



## Chapter five Housing

### 5.1 Background

The Council has statutory obligations to ensure that sufficient land is zoned for all types of housing to meet the town's projected housing requirements over the Plan period and to ensure that an undue shortage will not arise. One of the basic aims of any local authority is to promote a balanced social, physical and economic development. The Kildare County Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011 is drawn up for the entire County of Kildare including the urban districts of Naas and Athy and is included in Appendix 5.

The aim of the Plan is to ensure that there is adequate land available in appropriate locations for housing and to have clear policies regarding proposals to build new houses, whether individual units or schemes. The availability of housing for a diverse range of housing needs is important for sustaining communities and for enhancing quality of life. Financial constraints will determine the rate of public sector house building, whilst, in the private sector, the market dictates both the demand and supply of new housing including locational preferences.

There are considerable opportunities for new housing developments within Athy, provided the policies contained in the Plan are adhered to. New housing developments should be sympathetic to their surroundings and reflect the character of the area. It is important that the residents of the development enjoy satisfactory standards of privacy and outdoor amenity and that the overall layout provides a safe and attractive living environment.

### 5.2 Existing Residential

Residential development in Athy has occurred in a fairly dispersed pattern across the urban area, resulting in a relatively spread out urban form. The railway line, river, canal, floodplains and the industrial areas of Tegral and Minch Norton represent considerable barriers. These have contributed to the dispersed settlement patterns in the past and limit movement across the town. Residential development has taken place mainly on the road approaches to the town.

The type of residential development existing in the town is typical of a similar sized Irish town. It varies from one-off housing on the outskirts of the town, to ribbon development on the road approaches, to housing estates of varying design and densities. There has been a substantial increase in the number of houses built in recent years. Furthermore there are approximately 1,691 housing units with permission or under construction within housing developments at the time of writing.

The protection and promotion of residential uses within the town centre is crucial to creating a vibrant and safe town centre and the recent demand for new housing units in Athy town centre is encouraging. With the national trend towards smaller household sizes, the demands for apartment living will continue in the coming years. Additional accommodation in the town centre close to all facilities reduces the need to travel by car and thereby supports a sustainable land use pattern.

### 5.3 County Housing Strategy – Part V – Planning and Development Acts 2000-2004

The Kildare County Council's first Housing Strategy 2001-2006 was adopted on 1st October 2001. The Housing Strategy 2005 –2011 is included in Appendix 5. The analysis, which underpinned the Strategy, suggested that there was a social and affordable housing requirement in Kildare amounting to 47.3% of all housing. However legislation provided that the maximum amount of zoned land that could be reserved for social and affordable housing was 20%. While the provision of housing units under Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2004 has been limited to date this is expected to change significantly in the short term. The preferred option for compliance with Part V is the provision of completed housing units followed by serviced land or land. Compliance with Part V through the payment of financial contributions will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances.

#### Goal

To ensure that every household has accommodation suitable to its needs, located in an acceptable environment, at a price or rent it can afford. The Council will attempt to consolidate growth within and around the existing town fabric to develop a compact urban form and to attain the most efficient use of existing infrastructural services.

#### Objectives

The Key objectives of Athy Town Council in respect of housing are as follows:

- (1) To ensure the implementation of the Housing Strategy and to integrate housing provided under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004 into private development in a layout that prevents segregation and promotes good design and layout. A minimum of 20% social and affordable housing will be required on all sites that are zoned for residential development or a mixed-use site that includes residential. The social and affordable housing requirements shall be met as set out in the Housing Strategy which indicates an apportionment of 8% for social housing and 12% for affordable housing.
- (2) To carry out the Council's responsibilities under the Housing Acts and to provide Local Authority dwellings, affordable units, voluntary co-operative housing and private sites as the need arises and as finances permit.
- (3) 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 in individual schemes and variety, interest and social mix in private and social housing developments.
- (4) To ensure that the Council's housing policy and objectives are linked with employment, environmental and infrastructural policies and objectives with the aim of improving the quality of life and the attractiveness of Athy town.
- (5) 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.
- (6) To actively promote the provision of community, educational, social and recreational facilities in parallel with future housing development

### 5.4 Zoned Land

The Athy Development Plan 2000 forecast a population of 13,900 by 2006. A total of 199 Hectares of land was zoned "New Residential" in that Development Plan. There is approximately 67.33 hectares of residentially zoned land currently uncommitted. In addition to this residential zoning the Council has provided an element of new

zoning to ensure Athy has an adequate quantum of residentially zoned land to allow choice in the market and delivery of services. Therefore a total of 195.68 hectares (483.53 acres) of land are zoned "New Residential" in the Athy Development Plan for 2006 –2012. This will ensure that the availability of zoned land will not be a constraining factor in the housing market and there will be sufficient choice available for both the developer and the purchaser.

It is envisaged that future residential development will take place within the Plan area boundary as shown on the zoning map (Map 8).

Within the agricultural zone housing will be restricted to local need category as defined in Chapter 6 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2005 – 2011.

### Policy Statement

**HS 1** It is the policy of the Council to ensure that there is a sufficient quantum of residentially zoned land within Athy to meet the needs of the town, while having regard to Regional and National Guidelines.

## 5.5 Social, Affordable and Voluntary Housing

Athy Town Council aims to ensure that there is an adequate supply of social and affordable housing to meet the needs of the town. The current housing stock is dispersed throughout the town with a high concentration of housing estates in the western area of Woodstock. The regeneration of existing housing stock is vital to ensure a high quality living environment. There are currently proposals to rejuvenate the Townspark and Carbury Park estates. This scheme will improve the quality and design of this housing stock.

*Figure 5.1, Before and After: Proposed regeneration of Carbury Park and Townspark*



VIEW OF LINK BETWEEN CARBURY PARK & TOWNSPARK



PROPOSED VIEW OF LINK BETWEEN CARBURY PARK & TOWNSPARK

Source: Part 8 Submission – McCarthy O'Hora Associates

## **Policy Statements**

### *Housing*

It is the policy of the Council:

- HS 2** To continue to meet social housing needs in the town and to integrate housing provided under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004 into private developments in small schemes so as to prevent segregation and promote good design and layout.
- HS 3** To ensure that 20% of any land zoned solely for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses shall be made available for the provision of social/affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004 and the Housing Strategy.
- HS 4** To ensure that any submission made in compliance with a developer's responsibilities under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2004 and the Council's Housing Strategy 2005-2011, shall provide for a minimum of 8% social housing and 12% affordable housing, unless otherwise agreed by the planning authority due to the exceptional circumstances of any particular case.
- HS 5** To give preference to the option for compliance by developers with Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2004, where developers build the required houses and then make them available to the Council in order:
  - (a) To ensure the fullest achievable degree of social integration,
  - (b) To ensure complete and efficient development of building sites,
  - (c) To facilitate the implementation of policy in regard to social and affordable housing
- HS 6** To take action as may be necessary to acquire land needed to enable the implementation of housing programmes for both the social housing and private housing sectors and in particular for the provision of Low Cost Sites, Co-Op Housing Schemes and Voluntary Low Cost Schemes.
- HS 7** To acquire land in the interest of providing additional public sector housing and to assist local initiatives providing community housing, shared housing and social housing.
- HS 8** To support and facilitate the expansion of the role, played by the Voluntary Sector in meeting social housing need.
- HS 9** To regenerate the Council's current housing stock as required.

## **5.6 Accommodation for Members of the Travelling Community**

Athy Town Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Travelling community and it will endeavour 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 2005 – 2009 to provide accommodation for members of the Travelling community, whether by way of residential caravan sites/ halting sites, including transient sites, or by housing, as may be appropriate. There are currently six family units at the Ardrew Halting Site and six group-housing units will also be provided at this site. Ardrew Halting site is managed and maintained by Kildare County Council.

## **Policy Statements**

### *Traveller Accommodation*

It is the policy of the Council in conjunction with Kildare County Council:

- HS 10** To provide for Traveller accommodation in halting sites, individual dwellings or in-group housing schemes for Travellers who normally reside in Athy and require such accommodation.

HS 11 To maintain the halting site at Ardrew, to provide for group housing units for Travellers at this site, and in to provide for housing for those Travellers who wish to be settled in permanent dwellings.

## 5.7 Housing & Community Facilities

### Policy Statements

It is the policy of the Council:

HS 12 To facilitate and co-operate with other organisations in the provision of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities in parallel with future housing.

HS 13 To facilitate the provision of additional primary and second level schools in appropriate locations where residential expansion is planned.

HS 14 To prepare a Master Plan for 8.3 Ha (20.50 acres) of land owned by Kildare County Council at Ardrew to investigate the possible location of affordable housing initiatives, community facilities, play and recreation facilities and a primary school. (See Map 8)

HS 15 To ensure that the provision of recreational areas and the development of residential areas (where both form part of the same development boundary), are undertaken concurrently.

HS 16 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 approximately 75 dwellings. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria that may be taken into account in such an assessment include the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

## 5.8 Residential Density and Housing Design

The Residential Density Guidelines (1999) set out the Government policy of encouraging more sustainable urban development by the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and the promotion of higher residential densities in appropriate locations.

This will result in:

- More economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced land
- A 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

The Council recognises that higher densities will not be appropriate in every circumstance. In achieving higher densities the protection of the amenities of existing developments and those of the residents of the proposed development will be a primary consideration. A high quality of architecture in the siting and design providing a good quality living environment is essential if increased residential densities are to be acceptable. The development control standards set out in Chapter 12, set out the standards that will be applied to new development proposals to ensure a high quality living space. The Council will seek adherence from developers to the densities and standards set out in this Plan.

### Policy Statements

*Residential Density and Housing Design*

It is the policy of the Council:

HS 17 To require diversity in the density of development and in the form, size and type of dwelling within residential areas.

- HS 18 To ensure that a high standard of design be incorporated in structures and layout with the design of estate development, such as to facilitate pedestrian safety and restrict vehicular traffic speeds.
- HS 19 To promote energy conservation and renewable energy technologies in developments. Such measures shall be consistent with other policies in the Plan.
- HS 20 To require that all new residential accommodation meets the necessary standards of health, sanitation and design, and are carried out generally in accordance with principles of good design.
- HS 21 To require the naming of residential developments to reflect local place names, language or topographical features as appropriate and to incorporate old names from the locality as far as possible and in Irish.
- HS 22 To encourage strong frontages onto the main thoroughfares creating definite building lines and continuity of the town structure.

## 5.9 Infill Housing

Infill housing in the existing built up areas of the town will be encouraged. Any proposals should be designed to integrate successfully with the existing pattern of development in terms of housing type, scale and details to include materials finishes, building lines etc. In all cases the protection of the amenities of existing development should be a significant consideration.

### Policy Statement

#### *Infill Housing*

It is the policy of the Council:

- HS 23 To encourage infill housing developments on appropriate sites where the proposals respect the existing scale and character of the area.

*Figure 5.2, An example of Infill Housing*

