



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

13th May, 2026

**The Secretary
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01V902**

Oifigí an Chontae,
Bóthar Átha Í,
Ceatharlach, R93E7R7

County Buildings,
Athy Road,
Carlow, R93E7R7

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Re: Compulsory Acquisition of Carlow Town Centre, Brownfield Site bounded by Tullow Street Lower, Charlotte Street and Brown Street, Carlow Town.

Our Ref: CPOH-CARLOWTOWNCENTRE-2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

On 21st April 2026 Carlow County Council initiated the Compulsory Purchase of the above Carlow Town Centre Brownfield Site. In accordance with statutory requirements, I am now forwarding the details of same to you for determination.

1. Site Description and Strategic Importance

The subject lands comprise a centrally located landbank measuring approximately 0.448 hectares (1.107 acres), comprising 15 individual folios, situated within the established town centre of Carlow. The lands consist predominantly of vacant and/or derelict buildings and undeveloped brownfield land and occupy a highly prominent and strategic position within the urban core.

The site has remained wholly or substantially vacant and/or derelict for a prolonged and continuous period extending over a number of years and, due to its scale, configuration and central location, represents one of the most significant remaining brownfield redevelopment opportunities within Carlow town centre. The persistent underutilisation of this landbank has a disproportionate negative impact on the physical appearance, vitality and economic function of the town centre and creates a substantial break in the urban grain. The depth and configuration of the lands interrupt pedestrian permeability, legibility and movement between key streets and public spaces, such that the ongoing vacancy and dereliction of the site constitutes not only a visual detraction but a structural impediment to the proper functioning, cohesion and connectivity of the town centre.

2. Planning Policy and Strategic Context

The redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites within existing town centres is a central and recurring objective of national, regional and local planning policy, including policies relating to compact growth, sustainable settlement patterns, and the efficient use of zoned land and infrastructure.

At local level, the Carlow County Development Plan promotes the consolidation of the town centre as a place to live, work, visit and engage in civic and cultural activity, and emphasises the importance of permeability, active streets, high-quality public realm and the reuse of vacant and underutilised lands.

The subject lands represent a uniquely positioned opportunity to deliver a comprehensive town centre regeneration project comprising new public spaces, linked streets and a flexible mix of residential, hospitality, cultural, community and civic uses, in a manner that aligns directly with adopted policy objectives and the principles of Town Centre First.

The proposal is consistent with the relevant policies and objectives set out in the attached Appendix 1, as drawn from the Carlow County Development Plan 2022–2028 and the Carlow–Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024–2030.

3. Chronology of Engagement with the Owner

14 of the subject sites are owned by two companies, Milan Gaming Limited and Ronol Ventures Limited with the same Company Secretary, Stephen O’Leary. The 15th site, comprised in folio CW24274F, is owned solely by Stephen O’Leary. The local authority has engaged proactively and repeatedly with Stephen O’Leary over a period of approximately three years with a view to facilitating the voluntary redevelopment of the site. Please see enclosed Appendix 2 which gives a detailed outline of engagement. During this period, an intention to develop the lands was consistently indicated, and on one occasion, the local authority was furnished with a feasibility study for the area.

Notwithstanding these assurances, no planning application has been submitted in respect of the lands, nor has any substantive preparatory or enabling work been undertaken to progress development. The most recent correspondence from the owner, dated 19th November 2025, indicated that a planning application was to be submitted and sought a further meeting with the local authority.

By correspondence dated 24 November 2025 the local authority reasonably requested that, in advance of any further meeting, the owner provide preliminary plans and a clear and detailed timeline for the submission of a planning application and commencement of works. No response has been received to that correspondence, and no planning application has been lodged in the intervening period.

4. Condition of the Site and Material Detriment

The prolonged vacancy and dereliction of the subject lands detracts to a material degree from the character, appearance, vitality and functional connectivity of Carlow town centre. The lands form a visible and extensive area of inactivity within the urban core, suppressing pedestrian movement, severing linkages between adjoining streets, and reducing the opportunity for social, cultural and civic activity.

The continued non-use of the site undermines efforts to create a lively, legible and attractive town centre and represents a significant lost opportunity to provide public realm, community infrastructure and diverse town-centre uses at a location where such development is most appropriate and necessary.

5. Necessity for Compulsory Acquisition

The local authority is satisfied that the regeneration of the subject lands cannot be achieved incrementally or on a piecemeal basis. The delivery of a high-quality, permeability-led development incorporating public realm, linked streets and a flexible mix of residential, hospitality, cultural, community and civic uses requires unified control and coordinated planning of the entire landbank.

In the absence of compulsory acquisition, the authority has no assurance that the lands will be redeveloped in a coherent manner or within any reasonable timeframe, nor that critical public outcomes such as new streets, public spaces and community infrastructure would be delivered. Compulsory acquisition is therefore necessary to enable a comprehensive, plan-led and place-based regeneration of this strategically important town centre site.

6. Consideration of Alternatives

The acquisition of a lesser area of land or reliance on fragmented redevelopment would not facilitate the creation of new streets, pedestrian connections or meaningful areas of public realm, nor would it support the delivery of civic, cultural and community functions that depend on spatial coherence and urban integration.

The comprehensive acquisition of the entire landbank is required to secure a connected layout, appropriate scale of public realm, and a flexible development framework capable of responding to evolving town-centre needs over time.

7. Proportionality and Property Rights

The compulsory acquisition of private property engages constitutional and European Convention on Human Rights protections. The local authority has had full regard to these considerations and is satisfied that the proposed acquisition is proportionate, justified and in accordance with law.

The acquisition pursues a legitimate public interest objective, namely the regeneration of the town centre, the delivery of housing, and the implementation of adopted planning policy. The acquisition is rationally connected to these objectives and is the minimum intervention necessary to achieve them, having regard to the failure of voluntary measures and the fragmented ownership of the site.

The owner/s will be entitled to compensation in accordance with statutory provisions, and the interference with property rights is therefore considered proportionate when balanced against the substantial and ongoing public benefit to be derived from the redevelopment of the lands.

8. Intended Use and Deliverability

Following acquisition, it is the intention of the local authority to progress the redevelopment of the subject lands as a flexible-use town centre regeneration project, comprising high-quality public realm, new and improved pedestrian streets and connections, streetscape enhancement, and a mix of residential, hospitality, cultural, community and civic uses.

This flexible approach is intended to ensure that the redevelopment can respond to changing social, economic and community needs over time while delivering immediate and long-term public benefit. The local authority has the statutory remit, organisational capacity and access to appropriate funding mechanisms to advance the redevelopment directly or in partnership with approved housing bodies, cultural or community organisations, and development partners.

The proposed acquisition is therefore grounded in a clear and realistic delivery strategy and is directed towards achieving tangible and lasting regeneration outcomes within the town centre.

9. Conclusion

The compulsory acquisition of the subject lands will enable the transformation of a long-standing vacant and derelict site into a connected, vibrant and multi-functional part of Carlow town centre, delivering public realm, streets, housing and civic, cultural and community infrastructure in accordance with adopted policy and the wider public interest.

The documents enclosed are as follows –

Appendix 1 – Policy Alignment

Appendix 2 – Interaction with owner/s

Appendix 3 – Inspection Reports

Appendix 4 – CPO Documentation

Appendix 4a – 3 no. Original CPO Maps and 3 no. CPO Orders

A soft copy of the above has also been shared with laps@pleanala.ie.

I will not be including a copy of the file with personal information redacted as was normal practice as we have been advised by email dated 8th May 2024 from Ellen Morrin, Data Protection Officer, An Bord Pleanála that documentation should be unredacted as An Bord Pleanála does not redact personal details when making available documentation to the public.

Should you have any queries in relation to the enclosed documentation please contact Nicola Lawler, Town Regeneration Officer, Carlow County Council, County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow at 086 0608393 or by email to nlawler@carlowcoco.ie

Yours faithfully,



Nicola Lawler,
Town Regeneration Officer.