spaces and better access and promotion of civic uses.

Enabling Infrastructure

The goal of achieving compact growth will require improved accessibility, sustainable mobility, and the requisite infrastructure to enable Carlow-Graiguecullen Town to grow as a Key Town. The importance of protecting and investing in road, rail, water, wastewater, and energy infrastructure is imperative in order to facilitate the sustainable development of Carlow-Graiguecullen as a Key Town.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is your vision for the Carlow- Graiguecullen Joint Urban Area?
- How can the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Area best contribute to supporting its designation as a Key Town?
- How can the town be physically, economically, socially and culturally enhanced so as to make it an attractive place to live, work and visit?
- How can regeneration and economic growth be sustainably achieved in Carlow-Graiguecullen?

3. Population and Housing

Carlow town is the largest urban centre and accounts for over one-third (35.1%) of the County’s population. Including Graiguecullen the population of Carlow Town extends to 24,274 making it the thirteenth largest urban area in the State.

Population

The most recent published population data for Carlow Town, as per the CSO which includes Graiguecullen, was recorded as 24,272 in 2016 (Table 2). Overall the population of the town has increased by 31% between 2002-2016.

Urban ED and Graigue Rural ED, continue to experience significant levels of population growth (see Table 3). While this area extends beyond the Carlow Town boundary as defined by the CSO, it gives a clear indication of the extent of population growth within and proximate to Carlow Town.

Census	Carlow Town including Graiguecullen
2002	18,487
2006	20,724 (+12%)
2011	23,030 (+11%)
2016	24,272 (+ 5.3%)

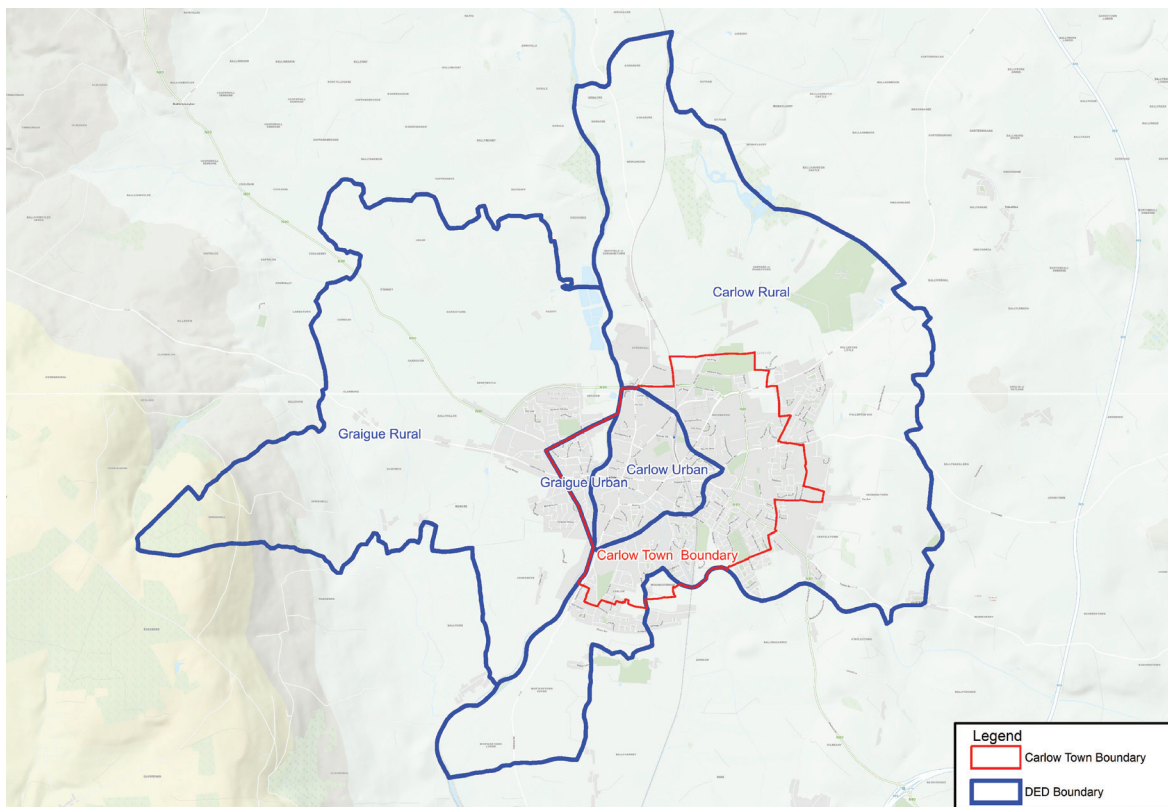
Table 2: Population of Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area and County Carlow (Source: CSO)

ED	2016	2022
Carlow Urban ED	4,560	5,100
Carlow Rural	14,546	16,146
Graigue Urban	1,405	1,665
Graigue Rural	4,786	5,323
	25,297	28,234 (+11.6)

Table 3: Population of EDs which incorporate lands within the area defined as Carlow Town (inc. Graiguecullen) (Source: CSO)

Preliminary CSO returns for 2022 at ED level which extends beyond the town boundary area have recently been published. Carlow Town together with the lands immediately adjoining same comprising Carlow Urban ED, Carlow Rural ED, Graigue

Map 2: Carlow Town and DED Boundaries



Cumulatively the population of these EDs has increased by approximately 11.6%. Of particular note however, is the increase in the urban areas of Carlow and Graigue which resulted in an increase of 13% on the 2016 figure. The continued growth of the urban area provides for more sustainable environments with populations located proximate to areas of employment, education and community infrastructure. A continuation of this trend would support the policy of Carlow and Laois to create a sustainable urban environment, to support urban regeneration and to create a vibrant town centre.

Housing

Housing requirements for the Carlow-Graiguecullen Greater Urban Area are contained in the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. The residential unit target within the Carlow functional area is 1,330 units with additional residual provision (phased 2 lands) of 333 units. Of the 1,663 units 900 are identified for the former town council area with the remaining 763 potential units within the Carlow Environs. 280 units are allocated to Graiguecullen between 2016-2027 under the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Where should additional population be focused and how can we ensure it gives rise to sustainable patterns of development?
- How can new developments contribute to the creation of sustainable communities?
- How can the housing needs of all sectors of our community be adequately addressed?
- How can new private and social housing be successfully integrated into existing and new communities?

4. Economic Development, Tourism and Retail

Carlow Town is designated as the principal driver of economic growth, employment generation and service provision in County Carlow. Graiguecullen is also designated as a Key Town in County Laois.



Clusters of small and medium enterprises have emerged in the greater urban area. While the area has many economic attributes the further development of Carlow – Graiguecullen as a regional and inter-regional growth driver will require a significant increase in job opportunities to sustain the existing and growing population.

Key industries in Carlow Town are outlined in Table 4.

Industry Sectors in Carlow Town	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1%
Building and construction	5%
Manufacturing industries	11%
Commerce and trade	24%
Transport and communications	6%
Public administration	5%
Professional services	23%
Other	25%

Table 4: Industry Sectors in Carlow Town (Census 2016)

The Councils will continue to support the growth and expansion of existing and new employment generating uses, the reuse of brownfield sites, the promotion of the town centre through key interventions and by addressing vacancy / dereliction and use of underutilised lands within the town centre.

It remains an objective of both Carlow and Laois County Councils that the Joint Urban Area is positioned and promoted as having a vibrant enterprise culture capable of sustaining and expanding local enterprises, creating employment and attracting inward investment. The new Local Area Plan will seek to build on and enhance the role of the area as a driver for economic development, in addition to promoting expansion, diversification, and engagement with key agencies to support the future development of the area.



Tourism

Tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy in Carlow. Carlow Tourism's mission for the sector is to enrich its visitors by offering a unique holiday experience through the provision of the ideal base for active holidays set against the natural panoramic backdrop of Carlow's rich heritage.

Development of the tourist product has been supported through significant investment in the arts and cultural offering of the area which has taken place including development of the Cultural Quarter in Carlow Town in an area around the

George Bernard Shaw Theatre, Visual Art Gallery, County Museum and Carlow Cathedral. Further investment in the tourist offering will continue in the coming years with €500,000 being provided for the development of the tourist product in Carlow Town under Failte Ireland's Destination Town Funding call in 2019.

The Joint LAP will seek to maintain and facilitate the expansion of the tourism product by;

- Facilitating the expansion of the existing tourism product;
- Identifying cross boundary projects;
- Identifying strategic sites capable of accommodating new tourism ventures while ensuring the preservation of the natural landscape;
- Seeking the enhancement of the appearance of the area through appropriate development.
- Seeking the enhancement of the public realm;
- Ensuring a high-quality design in the delivery of the tourism product; and
- Facilitating the development of alternative products such as eco-tourism, craft, artisan studios etc.



Retail

Under the Carlow County Retail Strategy 2022-2028 Carlow County Town Centre is designated 'Level 1' and forms the first tier within the retail hierarchy, being the principal urban centre in the county. In accordance with its role and function, the town exhibits a number of higher order retail, service and specialist functions. Carlow town centre should continue to be the prime focus for future development and in particular high order comparison retail floor space.

Under the Laois County Retail Strategy 2021-2027 Graiguecullen is designated 'Level 3' and forms the third tier within the retail hierarchy. In accordance with its Level 3 status it is to provide for shopping, amenity, commercial and community facilities of a scale and type to serve residents living within the district without undermining Carlow town centre.

Key considerations with regard to retail include;

- The need to enhance the retail role and function of the streets in the traditional core.
- Consideration must be given to emerging retail trends and how the core retail area can be positioned to not just respond but to benefit from these trends.
- The need for increased permeability between the traditional retail core and the newer south eastern expansion area.

Limited retail is provided within the Carlow Environs area with residents served by Carlow Town, the Sandhills retail area and smaller neighbourhood centres at Askea and on the Tullow Road. Within Graiguecullen the Barrow Valley Retail Park contains convenience and other retail services.



Consolidation of larger scale retail provision within the zoned town centre areas is appropriate to maintain the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre. Smaller scale local shops / neighbourhood facilities will be considered as appropriate to service residential / employment neighbourhoods where proposed in the environs area where the proposal would not detract from the town centre and would be in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The planning authority will implement the relevant provisions of the Retail Strategies as contained in the statutory land use plans as appropriate. It is important to develop quality commercial environments that will in turn improve the vibrancy and enhance traditional on street experiences in the town centre.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What policies should the Plan include to promote enterprise and employment?
- What are the most optimal locations in the Joint Urban Area for additional employment and new enterprises?
- What can the Plan do to promote and encourage tourism in the area?
- What policies should be introduced to further support town centre retailing and commercial activities that enhance vitality and vibrancy of the town?

5. Urban Design and Regeneration

The Plan will seek to promote architecture and urban design which compliments and reinforces the existing built fabric of the Carlow - Graiguecullen Joint Urban Area.

Urban Design

Urban design involves examining all the elements that contribute to place – buildings, uses, streets, footpaths, open spaces- and ensuring that these elements blend harmoniously to create an attractive and distinctive end product. It is both a process and an outcome of creating high quality places that all people can fully engage with, and which are attractive and liveable.

Good urban design underpins what has been more recently termed as placemaking. Placemaking reinforces a people-centred approach to the creation of the built environment, which goes beyond just the physical fabric of a place. In the regard, the Councils have a key role through the planning process in shaping the built environment. Achieving a good quality-built environment and public realm is essential to support sustainable mobility, healthy communities, successful urban living and the achievement of compact growth.

The key principles underpinning good urban design in the area should focus on:

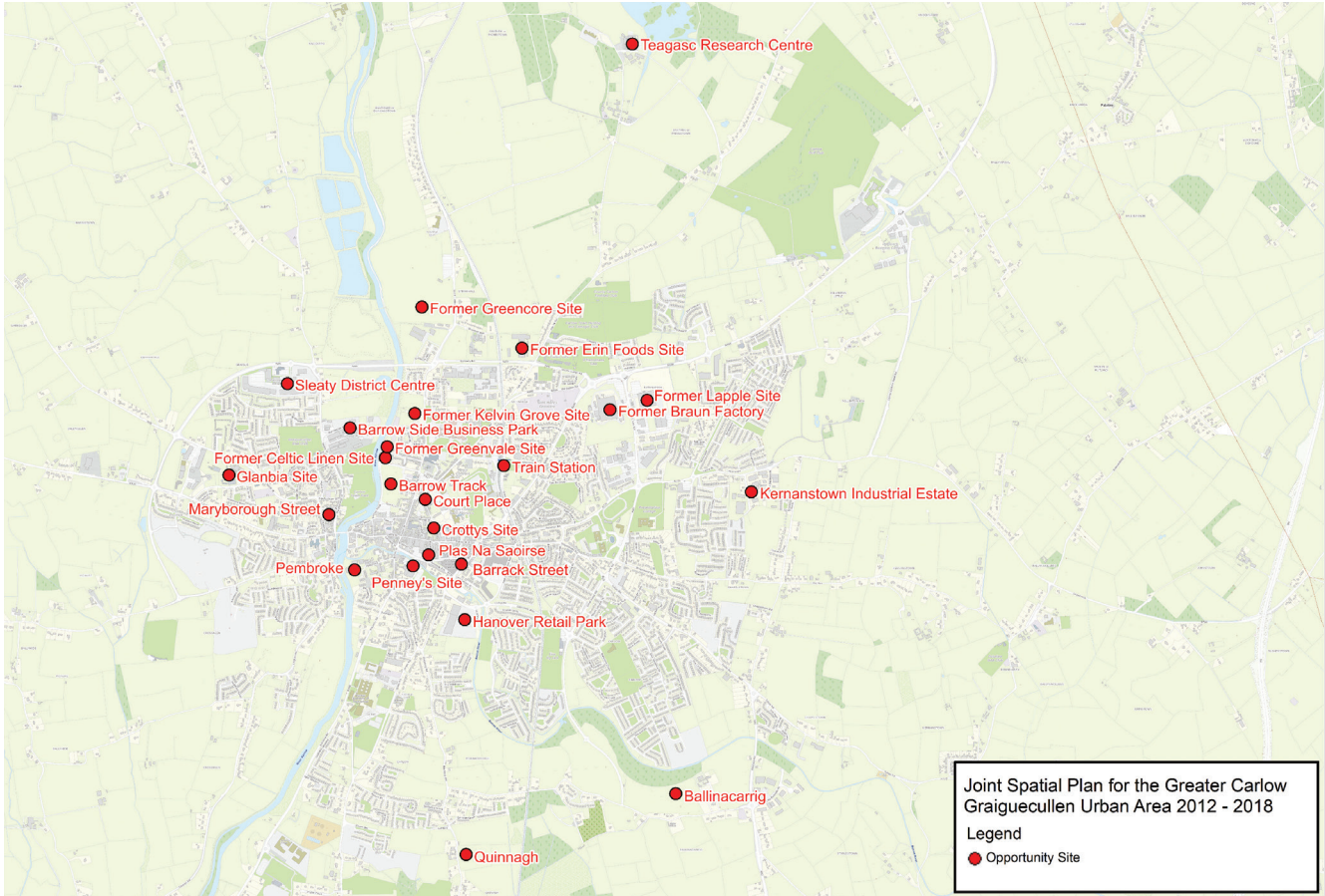
- Strengthening the urban fabric of the area;
- Reinforcing local identity and sense of place;
- Providing a coherent and permeable urban structure;
- Promoting an efficient use of land;
- Improving and enhancing the public realm;
- Conserving and respecting local heritage; and
- Supporting active travel initiatives.

Chapter 12 of the Carlow County Development Plan highlights the importance of urban design and placemaking, the planning authority will implement the principles outlined therein to achieve quality placemaking and good urban design which supports a key element of national, regional and local policy in relation to achieving compact growth.



Fig 2: Key Urban Design Principles for Quality Placemaking





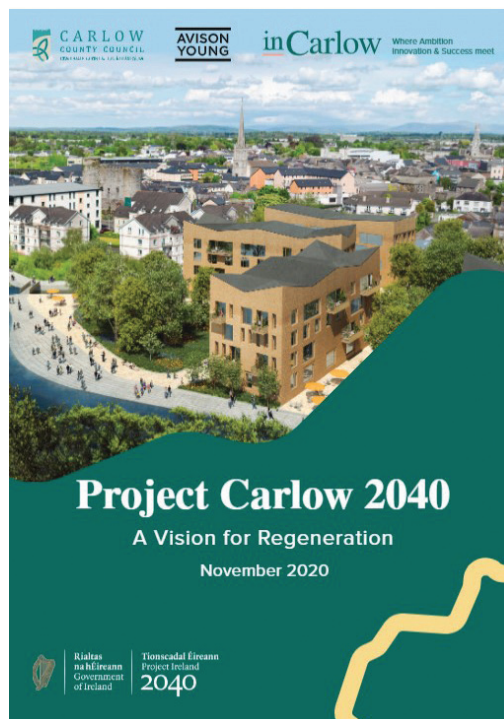
Map 3: Opportunity Sites 2012-2018

Regeneration

The Carlow - Graiguecullen Joint Urban area is a key focus for urban regeneration. Under the provisions of the current Joint Spatial Plan there are a total of 24 no. opportunity sites throughout the Carlow - Graiguecullen Area. The sites are located throughout the urban area (see Map 3). These sites were identified in 2012 as of strategic importance for the future development of the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area. A review of these opportunity sites and other potential sites will be conducted as part of the Local Area Plan with the objective of securing compact and sustainable growth.

Project Carlow 2040 A Vision of Regeneration is a recently published Regeneration Strategy which seeks to achieve a high quality connected urban environment with increased employment opportunities and a better quality of life for all.

The Strategy focuses development on the town centre and identifies opportunities in the built environment and the public realm which can be developed to the benefit of the community and the local economy.



<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Carlow/Enterprise-Development/Project-Carlow-2040/>

A number of intervention areas identified will act as a catalyst for regeneration but will also contribute to improved health and wellbeing, create better town centre spaces, enhance competitiveness and commercial activity, promote town centre living and encourage building enhancements in order to improve long-term viability. The intervention areas comprise the;

- Town Centre - Potato Market and Barrack Street.
- Cultural Quarter (including links to the Railway Station).
- The Barrow Track / Civic Spine.
- The Pembroke District.
- The Burrin Riverfront.
- Link Streets (Dublin Street and Tullow Street).

Guiding principles to support a more vibrant and viable town include:

- Reduced Vacancy;
- Promote a high quality of life and wellbeing;
- A Town perceived as an exciting place to live, work and visit;
- A Distinctive Town;
- Increased Town Centre Footfall; and,
- Diversity of Uses in the Town Centre.

Urban Regeneration and Development (URDF) funding totalling €21.8m has been awarded for key projects identified in *Project Carlow 2040 A Vision for Regeneration*.

Separately, Laois County Council have identified opportunity areas in Graiguecullen, including the:

- Glanbia site, and,
- Fruithill Manor site.

Within the Graiguecullen area vacant and underutilised sites also need to be addressed through the following mechanisms;

- Appropriate development typologies and density;
- Connectivity with the Carlow town area;
- Public realm improvements; and
- Creation of new spaces.

Recent Projects and Funding

Carlow County Council are currently at an advanced stage in the construction of a new semi-covered open space in the centre of the town at Potato Market called The Exchange. The new space will be suitable for a multiple of uses, including tourism events, micro festivals, farmer's market, fairs and student and youth events.

Work on upgrading Hanover Park in Carlow Town has also recently been completed, including new pathways, seating areas, and lighting. Further plans for the park including accessible playground, a bike pump track and biodiversity measures, are now at planning stage.

Planning and implementation of further projects is progressing and will continue over the life of the Joint Urban Local Area Plan.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the key design issues relating to the built environment in Carlow-Graiguecullen?
- What criteria should inform good quality living environments?
- What opportunity / regeneration sites if developed would contribute most to a more sustainable urban environment?
- What are the unique features of the urban environment that should inform future policy?

6. Movement and Active Travel

An effective and well performing transport network underpins the economic, spatial, social and environmental success of an urban area, as well as facilitating the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient local economy.

The movement and active travel policy for Carlow-Graiguecullen in the Joint Urban Local Area Plan (JULAP) will focus on integrated land use and transport, in conjunction with support for investment in public transport, and active travel networks. This will improve people's travel choices, as well as supporting sustainable, safe and healthy lifestyles.

Land Use and Transport Planning

An integrated approach to land use and transport planning, including policies which support realistic walking and cycling distances from residential, employment, educational, shopping and amenity areas, will be a key mechanism to support the development of a sustainable, healthy and low carbon urban area.

To contribute to the delivery of this integrated approach a Local Transport Plan (LTP) will be prepared alongside the new Joint Urban Local Area Plan (JULAP). The LTP will aim to maximise the opportunities for the integration of land use and transport planning in the urban area, taking into account existing conditions and infrastructure, transport demand, required interventions, and the prioritisation of active travel infrastructure for walking and cycling.

Public Transport

Limited local public transport options contribute to high private car usage. Therefore, central to the future success of Carlow-Graiguecullen will be the creation of a high-quality public transport network, connecting people to key destinations in a reasonable travel time within and outside of the Greater Urban Area.

Rail

A modern, efficient, and dependable passenger and freight rail network has a crucial role to play in mitigating climate impacts and in promoting Carlow-Graiguecullen for business, industrial, residential, and recreational purposes. Carlow Town is situated on the main Dublin-Waterford rail line, which has high levels of commuter demand. Improvements to frequency and timetabling are required to further enhance rail connectivity from Carlow-Graiguecullen to the wider eastern and southeast regions.



Bus

The development of a quality bus system as an alternative to the private car is an essential element of an integrated and balanced land use transportation system. Existing bus services provided by Bus Éireann and JJ Kavanagh link Carlow-Graiguecullen with regional destinations, as well as with smaller towns and villages in the hinterland. Carlow County Council, in conjunction with the NTA, have developed two bus routes which will improve sustainable travel patterns in the town. The service will connect residential areas with the main employment, education, retail and health service destinations. It is anticipated that the new bus service will be in place by Q4 of 2022.



Roads

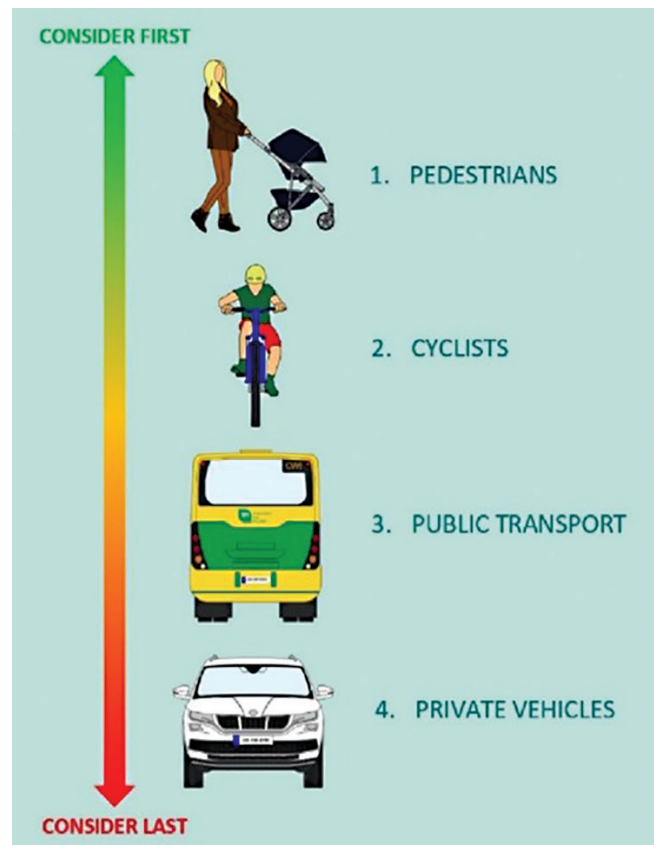
Carlow-Graiguecullen is strategically well placed on the national road network, located directly adjacent to the M9 Motorway, thereby providing excellent connectivity to Dublin (through the M7/N7) to the north, as well as Kilkenny and Waterford to the south. The M7 and M8 Motorways are approximately 40km away which provide connectivity with Limerick and Cork. The N80 National Road connects Carlow-Graiguecullen to the regional centres of Portlaoise, Enniscorthy, and Wexford Rosslare Port and the Midlands. An extensive regional road network serving the Greater Urban Area and including the R448, R430, R417, R725 and R726, also provides key links with smaller towns and villages in the hinterland and with larger towns in neighbouring counties.

The Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) supports the delivery of roads projects in the area, including the Southern Relief Road N80 – R448, and completion of the Southern Relief Road to link the N80 within County Laois. The Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 identifies the Carlow Northern Relief Road Extension as a priority road project for Graiguecullen.



Active Travel

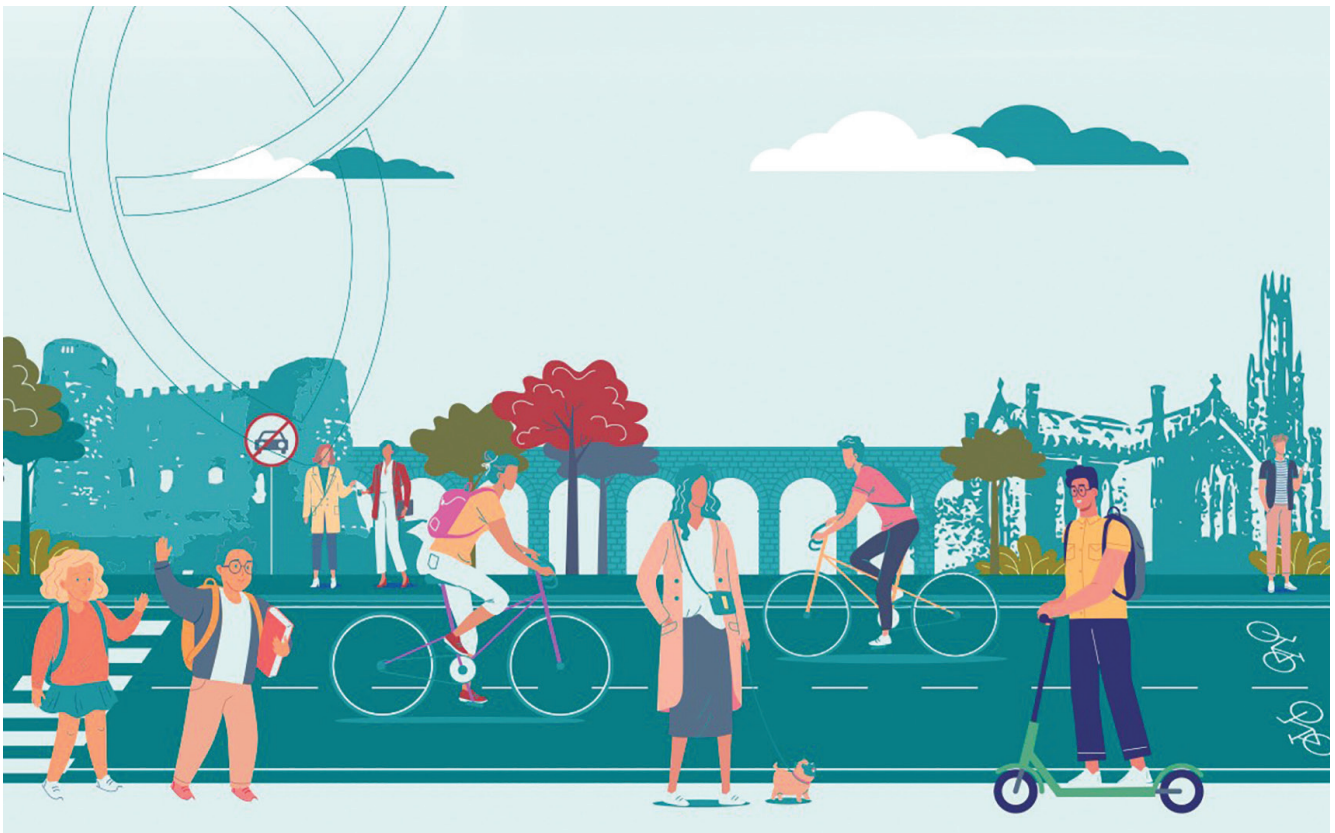
The creation of a comprehensive walking and cycling network will help create a resilient, low carbon transport network for Carlow-Graiguecullen that prioritises safe, friendly and healthy streetscapes, while reducing car dependency and improving air quality. It will enhance travel choices for all and improve connectivity to employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities.



An existing key asset for Carlow-Graiguecullen includes the walking and cycling Barrow Way, located along the towpath of the river. The River Burrin Linear Park in the town is also another key recreational route along the east of this smaller river.

There is scope to improve pedestrian and cycling priority, in addition to route continuity and connectivity in the Greater Urban Area, thereby supporting and promoting a modal shift to more active travel options. A number of active travel projects funded through the NTA are currently being progressed in the urban area.

In addition to the foregoing, the interventions identified in *Project Carlow 2040 A Vision for Regeneration* will support more sustainable travel patterns through public realm initiatives that aim to reduce overall car numbers and allow for more green space for walking and cycling with a focus on greater use of outdoor space and increased use of public transport.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the key transport issues in Carlow-Graiguecullen and how should the JULAP address them?
- What are the key movement and active travel issues affecting residents, workers, and visitors?
- What interventions could be introduced to alleviate traffic congestion in Carlow-Graiguecullen at peak times and school drop off / pick up times?
- How can we create more successful streets that easily facilitate the needs of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians?

7. Infrastructure (Water/Wastewater and Environmental Services)

The future development of Carlow-Graiguecullen is dependent on the availability of high-quality infrastructure networks and environmental services. These include water supply, wastewater management, waste management, drainage, electricity, gas, telecommunications and broadband.

Drinking Water and Wastewater

Irish Water is responsible for public water services (water supply and foul drainage), including the delivery, integration and implementation of strategic water and wastewater projects and infrastructural improvements. It is an objective of Irish Water to provide both drinking water and wastewater capacity to facilitate growth in accordance with core strategies at county level and with national and regional planning policies and objectives (subject to the constraints of the Irish Water Capital Investment Programme).



Carlow and Laois County Councils will, as part of the preparation of the JULAP, collaborate with Irish Water regarding any future infrastructure provision/upgrade requirements for the Greater Urban Area.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Surface water drainage is the responsibility of Carlow and Laois County Councils. All new development applications must account for how the surface water runoff will be managed on development sites. As such, the Councils aim to control runoff from such sites through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS aims to contain surface waters on site for gradual release back to watercourses or public drainage systems to as close as possible a 'greenfield' situation. Climate change and urbanisation will together present challenges for urban drainage, particularly in relation to more frequent rainfall events and incidences of urban (pluvial) flooding. The use of SuDS will therefore become more important as a climate action (adaptation) measure.



Waste Management

Waste management is integral to sustainable development, protecting public health and maintaining a high-quality environment. The role of local authorities in waste management has evolved and the principal areas of activity are now regulatory, education and enforcement related. Waste management policies are based on the EU Waste Hierarchy of prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, energy recovery and sustainable disposal.

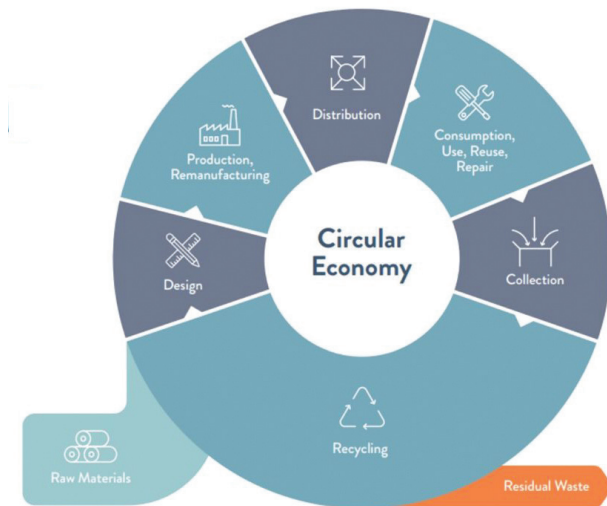


Fig 3: Circular Economy (Source: EPA)

There are many challenges in waste management, including minimisation of waste generation, maximising recovery/reuse and disposal/recovery through authorised facilities, promoting more sustainable consumption patterns, and the application of circular economy principles.

Energy Infrastructure

The supply and distribution of electricity and gas in Carlow-Graiguecullen is an important factor in the provision and location of employment and the creation of sustainable communities. Carlow and Laois County Councils will continue to work alongside key energy providers in facilitating the future development of networks throughout the Greater Urban Area. Both Councils are also cognisant of National Policy which

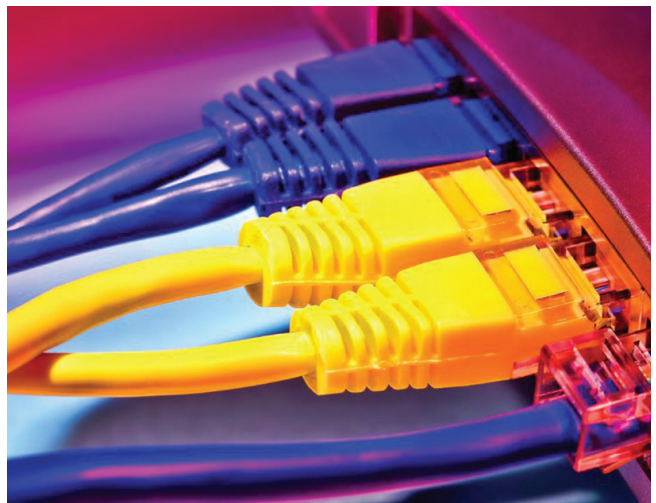
seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy.

Renewable Energy Opportunities

Renewable energy is that which is derived from natural resources that are not depleted when used and are alternatives to fossil fuels. The scale of renewable energy developments can range from micro to large-scale, providing energy for a single dwelling, a commercial property, or being exported to the electricity grid for distribution. The preparation of the JULAP provides an opportunity to provide a policy position for renewable energy opportunities in Carlow-Graiguecullen, thereby enabling the town to maximise its contribution to achieving EU and national targets.

Telecommunications and Broadband

Investment in telecommunications and broadband is essential for furthering the social and economic development of Carlow-Graiguecullen. The importance of advanced communications infrastructure is recognised for an information-based society, and as a key support for business, education, and research.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the main infrastructural issues that should be considered in the JULAP?
- What are the energy network and telecommunications/broadband needs in Carlow-Graiguecullen?
- How can the JULAP contribute to the promotion of renewable energy use and generation?
- What can we do to promote waste reduction?

8. Environment and Climate Change

The JULAP must ensure that a balance is achieved in terms of land use and development and the protection of the environment. The necessity to transition to a low carbon economy cuts across all policy areas and will be addressed in the plan. Environmental considerations will also inform the drafting of the JULAP through the preparation of environmental assessments.



Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory formal process carried out in order to fully incorporate environmental considerations into the plan making process with a view to promoting sustainable development. The process seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of the plan. It is a separate parallel process carried out in tandem with the preparation of the JULAP.

Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to protect a number of habitats with flora and fauna of European importance by designating these as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. The River Barrow is one of these designated SAC sites and it is a requirement of the Directive that an Appropriate Assessment be carried out on the implications of any plan or project for a Natura 2000 site. The draft JULAP will therefore have to be screened to ascertain whether it would be likely to have any significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site.

Flood Risk Assessment

The EU Floods Directive and the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities” set out the requirement for a plan to be accompanied by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. These guidelines state that inappropriate development that cannot meet the “Justification Test” should not be considered at the plan making stage. The Council will carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the policies and objectives of the Draft JULAP. This assessment will provide a broad assessment of flood risk within the Greater Urban Area and inform strategic land use decisions.

Climate Change

Climate change is recognised as a defining issue of our time and is now at the forefront of policy at an international, national, and local level. In terms of this current period of the planet’s history, there are growing concerns that natural fluctuations in climate are being overtaken by impacts from human activities.

Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change will therefore be overarching considerations that will inform policies and objectives in the JULAP, with a focus on reducing impacts in the Joint Urban Area through settlement and travel patterns, energy use and the protection of green infrastructure.

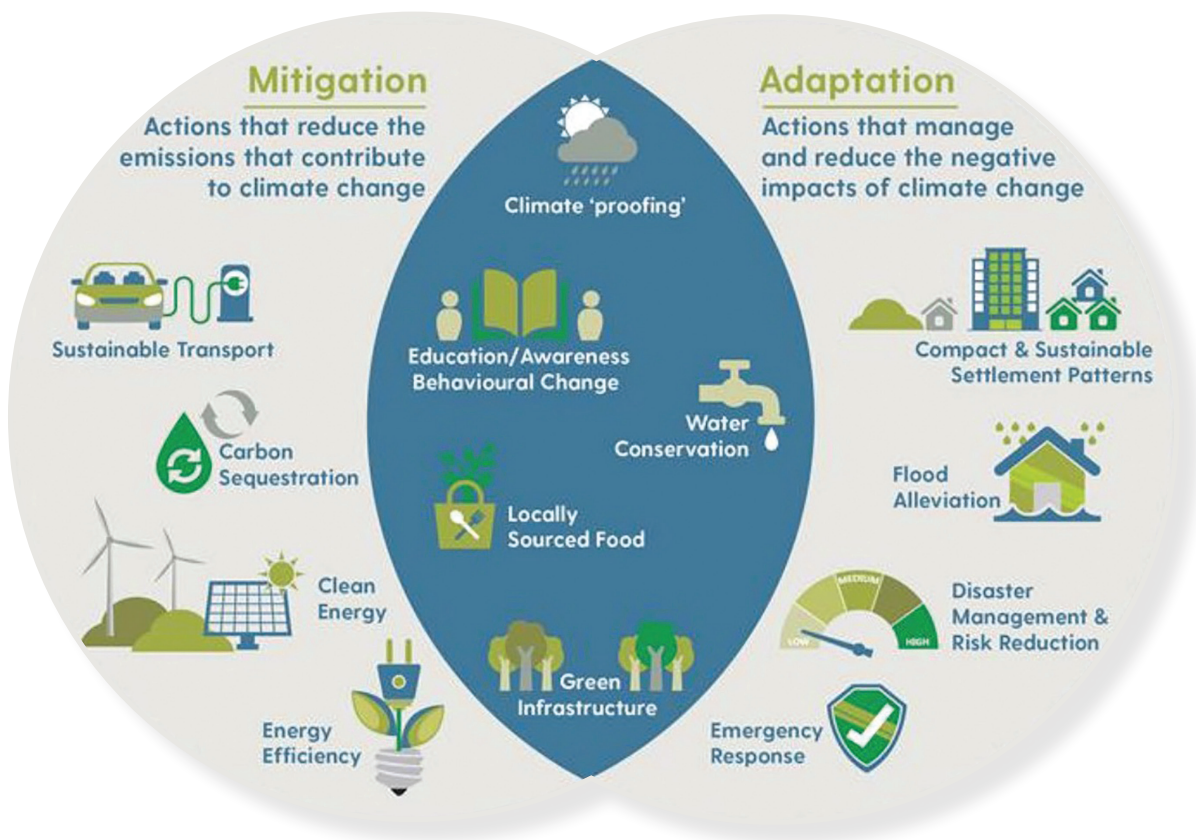


Fig 4: Mitigation and Adaptation Actions
(Source: Eastern and Midland Climate Action Regional Office - CARO)



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the important environmental issues for Carlow-Graigucullen?
- What additional measures should be taken to protect the local environment?
- How can the JULAP best address the challenges of climate change?
- How can renewable energy sources be promoted in Carlow-Graigucullen?

9. Sustainable Communities

The creation of healthy, inclusive, and vibrant communities, with a focus on sustainability and accessibility, is central to achieving a high quality of life for all residents of Carlow-Graigucullen. The provision of and the availability of access to, community services and social infrastructure, including recreational facilities, is integral to societal well-being and health, to social inclusion, and ultimately to fostering sustainable communities and the delivery of successful places.

Social Inclusion

Promoting and supporting social inclusion and community participation in the Joint Urban Area will be a key aim of the JULAP. Social inclusion includes an emphasis on ensuring all environments, whether living, working or recreational, are designed and maintained in a manner that everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, can achieve equality of access to the services and facilities they need to achieve their potential in life.

Open Space & Recreation

The natural and built assets of the Joint Urban Area, which attract tourists to the area, are also the foundations upon which infrastructure and facilities for recreation and amenity are based. The availability of such infrastructure and facilities makes a significant contribution to the physical health and overall well-being of communities. Established and key natural assets such as the River Barrow are supplemented by the provision of built facilities such as walking and cycling paths, open spaces, playgrounds, and playing fields. Open spaces have a particularly important role in built up urban areas, for biodiversity, the enhancement of neighbourhoods, and for recreation and amenity.

Fig. 5: Elements Supporting Quality of Life (Source: National Planning Framework)





Sports

The Joint Urban Area has a number of purpose-built sporting and recreation facilities, which are provided through a mix of public, private, third level, school, community facilities, and voluntary organisations. These facilities serve a range of sports, including GAA, soccer, swimming, rowing, tennis, golf, gyms and athletics. The natural and built environment of the area also supports other sports and leisure activities such as walking, jogging, cycling and fishing. The Local Area Plan shall seek to facilitate and support this active sports sector for Carlow-Graigucullen, including increased participation and good quality sustainable facilities.

Carlow has the significant benefit of having two 3rd level institutions, the South East Technological University (SETU) and Carlow College St. Patrick's. The role of SETU as part of a multi-campus technological university will support the provision of internationally recognised higher education and research opportunities and the development of enterprise and industry in the Greater Urban Area. Separately, Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training off the Kilkenny Road in Carlow is also the largest provider of further education and training courses in the southeast region.



Education

Educational facilities are a key part of social and community infrastructure and act as an anchor to wider social and community facilities in Carlow-Graigucullen. The Greater Urban Area is served by 11 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. An educational facility for autism and complex needs has also been permitted on the outskirts of Graigucullen. Carlow and Laois County Councils will liaise with the Department of Education in relation to any requirements for additional school facilities.



Childcare

The provision of childcare facilities is essential to meet the needs of the residents of Carlow-Graigucullen. It is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure that enables people to participate more fully in society and can make a significant contribution to the early years of childhood development. Increasing workforce participation, as well as changing lifestyles, has increased the demand for childcare facilities in communities.



Carlow and Laois County Councils role in relation to childcare facilities is in implementing national guidelines and local policies and in ensuring sufficient childcare facilities are provided alongside new development as appropriate. Facilities must be suitably located, of a high quality, inclusive of all children, including children with disabilities or special needs.

Healthcare

Healthcare facilities are essential to ensure that the residents of Carlow-Graigucullen have access to the care that they need. The provision of public health care services is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). The primary role of Carlow and Laois County Councils in healthcare provision is to ensure there are adequate lands available in the JULAP to provide for new healthcare facilities and the expansion or adaptation of existing facilities.

Arts and Culture

The arts and culture sector is a vibrant element of social life in Carlow-Graigucullen, impacting across a wide range of areas from tourism to cultural development. The developing cultural quarter in Carlow Town includes the VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art and George Bernard Shaw Theatre.

The JULAP will incorporate policy that supports and promotes opportunities for everyone to participate in the arts and cultural life of Carlow-Graigucullen, by facilitating the provision of well-managed sustainable infrastructure and by adopting a flexible approach to the incorporation of arts and cultural facilities in the development or refurbishment of community facilities.





Library Service

A wide range of services are provided by Carlow Central Library in Carlow Town, including access to technology, e-services, children's services, special collections, local studies, genealogy and archives, community information, lifelong learning initiatives, and regular events and programmes. The redevelopment and extension of Carlow Central Library, which serves residents of both Carlow and Graiguecullen, is a priority of Carlow County Council.

Fire Service

Carlow Fire and Rescue Service operates out of the Fire Service Headquarters, which is strategically located in Carlow Town.



Other Services

Other local services such as small shops, post offices and public houses provide an important service for communities and their retention is an important consideration in the sustainable development of communities.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can the JULAP assist in meeting community infrastructure needs?
- How can the value of existing community facilities be maximised?
- What policies should be included in the JULAP to support the delivery of education, healthcare and childcare facilities?
- How can the JULAP assist in promoting social inclusion?

10. Heritage, Amenity and Landscape

Heritage is integral to the identity of Carlow-Graiguecullen, providing it with a sense of place, character, and distinctiveness, reflective of the life and culture of its people.

The Carlow - Graiguecullen Urban Area features valued and varied heritage assets from the ancient formation of the town at a crossing point of the River Barrow around the defensive Carlow Castle of medieval date, and later on a military barracks and a centre of learning at Carlow College. The area was also located at the edge of the Pale, enriched by its good agricultural hinterland and the access to other urban areas and trade provided by way of the River Barrow.

Mechanisms for the protection of heritage features, landscapes and sites are provided through Planning and Development legislation, together with Wildlife, National Monuments and Habitats legislation. The JULAP will be an important medium that brings the various forms of heritage and landscape protection together.

Natural Heritage

Designated nature conservation sites provide important habitats for flora and fauna and contribute to the overall biodiversity of the area. The most significant natural heritage feature for the Greater Urban Area is the River Barrow, which



separates the historic core of Carlow town from Graiguecullen on the western side of the River. The River Barrow is a Special Area of Conservation, designated in Europe under the Habitats Directive and may also be referred to as a Natura 2000 site. The preservation of these natural heritage assets not only enriches biodiversity, quality of life, and the identity of the area, but also provides a unique selling point in terms of local tourism and thus the local economy.



Built Heritage

The built heritage of Carlow-Graiguecullen, comprising its architectural heritage and its archaeological heritage, has a practical role in shaping a positive future for the area. It should be viewed as one of the many assets that make Carlow-Graiguecullen an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

Architectural heritage is afforded protection through the Record of Protected Structures as contained in the Carlow and Laois County Development Plans. Areas which have a special character and architectural interest may also be protected through the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). There are currently 7 ACAs within Carlow Town.



The Carlow - Graiguecullen Urban Area contains several landscape types including historic urban core, urban area, river corridors, and demesne landscapes. The JULAP will contain guidance together with policies and objectives that will seek to ensure that changes arising from developments will be sympathetic to such landscape types and provide a basis for landscape planning and management consistent with the principle of sustainable development.



Green Infrastructure

The term green infrastructure gives greater recognition to the natural environment as an asset that provides a range of benefits from nature to people, including the provision of clean water, better health and human wellbeing, flood alleviation and improved habitats for wildlife. Potential green infrastructure can include areas of biodiversity, rivers, woodlands, grassland and amenity spaces such as play areas, playing fields, parks and domestic gardens.

Archaeological heritage is the surviving material remains of human presence in the landscape left by past societies and cultures. Archaeological heritage is afforded protection through the National Monuments Acts. Well-known National Monuments located within the Greater Urban Area include Carlow Castle close to Graiguecullen Bridge.

As part of Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework (NPF), the importance of green infrastructure planning to inform the preparation of development plans is recognised and supported. This gives recognition to the environment as an asset, which if planned for in the same way as other forms of infrastructure, can provide long term benefits. There is therefore an emphasis on protecting and valuing important and vulnerable habitats, landscapes, natural heritage, and green spaces. The JULAP will seek to address the important role of green infrastructure for Carlow-Graiguecullen.

Landscape

Landscape is a significant part of peoples' lives, contributing to a sense of place and identity, and is the backdrop to which all change takes place. Human beings strongly influence landscapes, and particularly in and around urban areas such as Carlow-Graiguecullen.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Are there any buildings, group of buildings, amenity areas, views that you consider to be of merit and should be afforded protection?
- What policies should the JULAP include to protect, enhance and promote the natural and built heritage of Carlow-Graiguecullen?
- How can the Councils best promote, support, and increase awareness of the benefits of Green Infrastructure?
- What greening initiatives do you think should be considered for the Greater Urban Area and incorporated into new development proposals?

HAVE YOUR SAY

If you are interested in planning and development issues in the Carlow-Graigucullen Urban Area and wish to contribute to the shaping of its future, please make a submission to the Planning Authority at this stage before 5pm, Friday 14th October 2022.

Two information sessions for members of the public will be held on the following dates:

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS	DATE	TIME
CARLOW		
Shaw Room at Carlow Central Library Tullow Street, Carlow	Thursday 29th September	14:30-18:00

GRAIGUECULLEN

Talbot Hotel, Graigue, Portlaoise Road Carlow	Tuesday 6th October	14:30-18:00
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Your submissions may be made in the following ways:

- 1 Through the relevant consultation portal(s) listed hereunder.
Carlow County Council: consult.carlow.ie
Laois County Council: consult.laois.ie
- 2 by email to:
JointLAP@carlowcoco.ie or JointLAP@laoiscoco.ie
- 3 in writing marked "Carlow-Graigucullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan Review" and sent to the following relevant address:

Carlow County Council
Senior Executive Officer
Planning Department
Carlow County Council
Athy Road
Carlow

Laois County Council
Senior Planner
Planning Department
Laois County Council
Portlaoise
Co. Laois

Next Steps

Following the Pre-Draft consultation process, a report on submissions received relating to the relevant functional area will be prepared and presented to the Elected Members of Carlow and Laois as appropriate. Following this, a Draft Local Area Plan will be prepared and published in Q1 of 2023. A further period of public consultation will take place and it is anticipated that the Carlow Graigucullen Local Area Plan will be adopted Q3/4 of 2023.



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