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Leitrim County Council



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# Appendix 4: Social Infrastructure Audit



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Study Purpose

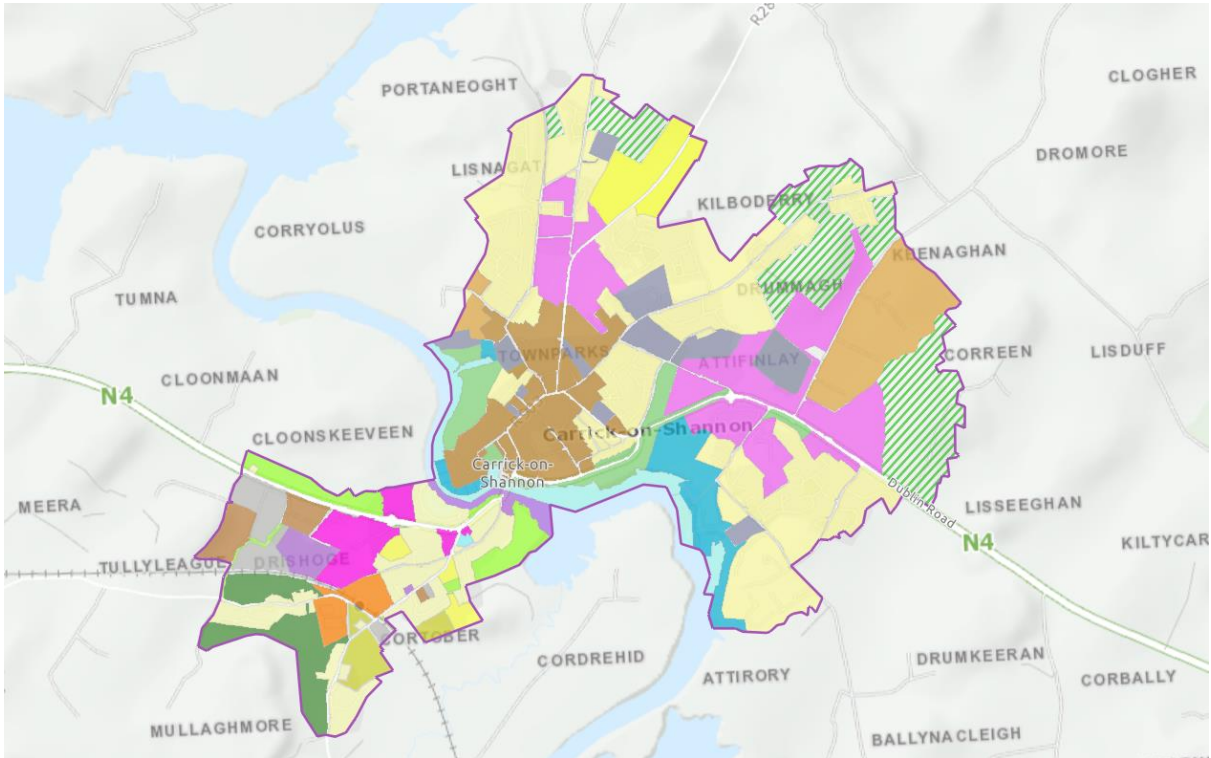
This Social Audit was prepared by Leitrim County Council, with assistance from Roscommon County Council for the purposes of informing the Joint Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030.

The function of this Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA) is to provide a demographic background to the study area, examine and analyse the existing range of social infrastructure within the study area, determine if the existing social infrastructure services and facilities supports the needs of the current and projected population and make recommendations based on anticipated settlements growth.

Social infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life. The provision of these services and facilities are crucial for health, wellbeing and social development of a town/place. Examples of social infrastructure facilities include education, childcare facilities, doctor's surgeries and community specific services as well as areas that can offer active and passive recreational activities. In addition to actual activity and function, social infrastructure facilities can provide a platform of community and social interaction which some residents may rely upon for personal wellbeing. The provision of the required levels within the area of Carrick-on-Shannon is therefore important to support the existing and planned residential base in both physical facilities and for social engagement.

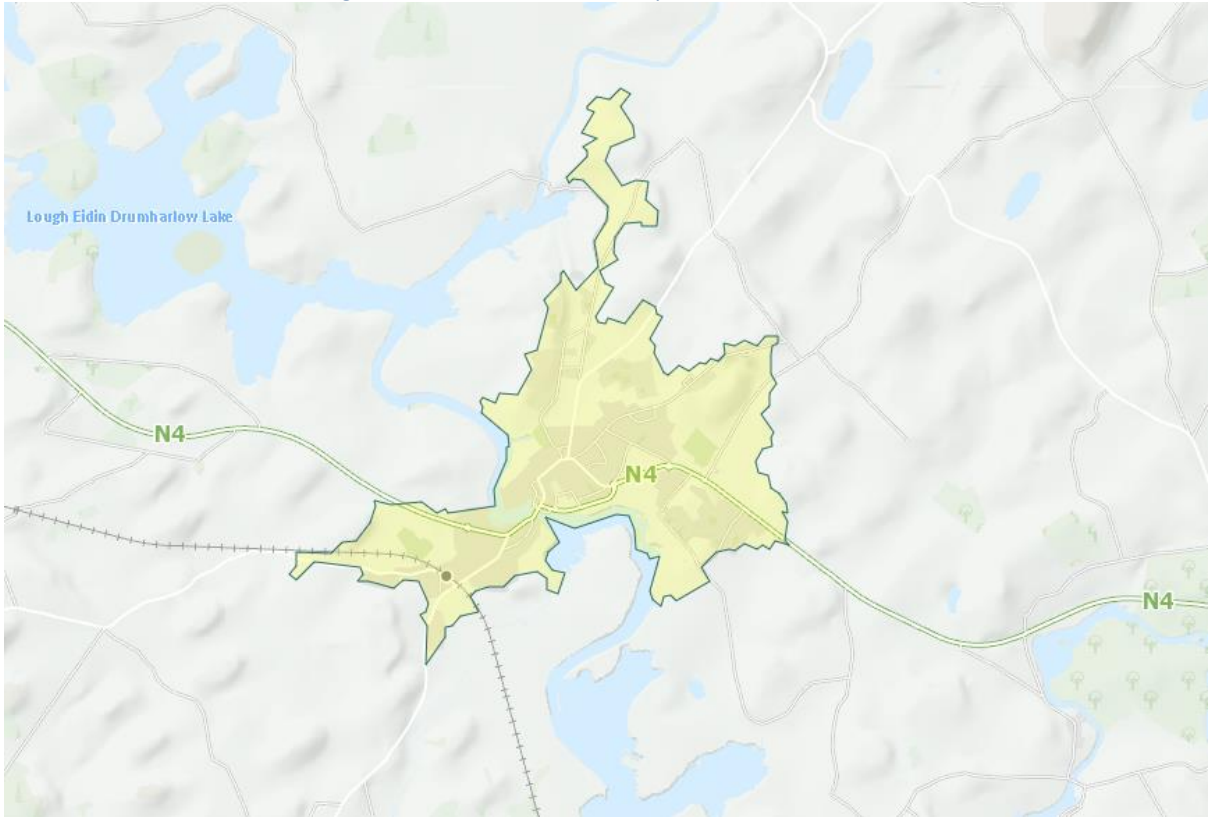
The study area for examining the existing provision of social infrastructure is outlined below in Figure 1 which includes the Local Area Plan boundary as outlined in the Carrick-on-Shannon 2010-2019 Local Area Plan as it relates to the lands located within Co. Leitrim and also the extent of the zoned lands located in the Co. Roscommon side of Carrick-on-Shannon. The study area used to provide a demographic profile of Carrick-on-Shannon is the 2022 CSO Town boundary of Carrick-on-Shannon – refer to Figure 2.

Figure 1: The Study Area



Source: Composite Map taken from Local Area Plans for Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober

Figure 2: 2022 CSO Town boundary of Carrick-on-Shannon



Source: Census Mapping CSO 2022



## 1.2 Policy Context

The assessment of 'social infrastructure' has been considered in the context of the spatial development objectives for the town of Carrick-on-Shannon set out in statutory policy documents at national, regional and local level.

The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) forms the overarching framework for the spatial development of Ireland to 2040. Sustainable and compact development within pre-existing urban areas and the provision of accessible services and facilities for all communities is a key focus of the NPF. It recognises that importance of quality of life and notes how future development in Ireland is planned will continue to be a significant determinant of people's quality of life. The NPF includes a number of points related to social infrastructure including 'National Strategic Outcome 10: Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services' which seeks to provide good accessibility to quality health services and childcare and education facilities, supported by compact growth in urban areas. Chapter 6 of the NPF states that the 'ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure and social interactions available to use and the prospect of securing employment' is intrinsic to providing a good quality of life for new and existing communities. This same chapter further includes a Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure that indicates the services and facilities necessary within settlements of different sizes to serve their populations.

The *Regional and Economic Spatial Strategy* (RSES) prepared for the Northern & Western Region supports the implementation of the NPF and priorities the creation of health and inclusive places for all. The RSES identifies Carrick-on-Shannon as a Key Town. A Key Town is a regionally strategic employment centre of significant scale that can act as regional drivers. Key priorities have been identified for the Key Towns that '*will unlock their latent potential and enable their sustainable growth as attractive key economic drivers for the towns and their rural hinterlands.*' These priorities include the preparation of "*a joint Local Area Plan with Roscommon to deliver and integrated framework for the future development of the urban area within 3 years of adoption of this strategy.*"

Chapter 7 of the above document acknowledges the importance of why place is '*intrinsic to achieving good quality of life – the quality of our immediate environment, our ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure and social interactions available to use and the prospect of securing employment, all combine to make a real difference to people's lives.*'

The RSES acknowledges that 'Quality of Life' is a key factor in retaining the current population and also in attracting more people to the region in the future and that it is determined by '*having an active and successful economy and living in a great place with an excellent education, leisure, transport, planning, housing, medical facilities and strong, safe communities.*' There are a number of regional policy objectives (RPS's) which support the provision and access to social infrastructure including RPO 7.9 which promotes the provision of high-quality accessible and suitably proportional areas of public open spaces and promote linkage with social, cultural and heritage sites and buildings and RPO 7.15 which encourages multi-agency approaches for delivering health, social care, education and community services needed by growing, diverse or isolated communities.

The importance of Carrick-on-Shannon is emphasised in the Settlement Hierarchy of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 which designates Carrick-on-Shannon as the Tier 1 Key Town as identified in the RSES. The population of Co. Leitrim could increase to 35,000-35,500 by 2026 and up to 37,000 by 2031 (based on the Implementation Roadmap for the NPF) and at least 30% of this population growth must be delivered in Carrick-on-Shannon as the key town. It is noted that there is no guidance in the RSES regarding the role of the adjoining Cortober. In the Settlement Hierarchy of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029, this 30% of all housing yield for the County to be accommodated in the town equates to 362 households. This housing yield, assuming an average household size of 2.55 (2016 & 2022 Census recorded level) would result in an additional 923 no. people or using the projected household size of 2.46 would result in an additional 891 no. persons. As mentioned above RSES provides no guidance in relation to the role of the adjoining village of Cortober, however, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 allocates 64 No. additional housing units and a population of 162 no. people for Cortober. A total of 426 housing units have therefore been identified for Carrick-on-Shannon and for the purposes of this Joint Local Area Plan this figure has been rounded up to 430 housing units. These additional housing units would provide for a population increase of 1,097 (using 2016 & 2022 average household sizes Census recorded levels) on the current 2022 census population figure of 4,743 over the course of the Development Plan periods, providing an overall population for Carrick-on-Shannon of 5,840 over the lifetime of the JLAP. The above figures are guided by the housing and population allocations for Carrick-on-Shannon Town as per the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and as per the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028.

### 1.3 Methodology

This Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA) was carried out using desktop research and on the ground inspections of the study area and its immediate environs. Also used was existing baseline data and mapping previously compiled by both Leitrim County Council and Roscommon County Council across a range of social infrastructure.

The SIA comprises of the following:

1. Community Profile – Population Dynamic

A socio-economic profile of the town of Carrick-on-Shannon based on Census 2022 providing background information relating to demographic profile, household composition, accommodation and home ownership, mobility, health and deprivation, employment and educational profile.

2. Community Profile - Existing Social Infrastructure

This baseline assessment was derived from a desk-top examination of available information, in conjunction with site visits for verification purposes which included the identification and cataloguing of existing community infrastructure features and where relevant their capacity. These are set out under a number of pre-defined themes which included Education/Training, Childcare, Health, Sports, Recreation & Open Space, Social and Community and Arts and Culture.

### 3. Future Demand Analysis

Consideration of existing social infrastructure provision relative to the existing and planned future population requirements through the application of national standards and best practice where possible.

### 4. Recommendations

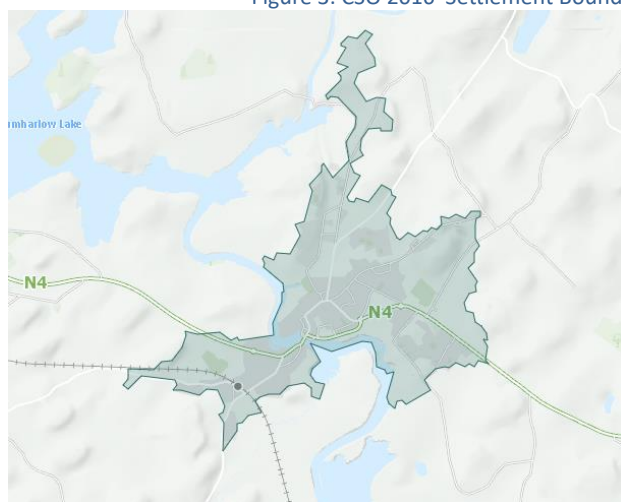
The recommendations for future social infrastructure provision which can be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Joint Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan 2024-2030.

## 2. Community Profile – Population Dynamic

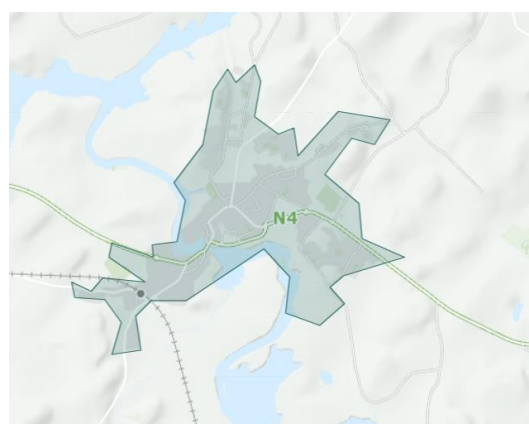
### 2.1 Demographic Profile

The total population (CSO 2022) for Carrick-on-Shannon is 4,743. While this would suggest a significant percentage increase of 16.8% on the CSO 2016 figure of 4,062, it is noted that in the CSO 2016, Carrick-on-Shannon was identified as a Settlement and the boundaries have changed between that identified in CSO 2016 (as a Settlement) and that identified in CSO 2022 (as a Town)(refer to Fig. 3 below) therefore a like for like comparison cannot readily be made. However, further to comparing both boundaries, the changes in the boundaries have resulted in the inclusion of an approximate 96 additional dwellings that were not included in 2016. Using the average 2.55 people per household figure from the 2022 & 2016 census (average for Leitrim Household used, as majority of additional houses lie in the Leitrim side of the Town), this equates to an additional 245 people to the 2016 figure. On this basis, for comparison's sake, the 2016 figure of 4,062 + the additional 245 results in a population of 4,307. Therefore, allowing for the change in the boundaries, the population of Carrick-on-Shannon has increased by approximately 436 people between 2016 and 2022 giving a comparison population of 4,498 which is a population increase of 10.7%.

Figure 3: CSO 2016 Settlement Boundary & CSO 2022 Town Boundary



Source: CSO 2022 Carrick-on-Shannon



CSO 2016 Carrick-on-Shannon

Further to the figures provided in the Census 2022, there is a higher percentage of the younger population/age profile (0-9 age cohort representing the pre-schoolers and early primary school years) at 15.6% of the total population in the town when compared to the national figure (12.4%) for the same cohort. However, overall the



0-24 age bracket at 32.6% as found in Carrick-on-Shannon is similar to the national figure of 32.3%. There is a slightly lower percentage of 65+ in the town representing 14.0% with the national figure being 15%.

Table 1: Overall Population Profile of Carrick-on-Shannon v National Profile

Age Group	Males	Females	Total	% of Total Population	National %
0-4	160	164	324	6.8%	5.7%
5-9	222	192	414	8.8%	6.7%
10-14	171	162	333	7%	7.3%
15-19	134	135	269	5.7%	6.6%
20-24	104	100	204	4.3%	6%
25-64	1,228	1,306	2,534	53.4%	52.7%
65 +	291	374	665	14.0 %	15%
Total	2,310	2,433	4,743		

Source: Census 2022

### 2.1.1 Household Composition and Family Cycle

There are 1,151 families recorded within Carrick-on-Shannon (CSO 2022 defined Town). The most common family type comprises of the 2 Person family at 43% of all families, followed by families comprising of 3 persons at 21.7%, 4 persons at 20.3%, 5 persons at 10.6% and 6 or more at 4.4%.

Of the 1,151 families 32% have no children, 28% have one child, 23.1% 2 children, 12.4% have 3 children, 3.4% have 4 children and 1.1% have 5 children or more.

The above figures are generally in line with the national figures of 31% of families that have no children, 27.1% have one child, 25.2% have 2 children, 12.2% have 3 and 4.5% have 4 or more.

The largest categorisation of family by 'family cycle' is adult at 17.2% of total family persons, followed by pre-adolescent at 14.3% where the oldest child is aged between 10-14 and then both early school (aged between 5-9) and adolescent (aged between 15-19) at 13.6% with the pre-school group at 9.2%. The pre-school (aged between 0-4) and early school (aged between 5-9) which typically represent the creche and early primary school age profile represent 22.8% of total family persons.

When compared with national figures, the adult categorisation nationally is 27% which is a significant difference to that found in Carrick-on-Shannon at just over 17%. It is noted that the pre-school and early school categorisation nationally is 21.8% which is similar to that found in Carrick-on-Shannon, though when combined with the pre-adolescent figures there is a significantly higher percentage of families with young children/adolescent 0-19 at 37.1% verses nationally at 29.9%.

### 2.1.2 Accommodation and Home Ownership

Within the study area, house/bungalow is by far the predominant housing type, accommodating 79.7% of the population with flats/apartments accommodating 21.1% and the remaining 0.2% of the population living in a mobile home/caravan. In terms of home ownership (outright ownership) is 29.1% and ownership with a mortgage accounts for 21.3% (total 50.4%) while nationally the figure is higher at 65.9% for both outright ownership and ownership with a mortgage. Within the study area 33.4% are rented from private landlords, 10.4% from the Local Authorities and 0.4% from voluntary housing bodies. The national rate is 18%, 8.4% and 1.6%. On the basis of these figures the rate of rented housing in Carrick-on-Shannon is twice that of the national figures. In terms of known number of

bedrooms, the majority of the housing is 3 bedroomed at 32.5%, followed by 4 at 27.1%, 2 at 19.1%, 1 at 6.5%, 5 at 5.3% and with the remaining 10.5% unknown.

### 2.1.3 Mobility

16.8% of households reported no car ownership and just over half of the households in Carrick-on-Shannon recorded 1 car with 28.3% of households having 2 cars.

Of those aged 5 or over, 62.1% of the population drive a car or are passengers in cars in order to get to work/school/college/childcare. The national average is 57.3%. It is noted that 20% use a sustainable form of transport to go to work/school/college/childcare, including walking, cycling, by bus or train compared to the national of 29.2%. Of those aged 5 years and over 16.7% walk or cycle to work, school, college or childcare which is similar to the national average of 16.4%.

In Carrick-on-Shannon 45.8% have less than a 15 minute travel time to work, school or college with a further 19.4% travelling between 15 minutes and 30 minutes while 3.9% have more than 90 minute commute to work, school or college.

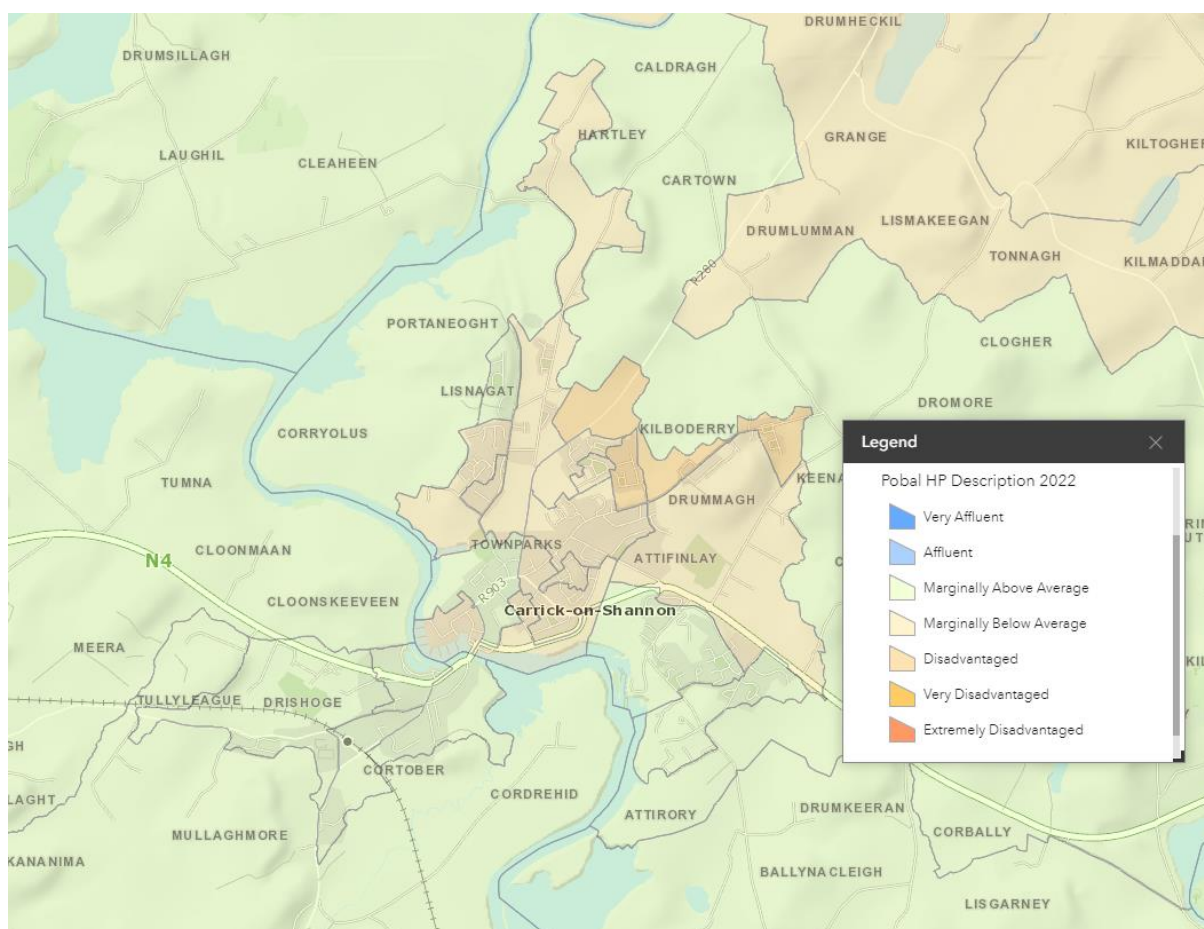
It is noted that 25.8% of those aged 15 years and over work from home compared with the national figure of 32%.

### 2.1.4 Health and Deprivation

In the CSO 2022 49% of the Carrick-on-Shannon population described their personal health as being 'Very Good' and a further 31.8% described their personal health as being 'Good' (combined 80.8%) while 12.3% described their personal health as being just 'Fair', 'Bad' or 'Very Bad'. This compares with 82.9% of the population of the State describing their health positively and 10.2% in a less positive way.

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index uses data from Census 2022, analysing ten measures of an area's levels of disadvantage. These include educational attainment, employment status and the numbers living in individual households. Within the Carrick-on-Shannon town (Figure 4 below) the Deprivation index 2022 indicates small proportions of the town on the Leitrim side are 'Marginally Above Average' however significant proportions of the Leitrim side of Carrick-on-Shannon are deemed to be 'Marginally Below Average' with one area to the north east of the town deemed 'Disadvantaged'. The entire Roscommon side of Carrick-on-Shannon is deemed 'Marginally Above Average'.

Figure 4: Deprivation index of Carrick-on-Shannon



Source: Pobal Deprivation Maps

21.7% of the population confirm that they have a disability which is generally in line with the national figure of 22%.

### 2.1.5 General Employment and Educational Profile

56% of the population of Carrick-on-Shannon aged 15 years and over are recorded as being at work which is in line with the national figure of 56.1%. The combined level of persons looking after home/family or those persons that are unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability (10.9%) is similar to the national figure of 11.2%. The largest group after the 'at work' group are those that are retired at 16% which is similar to the national figure of 15.9%. Combined short term unemployed and long term unemployed is 5.8% of the population while the national figure is 5.1%.

The largest social class in Carrick-on-Shannon is 'Managerial and Technical' (which nationally is also the case) followed by those in the category 'all others gainfully occupied and unknown' and 'non-manual'. The smallest workforce group being the 'unskilled' which is the same nationally.

The percentage of people aged 15 and over in Carrick-on-Shannon with no formal education or who dropped out of school after primary school is 8.3% which is somewhat lower than the national figure of 9.8%. The level of educational attainment in the form of those holding an honours bachelor degree, professional qualification or both is 12.1% while those who have completed a postgraduate diploma or degree is 10.5%. These figures are slightly lower than the national figures of 13.3% and 11.2% respectively.

### 2.1.6 Ethnicity and Religion

Census 2022 show 19% of the population of Carrick-on-Shannon town are citizens of a country other than Ireland. With regard to religion the vast majority of the population (68%) identify as Catholic, 13% as other religion, 12% as no religion and 7% did not state what if any religion they identified with.

## 3. Community Profile – Existing Social Infrastructure

### 3.1 Existing Social Infrastructure

Using a series of pre-defined themes an audit of social infrastructure within the town of Carrick-on-Shannon. The themes selected were education/training, childcare, health, sports and recreation, open space, social/community services, arts and culture and faith. The study area of the purposes of this audit was the boundary as identified in the Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan 2010-2019 and the boundary as identified in the Cortober Area Plan 2014-2020. This analysis of the above themes seeks to provide baseline information in relation to the extent of the existing social infrastructure in the town and the capacity and demand which will inform future recommendations.

### 3.2 Education and Training

Under this theme, primary schools, post-primary schools along with third level and further education/training will be examined. There are 2 primary schools (Scoil Mhuire and Gaelscoil Liatroma) and one secondary school (Carrick-on-Shannon Community School) in Carrick-on-Shannon. There are currently no third level educational facilities in Carrick-on-Shannon and there are limited further education/training facilities offered in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Table 2: Population Profile –School Going Age (Primary & Secondary)

Age Group	Total	% of Total Population	National %
5-12	626	13.2%	11.1%
13-17	299	6.3%	6.9%
Total	925	19.5%	18%

Source: Census 2022

#### 3.2.1 Primary and Secondary Schools

As mentioned there are 2 primary schools located within Carrick-on-Shannon. Both of these schools are located on the Leitrim side of the town. Scoil Mhuire is located on two sites within the town, one on Dublin Road and the other on Summerhill (both close to the town centre) while Gaelscoil Liatroma is located on the Castlecara Road on the outskirts of the town.

Enrolment figures for Scoil Mhuire 2023/2024 shows that 499 students are enrolled in the academic year 2023/2024 with a capacity enrolment of 528 students. The figures for Gaelscoil Liatroma is 198 students enrolled in the academic year 2023/2024 while the capacity enrolment of the school is 268. Both of the figures for 2023/2024 show an increase on the 2020/2021 figures which were 472 for Scoil Mhuire and 146 for Gaelscoil Liatroma.

Table 3: Primary Schools in Carrick-on-Shannon (2023/2024 Enrolment)

School	Capacity Enrolment	Current Enrolment	Operating Level	Capacity
Scoil Mhuire	528	499	95%	29

Gaelscoil Liatroma*	268	198	74%	70
Total	796	697	88%	99

Source: Data obtained from schools directly in January 2024

\*includes 2 Autism units (6 students per unit). While there are also pre-school and after school facilities these figure are not included in above figures.

The Department of Education enrolment figures (preliminary results) for the academic year 2023/2024 show 694 students were enrolled in the Carrick-on-Shannon Community School. This is an increase on the 2020/2021 figure of 666. It is noted that planning permission for a 473m<sup>2</sup> extension to the Carrick-on-Shannon Community School was permitted in May of 2023 wherein it was stated that it was envisaged that student numbers may increase to 1,057 in the future. Work as yet to commence on this extension.

Table 4: Second Level Schools in Carrick-on-Shannon (2023/2024 Enrolment – Preliminary results)

School	Male	Female	Total
Carrick-on-Shannon Community School	358	366	694

Source: Department of Education

The population profile of Carrick-on-Shannon (School Going Age) as outlined in Table 2 shows a higher percentage of primary school age (5-12) and secondary school age (13-17) at 19.5% with the national average being 18% of the population.

### 3.2.3 Third Level and Further Education/Training Facilities

There are no third level educational facilities in Carrick-on-Shannon. Given the geographical spread of the Atlantic Technical University (ATU) campus buildings throughout the west and northwest (as indicated in Fig.2.1 below, the potential to host an outreach branch of the ATU in Carrick-on-Shannon, focusing on the tourism, 'fintech' or 'medtech' industries should be explored.

The National Learning Network centre is based in Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim Road, who offer various FETAC training and education courses which are funded by the HSE and MSLETB.

Of the 340 further education/training courses on offer through MSLETB in 2024, 14 of them are provided in Carrick-on-Shannon, ranging from L3 Catering/Hairdressing to Beginner Computers to Adult Literacy and are facilitated either in the Leitrim Community Training Centre, the BTEI Centre, or the Adult Literacy Service.

Figure 5: Location of existing ATU campus locations and proposed location in Carrick-on-Shannon





Source: Consolidate, Create and Connect Carrick-on-Shannon – Planning for a Sustainable Community

### 3.2.4 Demand Analysis

Given that the population projection for the lifetime of the Plan is an additional 1,097 persons in Carrick-on-Shannon it is anticipated that additional education provision will be required if this population projection and that as outlined in both the *Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029* and the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028* materialises. As mentioned the existing primary and post primary facilities in the town of Carrick-on-Shannon serve not just the town itself but the surrounding hinterlands. The Department of Education, in their submission on the Pre-Draft Issues Paper, notes that there may be a requirement for additional education provision at primary and post-primary level if the population projections in both the *Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029* and the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028* materialise. The Department also anticipates that additional special education needs provision at both primary and post primary level will be required in the future throughout the country and this may result in schools requiring additional accommodation to meet this growing need. The figures as outlined below would cement this view.

Census 2022 data indicates that there are 626 children of primary school going age located within the town of Carrick-on-Shannon. The number of students enrolled in the primary schools in Carrick-on-Shannon for the academic year 2023/2024 is 796 which is 170 pupils above those within the primary school age bracket for the town. Primary schools in Carrick-on-Shannon are hosting 17% of the Census 2022 population, which reflects the larger catchment that the town serves. Applying the current figure of 17% (to take account of the wider catchment) to the projected population growth during the lifetime of the Plan to 2030 (1,097 persons) will require an additional 187 primary student places to be made available. It is noted that currently there is an overall combined capacity of 99 spaces suggesting that

current demand is being met, however, looking towards 2030 there would be a future capacity shortfall of 88 primary student spaces.

Census 2022 indicates that 6% (299) of the Carrick-on-Shannon population are of secondary school going age located. The number of students enrolled in the secondary school in Carrick-on-Shannon for the academic year 2023/2024 is 694 which is 395 pupils above those within the secondary school age bracket for the town. The post-primary school currently hosts 15% of the Census 2022 population which reflects the larger catchment area that the town serves. Applying the current figure of 15% (to take account of the wider catchment) to the projected population growth during the lifetime of the Plan to 2030 (1,097 persons) will require an additional 165 secondary student places to be made available. Based on these numbers, the permitted 473m<sup>2</sup> extension to the Carrick-on-Shannon Community School would offset the additional future demand for secondary student spaces.

### 3.3 Childcare

The two overarching sub-categories of childcare services as defined by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency of Ireland are Early Years Services (those not yet attending school) and School Age Services (those attending school).

Table 5: Population Profile – childcare and school going age

Age Group	Total	% of Total Population	National %
0-4	324	6.8%	5.7%
5-12	626	13.2%	11.1%
Total	950	20%	16.8%

Source: Census 2022

There are currently no recent or current planning applications for any additional childcare facilities, to those listed below, in Carrick-on-Shannon.

The following tables outline the various service providers and the number of children that they can accommodate.

Table 6: Early Years Services

Service Name	Address	Age Profile	No. of Children Service can Accommodate	Capacity
Breffini Childcare	Breffini Family Resource Centre, Breffini Crecent, Carrick-on-Shannon	0-6	47	None
Shannonside Community Childcare Centre	Shannonside View, Rosebank,	0-6	22	None

	Carrick-on-Shannon.			
Kinderkare Day Nurseries	Lisnagot, Carrick-on-Shannon.	2-6	66	5
Naíonra Kinderkare	Gaelscoil Liatroma, Castlecarra Road, Carrick-on-Shannon.	2-6	22	None
The Playhouse	7 The Wells, Cortober, Carrick-on-Shannon	1-6	48	None
<b>Total Capacity</b>			<b>205</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Tusla &amp; Service Providers

Table 7: School Age Services

Service Name	Address	Age Profile	No. of Children Service can Accommodate	Capacity
Kinderkare	Lisnagot, Carrick-on-Shannon.	4-12	36	8
Naíonra Kinderkare Pre-School & After-School	Gaelscoil Liatroma, Castlecarra Road, Carrick-on-Shannon.	4-12	44	None
Carrick Early Bird & Afterschool	Presentation House, Carrick-on-Shannon	4-12	30	None
Hartley Afterschool	Hartley, Cloonseebane, Carrick-on-Shannon.	4-12	36	None
Shannonside Community Childcare Centre	Shannonside View, Rosebank, Carrick-on-Shannon.	4-12	38	None
<b>Total Capacity</b>			<b>184</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: Tusla &amp; Service Providers

Of the 7 different child care and after-school providers only one has limited capacity to accommodate 5 additional early year child care spaces and 8 afterschool places, with the remaining providers operating at 100% capacity.

### 3.3.1 Demand Analysis

When comparing the existing capacity of the services in the town with the number of children aged 0-12, as based on the most recent Census date from 2022, it is clear that there are more children in the town than there are formal childcare/after school spaces. It is acknowledged that there are likely a number of smaller facilities which accommodate 3 children or less which do not need to be registered and so would not fall under the remit of Tusla, and also that a proportion of children will be minded in the home environment by family members or will access childcare outside of the study area (e.g. adjacent to parents' workplace).

While appendix 2 of the *Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (June 2001) document establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in a new housing development, historically, given the nature and size of Carrick-on-Shannon, planning applications for housing developments tend to be substantially smaller in size therefore not requiring the provision of the above-mentioned childcare facility. There will therefore be a reliance on the private sector to provide such facilities independent of any housing development. It is notable that there have been no planning applications within the last 7 years for any childcare facilities in the town of Carrick-on-Shannon.

As a general percentage of the potential future population increase of 1,097, using the Census 2022 average of 20 % of the Carrick-on-Shannon population falling into the 0-12 age bracket, it is expected that this would result in an additional 219 children eligible for childcare in this age bracket over the period of the Plan.

As the figures in Table 8 clearly indicate the existing childcare are currently capable of accommodating 41% of eligible children (0-12 year olds). In the absence of the provision of any additional providers of Childcare Services over the lifetime of the Plan, and if all existing facilities providing Childcare Services continue to operate at current capacity levels, there will only be capacity for 33% of eligible children in the 0-12 age cohort should this cohort remain at 20% of the population by 2030.

Table 8: Population Aged 0-12 compared to Early Years & School Age Services Capacity

Population		Total Capacity of Early Years & School Age Services	% of Eligible Children Accommodated
Current Population aged 0-12 years (Census 2022)	950	389	41%
Projected Population aged 0-12 by 2030	1,169	389	33%

Source: Census 2022

On the basis of the current capacity and number of childcare facilities – both Early Years and School Age need to be increased significantly to meet current and future demand.

### 3.4 Health

The assessment of health facilities included General Practitioners, health centres, dentists, pharmacy care and other related facilities.

There is a total of 7 full time GPs, 5 of which currently operate from the Carrick Medical Centre located in the HSE Primary and Mental Health Care Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon which was opened in 2021. The HSE Primary and Mental Health Care Centre 3,015 m<sup>2</sup> in size, comprises of a medical centre, an out of office hours medical centre and retail pharmacy at ground floor level with primary and mental health care facilities provided at ground, first and second floor levels. Along with a GP service (including NowDoc), some of the other services provided include a public health and community nursing service, cardiac diagnostics, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, dental services, addiction services, and a psychology service. Planning permission was granted

for a medical centre in Cortober in September 2021 in which 3 GP consultations rooms were proposed. Works have yet to commence on this development.

St. Patrick's Community hospital currently provides care to residents (46 bed- mainly long term stay) primarily requiring nursing and/or palliative care (HIQA inspection report 2023). This facility provides for some care for those with dementia and others who are young chronic sick persons under 65 years of age. It is anticipated that work on the new HSE community nursing unit in Carrick-on-Shannon which will replace St. Patrick's Community Hospital is to commence towards the end of 2024, providing a 90 bed community nursing unit comprising of 50 long stay beds, 20 short stay beds and 20 dementia beds.

There is an existing permission for a further nursing home, privately operated on Castlecarr Road (P.19/136 refers). Planning permission was granted for this development in September 2019 and works have yet to begin.

The HSE was recently granted planning permission (P.23/60154 refers) for a community dwelling providing short term respite services to children & young adults (18 to 28 years old) which is a welcomed proposal for the town.

The town is well served by pharmacies with a total of 4 pharmacies. There is one optician and 4 private physiotherapy practices within the town along with a sports recovery and injury clinic. The town is also served by a foot clinic (located within one of the physiotherapy practices) and a chiropractor located in Cortober. The Leitrim/Cavan Children's Disability Network Team is now located in what was the NowDoc building in Cortober. There are two dental practices in the town.

St. Ciaran's Day Centre offers a range of activities to adults with a diagnosis of intellectual disability and it is located beside Sunbeam Lodge Community Group Home and Sunbeam House Children's Respite Services in Summerhill. Tus Nua (Rehab Group) is a resource centre which is located off Main Street, supporting individuals with disabilities. Also supporting people with disabilities is the Irish Wheelchair Association

### 3.4.1 Demand Analysis

Census 2022 shows that circa 81% of the population of Carrick-on-Shannon considered themselves to be in very good or good health with circa 12% describing their personal health as being just fair, bad or very bad.

There would not appear to be any national standard for health provision in Ireland relating to the provision of primary care centres or the number of doctors in an area, however it is noted that the HSE estimates that a primary care centre can serve a population of between 10,000 and 20,000 people.

On the basis of the current population of Carrick-on-Shannon of 4,743 (and it is accepted that the town serves a larger catchment than the boundary of the town as defined in the Census 2022), the provision of a Primary and Mental Health Care Centre in the town is a welcomed improvement on and amalgamation of previously dispersed provision of such services. In terms of the number of GP's, in 2022 the head of GP Industrial Relations at the Irish Medical Organisation stated that there was an average of 0.69 GPs per 1,000 population in Ireland and that an average of between 1.02 and 1.1 per 1,000 population is needed (<https://www.thejournal.ie/more-gps-needed-5664914-Jan2022/>). The current doctor ratio to population ratio in Carrick-on-Shannon is 1.48 per 1,000 population with 7 full



time doctors in 2 locations within the town. The Carrick-on-Shannon figure currently exceeds the national (2022) figure of GP's per 1,000 population (0.69) and target figures of between 1.02 - 1.1. While it would fall to 1.20 GP's by 2030 on the basis of the future projected population of 5,840 if the current number of GP's was to remain at 7, this figure still exceeds the national average figure and also exceeds the target figures above.

Based on the projected future population of Carrick-on-Shannon 2 additional GP's would be required to maintain the current ratio of 1.48 GP's per 1,000 population by 2030. While permission has been granted for a medical centre on the Cortober side of Carrick-on-Shannon that would have the potential to increase the number of GP's from 7 to 10, works have yet to commence on site. Should the additional 3 No. GP's materialise, this would bring the future ratio of 1.71 GP's per 1,000 population based on the projected population of 5,840. As already mentioned, it is accepted that Carrick-on-Shannon serves a larger catchment area outside of the scope of this study, however based on the number of GP's that the head of GP Industrial Relations predicts is needed (between 1.02 and 1.1 per 1,000 population), these figures would indicate that the projected 10 No. of GP's would serve a population of between 9,000 - 9,800. While healthcare and medical facilities are provided by a range of public, private and voluntary agencies, the JLAP endeavours to facilitate the provision of such facilities in development proposals in consultation with the relevant bodies and in tandem with a growing population.

There is a growing ageing population in Ireland. Currently 14% (665) of the population of Carrick-on-Shannon population falls into the aged 65 and over cohort and having regard to the fact that there is an aging population in Ireland the percentage of those aged 65 and over is likely to be higher than 14% of the overall population into the future.

The only available residential/nursing care currently in Carrick-on-Shannon is in St. Patrick's Community Hospital which has a 46 bed capacity mainly for those requiring nursing and/or palliative care. Should the percentage of older people remain at 14% of the population then the figure of those aged 65 and older by 2030 would increase from 665 to 818. Based on HSE figures <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/residentialcare/> approximately 5% of all older people need residential or nursing home care. 5% of those currently in the 65+ age cohort results in a figure of 33 people in Carrick-on-Shannon likely needing to avail of residential or nursing home care while 5% of the future cohort within this age category would result in 41 people needing residential or nursing home care. Based on these figure the current bed spaces meet current demand for the Town of Carrick-on-Shannon, however the town has a catchment which extends beyond the town boundary of Carrick-on-Shannon.

Assuming that the permitted nursing homes are constructed over the lifetime of the plan (providing 180 beds), in terms of care of the elderly, these facilities would cater for 27% of those aged 65 and over (665) as outlined in the Census 2022. Going forward these bed spaces would cater for 22% (818) those aged 65 and over should this cohort remain at 14% of the population by 2030. Based on HSE figures approximately 5% of all older people will need residential or nursing home care which would mean that the 180 bed spaces would more than accommodate the future needs of the residents of Carrick-on-Shannon (33 current residents and 41 future residents) however, it is recognised that these

nursing homes (when/if constructed) will have a catchment which extends beyond the town boundary of Carrick-on-Shannon.

### 3.5 Sports, Recreation and Open Space

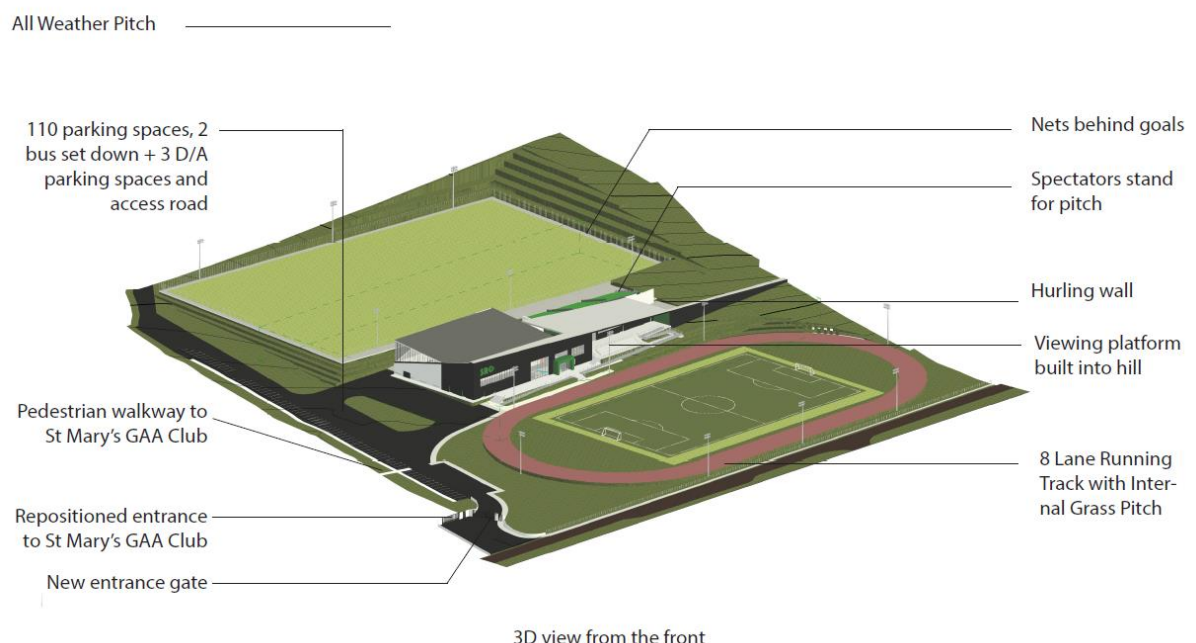
Sports and Recreation infrastructure include playgrounds, sports centres and formal club facilities.

In terms of sport centres, the Aura Leisure Centre currently would be considered to be the main sports centre serving the town of Carrick-on-Shannon, in which a gym, swimming pool and 2 No. all weather pitches (measuring 0.19ha) are provided. However, works have recently begun on a multi-use sports facility on a site along the Castlecara Road, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. The site is located on an existing green field site to the north east of Carrick-On-Shannon Town centre. The proposed site is located adjacent to two existing GAA pitches (Páirc Séan Mac Diarmada & St. Mary's GAA). This facility will be an all inclusive Recreational and Multi-sport Campus servicing the Upper Shannonside Region. It will service a wide range of sporting and recreational pursuits catering for junior and senior participants, teams and individuals, amateurs and elite athletes across a range of field, track and indoor disciplines. The purpose of the Shannonside Regional Recreation Campus is to build a regional sports campus to serve the needs of the entire community. A campus that will ensure that everyone, regardless of their ability, age or gender, can play, perform and participate in their chosen recreational activity to their best ability.

This regional sporting facility includes the following:

- one full size all weather pitch,
- 8 lane running track with an internal grass pitch & athletics field,
- indoor basketball courts,
- gym,
- changing rooms,
- function rooms,
- physiotherapy rooms,
- hurling wall,
- stand & viewing area,
- canteen,

Figure 6: 3D View of the Permitted Regional Recreation Campus



The town of Carrick-on-Shannon has three number GAA pitches namely 1 pitch associated with Avant Money Páirc Séan Mac Diarmada and 1 pitch St. Mary's GAA, both of which are located beside each other to the northeast of the town, with St. Mary's second pitch located to the north of the town along Park Lane. Páirc Séan Mac Diarmada is the home of Leitrim GAA's football and hurling teams and has a 3,000 seat covered stand capacity with an overall capacity of 9,331.

The River Shannon supports a number of recreational facilities which include a strong angling and boating tradition in the town. The town is also home to the oldest Rowing Clubs in the country – Carrick-on-Shannon Rowing Club, which was founded in 1836, the Rowing Club is now located on the Leitrim side of Carrick-on-Shannon but was originally located on the Roscommon side of the town,

There are a number of private gyms operating in the town which include CrossFit Carrick, Train & Gain, Morris Martial Arts and D&S Fitness & Gym.

There is a sports complex located beside the Aura Leisure complex in which indoor basketball and squash can be played. There is the Carrick-on-Shannon Athletic Club based in Carrick-on-Shannon and also the Tennis Club which is located in the centre of the town of Carrick-on-Shannon, beside which there is a bowling green. Carrick Town FC is located on the Cortober side of Carrick-on-Shannon and while located outside of the town boundaries, there is also the Carrick-on-Shannon Rugby Club which is to the north of the town. Carrick-on-Shannon gymnastics club is located in the Northwest Business Park.

In terms of outdoor playgrounds, there is only two such facilities, one of which is a publicly owned and the other privately owned. The publicly owned playground is located beside Aura Leisure Centre. This measures 0.0951ha. The other privately owned playground is located at the Family Resource Centre (Breffni Community Development CLG) which measure 0.02 ha.

While there are pockets of amenity greenspace throughout the town, in terms of the provision of formal open space (Parks and Gardens) the town of Carrick-on-Shannon is served by a linear park/riverside amenity area which runs along the Shannon from the Cortober side of up to the Dublin Road roundabout east of the town and on towards Aura Leisure Centre. The combined area of which is approximately 4.21ha (plus approximately 1.3ha of wetlands along the River Shannon). In addition to the above, the People's Park (approximately 0.27 ha – tennis courts and bowling green areas not included as measured under 'all outdoor sports') is located to the rear of the Tennis Club and the Rowing Club (between Quay Road and St. George's Terrace).

The Public Realm project (recently completed) and the Carrick Destination Town Scheme (partially completed), on the Leitrim side of the town have combined to visually enhanced the streetscape enormously providing a greater sense of place and connectivity between streets and enhanced streetscapes and generally adding to the amenities of the areas involved. A continuation of these projects/schemes on the Cortober side of the town would aid in visually improving, connecting and integrating both sides of the town.

### 3.5.1 Demand Analysis

There are no relevant standards for sports facilities in Ireland. Consideration has therefore been given to comparative recommendations from UK guidance, specifically the 'Fields in Trust (FIT)' recommendations which set out benchmark guidance for the provision of amenity and open space use in urban planning and design – refer to Table 3.4 below.

The 7 No. playing pitches (3 GAA pitches, 2 Soccer pitches and 2 all weather pitches) located within Carrick-on-Shannon measure a combined 5.67ha. It should be noted that the Regional Recreation Campus as mentioned above is currently under construction in which an additional all weather pitch (1.52ha), a grass pitch (0.03 ha) and an athletics field plus an 8 lane running track (0.12 ha) is currently being developed as part of this Campus. For the purpose of this exercise, the above facilities are included in the hectare figures provided in Table 9 below.

There are 2 No. outdoor tennis courts located within the town measuring 0.11 ha. and 1 No. bowling green measuring 0.1ha.

In carrying out the open space audit, guidance on open space has been categorised by typology of use and based on the one of the FIT typologies namely 'Parks and Gardens'. Fields in Trust define Parks and Gardens as 'Formal greens spaces including urban parks, country parks, forest parks and formal gardens.

Table 9: Formal Outdoor Space and Open Space V Actual Provision in Carrick-on-Shannon and Future Provision Needs

Type	Recommended Hectares per 1,000 population	Actual ** Provision in Carrick-on-Shannon	Requirement Based on Current Population (4,743)	Requirement Based on Projected Population (5,840)	Additional Future Requirements in Ha
Playing Pitches	1.2	7.22 ha	5.69 ha	7.00 ha	-----
All outdoor sports *	1.6	6.55 ha	7.58 ha	9.34 ha	2.79 ha
Equipped/Designated play areas	0.25	0.12 ha	1.19 ha	1.46 ha	1.34 ha
Other outdoor Provision (MUGA, Skating Park)	0.30	0 ha	1.42 ha	1.75 ha	1.75 ha
Parks and Gardens	0.80	4.48	3.79	4.67	0.19 ha

Source: Fields in Trust (FIT) Recommended Benchmark Guidelines

\*Includes playing pitches and remainder encompasses courts/bowling greens/athletics – natural or artificial

\*\* Includes figures for new Regional Sports Campus figures currently under development (doesn't relate to Parks and Gardens)

As the above Table indicates, Carrick-on-Shannon currently and into the future (2030) is served by a sufficient number of outdoor playing pitches with there being somewhat of a shortage within the category 'All Outdoor Sports' with 1.38 per 1,000 population as opposed to the recommended figure of 1.6 per 1,000.

The above Table clearly shows a severe lack of equipped and designated play areas and based on the Census 2022 population the current playground provision is 0.03 per 1,000 people which is considerable short of the 0.25 benchmark. The town of Carrick-on-Shannon would need to provide for an additional 1.34ha by 2030 to meet the benchmark standard.

The town of Carrick-on-Shannon fails to provide any 'Other Outdoor Provision' such as MUGA's or skating parks and would need to provide for 1.75 ha by 2030 to meet the benchmark standard.

While Carrick-on-Shannon would appear on a quantitative bases to be reasonably well provided for in the area of Parks and Gardens, (with additional future requirements of just 0.19ha), the parks do not provide or contain any active uses, for public use, such as football pitches, playgrounds, outdoor gym equipment etc. that would normally be expected to be found in parks. While it is noted that the People's Park provides Tennis Courts (and a bowling Green), the courts are for the use of members of the Carrick-on-Shannon Tennis Club only. The quality of the open space in general falls short as it is lacking the provision of active recreational facilities.

### 3.6 Social and Community

Social and Community services tend to be varied in nature and can include general civic services as well as targeted services for specific sections of the community. The provision of social and community services is important in the community.

There are 13 social/community services identified within the study area. The Garda Station, the Fire Station, the Post Office, the Court Services, the Library, Carrick-on-Shannon Parish Office, Breffni Community Development CLG (Family Resource Centre providing services including family support



services, disability initiatives, youth café, training and education), Foroige NYP, Leitrim Volunteer Centre, Carrick-on-Shannon Active Age, Tus Nua Centre, Citizens Information Centre and the Men's Shed.

In addition to the above Carrick-on-Shannon has a very active Tidy Towns group and a Heritage Group.

The 2022 census showed that 68% of the population identified as being catholic, 13% were another religion, 12% no religion and 7% did not respond. St. Mary's cemetery was established circa 1940 and has circa 1820 plots, of which circa 420 (23%) are currently available. A conservative estimate of the capacity of St. Mary's Cemetery based on an average of 20 burials per year (2023 figures) and assuming 1 person per plot, is that there is sufficient capacity for the next 20 plus years. As cremations are becoming more and more popular (with the closest crematorium being located in Cavan Town), and with typically more than 1 person per plot, the capacity of the graveyard is likely to extend well beyond 20 years.

### 3.6.1 Demand Analysis

There are no Irish standards for the provision of social and community services. There is, however, a UK benchmark of 0.3 community facilities per 1,000 population\* which indicates, when applied, that Carrick-on-Shannon has a ratio of 1.9 per 1,000 population (based on 9 community facilities – excluding the Garda Station, Fire Station, the Post Office and the Courts Service). This would suggest that Carrick-on-Shannon is very well served with community services and that no additional community or social services will be required to serve the future population increase. This benchmark figure is acknowledged as being quite crude as it does not distinguish between the various kinds of services, measuring just their quantity. It is further acknowledged that as a Key Town, Carrick-on-Shannon serves a wider catchment who use many of the services and while the ratio of services may seem sufficient, the nature of the provision of future services may need to vary as may their capacity.

It is notable in a town the size of Carrick-on-Shannon that there is no dedicated Community Hall/Centre. Based on local knowledge and social media, many community organisations have been left without a base to meet since the Hall adjoining Scoil Mhuire National School was reclaimed as a classroom. There is a need for a dedicated Community Hall/Centre to serve the town of Carrick-on-Shannon.

The location of the library in Carrick-on-Shannon has been one of some debate in recent years, and notwithstanding its relatively recent move from Park Lane to a larger premises in a more central location on Bridge Street, it continues to be the subject of some debate. A number of the pre-draft submissions made reference the need to provide a more modern enhanced library facility with further investment and expansion of its services being needed in the town to deliver services to local communities and visitors to the town.

\*Barton et al. (2010). Shaping Neighbourhoods: For Local Health and Global Sustainability 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London: Routledge

### 3.7 Arts and Culture

The town of Carrick-on-Shannon serves as a vibrant and popular arts and cultural hub for Leitrim and the northwest. The arts and cultural centre for the town of Carrick-on-Shannon is centred mainly in two premises:

- The Dock which provides cultural opportunities, educational workshops, theatre/music/literature venue/performances, art exhibitions, cinema screenings and is also a venue for the Leitrim Design House which *'nurtures Irish craftsmanship and assists small craft & design businesses to develop and showcase their designs'*.
- St. George's Heritage & Visitors Centre houses a small historical exhibition that includes artefacts and interpretive material depicting the 'Twin Traditions' that mingle ancient Gaelic roots with Plantation culture. The centre is linked with the Carrick-on-Shannon & District Historical Society and it ties into the Costello Memorial Chapel and the Famine Workhouse and Graveyard. Various cultural, historical and musical events are also hosted in the venue (both the visitors centre and in St. George's Church itself).

The Breffini Players are a drama group that is based in Carrick-on-Shannon. The Millennium Choir is also based in Carrick-on-Shannon and Irish Music and Bluegrass sessions are regularly held in Cryan's pub. There is 4 screen cinema located in Cortober.

Carrick plays hosts to a number of festivals and events each year, with the Carrick Carnival being one of the larger ones.

#### 3.7.1 Demand Analysis

The provision of arts and cultural facilities and services typically relates to the spend per capita in the given area as opposed to the provision of physical infrastructure. As there is no record of such spending in Carrick-on-Shannon, it is not possible to project how many arts and cultural services would need to be provided for an increase in population of the area.

## 4 Recommendations

This Social Infrastructure Audit has identified certain existing shortfalls and certain specific future requirements in the provision of community infrastructure facilities for the town of Carrick-on-Shannon. These requirements are based on current and projected population growth as provided for in the Core Strategies of both the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 and the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028. The recommendations are based on the population growing by 1,097 to 5,840 by 2030. This assessment can inform the future spatial development objectives for the Carrick-on-Shannon Joint Local Area Plan 2024-2030 and in this regard makes a number of recommendations.

### 4.1 Education and Training

Of the two primary schools in the town one is operating at capacity (95%) while the other (Gaelscoil Liatroma) is operating at 74% capacity. Based on project growth the number of primary school places required by 2030 will be 771 assuming this age group (5-12) continues at 13.2% of the population.

Primary school capacity is currently at 796 suggesting that there is sufficient capacity though essentially only in the Gaelscoil Liatroma.

However, as outlined under Section 3.2.4, the enrolment numbers for 2023/2024 in both primary schools currently cater for 796 students which is 170 students above those within the primary school age bracket in the town and account for 17% of the population (as opposed to 12.2% of the school going age in the study area). This figure reflects the larger catchment area that the town serves. Applying the current figure of 17% to the projected population growth during the lifetime of the Plan to 2030 would result in the need for an additional 88 primary student spaces. On the basis of a 1:23 teacher pupil ratio (Department of Education Circular 0006/2023) this would equate with a further 4 classrooms. This could be provided within existing schools where there is capacity to expand or through the provision of a new school. This new school option could be in the form of an amalgamation of the two campus buildings that currently serve Scoil Mhuire and its restructuring and extension on and in the environs of the Summerhill campus. This option would ensure that the presence of the school is retained within the town itself and within walking distance from existing residential developments and future residential developments.

The recent grant of planning permission for an extension to the Carrick-on-Shannon Community School, if implemented, will address the additional future demand for secondary student spaces. The school grounds remain capable of accommodating further extensions into the future and in light of the above it is considered that there is no need for any further provision in this regard over the period of the JLAP.

Both Councils will continue to liaise with and consult with the Department of Education with regard to any extensions, alterations or new school provisions within the area of the JLAP.

While there are no third level educational facilities in Carrick-on-Shannon, given the geographical spread of the Atlantic Technical University (ATU) campus buildings throughout the west and northwest the potential to host an outreach branch of the ATU in Carrick-on-Shannon, focusing on the tourism, 'fintech' or 'medtech' industries is something that should be explored and encouraged in the JLAP.

## 4.2 Childcare

Further to a review of childcare places in Carrick-on-Shannon, it is clear that there are more children in the town than there are formal childcare/after school spaces and that the existing service providers are essentially operating at capacity.

As a general percentage of the potential future population increase of 1,097, using the Census 2022 average of 20% of the Carrick-on-Shannon population falling into the 0-12 age bracket, it is expected that this would result in an additional 219 children eligible for childcare in this age bracket over the period of the Plan. In the absence of the provision of any additional providers of Childcare Services over the lifetime of the Plan, and if all existing facilities providing Childcare Services continue to operate at current capacity levels, there will only be capacity for 33% of eligible children in the 0-12 age cohort should this cohort remain at 20% of the population by 2030. It was further evident that there is a particular shortage in those providers that are accommodating the 0-2 age group.

On the basis of the current capacity and number of childcare facilities – both Early Years and School Age need to be increased significantly to meet current and future demand with new facilities being provided close to residential developments or schools. While the provision of such facilities are developer lead, the JLAP should make provision for encouraging such facilities while at the same time ensuring that all required standards are met.

### 4.3 Health

Following a review of the current baseline data in terms of GP numbers the Carrick-on-Shannon figure of 1.05 GP's per 1,000 population currently exceeds the national (2022) figure of 0.69 GP's per 1,000 population and it would fall to 0.86 GP's by 2030 on the basis of the future projected population of 5,840 if the current number of GP's was to remain at 5. Based on the projected future population of Carrick-on-Shannon 1 additional GP would be required to maintain the current ratio of 1.05 GP's per 1,000 population by 2030. It is accepted that Carrick-on-Shannon serves a larger catchment area outside of the scope of this study and so there will likely be a need for more than 1 additional GP (and assuming no decrease in GP numbers) to meet future demands. While Carrick-on-Shannon serves a larger catchment area outside of the scope of this study there will likely be a need for more than 1 additional GP to meet future demands, however, should the additional 3 No. GP's materialise (as permitted under P.21/440), this would bring the future ratio of 1.37 GP's per 1,000 population based on the projected population of 5,840.

In terms of residential care the current bed spaces meet current demand for the Town of Carrick-on-Shannon. Assuming that the permitted nursing homes are constructed over the lifetime of the plan (providing a combined 180 beds) these bed spaces would more than accommodate the future needs of the residents of Carrick-on-Shannon (33 current residents and 41 future residents) however, it is recognised that these nursing homes (when/if constructed) will have a catchment which extends beyond the local area town boundary of Carrick-on-Shannon, though given the number of permitted bed spaces, it is considered that they would likely adequately serve the wider catchment area too.

While healthcare and medical facilities are provided by a range of public, private and voluntary agencies, the JLAP endeavours to facilitate the provision of such facilities in development proposals in consultation with the relevant bodies and in tandem with a growing population.

### 4.4 Sports, Recreation & Open Space

The town of Carrick-on-Shannon is currently more than adequately served by outdoor playing pitches to meet current population demand and the current number of playing pitches will also meet the projected population demand to 2030. However, the audit of sports and recreation facilities showed that there is a need for additional outdoor sports facilities (includes not just playing pitches but basketballs courts, tennis courts, athletics, bowling greens etc) generally with a projected future required of 2.79ha to meet future population demands.

There is a lack of equipped and designated play areas (separate to outdoor sports) in the Town and based on the Census 2022 population the current playground provision is 0.03 per 1,000 people is considerably short of the 0.25 benchmark. The town of Carrick-on-Shannon would need to provide for an additional 1.34ha by 2030 to meet the benchmark standard.

The town of Carrick-on-Shannon fails to provide any 'Other Outdoor Provision' such as MUGA's or skating parks and would need to provide for 1.75 ha by 2030 to meet the benchmark standard.

The parks do not provide or contain any active uses, free for public use, such as football pitches, playgrounds, outdoor gym equipment etc. that would normally be expected to be found in parks. The quality of the open space in general falls short as it is lacking the provision of active recreational facilities. The existing linear park could accommodate an additional playground(s), potentially a MUGA or skating park and it could easily facilitate outdoor gym equipment.

Provision should be made in the JLAP for additional sports and recreations facilities within the town with particular emphasis on accommodating a MUGA which caters to a wide range of age groups and sporting interest, providing further playground facilities and ensuring the parks offer active recreational facilities for all.

The success of the public realm project on the Leitrim side of Carrick-on-Shannon and the on going works in relation to the Carrick Destination Town Scheme has enhanced the town centre enormously giving a more vibrant feel the streets. It is recommended that a public realm strategy which enhances the Cortober side of Carrick-on-Shannon should be provided for with similar such projects/schemes that compliments the work carried out in the Leitrim side of the town.

#### 4.5 Social and Community Services

The audit of social and community services would suggest that Carrick-on-Shannon is very well served with community services and that no additional community or social services will be required to serve the future population increase to 5,840. However, the benchmark figure used is acknowledged as being quite crude as it does not distinguish between the various kinds of services, measuring just their quantity. It is further acknowledged that as a Key Town, Carrick-on-Shannon serves a wider catchment who use many of the services and while the ratio of services may seem sufficient, the nature of the provision of future services may need to vary as may their capacity. Notwithstanding the quantity of Services provided within the town, the audit identified a notable omission in a town the size of Carrick-on-Shannon namely that there is no dedicated Community Hall/Centre to serve the town of Carrick-on-Shannon. The provision of such, either in terms of a new build within/close to the town centre or the re-use/repurposing of an existing building should be provided for during the lifetime of the JLAP.

While the library in the town was moved to a more central location in the town recently, there remains concern that the library facility is substandard and needs further investment and expansion of its services as required to deliver services to local communities and visitors to the town. It is recommended that provision for ensuring that the library facility in the town is of a standard and size to allow the full benefits of such a facility be enjoyed by all be considered in the lifetime of the JLAP and the need for an alternative site for the library or for the re-purposing of an existing building to accommodate such be provided for.

It is further recommended that given the projected aging population in Ireland which will be reflected in Carrick-on-Shannon and the general lack of youth targeted facilities within the town, that both the needs of the elderly and the youth categories are appropriately considered in relation to the continued development of the JLAP.



## 4.6 Arts and Culture

While no benchmark exists against which the current facilities/services can be measured and projected needs identified, it is considered that support should be given to maintaining existing services and provision made for providing additional facilities/services as needed, particularly in the town centre.

## 4.7 Best Practice

In order to ensure the sustainable and effective use of resources in the provision of social and community infrastructure this report recommends where possible that the following best practices be engaged:

- Co-location - co-location of complementary community services which facilitates co-ordination, convenience and access for all users,
- Multi-purpose and multi use – ensuring that facilities and spaces are flexible and diverse in terms of uses over a range of times,
- Place making and community identity – Promoting and encouraging community facilities that create a sense of place and identity,
- Partnership - Encouraging the delivery of infrastructure services and facilities through partnerships,
- Community asset management - Local Authorities to maintain and enhance their strategic role in co-ordination and engagement between different service providers for the benefit of the community and service providers.

## 5. Conclusion

The quality of life in a community does not just depend on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support but also on access to social and community facilities. The proper provision of high standard community and social infrastructure, in the most appropriate locations is important for all ages and abilities in society.

Social and Community infrastructure plays a vital role in achieving a balanced approach to sustainable local communities and it is of huge importance to the economic and social development of Carrick-on-Shannon. This audit looked at existing social and community facilities and what the likely future requirements will be based on projected population growth to 2030 for the life of the Carrick-on-Shannon Joint Local Area Plan. The findings of this audit highlights area in which the existing facilities/infrastructure exceed or are sufficient to meet demands and a shortfall or absence of some others. The role of social and community infrastructure in integrating new and existing communities in the Joint Local Area Plan is vital.

This audit will function as an important evidence base for the Carrick-on-Shannon Joint Local Area Plan 2024-2030, in highlighting the provision of accessible social and community infrastructure, which is an important component of building a healthy, inclusive and sustainable community.



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