Waterways Ireland is a Cross-Border Body, the largest of the six North/South Implementation Bodies established under the British Irish Agreement in 1998. Waterways Ireland is responsible for the infrastructure that maintains water depths for navigation on the Lower Bann from Lough Neagh to the harbour at Coleraine. Along this stretch of river there are a number of navigation weirs and locks including one at Carnroe which is located approximately 5 kilometres north of the village of Kilrea.

The weir at Carnroe was originally built in the 1850s and while there have been some alterations during the 20th Century including the addition of a fish pass, the masonry structure remains fundamentally the same as originally constructed.

**History of Carnroe Weir**

- Construction of the Lower Bann Navigation was undertaken by The Commissioners of Public Works Engineer John MacMahon in 1845.
- In order to navigate the rapids at Toome, Portna, Movanagher, Carnroe and the Cutts, a series of locks, short lateral canals, weirs, sluices and other ancillary features were constructed.
- 1 of the 3 weirs and 1 of the 5 lock chambers on the River Bann is located at Carnroe as well as two fish passes and two elver passes.
- The weir is a built masonry structure 180m in length and standing approximately 1.8m high.
- Several repairs have been undertaken down the years including the addition of a second fish pass and a new concrete apron in the 20th Century.
- Due to their history and heritage value the weir and associated structures at Carnroe are listed in the Environment Agency’s Industrial Heritage Register. It is Waterways Ireland’s duty to protect the structure while also ensuring the safety of all those who use the navigation.
Project Need

Waterways Ireland carries out regular inspections and condition surveys of its structures on the navigable waterways as part of its asset management procedures. A number of non-intrusive surveys have been carried out over the past decade at Carnroe to establish and monitor the structural condition of the weir and to assess what, if any, repair works are necessary.

A structural report on Carnroe Weir, completed in 2016, identified defects including:

• displaced masonry,
• mortar loss and undermining of the weir structure,
• voids in the weir apron,
• bulging and displaced masonry in the pier walls and
• failed embankment retaining walls.

The weir is showing advanced signs of deterioration with imminent localised failures possible.

If repairs are not carried out the weir structure could fail leading to catastrophic consequences.

Our Objectives

Carro Weir is essential to the retention of navigation facilitating boat movements along the length of the Lower Bann and maintaining water levels. The weir also helps to provide a resource for the local communities and visitors such as for fishing, birdwatching and other activities. It is therefore imperative that the weir and associated structures are repaired so as to maintain these facilities for future generations.

Waterways Irelands objectives when developing the scheme have focused on:

• Retaining the existing asset and heritage structure in a sound and safe condition
• Maintaining safe navigation along the River Lower Bann
• Maintaining existing water levels and protecting habitat
• Improving fish passage as required by the Fisheries Act and the Water Framework Directive
• Improving operational safety and retaining recreational opportunity
It is proposed that works will be undertaken in two phases:

**Phase 1 Western Side**
- Provision of two new temporary accesses on both western and eastern river banks;
- Installation and removal of temporary in-river cofferdams;
- Repair of approximately 60% of the weir as well as the existing river embankment and weir apron; and
- Installation of a temporary fish pass.

**Phase 2 Eastern Side**
- Installation and removal of temporary in-river cofferdams;
- Demolition of the existing fish and elver passes on the eastern bank to be replaced by a new Larinier style pass incorporating an elver pass;
- Repair of the remaining 40% of the weir as well as the existing lock chamber pier and weir apron; and
- Removal of all temporary accesses and resurfacing of existing where required.
Benefits to the Community

**Boating & Canoeing**
- Water depths and facilities are retained for the future for boating, canoeing and kayaking

**Heritage**
- Heritage features preserved and protected for future generations

**Habitat & Marine Life**
- Improved passage upstream for all species including salmon, eels, sea lamprey and coarse fish.
- The weir maintains water levels and preserves existing habitats and biodiversity

**Angling**
- Improved fish passage increasing overall numbers of fish in the system
  - Water levels maintained for fish stock

**Tourism**
- Enhances and maintains existing attraction as a platform for economic development through recreation and tourism
Process and Next Steps…

**Process to Date**

As part of the design process Waterways Ireland and their consultants have undertaken several surveys and assessments, including:

- Extensive land and water based surveys
- Ecology Assessments
- Noise Surveys
- Air Quality Assessments
- Transport Assessments
- River Modelling

As part of this process a wide range of consultations took place with landowners, government departments and other local and regional organisations.

**Next Steps**

**Planning Application**

Waterways Ireland are aiming to finalise scheme details and submit a planning application to the Planning Service in August 2019.

The application is to be submitted for full planning approval and will include:

- The Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Design drawings covering the locations plans, existing defects, proposed works and phasing of works
- Project Description and Works Proposals Document
- Pre-Application Community Consultation Report

The aim is to secure planning approval for the proposed works with the hope of starting works in Summer 2020.

**Programme**

- Preparation of planning application – July 2019
- Submission of planning application – August 2019
- Public Consultation by the Planning Service – Autumn 2019
- Anticipated Determination – by end of 2019
- Anticipated Start of Phase 1 – Summer 2020
- Anticipated Start of Phase 2 – Summer 2021
- Anticipated Completion of Scheme - Autumn 2021

**Feedback**

We welcome feedback on scheme proposals. Please do complete a feedback form before you leave.

Alternatively information can be found on our website including a link to the feedback form. [www.waterwaysireland.org/about-us/public-consultations](http://www.waterwaysireland.org/about-us/public-consultations)

**Please note:**
Comments made are for Waterways Ireland only and are not representations to the planning authority. If a planning application is subsequently submitted to Causeway Coast and Glens Council, normal neighbourhood notification and publicity will be undertaken and you will have the opportunity to make formal representations regarding the proposal at that time.