



Chapter four Economic Strategy

This chapter incorporates two separate sections dealing with the following topics:

- A) Economic Strategy
- B) Prevention of Major Accidents

4.1 Part A: Economic Strategy

4.1.1 *Background*

Sustainable economic development seeks to achieve the balance of optimising the output from available resources to achieve current objectives in a way that enables future generations meet their own needs and objectives in due course.

Modern day development objectives focus on building strong inclusive communities supported by adequate employment, housing, education, transportation and sanitary infrastructure, health services, community support services, security, amenities and leisure services. The quality of life within a community can be measured by the availability of these services, and their delivery is inextricably linked to economic development.

The National Spatial Strategy strongly recognises that quality of life is increasingly important to people. People want to spend less time in traffic or travelling long distances and more time at home with their families or enjoying leisure activities. It recognises the need to ensure that our cities, towns and rural areas develop in a way that meets the economic and social needs of a growing population and that future development focuses on improving the attractiveness and competitiveness of places in a sustainable way.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area have set out a strategy for the continuing economic development of the region, founded on the acceptance that Ireland is one of the most open economies in the world today and that Dublin is considered as the only location in Ireland with the necessary critical mass that the global market requires for the location of investment. The guidelines set out to define Dublin in a wider context to include the counties of the Mid East region and present to the world a location for investment that will compete in scale with other locations of similar critical mass in Europe.

Consistent with the strategy as set out in the RPG's, the joint Councils will seek to

1. Promote the economic development of Athy,
2. Maximise opportunities presented by the classification of Athy as a Moderate Growth Town
3. Build upon its proximity to the County's principal transportation routes.
4. In particular, ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for employment generating development throughout the Plan period. The adequacy of employment generating land supply will be closely monitored throughout the Development Plan period.

In order to develop Athy in the long term towards its optimal level of self-sufficiency coupled with the opportunity to attract inward movement of workers high-density employment opportunities should be located in appropriate locations with respect to residential areas and public transport nodes. Therefore opportunities for high-density employment have been located within walking distance of the railway station as well as existing and future residential development. This Plan has identified existing areas for intensification and potential areas for future high-density employment at locations including Tegral at the southwestern edge of the town centre, and within the town centre at the Dominican site, and the area to the north of Edmund Rice Square. (See Chapter 8 Town Centre and Maps 1 & 8).

To remove the conflict between heavy goods vehicles and local cycle and pedestrian movements, goods based employment with a lower density of employees per square metre such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution activities, should be located as close as possible to the national road network. In this Development Plan low density employment sites are located to the southeast, west and northwest of the town (See Map 8).

In order to encourage the better sustainable use of land and influence travel patterns, the employment strategy and employment land use supply seek to provide the majority of new land within or in close proximity to existing centres and to proposed major transport nodal points.

Objectives

It is an objective of Athy Town Council:

- (1) To build capacity for future population and employment growth
- (2) To support the development of a skilled and flexible labour force
- (3) To develop educational facilities and initiatives that promote and support opportunities in line with future labour market requirements.
- (4) To develop a quality built environment to attract and sustain enterprise and employment.
- (5) To integrate development of the town with employment generators already established in its environs.

It is clearly seen from Figure 4.1 that a Strategy for Economic Development integrates to one focus all the elements that shape the town as a living environment, and that the role of each is relevant. There are some individual elements that have a greater impact than others in presenting a location to attract and sustain economic development, but increasingly factors that heretofore were considered less relevant are emerging as strong influences.

Factors that make a town attractive for both firms and their employees are the key to a successful economic development strategy.

The Development Plan is the primary document that sets out the policy in this regard and presents in a holistic fashion all the issues that impact on population assignment and investment into the town. It constitutes the document from which the investor will take guidance as to future socio-economic development strategy trends, enable the investor to plan with reasonable certainty strategies to deliver the jobs and the houses as well as the supporting social infrastructure that the town requires.

- EE 7 To create an integrated and sustainable public and private transport system to move persons and goods efficiently within and through Athy.
- EE 8 To encourage the integration of employment locations with other land uses and the transportation network, and in particular, ensure that the location of employment intensive land uses are located in proximity to existing and planned strategic routes, where public transport is viable.
- EE 9 To ensure that there is adequate screening in the form of planting, landscaping and mounding as appropriate where industrial sites are developed adjacent to residential areas.
- EE 10 To support the development of entrepreneurial start up businesses and small scale industrial and employment generating activities, where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use would have minimal impact on adjoining uses, primarily residential property.
- EE 11 To facilitate the development of appropriate ICT centres for training, tele-working, call centres.
- EE 12 To facilitate the provision of telecommunications infrastructure to meet the socio-economic needs of the population within the various employment sectors. The further development of Broadband Communication Networks shall be promoted to create a dynamic for significant growth opportunities in Athy.
- EE 13 To prepare a feasibility study to investigate the potential of lands at Chanterlands for the attraction of major employment providers in order to promote economic development.

4.1.5 *Agriculture*

The future of farming in Kildare is influenced by developments within Europe and the rest of the world. The widening gap between farming incomes and the rest of the economy is becoming more apparent and necessitates the need for strategic development within the agricultural sector and the need for diversification.



Objectives

It is an objective of the Council;

- (1) To promote a vibrant, environmentally sustainable and well managed agricultural and forestry sector and bloodstock industry, which contribute to a dynamic and successful rural economy.
- (2) To protect agricultural uses from encroachment by urban development uses beyond that needed to cater for the orderly expansion of the town.

Policy Statements

Agriculture

It is the policy of the Council:

- AG 1 To support agricultural development and encourage the continuation of agriculture as a contributory means of maintaining population in the rural area.
- AG 2 To facilitate farm diversification and encourage the sustainable development of alternative rural enterprises and the conversion of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate owner-run enterprises, as a way of supporting a viable rural community subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The obligations on upper tier establishments include those for lower tier in addition to:

- Production of a Safety Report.
- Preparation of an internal emergency plan.
- Provision of information to those responsible for off-site emergency plans.
- Provision of information for the safety of the public.

Goal

To ensure that all industries covered by the SEVESO Directive have taken necessary steps to reduce the risk and minimise the effects of major accidents.

Objectives

It is the objective of the Council to require that:

- (1) The siting of new establishments.
- (2) Modifications to existing developments, and
- (3) New developments in the vicinity of existing establishments.

take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances, while safeguarding both the public and the environment.

Policy Statements

It is the policy of the Council:

MA 1 To comply with the SEVESO II Directive and to reduce the risk and limit the consequences of major industrial accidents by, where appropriate, taking into account the advice of the Health and Safety Authority when proposals for new developments are considered.

MA 2 That in the assessment of planning applications for new development or expansion of existing development involving hazardous substances, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The SEVESO Directive and Major Accident Regulations.
- HSA generic land-use planning advice.
- Potential adverse impacts on public health and safety.
- The need to maintain appropriate safe distances between residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity.

MA 3 To require planning permissions for:

- (i) the modifications of existing establishments and
- (ii) where the nature and quantity of dangerous substances handled, used or stored on existing sites is to be altered.

The need for additional technical measures may also be required so as not to increase the safety risks to people.

MA 4 To ensure that the land use policies take into account the need to maintain appropriate distances between major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

