



Chapter one Introduction

1.1 Purpose of a Development Plan

The purpose of a development plan is to set out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of a particular area, in this case Athy town. This Development Plan consists of a written statement and plans indicating development objectives for Athy.

Part II Chapter I of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires a planning authority to prepare a Development Plan for its functional area every six years.

In making the Development Plan the Council shall:

1. Have regard to Development Plans of adjoining planning authorities,
2. Take into account any significant likely effects the implementation of the plan may have on the area of any adjoining planning authority,
3. Have regard to national plans, policies or strategies.
4. Have regard to any Ministerial Guidelines.

1.2 Statutory Objectives

There are 13 mandatory objectives set out under Section 10 (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000. These include:

- a) The zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes (whether residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, as open space or otherwise, or a mixture of those uses), where and to such extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, requires the uses to be indicated.
- b) The provision, or facilitation of the provision of infrastructure including transport, energy and communication facilities, water supplies, waste recovery and disposal facilities, waste water services and ancillary facilities (regard having been had to the Waste Management Plan 2000-2005 for County Kildare).
- c) The conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph.

- d) The integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population.
- e) The preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.
- f) The protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- g) The preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas.
- h) The development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration.
- i) The provision of accommodation for Travellers, and the use of particular areas for that purpose.
- j) The preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities.
- k) The provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community including, in particular, schools crèches and other education and childcare facilities.
- l) An environmental appraisal on the likely effects on the environment of implementing the plan.

1.3 Strategic Aim

To set out a framework for the sustainable development of Athy so that growth may take place in a co-ordinated and orderly manner, whilst protecting and preserving the town's intrinsic character, heritage and amenity and making a positive contribution to an improvement in the quality of life.

1.4 Goals of the Plan

This Development Plan is based on a number of general goals which are designed to improve the quality of life for the population of Athy and surrounding hinterland and which the Council will endeavour to implement during the period of the Plan.

These goals are as follows:

- To be consistent and co-ordinated with the policies and objectives of the statutory Kildare County Development Plan 2005-2011, the County Development Board Strategy "Kildare 2012" and the Athy RAPID Plan as endorsed by the Area Implementation Team (AIT) and Kildare County Development Board.
- To be consistent with policy contained in the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines and Ministerial Guidelines.
- To guide the location and pattern of development whilst ensuring that a relatively compact urban form is maintained.
- To ensure that the future development of Athy is undertaken in such a way as to achieve a clean visual break between the urban and rural area thereby limiting ribbon development as far as possible outside the zoned envelope.
- To ensure that sufficient and suitably located land is allocated to satisfy the needs of the community.
- To sustain and enhance the role of Athy as a community and commercial service centre to the surrounding rural hinterland.
- To facilitate the provision of sufficient and adequate employment opportunities to cater for the needs of the population through the expansion of the manufacturing, services base and high technology sectors.
- To secure a safe and comprehensive road system capable of satisfying the requirements of both motor traffic and pedestrians in the town and critically to continue improvements of traffic management and car parking facilities to accommodate the conduct of commerce and social life.
- To facilitate the provision of improved amenities within the town and to secure the redevelopment and renewal of obsolete areas.
- To enhance the environment of the town including the renewal of obsolete areas and the preservation of buildings and other features of archaeological, historic, cultural or social interest.
- To protect residential and amenity lands from encroachment by incompatible types of development.
- To promote, protect, improve, encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism and recreational facilities in Athy.
- To conserve and protect the natural heritage of Athy.

1.5 Form & Content

The written statement sets out the aims of the Council for the proper planning and sustainable development of Athy. The Record of Protected Structures for Athy and the Housing Strategy for the County are contained in Appendices 1 and 4 respectively. The Plan sets out the many detailed objectives, which the Council wishes to achieve in the six years of the Plan, such as development objectives, infrastructure, conservation, preservation of amenities, renewal and community facilities. It is within the framework of the Plan that public services will be provided and investment decisions made. The Development Control objectives deal with the standards that will be applied to development proposals in the County. Their purpose is to regulate the impact of development on the environment in pursuance of the declared policies.

The maps give a graphic representation of the proposals of the Plan, indicating land use and other objectives of the Council. In particular, the maps contain the details of local objectives and it is essential therefore that particular attention is given to maps when considering the local objectives. They do not purport to be accurate survey maps from which site dimensions or other survey data can be measured. Should any conflict arise between the written statement and the maps, the written statement shall take precedence.

This Plan should be read in conjunction with relevant policies and objectives of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005 – 2011, where appropriate. This is required so that due account is taken of the town, its environs and its place in the Regional and County hierarchy of urban settlements.

1.6 Plan Composition

Each chapter within the written statement provides a background to the topic and identifies a goal, objectives and specific policies in relation to this subject. Details of what these include are identified below:

Background

A statement setting out the context for Athy in relation to the specific topic.

Goal

An overall general aim encompassing the policies and objectives.

Objectives

Detailed objectives providing a framework for specific programmes/policies. It provides the background and reasoning to the policies included in the Plan.

Policy

The policies set out the aims of the Council for the proper planning and sustainable development of Athy.

1.7 Implementation

The Council will seek to implement the aims, policies and objectives of the plan in a proactive manner. The Council will engage with all relevant stakeholders, both statutory and non-statutory agencies and organisations through the development control process. The Development Plan is the main instrument for regulation and control of development. The Council is required to assess development proposals in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the Plan.

