

Mr B. O’Gorman
Town Clerk,
Athy Town Council
Rathstewart,
Athy,
Co. Kildare

13th December 2011

Re. Draft Athy Development Plan 2012-2018 - Amendments

Dear Mr O’Gorman,

The National Transport Authority (the “Authority”) submits the following comments on the proposed amendments to the Draft Athy Development Plan 2012-2018 (hereafter referred to as the Draft Plan).

Core Strategy

The Authority acknowledges the fact that the Draft Plan has reduced the quantum of residentially zoned land from 185ha to 75.39ha, which goes a long way towards addressing the concerns of the Authority. However, the level of new residential zoned lands remains substantially above that of the projected requirements over the life of the plan, approximately 21.5ha. (This represents an oversupply of 53.39ha, or a population equivalent surplus of circa 3,100).

The Authority has previously suggested that a policy of sequential development for residentially zoned land should be included in the plan’s Core Strategy. The Authority would reiterate this position, and considers the prioritisation of brownfield development lands, and areas contiguous to the existing built up area as an important element in the build out of Athy as a compact town. Linking the sequential development of the town to accessibility of key destinations, such as employment, education and services (including interurban bus stops and the railway station) will facilitate the use of, and support investment in walking, cycling and public transport. These are key objectives of the draft NTA Strategy.

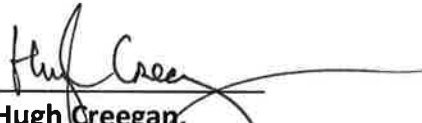
Land Use Zonings

In light of the comments set out above, the Authority would query why the development plan has not considered rezoning 'New Residential' zones C30, C31, C34 and C28, all of which are further removed from Athy town centre, yet adjacent to lands rezoned as White lands (Amendments 16.3, 16.4 and 16.8). The Authority would consider that including these sites as 'White Land' would help rebalance the issue of excess 'New Residential' zoned land in Athy.

The Authority would raise concerns over the rezoning on lands from H to H2 (Amendment 16.20), which will facilitate Retail Warehousing at an edge of town location. This, in conjunction with the rezoning of adjacent lands to Retail and Commerce (Amendment 16.21) could act to undermine the role and function of Athy town centre. Edge of town retail tends to attract more car based trips, which may impact on the potential for Athy town centre to develop a retail core more amenable to walking, cycling and linked to public transport.

I trust these comments will be taken into consideration in the finalisation of the Athy Development Plan.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Creegan,
Director of Transport Planning and Investment.