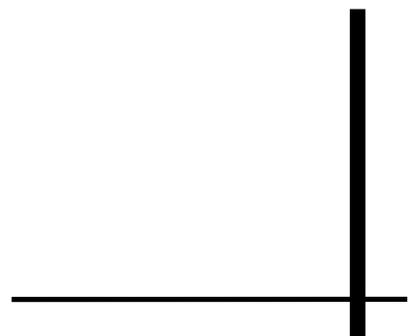


SECTION 1
Introduction



1.01 Introduction

1.01.01 Purpose of Plan

The aim of the Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan 2010-2016 is to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Carrick-on-Shannon and for the protection, conservation and enhancement of its natural and man made environment. The plan, in conjunction with the County Development Plan 2009-2015 will inform and manage the future development of the town.

This plan is the statutory development plan regulating and controlling development within the area boundary for the period of the Plan 2010 to 2016. However it also aims to put in place a framework to guide the town's development over a longer time frame, allowing the town to evolve into a substantially larger town in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.

The Council intends to implement the plan in partnership with the people of Carrick-on-Shannon.

Leitrim County Council is strongly supportive of the idea of developing an overall strategic policy framework for the overall Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober area. This Council will seek to enter into an agreement with Roscommon County Council, that Leitrim County Council will prepare a Local Area Plan for both areas.

1.01.02 Review of the Town

The aim of the Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan 2004-2010 was to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Carrick-on-Shannon and for the protection, conservation and enhancement of its natural and man made environment. The provision of specific policies and objectives contributed to the achievement of these aims. In drafting the new Local Area Plan a detailed review has taken place of the 2004-2010 Plan. The Local Area Plan 2010-2016 builds on the policy and aspirations of the previous Plan and advances policy and objectives in new areas of importance, as reflected during the public consultation phase.

1.01.03 Legal Status of the Plan

The last LAP for Carrick-on-Shannon dated from 2004-2010. Leitrim County Council has prepared a new Local Area Plan for Carrick-on-Shannon for the period 2010-2016 in accordance with its statutory duties. The Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan has been prepared under the provisions set out in Part II, Chapter II, Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

As stated above, this Plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2007 and will provide the statutory basis in conjunction with the County Development Plan, for the consideration by the Council of applications for planning permission.

Under the Planning and Development Acts as amended, once the first Local Area Plan has been prepared a new one is required to be prepared at least every 6 years after the making of the previous Local Area Plan.

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The Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan consists of this Written Statement and attached Maps. It is essential that both be referred to in considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the town. The Written Statement takes precedence over the Maps should any discrepancy arise between them. The period of this plan shall be taken as being 6 years from the date of its adoption or until it is reviewed or another plan made. The area to which this plan relates is the land within the 2010 Development Boundary, as shown on Map 1 (see Appendix A).

While the Council believes the policies and objectives set out in the plan are achievable, and it is fully committed to implementing them, the plan should not be interpreted as binding the Council to any particular investment or expenditure.

1.01.04 Location

Carrick-on-Shannon is strategically located on a crossing point of the Shannon in south County Leitrim. While the urban area straddles the Shannon, with substantial development on both sides of the river, the administrative area to which this plan relates is that part of the town located on the east bank of the Shannon, situated in County Leitrim^a. Carrick-on-Shannon is both the largest town in Leitrim and the County Town, and as such has important administrative, commercial and service functions for the County.

1.01.05 Regional Role

Carrick-on-Shannon is identified in the National Spatial Strategy as performing regionally strategic, residential, employment, administrative and other service functions.

Leitrim is located in the Border Region. The Regional Planning Guidelines for this region designate Carrick-on-Shannon as a Regionally Strategic Town.¹ The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region, 2010-2022 are currently at Draft stage. Carrick-on-Shannon is located at the border between the Border Regional Authority area and the Western Regional Authority area. Strong socio-economic linkages exist between the Border and Western Regions. The current Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) 2004-2010 for the Border Region indicate that Boyle/Carrick-on-Shannon represent one of the key urban influences and business strengths in the Region. The Border Regional Authority's Regional Planning Guidelines also identify that the Shannon catchment in Leitrim/Roscommon provides important tourism and environmental strengths. Carrick-on-Shannon is strategically located at the heart of this catchment.

The town is located on a 'National Transport Corridor' (the N4 and Sligo-Dublin rail line). As such the town has major potential to develop, acting as a catalyst for the economic and social regeneration of County Leitrim. This potential is noted in the current Regional Planning Guidelines which notes that 'Carrick-on-Shannon's role can be enhanced in competitive terms to drive development at the county level. Planning frameworks to co-ordinate development, good quality urban design and effective water services are necessary to deliver this. This plan is intended to assist in the realisation of this potential by setting out a framework for the future development of the Town.

Carrick-on-Shannon, together with Manorhamilton, is identified in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2009-2015 as two of the principal engines for future economic development in the northwest region.

^aThe urban area on the west bank of the river is situated in Co. Roscommon and is covered by the Cortober Area Plan 2008-2014.

¹ Regionally Strategic Town – Important towns that provide regionally significant roles and which take up strategic positions in their own locations. Their functionality may not relate to their size.

1.01.06 Historic Development

Carrick-on-Shannon has long been a strategically important crossing point of the Shannon. The modern town can trace its origins to the 16th century. The first written reference to the town was found in the Annals of Lough Key in 1530, where it is referred to as Cora Droma Ruisc (the Weir of the Ridge of the Marsh).

It became a Royal Borough during the plantations of James I in 1613. The town fell to Cromwellian forces in 1652. While a bridge is known to have existed as early as 1684, the present structure dates from the 1840s.

1.01.07 Urban Structure

Carrick-on-Shannon has a dense urban structure with two low lying green lungs on each side towards south and north. The historic development of the town has been determined by flood plains of the Shannon to the north and south.

The rest of the town is located around the centre in an open structure in smaller enclaves with local identities towards the east and northeast.

The industrial areas are primarily situated along the N4 towards Dublin, whereas housing areas are spread on the north side. The main commercial goods retail function has moved in recent years from the town centre to the edge of town.

The commercial and civic functions of the town are heavily concentrated in the historic core.

Within the town backlands, areas are opening up for development. While the historic core has a strong urban structure with good definition of streets and public spaces, the newer parts of the town are still less clearly defined. Map No. 4 identifies strong urban frontages and where opportunities exist for new or redeveloped urban frontages in the town core.

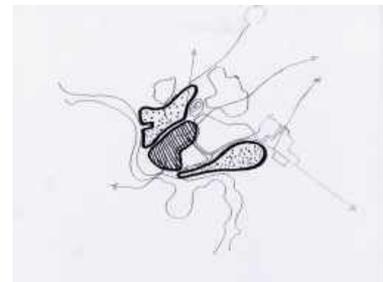


Fig. 1.1: Existing town centre surrounded by 'green lungs'



Photo. 1.1: Aerial view of Carrick-on-Shannon in 2007

1.02 Demographic Profile

1.02.01 Population

Carrick-on-Shannon (Leitrim only) has experienced dramatic population growth over the last two inter-censal periods (1996-2002 & 2002-2006). As a percentage of the total population increase for the County as a whole, Carrick-on-Shannon's population increase of 1,063 people represents 27%. The town itself has increased in population over the previous 35 years by 68% since 1971. The current population of Carrick-on-Shannon is 2,595, an increase of 41% on the 2002 figures. When considering such figures it should be kept in mind that consideration of statistics for such small areas must always be treated with great caution.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below indicate the population changes experienced over the period 1991-2006 and the respective percentage population change.

	Population			
	1991	1996	2002	2006
Co. Leitrim (Leitrim only)	25,301	25,057	25,815	28,950
Carrick-on-Shannon DED	2,113	2,148	2,664	3,505
Carrick-on-Shannon Town (Leitrim & Roscommon)	1,858	1,868	2,237	3,163
Carrick-on-Shannon Town (Leitrim Only)	1,510	1,532	1,842	2,595

Table 1.1: Population change in Carrick-on-Shannon 1991-2006
(Source: CSO)

	Percentage Population Change		
	1991-96	1996-02	2002-06
Co. Leitrim (Leitrim only)	-0.9%	+3.0%	+12.1%
Carrick-on-Shannon DED	+1.7%	+24.0%	+32.0%
Carrick-on-Shannon Town (Leitrim & Roscommon)	-9.3%	+20.0%	+41.3%
Carrick-on-Shannon Town (Leitrim Only)	+1.5%	+20.2%	+41.0%

Table 1.2: Percentage Population Change in Carrick-on-Shannon
(Source: CSO)

1.02.02 Households

The average household size in town areas for Leitrim has increased since the 2002 census while nationally the average household size has decreased. In Leitrim County generally, the average household size in town areas has increased from 2.38 persons in 2002 (then the smallest average household size recorded in the state) to 2.51 persons (currently the second smallest average household size recorded in the state – Dublin City now being the smallest with 2.50 persons). However, the average household size in town areas in Leitrim County is still significantly smaller than that nationally at 2.72 persons per household.

There are 1,172 private households in Carrick-on-Shannon, compared to 850 in 2002. Of these 1,172 households, 334 were recorded as being single person households, representing 28.5%. In 2002 the percentage of single person households was 32.5%. This compares to an average of 22% of households consisting of single persons in the state as a whole (CSO 2006, Volume 3, Table 17). A further analysis of family units (Table 1.3) indicates that they are significantly smaller than is found in the state as a whole and have been since 2002.

Family Unit Types*	Carrick-on-Shannon		The County		The State	
	2002	2006	2002	2006	2002	2006
Total No. of Family Units	486	692	5,634	12,436	924,464	1,053,180
% of which couple without children	34%	38%	28%	32%	25%	29%
% of which couple with children	50%	44%	58%	47%	58%	53%
% of which Lone Mother with children	14%	16%	12%	19%	14%	15%
% of which Lone Father with children	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Table 1.3: Classification of Family Unit Types

* defined as couples with or without children

Source (CSO 2002, 2006 Vol. 3 Tables 41 and 22)

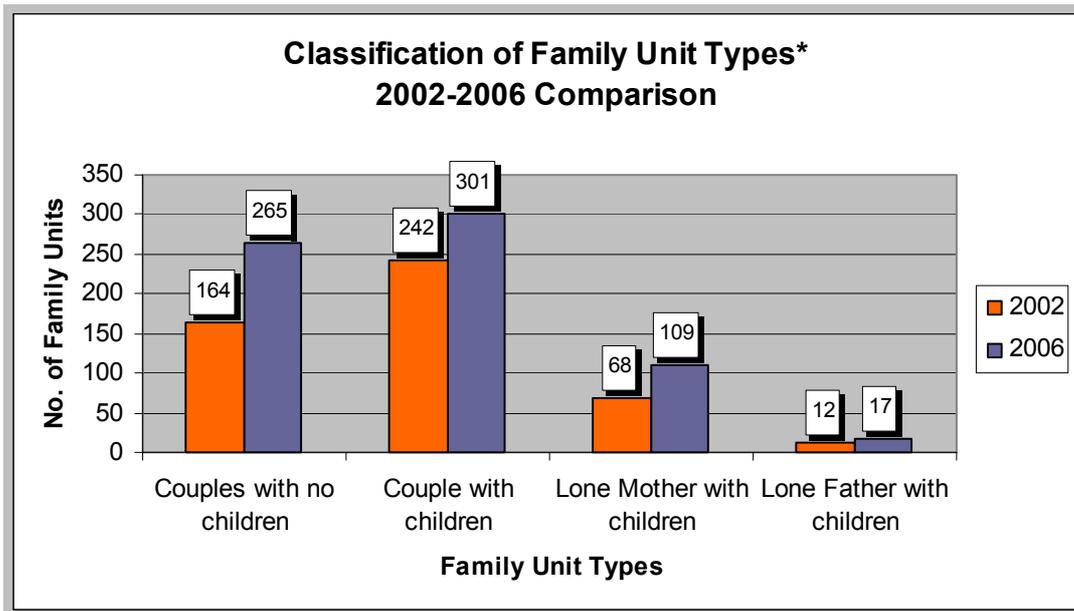


Chart 1.1: Family Unit Types

* defined as couples with or without children

Source (CSO 2002, 2006 Vol. 3 Table 41)

1.02.03 Age Profile and Employment

As Table 1.4 below indicates, Carrick-on-Shannon still has a lower percentage of its population between the ages of 0-14 years than the State, however since the 2002 census the percentage difference has decreased from 6% to 3%. Carrick-on-Shannon has a higher percentage, than that nationally, of people in the 25-44 year age bracket and while it has a higher than average percentage of people over 65 years of age, the percentage difference has dropped from 6% to just 2%. Essentially, the age profile of Carrick-on-Shannon is younger now than it was in 2002.

Age Group	Carrick-on-Shannon		The County		The State	
	2002	2006	2002	2006	2002	2006
0 - 14 years	15%	17%	21%	19%	21%	20%
15 - 24 years	15%	17%	13%	13%	17%	15%
25 - 44 years	32%	35%	26%	28%	30%	32%
45 - 64 years	21%	18%	25%	25%	21%	22%
65+	17%	13%	15%	15%	11%	11%

Table 1.4: Age Groups

Source CSO 2006, 2002 Vol. 2 Table 14
Based on pop. of Carrick – 3,163 (Leitrim and Roscommon)

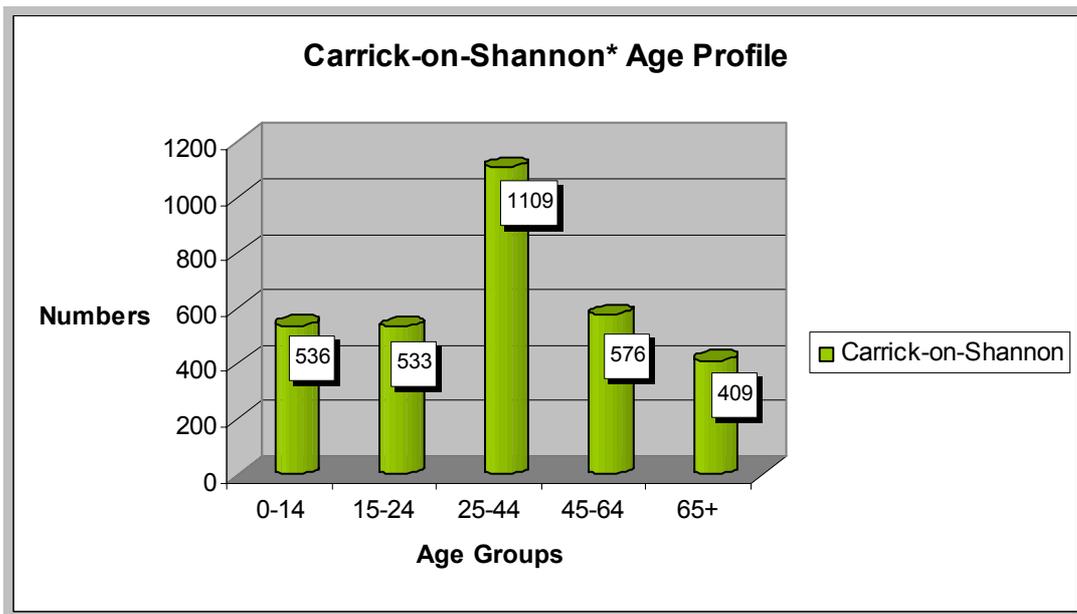


Chart 1.2: Age Profile

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As table 1.5 below clearly indicates, a very high percentage of those employed in Carrick-on-Shannon, at the time of the census in 2006, was in the area of Construction. The economic climate has changed significantly since the carrying out of the Census and thus it is very unlikely that this is representative of the figures currently employed in that area now. Wholesale & Retail, followed by Manufacturing and Banking & Financial Services are the other main areas of employment in the town.

Industrial Group	Carrick-on-Shannon		The County		The State	
	% Employed in 2002	% Employed in 2006	% Employed in 2002	% Employed in 2006	% Employed in 2002	% Employed in 2006
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.3	1.4	12.8	9.3	5.9	4.6
Mining, Quarrying & Turf Production	0.1	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.4
Manufacturing	10.0	12.4	13.6	11.0	14.8	12.6
Electricity, Gas & Water supply	0.7	0.1	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.6
Construction	8.1	15.3	11.4	15.6	9.1	11.1
Wholesale & Retail	12.4	12.7	10.8	10.7	13.3	13.3
Hotels and Restaurants	10.0	8.8	4.6	5.4	5.0	5.2
Transport, Storage & Communications	2.9	2.8	3.6	3.5	6.0	5.5
Banking & Financial Services	10.7	11.1	3.8	4.5	4.3	4.4
Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	7.3	5.8	4.4	5.4	9.2	9.4
Public Administration & Defence	9.6	6.9	8.4	6.8	5.8	5.3
Education	9.4	5.9	5.9	6.3	6.7	6.6
Health & Social Work	10.8	8.6	10.5	12.7	8.7	9.9
Other Community, Social & Personal Service Activities	2.7	3.6	2.7	3.5	3.9	4.2
Industry Not Stated	3.0	4.4	5.9	4.0	6.2	6.9

Table 1.5: Percentage of 15+ employed and classified by Industry

(Source: CSO 2002 and 2006 Vol. 7, Table 14)

1.02.04 Population Projections

Table 1.6 below indicates the population for Carrick-on-Shannon and the County over a 10 year period from 1996-2006.

	1996	2002	2006	Change
Carrick-on-Shannon	1,532	1,842	2,595	+1,063
The County	25,057	25,799	28,950	+ 3,893

Table 1.6: Population Change
(Source: CSO)

As a percentage of the total population increase for the County, Carrick-on-Shannon's population increase of 1,063 represents 27%.

The County's population projection to the year 2016 is 32,461 – this is based on the 1.2% annual percentage increase projected for the Border Region over the period 2006 – 2026 as detailed in the Regional Population Projections issued by the CSO and dated 4th December 2008. Total projected population increase for the County to the year 2016 is therefore 3,511 (28,950 + 3,511 = 32,461).

Applying the above mentioned figure of 1.2% to the 10 year period 2006–2016 it can be estimated that the population of the town of Carrick-on-Shannon would reach 2,906 by 2016. However, over the 10 year period 1996-2006 the population of Carrick-on-Shannon increased by 1,063 while the total population of the County increased by 3,893. The population increase in Carrick-on-Shannon therefore represented 27% of the total population increase of the County over the same period. Based on Carrick-on-Shannon achieving the same percentage increase (27%) of the total population increase for the County then the projected increase for Carrick-on-Shannon in 2016 would be 948 (i.e. 27% of 3,511) + 2,595 = 3,543. It is therefore anticipated that the population of Carrick-on-Shannon will increase by 948 people over the years 2006-2016.

However, it is the intention of the Council to use the target figure of **4,000** population by 2016 for Carrick-on-Shannon as expressed in Table 1 "Target Populations for Gateways, Hubs and Regionally Strategic Towns in Border Regions 2010-2022". In setting this target population, the strategic importance of Carrick-on-Shannon in terms of its status as County Town and as a Regionally Strategic Town, its growth rate of the last 10 years and its potential to act as an engine for economic growth have all been taken into consideration.

While population projections for a small town such as Carrick-on-Shannon are difficult to make with any degree of accuracy, the rapid rate of expansion the town has experienced over the last ten years shows signs of slowing, particularly over the last 2 years, reflecting the national downturn in the economy.

1.03 Town Profile

1.03.01 Social and Economic Analysis

The town has an important administrative and service role for its surrounding hinterland, accommodating the headquarters of the County Council and VEC, the County Community Care offices of the North Western Health Board, a courthouse and Garda Station. The town currently accommodates the department of Social and Family affairs on one of two decentralised government offices in the town.

In recent years the profile of the tourism industry has been greatly raised with the development of river related tourism holidays (principally cruising and angling). The expansion in the number of quality hotel rooms, conference and meeting facilities in the town has enhanced the attractiveness of the town as a tourism destination. The town also offers a number of good quality public houses, guesthouses, restaurants and entertainment.

The single biggest private employer is the Bank of America (formerly MBNA), located in the east of the town.

The retail function of the town is also important. While a relatively small town, Carrick-on-Shannon is still the largest town in a 30km radius and serves not just County Leitrim, but also large parts of north Roscommon. The retail function of the town is located mainly within Townspark, Attiroy and Attifinlay townlands with local facilities in Cortober Td. on the Roscommon side of the town. The retail function of the town continues to expand.

The IDA Ireland holds 15 acres at Keenaghan townland and has constructed a 25,000 sq. ft. advance building in this site. It is the IDA's objective to continue to develop this site in advance of the demand for jobs with the objective to have an advance building available at any time.

The town benefitted enormously from the Upper Shannon Rural Renewal Scheme which offered tax incentives for property development, from 1998 to 2006. This scheme was undoubtedly responsible for stimulating the construction industry in recent years.

1.03.02 Schools and Educational Facilities

The town accommodates one post primary school, Carrick-on-Shannon Community School, two primary schools and one Gael Scoil. While the post primary has been under severe pressure over the last number of years, the opening of new post primary schools in Boyle and Mohill has relieved pressure somewhat.

A Teacher Resource Centre offers a range of courses, including a Diploma in Education Management and courses organised by the University of Limerick. The VEC operates St. Joseph's Training Centre, providing full time training for the travelling community and early school leavers.

One full pre-school day care facility and a number of seasonal facilities operate in the town. However, according to the County Childcare Strategy the bulk of pre-school childcare is arranged on an informal basis. There is currently a vacant daycare facility located beside Aura Leisure Centre.

1.03.03 Clubs and Recreational Facilities

The town enjoys an extensive range of clubs and recreational facilities, including a rowing club of national importance, a tennis club, GAA and Soccer Clubs, athletics club and a number of other smaller clubs and associations. The annual rowing regatta on the Shannon in August is one of the highlights of the social year.

An indoor heated pool, fitness and recreation centre, with outdoor all-weather facilities, has replaced the former outdoor swimming pool at the Leisure Centre.

The Linear Park incorporates a playground and has been expanded to include a public mooring and a boardwalk which give enhanced access to the River within the town.

Faite Ireland has designated Carrick-on-Shannon as an “Angling centre of excellence”, with new facilities recently constructed to international standards [including access for persons with disability] being provided locally.

The new seated stand, with a capacity of 3,000, at Pairc Sean McDiarmuda has been recently completed and both the park and the new stand are a valuable resource to Carrick-on-Shannon.

1.03.04 Entertainment, Culture and the Arts

The development of the old Courthouse on George’s Terrace as “The Dock” Arts Centre has further enriched the town. Carrick-on-Shannon now has a thriving and growing arts scene centred on “The Dock”. Áras an Chontae also offers exhibition space for the visual arts and other exhibitions.

1.03.05 Built & Natural Environment

Carrick-on-Shannon boasts a rich architectural heritage with some fine 18th and 19th century structures in particular. Structures considered worthy of protection are listed in the County Register of Protected Structures, which is updated on a regular basis.

A zone of archaeological potential was also identified by Dúchas, in addition to the individual sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places (See Map No.6)

While there are no areas within the town specifically listed for protection for ecological reasons, a proposed Natural Heritage Area is located along the Shannon to the north west of the town, upriver of the Shannon. The town has a number of woodlands and wetlands, which, while not of national significance, are nevertheless worthy of protection.

The Shannon River is a significant ecological resource on the doorstep of the local community. The fish stocks contained therein are of considerable ecological as well as tourism and recreational value and are worthy of conservation and protection.

1.04 Transport

1.04.01 Public Transport

Carrick-on-Shannon is served by Bus Éireann provincial bus network. Bus Éireann operates a number of public bus transport services to and from Carrick-on-Shannon. Bus Éireann have increased the frequency of service on the Sligo/Carrick-on-Shannon/Dublin Expressway route from four services per day to seven services per day Monday to Friday and six services per day Saturday to Sunday.



Photo. 1.2: Bus Eireann bus stops on the N4

Regarding rail, on the Dublin to Sligo route there are 7 services daily (Mon. to Sat.) and an additional service (Mon. to Fri.) which serve Carrick-on-Shannon. There is a reduced service on Sundays with 6 services daily. Carrick-on-Shannon railway station is located in Cortober, Co. Roscommon.

Private bus operators also run regular services between Carrick-on-Shannon and nearby towns and villages which link to both Longford and Sligo.

Rural Lift, a scheduled 'dial-a-ride' bus service linking the town with outlying villages, is now in operation as part of the Rural Transport Initiative.

Taxis and Hackney Cabs also play an important public transport role in the town.

1.04.02 Roads

The town is served by the N4 National Primary Route from Dublin to Sligo, the R280 linking the town with North Leitrim and Co. Donegal, the R370 to Frenchpark and the N5 National Primary Route to Knock Airport and the R368 linking with the N61 and onwards to Roscommon Town. The limited capacity of the Shannon Bridge and the Leitrim Rd. junction still continue to act as bottlenecks in the town, causing traffic congestion. In time they are to be relieved with the construction of the proposed by-pass, the route of which is currently being re-considered (see Map No.8 showing the study area for the proposed Carrick-on-Shannon By-Pass).

The restricted nature of the road network in the town may act as a brake on future development if new relief roads are not provided. This plan identifies key links which will facilitate ease of movement through the town.

1.05 Utility Services

1.05.01 Waste Water

The town is served by an existing wastewater treatment plant located at Rosebank. Works have commenced on this existing sewage treatment plant (approved as a Design, Build and Operate Scheme) to expand it to a capacity of 11,500 p.e. (population equivalent). Wastewater is transferred to this treatment plant via an extensive network of sewers and pumping stations covering all the built area of the town. The capacity of the new treatment plant will be adequate to serve the needs of the town for a 20 year design life.

1.05.02 Solid Waste

The disposal of solid waste is now handled in accordance with the Connaught Regional Waste Management Plan.

1.05.03 Water Supply

Carrick-on-Shannon is served by the South Leitrim Regional Supply Scheme, with capacity considered adequate to serve the present and future needs of the town during the period of this plan.

1.05.04 Energy

The town is served by a 110kV electricity supply from the 220kV transformer at Flagford.

1.05.05 Telecommunications

The Council has installed broadband infrastructure to serve the town with funding from the National Development Plan.

1.6 Town Analysis (SWOT)

1.06.01 Strengths:

- Good range of functions and services.
- Proximity to the River Shannon.
- Strong urban structure.
- Vibrant economic base.
- Strong community structure.
- Strong development momentum.
- Good national road and rail access.
- Reasonable air access via airports at Sligo and Knock
- Broadband.
- Major employers located in the town.
- Young population.
- Ready supply of reasonably priced housing.

1.06.02 Weaknesses:

- The town structure outside the centre is too open, lacks an edge towards the surrounding landscape.
- Suffers from gaps in the hinterland between new development and the historic core.
- Existing road structure is not sufficient, new roads are needed to allow the town develop in the future (environmental cells).
- New growth areas are located outside the town boundary.
- Delays in the development of the town by-pass, due to economic downturn.
- Under utilisation of the town's broadband.

1.06.03 Opportunities

- The development of the bypass will create opportunities in the town centre.
- Broadband communications will enhance the town's competitiveness.
- New retail development within the town core will enhance the commercial base of the town.
- New development areas towards northeast, various house types and sizes to be provided.
- Create linkages between the green lungs – walks along the riverbank, intention to open up visual and physical access to the Shannon.
- The arrival of a decentralised government office.
- Vacant office space at Attifinlay and Attirory.

1.06.04 Threats:

- Continuing depopulation of the surrounding rural hinterland within Co. Leitrim and Co. Roscommon.
- The cessation of the Rural Renewal Scheme.
- Degradation of the natural and built environment.