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## Cover Letter

This is my personal submission

### Observations:

#### **My objections to the Athy Local Area Plan**

**Chapter:** Other supporting documents

For a start, I wish to register a protest at the way that the process of creating and publicising the Athy Local Area Plan has been executed.

Putting a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area may discharge the council's statutory duties but this is quite inadequate as a way of letting the residents of Athy know about the plan and related matters.

The chosen newspaper, the Kildare Nationalist like its owners the Irish Times, no longer has audited figures for its circulation.

In simple terms, KCC cannot calculate what the readership of their notices might be, so while it provides a legal fig leaf to the Council it really has no practical purpose.

In these circumstances, I think it is incumbent on the council to communicate directly with every household that will be affected by the plan.

Given the well documented historic corruption in the planning process in Ireland, albeit in the past, it beggars belief that the Planning Department are not a great deal more proactive in communicating with the population they serve and who pay their salaries.

There appears to be a gulf between the attitude displayed in statements made by the planners and the rights of the citizens to know what is happening in their communities.

In summary, I do not believe that the current process is truly democratic and want Kildare County Council to review its current processes and make changes so that the citizens are really communicated and consulted with in relation to all planning matters.

I am totally against the idea of increased permeability in the Graysland Kingsgrove Estate, and in the Glebelands Estate, as this is accessed by our estate and any increased permeability will in effect open up further access to our estate.

If the residents of the Coneyboro and Glebelands Estates favour greater permeability, then I suggest that the existing access between Glebelands and the Kingsgrove Graysland Estate be sealed and new access be opened between the other two estates.

Numerous academic studies globally have shown that greater permeability increases anti-social behaviour, assaults and burglaries and other crimes against the person and property.

It has been shown to decrease the quality of life of the residents and may affect the properties value and the cost of insurance.

Kildare County Council Planning Team have offered reassurances that the three green areas within the Kingsgrove Graysland Estate cannot be built on because of the conditions imposed in the original planning permissions.

I request clarification that these planning conditions mean that the lands cannot be used for any other purpose including building, providing land for roads, pathways, cycle lanes, or any other purpose, in perpetuity, and that an application cannot be made to change the land use at any time in the future.

Failing that assurance, I must assume that the lands are in danger of being repurposed, given the requirements that empty land are infilled in urban areas.

The Athy Social Infrastructure Audit on Page 37 Table 18 lists 'Evaluation of Open Space in Athy against FIT Standards.

I would refer the council to the Fields in Trust website <https://resource.esriuk.com/esri-resources/fields-in-trust/> which states on the home page:

'Protecting green spaces for perpetuity.

The vital importance of Britain's green spaces was brought to the forefront of national attention during the COVID-19 lockdown. When almost all other leisure venues were closed, parks and recreation grounds provided safe places for people to exercise, enjoy the fresh air and meet others at a social distance. Fields in Trust has used ArcGIS to expose inequalities in access to green spaces and highlight the urgent need to protect these valued places for perpetuity.

I agree with the sentiments of the organisations which was set up in the UK in 1925.

Table 18 shows a cut of around 20% in the future provision of the following types of open spaced per Hectare per 1000 population.

Neighbourhood Park

Local Park

Amenity Green Space

Green Corridor

Natural / Semi-Natural Green Space

Playground

I object to the plan to reduce the provision of all these types of land in the urban area.

The idea that a small town like Athy needs to have its belt tightened to the extent proposed is preposterous in my view.

The council must provide clarification on the location of lands they plan to look at repurposing to achieve their stated targets.

What percentage do they expect will be achieved by repurposing existing lands?

What percentage do they expect will be achieved by reducing the provision of open space in new developments?

If the council have calculated these precise percentages without reference to the current land use, then the figures are meaningless.

I object to the lands at Chanterlands being used for housing, I believe this is an inappropriate location for housing that is likely to provide housing for young families many of whose children will attend school at the Campus on the other side of town.

Adding housing for young families off the Carlow Road is, in my opinion, an act of stupidity and vandalism.

Looking at the Athy Schools Campus it appears that there is only one recent housing development to the south of the schools.

There are no developments to the North, East, or West of the campus.

If new estates were provided in this area they would be within strolling distance of the schools, and a short walk from the town centre.

From their inception, they could have walkways and cycle paths completely separated from the road network.

I want the Council to publish a list of all landowners who currently hold any lands that the council is considering allowing development on during the lifetime of the Athy Local Area Plan, and beyond.

A list of landowners with undeveloped land within a kilometre radius of the Athy Schools Campus should also be made public.

The identity of the limited number of landowners allowed to develop their land holdings must be totally transparent.

I am perfectly aware that the Athy Local Area Plan is what the title suggests, a plan.

Given that virtually no residents of the town were aware of the process the Council were undertaking to consult them about their wishes, I worry that in the future a lot of decisions will be taken in what amounts to secrecy, because notice in a newspaper with a negligible readership or an A4 notice fixed to a fence is almost certain to slip the public's attention, and are in my view totally inadequate.

I am concerned that proposals which feature in the final version of the published Plan, into which of course, the residents had had extraordinarily little input, may be cited as not having been objected to by the public, and therefore they can justifiably form the basis of actions by the council, of which we, the citizens, will be blissfully unaware.

Finally, the Council cited legislation and the work of planning is regarded as essential as a reason for not extending the consultation period so residents could examine large scale maps after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

This is one interpretation that can be made, but it rings hollow with the residents of Athy whose business are shut, employment terminated, children without proper schooling, examinations cancelled and altered, the list goes on.

The sooner the council wakes up and realise that they are there to serve the residents the better.

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**Documents Attached:** No  
**Boundaries Captured on** No  
**Map:**