



Forward Planning
Planning Department
Leitrim County Council
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Carrick-on-Shannon
Co Leitrim

Forward Planning
Planning Department
Roscommon County Council
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Roscommon
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Via online portal: www.carrickjointplan.ie

01/12/2023

RE: CARRICK ON SHANNON – JOINT LOCAL AREA PLAN (2024 – 2030) ISSUES PAPERS (PRE DRAFT CONSULTATION)

A Chara,

I refer to your notification on 12 October 2023 regarding the Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan Pre-Draft Consultation (Issues Paper). The Northern and Western Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') wish to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

The advancement of the Joint Local Area Plan ('JLAP') for Carrick-on-Shannon is identified as an objective within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 – 2023 ('RSES') (Section 3.8) and is also committed to in the Roscommon County Development Plan (2022 – '28) as well as the Leitrim County Development Plan (2023 – '29) and will clearly outline the growth of Carrick-on-Shannon to 2030 and beyond, which is welcomed.

The Assembly's comments in relation to each of the five key areas of the Issues paper are set out below, with general comments thereafter.

Housing & Communities

The RSES sets out the status of Carrick-on-Shannon as a Key Regional Town, accompanied by a clear ambition to grow Carrick-on-Shannon by at least 30%. This is reflected in the Leitrim County Development Plan, adopted earlier this year. However, in a trend which is comparable to other Key Towns, the level of residential completions and added units since 2020 has not reflected the growth ambitions for Carrick-on-Shannon, albeit, as a settlement, Carrick is continuing to grow, and this is evidenced in the Census 2022 results wherein growth of the population was recorded at 2.6% per annum between 2016 - 2022. The Assembly note the CSO boundary adjustments for Carrick-on-Shannon, which have increased the urban area to a greater extent than was previously the case. (See Appendix 1 below for comparison).

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The RSES 2 Year Monitoring Report (2020 – 2022)¹ illustrates the ongoing lag in housing output; between 2016 – 2022 the Town averaged approximately 20 units per annum. The Assembly consider that an output of approximately 80 – 100 residential units are required to bring Carrick-on-Shannon within reach of the growth ambition set out in policy hierarchy. It will therefore be important for Leitrim & Roscommon County Councils to set out a Plan which can deliver on the ambitions of the Regional Strategy, and which seeks to increase the delivery of units on Phase 1 Residential lands that are serviced/serviceable lands, as demonstrated through a capacity audit, and in the process identify the barriers currently in situ, which are creating impediments to new housing delivery.

The Serviced Sites initiative (Croi Conaithe Towns Fund) should also be evaluated by both Local Authorities in the context of Carrick-on-Shannon's future residential provision. The RSES (RPO 3.7) supports such a model across the Region, and it is particularly pressing given the ongoing market underperformance in bringing forward housing schemes in Regional Towns.

The mechanism through which compact growth can be measured (30% ambition) through RPO 3.2(c) should also be considered in the preparation of the Draft JLAP.

Climate Action & Biodiversity

The updated Government Climate Action Plan 2023 contains multiple actions which will contribute to a significant reduction in Ireland's Carbon emissions, as well as a roadmap for sectoral change in Ireland in a number of areas. Given Carrick-on-Shannon's location on the River Shannon, the p.NHA of Lough Drumharlow and the recent history of flooding in areas of the Town, the Climate Action and mitigation element of the Plan will be critical. In this regard, the Cortober area is disproportionately impacted, with lands to the East, West and North of the neighbourhood detailed via CFRAM as at High Probability Risk of a River Flood Event and this would benefit from consideration within the plan.

Regeneration & Placemaking / Economic Development

Carrick-on-Shannon has had considerable successes in Public Realm Projects, and URDF / RRDF approved projects that have added significantly to the public realm offering in the Town. Recent State incentives in respect of the renovation of derelict properties may assist in reducing the overall rate of vacancy in Town and Village Centres. Both Local Authorities may be mindful of prominent properties in Carrick-on-Shannon which could be the subject of targeted interventions, while recognising that Carrick-on-Shannon's commercial vacancy rate of 16.6% is substantially below a number of other towns in Connacht.²

The National Planning Framework highlights Carrick-on-Shannon as being a strong Regional performer in terms of Jobs / Population Ratio. The Assembly recently concluded engagement on the Draft Leitrim LECP 2023 – 2029, where the NWRA noted that in line with the Census 2022 results, which reflected strong population growth for County Leitrim, the ratio of jobs growth / population growth (Ratio 2:3) ambition should be reflected. It is accepted this ambition is a difficult indicator to fully ascertain given the increase (post Covid) of remote working, hybrid working arrangements and job location being more difficult to allocate than previously.

The Key Priorities for Carrick-on-Shannon, as outlined within the RSES will require elaboration, particularly the potential expansion of the Carrick Business Campus and the potential future

¹ <https://www.nwra.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/rses-2-year-report.pdf>

² GeoDirectory Q.2 - 2023 Commercial Buildings Report.

incremental development of an opportunity site to the East of the Town. The blue and green economy presents opportunities for communities and these should be explored within the plan.

Movement & Transport

The preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) (RPO 6.27) to be prepared in tandem with the JLAP for the Carrick-on-Shannon area and potentially other villages should focus on Sustainable Mobility and other Climate Action measures to reduce car-oriented journeys.

The progress of the N-4 upgrade, inclusive of the by-pass of Carrick-on-Shannon is outlined as a Regional priority within the RSES (RPO 6.7). It may be conceivable the project can advance to construction during the lifetime of the JLAP, which would potentially open up new opportunities for Carrick-on-Shannon in modal shift and may allow additional road-space to be utilised for modes other than the private car.

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy (Apr. 2022 – Dept. of Transport) contains an inbuilt aim the National Transport Authority will assist in the analysis of development lands and prioritise identification of sites within 1km of public transport networks. The aims of the Sustainable Mobility policy should be factored into land zonings for Carrick-on-Shannon accordingly.

Other Considerations & Concluding Comments

To achieve a shared vision for the Region, the RSES places a strong emphasis on strengthening Digital Networks to enable emerging technologies to address the challenges and to realise the opportunities digital connectivity shall deliver for our communities. RPOs 6.36 – 6.60 provides the strategy necessary to deliver smart places.

The Assembly consider that the Draft Plan would benefit from consideration on how Smart Region initiatives could contribute to the future growth of the Town.

In order to deliver on the Tourism opportunities, the Council may wish to consider how best to deliver on the ambitions of RPOs 4.9, 4.10 4.11 and 4.12, given the importance of supporting Tourism infrastructure investment including placemaking projects, and ongoing co-operation with Leitrim and Roscommon County Councils via Failte Irelands Branding proposition of Irelands Hidden Heartlands.

Finally, the Assembly wish to thank both Councils for the opportunity given to engage in the process. If you have any queries in respect of the above, then do not hesitate to revert.

Mise le meas



Denis Kelly
Director

Appendix 1

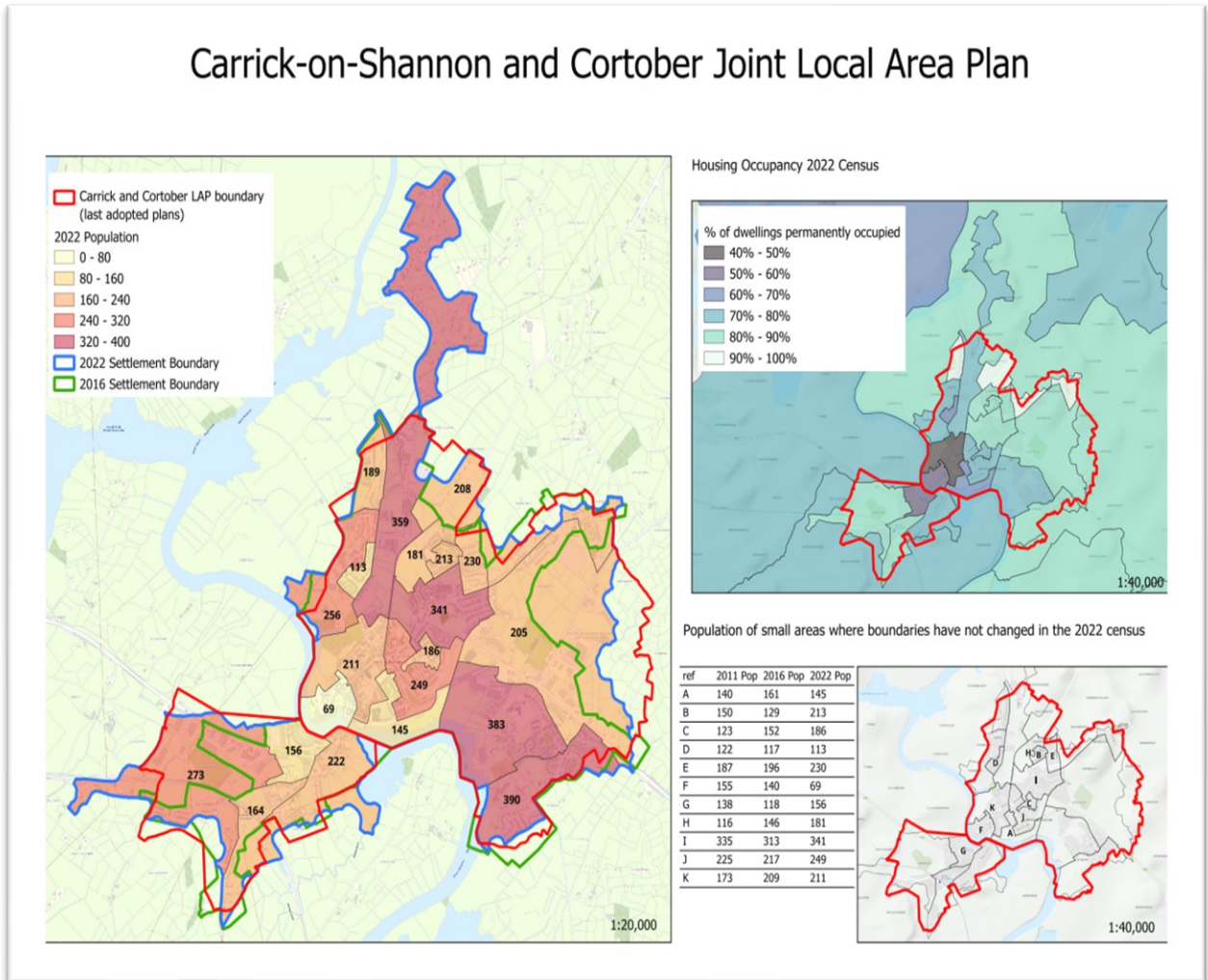


Figure1: Carrick on Shannon – Small Areas, Census 2022 & Boundary differential 2016 – 2022