

10 DELIVERY OF THE IFPLUT

10.1 Introduction

This section examines how the Framework Plan measures previously described in Section 10 should be implemented. The first part of the section is concerned with the phasing issues that need to be addressed to ensure a timely and coordinated delivery of the Framework. The second part deals with implementation issues such as cooperation and coordination required between the relevant bodies.

10.2 Phasing

The phasing approach considers how the development of Athy, including the provision of housing and jobs, may be coordinated with infrastructure in the most sustainable and economical way. On the basis that water and drainage services are available, and irrespective of the proposed land use scenario, it is considered that any phasing of future development should concentrate on developing higher density central sites first and the suburban sites second. Such an approach would comply with the principles of sustainable development with regard to a compact urban form and mix of uses in close proximity.

To ensure a continuously sustainable and integrated growth of the town over the period up to 2016 employment opportunities have to expand alongside residential development, retail provision has to improve constantly and the provision with community, recreational and amenity facilities has to keep pace with the growing population.

In order to avoid Athy becoming increasingly dependent on commuting to the Metropolitan Area and other towns, employment has to grow at a pace whereby the net outflow of local labour is decreasing over time. Whilst the land uses outlined in this report allow for local employment provision to equal the study area population that is available for employment it is not implied that Athy will ever contain all the employment needs of its population within the town. Instead it is envisaged that a significant quantum of the population's workforce will be employed within the town whilst there will also be a sustainable level of inward and outward commuting.

Short Term

In the short term, to 2006, the Town Council aims at an urban population of 13,900 per the current Development Plan. With a current population of approximately 6,000 people an additional number of 7,500 people have to be provided for in the next 2-3 years. Approximately 3,850 persons can be accommodated by the planning applications already granted or currently before the Town Council for decision as of March 2003. This leaves an additional 2,350 people to meet the target population in 2006, which translates into approximately 870 additional residential units at a household size of 2.7. It is not critical nor perhaps desirable or sustainable that such a level of population growth occurs in this period. It is preferable that this growth rate be extended into the medium term and that ideally, new neighbourhoods should be developed in the town centre or as close as possible to the centre and the railway station. This is in particular important since it is realistic to assume that commuting from Athy to other centres will prevail to some degree in the short and medium term.

In order to provide level of employment equivalent to the size labour force in the Study Area, job opportunities have to increase substantially. Ideally, at an assumed labour force participation rate of 45 per cent and by taking into account the existing number of jobs in the Study Area and the jobs provided by current planning applications 6,700 additional jobs should be provided to coincide with the potential population. It is very likely that the employment provision will lag behind the growth in population in the short and medium term. If evenly spread over the whole timeframe of the Study 480 jobs would be provided per annum in order to meet the target as outlined in Section 6.2.



With the considerable growth in population in the short term the provision with retail facilities has to improve at a comparable level. This does apply to an increased supply with convenience shopping for the weekly shop such as supermarkets as well as a more varied range and higher quality comparison shopping facilities. These facilities should be located in and around the existing main street.

Medium Term

In the medium term until 2011 the urban population is projected to increase by a further 1,400 people to a total population of 15,300. This requires 500 additional residential units within the 5 years between 2006 and 2011. The required increase in employment opportunities in the medium term amounts to 720 jobs within the Study Area.

The Triangle and other smaller town centre sites such as the Convent site should be available in the medium term, providing opportunity sites for high-density employment and apartment development. The lands for low density employment to the west of the town centre are readily available for development in the short to medium term, whereas the lands to the southeast can become available within the timeframe of the next Town Plan. Also, some of the Tegral lands may come on-stream for high-density employment by 2011.

The re-location of a governmental department to Athy will have considerable spin-off effects for associated services and will increase the demand for a sufficient supply with high-quality retailing as well as recreational, community and amenity facilities.

By 2011 various opportunity sites, which are currently in the backlands of the main street would be opened up through the construction of the Inner Relief Street. These sites can accommodate a large number of additional retail facilities as well as community and recreational facilities, which the then existing population will be able to sustain. Also, by 2011 there is scope for some retail warehousing on the edge of the town centre.

Amenity facilities should be constantly improved and it appears realistic that Emily Square, the Dominican Church area, Shaw's Square area as well as the new park and a much improved walking network can be developed to their full potential by 2011 however, in terms of the existing population, any existing deficit in facilities such as playing fields should be provided as soon as possible. It will be essential to improve the "soft" factors in the town such as amenity and recreational facilities alongside with or even ahead of the development of residential and employment areas. These factors contribute substantially to the attractiveness of the town and provide important incentives for investors and new residents.

The two additional schools, one primary and one secondary facility, will be required in the medium term.

Long Term

In the long term up to 2016 the target population for the Study Area of 20,000 people and 16,700 people in the urban area has ideally been reached. Thus, between 2011 and 2016 a further 1,400 residential units have to be built in the town and 680 additional jobs provided.

By 2016 Athy can be considered as self-sustaining town where people live and work. The population will have reached a critical mass to support a wide range of retailing and community, recreational and amenity facilities, which will limit journeys to other centres to a minimum. Some measures should be implemented directly in order to address the immediate needs of the town and to make better use of existing infrastructure.

Transportation Measures

The transport management objectives are outlined in Appendix A and should be read in conjunction with Figure 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5. The measures are defined in terms of short (up to three years), medium (between 3-7 years) and long term (beyond 7 years). Adherence to this phasing will ensure that infrastructure and service improvements are developed hand in hand with demand management measures. The short-term measures put forward are independent of future proposals and should be delivered now to aid the existing traffic situation within the town. The medium and long-term measures set out have taken account of the future land use proposals and transport developments for example the Inner Relief Street and should therefore be delivered in line with these proposals. However, within the planning process, provision should be made for medium and long-term measures with immediate effect.

10.3 Implementation

Development Plan – As the Framework Plan is a non-statutory document, forums for introducing the recommendations contained herein are the future Development Plans for the town and its environs. The statutory review of the Athy Development Plan 1999 by Athy Town Council has commenced with the adoption of the Plan scheduled for May 2006. In preparing the new Plan the location of land uses proposed and the densities of

development should be informed by this study. Policies and objectives should be incorporated that would lead to the implementation of key provisions relating to the pedestrian, cyclist and public transport facilities and roads infrastructure.

Local Area Plans – The use of Local Area Plans should be considered to provide more detailed guidance in particular areas that may be subject to large-scale development, for example Ardrew.

Urban Design Studies – To ensure the coherent and integrated implementation of the proposals for the town centre described in the previous section the development of an overall design scheme including building locations and hard and soft landscaping is strongly advisable. The Shaffrey report provides a valuable base for the development of the Inner Relief Street but should be, in a next step, extended to the Triangle, the Shaw's Square area, the new urban park and could also include areas such as the Marina south of Emily Square.

Development Design – One of the most valuable contributions to achieving the aspirations of the Framework is to design pedestrian, cyclist and public transport priority into the fabric of the urban expansion per the transport management measures outlined in Appendix A. The hierarchy of routes, and key destinations must be incorporated and meet the principles extolled in this Study. The Planning Authority can work with developers to ensure that these objectives are incorporated where relevant into individual development sites..

Marketing, Inward Investment and Location – The successful development of Athy, in accordance with the vision developed in this study, is dependent upon a high level of development and investment in the study area. An effective marketing and promotional strategy is required to deliver this vision and this will be complemented by other policies and programmes.