

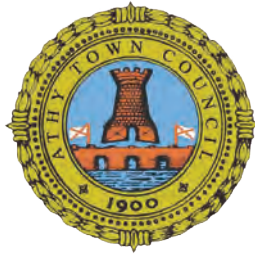
ATHY TOWN

Development Plan 2012-2018

Plean Forbartha Átha Í



March 2012



ATHLONE TOWN

Development Plan 2012-2018

Plean Forbartha Átha Í

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Pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) it is a requirement of the Planning Authority to append a statement to the development plan demonstrating:

- (i) How the planning authority has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the guidelines when considering their application to the area or part of the area of the development plan, or
- (ii) If applicable, that the planning authority has formed the opinion that it is not possible, because of the nature and characteristics of the area or part of the area of the development plan, to implement certain policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the guidelines when considering the application of those policies in the area or part of the area of the development plan or the development plan and shall give reasons for the forming of the opinion and why policies and objectives of the Minister have not been so implemented.

STATEMENT

Guidelines issued for Planning Authorities issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, pursuant to Section 28 of the Act are addressed in the following paragraphs:

(a) Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines

Chapter 12 of the Plan addresses architectural and archaeological protection and conservation. Policies and objectives contained within this plan have regard to various legislative provisions and policy guidance documents, including, the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004 and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The Plan lists 156 structures on the Record of Protected Structures in Table 12.2, identifies an ACA boundary and a Zone of Archaeological Potential. This chapter also includes policies under Sections 12.6 to 12.9 relating to the retention and re-use of older buildings not on the RPS, alterations/extensions to protected structures, development within the ACA, industrial and vernacular heritage.

(b) Childcare Facilities

Chapter 10, Social, Community and Cultural Development and Chapter 15 Development Management Standards both address the issue of Childcare Facilities. Section 10.10 of Chapter 10 outlines the most appropriate locations for childcare facilities in addition to policies which have regard to the recommendations and requirements of the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996. Section 15.4 of Chapter 15 sets out the development management standards regarding provision of childcare facilities and requires all childcare facilities shall be provided in accordance with the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 (DoEHLG) and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996.

(c) Design Standards for New Apartments

Chapter 4 Housing and Chapter 15 Development Management Standards addresses design standards for new apartments. Section 15.3.4 of this chapter further states that all planning applications for apartments in Athy shall be assessed against the recommendations and requirements of the DoEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments. Standards for apartment developments are set out under this section in relation to minimum floor area and storage requirements, access, public and private open space provision, car parking, management companies, etc.

(d) Development Plan- Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities have informed the preparation of this Plan. Section 4.13 of the guidelines requires that "the amount of land to be zoned for any particular land use must

be clearly based on and justified by a realistic assessment of need". As identified in Section 2.5 and also in Table 16.3 of the plan, the level of zoning for residential purposes as adopted significantly exceeds lands required to comply with the projected demands over the period of the plan 2012-2018.

(e) Provision of Schools and the Planning System

Chapter 10 Social, Community and Cultural Development, Section 10.9 addresses the issue of School Facilities in Athy. Policies contained in this chapter have regard to the recommendations and requirements of The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, a Code Practice for Planning Authorities, 2008 and also the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009, which highlights the importance of schools and their provision in tandem with residential development. This Section recognises the policies and objectives set out in these guidelines as being of central importance to the provision of school facilities in the town.

(f) Retail Planning Guidelines

Chapter 6 of the Plan solely addresses retail in the context of Athy. The policies and objectives of the chapter have been informed by the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016, the Draft Kildare County Retail Strategy 2010 and the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. In particular the chapter has regard to the town's designation as a Level 3 Sub County Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. The Retail Chapter seeks to fulfill Athy's role in the GDA Retail Strategy through strategic policy recommendations in relation to the Core Retail Area, Sequential Approach, Enhancement of the Town Centre, District and Neighbourhood Centres, Business Parks and Employment Areas, Innovation etc.

(g) Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines

Section 4.9 of Chapter 4 Housing, sets out the rural housing policy which shall be applied to lands zoned for Agricultural uses. These policies incorporate the recommendations of the DoEHLG, Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005. The primary aim for the agricultural zone in Athy is to to preserve the existing agricultural use of the areas zoned for this purpose and to prevent urbangenerated development.

(h) Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009 has been considered in the context of both Chapter 4 Housing and Chapter 15 Development Management Guidelines. These chapters have been prepared having reference to the guidelines and detail specific policies and objectives in relation to high quality design of residential areas, the use and development of infill, greenfield and brownfield sites etc.

(i) The Planning System and Flood Risk Management

Chapter 8, Water, Drainage and Environmental Services and Chapter 16 Land Use Zoning of the plan has been carried out in context of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009. In accordance with the above guidelines a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the plan and clearly shows the 100 year and 1000 year flood lines for the town. Specific policies in relation to flood risk are included under Sections 8.6, 8.8, 8.9 of the plan.

(j) Wind Energy

Chapter 9 Energy and Communications has been formulated having regard to the Wind Energy Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2006. Section 9.7 of the plan references wind energy in the context of supporting the development of renewable energy resources in Athy.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Strategic Context

1



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011. It relates to the functional area of Athy within the Athy Town Council boundary. The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town over the period 2012-2018. It is prepared with reference to the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 which sets out strategies, policies and objectives for the development of County Kildare.

Population targets for Athy and the strategy for economic development as outlined in the County Plan have informed the preparation of this Plan. The Development Plan is presented in two volumes. Volume 1 consists of a written statement with accompanying maps. It comprises 16 chapters as follows;

Chapters 1 and 2 set out the introduction, strategic context and core strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Athy.

Chapters 3-14 set out detailed policies and objectives under a range of headings which the Town Council will seek to achieve over the six-year life of the Plan e.g. economic development, housing, town centre development, retail, movement and transport, infrastructure, social, community, heritage and the development of opportunity areas.

Chapter 15 sets out development management objectives and standards to be applied to future development proposals. The purpose of these standards and objectives is to guide and assist the preparation of development proposals and to regulate the impact of development on the environment.

Chapter 16 sets out the land use activities referred to under each zoning objective and indicates the acceptability or otherwise of specified land uses within each zone.

Volume 2 presented on CD comprises the Appendices to the development plan as follows:
Appendix I: Housing Strategy for County Kildare.
Appendix II: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
Appendix III: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.
Appendix IV: Statement pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

1.2 PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The purpose of this Plan is to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town. It has been prepared having regard to those matters that must be included in a Development Plan (i.e. mandatory objectives) as well as those matters that may be included (discretionary objectives) as required by the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011.

Consideration can only be given to matters that relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. In summary, the main mandatory objectives of the Act for this Plan include the following:

- Zoning of land where the proper planning and sustainable development of the town requires land uses to be indicated¹ ;
- The provision of infrastructure including transport, energy and communication facilities, water supplies, waste recovery and disposal facilities, waste water facilities and ancillary facilities;
- Promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies including the promotion of measures to reduce energy demand, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change;
- The conservation and protection of the environment, including in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage and protection of the European designated sites and any other sites which may be prescribed;¹
- The encouragement, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, of the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species;
- The promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established for bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009; for groundwater, by the European

¹ It should be noted that there shall be no presumption in law that any land zoned in a particular development plan (including a development plan that has been varied) shall remain so zoned in any subsequent development plan (Section 10(8) Planning and Development Act 2000).

Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in river basin management plans (within the meaning of Regulation 13 of the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003);

- The integration of the planning and sustainable development of Athy with the social, community and cultural requirements of the town and its population;
- The preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and amenities of place and features of natural beauty or interest.
- The protection of the structures, or part of structures which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
- The preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
- The development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration;
- The provision of accommodation for Travellers and the use of particular areas for the purpose of accommodating Travellers;
- The preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- Reducing the risk of a major accident having regard to the Major Accidents Directive;
- The provision of services for the community including schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities;
- The preservation of public rights of way which give access to riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility; and
- Providing a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention.

In accordance with Section 15(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, there is a duty on the planning authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of this Plan. However, the achievement of many objectives will depend on the availability of funding and resources.

1.3 KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE PLAN PERIOD

This Plan has a critical role to play in ensuring that the needs of the existing population and future population growth are carefully planned for. It has been prepared at a time of unprecedented change in the economy. Athy experienced significant population growth from 5,306 in 1996 to 7,943 in 2006 representing a 50% increase in the population of the town.

Having regard to the significant period of growth, the population targets indicated for Kildare in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022, coupled with the significant changes to economic development, employment levels and Government finances, the following are key challenges facing Athy over the Plan period (2012-2018) and beyond:

- (i) Promoting Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town by encouraging significant new economic development in the town.
- (ii) Unlocking infrastructural constraints and ensuring adequate investment in infrastructure (including improving transport links in and around the town) in order to maintain and facilitate economic development.
- (iii) Promoting a sustainable transport network including the provision of roads, footpaths, cycle lanes, public transport infrastructure and promoting inter-connectivity.
- (iv) Securing and encouraging the appropriate redevelopment, renewal and improvement of areas within the town.
- (v) Consolidation of development and avoidance of urban sprawl.
- (vi) Continuing the protection of the environment at all levels, including the built and natural heritage.
- (vii) Facilitating the creation of sustainable and integrated communities.
- (viii) Integrating climate change considerations into the achievement of strategic objectives.

1.4 MAIN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended requires that a Development Plan shall, so far as is practicable, be consistent with national plans, policies and strategies, which relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area covered by the Plan.

The most central Government plans, guidelines and policies and strategies influencing preparation of this Plan are noted below. Other relevant documents include various Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government such as:

- Architectural Heritage Protection;
- Best Practice Urban Design Manual (Parts 1 and 2)
- Childcare Facilities Guidelines
- Design Standards for new Apartments;
- Development Plans- Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- Guidance Note on Core Strategies
- National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020
- Provision of Schools and the Planning System
- Retail Planning Guidelines
- Spatial Planning and National Roads
- Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas
- Telecommunications, Antennae and Support Structures
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management
- Wind Energy Guidelines

These are dealt with in the relevant sections of this Plan.

1.4.1 National Planning Policies and Strategies

The following sections set out a summary of the main provisions of national plans, policies and strategies, which relate to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area covered by the Plan.

(i) The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020, People, Places and Potential

The National Spatial Strategy is a twenty year spatial strategy designed to achieve a better balance

of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. It provides a framework to guide policies, programmes and investment.

The strategy emphasises continued strong growth in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) but with significant improvement in the regions outside the capital and more particularly in the nine gateway cities and nine hub towns identified in the strategy. Athy is neither a gateway nor hub however, with a population of over 5,000 it will act as a focus for a balanced pattern of growth. Athy will have to compete with higher order cities and towns to secure funding for strategic investment opportunities.

(ii) The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP)

The goal of the NDP is to integrate strategic development frameworks for regional development, rural communities, all-island co-operation and for protection of the environment with common economic and social goals.

There are a number of challenges facing the country which the NDP aims to address including infrastructural bottlenecks, improving skills and education, creating and sustaining high value economic opportunities and redistribution of wealth.

The NDP sets out a strong framework for the promotion of regional development with particular focus on investment in the NSS gateway centres.

The changes to the international and national fiscal situation is likely to impact on the level of available funding for the projects identified in the NDP impacting on prioritisation and timing of delivery.

(iii) Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997)

The national strategy for sustainable development provides a framework for the achievement of sustainability at the local level. It calls on planning authorities to incorporate the principles of sustainable development into their development plans.

(iv) Transport 21 and Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future (2009)

Transport 21 is the capital investment framework for the transport system under the NDP over the period 2006-2015. It addresses the twin challenges

of past investment backlogs and continuing growth in transport demand and comprises two investment programmes - a national programme and a programme for the Greater Dublin Area. County Kildare will benefit from both programmes. The programmes aim to increase accessibility, ensure sustainability, expand capacity, increase use of public transport, enhance quality, create an efficient national road and rail network and strengthen national, regional and local public transport services.

‘Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future’ is the new transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. The policy recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, while also setting out the necessary steps to ensure that people choose more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Actions are proposed in order to achieve the following:

- To reduce the distance travelled by private modes of transport and to encourage smarter travel;
- To ensure that alternatives to private modes of transport are more widely available;
- To improve the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies.

(v) Ireland National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012

The National Climate Change Strategy outlines the measures that Ireland should take in order to meet its commitments to limit greenhouse gas emissions over the period 2007-2012. This shall be achieved through legally binding limits to the production of greenhouse gases with the strategy incorporating a programme of actions for achieving those limits.

The main focus is on reducing transport emissions, encouraging renewable energy sources, changing agricultural practices and changing waste disposal policies and plans. The strategy recognises that decisions by local authorities on the location, design and construction of domestic and commercial developments and of related economic and social activity can have a significant effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

(vi) National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020

The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan outlines

Government proposals and actions to achieve a target of 20% energy savings across the economy by 2020. The strategy aims to reduce the country's dependency on imported fossil fuels, to improve energy efficiency across a number of sectors and to ensure a sustainable energy future.

The Government's energy policy framework 'Delivering a Sustainable Future for Ireland- The Energy Policy Framework' (2007-2020) is designed to steer Ireland towards a new and sustainable energy future, one that helps increase security of supply, makes energy more affordable, improves national competitiveness and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

1.4.2 Regional Planning Policies and Strategies

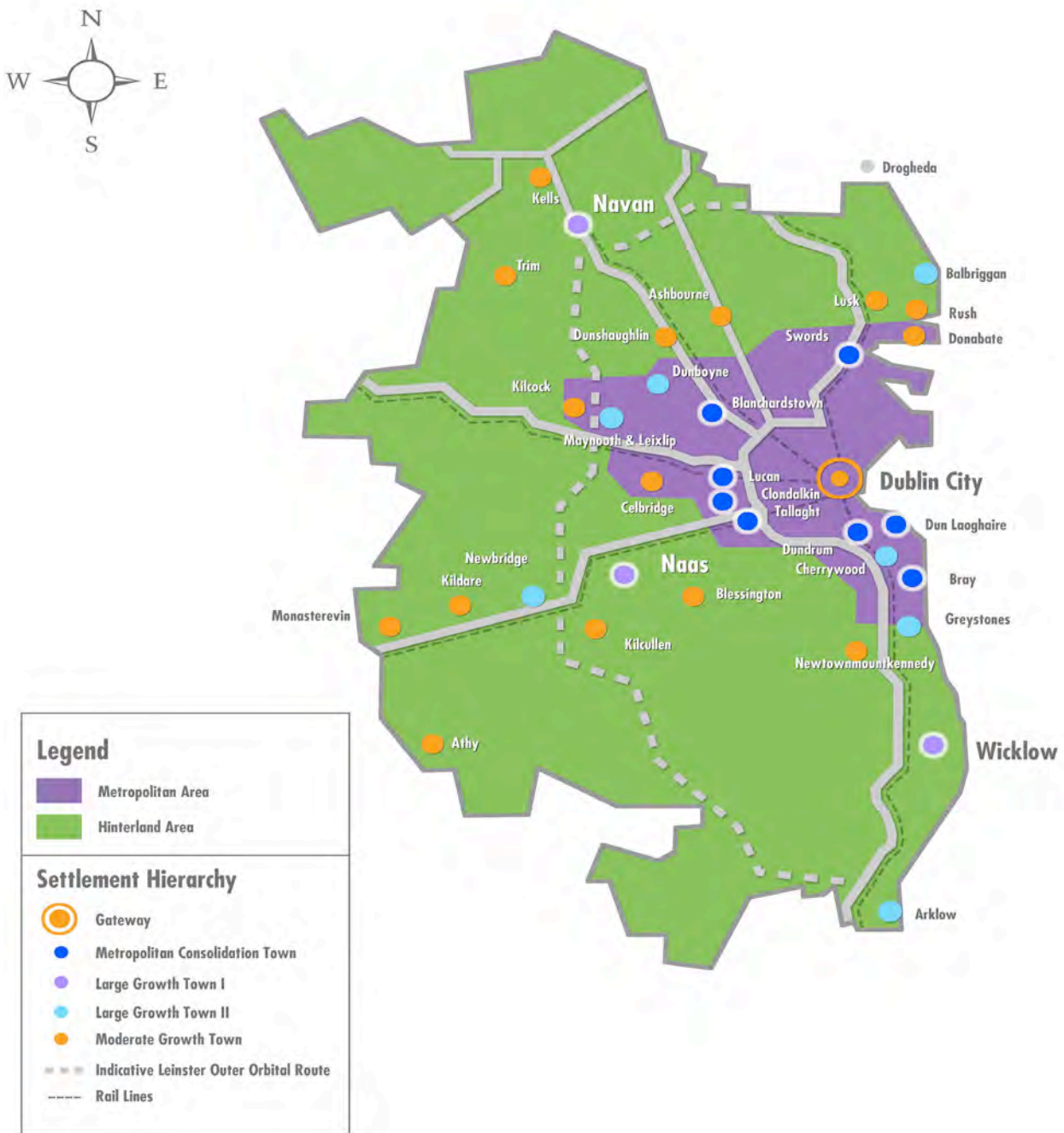
Regional policies and strategies provide the policy link between national policies and guidance documents, and local authority planning policies and decisions. The most relevant are outlined in the following sections:

(i) Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (RPGs) 2010-2022

The RPGs provide the overall strategic context for the Development Plans of each local authority in the Greater Dublin Area including population and housing targets, and also provides the framework for future investment in environmental services, transportation and other infrastructure. The key principle of the strategy involves consolidating the growth of the Metropolitan Area and concentrating the future development of the Hinterland Area into a number of selected towns to be developed as self sustaining growth towns. Athy, Kildare, Monasterevin and Kilcullen are designated as Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns within the hinterland area. These strategically placed, strong and dynamic urban centres are to absorb most new population growth in the hinterland area acting as key centres for the provision of services for surrounding smaller towns in rural areas. They are also recognised as having an important supporting and complementary role in the development of economic growth throughout the GDA.

The long term objective is to consolidate existing employment and service sectors and create new employment opportunities, particularly in the areas of high value added manufacturing and internationally traded sectors with IDA support around transport corridors and routes, in tandem with continued investment in education and skills.

Map 1.1: Settlement Strategy - Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022



(ii) Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area sets out a coordinated and sustainable approach to the assessment and provision of retailing within the Greater Dublin Area so that:

- Adequate and suitable provision is made to meet the needs of changing population patterns in order to provide for healthy competition and consumer choice.
- The enhancement and expansion of the

retail offer in suitable locations is also provided which should be integrated within the existing growth areas while having regard to public transport investment.

- Significant over provision is avoided as this would place more marginal locations under severe pressure and undermine sustainability driven policies aimed at revitalising town centres.

By setting out a strategic framework for retailing, the strategy seeks to give guidance on where future retail facilities should be provided while identifying issues that need to be addressed.

To this end, the strategy includes a retail hierarchy as a core spatial policy around which proposed future growth, rejuvenation and expansion in the retail sector should be addressed.

(iii) Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

The Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) 'A Platform for Change 2000-2016' seeks the development of an efficient and high quality system of public transport connections within the Greater Dublin Area. It comprises two independent objectives, namely:

- Infrastructure and service improvements to expand the public transport network, strategic road construction and traffic management.
- Demand management to reduce the growth in private travel through the application of land use and other policies while maintaining economic progress.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has commenced work on developing a new Transport Strategy for the GDA which will be linked to sustainable land use planning and will be directed by the economic, social, cultural and environmental needs of the people of the GDA.

(iv) River Basin Management Plan

The Water Framework Directive was adopted in 2000 and requires the preparation of a management plan for all waters in an area called a River Basin District. Athy is located in the South Eastern River Basin District. The Directive's main aim is to maintain all water bodies, rivers, lakes, groundwater and estuaries at high status, to prevent deterioration in the existing status of water, and to achieve at least "good status" in relation to all waters by 2015.

The River Basin Management Plan describes in detail the status of all waters and protected areas. A programme of measures will be put in place to provide the works necessary to bring water bodies to good quality status. These measures have informed the preparation of this Plan.

1.4.3 Strategies and Studies for County Kildare and Athy

A number of strategies and studies carried out by Athy Town Council and/ or Kildare County Council have informed the preparation of this plan. The most relevant of these are outlined in the following sections:

(i) Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017

The Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 adopted in April 2011 has been prepared having regard to the NSS, the RPGs and various Government guidelines. It sets out the context for future development in County Kildare and includes a core strategy, development objectives, a settlement hierarchy, and policies for the protection of the environment.

The settlement strategy for County Kildare ranks settlements from large growth towns to moderate sustainable growth towns consistent with the Regional Planning Guidelines 2012-2022. Table 1.1 outlines the higher order settlements within the settlement hierarchy for County Kildare together with principles governing the categorisation of each settlement type.

Arising from the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017, the following strategic considerations will inform the preparation of this Plan:

- Athy is to plan for a potential population growth of 2,876 between 2006-2018 equating to 1,389 residential units.
- Athy is identified as a secondary economic growth centre providing an important and complementary role in developing economic growth and sectoral interests in tandem with the primary economic growth towns.
- Development of sectoral strengths will be promoted comprising high value-added manufacturing and internationally traded sectors in tandem with IDA support around transport corridors and routes such as the rail station supported by continued investment in education and skills development.

Table 1.1: Higher Order Settlements within the Settlement Hierarchy for County Kildare.

Hierarchy	Description	Locations
Large Growth Towns I	Key destinations, economically active towns supporting surrounding areas.	Naas
Large Growth Towns II	Smaller in scale but strong active growth towns, economically vibrant with high quality transport links to larger towns / city.	Leixlip (including expansion area of Collinstown) Maynooth Newbridge
Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns	(i) In Metropolitan Area, strong edge of metropolitan area district service centres, HQ linkages and increased densities at nodes on public transport corridors. (ii) In hinterland areas, circa 10km from large town on public transport corridor, serve rural hinterland as market town.	Celbridge Kilcock Athy Kildare Kilcullen Monasterevin

(ii) Kildare Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2009-2014

The Kildare Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2009-2014 sets out the Mission Statement for the Kildare local authorities and a strategic framework for actions by the authorities. The Plan outlines the core values of the local authorities and the key strategic objectives to be pursued over the five year period, subject to available resources. The Plan also sets out the context for the preparation of the annual budget and business plans for each section of the local authorities.

(iii) Kildare County Development Board Strategy (2012)

The County Development Board’s (CDB) “*Kildare 2012- An Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy*” is a Strategy for the development of Kildare based on a shared vision for the county over a ten year period. It seeks to “*make Kildare a better place to learn, work, visit and do business in*” and is accompanied by a set of goals and objectives to achieve this vision together with actions that will build on the strengths and opportunities of the county. Strategic goals and objectives from the CDB strategy have been taken into account in the preparation of this Plan.

(iv) Draft Retail Strategy for County Kildare (2010)

The Draft Retail Strategy for County Kildare is set within the context of the Retail Strategy for the GDA. Athy, along with Clane and Kildare, is designated as a Level 3 Sub County Town Centre in the GDA Regional Retail Hierarchy and a Hinterland Area Tier 1 Level

3 Sub County Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy.

The County Retail Strategy advises that Sub County Town Centres in the Hinterland Area of the County should play an important strategic role in the shopping patterns of their generally extensive hinterlands. In respect of Athy, it is the main retail centre in the south of the County.

The range of retailing which is deemed appropriate in the County Retail Strategy for centres at this level in the County Retail Hierarchy is large scale convenience and middle order comparison, but not excluding higher order comparison particularly that related to the tourism economy.

It is recognised that there are deficiencies in the retail offer of Athy which is undermining the town delivering its strategic role and potential. It is an important priority that, over the timescale of the Development Plan and beyond, Athy fully develops into its designated role outlined in the County Retail Hierarchy.

(v) Competing in a Globalised World - An Economic Development Strategy for Kildare

Competing in a Globalised World – An Economic Development Strategy for Kildare is the current economic strategy for County Kildare. The key message is that Kildare has to compete internationally in order to attract and retain investment and skills to stay ahead. It recognises

that the county will need to develop and attract more strategic activities in the manufacturing sectors and re-orientate towards high value- added traded services.

At a strategic level it advocates the importance of identifying locations that have the highest potential for the attraction of high-tech, high value-added and research intensive activities and that these sites be ring-fenced specifically for those developments. It also recognises the need to cater for a wide range of business, residential and infrastructure developments throughout the county.

(vi) **Athy Integrated Framework Plan for Landuse and Transportation (IFPLUT) (2004)**

In 2004 Kildare County Council and Athy Town Council, in conjunction with the Dublin Transportation Office, prepared an Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation for Athy (IFPLUT Study). The purpose of this Integrated Framework Plan is to integrate the strategic and coordinated planning of land use and transport up to 2016 and beyond. The IFPLUT Study has a timeframe until 2020, and will complement the Development Plan for Athy. It sets down the principles for future development, guiding the level, scale and location of development within the wider area of Athy, to provide for a quality living environment.

Map 1.2 illustrates the IFPLUT preferred scenario for the town at a macro level with the development pattern for the town focused on the reinvigoration of the town centre and waterways with limited development to the east of the railway line.

(vii) **Athy RAPID Area Action Plan 2003**

RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) is a government initiative aimed at improving the quality of life of disadvantaged communities throughout Ireland.

The RAPID Area Action Plan for Athy sets out a vision for the town, *“to promote social inclusion and significantly improve the quality of life and the opportunities available to people in Athy.”*

The RAPID programme involves the main statutory and local development agencies working together with the local community to co-ordinate and improve services through strategic and joint planning, targeting of existing and additional investment and community participation. The RAPID Plan reflects the agreed priorities set by

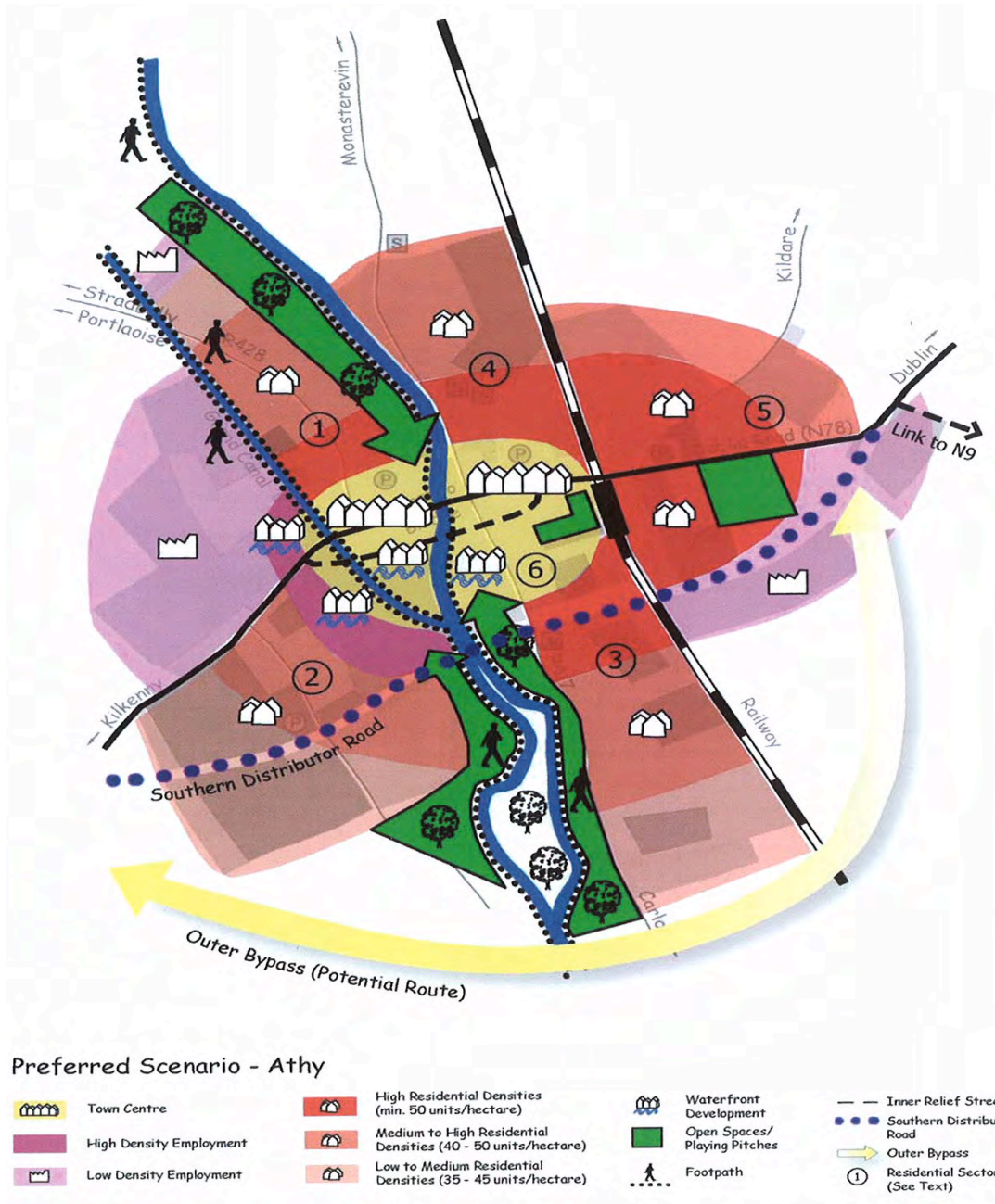
the community and statutory agencies and provides the basis for the prioritisation of investment by statutory bodies. The strategic objectives of the RAPID Plan comprise:

- Supporting the construction of new educational facilities and the implementation of additional resources to support students to counter risks of early school leaving.
- Co-ordinating the development of Garda / Community liaison.
- Co-operating with the development of specific schemes and projects to enhance the visual and physical environment of residents.
- Co-ordinating and supporting the enhancement of the capacity of local organisations to provide new and additional services for RAPID target groups.
- Implementing new family support initiatives and providing improved access to essential care.
- Supporting the implementation of initiatives to provide improved road and rail transport and safer access to facilities for pedestrians and residents.

These objectives as they relate to landuse planning are reflected in the objectives and policies included in this Plan.

Other Plans and Strategies which informed the preparation of this Plan, include, County Heritage Plan 2005-2009, Kildare Open Space Strategy, December 2008, County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013, Athy Access Plan and Athy Traffic Management Plan (2010).

Map 1.2: Athy Integrated Framework Plan for Landuse and Transportation - Preferred Scenario



1.5 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC), was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No 435 of 2004) - as amended by European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200 of 2011) - and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No 436 of 2004) - as amended by Planning and

Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011) - which required the Athy Town Development Plan to undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in order to improve planning and environmental management of future development in the Town.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the term which has been given to the environmental assessment of plans, is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a plan in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a

par with economic and social considerations. The SEA was carried out in parallel to the preparation of this Development Plan.

The environmental issues which are considered by the SEA are as follows:

- Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora;
- Population and Human Health;
- Soil;
- Water;
- Air and Climatic Factors;
- Material Assets;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Landscape.

The Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018 provides a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the future accommodation of development in the town. The evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative strategies for accommodating future development in Athy is part of the SEA process.

The Environmental Report has guided the preparation of objectives, policies and development alternatives for the Development Plan with the aim of achieving sustainable development in the town without causing adverse harm to the environment.

1.6 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (AA)

Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive require an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project whether within or outside a designated Natura 2000 site, which does not directly relate to the management of the site but may impact upon its conservation objectives.

All land use plans also require to be 'screened' for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. In any case where, following screening, it is found that the draft plan may have an impact on the objectives of a Natura site, or such an impact cannot be ruled out, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the EU Habitats Directive must be undertaken.

This AA process comprises the assessment, based on scientific knowledge, of the potential impacts of the

development plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura site and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of the development plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site. It informs plans of the environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into plan making.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the Athy Town Development Plan has been carried out. A number of policies and objectives within the Plan were identified which could lead to impacts on the River Barrow/River Nore SAC. In particular, provisions for transport infrastructure (i.e. The Southern and Northern Distributor Roads) and a marina have the potential to significantly impact on the SAC.

The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the Natura site have been largely addressed by the inclusion of a number of objectives to ensure that developments arising through the implementation of the plan are subject to Appropriate Assessment at a more appropriate level and when further details of design and location are available. Infrastructure such as the marina and distributor roads will be subject to feasibility studies and route/site selection where appropriate. Other measures have been included for the protection of water quality including the requirement for ecological buffer zones and measures for prevention of pollutants entering watercourses.

Having incorporated mitigation measures, it is considered that the Athy Town Development Plan will not have a significant adverse effect on the River Barrow/River Nore SAC, and that the integrity of that site will not be adversely affected.

1.7 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA)

Under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended statutory guidelines entitled 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' were published by the DoEHLG (November 2009). These guidelines require planning authorities to introduce flood risk assessment as an integral and leading element of the development plan process.

The SFRA for Athy is an assessment of flood risk in the town to inform strategic land-use decisions with the purpose of ensuring that flood risk management is fully integrated into the Athy Town Development Plan.

1.8 OVERALL VISION

Through the public consultation process a number of key themes emerged for consideration regarding the overall vision for Athy. These themes have been amalgamated and expressed in the following vision statement:

“To plan for and facilitate appropriate levels of sustainable development in Athy, addressing its weaknesses and building on its strengths based on high quality employment, residential and recreational areas with a balanced range of facilities to meet the needs of those living, working or visiting the town, thereby improving the quality of life for all.”



CHAPTER 2

Core Strategy

2



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To respond in a coherent sustainable spatial manner to the development of Athy providing a more focused approach to planning for future development. The core strategy seeks to promote a more consolidated and compact urban form; to create and promote new employment opportunities; to create sustainable and integrated communities while balancing the protection of the natural and built heritage with sustainable and appropriate development

2.1 STRATEGY

The core strategy for Athy has been prepared with reference to the Athy Town Development Plan 2006-2012, the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 and the core strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. It sets out a strategic approach to the management of growth and resources in Athy and is expanded upon in the policies and objectives contained within the remainder of this Plan. The strategy seeks to facilitate the sustainable development of the town over the six year period of the Development Plan and beyond.

In developing a strategy for the future planning and development of the town it is recognised that Athy is the largest town in south Kildare and the sixth largest in County Kildare. It is also identified as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and as a Secondary Economic Growth Centre in the Greater Dublin Area.

The aims and objectives of the core strategy are to:

- (i) Recognise and promote the role of Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town having an interacting and supporting role servicing the rural hinterland area of south Kildare.
- (ii) Facilitate future population growth of Athy in line with the RPGs and the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017, through the consolidation of the town centre and adjoining residential areas.
- (iii) Support the development of Athy as a secondary economic growth centre providing an important role in developing economic growth and sectoral interests.
- (iv) Encourage and support the delivery of key infrastructural projects to ensure that future development needs are met in a sustainable and coordinated manner.
- (v) Promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of the retail offer and town centre retail functions of Athy in line with its designation as a Sub County Town Centre in south Kildare.
- (vi) Develop a compact urban form with particular emphasis on the orderly redevelopment and regeneration of key areas within the town centre.
- (vii) Protect local assets by preserving the quality of the landscape, open space, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage and material assets of the town.



2.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND STATUS

The name Athy dates back to the second century when Ae the son of Dearthabhail was slain in a battle between the men of Munster and the men of Leinster. The battle was fought at a Ford on the River Barrow hence called Ath-Ae, the Ford of Ae, which was later anglicised into Athy.

The town itself developed as part of the Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland. Woodstock Castle was built in the early years of the thirteenth century near the ancient river crossing of Ath-Ae.

The Priory of St Thomas and Hospital of St John was founded in the thirteenth century on rising ground above the river on its west side while, on the east bank, just south of the crossing, a Dominican friary was established in 1253 in the area known as the Abbey.

The town has developed from a relatively compact urban structure containing an historic core with many fine buildings of architectural merit which contribute to the overall heritage value of the town.

The River Barrow is an important feature in the town and flows through the town centre in a north/south direction. The town's main vehicular axis runs east/west along the N78 National Secondary route and forms part of the main street.

The R417 Monasterevin/Carlow Regional Road bisects Athy in a north-south direction and connects the town to Monasterevin in the north and Carlow in the south. The R428 Regional Road (Stradbally Road) enters the town from Portlaoise to the west and the R418 enters from Castledermot to the southeast.

Numerous county roads link the town to its hinterland. Athy is also serviced by public rail transport and includes mainline intercity service on the Carlow/Kilkenny/Waterford line.

The town serves a large hinterland in southern Kildare and Laois and is proximate to a number of major employment, retail and leisure development centres including Dublin, Carlow, Kilkenny, Portlaoise, Newbridge and Naas.

2.3 ATHY WITHIN ITS REGIONAL AND COUNTY CONTEXT

The Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 (RPGs) outlines the strategic planning framework for all development plans within the GDA. The guidelines identifies two planning policy zones, the Metropolitan Area and the Hinterland Area. These planning policy zones are supported by a settlement hierarchy with the identification of key growth towns to be consolidated, developed and supported within a sustainable urban form.

The RPG settlement strategy and the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 designates Athy, Kildare, Monasterevin and Kilcullen as Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns within the hinterland area. These strategically placed, strong and dynamic urban centres are to accommodate significant population growth in the hinterland area acting as key centres for the provision of services for surrounding smaller towns in rural areas.

Athy is also designated as a secondary economic growth centre providing an important supporting and complementary role in the development of economic growth in tandem with the primary economic growth towns of Naas, Maynooth and Leixlip. The long term objective for Athy is to consolidate existing employment and service sectors and create new employment opportunities, particularly in the areas of high value added manufacturing and internationally traded sectors in tandem with IDA support around transport corridors and routes.

In terms of retail, Athy along with Clane and Kildare are designated as Level 3 Sub County Town Centres in the GDA Regional Retail Hierarchy and a Hinterland Area Tier 1 Level 3 Sub County Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. These centres play an important strategic role in the shopping patterns of their generally extensive hinterlands.

Athy is the main retail centre in the south of the County however there are deficiencies in the retail offer of Athy which is undermining the town delivering its strategic role and potential. It is an important priority that, over the timescale of the Development Plan and beyond, Athy fully develops into its designated role in the County Retail Hierarchy.

Chapter 6 deals specifically with retail development in Athy and had regard to the Retail Strategy for

the GDA 2008-2016, the Draft Kildare County Retail Strategy 2008-2016, published in 2010 and the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. The review and update of the County Retail Strategy was undertaken to ensure that the retail policies in land use plans in Co. Kildare are in accordance with all national, regional and local planning frameworks.

The Retail Chapter of this Plan is consistent with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's (DoEHLG) Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (RPG), 2005 and the GDA Retail Strategy, 2008.

2.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

2.4.1 Total Population

Changes in population and household patterns are important concepts in Development Plans in order to estimate land and services required for residential development, community facilities, employment, infrastructure etc. Table 2.1 below shows the pattern of population change in Athy from 1996- 2006.

Table 2.1: Population Change in Athy 1996-2006

	1996	2002	2006
Population	5306	6058	2943
Households	1683	2056	2852
Average Household Size	3.15	2.9	2.7

Source : CSO Census of Population

The census 2006 illustrates a period of unprecedented population growth in Athy with a 31% increase between 2002 and 2006 and a 50% increase over the period 1996 to 2006. In comparison the population of County Kildare increased from 134,881 in 1996 to 186,335 in 2006, representing a growth of 38%. The population growth in Athy equates to almost three times the national population increase of 17% between 1996 and 2006. The Preliminary Census Results for 2011 records a population of 9,588 in Athy Town representing an increase of 20.7% since 2006.

2.4.2 Households and Household Sizes

The total number of households in Athy increased from 1,683 in 1996 to 2,852 in 2006. The average household size decreased from 3.15 in 1996 to 2.7 in 2006 (refer Table 2.1).

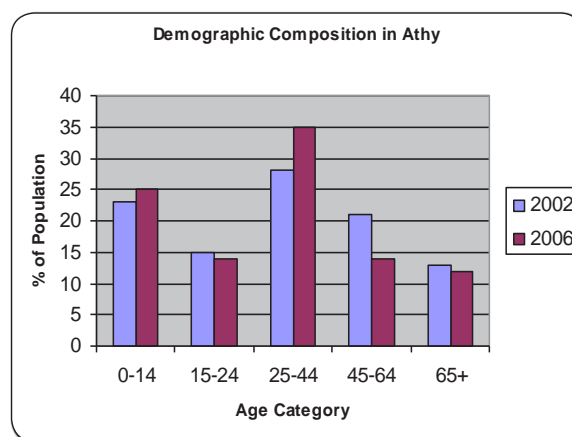
The average household size is significantly below the average for the county as a whole which was recorded at 3.07 in 2006. The decreasing household sizes are consistent with the trend at a national level. Changes in household sizes will have implications for the nature of housing provision within the town.

2.4.3 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile in Athy changed significantly over the period 2002-2006. The most significant increase occurred in the 25-44 age cohort (+7%) followed by the 0-14 age cohort (+2 %). The 45-64 year age cohort decreased significantly over the same period by 7%. Both the 15-24 and the 65+ categories decreased by 1%.

The decrease in the 65+ cohort is in contrast to the national trend which is experiencing an ageing of the population. This suggests that many young couples / new households have established homes in the town bringing pressures for childcare, educational provision and employment opportunities.

Figure 2.1: Demographic Composition in Athy



2.4.4 Labour Force and Commuting

The CSO 2006 indicates that 4,014 workers lived in Athy. Of this figure 2,176 people were employed within the town and 3,445 residents were available for employment. Education, health and social work, commerce and manufacturing accounted for 77% of the jobs. Table 2.2 outlines the number of people employed in each category in Athy.

Table 2.2: Employment in Athy by industry

Industry Category	1996
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	17
Commerce	602
Construction	103
Education, Health, Social Work	625
Manufacturing Industries	444
Public Administration & Defence	81
Transport, Storage & Communications	52
Other	252
Total No. of Jobs	2,176

Source: CSO Census of Population

In 2006 it was estimated that 1,691 workers commute from Athy to their place of work representing 42% of the available workforce in Athy. This figure demonstrates the need to provide suitable employment opportunities within the town to cater for the residents of Athy and its surrounding areas.

2.5 ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE GROWTH AND NEEDS

In order to estimate land, services and infrastructural requirements for particular landuses including residential development, community facilities and employment provision an assessment of future growth is required.

2.5.1 Future Population Growth and Housing Targets

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 indicates that County Kildare is to plan for continued strong levels of population growth towards a target of 252,640 by 2022, an increase of 66,305 persons or 33.8% increase, in addition to the number recorded in 2006.

The Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 allocates 35% of the population / unit target growth to the Metropolitan towns in the north east with 32.5% allocated to the hinterland towns of Naas, Newbridge, Kildare, Athy, Monasterevin and Kilcullen and the remaining 32.5% to smaller towns, villages and the rural countryside. Arising from the allocation, a growth target of 10,679 population / 1,252 units for Athy is prescribed for the period 2006-2017. This represents 4.2% of the allocated growth for the County over this period.

Table 2.3: Housing & Population Allocation 2012-2018

Athy Town	Population
2006 Population Census	7,943
2011 Population Census	9,588
2018 Population Target	10,819
Projected population increase 2006-2018	2,876 (36% increase)
2006-2018 Housing Unit Target	1,389
2006-2010 Units Constructed	702
2011-2018 Housing unit target	687 / 85 units per yr

In order to plan for the potential growth as outlined above, an understanding of the existing development capacity of the town is required. Under the Athy Development Plan 2006-2012 the town currently has 203.4ha of undeveloped land zoned for residential purposes² of which 24ha is subject to valid permissions for residential developments (402 residential units). With reference to the targets as outlined in Table 2.3 it is estimated that the Plan must provide sufficient zoning to

accommodate a total of 628 units³. This requires the provision of approx. 28ha of lands for residential purposes.

It should also be noted that the *National Survey of Ongoing Housing Development* conducted by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2010 estimated that 145 units are constructed and unoccupied in Athy. There is therefore an existing supply of units to cater for demand over the short to medium term.

This Plan provides sufficient new residential zoning to facilitate approximately 1,667 no. of units (75.8ha). This is a significant decrease in lands zoned for new residential development from 185 ha in the Athy Town Development Plan 2006-2012.

It is recognised that this level of zoning is of a scale which could facilitate future development up to 2022⁴ in line with the projected demands of the Regional Planning Guidelines.

This level of zoning is deemed appropriate as it will:

- Achieve more balanced residential development in all areas within the town boundary.
- Ensure accessibility to the proposed new road infrastructure such as the Northern Distributor Route.
- Be proximate and accessible to existing and future educational facilities

To ensure compliance with the core strategy of the plan a monitoring mechanism will be put in place in accordance with Policy CS 16. Furthermore, as part of the two year mid-term review an analysis of compliance with the Core Strategy will be undertaken and appropriate measures implemented if required (Refer to Policy CS 17).

Within the agricultural zone, housing will be restricted to people with a genuine housing need and who can demonstrate that they comply with local need requirements as outlined in Section 4.9 of the “Sustainable Rural Housing- Guidelines for Planning Authorities” and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



² Excludes town centre zoned sites.

³ 1030 units (150% provision DoEHLG Guidelines – 402 (committed units) = 628

⁴ On the basis of Athy continuing to have 4.5% of the projected overall growth of the County as provided for in the RPGs, it is estimated that 78.6ha of residential land will be required up to 2022.

2.5.2 Future Employment Requirements

As outlined in section 2.4.4, 42% of the working population commutes from Athy to their place of employment. While it is recognized that a certain proportion of commuting will continue into the future, this level of commuting is unsustainable in the longer term. In order to make the town more self sufficient and improve the quality of life of residents, it will be necessary to promote an increase in the number of jobs available in the town.

Table 2.4 provides a broad assessment of Athy's employment requirements up to 2018. In light of the current economic climate and job losses within the town it is the goal of this Plan to achieve a job ratio⁵ of 0.62 by 2018.

Table 2.4: Employment in Athy by industry

Athy	2006	2018	Increase 2006-2018
Population	7,943	10,676	2,733
Total Labour Force⁶	4,014	5,446	1,432
% of population economically active	62%	62%	No Change
Labour Force Participation Rate	64%	64%	No Change
Number of Jobs existing/ required in Athy⁷	2,176	3377	1201
Job Index	54 %	62%	8% increase
Extra jobs required by 2018		1201	

Source: CSO POWCAR Data by DTO (2009)

⁵ Jobs ratio relates to the number of jobs based in the town area divided by the resident workforce; it does not factor in employees commuting in or out of the town to work.

⁶ Estimates based on same proportion evident in 2006

⁷ Source: Derived from CSO POWCAR data by DTO (2009)

2.6 INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES

The development targets for Athy will be subject to the capacity of necessary physical infrastructure including transportation infrastructure, potable water, wastewater and surface water drainage to cater for such developments.

While the new link from Athy to the M9 represents a significant opportunity for the town, the N78 serves as the principal commercial thoroughfare and vehicular route through the town. It is subject to frequent delays, which in the absence of further road infrastructure will pose an impediment to the future economic development of Athy. Upgrading of the wastewater and water supply network are also required to facilitate the future expansion of the town.

2.7 DELIVERING THE CORE STRATEGY

The aims and objectives of the core strategy as outlined in Section 2.1 will be achieved through the implementation of strategic policies supported by more detailed policies and objectives outlined in the remaining chapters of this plan.

The core strategy is outlined on Map 2.1 and focuses on five key areas:

- Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town.
- Economic Development.
- Town Centre Development.
- Creation of sustainable and integrated communities.
- Balancing the environment with sustainable and appropriate development.

2.7.1 Strategy for Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town

The overall function of Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town is to develop in a self-sufficient manner, reducing commuting levels and ensuring sustainable levels of housing growth. A full range of local services adequate to meet local needs and for surrounding rural areas is required.

The provision of strong social infrastructure in tandem with growth in population, particularly in relation to schools and leisure facilities is also required.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CS1:** To facilitate sustainable levels of housing growth at appropriate locations within the town in tandem with the delivery of physical, social and community infrastructure along with local services adequate to meet the needs of the population of the town and surrounding rural area.
- CS2:** To facilitate greater co-ordination of residential and employment provision with the delivery of public infrastructure, amenities, community facilities, schools, public transport etc.

2.7.2 Economic Development

Athy is designated as a secondary economic growth town in the hinterland area providing an important role in developing economic growth and sectoral strengths in the GDA.

It will seek to complement the regionally important primary economic growth towns within the county of Naas, Maynooth and Leixlip.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CS3:** To encourage and facilitate new employment opportunities within the town and to seek to attract higher order knowledge based enterprise and economic development.
- CS4:** To focus sectoral opportunities on the development of high value added manufacturing, SMEs, agri-business, agriculture and tourism.
- CS5:** To address commuting patterns by building up the local economy to a more sustainable level.

2.7.3 Town Centre Strategy

The overriding principle of the town centre strategy is to seek the consolidation of the town centre by the regeneration and redevelopment of under utilised areas particularly backland areas, vacant units and brownfield sites. High quality urban development is advocated within the town centre, while ensuring that new development respects the existing unique built form and residential amenity of the area.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CS6:** To support, protect and reinforce the role of the town centre as the central retailing and service area of Athy through the

intensification, consolidation and appropriate redevelopment of the town centre.

- CS7:** To facilitate the provision of high level and broad ranging uses and to enhance and develop the urban fabric of the town centre.
- CS8:** To encourage the appropriate use and re-use of town centre backland and under-utilised sites to promote the regeneration of areas in need of renewal.

2.7.4 Creation of Sustainable Integrated Communities

In parallel with the provision of a more consolidated and compact urban core, together with the provision of employment opportunities, is the need to create sustainable and more socially inclusive integrated communities.

In this regard, the development of quality homes, mixed tenure neighbourhoods supported by infrastructure including social and community infrastructure is required. In order to achieve this, a number of key principles are identified to ensure that infrastructure such as schools, retail, childcare and open space facilities are provided in a concurrent manner.

The Plan seeks to create a vibrant and bustling town with a diverse mix of activities and the creation of sustainable and integrated communities.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CS9:** To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities through land use planning, by providing for appropriate land uses capable of accommodating employment, community, leisure, recreational and cultural facilities, accessible to and meeting the needs of all individuals and local community groups, in tandem with the delivery of residential and physical infrastructure to create quality environments in which to live.
- CS10:** To ensure that developments are appropriate and accessible to meet the needs of all individuals and local community groups.
- CS11:** To seek the delivery of adequate and appropriate physical and community infrastructure in conjunction with high quality residential development to create quality living environments.

2.7.5 Balancing the Environment with Sustainable and Appropriate Development

The built and natural heritage of Athy is recognised as an important environmental and economic resource and its conservation and enhancement is a key objective of this Development Plan. A key challenge is to balance the protection of the natural and built environment with the pressure for development. There is a need to protect local assets and to identify elements of key importance to the unique identity and character of Athy Town and also to enhance, conserve and protect these as appropriate.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CS12:** To protect and conserve buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and to protect features of natural heritage, including the Canal, watercourses and habitats.
- CS13:** To protect and conserve the natural environment.
- CS14:** To protect and conserve nationally important and EU designated sites.
- CS15:** To promote and enhance biodiversity.

2.7.6 Monitoring of Residential Development

In order to ensure compliance with the core strategy it is proposed to implement appropriate monitoring and control mechanisms in accordance with Policies CS16 and CS17.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CS16:** To monitor carefully the scale, rate and location of newly permitted development and apply appropriate development management measures to ensure compliance with the core strategy including population target for the town; and to achieve the delivery of strategic plan led and co-ordinate balanced development throughout the planning area.
- CS17:** To prepare a report as part of the Mid Term Review of this Plan (to be carried out in accordance with Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This report shall include detailed consideration of compliance with the Core Strategy and if necessary indicate measures to be taken (e.g.

Variation of the Athy Development Plan 2012-2018) to affect the aims of Section 2.5.1 and to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy, the CDP and the RPGs.

Map 2.1: Core Strategy



Athy - Moderate Sustainable Growth Town

Legend

- Athy Town Council Boundary
- Existing Built Area
- Key Employment Areas
- New Residential Areas
- Green/Amenity Area
- Community Education
- Town Centre
- Agriculture
- River Barrow
- Grand Canal
- Northern Distributor Road Study Area
- Main Road Network
- Local Roads
- Southern Distributor Road
- Railway Station
- Railway
- Opportunity Areas
- Consolidated Town Centre

CHAPTER 3

Economic Strategy

3



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To provide for the future well being of the residents of Athy by facilitating and promoting economic development and the growth of employment opportunities in all sectors in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; to achieve a reduction in the levels of commuting from the town by ensuring that lands are appropriately zoned and a framework is in place to attract greater employment opportunities and manufacturing industries by fostering competitiveness and innovation within a high quality physical environment; to provide a greater focus on community building and the quality of life of the residents of Athy.

3(A) ECONOMIC STRATEGY

3.1 ECONOMIC POLICY CONTEXT

3.1.1 National Context

Improving Ireland's economy is a recognised priority at national level and this has been reflected in *"Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal"* (2008).

This framework plan sets out Government policy on the restructuring of the economy with the primary objective of returning Ireland to sustainable growth in the medium term. The framework focuses on building a smart economy with thriving enterprises, high quality business environment, secure energy supplies, an attractive environment and first class infrastructure.

3.1.2 Regional Context

At a regional level the Greater Dublin Area is seen as the power house of the national economy accommodating over 40% of the population of Ireland and generating just under half of Ireland's Gross Value Added. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2010-2022) sets out a strategy for the continuing economic development of the region.

The RPG strategy identifies key areas of enterprise development potential in the GDA and focuses on enhancing strategically important aspects of the business environment so as to create the conditions for attracting investment by both foreign and indigenous companies, stimulating entrepreneurship and enabling companies to grow and target international markets. The RPGs state

that targeted investment in physical, green and social infrastructure provides the most efficient and effective long term use of resources.

Athy is identified in the RPGs as a "Moderate Sustainable Growth Town". It is located in the Hinterland Area and provides a wide range of local services to meet local needs at district level and for the surrounding rural areas as stated in the RPGs. Moderate Sustainable Growth Towns should continue to fulfill a strong role as a commuter location within the fabric of continued consolidation of the metropolitan area. Growth in Athy needs to ensure that expansion is based on and related to the capacity of public transport connections and capacity of social infrastructure. Emphasis should be placed on encouraging good local connections to adjoining towns and employment locations within the metropolitan area through bus corridors and good cycling and walking connections within the town itself.

The town should develop in a self sufficient manner in the longer term and that continued basis for growth is that it does not remain a dormitory town. The local labour market should be capitalised on to attract a range of enterprises and employment opportunities.

3.1.3 Local Context

The promotion and development of sustainable economic development is a priority of this town plan. It seeks to build upon the current economic strategy for the county "Competing in a Globalised World – An Economic Development Strategy for Kildare" and the economic strategy of the Athy Town Development Plan 2006-2012.

The future economic development of Athy is linked to that of the county and the key message from the aforementioned economic strategy is that Kildare has to compete internationally in order to attract and retain investment and skills. It recognises the need to develop and attract more strategic activities in the manufacturing sectors and re-orientate the county towards high value added traded services. At a strategic level it advocates the importance of identifying locations that have the highest potential for the attraction of high-tech, high value added and R&D activities and that these sites be identified specifically for those developments. It also recognises the need to cater for a wide range of business, residential and infrastructure developments throughout the county.

The importance of attracting investment into the town is recognised and the Council aims to facilitate economic development and employment generating opportunities throughout Athy by:

- Appropriate zoning of lands at strategic locations;
- Facilitating the provision of necessary infrastructure;
- Continuing to develop a partnership approach and a coordinating role with other agencies in pursuing investment opportunities for Athy.

The Council will continue to promote economic development and will engage with the County Development Board, the Kildare Enterprise Board, the IDA and Forfás and stakeholders and interest groups to deliver sustainable economic development.

3.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE OF ATHY

According to the 2006 Census, 4,014 workers lived in Athy. 2,176 people were employed within the town and 3,445¹ residents of the town were available for employment¹. Manufacturing, education, health, social work and commerce accounted for the majority of the jobs within the town in 2006, with agriculture also featuring as a source of fulltime and part time employment in the hinterland area of the town.

¹ Persons who are employed, unemployed and first time job seekers.

Table 3.1: Principal Economic Status (Persons aged 15+)

Population Category	No. of Persons
Total population of Athy	7,943
Labour Force	4,014
Persons aged 15 and over	6,051
Number in employment	3,345
Students	463
Retired	647
Looking after home/family	717
Unable to work due to disability / sickness	307

Source: CSO Census 2006

Table 3.2: Employment in Athy by Industry

Industry Category	No. of Jobs
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	17
Commerce	602
Construction	103
Education, Health, Social Work	625
Manufacturing Industries	444
Public Administration & Defence	81
Transport, Storage & Communications	52
Other	252
Total No. of Jobs	2,176

Source: CSO Census 2006

3.2.1 Unemployment Rates

Within the County as a whole, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of people “signing on” since the end of February 2007.

Employment levels within the town are lower than for other large towns in the county, with a Job Ratio² of 54.2%³ in Athy, in comparison to 62% for the County. Economic growth and development is primarily linked with growth in population and employment and while it is generally possible to assign population growth to a particular location, it is not possible to “assign” employment to specific areas. Employment investment is generally attracted to a particular urban location and the power of subsidies; tax breaks and grants to make locations attractive are declining. Emerging policies favour the switch from subsidies and grants to investment in infrastructure because it is considered to be more effective and offers better value for money over the longer term.

3.2.2 Levels of Commuting

The 2006 Census indicates that a substantial number of workers resident in Athy commute to employment outside the town. Approximately 1,691 workers commute from Athy between 10-50+ km to their place of work. The number of workers commuting from Athy supports the view that there is an available workforce to support many

new employment projects. The projected increase in population coupled with the role of Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town as outlined in the RPGs will result in an increase in the labour force in Athy. The availability of a larger workforce could result in a comparative advantage in attracting inward employment creating enterprises and will also require the creation of additional employment opportunities.

3.3 EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS 2006-2018

Table 3.3 provides a broad assessment of Athy’s employment requirements up to 2018. Many residents of the town are dependent on jobs located elsewhere in the region and in particular in Dublin City and Carlow Town. In order to make the town more self sufficient and improve the quality of life of residents, there is a need to bring employment closer to where people reside. The RPGs identify that the county should plan for an increased Job Ratio. While there is no empirical evidence available there is no doubt the number of jobs available in the town has reduced from the figure of 2,176 given in the 2006 census reports. It is the goal of this Plan to facilitate the creation of sufficient jobs to restore the Job Ratio to at least the 2006 figure of 55% and to increase it to match that of the County with a target Job Ratio of 62% for Athy by 2018.



² Jobs ratio relates to the number of jobs based in the town area divided by the resident workforce; it does not factor in employees commuting in or out of the town to work.

³ Source: CSO POWCAR 2006, as provided by the National Transport Authority.

Table 3.3: Future Employment Requirements

Athy	2006	2018	Increase 2006-2018
Population	7943	10,676	2733
Total Labour Force ⁴	4014	5446	1432
Percentage of population economically active	62%	62%	No Change
Labour Force Participation Rate	64%	64%	No Change
Number of Jobs existing/required in Athy ⁵	2176	3377	1201
Job Ratio	54 %	62%	8% increase
Extra jobs required by 2018		1201	

Source: CSO POWCAR Data by DTO (2009)

Assuming that greenfield sites are developed at a modest plot ratio of 0.4 and all lands are developed for low-medium density type employment (40m² per employee), the provision of the required new jobs would require the provision of 12.01 hectares of zoned land. Currently it is estimated that approximately 50 hectares of undeveloped land is zoned for employment purposes in Athy.

3.4 STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Athy Town Council recognises the significant economic and employment challenges facing Athy and will seek to facilitate the continuance of inward investment and the development and revitalisation of indigenous businesses in Athy. The recommendations put forward in the County Economic Strategy are relevant to the economic development of Athy and inform the content and direction of this Development Plan.

The importance of quality of life is a key component to facilitate future economic development, which depends not solely on employment status and income but on factors such as infrastructural support, commuting times, availability of childcare, education, recreation opportunities and on the quality of the built and natural environment.

This Plan will also have regard to the government’s framework for economic recovery entitled “Building Ireland’s Smart Economy, A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal 2008”. This framework focuses on building a smart economy with a thriving enterprise sector, high quality employment, secure energy supplies, an attractive environment and first class infrastructure.

Athy must seek to develop a complementary role in economic growth and sectoral interests in tandem with the primary economic growth towns in the GDA to facilitate higher order employment uses.

A new land use zoning category of “Enterprise and Employment” has been included in this Plan to allow for and to promote the growth and improvement of this sector. It is a priority of this Plan to encourage and make provision for increased employment activity, including ensuring that sufficient land is zoned at optimum locations, the provision of necessary infrastructure and to encourage measures in promoting critical mass to allow for the future sustainable economic development of Athy.

The Town Council will continue to work closely with the Athy Investment and Development Forum in order to bring forward a number of new initiatives relating to enterprise development.

⁴ Estimates based on same proportion evident in 2006

⁵ Source: Derived from CSO POWCAR data by DTO (2009)

The importance of developing the town centre area is acknowledged. Key interventions in this regard include better traffic and parking management and master planning as well as a greater level of flexibility in terms of zoning matrices.

Development in Athy should concentrate on the areas of high value added export led manufacturing sectors as well as SMEs; logistics and internationally traded sectors in tandem with IDA support, around transport corridors and routes such as the railway station. Continued investment in education and skills development are also advocated.

3.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. Availability of Zoned Land

One of the key enablers to attract potential investment and employment to Athy will be the availability of appropriately zoned lands. Under the Athy Town Development Plan 2006-2012 approximately 101 hectares of land is zoned for employment, industry and enterprise purposes in and around Athy. It should be noted that this figure does not include such uses as Town Centre, Retail, Leisure and Amenity which would also provide an element of employment generation.

Approximately 50 hectares of lands zoned for employment purposes remain undeveloped. This figure solely relates to lands zoned for employment such as industrial warehousing and commercial and does not take into account potential job creation on other lands zoned for town centre, retail or leisure and amenity uses. It is considered that there is sufficient land zoned for employment generation to meet job creation needs for the town up to 2018 and beyond. Table 3.4 provides further information in relation to the location and availability of undeveloped zoned employment land in Athy.

II. Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is vital for the facilitation of future economic development activity in the town. This includes water services, effective road and public transport networks, energy, telecommunications, waste management, education and recreation facilities etc. There is a significant infrastructural deficit in relation to road infrastructure and to a lesser extent the public transport network in Athy. The Southern Distributor Road in Athy has been identified as a key infrastructural priority and its delivery is viewed as

being essential for the future economic expansion of the town as well as the significant improvement of the accessibility and attractiveness of the town centre. The Northern Distributor Road is identified in this Plan as a longer term objective in order to further improve accessibility and economic development of the town.

Improvement of the broadband and telecommunications network in Athy is also required in terms of the quality and range of broadband provision throughout Athy. The development of a comprehensive and efficient broadband and telecommunications network will bring significant economic benefits to the town. The availability of this telecommunications infrastructure in Athy enables high speed access to information for industry, public and private sector organisations.

III. Quality of Life

The significance of quality of life is a key component to facilitate future economic development. Factors that make a town attractive for both businesses and their employees are the key to a successful economic development strategy.

Specific actions to improve quality of life for the residents of the town include:

- Providing high quality residential developments with supporting social and community facilities.
- Ensuring a vibrant town centre with a high quality public realm.
- Creating an attractive urban environment to facilitate residency of the projected labour force.
- Developing the public realm and amenities of Athy so that the quality of life of employees and residents can be improved.
- Ensuring the appearance of development complements existing environments and is of the highest quality.
- Seeking the upgrade of transport infrastructure together with the improvement of inter urban non national roads and seeking opportunities for modal change.
- Expanding infrastructural capacity for water and wastewater.
- Increasing and improving the range and quality of recreational, amenity and cultural facilities.
- Improve access to the range and type of educational facilities within the town.

Policies - General Economic Development

It is the policy of the Council:

- ED1:** To facilitate and support the sustainable growth of Athy as an attractive location for employment development.
- ED2:** To promote employment in Athy in order to reduce the need to travel and the dependence on private transport.
- ED3:** To promote economic development on appropriately zoned land throughout the town, especially at or in close proximity to transport nodes.
- ED4:** To support the appropriate development of a high quality built environment to attract and sustain enterprise and employment.
- ED5:** To promote innovative economic sectors and encourage business clusters that exploit links with one another and with third level education facilities.
- ED6:** To actively encourage the appropriate redevelopment of brownfield sites and re-use of disused buildings for enterprise and employment creation, when such development is in compliance with the policies and objectives of this Plan.
- ED7:** To promote the establishment of entrepreneurial start up business and small scale employment generating activities and to apply a flexible approach to zoning where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would have minimal impact on adjoining uses, particularly residential.
- ED8:** To encourage and facilitate at appropriate locations, small indigenous industries in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity.
- ED9:** To encourage and facilitate the development of 'green' industries, including those relating to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies.

3.6 LAND-USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development will be focused on land uses such as enterprise development, industry, retail and commercial development. Other sectoral employment opportunities for consideration include tourism, leisure and rural enterprise in the agricultural zone.

3.6.1 Large Scale Enterprise Development

Enterprise development includes a broad range of economic and employment generating developments that rely on process-orientated activities to produce goods and services. It includes "office-based industry" and knowledge based industry, high value added manufacturing and services based industry.

Traditional industries are being replaced by these new categories of business which provide a range of products and services including software development, information technology, telemarketing, commercial research, science and research and development.

In general large scale multi national companies display a preference for locations within or in close proximity to large urban areas that can provide labour force, skills, infrastructure, services, accessibility and business social networks. Athy provides a number of areas zoned to accommodate a wide range of enterprise development opportunities including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

It is the policy of the Council:

- ED10:** To encourage the development of existing manufacturing industries in the town while establishing and expanding new categories of business in Athy and support their development in a phased and sustainable manner.

3.6.2 Industrial Development

There continues to be a need for a diverse range of employment opportunities in Athy, despite the increasing move towards "knowledge-based" activities. It is essential to retain existing established industrial based development and also to expand further industrial activities appropriate to the town. The industrial and warehousing zoning objective allows for industrial development and a range

of related uses that could be suitably located on industrial estates and enterprise centres within the town.



3.6.3 Small – Medium Enterprise (SME)

The development of small and medium scale projects with longer term employment potential are essential to the future development of Athy and such types of development is encouraged within the town. Recognised best practice approaches to stimulating SME activity include incubation units, clustering of similar such enterprises and networking.

Small – medium enterprises may include manufacturing, processing, services, repairs, agriculturally related businesses, distributions and transport operating centres type activities.

It is the policy of the Council:

ED11: To facilitate the sustainable development of knowledge-intensive and technology based companies in Athy and to encourage the provision of Research and Development/ Innovation facilities and SMEs to support enterprise and employment.

3.6.4 Retail and Office Development

The retail sector contributes to the overall vitality and attractiveness of a town and provides employment in an area. While Athy boasts an attractive historic town centre with a range of local retail services, there are challenges posed particularly in terms of accessibility, traffic movement, vacancy rates, dereliction and adaptability of retail units. However, it is important to look at opportunities for the appropriate re-use and regeneration of the town centre, along with the

development of backlands and brownfield sites. Planning policy in relation to retailing is set out in Chapter 6 of this Plan.

The priority location for new retail floor space is within and/or at the edge of the town centre. It is an aim of this Plan to revitalise and improve the existing town centre and also to deliver the key infrastructure required to ensure the retail sector in the town centre continues to grow and provide a wide range and high standard of retail development to serve the population of Athy and surrounding area.

It is policy of the Council:

- RO1:** To implement the retail strategy and support the creation of high quality living and shopping environments which will add to the attraction of Athy for employers as a town in which to locate.
- RO2:** To facilitate and encourage office based industry primarily in enterprise and employment zones and to encourage smaller scale office development in the town centre.
- RO3:** To locate commercial developments providing goods / services to significant numbers of visiting members of the public, within or in close proximity to the existing town centre.

3.6.5 Education and Health

Education, health and social work account for the majority of employment opportunities in the town. In particular the recent completion of the new education campus on the Monasterevin Road has boosted the role of education within the town as an employer. Both the education and health sectors have a vital role to play in the further training of the workforce and also in further research.

The continued support and development of education facilities in the town is of great importance. Furthermore the relationship between Carlow Institute of Technology (CIT) should be built upon with economic opportunities developed which support the third level education base of CIT, including development in the areas of R&D, agri-engineering and alternative energies.

Health Services in the Athy area are administered by the Health Service Executive from a number of locations within the town. The main Health Centre is located on Woodstock Street and provides for the full range of community health and social services.

Services for older persons are based at St.Vincent’s Hospital Athy. Naas Hospital provides the general hospital services for the area.

It is the policy of the Council:

- EH1:** To promote initiatives with relevant agencies to expand training and education that meets the wide range of business skills located in the town.
- EH2:** To support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations in the town.

3.6.6 Incubation Units / Workshops / Business Starter Units

The provision of appropriate infrastructure is important in creating the conditions conducive to enterprise and employment creation. Incubation units, workshops and business starter units provide small and medium businesses with a base to engage in the production, research and development and enterprise activities. Having regard to current trends and forecasts it is considered that there will be demand for smaller units c.50-80 sqm providing for greater letting ability and lower rents.

Athy Town Council will continue to work pro-actively with national, regional and local development agencies and to work in conjunction with the County Development Board and in particular, such educational institutions as CIT and the VEC. The economic potential arising from the location of Athy town close to Carlow town should be maximised in terms of the benefits that can be gained from good economic and educational relationships.

It is policy of the Council:

- EE1:** To promote the provision of workspace units suitable for small businesses and start up companies, in general, and with particular emphasis on their provision within large schemes.

3.6.7 Research and Development

Research and Development is a high value employment sector which relies on a good supply of a well educated, skilled workforce within its geographic catchment. Consequently, factors influencing the location of R&D enterprise include quality of infrastructure and physical environment,

availability of a well educated workforce, connectivity levels, and community and cultural facilities.

It is the policy of the Council:

- EE2:** To promote the growth of Research and Development in Athy by facilitating the conditions conducive to such development including a high quality built and natural environment, public transport infrastructure and community and cultural infrastructure.
- EE3:** To support the development of economic opportunities which support the third level education base of CIT and NUI Maynooth, particularly in the areas of R&D, agri-engineering and alternative energies. The Council will co-operate with Carlow IT and NUI Maynooth to promote and encourage R&D in Athy to attract industry.

3.6.8 Home Based Economic Activity

Working from home can make a very positive contribution towards reducing car travel and increasing the vibrancy of an area. While this Plan supports the concept of home working, it is important that such activity does not result in the disamenity of a predominantly residential area and therefore employment use in a dwelling should be restricted to the occupier(s) of the dwelling and such use should be subordinate to the use of the dwelling as a residence. In addition to home working, this Plan supports the concept of a live-work unit which can be defined as a single unit within a building that is both a place to live and a place of business or commerce. The development of live-work units can lead to a more sustainable land use pattern, by providing for a mix of uses, ensuring a balance between day and night time activity and reducing commuting.

It is the policy of the Council:

- HW1:** To facilitate home-working and innovative forms of working which reduce the need to travel but are subordinate to the main residential use of the dwelling and do not result in a dis-amenity in an area.
- HW2:** To encourage the provision of live-work units as part of mixed-use developments in appropriate locations (particularly at ground floor level).

3.6.9 Design, Location and Availability of Employment lands in Athy

The Council's zoning strategy for the town identifies locations for particular types of employment lands uses such as large-scale enterprise development, industrial development, retail and small to medium enterprises. This Plan seeks to identify a range of optimum locations which can present opportunities for the location of specific /specialized enterprise and employment uses within the town. This Plan also encourages the re-use and re-development of brownfield lands i.e. those lands formerly used for other uses.

The location of the main employment areas in Athy and the quantity of zoned undeveloped land available for employment development are shown in Table 3.4 and Map 3.1. In addition to the main employment zoning categories such as Enterprise, Industry and Warehousing, there are other zoning categories which allow for leisure activities and various commercial uses. Reference should be made to Chapter 16 for further detail in relation to the individual land use zonings throughout the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- UD1:** To ensure that new employment areas are attractive areas and are of a high standard of urban design.
- UD2:** To ensure the provision of adequate screening of employment developments in the form of planting, landscaping and mounding as appropriate, especially where new industrial/employment developments adjoin residential areas.
- UD3:** To ensure that the layout of new employment developments will have regard to alternative sustainable modes of transport. Site layout should emphasise the necessary connections to the wider local and strategic public transport, walking and cycling networks.



Table 3.4: Location and Availability of Employment Land in Athy

Land Use Zoning Objective	Location and availability of (undeveloped) land	Employment Opportunities/Sectoral Strengths
<p>A: Town Centre</p> <p><i>To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of the existing town centre and to provide for new and improved town centre facilities and uses.</i></p>	<p>Town Centre</p>	<p>Capacity for retail and residential development, office and small- medium sized enterprise. Also capacity for innovative retail/tourism/mixed use/cultural development in brownfield town centre sites.</p>
<p>Q: Enterprise and Employment</p> <p><i>To facilitate opportunities for employment and enterprise uses, manufacturing, research and development, light industry and employment related uses within a high quality campus/park type development.</i></p>	<p>Woodstock South</p> <p>Bleach</p>	<p>Identified for large/medium scale new enterprise and employment growth of Athy. These areas which were previously zoned H: Industrial and Warehousing in the Athy Town Development Plan 2006-2012, will play a pivotal role in future enterprise and employment development in the town.</p> <p>Development of higher quality knowledge based enterprises focusing on ICT, R&D, offices, office based industry, telemarketing and some manufacturing.</p> <p>Development at these locations, comprising both brownfield and infill sites, should increase the density of employment in the area while also allowing for some appropriate mixed-use development to increase service opportunities. This plan seeks to retain and develop the existing manufacturing industries in the town while establishing and expanding new categories of business in Athy and support their development.</p>
<p>H: Industrial & Warehousing</p> <p><i>To provide for and improve industrial and warehousing development.</i></p>	<p>Woodstock South</p> <p>Chanterlands</p> <p>Townparks</p>	<p>Development in these areas will be generally less employment intensive. Opportunity for development of high value added manufacturing and small – medium enterprise (SME).</p> <p>Significant capacity for infill industrial development and re-development of brownfield sites. Opportunity for new industrial and warehousing development, and small-medium sized enterprise in undeveloped areas.</p>
<p>H1: Industrial & Warehousing</p> <p><i>To provide for a gateway business campus.</i></p>	<p>Gallowshill</p>	<p>This zone relates to the gateway business campus and provides for any future expansion of this campus. Future development will be for low- density employment of the light industrial and industrial office type. This site is a key gateway to the town and therefore high quality design, finish and landscaping of the development is particularly important.</p>

Land Use Zoning Objective	Location and availability of (undeveloped) land	Employment Opportunities/Sectoral Strengths
<p>H2: Industrial & Warehousing</p> <p><i>To provide for and improve industrial and warehousing development and to include retail/warehousing.</i></p>	<p>Woodstock South</p> <p>Along Southern Distributor Rd</p>	<p>Development in these areas will be generally less employment intensive. Opportunity for development of high value added manufacturing and small – medium enterprise (SME).</p> <p>Significant capacity for infill industrial development and re-development of brownfield sites. Opportunity for new industrial and warehousing development, and small-medium sized enterprise in undeveloped areas.</p> <p>H2 to include Retail/Warehousing</p>
<p>H3: Light Industrial & Commercial</p> <p><i>To provide for new office and light industrial development</i></p>	<p>Townparks</p> <p>Shamrock Lodge</p> <p>Gallowshill</p>	<p>Development in these areas will be focused on the improvement/consolidation of existing permitted established uses, and/or the provision of new office, light industrial development.</p> <p>Development on these sites, comprising both brownfield and greenfield sites, should increase the density of employment in the area.</p>
<p>H4: Industrial & Warehousing</p>	<p>Woodstock South</p>	<p>This zone relates to the Athy Business Campus in Woodstock South.</p> <p>The purpose of this zone is to consolidate the employment base in the town other uses ancillary or similar to industry and warehousing including office, office based industry; professional and medical services will normally be acceptable in this zone subject to the provision of appropriate service infrastructure and car parking to support such uses.</p>
<p>I: Agricultural</p> <p><i>To provide for continued agricultural development and associated uses.</i></p>		<p>Agriculture, rural enterprise, horticulture, equine industry.</p>

Note: This table is indicative of the main employment zones and their employment opportunities. For further guidance in relation to zoned land, refer to Chapter 16 Land Use Zoning Map 16.1

3.7 PREVENTION OF MAJOR ACCIDENTS

The Seveso Directive II (96-082-EEC) is an EU Directive that seeks to prevent major industrial accidents involving dangerous substances and to limit the consequences of such accidents on people and the environment.

There are no major accident hazard sites notified under the EC (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 (SI 74 of 2006) within Athy but any new developments of this nature shall abide by standards prescribed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the relevant legislation.

It is the policy of the Council:

- MA1:** To have regard to the following in assessing applications for new developments (including extensions):
- a) Major Accidents Directive (Seveso II - 96/082/EEC)
 - b) The potential effects on public health and safety.
 - c) The need to ensure adequate distances between such developments and residential areas, areas of public use and any areas of sensitivity.
 - d) The advice of the HSA.

3.8 RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Athy and the surrounding area boast some of the finest agricultural lands in the region. The rural economy is an important component of Athy's overall economy. There is approximately 435 hectares of agricultural land zoned within the town boundary.

Certain types of rural enterprises and agribusiness, especially those that involve natural resources may, at an appropriate scale, have a role to play in the agricultural zone. Where appropriate locations are available in Athy and subject to proper planning considerations, including adequate infrastructure, proposals may be considered favorably within the agricultural zone.

Despite a national decline in fulltime agricultural employment, Athy continues to have a higher than

average number of persons in fulltime agricultural employment. SMEs are a significant element of the rural economy and include food production and manufacturing. A small component of Athy's rural economy is engaged in strategic food production and processing. This area of economic development should be encouraged and promoted. Rural based tourism which includes fishing, forestry, trekking, equine and farm based activities also provides opportunities for the diversification of the rural economy.

Given the importance of the rural environment it is essential that its integrity is maintained and enhanced and that the activities which rely upon it do not degrade or detract from it.

It is recognised that the agricultural industry has an important role in employment. Horticulture, a sub sector of agriculture, offers higher value added than other traditional agricultural enterprises and its development as an enterprise activity is also recognised in this Plan. Furthermore the development of specialised agri-engineering and related R&D projects on appropriately zoned lands within the town will be supported by the Council.

It is the policy of the Council:

- AG1:** To promote an environmentally sustainable agricultural/horticultural sector and a vibrant bloodstock industry, which contributes to a dynamic and successful rural economy.
- AG2:** To support and protect the development of agriculture within the agricultural zone in Athy; to develop a sustainable agricultural sector that is compatible with the sustainable development of the town and maintains the viability of farming.
- AG3:** To ensure that agricultural activities do not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside/ agricultural zone and to ensure that watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance are protected from the threat of pollution.
- AG4:** To protect agricultural and equine uses, from encroachment by urban development uses beyond that needed to cater for the orderly expansion of the town.
- AG5:** To protect and ensure the continuing viability of agriculture and horticulture within rural areas and to sustain the rural character of the countryside as a valuable resource.

- AG6:** To promote the diversification of the rural economy and the development of rural indigenous industry while safeguarding the environment and role of the rural area as a strategic asset.
- AG7:** To encourage agri-businesses appropriate to the area which are directly related to the local horticultural or agricultural sectors in areas zoned for agricultural purposes.
- AG8:** To require the submission of a comprehensive traffic impact study for any proposed agri-business within the rural area.

3.9 EQUINE INDUSTRY

The equine industry represents a significant landuse in County Kildare. The Council recognises the importance of the bloodstock and sport horse industry in the County and would encourage its further development in the Athy area.

It is the policy of the Council:

- EQ1:** To encourage the development of equine related enterprises on agricultural zoned lands within the town boundary.

3.10 GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- EDO1:** To encourage economic development and employment development in the Moderate Sustainable Growth Town of Athy in accordance with national and regional policies and objectives and in accordance with the overall development strategy of this Plan.
- EDO2:** To ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for employment generating uses in Athy. Such land will, normally, be protected from inappropriate development that would prejudice its long term development for these uses.
- EDO3:** To ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate water, wastewater treatment and waste management facilities to accommodate future economic growth of the town.
- EDO4:** To co-operate with and seek to facilitate local community based development groups in

developing employment clusters including incubator/start up units as appropriate.

- EDO5:** To continue to forge strong partnerships and work in conjunction with national, regional and local development agencies, including Forfás, Industrial Development Agency, Kildare County Development Board, Kildare County Council, County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland, Athy Industrial Forum, FAS and also the educational sector including CIT and the VEC in attracting new commercial enterprises and employment opportunities in Athy.
- EDO6:** To acquire suitable land, subject to the availability of funding, to stimulate and support creative and innovative entrepreneurial initiatives.
- EDO7:** To support IDA Ireland in the attraction of high value added manufacturing sectors and internationally traded sectors to Athy.



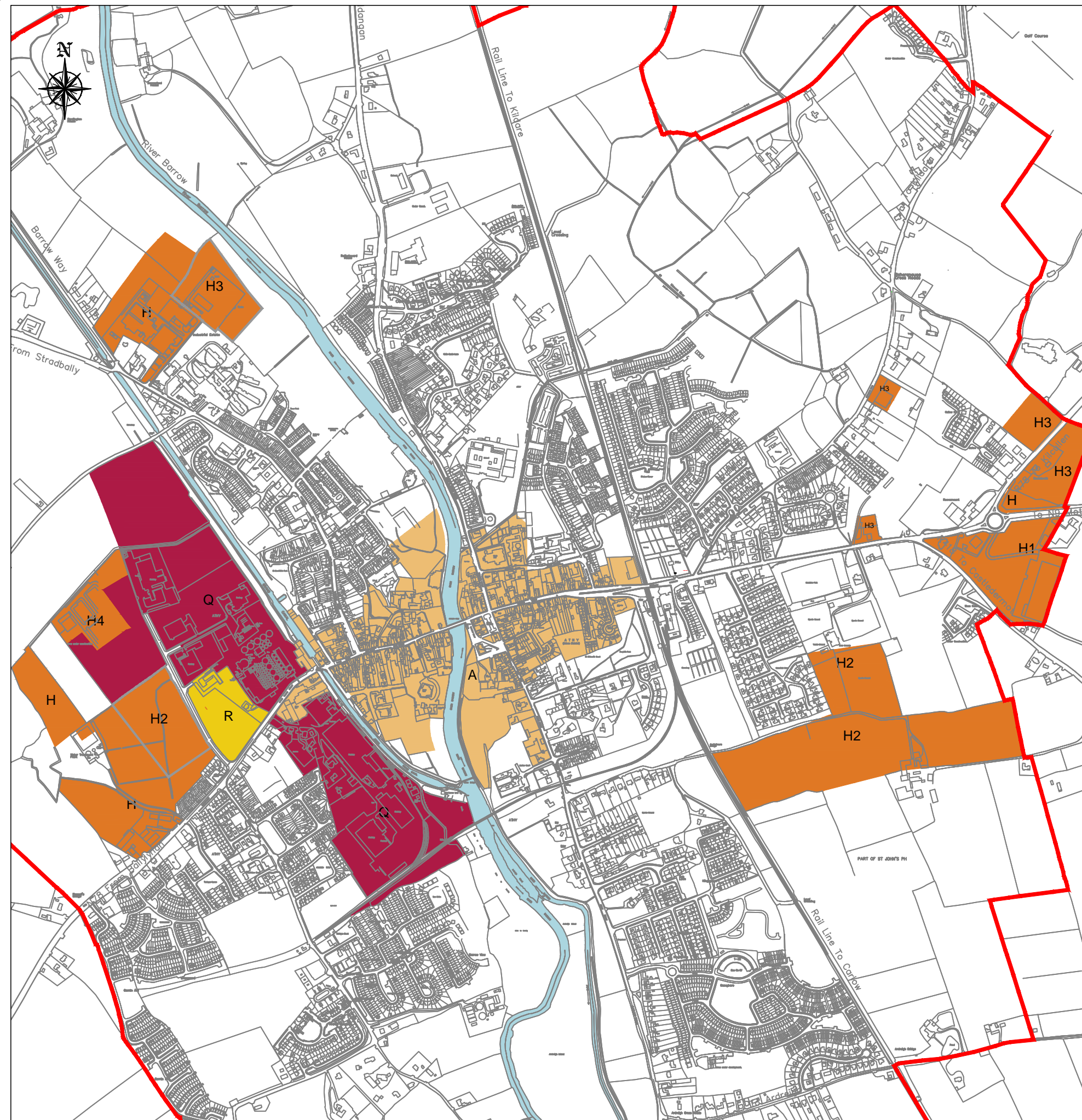


Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

Legend

-  Athy Town Council Boundary
-  A: Town Centre
-  H, H1, H2, H4: Industrial & Warehousing
-  H3: Light Industrial & Commercial
-  Q: Enterprise & Employment
-  R: Retail / Commercial
-  Rivers and Canals



Main Employment Zones

Date: March 2012	Map Ref: 3.1
Scale: N.T.S.	Drawing No: 200/10/522
Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence No.: 2004/07CCMA (Kildare County Council)	Drawn By DMcN

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CONJUNCTION WITH THE WRITTEN STATEMENT



3(B) TOURISM STRATEGY

3.11 BACKGROUND

Tourism is an important sector of the economy offering potential for increased employment and economic activity. Athy has a rich portfolio of natural, architectural, historical and cultural assets and amenities, providing a substantial recreational and heritage resource for a large and growing population. The Council will seek to leverage the economic and social opportunity which tourism within the area represents to both Athy and the wider surrounding rural area.

Athy also has strong opportunities for business tourism because of its proximity to Dublin City and the ready availability of hotel accommodation. Opportunities to develop niche tourism including water sports, walking, angling, eco-tourism, sports, passive recreation, golfing, culinary and other leisure pursuits.

The Council will look favourably on sustainable tourism developments and especially on supporting tourism infrastructure, which is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the town.

The Council is committed to supporting the development and improvement of tourism services and attractions throughout the town. The town is designated as a Heritage Town and associated heritage and information signage has been erected in the town since the adoption of the previous plan.

There is now an official seasonal tourist office located in the Athy Heritage Centre along with the Shackelton Museum and the town library.

Furthermore, several initiatives have been developed for Athy in recent years in order to encourage increased visitor numbers to the area and to improve the overall experience of the visitor while in the town. The town is the subject of the pilot “Shine Town” strategy. This initiative aims to reinvigorate the traditional Irish welcome offered to overseas visitors. The initiative was developed by Tourism Ireland in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland and in response to approaches and involvement from local tourism interests.

3.12 TOURISM IN THE CONTEXT OF ATHY

I. Waterways Tourism - Boating, Angling, Walking, Cycling

Given the location, extent and quality of both the River Barrow and the Grand Canal, there is great potential for the development of waterways tourism throughout the town and the surrounding area.

The River Barrow Navigation extends from Robertstown and heads south through Monasterevin and Athy and onward through Co. Carlow and onto Co. Kilkenny. The County Kildare section of the Barrow Line is 28 miles (43 km) long with nine locks including two doubles. The main line of the Grand Canal flows from Dublin to Shannon

Harbour and is 82 miles (131 km) in total with 43 locks, five of which are double locks.

Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland in conjunction with Carlow County Development Partnership, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Wexford County Councils have undertaken a study of the River Barrow Corridor, The Barrow Corridor: Tourism, Recreation and Commercial Product Development Study 2011, to recognise and mark the 220th anniversary of the Barrow as a navigation waterway. This study will contribute greatly to the potential and further development of the tourism industry associated with the Barrow. The scope of the study includes a detailed examination of a one-mile wide corridor along the Barrow Valley from the Grand Canal at Lowtown, Roberstown to the Barrow estuary south of New Ross, Co. Wexford. The report includes a high level assessment of a fifteen mile wide corridor along the Barrow Valley route.

The key outputs from the study are:

- Audit of existing facilities and tourism products and trends in the catchments.
- Production of a map to identify potential sites for future tourism enterprise.
- Action plan for development of identified sites.
- Nominate responsibility to key actors for the delivery of the Action Plan.

The main obstacle to achieving improved utilisation of the waterways in Athy is the deficit in safe and convenient mooring facilities. Boats and barges are being restricted in their ability to moor in Athy and this is a major disincentive to considering the town as a stop over location. The development of a marina or at least a floating jetty is an essential piece of infrastructure required in order to maximise the possibilities presented by tourism activities based around the waterways of Athy.

The Council will continue to work with Waterways Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in order to unlock the potential of the Grand Canal and River Barrow as a tourist attraction to local, national and international boat users, fishing and walking enthusiasts. In addition to a marina, the provision of a boat house and/or canoe club would also be a welcome addition to the town and would further boost tourist numbers.

The Council will support initiatives to provide

strategic walking and cycling routes in conjunction with angling spots along the waterways. However, it should be noted that should any works be required in order to provide walking and information and facilities along the river and canal banks that an Appropriate Assessment may need to be carried out.

II. Sports and Recreation Tourism

The annual TriAthy event has grown in popularity since its establishment in 2006. Its further development and expansion by the organisers is supported by Athy Town Council.

Significant potential exists to develop and improve the amenity of greenfield recreational areas such as the People's Park, the area surrounding Woodstock Castle and the structure and adjoining gardens of White Castle.



III. Heritage Tourism

Athy boasts a rich and unique architectural, archaeological and natural heritage. The town retains many buildings of significance, including White Castle, Market House (Heritage Centre and Library), The Model Farm and School (recently fire damaged), Dominican Church and Presbyterian Church. Furthermore the town has strong connections with Arctic explorer Ernest Shackleton, providing the only permanent exhibition in the world on this subject in the Heritage Centre. It is essential to protect and enhance the qualities of Athy so that the growth in tourism visitors into the town is encouraged.

IV. Arts & Culture

Athy boasts a vibrant arts and culture sector with the Heritage Centre on Emily Square, hosting regular exhibitions and cultural events along with the recently established Community Arts Facility in the Methodist Church on Woodstock Street. Athy Town Council in conjunction with Kildare County Council's Arts Office will continue to support the arts and cultural development within the town.



3.12.1 Policies – Tourism

It is the policy of the Council:

- TS1:** To recognise the employment and revenue potential of tourism in the local economy.
- TS2:** To recognise and improve the existing tourism potential of Athy such as the Grand Canal and River Barrow waterside amenity activities such as walking, fishing boating and to facilitate further enhancement through specific objectives of this Plan.
- TS3:** To implement the recommendations of the River Barrow Valley Study carried out by Waterways Ireland in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland and other local authorities.
- TS4:** To identify opportunities to improve the tourist product in Athy and to co-operate with the appropriate statutory agencies, the private tourism sector and community groups.
- TS5:** To encourage tourism related uses along the Grand Canal and River Barrow including the investigation of the feasibility of developing a marina within the town boundary (in accordance with Policy R 9) and associated boating uses and activities in co-operation with the relevant statutory agencies, voluntary bodies and private property owners to develop the infrastructure and amenity of both water bodies.
- TS6:** To continue to work closely with key stakeholders in the tourism industry including Kildare Fáilte, Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland in conjunction with local clubs and stakeholders, in order to further develop the overall tourist and economic potential in and around the town with particular emphasis on water based and waterside activities such as angling, boating, walking, canoeing etc.
- TS7:** To work with the relevant agencies and bodies in the development and improvement of tourism related infrastructure and facilities in Athy.
- TS8:** To ensure that the development of new tourist facilities are designed to the highest standard with particular emphasis given to quality materials and accessibility.
- TS9:** To support the sustainable development of appropriate new tourist facilities or upgrading / extension of existing tourist facilities, including hotels, guesthouses and B&B's, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- TS10:** To promote the establishment of tourist destinations in Athy subject to them being of an appropriate scale, located in sustainable locations, adequately served by public transport and would not adversely impact upon a Natura 2000 site.
- TS11:** To promote festivals and sporting events to increase the tourism, cultural and lifestyle profile of the town including the use of appropriate green areas throughout the town.

- TS12:** To facilitate the appropriate use and development of White Castle as a tourist attraction, in order to ensure its conservation and protection.
- TS13:** To recognise the importance of the malting industry to the economy of Athy and to support and encourage the development of the town's association with the malting industry as a tourist attraction.

3.12.2 Objectives – Tourism

It is the objective of the Council:

- TSO1:** To support the provision and development of walking and cycling trails which give access to river and canal banks and towpaths, subject to Appropriate Assessment where appropriate and in conjunction with Waterways Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoAHG.
- TSO2:** To promote the National Trails Network, Sli na Sláinte and other defined walking trails and cycle routes.
- TSO3:** To support the protection of recreational areas such as the People's Park and encourage the further development of amenity areas such as the area surrounding Woodstock Castle, Lords Island and the adjoining gardens of White Castle.
- TSO4:** To support the development of the tourism industry by the upgrading of existing amenities in co-operation with the appropriate statutory agencies, private tourism sector and community groups.
- TSO5:** To facilitate the erection of standardised signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions throughout the town.
- TSO6:** To protect the environmental amenities of Athy from insensitive or inappropriate development, particularly any development that threatens the tourism resources of the town.
- TSO7:** To recognise the importance of the local golf clubs and other sports clubs and sporting events to tourism in the town.
- TSO8:** To promote Athy's literary, social, historical, genealogical, archaeological, architectural and natural heritage as tourism generating opportunities.
- TSO9:** To harness the economic benefits of the tourism industry through sustainable means, including the conservation and protection of the built and natural heritage.
- TSO10:** To encourage the sustainable development of tourism activities such as waterways activities, agri-tourism, green/eco-tourism, niche retailing, food markets, local and other craft type activities so as to diversify the tourism product in Athy.
- TSO11:** To support sustainable tourism initiatives which develop the tourist potential of the rural area around the town while recognising and enhancing the quality and values of the rural area.
- TSO12:** To protect the economic and social benefits of licensed local farmers/ country markets and support their role as visitor attractions.

CHAPTER 4

Housing

4



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To ensure that there is adequate land in appropriately zoned locations for residential development; to protect and improve residential amenity in existing residential areas; to encourage a quality standard of residential development and public spaces; to provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet different household needs and to promote balanced and integrated communities.

4.1 BACKGROUND

The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the projected housing requirements of Athy over the period of this Plan.

The town experienced a substantial increase in house construction with the completion of approximately 700 housing units since the adoption of the previous plan in 2006. Furthermore approximately 460 units have been granted planning permission, construction of which has not yet commenced.

The residential land use pattern in Athy is characterised by a low proportion of residential use within the town centre area and expanding residential development of relatively low density conventional housing developments on the fringes of the town.

The type and scale of residential development in Athy is predominately two- storey, semi detached and detached structures. In recent years some apartment schemes have also been developed, such as Harbour View apartments along the Canal.

4.2 STRATEGY

The Development Plan strategy for housing incorporates the policies of the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines and Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments (May 2009). The strategy is also informed by the Kildare Local Authorities Housing Strategy 2011-2017 and the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013.

The strategy for the provision of housing is based on achieving the following aims:

- Provide sufficient zoned land to accommodate the growing population.
- Promote sustainable communities that deliver quality well designed housing.
- Promote residential densities to ensure the efficient use of land at appropriate locations.
- Secure the implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy and Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- Provide for changing housing needs and promote the provision of social and affordable housing and housing for people with particular needs.
- Provide for changing household sizes and promote an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to facilitate the creation of balanced communities and to counteract social segregation.
- Promote the consolidation of existing built up areas by facilitating good quality appropriate infill development.

4.3 DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

According to Census figures, the population in Athy increased from 5,306 in 1996 to 7,943 in 2006, representing a growth of 50%. The Preliminary Census Results for 2011 records a population of 9,588 persons in Athy, an increase of 1,645 persons from 2006, representing a growth of 20%. The Athy Town Development Plan 2011-2018 is to cater for a future population target, of 10,819 by 2018.

This would result in a housing unit target of 1,389 units over the same period. Approximately, 702 units have already been constructed since 2006 which leaves a balance of 687 units to be provided for during the period 2011-2018.

The land availability survey carried out in 2010 indicates that there are approximately 214 hectares of undeveloped zoned land that can be used for residential development in Athy.

The available land has a capacity of approximately 4,692 additional residential units which could potentially yield additional population growth of 12,481 persons.

Given the excessive availability of zoned residential land in Athy coupled with the high residential unit vacancy rate (145 units completed and vacant in the

town)¹, it is evident that significant overzoning exists within the town boundary. As outlined in Chapter 2 an estimate of approximately 28ha of zoned land is required to meet the needs of the town over the plan period 2012-2018. This is addressed in Chapter 16, Land Use Zoning.

Table 4.1: Population and Capacity of Undeveloped Lands

ATHY	
Quantum of undeveloped zoned land (Ha)	75.8ha
Population capacity of undeveloped land	4,411
Potential units deliverable	1,658
Unit Target 2006-2018	1,389
Units Constructed 2006-2010	702
Committed Units ²	402

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP1:** To ensure that sufficient and suitably located land is zoned to satisfy housing development needs within the period of the Plan and in accordance with population targets for Athy.
- HP2:** Where a residential development larger than 5 units is proposed, a detailed phasing programme shall be lodged and agreed with the Planning Authority detailing the construction, phasing and completion of each phase and timeframe of the project.
- HP3:** To implement the Kildare Local Authorities Housing Strategy 2011-2017 prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011
- HP4:** To have regard to the provisions of the Guidelines on “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas” and the accompanying ‘Urban Design Manual’ in assessing applications for housing development.

4.4 HOUSING LOCATION AND DENSITY

The DoEHLG Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) outlines sustainable approaches to the development of urban areas. It encourages more sustainable urban development by the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and the promotion of higher residential densities in appropriate locations.

It is intended that implementation of the guidelines will result in:

- Increased economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced land;
- Reduced need for the development of “greenfield” sites, urban sprawl and ribbon development;
- Reduced need for investment in infrastructure;
- Better access to existing services and facilities;
- More sustainable commuting patterns.

Chapter 16 of this plan sets out objectives for individual zonings in Athy. To maximise the return on public transport investments, it is important that land use planning underpins the efficiency of public transport services by sustainable settlement patterns, including appropriate densities, on lands within existing or planned transport corridors. Higher residential densities will be encouraged at appropriate locations. Generally higher densities will be considered in town centre locations and edge of town centre locations, with medium to lower densities being considered more appropriate at outer suburban and greenfield sites and outer edge of the urban-rural transition area. It should be noted that densities in excess of the upper limits will be considered on their merits.

4.4.1 Town Centre / Brownfield Sites

There are a number of undeveloped backland sites and brownfield sites within the town centre area where there are significant opportunities for regeneration and appropriate re-development at higher densities. Since the adoption of the 2006 Athy Plan, only a small number of new residential developments have been constructed in the town centre area. This Plan seeks to address this by supporting a more sustainable land use pattern.

¹ DoEHLG Survey of Vacant Houses in Housing Developments 2010

² Permissions granted for residential units.

In order to maximise town centre population growth, higher residential densities will be considered subject to the following safeguards:

- Avoidance of undue adverse impact on the amenities of existing or future adjoining neighbours.
- Good internal space standards of development.
- Recognition of the significant merits of preserving protected structures and their settings and of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area.
- Compliance with development management standards, including useable private open space.

4.4.2 Public Transport Corridors

Higher residential densities (within walking distance of public transport facilities) can help to sustain the economic viability of such transport modes. Higher densities will be determined on a site by site basis for sites within 500 metres walking distance of the train station, with decreasing densities located a distance away from such nodes. These densities shall take into account the capacity of transport to cater for such developments.

4.4.3 Infill Residential Development

Potential sites may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, side gardens of existing houses, up to larger undeveloped sites within an established residential area.

A balance has to be struck between the reasonable protection of the amenities and privacy of adjoining dwellings, the protection of established character and the need to provide residential infill. Proposals for development involving the intensification of residential uses within existing residential areas such as houses in side gardens will generally be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal respects the existing character of the area and would not harm the amenity value of adjoining properties. It is important that areas designated and developed as public open space shall be maintained as such. Development will not be permitted on designated areas of public open space that form part of a development granted planning permission.

4.4.4 Existing Greenfield Sites

These are defined as greenfield sites on the outer edge of the existing built up areas of Athy Town. There are a number of residential zoned sites located in the town, which fall under this category. It is necessary to make efficient use of these lands in the context of their location and the provision of a variety of housing types. Densities in a range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare will be appropriate and should include a variety of housing types.

4.4.5 Existing Greenfield Sites Outer Edge of Urban – Rural Transition

The emphasis is on achieving successful transition from central areas to areas at the edge of the town. There are a number of residentially zoned sites which fall under this category. Given the transitional nature of such sites, densities in a range of between 20-35 dwellings per hectare will be considered appropriate and should include a variety of housing types.

Table 4.2: Indicative Residential Densities³

Location for new residential development	General density parameters
Town Centre and Brownfield sites	Site specific Higher densities generally promoted e.g. 50 units per Ha
At strategic locations including public transport nodes and town centre area	50 units per Ha
Inner suburban/infill	Site Specific
Outer suburban/Greenfield. Generally new residential zoning area	30-50 units per Ha
Outer edge of urban-rural transition	20-35 units per Ha

Note: The density levels considered appropriate in Table 4.2 are indicative only. Applications for residential developments should also have regard to design principles outlined in Chapter 14 Urban Design and Opportunity Areas and to Development Management Standards outlined in Chapter 15.

³ Source: Guidance on Appropriate locations for New Residential Development (informed by the DoEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009).

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP5:** To encourage appropriate densities of new housing development in accordance with Government advice set out in the ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’.
- HP6:** To encourage higher residential densities in the town centre, on ‘brownfield’ and infill sites close to existing/potential connections to public transport.
- HP7:** To ensure that all new urban development especially in and around the town centre is of a high design and supports the achievement of successful urban spaces and sustainable communities.
- HP8:** To require diversity in the density of development and in the form, size and type of dwelling within residential areas.
- HP9:** To secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the town as a whole to meet the needs of the existing and projected likely future population. A statement of mix may be required for multi unit schemes to demonstrate that the needs of the area are provided for within the scheme.
- HP10:** To require the submission of design statements for residential development in excess of 50 housing units to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to key objectives of the Development Plan with regard to the creation of sustainable residential communities.
- HP11:** To refuse permission for residential development on zoned open green spaces, or on lands which are designated as public open space as part of a permitted development.
- HP12:** To ensure developments are carried out generally in accordance with the ‘Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas’. (DoEHLG 1998) or as updated or amended.
- HP13:** To ensure that all open spaces, entrances, pathways and parking areas in new residential developments are designed with reference to “Buildings for Everyone – Inclusion, Access and Use (National Disability Authority, 2002) and any subsequent update.

- HP14:** To require planning applications for new housing to demonstrate good pedestrian and cycle links between residential developments and key destinations within Athy.



4.5 HIGH QUALITY DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Sustainable neighbourhoods are areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure combine to create places people want to live in. This Plan seeks to promote high design and construction standards that result in a visually and functionally pleasing environment.

A high quality living environment is vital to the economic and social development and building of sustainable communities. The challenge is to design residential environments that impact positively on quality of life and comprise attractive safe areas with a mix of house types, sizes and design.

Good permeability with pedestrian and cycle links to surrounding neighbourhoods, community facilities

and open spaces and recreation areas are required for sustainable neighbourhoods.

The following criteria for new housing developments will be considered in the assessment of proposals:

- The need for land to be used economically;
- The capacity of the infrastructure to cater for future population;
- The adequacy of community facilities;
- Appropriate density, high standards of design and appropriate mix of housing;
- Adequate privacy for individual houses, apartments and the protection of existing residential amenity;
- The safety and permeability of proposed layouts;
- Appropriate provision is made for amenity and public open space as an integral part of new development proposals.

Design principles outlined in the Urban Design Manual published by the DoEHLG, together with Urban Design and the Development Management Standards, set out in this Plan should be referenced for the development of residential areas.

4.5.1 Universal Design

High quality design should be guided by the principle of universal design. Universal design is the design of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

The proposed design of new residential communities shall consider people's diverse needs and abilities throughout the design process, to design for adaptable environments that meet the needs of all. This universal design approach should be incorporated from the early stage of planning in order to reduce the need for costly and wasteful retrofits over the medium to long term.

4.5.2 Housing Mix

A key aim in the provision of new housing is to encourage diversity rather than uniformity and as far as possible to relate the type of proposed new housing to the varying needs of the population. In all housing proposals an appropriate mix of dwelling types to meet the needs of categories of households will be encouraged.

The mix of house types proposed in an area should therefore be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Consideration of the nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;
- The desirability of providing for mixed communities;
- Provision of a range of housing types and tenures;
- The need to provide a choice of housing, suitable to all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle;
- The need to cater for special needs groups such as the elderly, Travellers and disabled and the marketability of different types of housing.

4.6 EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

4.6.1 Extensions to Dwellings

The construction of extensions to houses will generally be encouraged as a sustainable use of land. The design and layout of extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly as regards sunlight, daylight and privacy. (Refer to Chapter 15 Development Management Standards).

4.6.2 Subdivision of Dwellings

New households in existing, established residential areas may be catered for through the sub-division of large houses on relatively extensive sites. The sub-division of dwellings will generally only be considered for exceptionally large houses on relatively extensive sites in urban areas and subject to adherence to relevant Development Management Standards set out in Chapter 15.

4.6.3 Backland Development

The development of backland sites in a coherent and well-designed manner can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing settlement while also contributing to the efficient use of serviced lands. The development of backland sites on an individual basis (i.e. rear garden areas/ individual backlands with no frontage) can conflict with the established pattern and character of development in an area. Backland development will generally only be considered where the proposed development forms part of a comprehensive plan for development of the entire backland area.

4.6.4 Family Flat

A ‘family’ flat refers to a temporary sub-division or extension of a single dwelling unit to accommodate a member of the immediate family for a temporary period (e.g. older parent or other dependent). Where it can be clearly established that there is a valid case, such development will be considered, provided that the proposal does not otherwise detract from the residential amenity of the area. Chapter 15 outlines Development Management Standards for such developments.

Policies - Existing Residential Development

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP15:** To encourage infill housing developments on appropriate sites.
- HP16:** To facilitate the extension of existing dwelling houses in principle subject to standards outlined in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.
- HP17:** To facilitate the development of corner sites or wide side garden locations for infill housing subject to standards outlined in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.
- HP18:** To facilitate the provision of a family flat in circumstances where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there is a valid case and where the proposal has regard to the standards in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.
- HP19:** To permit backland development generally only where development is carried out in a comprehensive redevelopment of the backland to secure a co-ordinated scheme. Each application will be considered on its merits.
- HP20:** To facilitate sub-division of dwellings for exceptionally large houses on relatively extensive sites subject to adherence to all relevant Development Management Standards set out in Chapter 15.

4.7 APARTMENT DEVELOPMENT

“Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments” Guidelines, issued by the DoEHLG in 2009, aim to promote sustainable urban housing, by ensuring that the design and layout of new apartments will provide satisfactory accommodation

for a variety of household types and sizes. Accordingly, these guidelines provide recommended minimum standards for:

- floor areas for different types of apartments,
- storage spaces,
- sizes for apartment balconies / patios, and
- room dimensions for certain rooms.

Within Athy, the provision of apartment schemes may be considered at appropriate locations and where a significant demand for this type of accommodation is evident. Generally apartments, or retail developments with apartments above, should be located in the town centre zone. They may also be appropriate close to public transport nodes or as a limited proportion of a general residential scheme. Apartment schemes shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 15 Development Management Standards in terms of layout, design, finish and landscaping.

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP21:** To restrict apartment developments generally to town centre locations or suitably located sites adjoining public transport connections. Apartments will not be permitted where there is an over concentration of this type of development. Higher density schemes will only be considered where they exhibit a high architectural design standard.

4.8 HOUSING AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The importance of creating sustainable neighbourhoods, whereby adequate community facilities are available in conjunction with the provision of new housing, is acknowledged. It is an objective of this Development Plan to provide for additional community services where there are existing deficiencies in an area.

In applications for large residential developments, the developer shall satisfactorily demonstrate how the proposed increase in population will be accommodated in terms of education provision.

In this regard, guidelines from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Department of Education indicate that 12% and 8.5% of a population at any time is assumed to be of primary and secondary going age respectively.

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP22:** To facilitate and co-operate in the provision of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities in tandem with residential development.
- HP23:** To require the provision of Childcare Facilities in all new residential developments as appropriate. The indicative standard is one childcare facility, accommodating 20 children, for each 75 dwellings. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so.
- HP24:** To seek to ensure the necessary infrastructural investment to facilitate the overall level of housing output required to meet the current and anticipated levels of demand in a planned and coherent fashion.
- HP25:** To facilitate the provision of purpose built dwellings for those with special needs, including provision for the needs of the elderly, persons with physical disabilities and persons with learning disabilities and in conjunction with other voluntary bodies and the private sector.

4.9 HOUSING IN THE AGRICULTURAL ZONE

The primary aim for the agricultural zone in Athy is to preserve the existing agricultural use of the areas zoned for this purpose and to prevent urban-generated development which would interfere with the operation of farming/bloodstock or rural resource based enterprise.

The “Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (2005), set out principles regarding the siting and design of new dwellings in rural areas, the protection of water quality, the provision of a safe means of access and the conservation of sensitive areas. Within the agricultural zone in Athy, housing will be confined to people with a genuine housing need and who can demonstrate that they comply with categories of local need, outlined below, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria.

- (i) Persons engaged full time in agriculture (including commercial bloodstock / horticulture), wishing to build on their own landholding and who can demonstrate that they have been engaged in farming at that

location for a continuous period of over 7 years, prior to making the application.

- (ii) Persons who have grown up or spent substantial periods of their lives, (18 years), living in the agricultural zone, as members of the rural community, seeking to build on family landholding or on a site within 5 km of the family home, and currently living in the area.
- (iii) Persons who have grown up or spent substantial periods of their lives (18 years) living in the area, who have moved away and who now wish to return to reside near to, or to care for, immediate family members, seeking to build on the family landholding or on a site within 5 km of the original family home. Immediate family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister or guardian.
- (iv) Persons employed full time in farming (agriculture, bloodstock etc) in the locality, within 5 km of the site, where they need to reside close to their employment and have been engaged in such employment, at that location, for a continuous period of over 7 years, prior to making the application.

It is policy of the Council:

- HP26:** To manage the provision of one off housing in conjunction with the local need criteria as outlined above. Documentary evidence of compliance with the rural housing policy must be submitted as part of the planning application, including a separate statement by the applicant on the need to reside in the area.
- HP27:** To ensure that, notwithstanding compliance with the Local Need eligibility criteria, applicants comply with all other normal siting and design considerations.
- HP28:** To protect the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the agricultural zone
- HP29:** To require that applicants comply with the requirements of ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ published by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (November 2009).

4.10 SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires each Local Authority to adopt a Housing Strategy for their administrative area. The Housing Strategy for Kildare Local Authorities 2011-2017 is contained in Appendix 1 of this Plan.

It has had regard to national policies and guidelines on residential development and provides an estimate of existing and future need for social and affordable housing throughout the county.

The main purpose of the Housing Strategy is:

- To provide for social and affordable housing requirements within lands zoned for residential use, or a mixture of residential and other uses.
- To ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income by providing housing for a diverse range of housing needs.
- To address the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds by ensuring that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households.

The Housing Strategy outlines a 20% requirement for the provision of social and affordable housing. This may be provided in a number of ways:

- The transfer of completed dwellings on the site subject to the planning application.
- The transfer of fully or partially serviced sites on the site subject to the application.
- The transfer of a portion of the site which is the subject of the application.
- The payment of a monetary contribution.
- The transfer of serviced sites at another location.
- The transfer of land at another location.
- The transfer of completed dwellings at another location.

An agreement may provide for a combination of any of the above. It shall comply with the strategic objective of counteracting social segregation and facilitating the creation of balanced communities across the entire county. The agreement should

also seek to avoid an over concentration of social housing in any particular part of the town. Each proposal will be considered and assessed based on individual merit having regard to the Housing Strategy and in consultation with the Planning Authority.

In accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011, an exemption from 'Part V' requirements may be sought from the Council in the case of small housing developments i.e. those of four or fewer houses, or any number of units on land of 0.1 hectares or less.

Athy Town Council conducted an assessment of Housing Need in March 2011. A total of 584 households were considered eligible for local authority accommodation. The current Council housing stock in Athy amounts to 315 units.

4.11 SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Planning for the provision of housing for the population of the town includes providing for the needs of persons with special requirements, such as persons with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. The importance of access to public transport, local community services and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving quality of life.

House design and compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations has expanded the range of options available to people with a disability. The Council will continue to address particular identified needs through the provision of purpose built, adaptable dwellings, where feasible.

4.11.1 Homelessness

The Council will continue to provide an important role alongside voluntary groups and other agencies in the provision of emergency accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of crisis facilities.

4.11.2 Elderly

The changing nature of the age profile of Athy requires greater consideration for the housing needs of the elderly. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over in Athy decreased from 15% in 2002 to 12% in 2006. The national average for the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over was recorded at 11% in 2006.

Specific needs of the elderly must be considered



relating to access, public transport, and local services, medical care, security and personal safety. In this regard dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes. For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller or single storey dwelling or apartment unit). Refer to Chapter 10 for further detail in relation to housing and community care for the elderly.

4.11.3 Traveller Accommodation

The Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Travelling Community and it will endeavor to provide suitable accommodation for Travellers who are indigenous to the area.

The Council will implement measures, as required by law and national policy and in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 to provide accommodation for members of the Travelling Community.

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP30:** To provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the Kildare Local Authorities Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- HP31:** To facilitate the provision of purpose built dwellings individually and within

mixed schemes for those with special needs, including provision for the needs of the elderly, persons with physical disabilities and persons with learning disabilities and in conjunction with other voluntary bodies and the private sector.

- HP32:** To provide for and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of the elderly and to encourage the provision of a range of housing options for elderly persons in central, convenient and easily accessible locations and to integrate such housing with mainstream housing where possible.
- HP33:** To provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities through the adaptation of appropriate accommodation.

4.12 HOUSING OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- HO1:** To secure the implementation of the Kildare Local Authorities Housing Strategy 2011-2017.
- HO2:** To provide adequate accommodation for Travellers in accordance with the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- HO3:** To promote a high standard of architecture in the design of new housing developments and to encourage a variety of house types, sizes and tenure to cater for the needs of the population and facilitate the creation of balanced communities.

CHAPTER 5

Town Centre

5



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To develop a compact urban form and to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre area of Athy through the provision of a high level and broad range of uses for residents, workers and visitors to the town; to provide greater opportunities for town centre living; to facilitate high quality urban design and through the provision of high quality public realm to promote the town centre as an attractive place for all to enjoy.

5.1 BACKGROUND

The growth in population since the 2006 Census has increased pressures on the existing services and facilities within the town. Athy town centre acts as a focus for the wider community and should be an attractive, inviting, safe and secure environment for visitors, business, shoppers and residents. The area zoned "Town Centre" in Athy comprises approximately 33ha hectares (Refer to Map 5.1). Shops and services are located primarily in and around Duke Street and Leinster Street.

The narrow plot sizes and street widths within the town centre area have limited the ability of the town centre to accommodate large individual building footprints, but a considerable number of vacant premises, backland, infill and brownfield sites exist which could accommodate further town centre development appropriate to the existing footprint of the town. The character of the town centre has been established by its historical layout and rich and varied architectural heritage. It is important that the design of future development within the town centre builds on its character to enhance its appearance and attractiveness as a place to visit and do business.

5.2 STRATEGY

A key principle of the core strategy is to promote Athy town centre as a vibrant centre offering a wide range of services and opportunities within a high quality urban environment. Consolidation of the existing town centre, utilisation of backlands and appropriate development of brownfield sites is of primary importance. New development should be connected to, and complement the existing town centre and surrounding area. New development should be of a high quality and proposals should be developed in accordance with the zoning objectives set out in Chapter 16 of this Plan.

The following principles underpin the Councils' town centre strategy:

- Increase the critical mass of population, employment, retail and associated uses to facilitate the consolidation of the town centre and its expansion, while maintaining the integrity of the town's heritage status.
- Rejuvenate the existing town centre area and promote the appropriate reuse of vacant premises.
- Maintain the viability of the town centre by promoting the centre as the primary location for retail and other commercial development i.e. the development of a vibrant retail core supported by a mix of complementary uses.
- Encourage increased town centre residential development to enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre with safe and attractive spaces to promote the town centre as a desirable place to work, live and visit
- Identify and secure the redevelopment and regeneration of areas in need of renewal.
- Promote the appropriate re-use of buildings and development of under-utilised backland and brownfield sites to successfully integrate with the town centre area.
- Promote high quality urban design which responds positively to the town's historic character and architectural heritage and ensures all users are catered for.
- Reduce traffic congestion and improve the public realm.

5.3 TOWN CENTRE USES

The promotion of a variety of uses such as residential, retail, commercial, employment and cultural within the town centre is encouraged. The increase of population within the town centre with a range of employment, recreation, educational, commercial, residential and retail uses can help to curtail travel demand. Town centres have the greatest potential for the creation of sustainable patterns of development. A healthy retail environment is an essential pre-requisite for a vibrant and viable town centre. Increasing the retail sector within the town centre and promoting Athy as an important shopping destination will assist the town in maintaining its role as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town.

Residential use in the town centre is currently limited. A more substantial presence would add to the vitality and viability of the town centre and as such, proposals for the residential conversion of the upper floors of retail and commercial premises will be favourably considered. Any proposed residential use must respect the historic fabric, whilst also providing adequate residential amenity.

This plan seeks to ensure new residential developments locate within the town centre area and also to incorporate a non-residential, preferably retail/commercial use at the ground floor level. All applications for residential development will be assessed having regard to the policies outlined in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards. In exceptional circumstances these standards may be relaxed in the town centre.

The development of a vibrant town centre, evening and night time uses, will be encouraged, subject to development management criteria including access, visual amenity, parking and protection of residential amenity. There has been an emergence of non-retail developments such as betting offices, and take-aways in the town centre in recent years. The cumulative impact of non-retail uses in any particular area will be considered in the assessment of planning applications for non-retail uses.

It is the policy of the Council:

- TC1:** To promote the vitality and viability of the town centre area so that it becomes a high quality environment for shopping, working and visiting the town.
- TC2:** To encourage and promote development within the town centre which is of a high standard of design, has an appropriate mix of uses, enhances the built environment and delivers a high quality public realm.
- TC3:** To reinforce Athy Town Centre as the priority location for new retail and services development, with quality of design and integration /linkage with the existing urban form/ layout being fundamental prerequisites.
- TC4:** To promote appropriate residential development within the town centre and encourage the concept of 'Living Over the Shop' in the town centre.

5.4 TOWN CENTRE DESIGN

The significance of built and architectural heritage particularly with regard to the numerous Protected Structures in the town centre and to the designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is recognised in Chapter 12 of this Plan.

Proposals for new development in the town centre should adhere to the character of the area and to the principles of good practice, as set out in "*Architectural Heritage Guidelines*" issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004).

The Council will consider proposals for modern, contemporary architecture, where it respects the character and scale of the surrounding development. In general, innovative modern development using high quality materials will be favoured over pastiche or reproduction of existing buildings.

Development proposals (including new build and proposals for alteration, conversion, renovation of historic structures) should support the role of Athy town centre as a primary location for commercial, retail and cultural activities with a good mix of uses, particularly at ground floor level.

Athy contains a number of traditional shopfronts, which contribute to the distinctive character of the town. The Council will encourage the preservation and refurbishment of existing traditional shopfronts and name plates. New non-traditional design shopfronts will be considered. However these should be designed to the highest standards.

It is the policy of the Council:

- TCD1:** To ensure that new development in the town centre will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances its character thereby promoting high quality urban change and improvement.
- TCD2:** To continue to enhance the streetscape and heritage assets of the town centre, to continue environmental improvements, to sustain and improve its attraction for living, working, visiting and investment.
- TCD3:** To ensure the retention of older shop fronts and other significant elements of the streetscape, which enhance the visual amenity and distinctiveness of the town centre.



TCD4: To seek to improve existing shopfronts and to ensure that new shopfronts reflect the scale and proportions of the existing streetscape.

TCD5: To restrict unnecessary additional lighting, including intermittent lighting and neon lighting on external elevations, particularly in or adjacent to residential properties.

TCD6: To place underground new service cables and ducting such as electrical, telephone, broadband and cable television.

TCD7: To insist upon the use of high quality materials and traditional hand painted signs, as opposed to uPVC, plastic or other materials. Internally illuminated plastic signage will generally not be permitted.

TCD8: To restrict the use of external security grilles/shutters on shop fronts.

TCD9: To restrict advertising signs/ banners/ stickers on the inside of shop front/ commercial business windows.

5.5 URBAN RENEWAL / REGENERATION AND OPPORTUNITY SITES

There is a need to reduce the high vacancy rates in the town centre and develop a town centre typified

by a variety of high quality shops and services and good design. A series of connected public spaces that respect and enhance the setting of the architectural heritage of the town will also be encouraged.

There are considerable undeveloped backland areas to the rear of buildings on Duke Street and Leinster Street, with significant development potential. The potential for the re-use and regeneration of derelict and vacant buildings and brownfield sites in the town centre and at the edge of centre locations should be considered in the formulation of development proposals.

In addition to Leinster and Duke Street, there is a hierarchy of "side" streets and laneways which are an under-utilised resource as they offer development potential for the expansion of retail and service outlets. The development of laneways can offer potential benefits in terms of enhancing the permeability of the town centre, and in the development of attractive, unique and pedestrian friendly urban spaces.

A number of opportunity sites are located within the town centre and adjoining area. These sites are capable of accommodating a mix of uses.

The development and overall improvement of these opportunity sites should comprise a high quality of urban design and innovative architectural design solutions. Chapter 14 Urban Design and Opportunity Areas highlight a number of these sites and provide guidance for the future development of these areas. In assessing proposals for opportunity sites, the Council shall have regard to the development standards and guidelines outlined in Chapters 14 and 15.



Athy Town Council has been proactive in the identification of derelict sites which negatively affect the townscape and will continue to address the issue of dereliction under the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990. Re-use and regeneration of derelict/ obsolete land and buildings will help achieve the preservation of the character and quality of the town, particularly in terms of vernacular/ historical architecture.

It is the policy of the Council:

- UR1:** To encourage a greater usage of backland areas and to promote the re-development of brownfield sites in the town centre area where new development will positively contribute to the commercial vitality of the town centre.
- UR2:** To encourage and promote the re-utilisation and revitalisation of derelict or obsolete structures or land in the town centre and encourage the renewal/ repair and maintenance of structures on the Council’s Derelict Sites Register. The Council will use its statutory powers, where appropriate and consider such sites for inclusion on the Register of Derelict Sites.
- UR3:** To encourage the use of upper floors of existing buildings and the

development of mixed-use schemes, particularly for residential uses.

- UR4:** To encourage the creation of new public spaces within the fabric of the town centre provided they are passively supervised and surrounded by active ground floor use.
- UR5:** To require that any new development creates or positively contributes towards a connected network of streets and spaces, which prioritises pedestrians and cyclists.
- UR6:** To ensure that town centre environmental improvements including improved paving, street furniture and tree planting are designed and implemented to a high design standard.

5.6 MOVEMENT, ACCESS AND THE PUBLIC REALM

Vehicular traffic in the town centre and the proximity of vehicular traffic to pedestrian movement on narrow pavements diminishes the quality of the environment for shopping, visitors, pedestrians etc. This Plan proposes the reduction in vehicular traffic in the town centre and promotes streets as “living spaces” which are a functional part of the community and the focus of activities. The Plan seeks to link commercial areas, employment areas and public spaces through a network of quality pedestrian and cycling routes in an enhanced public realm.

An improved pedestrian environment will encourage higher levels of footfall on the main thoroughfares with associated higher levels of economic activity. It is an aim of the Council to facilitate public realm improvements, both in terms of regeneration, building fabric, street materials and furniture and connectivity. In general, any urban renewal or environmental improvement scheme should retain historic features, street furniture and features of interest. In exceptional cases where any of these features need to be removed, their reuse where appropriate within the town centre will be encouraged. This Plan also seeks to encourage the full or part pedestrianisation of parts of the town centre such as Emily Square during the plan period and the development of a pedestrian crossing over the River Barrow to the North of Cromaboo Bridge.

It is the policy of the Council:

- PR1:** To provide pedestrian links from the nearby schools on the east and west of the

River Barrow to recreational facilities and residential areas through the development of safe pedestrian routes and a pedestrian footbridge over the River Barrow.

- PR2:** To encourage the improvement of the area surrounding the Dominican Church.
- PR3:** To work towards improving the overall visual appearance of Athy by encouraging the following:
 - (a) The removal of overhead cables and wires placing them underground within the town centre in conjunction with the various utility companies.
 - (b) The control of advertising, including the removal of existing signage which is visually obtrusive or out of character, in particular neon and poor quality plastic signage will be prohibited.



5.7 TOWN CENTRE OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- TCO1:** To maintain the Council's Derelict Sites Register and to exercise its powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.
- TCO2:** To seek the removal of unauthorised advertising/ signage through enforcement provisions and to encourage new advertising and signage which is appropriate to the streetscape and

positively contributes to the public realm.

- TCO3:** To prepare and implement an Environmental Improvement Scheme within the lifetime of this Plan to visually enhance the streetscape and key urban spaces with an emphasis on promoting a pedestrian and public transport friendly environment.
- TCO4:** To investigate the feasibility of the pedestrianisation of all or part of Emily Square during the Plan period.
- TCO5:** To construct a pedestrian crossing over the River Barrow as appropriate to link schools, parks, playing fields and residential areas on both sides of the river.
- TCO6:** To provide for a pedestrian crossing from the train station to the park/ playground in People's Park.



Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



LEGEND

- A: Town Centre
- B: Existing Residential & Infill
- C: New Residential
- D: Neighbourhood Centre
- E: Community & Educational
- F: Open Space & Amenity
- H, H1, H2: Industrial & Warehousing
- H3: Light Industrial & Commercial
- I: Agricultural
- J: Transport & Utilities
- U: Public Utilities
- Q: Enterprise & Employment
- R: Retail / Commercial
- Rivers and Canals
- Athy Town Council Boundary
- 500m Intervals from the centre of Town
- Public Rights of Way
- New Roads Objectives
- Improvements to existing Road Network
- Reservation to allow upgrading of the Rail Bridge
- 1000 Year Flood Line

Note: This map should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Athy (Refer to Appendix II)

Note: Road, cycle and foot path locations are indicative only & may be subject to change during the detailed design process.

Town Centre & Associated Zoning

Date: March 2012	Map Ref: 5.1
Scale: N.T.S.	Drawing No: 200/10/496
Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved. Licence No.: 2004/07CCMA (Kildare County Council)	Drawn By DMcN

**THIS DRAWING TO BE READ IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE WRITTEN STATEMENT**

CHAPTER 6

Retail

6



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of the retail floorspace and town centre functions of Athy, to further develop its competitiveness with nearby towns such as Carlow and Portlaoise and to recognise its importance as a Sub County Town Centre in County Kildare and the wider Greater Dublin Area.

6.1 POLICY CONTEXT

The preparation of this chapter has been informed by the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008 – 2016 (2008 GDA Retail Strategy), the Draft Kildare County Retail Strategy 2010 and the Kildare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017.

As required by the DoEHLG's Retail Planning Guidelines (2005), the County Retail Strategy covers the matters that should be included in development plans, namely:

- I. Confirmation of the retail hierarchy, the role of centres and the size of main town centres;
- II. Definition in the development plan of the boundaries of the core shopping area of town centres;
- III. A broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floor space;
- IV. Strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development;
- V. Preparation of policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres;
- VI. Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

The approach adopted is consistent with Retail Planning Guidelines guidance which requires that Local Authorities regularly monitor and update their retail policies to ensure that policies, objectives and the baseline on which they were founded remain up to date and valid.

Athy, along with Clane and Kildare, is designated as a Level 3 Sub County Town Centre in the GDA Regional Retail Hierarchy and a Hinterland Area Tier 1 Level 3 Sub County Town Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. This is the level below the most important existing and planned County Town Centres and

Major Town Centres in County Kildare, namely Naas, Newbridge and Leixlip (including Collinstown).

To fulfil its role in the GDA Retail Strategy the following strategic policy recommendations have been adopted in relation to Athy.

6.1.1 GDA Retail Strategy

It is the policy of the Council:

SR1: To promote the role of Athy as a key town serving the large rural hinterland of South Kildare seeking to create a critical mass within the urban core so that the retail opportunities in the town centre are developed to create a viable, attractive local destination for convenience and comparison shopping and thus reduce market leakage from this area.

6.1.2 Kildare County Development Plan

It is the policy of the Council:

SR2: To promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of the retail offer and town centre functions of Athy, Clane and Kildare Town to sustain and enhance their importance as Sub County Town Centres within the Central and South Sub Areas of the County.

SR3: To work with Athy Town Council in delivering the policy objectives of the County Retail Strategy in order that it delivers its vision and potential as the mechanism for redressing high shopping expenditure leakage from its catchment area and the south of the County as a whole

6.2 RETAIL CONTEXT

Although the sixth largest settlement at the time of the 2001 GDA Retail Strategy floorspace survey, Athy was the third largest retail centre in the County, after Newbridge and Naas. In the interim period when both the Draft Kildare County Retail Strategy 2005 and Draft County Retail Strategy 2010 were being prepared, the town had dropped to fifth place in respect of its quantum of retail floorspace and is currently also below Maynooth and Kildare Town respectively.

The County Retail Strategy estimates that the town at present has a total retail floorspace of 8,728m² net, comprising 4,391m² (50.3%) convenience

and 4,337m² (49.7%) comparison. These figures exclude vacant floorspace. This is an increase in retail floorspace of just under 17.3% since 2001 and is wholly attributable to the introduction of Lidl to the town's offer, which has modified the balance between convenience and comparison floorspace. From being predominantly a comparison shopping location, convenience floorspace has marginally become the largest sector. It is also noted that, as was the position at the time the 2005 Draft County Retail Strategy was prepared, bulky goods floorspace does not form part of the town's retail profile although there are units of varying quality in the industrial estates/parks.

The 2001 GDA Retail Strategy floorspace survey identified that Athy had a vacancy rate of 7.7% or 626m², which was not of a level to cause concern. This position has significantly changed in the interim period, as tracked in the Draft County Retail Strategy 2010 which has confirmed that it is a trend that has been on the increase, as evidenced from the fact that vacant retail properties have doubled in number from thirteen to twenty six since 2006. The quantum and profile of the vacancies seriously undermine the ambience and attraction of the town centre.

There are a large number of convenience shops within the town centre, the largest of which is the Pettitts' SuperValu located at Edmund Rice Square. In addition to Pettitts, there is a second SuperValu on Duke Street and two Perry's supermarkets located on Leinster Street and Duke Street. A number of small baker, butcher, florist, grocery and newsagent shops are interspersed around the town centre. Two specialist convenience shops – the Healthy Living Health Store and Afro-Caribbean Foodstore – are located on Leinster Street. A Farmers Market and Craft Fair also take place every Sunday morning in Emily Square providing a wide range of fresh produce and gourmet foodstuffs. Athy's comparison shopping is anchored by the Shaws' department store on Duke Street, with the remainder of the offer provided by a number of small independent retailers offering a range of women's fashion, menswear, footwear and household items.

Household and shopper surveys commissioned in 2004, as part of the preparation of the 2006 Town Development Plan, identified that although Athy had a relatively limited convenience offer, the town and its immediate hinterland area were retaining a relatively high level of convenience shopping expenditure (70.0%). The converse prevailed with

comparison expenditure where nearly 70.0% of this was leaking to competing centres both within and outside of the County. There has been a lack of new investment in either convenience or comparison floorspace in the interim period, against the substantial improvements that have taken place in key competing centres. The key issues are that Athy: has extremely limited large modern format convenience floorspace; has only one national level mainstream comparison operator; and, subsequently local people have to travel to other centres for these needs to be met. Key competing centres to where expenditure is leaking are Carlow, Dublin, Kilkenny, Newbridge and Portlaoise. This position, unless redressed, has consequences for the vitality and viability of the town centre of Athy.



Athy's potential to become one of the most important retail centres in the south of the County and GDA is recognised in its Level 3 designation in both retail hierarchies. Since 2001, with the exception of the Lidl foodstore, there has been a lack of investment in new retail floorspace and this has been during one of the most dynamic periods of retail development activity in the country and the County.

The position masks the considerable market interest in both major new schemes and the designation of additional lands for retail development in and around the town over at least the last five years. During this period there have been a number of applications for key developments on important sites but only a few of these have proceeded to full planning permission. They include: the expansion and remodelling of the Shaw's department store on Duke Street; the mixed retail permission for the Woodstock South site which incorporates a retail park; and, the more recently permitted mixed use, but predominantly retail, Raggett scheme which is located off Leinster Street.

The implementation of these permitted schemes would significantly enhance and reinstate Athy's role and potential in the shopping patterns of the south of the County, particularly in respect of leakage to the nearby higher order centres of Carlow and Portlaoise. There is, however, scope for further enhancement with Athy having the potential to grow to a centre with a total retail floorspace of up to 20,000 m² – 30,000m² over the next 10 years.

Although the economic and retail market context has considerably changed, the emphasis and priority of the Council remains as supporting, protecting, regenerating and reinforcing the role of the town centre as the central retailing and service area of Athy through the intensification and consolidation of the town centre, and to facilitate the provision of high level and broad ranging retailing, along with a broad range of services and other functions.

6.3 ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND FUTURE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

The prevailing economic context informed the preparation of the County Retail Strategy and the assessment of the potential for additional retail floorspace. The assessment was based on authoritative population and economic forecasts published by the DoEHLG and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) respectively. The latter predicted a return to positive economic growth post 2010 but acknowledged that this would be at levels well below those experienced pre-2008. It is recognised that, in view of more recent appraisals and issues in respect of the country's economic position, achievement of this will have a longer timeframe.

The above noted, retail planning needs to be informed by current economic trends and forecasts but given the timeframes generally involved in larger retail proposals being delivered then a longer perspective, which takes account of both low and high growth scenarios, requires to be adopted. This underpins the assessment of the requirement for new retail floorspace in the County Retail Strategy; is an approach that is consistent with that adopted in the GDA Retail Strategy; and, is one which the Council will give due weight to in the consideration of planning applications for new retail development in the town.

6.4 KEY PRINCIPLES AND VISION

The key principle and vision for retail planning and development in this Plan is to provide both the strategic planning framework and comprehensive guidance in relation to retail development in order to assist the formulation and assessment of development proposals.

For future retail development in Athy, the emphasis is on ensuring that the town substantially sustains and enhances its role and importance in the shopping patterns of local people, the south of the County and the County overall. This will largely be driven by Athy realising a considerable enhancement of its main food shopping and both mainstream and bulky goods comparison offer.

The key principles and vision that underpin this being achieved are:

- i. Athy re-establishes its role, importance and profile as the key shopping destination in the south of the County and wider afield;
- ii. There is an improvement in the main food shopping offer of the town;
- iii. The comparison shopping offer of the town is substantially improved and enhances the representation of national and international operators and high street brands;
- iv. The issue of traffic congestion is addressed;
- v. There is continued investment in the quality of the public realm; and
- vi. There is priority given to the enhancement of Athy's tourism and leisure offer particularly that which is retail related to the unique waterfront asset and potential of the town.

6.5 STRATEGY

The overall strategy for retail development in Athy Town is subdivided into three categories:

- Strategic Policy Framework.
- Specific Retail Policies.
- General Retail Policies.

6.5.1 Strategic Policy Framework

The strategic policy framework that underpins the specific and general retail policies of the Development Plan comprises the GDA County Retail Hierarchy, Retail Planning Guidelines, Core Retail Area and the Sequential Approach.

6.5.1.1 County Retail Hierarchy

As has been noted, Athy – along with Clane and Kildare Town, is designated as being at the second most important retail centre level in the County Retail Hierarchy. The County Retail Strategy advises that Sub County Town Centres in the Hinterland Area of the County should play an important strategic role in the shopping patterns of their generally extensive hinterlands. In respect of Athy, it is the main retail centre in the south of the County.

The range of retailing which is deemed appropriate in the County Retail Strategy for centres at this level in the County Retail Hierarchy is large scale convenience and middle order comparison, but not excluding higher order comparison particularly that related to the tourism economy.

It is recognised that there are deficiencies in the retail offer of Athy which is undermining the town delivering its strategic role and potential. It is an important priority that, over the timescale of the Development Plan and beyond, Athy fully develops into its designated role in the County Retail Hierarchy.

It is the policy of the Council:

RS1: To guide major retail development in accordance with the framework provided by the County Retail Hierarchy to enable an efficient, equitable and sustainable distribution of floorspace throughout the town.



6.5.1.2 Core Retail Area

The Core Retail Area is that part of a town centre which is primarily devoted to shopping. It is normally defined as the area including and immediate to the 'prime pitch'. This is the area that achieves the highest rentals, best yields, is the highest in demand from retailers/ operators/ developers and investors and where pedestrian flows are greatest.

It is the policy of the Council:

RS2: To promote the Core Retail Area (Refer to Map 6.1) and town centre as the primary focus and preferred location for new retail development.

6.5.1.3 Sequential Approach

The Sequential Approach is incorporated in the strategic policy framework for guiding new retail development in the Development Plan. It recognises the significance of sustaining the retail importance, vitality and viability of town and other centres.

Proposals for retail schemes in Athy shall take due cognisance of this as follows:

- i. In the first instance, the priority should be in locating retail development in the town centre;
- ii. If town centre locations are not readily available within a reasonable and realistic timescale then edge of centre sites should be examined. In the Retail Planning Guidelines, these are defined as sites that are within 300 – 400 metres of the Core Retail Area;
- iii. Only after the options for town centre and edge of centre sites are exhausted should out of centre locations and sites be considered.

It is the policy of the Council:

RS4: To guide retail development in accordance with the framework provided by the Sequential Approach to enable the vitality and viability of the town centre to be sustained and strengthened.

RS5: To assess all applications for large retail development in accordance with the criteria set out above and in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards of this Plan.

6.6 SPECIFIC RETAIL POLICIES

The delivery of the Strategic Policy Framework for retail planning and development in the Development Plan is founded on specific retail policies for Athy.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP1:** To promote and encourage major enhancement and expansion of the retail offer and town centre retail functions of Athy and to develop its importance as a Sub County Town Centre within the south of the County whilst ensuring high quality design in all retail proposals.
- RP2:** To work with Kildare County Council in delivering the policy objectives of the County Retail Strategy in order that Athy delivers its vision and potential as the mechanism for redressing high shopping expenditure leakage from its catchment area and the south of the County as a whole.
- RP3:** To work in partnership with local organisations, businesses and people in the delivery of the vision for Athy.
- RP4:** To improve the shopping experience in Athy Town by promoting the potential of Athy Town for a range of additional convenience and comparison floorspace at appropriate locations.
- RP5:** To align, as far as is practicable, new retail development with existing and proposed public transport infrastructure and services and encourage access by foot and bicycle to reduce the dominance of access by private car.
- RP6:** To facilitate retail warehousing on zoned H2 Industrial & Warehousing, lands in order to meet, more sustainably the needs in this sector of the market in the south of the County.
- RP7:** To recognise the tradition of Athy as a Market Town and to encourage the continuation and improvement of the 'Athy Town Market' and the continued development of a high quality 'Farmers Market' within the town.

6.7 GENERAL RETAIL POLICIES

The general retail policies in the Development Plan are aligned with those in the County Development Plan and GDA and County Retail Strategies.

6.7.1 Enhancement of Athy Town Centre

The retail development potential and heritage and waterfront asset of Athy Town Centre are well recognised but largely untapped. There is substantial potential for this to be further enhanced through retail related development. Planning decisions by the Council have resulted in improvement and investment by the Council and other public and private sector bodies/interests in the town centre in recent years however key prevailing issues remain such as the increasing number of vacant retail and other commercial properties; the increasing number of derelict properties; traffic congestion and deficiencies in convenient parking provision. These are key issues to be redressed if the environment is to be both sustained and enhanced for existing and future retail investment.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP8:** To encourage and facilitate the enhancement and environmental improvement of Athy Town.
- RP9:** To pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the public realm in Athy Town Centre.
- RP10:** To ensure that the best quality of design is achieved for all new retail development and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics of Athy Town in terms of design, scale and external finishes.
- RP11:** To protect and enhance the amenities and character of Athy Town Centre. The Council will seek to balance the competing needs of commercial, service social and cultural functions which the town centre performs with the need to protect the recognised heritage and architectural quality of its streetscape. This will apply to skyline, shop fronts and advertising structures.

6.7.2 District and Neighbourhood Centres

It is recognised that the main shopping needs of people living in Athy are not being as well served as they should be which is resulting in increasing convenience expenditure leakage from the town and its hinterland area. This noted, in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan, to ensure that any development does not prejudice the town centre and edge of centre schemes being delivered, the development of a District Centre should only be permitted when the town centre and

edge of centre schemes are at an advanced stage and in the interim only a standalone supermarket and bulky goods restricted retail warehousing would be acceptable.

It is the policy of the Council:

RP12: To encourage and facilitate the development of appropriately located retail centres to meet the needs of existing and growing areas of the town in accordance with the sequential approach.

RP13: To identify appropriate locations for new retail centres within established residential areas and where large scale residential development is planned over the period of the timescale of the Development Plan while having regard to the possible impact on Athy Town Centre.

6.7.3 Retail Warehouse Parks

Athy at present does not have a recognised profile in the bulky goods retail market. This is set to change with the granted permission for the Woodstock South site. It is, however, recognised to be a sector that generally has witnessed over provision in permitted floorspace, with consequential pressures to relax permissions and enable more mainstream convenience and comparison operators to take up the granted floorspace.

This has and will continue to be resisted by Athy Town Council and is reflected in the following policies.

It is the policy of the Council:

RP14: To prohibit mainstream and discount convenience retail developments in retail parks.

RP15: To prohibit mainstream comparison floorspace or retailers in retail parks.

6.7.4 Retail Development in Business Parks and Employment Areas

It is part of the Core Strategy of this Plan to promote mixed use sustainable strategies that combine working, living, leisure, shopping and local services provision.

It is the policy of the Council:

RP16: To ensure that the level of retail and local services provision in existing and new major

employment areas sustains and enhances their attraction as locations for investment.

RP17: To provide the land use and retail planning framework to ensure that the mixed use strategies for new employment areas respond to the wider context of need and demand in related expanding residential areas in the interests of ensuring that these locations are attractive to new residents, workers and employers.

RP18: To limit the level of shopping and local services provision in existing industrial estates or parks, unless there is an interface with neighbouring residential areas. Standalone mainstream and discount convenience or comparison floorspace will not be permitted in existing employment areas unless it is proven to be part of the wholesale retail market sector.

6.7.5 Re-Use and Regeneration of Derelict And Underutilised Land and Buildings

Re-use and regeneration of derelict/obsolete buildings is a sustainable objective. It is an objective of the Council to re-use and regenerate derelict land and buildings in the Town Centre area for retail and other town centre activities in order that the qualities and attraction of the town centre is preserved and enhanced.

It is the policy of the Council:

RP19: To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses.

RP20: To work with and encourage landowners, retailers and development interests to realise the potential of town centre lands in Athy Town.

6.7.6 Retailing and Tourism Policy

Athy is rich in its tourism potential founded on its built heritage and location on the River Barrow and Grand Canal but this to date remains largely untapped. Recent investment in the town and area's hotel stock demonstrate that its tourism potential is recognised by the commercial leisure market.

Additionally, as with the remainder of the County, the retail dimension of the town's tourism economy has not been harnessed and both provide considerable opportunities for Athy increasing its attraction and competitiveness, stemming the flow

of comparison expenditure leakage from the south of Kildare and better contributing to the retail profile and attraction of the town as a retail destination.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP21:** To encourage and facilitate the development of retailing in the tourism and leisure sectors and encourage strong linkages between each.
- RP22:** To encourage and facilitate the delivery of tourism related retail developments and initiatives in and around Athy Town Centre and waterfront.

6.7.7 Casual Trading

The Council will carry out its statutory functions under the Casual Trading Act 1995, including the issuing of permits and the designation of Casual Trading Areas where the Council considers these to be necessary.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP23:** To take cognisance in the designations of areas for Casual Trading of the proper and sustainable development of Athy, including: the preservation and improvement of amenities; the safety and convenience of pedestrians; the traffic likely to be generated by Casual Trading; and, the promotion of tourism.
- RP24:** To prosecute in situations where the Casual Trading 1995 Act is being contravened.

6.7.8 Non Retail Uses in the Core Retail Area and Main Streets

As with many centres in the County, Athy Town Centre has witnessed the introduction of non retail and lower grade retail uses in its Core Retail Area and other main streets. To maintain the integrity, critical mass and potential for quality retail activity and the vitality and viability of the Core Retail Area and other main streets, the Council will seek to discourage an overconcentration of non retail and lower grade retail uses in prime retail areas.

It is the policy of the Council:

- RP25:** To discourage amusement/gaming arcades in the Core Retail Area as they are considered to be an undesirable use and potentially detrimental to the business and commercial environment of the town.

- RP26:** To discourage non retail and lower grade retail uses e.g. takeaways and betting offices in the Core Retail Area and other principal streets in the town centre in the interests of maintaining and sustaining the retail attraction of Athy Town Centre.

6.7.9 Innovation in the Town's Retail Offer

Encouraging and facilitating innovation, be that in trading format, location or product, will assist the town to sustain and increase its competitiveness and attraction. To this end, the Council will work with both public agencies and private sector interests to develop the town's potential and attraction as a location for new retail concepts and innovative formats.

It is the policy of the Council:

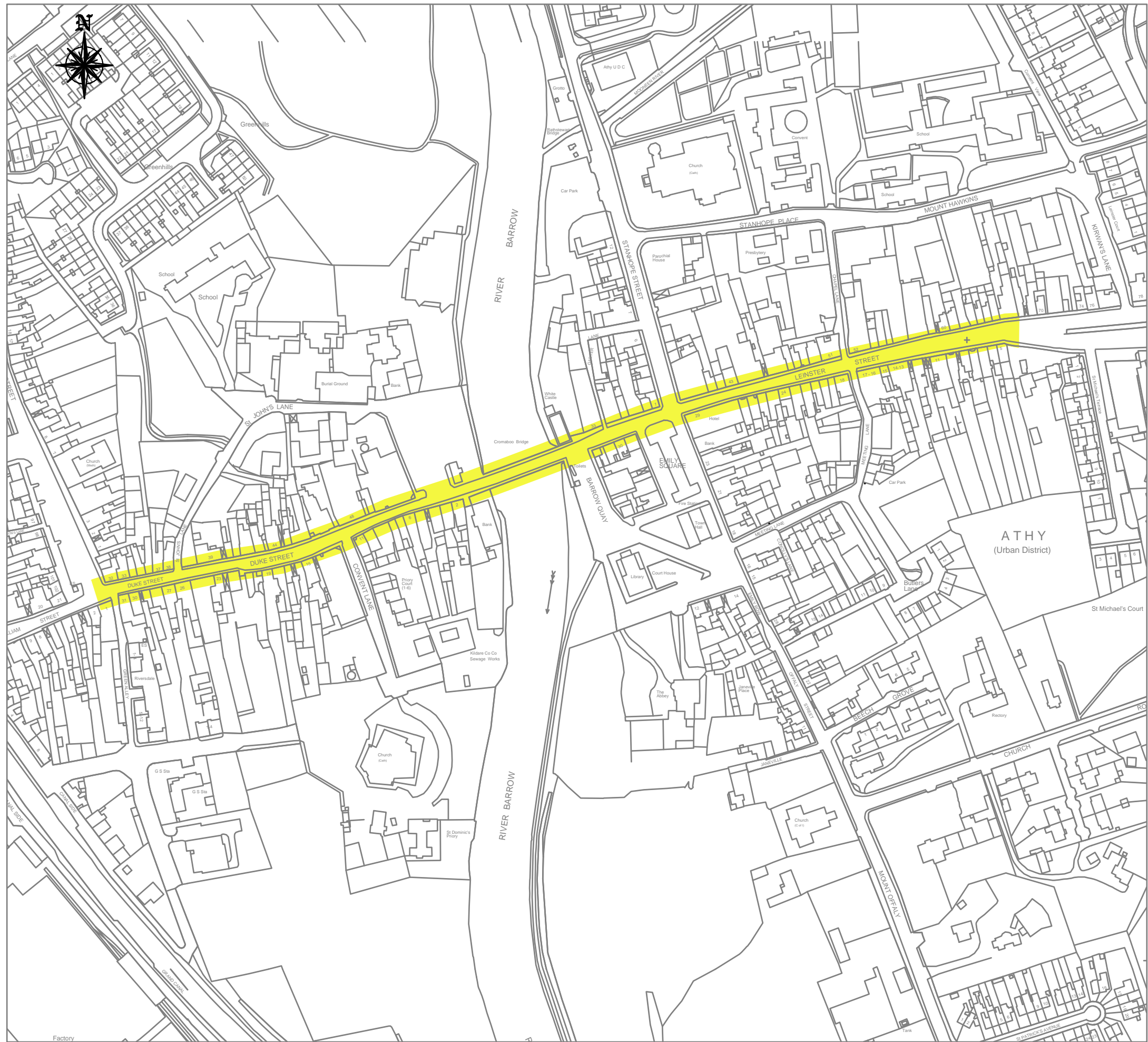
- RP27:** To encourage and facilitate the potential of Athy Town as a centre for innovation in retailing in order to enhance the town's retail offer and attraction.
- RP28:** To review and monitor retail trends that could have an influence on the performance of the sector within the town and pursue harnessing new concepts and formats in the Athy Town retail structure.
- RP29:** To require applicants to indicate their proposed hours of opening. Late opening of shops will only be permissible where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no negative impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring areas.



6.8 GENERAL RETAIL POLICIES

It is the policy of the Council:

- GR1:** To make an important contribution to sustaining and improving the retail profile and competitiveness of the town and County Kildare within the retail economy of the GDA and beyond.
- GR2:** To encourage and facilitate the preservation of the retail and services role of Athy in both the County and GDA contexts.
- GR3:** To reinforce the heart of the town centre as the priority location for new retail development, with quality of design and integration/linkage being fundamental prerequisites.
- GR4:** To address leakage of retail expenditure from the town and its catchment by facilitating the strengthening of the range and quality of its retail offer.
- GR5:** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict and underutilised land and buildings in the town centre for retail and other town centre uses, having regard to the Sequential Approach outlined in this Plan.
- GR6:** To ensure an efficient, equitable and sustainable spatial distribution of retail centres in and around the town.
- GR7:** To establish clear principles and guidance on where various forms of new retail floorspace would be acceptable.
- GR8:** To ensure that the retail needs of the Athy catchment area are met as fully as possible to promote social inclusion within the town and take due cognisance of the GDA retail hierarchy



Athy Town Council

**Athy Town Development Plan
2012-2018**

Legend

 Core Retail Area

Core Retail Area

Date: March 2012	Map Ref: 6.1
Scale: N.T.S.	Drg No: 200/10/523
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THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE WRITTEN STATEMENT

CHAPTER 7

Movement and Transport

7



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To promote ease of movement within and access to Athy, by integrating sustainable land use planning with a high quality, integrated transport system; to support improvements to the road, rail and public transport network, together with cycleway and pedestrian facilities and to provide for new and improved transport facilities within Athy in a manner which is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

7.1 BACKGROUND

Improving the standard of transportation infrastructure in Athy is of primary importance. The provision of good quality infrastructure is essential to the economic, social and cultural development of the town.

The designation of Athy as a Moderate Sustainable Growth Town within the Greater Dublin Area necessitates the improvement of links to and from Athy for all trip purposes by all modes of transport. The most significant traffic management improvement in Athy in recent years has been the M9 upgrade which includes the new N78 from Athy to the M9.

It is vital that links with Dublin and surrounding areas are maximised not only to attract business development into the town but also to provide for leisure and other trips to and from the Metropolitan area.

Athy's public transport services include a bus network linking the town with Dublin and the surrounding regional towns, there is also a rural transport service linking Athy with the nearby rural centres. Athy train station is located on Church road and is served by the main Dublin – Carlow / Kilkenny / Waterford line providing regular connections to these centres.

7.2 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

A number of national and regional policy documents are of relevance to the future policy approach regarding integrated movement and transport in Athy.

7.2.1 National Development Plan (2007-2013) and Transport 21 (2006-2016)

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP) and Transport 21 indicate future funding for infrastructural improvement works.

Key projects affecting Athy include:

- The development of the Kildare Route Project (including four-tracking between Heuston and Hazelhatch).
- Construction of additional park and ride facilities.
- Mainstreaming of accessibility across all modes of public transport.

7.2.2 National Transport Authority

The National Transport Authority is a statutory body established by the Minister for Transport in December 2009 and is responsible for preparing a strategic transport plan for the integrated development of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area. It is expected that the Authority will set out the framework for the delivery of infrastructure and services in an integrated transport plan covering a 12 to 20 year period.

The Authority also has responsibility for the capital funding of all major public transport infrastructure projects planned for the Greater Dublin Area

7.2.3 Smarter Travel, a Sustainable Transport Future, a New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020

Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future, (2009) is the new transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. It recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development. It also sets out necessary steps to ensure that people choose more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

It sets out five key goals:

- 1) To reduce overall travel demand,
- 2) To maximise the efficiency of the transport network,
- 3) To reduce reliance on fossil fuels,
- 4) To reduce transport emissions,
- 5) To improve accessibility to transport.

7.2.4 DTO – A Platform for Change 2000-2016

The DTO's transport strategy "A Platform for Change 2000-2016" seeks the development of an efficient and high quality system of public transport connections within the GDA. Work has commenced on developing a new Transport Strategy for the GDA for the period up to 2030 which will be linked to sustainable land use planning and directed by the economic, social, cultural and environmental needs of the region.

7.2.5 Green School Initiative

The Green-Schools Initiative is an international environmental education programme and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole-school action for the environment.

"Green-Schools in Ireland" is operated and co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce in partnership with Local Authorities throughout the country, and supported by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Transport and the National Transport Authority. Details of the scheme can be found at <http://www.greenschoolsireland.org>

7.2.6 National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020

The National Cycle Policy Framework (as part of Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009) sets out a national policy for cycling, in order to create a stronger cycling culture, a more friendly environment for cycling and improved quality of life. The vision is that all cities, towns and rural areas will be bicycle friendly. The policy document sets a target of 10% of all trips by bicycle by 2020 and places emphasis on promoting and integrating cycle networks.

7.2.7 Electric Transport Programme (2008)

The Electric Transport Programme 2008, seeks to assist Ireland in meeting EU targets on carbon emissions. The target seeks that 10% of the National Road Transport fleet be electrically powered by 2020. The provision of appropriate battery charging infrastructure in car parks and other suitable locations is a means by which the Council can assist in achieving this objective.

7.2.8 Rural Transport Initiative

Rural Transport Initiatives are supported by the

Department of Transport under the Rural Transport Programme and part-financed by the EU through the National Development Plan 2007-2013. There are currently two companies offering a rural transport service within the County - South Kildare Community Transport and Offaly Kildare Community Transport Ltd.

7.3 TRANSPORT STRATEGY

7.3.1 Athy Integrated Framework Plan 2004

The Athy Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) was commissioned jointly by Kildare County Council and the Dublin Transportation Office in the context of Athy's designation as a secondary growth centre in the Strategic Planning Guidelines (1999). The purpose of this study was to set out an integrated framework plan for the future development of the town.

The Integrated Framework Plan sets out the preferred scenario for the development of the town up to 2016. In order to develop this preferred scenario, guiding principles and objectives were set out, upon which the strategy could be assessed. The various land use scenarios were also measured using two modelling processes.

Firstly, the sustainability of each land use scenario was gauged by determining the walking distances between major trip attractions. Then each viable scenario was tested up to 2016 using two computer-modelling packages. These computer programmes model traffic behaviour around the town and assess the modal split for the various journey types. The results from this modelling are then assessed in terms of their compliance with the guiding objectives with a final preferred scenario being selected as the most beneficial to the future development of the town.

In terms of movement and transportation, a roads hierarchy and associated car park locations were identified as part of the preferred scenario identified in the IFPLUT, with a strong emphasis put on the delivery of the Southern Distributor Road in particular in order to allow for more efficient traffic movement in an east –west direction through the town.

7.3.2 Traffic Management Plan and Parking Strategy (TMP) 2009

The TMP commissioned by Kildare County Council was carried out by WSP consultants in 2009. The

purpose of the study is to provide specific traffic and transport recommendations for the town centre streets of Athy which can be developed in tandem with key infrastructure projects proposed for the town.

The TMP had also been developed with an emphasis on enhancing the heritage value of the historical streetscape of the town centre and the potential to provide enhanced civic areas. The study develops recommendations based on an assumed phasing of key infrastructure projects including the Southern Distributor Road and the New Town Street and the Northern Distributor Road. The recommendations made are categorised into immediate term, short term and long term recommendations.

7.3.3 Sustainable Transport

The further development of a sustainable transport system will be an important component in meeting the physical, social and economic needs of Athy and will be a key priority over the period of this Plan. The Council will seek to influence people's travel behaviour towards more sustainable options by working closely with relevant organisations in improving public transport facilities and promoting opportunities for alternative transportation such as walking and cycling.

7.4 POLICY STATEMENTS

7.4.1 Policies-General Movement and Transport

It is the policy of the Council:

- GT1:** To co-operate with other agencies to promote and facilitate the implementation of a sustainable transportation strategy for Athy having regard to Transport 21 (2006- 2015), Department of Transport's Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 and the Dublin Transportation Office's strategic document Platform for Change 2000-2016"and the forthcoming strategy to be published by the National Transport Authority.
- GT2:** To support sustainable modes of transport that ensure that land use planning and zoning are fully integrated with the provision and development of high quality transportation systems.
- GT3:** To promote and encourage the development and growth of Athy in line with the principles of sustainable development

and to continue to support the policies and recommendations as outlined in the Athy Integrated Framework Plan for Land - Use and Transportation and the Athy Traffic Management Plan.

- GT4:** To provide a road network which is safe and efficient for all road users while being cognisant of the requirements of all traffic, including motorised vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- GT5:** To ensure that Athy is well-connected to both the national road network and local centres of population.
- GT6:** To progressively improve all urban roads and footpaths and maintain these to the highest possible standards, having regard to the availability of finance and amenity and townscape requirements.
- GT7:** To improve road safety within the town centre by implementing gateway entry treatments and other speed reduction measures (incl. 50kph signage) inside the town boundary. This measure will include reducing the speed limit appropriately in the core town centre, and between the town centre and the town boundary.
- GT8:** To investigate the reduction of vehicular traffic passing through the Town Centre to improve the pedestrian environment of the town's retail core.
- GT9:** To co-operate with the public transport authorities and any other relevant bodies to promote the use of existing parking facilities in the town for park and ride purposes.
- GT10:** To utilise the provisions of Sections 48(2)(C) and 49 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended to generate financial contributions towards the capital costs of providing strategic and local transport infrastructure.
- GT11:** To continue to support the operation of and development of the bus service provided by South Kildare Community Transport supported by the Department of Transport
- GT12:** To have regard to the condition, location and accessibility of heritage items in the planning and provision of transportation services.
- GT13:** To have regard to the policies, actions, outcomes and recommendations of the Kildare Local Authorities Noise Action Plan regarding new development

in proximity to National Routes.

- GT14:** To increase the level of access within Athy to a choice of transport modes and, in particular, to promote forms of development that reduce dependence on private car transport.
- GT15:** To require roads and other infrastructure crossing a Natura 2000 site to comply with the following requirements:
- Demonstrate the need for the project in light of a “do nothing” context.
 - Develop and evaluate a comprehensive series of plausible alternative routes and design strategies.
 - Demonstrate how each route has taken due account of, and accommodated ecological considerations and legislative requirements including the Precautionary Principle.
 - Demonstrate that the chosen route will not cause any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.
- GT16:** To support the Government’s Electric Transport Programme 2008, by facilitating the roll-out of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles at appropriate locations within the town, through the planning system.

7.4.2 Public Transport

Athy is served by both bus and rail public transport. The rail service includes the mainline intercity service on the Carlow/ Kilkenny / Waterford line. There are currently 10 services from Athy to Dublin with 8 services from Dublin to Athy daily, there are also parking facilities at the station and at a separate location close to the station which provide the opportunity for commuters to park and ride.

Athy town is served by bus transport with a range of services to centres including Carlow, Portlaoise, Dublin, Naas, Monasterevin, Kildare and Maynooth. Bus Eireann currently operate both local and expressway services through Athy. The local service operates once a day from Athy - Kilcullen – Naas. The expressway services operate five departures a day from Athy to Dublin and four departures from Dublin to Athy daily. South Kildare Community Transport Ltd was formed out of the Department of Public Enterprise Rural transport Initiative and recently began operating services between Kildare,

Monasterevin and Athy providing six services per day. Private bus operators also provide commuter and general services from Clonmel via Athy and Naas to Dublin City. In addition a limited number of private bus services run through Athy to the third level colleges of NUI Maynooth and the Institute of Technology in Carlow. Athy Town Council will promote improved and more frequent rail and bus services from Athy to other urban centres in the County and elsewhere.



It is the policy of the Council:

- TM1:** To promote the enhancement and to maximise the use of Athy train station and to assess the need to provide for additional parking facilities at this location.
- TM2:** To facilitate and promote the development of upgraded rail infrastructure and services on the ‘Dublin-Waterford’ line through Athy.
- TM3:** To co-operate with the relevant transport bodies and authorities to secure improvements and further developments of the public transport system.
- TM4:** To encourage public transport usage by improving bus shelters and associated passenger facilities.
- TM5:** To encourage the implementation and expansion of local bus services to link key trip generators and attractors in the town, particularly residential, employment, educational and retail centres.
- TM6:** To require that public transport set-down and pickup points are located such that the safety of passengers is maximised and

the safety of road users is not endangered through the creation of a traffic hazard.

- TM7:** To facilitate the provision of taxi and hackney services and appropriately located parking in Athy.
- TM8:** To facilitate provision of a bus-bay and quality bus waiting area in the town centre and to encourage interchange between bus and rail services.

7.4.3 Walking and Cycling

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, this Plan aims to promote walking and cycling as effective modes of transport within the urban area. The Plan supports and encourages the continued development of walking as a sustainable form of transportation and the Council will work with organisations and groups in the promotion of safe walking throughout the town including historic/heritage walks which are an important amenity and tourism resource. Future developments should provide for the safe movement of pedestrians.

Currently cycling does not play a significant role as a mode of transportation in Athy. A number of development objectives set out in the plan will enhance the pedestrian and cycling environment for the enjoyment of Athy residents and visitors alike. The development of the Southern and Northern Distributor roads and the New Town Centre Street will provide major opportunities to develop pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the town centre.

This may provide the opportunity to develop a one-way system which would offer the potential to reallocate road space to footpaths and dedicated cyclist facilities.

It is the policy of the Council:

- WC1:** To promote and encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of transportation such as cycling and walking in accordance with national and regional walking and cycling policies.
- WC2:** To increase priority for pedestrians and cyclists at signalised junctions in Athy town centre.
- WC3:** To provide for safer routes to schools within the town and to encourage walking and cycling as suitable modes of transport as part of the Green School



Initiative Programme and other local traffic management improvements.

- WC4:** To facilitate and encourage cycling as a more convenient and safe method of transport through an integrated network of safe and convenient cycle and pedestrian routes throughout Athy.
- WC5:** To realise the potential of cycling and walking routes along the Grand Canal and River Barrow. (Refer to Recreation and Amenity Chapter 11, Map 11.1)
- WC6:** To ensure the provision of cycle parking facilities in new development schemes.
- WC7:** To provide and seek the provision of secure cycle parking facilities at key areas in Athy town centre and to encourage and promote the use of cycling by employees, shoppers and visitors to the town.
- WC8:** To traffic calm and environmentally enhance the regional / national routes leading into the town, to make them safer and more pedestrian and cyclist friendly in conjunction with Kildare County Council and other statutory bodies.
- WC9:** To ensure that roads and footpaths are designed and constructed to cater for the needs of people with disabilities.
- WC10:** To provide footpath continuity at appropriate locations to the Town boundary.

- WC11:** To improve existing lighting and seek the provision of additional lighting facilities in Athy as funding becomes available.
- WC12:** To carry out a feasibility study regarding the provision of a boardwalk along Cromaboo Bridge. The scope of this report must have regard to the design and impact of the proposed boardwalk, having regard to the protected structure status of the bridge; it's location within the ACA and the SAC status of the River Barrow and the associated requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- WC13:** To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in the town centre e.g Emily Square and Edmund Rice Square and at public facilities such as schools, the library, the train station and in all new developments in accordance with the standards set out in the Development Management Standards in Chapter 15.
- WC14:** To ensure that the national roads system throughout County Kildare is planned for and managed in an integrated manner enabling sustainable economic development of the County and wider area while encouraging a shift towards more sustainable travel and transport in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012), as may be amended.

7.5 ROADS

The current road hierarchy comprises the N78 national secondary road which consists of the new link road from the M9 linking the town to Naas and Dublin to the east. It also travels through the town centre and on to Kilkenny to the southwest. The R417 Monasterevin/Carlow Regional Road bisects Athy in a north-south direction and connects the town to Monasterevin in the north and Carlow in the south. The R428 regional road (Stradbally Road) enters the town from Portlaoise in the west and the R418 enters from Castledermot in the southeast. Numerous county roads link the town to its hinterland.

The N78 serves as the principal commercial thoroughfare and the principal vehicular route through the town. It is subject to frequent delays, which in the absence of further road infrastructure will pose an impediment to the future economic development of Athy.

7.5.1 Southern Distributor Road (SDR)

The route comprises an urban single carriageway circa 3.2 km in length. The proposed Southern Distributor Road is intended to divert through traffic away from the town centre. This road will facilitate improved safety due to the removal of vehicles from the existing N78 in the town centre, especially heavy goods vehicles and will free up capacity for road users who want to avail of the facilities of the town.

The secondary function of the Athy SDR is to facilitate the orderly expansion of Athy increasing connectivity and allowing for the integration of different modes of transport. The proposed scheme will include pedestrian and cycle paths, additional crossing points over the River Barrow, Grand Canal and railway line and will facilitate linkages between zoned land, the town centre and railway station linking the N78 southwest of the town at Bennetsbridge to the N78 northeast of the town at Gallowshill.

From its commencement, there will be a roundabout at the tie into the N78, Kilkenny road southwest of the town. The proposed route will run for part of the route along the line of the disused CIE rail line. It then crosses the River Barrow and the main Dublin to Waterford rail line before tying into the newly constructed N9/N10 link road roundabout.

An Appropriate Assessment of the Proposed Athy Southern Distributor Road has been carried out. It concluded that once best practice is followed throughout the construction of the proposed roadway, and the recommended mitigation measures are taken into consideration, it is considered that this development will not have a significant negative impact upon the River Barrow/ River Nore SAC and its habitats and species.

7.5.2 Northern Distributor Road (NDR)

The proposed NDR begins on the N78 at the junction with the Old Dump Road and will require the realignment and upgrade of the existing road to the Bohernouca Crossroads.

The primary function of the proposed Northern Distributor Road is similar to that of the above mentioned Southern Distributor Road, once constructed it will help to reduce traffic congestion in the town centre whilst also linking up the various development and zoned lands to the north

of the town. It continues through the townland of Prusselstown and crosses the Noneen and Clogorow Bog rivers, crossing the main Waterford to Dublin Railway line, passing through the Barrowford townland and crossing the R417 Monasterevin Road.

The route crosses the River Barrow, the Cardington Road and the Grand Canal adjacent to the Cardington Demense. Following this, the route crosses the R428 Stradbally Road and passes through the townland of Woodstock North and South. It then crosses the Ballintubbert Road after Lennons Bridge to tie into the N78 South West of Athy town.

A Route Selection Study has been carried out and a route corridor has been identified and is illustrated on the land use zoning Map 16.1. An Appropriate Assessment has not been carried out to date.

7.5.3 New Town Centre Street

The proposed street will be approximately 1 km in length, running from the junction of Leinster Street and St. Michael's Terrace as far as Upper William Street. It will incorporate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, a bridge over the River Barrow and a drop lock and bridge on the Grand Canal.

In 1999 Shaffrey Associates prepared a report for the Planning Authority "Athy – New Street Proposals 1999." This Report contains recommendations on the development of the Athy Inner Relief Road as a New Town Centre Street within Athy.

Similar recommendations are made in the Athy Traffic Management Plan prepared in 2009 by WSP Ireland, it recognizes that this link will function as a street and not as a relief road as it was originally envisaged in the 1970's. The development of Athy town centre in the intervening years between its initial proposal and today has surpassed the need for a Relief Road at this location; there is however significant benefits arising from the construction of a street complete with River and Canal crossings along the alignment of the route.

This New Town Centre Street will contribute fundamentally to the connectivity of the town and allow for significant improvements to be made along the main street catering for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic appropriately.

The development of this street will also provide opportunities to redevelop the existing streetscape

of Leinster Street and Duke Street and to develop between the New Town Centre Street and Duke Street, thus expanding the Town Centre function and adding to the local economy.

7.5.4 Distributor/Relief Roads

The primary function of Distributor Roads in Athy is to divert through traffic away from the town centre and to improve the public realm, while also contributing to an efficient transport network in the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- DR 1:** To ensure that new distributor/relief roads are designed and constructed in a manner that will enable them to fulfill their functions.
- DR 2:** To limit direct access onto distributor/relief roads to a number of strategically located junctions.
- DR 3:** To continue the development of proposed distributor/relief roads namely the Northern and Southern roads.
- DR 4:** To require housing scheme roads to be provided in accordance with:
 - a)** Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) and accompanying Best Practice Design Manual (2009).
 - b)** Architecture 2009-2015 Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality within the Built Environment (2009).
 - c)** Manual for Streets published by the Department of Transport, and Communities and Local Government (England and Wales) (2007) and any new guidance/ standards issued from the DoECLG.

7.6 PARKING

The Council aims to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of parking spaces to support the town centre businesses and that these spaces are effectively managed.

The Council's approach to parking is therefore framed by the following aims:

- To improve and enhance parking facilities in the town, in order to relieve and prevent traffic congestion and generally enhance the amenity of the area.
- To pursue a policy of access for those with limited mobility in terms of parking provision.
- To promote off street parking as opposed to on street parking.

Parking facilities, including parking for the disabled will continue to be provided to Development Plan standards in all developments and car parking provision will be subject to the preparation of mobility plans for employment development for over 50 employees.

Public car parks are available at a number of locations throughout the town providing for approximately 586 parking spaces. There are approximately 424 private parking spaces provided in the town. In total there are approximately 1,010 parking spaces in the town.

The Council will continue to provide for appropriate maintenance of public car parking and appropriate designing of accessible parking. As part of any proposals for the renewal of the public realm, accessible facilities will be given high priority.

It is the policy of the Council:

- PK1:** To optimise the use of existing parking stock and to provide, facilitate and regulate the provision of parking spaces conveniently located to serve the various land uses.
- PK2:** To seek to ensure that all new private car parking facilities are provided to an appropriate standard, including the provision of public lighting, permanent surfacing and marking, the provision of adequate circulation and aisle widths.
- PK3:** To manage the provision of on street parking and to promote the provision of off-street car parks at edge-of-town

centre locations and to reduce on street parking in the town centre.

- PK4:** To require significant new industrial developments in the vicinity of Athy to incorporate designated HGV parking areas.
- PK5:** To ensure that car parking is generally provided in accordance with "Buildings for Everyone" 2002 published by the National Disability Authority.
- PK6:** To prepare a car parking strategy for the town ensuring that there is a network of car parks at strategic entry points to the town centre.
- PK7:** To review all parking standards in consultation with relevant stakeholders during the life of this Plan.

7.7 MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Council are outlined below. Most of the objectives are to be implemented during the six year plan period. However a number of longer term objectives are also proposed.

7.7.1 General Movement and Transport Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

- GO1:** To implement the recommendations of the Athy Traffic Management Plan, including the environmental and traffic management improvements.
- GO2:** To prepare a traffic and public realm plan for Emily Square and to make recommendations on the necessary improvements.
- GO3:** To liaise with Kildare County Council on the possibility of developing a central website containing information on public transport services and routes available in Athy.
- GO4:** To assess the viability of diverting HGVs away from the town centre and consider the feasibility of providing localised parking centres for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).
- GO5:** To support the improvement of public transport services generally by reserving land in suitable locations.
- GO6:** To improve road/street signage by undertaking a survey to assess proliferation, gaps and quality in signage and to develop a policy for the future provision of signage

within the town, including the location of parking facilities and key public buildings and attractions throughout the town.

- GO7:** To optimise use of the existing parking stock, by increasing turnover, by increasing occupancy at under-utilised locations and to direct traffic to locations where spare capacity is available.
- GO8:** To consider the development of multi-storey car parks and/ basement car parks in the town.
- GO9:** To require all proposed developments to provide appropriate turning areas for emergency and service vehicles.
- GO10:** To ensure all new developments are accessible to sustainable modes of transportation.
- GO11:** To identify car parks and other suitable locations for the provision of appropriate battery charging infrastructure for electrically powered cars/vehicles as a means by which the Council can assist in achieving a reduction in carbon emissions.
- GO12:** To further upgrade and improve the pathway between St. John's Lane and Greenhills in order to maximise the accessibility and amenity value of the area. These works should be carried out within the context of a strategic plan to upgrade and improve pedestrian connectivity and permeability throughout the town.

7.7.2 Sustainable Travel

It is an objective of the Council:

- STO1:** To engage with service providers to regularise the number of bus stops and provide bus pull in bays and shelters along the main routes thereby improving safety and traffic flow.
- STO2:** To encourage Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and private companies to improve the frequency and quality of public transport facilities to, from and within the town.
- STO3:** To investigate the potential for a number of "park and walk" sites which would provide convenient pedestrian access to the town centre, as an alternative to providing additional car parking within the town centre area.
- STO4:** To continue the road and footpath

improvements, which facilitate pedestrian safety at various locations within the town centre, and in particular at the following junctions:

- (a) N78 / Kirwans Lane
 - (b) N78 / Church Road
 - (c) N78 / Chapel Lane
 - (d) N78/ Meeting Lane
 - (e) N78 / St John's Lane
 - (f) N78 / Green Alley
 - (g) N78 / Nelson Street
 - (h) Mount Hawkins / Chapel Lane
 - (i) Kirwans Lane / Mount Hawkins
 - (j) Woodstock Street / Barrack Lane
- STO5:** To investigate the pedestrianisation of certain town centre routes once the New Town Centre Street is constructed.
 - STO6:** To construct a pedestrian bridge over the River Barrow as appropriate to link schools, parks, playing fields and residential areas on both sides of the river, thereby providing safer routes to school. This bridge will be constructed to the specifications of all statutory bodies.
 - STO7:** To upgrade and construct continuous walkways and cycle ways along both sides of the River Barrow and Grand Canal, to provide attractive leisure routes and alternative routes to the town centre.
 - STO8:** To assist and encourage the development and expansion of rural transport initiatives, in conjunction with other statutory and development agencies.



7.7.3 Roads Programme

It is an objective of the Council:

- RP1:** To construct a Southern distributor road including a proposed link from this route to the town centre via the train station and to preserve these routes free from development. This is a priority objective of this plan. (Refer to Land Use Zoning Map 16.1).
- RP2:** To support the construction of a Northern Distributor Road and until such time as construction commences to preserve the route free from development.
- RP3:** That following completion of the Detailed Design and Appropriate Assessment for the Northern Distributor Road (NDR), the proposed land take, indicated on Map No 16.1 be amended to coincide with the proposed land take for the NDR.
- RP4:** To support the construction of the New Town Centre Street and to co-operate with Kildare County Council in acquiring land to facilitate its construction. The design of the proposed New Town Centre Street and bridge crossing shall have regard to the potential impact on Emily Square and adjoining lands.
- RP5:** To complete road improvements to the Fortbarrington Road from Blackparks to Ardrew.
- RP6:** To improve the junctions of the R418 (Castledermot Road) with the N78.
- RP7:** To improve the junction of the Kildare Road with the N78, having regard to the constraints of nearby protected structures.
- RP8:** To continue the construction of gateway features on the west-end of the N78 and to introduce gateway features on the eastern-end of the N78 to alert drivers that they are entering an urban area. This will include improved lighting, traffic calming measures, provision of higher level of signage along with road markings.
- RP9:** To carry out the improvement of the local road from Prusselstown Cross Roads to the N78 Dublin Road.
- RP10:** To ensure that adequate set back is provided adjacent to the four railway bridges in Athy to allow for the upgrading of the railway in consultation with Iarnrod Eireann.
- RP11:** To implement traffic calming and other associated measures on the R417 and R428 as part of new developments.
- RP12:** To implement traffic calming measures on Stanhope Place and Mount Hawkins.
- RP13:** To implement traffic calming measures on the N78 at the GAA club.
- RP14:** To review and set out an implementation plan for the roads programme, including the improvement of walking and cycling routes, as part of a "local traffic plan" to be prepared following publications of the NTA Transport Strategy for the GDA and in accordance with Section 65 of the DTA Act 2008.
- RP15:** To prepare the preliminary design of the Northern Distributor Road within 21 months from the day of the adoption of this Plan.

CHAPTER 8

Water, Drainage and Environmental Services

8



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To develop, protect, improve and extend water and wastewater and environmental services throughout Athy and to prioritise the sustainable provision of water services infrastructure to complement the overall strategy for the economic and population growth of the town and achieve enhanced environmental protection.

8.1 BACKGROUND

The Core Strategy for Athy identifies a need to accommodate an additional 1,389 housing units by 2018. This level of growth, which does not include parallel commercial development, highlights the need for continued investment in the infrastructure of the town and its surrounding area.

The Development Plan and key infrastructural advancements throughout the lifetime of this Plan must therefore provide for this level of growth in Athy during the Plan period.

Athy is dependent on strategic national / regional solutions to the provision of future water and wastewater infrastructure. The development of new regional water supply sources and the implementation of the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study are central to the longer term sustainable development of the town.

8.2 POLICY / LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The provision of water, drainage and environmental services infrastructure in Athy must have regard to relevant policy/legislation.

8.2.1 Water Services Act (2007)

The Water Services Act 2007 provides the legislative framework in relation to the planning, management and delivery of water supply and wastewater collection and treatment services.

The Act incorporates a comprehensive review, update and consolidation of all existing water services legislation and facilitates the establishment of a comprehensive supervisory regime to ensure compliance with specified performance standards. Other legislative provisions which the Council must

comply with include:

- Drinking Water Regulations 2007
- Waste Water Discharge Regulations 2007
- Urban Wastewater Regulations 2001

8.2.2 Water Framework Directive (2000)

The EU Water Framework Directive, Directive 2000/60/EC, was adopted in 2000 as a single piece of legislation covering rivers, lakes, groundwater and transitional (estuarine) and coastal waters and includes heavily modified and artificial water bodies.

It's objectives include prevention of further deterioration of and the protection, enhancement and restoration of the status of all bodies of water with the aim of achieving at least "good" ecological status by 2015.

8.2.3 Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (2005)

The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study investigated sewerage, drainage and river systems in the Greater Dublin Area up to 2031. The study identified new practices, processes and techniques to take advantage of the latest developments in hydraulic monitoring, geographical information systems and database management.

The study recommended that regional and local policies should incorporate up to date and best practice in drainage design, operation and management.

A co-ordinated regional approach is required to deliver on the recommendations of the strategy. Flood risk management should be integrated into spatial planning policies at all levels.

8.2.4 The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (November 2009)

The Guidelines introduced comprehensive mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification assessment and management into the planning process. Implementation of the Guidelines will be achieved through actions at national, regional, local authority and site specific levels.

The Guidelines require planning authorities to:

- Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding,



particularly flood plains, unless there are proven sustainability grounds that justify appropriate development and where flood risk can be reduced or managed to an acceptable level, without increasing flood risk elsewhere;

- Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management when assessing the location for new development based on avoidance, substitution, justification and mitigation of flood risk;
- Incorporate flood risk assessment into all stages of the planning process in accordance with the Guidelines;
- Carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the Guidelines for the Athy Town Development Plan (2012-2018);

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared in conjunction with this Plan and all but one, of the recommendations of the SFRA have been incorporated to this Plan. (Refer to Table 2 of SFRA, Appendix II)

8.2.5 Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme

The OPW has developed a Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme, which lies at the core of the assessment of flood risk and the long-term planning of the flood risk management measures throughout the country, including capital, structural and non-structural measures. The CFRAM Programme will, as well as

delivering on national policy, meet the requirements of the EU 'Floods' Directive that came into force in November 2007.

This Directive requires the production of flood maps for the Areas of Potentially Significant Risk by the end of 2013, and the development of Flood Risk Management Plans to manage risk within the Areas of Potentially Significant Risk by the end of 2015.

The outcomes of these studies together with any Local Authority policies should be used to inform flood risk assessments in the planning process in accordance with the Guidelines described in Section 8.2.4.

8.2.6 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2010-2022)

Continued investment in waste water treatment is required during the life of the RPGs;

- To ensure high water quality standards to meet the Water Framework Directive targets,
- To ensure necessary new economic and housing developments can take place in the most optimal locations.

Local Authorities are advised to assess existing systems on a catchment basis and identify funding for the renewal, upgrading and replacement of surface water infrastructure where needed to meet existing and future demands.

8.3 STRATEGY

The strategy seeks to maintain, enhance and extend, as appropriate a sustainable water supply, wastewater and drainage service in Athy by:

- Working alongside Kildare County Council in preserving the capacity of water and wastewater services primarily for the use of developments within Athy and to make provision for improved and additional wastewater services on a planned basis, in accordance with the present and future needs of housing, industry and commerce in Athy.
- Continuing the sustainable development and improvement of the water supply and foul drainage systems throughout the town to meet the anticipated water and drainage requirements of the area.
- Protecting surface water catchments and managing catchment areas where appropriate to protect the surface water drainage infrastructure and minimise the risk of flooding within the town.
- Implementing the provisions of national policy and legislation in the control of water pollution.
- Ensuring that existing and proposed developments are not subject to undue risk of flooding.
- Conserving treated water by active leakage detection, non-domestic metering and development of infrastructure and water conservation methods.
- Actively pursuing and resolving water leakage.
- Preserving free from development the way leaves of all public sewers and water mains.

8.4 WATER SERVICES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS 2010-2012

Local Authorities are required to prepare an “Assessment of Needs” for water services capital works in their areas at regular intervals. These assessments highlight the strategic context within which the county is set and the current constraints facing the county particularly in relation to water supply and wastewater treatment and provide the basis for scheme approval and scheduling under the Water Services Investment Programme.

In 2009 a ‘Needs Assessment’ was prepared by Kildare County Council, which informed the Water

Services Investment Programme for the period 2010 – 2012. A list of priority projects has been drawn up and submitted to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for consideration. The upgrade of the Athy Sewerage Network and the Barrow Abstraction Scheme have been included as projects to be commenced between 2010-2012.

8.5 PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Kildare County Council, being the Water Services Authority for Athy, is responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public water supply and waste water infrastructure throughout the town and continues to invest in the improvement of the existing water supply and wastewater treatment, in accordance with the Water Services Investment Programme.

8.5.1 Water Supply

At present, Athy town’s daily water demand is in excess of 4,000 cubic metres and is supplied from 4 separate sources within the town located along the north western bank of the River Barrow. An additional source is also obtained from the Regional Supply from the Poulaphouca Reservoir to supplement the town’s own supply. This can be extended into the town should any of the local sources need to be shut off.

Construction of a new 150mm diameter trunk main on the Monasterevin Road which will link to Wellfields is completed. This will provide an additional source of water supply when required. It is envisaged that the Barrow Abstraction Scheme should be completed by 2012 which will further consolidate and improve the town’s water supply.

It is the policy of the Council:

- WS1:** To secure the timely development of the priorities relating to Athy outlined in the Water Services Investment Programme - Assessment of Needs 2010 to 2012.
- WS2:** To secure priorities outlined in the Water Services Investment Programme - Assessment of Needs 2010 to 2012 including the network upgrade of the Athy Sewerage Scheme and the Barrow Abstraction Scheme.
- WS3:** To prepare a Water Services Strategic Plan - in compliance with the Water Services Act - for the functional area of the Council. Such a Plan may be prepared jointly

with other Water Services Authorities.

- WS4:** To provide water, sufficient in quantity and quality to serve the needs of existing and future population.
- WS5:** To examine ways of improving and upgrading the drinking water supply in Athy to cater for existing development in line with changing EU and National Directives, and concurrently to allow for increased residential, industrial and commercial growth in line with the objectives of this Plan.
- WS6:** To upgrade the existing water supply network infrastructure with the aim of improving the supply and quality of drinking water and reducing the level of unaccounted for water.
- WS7:** To promote conservation of water resources and where possible effect a reduction in the overall demand for treated water.
- WS8:** To promote water conservation measures within Athy by requiring the installation of water meters in all new residential units and in cases where planning permission is required for an extension.
- WS9:** To explore sustainable water conservation initiatives including large scale rainwater harvesting, re-use of grey water and improved leakage controls.
- WS10:** To require developments to connect to the public water supply.
- WS11:** To actively minimise leakage from the water supply network.
- WS12:** To provide a clean water supply which meets the requirements of the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No 2) Regulations 2007 and any subsequent amendments to the regulations during the period of this Plan.

8.5.2 Wastewater Treatment

Wastewater is treated at the Athy Wastewater Treatment Plant at Boherbui located to the south west of the town centre area. The plant has an existing design capacity of 15,000 population equivalent (PE) with capacity for future expansion. The current loading of the treatment plant is approximately 10,000PE. It is anticipated that it will be necessary to extend the plant to 11,500 PE before 2014 to meet additional domestic and non-domestic demand. In addition the overall wastewater network

requires improvement to facilitate possible future expansion of the town. In the interim however wastewater improvements under the Athy Sewerage Scheme include the provision of a new trunk foul sewer to the south east of the town to serve lands located at Prusselstown. Remediation of the existing sewer network to the east of the river Barrow was carried out in 2010 as the first phase of the Athy Sewerage Scheme.

It is the policy of the Council:

- WW1:** To reserve and allocate a proportion of the capacity of the Athy Sewerage Treatment Plant to development that yields long term sustainable employment in the town.
- WW2:** To minimise leakage from the foul sewer network and surface water infiltration into the foul sewerage system while at the same time reducing groundwater pollution.
- WW3:** To ensure that public wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure - which fully complies with requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) including the need to provide secondary treatment and other treatment as required - shall be operational and with adequate capacity to accommodate waste water arising from development, prior to developments being occupied. Discharges arising from this collection and treatment shall also comply with the requirements of the Directive.
- WW4:** To implement the relevant recommendations set out in Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons - A Report for the Years 2006 and 2007 (EPA Office of Environment Enforcement, 2009).
- WW5:** To have regard to all relevant waste water legislation particularly sections 43 and 44 of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007.

8.6 SURFACE WATER AND DRAINAGE

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are advocated within the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS) with a specific objective to ensure that any future development does not increase flooding or pollution of rivers. The system aims to mimic the natural drainage of a site to minimise the effect

of a development on flooding and pollution of waterways.

The control of surface water and appropriate measures for minimising flood risk is vital to a sustainable water services policy. The potential for increased incidences of flooding due to climate change is acknowledged and the Council will seek to include flood risk as a key consideration in both policy formulation and assessment of planning applications. The issue of surface water drainage is an increasingly important issue in the context of climate change, with higher rainfall levels and increased flood frequency. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment accompanies this Plan. Increased urbanisation and the effects of climate change make surface water drainage and management of flood risk increasingly important issues.

Development will be informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with *"The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities"* published by the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government in November 2009 which accompanies this Plan.

In order to be permitted, development proposals must demonstrate that the discharge of surface water runoff from the development will not lead to an increase in the risk of flooding in the receiving surface water drainage network. Further information on SuDS is available at www.suds.com.

It is the policy of the Council:

- SW1:** To implement the requirements of the DoEHLG The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) in the carrying out of functions during the period of the Plan.
- SW2:** To ensure that appropriate drainage facilities are provided which will allow development to proceed without leading to an increased risk of pollution or flooding.
- SW3:** To ensure that all new developments shall incorporate SuDS facilities to restrict surface water runoff in accordance with the principles of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GSDSDS).
- SW4:** To ensure that development proposals on lands identified in the Athy Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are subject to an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment in

accordance with the DoEHLG The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).

- SW5:** To require Persons/Companies undertaking Flood Risk Assessments to certify that the Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the DoEHLG Planning System and Flood Risk Management ~ Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and utilising other flood information as it becomes available.
- SW6:** To ensure that all structures adjacent to watercourses (including hard landscaping) are set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/ maintenance. A set back of 10 metres will generally be required depending on channel width and location.
- SW7:** To ensure that the requirements of Inland Fisheries Ireland are adhered to in the construction of flood alleviation measures. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Allowance for dry weather flow conditions to be reflected in channel cross section;
 - Appropriate programming of any "instream works" to reflect the requirements of Inland Fisheries Ireland.
- SW8:** To protect groundwater resources and drinking water catchments having regard to the County Kildare Ground Water Protection Scheme 1999 (as amended) and Environmental Protection Agency Code of Practice or Building Regulations applicable at the time from the effects of flooding.



8.7 WATER QUALITY

Water supplied to the town is tested regularly to ensure that it is consistently of the highest quality. The maintenance and improvement of water quality is a key objective of the River Basin Management Plans and other legislative provisions. Drinking water quality in Kildare is monitored on an agency basis, by the Environmental Health Service of the Health Service Executive (HSE) in accordance with the Council's 2007 Drinking Water Monitoring Plan.

The European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278 of 2007) transpose outstanding aspects of the EU Drinking Water Directive into Irish Law by underpinning comprehensive supervision and maintenance regimes for both sanitary authority and group water scheme supplies and by providing for increased penalties for non-compliance. Achieving and improving appropriate water quality standards are of significant importance to the Council.

It is the policy of the Council:

- WQ1:** To co-operate with the EPA, HSE and other authorities, in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and assist and co-operate with the lead authorities for the South Eastern River Basin District.
- WQ2:** To ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans and their associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the town.
- WQ3:** To work, in co-operation with relevant organisations and major stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of water resources.
- WQ4:** To continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, (as amended) and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and other relevant Regulations.
- WQ5:** To promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect both surface water and groundwater bodies.
- WQ6:** To ensure that all agricultural activities adhere to any current or future

legislation on water quality, such as the Phosphorous Regulations, Water Framework Directive and Nitrate Directive.

- WQ7:** To ensure conformance with the relevant recommendations set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland - A Report for the Years 2007-2008 (EPA Office of Environment Enforcement, 2009).

8.8 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Historical flooding for County Kildare has been recorded in both the recent and distant past causing damage to homes and businesses. While it is noted that Athy is vulnerable to flooding particularly from the River Barrow, large areas of the floodplains within Athy are not built upon.

The risk and frequency of flooding is likely to increase in the future as a result of climate change, with increased rainfall, rising sea levels and increased urbanisation. Flood risk due to climate change and other external factors is therefore continually changing and requires on-going assessment. In order to minimise the impact of an increased future flood risk, the plan must have regard to the results and recommendations of SFRA in conjunction with various other steps that Local Authorities can take. These include flood protection works, storm water attenuation and more significantly, avoidance of development in floodplains subject to flooding except in very limited circumstances.

A major function performed by floodplains and wetlands subject to flooding is to hold excess water until it can be released slowly back into a river system or the sea or seep into the ground as a storm or tidal surge subsides. Floodplains and wetlands subject to flooding should, therefore, be recognised and preserved to the maximum extent possible, in both urban and rural areas, as green infrastructure which provides a natural defence against flood risk.

"The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines" produced by the DoEHLG (2009) aim to ensure a rigorous assessment of flood risk at all levels to provide a consistency of approach throughout the whole country.

Development at all levels will be required to comply with the recommendations of these guidelines.

In achieving the aims and objectives of the Guidelines, planning authorities must:



- Ensure that development is not permitted in areas of flood risk, particularly floodplains and coastal areas subject to flooding, except where there are no suitable alternative sites available in areas at lower risk that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.
- Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management which aims to avoid flood risk, where possible, substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible, and to mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

A precautionary approach should also be applied to flood risk management to reflect uncertainties in flooding datasets, risk assessment techniques and the ability to predict the future climate, the performance of existing flood defences and the extent of future coastal erosion. The EU Floods Directive was introduced in 2007 and sets out how member states must have a plan for the management of flood risk. The aims of the Directive will be achieved through a series of requirements which will be carried out at river catchment level and also in coastal zones.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Athy Town Development Plan (2012-2018) has been prepared. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which has been carried out in accordance with *"The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities"* published by the Minister for The Environment, Heritage and Local Government in November 2009 is in keeping with the requirements of the EU Flood Directive and the Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022) for the Greater Dublin Area.

The key outputs of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are:

- To provide for an improved understanding of flood risk issues within the town development plan and development management process, and to communicate this to a wide range of stakeholders;
- To produce an assessment of existing flood defence infrastructure and the consequences of failure of that infrastructure and to identify areas of natural floodplain to be safeguarded;
- To produce a suitably detailed flood risk assessment that supports the application of the sequential approach in key areas where there may be tension between development pressures and avoidance of flood risk;
- To inform, where necessary, the application of the Justification Test;
- To conclude whether measures to deal with flood risks to the area proposed for development can satisfactorily reduce the risks to an acceptable level while not increasing flood risk elsewhere; and
- To produce guidance on mitigation measures, how surface water should be managed and appropriate criteria.

8.9 WATER, WASTEWATER AND DRAINAGE OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- WDO1:** To improve the provision of water and drainage services in new developments and in those areas of the town where deficiencies exist.
- WDO2:** To protect, improve and conserve the towns wastewater resources.
- WDO3:** To facilitate the provision of necessary water infrastructure in a sustainable manner.
- WDO4:** To improve water quality in the town in accordance with European and National legislation.
- WDO5:** To monitor and review the water quality standards of Athy Town Council in light of European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations 2007 (SI 278 of 2007), and to ensure continuing compliance with the regulations.
- WDO6:** To improve and expand the water supply to all areas in accordance with the Water Services Investment Programme for County Kildare.
- WDO7:** To promote rain water harvesting as a complementary surface water management system in all developments and in particular, for larger developments.
- WDO8:** To promote the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in Athy where this is feasible.
- WDO9:** To carry out a survey of the surface water culverts in Athy to assess their current state, and to improve culverts where necessary.
- WDO10:** To carry out a programme of dredging surface water drains and to continue to ensure that the drains are regularly maintained to minimise the risk of flooding.
- WDO11:** To promote sustainable water conservation initiatives, particularly for larger developments including rainwater harvesting, re-use of grey water and improved leakage control with a view to their implementation within the towns water supply and drainage network.

WDO12: To decommission as many lead public water mains as possible in older areas of Athy where they are present.

WDO13: To fulfil its responsibilities under the Flood Risk Directive 2007/60/EC and co-operate with the Office of Public Works in the development of any Catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plan as necessary. Any relevant recommendations and outputs arising from Flood Risk Management Plan will be incorporated into the Development Plan.

WDO14: To integrate into the Plan, relevant findings of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS) for the River Barrow Catchment when it is finalised in 2014, as appropriate.

8.10 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Aim: To conform with EU, national and regional policies in relation to waste management, to protect and enhance water, air and noise quality and to promote environmental awareness in Athy.

8.11 CONTEXT

Protection and enhancement of the physical environment is of primary importance to Athy Town Council. The role of the Council in this regard is to prevent water, air and noise pollution and to ensure the provision of the highest standards of waste management facilities.

8.12 STRATEGY

The strategy for environmental services seeks to conform with national and regional policy in relation to waste management and to maintain and improve environmental services in Athy. Central to the environmental strategy for the town is a focus on the promotion of environmental protection through education.

The strategy has regard to the internationally recognised hierarchy of waste management options which is:

- Prevention
- Minimisation
- Reuse/recycling
- Environmentally sustainable disposal of waste

8.13 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Council is obliged to collect or arrange for the collection of household waste in its jurisdiction. Waste collected is currently transferred to Dublin from the Integrated Waste Management Facility at Silliot Hill, Kilcullen for baling prior to disposal at Arthurstown Landfill Site. The Civic Amenity Centre located at Gallowshill off the Dublin Road in Athy is operated by Oxigen under licence to Kildare County Council. This facility provides a significant service to the local and wider community and accepts a wide range of recyclable materials including glass, paper, cardboard, hazardous household waste, material, plastic and cans.

The County Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 sets out the overall waste management objectives and includes details on waste prevention, minimisation, recovery/reuse, recovery/recycling, energy recover, disposal, waste collection, animal slurries, sludge hazardous waste and litter prevention. This Plan shall have regard to the County Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 as may be amended and also the information and recommendations contained in the EPA reports, The National Waste Report 2009 and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008-2012.

Section 22 of the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended by Section 4 of the Waste Management (Amendment) Act 2001) provides the link between a Development Plan under the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Waste Management Plan.

It is the policy of the Council:

- WM1:** To have regard to the County Kildare Waste Management Plan in the implementation, operation and management of schemes and services for the disposal of waste.
- WM2:** To seek to ensure that Athy is served by adequate recycling facilities in the form of kerbside collection, the continued operation and improvement of the existing Civic Amenity Centre and bring-bank recycling facilities.
- WM3:** To encourage waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste. Where waste management is not being carried out properly, the Waste Management Act, 1996 to 2008 will be used as a means to ensure specific national policies and regulations are adhered to.
- WM4:** To promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness, community-based recycling initiatives and environmental management initiatives, which will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.
- WM5:** To ensure that the “Code of Practice Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites” published by the EPA is adhered to regarding any contaminated sites within the town council boundary and to ensure that a risk based assessment procedure is carried out for all historic unregulated waste disposal

sites; the potential risks are assessed and that the appropriate remedial measures or corrective actions are put in place before any development takes place.

8.13.1 Litter Management

In accordance with the Litter Pollution Act 1997 local authorities are required to adopt Litter Management Plans. A Litter Management Plan should set out the Council's objectives to prevent and control litter as well as measures to encourage public awareness of the litter problem with particular emphasis on educational and information strategies.

The Plan should include information on and should be prepared having regard to:

- The policies and objectives of the Council in relation to the prevention and control of litter.
- Litter prevention and control measures carried out by the Council.
- Litter prevention and control activities being carried out by agencies other than the Council.
- Recycling and recovery facilities provided for public use.
- The Council's enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act 1997.

Since the adoption of the Athy Town Development Plan in 2006, Athy Town Council has been actively involved in facilitating the delivery of a more sustainable approach to waste management and litter.

It is the policy of the Council:

- L1:** To enforce, where applicable, the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act 1997.
- L2:** To prepare a Litter Management Plan for Athy in accordance with the Litter Pollution Act 1997.
- L3:** To continue education and awareness programmes in local schools and to promote grant schemes and initiatives to residential associations and other groups, in particular the Tidy Towns Committee, which aim to reduce litter in the town.
- L4:** To require the provision of litter bins on or directly adjoining the premises of all neighbourhood facilities.



8.14 POLLUTION CONTROL - WATER, AIR AND NOISE

The importance of a clean and attractive environment for the economic and social life of the town is well recognised. In this regard, continuous effective monitoring and enforcement in relation to pollution control measures is imperative and will continue over the period of the Plan.

The Council's role in relation to water and air is to monitor and promote a reduction in water and air pollution, through implementation of relevant legislation and through the provision of advice and guidance on best practice.

The Kildare Noise Action Plan (2009) was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations (SI 140 2006). These Regulations give effect in Ireland to EU Directive 2002/49/EC, relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. Environmental noise is defined as unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise emitted by means of transport, road traffic, rail traffic, air traffic, and from sites of industrial activity. The Regulations do not address domestic or neighbourhood noise.

The objectives of the Noise Action Plan are to avoid, prevent and reduce, where necessary, on a prioritised basis, the harmful effects, of long

term exposure to environmental noise. The Plan promotes action on environmental noise through four avenues:

- Noise Reduction at source.
- Land use planning adapted to noise goals.
- Procedures to reduce noise impact.
- Operating restrictions to reduce noise emissions.

It is the policy of the Council:

- N1:** To enforce, where applicable, the provisions of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.
- N2:** To seek to ensure that noise levels do not exceed accepted standards and that new developments incorporate measures to ensure compliance with the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 and any subsequent revision of these Regulations.
- N3:** To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise (other than those activities which require regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency).
- N4:** To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors.

8.14.1 Light

Light pollution can cause problems in a similar way to noise pollution; however the effects can be reduced. External lighting schemes and illuminated signage on commercial and industrial premises, sports grounds, and other developments, should be designed, installed and operated, so as to prevent nuisance to adjoining occupiers and road users, in the interests of amenity and public safety.

It is the policy of the Council:

- LT1:** To seek to minimise the effects of all new external lighting on environmental amenity.

8.15 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- ENO1:** To facilitate the implementation of the County Kildare Waste Management Plan 2005-2010 and any subsequent revisions thereof during the period of this Plan.
- ENO2:** To investigate the possibility of the further provision of recycling facilities in Athy.

- ENO3:** To facilitate the preparation and implementation of the Kildare Noise Action Plan 2009 and Athy Litter Management Plan and any subsequent amendments during the period of the Plan.

- ENO4:** To continue to monitor air quality at selected locations throughout the town in co-operation with the Health Service Executive and the Environmental Protection Agency.

- ENO5:** To continue to monitor watercourses and other sensitive areas of the town's environment with a view to early detection and prevention of pollution.

- ENO6:** To continue to support Community Groups, Resident's Associations and Tidy Town's Committee, in the promotion of Athy as a clean and attractive town.

- ENO7:** To continue to expand environmental awareness initiatives designed to create increased public awareness of waste prevention, minimisation and reuse.



CHAPTER 9

Energy and Communications

9



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To promote energy conservation in Athy through appropriate land use and building standards with an aim to reduce the demand for energy and fossil fuels in particular and to promote and facilitate the development of telecommunications infrastructure.

9.1 BACKGROUND

It is acknowledged that energy efficiency is paramount if Ireland is to assist in mitigating its vulnerability to climate change. The dependence on fossil fuels is likely to be costly and unsustainable environmentally and economically as the world faces the potential depletion of these non renewable energy resources. The combustion of non renewable sources also results in emissions to the atmosphere. It is therefore important that the use and dependence on fossil fuels is reduced.

The development of renewable energy sources is a priority at national and European level for both environmental and energy policy reasons. The Government's primary policy on energy is set out in the Energy White Paper "*Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework (2007-2020)*". It sets out a broad energy policy framework for the long-term development of the energy sector, including power generation, energy efficiency in transport and the built environment. It seeks to make a substantial contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency improvements, changes in fuel mix and the increased use of renewable energy.

The "National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012" also focuses on encouraging renewable energy sources. A more recent document entitled "*The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2009-2020)*" also seeks to improve energy efficiency across a number of sectors to ensure a sustainable energy future.

The importance of a high quality telecommunications infrastructure in the context of national, regional and local development is also recognised.

9.1.1 Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006 (DoEHLG)

These guidelines offer advice to Planning Authorities on planning for wind energy through

the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission. The guidelines require that a development plan must achieve a reasonable balance between responding to overall Government Policy on renewable energy and enabling the wind energy resources of the Planning Authority's area to be harnessed in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

9.1.2 Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines 1996 (DoEHLG)

The aim of these guidelines is to provide relevant technical information in relation to telecommunication installations and to offer general guidance on planning issues so that their environmental impact is minimised and a consistent approach is adopted by Planning Authorities in the preparation of their development plans and in the operation of development control.

9.2 STRATEGY

The strategy seeks to address the issue of climate change, energy efficiency and to promote a quality telecommunications infrastructure in Athy through measures such as:

- Conformity with national policy and continuing to take a positive approach to the development of renewable energy facilities, where appropriate;
- Energy use avoidance or reduction, through better planning and maximum efficiency in land use;
- Recognising that brownfield and underutilised sites represent significant opportunities for redevelopment, particularly where located close to existing or future transport corridors and may offer the opportunities to utilise energy saving technologies;
- Encouragement of the transfer of journeys to more sustainable forms of transport;
- Ensuring that the location of renewable energy structures should minimise and/or mitigate any adverse visual and environmental impacts on the built or natural environment;
- Improvement of energy efficiency of existing building stock, and promotion of energy conservation in the design and development of all new buildings;
- Encouragement of a high quality

telecommunications service and achieving a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic development while sustaining residential amenities and environmental quality.

9.3 ENERGY USE

The most recent comprehensive data available for energy use in Ireland is from “Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland, The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020” published by the Department of Marine, Communications and Natural Resources.

This Government White Paper indicates that energy use is split relatively evenly between the three principal energy users – transport (33%), electricity generation (33%) and heating (34%). Growth in energy demand is forecast to be 2-3% annually to 2020. In 2007, 96% of Ireland’s total energy demand was met by imported fossil fuels, with oil accounting for around 56% of the country’s total primary energy supply.

9.3.1 Policies – Energy Use

It is the policy of the Council:

EN1: To support the regional, national and international initiatives and strategies and to facilitate measures that seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. In this regard, the Council will generally support initiatives taken to provide for more sustainable forms of energy use in an environmentally acceptable manner, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

9.4 RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES

Renewable energy can be defined as energy generated from resources that are unlimited, rapidly replenished or naturally renewable and not from the combustion of fossil fuels. Athy is somewhat limited in its capacity to generate renewable energy e.g. from wind. Therefore the main sources of renewable energy may include, solar energy, biomass, ground source heating systems, hydro power and through the built environment.

Table 9.1: Main Sources of Renewable Energy

Source	Type
Sun	Solar Energy
Wind	Wind Energy
Water	Hydropower, wave and tidal energy
Geothermal	Heat Energy from below the surface of the earth
Biomass	Energy from wood, waste and energy crops

(i) Solar Energy

Solar Energy can provide a suitable source of energy for buildings and reduces demand for electricity supply from the national grid. Three basic techniques are used today to harness solar energy and gain maximum benefit of solar energy in buildings:

- Passive Solar
- Active Solar Heating
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Systems

(ii) Wind Energy

The potential for generation of wind energy in the urban area of Athy is likely to be confined to smaller scale domestic and/or local level wind energy production in conjunction with other renewable energy sources as opposed to large scale wind farm development. In the event of development proposals, the Wind Energy – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2006 (DoEHLG) will be taken into consideration.

(iii) Hydro Power

Hydro Power can also provide a suitable source of energy for buildings and reduces demand for electricity supply from the national grid. It is acknowledged that the possibility of utilising the River Barrow for generation of an electricity supply for the town is unlikely in the short term. However development of hydro power may be achieved in the medium to longer term in the town.

(iv) Ground Source Heating Systems

The provision of ground source heat pumps, also known as geothermal heat pumps is encouraged. These are used for space heating and cooling, as well

as water heating for both residential and commercial developments.

(v) Small-Scale Renewable Energy

The classification of small-scale renewable energy sources are in line with the Planning and Development Regulations (Exempted Development), 2008.

The provision of each of the following for domestic use (subject to certain conditions for industrial, commercial and public buildings) may be exempt from planning permission, subject to certain conditions;

- Stand-alone wind turbines
- Building mounted wind turbines
- Building mounted solar panels
- Stand alone solar panels
- Ground source heat pumps
- Biomass (includes fuel storage tanks/structures)

9.4.1 Policies – Renewable Energy

It is the policy of the Council:

RE1: To promote, support and facilitate the development of renewable energy in Athy, where it is considered appropriate.

RE2: To explore all viable options with regard to utilising renewable energies for all public infrastructure and developments, subject to funding.



9.5 ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS

Research has indicated that CO2 emissions from buildings across the EU could be reduced by 22% through improved energy efficiency. Revisions of Part L of the Building Regulations in 2008 have raised the standards to which buildings are to be designed and constructed with regard to heat loss and CO2 emissions.

The EU Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD) contains a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance in residential and non-residential buildings both new build and existing.

Good design is considered as being the key in achieving optimum energy performance of buildings.

Developers should have regard to the following:

- Site layout and associated bio-climatic/ passive solar design measures;
- Enhanced levels of insulation in walls, floors, glazing and doors;
- Heat recovery systems;
- Use of sunlight;
- Water conservation measures;
- Suitable building materials;
- Efficient provision of domestic hot water;
- Use of low CO2 emitting fuels;
- Energy efficient lighting systems;
- Incorporation of renewable energy systems e.g solar, heat pumps;
- Provision of group or district heating systems



9.5.1 Policies – Energy Efficiency

It is the policy of the Council:

- EE1:** To promote energy conservation and efficiency measures and to facilitate innovative building design that promotes energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources in accordance with national policy and guidelines.
- EE2:** To encourage use of passive solar design principles for residential building(s).
- EE3:** To support and encourage the installation of solar collectors and panels for the production of heat or electricity in residential and commercial buildings, in line with relevant design criteria.
- EE4:** To have regard to and implement where feasible, the recommendations of the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012.

9.6 NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY

Non-renewable energy refers to energy that can be used only once e.g. burning of fossil fuels. Most non-renewable sources of energy produce greenhouse gases when they are used. Non-renewable energy sources include gas, oil, peat etc. It is the general aim of this Plan through related policies and objectives to reduce the dependency on non-renewable energy.

9.6.1 Electricity

Kildare is traversed by the highest voltage lines of the Eirgrid Transmission System and with the benefit of an extensive network comprising 400 kV, 220 kV and 110 kV power lines, the county has the potential to be in a position to meet electricity demands with the minimum of network reinforcement.

The electricity infrastructure of Athy comprises one 110KV Station at Woodstock South with one associated 110KV line. A second 110KV line was delivered by the ESB in 2011. There are currently two 38KV stations on the Stradbally Road and Ballylynan Road serving the town. It is proposed that these stations be decommissioned when the second 110KV line is secured. There is reserve power available in Athy and this is particularly advantageous for industries wishing to locate in the town. This Plan seeks to continue to encourage and facilitate the under-grounding of overhead electricity cables, particularly in the town centre, during the lifetime of this Plan.

9.6.2 Gas

Athy is served by a natural gas supply since 1999. The natural gas is transported to the town via a spur from the Cork to Dublin transmission pipe line. Gas is available throughout the town with transmission terminating at Ardreich Bridge.

9.6.3 Policies – Non Renewable Energy

It is the policy of the Council:

- NR1:** To encourage through coordinated land-use and transport planning, a reduction in the demand for vehicular travel and journey lengths.
- NR2:** To promote the design and construction of buildings so as to limit the amount of energy required for the operation of the buildings and the amount of CO2 emissions associated with this energy use.
- NR3:** To implement a programme to place all existing overhead cables underground throughout the town centre during the lifetime of the plan, subject to available funding.
- NR4:** To support the infrastructural renewal and development of electricity networks in Athy town and environs as appropriate. The development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is recognized as a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment to the area.
- NR5:** To encourage the extension of the existing gas infrastructure network in Athy and its environs in consultation with Natural Gas providers.



9.7 TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

The importance of the telecommunications sector to the local economy is acknowledged. Access to advanced information and communications infrastructure is essential to development and offers a competitive advantage in attracting economic development and inward investment.

The vast growth in the use of the Internet requires infrastructure investment to accommodate this growth.

The planning authority will have regard to the DoEHLG guidelines "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures" (1996), and to such other publications and material as may be relevant in the consideration of planning applications for such structures.

9.7.1 Broadband

The availability of broadband infrastructure enables high speed access to information for industry, public and private sector organisations. It facilitates international e-commerce and is essential for all aspects of business including Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and multinationals.

The provision of a broadband network by a number of private companies has enhanced the potential of Athy for investment and will lead to increased opportunities for further economic development.

9.7.2 Policies - Telecommunications

It is the policy of the Council:

- TE1:** To encourage the development and expansion of communication, information and broadcasting networks, including mobile phone networks, broadband and other digital services.
- TE2:** To encourage owners and operators of telecommunication structures to facilitate the co-location of antennae on existing support structures and masts.
- TE3:** To achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenity and environmental quality.
- TE4:** To ensure that the location of telecommunications structures minimises and/or mitigates any

adverse impacts on communities and the built or natural environment.

- TE5:** To preserve significant views from the visual intrusion of large scale telecommunications infrastructure.
- TE6:** To ensure that new telecommunications infrastructure are adequately screened, integrated and/or landscaped so as to minimise any adverse visual impacts on the environment.
- TE7:** To promote and encourage the delivery of a high capacity ICT infrastructure, broadband network, cable and broadcasting technologies throughout Athy and to facilitate access to these services by all sectors of the community by developing initiatives through the public library service.
- TE8:** To support national policy for the provision of new and innovative telecommunications infrastructure, including a fibre optic broadband network and to recognise that the development of such infrastructure is a key component of future economic prosperity of Athy.

9.8 ENERGY AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

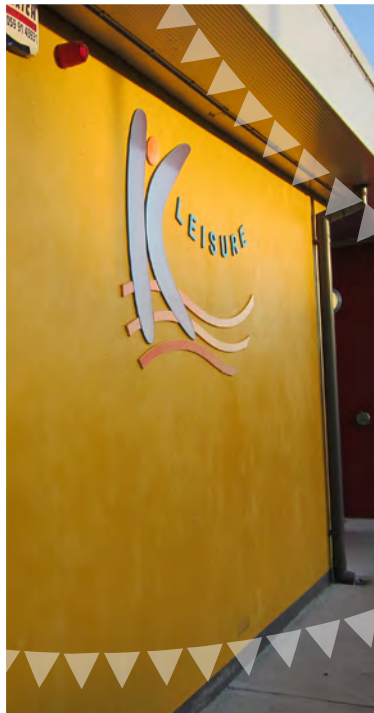
- EC1:** To support the modernisation and development of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure to support the economic development of Athy.
- EC2:** To implement on a phased basis a programme of placing all existing and proposed overhead cables underground throughout the town centre and to seek DoECLG financial support to undertake such works. Future capacity should be taken into account and appropriate ducting should also be put in place when the cables are placed underground.
- EC3:** To support the implementation of the National Broadband Scheme insofar as it relates to Athy and to co-operate with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in any future additions to the scheme.



CHAPTER 10

Social, Community and Cultural Development

10



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To ensure that Athy is an attractive place to live and work by building strong inclusive communities that have a sense of place and belonging, with the provision of accessible social and community facilities.

10.1 BACKGROUND

Building strong, inclusive communities is a key element in achieving sustainable development objectives. In this regard, the Council will facilitate the delivery of social, community and cultural infrastructure to meet the needs of the existing and future population. Access to education, health and community support services, amenities, leisure services and a good quality built environment is a prerequisite for the creation of sustainable communities.

Social Inclusion is a key objective at national and local level. It refers to the way in which all persons in a community are integrated in an equal manner by reducing barriers to participation e.g. discrimination and or physical barriers such as accessibility. In order to combat social exclusion, actions must be taken at both national and local level to focus on the most disadvantaged areas ensuring that those at risk of social exclusion have the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and enjoy a standard of living and well being that is considered normal in today's society.

At a national level Towards 2016 proposes a 'lifecycle' approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion. The targets and interventions through which agreements are to be achieved are outlined in "The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016". Under Strand II of the RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) for provincial towns, Athy was designated as a RAPID town. RAPID aims at eliminating poverty and enhancing social inclusion by promoting equality of opportunity and participation.

The RAPID programme has aided the opening of a number of facilities including the swimming pool and leisure centre, the boxing club, the Community College, the Youth Café and the Woodstock Soccer Club in the town. Reference has been made in the preparation of this plan to various national strategies

including the National Development Plan 2007-2013; National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016; The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, 2008; Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001; Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines, 2009.

10.2 STRATEGY

The promotion of social inclusion, cultural development and the provision of community facilities through the planning process will be facilitated in accordance with the following provisions:

- Ensure sufficient and appropriately zoned land is identified to meet community infrastructure requirements over the period of this Plan.
- Promote the retention and enhancement of existing community services.
- Require the provision of services and facilities in tandem with housing developments (e.g. shops, businesses, schools, childcare, and community centres)
- Require the provision of neighbourhood centres and community facilities within
- Walking distance of and concurrent with new residential development, and promote the use of shared facilities.
- Use the Council's Development Contribution Scheme to provide benefits to the community; including the provision of open space, recreational facilities and community facilities.
- Facilitate the provision of access and facilities for people with disabilities and the integration of ethnic-minority groups in the town.
- Promote the development and access to public transport and safe pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Ensure that relevant development proposals incorporate access to facilities for people with disabilities such as level access to buildings, dished kerbs, appropriate parking spaces and accessible toilet facilities.

10.3 COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The provision of community services and facilities creates an environment in which members of the community can interact. Essential for health, well-being and social development, the provision of community, leisure and cultural facilities and a good quality environment ensure places are attractive residential environments.

Throughout the last 10 to 15 years, residential and economic development has facilitated the provision of a range of community and recreational facilities in the town. The recently opened sports and leisure campus at Greenhills on the Stradbally Road provides an important facility for the community. Furthermore Athy Library and the recently opened Youth Café on Meeting Lane, along with numerous sporting clubs in the town including the G.A.A, rugby, tennis, boxing, soccer, gymnastics, etc are recognised as significant social assets for the town. Athy Fire Station is located on the Stradbally Road, responding to fire, road traffic accidents, flooding, and other incidents in the town and surrounding areas. The Heritage Centre on Emily Square and the recently developed Community Arts Centre on Woodstock Street host regular exhibitions and cultural events.

This Development Plan recognises the importance of ensuring the level of community, recreational and cultural facilities are adequate to serve the needs and expectations of the local community.

The County Development Board Strategy Kildare 2012- Social, Economic and Cultural Development of Kildare sets out the policy mechanism for the co-ordination of local delivery of community infrastructure and services. The Council will seek the provision of and access to services and facilities to meet the needs of the town's growing population over the period of this Plan.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CF1:** To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to cater for the social and community needs of the town.
- CF2:** To actively promote the provision of community, educational, social and recreational facilities in tandem with future housing development. In certain large mixed use schemes the frontloading of such infrastructure may be required prior

to the commencement of development. In this regard, applicants will be required to submit a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) for the following; residential schemes on zoned land which are greater than 50 units, or where deemed necessary by the planning authority. The suitability and scale of proposed developments will be assessed against the level of social infrastructure in the town. The planning authority will seek to ensure that unsustainable levels of population growth do not take place in the absence of adequate levels of social infrastructure.

- CF3:** To carry out a review of the SIA process to assist in the implementation of policy CF 2 above in conjunction with Kildare County Council.
- CF4:** To encourage the shared use of educational and community facilities for community and non-school purposes where possible so as to maximise the sustainable use of such infrastructure and promote community cohesion.
- CF5:** To assess the suitable provision of nursing homes, crèches and other commercially run community facilities and amenities at appropriate locations in the town.
- CF6:** To facilitate the provision of social, community and cultural services along safe walking routes and within a walking distance of communities, through prudent and inclusive planning.
- CF7:** To ensure that future social, community and cultural facilities are adequate and of a standard to meet the needs of the communities they serve and that they are physically and spatially integrated into the local area. Such facilities need to be provided in tandem with the phasing of new residential development.
- CF8:** To work with Kildare Leader Partnership to develop Social and Community Projects within the town.

10.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 recognises the distinct groups in society and the needs of each in achieving social inclusion, tackling poverty and access to quality services.

The Council recognises the direct impact of planning on the well-being of individuals and communities, and in particular the potential for good planning to promote social inclusion. The RAPID programme in Athy aims to coordinate and improve services aimed at RAPID target groups through strategic and joint planning, targeting of existing and additional investment and community participation.

It is the policy of the Council:

- SC1:** To promote equality of access to services and facilities and assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.
- SC2:** To work with the Athy RAPID Area Implementation Team to co-ordinate and improve services aimed at the RAPID target groups.
- SC3:** To support and encourage the establishment of consultative structures, particularly those associated with the County Development Board, which enhance and enable communities to engage in policy making.
- SC4:** To ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community.
- SC5:** To support and encourage communities in the restoration and rehabilitation of community halls / centres, thereby facilitating a greater level of social and community inclusion. Assistance in the form of funding will be subject to budget allocations.
- SC6:** To support and facilitate the improvement of public service infrastructure and facilities in the town, in particular health centres and local clinics, Garda Station and installations.

10.5 GROUPS WITH SPECIFIC DESIGN / PLANNING NEEDS

There are a number of groups in society with specific design and planning needs including young people, children, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and the traveller community. In tandem with good urban design practices, this Plan will encourage and facilitate appropriately designed public spaces, public buildings, social needs housing and accessibility for all, through its policy formation. In particular, the Council recognises the importance of planning for the needs of the following groups:



10.5.1 Young People and Children

The 2006 Census indicates that Athy town has a comparatively youthful population with c.24% under 15 years of age, compared with 20.4% at a national level. This compares equally with the County level which has 23.7% of the population under 15 years of age. Over 15% of the towns families are classified as being 'pre-school families' (Parents with children under 4 years). These factors have a bearing on the present and future need for facilities such as childcare, play areas for children, sports facilities, schools and safe walking and cycling routes in the town.

The 2008 CSO (Central Statistics Office) report Regional Population Projections 2011-2026 projects a nationwide increase of 28.8% in the population aged under fourteen years between 2006 and 2026. In the Mid-East region this increase is expected to be even larger, at 53.3%. Thus the provision of youth facilities will be a priority in future planning for Athy. The Council recognises the importance of the provision of play areas for children as part of the development of communities. All play areas should be located where they can be overlooked by

dwellings but will not cause unreasonable nuisance problems for residents. Play areas shall be designed specifically for children's play and include play equipment and safety surfacing which conforms to relevant safety standards.

Play can also be provided for in a less formal way. Children use their whole environment to play and it is possible through careful design and landscaping to provide play features that would not have the insurance, supervision, security or maintenance implications of traditional play areas. It is the intention of the Council to encourage the development of built environments, where living predominates over traffic to facilitate this.

There is also a need to recognise the recreational needs of teenagers and young adults. Depending on the age profile of an area, there are a number of facilities including multi-purpose play areas which would typically provide a hard surfaced area allowing for basketball and other hard court sports, skate parks, youth clubs and internet cafes. The Council recognises the importance of planning for the needs of this group.

Regardless of the form of play provision, planning applications will be required to contain full details of design, management and maintenance for all play provision. The Council will endeavour to ensure that such facilities are inclusive and accessible to relevant age groups.



It is the policy of the Council:

YPC1: To consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities (refer to Chapter 11 for additional policies on recreation and amenity).

YPC2: To support and encourage the establishment of facilities for young people at appropriate locations within the town.

10.5.2 People with Disabilities

People with disabilities and the mobility impaired face particular physical barriers to access and movement. For people with mobility impairments, ensuring level / ramped access to buildings, dished kerbs and the provision of appropriate parking and toilet facilities are important. For people with visual impairments, tactile paving that can be felt underfoot and audible signals at pedestrian crossings are necessary.

The NES (National Economic and Social Council) report Well-Being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland (2009) indicates that nationally less than one-third of people with disabilities can enter non-residential buildings built in the last ten years and only 12% feel that Part M of the Building Regulations are being enforced. Furthermore, the report found that people with disabilities are likely to achieve a lower level of education and have a lower participation in the work force than most other western European countries.

The focus therefore should be on the integration of accommodation within a mix of housing types, providing mobility and access for people with disabilities in order to remove barriers to involvement in community and employment activities. Specific planning and design policies will be implemented including the provision of:

- Dwellings located close to community services and public transport;
- Housing units designed to accommodate a live-in carer if required;
- Accommodation for those with disabilities within mixed residential developments;
- Pavements, pedestrian crossings and street layouts designed for the mobility impaired.

Athy Town Council has made significant progress in access and equality of opportunity in a wide variety

of areas including staff training, provision of assistive technologies, specialist design of public counters, adaptive work to Council houses, footpath and traffic signal improvements, and accessible signage for people with visual impairments and works to community facilities.

Athy Town Council will continue to enforce the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations for all new buildings and refurbishment projects where public access is required.

It is the policy of the Council:

- PD1:** To ensure that all buildings, public open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of 'Building for Everyone' (National Disability Authority) and 'Access for the Disabled' (No. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board).
- PD2:** To ensure that parking spaces provided for people with disabilities are appropriately indicated and are located in a manner which has regard to dismounting, safety of drivers and passengers.
- PD3:** To ensure that all footpaths and public areas are accessible and safe for people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility by way of dishing of footpaths, location of crossings etc.
- PD4:** To provide for the needs of people with visual difficulties in the design of pedestrian facilities, by assessing the options available and choosing the most appropriate design to implement on a case by case basis.

10.5.3 Older People

In the Census of 2006 11% of the state's population was recorded as being over 65 years of age. Athy town has higher concentrations of older persons living in the town, with c.15% of the urban population being aged 65 years or older compared to 6.7% for the County. The CSO report Regional Population Projections 2011-2026 (2008) projects a nationwide doubling in numbers of older persons (65 years and over) between 2006-2011, with the most marked increases likely to occur in the Mid-East Region at 164%.

There is widespread recognition of the need to plan and design for housing, community and care facilities for the elderly. The NESC report Well-Being

Matters: A Social Report for Ireland (2009) points to a number of ways whereby the quality of life of older people can be improved through planning and the built environment. These measures include:

- Availability of a mix of dwelling types (integrated housing and care services) of good design across all tenures;
- Preparation of Housing Action Plans to address special needs and specifically the role of the voluntary and co-operative housing sector;
- Inter-agency co-operation to cater for care needs in accommodation;
- Services to provide enhanced home security and energy conservation, including improved heating systems and insulation; and
- Further development of the rural transport initiative (RTI) to support community based living.

The 'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (February 2009) set standards for the provision of care facilities for the elderly. These standards provide a baseline for those with the responsibility for providing nursing home facilities and include specific standards for the design and layout of the internal and external environment of care facilities. Athy Town Council recognises these guidelines as important for setting the standards for the provision of Nursing Home facilities in the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- OP1:** To facilitate the provision of continuing care facilities for the elderly, such as: own homes (designed to meet the needs of elderly people), sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units (e.g. dementia specific units) at appropriate locations in the town.
- OP2:** To cater for the diversity of older people's needs by promoting adaptability and flexibility in the design of homes, and the promotion of appropriately located commercial and community facilities in the town.
- OP3:** To site residential care facilities for the elderly in accordance with the following:
 - I.** Facilities should be located close to community and social facilities required by occupants (e.g. shops, post office,

community centres, etc) thereby ensuring that older people can remain part of existing communities.

- II. Facilities should be easily accessible for residents, employees, visitors and service providers. A mobility strategy should be provided detailing connections to local/ social infrastructure facilities, amenities and public transport services for residents, employees and visitors.
 - III. Located within an environment that is suitable for their stated purpose, integrating within the wider community while providing a safe environment for residents.
 - IV. Located in an area which can benefit from the creation of strong links between the care for the elderly facilities and the local community including activities linked to other community groups.
- OP4:** To require the design and layout of residential care facilities for the elderly to comply with all relevant standards set out in the 'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (February 2009) or the relevant standards for any subsequent national guidelines. Relevant standards are contained within Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.
- OP5:** To support the provision of social and physical infrastructure to encourage the development of Athy as an Age Friendly Town.

10.5.4 Traveller Community

The Traveller's Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 adopted by Kildare County Council in February 2009 assessed the needs for traveller accommodation in the county. It states that a group housing scheme was completed in Ardrew in 2009. No further measures were outlined for Traveller Specific Accommodation in Athy however should a requirement for further provision arise; a provision can be made in the plan. The continuing implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme will address the provision of accommodation appropriate to the particular needs of Travellers.

The promotion of mainstream public services that

are accessible, relevant and welcoming to Travellers is vital as well as ensuring that members of the Travelling Community can easily access facilities such as shops, schools, childcare and community facilities.

It is the policy of the Council:

TC1: To explore the feasibility of designating lands for the provision of an equine based facility.

TC2: To support the Athy horse project in association with Kildare Traveller Inter-agency Strategy.

10.5.5 Ethnic Minority Groups

Compared with County Kildare, Athy town has a relatively culturally diverse population. The Census of 2006 records that over 87 % of the town's population are nationals, with the remaining 13% being non-nationals. Over 7% of the town's population are non-Irish EU nationals, with 3% being African nationals. Service provision and community facilities within the town should reflect the varying needs of the town's cultural mix.

10.6 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT / COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Council recognises the important role played by local development / community groups in the overall development of the town and will continue to support these groups in the development of facilities through the reservation of suitable land and the provision of funding where available and appropriate.

The County Development Board, which is representative of the major statutory and voluntary / community sectors, is the main driver of integrated service delivery at local level and promotes partnership and collaboration across the county. The Council will continue to support and facilitate the County Development Board in its key objectives of strengthening the town's community sector and developing a long-term strategy of social investment at community level.

This development plan also recognises the important role of the RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) in the overall development of the town. The Council will continue to co-operate with the County Development Board to support and encourage the progression of the RAPID Programme in Athy.

It is the policy of the Council:

- LDG1:** To continue to co-operate with statutory bodies, in particular the County Development Board, Enterprise Ireland and other agencies including the voluntary sector, residents, business and environment groups to counter disadvantage and social exclusion, to secure improvements in the quality of community facilities and to promote equality of access to public and social services for all members of the community.
- LDG2:** To work with the Athy RAPID Area Implementation Team to co-ordinate and improve services aimed at the RAPID target groups.
- LDG3:** To promote social inclusion, improved facilities and encourage greater integration of marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, in community-based initiatives.



10.7 ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

The Heritage Centre on Emily Square hosts regular exhibitions and cultural events. A new Community Arts Facility has also been developed within the existing Methodist Church on Woodstock Street. A number of cultural events are held in the town throughout the year, these include the Water Festival, Blue Grass Festival, Medieval Festival, Kildare County Show, the Ernest Shackleton Autumn School and the Tri-Athy.

Making Inroads: An Arts Development Plan for Kildare County Council 2006-2011 outlines a framework for arts development in the county. The plan recognises how many parts of the county remain rural and isolated.

The plan is interactive, flexible and responsive to the citizens of County Kildare. Strategic objectives for the delivery of key developments are set out. Athy Town Council regards the partnership approach set out in 'Making Inroads', as fundamental for sustainable arts development in the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- AC1:** To continue to develop and improve the physical infrastructure of cultural facilities in the town.
- AC2:** To ensure that all arts and cultural facilities in the ownership and management of the Council are accessible to the wider community and to promote the role of these facilities as focal points for the community.
- AC3:** To continue to support an Arts and Cultural Programme for Athy Community Library.
- AC4:** To support the town's existing Heritage Centre/Tourist Office by the promotion of further heritage services within the town.
- AC5:** To assist the development of the Arts Service within the town and to support the town's cultural infrastructure.
- AC6:** To recognise and support the continued use of the Youth Café (in the Quaker Meeting House) and the Arts Centre (in the Methodist Church) in providing social, community and cultural services within the town.
- AC7:** To facilitate the development of a cinema at an appropriate location within the Town Centre area of Athy.

10.8 LIBRARY SERVICES

The Council Library Service leads and supports a wide range of activities and programmes including public libraries, arts services, local studies, genealogy, archives, services to primary schools, a mobile library and a Quaker museum. The design and provision of the county's library service is set out in Ideas Matter – Library Service Development Plan 2006 - 2011.

The plan is underpinned by two key themes, cultural inclusion and co-operative networking, in order to make cultural experiences and opportunities available to the citizens of County Kildare, including Athy. Athy Library, located on Emily Square in the centre of the town, provides a wide range of services to the community. The library includes an Adult Lending Room, Children's Lending Room, Adult Reference Room, Exhibition facilities public internet access, and a Community Information service. In 2010, the library launched a dedicated Minihan Gallery and Reading room recognising photographer John Minihan's contribution to the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- LR1:** To provide and improve access to library services and provide an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts, archives and local studies services.
- LR2:** To continue to improve access for the disabled in the existing library accommodation/Heritage Centre/Tourist Office.

10.9 SCHOOL FACILITIES

The role of the Town Development Plan in education is in providing appropriate zoning of lands for educational use. Athy Town Council also works closely with the Department of Education and Science and the VEC in relation to educational provision in Athy. The construction of an 8 classroom and 24 classroom primary schools on the Monasterevin Road has recently been completed, along with a 400 pupil post primary school constructed by the VEC on the adjoining site.

The Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) highlight the importance of schools and their provision in tandem with residential development. The Department of Skills and Education is responsible for the delivery

of educational facilities and services. The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, a Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, published jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (July, 2008), sets out the best practice approach that should be followed in facilitating the timely and cost effective roll out of school facilities.

Athy Town Council recognises the policies and objectives set out in these guidelines as being of central importance in the provision of school facilities in the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- ED1:** To facilitate the provision of new education and other community facilities, and appropriate extensions to such facilities, within the town through the reservation / zoning of land for such uses.
- ED2:** To continue to facilitate the provision of dedicated facilities for adult and community education in recognition of the growing demand for life long learning opportunities and the perceived shortage of such facilities at present.
- ED3:** To ensure that new or additional educational facilities are designed and located and have adequate management arrangements in place so as to enable the greatest possible use by the wider community.

10.10 CHILDCARE FACILITIES

The provision of childcare facilities, in its various forms, is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate more fully in society.

Many parents/guardians prefer to avail of a childminder rather than a crèche facility. Small childminding operations for six children or less are normally exempt from requiring planning permission.

Athy Town Council is working with Kildare Childcare Committee to improve the quality, provision and affordability of childcare in the town. Kildare County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan 2007-2010 sets out key objectives with the aim of delivering quality childcare and educational services centred on the needs of the child. This strategy outlines the future childcare needs and requirements for Athy.



The Council will have regard to the criteria specified in the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities published by the DoEHLG, (2001) regarding the provision of such facilities, together with the requirements of Chapter 15, Development Management Standards, in this Plan. The provision of childcare facilities will be encouraged at the following locations:

- Business Parks and major employment centres;
- Neighbourhood and district retail centres;
- Large scale retail developments;
- In, or in the vicinity of, schools and major educational facilities;
- In, or adjacent to, community centres and facilities;
- Adjacent to public transport nodes; and
- Within new and existing residential developments.

It is the policy of the Council:

- CF1:** To ensure the provision of childcare facilities in accordance with the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG) and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996 and 1997, 'Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy' (2004) and any other relevant statutory guidelines which may issue during the period of this Plan.
- CF2:** To facilitate and encourage the provision of childcare facilities, including community crèche facilities, of an appropriate type and scale, at appropriate locations in the town.
- CF 3:** To assess, in conjunction with the Kildare County Childcare Committee, the continuing

needs around childcare and related facilities and review progress on provision during the mid term review of this Plan.

- CF4:** To promote and encourage the provision of a network of childcare facilities that reflects the distribution of the residential population in the town in order to minimise travel distances and maximise opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

10.11 HEALTH SERVICES

Provision of public health care services for Athy town is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE is seeking to rebalance its approach with a shift from secondary care to primary care provision. The primary care model has a stronger emphasis on working with communities and individuals to improve their health and well-being. Building on the National Health Strategy Quality and Fairness- A Health System for You, the primary care model aims to ensure everyone has ready access to a broad spectrum of care services through a local primary care team.

Primary care centres will be facilitated on suitably zoned lands and in close proximity to new and existing residential areas to allow communities access to multidisciplinary health care in easily accessible locations.

In new development areas, medical practices should be provided for at the planning and design stage, either within the town, local / neighbourhood centre or within housing areas, preferably in purpose built premises. The locations of these facilities should have minimal impact on residential amenity.

Location of medical practices within housing areas is generally only appropriate for smaller-scale practices (excluding, veterinary practices). In such cases, the locations should have minimal impact on residential amenity, adequate parking provision and located on a main road, or on a public transport route.

It is the policy of the Council:

- HS1:** To support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations in the town.
- HS2:** To facilitate the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.
- HS3:** To support the provision of 'one stop' primary care medical centres and GP practices particularly along public transport routes and at locations easily accessible to members of the wider community.

10.12 BURIAL GROUNDS

The Council has responsibility in the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. St Michael's Cemetery is adequate to meet the current needs of the town. However it is an objective of this Plan that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with the future needs of the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- BG1:** To protect the cultural heritage of the town's burial grounds and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles.
- BG2:** To provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds at appropriate locations in the town.

10.13 SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Kildare has hosted numerous annual social, community and cultural events, such as outdoor concerts and annual festivals in a number of locations throughout the county. Athy has hosted a number of these events, most notably the National Ploughing Championships in 1931 (first championships), 1985, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

The Council will continue to support such events in accordance with planning regulations and health and safety requirements. The locations for these events will take into account the needs of local residents including noise levels, traffic management and car parking arrangements, security, liaison with Gardaí, health and safety issues and litter prevention.

10.14 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- SCO1:** To assess the suitability and demand for care facilities for the elderly and to facilitate the use of appropriate site(s) within the town for such uses.
- SCO2:** To develop a partnership approach in funding and developing play opportunities in the town, in accordance with any forthcoming Council's Play Policy.
- SCO3:** To improve library provision and services subject to the availability of resources and finance.
- SCO4:** To improve fire service provision, subject to the availability of resources and finance.
- SCO5:** To provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds by reservation of land at suitable locations and provision of local authority burial grounds, where feasible.
- SCO6:** To actively pursue the location of a third-level outreach facility in Athy so as to improve access to further education and provide a greater range of opportunities for members of the community. A possible location for this facility would be in Rathstewart adjacent to the Community College.
- SCO7:** To continue to enforce the By-laws in association with Kildare County Council relating to the control of horses in public places.

CHAPTER 11

Recreation and Amenity

11



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To ensure the retention, provision and maintenance of accessible recreational and amenity facilities including parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the growing population of Athy.

11.1 BACKGROUND

It is recognised that quality recreation and leisure facilities contribute to the quality of life for all that it serves. The provision of amenities which can cater for the demands of an increasing population and which can be accessible for all sectors and age groups is a central element in the delivery of sustainable communities. The Council recognises the important role that areas of amenity and green linkages play in creating quality and healthy environments for all and will seek to promote a balance between the protection of environmental assets and the facilitation of recreational use.

11.2 STRATEGY

It is proposed to strengthen communities through the provision of attractive recreation and amenity areas that meet the needs of the population of Athy. The Council seeks to protect the existing open space and amenity areas of the town area by retaining them under their current zonings. It is proposed to support the development of an Open Space and Green Network through the provision of increased linkages from adjoining land-uses. The Council will have regard to strategies and guidelines including the National Development Plan 2007-2013, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (DoEHLG 2009) and the Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide (DoEHLG 2008).

11.3 RECREATION

Quality recreation, leisure and amenity facilities have a fundamental impact on the quality of life in a town and on its social integration and cohesiveness. Athy is relatively well served with a variety of clubs and organisations operating within the town and these provide a wide-range of active and passive recreational facilities. Some of these facilities include Athy Golf Club, Athy Gaelic Football Club, Hockey Club, Hurling Club, various Soccer Clubs, Rowing Club, Boxing Club, Tennis Club and Swimming Pool. Other important clubs in the town include the Drama and Musical Society, Athy Art Group, Irish Dancing Class, the South Kildare Beekeepers and the

Youth Café. Athy also has an extensive amount of public open space with the People's Park in the east of the town, the town council owned land to the north of the town centre where the new swimming pool now operates and the area of land along the banks of the river and canal.

While Athy has a lot to offer in terms of recreational amenities, anti-social behaviour has proved problematic over the years, therefore requiring the provision of palisade fencing around various recreational areas as a means to preventing and minimising such behaviour.

It is the policy of the Council:

- R1:** To encourage the provision, improvement and expansion of more varied recreational and sporting facilities to serve the needs of the town.
- R2:** To encourage recreational and amenity facilities to be multi-functional and not used exclusively by any one group.
- R3:** To encourage and promote the provision of pedestrian, cycle routes and networks linking parks and open spaces to residential developments so as to facilitate recreation and amenity activity, where feasible.
- R4:** To safeguard existing leisure, recreational facilities in Athy town and encourage the provision of new facilities for community use in new areas, or in areas where an identified shortage of such facilities exist.
- R5:** To facilitate the provision of sports and community facilities on Council owned land north of the Town Centre in a co-ordinated manner ensuring accessibility and usability by all members of the community.
- R6:** To seek to develop in conjunction with Kildare County Council, a county play and recreational and amenity strategy.
- R7:** To support Kildare Sports Partnership and encourage participation in sport and recreation in Athy through strategic placement, planning, refurbishment and management of new and existing facilities.
- R8:** To promote active amenity sports along the River Barrow and the Canal.
- R9:** A study will be carried out to explore the feasibility of developing a marina within the town area. This study will examine the need for the marina in light of a "do nothing"

context, a range of sizes, locations and adjoining uses. Any development proposed in light of this study will be subject to EIA and Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

11.4 AMENITY

High quality accessible parks and open spaces and greenways provide health benefits for all including space for children to play, a meeting place for people and communities and can provide for the development of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes.

The Grand Canal and the River Barrow provide for attractive walking routes and amenity areas for passive recreation as well as boating and fishing opportunities within the town. There is a great potential for waterways tourism in Athy where the Grand Canal and the Barrow meet. The development of a Marina would encourage greater usage of the Canal and River by boat users and promote Athy's waterways for recreational use.



There are a series of walkways along Athy's Waterways that enhance the amenity value of the area. These walking routes are denoted on Map 11.1 Open Space and Green Routes.

A project was recently undertaken in conjunction with Bord Failte Ireland to promote the heritage

trails within Athy. Three routes were identified and directional signposts, orientation signs, plaques and panels were erected highlighting all aspects of the town's heritage (Refer Map 11.2). Further to these routes, Sli na Sláinte which stands for 'paths to health' have a designated walking route also in Athy. The route comprises a 2.6km ring which begins at the Courthouse adjoining the River Barrow.

With the increased focus on the town's waterways, opportunities exist to improve the quality of the open spaces along the banks of the Canal and the River Barrow to develop the amenities provided by the town's unique location specifically adjoining the Canal at Flinters Field in the north east of the town and the area west and south of Emily Square.

It is the policy of the Council:

- A1:** To continue the development of riverside and canal side walking routes with the creation of a linear park along the River Barrow and canal in conjunction with the relevant statutory bodies.
- A2:** To continue the amenity development of the People's Park and to retain its enclosed urban park character.
- A3:** To maintain and develop the amenity potential of the canal for recreation.
- A4:** To ensure that any future development along the Canal and the River provides walking routes and does not disproportionately affect their amenity value.
- A5:** To promote an increased awareness of Athy walking routes and heritage trails as attractive and unique recreational and educational amenities.
- A6:** To protect and improve all existing rights-of-way and to create further rights-of-way where necessary and appropriate.
- A7:** To facilitate, where practicable, the provision of cycle-ways or walkways along the extent of the canal, in co-operation with landowners, Waterways Ireland and government departments. Any proposed cycling or walking routes along the Grand Canal and River Barrow will be subject to a feasibility study and Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.
- A8:** To support the conservation and development of local angling waters

and associated infrastructure required to advance the sport in the town. Any proposed restocking will be carried out in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and in co-operation with Inland Fisheries Ireland. Any proposed works, including infrastructural works will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.”

- A9:** To encourage and support the development of water safety awareness initiatives in association with Kildare Water Safety.

11.5 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Open spaces are a vital part of the urban environment. Open space amenities create benefits not only for the enhancement of the quality of life of residential areas but also provide opportunities for recreational activities, ecological and environmental preservation as well as education. The Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of a number of open spaces and amenity areas in Athy.

The planning process plays a vital role in ensuring that existing parks and open spaces are protected and enhanced. In addition it is key to the provision of appropriate, high quality additional parks and open spaces to cater for increased demand as new residential areas are developed and the population increases.

Athy contains a range of sizes and types of open spaces which are accessible to the public. The land use zoning map 16.1 outlines the areas for Open Space and Amenity in the town. These areas include lands which are in public and private ownership and consist of a variety of sports clubs, the People’s Park and the open space area north of Barrack Lane. These areas in are in addition to approximately 57ha of land zoned for open space and amenity purposes throughout Athy.

An Open Space Strategy was completed for County Kildare in 2010. The strategy identified a hierarchy of open space for the county, provided an audit of open space based on this hierarchy and assessed current and future open space needs within the county. The strategy noted that there is an adequate diversity of public open space throughout Athy including one neighbourhood park, two local parks and small areas of amenity green-space throughout the residential areas of

the town. The recommendations arising from the strategy have been taken into consideration in the policies and objectives outlined below. The open space area to the north of the town centre is largely undeveloped therefore it is proposed to intensify the usage of this open space area with the intention of developing a town park and providing a range of sports and community facilities in a coordinated manner. The provision of such facilities will benefit both schools and residential areas located to the north of the town which will maximise the usage of such facilities. The provision of a new footbridge across the Barrow at this point will further increase accessibility to these services. A landscape management plan for this area will seek to enhance the amenity value of this open space.

11.5.1 Strategic Provision of Open Spaces

The Council seeks to establish a hierarchy of open space for various categories of the population and provide a situation whereby every resident in the town lives within a comfortable walking distance, e.g. 10 minutes of a range of open space types such as formal parks and children’s play areas.

The Department of the Environment ‘A Park’s Policy for Local Authorities’ (DoE 1987) recommends that amenity areas be provided in a ‘Hierarchy of Parks’ based on population units of 10,000. This policy recommends a neighbourhood park of about 16 ha or 40 acres and two local parks within a specified distance of the population to be served.

The Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (DoEHLG 2009) recognize that assessing open space on a population basis can be difficult due, inter alia, to the unpredictability of occupancy rates. Town centre development will be unable to achieve the same public open space provision as suburban sites.

These factors will be taken into account when planning open space provision. Large areas of open space should be located adjacent to existing or proposed neighbourhood centres, community facilities and educational campuses in order to facilitate multi-purpose use, to meet a variety of needs and thus be able to fulfill a range of functions.

The development of a Green Network for the town is important in developing a hierarchy of open space areas. Green Networks function as long distance walking and cycling routes as well as ecological corridors. This Plan seeks to create greater linkages

between the existing and future green infrastructure generally in accordance with Map 11.1 Open Space and Green Network.



It is the policy of the Council:

- OS1:** To develop and facilitate the provision of public open space generally in accordance with "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoEHLG, 2009) and with the 'Kildare Open Space Strategy'
- OS2:** To facilitate and encourage a series of high quality open spaces throughout the town, preferably as part of a larger linked network that is available to all ages and accessible to everyone, including people with mobility impairments.
- OS3:** To retain open space lands with established recreational uses.
- OS4:** To preserve, manage and maintain to a high standard the existing parks and open spaces in the town.
- OS5:** To encourage the provision of open space for both passive and active recreation to serve the needs of the town's existing and future population concurrent with new residential development.
- OS6:** To protect lands zoned Open Space and Amenity from inappropriate development, to provide for public access for recreational purposes, and to facilitate nature conservation in these areas.

11.5.2 Allotments

An emerging new form of land-use has been the development of allotments. Allotment gardens allow a number of people to cultivate their own vegetables in individual plots/land parcels on lands owned by another individual or body. The size of a plot/parcel ranges between 200-400sqm and often the plots include a shed for tools and shelter.

The gardeners are usually organised in an allotment association which leases the land from the owner which may be a public/private entity. Allotments can have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper local and sustainable source of food.

It is the policy of the council:

- AL1:** To encourage and facilitate the development of allotments of an appropriate scale which meet the following criteria;
- (i) The lands are appropriately situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of the town;
 - (ii) The lands are easily accessible to the residents of the town; and
 - (iii) Adequate water supply and adequate bicycle and car parking facilities can be provided.

11.6 RECREATION AND AMENITY OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- RAO1:** To support the development of a quality open space area to include the provision of sports and community facilities on Town Council owned land north of Barrack Lane (Refer to Map 11.1)
- RAO2:** To carry out a landscape management plan for the open space area to the north of Barrack Lane containing a detailed planting, landscaping and maintenance programme for the area. This landscape plan should address issues such as:
- The need for attenuation ponds
 - Street furniture including lighting, seats and bins
 - Pedestrian and Cycle facilities
 - New planting and management facilities

RAO3: To facilitate the provision of secure bicycle locking facilities at the People's Park.

RAO4: To investigate developing Lord's Island as a Wildlife amenity area open to all members of the community.

RAO5: To support the development of a linear walkway along the banks of the Canal and River Barrow. Any proposed cycling or walking routes along the Grand Canal and River Barrow will be subject to a feasibility study and Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

RAO6: To undertake a feasibility study to determine the most appropriate location for a skateboard park.

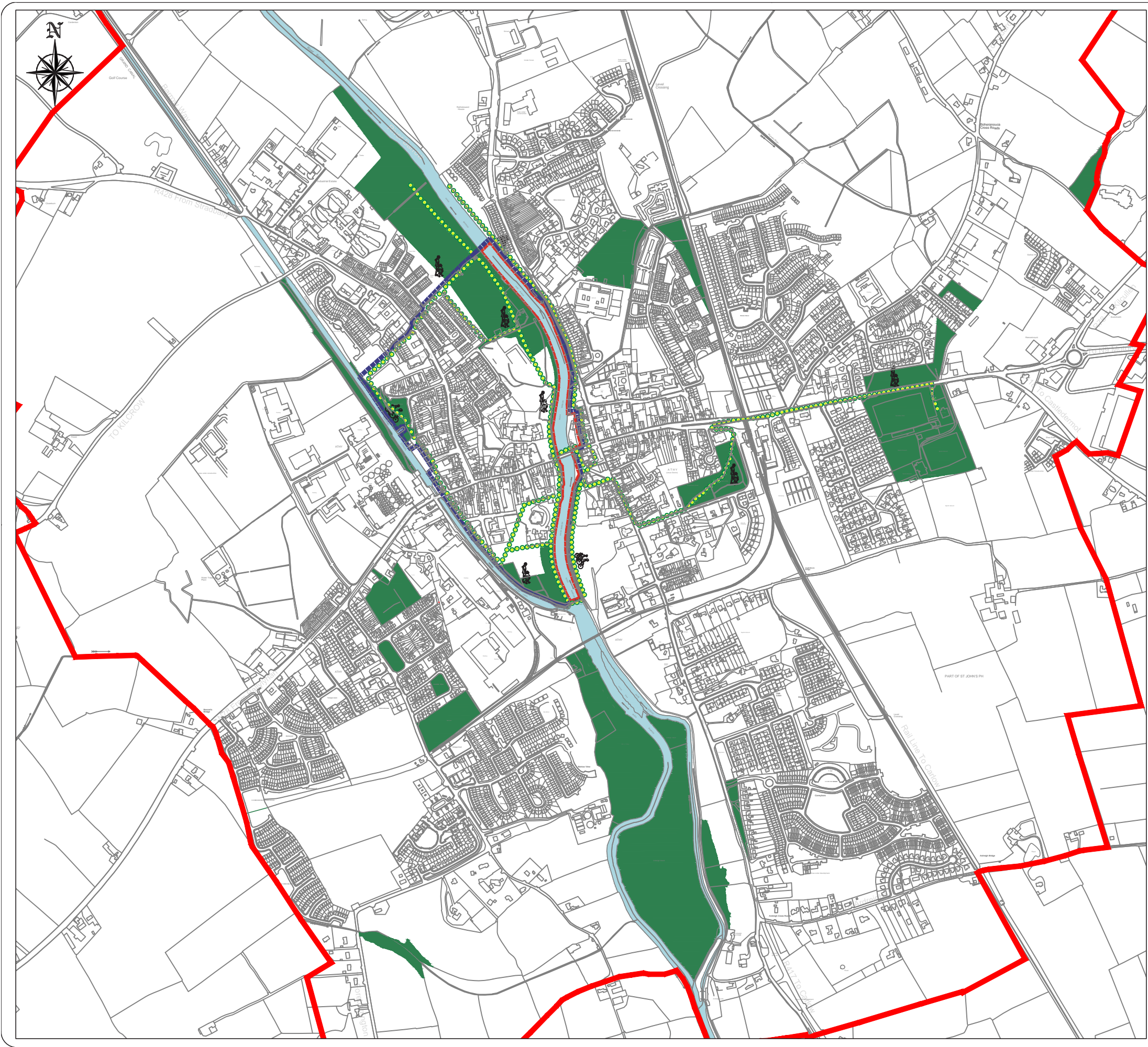
RAO7: To continue landscaping and maintenance of amenity areas.

RAO8: To provide and develop walking and cycling routes throughout the Town, particularly ones linking various areas of public open spaces and amenity in accordance with Map 11.1.

RAO9: To continue to maintain existing open space areas within housing developments, which have been taken in charge by the Council.

RAO10: To implement the recommendations of the Kildare Open Space Strategy as appropriate.





Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan
2012-2018

Legend

-  2.5 km Walking & Cycling Routes
-  3.0 km Walking/Cycle Route
-  Indicative Walking / Cycling Route
-  Athy Town Council Boundary
-  F: Open Space & Amenity
-  River Barrow and The Grand Canal

Green Network

Date: March 2012	Map Ref: 11.1
Scale: N.T.S.	Drg No: 200/10/508
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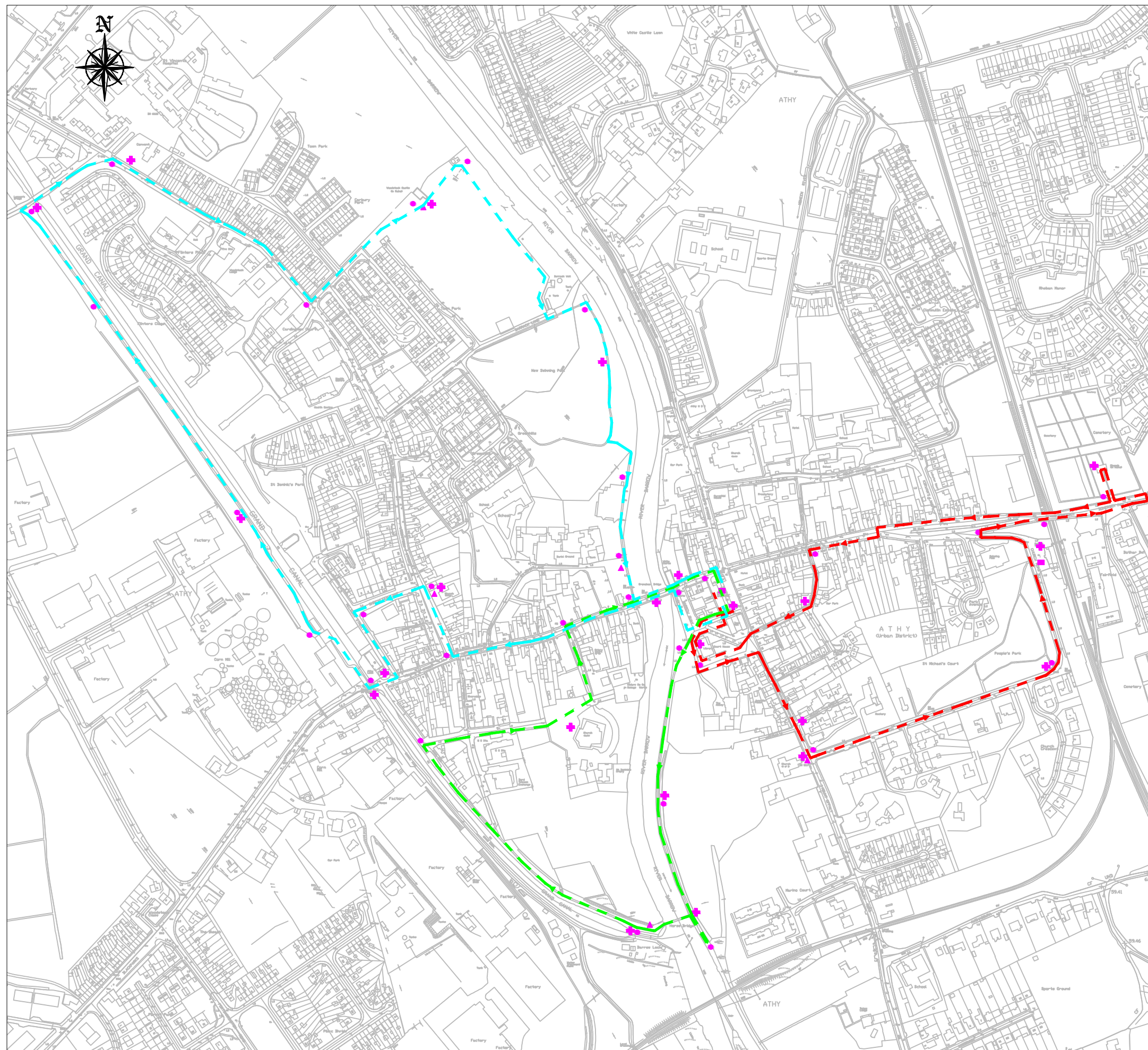


Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

Legend

- Route 1 (Length 1.8km)
- Route 2 (Length 1.6km)
- Route 3 (Length 3.0km)
- Orientation Signs
- Historical Trail Direction Signposts Fingers
- + Plaques
- ▲ Panels



Heritage Trails

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 11.2

Scale: N.T.S.

Drg No: 200/10/513

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CHAPTER 12

Architectural and Archaeological Heritage

12



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To conserve, protect and enhance the architectural and archaeological heritage of Athy. To strike a reasonable balance between conservation and development objectives and continue to protect, conserve and enhance buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

12.1 BACKGROUND

Athy boasts a unique architectural and archaeological heritage and as a valuable, non-renewable asset it is important that its contribution to our quality of life is recognised.

Architectural and archaeological heritage are intrinsic parts of our heritage and refers to all manmade features in the environment including buildings and other structures such as bridges, wells, archaeological sites, walls and street furniture. The structures which form the architectural heritage of Athy play an integral part in the life of the town. These structures form places of work, commerce, worship, education and recreation. It is important that these heritage items are not viewed in isolation or as an impediment to development on account of their existence but rather be considered as being of great importance to Athy, in particular in terms of their contribution or potential contribution to the tourism economy of the town.

12.2 STRATEGY

The strategy for architectural and archaeological heritage in Athy has been informed by national, regional and local policy and guidance documents. This Plan seeks to protect and enhance the architectural and archaeological heritage of Athy and is underpinned by the following principles:

- To protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- To encourage and promote the maintenance, rehabilitation, renovation, re-use of existing older buildings where appropriate.
- To protect and conserve the archaeological heritage of the town and to secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.

- To promote a reasonable balance between conservation measures and development measures in the interests of promoting the orderly and sustainable development of Athy.

12.3 POLICY CONTEXT

Built heritage is the term used to describe buildings, places and sites which have acquired through time special interest and values and as such, warrant protection and preservation. Various legislative provisions and policy documents seek to protect and preserve architectural and archaeological heritage and are summarised in the following paragraphs.

12.3.1 Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011

Current legislation sets out that objectives must be included in a development plan for protecting or preserving (either in situ or by record) places, caves, sites, features and other objects of archaeological, geological, historical, scientific or ecological interest. The Acts also confer a number of responsibilities to Local Authorities with regard to built heritage:

- Every development plan is required to include a record of protected structures which form part of our architectural heritage and which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, the identification and protection of architectural conservation areas;
- The control of development works on protected structures or the site of a protected structure; and
- The power to issue notices requiring certain works to be carried out to protect or restore an endangered protected structure and the power to acquire a protected structure.

12.3.2 National Heritage Plan (2002)

The National Heritage Plan sets out a clear and coherent strategy and framework for the protection and enhancement of Ireland's national heritage. The core objective of the Plan is to protect the national heritage as well as promoting it as a resource to be enjoyed by all.

12.3.3 County Kildare Heritage Plan (2005-2009)

Following on from the National Heritage Plan, Kildare County Council prepared a County Heritage Plan, which comprises a five-year action plan for

the conservation, preservation and enhancement of Kildare's heritage including built heritage. The County Heritage Plan will be reviewed in 2012.

12.3.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) produced an inventory of structures of architectural heritage for County Kildare in 2003 as part of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). 179 buildings in Athy town were identified in the survey. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government made recommendations that structures identified of Regional importance or above be added to the Council's Record of Protected Structures (RPS). These structures have been assessed as part of this development plan review.



12.3.5 Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines (2004)

The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, published by the DoEHLG in 2004 provide guidance to Planning Authorities on the application of Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

These guidelines also deal with Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas in considerable detail. While primarily aimed at planning authorities, these Guidelines also offer assistance and advice to owners and occupiers of protected structures and buildings within Architectural Conservation Areas. A garden and demesne survey of historic designed landscapes is also being prepared by the DoEHLG.

12.3.6 National Monuments Acts

The archaeological heritage of Athy is protected by the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 and includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts.

12.3.7 Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1999)

This document sets out guiding policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage of Ireland. Under Section 12.3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, a person proposing to carry out works at or close to a Recorded Monument is obliged to give notice of such intention to the Minister.

The Council must ensure that development, either above or below ground in the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest, will not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting.

12.4 GENERAL HERITAGE POLICIES

It is the policy of the Council:

- HP1:** To work with relevant agencies in promoting awareness and pride in the natural, built and archaeological heritage of the county and to develop codes of best practice in relation to conservation of this heritage.
- HP2:** To encourage participation by heritage groups, community associations and local people in the identification, protection, conservation and enhancement of the heritage of Athy.

12.5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

There is a diverse range of archaeological features found throughout the town, with representative monuments and artefacts of all periods. Archaeological heritage includes structures, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects. Archaeological finds dating to the Neolithic and the Bronze Age attest to the importance of the crossing over the River Barrow from prehistoric times. Athy's significant archaeological heritage provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource.

Athy Town Council recognises the importance of

preserving, protecting and fostering a greater public appreciation of the towns' archaeological heritage.

It is the policy of the Council:

- AH1:** To ensure full consideration is given to the protection of archaeological heritage when undertaking or authorising development in order to avoid unnecessary conflict between development and the protection of the archaeological heritage.
- AH2:** To have regard to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) Table 12.1 when assessing planning applications for development.
- AH3:** To protect and preserve any archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- AH4:** To ensure that development in the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest is not detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting by reason of its location, scale, bulk or detailing and to ensure that such proposed developments are subject to an archaeological assessment. Such an assessment will seek to ensure that the development can be designed in such

a way as to avoid or minimise any potential effects on the archaeological heritage.

12.5.1 Recorded Monuments and Places

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) compiled under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 lists structures, features, objects or sites as Recorded Monuments.

It consists of a set of constraint maps, and accompanying manual. Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 requires an owner/occupier to give two weeks written notice of proposals to carry out works at or in relation to a recorded monument. Some archaeological structures within the town may, in some situations, also be considered as architectural heritage and may therefore appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Accordingly these structures are protected by both the National Monuments Acts and the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011.

The relevant structures in the RMP are listed in the Table 12.1 below. The RMP for Athy is continually updated as new information becomes available and new sites are uncovered.

Table 12.1: Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)

MONUMENT NO.	TOWNLAND	CLASSIFICATION
KD035016	Cardingtown Demesne	Enclosure site possible
KD03501701	Prusselstown	Enclosure Site
KD03501702	Prusselstown	Field system site
KD03501703	Prusselstown	Rectangular enclosure site
KD035021	Townsparks	Castle
KD035022	Townsparks	Town
KD035023	Woodstock South	Enclosure site possible
KD035024	Woodstock South	Rectangular enclosure site
KD035031	Ardrew	Enclosure site
KD03503202	Ardreee/Coneyburrow	Settlement shrunken
KD035049	Bleach	Burial

12.5.2 Access to Recorded Monuments

Where practicable the Council will encourage access to recorded monuments in the care and guardianship of Kildare County Council or the State. In the case of pre-planning consultation the Council recommend that potential developers consult as early as possible with the relevant agencies (such as the National Monuments Service of the DoAHG) to ensure that archaeological concerns can be specified and if appropriate, integrated into the development proposals at an early stage.

It is the policy of the Council:

AH5: To encourage the provision of signage to publicly accessible recorded monuments.

12.5.3 Zone of Archaeological Potential or Significance

In 1986 an Urban Archaeological Survey of Kildare was conducted. A number of medieval / early modern towns with known archaeological potential were surveyed and zones of potentially significant archaeology identified. These areas are designated under the National Monuments Acts as recorded monuments and are listed on the RMP.

The historic core of Athy was identified as a Zone of Archaeological Potential (Refer to Map 12.1). Within the Zone of Archaeological Potential there is a significant potential of uncovering archaeological remains. Therefore, the impact of any proposed development on potential subsurface archaeological remains shall be considered.

It is the policy of the Council:

AH6: To have regard to the Zone of Archaeological Potential shown on Map 12.1 and ensure that planning applications are referred to the appropriate prescribed bodies and to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the prescribed bodies.

12.5.4 Medieval Remains

The rising ground on the west side of the river, around the medieval graveyard site and St. John's Lane, is considered significant as one of the early medieval sites in the town as is the area around the remnant of St. Michael's Church to the east of the town. Little of Athy's medieval origins remain apart from the presence of structures from this period such as White Castle located on the east bank of the River Barrow adjacent to Cromaboo Bridge; the ruins

of St. Michael's Church at the edge of the town and a wall of St. Johns Hospital bounding the medieval graveyard on John's Lane. The sense of the Town's medieval origins is retained by the street pattern and distinct building line along the Main Street creating a sense of enclosure of medieval character.

It is a policy of the Council:

AH7: To retain where possible the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.



12.5.5 Graveyards / Burial Grounds

Burial grounds are an important part of local heritage, often containing the standing remains of sites of earlier structures and also a great diversity of animal and plant life. Historic burial grounds, which are included in the RMP, are afforded protection under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. It is important to note that the archaeological potential of burial grounds may extend beyond the walls of the burial ground and this should be considered in any subsurface works.

It is a policy of the Council:

AH8: To protect the historical burial grounds within Athy town and encourage their maintenance in accordance with conservation principles in co-operation with the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and National Monuments Section of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG).

12.6 PROTECTED STRUCTURES

Athy has 156 structures on the RPS (See Table 12.2 and Maps 12.2 a-e). These structures are designated protected structures under the Planning and Development Act 2000, by virtue of their special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

A protected structure, unless otherwise stated, includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interior, all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of that structure. The protection also extends to any features specified as being in the attendant grounds. By placing a structure on the RPS the Council is seeking to ensure that the character of the structure is maintained and any changes or alterations to it are carried out in such a way as to retain and enhance this character.

The planning authority during the period of this Plan, reviewed the RPS. Any additions or deletions must be considered having regard to the relevant planning legislation and guidelines including the 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004).

Minor works to a protected structure may be carried out without planning permission only if the works do not affect the character of the structures, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest. Under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, owners and occupiers of protected structures may request a declaration from the planning authority as to the type of works that it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure and consequently which works would or would not require planning permission.

12.6.1 Alteration / Extensions / Change of Use to Protected Structures

It is recognised that the best method of conserving historic buildings and prolonging their functional and cultural life is to keep them in active use. While a degree of compromise will be required in adapting a protected structure to meet the requirements of modern living, it is important that its special interest is not damaged.

There may be some structures which are of such quality that they cannot be altered without unacceptable damage to their character and special

interest. The planning authority will consider whether it is appropriate in such cases to permit any alterations to the protected structure.

The Council will ensure that the alteration or extensions to protected buildings and structures will only be permitted if the proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and preserve the architectural and historic features of the building or structure.

Sympathetic reuse and/or development of structures, including appropriate design additions near to protected structures, can allow our architectural heritage to continue to offer aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits for future generations.

The Council will favourably consider the change of use, or re-use of Protected Structures provided such a change of use does not seriously impact on its intrinsic character.

12.6.2 Funding and Assistance for Protected Structures

Up until 2010 the Council administered a Conservation Grant Scheme which provided financial assistance to owners / occupiers of protected structure in order to undertake necessary conservation works. This grant scheme has currently been suspended. Any future grant scheme will be subject to the availability of funds from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and qualifying works in accordance with good conservation practice. Additional sources of funding which may be availed of include Heritage Council Building at Risk grants; and Section 482 of the Taxes Consolidation Act.

It is the Policy of the Council:

- PS1:** To conserve and protect the town's built environment and heritage in terms of streetscapes, individual buildings and features of historical, architectural, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and technical interest using the powers vested in it by the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011.
- PS2:** To ensure the protection, conservation and, where necessary, appropriate restoration of the architectural heritage of the town for future generations, and protect structures on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Any conservation

and restoration works must positively contribute to the streetscape of the area.

- PS3:** To promote and encourage the sensitive alteration/extension to Protected Structures so that they are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings.
- PS4:** To require a method statement for the conservation of any works to protected structures. Method statements should make reference to the DoEHLG Advice Series on how best to repair and maintain historic buildings.¹
- PS5:** To assist owners of Protected Structures in the maintenance and repair of their properties through the Building Conservation Grant Scheme where funding is provided by the DoAHG.
- PS6:** To refuse planning permission for the demolition of any protected structure unless the Council is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.
- PS7:** To protect the curtilage of protected structures or proposed protected structures and to prohibit inappropriate development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure which would cause loss of or damage to the special character of the protected structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of heritage value within the curtilage of the protected structure.
- PS8:** To encourage uses compatible with the character of protected structures. In certain cases, the planning authority may relax its requirements in order to secure the protection and restoration of the structure. These requirements including site development standards, zoning etc, may be relaxed if the protected structure, its special interest, character and setting is protected and its use and development is consistent with conservation policies and its special interest, character and setting is protected.
- PS9:** To endeavour to strategically target conservation funding for specific priority projects.

12.6.3 Retention and Re-Use of Older Buildings not on the RPS

There are many structures in the town which may not merit inclusion on the RPS, however they may have some degree of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or contribute to the amenity or character of the town. The opportunity should always be taken to examine the possibility of re-using and integrating such structures in new developments. The retention, rehabilitation and reuse of older buildings can play a pivotal role in the sustainable development of the town. The Council recognises the contribution made by older buildings, both individually and collectively, to the unique character, heritage and identity of the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- AH9:** To encourage the rehabilitation, renovation and re-use of older structures, where appropriate. Such rehabilitation, renovation and re-use to existing vernacular structures must positively contribute to the streetscape of the area and shall have regard to bats and their roosts.

12.7 ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is designated to protect the character of a group of structures which together are of special heritage value. An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contribute to the appreciation of a Protected Structure. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) provides the legislative basis for the protection of such Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA).

While the purpose of this designation is to protect and enhance the special character of the area, this does not preclude appropriate forms of development.

¹ As outlined in the DoEHLG's Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, a method statement is a useful tool to explain the rationale for the phasing of works. The statement could summarise the principal impacts on the character and special interest of the structure or site and describe how it is proposed to minimise these impacts. It may also describe how the works have been designed or specified to have regard to the character of the architectural heritage.

12.7.1 Athy Architectural Conservation Area

The Athy ACA extends from the Grand Canal, to the west of the town, to the Model School in the east of the town. It extends from St Michael's Catholic Church, on Stanhope Street to the north, and the railway bridge, over the River Barrow, in the south. The Barrow and the main Dublin to Carlow railway line are almost parallel and sub-divide the ACA on a north-south basis while the line of Boherboy Road, Leinster Street, Duke Street and William Street bisects the area from east to west. Refer to Map 12.3 for ACA Map and boundary.

The ACA assumes three sub-areas each of which represent different stages of the town's development. Historic plot lines were, where possible, used to define the ACA boundary although it is recognised that a number of these have been lost as a result of unsympathetic redevelopment which has also resulted in a certain loss of coherence.

Area 1 to the west of the ACA, includes the late-eighteenth century Grand Canal between the dry dock to the north and Barrow Lock and the Horse Bridge over the Barrow to the south and has as its backdrop the industrial developments further to the west.

Area 2 on which the ACA is centred, contains the historic/medieval core and part of the commercial centre of the town. The focal point of this area is White Castle (to the north-east of Cromaboo Bridge) and it also includes Emily Square, Barrow Quay, Courthouse Square, Back Square, all of Duke Street and part of Leinster Street, Stanhope Street, St John's Lane, Meeting Lane, the Carlow Road and the area around the river.

Area 3, to the east of the ACA, is representative of the late nineteenth century expansion of the town and is more residential in character. It includes the railway station, Church Road, the People's Park and the Church of Ireland on the Carlow Road. The eastern part of the commercial centre of the town on Leinster Street is also included.

12.7.2 Implications of Designation

Designation as an ACA provides a means to manage changes and new developments within the ACA in order to preserve its special heritage value and to improve and enhance its presentation. A distinctive sense of place can be created through street lighting, street furniture, shopfronts paving, signage and by encouraging best conservation practice in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings.

The designation of an ACA has the effect of de-exempting works to the exterior of any structure where they would, in the opinion of the planning authority materially affect the character of the area. Planning permission is required for all but very slight changes to the external appearance of structures within an ACA, including visible rear alterations, as any change to windows, doors, boundary walls, façades or shopfronts can erode the special character of the group.

Repair or refurbishment works which do not materially affect the external character will not require planning permission. The ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements provided that these change do not impact on the exterior appearance of the structure.

It is the policy of the Council:

ACA1: To ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions within an ACA are sited and designed appropriately, and are not detrimental to the character of the structure or to its setting or the general character of the ACA.

ACA2: To have regard to architectural heritage when considering proposed infrastructure developments (including transport, telecommunications, sewerage and water) located in close proximity to Protected Structures or the ACA.



12.8 INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Athy has a rich industrial heritage dating from the medieval period. Accessibility to markets was greatly increased by the opening of the Grand Canal from Athy to Monasterevin in 1791, enabling both goods and people to reach Dublin by this route. The railway from Dublin through Athy to Carlow was opened in 1846 also assisted in developing the town's industries including milling and other agriculturally based industries, a union workhouse, military barracks, gaol, model school and farm.

The industrial heritage of Athy contains a wide range of elements including the railway, engineering structures such as bridges and the Canal. All of these elements are significant as they contribute to the social, historical, archaeological, engineering and architectural development of the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- IH1:** To promote the marketing and interpretation of industrial heritage sites and to encourage public awareness and appreciation of this heritage with a view to optimising its tourism potential.
- IH2:** To conserve items of architectural

or industrial archaeological interest associated with the canal systems in association with Waterways Ireland, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoAHG and local communities.

12.9 VERNACULAR HERITAGE

Vernacular architecture refers to the local and regional traditional building forms and types built using local materials, skills and building techniques. This would include traditional domestic buildings as well as shops, outbuildings, mills, stone walls, gates and gate piers. The Council will seek to retain vernacular structures where appropriate as their loss through demolition and replacement can considerably diminish the character of an area. The rehabilitation and appropriate reuse of the vernacular building stock can play a vital role in the sustainable development of the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

- VH1:** To encourage the protection, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular heritage of the town including their settings and features.

12.10 FEATURES OF INTEREST

Features of interest can be important elements in establishing the character of an area. Such items include lamp standards, cast-iron features, railings, water pumps, street signs, freestanding or wall mounted post-boxes, kerbstones, plaques and monuments. Other features of interest may include old stone walls, bridges, gate piers, gates and wrought iron features.

It is the policy of the Council:

FI1: To protect and conserve important heritage items such as historic gardens, stone walls, bridges, street furniture, post boxes, curtilage features, and other significant historic features of interest.

12.11 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

AH01: To review on an ongoing basis the Record of Protected Structures and make additions and deletions as appropriate over the period of this Plan.

AH02: To seek the protection of all structures listed on the Record of Protected Structures and to protect the town's vernacular architectural heritage.

AH03: To publish an information booklet outlining the specific recommendations for development within the Architectural Conservation Area.

AH04: To secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.

AH05: To prepare a buildings at risk register and to prevent the endangerment of Protected Structures, historic or vernacular buildings.

AH06: To encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access to sites identified on the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership or control of the Local Authority and the State.

AH07: To record and protect heritage items, such as walls, bridges and street furniture, within Athy.

AH08: To support the Athy Heritage Centre and museum as an important tourism and heritage resource for the town. To support


its board of directors in progressing related programmes and proposals including, in particular, the further development of the Ernest Shackleton theme.



Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

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 A: Zone of Archaeological Potential
(RMP 35-22)

Zone of Archaeological Potential

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 12.1

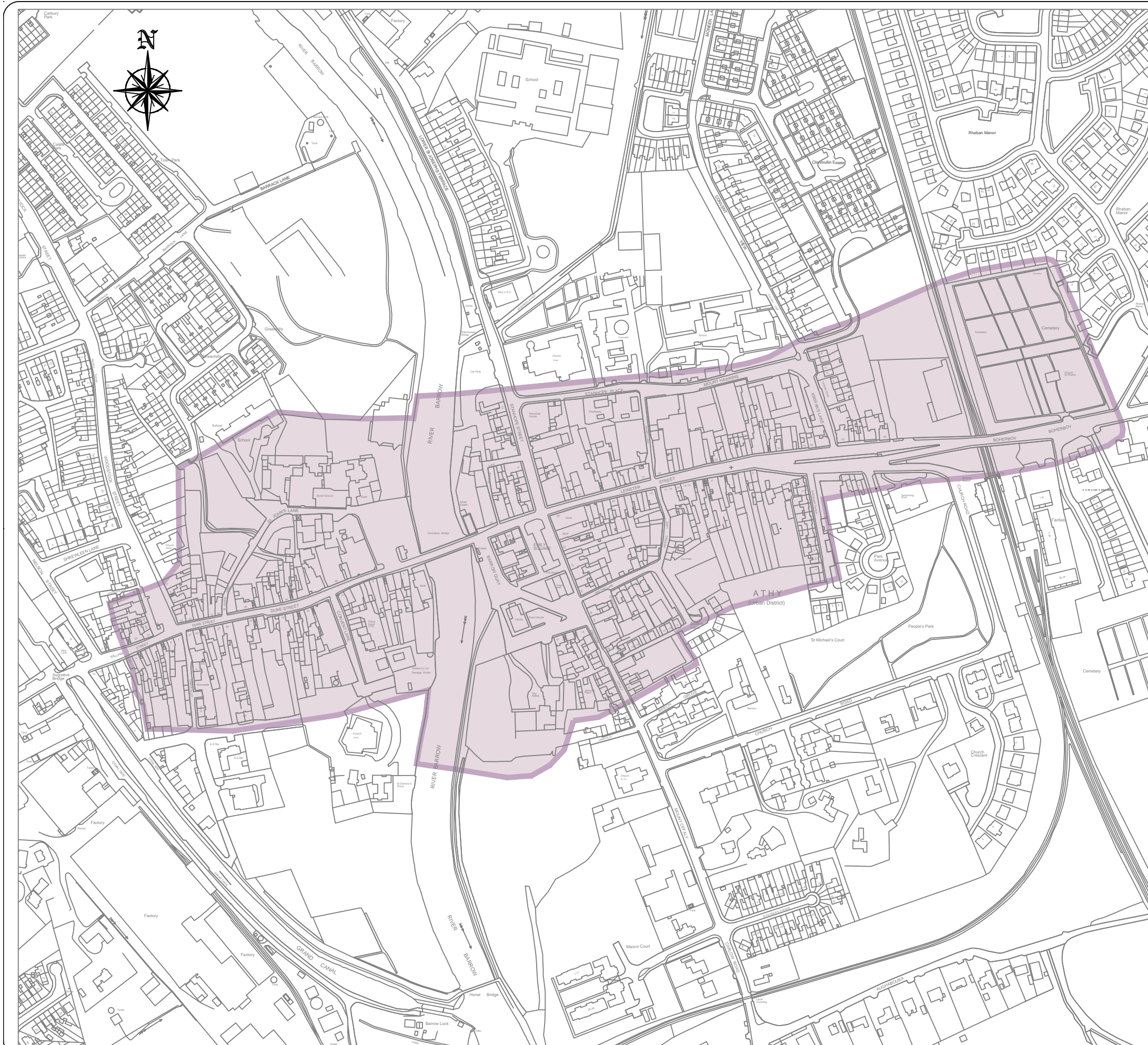
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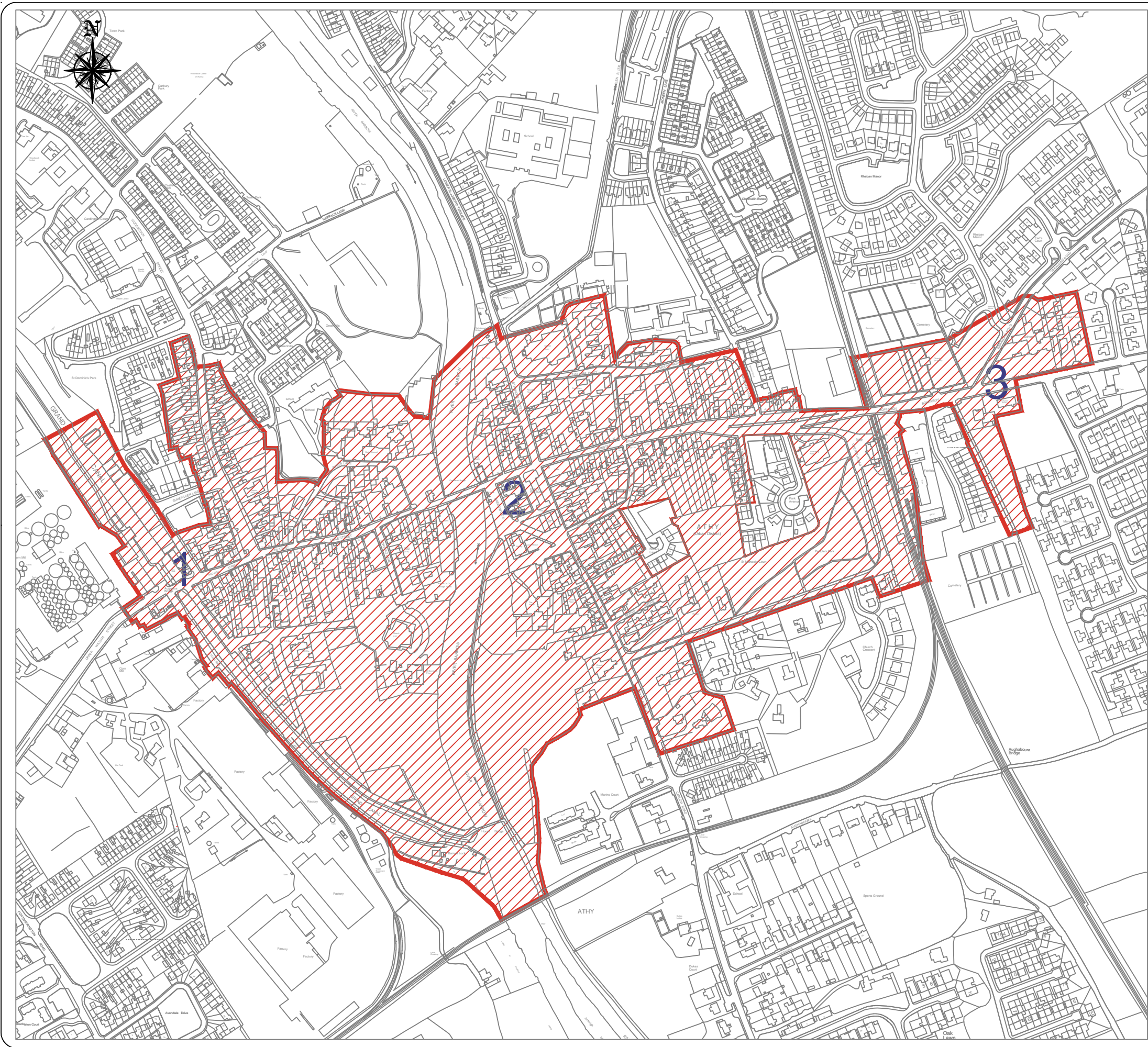
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Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan
2012-2018

Legend

-  Architectural Conservation Area
-  Areas excluded from the ACA

Subdivision of ACA

- 1 Grand Canal Area
- 2 Emily Square Area
- 3 Model Farm School Area

Architectural Conservation Area

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 12.2

Scale: N.T.S.

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Table 12.2: Record of Protected Structures

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY001	11506014	St. Michael's Cemetery, Boherboy	Athy	Cemetery
AY002	11503008	Moneen Lane, Tomard	Athy	Bridge
AY005	11503016	St. Michaels Convent of Mercy Graveyard	Athy	Graveyard
AY008	11504029	Geraldine Road	Townparks	Wall
AY009	11504024	Shamrock Lodge Gates, Geraldine Road	Shamrocklodge	Gates
AY010	11500020	St. Vincents Hospital, Stradbally Road	Townparks	Building (Formerly detached five-bay single-storey hospital gate lodge, built c. 1845, as workhouse lodge with extension to rear. Now in use as sheltered housing.
AY011	11500002	Cardington Lock, Stradbally Road	Cardington	Lock
AY012	11500005	Galilee, Stradbally Road	Cardington	Building
AY013	11500015	St. Vincents Hospital, Stradbally Road	Townparks	Building. Freestanding former workhouse, built 1843, now local hospital. Eighteen-bay two-storey front with two- and three-bay three-storey projecting wings.
AY014	11500019	St. Vincents Hospital, Stradbally Rd	Townparks	Wall
AY015	11500039	St. Marys Cemetery, Ballintubbert Road	Woodstock North	Cemetery
AY016	11500038	Lennons Bridge, Ballintubbert Road	Townparks	Bridge
AY017	11500056	The Grand Canal		Canal (Section of the Grand Canal (Barrow Line) constructed c. 1790. Links into the Barrow Navigation to south of the town at Horse Bridge.)

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY018	11500034	Woodstock Lodge	Townparks	Building
AY019	11505060	Duke Street (Shaws)	Athy	Building
AY020	11505040	Cromaboo Bridge	Athy	Bridge
AY021	11505039	The White Castle, Leinster Street	Athy	Castle
AY022	11505358	Emily Square	Athy	Fountain
AY023	11505336	No. 5 Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY024	11505341	No. 30 W.T Duthie, Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY025	11505342	No. 31 Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY026	11505331	Bank of Ireland, Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY027	11505330	O' Briens Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY030	11505300	Stanhope Place	Athy	Building
AY032	11505344	The Emigrant, Barrow Quay	Athy	Building
AY033	11505311	Babty Maher's, Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY034	11505309	No. 25 Rafter's, Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY035	11505307	No. 27 Manleys, Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY036	11505286	No. 46 Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY037	11505016	Athy Community Centre, Stanhope Place	Athy	Building
AY038	11505017	Carlton Hotel. (Formerly St. Michael's Convent of Mercy, Stanhope Place)	Athy	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY040	11505019	Carlton Hotel. (Formerly St. Michaels Convent of Mercy, Stanhope Place)	Athy	Building
AY041	11505020	Carlton Hotel. (Formerly St. Michaels Convent of Mercy- Chapel, Stanhope Place)	Athy	Church
AY042	11505021	St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Stanhope Street	Athy	Church
AY043	11505022	Rathstewart Road	Athy	Bridge
AY046	11505049	St. John's Cemetery, St. John's Lane	Athy	Cemetery
AY048	11505054	St. John's Lane	Athy	Wall
AY049	11505226	Front façade only of No. 9 McLaughlin's Bar, Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY050	11505006	No. 82 Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY051	11505258	No. 69 Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY053	11505318	Meeting Lane	Athy	Building
AY054	11505314	No. 20 (M.D Mullins), Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY055	11505313	No. 21 Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY057	11505257	Post Box, No. 69 Leinster Street	Athy	Post Box
AY058	11505260	No. 67 (Angler's Rest) Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY059	11505229	Front façade only of No. 6 Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY060	11505230	Front façade only of No. 5 Leinster Street	Athy	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY061	11505019	Front façade only of No. 11 (Kane's Public House), Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY062	11505020	No. 12 (Clancy's) Leinster Street	Athy	Building
AY063	11505021	Athy Railway Station, Church Road	Athy	Railway Station
AY064	11505022	Athy Railway Station-Post Box, Church Road	Athy	Post Box
AY065	11505049	Athy Railway Station Church Road	Athy	Water Tower
AY066	11505054	Athy Railway, Church Road	Athy	Bridge
AY067	11505226	Leinster Street	Athy	Water Trough
AY068	11505006	Athy Railway- Bridge, Boherboy	Athy	Bridge
AY074	11505258	St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church, Convent Lane	Athy	Church
AY075	11505318	Athy Town Hall, Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY077	11505314	Athy Court House, Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY079	11505313	Front façade, east and west side elevations only of No. 22 Griffin Hawe, rear, Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY080	11505257	Griffin Hawe, Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY081	11505260	Athy Post Office, Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY083	11505229	Janeville Cottage, Janeville	Athy	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY084	11505143	Casa Maria, Janeville	Athy	Building
AY085	11505142	Offaly House, Janeville	Athy	Building
AY086	11505136	No. 8 Offaly Street	Athy	Building
AY087	11505135	No. 7 Offaly Street	Athy	Building
AY088	11505134	No. 6 Offaly Street	Athy	Building
AY089	11505133	No. 5 Offaly Street	Athy	Building
AY090	11505132	Front façade only of No. 4 Offaly Street	Athy	Building
AY091	11505127	No. 13, Rear of Emily Square	Athy	Building (outbuilding)
AY094	11505119	Front façade only of No. 13 Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY095	11505115	Barrow Quay	Athy	Quay
AY096	11505111	Irish Permanent, No. 3 Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY097	11505108	No. 5 Duke Street (H.G Donnelly and Sons)	Athy	Building
AY099	11505096	No. 1 Duke Street	Athy	Gazebo
AY100	11505081	No. 16-17 Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY101	11505083	No. 14 Duke Street (An Sean Chistin)	Athy	Building
AY102	11505073	No 23 Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY103	11505072	No. 24-25 Duke Street (Perrys Supermarket)	Athy	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY104	11505067	No. 43 Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY105	11505066	No. 44 Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY107	11505177	The Coach House, Church Road	Athy	Building
AY108	11505176	The Rectory, Church Road	Athy	Building
AY109	11505175	Church Road	Athy	Building
AY110	11505150	Athy Lodge, Church Road	Athy	Building
AY111	11505146	Teach Iosa, Carlow Lodge	Athy	Building
AY112	11505145	St. Michael's Church of Ireland	Athy	Church
AY113	11505179	Post Box, Offaly street	Athy	Post Box
AY115	11505147	Prospect House, Carlow Road	Athy	Building
AY116	11505148	Prospect House, Carlow Road	Athy	Building
AY 120	11505162	St. Annes B&B, Church Road	Athy	Building
AY122	11505339	No. 3 Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY123	11505335	No. 6 Emily Square	Athy	Building
AY124	11505337	The Immigrant	Athy	Building
AY125	11506021	Athy Presbyterian Church, Dublin Road	Townparks	Church

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY126	11506020	The Manse, Boherboy	Townparks	Building
AY127	11506006	The Model Farm, Dublin Road	Townparks	Building
AY128	11506007	Model Court, Geraldine Road	Townparks	Building
AY129	11506008	Model Court, Geraldine Road	Townparks	Building
AY130	11506009	Model Court, Geraldine Road	Townparks	Building
AY131	11506010	Model Court- Youth Reach, Geraldine Road	Townparks	Outbuildings
AY132	11506011	Model Court- Montessori School	Townparks	Outbuildings
AY133	11506012	The Model School, Dublin Road	Townparks	Building
AY135	11506019	Cemetery, Boherboy	Athy	Cemetery
AY136	11501132	No. 89 Woodstock Street	Townparks	Building
AY137	11501127	Grand Canal Barrow Navigation	Townparks	Mooring Bollards
AY138	11501126	Grand Canal Barrow Navigation	Townparks	Dry Dock
AY139	11501110	W. Doyle, Woodstock Street	Townparks	Building
AY140	11501039	Athy Methodist Church, Woodstock Street	Athy	Church
AY141	11501038	No. 7 Woodstock Street	Athy	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY142	11501037	No. 8 Woodstock Street	Townparks	Church
AY143	11501036	No. 9. Woodstock Street	Athy	Building
AY144	11501035	No. 10. Woodstock Street	Athy	Building
AY145	11501028	Woodstock Street		Post Box
AY146	11505071	No. 39 Park House, Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY150	11501151	Grand Canal Barrow Navigation	Woodstock South	Mooring Bollards
AY151	11501150	Minch Norton and Company, Upper William Street	Woodstock South	Building
AY152	11501148	Canal Side, Woodstock South	Woodstock South	Building
AY153	11501118	No. 15 Biadhlan, William Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Building
AY154	11501116	Athy Lock-Crane, William Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Crane
AY155	11501115	Athy Lock, William Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Lock
AY156	11501114	Augustus Bridge, William Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Bridge
AY157	11501105	No. 97 Woodstock Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Building
AY158	11501103	No. 98 Woodstock Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Building
AY159	11501102	No. 99 Woodstock Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Building
AY160	11501101	No. 100 Eversley, Woodstock Street	Townparks (Athy West Urban ED)	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY165	11501079	William Street	Athy	Post Box
AY167	11501055	No. 27 Duke Street	Athy	Building
AY168	11501054	No. 26 Duke Street, (Parkview House)	Athy	Building
AY169	11501045	No. 1 Woodstock Street	Athy	Building
AY170	11501044	No. 2 Woodstock Street	Athy	Building
AY171	11507071	Barrow Lock, Grand Canal Barrow Navigation	Bleach	Lock
AY172	11507058	Convent Lane	Athy	Gates
AY173	11507057	Horse Bridge, River Barrow	Athy	Bridge
AY174	11507056	Railway Bridge, River Barrow	Bleach	Bridge
AY175	11507055	Weir, River Barrow	Coneyburrow	Weir
AY176	11507054	Dukes Lodge, River Entrance, Carlow Road		Gates
AY177	11507046	Dukes Lodge, Carlow Road	Coneyburrow	Building
AY178	11507045	Dukes Lodge, Carlow Road	Coneyburrow	Gates/railings
AY179	11507003	Carlow Road	Grayland	Building
AY180	11502053	Fortbarrington Road	Blackparks	Post Box
AY182	11502002	Tegral Building Products-Chimney Stack, Upper William Street	Bleach	Building

RPS Ref.	NIAH Ref.	Building Address	Townland	Description
AY183	11502004	Tegral Building Products- Store, Upper William Street	Bleach	Building
AY184	11500003	Bascule Bridge, Stradbally Road	Townparks (Athy West Rural ED)	Bridge
AY185	11903511	Ardreigh House,	Ardree	House
AY186		Lift Bridge at Ardreigh	Ardree	Lift Bridge
AY188		Woodstock Castle	Woodstock	Ruins of Woodstock Castle
AY189		Former Maltings, Nelson Street	Woodstock South	Stone walls of former malting house
AY190		Duke Street		Lamp Post at west end of Cromaboo Bridge
AY191		Mill Cottage, Ardreigh	Ardree	House
AY192	11505327	No. 20 Emily Square (Royal Garden restaurant)		Building
AY193	11505324	No. 18 Emily Square		House
AY195	11501093	No. 18 William Street (Canalside Inn)	Townparks	House
AY197		Tonlegee House	Tonlegee	House

This is the Record of Protected Structures as of 26th March 2012. Please note, that pursuant to Section 55 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, the planning authority can make an addition to or deletion from this Record of Protected Structures at any time. For the most up to date version, please see the RPS on our website www.athytowncouncil.ie or contact the Planning Department.



Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

Legend

● Protected Structures



Protected Structures

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 12.3 (a)

Scale: N.T.S.

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2012-2018

Legend

● Protected Structures

Protected Structures

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 12.3 (b)

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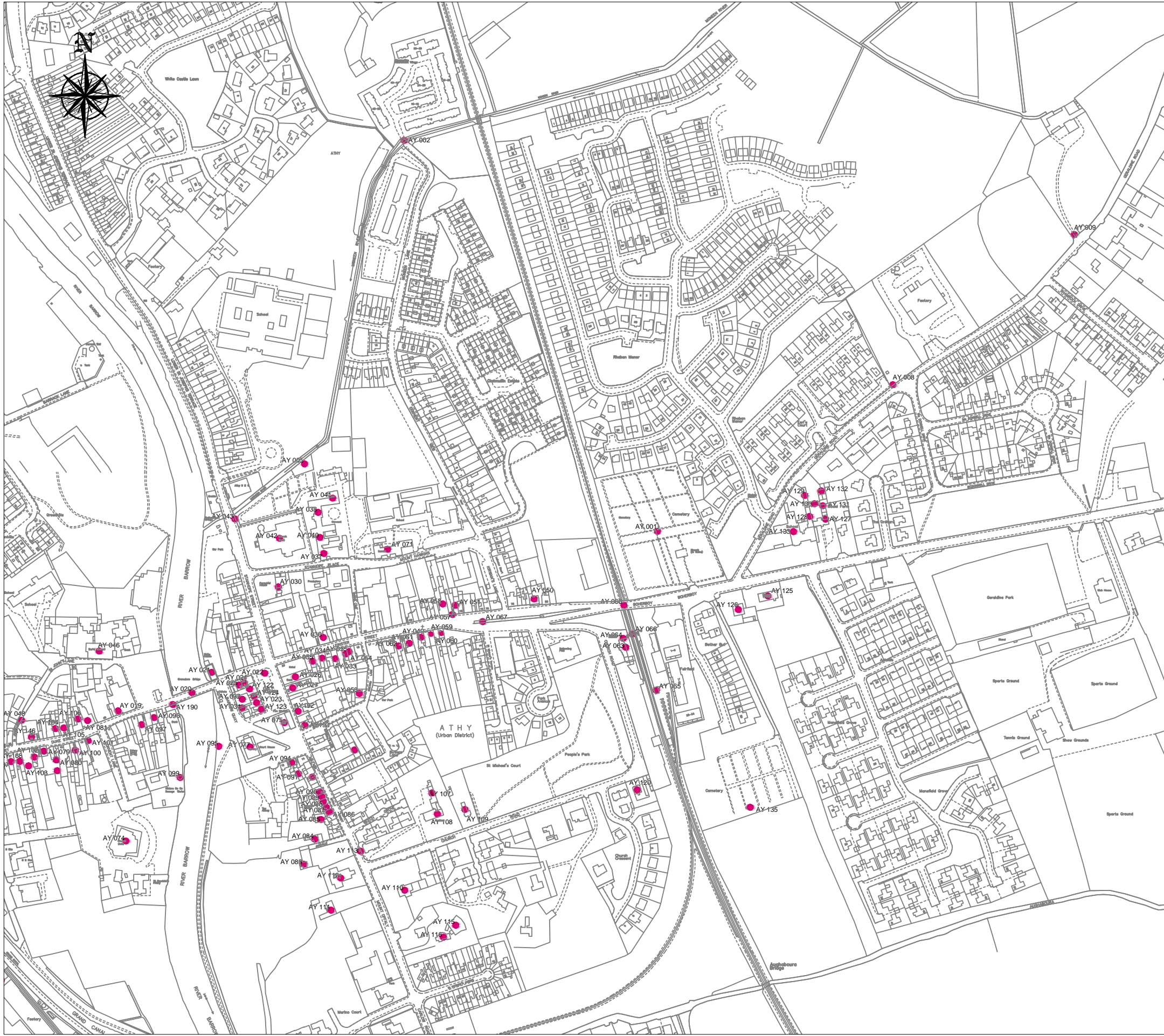


Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

Legend

 Protected Structures



Protected Structures

Date: March 2012

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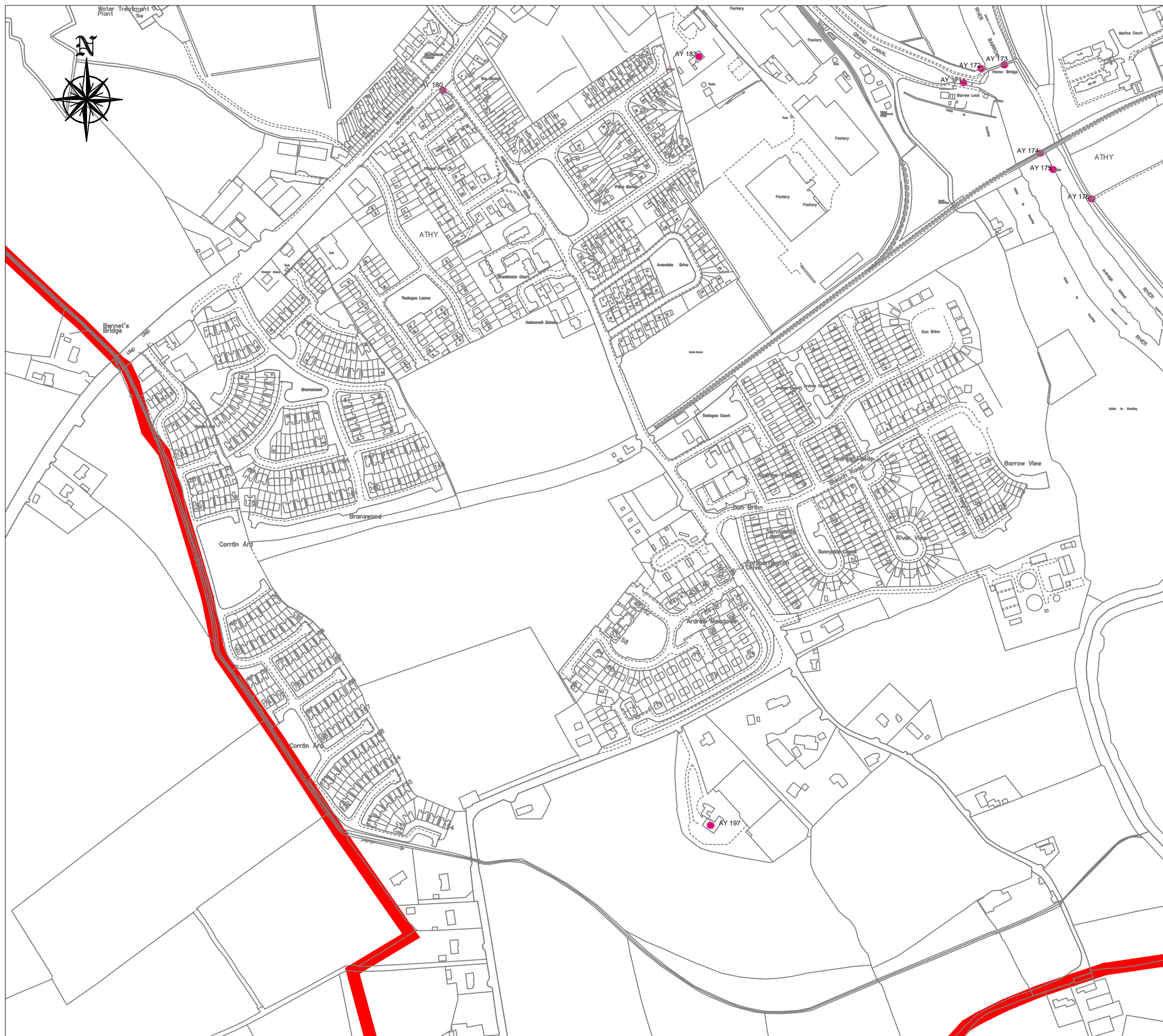


Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

Legend

● Protected Structures



Protected Structures

Date: March 2012

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CHAPTER 13

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

13



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To protect, conserve and manage natural heritage in a sustainable manner ensuring that the future economic growth and development of Athy complements its natural setting.

13.1 BACKGROUND

Natural heritage or biodiversity (biological diversity) refers to the variety of all living things, including plants, animals and their habitats as well as the physical and geological foundation that forms the landscape. Biodiversity is vital for the supply of clean air and water, healthy soils, food, building materials and medicines. The conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage is an integral part of good environmental management and sustainable development.

There is a great diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats in Athy, in particular, groups of trees, grassland areas, river and canal habitats and riparian habitat. Athy boasts significant designated sites within the town development boundary. A sustainable approach to protecting, conserving and enhancing this natural heritage resource is proposed.

13.2 STRATEGY

The following principles will guide the Council's natural heritage and bio-diversity policies and objectives set out in this Plan:

- To promote a reasonable balance between conservation measures and development objectives in the interests of promoting the orderly and sustainable development of Athy.
- To protect national important sites including the Special Area of Conservation (River Barrow) and the proposed Natural Heritage Area (the Grand Canal).
- To mitigate the impacts to natural heritage, where it cannot be avoided.
- To promote appropriate habitat enhancement as an integral part of any development.
- To avoid undue negative effects upon the natural environment.

13.3 POLICY CONTEXT - NATIONAL / LOCAL

While legislative provision exists governing the protection of important habitats and species, there are also a number of policy documents, which seek to protect and enhance natural heritage and promote the enhancement of biodiversity.

13.3.1 National Biodiversity Plan (2011-2016)

The National Biodiversity Plan recognises that conservation and enhancement of biological diversity is essential for sustainable development, and for maintaining quality of life. A key target of the Plan is that biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally.

13.3.2 County Biodiversity Plan (2009-2013)

The County Biodiversity Plan was adopted in November 2008. The National Biodiversity Plan recognises the key role of local authorities in promoting and delivering the conservation of biodiversity and recommends the preparation of local biodiversity plans.

The County Biodiversity Plan provides a framework for conserving biodiversity and natural heritage at a local level. The Biodiversity Plan focuses on gathering information on and managing the biodiversity resource, education/awareness raising and the promotion of effective cooperation between stakeholders. The Biodiversity Plan complements the County Heritage Plan by including detailed actions to deliver positive outcomes focussed on species and habitats.

13.3.3 Legislative Context

Ireland has signed and ratified a number of international conventions and agreements including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern) and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar).

These various obligations are given legal effect through both European and National legislation.

13.4 DESIGNATED SITES

European and national legislation protects the most valuable of our natural heritage areas. At European level, Natura 2000 sites form a network of protected areas throughout the European Union and comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), designated under the EU Birds Directive. Local authorities are required to ensure that an appropriate assessment of the implications of proposals affecting designated conservation sites is undertaken in respect of developments requiring planning permission. This applies to all development proposals, irrespective of location, likely to impact on these sites.

At national level, the Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 are the principal statutory provisions for the protection of wildlife (both flora and fauna) and the control of activities which may impact adversely on the conservation of wildlife. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance and sites of geological interest. The designation of these sites at a national level is the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The designation of these sites is an ongoing process as boundaries are revised and adjusted and new sites added.



At present there are two important designated biodiversity sites within the Athy area. The Grand Canal is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area and the River Barrow is listed as a Special Area of Conservation.

13.4.1 The River Barrow (cSAC)

The River Barrow is protected under National and EU legislation by way of its designation as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) – (site number 00858) and a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) – (site number 02162). The site is of considerable conservation significance given the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed in Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive respectively. Furthermore the River Barrow is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it. The occurrence of several Red Data Book plant species add further interest to this site.

13.4.2 Conservation within Natura 2000 Designated Sites – Appropriate Assessment

Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive require an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project whether within or outside a designated Natura 2000 site, which does not directly relate to the management of the site but may impact upon its conservation objectives.

The assessment should be based on best scientific knowledge, and carried out by a person with ecological expertise. It should address the potential impacts of the plan or project on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site. The impact assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan or project, together with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site.

The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites but potentially impacting upon them (known as 'ex situ' impacts) must also be included in the assessment. Guidelines issued by DoEHLG in 2009 entitled "Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities", or any amendments of these guidelines, should be referenced in this regard.

A project or plan may only proceed if it can be concluded on the basis of Appropriate Assessment that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. If adverse effects are likely, or in cases of doubt, then derogation under Article 6 (4) shall apply, but only in cases of imperative reasons of over-riding public interest.

13.4.3 The Grand Canal (pNHA)

The Grand Canal is a man-made waterway linking the River Liffey in Dublin with the Shannon at Shannon Harbour and the Barrow at Athy. The Grand Canal system is protected under National legislation by way of its designation as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) – (site number 02104). The Grand Canal Natural Heritage Area comprises the canal channel and the banks on either side of it. Various habitats are found within the canal boundaries - hedgerow, tall herbs, calcareous grassland, reed fringe, open water, scrub and woodland. The ecological value of the canal lies more in the diversity of species it supports along its linear habitats than in the presence of rare species.

13.4.4 European and National Designated Protected Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are also protected by law. This protection applies wherever the plant, animal or bird species are found and is not confined to sites designated by law and their habitats. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order 1999 and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

13.4.5 Polices – General Natural Heritage and Designated Sites

It is the policy of the Council:

- NH1:** To implement the actions contained in the County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013 through the identification of priority actions subject to the availability of funding.
- NH2:** To facilitate the conservation, protection and enhancement of the Grand Canal pNHA, and the River Barrow cSAC, including the adjacent wetlands and associated habitats and to ensure that development does not significantly adversely affect conservation values.
- NH3:** To preserve the quality and quantity of water in the Grand Canal system and the Barrow in partnership with Waterways Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoAHG,
- NH4:** To have regard to the views and guidance of National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoAHG in respect of proposed development

where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on sites with nature conservation designations.

NH5: To require the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment for all development which may have a significant impact on the Canal, river and riparian habitats. This assessment should where appropriate suggest a minimum buffer of undisturbed vegetation to be retained to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential, maintain habitats and provide an ecological corridor. The buffer zone shall, where possible be maintained free of development and hard surfaces. The assessment shall address the following issues:

- Protected species i.e. bats, otters including the requirement for derogation licences.
- Cumulative impact of the proposed development.

NH6: To ensure that any project with the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site(s) i.e. the River Barrow shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Potential temporary impacts upon the River Barrow cSAC arising from construction activities shall be avoided by compliance with the measures outlined in Section 3.5.2 of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Statement.

NH7: To ensure that no project which gives rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).¹

¹ Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available,
- (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

NH8: To ensure that a suitable buffer zone will be maintained between the Grand Canal and the River Barrow and any proposed development. The extent and composition of this undisturbed riparian buffer zone should be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist. In all instances however a buffer of 2.5 metres of vegetation shall be retained along the canal bank to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat.

NH9: To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact on plant species, animals and birds listed in the Flora Protection Order, Wildlife Act 1976-2000, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

13.5 NATURE/ BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION OUTSIDE DESIGNATED SITES

There are habitats and features, which are of particular importance for biodiversity throughout the town area. These include woodlands, hedgerow field boundaries, rivers, streams and associated riparian zones, canals, freshwater wetlands, urban parks and gardens.

A network of protected areas and ecological corridors available to support the movement of species and to sustain habitats, ecological processes and functions is necessary to maintain biodiversity. Article 10 of the Habitats Directive requires EU member states in their land-use planning and development policies to encourage the management of features which constitute such ecological networks and which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora.



13.5.1 Local Biodiversity Important Areas

Contained within the Plan area are areas which are of local biodiversity significance, which should be protected, enhanced and restored. These areas, such as wetland areas, can contribute significant ecological functions to the Plan area such as the use of natural wetland areas to reduce flooding.

It is an aim of this Plan to carry out habitat mapping for the town. Once completed, this mapping will assist in identifying local biodiversity areas throughout the town.

It is the policy of the Council:

NH10: To facilitate, maintain and enhance as far as is practicable the natural heritage and amenity of the town by seeking to encourage the preservation and retention of woodlands, hedgerows, stone walls, rivers, streams and wetlands. Where the removal of such features is unavoidable appropriate measures to replace like with like should be considered, subject to safety considerations.

NH11: To ensure that existing biodiversity features such as watercourses, streams, hedgerows, trees, ecological corridors and linkages are incorporated into the design of new developments.

NH12: To protect, conserve and enhance the town's biodiversity and natural heritage including wildlife (flora and fauna), habitats, landscapes and/or landscape features of importance to wildlife.

NH13: To seek compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to encouraging the management of features in the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure act as biodiversity (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

13.6 INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Non native species, both invertebrate and plants, can represent a major threat to local, regional, and national biodiversity. Terrestrial and aquatic habitats can be negatively affected, resulting in significant damage to conservation and economic interests, such as agriculture, forestry and civil infrastructure.

It is the policy of the Council:

NH14: To support measures for the prevention and/or eradication of invasive species as appropriate, as opportunities and resources allow.

13.7 TREES, HEDGEROWS AND WOODLANDS

Trees and hedgerows constitute an important natural and historic resource, given their contribution to landscape quality, their ecological importance as wildlife habitats and historical significance as townland and field boundaries. In urban settings trees and groups of trees can contribute significantly to the local landscape/ townscape and in the successful integration of new buildings into the landscape.

Athy contains many large trees and groups of trees of considerable heritage value, which enhance the urban fabric of the town. These are considered visually important to the landscape, as well as providing significant recreational capacity and important wildlife habitats. The planting or retention of mature trees can contribute to amenity and more attractive developments as well as important wildlife habitats. The retention of trees should be considered at the design stage of any development. When planting hedgerows, species indigenous to the area should be used. The County Kildare Hedgerow Survey (2006) identified the predominant hedgerow species in Kildare. These species are listed in Chapter 15, Development Management Standards.

It is the policy of the Council:

NH15: To promote the protection and preservation of existing hedgerows, where appropriate and encourage planting of native hedgerow species.

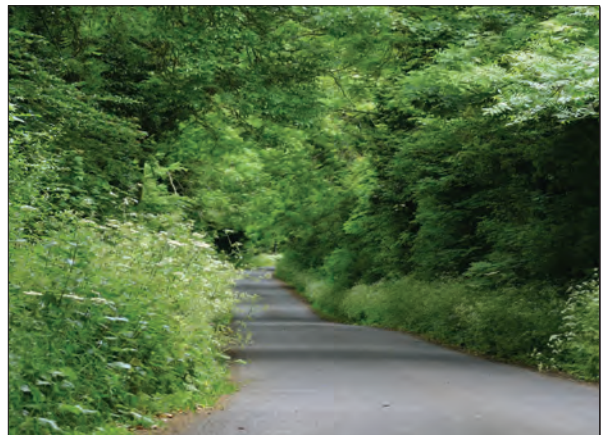
NH16: To promote the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees.

NH17: To discourage the felling of mature trees and encourage tree surgery rather than felling where appropriate.

NH18: To restrict the cutting of hedges during the bird-nesting season (1st March until 31st August), except in certain legally defined circumstances, in accordance with the provisions of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

NH19: To discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development, and will encourage tree surgery rather than felling where possible.

NH20: To promote the protection of trees, in particular native and broadleaf species, which are of conservation and/or amenity value. Development that requires the felling of mature trees of species interest, notwithstanding the fact that they may not be listed in this Plan, will be discouraged.



13.8 RIVERS, STREAMS AND CANALS

The canal, streams and particularly the River Barrow are home to a variety of habitats and species. The banks (riparian zones) of rivers and streams are particularly important as they contain a range of habitats and species, which are different from the surrounding landscape.

In many cases the maintenance of rivers and streams in an open, semi-natural condition, will be encouraged to protect and maintain biodiversity, landscape and for flood protection control value wherever possible. This will be achieved by regulating development in river and stream corridors by implementing sustainable drainage systems for commercial and residential developments.

It is the policy of the Council:

- NH21:** To protect existing rivers, streams and watercourses and wetlands located on land zoned for development and incorporate them within the overall design for the area, thereby contributing to and connecting into an overall green network for the town.
- NH22:** To consult, as appropriate, with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to developments that could potentially impact on the aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats.
- NH23:** To protect rivers, streams and other water courses and, wherever possible, maintain them in an open state capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora and discouraging culverting or realignment.
- NH24:** To seek during redevelopment the creation of a riparian buffer strip along either side of all watercourses where practicable.

13.9 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The term 'Green Infrastructure' is increasingly being used to describe the interconnected network of environmental features all around us. This strategically planned and delivered network should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Green infrastructure includes nature conservation areas, parks, open space, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands and farmland found throughout the town.



Green Infrastructure provides space for nature and ecosystems to work, it regulates our temperature, provides us with clean water and air and many other benefits humans gain from the environment. High quality and accessible parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and other recreational areas provide health benefits for all, including play areas for children and walking and cycling routes. A high quality environment with an extensive green infrastructure network helps to attract and hold on to high tech industries, entrepreneurs and workers required to underpin the knowledge economy.

Kildare County Council intends to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County, including Athy during the lifetime of this Plan. It will focus on the appropriate treatment of biodiversity, parks, open space and recreational areas, water management, archaeological and architectural heritage, climate change and landscape. An objective of the strategy in relation to the management and provision of green infrastructure will be to provide guidance for the various statutory plans prepared by the Council. All proposals for new development in the town must have regard to the County's green infrastructure resources and ensure that it is protected, managed, and enhanced as new development takes place. In practical terms this means that development proposals should be integrated to the maximum extent with the green infrastructure in the locality.

It is the policy of the Council:

- GI1:** To have regard to the recommendations of the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy prepared for the County as part of the County Development Plan.

13.10 VIEWS AND PROSPECTS

The built and natural heritage of Athy provides the town with significant views and prospects which the Council will seek to protect. The significant views and prospect of Athy are shown on Map 13.1 and are listed in the Table 13.1.

It is the policy of the Council:

- VP1:** To preserve views and prospects listed in Table 13.1.
- VP2:** To ensure that development does not disrupt available vistas or impact on the landscape quality and scenic value of the Grand Canal corridor.

Table 13.1: Protected Views and Prospects

Views and Prospects	
VP1	Views of the River Barrow upstream and downstream from Cromaboo Bridge and from Horse Bridge
VP2	Views of the River Barrow upstream and downstream from the proposed New Town Street bridge
VP3	Views from the River Barrow across open land to the south and north of the town
VP4	Views of the Grand Canal and of the Barrow Navigation, upstream and downstream from all bridges
VP5	Views along the River Barrow from all existing public rights of way (including public roads as well as footpaths)
VP6	Views of the Dominican Church from Barrow Quay and from the banks of the River Barrow
VP7	Views and prospects forming the setting and environs of all protected structures

13.11 NATURAL HERITAGE/ BIODIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

It is an objective of the Council:

- NHO1:** To conserve and protect national/EU designated sites and to ensure that any new development proposal in the vicinity of, or affecting a designated site, provides sufficient information to show how its proposals will impact on the habitat of the site, and appropriate amelioration, and the Council will consult with the DoAHG in this regard.
- NHO2:** To encourage the development of proposals for new woodlands utilising funding available through schemes such as the Neighbour Wood and Native Woodland Schemes.
- NHO3:** To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service prior to undertaking, approving or authorising any works or development that may impact on the natural heritage.
- NHO4:** To map the habitats contained within and adjacent to the Plan area and to identify the biodiversity areas and recommendations made for their protection and enhancement.
- NHO5:** To carry out a tree survey of all trees in the town and to implement its recommendations in relation to the protection of specific trees and groups of trees of special amenity value, including the possible making of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

NHO6: To prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County, including Athy during the lifetime of this Plan.

NHO7: To request National Parks and Wildlife Service to prioritise the preparation of a Management Plan for the River Barrow a Natura 2000 Site and to have regard to the objectives and management practices proposed in the Management Plan as appropriate.

NHO8: To identify suitable buffer zones between designated ecological sites and areas zoned for development.





Athy Town Council

Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018

Legend

- Grand Canal and River Barrow
- NHA Grand Canal
- SAC River Barrow
- Athy Town Boundary
- Existing trees to be Preserved
- Zone of Archaeological Potential
- Views & Prospects to be Preserved (Related to Water Corridor)
- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) (National Site or Monument)

Natural Heritage, Views & Prospects

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 13.1

Scale: N.T.C.

Drg No: 200/10/509

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(Kildare County Council)

Drawn By DMcN

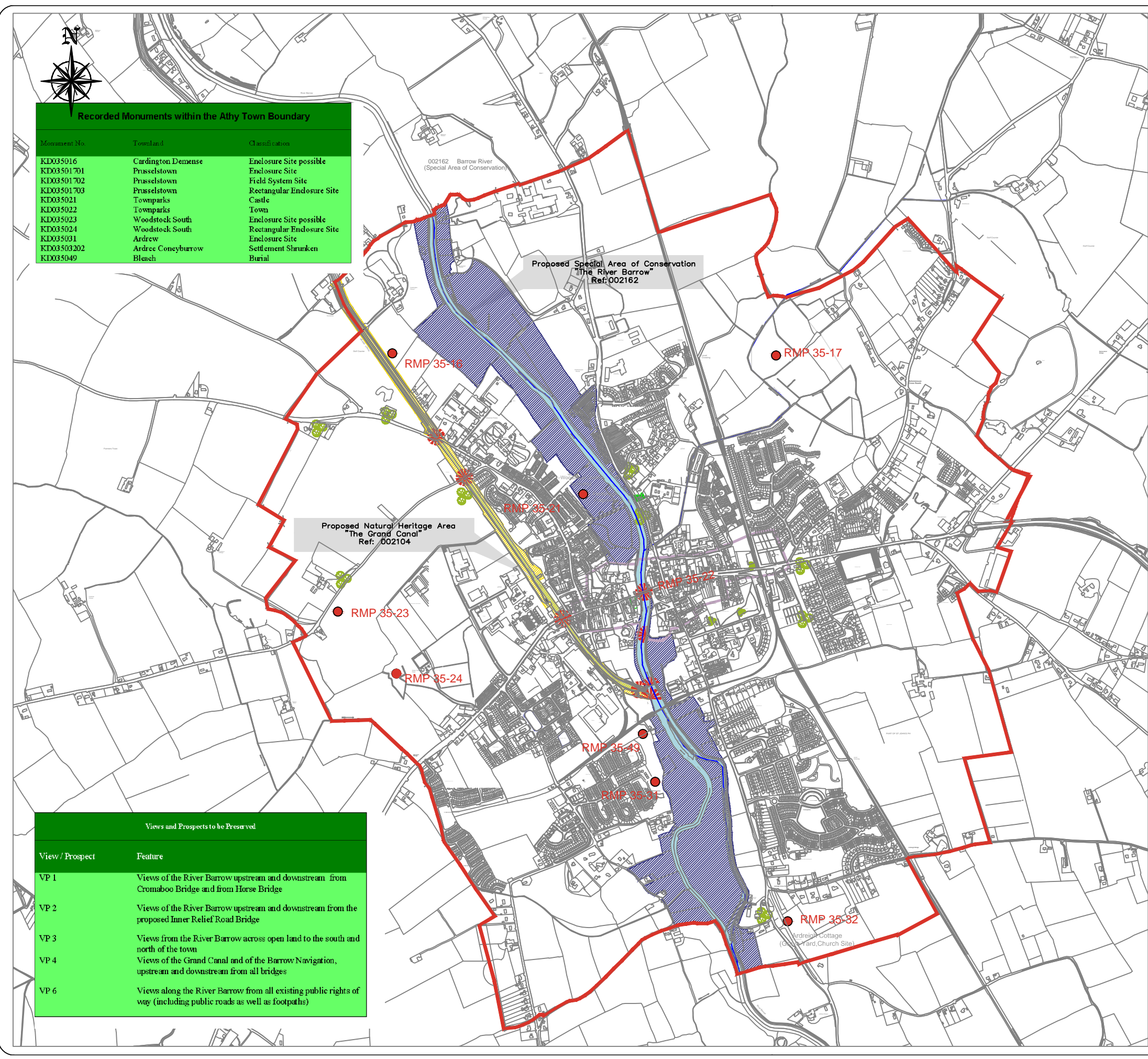
THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE WRITTEN STATEMENT

Recorded Monuments within the Athy Town Boundary

Monument No	Townland	Classification
KD035016	Cardington Demense	Enclosure Site possible
KD03501701	Prusselstown	Enclosure Site
KD03501702	Prusselstown	Field System Site
KD03501703	Prusselstown	Rectangular Enclosure Site
KD035021	Townparks	Castle
KD035022	Townparks	Town
KD035023	Woodstock South	Enclosure Site possible
KD035024	Woodstock South	Rectangular Enclosure Site
KD035031	Ardrew	Enclosure Site
KD03503202	Ardree Coneyburrow	Settlement Shrunken
KD035049	Blench	Burial

Views and Prospects to be Preserved

View / Prospect	Feature
VP 1	Views of the River Barrow upstream and downstream from Cromaboo Bridge and from Horse Bridge
VP 2	Views of the River Barrow upstream and downstream from the proposed Inner Relief Road Bridge
VP 3	Views from the River Barrow across open land to the south and north of the town
VP 4	Views of the Grand Canal and of the Barrow Navigation, upstream and downstream from all bridges
VP 6	Views along the River Barrow from all existing public rights of way (including public roads as well as footpaths)





CHAPTER 14

Urban Design and Opportunity Areas

14



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To create a vibrant and bustling town and to enhance the quality of the built environment.

14.1 BACKGROUND

Through the planning process, local authorities have a key role in relation to the formation of the built environment. This chapter outlines guidelines to support a key element of the core strategy to consolidate Athy and support the achievement of a sustainable town through the identification of character areas and key opportunity sites. The chapter also sets out general guidance in relation to urban design.

The Council will proactively encourage the regeneration and conservation of the town centre whereby development and growth is managed and coordinated with the emerging role of the town using the best practice principles and the detailed design considerations outlined within this chapter. It should be read in conjunction with the relevant DOEHLG guidelines and Government policy documents listed below;

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages) (2009).
- Urban Design Manual; a Best Practice Guide (2009).
- Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 (2009).

14.2 BEST PRACTICE

To guide sustainable urban development and growth and to create a distinctive and enduring environment, the following principles should inform future development proposals;

Character: Development which creates an identity and character reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape.

Continuity and Enclosure: The creation of public and private spaces which are clearly distinguished through continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space by the built form.

Quality of the Public Realm: The provision of public spaces and routes which are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society,

including older people and people with mobility impairments.

Ease of Movement: The creation of areas which are easy to get to and move through, achieved by prioritising people before traffic.

Legibility: The creation of legible places provided by identifiable routes, intersections and landmarks.

Walkable Environment: The creation of places that facilitate access to public transport in order to reduce reliance on the private car and provide a well connected open space network.

Adaptability: The creation of places that can change easily and can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Diversity: The promotion of choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses to ensure a place that responds to local needs as well as providing for a diverse society of different incomes at different stages of life.

Environmental Sustainability: The enhancement of local ecology, the promotion of biodiversity, the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the minimisation of flood risk.

14.3 STRATEGY

This Plan seeks to build on the existing strengths of the town such as its historic core, landmark buildings and architectural heritage, urban spaces and civic amenities by identifying opportunity sites which will complement Athy's existing assets and act as catalysts for change.

It also seeks to enhance the factors that have a significant impact on the image of the town and the quality of the public domain by:

- Promoting and encouraging high quality urban design;
- Formalising approaches and entrances to the town in order to create a sense of arrival and departure;
- Relieving traffic congestion within the town centre by improving permeability;
- Creating a network of quality public spaces and a legible public realm;
- Reinforcing the heart of the town and creating distinctive areas within the centre;

- Prioritising the development of derelict/ brownfield and key infill/gap sites therefore ensuring that new development is based on the concept of consolidating the existing town core;
- Ensuring a mix of uses within the core;
- Enhancing the physical environment and streetscape in order to provide a pleasant shopping experience;
- Providing for sustainable urban expansion areas;
- Calming traffic flow and rationalising carparking with the use of high quality materials;

14.4 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

14.4.1 Introduction

The urban analysis considers the current situation of the Town Centre in terms of;

- Athy's legibility, function and image;
- Built form and visual appropriateness;
- Public open space and major pedestrian generators;
- Transport links and movement;
- Land use and activity

A strategy based on this analysis will aim to improve the strength and vitality of the Town Centre and in doing so will have regard to the policies and objectives of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017. In helping to identify areas that have the potential to develop the town centre, a full S.W.O.T analysis¹ of the town has been undertaken, the result of which are summarised below.

14.4.2 Legibility, Function and Image

Athy is bisected by the River Barrow which runs in a north-south direction through the centre of the town. The town's main axis is east-west, along Leinster Street east of the River Barrow, crossing Cromaboo Bridge to Duke Street and William Street to the west of the town.

On the east side of the river Leinster Street is intersected at Emily Square by Stanhope Street and Offaly Street. On the west side Woodstock Street branches northwards at the junction of Duke Street and William Street.

The retail element within the town has shifted from Leinster Street to Duke Street. Leinster Street has suffered as a result with many derelict and vacant buildings. A diversity of shops and businesses need to be attracted to Athy to ensure the vitality of the town centre. However, the through flow of traffic along Duke Street and Leinster Street combined with the lack of permeability through the town has resulted in chronic traffic congestion within the centre. Traffic congestion combined with the narrowness of the footpaths in places negatively impacts on the shopping experience within the town centre.

The Leinster Street Area with its large vacancy rates and substantially intact historic fabric has left a distinctive structure that is ideal for regeneration and a prime opportunity to act as a 'catalyst for change'. The primary aim in this context is to provide the Leinster Street/ Emily Square area with a new purpose, which builds on the distinctive sense of place the area already possesses. An opportunity therefore exists to utilise the historic core with its



¹ The 'S.W.O.T. analysis' involved identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Athy's townscape.

strong sense of place, character and culture as a tool to regenerate the town core and achieve a place with a positive public image. Developing a cultural quarter within the historic town core area will reinforce Athy's status as a heritage town.

14.4.3 Built Form and Visual Appropriateness

Urban grain can be defined as the pattern and form of buildings, plots and blocks within urban areas. In cases where there is a dense pattern emerging with multiple plots/buildings fronting a street, the urban grain is defined as fine. The term loose grain is applied where the building plot is larger and the built form smaller.

Typically within historic towns a fine grain is prevalent and in this regard Athy is no exception. Plots within the town particularly along Leinster Street, Duke Street, William Street and Stanhope Street are deep plots with narrow frontage onto the street.

The development of Duke Street as the main shopping area within the town has resulted in the loss of the historic fabric particularly in the vicinity of Edmund Rice Square and St. John's Lane. This area of the town suffers from poor definition of the public realm. The built form comprises of low grade architecture combined with poor quality shop fronts as well as an abundance of derelict buildings and vacant sites. In contrast the upside to the lack of redevelopment around Leinster Street and Emily Square has meant that the historic fabric has remained largely intact. There is therefore an opportunity to redevelop this area in a manner that retains and enhances its historic sense of place.

14.4.4 Public Open Space and Major Pedestrian Generators

There is a good provision of connected civic spaces particularly around Emily Square, however overall the quality of the public realm at this location is poor - typified by poor quality materials and an abundance of clutter. The main purpose of these civic spaces is the provision of car parking with the exception of Market Day. This Plan aims to improve the quality of the streetscape and the public realm.

Both the River Barrow and the Grand Canal present Athy with a unique setting and provide amenity areas beside water bodies with an attractive riverside pedestrian walkway adjacent to Emily Square. The River Barrow waterside amenity areas also play a vital role as floodplains for the river and thereby

minimise flood impact upon more developed areas within the Athy town boundary. This walkway is however poorly overlooked and has poor linkages back towards Offaly Street and the Carlow Road. An opportunity exists to improve the quality of the public open spaces along the banks of the river and to develop the amenities provided by the town's unique location adjacent to the waterways.

Athy also has a good provision of public open space for both passive and active recreation purposes. However, most of these amenity areas are disconnected from the town centre with poor linkages and permeability. This has resulted in poorly defined and underutilised public parks and open space particularly in the vicinity of the Town's Park. An opportunity exists to improve the access and use of these spaces through well designed urban development.

14.4.5 Transport Links and Movement

There are poorly defined approaches to the town and a number of edges are of poor quality characterised by vacant and derelict sites as well as a poor quality public realm. An opportunity exists to improve the approaches to the town and provide gateways to the town to celebrate the entrances to the town centre.

Traffic congestion has become the largest threat to the success of Athy as an attractive urban centre.

While the River Barrow provides Athy with many positive attributes it also represents a physical barrier with only two access points that cross the river, one vehicular and one pedestrian, providing inadequate permeability within the town centre. In order to consolidate the town; better connectivity and permeability is required to overcome the traffic congestion along Leinster Street and Duke Street.

There is also a lack of pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the town centre and nearby residential areas. An opportunity exists to provide overlooked cycle and pedestrian linkages between the residential areas, amenities and the town core.

14.4.6 Land Use and Activity

The town centre is the commercial core of Athy with many established retailers located there. Poor uptake of retail with high retail vacancy rates within the town centre has occurred through the loss of retail functions to neighbouring towns such as Carlow, Portlaoise and Newbridge. An opportunity exists to improve the quality of the retail provision

within the town through the amalgamation of plots. There are large concentrations of social housing along the western bank of the River Barrow. Recently there has been some welcome regeneration of the housing stock and the provision of community facilities within the area such as a swimming pool, basketball courts and a playground. However these residential areas remain effectively severed from the rest of the town through lack of connectivity with both the main shopping areas of the town and the schools on the eastern side of the river.

14.4.7 General Urban Design Policies

This section sets out general urban design policies which address issues arising from the Townscape Analysis.

It is a policy of the Council:

- UDG1:** To utilise the towns historic core as a tool to regenerate the town centre to achieve a place with a positive public image.
- UDG2:** To facilitate the development of the historic core as a cultural quarter that reinforces Athy's status as a Heritage town.
- UDG3:** To improve access and use of new and existing amenity spaces in the town through well designed developments that provide connections from the town centre by way of good linkages and higher level of permeability.
- UDG4:** To improve the quality of the public open spaces along the banks of the river and develop the amenities provided by the town's unique location adjacent to the waterways.
- UDG5:** To provide better definition of public parks and open space that allows for greater levels of use, particularly in the vicinity of the Town's Park.
- UDG6:** To improve the approaches to the town and provide well designed entrances to mark the edges of the town centre at appropriate locations that reflect its character.
- UDG7:** To achieve better connectivity and permeability to overcome the traffic congestion along Leinster Street and Duke Street.
- UDG8:** To provide overlooked cycle and pedestrian linkages between the residential areas, amenity areas and the town core.

14.5 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

This section establishes the general principles and strategies that are proposed for Athy, including specific proposals to guide growth and manage change in the town over the next two decades by consolidating and expanding Athy in order to create a lively urban core with a mix of residential, commercial and amenity uses. The overall aim of the strategy will be to achieve a flexible and realistic framework for growth while allowing for the continued development, regeneration and physical improvement of the town.

It is a particular objective of the Plan that the established town centre be consolidated, providing for commercial and mixed-use development while creating strong linkages within the town centre. It is therefore an aim of the urban design framework to develop in an integrated manner opportunity sites within the town in order to intensify development in the existing urban centre.

The vision of this strategy is to create a vibrant and bustling town with a diverse mix of activities. The strategy seeks firstly to develop derelict and key infill/gap sites in the town centre, enhance the physical environment and streetscape of the existing town core, create zones of activity and in doing so realise the full potential of Athy's inherent character.

14.5.1 Consolidate the Existing Town Centre

Athy today is facing physical, social and economic challenges. The proposed bypass of the town has the potential to create both positive and negative effects. While it will ease congestion, it could also potentially lead to the further degradation of Leinster Street and Duke Street due to reduced levels in footfall associated with passing traffic. By removing congestion the bypass will however provide an opportunity to re-focus this area to provide a quality public realm and an attractive place in which to live, work, shop and recreate. It is therefore imperative that the primacy of Leinster Street and Duke Street be respected and reinforced by any expansion of the town centre; this can only be achieved if an integrated approach is adopted in order to enlarge the town centre in a sustainable manner.

14.5.2 Improve the Image of the Town Centre

The image of Athy is crucial to its vitality and therefore plays an important part towards the success of the town centre. The following measures will strengthen the image of the town centre and

support its role as the principle commercial area. Good urban quarters are judged on their street life, therefore good streets need to be active and the areas which they serve must be permeable. Good quality streets have well defined edges and transparency or visibility at their edges (where private and public edges meet). For this to happen there must be a good horizontal grain of active frontages along a street. Thus in any block of, say, 10 shop units, there might be a range of users such as food shops or deli's, a video store, an off-licence, a patisserie/bakery, a café/bar, a gallery, a restaurant, a pharmacy or a betting shop. Successful quarters tend to have a number of activity nodes within a short walking distance of each other.

High vacancy rates within the town centre provide an opportunity to develop good quality streets with ground floor active frontages as outlined above. While improvements to the public realm in the form of high quality street furniture, public lighting, improvements to the surface material and traffic calming may improve the streetscape, the overall success of a town centre will largely rely on the right combination and location of shops and cultural activities.

Emily Square at the heart of the historic core has a poor public realm. Its principal function is related to traffic and parking which at present, dilute the quality of the civic space with the clutter of signs, poles and overhead wires and the poor quality of some recent developments including shop fronts and other architectural elements.

The historic core retains many buildings of significant architectural and historical merit such as the Courthouse, the Library, the Heritage Centre and White Castle all of which significantly contribute to the urban quality of the historic centre and provide Athy with both a sense of place and historic identity.

An opportunity exists to utilise the historic core with its strong sense of place, character and culture as a tool to regenerate the town core and achieve a place with a positive public image.

Shopfronts can have a significant impact on the image of the town and the quality of the public domain. It is proposed to:

- Promote and encourage high quality shopfront design particularly within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) (Refer to Chapter 12 in this Plan).



- Encourage the retention, sensitive repair and re-use of traditional shopfronts.
- Encourage the sensitive conversion of retail units to residential use where viable.
- Reduce visual clutter by removing and preventing the introduction of poor quality projecting signage.

Leinster Street has experienced deterioration and neglect resulting in high vacancy rates. The fine urban grain is an important feature of this street; however improvement of visual identity of this area is needed given its role as the first point of entry to the town from the east.

This Plan seeks to improve the quality of new development in the town centre and to improve the general ambience of the public realm.

14.5.3 Intensify Town Centre Development

The regeneration of Athy Town Centre is a complex process of adaptation of existing urban areas, preservation of areas of historical significance, the balanced development within and adjoining the town centre boundaries and environmental protection and flood risk minimisation.

Therefore, this chapter seeks to:

- Develop a framework for the orderly town centre growth that balances adaptation, preservation and expansion.

- Set out principles for the intensification of use of the existing grain within the established town centre.
- Establish a consistent approach to key redevelopment sites by way of comprehensive design guidelines.

Consolidation is necessary to reinforce the town centre as the central hub of activity resulting in a vibrant and bustling core with a diverse mix of uses. The intensification of development in Athy can occur by utilising undeveloped, backland and brownfield land within or adjacent to the town centre area.

The main spine route of Leinster Street and Duke Street are characterised by a fine urban grain with some noteworthy examples of traditional shopfronts. Despite the close knit appearance, large underutilised vacant backland plots exist to the rear of these streets. This Plan seeks to maximise the development potential of these expansion areas in an integrated manner. It is therefore proposed to strengthen and formalise existing routes within the town as well as creating new linkages along which development can take place.

In this manner the town core will expand organically overtime, allowing the continued development of a viable urban centre.



14.5.4 Regularise Traffic

It is the aim of this strategy to intensify and transform Athy from a busy through route to a bustling core. Presently, Leinster Street and Duke Street are characterised by significant levels of vehicular activity that is largely associated with through traffic, however commercial activities within the town also contribute to the traffic flows in the area.

The proposed Southern Distributor Road will remove significant levels of the through traffic from the town centre. Upon the construction of this road, it is therefore an objective of this strategy that traffic be calmed, most importantly at the entrances and approaches to the town in order to improve the comfort for pedestrians and enhance the public realm. This can be achieved by providing alternative routes through the town centre, reducing the level and speed of traffic through the town by appropriate use of surface material combined with pedestrian priority zones.

Athy Town Centre will therefore comprise of a fine grain network of streets and paths with defined public spaces which will allow intensity of use as well as social and economic exchanges to take place. It is proposed to develop a network of public spaces throughout the town that are easy to move between with varying activities.

Figure 14.3 shows existing and proposed streets within the town centre which will provide alternative routes in and around the town centre also serving to relieve traffic congestion along Leinster Street and Duke Street.

14.5.5 Formalise Entrances and Approaches to the Town Centre

The existing entrances to the town create a poor sense of arrival. Derelict buildings set a negative tone along the approach from the west, while vacant sites and the awkward road layout provide a poor sense of enclosure as the town is approached from the east. It is therefore proposed to mark the entrances to the town as follows:

The Western Approach

Create a new approach to the town at the Tegral Site at the junction of the proposed New Town Street (Inner Relief Street) and the Kilkenny Road.

A key building should signify this important entrance to the town.

Figure 14.1: Western Approach



Key

-  **MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE**
-  **FUTURE MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE**
-  **SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK**
-  **MAIN ROAD JUNCTION**
-  **TOWN CENTRE GATEWAY**

The Eastern Approach

Transform Leinster Street at the Junction with Church Road into a boulevard and create a new public space with a key building at the junction of the proposed New Town Street and Leinster Street.

Figure 14.2: Eastern Approach



Key

-  **MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE**
-  **FUTURE MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE**
-  **SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK**
-  **MAIN ROAD JUNCTION**
-  **TOWN CENTRE GATEWAY**

14.5.6 Integrate Green Space and Increase Permeability

While Athy has an abundance of green space much of it is disconnected and underutilised. It is therefore proposed to provide better connectivity between areas of green space by providing green links and improving the pedestrian and cycling network between the existing parks, the town centre and community, social and education facilities.

This green network will encourage further biodiversity and provide a dedicated pedestrian and cycle network across Athy. Native tree planting throughout the town should form part of the design philosophy to encourage biodiversity and create a quality public realm.

14.5.7 Urban Design Framework Policies

It is a policy of the Council:

- UDF1:** To consolidate the existing town centre through an integrated approach that consolidates the town centres activities in a sustainable manner.
- UDF2:** To improve the image of the town centre by increasing permeability, creating well defined street edges (where private space and public space meet), developing high quality streets with active ground floor frontages.
- UDF3:** To strengthen the identity of the town by achieving a balance between old and new which reinforces the distinctiveness of the historic town core.
- UDF4:** To improve the quality of the town's streetscape by:
 - Promoting and encouraging high quality shopfront design particularly within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) (Refer to Chapter 15 in this Plan).
 - Encouraging the retention, sensitive repair and re-use of traditional shopfronts.
 - Encouraging the sensitive conversion of retail units to residential use where viable.
 - Reducing visual clutter by removing and preventing the introduction of poor quality projecting signage.

- UDF5:** To provide an attractive streetscape along Leinster Street, Duke Street and Emily Square by rationalising and calming traffic flow, regularising on street car parking and using high quality materials to create a quality public realm.
- UDF6:** To intensify town centre development by establishing a consistent approach to key redevelopment sites by way of comprehensive design guidelines (refer to section 14.6 – Character Areas)
- UDF7:** To allow for the intensification of the town centre by utilising undeveloped, backland and brownfield land within or adjacent to the town centre area.
- UDF8:** To strengthen and formalise existing routes within the town as well as creating new linkages along which development can take place.
- UDF9:** To facilitate traffic calming measures, most importantly at the entrances and approaches to the town, which improve the comfort for pedestrians and enhance the public realm.
- UDF10:** To develop a network of public spaces throughout the town that are easy to move between allowing for various modes of transport.
- UDF11:** To utilise and enhance the environmental qualities of the town to provide quality facilities in terms of passive and active recreational green spaces.
- UDF12:** To prepare and submit a design statement for developments within the town centre, as deemed necessary by the planning authority.
- UDF13:** To incorporate the Key Design Guidelines set out for each of the five character areas (defined in section 14.6 of the plan) in the preparation of design statements.

FIGURE 14.3 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

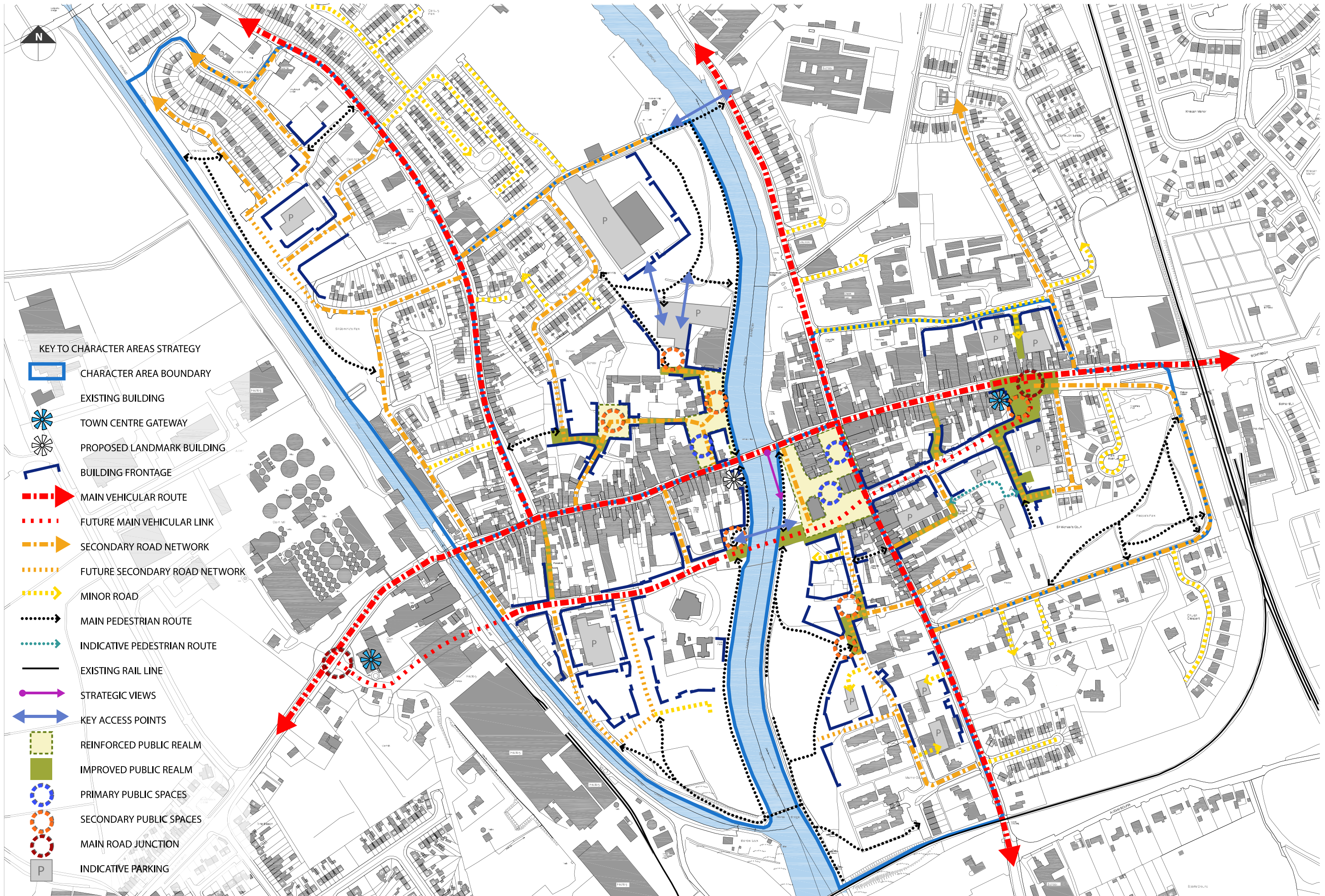
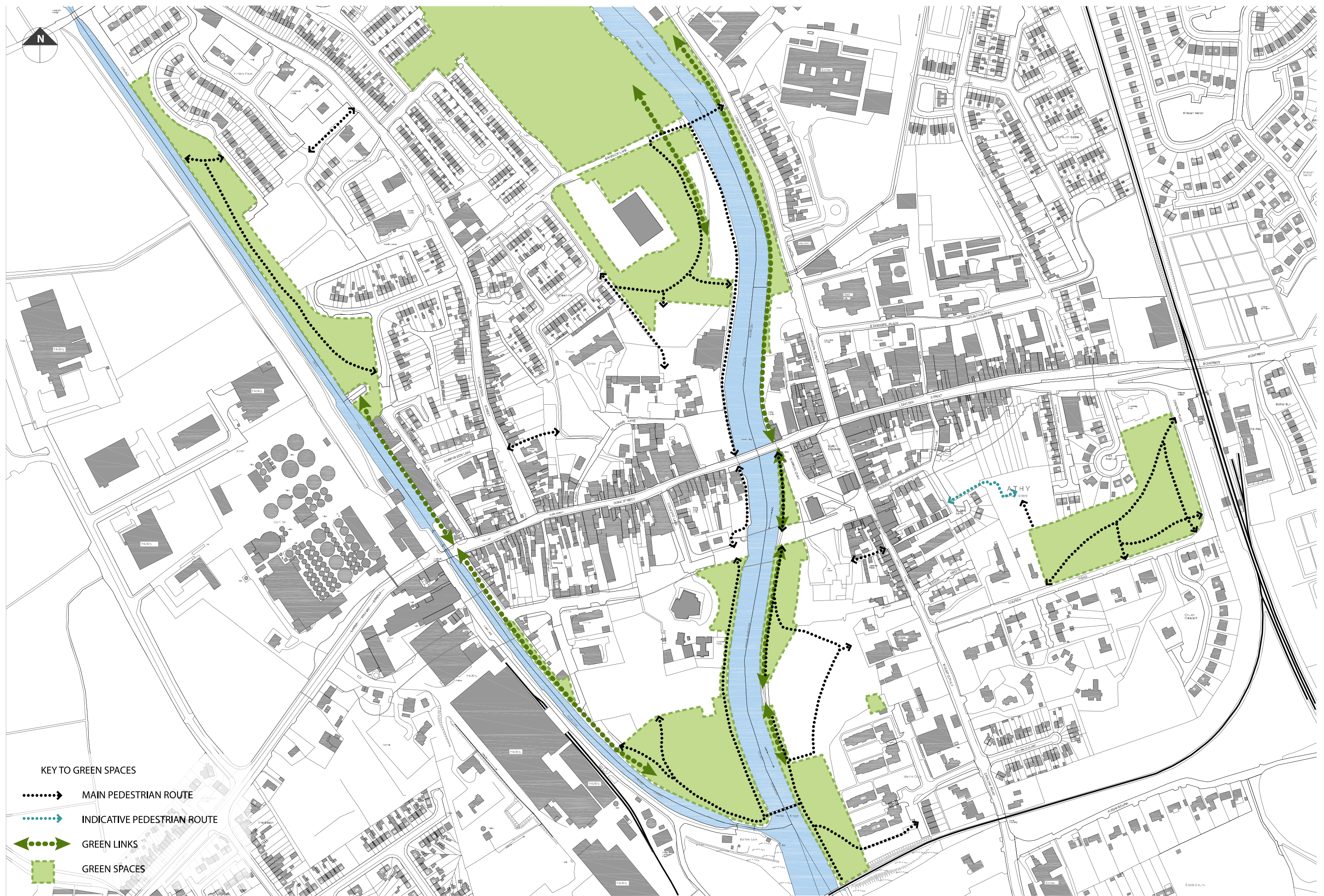


FIGURE 14.4 NETWORK OF GREEN SPACES



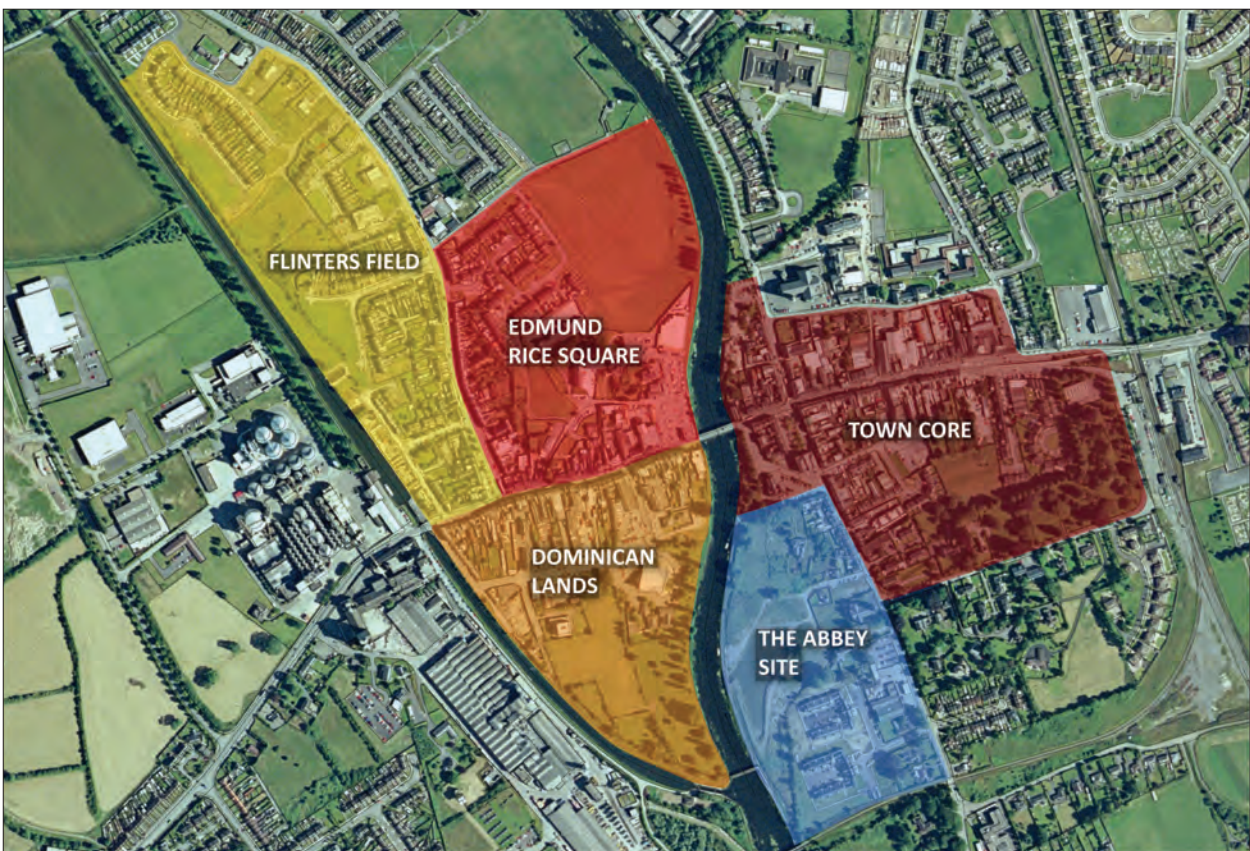
14.6 CHARACTER AREAS

Character areas have been identified in order to assist in maximising the potential of underutilised land in the town. Indicative urban design sketches suggest how the built form (street frontages, important buildings etc.), routes and spaces could be developed in these areas. Notwithstanding the indicative sketches, a design statement which clearly shows how development proposals relate to a specific site/area will be required as deemed necessary by the planning authority.

These character areas include:

- Town Core
- The Abbey Site
- Dominican Lands
- Edmund Rice Square (incl. Townspark)
- Flinters Field (incl. Grand Canal)

Figure 14.5: Character Areas



14.6.1 Town Core Character Area

The Study Area

The subject lands comprise primarily of the area to the north and south of Leinster Street including Emily Square. These lands are bounded by the Railway line to the East, Kirwans Lane to the North, and Church Road and the Abbey Lands to the south and south west respectively and the River Barrow to the west.

Key Urban Design Issues

The study area provides an opportunity to revitalise an underutilised area in the historic centre.

There are a number of key opportunity sites within the character area, mostly occurring to the rear of the existing buildings north and south of Leinster Street.

Design Objectives

In order to increase permeability and to provide relief to the traffic congestion experienced through the town, it is proposed to develop a New Town Street to the south of Leinster Street. This street provides an opportunity to maximise the potential of extensive backland opportunity sites to the south of Leinster Street.

The character area presents an opportunity to formalise the approach and entrance and create a new well defined entrance into the town centre in order to create a sense of arrival and departure. It is envisaged that a key building at the junction of Leinster Street and the New Street will signal the significance of the site as an entrance into the Town Centre. Care should be taken that this building addresses both street frontages and must

be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations. Care should be taken with regard to the scale and massing of this structure to ensure that it does not become too bulky. New developments should enhance the character of the existing historic core.

It is proposed that the New Town Street will link to Emily Square. In order to overcome the barrier of the river and increase permeability within the town centre it is proposed that a new vehicular bridge will link Emily Square to the access road at the Dominican Church and the backlands to the south of Duke Street.

Development along the New Town Street should complement and add to the existing town core providing a successful urban centre with a concentration and variety of uses. The built form should consist of a mix of historic and contemporary structures. New proposals for this area should have regard to the surrounding character by enhancing the historic core through the use of high quality design, fine grained, active frontage blocks.

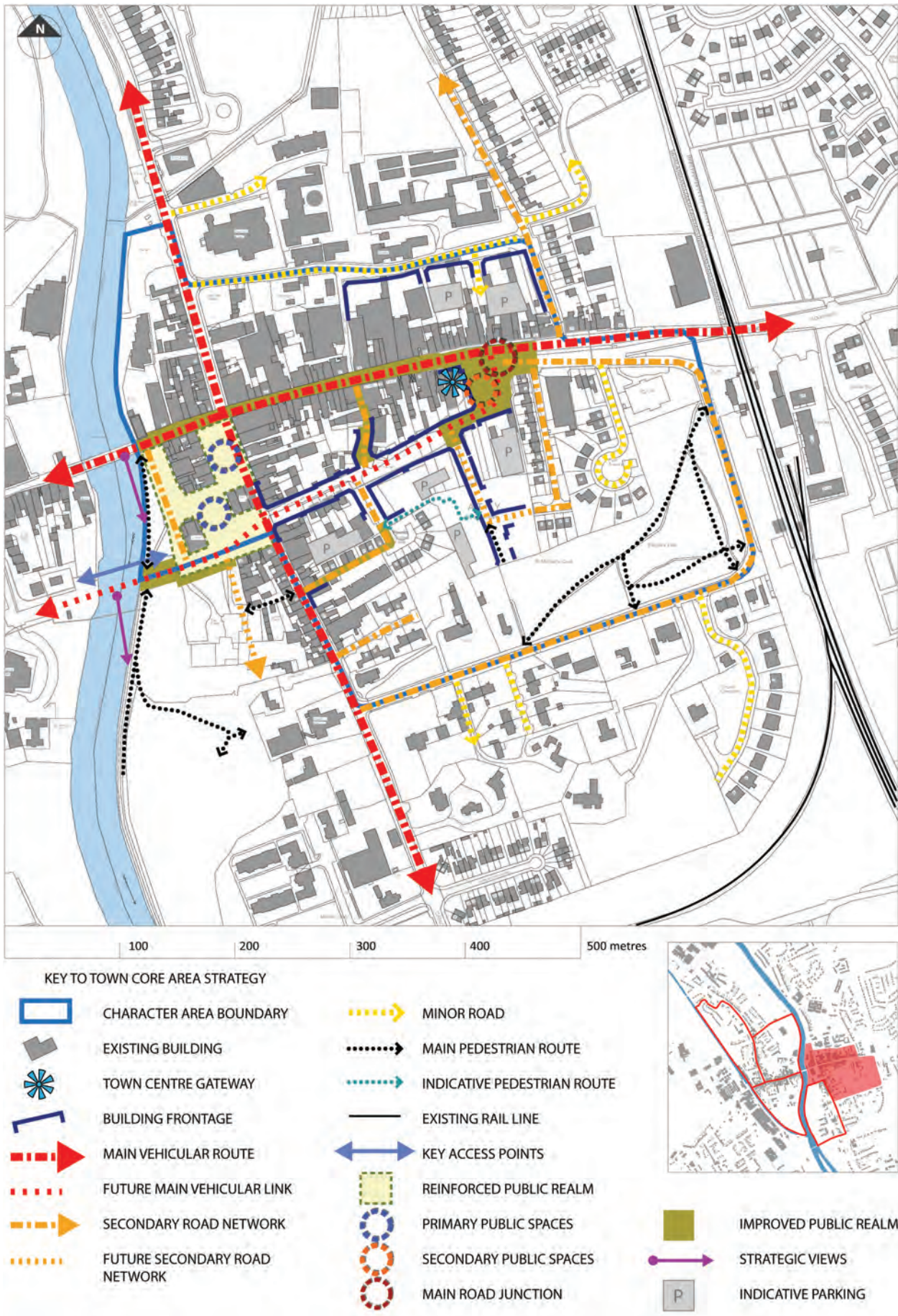
Development to the rear or adjacent to the existing built form should have regard to residential and visual amenity of these buildings. The design and layout of new buildings should incorporate the principles of passive surveillance to encourage a community atmosphere that discourages anti-social behaviour, through active overlooking of public space.

Table 14.1 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.6 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

Table 14.1: Key Design Guidelines

- Facilitate the construction of a formal gateway to the Town Centre
- Facilitate the development of the New Town Street to improve permeability and relieve traffic congestion within the town core.
- Provide additional shopping potential and improve the overall shopping experience
- Improve connectivity to the Peoples Park
- Place Emily Square at the centre of the town
- Provide additional shopping
- Provide fine grained active frontage development in the form of a perimeter block
- Parking to the rear or within buildings
- Improve the amenity area towards the river

Figure 14.6: Town Core Character Area



14.6.2 The Abbey Character Area

The Study Area

The study area comprises the undeveloped lands on the site of the former Abbey and the underutilised sites along Marina Court. The lands are bounded by the Emily Square to the north and Offaly Street and the Carlow Road to the East. The River Barrow forms the boundary to the West.

Key Urban Design Issues

This character area lies adjacent to the centre of the town providing a key expansion area within the town core. The sensitive redevelopment of this character area is required due to its pivotal location immediately south of the historic heart of Athy and adjacent to the River Barrow. The exceptional views afforded towards the site from Cromaboo Bridge and from the west bank of the River Barrow also highlight the need for the responsive redevelopment of the character area.

Design Objectives

The character area provides an opportunity to intensify town centre development by reinforcing the urban fabric of the area. In particular any new development should provide a strong built edge to Emily Square providing a point of destination and increasing the pedestrian flow to this area of the town centre. The street network to and within this character area should provide an opportunity to unlock the backland development sites to the rear of existing residential units along Offaly Street.

It is envisaged the character area will comprise of buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, providing a strong street edge along with a quality public realm. Development should comprise a high quality design and fine grained active frontage blocks. Buildings should provide a strong frontage that delineates the public realm. Development to the rear or adjacent to the existing built form shall have regard to the residential and visual amenity of these buildings. Larger blocks may be sensitively incorporated towards the centre of the site. Two or three storey high buildings may be acceptable in this area; however it is imperative that these urban blocks 'look' outwards towards the surrounding streets, public spaces and the River Barrow. Ground floor activity should spill out over the pavements. Where possible, surface car parking should be provided to the rear of buildings.

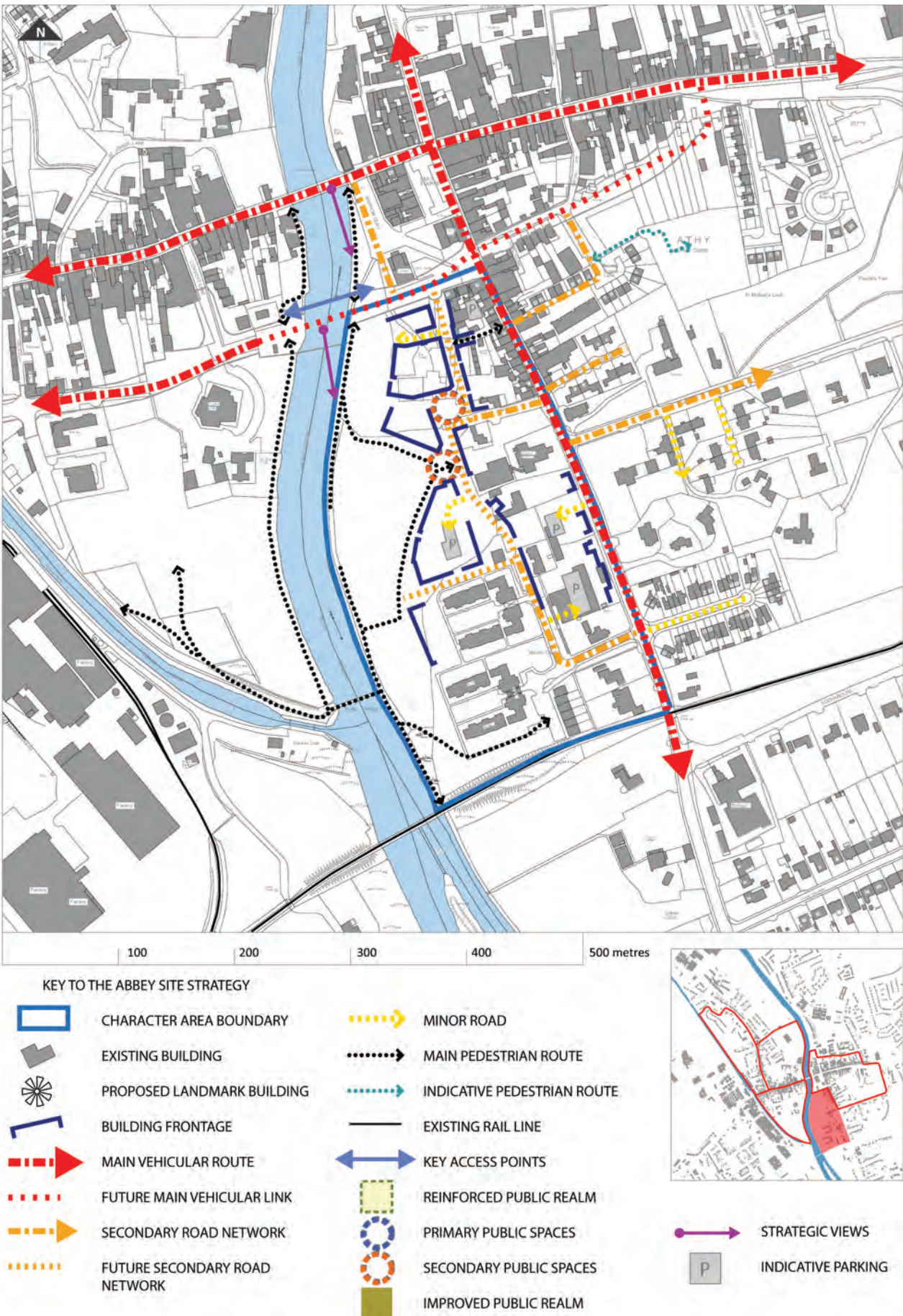
The development of leisure and tourist based uses within the character area will be encouraged in order to complement the amenity value of the river. It is envisaged that a high quality public realm will be provided surrounded by new residential development.

Table 14.2 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.7 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

Table 14.2: Key Design Guidelines

- Consolidate and reinforce the role of Emily Square as the main civic space within the town
- Provide strong street edges and active frontages in order to increase passive surveillance to the public realm
- Create a new civic and cultural urban quarter for the Town
- Develop tourist / leisure based enterprise / uses in addition to niche retailing
- Use perimeter block urban structure
- Provide additional overlooked recreational amenities along the river
- Provide a quality public realm
- Have regard to the amenity of surrounding buildings

Figure 14.7: The Abbey Character Area



14.6.3 Dominican Lands Character Area

Study Area

The Dominican lands are located between the Barrow Navigation of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow. The subject lands comprise of the undeveloped lands around the Dominican Church and include the underutilised and backland sites along the church access road to the south of Duke Street. A number of fields are located at the junction of the Barrow Navigation of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow. There is currently restricted access to the area via a pedestrian bridge and an access road to the church.

Key Urban Design Issues

Although there have been a number of modern developments in this area in recent years, the built form generally provides poor street frontage resulting in a low quality public realm and streetscape. The existing access road consists of few active frontages and town centre uses resulting in an underutilised and underdeveloped area within the town centre. Both the river to the east and the canal to the west form barriers and sever the character area from nearby Emily Square and surrounding areas and permeability is poor between these areas.

Design Objectives

In order to increase permeability and to provide relief to the traffic congestion through the town, it is proposed to link the existing access road to the Dominican church with the new vehicular bridge. An opportunity therefore exists to transform this access road into a bustling urban street within the town core by improving the quality of the public realm, in particular the existing connections and linkages to Duke Street and Emily Square.

The canal is an important historic and amenity element within the town. The canal itself is an underutilised asset which currently presents a physical barrier between the urban centre and the industrial lands to the west. The development of this area provides an opportunity to maximise the potential of the industrial lands to the west of the town by increasing links between these character areas and to establish links with the historic town centre.

Several opportunities exist for appropriate infill development. Infill development should have regard to the surrounding character, particularly where the proposed development is located on a small plot. It is envisaged that the street could be redeveloped

in order to provide for new structures with a strong building line and active frontages. A quality public realm should be achieved using a high standard of quality finishes and treatments.

Development proposals within the character area should generally follow a perimeter block structure and comprise a mix of building types. Mixed use buildings/ schemes will be encouraged where compliant with the relevant zoning provisions. New development should overlook adjacent streets, landscaped courtyards, the canal and river. Apartment developments may be appropriate in limited circumstances, for instance on corner sites to enhance these prominent positions and take advantage of dual aspect, or within mixed use developments with residential uses above shops. The open fields at the southern tip of the character area should be retained as an area of parkland providing passive recreational space. Parts of the area, particularly fronting the parkland, canal and river may have the capacity to absorb larger detached housing.

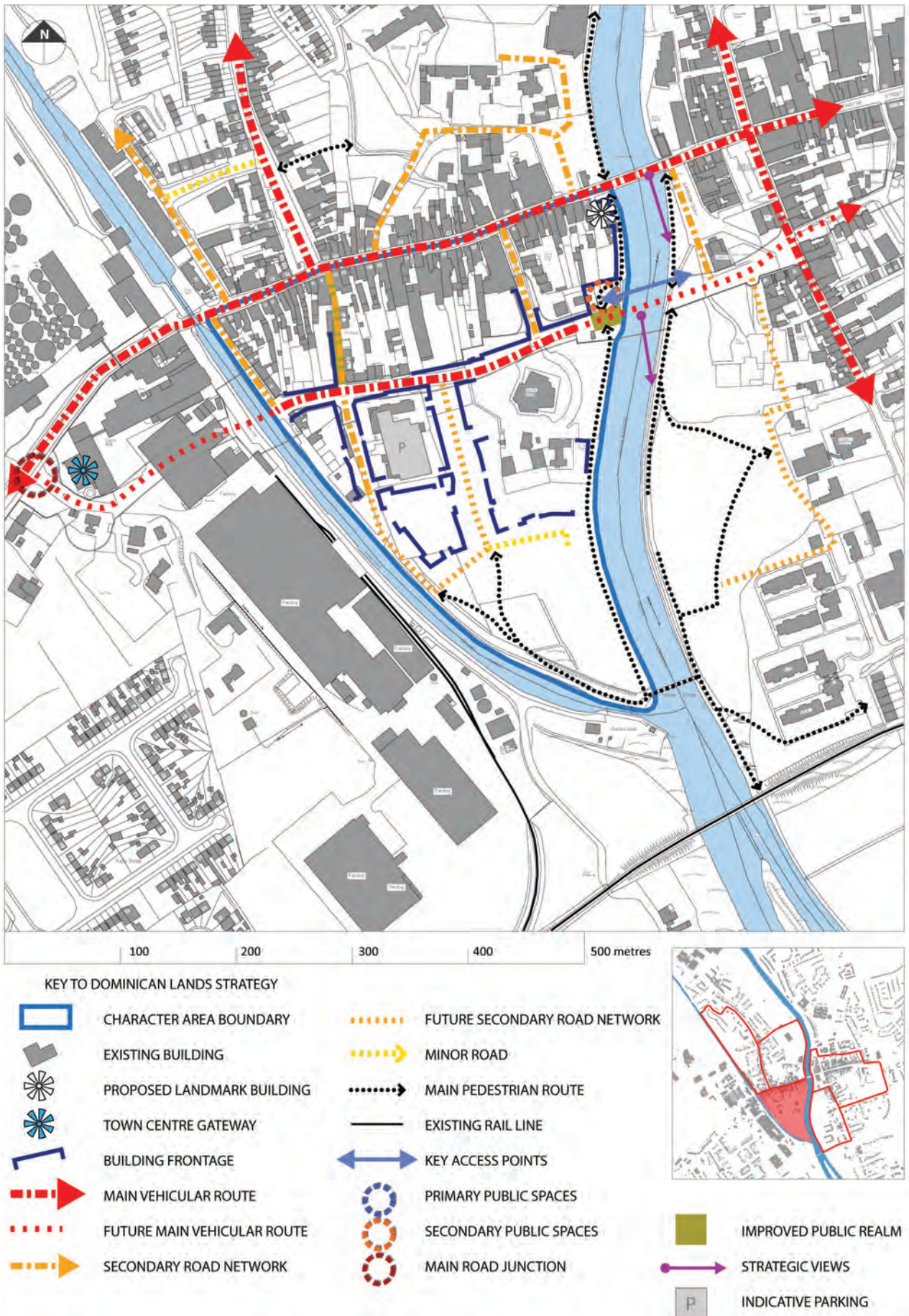
Quality public realm should be designed and developed to a high standard using quality finishes and treatments. Small pocket parks and more local areas of open space should be creatively incorporated into any proposed residential layouts which should be overlooked in order to promote natural surveillance.

The existing riverside walkway ends at Edmund Rice Square and does not extend to the subject site. It is a key design objective that walks along the river and canal should be improved and extended in conjunction with new development to ensure a continuous walkway for new neighbourhoods in this area and for the town in general. In the development of this walkway due consideration should be taken of the natural heritage status of the river and canal. Table 14.3 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.8 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

Table 14.3: Key Design Guidelines

- Overcome the natural barrier of the River Barrow by providing new connections between the character area and Emily Square
- Create a sustainable town centre extension with a mix of uses
- Extend the river and canal side walkways
- Transform the church access roadway (Dominican Lane) into a bustling street within the town core
- Provide appropriate infill development with active frontages and a strong building line along Dominican Lane and Convent Lane
- Improve the quality of the public realm and reinforce the existing linkages between the character area, Duke Street and Emily Square
- Provide an area of passive recreational space to the south of the character area overlooked by larger detached residential development

Figure 14.8: The Dominican Lands Character Area



14.6.4 Edmund Rice Square Character Area

The Study Area

The subject site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Town Centre and is zoned for town centre uses. Pettits Supermarket and Shaws Department Store mainly define this area towards the town centre, while a large expanse of residential development and a public park define the character area to the north. The character area is bounded by the River Barrow to the east, Woodstock Street to the west and Duke Street to the south. The character area is outlined in blue on the following graphic, Fig. 14.9.

Key Urban Design Issues

Edmund Rice Square provides a poor quality public realm used entirely as a surface car park. The square is currently flanked by under scaled one and two storey retail units. The current configuration of the square does little to improve the streetscape along Duke Street.

Pettits Supermarket severs the town centre from the adjacent residential area. The supermarket does not address the river or the open space to the north. The existing riverside walkway is not overlooked, is of poor quality, is poorly lit, attracts anti social behaviour and consequently is uninviting. The existing built form along St. John's Lane is of poor quality and comprises derelict industrial buildings and vacant sites, overall providing a poor public realm.

There is no connectivity with residential development to the north of Edmund Rice Square apart from an unsupervised pedestrian walkway to the housing area adjacent to the school.

Design Objectives

The redevelopment of the area provides an opportunity to connect with the residential development, park and community facilities to the north of the square behind the supermarket. It is proposed to provide a new pedestrian bridge linking the park and residential area with the schools to the east of the river. It is also proposed to provide additional opportunities for community facilities within the park which will overlook an extended riverside walkway. The walkway should run from Duke Street to the proposed pedestrian bridge. In the development of this walkway due consideration should be taken of the SAC status of the River Barrow.

This Plan encourages the redevelopment of Edmund Rice Square to create a sustainable urban quarter with a mix of uses. New development should seek to create a compact area with priority for pedestrians. Redevelopment should increase the connectivity and permeability with adjacent residential developments.

Development shall comprise a high quality design, fine grained, active frontage blocks continuing the existing building line. New buildings should be permanent, timeless and contemporary structures and streets may be punctuated intermittently by individually designed buildings to ensure visual interest and to develop a stimulating streetscape where appropriate.

The existing built form along St. John's Lane provides a poor sense of enclosure particularly in the vicinity of the school. New development along this edge should provide a formal urban structure and strong building line. It is therefore proposed to create a formal public space at this location in order to create a formal urban structure. An opportunity exists to develop the site to the west of the school in order to provide surveillance to the pedestrian walkway associated with the adjacent residential development.

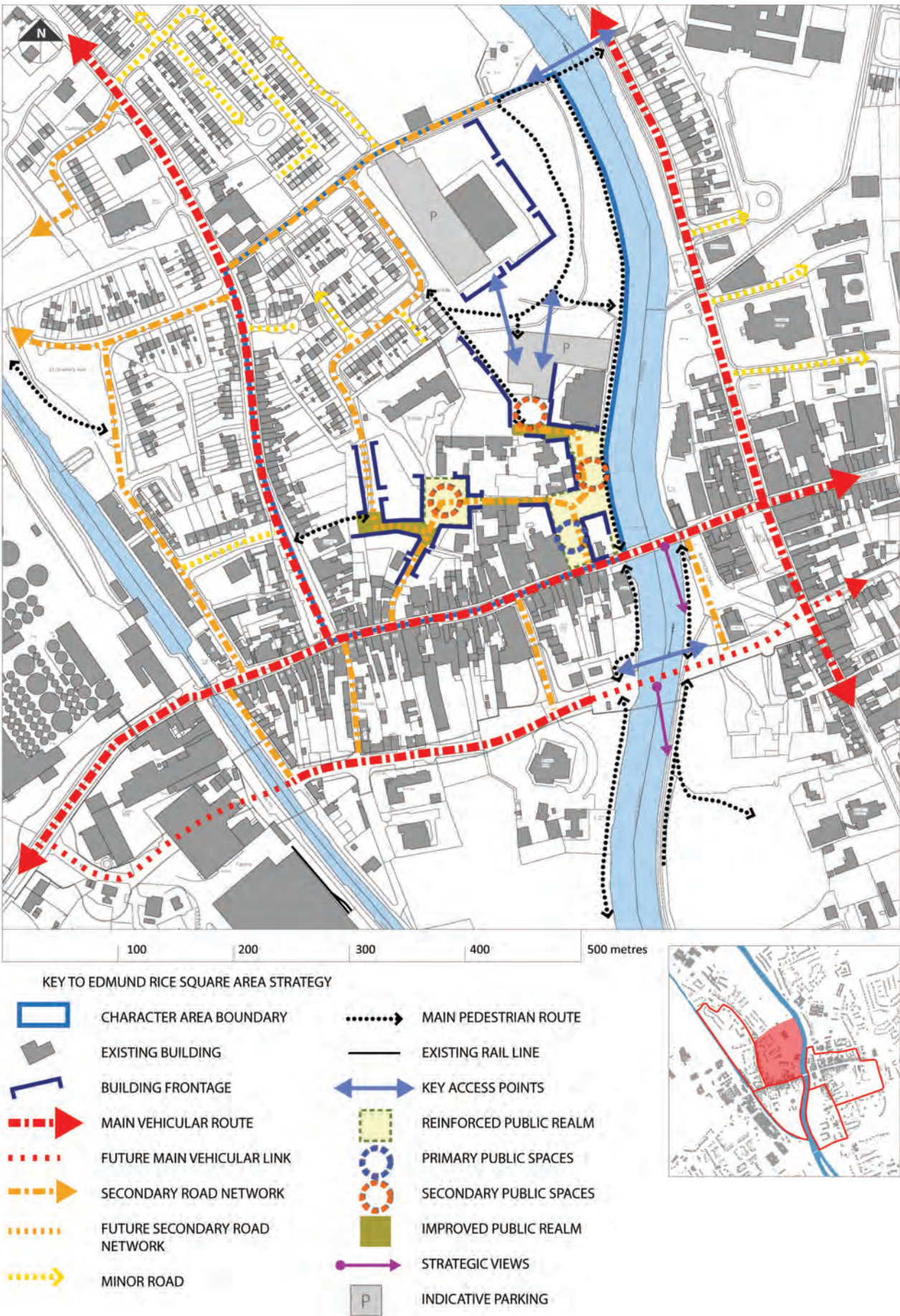
Development to the rear of or adjacent to the existing built form should have regard to the amenity of nearby buildings. Quality public realm shall be achieved using a high standard of quality finishes and treatments.

Table 14.4 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.9 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

Table 14.4: Key Design Guidelines

- Overcome the natural barrier of the River Barrow by providing new connections between the character area and Emily Square
- Create a sustainable town centre extension with a mix of uses
- Extend the river and canal side walkways
- Transform the church access roadway (Dominican Lane) into a bustling street within the town core
- Provide appropriate infill development with active frontages and a strong building line along Dominican Lane and Convent Lane
- Improve the quality of the public realm and reinforce the existing linkages between the character area, Duke Street and Emily Square
- Provide an area of passive recreational space to the south of the character area overlooked by larger detached residential development

Figure 14.9: Edmund Rice Square Character Area



14.6.5 Flinters Field Character Area

Study Area

Flinters Field is located to the north of the town along the canal. The study area is bounded by Woodstock Street to the East, the Canal to the West and Duke Street to the south.

Key Urban Design Issues

The character area comprises disconnected residential development and a poor quality tract of wasteland adjacent to the canal. The existing residential development follows a 'cul de sac' model of development and therefore lacks legibility and connectivity.

Design Objectives

An opportunity exists to intensify development at this location and increase connectivity and permeability.

The built form should comprise buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, with a quality public realm. Buildings should follow the existing building line that delineates the public realm. In particular any new development should provide a strong built edge to the surrounding streets. New development should address the parkland area

identified on Fig 14.10, incorporating the principles of passive surveillance to encourage a community atmosphere and to discourage anti-social behaviour.

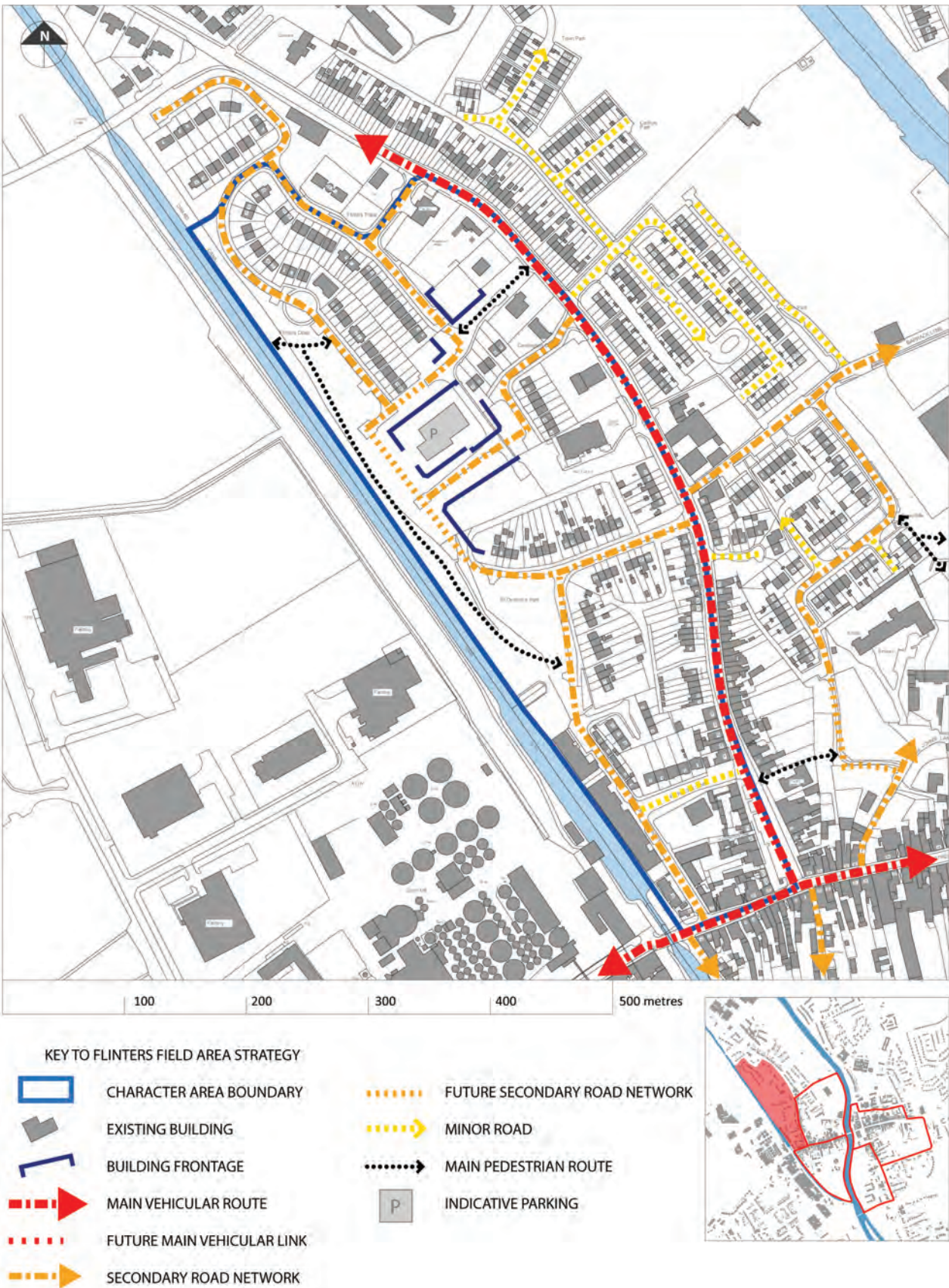
The wasteland adjacent to the canal should be transformed into a linear park which would incorporate a pedestrian walkway to provide an attractive amenity along the canal. In the development of this walkway due consideration should be taken of the NHA status of the canal.

Table 14.5 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.10 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

Table 14.5: Key Design Guidelines

- Improve connectivity and permeability within the character area.
- Provide a strong street edge where appropriate.
- Use of perimeter block structure
- Provide a quality public realm
- Have regard to the amenity of surrounding buildings
- Provide passive supervision of the public realm and areas of open space
- Transform the wasteland along the canal into a linear park.

Figure 14.10: Flinter's Field Character Area



14.7 GENERAL URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The following sections outline detailed urban design considerations:

14.7.1 Scale / Mass / Composition

The size of a building should be relative to its surroundings. Scale is therefore one of the key elements in the design consideration for new buildings.

Scale, mass or bulk essentially refers to the size of the plot, average storey height and also the manner in which the façade is articulated. If these aspects of the design of a building are excessively large when compared to adjoining buildings along a street, then the building is likely to be out of place on the streetscape. Exceptions may be permitted in the following circumstances:

- If it is a building of major public significance.
- If the nature of the use demands such a building and if the location is suitable for such a building.
- The degree to which it can contribute to the economic vitality of the town centre.

14.7.2 Key Buildings

Gateway and key buildings can emphasise the urban identity of a place. Their purpose is to provide a signal of a significant place either in terms of movement or use.

Suitable locations for these buildings include important street corners or junctions, the end of vistas and gateways, local centres and the edges of public squares. They ensure visual interest and develop a stimulating streetscape and should only occur at these locations.

In such instances, it may be appropriate to increase building heights so as to provide greater emphasis on the building, but there will also be a greater expectation of design quality and architectural treatment. The significance of these buildings does not always need to be expressed in terms of height. Differentiation in building materials and form can also convey their importance.

14.7.3 Corner Sites

Corner sites should be reinforced by buildings which address both street frontages. These buildings should be designed with windows and where appropriate, entrance ways onto both streets.

Various options can be explored e.g. an increase or stepping up in building height, a round corner, a stepped back corner (for example, to create a civic space), or a simple splayed corner. Such buildings should be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations.



Figure 14.11: Example of corner building

14.7.4 Building Line

Building lines are created by the position of the building frontage along the street edge. This is important as the position of the building line determines the width of the street, therefore influencing the sense of enclosure created.

Building lines generally are continuous but not rigidly straight. They tend to be more organic in nature, staggering at certain intervals, adding significantly to the character of the street and sense of enclosure.

Generally, existing and established building lines should be maintained. Building lines may be relaxed to accentuate an important building or place or where important areas of public or civic space are required. Existing building lines may also be relaxed where innovative design solutions can demonstrate that the design will positively enhance the streetscape.

14.7.5 Roofline

The scale of buildings has a direct influence on the skyline. Roof tops of traditional buildings are generally constructed of slate and contain features

such as chimneys which add visual interest and variety to the skyline. In many contemporary buildings, roofs tend to be flat. Where this type of roof occurs on a building with a long façade it can result in monotony. In such cases the monotony can be relieved by variations in building height at appropriate locations (i.e. stepping up heights at the corners or at the centre of a symmetrical building).

Regard should be had to the following:

- Rooflines should respond to the articulation of the rest of the façade so that the building can be read from the ground floor up.
- The roofline should acknowledge the rhythm, harmony and scale of the entire street frontage.
- Materials should be chosen for their compatibility with the existing roof tops i.e., dark grey slate.
- Machine and mechanical plant rooms should be designed as an integral part of the building and ideally should not appear as a disruption of the roof line.



Figure 14.12: Traditional building line and roofline

14.7.6 Perimeter Block

Residential layouts should generally utilise the perimeter block principle, as a departure from more recent cul-de sac type layouts. This will increase pedestrian permeability and legibility of a new development area and will help to define streets and public spaces.

14.7.7 Courtyard Buildings

Courtyards can occur primarily in town centre developments. They should be treated as semi-public/private space and their use is to provide:

- A communal outdoor space;
- A circulation space prior to access to the rear of properties; and
- A location for secure cycle and car parking.

These spaces must be safe environments that are policed by natural surveillance from the individual properties. It is therefore imperative that dead corners that may be hidden from view are avoided. Priority should be given to pedestrian movement as it is intended that these areas will provide informal play for small children. Courtyards should therefore be treated as shared surfaces. Seating should also be provided and orientated to capture the sunshine. This will allow casual residential users to engage with courtyard activities. Small areas of ornamental planting and patches of lawn should be discouraged.

14.7.8 Building Type and Height

In order to conserve and develop the vitality of urban cores, a mix of uses and a healthy balance of economic, residential, cultural and recreational activity should be maintained. By increasing the amount of services and amenities within urban centres, the provision of a wide range of local jobs will be encouraged. It is therefore imperative that urban centres provide a diverse range of activities and uses. Development should be designed for a diverse community which encourages sustainable living and reinforces neighbourhood values.

Residential development should provide a variety of designs to accommodate a good mix of household types – including first time buyers, single people, families, empty nesters and the elderly in order to ensure a social mix and balance is achieved.

Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skyline. Building height shall

generally be considered in terms of the area and location of the site.

14.7.9 Neighbourhood Centres

Local or neighbourhood centres, where appropriate, typically include services and facilities such as shops, pubs, post office, crèche, doctors surgery, health centre, community centre, civic space, as well as some local services and/or employment uses and should comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions of Chapter 6 Retail.

14.7.10 Car Parking

Parking standards are set out in Chapter 15, Development Management Standards. Regard should be had to the following in relation to the location and layout of car parking areas:

- Car parking should generally be sited within established site boundaries in such a manner as to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining premises.
- In the town centre, parking spaces should be located behind buildings, or underground wherever possible, to encourage the continuity of streetscapes.
- Landscaping and tree planting must be provided to visually enhance the appearance of parking areas.
- Where on-street parking is proposed properly marked car parking spaces should be provided with regular tree planting and a high standard of kerbing and paving. Generally not more than five perpendicular or two parallel car parking spaces should be provided between trees.
- Where surface car parking is required it should be designed to be overlooked to provide passive surveillance and should not dominate the street frontage.
- Cycle parking facilities should be conveniently located, secure, easy to use, adequately lit and well posted. Weather protected facilities should be considered where appropriate. In addition, parking should be placed within a populated, well-supervised area, and monitored by CCTV where possible.

14.7.11 Protection of the Existing Environment

All development proposals immediately adjoining existing development should provide for the protection of existing residential amenities and have particular regard to minimising overlooking and visual intrusion.

Athy Town Council places significance on the existing heritage fabric of the town. This represents a key heritage and cultural asset and includes protected structures of special architectural, historical and cultural interest.

14.7.12 Building Language and Finishes

Good modern architecture and design should prevail throughout developments. There should be consistency in materials, colour, proportions, roof pitches, building detail, street/ route surfaces, planting and street furniture within a development. Certain principles will apply in relation to materials and finishes of development as follows:

- In general, finishes and materials should be of a high quality and should be used in a consistent and restrained manner.
- Where possible natural materials should be used including wood, stone, slate etc. The use of native Irish material should be maximised.
- Materials and finishes should as far as possible reflect a vernacular style and, where appropriate and feasible, a Kildare and local vernacular.
- Use of non-natural materials such as

clay pantiles will be permitted in limited circumstances only, where it is considered that such a material contributes to the overall design quality of the scheme.

- Use of uPVC window frames and doors etc. should in general be avoided unless a particular and specific case can be made for their use. This is in the interests of sustainable development, visual amenity and to help to promote the use of natural and native materials and more environmentally friendly materials.
- In cases where it can be demonstrated that the design of a building is of an exceptional nature and particularly in the case of gateway and key buildings, consideration will be given to the use of modern materials.
- External wall finishes may include render, dry dash, timber cladding and certain types of brick, appropriate to the context, in some instances.
- The use of colour should form part of any design proposal. This should have regard to the traditional use of colour in the Irish context.
- In general, the design of schemes should focus on having a commonality of approach in terms of particular housing areas, with a clearly different approach between housing areas.

In addition, there should also be an overall and consistent design concept for the entire scheme.



14.8 OVERALL LAYOUT DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding the context and the potential of a site through a detailed site analysis will inform the design process for development proposals. The new urban structure should consist of a framework of routes and spaces that provide connectivity within a development, as well as to existing and planned routes in adjoining developments.

Design considerations include the following:

- Recognisable routes, intersections and key buildings should be provided to help people navigate.
- Priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists by providing routes that are direct, safe and secure.
- Streets should be designed to prioritise pedestrian movement and therefore encourage pedestrian activity.
- Attractive and successful outdoor areas should provide a quality public realm.
- Passive supervision of the public realm is the most effective means of preventing anti-social behaviour.
- Buildings should be orientated to maximise privacy and elements such as planting and boundary treatment should be used to maximum effect.
- Residential layouts should, where appropriate, utilise the perimeter block principle as a departure from more recent cul-de sac type layouts.
- Housing should at a minimum be dual aspect and designed so that greatest advantage is taken of southwest orientation.
- Development should be designed for a diverse community which will encourage sustainable living and reinforce neighbourhood values.

14.8.1 Permeability

Central to the vitality of any urban centre is its network of pedestrian paths and routes. A fine grained network is critical to the creation of a human scale environment being, attractive and accessible for the pedestrian. All new development should provide a fully permeable and recognisable, interconnecting network of streets. Any new

development should open up new routes as part of the development and connect into existing routes.

14.8.2 Legibility

All new development should provide:

- Recognisable routes which provide a coherent and easily read pattern of streets, lanes, squares, urban and green spaces.
- Intersections and key buildings which are provided to aid orientation.
- Main routes, should be distinguished by exploiting vistas, key buildings and landmarks.
- The activities and functions of places should be made visible, thus bringing about a sense of liveliness.

14.8.3 Streetscape

The streetscape should be characterised by quality buildings and a high standard of finishes and treatments such as paving, landscaping and street furniture, creating an environment with a definite sense of place.

All streets/roads, walking/cycling routes and public spaces should be overlooked by adjoining accommodation to ensure passive surveillance. The creation of observed public spaces and route ways should not reduce or detract from the private nature of other spaces and buildings.

14.8.4 Public Space

To create a vibrant bustling town and to integrate new development into backland areas the provision of a network of public spaces should be explored. These spaces should be designed to vary in size and use providing for children's play, kick about spaces, passive recreation and landscaped and planted areas to serve the entire community. Public spaces should be linked through high quality pedestrian and cycle routes combined with views and vistas and should be overlooked by adjoining accommodation to ensure passive surveillance.

14.8.5 Transportation Network

Development must emphasise permeability for all modes of transport and should be designed on the basis of the following considerations and users:

- Pedestrians and cyclists
- Public Transport

- Access for emergency vehicles
- Efficient circulation of local traffic
- Externalising non local traffic

14.8.6 Cycling and Pedestrian Linkages

Cycling and pedestrian linkages are necessary to promote integration and sustainable development patterns. New development should seek to achieve:

- Convenient and prominent pedestrian access points in terms of signage, lighting and gradients;
- A pattern of footpaths/pavements which allow easy permeability, a choice of routes filtering through the area;
- Routes from houses to local facilities, including shops, schools and bus stops, should be direct and pleasant, avoiding steep slopes or steps/kerbs where possible.
- Utilising green open space networks for longer distance walks.
- Providing dedicated pedestrian routes along green corridors.

For a cycle network to be successful it should be continuous and convenient with appropriate trip-end provision.

14.8.7 Street Hierarchy

A network of high quality, attractive streets comprising high quality finishes and treatments such as paving and landscaping, to create an environment with a definite sense of place, should be achieved. All development should include a hierarchy of streets designed to recognise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and therefore encourage healthy activity. This can be achieved by paying close attention to the design of street surfaces and planting which should be integrated with passive traffic calming measures.

The purpose of any proposed network is to adequately serve the maximum extent of development whilst discouraging unnecessary through-traffic.

Boulevards

Access roads should be provided in the form of spacious, tree-lined boulevards to provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists with associated cycle lanes, footpaths and verges which should be fronted by buildings. Boulevards should comprise a high quality public realm, planted with appropriate native species.



Figure 14.13: Boulevards

Neighbourhood Streets

The majority of circulation routes within new developments should be provided by neighbourhood streets. The design of the neighbourhood street including associated parking should vary according to the density of the area. In most urban areas where the density is at its

highest, the neighbourhood street will have a carriageway width of between 5m and 5.5m and should maintain a constant road width and continuous kerb edge. They will have dedicated 2m minimum footpaths either side and 1.5m wide grass verges. Cyclists will use the road surface. On-street parking will be provided on both sides of the street.



Figure 14.14: Neighbourhood Streets

Where the density is medium the road width will be maintained as above but the parking will be provided on one side only and staggered along the length of the street.



Figure 14.15: Neighbourhood Streets

Where the built density decreases away from the urban area, the street design will largely be less formal in character at the edges of a built up area, such as variable kerb alignment and road width.



Figure 14.16: Neighbourhood Streets

Mews / Shared Surface Streets

Shared surface streets may occur where the character is mostly urban, typically in the town centres.

These streets should be designed as shared level

surfaces, where pedestrians and cyclists have equal priority with vehicles, therefore having the advantage of providing sufficient space for large vehicles to approach close to buildings without giving the impression of a 'tarmac prairie'. These streets must have building frontages on both sides.



Figure 14.17: Shared Surface Street

14.9 SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS)

Where swales, detention basin and/or other attenuation facilities are proposed for open / green spaces, they must be incorporated into the landscape structure of the new development and form part of a cohesive urban structure, integrated with both the streets and built form.

SUDS areas should be planted utilising indigenous species that can withstand both dry and very wet conditions. A similar landscape treatment will be utilised across the system so that it reads as a single network.

The development of an appropriate management regime is critical for the avoidance of future problems. The following illustrations show how swales may be incorporated into the design of a new area and could assist in providing developments with a sense of place.

The use of 'swales' should be explored as part of SUDS to mitigate water. Swales should be linked, have a storage and infiltration function and mainly convey runoff to shallow appropriately located storage wetlands. Swales located throughout the development lands should also provide the underlying basis of the landscape structure of new development and form part of a cohesive urban structure, integrated with both the streets and built form.

The system should be capable of accommodating all storm events. The design of future surface water drainage systems should be mindful of the natural drainage of areas.



Figure 14.18: Swales at Upton, Northampton, UK



Figure 14.19: Swales at Upton, Northampton, UK



Figure 14.20: Swales at Upton, Northampton, UK

CHAPTER 15

Development Management Standards

15



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To ensure the orderly and sustainable development of high quality living and working environments in the town through the setting out of objectives and standards for the management of development.

15.1 BACKGROUND

The purpose of this section of the Plan is to ensure a high standard of design, layout and function for all development under the Planning Acts and Regulations, to conserve and build upon positive elements in the built and natural environment and to protect the amenities of the town.

Development management is a statutory process provided for in the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011 that seeks to ensure development takes place in an orderly and efficient manner. Specific control measures are outlined to ensure that new development is of a high quality and relates to the character, scale, layout and form of the area in question. Development will be managed by means of established and proven principles aided by guiding standards.

There is an obligation on the Council to ensure that permissions granted under the Planning Acts are consistent with the policies and objectives set out in this Development Plan. This chapter focuses on the general planning standards and design criteria that will be applied by the Council to ensure that future development is in accordance with these policies and objectives.

There is provision for a degree of flexibility of approach in particular circumstances. This applies where a proposed development is otherwise consistent with proper planning and development and the preservation and improvement of amenities. The granting of planning permission does not in itself enable development to commence. There may be other legal and procedural requirements to be considered e.g. property title, building regulations, public health acts, fire regulations, air and water pollution legislation etc.

15.1.1 Enforcement

To ensure that the integrity of the Planning System is maintained and that it operates for the benefit of the whole community, the Council will take enforcement action in cases of unauthorised development,

where it is appropriate to do so, consistent with the provisions of Part VIII of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended.

Under planning legislation any development which is not specifically exempt development requires planning permission and development which does not have that permission is unauthorised development, as is development which has been or is being carried out in breach of conditions specified in a planning permission. In carrying out its enforcement functions, the Council may issue Warning Letters and / or Enforcement Notices or take injunctive proceedings pursuant to Section 160 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

Proceedings for non-compliance with an Enforcement Notice will be taken in the District Court in most cases. However, where appropriate, injunctions will be sought in the Circuit Court or High Court. In all cases involving legal proceedings the Council will seek to recover its costs, in addition to any fines imposed by the courts.

15.1.2 Failure to Comply with Previous Permission

To ensure that the integrity of the planning system is maintained and that it operates for the benefit of the whole community, the Council may refuse permission for a development arising from past failures to comply with any previous permission, where they are deemed to be of a substantial nature, and where it is appropriate to do so, having regard to the provisions of Section 35 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011.

15.1.3 Development Contributions

The Council, taking into consideration the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of infrastructure, will require the payment of financial contributions in accordance with the Development Contributions Scheme adopted by the Council. Developers may also be required to carry out works at their own expense to facilitate their development and these will be specified as a condition of their planning permission.

15.1.4 Environmental Impact Assessment

Certain developments may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (or as may be amended).

15.1.5 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive requires an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or specific project whether within or outside a designated Natura 2000 site, which does not directly relate to the management of the site but may impact upon its conservation objectives. This assessment is based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise. It addresses the potential impacts of the plan or project on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site (i.e. the River Barrow in this instance).

15.1.6 Pre-Application Discussions

The Council will endeavour to facilitate pre-planning discussions through individual meetings / planning clinics as deemed appropriate. The carrying out of consultations shall not prejudice the performance by the Council of any other of its functions under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011 or any regulations made under the Acts, and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

15.1.7 Bonds

To ensure that developments undertaken by private developers are satisfactorily completed, developers will be required to give cash deposits or submit a bond from an insurance company or other financial institution acceptable to the Council for the satisfactory completion of developments and their ancillary services. In determining the method of security, previous records of applicant's compliance and construction standards will be taken into account. This bond or surety shall be submitted and be in place before any development is commenced.

15.1.8 Digitised Planning Applications

The Council will require all applications over three housing units and all commercial developments to provide site drawings to fit into National Grid Co-ordinates in order to comply with the requirements for Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping and inventory.

15.2 GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

15.2.1 Site Coverage

Site coverage standards are intended to avoid the adverse effects of over-development.

$$\text{Site Coverage} = \frac{\text{Total area of ground covered by buildings}}{\text{Total ground area within the site cartilage}}$$

The maximum site coverage shall be 50% for residential development, 75% for industrial and 66% for retail and commercial development. Within the town centre zone, the maximum site coverage shall be 80% for all development. In considering applications for redevelopment of existing sites, due regard will be had to the established site coverage.

A particular site coverage standard shall be acceptable only where it is consistent with other standards such as open space requirements, car parking, plot ratio, building lines and building heights, fire safety and building regulations together with the amenity of adjoining dwellings/ properties.

15.2.2 Plot Ratio

The purpose of plot ratio standards is to prevent the adverse effects of over-development on the layout and amenity of buildings and to ensure an adequate sense of enclosure and the efficient and sustainable use of serviced land.

$$\text{Plot Ratio} = \frac{\text{Gross building floor area}}{\text{Gross site area}}$$

The gross floor area is the sum of all floor space within the external walls of the buildings, excluding plant, tank rooms and car parking areas. The gross site area comprises all land within the curtilage of the site.

In considering applications for redevelopment of existing sites, due regard will be had to the established plot ratio.

Table 15.1: Plot Ratio Standards

Location	Plot Ratio
Town Centre/Brownfield	1.0 - 2.0
Inner Suburban	0.5 - 1.0
Outer Suburban In close proximity to public transport	0.35 - 0.5
Outer Suburban Remote from public transport	0.25 - 0.35

15.2.3 Overlooking

In general, a minimum distance of 22 metres between opposing above ground floor level windows is required for habitable rooms. In cases of innovative design where overlooking into habitable rooms does not occur, this figure may be reduced.

A separation distance of 35 metres should be considered in the case of overlooking living room windows and balconies at upper floors.

15.2.4 Overshadowing

Where development of a significant height is located close to existing development, the planning authority may require daylight and shadow projection diagrams to be submitted. The recommendations of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice' (BRE 1991) or B.S. 8206 "Lighting for Buildings Part 2 1992: Code of Practice for Day Lighting" should be followed in this regard.

15.2.5 Soft Landscaping

Planting and landscaping should be used to integrate new buildings into their surroundings and provide privacy between dwellings. New planting should consist of local native plant types indigenous to the area and be incorporated into the site so as to enhance the overall appearance.

Where mature trees and/or substantial hedgerows are located on lands that are being considered for development, a detailed tree survey shall be submitted with the planning application. All trees with a diameter of 75mm and which are above 1.5m ground level should be included. Trees should be surveyed by reference to species, branch canopy, spread, shape, height and condition.

In the event of the development requiring trees to be felled during development, the Council will require the planting of a minimum of five mature/established trees per tree felled which shall be incorporated into the overall design of the scheme.

Where a development, located on lands zoned for development necessitates the removal of hedgerows/trees, the planning authority will require the removal of same to be identified with the planning application and a detailed replanting proposal where appropriate shall be submitted. This proposal shall provide for the replacement of at minimum an equal amount of similar indigenous

hedgerows/tree planting within the overall scheme.

In landscaping plans as part of the planning permission the planning authority will seek to ensure the planting of semi-mature trees depending on location and circumstances. Semi-mature trees are defined by the BSI as: "Trees with an overall height in excess of 4 metres and or a stem girth measurement (circumference of 20 centimetres or larger)".

The replacement of hedgerows/trees shall have due regard to the ecological function of hedgerows as a wildlife corridor and shall not work in isolation to the remaining hedgerow network.

Where trees or hedgerows are to be preserved on a development site, it is essential that the trees are protected by the erection of secure fencing prior to any site or engineering work commencing. No materials or vehicles shall be stored or parked within the fenced area. A site management plan shall be submitted to ensure the protection of retained trees and hedgerows on the site. To ensure that trees and hedgerows are protected on a site and that landscaping in accordance with a planning permission is carried out, a bond lodgement may be required, the amount of which shall be determined by the Council. Existing trees (particularly mature trees) shall be protected during site development works and shall be sensitively incorporated into the design of development layouts.

The Good Practice Guidelines for Developers – Biodiversity and Development in County Kildare, Kildare Heritage Series Vol. 1 and The Good Practice Guidelines for Householders – Biodiversity and Development in County Kildare, Kildare Heritage Series Vol. 2 should also be referenced for advice regarding landscaping and biodiversity matters.

15.2.6 Hard Landscaping

Hard landscaping design, including paving and street furniture, is an important element in defining the character of streets and public open spaces. Hard landscaping can help to provide a visual link to the surroundings; define and enclose spaces, delineate public from private space; provide security to private areas; distinguish between pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular movement; and provide suitable play space for children.

Materials must be appropriate, durable and of good quality. Careful consideration must be given to the

Table 15.2: Recommended native trees, shrubs and hedgerow to be used in landscaping schemes.

Common name	Height (max)	Suitable for public open spaces	Suitable for streets and confined spaces	Suitable for tubs, containers and raised beds etc.	Guide to planting: See key below
Alder	22m	Yes	No	Yes	ADPS
Alder Buckthorn	6m	Yes	No	Yes	D
Ash	28m	Yes	No	No	ADIPS
Aspen	24m	Yes	No	No	DPSV not close to buildings or services.
Arbutus (strawberry tree)	8m	Yes	No	Yes	Not frost hardy
Bramble	2m	No	No	No	C/ H tends to be invasive
Broom	2m	Yes	No	Yes	Tolerates dry conditions
Burnet Rose	2m	Yes	No	Yes, but vigorous	C/H. Restricted distribution. Not common.
Common (or European) Gorse	2.5m	Yes	No	In a rural setting	HV
Crab Apple	6m	Yes	No	No	AHIP
Dog Rose	2m	Yes	No	Yes. Vigorous	C/H
Downy Birch	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Elder	6m	In hedge	No	No	V
Guelder Rose	4.5m	Yes	No	No	DH
Hawthorn	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHIPS
Hazel	6m	Yes	No	No	AHS
Holly	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHPS
Honeysuckle	climber	Yes	On walls	No	C
Ivy	climber	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
Juniper	6m	Yes	No	No	S
Pedunculate Oak	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Rowan or Mountain Ash	9m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADHIP
Scots Pine	24m	Yes	No	No	AI
Sessile Oak	30m	Yes	No	No	AI only suitable for large spaces
Sliver Birch	18m	Yes	Yes	Yes	ADIP
Sloe, Blackthorn	3m	Yes	No	No	AHPV
Spindle	7.5m	Yes	No	No	H
Whitebeam spp.	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	IPS
Wild Cherry	15m	Yes	Yes	Yes	AHI
Wild Privet	3m	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Willow spp.	6m	Some	No	No	V Not suitable near buildings or services
Wych Elm	30m	Yes		No	PS
Yew	14m	Yes	No	Yes	AIPS

A Grows in a wide variety of soils
C Climber
H Suitable for hedging
I Suitable as an individual tree

D Tolerates or prefers damp conditions
P Tolerates smoke or pollution
S Tolerates shades
V Invasive

design of hard surfaces such as streets, squares, open spaces, paved areas, footpaths and driveways. Hard landscaping design shall have regard to the use of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise runoff and maximise efficient management of surface water within the space.

Walls, fences, metal railings and gates used to define spaces and their usage have a major impact on the visual character of development. These should be carefully selected with local distinctiveness in mind and will need to be an integral part of the overall design concept.

The siting of street furniture should not provide undue obstacles for people with disabilities. The integration of art into the public domain can contribute positively to the urban form creating local distinctiveness and enhancing a public space. Where possible and practicable existing stone walls or features of interest should be retained as part of new developments.

15.2.7 Access to Land

Development should be designed in such a fashion that it will not prejudice the provision of vehicular, pedestrian access or key infrastructural services in adjoining lands. Development should be designed so as to ensure 'ransom strips' of land will not inhibit future development.

15.2.8 Access for All

The Council will require that the layout and design of a proposed development gives consideration to the needs of the aged, people with disabilities and people with children. In addition to the above, all developments must make provision for car parking for the disabled in accordance with the recommendations of 'Buildings for Everyone' 2002 published by the National Disability Authority and Part M of the Building Regulations (S.I. No. 179, 2000) or as may be amended.

15.2.9 Design Statements

Where a design statement is a requirement for a particular development it should outline how the particular design addresses Development Plan policies, objectives and guidance in particular those relating to urban design as well as national guidance. The Design Statement should clearly describe how the proposal relates to the site and its context.

Drawings and statements should be included with the design statement and it should be clearly illustrated why a particular design solution was arrived at for that particular site and demonstrate how the design responds to the site context, the ecology, topography and features (both natural and man made) existing on site and immediately adjacent to the site.

15.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Good design is at the core of creating a good quality residential environment. The design of new housing developments should pay particular attention to the characteristics of the local setting. It is imperative that a high standard of design and quality of environment are created, which in turn will contribute to a sense of place and an identity being created.

The planning authority will also have regard to:

- The policies and objectives set out in Chapter 4 Housing;
- The guidelines contained in Chapter 14 Urban Design and Opportunity Areas of this Plan as appropriate;
- The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)
- The accompanying document Urban Design Manual Best Practice Guide (2009).
- The Council's Taking in Charge Policy Statement (2009) as may be amended.
- Construction standards and specifications set out in 'Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas' (DoEHLG, 1998)
- The forthcoming Design Manual for Urban Streets being prepared by the Department of Transport which will address such matters as layout, on-street parking, accessibility and cyclist movement.
- The DoEHLG Planning Guidelines document entitled 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (2009).
- Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) described in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study.

15.3.1 Density

Indicative density levels are set out in Table 4.2 of Chapter 4, Housing. Higher residential densities identified in this table will only be encouraged at appropriate locations. Such development must ensure a balance between reasonable protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of these areas.

15.3.2 Layout

The layout of new residential development should be designed to create a strong sense of identity and a sense of place. New developments should take full account of the characteristics of the natural and built environment of the site. Gated developments will not be permitted as they reduce social inclusion and integration within the existing community and generally fail to address the existing streetscape. Detailed guidance regarding proposed layouts is contained in Chapter 14 Urban Design and Opportunity Areas of this Plan.

15.3.3 Dwelling Design / Layout / Boundary Treatment

In addition to an appropriate layout a high standard of building design, detailing, and specification of materials and a high standard of craftsmanship will be required. The planning authority welcomes contemporary and innovative designs and innovation.

Dwelling design shall have regard to the following requirements:

- Minimum required floor areas in accordance with Table 15.3:

Table 15.3: Houses - Required Floor Area Sizes

Unit Type (House)	Floor Area
One Bedroom	48m ²
Two Bedroom	55m ²
Three Bedroom	60m ²
Four Bedroom	75m ²

- Dual aspect shall be incorporated into all dwelling units.
- A minimum distance of 2.5m between the side elevations of semi-detached and detached housing shall generally be provided.
- Adequate provision shall be made for the storage and collection of waste materials. Each house shall have adequate storage for at least three 'wheelie' bins and screened from public view where necessary.
- Special consideration should be given to boundary treatments particularly where

these adjoin existing dwellings. Boundaries between the rear of existing and proposed dwellings shall be a minimum of 1.8m high and shall be constructed as capped, rendered/plastered concrete block or brick walls, to ensure privacy, security and permanency.

- Minimum private open space requirements in accordance with Table 15.4.

Table 15.4: Houses - Private Open Space Requirements

Unit Type (House)	Floor Area	Storage Area
One Bedroom	55m ²	3m ²
Two Bedroom	75m ²	6m ²
Three Bedroom	90m ²	9m ²
Four Bedroom	110m ²	10m ²

Requirements for dwelling houses:

- High quality boundary treatments are generally required to enclose private open space. A 1.8m-2m solid block capped wall is generally acceptable enclosing rear garden area, although this should be in keeping with the overall design of the development. Post and wire or concrete post and timber fencing is not permitted.
- 2m high screen walls should be provided between all areas of public open space and gardens to the rear of dwellings. Where concrete or block screen walls along the edge of public open spaces are proposed, they should be suitably rendered on the side of the wall adjoining the public open spaces and capped.
- Private open space should be designed so that it is usable for the proposed residents. Long narrow rear gardens or awkward shapes are therefore not acceptable.
- Generally windows on the gable/side walls of dwellings will not be permitted where the window would closely overlook the curtilage of the adjoining dwelling.

15.3.4 Apartment Developments

An apartment or flat is a dwelling accessed from an internal lobby or hallway. For the purpose of this Plan a house and maisonette is defined as a dwelling with its own external access.

Planning applications for apartments shall be assessed against the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (2007, DoEHLG).

Apartment design shall have regard to the following requirements:

- Minimum floor areas and storage requirements as set out in Table 15.5:

Table 15.5: Apartments - Floor Area and Storage Requirements

Unit Type (House)	Floor Area	Storage Area
One Bedroom	55m ²	3m ²
Two Bedroom	80-90m ²	6m ²
Three Bedroom	100m ²	9m ²

- Present a live edge to the street by locating doors and windows onto the street frontage;
- In the case of residential accommodation over shops or other business premises, a separate access should be provided for the upper floor accommodation;
- Where ground floor commercial use consists of restaurants/take-aways, public houses, dry cleaners or printing shops, with apartments above, proper sound-proofing, ventilation and storage must be built into the design of the building;
- Provide off-street vehicular parking e.g. at basement level;
- Provide concealed and covered refuse bin storage areas and cycle storage areas which are convenient and accessible to each of the apartments;
- Provide open space that is suitable for passive recreation and which includes play spaces for smaller children;
- Provision should be made in all apartment schemes for general storage. General storage should be additional to kitchen presses and bedroom furniture, but may be partly provided in these rooms. Storage spaces should be provided at hallway or landing level to facilitate access. Hot presses or boiler space do not count as general storage. No individual storage room within an apartment should exceed 3.5 sq metres.

- Apartment schemes should provide storage for bulky items inside or outside individual units. These storage areas should be secure and readily accessible from the unit (e.g. dedicated storage rooms on each floor or at basement level) and this may satisfy part of the general storage requirement.
- Cleaners' stores should be provided in individual apartment blocks. These stores should be provided with power supply, water supply and drainage outlets. Service ducts serving two or more apartments should be accessible from common areas for maintenance purposes.
- The provision of maintenance facilities such as a management room, maintenance store(s) and accommodation for a caretaker should be included in larger schemes containing 40 or more apartments and consideration should be given to the provision of such facilities in smaller schemes.
- The installation of lifts in apartment blocks over two storeys in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.
- Where lifts are required design proposals shall allow for the satisfactory use of the building in the event of prolonged lift failure while also discouraging the habitual use of the lift, through the provision of circulation space that is enjoyable and safe to use.
- Provision of private open space in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards, terraces/ patios and balconies.
- The location of apartment blocks in a mixed residential development should be carefully considered having regard to factors such as design, height, overlooking, bin storage areas etc.
- Each apartment development should include a mix of residential units including a number of one bedroom units. These one-bedroom units shall encompass an additional space, where a study or sleepover space may be accommodated. If apartment schemes are being proposed to accommodate in excess of 10% one bedroom units, a specific housing needs analysis shall be prepared and submitted as part of any planning application.
- Minimum private open space requirements as set out in Table 15.6:

Table 15.6: Apartments - Private Open Space Requirements

Unit Type (Apartment)	Area (m ²)
One Bedroom	10m ²
Two Bedroom	15m ²
Three Bedroom	20m ²

15.3.5 Public Open Space for Residential Development

Public open space must be carefully designed as an integral part of the layout of all residential schemes / mixed use schemes and should be addressed at the initial design stages. All applications for residential developments shall include a landscape plan.

On greenfield sites, the minimum area of open space that is acceptable is 15% of the total site area. On institutional sites a minimum requirement of 20% of the site area may be required. In all other cases, public open space should be provided at the rate of 10% of the total site area.

A relaxation of the standard may be considered where the overall density of a proposal is <8 dwellings per hectare as the provision of space within the dwelling curtilage over and above the minimum required may be taken into account.

Each application shall also have regard to the qualitative standards outlined in Section 4.18 of the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (2009).

The following should also be taken into consideration in relation to public open space:

- Areas with high gradients or otherwise impractical to function effectively will not be acceptable as open space.
- Narrow tracts of land (less than 10m) or pieces of land 'left over after planning' are not acceptable. Public open space should be innovative in its design approach, centrally located within the overall development scheme (see bullet point below referring to 'pocket parks') and designed to be functionally accessible to the maximum number of dwellings within the residential area.
- Public open space should be overlooked by as many dwellings as possible.
- Houses shall not be permitted to

back onto public open spaces.

- Natural features e.g. trees, hedgerows and wetland sites should be retained, protected and incorporated into public open space areas.
- On large sites, areas should be identified for a hierarchy of uses e.g. – formal areas, more casual ‘pocket parks’ for smaller children to play, informal kick about areas, passive amenity areas etc.
- Appropriate pedestrian and cycle linkages between open spaces should be clearly indicated on the site layout plan.
- Care should be taken during the design process to connect existing and proposed areas of open space thus providing green linkages for wildlife habitats.
- The use of hard landscaping elements should also be identified.
- The design of lanes connecting housing estates or within housing estates should be of sufficient width to allow for the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists. Laneways should be adequately overlooked and lit and not be excessive in length.

15.3.6 Extension to Dwellings

Primarily the design and layout of extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly as regards sunlight, daylight and privacy. In addition the following basic principles shall be applied:

- The extension should be sensitive to the existing dwelling and should not adversely distort the scale or mass of the structure, or adjoining properties.
- The form, size and appearance of an extension should complement the building, and the design and scale should have regard to adjoining properties. A flexible approach will be taken to the assessment of alternative design concepts. In particular, contemporary designs appropriate to the existing dwelling and site will be encouraged.
- The extension should not provide for new overlooking of the private area of an adjacent residence where no such overlooking previously existed.
- In an existing developed area, where a degree of overlooking is already present, the new extension must not significantly increase overlooking possibilities.

- New extensions should not overshadow adjacent dwellings to the degree that there is a significant decrease in daylight or sunlight entering into adjacent buildings.
- In all cases a minimum private rear garden area must be retained.

15.3.7 Family Flat

A temporary arrangement to accommodate a family member within an existing dwelling unit shall have regard to the following requirements:

- The proposed unit should be linked directly to the main dwelling by a connecting door.
- Accommodation should be limited to a maximum of two bedrooms.
- External doors should be limited to the side or rear of the house.
- Applicants should submit documentary evidence at application stage to support their case for the necessity of a ‘family’ flat.

It is normal procedure to include conditions in any grant of permission that the ‘family’ flat cannot be sold, conveyed or leased separate to the main residence. Also when the need for the ‘family’ flat no longer exists the dwelling must be returned to a single dwelling unit.

15.3.8 Vehicular Parking in Residential Areas

Car parking standards are set out in Table 15.9 Residential Areas should not be dominated by car parking along access streets. The design quality of the street is paramount (Reference; Manual for Streets published by the Department of Transport, and Communities and Local Government (England and Wales) 2007). The National Transport Authority (NTA) has drafted a new Transport Strategy for the GDA which links sustainable land use planning and the economic, social, cultural and environmental needs of the people of the GDA.

New residential development should take account of the different criteria regarding car parking including:

- Vehicular parking for detached and semi-detached housing should be within the curtilage of the house.
- Vehicular parking for apartments where appropriate should generally be at basement level. Where this is not possible, parking for

apartments and terraced housing should be in informal groups overlooked by residential units.

- The visual impact of large areas of parking should be reduced by the use of screen planting, low walls and the use of different textured or coloured paving for car parking bays.
- Consideration needs to be given to parking for visitors and people with disabilities.

15.3.9 Taking in Charge and Management Companies

Athy Town Council's policy on taking estates in charge of residential developments is set out in its Taking in Charge of Private Housing Developments, Policy and Procedures Document (2009).

Management Companies are not required and are not envisaged for conventional housing developments. Apartment developments are not taken in charge by the local authority and therefore a management company is required.

In mixed developments that consist of 'conventional houses', apartments and commercial/retail developments, the public infrastructure should be laid out and constructed in such a manner so that there is a clear distinction between the areas and infrastructure that are to be taken in charge and those that will be managed by a management company.

The following should be noted;

- It is recognised that certain development types, (such as apartment blocks or developments that consist predominantly of apartment blocks and where it would not be practical to isolate the infrastructure serving the apartment blocks from the other conventional housing element of the development) require the creation of management companies to manage and maintain the communal areas in the development.
- Where management companies are required, a properly constituted management company should be established for the purposes of maintaining public lighting, roads, parking areas, services, open spaces and public areas in apartment schemes.
- Management Companies should be constituted in accordance with the Company Law Handbook on Residential Property Owners' Management Companies' (published by the Office of the Director of Corporate

Enforcement, December 2008) and 'Report on Multi-Unit Developments' (published by the Law Reform Commission, June 2008) or any future national legislation or guidelines.

- Where management companies have been formed for conventional housing estates or for the conventional housing element or mixed-use estates, the Council will take these estates in charge when they have been completed to the satisfaction of the Council on condition that the management company is wound up when the estate has been taken in charge.

15.3.10 Naming of Developments

The names of residential developments shall reflect local heritage by encouraging the use of local place names or geographical, historical, cultural names in the naming of new residential and other developments. Developers shall provide an Irish language translation of the proposed name.

Prior to commencement of development, it shall be a condition of planning permission for new housing schemes that the developer, submit a scheme for the naming and numbering of the estate together with traffic calming measures and public lighting proposals for the estate. Implementation of same shall be provided on a phased basis. The naming of housing estates shall reflect in as far as possible the local context in which it is located. On approval of the naming of the scheme the developer will be required to provide nameplates and numbers as required by the Council.

The Council shall approve the naming of residential developments, in order to avoid confusion with regard to similar names in other locations.

15.4 CHILDCARE FACILITIES

All childcare facilities shall be provided in accordance with the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 (DoEHLG) and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996 as appropriate.

In particular the following should be noted:

- One childcare facility is generally required to cater for 20 places in developments of 75 houses, including local authority and social housing schemes in accordance with DoEHLG Guidelines. This standard may be varied depending on local circumstances.
- The complete conversion of existing semi-detached and terraced dwellings within housing estates to childcare facilities is generally discouraged. The childcare use should remain secondary and the bulk of the house should be retained for residential purposes.
- In new housing estates, purpose built facilities are normally required.
- Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into development proposals where appropriate.

Applicants are recommended to seek the advice of the Kildare County Childcare Committee, HSE,

and other relevant bodies in the design of childcare facilities prior to the submission of a planning application.

15.5 NURSING HOMES

Nursing homes should be integrated wherever possible into and adjacent to established residential areas of the town where their residents can expect reasonable access to local services.

In determining planning applications for change of use of a residential dwelling or other building to a nursing/elder care home, the following factors should be considered:

- compliance with the National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' (February 2009);
- the effect on the amenities of adjoining properties;
- the adequacy of off-street car parking;
- suitable private open space;
- proximity to local services and facilities;
- the size, scale and design of the facility proposed must be appropriate to the area;
- Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into development proposals where appropriate.



15.6 TRANSPORT

15.6.1 Stopping Distances and Sightlines

Sightline requirements are determined by the Council on a case by case basis. Factors including the type, speed limit and condition of the road are taken into consideration as well as the following factors:

- Where sightlines are inadequate and would give rise to a traffic hazard, development will not be permitted (Refer to Figures 15.1 and 15.2)
- Where the improvement of sightlines requires the substantial or complete removal of an existing hedgerow, the developer must include detailed landscape proposals to minimise the impact.
- In cases where an access already exists with inadequate sightlines, it is Council policy to recommend the closing up of this entrance and facilitating another entrance with adequate sightlines.

15.6.2 Building Lines

Building lines should generally be in accordance with Table 15.7. Depending on circumstances, e.g. proposed use, location, existing development etc, the building line requirements may be relaxed. All measurements are taken from the nearest edge of the road surface. Other building lines may be specified in recognition of local conditions.

In situations where there is an established building line, new houses where appropriate shall conform to the established building line.

Table 15.7: Building Line Requirements

Road Type	Building Line Requirement
National Primary	91.0m
National Secondary	91.0m
Regional Road	31.0m
Urban/County Road	18.5m
Distributor	18.5m

Where a development requires that the existing roads / footpaths and public lighting be improved / extended, or any other works carried out, to facilitate a development, the developer may be required to provide these as a condition of planning permission.

15.6.3 Access onto Public Roads

Generally, where the capacity, width, alignment or surface condition of the road is inadequate, development will not be favoured.

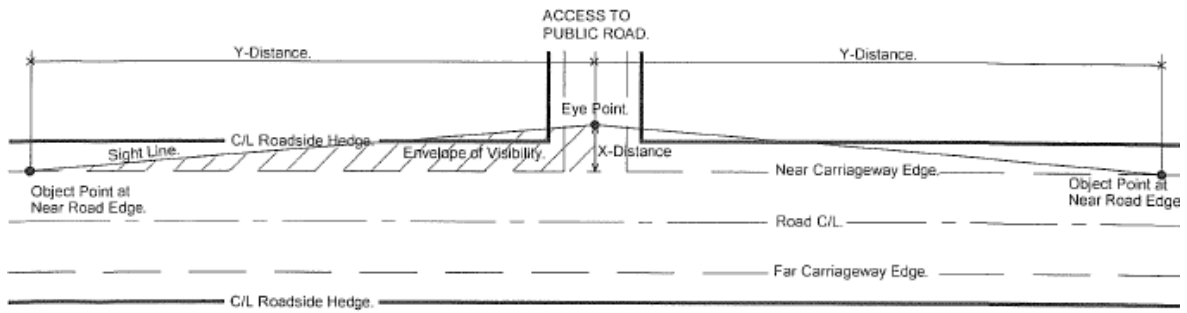
Where new development would adversely impact on road drainage, development will not be permitted unless applicants agree proposals with the Council to improve the road.

The Council requires the submission of a Traffic and Mobility Assessment (TMA) as part of planning applications for larger developments. Applicants should consult with the Transportation Department of the Council prior to the submission of an application.

15.6.4 Access Requirements

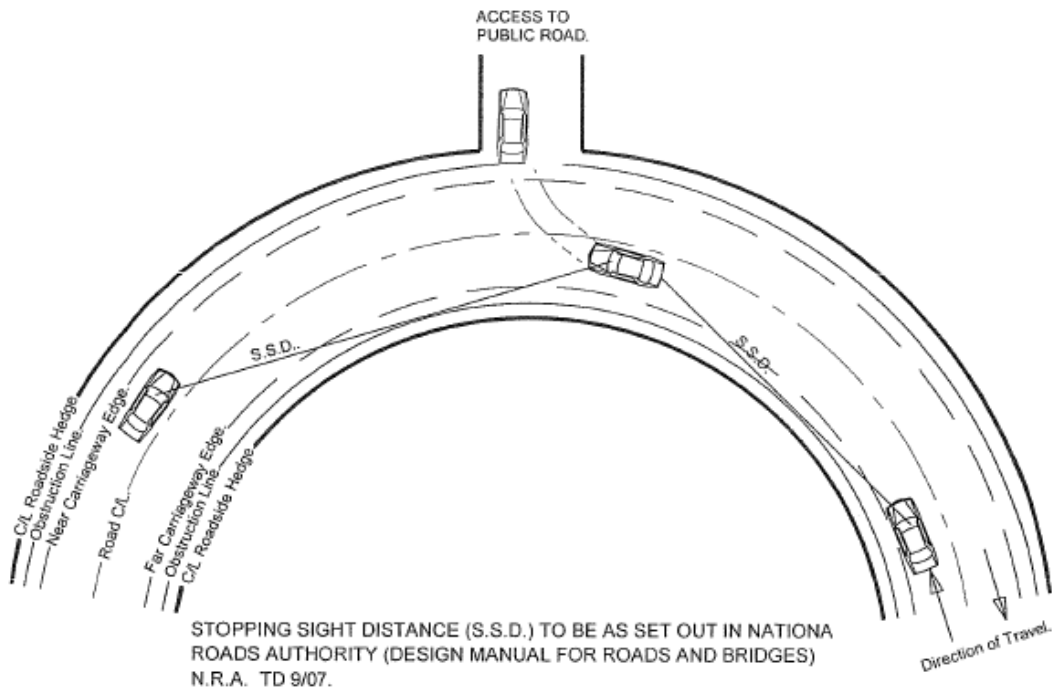
Generally, it is the policy of the Council to discourage the proliferation of access points onto public roads particularly onto ring roads in Athy. The Council encourages and promotes shared access points in all circumstances.

Figure 15.1: Method of Measuring Sightlines



"X" & "Y" DISTANCES TO BE AS SET OUT IN NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY (DESIGN MANUAL FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES) N.R.A. TD 41-42/09.

Figure 15.2: Method of Measuring Sightlines



STOPPING SIGHT DISTANCE (S.S.D.) TO BE AS SET OUT IN NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY (DESIGN MANUAL FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES) N.R.A. TD 9/07.



15.6.5 Street Lighting and Public Utilities

Street lighting should be at least to the standards set out in the ESB publication Public Lighting in Residential Estates. Pedestrian links must also be illuminated. Lighting levels within a new development must create a secure environment.

Dark corners and alleyways should be avoided. The use of low pressure sodium lighting and full cut off lighting will be encouraged for environmental, economic and road safety reasons. Light spill should be avoided to protect residential amenity.

To preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety, all services including electricity, public lighting, telephone and television cables shall be provided underground in all new developments. Provision should be made for the unobtrusive siting of transformer stations, pumping stations and other necessary service buildings. Pole mounted equipment (such as transformers) will not be permitted.

15.6.6 Car Parking

In all developments the Council will normally require the provision of car parking spaces within or convenient to the site of the development. The provision should be based on the extent to

which the development is likely to generate demand for additional parking spaces. The parking standards set out in Table 15.9 shall apply. The following should also be taken into consideration:

- The Council reserves the right to alter the requirements outlined below, having regard to the circumstances of each particular development.
- The minimum size for a car parking space shall be 2.5m x 5.0m with a circulation aisle of 6m wide. Loading bays shall be a minimum 3 x 6m.
- The Council requires the submission of a Mobility Management Plan with planning applications where developments include substantial parking requirements. Complementary or shared usage of car parks will be encouraged, especially where opening hours of different land uses vary. In addition to car parking standards sufficient space will be required within the curtilage of the site for all service vehicles involved in the operation of the business or building.
- Where in the opinion of the Council, it is appropriate in the context of the level of car parking within the wider area and with regard to the parking strategy to be developed under policy PK 6, car parking shall be provided within the curtilage of the development site.

15.6.7 Cycle Parking

The planning authority requires the provision of a minimum level of secure cycle parking facilities in association with new development and changes of use. This is consistent with the objectives and policies of the Department of Transport's National Cycle Policy (2009).

Where the provision of cycle parking facilities are intended for use by the staff of that particular development, stands should be covered and located within the curtilage of the development to ensure security and supervision.

Cycle stands for use by visitors should be located to maximise convenience to the entrance of buildings, and positioned so as to ensure safety, security and supervision. The cycle parking standards set out in Table 15.8 shall apply and cycle parking provision should be in accordance with current National Guidance on Cycle Parking.

The planning authority may also request the provision of public cycle parking facilities, where possible, at existing transport nodes, public buildings, retail centres and leisure facilities.

Figure 15.8: Cycle Parking Standards

Type of Development	Relevant Cycle Parking Standard
Houses and flats	One unit per dwelling
Shops	1 stand* for every 200 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Supermarkets and large stores	1 stand for every 200 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Offices	1 stand for every 200 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Industry	1 stand for every 200 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Warehousing	1 stand for every 250 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Theatre, cinema, church, stadium	1 stand for every 20 seats
Hotels, guest houses	1 stand per 4 bedrooms
Lounge bars	1 stand for every 30 sq.m. of public floorspace
Restaurants	1 stand for every 30 sq.m. of public floorspace
Function-room, dance halls, clubs	1 stand for every 30 sq.m.
Playing fields	4 stands per pitch
Schools	1 stand per 10 pupils
Nursing Homes	1 stand per 8 members of staff

*One cycle stand is the equivalent to five units

Figure 15.9: Car Parking Standards

Type of Development	Minimum Car Parking Standards
House/Apartment (1 bedroom)	1 car space per unit + 1 visitor's space per 2 dwelling units
House/Apartment (2 bedrooms or more)	2 car spaces per unit
Maximum Car Parking Standards	
Type of Development	Maximum Car Parking Standards
Shops (< 250 sq. m. gross)	1 car space per 24 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Shops (250 - 1,000 sq. m. gross)	1 car space per 18 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Large stores (> 1,000 sq. m. gross)	1 car space per 12 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Banks, Financial institutions	1 car space per 14 sq. m. of gross floor space
Offices (town centre)	1 car space per 25 sq.m. of gross floorspace
Office Park	1 car space per 20 sq. m. of gross floor space
Industry/manufacturing	1 car space per 33 sq. m. of gross floorspace
Warehousing	1 car space per 100 sq. m. of gross floorspace
Theatre, cinema, church, stadium	1 car space per 3 seats
Hotels, guest houses (excl. function rooms)	1 car space per bedroom
Lounge bars	1 car space per 3.75 sq. m. of public floorspace
Restaurants	1 car space per 4.5 sq. m. of public floorspace
Take-aways	1 car parking space per 18 sq.m. gross floor area
Function-room, dance halls, clubs	1 car space per 3 sq. m.
Playing fields	15 car spaces per pitch
Primary Schools	2 car spaces per classroom
Secondary Schools	2 car spaces per classroom
Nursing homes	1 car space per 2 bedrooms
Hospitals	To be agreed with the Council
Childcare facilities	1 car parking space per staff member + 1 car parking space per 4 children

Note: Large complex developments may be assessed separately with regard to the circumstances of each case.

15.7 EMPLOYMENT

15.7.1 Employment Uses

The following information should be submitted as part of any application for industrial /commercial/ business development:

- a) Details of the nature and scale of the proposed operation, to include opening hours and anticipated traffic levels.
- b) Availability of adequate services to serve the development or the ability of the applicant to provide these services in a manner which does not adversely impact on surrounding properties or the broader environment.
- c) Proposals for the safe storage and disposal of waste in a manner which is visually and environmentally acceptable.
- d) Storage should generally be confined to the rear of the premises – height should be such that the materials stored are adequately screened either by the building unit or an alternative screening method.
- e) Compatibility of existing adjacent land uses with the proposed development and mitigation measures to preserve and protect the amenity of the adjacent uses, should this be necessary.
- f) Availability of adequate sight lines (or ability of applicant to provide same) in accordance with the relevant NRA Standards and safe road access for anticipated levels of traffic to be generated by the proposed development. Generally, only one vehicular access point will be permitted.
- g) Adequate parking and circulation areas should be provided by the applicant within the curtilage of the proposed development unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.
- h) Advertising signage shall be detailed at planning application stage and shall be sympathetic in size, scale, design, materials and colour with the surrounding landscape/streetscape. Lighting should be unobtrusive and should not adversely affect traffic safety on adjacent roads.

15.7.2 Industry and Warehousing Development

Industry and warehousing schemes will be required to present a good quality appearance, assisted by landscaping and careful placing of advertisement structures. In relation to industrial development the following should be taken into consideration:

- Individual buildings should exhibit a high quality of modern architectural design and finish (including the use of colour).
- In the case of two or more industrial/warehouse units, a uniform design is required for boundary treatments, roof profiles and building lines.
- Areas between the building and road boundary may include car parking spaces provided adequate screen planting is incorporated into the design proposal.
- Adequate provision shall be made on the site for parking of vehicles, storage and stacking space. Storage and stacking areas shall be located to the rear of the building or where such facilities are located at the side, provision for screening shall be made.
- The front building line shall be as determined in consultation with the Planning Authority and, where required, the existing roadside boundary shall be set back.
- Any industrial or commercial development should not be injurious to the residential amenity of adjoining properties.
- A landscaped buffer zone (minimum 10-15 metres) will be a requirement of planning permissions for any Industrial/ Warehousing development where it adjoins another zoning or where it would impact on the amenities of adjoining land uses.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be incorporated into development proposals.

15.7.3 Business and Technology Parks

Business parks should be laid out in an open parkland setting with a high level of landscaping and provision should be made for pedestrian and cycle paths. The following design issues should also be taken into consideration:

- Individual buildings should exhibit a high quality contemporary design and finish including colour.
- Car parking should be provided in a discreet, landscaped and well-screened environment with a view to minimising its visual impact, particularly when viewed from approach roads.

- Proposals should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and other measures that address adaptation to climate change including the creation of integrated wetlands, the construction of green / living roofs whereby opportunities for existing solar energy and wind energy are afforded.
- In order to ensure an attractive open parkland setting the building line on all principal road frontages shall generally not be less than 15 metres from the road and the site coverage behind the building line shall not exceed 45%. There shall be a minimum planted strip of a width of five metres on all principal road frontages. Where a proposed development is located within convenient walking distance of a high quality public transport network the above requirement may be varied so as to achieve a scale of development and density of employment appropriate to the proximity of the site to a high quality public transport network.

15.7.4 Loading and Unloading

In addition to the general car parking requirements, service parking spaces may be required for cars or other vehicles involved in the operation of the business or a particular building, e.g. delivery and collection of goods. In all major developments of an industrial/commercial nature, developers will be required to provide loading and unloading facilities sufficient to meet the likely demand of such development.

15.7.5 Home-Based Economic Activity

Home based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by a resident of a house which is subordinate to the primary use of the dwelling as a place of residence. In dealing with applications for such developments the planning authority will have regard to the following:

- The nature and extent of the work
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining properties particularly with regard to the hours of operation, noise and general disturbance,
- The anticipated levels of traffic generation
- The generation, storage and collection of waste.

Permissions for home based economic activity will generally be restricted to use by the applicant only and access to visiting members of the public may also be restricted.

Applications may be subject to a temporary permission, in order to enable the planning authority to monitor the impact of the development.

15.8 ENERGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

15.8.1 Applications Proximate to Overhead Lines

In determining applications proximate to overhead power lines the planning authority will have regard to the clearance distances as recommended by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) as follows:

- For development in proximity to a 10kv or a 38kv overhead line, no specific clearance is required by the ESB.
- For development in proximity to a 110kv overhead line, a clearance distance of 20 metres either side of the centre line or 23 metres around a pylon is recommended.
- For development in proximity to a 220kv overhead line, a clearance distance of 30 metres either side of the centre line or around a pylon is required.

15.8.2 Telecommunications and Supporting Infrastructure

Government policy for the development of telecommunications infrastructure is set out in Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (1996). The planning authority will have regard to the foregoing and to such other publications and material as may be relevant in the consideration of planning applications for such structures.

When evaluating planning applications for the provision of such infrastructural installations, the Council will seek to ensure that:

- The preservation of residential and visual amenity is considered.
- The telecommunications infrastructure/ structure is sited so as not to cause a negative impact on the special character and appearance of designated conservation areas, protected structures and sites of archaeological importance.
- The location of antennae in residential areas and near schools is discouraged and only as a last resort, will free standing masts be permitted in a residential area or beside a school. If such a location should become necessary, sites already developed for utilities should be considered and

masts and antennae should be designed and adapted for the specific locations. The support structure should be kept to the minimum height consistent with effective operation. In residential areas or beside schools, the support structure should be monopole or poles rather than a latticed tripod or square structure.

- The sharing of installations by agencies/operators will be encouraged. Where new facilities are proposed applicants will be required to satisfy the Council that they have made a reasonable effort to share facilities or to locate facilities in clusters.
 - Planning permissions for telecommunications antennae and support structures shall generally be for a temporary period of not more than five years.
- Operators are encouraged to locate in industrial estates or on industrially zoned land. The possibilities offered by some commercial or retail areas should be explored whether as rooftop locations or by way of locating “disguised” masts. The use of tall buildings or other existing structures is always preferable to the construction of an independent antennae support structure.
 - Within the life of a planning permission, opportunities to modify and improve existing structures shall be taken into consideration. In the event of obsolescence, the antennae and their support structure shall be demolished/ removed and the site reinstated at the operator’s expense. A bond will be required to guarantee this.
 - Evidence of consideration of alternative sites must accompany planning applications.



15.9 RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

15.9.1 Criteria for Assessment

Applications for significant retail development as outlined in Chapter 6 Retail will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- i. Testing the proposal against the tests of the Sequential Approach and that other options have been considered. Under the Sequential Approach the following criteria require to be addressed:
 - If a brownfield town centre site is not being promoted in the application, it should be demonstrated that all town centre options have been fully evaluated and that flexibility has been adopted in respect of the retail format.
 - In all cases, the site should offer the optimum accessibility by all transport modes, including walking and cycling and this is generally best achieved within the town centre.
- ii. There is a demonstrable qualitative and quantitative need for the proposal. In respect of quantitative need, this should be derived from the expenditure capacity within the relevant catchment area which should be appropriate to the nature and quantum of the retail floor space proposed;
- iii. Its role in improving the competitiveness of the town.
- iv. The impact on the town, including cumulative impact.
In respect of cumulative impact, due regard is taken of all extant planning permissions and consideration given to proposals that are at an advanced stage in the planning process;
- v. The baseline information and capacity/impact assessment is fit for purpose and transparent;
- vi. Its contribution to town/district/ neighbourhood centre improvement through quality of design and integration;
- vii. Its contribution to site and/ or area regeneration;
- viii. The quality of access by all modes of transport and by foot and bicycle; and

- ix. The extent to which it is relevant to consider the imposition of restrictions on the nature and range of goods permitted for sale.

The Planning Authority will consider hours of operation in assessing planning applications for retail development and may attach conditions restricting same.

15.9.2 Town Centre

Development proposals within the town centre should:

- Promote high architectural quality, and by their design and relationship to setting, create or contribute to a sense of place;
- Relate appropriately to the surrounding townscape and any building of note;
- Have regard to the scale and character of adjacent streets;
- Have regard to local views, prevailing heights and building lines;
- Preserve as much as possible, the historic street layout and urban form;
- Present a lively active street frontage, with regular entrances and windows facing the street;
- Have a continuous building line up to the back edge of pavements.

15.9.3 Local Centres

In local centres, it is a requirement to maintain a balance of appropriate commercial, service and residential uses. In assessing proposals, regard will be had for the need to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and the character of the area.

15.9.4 Shopping Centres

Shopping centres must conform to the highest urban design standards. The design must ensure that the proposed centre will integrate with and be complementary to the streetscape and area in which it is located.

Elements to be addressed include:

- The scale, design and enclosure of pedestrian space.
- Connectivity with surrounding routes and places. Where possible new connections shall be provided between desirable

locations within the surrounding area.

- The provision, location and design of street furniture including public art, telephones, seats, litter bins etc
- The provision, within the overall design of the centre, of public facilities, e.g. toilets, separate childcare (baby changing / feeding) areas, access and facilities for disabled people including toilets and parking spaces. The centres, where appropriate, should include offices, medical and related consultants.
- Activities and uses that keep the centre alive both during the day and evening e.g. café and restaurants.
- The centre should provide active frontages to surrounding streets and should not be surrounded by car parking.
- Landscaping plans must accompany all applications. Shopping centres should provide recycling facilities and secure bicycle parking.
- High quality design and material content. Advertising material should be restricted to a minimum and no lighting shall be installed so as to cause glare or interference to users of an adjacent public road.
- The modification of standard corporate designs may be required by the Council in order to reduce the visual impact of the development.

15.9.5 Retail Warehousing

Applications for retail warehousing shall be limited to bulky goods as described in the Retail Planning Guidelines. If there have been a number of retail warehousing applications over the lifetime of the plan, the planning authority will require applicants to provide an assessment of the cumulative impact of the existing and proposed retail warehousing.

15.9.6 Service Stations

New service stations and refurbished existing stations will be required to have a high standard of design and architectural layout to ensure an attractive and functional development that integrates with and complements its surroundings. The forecourt canopy should be integrated into the overall design and sited so that it does not dominate the surrounding buildings or landscape.

The essential purpose of service stations is to provide facilities for the sale of fuel for vehicles. The

Council however recognises the more intensive role of service stations in recent times and the expansion from merely fuel depots to the provision of a wide range of convenience and other goods and services. Applications for planning permission for such development should contain the following elements:

- Detailed proposals for the service station will be required, including the method of disposal of wastewater from carwash areas, traffic management, surface water outlet and oil interceptors etc. The development should be designed and operated in such a manner that it does not adversely affect existing road drainage in the area.
- High quality design and material content. Advertising material should be restricted to a minimum and no lighting shall be installed so as to cause glare or interference to any user of an adjacent public road.
- The modification of standard corporate designs may be required by the Council in order to reduce the visual impact of the development. In such instances, standard petrol station canopies can be replaced with more sympathetic canopies designed to the satisfaction of the Council, such as light steel and glass or slated roofs with no attached advertising.
- Strident and multiple colouring of the structure and associated signage should be avoided and will be discouraged. The size and colour should be such as to take cognisance of the structures setting and location in the landscape.
- Any associated shop shall remain secondary to the use as a petrol filling station and any application must clearly demonstrate that the retail element would not adversely affect the existing retail development in the town centre.
- Small convenience type shops associated with the petrol station shall not exceed 100 sq. metres of sales space. Planning applications for the provision of such shops however shall be specifically applied for. The layout of the station forecourt should be arranged to allow dedicated parking for those using the shop. Where an associated shop is proposed, the application shall be considered in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, December 2000 (or as maybe amended) including potential impact on any local centre.

15.9.7 Fast Food Outlets / Take-Aways / Amusement Arcades / Gaming Clubs Bookmakers

In order to maintain the appropriate mix of uses and protect night time amenities in a particular area, it is a policy of the Council to prevent the excessive concentration of the aforementioned uses and to ensure that the intensity of any proposed use is in keeping with both the scale and pattern of development in the area.

The cumulative impact of the number of takeaways, amusement arcades, fast food outlets and turf accountants in any particular area will be considered in the assessment of any application. Impacts such as noise, litter, disturbance and traffic, will also be taken into consideration. The planning authority will control the opening hours of take-aways.

The provision of any of the above will be assessed having regard to the following where appropriate;

- Noise at the boundaries will be carefully monitored and noise insulation measures will be required at the time of the submission of the planning application. Other effects of the development on the amenity of nearby residents must be assessed prior to the granting of planning permission, i.e. general disturbance, hours of operation, car parking, litter and fumes;
- New buildings must be designed to prevent noise escaping and with adequate provision for refuse disposal, storage and collection;
- The number and frequency of such facilities in the area;
- The need to safeguard the vitality and viability of shopping areas in the town centre and to maintain a suitable mix of retail uses;
- Façade design will be carefully controlled by the planning authority and in particular the type and degree of advertising signage and lighting. The design shall respect the character of the street and the buildings.

15.10 SHOPFRONT DESIGN AND ADVERTISING

15.10.1 Shopfronts

Shopfronts are one of the most important elements in determining the character, quality and image of retail streets in Athy.

The design of shopfronts should reflect the scale and proportions of the existing streetscape. The retention of existing shopfronts of townscape importance will be encouraged. In respect of shops and other business premises, advertising should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront and in most cases will be required to be located within the fascia. Signs will not be allowed to dominate the facade or interfere with windows or other features or detailing on the building.

Applications for planning permission for such development should have regard to the following;

- Detailed plans at a scale of 1:50 shall be submitted with all applications. Such plans shall include details regarding the design, colour and detailing with regard to signage, advertising and lighting. The use of garish colour shall be avoided.
- Standard logos and advertising may not be permitted. All signage must be compatible with the existing streetscape. Timber, stone, glass and steel are preferred materials.
- The use of external roller shutters and projecting brand signs are unacceptable.
- Contemporary shopfronts will be considered provided that they are designed in accordance with traditional principles of scale, proportion and detailing.
- The appearance and proportions of the original shopfront should be retained as appropriate. Changes in internal ceiling heights, where required, should not interfere with the proportions and depths of fascias.
- The twin elements of a fascia board (to carry names and advertising) and pilasters (to frame and delineate the shopfront boundary) should be provided in all cases.
- The design must be approached in an integrated way (relating to the whole facade), including advertising, lighting and other features.
- Colour schemes should co-ordinate with adjoining buildings and shopfronts and should be chosen to enhance the proportions

and detailing of the whole building.

- Vertical emphasis and proportions should be kept and plot divisions should be expressed externally (even if the shop crosses them internally).
- The removal of service wires associated with existing facades will be actively promoted in Athy.
- The enlargement or remodelling to a horizontal emphasis of existing windows above ground floor level will be discouraged.
- The use of large areas of undivided glass or the provision of new display windows with a horizontal emphasis will be discouraged.
- The permanent removal of the shopfront and the creation of an opening through which direct trading onto the pavement is carried out will be discouraged.

Retail and other multiples e.g. turf accountants, banks and building societies tend to have their own corporate identity and standardised signage. In sensitive locations, standard shop fronts can have the effect of weakening the special local identity of a place. The planning authority will insist upon shop front design that does not have the effect of visually detracting from the local and often sensitive character of an area. However it is often possible to achieve a compromise so that the corporate image is maintained without eroding local character.

15.10.2 Advertising

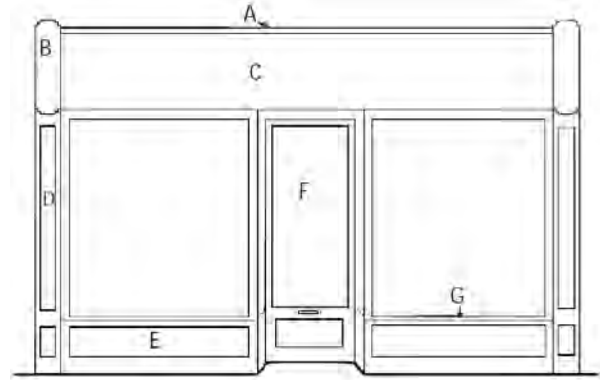
In respect of shops and other business premises, advertising should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront and in most cases will be required to be located within the fascia. Signs will not be allowed to dominate the facade or interfere with windows or other features or detailing on the building.

The Council will encourage the following types of advertising:

- The use of traditional painted sign-writing on fascia boards, using appropriate colour schemes;
- The use of solid block individual lettering affixed directly to fascia boards or facades;
- The use of spotlighting or floodlighting of fascia boards, shopfronts or entire facades (provided that the light fixtures are of modest form and size and that such lighting will not cause a traffic hazard);
- The painting of stall risers and other features

to enhance the design of the shopfront, using appropriate colour schemes;

- The provision of traditional timber or wrought iron hanging signs, with painted or enamelled finishes. Such signs shall be of a limited size and projection and shall be limited to a maximum of one sign for each building facade.



A: Cornice **B:** Capital **C:** Fascia **D:** Pillaster, **E:** Stall Riser **F:** Recessed Doorway **G:** Window Cill

Commercial interests will not necessarily be allowed to use standardised shopfront design, 'corporate colours', logos or materials. Compatibility with individual buildings and with the streetscape is considered by the Council to be more important than uniformity between the branches of one company.

The character of the building, its materials and colour scheme, and those of adjoining buildings will determine the appropriate design response in any instance.

The following types of advertising will not normally be permitted by the Council, and will be actively discouraged:

- The use of plastic, PVC, Perspex and neon signs or lettering or detailing on any exterior;
- Internally illuminated box fascia signs;
- Internally illuminated projecting signs, whether fixed or hanging;
- Flashing, reflectorised, neon or glitter-type signs or detailing at any location on the exterior of the building, or so located within the interior as to be intended to be viewed from the exterior;
- The erection of any signs or other devices which project above the level of the eaves or parapet, or obtrude on the skyline, or

outside the general bulk of the building;

- The provision of multiple signs, whether small or large, which would cause visual clutter on buildings or within the streetscape;
- The use of inappropriate brand or corporate advertising;
- The covering over of shop front windows by the rear of display areas, posters, banners etc.

15.10.3 Canopies/Banners/Flags

The erection of plastic or fabric canopies or 'Dutch' style canopies will be discouraged. Such canopies disrupt the view along the street and obscure both shopfront detail and neighbouring advertising and are generally not acceptable. Where shading of a window display is required the use of traditional rectangular sun blinds/awnings of the retractable type may be permitted. The erection of a canopy or awning requires planning permission.

Banners and flags are considered to be unsuitable forms of identification and will not be permitted.

15.10.4 Roller Shutters

The installation of security shutters can visually destroy and deaden the shopping street at night, thereby detracting from the public realm/environment of the town. It is the policy of the Council to discourage the use of such shutters and to ensure the removal of unauthorised ones. The erection of a roller shutter and its associated housing requires planning permission.

Where security shutters are considered to be essential - for example, because of the type of business transacted or goods stored and where the location so indicates, the Council may permit them provided that they meet the following criteria:

- They must be of the open-grille type or timber panelled shutters painted to match the shop-front colour scheme. This will be favourably considered in place of roller shutters in order to enhance the streetscape.
- Internal roller shutters located behind display window.
- Steel security shutters may be acceptable for security reasons for certain businesses.

Each case will be examined on its merits.

15.10.5 Outdoor Advertising Structures

Outdoor advertising structures will not generally be permitted within the town, whether freestanding or attached to buildings. In cases however where they screen a derelict structure or other eyesore, they may be permitted on a temporary basis. In particular, the use of gables or sides of buildings for the exhibition of advertising structures will not be permitted.

The use of free-standing signs/advertising boards on or over the public footpath will not be permitted.

15.10.6 Advertising on Bus Shelters

In considering applications for bus shelters with associated advertising the planning authority will have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, such as location, scale and type of advertising proposed and the effect on the amenities of the area and streetscape.

15.10.7 Automated Teller Machines

The provision of automatic teller machines (ATMs) will be strictly regulated, having regard to the following:

- The need to protect the character of the building or shopfront they are to be incorporated into, in particular, Protected Structures/Architectural Conservation Areas;
- The design and location must be such that they are accessible to all;
- In general, there should not be more than one ATM in any one shopfront so as to avoid the creation of a dead shopfront;
- The need to control the amount of litter generated by these machines.

15.11 BUILT AND NATURAL HERITAGE

15.11.1 Development in Relation to Protected Structures

Planning permission will be required for works, both to the exterior and interior, which materially affects the character of a protected structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest. What might be regarded normally as minor alterations to buildings may not necessarily be regarded as such in the case of protected structures.

Such works can include:

- Window replacement and fenestration changes.
- Wholesale plastering/pointing/painting or painting of previously unpainted elements.
- Modifications of brickwork and stonework.
- The removal/alteration of architectural detailing including joinery and decorative plasterwork.
- Inappropriate interior works including the removal of walls, the creation of openings and partitioning of rooms.
- Works to roofs and railings involving the removal of original materials and replacement with inappropriate materials.

In considering applications for alterations and/or additions to a protected structure, the Council will have regard to the various elements of the structure, which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted on by the proposed development. A declaration under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) can be sought from the Council to list the type of works that do not affect the character of a specified protected structure and therefore do not require planning permission.

In the case of a proposal to materially change the use of a protected structure, the suitability of such use having regard to its potential impact on the structure including works necessary to comply with Building Regulations will be considered. Proposals for change of use must, however demonstrate the following:

- The reversibility of the proposed alterations;
- In the case of buildings within the curtilage of a protected structure whether such buildings are of heritage value or not;
- How the new use will respect the historic fabric of the building;

- How specific features of importance will be retained (e.g. historic shop fronts, plasterwork and original timber sash windows);
- The extent to which the new use will require structural or other modification of the building – e.g. in the case of upper floor offices in historic structure, additional floor loadings may require strengthening of floors and ceilings below;
- In the case of buildings with particular ecclesiastical or civic functions, the new use should involve minimal alteration to the exterior of the structure. In the case of churches and graveyards, burials, graves and other monuments should not be removed and should be protected in the course of works.

Windows made from aluminium, uPVC or similar material will not be acceptable in protected structures.

All applicants should be guided by the DoEHLGs Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004) and in particular Chapter 6 on Development Control where it states at paragraph 6.3.2 “The conservation of historic buildings is a specialised discipline. An applicant should be advised that a level of specialised expertise may be necessary to guide on best practice in dealing with works to a protected structure.”

This will be increasingly important depending on the scale and complexity of works proposed to the structure or when considering the design and scale of new structures within the curtilage”. An applicant should seek advice from a qualified and experienced architectural conservation consultant at feasibility stage.

An architectural heritage assessment report, as described in Appendix B of the DoEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004) shall accompany planning applications for works to protected structures. This report shall:

- Outline the significance of the building;
- Include a detailed survey of the building, including a photographic survey;
- Detail the proposed works it is intended to carry out; and
- Contain a full assessment on the materials and method proposed to carry out these works, their impact on the character of the structure and the reversibility of the proposed works.

The details required to be submitted will be dependant on the significance of the building and the nature of works proposed. All works to protected structures should be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.

A method statement shall be required for the conservation of any works to protected structures. Method statements should make reference to the DoELHG Advice Series in how best to repair and maintain historic buildings. As outlined in the DoEHLG's Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines, a method statement is a useful tool to explain the rationale for the phasing of works.

The statement could summarise the principal impacts on the character and special interest of the structure or site and describe how it is proposed to minimise these impacts. It may also describe how the works have been designed or specified to have regard to the character of the architectural heritage.

15.11.2 Development within the Curtilage and Setting of Protected Structures

In considering applications for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The various elements of the structure which gives the protected structure its special character and how these would be impacted on by the proposed development.
- Proximity of any new development to the main protected structure and any other buildings of heritage value.
- The design of the new development that should relate to and complement the special character of the protected structure.

High quality design will be a foremost consideration when assessing proposals for development within the curtilage of a protected structure, with particular emphasis on siting, building lines, proportions, scale, massing, height, roof treatment and materials. This does not preclude innovative, well designed contemporary buildings. High quality contemporary interventions will be encouraged over historic pastiche. Development proposals should include an appraisal of the wider context of the site and structure.

15.11.3 Development in Architectural Conservation Areas

The extent of the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is illustrated on Map 12.3. In considering proposed developments in the ACA the Council will have regard to the following:

- The effect of the proposed development on buildings and the surrounding environment, both natural and man-made.
- The impact of development on the immediate streetscape in terms of design, scale, height, plot, width, roof treatment, materials, landscaping, mix and intensity of use proposed.
- New alterations and extensions should complement existing buildings/structures in terms of design, external finishes, colour, texture, windows / doors/ roof/ chimney/ design and other details.
- In dealing with advertisements in the Architectural Conservation Area, the overriding consideration will be the enhancement and protection of the essential visual qualities of the area.

15.11.4 Development in Areas of Archaeological Potential

When considering development proposals within Areas of Archaeological Potential and on, or in close proximity to, sites of known archaeological significance, the Council will have regard to the provisions of Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, or as may be amended from time to time. The Council will also have regard to the observations and recommendations of the Department of the Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht.

When considering such proposals, regard will be had to the nature of sub-surface works that could impact on archaeological remains (e.g. foundation type and design, layout and location of services, road works, landscaping schemes etc). The Council may require the developer to submit a report prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist on the potential implications of the proposed development on the archaeological integrity of the structure/site.

In appropriate circumstances, the Council when granting permission for development may impose conditions requiring:

- Professional archaeological supervision of site excavations.

- The funding by the applicant of archaeological assessment, monitoring, testing or excavation of the site and the submission of a report thereon, prior to the commencement of development
- The preservation of all or part of any archaeological remains on the site.

15.11.5 Natural Heritage

Article 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive requires an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project whether within or outside a designated Natura 2000 site, which does not directly relate to the management of the site but may impact upon its conservation objectives.

The assessment is based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise. It addresses the potential impacts of the plan or project on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site. The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan or project, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site. The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites but potentially impacting upon them (known as 'ex situ' impacts) must also be included in the assessment. For more detailed guidelines see Appropriate Assessment of Plans and projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009) issued by the DoEHLG.

A project or plan may only proceed if it can be concluded on the basis of Appropriate Assessment that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. If adverse effects are likely, or in cases of doubt, then derogation under article 6 (4) shall apply, but only in cases of imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

In the case of SAC and NHA sites the council may require an Ecological Impact Assessment to determine the impact of the proposed development on the designated site.

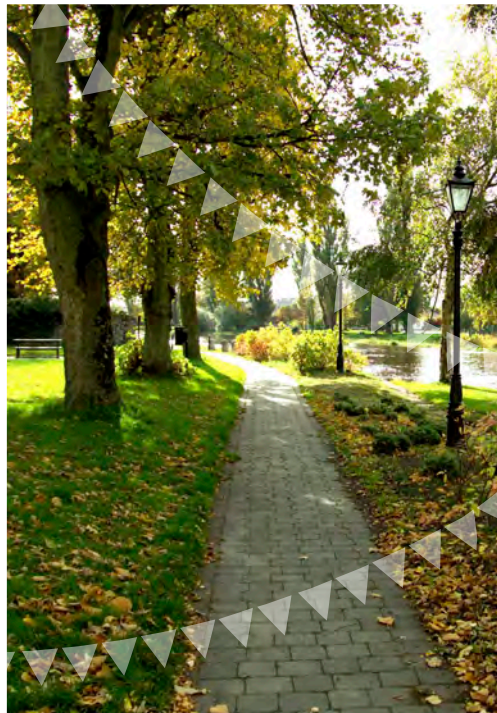
In the event of a proposed development impacting on a site known to be a breeding or resting site of species listed in the Habitats Regulations a derogation license may be required.

Applications for a derogation license should be made in writing, including survey results and proposed mitigation measures, to the Species and Regulations Unit, the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

CHAPTER 16

Land Use Zoning

16



Athy Town Development Plan 2012-2018



Aim: To ensure the orderly and sustainable development of the town through the setting out of zoning objectives for a variety of uses.

16.1 BACKGROUND

The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, requires that development plans contain objectives for the zoning of land for particular purposes, in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development. The key method of implementing this is through the identification of Land Use Zonings and Objectives for specific areas or sites. This chapter lists the land use activities referred to under each zoning objective and indicates the acceptability or otherwise of specified land uses within each zone. The zonings are identified by colour on Map 16.1 Land Use Zoning Map and the uses identified in Table 16.5, Land Use Zoning Matrix.

Zoning aspires to promote orderly development, to eliminate potential conflicts between incompatible land uses and to establish an economic basis for investment in public infrastructure and facilities. Zoning has regard to the strategic policies underlying the core strategy of this Development Plan. These include the principles of sustainable development, the integration of land use and transportation planning, the promotion of economic development, the concept of creating sustainable communities and the protection of built and natural resources.¹

This chapter should also be read in conjunction with Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.

16.2 STRATEGY

In accordance with the overall strategy of this Plan, the zoning strategy has regard to:

- The need to promote sustainable development in accordance with national, regional, county and local policy.
- The need to provide sufficient zoned land at appropriate locations throughout the

Plan area to facilitate the envisaged land use requirements for the period 2012-2018.

- The sequential development of land.
- The sustainable development and the use/redevelopment of under utilised and brownfield sites.
- The accessibility, availability and location of land for development.
- The location and adequacy of existing social infrastructure (schools, community facilities etc).
- The character of the town with regard to the scale and pattern of development.
- Physical features and amenities of the town.
- The present and future situation regarding the provision of physical infrastructure including water, wastewater and roads



¹ Section 10 (8) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 states that there shall be no presumption in law that any zoned land in a Development Plan shall remain so zoned in any subsequent Development Plan.

16.2.1 Land Use Zoning Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

- LU1:** To ensure that a logical and sequential approach is adopted for development within the Athy Town Plan area (i.e. prioritising the development from the core area outwards).
- LU2:** To prohibit the proliferation of any individual use which in the opinion of the planning authority does not contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- LU3:** To encourage a mix of uses where appropriate.

16.2.2 Land Use Zoning Category

Land use zonings are designated in this Development Plan in accordance with Table 16.1. Table 16.2 describes these zonings and the specific land use zoning objectives in greater detail.

Table 16.1: Land Use Zoning Category

Ref.	Land Use Zoning
A	Town Centre
B	Existing Residential & Infill
C	New Residential
D	Neighbourhood Centre
E	Community & Educational
F	Open Space & Amenity
H, H1, H2, H4	Industrial & Warehousing
H3	Light Industrial & Commercial
I	Agriculture
J	Transport & Utilities
Q	Enterprise & Employment
R	Retail & Commercial
U	Public Utilities

Table 16.2: Land Use Zoning Objectives

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
A	Town Centre	<p><i>To protect and enhance the special physical, historical and social character of the existing town centre and to provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre facilities and uses including retail, residential, commercial, cultural and civic uses.</i></p> <p>The purpose of this zone is to protect and enhance the special character of Athy Town Centre and to provide for comprehensive development and allowing for a broad range of compatible and complementary uses which will be encouraged to locate in this area and contribute to a dynamic, vibrant and pedestrian focused town core area. To improve retailing, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the Town Centre which complement its unique historic setting. It will be an objective of the Council to encourage the full use of buildings and back lands especially the use of upper floors, preferably for residential purposes. Certain uses are best located away from the principal shopping streets because of their extensive character and their need for large-scale building forms and space requirement. These uses include retail warehousing or industrial uses.</p> <p>A strong urban design approach will be required in all aspects of development in this area. The Council will encourage the appropriate re-use and regeneration of buildings, backlands and derelict/obsolete land.</p> <p>A variety of compatible uses appropriate for daytime and evening use will be promoted in the town centre. Innovative design approaches will be welcomed in the area, particularly with regard to residential development. Warehousing and other industrial uses will not be permitted in the town centre.</p> <p>Chapter 14 - Urban Design and Opportunity Areas provides urban design guidance for a number of opportunity areas within the town centre.</p>
A	Town Centre lands located within the flood lines.	<p>Development proposals located within the flood lines on lands zoned A: Town Centre and shown on Map 16.1 and Map 5.1 shall be accompanied by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment. The development proposal shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Indicate and quantify the loss of flood storage arising from the development proposal. (ii) Provide compensatory storage located adjacent to the proposed development. (ii) Indicate measures to minimise the risk of flooding on the subject site.

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
B	Existing Residential and Infill	<p>To protect and enhance the existing residential amenity, to provide for appropriate infill residential development and to provide for new and improved ancillary services.</p> <p>This zoning principally covers existing residential areas. The zoning provides for infill development within these residential areas. The primary aim of this zoning objective is to preserve and improve residential amenity and to provide for further infill residential development at a density that is considered appropriate to the area and to the needs of the population. While infill or re-development proposals would be acceptable in principle, careful consideration would have to be given to protecting amenities such as privacy, daylight and aspect in new proposals.</p>
B	Existing Residential lands located within Flood Zones A & B	<p>These lands are substantially developed. However, proposals for further development of these lands shall be the subject of a site specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed. It is recommended that further development of these lands be required to incorporate mitigation measures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Indicate and quantify loss of floodplain storage arising from the development proposal; (ii) Provide compensatory storage located within or adjacent to the proposed development; (iii) Indicate measures to ensure that water-vulnerable elements of the development would not be flooded during the 1000 year flood; (iv) Ensure that existing flow paths for flood waters will not be compromised.
C	New Residential	<p>To provide for new residential development, associated residential services and community facilities.</p> <p>The purpose of this zone is to provide new residential development and other services incidental to residential development. While housing is the primary use in this zone, recreation, education, crèche/playschool, community buildings and sheltered housing will also be considered by the Council. Limited local shopping facilities will be considered to serve the local need of the residents.</p> <p>Permission may also be granted for home based economic activity within this zone subject to the preservation of residential amenity and traffic considerations. New residential areas should be developed in accordance with a comprehensive plan detailing the layout of services, roads, pedestrian and cycle routes and the landscaping of open space. New residential development should only take place in conjunction with the provision of necessary physical, social, community and recreational services/facilities.</p>
C6 C21	New Residential	<p>Development proposals for these lands shall be the subject of a site specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed.</p>

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
C12 C26 C27 C33	New Residential	While a portion of each of these land parcels is located within Flood Zones A and B, in each case the proportion is not sufficient to prevent appropriate development within the overall land parcel. The layout and design of development on these lands should be such that water vulnerable features are located outside of the Flood Zones A and B.
D	Neighbourhood Centre	<p>To provide for a new Neighbourhood Centre and associated facilities.</p> <p>This zoning provides for the development of a new neighbourhood centre to serve the needs of residential areas. A mix of retail, community and recreation development is sought in this zone. Only limited residential development sufficient to ensure the viable and satisfactory working of the neighbourhood centre will be considered in this zone. This centre is intended to serve the immediate needs of the local working and residential population and complement rather than compete with the established town centre. Medical clinics and professional offices, workshops, a crèche, small convenience stores or café are all envisaged within this zone.</p> <p>No single shop unit shall be greater than 1500sq.m gross floor area. This threshold shall be monitored over the period of this plan.</p> <p>Neighbourhood centres have been identified at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monasterevin Road • Ardrew • Geraldine Road
E	Community and Educational	<p>To provide for and improve community, educational, ecclesiastical and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The purpose of this zoning is to provide for and improve community, educational and recreational facilities including, health care, child care, fire station, courthouse, schools, churches, meeting halls and other, community facilities, ancillary neighbourhood uses and services.</p>
E	Community and Educational Lands located north of the Town Centre between the River Barrow and the Railway line	<p>These lands passed the Justification Test and thus modification of the lands use classification is not a recommendation of the SFRA. The land is already substantially developed. However, it is recommended that further development of these lands be required to incorporate mitigation measures that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Prevent flooding of the development; (ii) Ensure there is not net reduction in the volume of floodplain storage contained within the lands being developed; (iii) Existing flow paths for flood waters will not be compromised.

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
F	Open Space and Amenity	<p>To protect and provide for open spaces, amenity facilities and recreational uses.</p> <p>This zone relates to open spaces, dispersed throughout the town, and comprises public and private land. The purpose of this zoning is to provide for open spaces, playgrounds, parks, sports centres, active and passive recreation uses, landscaped areas and walkways. The Council will not normally permit other developments which result in loss of zoned open space within the town.</p>
H	Industrial and Warehousing	<p>To provide for and improve industrial and warehousing development.</p> <p>The purpose of this zoning is to provide for industrial and warehousing uses. Other uses, ancillary or similar to industry and warehousing will be considered on the merits of the proposed development and may be acceptable in this zone. Where employment is a high generator of traffic, the location of new employment facilities at appropriate scale, density, type and location will be encouraged to reduce demand for travel.</p> <p>Residential or retail uses (including retail warehousing) or incinerators/thermal treatment plants will not be acceptable in this zone. Retail warehousing is permitted in principal in lands zoned H2.</p> <p>Where any Industrial/Warehousing land adjoins other land uses, particularly residential use, a buffer zone (approximately 10-15 metres) shall be provided for and landscaped accordingly in accordance with the Development Management Standards (Chapter 15) of this Plan.</p>
H	Industrial and Warehousing Lands located to the north of the Ballylynan Road	<p>Site zoned H: Industrial and Warehousing located along the Ballylynan Road and which passed justification test (Refer to Appendix II, Section 4.4, Table 2 of the SFRA).</p> <p>It is recommended that development of these lands which are located within the 100 year and 1000 year flood zones be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the nature and scale of development being proposed. Such development proposals shall also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Indicate and quantify loss of floodplain storage arising from the development proposal; (ii) Provide compensatory storage located within or adjacent to the proposed development (iii) Indicate measures to ensure that water vulnerable elements of the development not be flooded during the 1000 year flood; (iv) Ensure that existing flow paths for flood waters will not be compromised.

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
H1	Industrial and Warehousing	<p>This zone relates to the gateway business campus and provides for any future expansion of this campus. Future development will be for low-density employment of the light industrial and industrial office type. This site is a key gateway to the town and therefore high quality design, finish and landscaping of the development is particularly important.</p>
H2	Industrial and Warehousing	<p>To provide for light industrial and industrial office type employment in a high quality campus environment and to provide for retail warehousing in accordance with the retail policy and subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands located to the north and south of the Southern Distributor Road <p>A Master Plan must be prepared for this area and any application must be submitted having regard to this Master Plan. The Master Plan should be prepared by the landowners ideally working together, and in consultation with Kildare County Council and any other service providers. Any development on these sites must not seriously injure the amenities of adjoining land uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands zoned as H2: Industrial and Warehousing off the N78 Ballylnan Road <p>It is recommended that development of these lands be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the nature and scale of development being proposed. Such Development Proposals shall also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Indicate and quantify loss of floodplain storage arising from the development proposal; (ii) Provide compensatory storage located within or adjacent to the proposed development; (iii) Indicate measures to ensure that water-vulnerable elements of the Development would not be flooded during the 1000 year flood; (iv) Ensure that existing flow paths for flood waters will not be compromised.
H3	Light Industrial and Commercial	<p>To provide for and improve light industrial and warehousing development.</p> <p>The purpose of this zone is to provide for office and light industrial and warehousing development.</p>

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
H4	Industrial and Warehousing	This zone relates to the Athy Business Campus in Woodstock South. The purpose of this zone is to consolidate the employment base in the town, other uses ancillary or similar to industry and warehousing including office, office based industry; professional and medical services will normally be acceptable in this zone subject to the provision of appropriate service infrastructure and car parking to support such uses.
I	Agricultural	To retain and protect agricultural uses. The purpose of this zoning is to ensure the retention of agricultural uses and protect them from urban sprawl and ribbon development. Uses which are directly associated with agriculture or which would not interfere with this use are open for consideration. This includes limited housing for members of landowners' families or persons who can demonstrate a need to live in the agriculture zone.
J	Transport and Utilities	To provide for the needs of transport and utility uses. The purpose of this zoning is to provide for the needs of public transport and other utility providers. Car parks and commercial development associated with the provision of public transport services are envisaged for this zone.
Q	Enterprise and Employment	To facilitate opportunities for employment and enterprise uses, manufacturing, research and development, light industry, employment and enterprise related uses within a high quality campus/park type development. This Plan seeks to retain and develop the existing manufacturing industries in these areas while, establishing and expanding new categories of business in Athy and support their development. It is intended that these lands will be used for enterprise and employment uses in a high quality, well design environment. Development shall be of a high quality architectural design and landscaping. Along the Canal, new or infill development must have regard to the visual amenity of the canal and the established uses in the immediate vicinity. Any development on this site shall require a detailed landscaping scheme at application stage Possible uses for the Enterprise and Employment zone include: Business, Science and Technology units: High tech, research and development facilities, corporate and industrial offices. Office Based Industry: Where the activity is concerned primarily with producing an end-product (e.g. software development, research and development) or provides telephone or web based services (e.g. telemarketing). Only office developments to which the public do not normally have access will be permitted within the zone.

Ref	Use	Land-Use Zoning
		<p>Enterprise and Incubator units: Small and mixed sized workspace units suitable for small businesses and start up companies. Limited light industrial development will be considered in the context of the overall campus type development.</p> <p>Institutional Use: Includes medical facilities and educational and knowledge based research facilities.</p> <p>Support facilities: Without compromising the policy of resisting inappropriately located retail and leisure development, provision is made for small scale, "walk to" facilities (i.e. restaurant, sandwich shop and specialist services such as crèches) , which are integrated with employment units and are of a nature and scale to serve the needs of employees within this employment area.</p>
Q	Enterprise and Employment Lands adjoining the western bank of the Grand Canal	<p>These lands are substantially developed. However, proposals for further development of these lands shall be the subject of a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed. It is recommended that further development of these lands be required to incorporate mitigation measures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Indicate and quantify loss of floodplain storage arising from the development proposal; (ii) Provide compensatory storage located within or adjacent to the proposed development; (iii) Indicate measures to ensure that water-vulnerable elements of the Development would not be flooded during the 1000 year flood; (iv) Ensure that existing flow paths for flood waters will not be compromised.
R	Retail and Commercial	<p>To provide for and improve retailing and commercial activities.</p> <p>The purpose of this zone is to provide for and improve retail and commercial activities on a site at Woodstock South. The supermarket shall have a net retail area not exceeding 3.000sqm in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines. Any additional retail/commercial development on the site shall be considered on its merits and in accordance with the provisions of the Plan.</p>
U	Public Utilities	<p>To protect and improve existing commercial and residential uses and provide for additional compatible uses.</p> <p>The purpose of this zoning is to reflect the established mix of commercial and residential uses which have developed historically in Athy. Any new development in this zone must not prejudice the viability of established land uses within the zone.</p>

Table 16.3: Quantum of Zoned Land

Ref.	Specific Zoning Objective	Approx. Area (Ha)
A	Town Centre	33.4
B	Existing Residential and Infill	222.2
C	New Residential	75.8
D	Neighbourhood Centre	2.4
E	Community and Education	43.0
F	Open Space and Amenity	57.2
H, H1, H2	Industry and Warehousing	51.1
H3	Light Industry and Commercial	9
H4	Industrial and Warehousing	3.1
I	Agricultural	434.7
J	Transport and Utilities	7.6
Q	Enterprise and Employment	38.6
R	Retail and Commercial	3.4
K	Public Utilities	5.2

Table 16.4: Quantum of Residential Land (C-New residential currently undeveloped)

Residential Objective No.	Approx. Area (Ha)	Residential Objective No.	Approx. Area (Ha)
C2	4.2	C22	0.4
C6	8.9	C26	6.7
C8	1.7	C27	1.3
C9	0.7	C28	3.8
C11	4.9	C30	3.95
C12	3.3	C31	7.2
C13	8.7	C33	4.0
C15	4.0	C34	2.4
C19	1.0	C35	0.34
C20	0.4	C37	0.7
C21	7.2		
		TOTAL	75.8 Ha

16.3 ZONING MATRIX

16.3.1 Application of Zoning Matrix

Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided they are not in conflict with the primary use-zoning objective. The Zoning Matrix (Table 16.5) illustrates the acceptability or unacceptability of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. The land use-zoning matrix is intended to provide guidance to potential developers. An indication that a proposal would be 'permitted in principle' from the matrix should not be taken to imply a granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application may be necessarily successful. The matrix relates to land use only and important factors such as density, building height, design standards, traffic generation, etc., are also relevant in establishing whether or not a development proposal would be acceptable in a particular location.

Y= Permitted in Principle

A use which the Local Authority accepts in principle in the relevant zone subject to the normal planning process including policies and objectives outlined in the Plan.

O= Open for Consideration

A use which is "Open for Consideration" means that the use is generally acceptable except where indicated otherwise and where specific considerations associated with a given proposal (e.g. scale) would be unacceptable or where the development would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

N= Not Permitted

A land use which is indicated as "Not Permitted" in the Land Use Zoning Matrix is not considered to be appropriate except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the policies and objectives contained in this Plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

16.3.2 Other Uses

Proposed land uses not listed in the matrix will be considered on the merits of the individual planning application, with reference to the most appropriate use of a similar nature indicated in the table and in relation to the general policies and zoning objectives for the area.

16.3.3 Non-Conforming Uses

Throughout the town there are uses that do not conform to the zoning objectives for that area. These are uses which:

1. Were in existence on 1st October 1964,
2. Have valid permissions or,
3. Have no permission and which may or may not be the subject of enforcement proceedings.

Extensions to and improvement of premises referred to in categories 1 and 2 above may be permitted. This would apply where proposed development would not be seriously injurious to the amenities of the area and would not prejudice the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

16.3.4 Material Contravention

The Council has a statutory obligation to take such steps as may be necessary to secure the objectives of the Development Plan. In appropriate circumstances the Council may permit a material contravention of the Development Plan. The granting of a planning permission that materially contravenes the Development Plan is a reserved function of the Elected Members of the Council, exercisable following a public consultation process.

16.3.5 Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land use zones. In these areas it is necessary to avoid developments that would be detrimental to amenity.

In zones abutting residential areas, particular attention will be paid to the uses, scale, density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals required to protect the amenities of residential areas.

Development abutting amenity and open space should generally facilitate the passive supervision of that space, where possible by fronting onto it.

Table 16.5: Land Use Zoning Matrix

LAND USE	A: Town Centre	B: Existing Residential & Infill	C: New Residential	D: Neighbourhood Centre	E: Community & Education	F: Open Space & Amenity	H: Industry & Warehousing	H1: Industry & Warehousing	H2: Industry & Warehousing	H3: Light Industry & Commercial	I: Agricultural	J: Transport & Utilities	Q: Enterprise & Employment	R: Retail and Commercial	U: Public Utilities
Amusement Arcade	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Broiler House	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Car Parks	Y	N	N	O	O	N	Y	Y	Y	O	N	Y	O	O	O
Cattle shed / Slatted Unit	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Cemetery	N	N	N	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Cinema/ Dancehall/ Disco	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N
Community Hall	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	N	N	Y	N	O	O	O	N
Childcare/ Crèche/ Playschool	Y	O	Y	O	Y	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	N
Cultural Uses/ Library	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	O	N
Dwelling Unit	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N	N	N
Funeral Homes	Y	N	N	O	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	O	N	N
Land Use	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	O	O	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Guest House/ Hostel	Y	O	O	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	O	N	N
Hotel	Y	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Halting Site	N	O	O	N	O	O	N	N	N	O	O	N	N	N	N
Health Centre/ Clinic	Y	O	O	Y	Y	N	O	O	O	Y	N	O	Y	Y	N

LAND USE	A: Town Centre	B: Existing Residential & Infill	C: New Residential	D: Neighbourhood Centre	E: Community & Education	F: Open Space & Amenity	H: Industry & Warehousing	H1: Industry & Warehousingw	H2: Industry & Warehousing	H3: Light Industry & Commercial	I: Agricultural	J: Transport & Utilities	Q: Enterprise & Employment	R: Retail and Commercial	U: Public Utilities
Heavy Commercial Vehicle Parks	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Take- Away	O	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N	O	O	N
Industry	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	O	O	O	N
Industry (Light)	O	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	O	O	O	N
Medical & related consultancy	Y	O	O	Y	Y	N	O	O	O	O	N	O	O	O	N
Motor Sales	Y	N	N	N	N	N	O	O	O	Y	N	Y	O	N	N
Nursing Home	Y	O	O	O	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	O	N	N	N	N
Offices	Y	O	N	O	O	N	O	O	O	O	N	O	Y	O	N
Park/ Playground	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	O	O	O	O	O	N	O	O	N
Petrol Station	O	N	N	O	N	N	O	O	O	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Place of Worship	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Playing Fields	O	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	O	Y	N	O	O	N
Pub	Y	O	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N
Recreational Buildings	Y	O	O	O	Y	Y	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	N
Repository/ Store/Depot	O	N	N	N	O	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	O	O	O	N
Restaurant	Y	O	O	Y	O	N	O	O	O	O	N	O	O	O	N
Residential Development	Y	Y	Y	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

LAND USE	A: Town Centre	B: Existing Residential & Infill	C: New Residential	D: Neighbourhood Centre	E: Community & Education	F: Open Space & Amenity	H: Industry & Warehousing	H1: Industry & Warehousing	H2: Industry & Warehousing	H3: Light Industry & Commercial	I: Agricultural	J: Transport & Utilities	Q: Enterprise & Employment	R: Retail and Commercial	U: Public Utilities
Retail Warehouse	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	O	N
School	Y	O	O	N	Y	O	N	N	N	N	O	N	O	N	N
Shop (Comparison)	Y	N	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Shop (Convenience)	Y	O	O	Y	N	N	O	O	O	O	N	O	O	Y	N
Stable Yard	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	Y	N	N	N	N
Sport/Leisure Complex	Y	O	O	O	Y	O	N	N	N	O	N	N	O	O	N
Tourist camping site/ caravan park	N	N	O	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	O	N	N
Utility Structures	Y	O	O	O	O	O	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	O	O	Y
Warehouse (Wholesale)	O	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	O	N	N
Waste Incinerator	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Workshop	O	N	N	N	O	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	O	Y	O	N	O

Y= Permitted in Principle O= Open for Consideration N=Not permitted



Athy Town Development Plan
2012-2018

LEGEND:

- A: Town Centre
- B: Existing Residential & Infill
- C: New Residential
- D: Neighbourhood Centre
- E: Community & Educational
- F: Open Space & Amenity
- H, H1, H2, H4: Industrial & Warehousing
- H3: Light Industrial & Commercial
- I: Agricultural
- J: Transport & Utilities
- Q: Enterprise & Employment
- R: Retail / Commercial
- U: Public Utilities
- Rivers and Canals
- Athy Town Council Boundary
- 500m Intervals from the centre of Town
- Public Rights of Way
- New Roads Objectives
- Northern Distributor Road Study Area
- Improvements to existing Road Network
- Reservation to allow upgrading of the Rail Bridge
- 1000 Year Flood Line

Note: This map should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Athy (Refer to Appendix II)
Note: Road, cycle and foot path locations are indicative only & may be subject to change during the detailed design process.

Land Use Zoning Map

Date: March 2012

Map Ref: 16.1

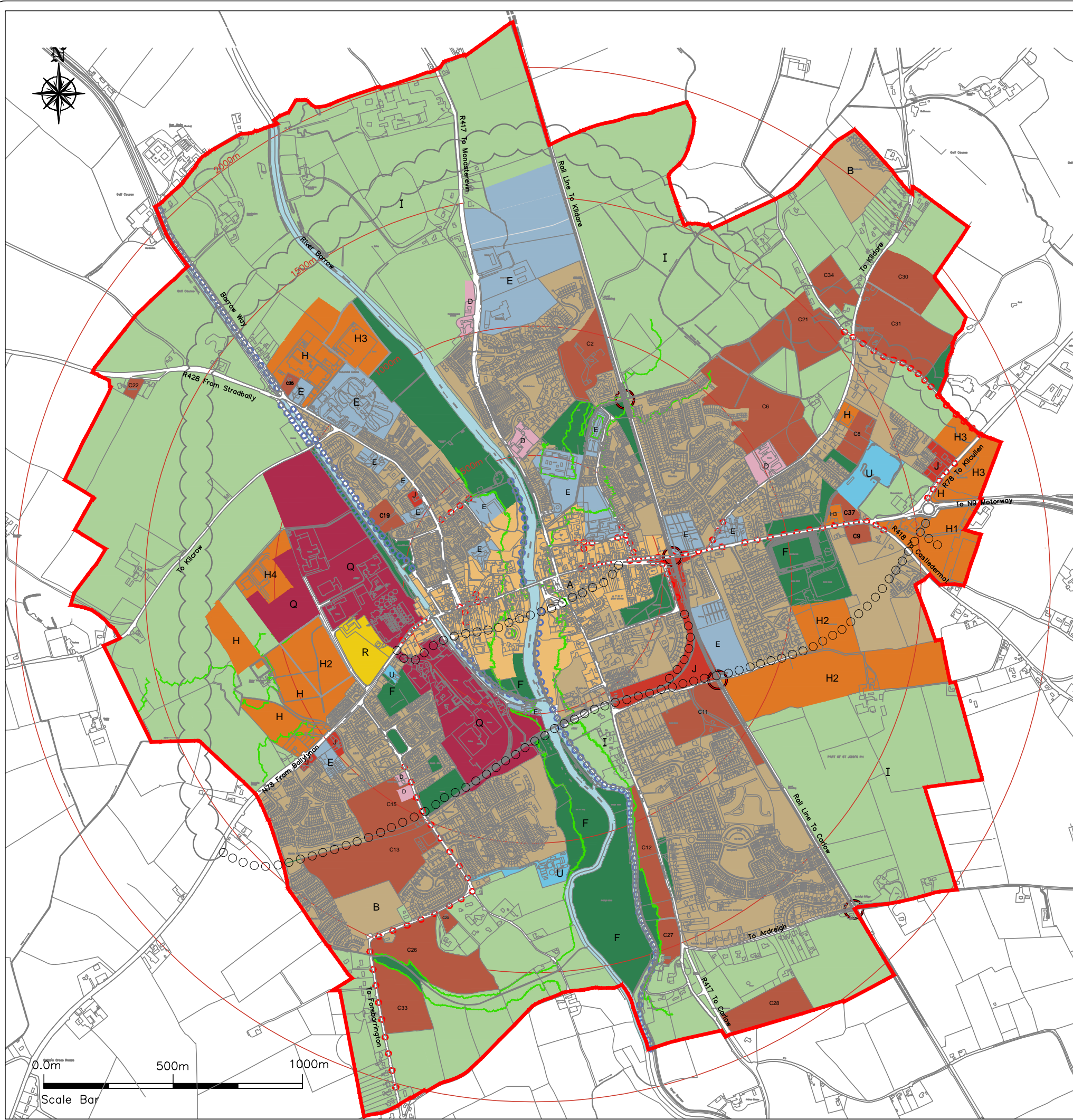
Scale: N.T.S.

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Drawn By DMcN

**THIS DRAWING TO BE READ IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE WRITTEN STATEMENT**



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