Athy

Area Based

Transport Assessment

Draft December 2020

Kildare County Council

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Introduction

Background

As part of the requirement for an evidence-based approach to planning, as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), Kildare County Council has prepared an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) to inform the drafting of the next Local Area Plan for Athy.

The ABTA will identify the appropriate transport solutions for the Athy area which will allow development to occur in line with the objectives of the NPF, RSES, Kildare County Development Plan (CDP) and other local planning policies.

The purpose is to undertake a transport assessment for the town of Athy and its hinterland, "the Study Area", which will seek to ensure integration of land use objectives and transport planning. An iterative approach will be taken to ensure that objectives such as increasing public transport (PT) and active travel mode share are realised. It will identify the scale and nature of transport interventions required to serve these objectives and will also provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of transport infrastructure and services in the Study Area.

Athy is the largest town in south Kildare, with a population of 9,677 (as per the 2016 Census). Over the last few decades, Athy has grown significantly. However, as this development has generally been peripheral, there has been a loss of vibrancy of the town centre. Traffic congestion is often chronic, particularly at peak times. In addition, there are significant pedestrian related safety concerns in the town with 50% of collisions on the N78 main street between 2005 and 2013 involving pedestrians.

The new Athy Distributor Road, about to begin construction this year, offers a significant opportunity. It will reduce traffic congestion in the town centre urban environment, making it easily accessible to sustainable transport modes and safe for all road users. The Athy Distributor Road also includes provision for high quality pedestrian and cyclist facilities, providing for increased connectivity in the town.

This Area Based Transport Strategy for Athy aims to capitalise on these opportunities and prioritise sustainable transport.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the ABTA for Athy are founded in the core purpose of what an ABTA should achieve - effective integration of land use and transport planning, providing for more sustainable and equitable forms of development. An important aspect of this is to capture more sustainable travel mode share by discouraging car use. These objectives are in line with overarching National, Regional and Local Planning Policies (as outlined in Part 2 of this ABTA).

The key objectives for the Athy ABTA are listed overleaf.

Public Transport Objectives

Improve the existing bus and rail services to encourage a shift to sustainable transport modes.

Cycling Objectives

Provide an integrated cycle network for Athy and improve safety for cyclists, with a focus on improving the cycling mode share, particularly to schools.

Walking Objectives

Provide an integrated walking network for Athy, with an emphasis on improving safety and increasing the walking mode share, particularly to schools.

Road Objectives

Reduce unnecessary vehicular trips through Athy Town Centre and identify mitigation measures to improve road safety and minimise collision hotspots.

Parking Objectives

Develop a strategy to improve the utilisation of existing car parks in Athy Town Centre.

Another key objective of the Athy ABTA is to engage with the Planning Department in order to ensure that the developing ABTA and the developing Local Area Plan (LAP) are in sync. This will ensure that the objectives above can be achieved for the land use zoning adopted in the LAP. This feedback loop is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

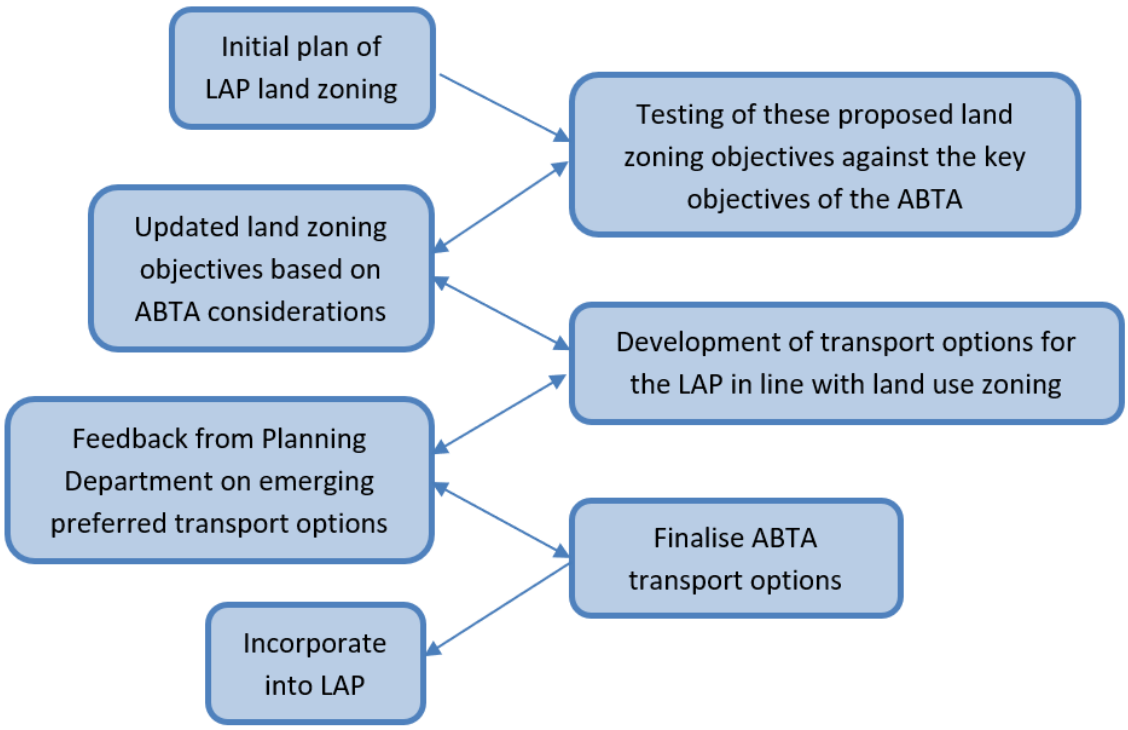

Figure 1: ABTA Interaction with Developing LAP

Scope and Report Structure

The scope and structure of this ABTA has been defined using best practice guidelines.

The NTA are currently in the process of completing an Area Based Transport Assessment Manual. However, in the meantime, in order to provide clarity to transport planners, two guidance documents have been published –

1. NTA - Area Based Transport Assessment Advice Note, December 2018

2. TII - Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes, PE-PDV-02046 April 2018

Both of these documents stress the importance of sustainable transport and proper integration between transport and development.

The guidance notes specify that there are 6 steps to completing an ABTA. These are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Scope of the Athy ABTA

ABTA Part No.	ABTA Element	Description
Part 1 Baseline Assessment of Plan Area and the Surrounding Area **Part 2** Establish Context for the ABTA	Baseline Study	- Study Area - Settlement Context - Existing Public Transport - Existing Connectivity Network - Existing Cycling Infrastructure - Existing Road Network - Existing Parking Provisions - Travel Demand (incl. future growth and associated transport implications) - Summary & Feedback into LAP - National Policy - Regional Policy - Local Policy
Part 3 ABTA Process / Options Assessment	Public Transport Strategy (including bus and rail) Walking / Connectivity Cycling Strategy Roads Strategy Parking Strategy	- Review of objectives and development of options for each strand of the ABTA (listed to the left). - For each strand of the ABTA, a table and map of objectives is presented.

ABTA Part No.	ABTA Element	Description
Part 4 Refinement and Sense Check the Proposals	Implementation Plan	- Note on detailed design - Implementation interdependencies and timeframes
Part 5 Finalisation of the Plan	Consultation and Finalisation	- Internal KCC consultation - Consultation as part of LAP process - Final Transport Plan (including for any changes resulting from consultations) & Conclusions of ABTA
Part 6 Monitoring and Review	Review	- Monitoring Strategy - ABTA Review

At the end of each of these stages, feedback into the pre-draft Local Area Plan preparation process is required.

This ABTA follows each of the steps above in order to provide a comprehensive transport assessment for the town of Athy.

The report structure mirrors the above steps.

Methodology

Various different tools, analysis methods and data sets were utilised in the development of this evidence-based ABTA. These are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of Athy ABTA Methodology

ABTA Part No.	ABTA Element	Tools & Methodology
Part 1 Baseline Assessment of Plan Area and the Surrounding Area	Baseline Study	- Analysis of baseline situation using 2016 Census Data, GeoDirectory Data, AIRO Small Area Data, online resources and site visits. - Baseline catchment analysis using ArcGIS analysis. - Travel demand analysis using 2016 Census commuting statistics. - Future travel demand analysis using the preliminary Athy 2021 – 2027 LAP land-use zoning map provided by the Planning Department of KCC.

ABTA Part No.	ABTA Element	Tools & Methodology
Part 2 Establish Context for the ABTA		- Review of relevant national, regional and local documentation, including strategies, frameworks, plans and policies.
Part 3 ABTA Process / Options Assessment	Public Transport Strategy (including bus and rail)	- Identification of gaps in public transport infrastructure and services using information from the baseline analysis and travel demand analysis
	Walking / Connectivity	- Identification of key trip attractors in Athy - Baseline catchment analysis to identify gaps in walking network which would increase connectivity to key trip attractors - ArcGIS analysis of new proposed connectivity measures to quantify benefit of new links
	Cycling Strategy	- Identification of cycling routes proposed by the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan for Athy - Identification of cycling links which give the greatest benefit in terms of the main objectives of the ABTA, for example, to increase cycling mode share to schools
	Roads Strategy	- Identification of current road projects in Athy - Analysis of Athy Strategic VISUM Traffic Model to understand current and future AADT (annual average daily traffic) in the town, resulting from the Athy Distributor Road - Identification of new roads proposals for the future which would reduce traffic in the town centre and encourage active travel in Athy
	Parking Strategy	- Review of current parking infrastructure and propose new measures to improve the parking situation in Athy

ABTA Part No.	ABTA Element	Tools & Methodology
Part 4 Refinement and Sense Check the Proposals	Implementation Plan	- Illustration of interdependencies between various options and development of an implementation plan for short, medium and long term
Part 5 Finalisation of the Plan	Consultation and Finalisation	- Summary of feedback from internal KCC consultation and any transport related feedback from the future LAP process - Finalisation of the ABTA options based on these consultations
Part 6 Monitoring and Review	Review	• Development of a plan for monitoring progress of ABTA options and a plan to review the ABTA periodically

COVID-19

While this report was prepared during the emergency measures for COVID-19, it is anticipated that over the timeframe which is considered by this report, transportation will return to pre-existing levels of service and use.

It is too early to draw any conclusions or other inferences from the current situation, as it is very dynamic. Observed increased use of active modes will have beneficial effects on sustainability, however, increased dependence on the private car (in preference to public transport) will give rise to difficulties due to congestion and pollution.

It therefore continues to be important that sustainable transportation and, in particular, active modes are supported to reduce congestion and the overuse of unsustainable modes.

In this regard, sustainable transportation remains a priority of transportation planning and the proposals contained in this report should continue to be considered valid.

Part 1 Baseline Assessment of Area

This section provides details of the settlement and transport context in Athy, including current transport infrastructure, services and an analysis of travel demand.

1.1 Transport Assessment Study Area

For the purposes of this ABTA, the red line in Figure 2 below has been taken as the extents of the study area. This is the Athy Town Development Plan 2012 – 2018 boundary. This was chosen as it encompasses more of the built environment and major routes into the town than the CSO settlement boundary (blue line).

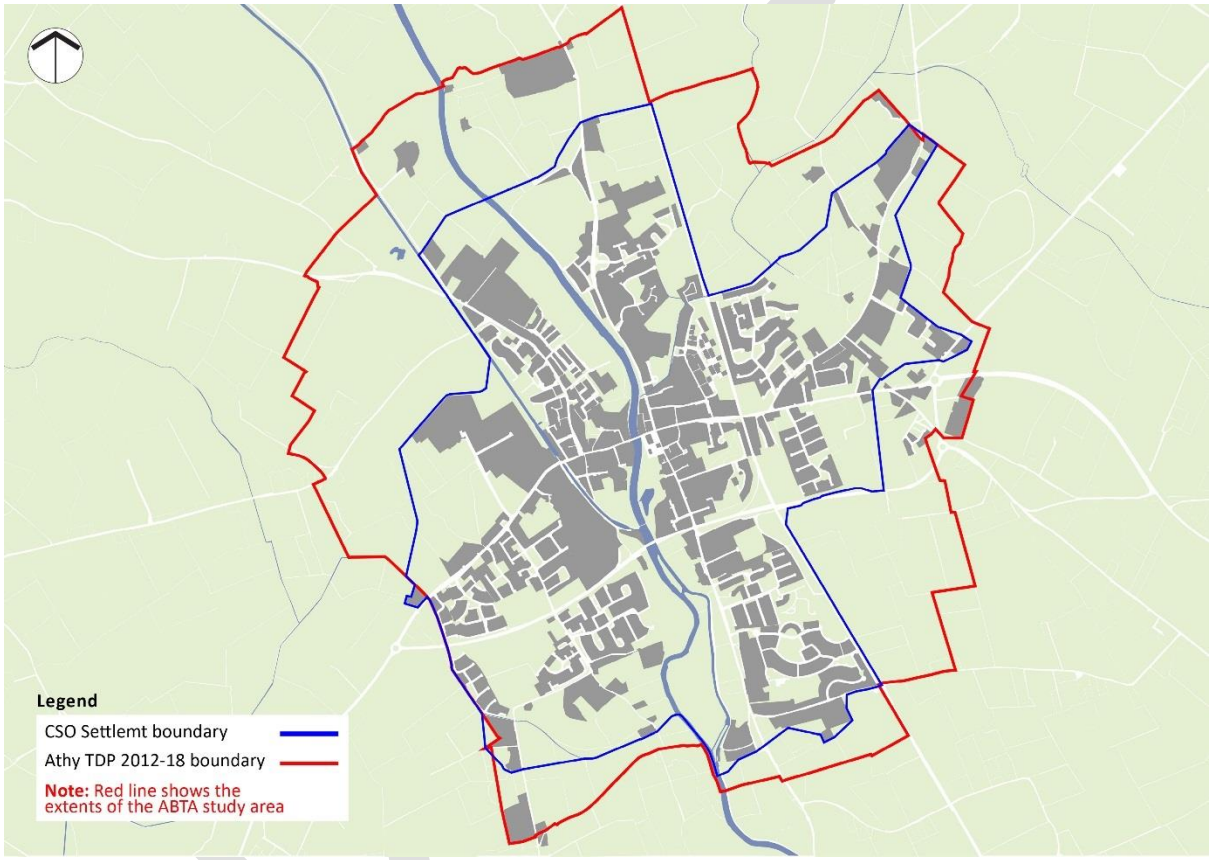

Figure 2: ABTA Study Area

1.2 Settlement Context

1.2.1 Building Uses

Athy experienced rapid population growth for several decades but this growth slowed markedly in the years after 2008. 40% of housing stock in the town in 2016 was built between 2001 – 2010. Only 34 units were built in the town between 2011 – 2016 and only approximately 70-80 units were constructed between April 2016 to November 2020.

In 2016, 1 in 8 houses were found to be vacant but this has changed significantly since and Athy is a designated rent pressure zone since April 2020.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the split between commercial and residential buildings in Athy using the GeoDirectory dataset. This indicates that commercial activities are mostly concentrated in the centre of Athy as well as in industrial estates along the western edge of the Canal and in the northern and eastern peripheries. Along the western edge of the canal close to the town centre, there are two large factories; Tegral Building Products Limited and Minch Malt. There is some evidence of mixed-use developments in the town centre.

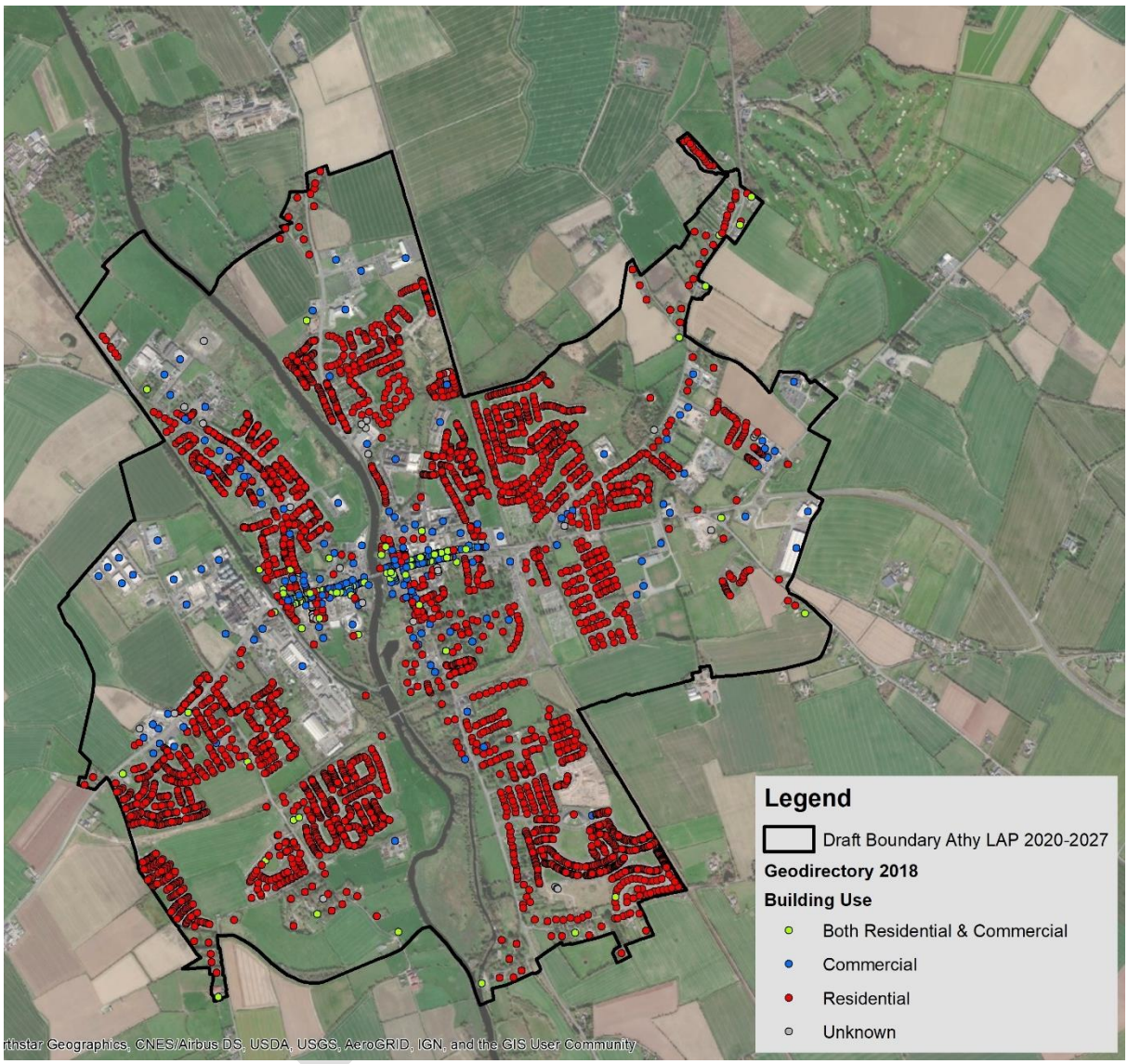

Figure 3: Residential and Commercial Buildings in Athy (GeoDirectory)

1.2.2 Population Size and Density

The AIRO Small Area data gives the total population in Athy in 2016. The total population for all Athy EDs was 10,715, living in 4,094 occupied houses. This gives an average of 2.61 persons per household.

The total populations in the Athy Rural Electoral District (ED) as 3,834, of which Males numbered 1,933 and Females were 1,901. The total housing stock was 1,526, of which vacant households (excluding holiday homes) numbered 156.

The total population in Athy Urban East Electoral District (ED) was 3,910, of which Males numbered 1,930 and Females were 1,980. The total housing stock was 1,779, of which vacant households (excluding holiday homes) numbered 213.

The total population in the Athy Urban West Electoral District (ED) was 2,971, of which Males numbered 1,451 and Females were 1,520. The total housing stock was 1,339, of which vacant households (excluding holiday homes) numbered 181.

Figure 4 below, provided by AIRO, shows the population density for Athy, based on the 2016 Census. The highest population density is noted in north-east and south-west of the town.

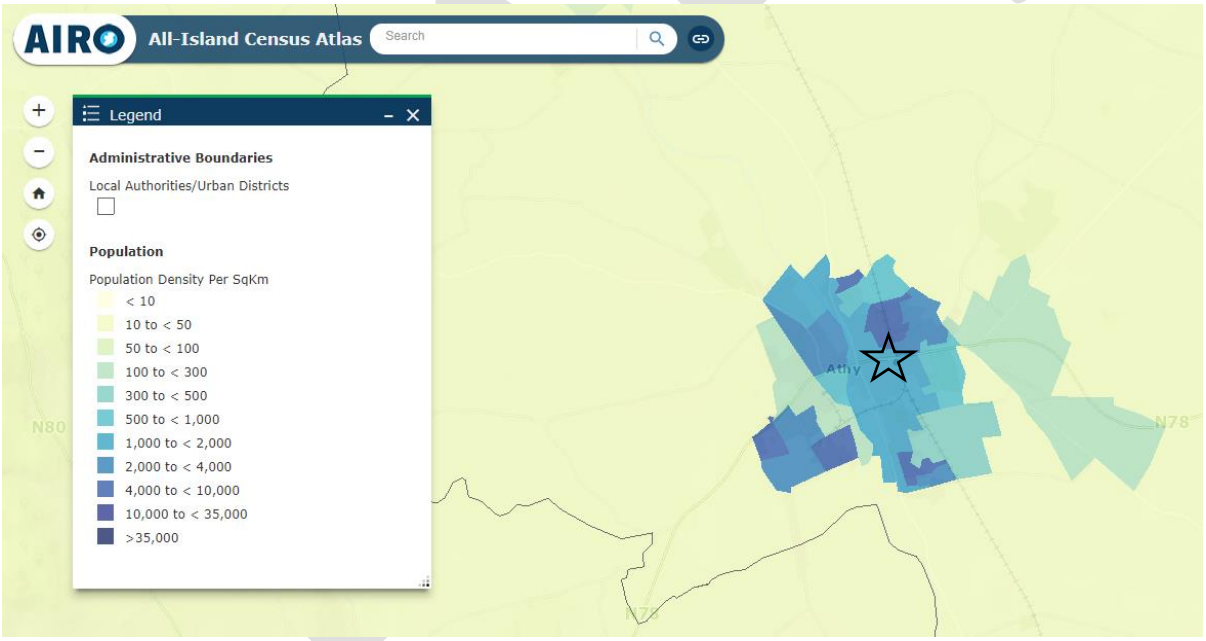

Figure 4: Population Density in Athy

1.2.3 Jobs Distribution and Employment Levels

AIRO small area analysis shows that areas with more than 100 jobs are mostly located west of the town and in the town centre, with one employment area at the N78 to the east of the town.

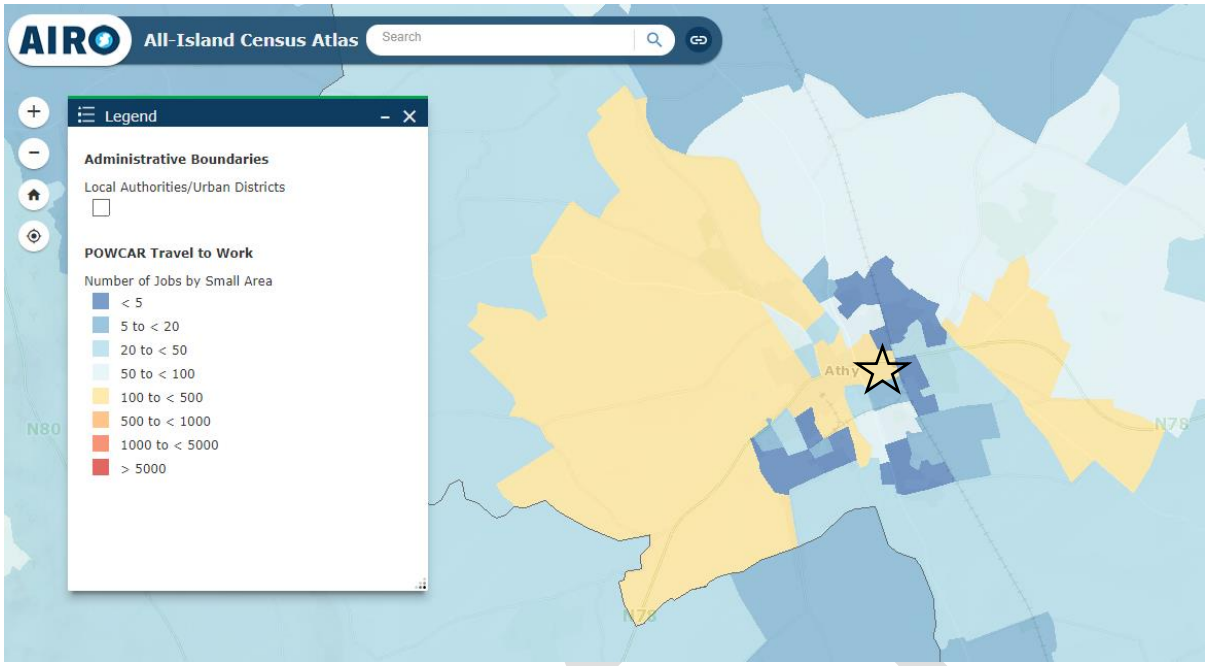

Figure 5: Number of jobs by small area in Athy (AIRO)

The 2016 Census found unemployment in Athy far exceeded the county average (26.6% vs 11.4%) and the job participation rate was also substantially lower (59.9% versus 64.1%). It is noted that unemployment has reduced significantly over the period to Spring 2020 (not accounting for more recent Covid-19 impacts).

2016 figures show that labour force participation was low in many parts of the town, with 4 distinct areas of higher participation, see Figure 6.

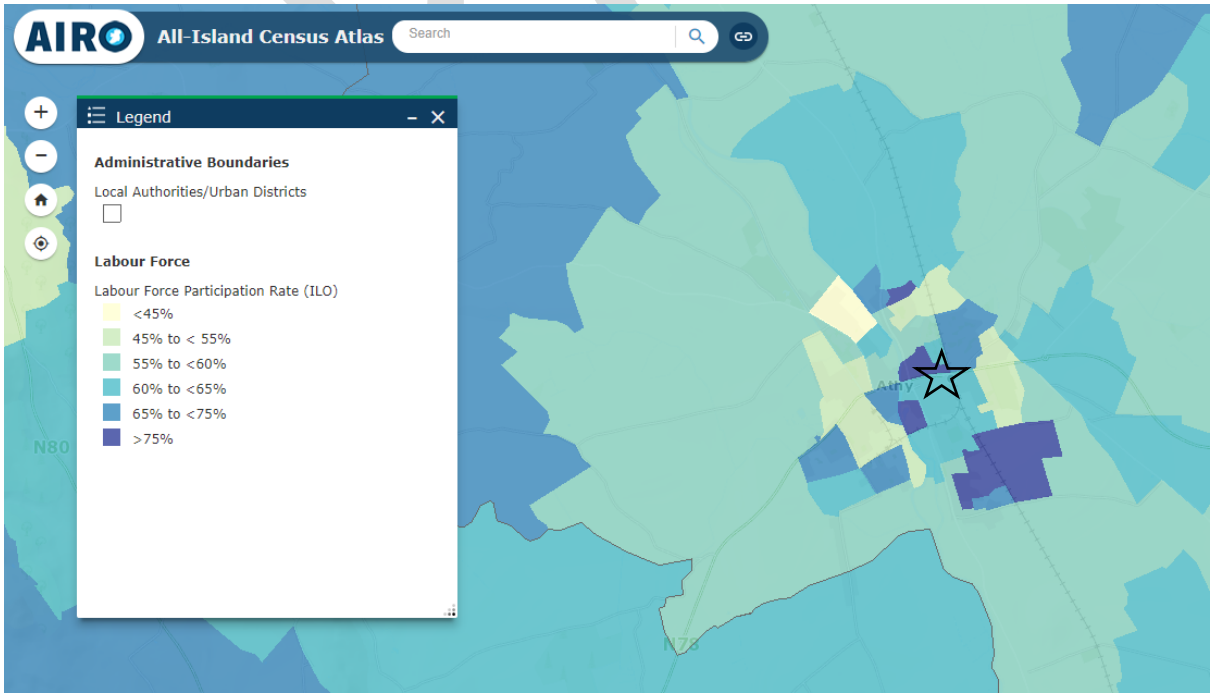

Figure 6: Labour Force Participation Rate in Athy (AIRO, 2016)

1.2.4 Schools and Education Facilities

Figure 7 shows the location of the primary schools, secondary schools and third level training centres in Athy. There are four primary schools, three located within the School Campus to the north of the town and one closer to the town centre. Athy has two secondary schools, one within the Schools Campus and one just north of the town centre.

All primary and secondary schools in Athy are located east of the River Barrow and north of main street (i.e. the commercial core, Leinster Street – Duke Street axis). This limits the practicality of active travel to school, particularly for residents to the west of the River Barrow due to limited crossings of the river. The peripheral location of the School Campus encourages car trips, making it critical that safe walking and cycling facilities are provided to this area.

There are two third level education facilities within the study area, one is located close to the town centre and the other is situated on the R417, to the south of the town.

Primary schools, secondary schools and third level institutions are listed in Table 3.

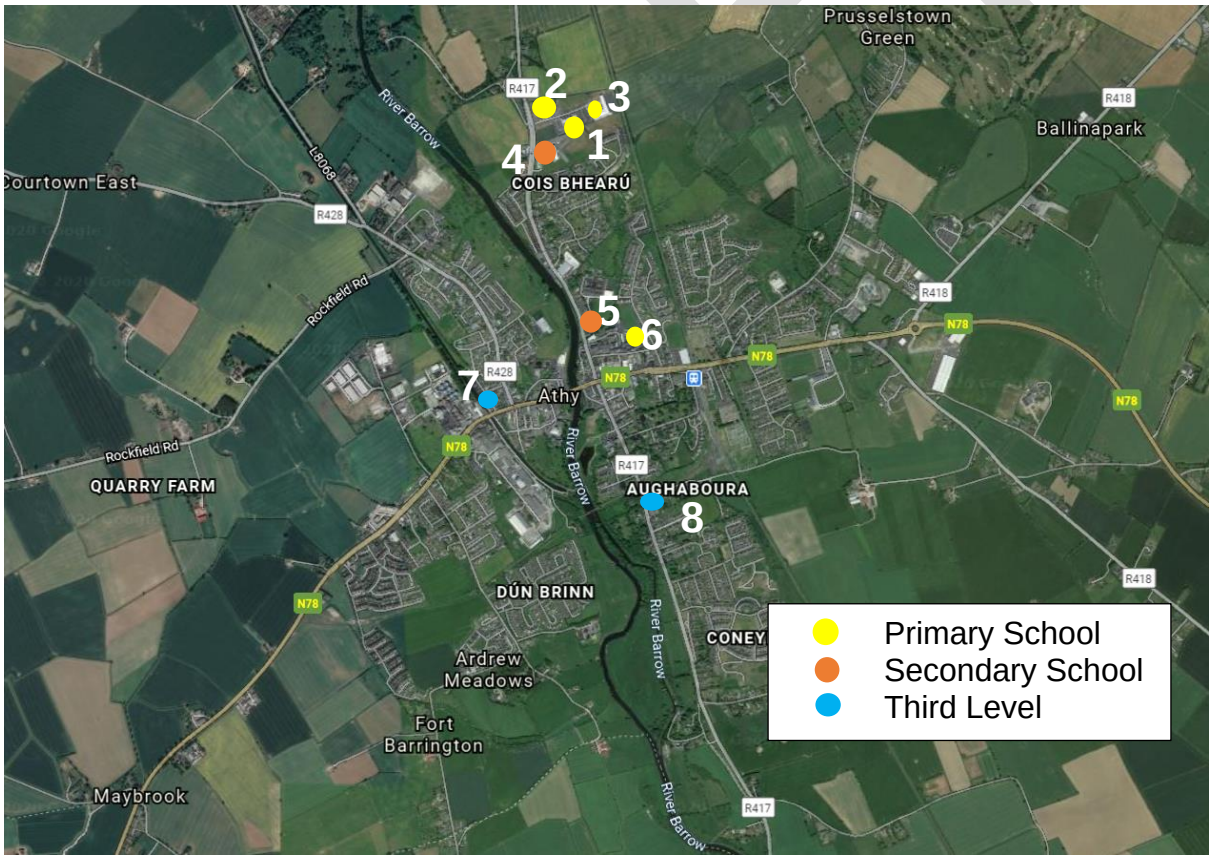

Figure 7: Location of Education Facilities in Athy

Table 3: List of Education Facilities in Athy

Number	School Name	School Type
1	Athy Model School	Primary
2	Gaelscoil Áth Í	Primary
3	Scoil Phádraig Naofa	Primary
4	Athy College	Secondary
5	Ardscoil na Trionoide	Secondary
6	Scoil Mhicil Naofa	Primary
7	Athy Adult Learning Centre	Third Level
8	Further Education & Training Centre Athy	Third Level

1.3 Existing Public Transport

Athy has a limited public transport offering with a modest public transport service, focused on regional connectivity. A town public transportation network is not provided.

1.3.1 Rail Services

Athy train station, which is located east of the town centre, is serviced by two routes:

1. Dublin Heuston-Waterford
2. Waterford – Clonmel – Limerick Junction (Connections with Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway)

The Dublin Heuston-Waterford line connects the towns and cities of Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow to Athy, Kildare, Newbridge, Sallins/Naas, Celbridge and Dublin on the Kildare Mainline. Currently, there are 9/10 services daily (Monday to Friday) towards both Dublin and Waterford. There are slightly fewer services on a Saturday and limited services on a Sunday.

The Waterford – Clonmel – Limerick Junction only provides one train Monday – Saturday from Athy Station to both Dublin Heuston and Waterford.

There are parking facilities at the station and at a separate location close to the station which provide the opportunity for commuters to park and ride.

The train line route between Dublin, Athy and Waterford is shown in Figure 8.

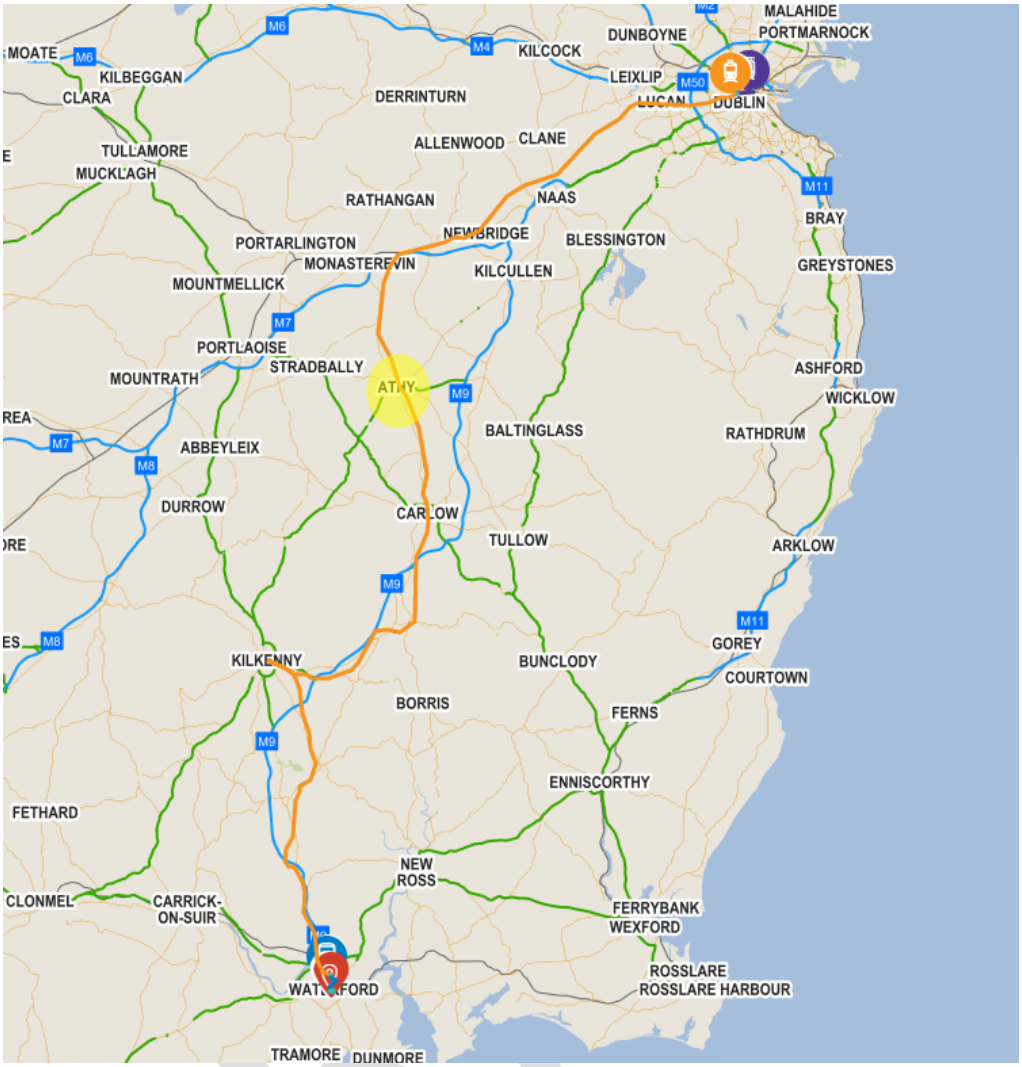

Figure 8: Train line between Dublin, Athy and Waterford (orange line)

The existing service frequency departing from Athy Station, including both services (Monday to Saturday) is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Frequency of Train Services Departing Athy – Monday to Saturday

Direction	< 07:00	07:00 - 08:00	08:00 - 09:00	09:00 - 11:00	11:00 - 13:00	13:00 - 15:00	15:00 - 17:00	17:00 - 18:00	18:00 - 19:00	19:00 - 20:00	> 20:00
Towards Dublin Heuston	1*	1	1	1	1	2	1	1**	0	1	1*
Towards Waterford	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	2***	1	1	1*

* Monday to Friday only **Friday and Saturday only ***One of these is Friday only

As can be seen from the table above, the train services from Athy are spread relatively evenly across the day. There is no increased frequency at peak hours in the morning and evening. There are also no early morning trains towards Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford.

The location of the train station in Athy is shown in Figure 9. This shows the train station to the east of the town centre. Connectivity to the train station will soon be improved by the construction of the Athy Distributor Road, which includes a high-quality pedestrian and cycle tracks. Connectivity catchment analysis for the train station is discussed in Sections 1.3 and 3.3.

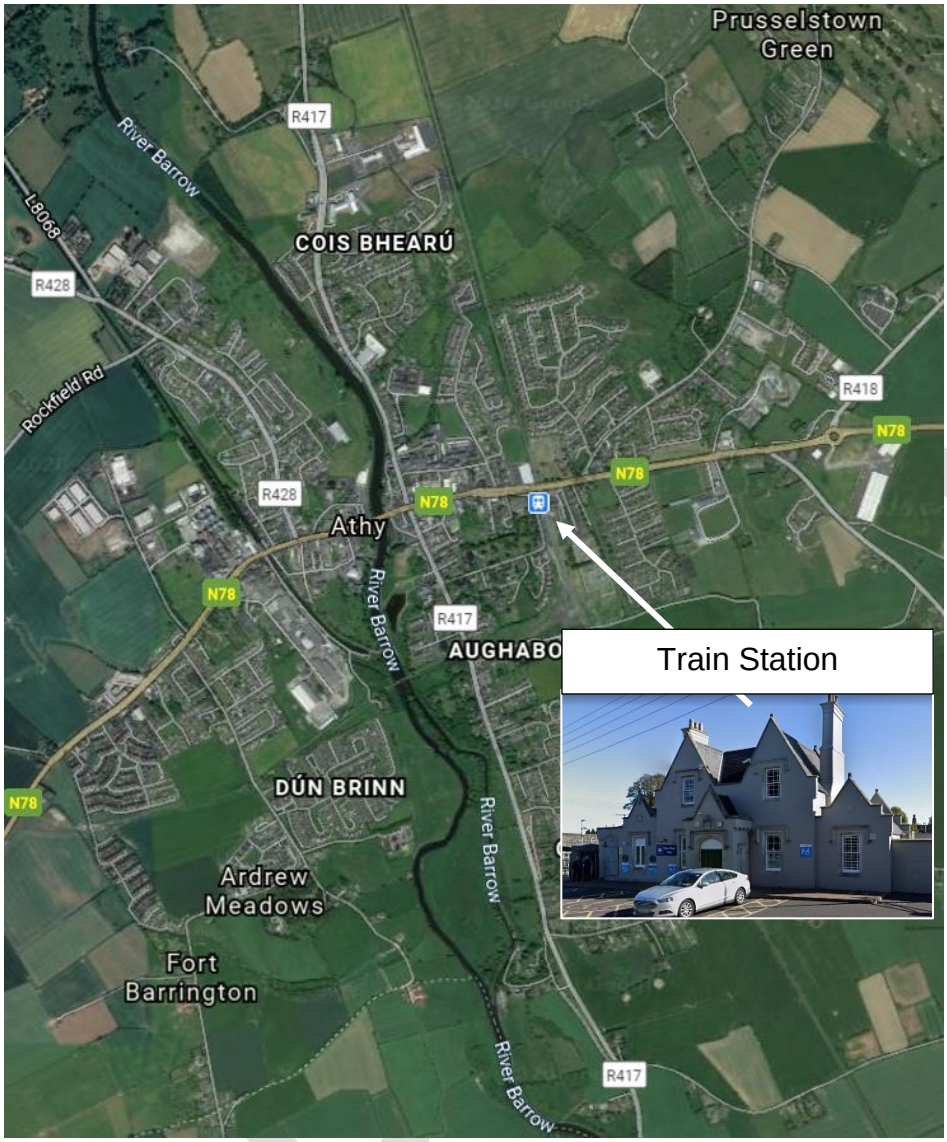

Figure 9: Location of Athy Train Station

1.3.2 Bus Services

Regional bus services in Athy are limited in frequency but do provide connections to a number of hinterlands, major towns and cities in the province, as well as Dublin Airport.

The 130 and 130a routes are operated by Go-Ahead. These services provide connectivity to Kilcullen and Naas with onward connections to Dublin. It is noted that there are only four departures and four arrivals from/to Athy each day (Monday to Friday). Only two of the buses departing Athy travel directly to Dublin. The other two buses require passengers to interchange at Naas. Similarly, travelling from Dublin to Athy, only one bus travels directly. The other three busses require an interchange at Naas.

Route 817 (operated by Bernard Kavanagh & Sons) provides a once daily return service from Kilkenny to Dublin via Athy.

Local Link provides Route 883 from Athy. This service provides four departures to Newbridge via Kildangan and Kildare Town each day (plus four return services from Newbridge).

Local Link also provides one bus daily, Monday to Friday, from Athy to Castledermot, Moone and Timolin and before travelling back to Athy.

Route 825, operated by J.J Kavanagh & Sons travels from Abbeyleix to Carlow, via Portlaoise, Stradbally, Athy and Carlow IT (and return), twice daily. This route only operates during College Term.

The second route operated by J.J Kavanagh & Sons, Route 717 provides transport from Athy to Dublin Airport (via Naas), with three busses a day. In the other direction, this route provides transport from Athy to Clonmel (via Kilkenny) with two busses a day.

Kenneally's bus service runs the Num 06 route from Athy to Maynooth during college term time. There is one bus departing Athy in the morning and one arriving in Athy in the evening (Monday to Friday).

J.J / Bernard Kavanagh runs a service, ITC02 from Curragh Camp to Carlow IT, routing through Athy, twice a day, Monday to Friday, during college term only.

Figure 10 overleaf shows the bus routes servicing Athy.

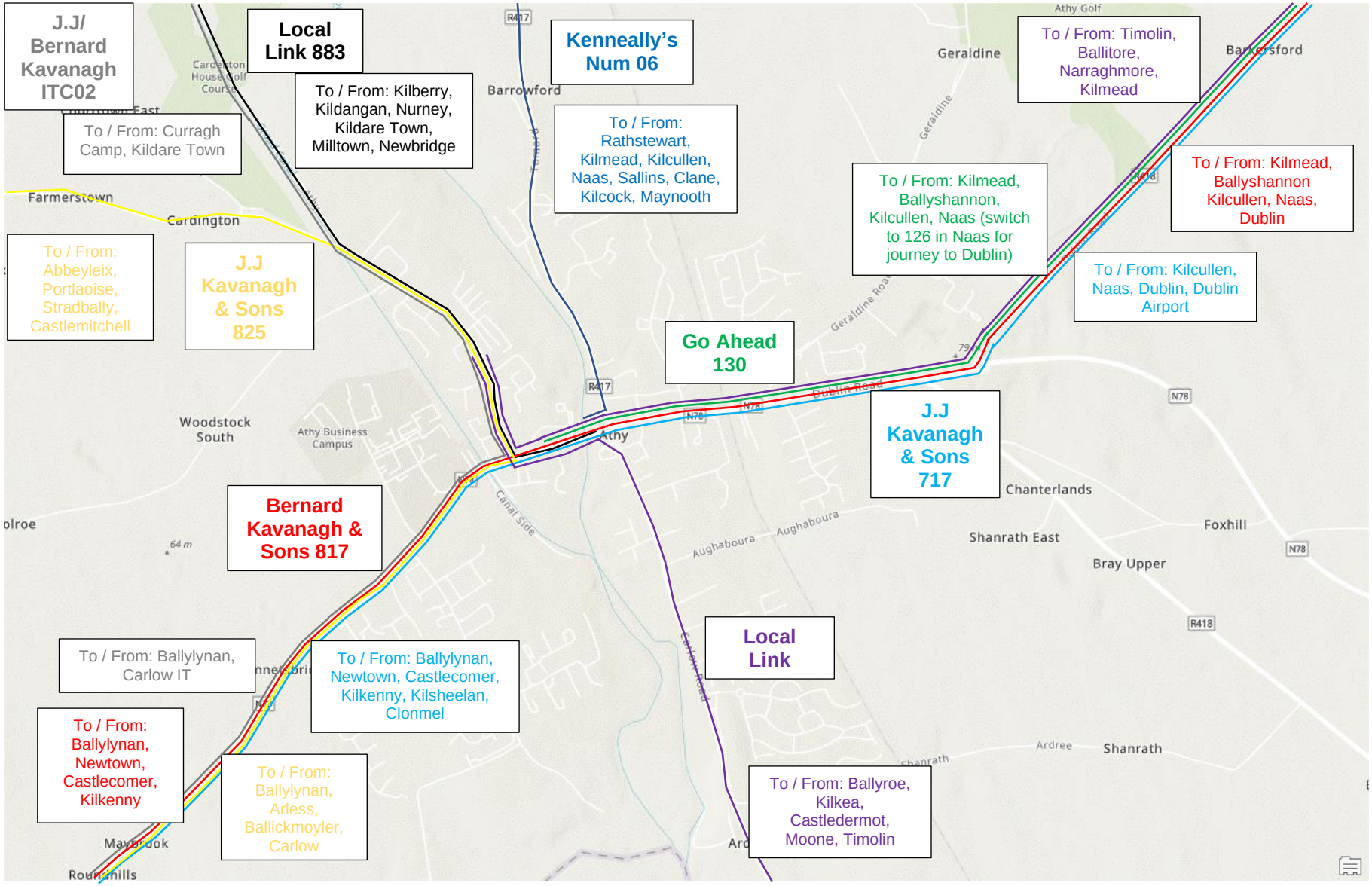

Figure 10: Bus Routes Serving Athy

1.4 Existing Connectivity Network

1.4.1 Current Network

1.4.1.1 Walking Network

The current walking network in Athy is illustrated in Figure 11 below. Catchment analysis of this network in terms connectivity to key trip attractors is detailed in Section 1.4.3.

Figure 11: Current Connectivity Network in Athy

1.4.1.2 Waterways

Of note, in terms of connectivity, Athy will benefit from the Barrow Blueway (currently under construction). This Blueway runs along the Grand Canal for much of Athy, before crossing over at Horse Bridge and continuing along the River Barrow through the south of the town. This is illustrated in Figure 12 below. The Barrow Blueway will connect directly with the new Athy Distributor Road once constructed. The Blueway will provide an important north-south spine through the town.

The Blueway is proposed to consist of the development of a multi-use shared leisure route on the existing navigation towpath, which is a National Waymarked Route. This will include tailored surface finishes, information, directional, and safety signage, and all other associated ancillary works. The Blueway will cater for both pedestrians and cyclists and the section through Athy is due for completion by the end of Q1 2022.

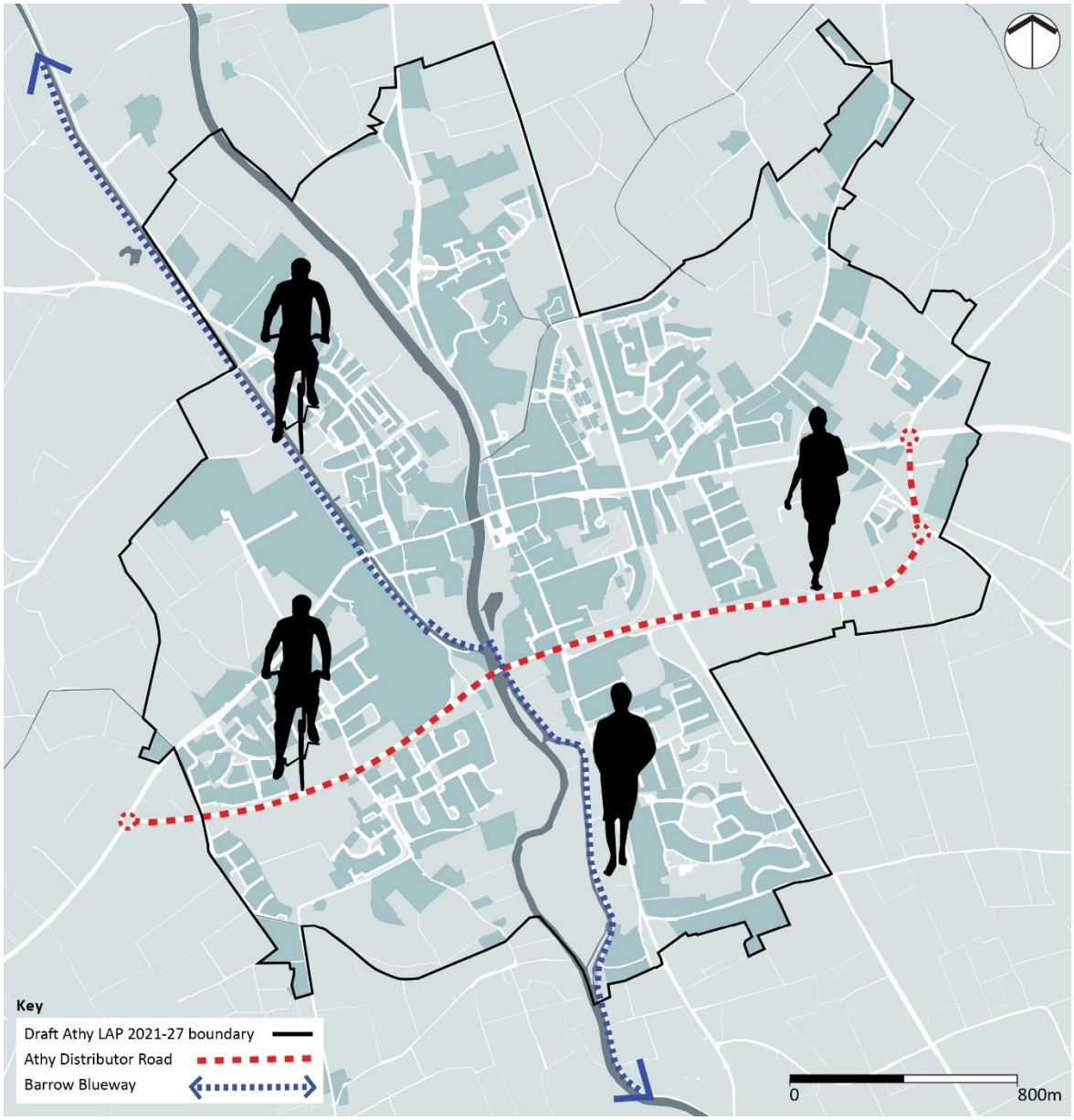

Figure 12: Benefit of Athy Distributor Road in terms of Connectivity and Link to Barrow Way

In addition to the Barrow Blueway, there are a number of paths along the Barrow and Grand Canal which are not on the Blueway route. These also provide good north-south links through the town.

1.4.2 Key Connectivity Barriers

Athy is characterised by a large number of cul de sac type residential estates with poor connectivity. In addition, there are a number of features such as the railway line, the canal and the River Barrow which present linear barriers to connectivity in the east-west direction. This is illustrated in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Identified Main Barriers to Connectivity in Athy

A Walkability Audit was conducted around Athy Town Centre in 2020. The biggest issue raised as a result of this audit was the difficulty of crossing the N78 throughout the town. The audit identified four problem areas; Leinster Street junction, Stradbally Road Junction, Emily Square and Cromaboo Bridge. Issues crossing the main road east-west through the town presents a major hindrance to connectivity. Other issues such as poor quality, narrow footpaths and street clutter were also identified as barriers to walking in Athy Town Centre.

1.4.3 Current Catchment Area Analysis

This section outlines the current catchment areas for key trips attractors in Athy. The trip attractors included in this analysis are as follows:

1. Bus stops
2. Train Station
3. Health facilities
4. Main Street
5. Primary Schools
6. Secondary Schools
7. Further Education
8. Public Services (Library and Garda Station)
9. Sports Amenities
10. Supermarkets

The analysis uses ArcGIS software to determine how many residential and commercial buildings are within a set walking distance from a certain trip attractor. This is calculated using the baseline walking network, illustrated in Figure 11.

Table 5 provides an overview of the catchments for key locations throughout Athy. This provides a count of the number of residential and commercial addresses in each catchment area using the GeoDirectory database. Furthermore, the table provides a breakdown of the percentage of total buildings in the study area which are within walking distance of each location.

This highlights that the secondary school and health facility coverage is very low and covers less than 30% of residential buildings. This is a symptom of the lack of river crossing in the north of the town. Access to bus stops and the train station is also particularly poor, with less than 40% residential coverage. This means that over 6 in 10 households in Athy do not have convenient access to public transport services.

Table 5: GeoDirectory Statistics for Coverage of Key Services

	Existing Network Catchment		% of Total Study Area Buildings	
Catchment	Residential Address Points	Commercial Address Points	Residential Address Points	Commercial Address Points
Bus Stops - 500m	1537	310	35.6%	66.8%
Train Station - 1km	1470	294	34.0%	63.4%
Primary Schools - 1km	1675	n/a	38.8%	n/a
Secondary Schools - 1km	999	n/a	23.1%	n/a
Further Education / Adult Education - 1km	1777	n/a	41.1%	n/a
Main Street - 1km	1421	302	32.9%	65.1%
Supermarkets - 1km	2261	316	52.4%	68.1%
Health Facilities - 1km	1232	264	28.5%	56.9%
Sports Amenities - 1km	1850	313	42.8%	67.5%
Public Services - 1km	1354	307	31.3%	66.2%

The baseline catchments for each type of trip attractor are shown in Figure 14 to Figure 23. In these figures, the shaded area illustrates the area within a certain walking distance of the destination with the current walking network. The dotted line shows the theoretical area within walking distance of the trip attractor, if there were no impediments to walking.

In Section 3.3, new connectivity links are proposed and analysed to determine if they increase the number of buildings within walking distance of each trip attractor.

Key points to note from the baseline catchment analysis figures:

- **Bus stops (Figure 14):** Access to bus stops is reasonably good within the 500m circular buffer. However, due to the location of bus stops, there are large areas of the town outside this 500m area. For example, to the east and south of the town. This could be improved with new bus stop locations
- **Train Station (Figure 15):** There is some scope to improve access to the train station at the periphery of the 1km circular buffer, to the north and south
- **Health Care Facilities (Figure 16):** Residential estates to the north-east are cut off from hospitals to the west of the River Barrow due to a lack of bridge to the north of the N78
- **Main Street (Figure 17):** There is scope to improve access to the main street (defined as a point on Duke Street for the purposes of this analysis) on the periphery of the 1km circular buffer
- **Primary Schools (Figure 18):** Residential estates to the west of the River Barrow are cut off from the primary schools to the east due to a lack of river crossings to the north of the N78
- **Secondary Schools (Figure 19):** Similar to primary schools, residential estates to the west of the River Barrow are cut off from the secondary schools to the east due to a lack of river crossings to the north of the N78. In addition, the railway line is a barrier for residential areas to the east of the secondary schools
- **Further education (Figure 20):** There is potential to improve the number of buildings in the 1km catchment area through new connectivity links
- **Public Services (Figure 21):** Residential estates to the south-west of the town could be brought within the 1km buffer of the library and garda station with improved connectivity links
- **Sports Amenities (Figure 22):** Most of these facilities are located in the northern half of the town, as such, residential areas to the south are mostly excluded from the 1km catchment area. However, this could be improved through new connectivity links which facilitate south to north movement
- **Supermarkets (Figure 23):** The three major supermarkets in Athy are all located north of the N78. As such, there are connectivity issues with the south of the town and this is reflected in the baseline catchment map. There is potential to improve this with new connectivity links running south to north

Figure 14: Baseline Bus Stop Catchment Area

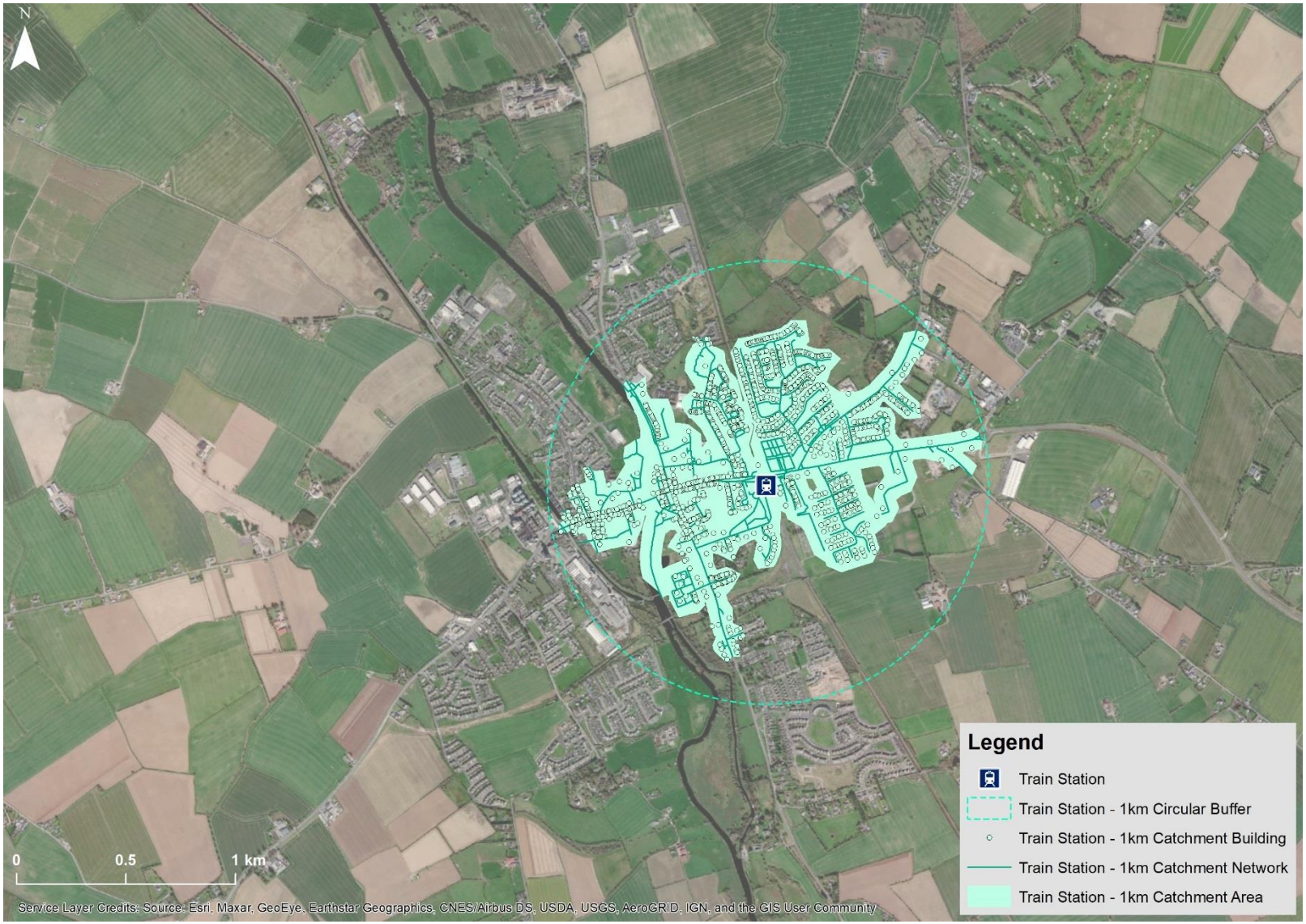

Figure 15: Baseline Train Station Catchment Area

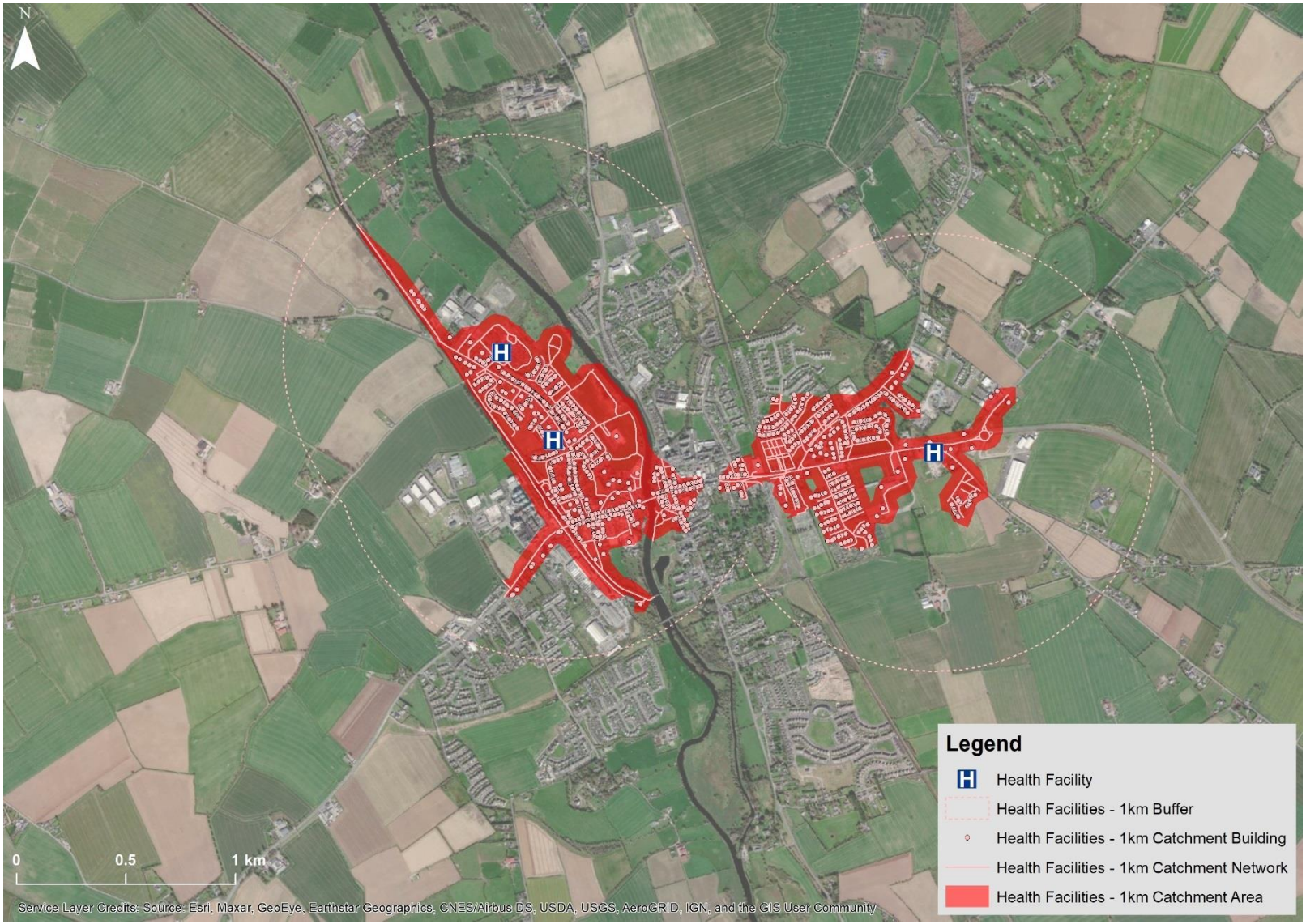

Figure 16: Baseline Health Facilities Catchment Area

Figure 17: Baseline Main Street Catchment Area

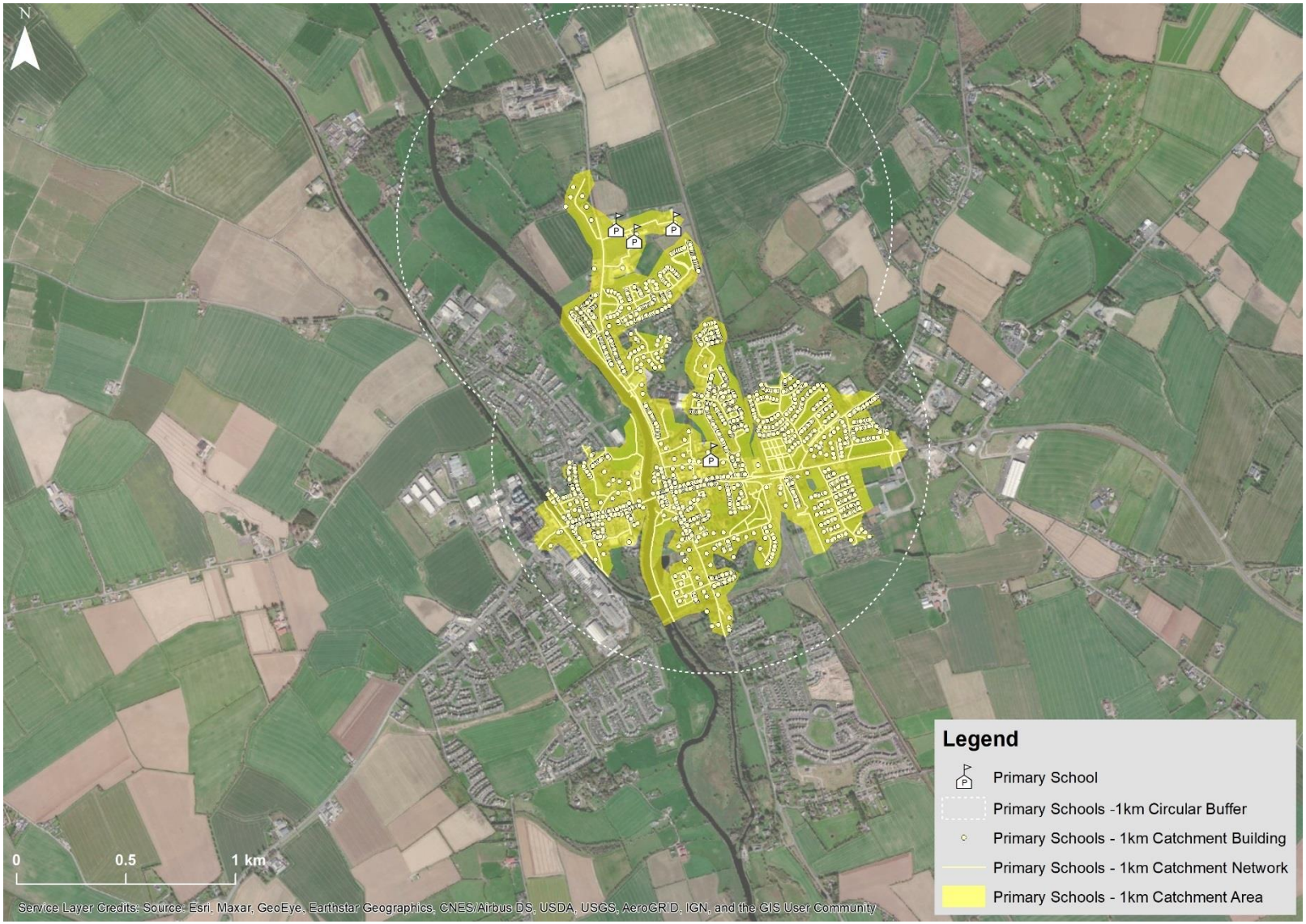

Figure 18: Baseline Primary Schools Catchment Area

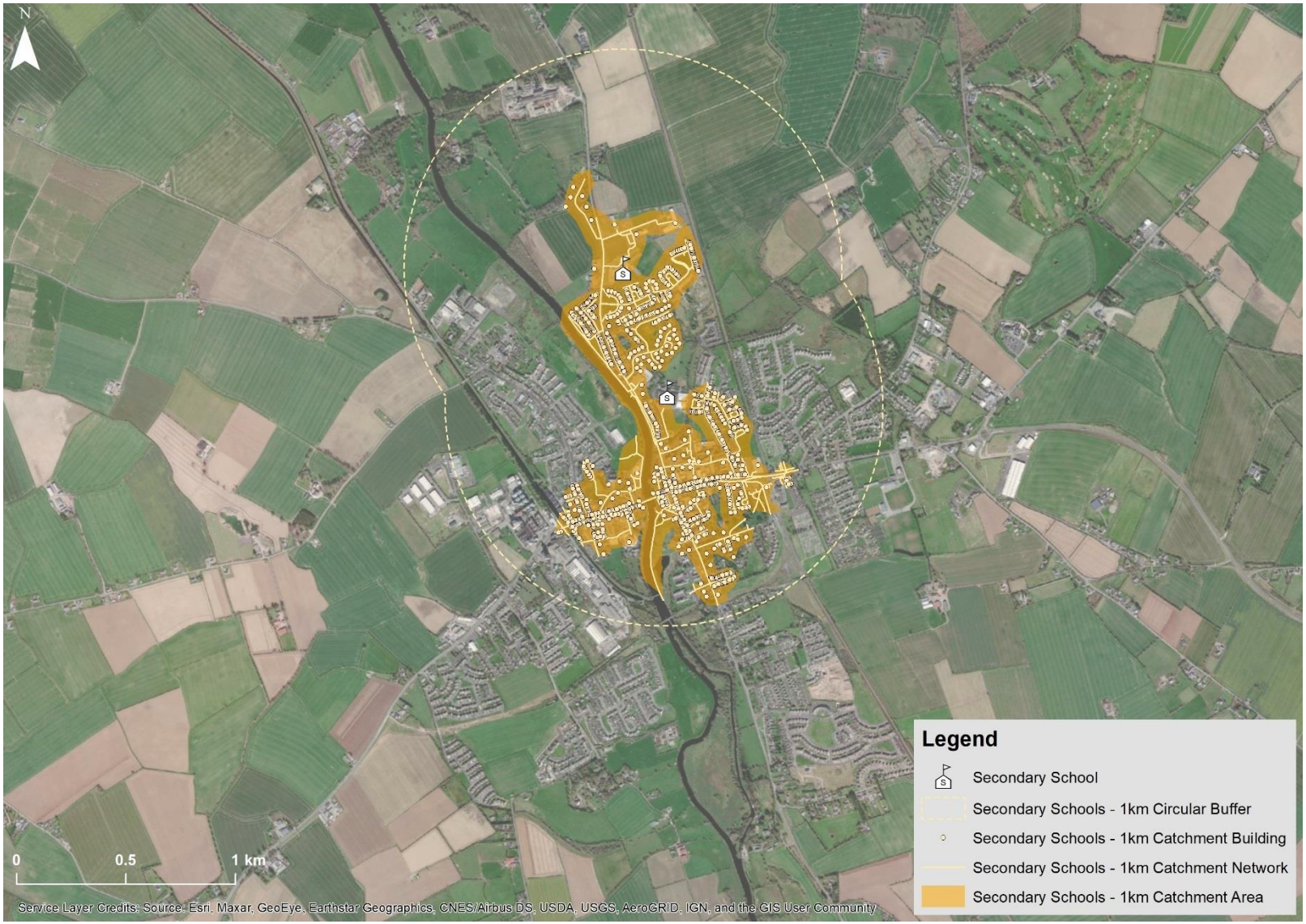

Figure 19: Baseline Secondary Schools Catchment Area

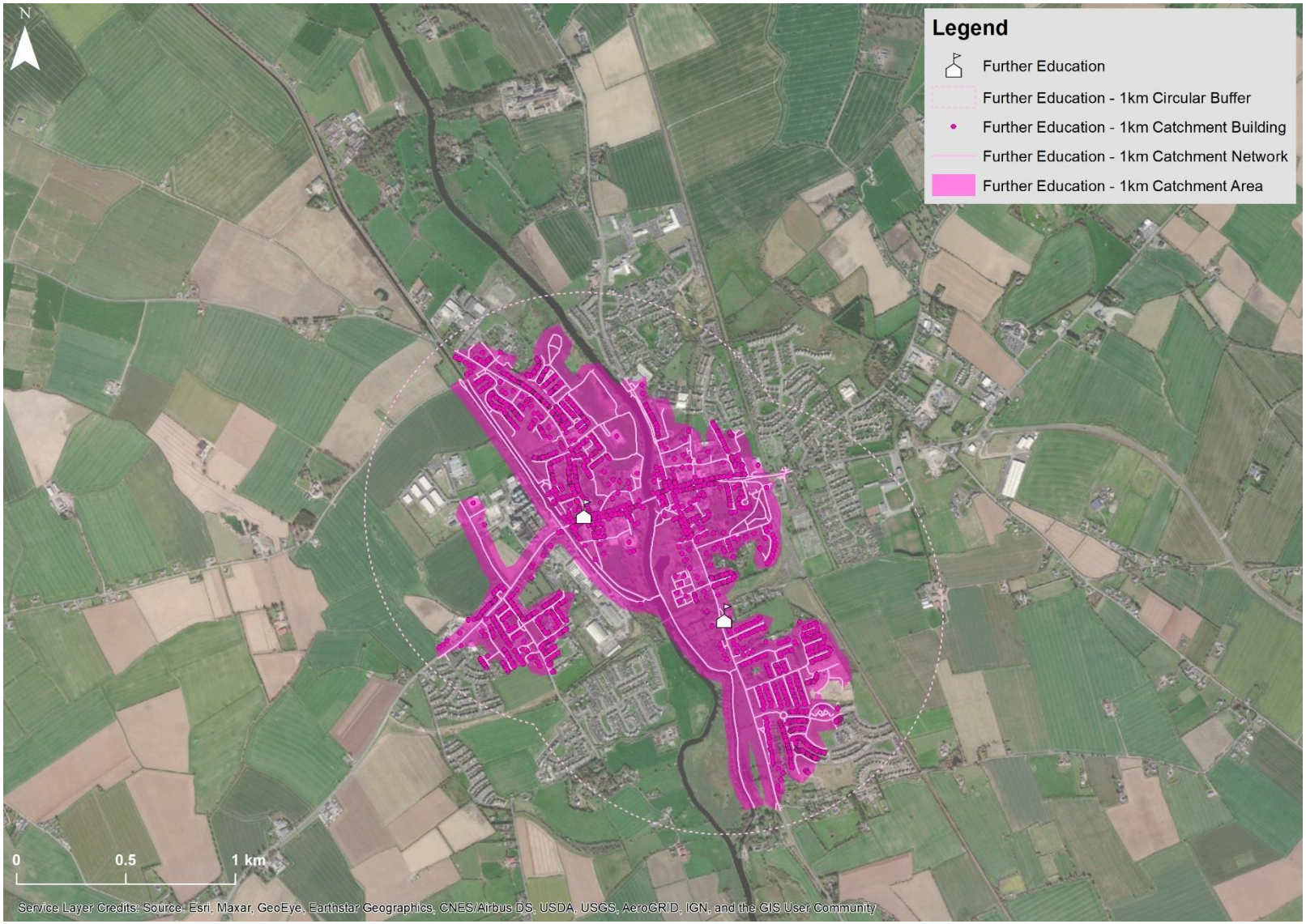

Figure 20: Baseline Further Education Catchment Area

Figure 21: Baseline Public Services Catchment Area

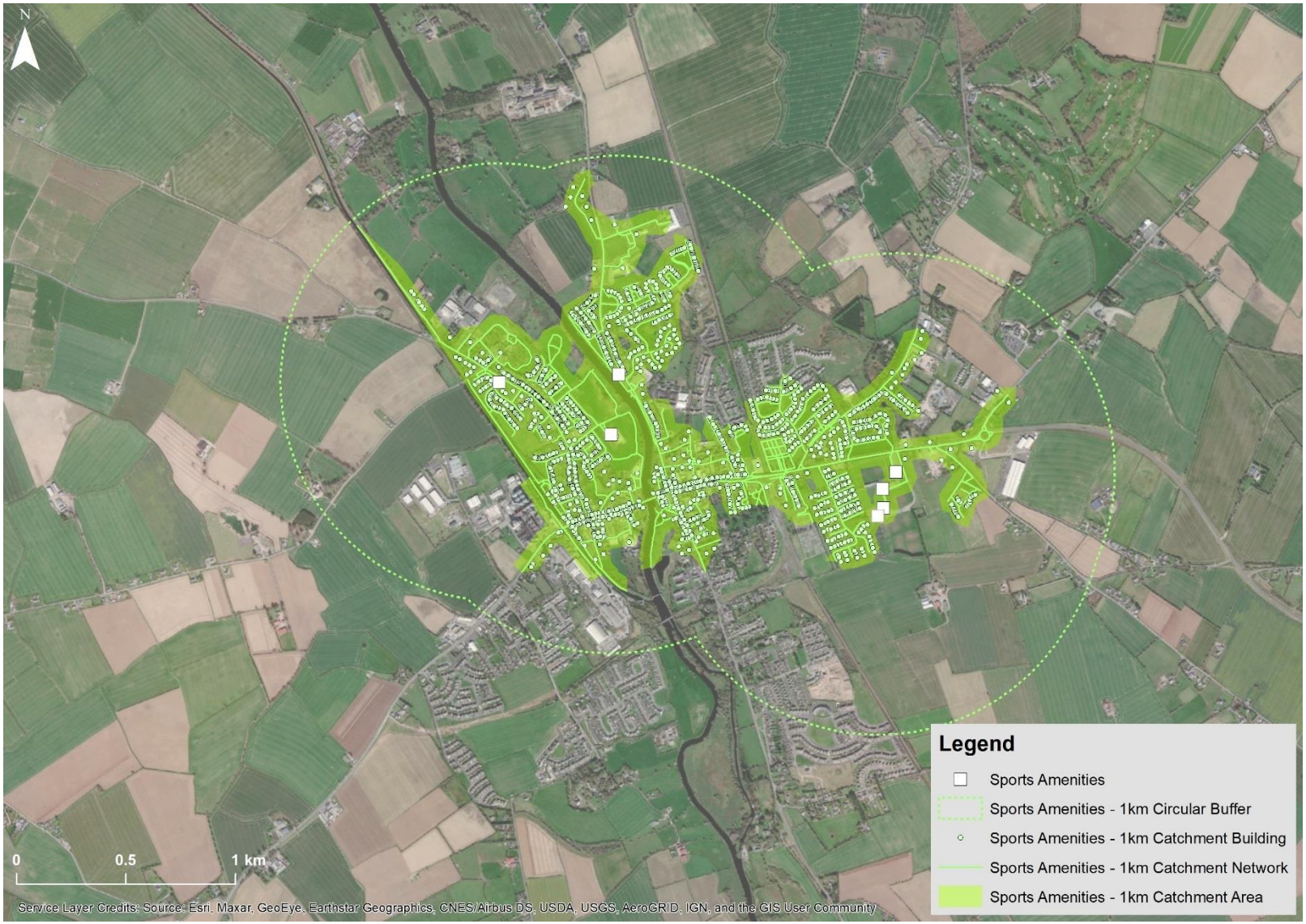

Figure 22: Baseline Sports Amenities Catchment Area

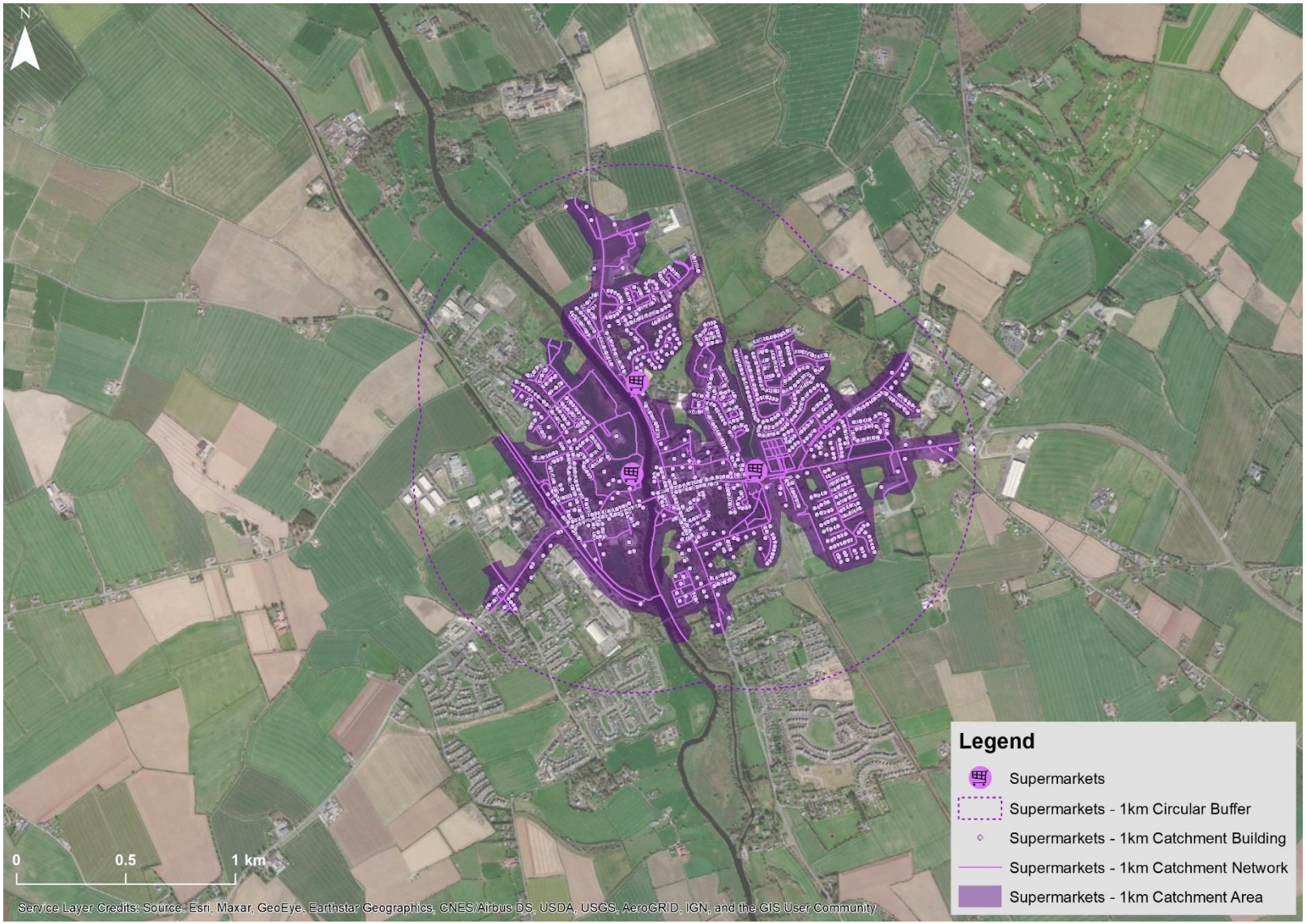

Figure 23: Baseline Supermarkets Catchment Area

1.5 Existing Cycling Infrastructure

Athy has a relatively flat topography and key services are generally clustered around the town centre. As such, with the correct infrastructure in place, cycling should be an attractive mode of travel.

However, there are currently no dedicated cycle facilities in Athy. Cyclists can use the paths to the edge of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow to travel north-south through the town, however these paths are not suitable for cyclists in a number of areas, see Figure 24 (a) and (b) below for examples.

(a) Narrow bridge with steps, unsuitable for cycling

(b) Horse Bridge – Narrow with low headroom, unsuitable for cycling

Figure 24: Examples of Sections Along the River Barrow Pathway Unsuitable for Cyclists

In terms of cycle parking facilities, there are currently some cycle stands provided at the train station, the schools campus and the primary care centre. However, no cycle stands in the town centre were noted.

The Blueway and Athy Distributor Road, which are both currently under construction, will provide for dedicated cycle tracks. These two schemes will provide two major cycling spines east-west and north-south. However, additional cycling infrastructure will be required to link residential areas with key trip attractors around the town, particularly schools.

1.6 Existing Road Network

1.6.1 Current Road Infrastructure

The study area is defined by the N78 national road which runs through the town centre in an east – southwest direction. This route serves as a link to the M9 - Dublin to Waterford Motorway east of the town and southwest to Castlecomer and Kilkenny.

Athy is defined by a number of regional routes which converge on the town as a significant crossing on the River Barrow. These are the R418 north to Kilcullen, R418 southeast to Castledermot, the R417 south to Carlow, the R428 to Stradbally and the R417 north to Monasterevin. Several local roads link the town and its hinterland and complement the main road network. This is illustrated in Figure 25 below.

Figure 25: Existing Road Network in Athy

1.6.2 Existing Road Network Operation

Currently Athy suffers from significant traffic congestion. This is largely due to a lack of alternative routes around Athy. For example, the nearest crossings of the River Barrow and Grand Canal are on sub-standard local roads 3km north and 6km south of Athy Town Centre. The road network in Athy is also constrained due to the focal point of the Cromaboo Bridge and the historic street layout.

A Strategic Transport Model of the existing road network was created as part of the Athy Distributor Road project. This model has provided congestion, delay and volume/capacity information for the network in the town and its hinterland. The Traffic Modelling Report notes that the N78 currently experiences significant congestion over a large portion of the day with journey times in excess of 50% above free flow journey times. The Route Selection Report for the Athy Distributor Road notes that much of the congestion in Athy is related to trips internal to the town.

On completion of the Distributor Road Scheme, a major opportunity will exist for the improvement of road safety as a result of the reduction in traffic levels through Athy town centre (for example there will be a 42% reduction in annual average daily traffic (AADT) along Leinster Street in the 2035 model as a result of the Athy Distributor Road).

The existing N78 road is noted as having a particularly poor safety record with 50% of collisions on the N78 between 2005 and 2013 involving pedestrians (RSA, Personal Injury Accident collision statistics). In February 2019, there was a fatal collision on Duke Street where a there was a female pedestrian fatality following a collision with an HGV. Figure 26 shows the geographical spread of collisions in Athy between 2005 and 2016. It is evident from this figure that the majority of collisions occur along the N78 through the town centre.

As a result of the Athy Distributor Road it is estimated that there will be a reduction of 399 collisions, compared to the do-nothing scenario.

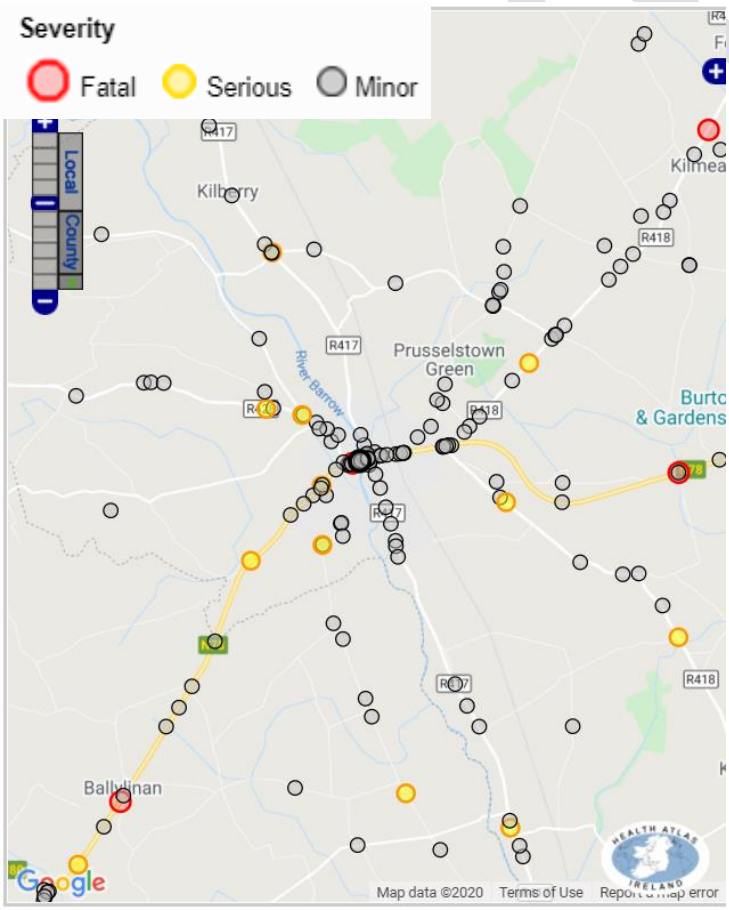

Figure 26: Road Safety Authority – Online Map of Collisions in Athy from 2005 - 2016

1.6.3 Athy Distributor Road

The new Athy Distributor Road will begin construction shortly. This will provide a new east-west link to the south of the main street (Leinster Street-Duke Street commercial core), bypassing the congested N78. The route of the Athy Distributor Road is illustrated in Figure 27 below.

Figure 27: Route of Athy Distributor Road

The Athy Distributor Road will incorporate high quality footpaths and cycle tracks along much of the scheme. A typical cross-section of the road is shown in Figure 28. As can been seen, where pedestrian and cyclist facilities are being provided, a minimum of 5m is being provided for same. This new road will provide Athy with a high-quality east-west connectivity link for active travel modes and connects directly to the train station via a pedestrian / cyclist spur from the road. There will also be a direct connection between the Barrow Way and the new Athy Distributor Road. This connects a strong north-south link through the town with the east-west link of the new road, creating two major connectivity “spines” (see Figure 12).

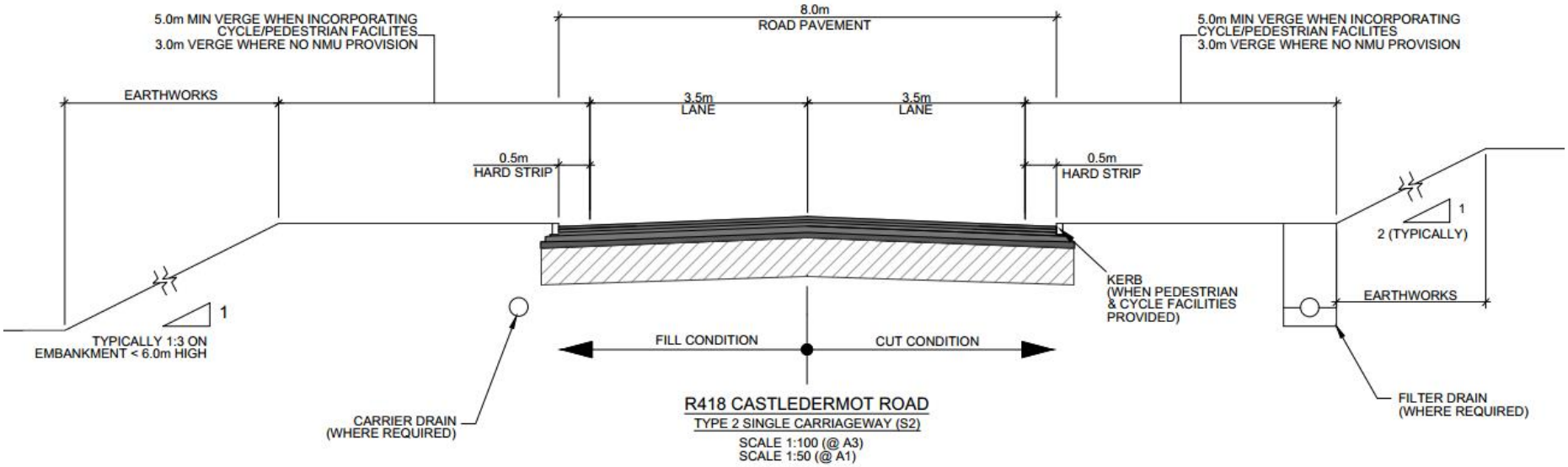

Figure 28: Typical Cross-section through Athy Distributor Road

As part of the Athy Distributor Road project, a strategic transport model was developed. The model provided the basis for selecting the route now under construction for the Athy Distributor Road in its function as an alternative route for traffic along the N78 at Athy. The model was based on traffic surveys which included traffic counts and automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) studies of traffic flows within and approaching the town, carried out in 2015. The traffic model was validated in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland's modelling requirements. The model provided traffic flow figures for various scenarios in the year 2035.

The resulting 2035 traffic flows for the Distributor Road and the other major road links within the town are provided in the Route Selection Report. These 2035 figures are compared to the figures captured in the survey carried out in 2015. The figures give a clear indication of traffic levels resulting from the opening of the Distributor Road and its operation over the next 15 years.

Figure 29 below illustrates traffic levels along major routes in Athy in 2015. Anticipated 2035 traffic levels, without the construction of the Athy Distributor Road can be seen in Figure 30. These figures can be compared with the 2035 levels predicted in Athy, with the distributor road in place (Figure 31). The figures clearly show a significant reduction in traffic along key routes through the town as a result of the Athy Distributor Road. As the Distributor Road is provided as an alternative route to Duke Street and Leinster Street it is significant that the anticipated traffic levels along these routes remain lower in 2035 than observed in 2015.

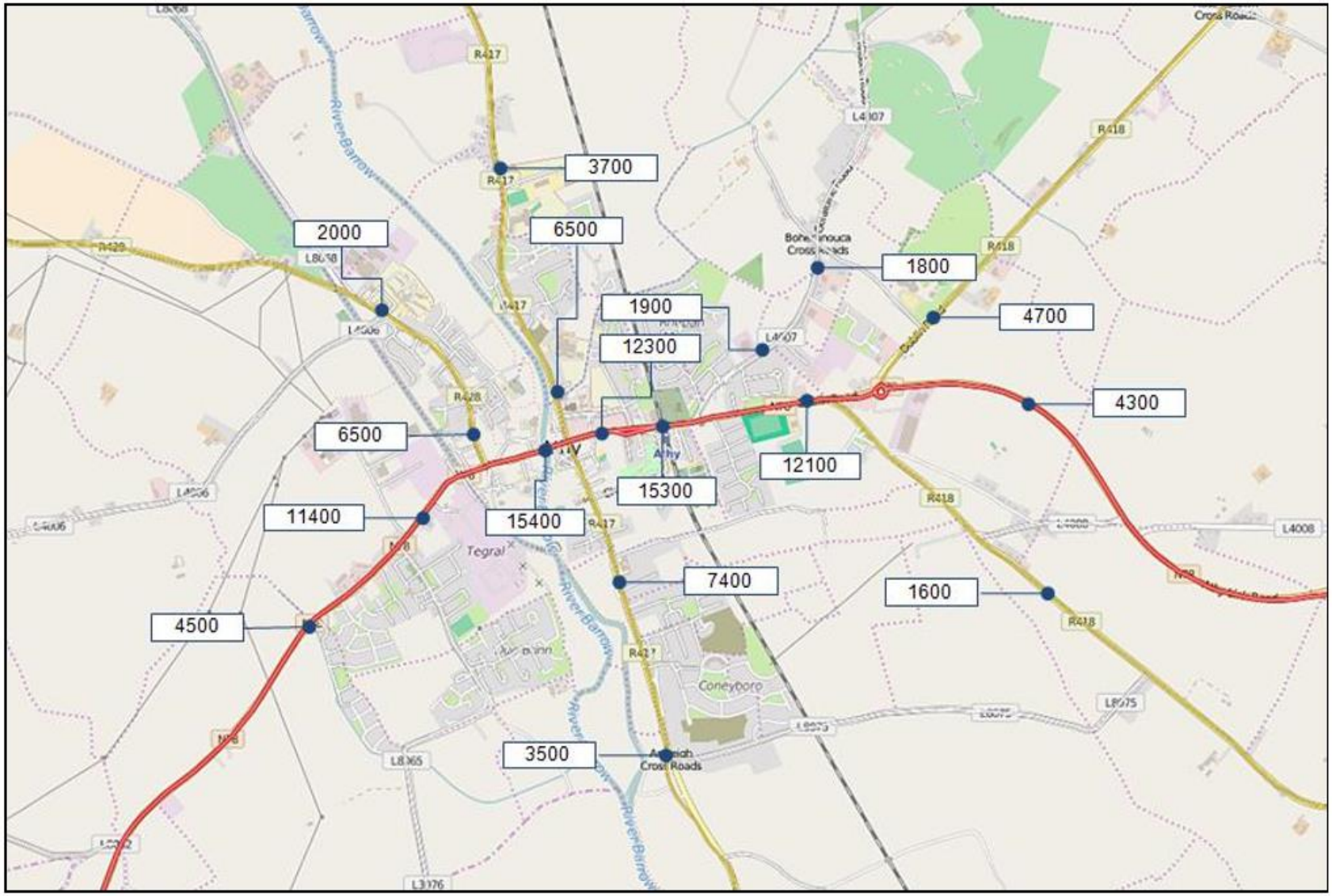

Figure 29: Athy Strategic Traffic Model - 2015 AADT Summary (Phase 4 Traffic Modelling Report)

Figure 30: Athy Strategic Traffic Model - 2035 Do-Minimum Network (Phase 4 Traffic Modelling Report)

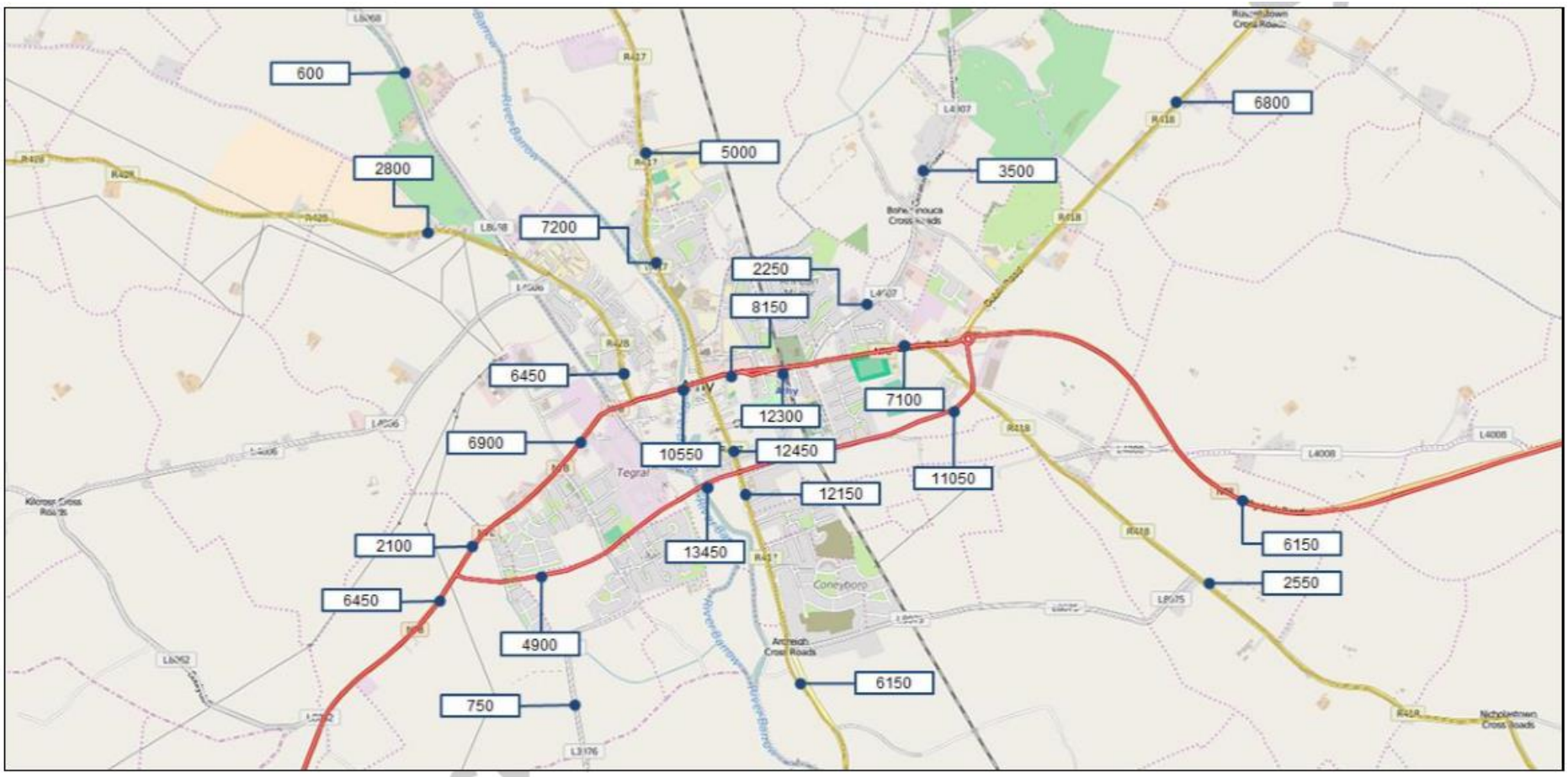

Figure 31: Athy Strategic Traffic Model - 2035 Do-Something (Phase 4 Traffic Modelling Report)

1.7 Existing Parking Provisions

The parking bye-law maps for Athy Town illustrate on-street parking spaces and car parks in Athy. The on-street parking is divided into short term (max stay 1 hour), medium term (max. stay 2 hours) and long term (all day) parking. There are a number of loading bays, bus bays and disabled parking spaces throughout the town. In the town centre, parking is managed through a pay and display system. Figure 32 below illustrates the main car parks in the town (in blue). There are additional car parks around the train station, services such as the library and supermarkets. Some of these (close to the town centre) are shown as yellow on the map. Most of the on-street parking is located on streets to the north and south of the main street (N78) (i.e. the commercial core, Leinster Street – Duke Street axis). There is limited on-street parking on the N78 to the east of the town and around the canal on the west of the town, this is shown as red on the map.

It should be noted that current perpendicular parking at Emily Square, the south side of the Heritage Centre and the junction of Meeting Lane with the R417 will be removed as part of public realm and junction upgrade projects in the future.

Athy is well served by off-street car parks which can be accessed without having to travel through the town centre, yet are in easy walking distance of the main retail areas. There is no evidence of parking shortages in the town currently.

During the development of the Urban Regeneration Framework for Athy (see Section 2.3.3), a number of car parks were surveyed within the town centre on a weekday afternoon. This survey recorded that none of the car parks managed by the council were operating at or near capacity (see Table 6 below). It is acknowledged that this provides limited information and further surveys are required, however it does support anecdotal evidence that there is no parking shortage in Athy. The Urban Regeneration Framework identifies that a Public Realm Strategy is required for Athy, within 12 months of the adoption of the LAP. As part of this Public Realm Strategy, a car parking analysis of the town would be undertaken, the outputs of which will comprise a comprehensive parking plan for the town centre. This will balance the needs of vehicular access to the town centre without compromising the overall quality and visitor experience of the public realm. As such, this ABTA aims to provide high-level parking objectives to guide this future parking plan.

Carpark	Capacity in Spaces	Spaces Occupied	% Occupancy
Meeting Lane	38	16	42%
Stanhope Street	52	29	56%
Emily Square	28	7	25%
Back Square and Barrow Quay	79	24	30%
Edmund Rice Square	84	32	38%
Dominican Lands	122	45	37%

Table 6: Results of Parking Survey in Athy (17 September 2020)

Figure 32 Main Car Parks in Athy (Sources: Bye-Law Parking Maps for Athy Town 2013 and Google Maps)

1.8 Travel Demand

This section sets out the travel demand for the Study Area that will be used for deriving a preferred approach for the study. In the case of Athy, travel demand can be assessed on both a regional level and on a local level.

Data provided by the CSO from the 2016 census in its POWSCAR data set (Place of Work, School or College - Census of Anonymised Records) provides origin and destination data between Electoral Districts (EDs) for each commute on census day in an anonymised data set. Assessment of this data has provided a rich source of information for commuting patterns related to the town of Athy. The provision of roadways and transportation services can be assessed against the data provided in the census. While the existing services provided will closely align with the commuting patterns, gaps can be identified, and sustainable improvements considered.

Within Athy, it is anticipated that development will occur as set out in the County Development Plan Core Strategy (including Variation No. 1) and the draft land-use zoning map provided by the Planning Department in KCC. The draft land-use zoning map has been developed in tandem with the Transportation Department to ensure that sustainable transport and sustainable growth objectives are aligned (see Section1.8). The transportation infrastructure required for new residential and commercial development has been assessed in accordance with sustainable transportation objectives.

Together, local commuting patterns, regional commuting patterns and assessment of new growth areas provide for future travel demand in Athy and a basis for the provision of sustainable transportation solutions.

1.8.1 Establishing Demand

1.8.1.1 Commuting Modes

Data on the theme of commuting is available from the 2016 census. Across all three of the ED's in Athy, there were 6,147 commutes recorded for census day 2016 (to work, school or college). This data includes home working and "not stated".

The largest mode for commuting was noted to be "car driver" (2,308 of 6,147). This mode was significant for commutes to work. The second largest mode was "car passenger" (1,446 of 6,147) and this mode was significant for those in education. 1,026 commutes were recorded "on foot", also significant for those in education. Only 243 commutes were made on public transport. Tellingly, only 1% of commuting trips overall were by bicycle.

In percentage terms "car driver" is at 38% and "car passenger" is at 24%. This shows the significance of private vehicles as a mode of transportation. It is noticeable that in the urban EDs, the use of the private car is significantly less than in the rural ED. Conversely "on foot" is significantly stronger within the urban EDs.

Comparing travel mode to school for the East and West urban EDs, a significantly larger number of school attendees walk in the eastern ED than in the western ED.

At the same time, a significantly higher number of school attendees are driven to school from the western ED than from the eastern ED. This may be explained in part by the fact that western areas are at least one kilometre further from the schools as a result of the single crossing of the River Barrow. If there was a direct line, this distance could be as little as 500 metres. Where distance between origin and destination can be shortened, e.g. the provision of a bridge over the Barrow or the removal of a barrier, more trips by foot will naturally occur and there can then be a reduction the number of car dependent trips.

AIRO provides further information on a small area basis. This data shows that car-based commuters account for 60% – 70% of all commutes in Athy and immediate surrounds (see Figure 33).

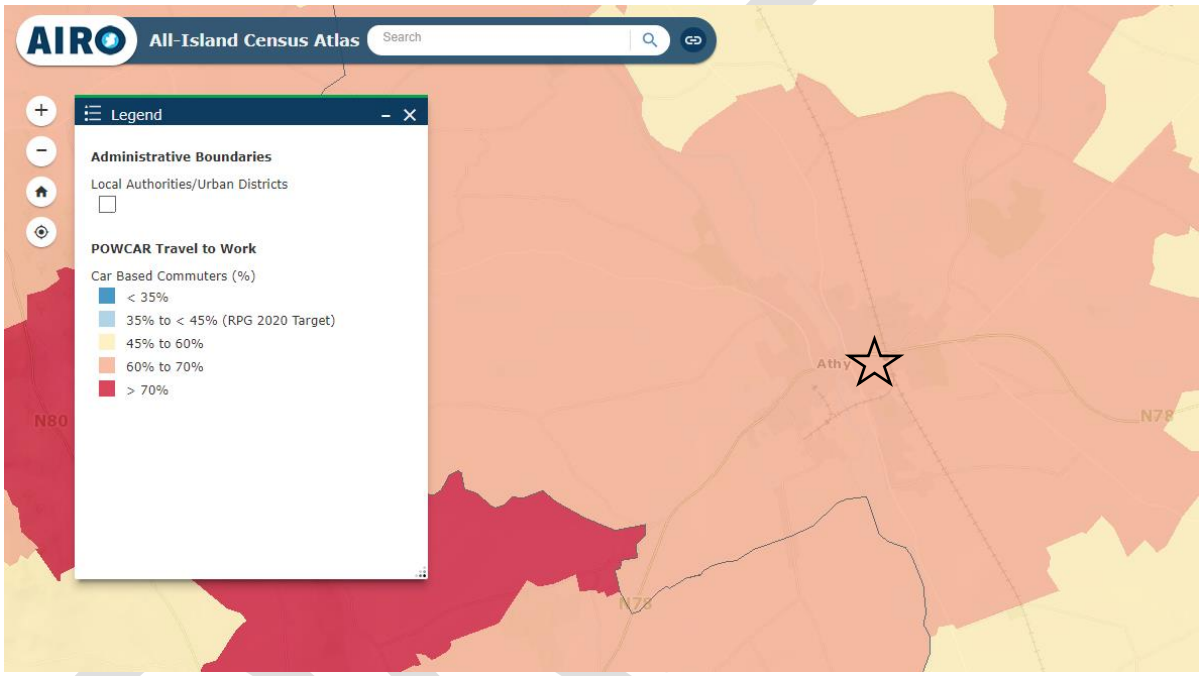

Figure 33: Car Based Commuters (AIRO, Small Area Data)

1.8.1.2 Regional Commuting Patterns

Commuting data in the 2016 Census provides information on the numbers of commuters with an origin or destination in Athy and information on the ED where each such journey commenced or ended. This information is shown geographically in Figure 34.

In the figure overleaf, red circles represent destinations (at ED level) for commutes commencing in Athy and blue circles represent origins (at ED level) for commutes to Athy. For clarity, commutes internal to Athy are not shown.

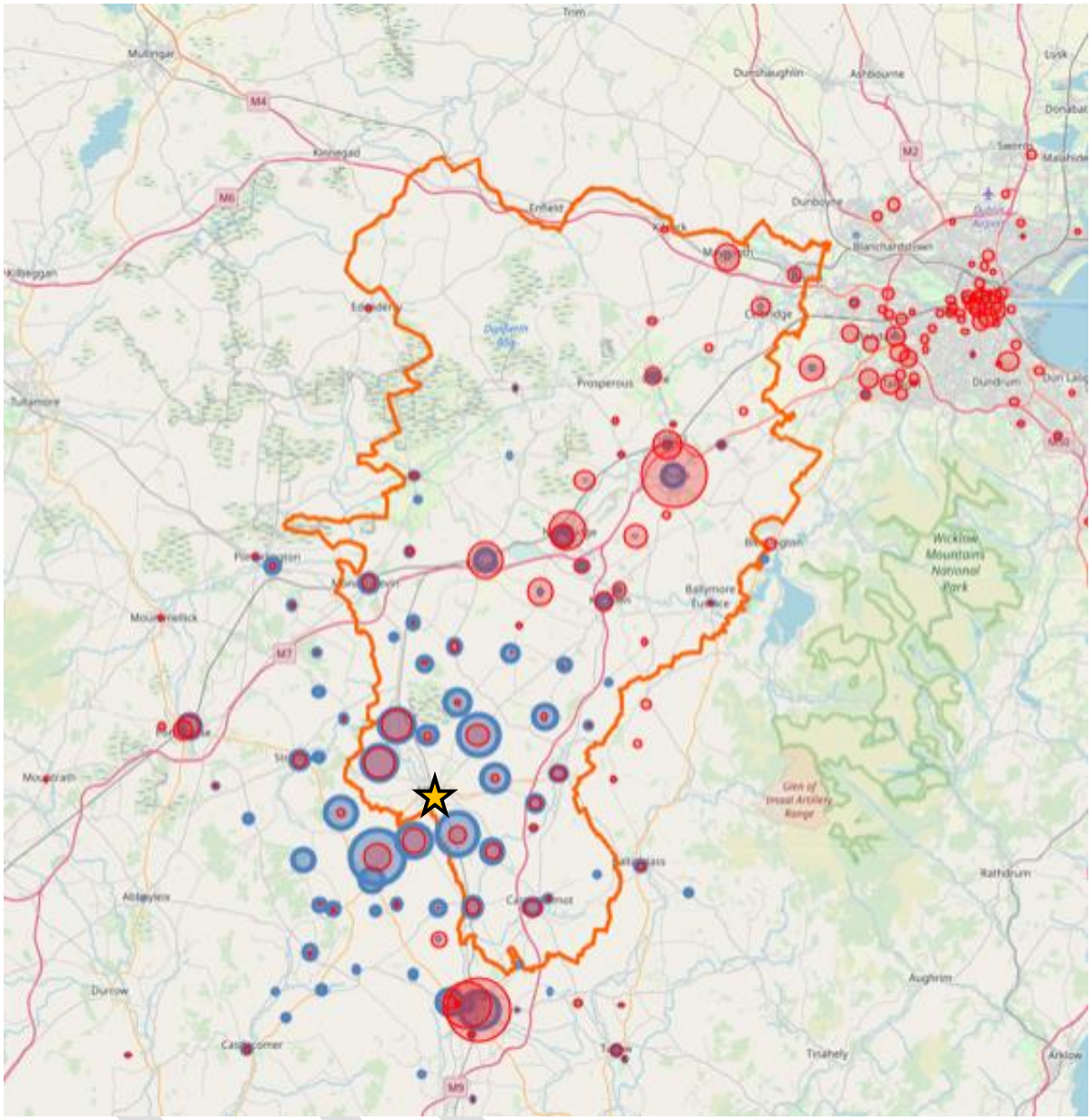

Figure 34: Origins and Destinations of Commuting Trips To and From Athy

The proximity of Athy to the counties of Laois and Carlow are reflected in the strong commuting patterns from Laois, as a source of many commutes into Athy, and Carlow, as a significant destination.

Athy is within commuting distance of Dublin, with the city centre being a strong destination for commuters (rail services facilitating good access to Dublin City Centre) and employment areas south-west of the city. UCD also appears as a distinct destination.

Three trends are apparent from the commuting patterns:

1. The strongest commuting relationship is amongst the three Athy ED's. A total of 2,600 such trips occur with more than 1,600 trips within in the urban area of Athy.

Improved local transportation infrastructure will accommodate these trips, many of which will also be possible by active travel modes.

2. Inter town commuting is significant with strong links to and from, Carlow, Naas and Newbridge. These locations are linked to Athy by railway and opportunities exist for exploiting rail-based commuting. In particular, there is a strong commuting relationship with Naas even though no direct train service exists. However, there is a bus service to Naas.
3. With the locations ranked on the strength of their relationship with Athy (the total sum of both origin and destination). Commuters into Athy are predominantly from the wider hinterland, for example, Ballylynan, Churchtown, Skerries and Grangemellon. However, there is a strong two-way relationship with some ED's providing both origin and destination relationship with Athy. This reflects Athy's strong position as a regional centre for employment and services, with regard to its wider hinterland.

1.8.2 Demand Analysis

Demand analysis can be looked at through the various modes available for each type of trip:

- Local trips are possible using active modes and can be increased through the provision of appropriate infrastructure either as new infrastructure or the retrofitting of existing infrastructure.
- Trips to and from Athy's hinterland will use local roads to access Athy.
- Trips which occur on public transport services will continue and increase if the necessary frequency and capacity is provided. It should be taken into consideration that the first mile and last mile links are suitably supported to make the trip possible. This means providing the necessary infrastructure to make this part of the journey easy and accessible.
- Finally, other trips to destinations which are too far to walk or cycle to and are not served by public transport can only be undertaken by private vehicle. Where this occurs, the impact of these trips on the urban area should be reduced.

To improve sustainability within Athy, active modes must be supported with the provision of appropriate infrastructure. Private vehicle modes must naturally be considered less convenient for short trips within the town. This can be brought about using best practice for urban development and road design. The reduction in private vehicle use within the urban environment has been observed to be beneficial to the attractiveness of a town and to the use of active modes.

1.8.2.1 Demand Assessment by Trip Type

It is noted that trips to Dublin are comprised of city centre trips which are accommodated on public transport and railway services into the city centre and trips which utilise the major roads, M7 and M9, to access the southwest of Dublin approaching and along the M50. While important, trips to Dublin make up a small portion of the total number of trips accommodated by the road network in Athy.

The assessment needs to look at regional destinations and the regional transportation capacities.

Athy has strong transportation links to regional destinations, including the neighbouring towns of Carlow, Naas, Newbridge and Portlaoise, as well as villages in its hinterland. A regional assessment of transportation patterns with origins and destinations commencing or ending in Athy are compared to the provision of transportation services, in order that sustainable modal share can be fully utilised and supported in this assessment.

Table 7: Demand Assessment by Trip Type

Trip type	Trips quantum	Priorities	Supports
Local, within the town (urban and rural ED's)	**40%** (2,600) of trips each day	• Maximise active modes • Improve road safety • Improve attractiveness of streetscape	Provision of enabling safety measures and infrastructure. Design standards for new developments and retrofitting existing roads. Connectivity for active modes
Hinterland trips, i.e. to ED's within 15km of Athy and no public transport service	**20%** (1,370) of trips each day	• Develop low impact measures on town centre • Retain benefits of Distributor Road and other major roads supporting the movement of people and goods • Provide appropriate public transport services for community and social requirements	Support road safety and minimise impact of vehicular use on Athy Town Centre and approach roads.
Regional and hinterland trips where Public Transport is provided	**25%** (1,590) of trips (to ED's served by Commuter Rail on the Kildare Line and Dublin city centre)	• Where possible improve capacity, frequency, connectivity of PT services	Provide improved active mode connection to train station. Develop bus stop network within the town.
Regional trips further than 15km where Public Transport is not available	**15%** (850) of trips each day (where public transport is not available)	• Develop low impact measures on town centre • Retain benefits of Distributor Road and other major roads supporting the movement of people and goods	Support safety and minimise impact of vehicular use on Athy

40% of trips are local to the town of Athy. These trips should have a high percentage of active mode that is cycling or walking.

25% of trips are to destinations connected to Athy by railway or bus services. These trips should be assessed to see what supports they require for an increase in use of public transport.

The remaining 35% of trips are too long to cycle or walk to and are not served by existing public transport services. These trips should be assessed to find out what support they require or where public transportation might be viable.

1.8.2.2 Local Trips

Demand arises locally within the town as residents' access various community, commercial and transportation services provided by the town. These trips are the trips which should be targeted to be taken by active modes such as walking and cycling. Since the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are not fully met by the infrastructure provided in the town, there is a latent demand. Therefore, pedestrian improvements and cycleway improvements, such as the combined pedestrian and cycletrack which is included in the Athy Distributor Road scheme, are essential. These will link various residential areas on the southwest, south and southeast parts of town with destinations including the town centre and the train station.

The CSO 2016 Census POWSCAR data set provides limited visibility of trips within Athy town and its immediate surroundings. Athy is fragmented with barriers to transportation and connectivity within the town. These include the River Barrow, the Grand Canal and the railway line. Any consideration to local transportation must be cognisant of these barriers. It is useful to study the town with regards to the difficulties that arise because of these barriers.

Disregarding the Athy Rural ED and concentrating on the two urban ED's, it is possible to identify the quantity of local (town) traffic which crosses the River Barrow, the river being the boundary between the two ED's (see Table 8). Note, this represents one trip each person makes each day for work, school, etc.

Table 8: Number of Local Trips within Athy Urban ED's

Electoral Districts	No. of Trips
Athy East Urban internal	464
Athy West Urban to East	318
Athy East Urban to West	156
Athy West Urban internal	134

An assessment of proposed new connectivity links has been included in Section 3.3 of this ABTA. This catchment analysis shows how an improved network of footpaths and cycleways will promote modal shift to active travel modes for these local trips.

1.8.2.3 Hinterland Trips

POWSCAR data provides information on all commuting trips to and from Athy's hinterland areas. By calculating the distance from Athy by the number of commuting trips where Athy is either the origin or destination, an aggregate commute can be determined. This then gives an indication of the viability of regional public transport services to linking these hinterland areas to Athy.

From Table 9 below, it is clear that there are seven hinterland areas which have a higher aggregate commute value than the other hinterland areas. This indicates the potential for a viable PT service. Of these hinterland areas, Ballylynan and Kilberry are already served by some level of PT to and from Athy. The remaining areas, Churchtown, Skerries, Grangemellon, Barrowhouse and Ballyadams are not served by any bus service.

Table 9: Analysis of Commuting Trips To / From Hinterland Areas

Electoral District	Commute Origin (i.e. where Athy is the destination)	Commute Destination (i.e. where Athy is the origin)	Distance from Athy (km)	Aggregate Commute, km (as a proxy for viability of regional PT service)
Ballylynan	158	36	7.1	1377.0
Churchtown	75	47	4.6	557.0
Skerries (Kildare)	93	25*	6.0	710.0
Kilberry	69	47*	5.6	644.1
Grangemellon	99	15	4.7	531.6
Barrowhouse	70	30	4.5	450.4
Ballyadams	58	5	7.8	489.7
Burtown	46	4	5.9	294.0
Kilkea	35	13	7.7	369.5
Fontstown	41	2	7.2	310.0
Narraghmore	36	3	11.6	451.7
Tankardstown	37	0	8.9	330.7
Castledermot	21	15	13.4	480.7
Stradbally	24	11	11.3	395.6
Dunmanoge	24	11	10.4	365.3
Luggacurren	30	0	12.3	368.0
Ballitore	18	12	11.5	343.6
Bert	25	4	4.1	117.5
Moone	19	8	9.4	254.7
Kilrush	20	1	12.9	271.4
Nurney	15	5	11.4	228.4
Harristown	16	2	9.8	176.8
Killabban	16	1	9.8	166.5

Electoral District	Commute Origin (i.e. where Athy is the destination)	Commute Destination (i.e. where Athy is the origin)	Distance from Athy (km)	Aggregate Commute, km (as a proxy for viability of regional PT service)
Shrule	2	13	12.3	184.3
Ballylehane	13	2	12.8	191.8
Rathaspick	13	1	13.3	186.3
Kildangan	12	1	13.1	170.3
Arless	9	2	9.8	108.0
Moyanna	10	0	12.1	121.0
Curraclone	10	0	9.7	97.5
Farnans	9	0	10.9	98.2
Vicarstown	7	1	9.0	71.9
Graney	6	2	13.8	110.7
Sallyford	6	1	14.3	100.4
Inchaquire	6	1	14.9	104.1
Belan	4	3	9.8	68.6
Ballybrackan	7	0	12.3	85.8

*Work in this area (Kilberry and Skerries) potentially related to nearby bog

1.8.2.4 Regional Trips

Table 10 below presents POWSCAR "all trips" data related to Athy ED's by county excluding Co. Kildare. Note that this assumes that educational trips are limited to within the Athy ED's, except for 3rd level. This table shows the strong links between Athy and Carlow, Dublin Local Authority Areas, Laois and to a lesser extent, Kilkenny and Waterford. Of these areas, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Dublin City are linked to Athy via rail. In addition, Carlow, Dublin City, Fingal Local Authority Area (Dublin Airport), Kilkenny and Laois are linked to Athy via regional bus services.

By increasing the frequency of these regional PT services, there is an opportunity to create a mode shift away from the private car to these common commuting origins / destinations.

Table 10: Commuting Trips To / From other Local Authority Areas

Commute origin	Commute destination	County
164	331	Carlow
17	322	Dublin City
13	224	South Dublin
6	51	Fingal
8	64	DLR Co. Co.
62	61	Kilkenny
667	184	Laois
2	6	Longford

Commute origin	Commute destination	County
4	3	Louth
7	8	Meath
16	6	Offaly
6	9	Westmeath
13	3	Wexford
37	37	Waterford

1.8.3 Future Demand

1.8.3.1 Allocated Growth for Athy

As per Variation No. 1 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 (June 2020), a population growth of 1,890 is provided for in Athy to 2026, equating to a growth in housing units of 675 (see Table 11 below). This is a large reduction on the growth provided for in the previously adopted Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and this reflects the objectives of the National Planning Framework to reduce unrealistic / unsustainable population and dwelling completion targets.

Athy 2016 Census Pop	Athy 2016 Dwellings	Allocated Growth (%) 2020-2023 NPF 2026	Pop Growth in persons NPF 2026	Growth in housing units to 2026
9,677	4,281	4.8%	1,890	675

Table 11: Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Variation No. 1, Allocated Growth for Athy

It is anticipated that the draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027 will allow for a population growth of 2,160 to 2027 (which equates to a growth in housing of 771 units, with an average household size of 2.8 persons). This adds one further year to the CPD Variation No. 1 allocation for Athy in order to cover the entire LAP period (see Table 12 below). Note that these figures only include projected population growth on lands zoned for town centre and new residential uses.

Athy 2016 Census Pop.	Athy 2016 Dwellings	Allocated Growth (%) 2020-23 NPF 2026	Pop. Growth in persons NPF 2026	Growth in housing units to 2026	Pop. Growth in persons - LAP 2027	Growth in Housing - LAP 2027
9,677	4,281	4.8%	1,890	675	2,160	771 units

Table 12: Draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027, Population and Housing Growth in Athy

1.8.3.2 Draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027 Zoning Map

A preliminary draft zoning map, proposed for the upcoming Draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027, was provided by Kildare County Council's Planning Department as a first step in integrating transport and growth objectives for Athy. As previously discussed, development of land-use plans is a collaborative and iterative exercise between Planners and Transport Engineers. This draft map is shown in Figure 35 overleaf.

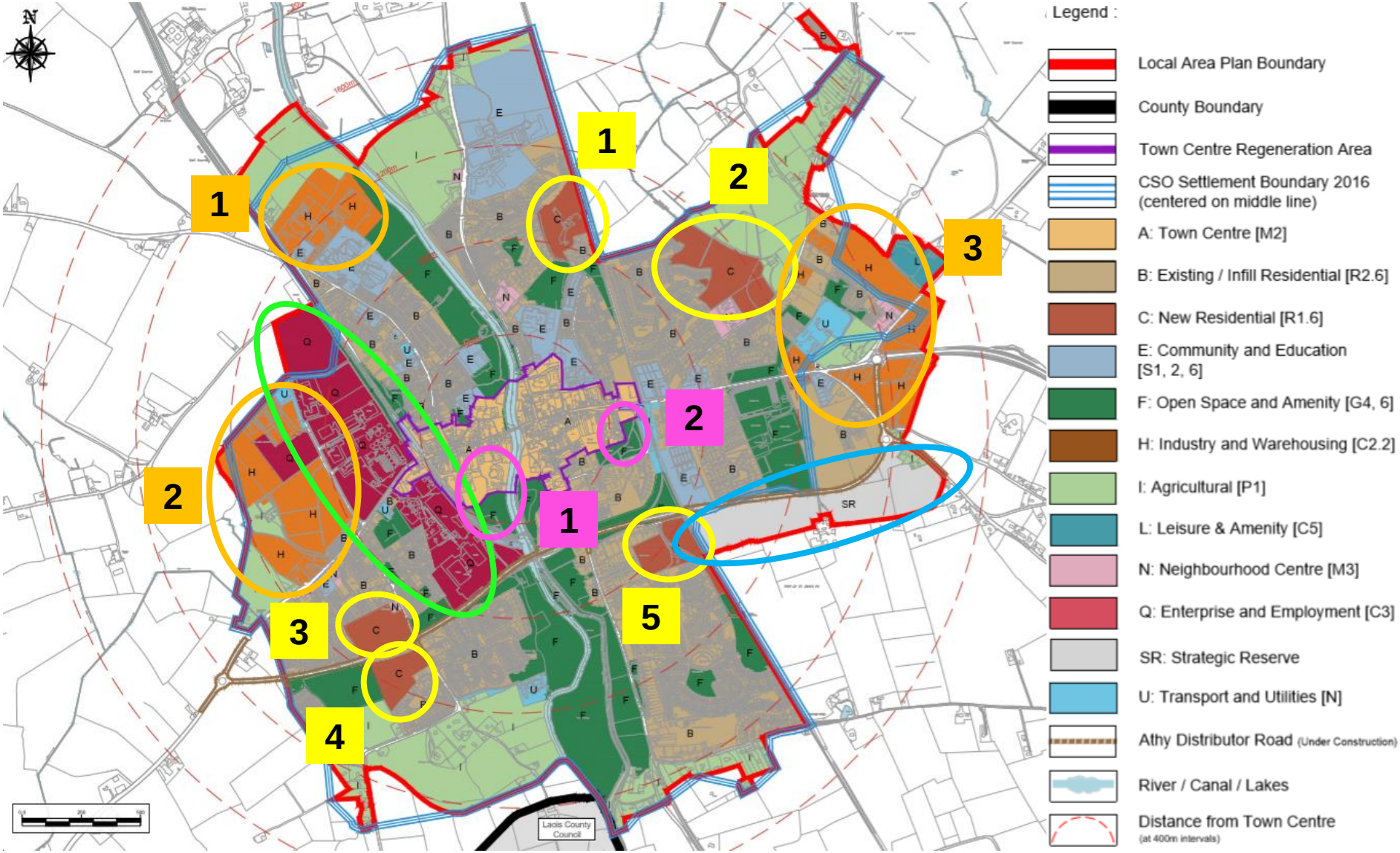

Figure 35: Athy Local Area Plan 2021 – 2027, Preliminary Draft Land-use Zoning Map

Residential:

From this draft map, it can be seen that there are limited “C, New Residential” zones. These are zones marked for new housing schemes and are important in considering the future transport infrastructure requirements of the town. In total there are only 5 of these zones proposed for the next Athy LAP (circled in yellow in Figure 35). An analysis of these zones, from a transport perspective is detailed in Table 13 below.

It can be concluded from the analysis that the five zones proposed for future residential development are sustainable from a transport perspective in terms of active travel and proximity to key trip attractors in the town - if the appropriate infrastructure is put in place. A separate Strategic Planning and Infrastructural Assessment (SPIA) is being undertaken to determine access to the local road network and if the surrounding road network can accommodate an increase in traffic from these developments.

Development Opportunity Sites in the Town Centre:

There are two sites which have been specifically identified as having high potential for infill development within the town centre, these are the Dominican Lands site and a site to the rear of Leinster Street. These are labelled and circled in pink in Figure 35.

The Dominican lands occupy a prominent location in the town centre which, notwithstanding environmental constraints, can accommodate a level of infill development which would contribute to improving the urban environment. The indicative design framework (see Figure 36) illustrates the potential for creating a new urban east-west street along Convent Lane. A new civic square would also be created at the Library. Envisaged land uses would include a mix of residential and commercial.

From a transport point of view, the proposed bridge across the River Barrow would be pedestrian and cyclist only. Pedestrian and cyclist facilities should be incorporated along the red arrows to ensure connectivity to the Blueway and other active travel infrastructure. Vehicle access to the site would be via Convent Lane, Canal Side and potentially Green Alley, although the width of this street is constrained. The site is located in the town centre, bringing the benefits of close proximity to trip attractors such as the main street (i.e. the commercial core, Leinster Street – Duke Street axis), supermarkets, and public transport services.

Figure 36: Indicative Design Framework for Dominican Lands

The second strategic site is located to the rear of Leinster Street. The site has the capacity to both create increased connectivity and permeability whilst also providing for an intensification of commercial uses which would add to the overall retail offer of the town centre. The indicative design framework (see Figure 37) illustrates the internal streets of the development as being pedestrian and cycle focused, with car parking to be located to the interior of the urban block. This creates the possibility of developing a central civic plaza in the centre of the site. The potential for a high-quality pedestrian and cyclist link with the People's Park to the south is also illustrated. Envisaged land uses on the site should incorporate retail, commercial and residential units.

From a transport perspective, the site is ideally located adjacent to the train station and the main street (i.e. the commercial core, Leinster Street – Duke Street axis). Pedestrian and cycle access should be provided for as indicated in Figure 37, which links across to the Barrow Blueway to the west via proposed active travel infrastructure along Meeting Lane. The development of this site would entail the construction of a section of new road, linking the N78 with Meeting Lane. Vehicular access to the site would be via this new section of road and Meeting Lane.

Figure 37: Indicative Design Framework for Site to Rear of Leinster Street

Industry and Warehousing:

In relation to zones marked “H: Industry and Warehousing”. There are 3 major areas of this zoning on the draft map (labelled 1 – 3 and circled in orange in Figure 35).

Area 1 could be accessible by foot via the Barrow Blue Way (Grand Canal Section) and there is a bus route in close proximity to the site, along the R428.

Area 2 is located relatively close to the Town Centre. The N78 to the south of the site provides bus services and footpaths to allow travel to the site by sustainable means.

Area 3 is located on the eastern periphery of the town. It is relatively close to the train station but there are no bus stops nearby. Any development of these lands should ensure that there are footpaths linking back towards the Train Station and Town Centre.

Enterprise & Employment:

Lands zoned for enterprise and employment (Q on the map, outlined in green in Figure 35) are clustered to the west of the town centre, both north and south of the N78.

The lands north could be accessed via the footpaths on the N78 and via footpaths constructed through the zoned lands. Alternatively, access to new developments for pedestrians and cyclists could be provided off the walkways/cycleways adjacent to the Grand Canal. Lands to the south of the N78 could potentially link with the new Athy Distributor Road, giving access to high quality cycle tracks, footpaths and a direct link to the train station. Both of these areas have access to bus services along the N78.

Strategic Reserve:

An area is marked on the draft zoning map labelled “Strategic Reserve” (circled in blue in Figure 35). In the post-2027 period and following the building out of identified sites, it is considered that the lands situated to the southeast of the town, adjacent to the future Athy Distributor Road, represent the most appropriate area to cater for future strategic requirements to accommodate the orderly and sequential expansion of the town, at a location which is proximate to public transport at the train station, and with suitable access to other services. For this reason, these lands have been zoned as ‘*Strategic Reserve*’, a designation that seeks to protect such lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly and efficient expansion of the urban settlement.

In the event that this land is developed, there is potential for active travel links to the new Athy Distributor Road. However, careful consideration should be given to how the development would allow access for vehicular traffic. The capacity of the distributor road should be protected.

Table 13: Transport Analysis of New Residential Zones in Draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027 Zoning Map

Zone Reference	Aerial View	Notes	Transport Implications of Development
1		• Contiguous to existing residential development • Access is not ideal, existing estate roads should be utilised • 1.6km from the centre of Athy • Vacant greenfield site, which is fully serviced • Permission previously granted for 55 residential units. Extension of duration refused in 2019 on basis that no works had taken place on site	• Lands located close to Schools campus • Connections for active travel modes should be considered from this development to the Schools campus, train station and town centre (with associated bus services) • Site within the CSO Settlement Boundary • Good site for development in terms of potential for active travel on local journeys • However, access onto existing estate roads is not ideal and capacity of the roads should be considered • As all traffic not heading to Monasterevin will travel via the town centre, support for active modes from this development is critical

Zone Reference	Aerial View	Notes	Transport Implications of Development
2		• Contiguous to existing residential development • Access via Geraldine Road • Approx. 1km from town centre • Residential development already granted on this site	• Good access to train station and town centre, with associated public transport links • Potential for connection between this area and the schools campus to the north-west should be investigated • Site is within the CSO Settlement Boundary
3		• Contiguous to existing residential development • Good access to Fortbarrington Road and access will be improved by the development of the Distributor Road (although development will not access directly onto the new distributor road for vehicles) • 1.2km from the centre of Athy • Green field site is vacant and fully serviced • No relevant planning history	• Potential to provide footpath and cycleway access onto new Athy Distributor Road • This will in turn link with the paths along the River Barrow, giving access into the town centre (and various bus services) and further north to the schools • It will also provide direct access to the train station via the distributor road • Site will be accessed by car from the Fortbarrington Road only, protecting the capacity of the new distributor road • Site is within the CSO Settlement Boundary

Zone Reference	Aerial View	Notes	Transport Implications of Development
4		• Site is located within the context of several completed residential estates • Owned by KCC • Plans to partially develop the site for residential development and amenity facility • 1.6km from the centre of Athy • Green field site, vacant and fully serviced	• Potential to provide footpath and cycleway access onto new Athy Distributor Road • This will in turn link with the paths along the River Barrow, giving access into the town centre (and various bus services) and further north to the schools • It will also provide direct access to the train station via the distributor road • Site can be accessed by car from the Fortbarrington Road, protecting the capacity of the new distributor road • Site is within the CSO Settlement Boundary

Zone Reference	Aerial View	Notes	Transport Implications of Development
5		• Adjoins existing residential development • Access to this site is considered poor • 1.1km from the centre of Athy • Green field site is still vacant and fully serviced • Planning permissions for a number of units on both the east and west side of the zone were refused on the grounds of prematurity of application in advance of the development of the Athy Distributor Road	• Potential to provide footpath and cycleway access onto new Athy Distributor Road • This will in turn link with the paths along the River Barrow, giving access into the town centre (and various bus services) and further north to the schools • It will also provide direct access to the train station via the distributor road • Vehicular access to this site should not be via the Athy Distributor Road (so as to protect the capacity of the new road). Access via Old Road parallel to the distributor road would not be suitable either as the junction with the R417 is too close to the junction with the ADR • Vehicular access to these lands may be examined via Chanterlands, Kingsgrove or Oak Lawn

1.9 Summary of Baseline Assessment and Feedback into Draft LAP

1. Athy has experienced very slow growth in recent years with only approximately 40-50 units constructed between April 2016 to present. On the other hand, Athy is a designated rent pressure zone since April 2020, showing a high level of demand for housing in the area.

2. Commercial activities are concentrated in the centre of Athy as well as in industrial estates along the western edge of the Canal and in the northern and eastern peripheries.

3. The total population for all Athy EDs was 10,715 in 2016, living in 4,094 occupied houses. This gives an average of 2.61 persons per household. The highest population density is noted in north-east and south-west of the town.

4. 2016 figures show that labour force participation was low in many parts of the town, although it is noted that unemployment in Athy reduced significantly over the period to early 2020.

5. All primary (4 No.) and secondary schools (2 No.) in Athy are located east of the River Barrow and north of main street (Leinster Street – Duke Street axis). This limits the practicality of active travel to school, particularly for residents to the west of the River Barrow due to limited crossings of the river. The peripheral location of the School Campus encourages car trips, making it critical that safe walking and cycling facilities are provided to this area.

6. Athy train station, which is located east of the town centre, is on the Dublin to Waterford train line. Train services from Athy are spread relatively evenly across the day. There is no increased frequency at peak hours in the morning and evening. There are also no early morning trains towards Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford.

7. Connectivity to the train station will soon be improved by the construction of the Athy Distributor Road, which includes a high-quality pedestrian and cycle tracks.

8. Regional bus services in Athy are limited in frequency but do provide connections to a number of hinterlands, major towns and cities in the province, as well as Dublin Airport.

9. Catchment analysis provided an overview of the current walking catchments for key locations throughout Athy. The analysis highlights that the secondary school and health facility coverage is very low and covers less than 30% of residential buildings. This is a symptom of the lack of river crossing in the north of the town. Access to bus stops and the train station is also particularly poor, with less than 40% residential coverage. This means that over 6 in 10 households in Athy do not have convenient access to public transport services.

10. Athy benefits from the Barrow Blueway (currently under construction). This Blueway runs along the Grand Canal for much of Athy, before crossing over at Horse Bridge and continuing along the River Barrow through the south of the town. The Barrow Blueway will connect directly with the new Athy Distributor Road once constructed. The Blueway provides an important north-south spine through the town.

11. Athy is characterised by a large number of cul de sac type residential estates with poor connectivity. In addition, there are a number of features such as the railway line, the canal and the River Barrow which present physical linear barriers to connectivity in the east-west direction.

12. There are currently no dedicated cycle facilities in Athy. Cyclists can use the paths to the edge of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow (including the Barrow Blueway) to travel north-south through the town, however these paths are not suitable for cyclists in a number of areas.

13. Athy's road network is defined by the N78 national secondary road which runs through the town centre in an east – southwest direction. This route serves as a link to the M9 - Dublin to Waterford Motorway east of the town and southwest to Castlecomer and Kilkenny.

14. The town has a number of regional routes which converge on the town as a significant crossing on the River Barrow. These are the R418 north to Kilcullen, R418 southeast to Castledermot, The R417 south to Carlow, the R428 to Stradbally and the R417 north to Monasterevin. Several local roads link the town and its hinterland and complement the main road network.

15. Currently Athy suffers from significant traffic congestion. This is largely due to a lack of alternative routes around Athy. For example, the nearest crossings of the River Barrow and Grand Canal are on sub-standard local roads 3km north and 6km south of Athy Town Centre. The road network in Athy is also constrained due to the focal point of the Cromaboo Bridge and the historic street layout.

16. The existing N78 road is noted as having a particularly poor safety record with 50% of collisions on the N78 between 2005 and 2013 involving pedestrians.

17. The new Athy Distributor Road will begin construction shortly. This will provide a new east-west link to the south of the main street, bypassing the congested N78. The Athy Distributor Road will incorporate high quality footpaths and cycle tracks along much of the scheme. This new road will provide Athy with a high-quality east-west connectivity link for active travel modes and connects directly to the train station via a pedestrian / cyclist spur from the road.

There will also be a direct connection between the Barrow Way and the new Athy Distributor Road. This connects a strong north-south link through the town with the east-west link of the new road, creating two major connectivity "spines".

18. On completion of the Distributor Road Scheme, a major opportunity will exist for the improvement of road safety as a result of the reduction in traffic levels through Athy Town Centre (for example there will be a 42% reduction in AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) along Leinster Street in the 2035 model as a result of the Athy Distributor Road).

19. Athy is well served by off-street car parks which can be accessed without having to travel through the town centre yet are in easy walking distance of the main retail areas. There is no evidence of parking shortages in the town currently.

20. Data on the theme of commuting is available from the 2016 census. This data showed that car-based commutes accounted for 62% in terms of mode share in Athy (38% car driver and 24% car passenger) It is noticeable that in the urban EDs, the use of the private car is significantly less than in the rural ED. Only 1% of commutes were by bicycle.

21. Comparing travel mode to school for the East and West urban EDs, a significantly larger number of school attendees walk in the eastern ED than in the western ED. This may be explained in part by the fact that western areas are at least one kilometre further from the schools as a result of the single crossing of the River Barrow.

22. The proximity of Athy to the counties of Laois and Carlow are reflected in the strong commuting patterns from Laois, as a source of many commutes into Athy, and Carlow, as a significant destination.

23. Athy is within commuting distance of Dublin, with the city centre being a strong destination for commuters employment areas southwest of the city.

24. The strongest commuting relationship is amongst the three Athy ED's. A total of 2,600 such trips occur with more than 1,600 trips within in the urban area of Athy. Improved local transportation infrastructure will accommodate these trips, many of which will also be possible by active travel modes.

25. Inter town commuting is significant with strong links to and from, Carlow, Naas and Newbridge. These locations are linked to Athy by railway and opportunities exist for exploiting rail-based commuting. In particular, there is a strong commuting relationship with Naas even though no direct train service exists. However, there is a bus service to Naas.

26. Commuters into Athy are predominantly from the wider hinterland, for example, Ballylynan, Churchtown Skerries and Grangemellon. However, there is a strong two-way relationship with some ED's providing both origin and destination relationship with Athy. This reflects Athy's strong position as a regional centre for employment and services, with regard to its wider hinterland.

27. 40% of trips are local to the town of Athy. These trips should have a high percentage of active mode that is cycling or walking.

28. 25% of trips are to destinations connected to Athy by railway or bus services. These trips should be assessed to see what supports they require for an increase in use of public transport.

29. The remaining 35% of trips are too long to cycle or walk to and are not served by existing public transport services. These trips should be assessed to find out what support they require or where public transportation might be viable.

30. POWSCAR data provides information on all commuting trips to and from Athy's hinterland areas. There are 7 hinterland areas which have a higher aggregate commute value than the other hinterland areas. This indicates the potential for a viable PT service. Of these hinterland areas, Ballylynan and Kilberry are already served by some level of PT to and from Athy. The remaining areas, Churchtown, Skerries, Grangemellon, Barrowhouse and Ballyadams are not served by any bus service.

31. POWSCAR regional commuting data shows the strong links between Athy and Carlow, Dublin Local Authority Areas, Laois and to a lesser extent, Kilkenny and Waterford. Of these areas, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Dublin City are linked to Athy via rail. In addition, Carlow, Dublin City, Fingal Local Authority Area (Dublin Airport), Kilkenny and Laois are linked to Athy via regional bus services. By increasing the frequency of these regional PT services, there is an opportunity to create a mode shift away from the private car to these common commuting origins / destinations.

32. It is anticipated that the draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027 will allow for a population growth of 2,160 to 2027 (which equates to a growth in housing of 771 units, with an average household size of 2.8 persons).

33. A preliminary draft zoning map, proposed for the upcoming Athy LAP 2021 – 2027, was provided by Kildare County Council's Planning Department as a first step in integrating transport and growth objectives for Athy. A high-level analysis of the five proposed new residential zones concluded that these zones are sustainable from a transport perspective in terms of active travel and proximity to key trip attractors in the town, provided correct walking and cycling infrastructure is developed in tandem with these sites.

34. Zones proposed for "Industry and Warehousing" and "Enterprise and Employment" show good promise for sustainable travel modes but careful consideration needs to be given to any new developments. They should link to public transport services and good quality footpaths and cycle tracks.

35. The "Strategic Reserve" area marked on the draft zoning map has been identified as the most appropriate area to cater for further expansion of the town, post-2027. In the event that this land is developed, there is potential for active travel links to the new Athy Distributor Road. However, careful consideration should be given to how the development would allow access for vehicular traffic. The capacity of the distributor road should be protected.

Part 2 Context for the Area Based Transport Assessment

2.1 National Policy

2.1.1 National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) provides a high-level strategic planning framework to guide development and investment over the coming decades. The NPF contains a set of ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) to guide future development and investment.

The NPF notes that Athy is located in the Eastern and Midland Region which has experienced high levels of population growth in recent decades, at more than twice the national growth rate. A population of 2.58 million is forecast in the Eastern and Midland Region by 2040; 500,000 more people than live there at present.

Key future planning, development and place-making policy priorities for the Eastern and Midland Region which are relevant to Athy include:

- *"Enabling the complementary development of large and county towns in the wider Greater Dublin Area and Midland areas on the key strategic and public transport routes in a regionally co-ordinated manner, with an enhanced emphasis on measures to promote self-sustaining economic and employment based development opportunities to match and catch-up on rapid phases of housing delivery in recent years."*
- *"Building on the progress made in developing an integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways, that will support the diversification of rural and regional economies and promote more sustainable forms of travel and activity based recreation utilising canal and former rail and other routes."*

From the ten National Strategic Outcomes: NSO 1: Compact Growth, NSO 2: Enhanced Regional Accessibility and NSO 4: Sustainable Mobility are the most relevant to the Athy ABTA.

Another applicable objective from the document is the NPF's National Policy Objective (NPO) 27 that states:

- *"Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages."*

NPO 35 states that residential densities in settlements in should be increased which is relevant to create urban centres which can support higher frequencies of public transport. NPO 35 states the following:

- *"Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights."*

2.1.2 National Development Plan 2018 – 2027

The National Development Plan (NDP) sets out the investment priorities that underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework. It is designed to guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades.

The National Development Plan demonstrates the Government's commitment to meeting Ireland's infrastructure and investment needs over the next ten years, through a total investment estimated at €116 billion over the lifetime of the plan. The NDP has also allocated funding for the procurement of some 300 additional rail carriages which help to provide an increased level of service on the Kildare rail line, directly benefiting Athy.

2.1.3 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020

Smarter Travel – A sustainable Transport Future is a sustainable transport policy for Ireland covering the period 2009 – 2020. Delivering this policy is a key objective of Government because current transport and travel trends are unsustainable.

Despite investment in road infrastructure, congestion will get worse, transport emissions will continue to grow, economic competitiveness will suffer, and quality of life will decline unless more sustainable transport policies are adopted. This document outlines the Government's vision for sustainability in transport by setting out key goals, which are to:

- Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and, in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport;
- Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks;
- Minimising the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car; and
- Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels.

In relation to roads, the proposed policy is to retain investment in roads that will remove bottlenecks, ease congestion and pressure within towns and villages, and provide the necessary infrastructure links to support the National Spatial Strategy (superseded by the National Planning Framework).

For bus transport providers, including the CIE Group and private operators, quality roads are an essential requirement. Investment in the road network is therefore a key ingredient in improved public transport in Ireland. Improved public transport is also a key priority under the Government's Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport and the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan 2016 – 2021.

The strategy has an overriding goal that by 2020 55% of all commuting trips will be made by sustainable means of walking, cycling and public transport.

2.1.4 ABTA Policy and Guidelines

The policy context for ABTAs is based within a hierarchy of transport assessments, from local area plans right up to National level. As set out in the TII Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes, 2018 - under current legislation, namely the provisions of Section 31J of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) each planning authority in the GDA must demonstrate consistency with the NTA Transport Strategy in relation to new Development Plans and Local Area Plans. In a similar manner, under Section 27 (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), local authorities across the country will be required to demonstrate consistency with the policies and proposals set out in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), including transport polices and proposals.

The outcome of this requirement is that Local Authorities must show that they comply with the transport assessment requirements as set out in the overarching policy documents. For Athy, this means that developing an ABTA (or Local Transport Plan) is a requirement for any new Local Area Plan.

The NTA are currently in the process of completing an Area Based Transport Assessment Manual. However, in the meantime, in order to provide clarity to transport planners, two guidance documents have been published –

1. NTA - Area Based Transport Assessment Advice Note, December 2018

2. TII - Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes, PE-PDV-02046 April 2018

These documents highlight that an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) is one of a number of complementary assessment processes, used in the preparation of local area plans. The intended effect of an ABTA is to ensure that the assessment of transport demand and its associated impact plays a central role in informing the development proposals. This should include consideration of the overall scale of the development as well as the mix of land uses, location, density, phasing and design / delivery of supporting transport infrastructure and services (across all modes of transport).

Essentially, an ABTA's function is to place the integration of land use and transport planning at the centre of the Plan preparation process. In terms of policy integration from national to local level, an ABTA can address the need to incorporate national and regional transport policies and objectives into local level land use plans and significant development areas.

The ABTA will allow for, at the earliest stages of local level planning, the identification of requirements, primarily in relation to movement and accessibility, to address crosssectoral issues relating to the environment, employment, education, recreation, health and housing. In doing so, it is intended that the ABTA will establish and give expression, at the local level, to national and regional land use and transport planning policies.

It is notable that both of the guidance documents stress the importance of sustainable transport and proper integration between transport and development.

The guidance notes specify that there are 6 steps to completing an ABTA:

Part 1 Baseline Assessment of Plan Area and the Surrounding Area

Part 2 Establish Context for the ABTA

Part 3 ABTA Process / Options Assessment

Part 4 Refinement and Sense Check the Proposals

Part 5 Finalisation of the Plan

Part 6 Monitoring and Review

This report has been structured to mirror the 6 steps to ensure that the correct procedure for an ABTA is followed.

2.1.5 National Cycle Policy Framework 2009 – 2020

The vision of the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) was to create a strong and vibrant cycling culture in Ireland that would see 10% of all commuting trips being made by bike by 2020. The NCPF was required to respond to the declining number of cyclists since the 1980's. The NCPF builds on sustainable transport commuting targets outlined in the Smarter Travel document containing specific measures to enhance cycling in Ireland in order to increase participation. The NCPF is underpinned by 19 key objective that cover the areas of Infrastructure, Communication/Education, Financial Resources, Legislation and Enforcement, Human Resources and Coordination and Evaluation and Effects.

2.1.6 Road Safety Authority Road Safety Strategy 2013 – 2020

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) Road Safety Strategy 2013 – 2020 sets out targets to be achieved in terms of road safety in Ireland as well as policy to achieve these targets. The primary target of this strategy is:

"A reduction of road collision fatalities on Irish roads to 25 per million population or less by 2020 is required to close the gap between Ireland and the safest countries. This means reducing deaths from 162 in 2012 to 124 or fewer by 2020. A provisional target for the reduction of serious injuries by 30% from 472 (2011) to 330 or fewer by 2020 or 61 per million population has also been set."

The plan sets out strategies for engineering and infrastructure in terms of the benefits that they can have in terms of reducing collisions.

2.2 Regional Policy

2.2.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031 sets out a framework to direct future growth of the Region over the medium to long term.

The RSES will help implement the strategic planning framework set out in the NPF.

The RSES Settlement Strategy identifies Athy as being within the Core Region of the Eastern and Midland Region. The RSES also acknowledges the important value of developing and improving the Strategic Greenway network; which includes reference to the to the Barrow Way at Athy and its connections to the Grand Canal Greenway:

"Grand Canal Greenway from Docklands through the southern inner suburbs to Naas, Newbridge and Kildare joining the Barrow Way at Athy with potential to link to Cork"

In terms of retail function, the RSES designates Athy as a Level 3 town, which are towns and/or District Centres & Sub-County Town Centres (Key Service Centres). Athy is also noted within the Strategic Natural, Cultural and Green Infrastructure Assets in the Region as being a walled town. Athy is specifically noted as being one of the designated Irish Heritage Towns. The RSES outlines that:

"These built heritage assets are a non-renewable resource that contribute to our understanding of our past, and the well-being and quality of life of our current citizens and also represent an opportunity for sustainable economic development."

2.2.2 Transport Strategy for Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) 2016-2035 (due for review in the near-future) aims to contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of the GDA by providing for the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and goods.

The strategy outlines a suite of transportation objectives for the GDA including the provision of additional public transport facilities (heavy rail, light rail, bus and bus rapid transit facilities), cycling and walking infrastructure and road network measures up to 2035.

The priorities of the strategy which are relevant to Athy include the following:

- To address urban congestion
- To protect the capacity of the strategic road network
- To reduce the share of trips undertaken by car and increase walking, cycling and public transport mode share
- To provide a safe cycling network
- To enhance the pedestrian environment, in particular to overcome severance and increase connectivity
- To consider all-day travel demand from all societal groups

Athy is designated by the NTA as being on radial corridor D: Newbridge – Naas – Clondalkin – North Tallaght – to Dublin City Centre, only stated as extending as far west as Newbridge. Athy is referenced as being outside the metropolitan area and referred to as a large urban settlement. Noted as being served by rail services, on both the Kildare and Waterford lines, and by longer distance commuter bus services.

The strategy states that much of the growth in these large urban settlements has largely been outside of the catchment of rail stations with bus often serving a more extensive catchment. The strategy intends to deliver further improvement to both bus and rail services from these towns into Dublin City Centre, as further population growth occurs.

It is noted that this corridor will benefit from improvement to the Kildare rail line such as the reopening of the Phoenix Park Tunnel Link for passenger services linking the Kildare Line to the City Centre

The strategy also identifies six regional bus corridors which form part of the Core Bus Network one of which the 'M7/ N7, via Long Mile Road' will serve regional buses from Co. Kildare.

2.2.3 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2013

The Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan sets out the National Transport Authority's plan for a cycle network throughout the Greater Dublin Area, comprising of an Urban Network, Inter-Urban Network and Green Route Network for the seven Local Authority areas in the GDA. The Cycle Network Plan aims to ensure that cycling as a transport mode is supported and enhanced in order to achieve strategic objectives and reach national goals for cycle usage.

The Athy cycling routes identified within the Plan are:

- A1: N78 – Dublin Road to Kilkenny Road
- A2: River Barrow Greenway – Eastbank (Alternative to R417 Kildare Road)
- A3: Barrow Canal Greenway (Alternative to R428 Stradbally Road)
- N10: Barrow Canal Greenway, West of Robertstown to Athy
- K20: Newbridge - Curragh - Suncroft – Athy
- A number of other Urban Town Network routes around Athy (dark blue lines)

Figure 38 illustrates the proposed cycle network plan for Athy, showing where investment in cycling infrastructure is expected over the forthcoming years.

Figure 38: Proposed NTA Cycle Network Plan for Athy (Map RN7, GDA Cycle Network Plan)

2.3 Local Policy

2.3.1 Kildare County Development Plan 2017 – 2023 (Including Variation No. 1, 2020)

Variation No. 1 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (June 2020) designates Athy as a "Self-Sustaining Growth Town" with a "Moderate level of jobs and services" and is defined thus:

"The RSES define these towns as those with a moderate level of jobs and services, which adequately cater for the people of its service catchment with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth."

Athy is, in planning terms, at the same level as Newbridge, Leixlip, and Kildare Town.

Variation No. 1 to the Kildare County Development 2017 – 2023 lists the percentage allocation of growth in the various towns, villages and settlements in Kildare.

Table 14 below shows an extract from the CDP Variation which provides the population and housing unit allocation for Athy for 2020 – 2023 and onwards to 2026.

Table 14: Settlement Hierarchy – Population and Housing Unit Allocation 2020-2023 (Athy highlighted)

Settlement Type	Towns / Villages	2016 Census Pop	2016 Dwellings	Allocated Growth (%) 2020-2023	NPF 2026 Pop Growth in persons	NPF 2026 Pop Growth in housing units	Population Growth 2020 to 2023 (annualised from 2026 NPF Figures)[6]	Dwellings Target 2020 to 2023
Key Town	Maynooth (MASP[7])	14,585	5,171	10.9%	4,291	1,533	1,839	657
	Naas	21,393	7,726	14.9%	5,866	2,095	2,514	898
Self-Sustaining Growth Town	Newbridge	22,742	8,260	11.6%	4,567	1,631	1,957	699
	Leixlip	15,504	5,524	10.2%	4,016	1,434	1,721	615
	Kildare	8,634	3,158	4.7%	1,850	661	793	283
	Athy	9,677	4,281	4.8%	1,890	675	810	289

In relation to economic development and sectoral opportunities, Athy, being a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, is listed as having a moderate level of jobs and services and has opportunities within bloodstock, tourism, manufacturing, logistics, food and beverage products.

Chapter 6 of the Kildare County Development Plan outlines movement and transportation objectives for County Kildare. Objectives and policies of particular importance to the Athy ABTA are as follows:

MTO3: Review and implement Integrated Transport Studies for Maynooth, Leixlip, Celbridge, Naas, Newbridge, Kildare and Athy in conjunction with the DTTS, TII and NTA and to prepare new Integrated Transport Studies for other towns, villages and settlements as required, to provide a framework to cater for the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and private vehicles.

RSO2: Ensure the planning, design and completion of the Athy Distributor route along a new corridor to reduce congestion on the existing urban road network (N78 National Secondary Arterial route through Athy town centre).

NRO1: Provide an alternative road to the arterial (National Secondary) N78 road through Athy which connects the N78 south of the town with the improved N78 link road north of Athy, which connects to the M9 motorway. This is necessary to reduce congestion on the national road system and within the town, improve safety and reduce the vulnerability of the national road network at this river crossing.

RR5: Preserve free from development proposed transport routes (or optional routes) identified in Local Area Plans, including those identified in the Naas and Athy Town Plans.

RRO1: Ensure the planning, design and completion of the Athy Distributor Road along a new corridor to reduce congestion on the existing urban road network (N78 National Secondary arterial route through Athy town centre).

RRO2: Seek to progress the regional roads identified for improvement as set out in Table 6.2 subject to funding

2.3.2 Athy Town Development Plan 2012 – 2018

The Athy Town Development Plan 2012 – 2018 (including Variations 1 and 2) has provided a framework for the development of Athy since 2012. The purpose of this ABTA is to inform the transport objectives for the successor of this Town Development Plan - the Athy Local Area Plan, 2021 – 2027.

In the Athy Town Development Plan 2012 – 2018, the policies and objectives relevant to transport are listed below (note that several of the documents referenced are now superseded).

GT1: To co-operate with other agencies to promote and facilitate the implementation of a sustainable transportation strategy for Athy having regard to Transport 21 (2006- 2015), Department of Transport's Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 and the Dublin Transportation Office's strategic document Platform for Change 2000-2016"and the forthcoming strategy to be published by the National Transport Authority.

GT2: To support sustainable modes of transport that ensure that land use planning and zoning are fully integrated with the provision and development of high quality transportation systems.

GT3: To promote and encourage the development and growth of Athy in line with the principles of sustainable development and to continue to support the policies and recommendations as outlined in the Athy Integrated Framework Plan for Land - Use and Transportation and the Athy Traffic Management Plan.

GT4: To provide a road network which is safe and efficient for all road users while being cognisant of the requirements of all traffic, including motorised vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

GT5: To ensure that Athy is well-connected to both the national road network and local centres of population.

GT6: To progressively improve all urban roads and footpaths and maintain these to the highest possible standards, having regard to the availability of finance and amenity and townscape requirements.

GT7: To improve road safety within the town centre by implementing gateway entry treatments and other speed reduction measures (incl. 50kph signage) inside the town boundary. This measure will include reducing the speed limit appropriately in the core town centre, and between the town centre and the town boundary.

GT8: To investigate the reduction of vehicular traffic passing through the Town Centre to improve the pedestrian environment of the town's retail core.

GT9: To co-operate with the public transport authorities and any other relevant bodies to promote the use of existing parking facilities in the town for park and ride purposes.

GT10: To utilise the provisions of Sections 48(2)(C) and 49 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended to generate financial contributions towards the capital costs of providing strategic and local transport infrastructure.

GT11: To continue to support the operation of and development of the bus service provided by South Kildare Community Transport supported by the Department of Transport

GT12: To have regard to the condition, location and accessibility of heritage items in the planning and provision of transportation services.

GT13: To have regard to the policies, actions, outcomes and recommendations of the Kildare Local Authorities Noise Action Plan regarding new development in proximity to National Routes.

GT14: To increase the level of access within Athy to a choice of transport modes and, in particular, to promote forms of development that reduce dependence on private car transport.

GT15: To require roads and other infrastructure crossing a Natura 2000 site to comply with the following requirements:

- Demonstrate the need for the project in light of a “do nothing” context.
- Develop and evaluate a comprehensive series of plausible alternative routes and design strategies.
- Demonstrate how each route has taken due account of and accommodated ecological considerations and legislative requirements including the Precautionary Principle.
- Demonstrate that the chosen route will not cause any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

GT16: To support the Government’s Electric Transport Programme 2008, by facilitating the roll-out of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles at appropriate locations within the town, through the planning system

The Athy Town Development Plan (2012 - 2018) also contains a large number of more specific objectives, relevant to different aspects of transport. These objectives were considered in the development of objectives presented for each mode of transport in Section 3 of this report. In addition, the Plan provided a Green Network Map, Heritage Trail Map, Urban Design Framework Map and the Land-Use Zoning Map. This land-use map (Variation No. 2) is show in Figure 39 overleaf. Comparing this map to the draft land-use zoning map which this ABTA is based (Figure 35), it is evident that the area of lands zoned for new residential development have been significantly reduced (approx. 75.8 ha reduced to approx. 25 ha). This it so that growth in the town is in line with new national and regional policy, including the NPF and RSES.

It is of note that in Variation No. 1 of the Athy Town Development Plan, several roads objectives were amended. In particular, the Northern Distributor Road study corridor was removed from the plan. The section of the New Town Street that crosses the River Barrow was also removed. Finally, the variation revised the policy in relation to a pedestrian / cyclist bridge over the River Barrow in the Athy Plan to one of carrying out a feasibility study in relation to this proposal.

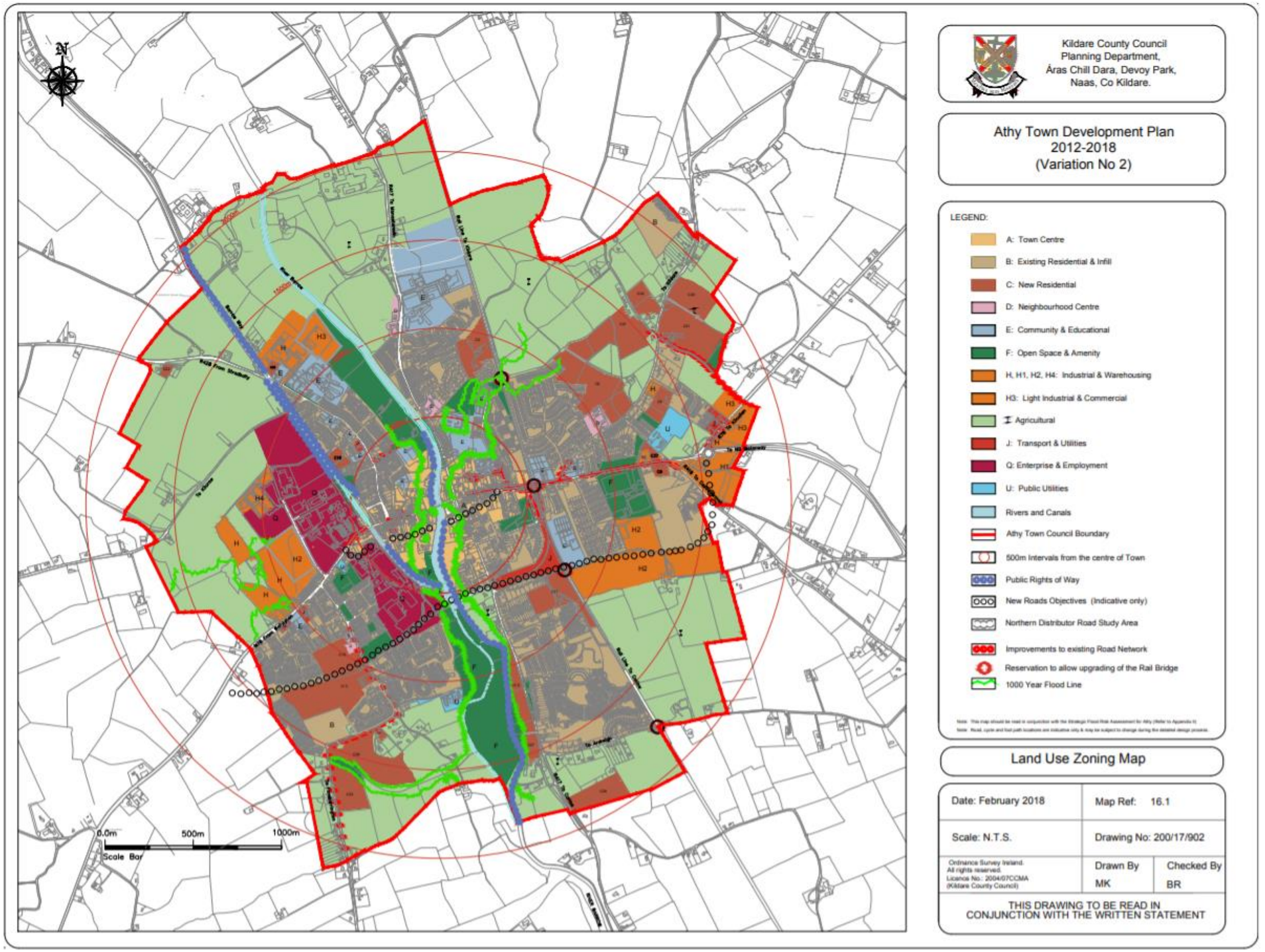

Figure 39: Athy Town Development Plan 2012 – 2018, Land-Use Zoning Map (Variation No. 2)

2.3.3 Athy Urban Regeneration Framework

This framework document has been prepared as an appendix to the Draft Athy LAP 2021 – 2027. The Urban Regeneration Framework for Athy sets out a strategy to guide and co-ordinate various projects which will help rejuvenate the town whilst also providing a platform for its future sustainable development. While applying to Athy as a whole, the framework primarily focuses on the regeneration of the historic and commercial core by identifying and presenting opportunities to improve the retail and commercial attractiveness of the town centre; creating revitalised streets and public spaces; facilitating and providing for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre activities including retail, residential, cultural, tourist and amenity uses.

The framework also seeks to promote sustainable mobility within Athy by increasing connectivity and prioritising sustainable movement routes to key destinations within the town. In this regard, the framework is directly related to this ABTA.

Over the past number of years there have been an extensive number of strategies and plans prepared for Athy which have sought to develop the town and increase its attractiveness as a place to live, visit and do business in. The Urban Regeneration Framework co-ordinates and further progresses the work already carried out to date. It incorporates key projects which are considered to best align with the LAP's key development principles and consequently have the most potential to achieve the desired transformative place-based change within the town. A variety of ideas and proposals contained in the following list of previous strategies and plans have been incorporated into the Urban Regeneration Framework:

1. Athy Integrated Framework Plan for Land Use and Transportation (2004) - Non-statutory long-term development framework

2. Athy Town Development Plan (2012-2018) - Statutory land use plan

3. The Barrow Corridor Recreation, Tourism, Commercial and Product Strategy Study (2012) - Developing the Barrow Valley as a key visitor destination within the region.

4. Athy Regeneration Strategy, Athy Enterprise Network (2015) - Economic development and branding strategy

5. Athy Preliminary Public Realm Strategy (2016) - Sets out a provisional framework for environmental improvements in town centre.

6. Barrow Blueway (2018) - A multi-use shared leisure route on the existing Barrow Line Canal and Barrow Navigation towpath.

7. Athy Walkability Audit (2020) - Kildare County Council document focusing on creating an age friendly town centre.

8. Dominican Square and Blueway Hub Masterplan proposal - Initial design iteration for the Dominican Lands.

9. Emily Square Environmental Improvement Scheme (2018) - Approved Kildare County Council Part 8 proposal.

10. Athy Heritage Centre - Shackleton Museum Refurbishment and Extension - Approved Kildare County Council Part 8 proposal.

11. Athy Food, Drink and Innovation Hub Feasibility Study (2020) - Proposal to repurpose the former Model School was awarded funding for further design and planning work from the Regional Enterprise Development Fund.

As all of the above documents have been considered in the Athy Urban Regeneration Framework, the framework is taken as the overarching document and proposals contained in the Urban Regeneration Framework have been incorporated into this ABTA, rather than all of the varied proposals noted in the previous plans and strategies.

Figure 40 illustrates the priority projects in Athy brought forward as part of the Urban Regeneration Framework. Table 15 below provides notes on each of the projects from the perspective of this ABTA.

Table 15: Notes on Priority Projects for Athy

Project	Notes
1. Barrow Blueway	The Blueway is currently under construction and will provide the centrepiece of the town's future tourism offering
2. Public Realm Strategy for Athy	The Framework identified the development of a Public Realm Strategy as a short-term priority for the town, to be commenced within 12 months of the adoption of the LAP. The Public Realm Strategy will **seek to capitalise on the opening of Athy Distributor Road and the consequent freeing up space within the town centre**. The main focus of strategy will be the enhancement of the character of the historic core and its development as a key visitor attractor, thus improving the overall liveability of the town for both visitors and residents alike.
3. Emily Square Upgrade and Athy Heritage Centre Extension and Refurbishment	This project combines two projects which have already secured Part 8 Planning Permission. Both the public realm upgrade works to Emily Square and the redevelopment of the Athy Heritage Centre - Shackleton Museum which will provide for the development of a high-quality key visitor destination in the town centre at a strategic riverside location.

Project	Notes
4. Dominican Lands and Blueway Hub Masterplan	A Masterplan shall be prepared for the former Dominican Lands and its immediate surroundings and will accommodate the following elements: • A new urban built edge to the north • A new civic square/public realm surrounding the Library • An eco-park • A Blueway hub/visitor centre • **Pedestrian/cyclist bridge across the River Barrow** • Flood defence works • Social housing scheme (for the over 55's)
5. A Connectivity Programme for Athy	This plan will be informed by the connectivity objectives contained in this ABTA.
6. Active Land Management Programme	This programme will aim to address the high number of vacant sites in the town centre.
7. Athy Food, Drinks and Skills Innovation Hub	This regional facility will be located in the refurbished Model School and aims to facilitate the development new and innovative food and drinks businesses.
8. Woodstock Lands Masterplan	This project seeks to maximise the potential of the Woodstock lands as a recreational space not just for the immediate area but on that can be utilised by the population of the town as a whole. The Masterplan will seek to maximum the location of the lands next to the river whilst also making Woodstock Castle a key point of focus.

Figure 40: Athy Urban Regeneration Framework - Priority Projects

2.3.4 Athy Traffic Management Plan, 2009

The Athy TMP 2009 was commissioned by Kildare County Council and developed on their behalf by WSP Ireland Ltd. (Consultants). At the time of undertaking the TMP a proposed Southern Distributor Road (now known as the Athy Distributor Road) had been progressed through preliminary design and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had been prepared for the proposed route option. The Study states that its purpose was:

"To provide specific traffic and transportation recommendations for the town centre streets of Athy which can be developed in tandem with key infrastructure projects proposed for the town"

This study develops recommendations, based on an assumed phasing of proposed infrastructure projects including the Athy Distributor Road, New Town Centre Street and the Northern Relief Road, as follows;

- Immediate Term Recommendations: To take place prior to the Athy Distributor Route and the New Town Centre Street.
- Short Term Recommendations: To take place on completion of the Athy Distributor Route and completion of the New Town Centre Street Scheme from the existing mini-roundabout junction on Dublin Road East to Barrow Quay.
- Long Term Recommendations: To take place on completion of the Athy Northern Relief Road and the full extent of the New Town Centre Street Scheme with link roads connecting the Athy Distributor Road to the New Town Centre Street in the west and to Church Road in the east.

However, since this report was prepared, there have been significant changes to the objectives in the overall planning and transportation policy context including the Athy Town Development Plan (Variation No. 1) and the Kildare County Development Plan. As such, the Traffic Management Plan is no longer relevant as it contains proposals inconsistent with the hierarchy of planning and transportation strategy policies and objectives.

2.3.5 Athy Future Local Area Plan, Pre-Draft Consultation

As part of preparations for the upcoming Athy Local Area Plan, a public and stakeholder consultation was held in March and April 2018. The purpose of this consultation was to gain an understanding of the key issues which the local community consider important for their town. 76 submissions were received as part of the consultation. Of these, 9 submissions related to movement and transport (12%).

These submissions discussed the proposed Athy Distributor Road and traffic congestion within the town. Two submissions suggested the creation of footbridges across the River Barrow; from the new Athy Library and also crossing the river from the swimming pool. Parking was also a concern in terms of the removal of spaces as a result of the proposed renovation to Emily Square. The HSE recommended that electric car charging points be considered to improve air quality within the town. Submissions were also received from both the NTA and TII setting out the strategic context of Athy and the need for adherence to the national guidance. These submissions have been considered as part of this ABTA.

Part 3 ABTA Process & Options Assessment

3.1 Introduction

This section of the ABTA presents the options brought forward to achieve the transportation objectives envisioned for Athy.

The baseline analysis and travel demand has been analysed in line with the relevant transport and settlement policies to create a list of holistic options across the following travel modes:

1. Public Transport (including bus and rail);
2. Walking;
3. Cycling;
4. Roads; and
5. Parking.

Future developments and growth in Athy have been accounted for in these options to ensure that the land-use strategy is in line with sustainable transport objectives.

3.1.1 Implementation Timescale

Once the options have been assessed and the preferred strategy interventions have been identified in the following sections, they will be then subject to a more detailed categorisation according to their estimated delivery timescale (Section 4.2). In this regard, the following categories will be used to define the implementation timescale for each measure:

- **Short term:** Measure intended for implementation within 1-2 years
- **Medium term:** Measure intended for implementation within 3-5 years
- **Long term:** Measure intended for implementation within 6-10 years

These timescales are indicative only and will be subject to funding and resource availability.

3.2 Public Transport Strategy

3.2.1 Public Transport Overview and Objectives

The baseline assessment of Athy highlighted some deficiencies in the current public transport offering. For example, although there are bus connections to a number of hinterlands, major towns and cities in the province (as well as Dublin Airport), these are limited in frequency, limiting their potential as viable transport modes for commuting journeys. In addition, although train services from Athy are spread relatively evenly across the day, there is no increased frequency at peak hours in the morning and evening. There are also no early morning trains towards Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford.

The key public transport objectives for Athy are to improve the existing bus and rail services to encourage a shift to sustainable transport modes. This section presents both bus and rail options designed to achieve these objectives.

3.2.2 Public Transport Options

Rail Options:

Table 16 lists the rail options brought forward as part of this ABTA. The reasoning for each option is also provided.

Table 16: Rail Options

Option	Description	Need for Option
PTR1	Support the upgrade of facilities at Athy Train Station. This would entail installing a lift for the pedestrian bridge over the railway and other improvements such as accessible toilets and leap card machines (tying in with option PTR5)	Improve accessibility of the station for all users, encouraging use of sustainable PT mode
PTR2	Support the extension of Phoenix Park Tunnel Services to Athy	Increasing the destinations of the train service from Athy will facilitate more commuting journeys
PTR3	Support the provision of an additional stop at Naas/ Sallins and Hazelhatch	Increasing the destinations of the train service from Athy will facilitate more commuting journeys
PTR4	Liaise with Irish Rail to improve the frequency of the train services stopping in Athy. In particular, early morning services should be provided towards Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford	Improving frequency at key times will improve the viability of train for commuters
PTR5	Leap card integration. At present, the Leap card is only available on rail services in the 'Short hop zone' which ends at Naas/Sallins. Lack of Leap card integration reduces the appeal of bus-rail interchange and public transport services. This option proposes that KCC should support the provision of Leap card payment facilities even if Athy is not included in the short hop zone.	Improving the integration of public transport services will increase the attractiveness of train as a viable mode of transport

Bus Options:

Table 17 lists the bus options brought forward as part of this ABTA, along with the reason for each option. Figure 41 illustrates options which require new bus stops / infrastructure on a map of Athy.

Table 17: Bus Options

Option	Description	Need for Option
PTB1	Improve bus stop environments and usability by providing bus shelters, seating and real time passenger information	Improving bus infrastructure will remove barriers to using bus services and increase mode share
PTB2	Rationalise bus stops in the town and provide pull in bays where possible. In particular, investigate the feasibility of providing new bus stops to the east of the town (in addition to option PTB4).	This will increase bus mode share by expanding the number of people who can access certain bus services. Pull in bays will improve safety
PTB3	Support the provision of increases in frequency and improvement of reliability of bus services to key destinations from Athy and origins to Athy, particularly to accommodate AM and PM peak commuter trips	To improve the viability of bus for commuting trips by improving the schedule to suit typical working hours
PTB4a **PTB4b**	To create a new bus interchange, close to the train station and extend certain bus routes to access the interchange. PTB4B would tie in with the indicative design framework for the site to the rear of Leinster Street (Figure 37). PTB4A would require the relocation of some on-street parking on Leinster Street.	To encourage interchange between bus and rail services
PTB5	Support the increased connection of bus services, particularly to local areas identified as being popular commuting destinations / origins	Improve social connectivity to hinterland areas and capture commuting mode share

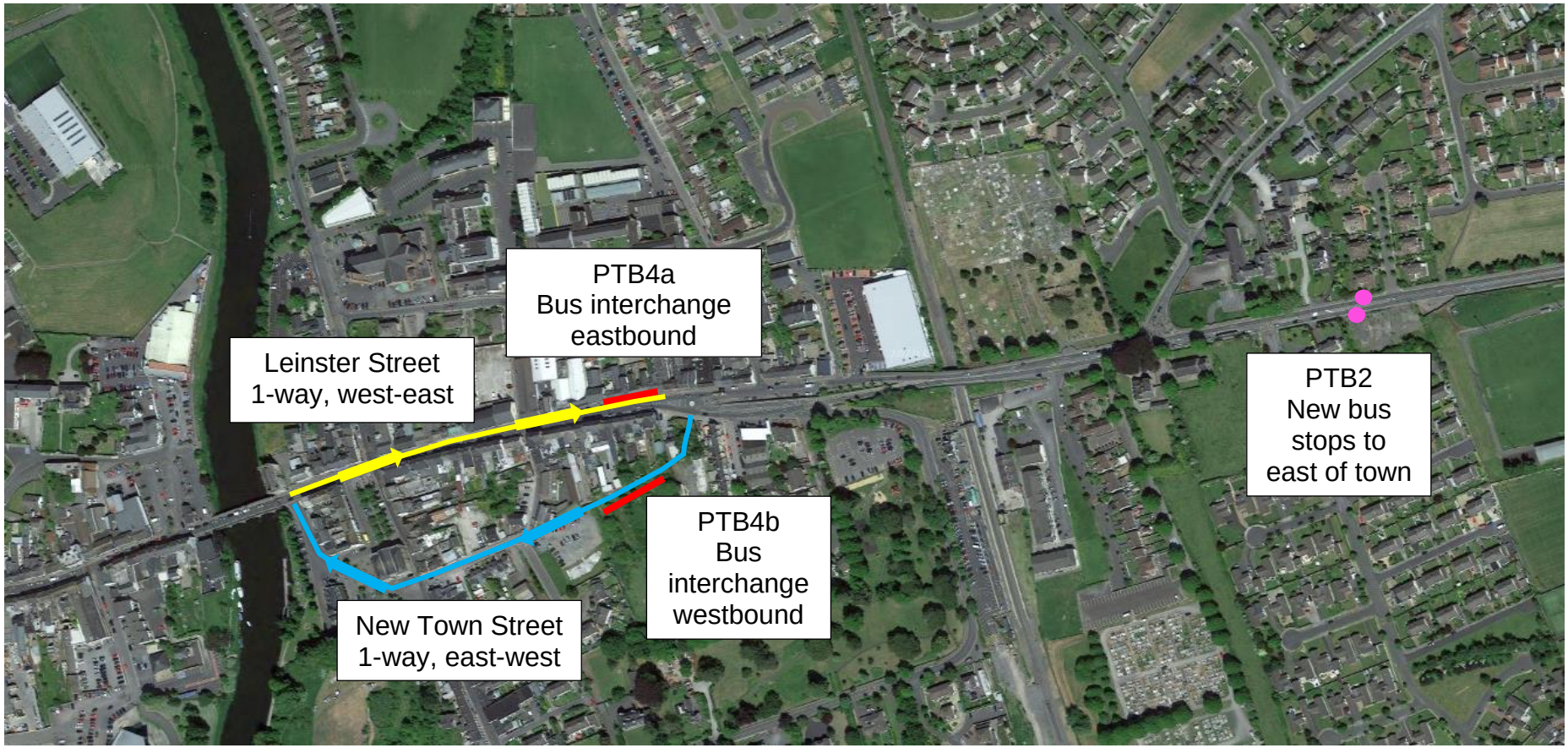

Figure 41: Map of Public Transport Options which require new infrastructure / bus stops

3.3 Walking / Connectivity Strategy

3.3.1 Walking / Connectivity Overview and Objectives

Athy is characterised by a large number of cul de sac type residential estates with poor connectivity. In addition, there are several features such as the railway line, the canal and the River Barrow which present linear barriers to connectivity in the east-west direction. Only 17% of work / school commutes were by foot in the 2016 Census within Athy electoral districts. This is despite 40% of commuting trips being internal to Athy. There are many factors inhibiting walking for these trips, for example, the peripheral location of the School Campus encourages car trips and the western residential areas of the town are at least 1km further from school as a result of the single crossing of the River Barrow.

On a positive note, Athy will soon benefit from the construction of the Athy Distributor Road. This new road will provide Athy with a high-quality east-west connectivity link for active travel modes and connects directly to the train station via a pedestrian / cyclist off-shoot from the road. There will also be a direct connection between the Barrow Way and the new Athy Distributor Road. This connects a strong north-south link through the town with the east-west link of the new road, creating two major connectivity “spines”.

Athy also benefits from walkways along the Grand Canal and the River Barrow. These should be utilised to their full benefit to maximise connectivity and walking mode share in Athy.

One of the key objectives of this ABTA is to provide an integrated walking network for Athy, with an emphasis on improving safety and increasing the walking mode share, particularly to schools. This can be achieved by improving existing walking infrastructure and by creating new connectivity links, thereby increasing the catchment areas of key trip attractors in the town.

3.3.2 Walking / Connectivity Options

Walking and connectivity options for Athy have been grouped into the following categories:

- Upgrading of existing infrastructure (Table 18)
- Construction of new infrastructure (Table 19)
- Supporting measures (Table 20)

For each group, a list of options is presented. Taken together, these options will provide an integrated walking network for Athy. These options are illustrated in Figure 42.

Table 18: Walking / Connectivity Options - Existing Infrastructure

Number on Connectivity Options Map V3	Description
WE1	Barrow Blueway The blueway is proposed to consist of the development of a multi-use shared leisure route on the existing navigation towpath, which is a National Waymarked Route. This will include tailored surface finishes, information, directional, and safety signage, and all other associated ancillary works. The blueway will cater for both pedestrians and cyclists and the section through Athy is due for completion by Q1 2022.
WE2	Improve link along the eastern side of the River Barrow from Barrow Quay to link with the Barrow Blueway at Horse Bridge. This will require upgrades to the existing bridge along this route
WE3	Improve link along western side of River Barrow, from N78, north to new pedestrian / cyclist bridge WN6
WE4	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, north to St. Dominic's Park
WE5	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, south to new pedestrian bridge (part of Barrow Blueway)
WE6	Upgrade and improve pathway between St. John's Lane and Greenhills
WE7 (Not on map)	Footpath surfacing improvements as determined by the upcoming N78 upgrade project through Athy town centre (removal of street clutter, footpath improvements, etc.) Note: Not shown on Figure 42
WE8 (Not on map)	Conduct a survey to highlight the defective footpaths and design a priority list for repair works in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders. Note: Not shown on Figure 42

Table 19: Walking / Connectivity Options – New Infrastructure

Number	Description	Type
WN1	North-western Distributor Road	New Road
WN2	North-eastern Distributor Road	New Road
WN3	Athy Distributor Road (plus associated links, including link to train station)	New Road
WN4	New Street	New Road
WN5	Bridge over the River Barrow at Athy Library	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge
WN6	Bridge over the River Barrow at Barrack Lane / Woodstock Castle to Stanhope Street / R417	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge
WN7	Boardwalk along Cromaboo Bridge It is an objective of this ABTA to carry out a feasibility study regarding the provision of a boardwalk along Cromaboo Bridge. The scope of this study must have regard to the design and impact of the proposed boardwalk, having regard to the protected structure status of the bridge; it's location within the ACA and the SAC status of the River Barrow and the associated requirements of the Habitats Directive. Currently this bridge is very narrow and heavily trafficked. During a recent walkability audit of the town centre, participants found the slope and narrowness of the footpaths very difficult to negotiate. The bridge was noted as one of the biggest limitations on the walkability of Athy.	Boardwalk
WN8	Coney Green - Glebelands	New Link
WN9	Chanterlands – New residential lands. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link
WN10	Kingsgrove – New residential lands and link to to ADR via section of Aughaboura Rd. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link

Number	Description	Type
WN11	Mansfield Grove – Athy Distributor Road footpath / cycleway	New Link
WN12	New residential lands site at Ardrew – Incl. links to ADR Fortbarrington Rd (incl. new footpath on west side of road) Adrew Meadows Corán Ard x2 – via perimeter of new pitches	New Residential Lands Link
WN13	Moneen Lane – New residential lands. Along Moneen River and via rail underpass	New Link
WN14	New residential lands - Geraldine Road. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link
WN15	New residential lands – Hollands Cl. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link
WN16	Rheban Avenue & Moneen View - Moneen River. Connects to WN15	New Link
WN17	Hollands Park - Moneen View (currently an informal path)	New Link
WN18	Moneen Lane - Stanhope Street, with offshoot into school. Links to bridge (WN6)	New Link
WN19	WN20 - Ard Bhearú and White Castle Lawn. Connectivity links within new residential area. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link
WN20	Links into Schools Campus from residential estate to the south	New Link
WN21	Tonlegee Lawns and Branswood – Athy Distributor Road / Fortbarrington Road Junction. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link
WN22	New link as part of Dominican lands indicative framework. Links new bridge WN5 – Convent Lane	New Link
WN23	Janeville to new bridge WN5	New Link

Number	Description	Type
WN24	Link in Dominican Lands from new bridge WN5 to Barrow Blueway	New Link
WN25	Link to People's Park from New Street (WN4) – As part of indicative framework for site to rear of Leinster Street	New Link
WN26	R418 Dublin Road (Texaco Station) to Clanard Court Hotel (including section along Gallow Hill Ct)	New Link
WN27	Barrow Blueway to Woodstock Industrial Estate	New Link

Table 20: Walking / Connectivity Options – Supporting Measures

Option	Description
WS1	Increase priority for pedestrians at signalised junctions in Athy. Note: Not shown on Figure 42
WS2	Provide pedestrian crossings at locations as determined by the upcoming N78 upgrade project through Athy town centre. Note: Not shown on Figure 42

Figure 42: Walking / Connectivity Options for Athy

3.3.3 Walking / Connectivity Strategy Assessment

The purpose of the connectivity links proposed for this ABTA is to provide a holistic solution to improve conditions for walking and cycling. Individually, the purpose of each link may not be immediately apparent, but in combination each link forms part of a wider walking or cycling route to a key destination (e.g. employment, education, retail) or a critical piece of transport infrastructure (e.g. bus stop, train station).

As a result, it is not appropriate to assess each connectivity option individually. Instead the benefits of the connectivity network as a whole are assessed to quantify the number of homes which will be added to the walking catchment for key destinations. This section assesses the expansion of walking distance catchments in Athy with the implementation of the new connectivity measures. To conduct this analysis, a Do-Something path network was created which contained the baseline path network with the addition of all proposed paths, roads and footbridges. Table 21 summarises the quantitative benefits of the strategy through the expansion of the number of buildings in the catchment for key destinations.

Table 21: Expansion of Walking Catchment to Key Destinations

	Existing Network		Future Network		Difference		%Increase	
Catchment	Residential Address Points	Commercial Address Points	Residential Address Points	Commercial Address Points	Residential Address Points	Commercial Address Points	Residential Address Points	Commercial Address Points
Bus Stops - 500m	1537	310	1544	310	7	0	0.5%	0.0%
Train Station - 1km	1470	294	1513	295	43	1	2.9%	0.3%
Primary Schools - 1km	1675	n/a	1809	n/a	134	n/a	8.0%	n/a
Secondary Schools - 1km	999	n/a	1750	n/a	751	n/a	75.2%	n/a
Further Education / Adult Education - 1km	1777	n/a	2091	n/a	314	n/a	17.7%	n/a
Main Street - 1km	1421	302	1458	325	37	23	2.6%	7.6%
Supermarkets - 1km	2261	316	2357	318	107	2	4.2%	0.6%
Health Facilities - 1km	1232	264	1434	276	202	12	16.4%	4.5%
Sports Amenities - 1km	1850	313	2078	316	228	3	12.3%	1.0%
Public Services - 1km	1354	307	1553	334	199	27	14.7%	8.8%

Figure 43 to Figure 52 present the results of the network analyst GIS assessment which shows the spatial expansion in catchment as a result of the strategy.

From this analysis, the following key points are noted:

1. Bus stops: Without including a new bus stop to the east of the town, there is little benefit to the residential population in terms of improved catchment. This highlights the necessity of this new bus stop;

2. Train Station: The connectivity measures increase the area of land within the 1km walking catchment and bring some future residential zoned lands into the catchment area;

3. Health Facilities: There is a large catchment increase due to the new connectivity measures, mostly due to the benefits of the new bridge to the north of the town, over the River Barrow;

4. Primary and Secondary Schools: There is an increase in the catchment area of both primary and secondary schools. In particular, the benefits to connectivity for secondary schools is very large, with the new bridge and connectivity measures to the north of the town proving to be highly effective;

5. Further Education / Adult Education: There is also benefits to access to further education / adult education facilities, with the Athy Distributor Road providing an increased catchment area; and

6. Sports Amenities: There is an improvement to access to sports amenities, particularly in the north-east of the town. This is due to the new connectivity measures in this area and also the new bridge over the River Barrow to the north.

Figure 43: Expansion of the 500m Catchment for Existing Bus Stops

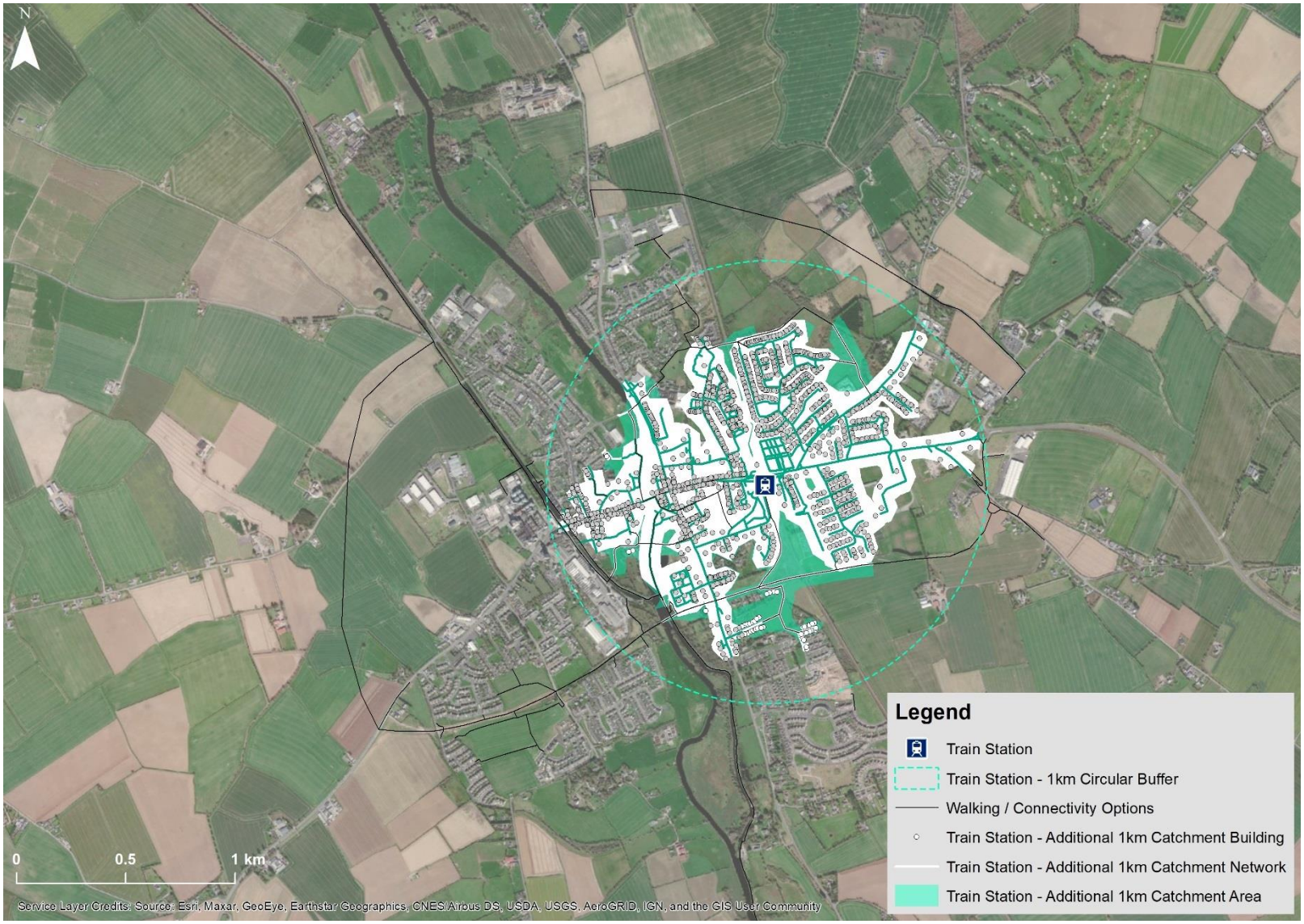

Figure 44: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for the Train Station

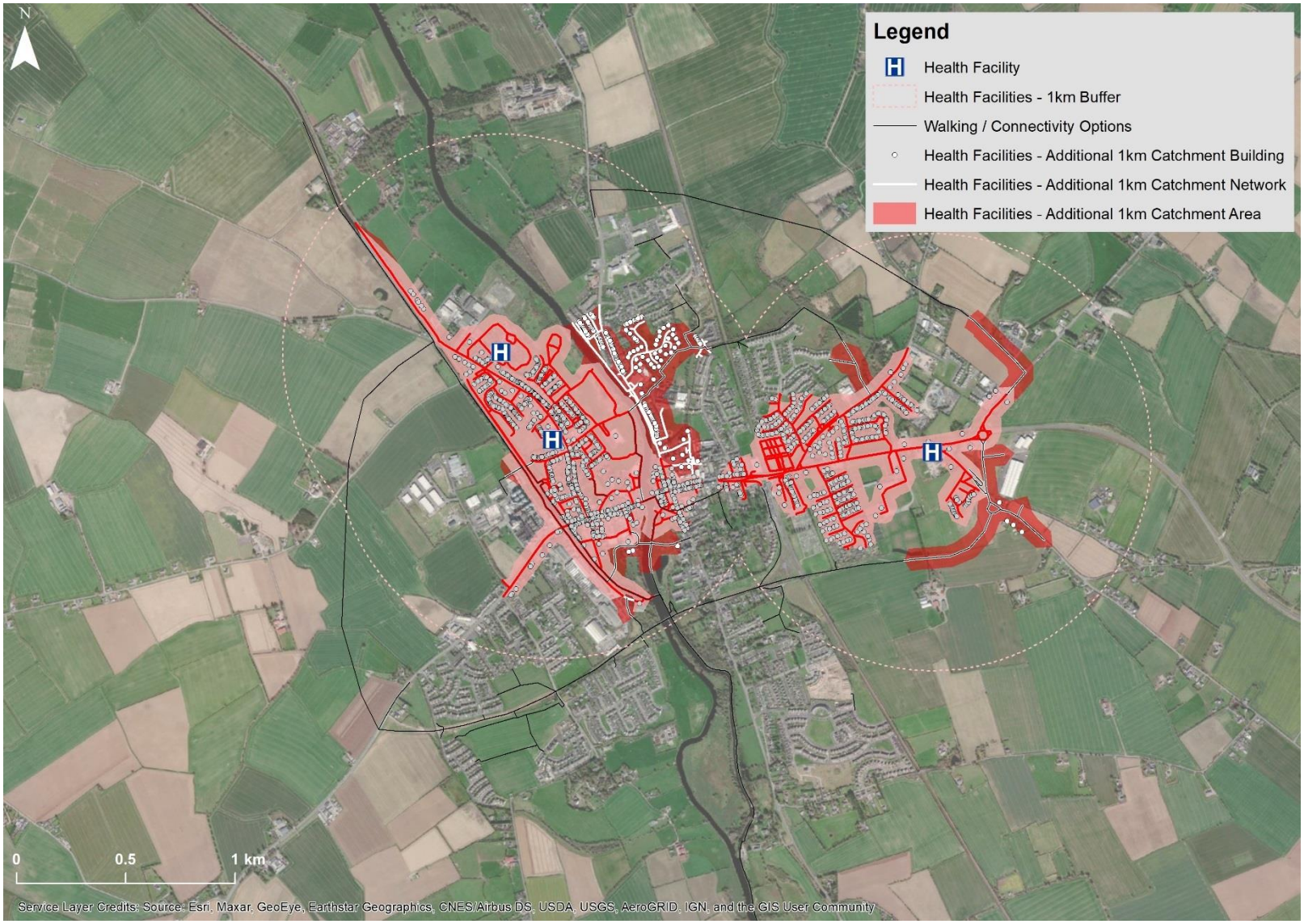

Figure 45: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Health Facilities

Figure 46: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for the Main Street

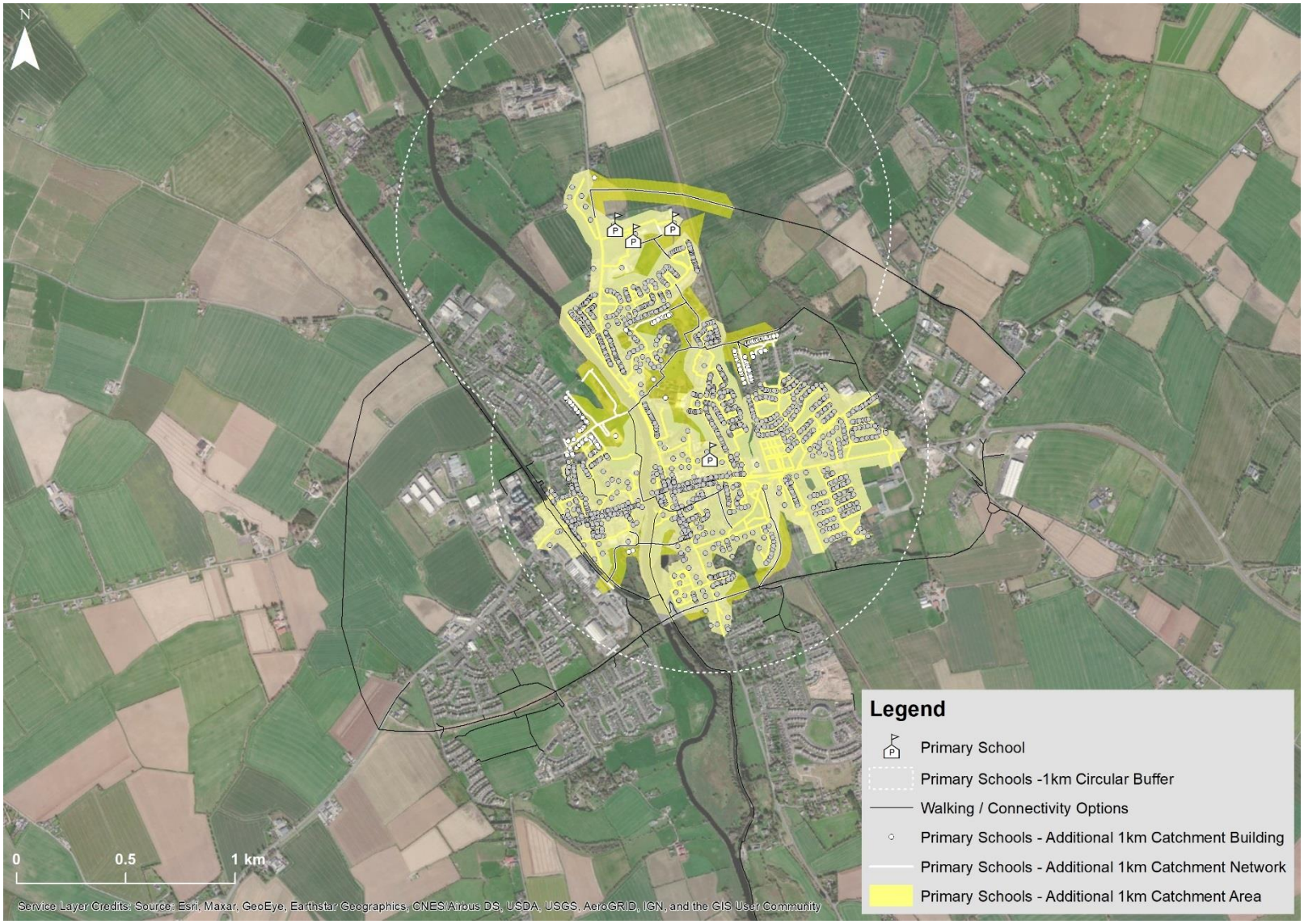

Figure 47: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Primary Schools

Figure 48: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Secondary Schools

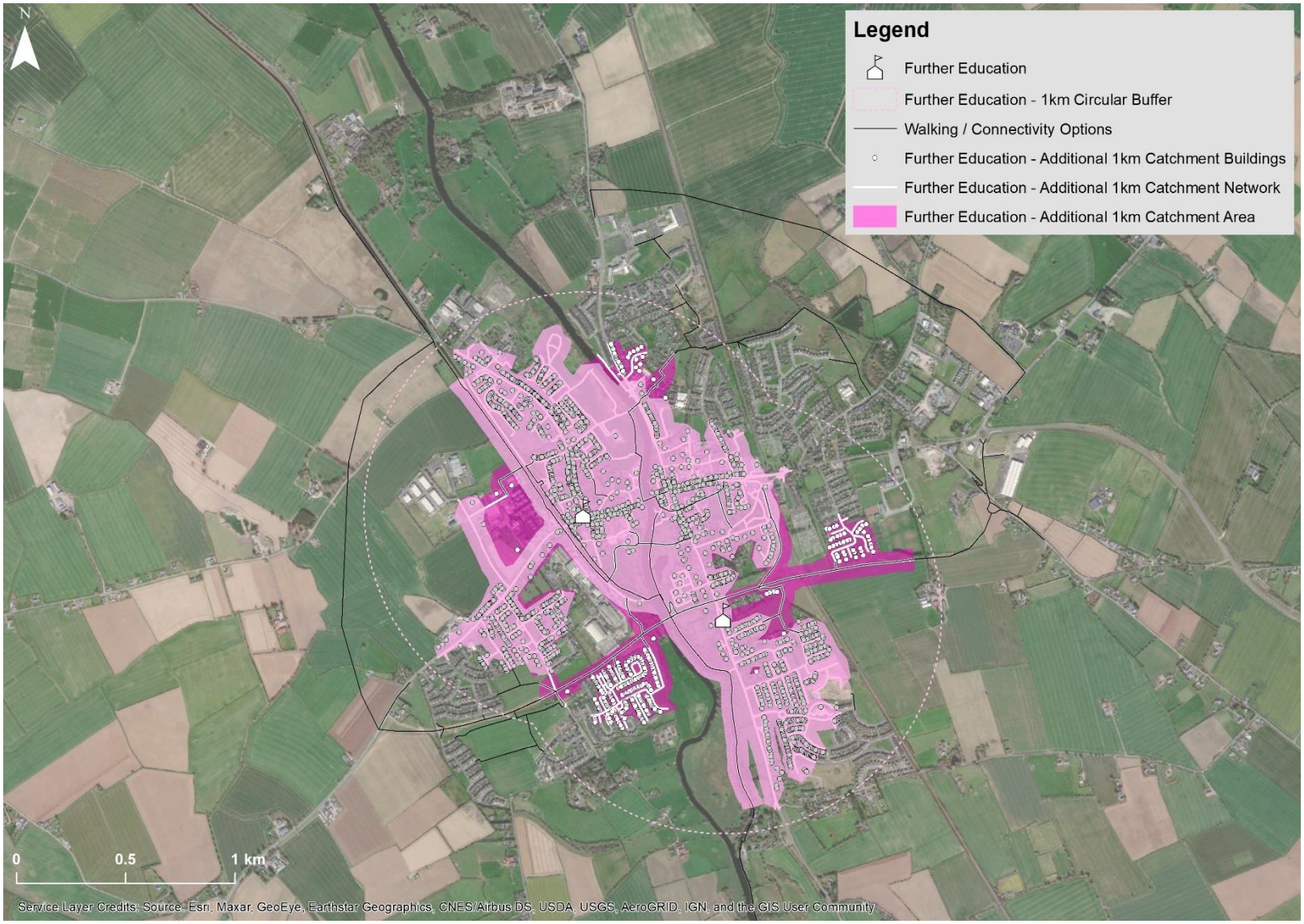

Figure 49: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Further Education Facilities

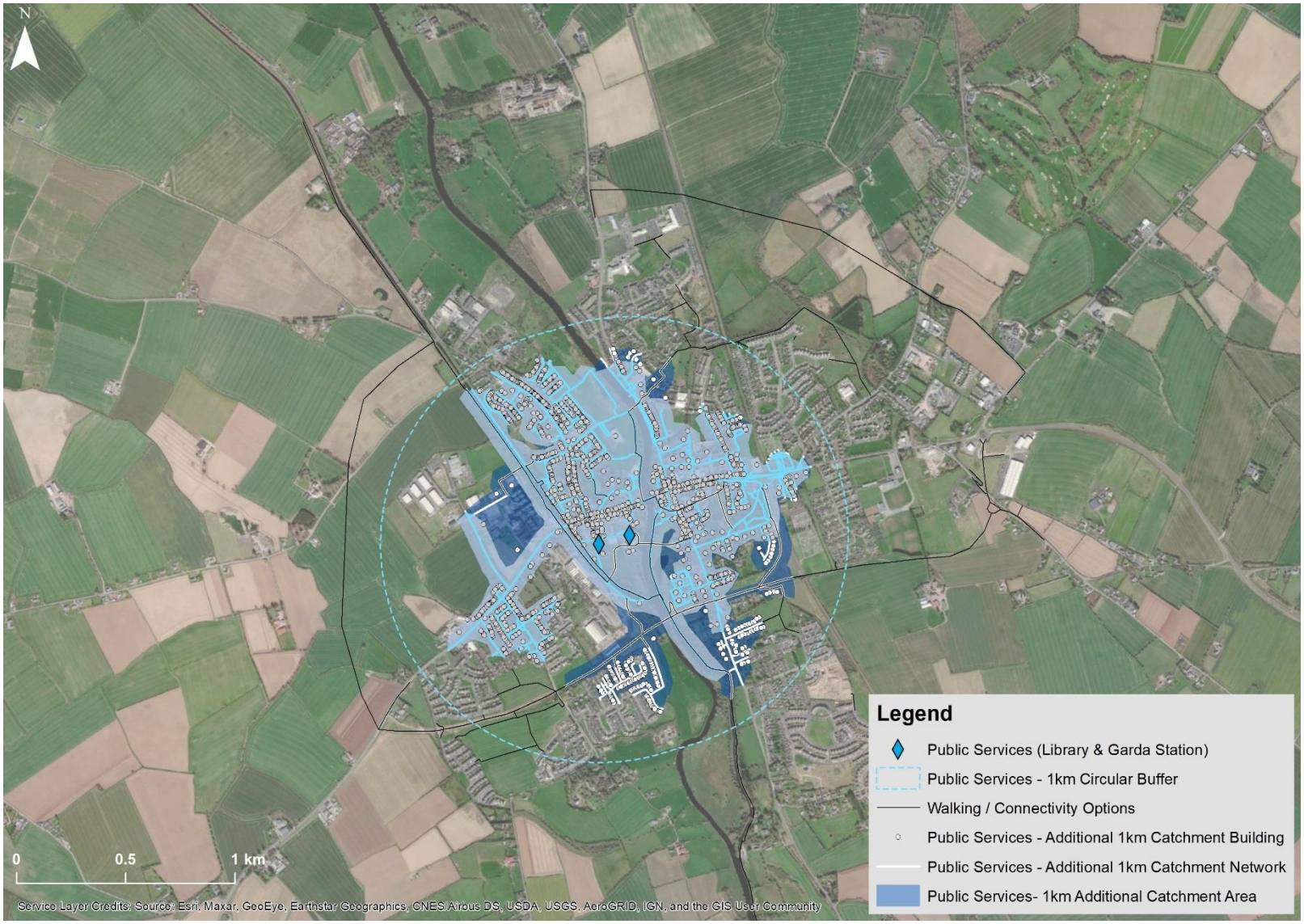

Figure 50: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Public Services

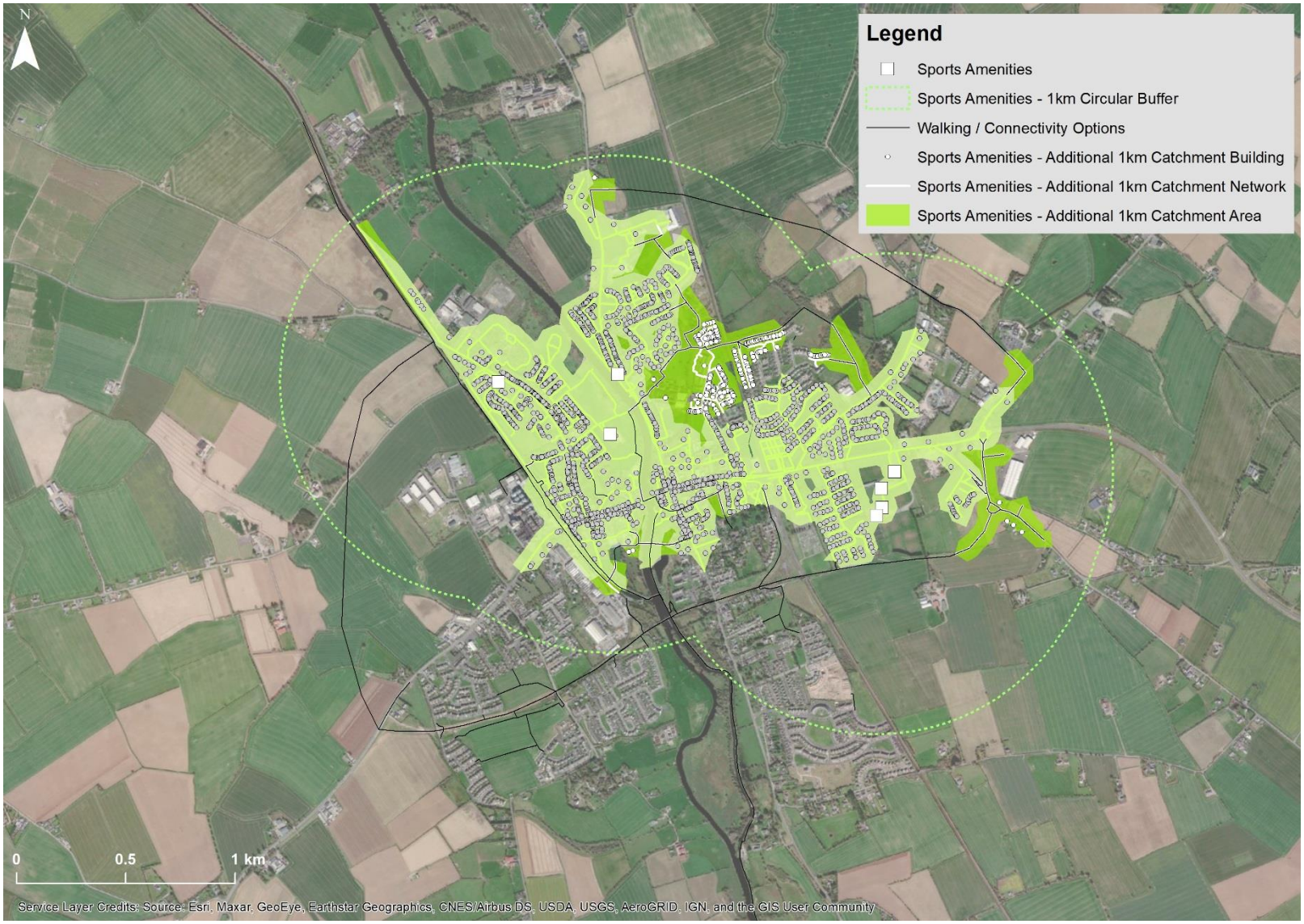

Figure 51: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Sports Amenities

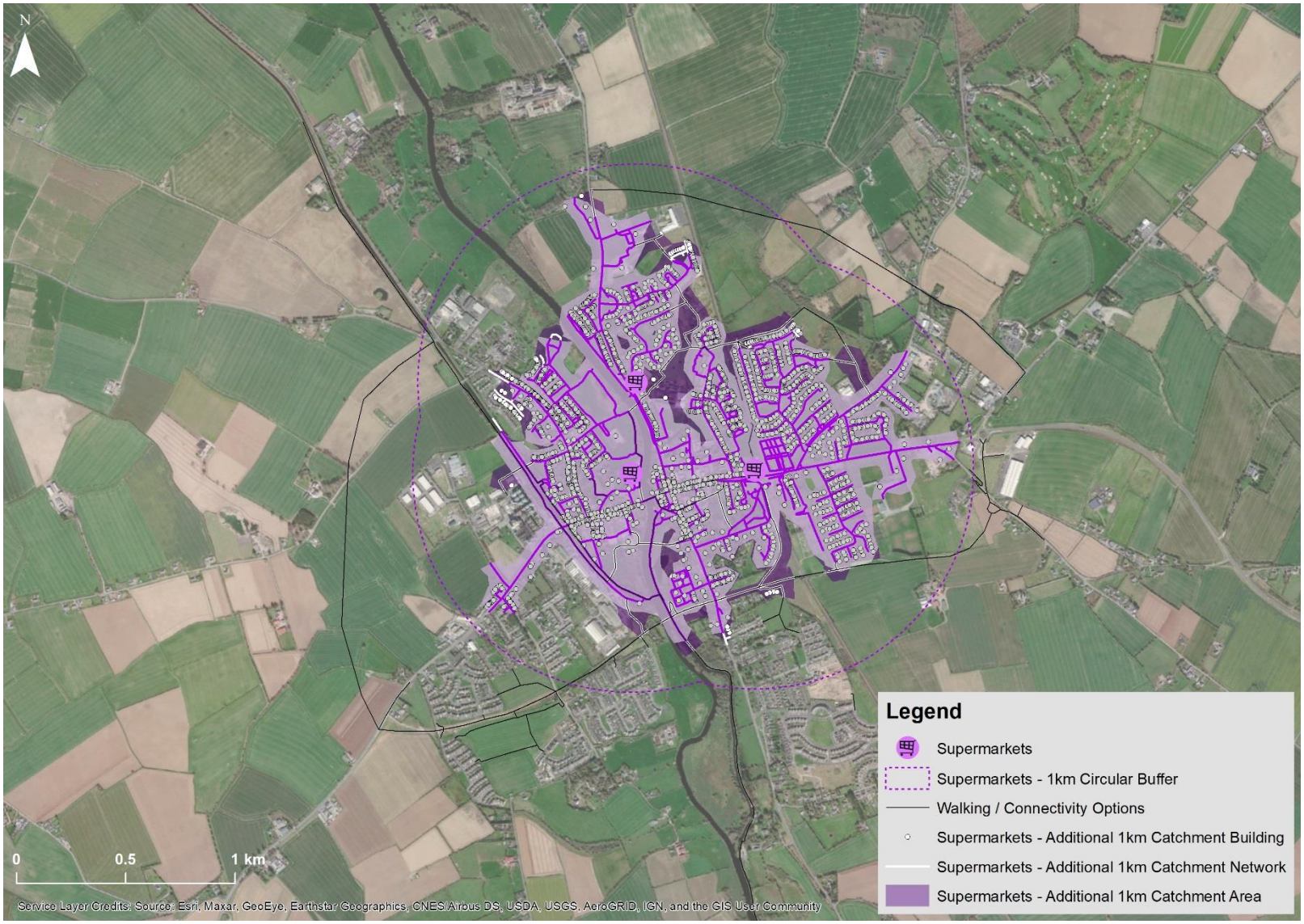

Figure 52: Expansion of the 1km Catchment for Supermarket

3.4 Cycling Strategy

3.4.1 Cycling Overview and Objectives

There are currently no dedicated cycle facilities in Athy. Cyclists can use the paths to the edge of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow (including the Barrow Blueway) to travel north-south through the town. However, these paths are unsuitable for cycling in a number of areas. Given the high number of internal commuting trips within Athy, there is an opportunity to increase cycling mode share, which is currently standing at only 1% of commuting trips.

Similar to the walking network, the Athy Distributor Road and Barrow Way will provide two major spines for the cycling network. New cycling infrastructure should link with these two spines to maximise their potential.

The objective of this ABTA is to provide an integrated cycle network for Athy and improve safety for cyclists, with a focus on improving the cycling mode share, particularly to schools.

3.4.2 Cycling Options

Cycling options are divided into infrastructure measures (Table 22) and supporting measures (Table 23). The type of cycle infrastructure to be provided (cycle track/lane, shared street, greenway, etc.) is indicated beside each option[1]. Exact details of the cycle option, for example, if it is segregated or on-road would be examined at detailed design stage. These cycle measures are illustrated in Figure 53.

Table 22: Cycling Infrastructure Measures

Option	Description	Type
CI1	North-western Distributor Road	New Road
CI2	North-eastern Distributor Road	New Road
CI3	Athy Distributor Road	New Road
CI4	New Street	New Road
CI5	Barrow Blueway	Blueway
CI6	Bridge over the River Barrow at Athy Library	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge

1 No distinction has been made between cycle lanes (marked on the main carriageway) and segregated cycle tracks at this stage, as schemes can be comprised of both types of facility and smooth transitions from cycle track to cycle lane are central to success. However, while the exact degree of segregation to be provided at different points on these links is best determined at detailed design stage, the overall objective should be to ensure that to the greatest extent possible, the degree of protection provided from vehicular traffic ensures a high level of perceived, as well as actual, safety, as this is an essential component of achieving modal shift

Option	Description	Type
CI7	Bridge over the River Barrow at Barrack Lane / Woodstock Castle to Stanhope Street / R417	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge
CI8	Improve link along the eastern side of the River Barrow from Barrow Quay to link with the Barrow Blueway at Horse Bridge. This will require upgrades to the existing bridge along this route and a suitable cycle path under or around Horse Bridge to make safe for cycling	Greenway
CI9	Improve link along western side of River Barrow, from N78, north to new pedestrian / cyclist bridge CI7	Greenway
CI10	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, north to St. Dominic's Park	Greenway
CI11	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, south to new pedestrian bridge (part of Barrow Blueway)	Greenway
CI12	Geraldine Road	Cycle track / lane
CI13	Dublin Road R418 – From N78 Roundabout to junction with Gallow Hill Ct	Cycle track / lane
CI14	N78 – From Roundabout with Dublin Road to Canal Bridge	Cycle track / lane
CI15	R417 – Junction with N78 to junction with new pedestrian bridge over River Barrow (CI7)	Cycle track / lane
CI16	R417 – From new pedestrian bridge over River Barrow (CI7) to Schools Campus	Cycle track / lane
CI17	R417 – Schools Campus to junction with new North-eastern Distributor Road	Cycle track / lane
CI18	Link between CI7 and CI10, via Barrack Lane, Green Hills, Woodstock Street and St. Dominic's Park	Cycle track / lane
CI19	Improve pathway between St. John's Lane and Greenhills	Cycle track / lane
CI20	N78 – From Canal Bridge to junction with Athy Distributor Road / North-western Distributor Road	Cycle track / lane
CI21	Fortbarrington Road – From junction with Athy Distributor Road to N78	Cycle track / lane

Option	Description	Type
CI22	R417 – From junction with Athy Distributor Road to N78	Cycle track / lane
CI23	Canal Side, Green Alley and Convent Lane and around Library to new pedestrian/cyclist bridge (C16) – As part of Dominican lands indicative framework	Cycle track / lane
CI24	New cycle link between Janeville and new pedestrian/cyclist bridge (C16)	Cycle track / lane
CI25	Link to People's Park from New Street (CI4) – As part of indicative framework for site to rear of Leinster Street	Cycle track / lane
CI26	Link between N78 and train station, via Church Road	Cycle track / lane
CI27	Upgrade link between Barrow Blueway and R417 between Oak Lawn and Kingsgrove	Cycle track / lane

Table 23: Supporting Cycling Measures

Option	Description
CS1	Provision of cycle parking at train station and bus interchange
CS2	Provision of cycle parking at schools, healthcare centres and sports facilities

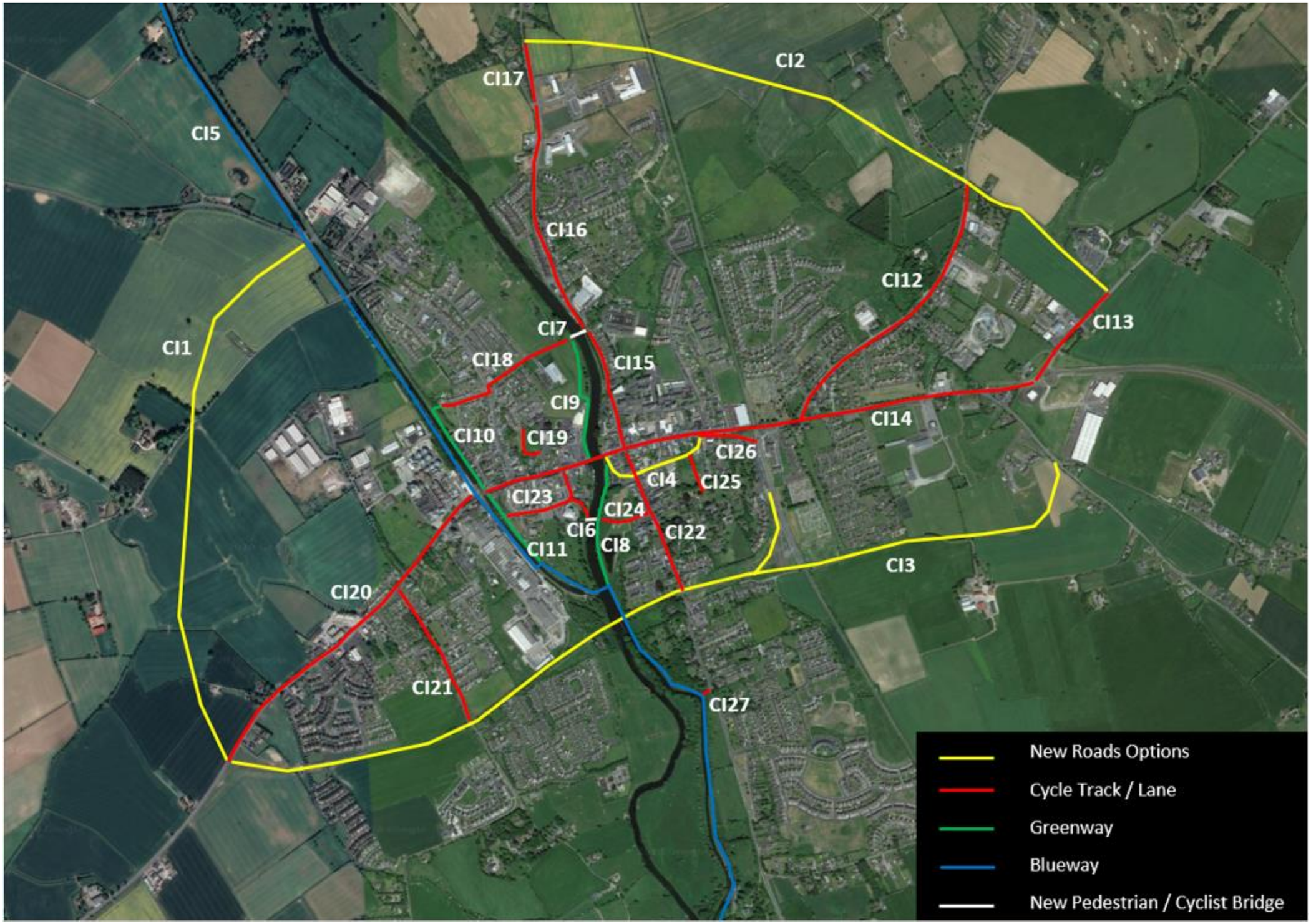

Figure 53: Cycling Options for Athy

3.5 Roads Strategy

3.5.1 Roads Overview and Objectives

The new Athy Distributor Road will begin construction shortly. This will provide a new east-west link to the south of the main street, bypassing the congested N78. The Athy Distributor Road will incorporate high quality footpaths and cycle tracks along much of the scheme. This new road will provide Athy with a high-quality east-west connectivity link for active travel modes and connects directly to the train station via a pedestrian / cyclist spur from the road.

On completion of the Distributor Road Scheme, a major opportunity will exist for the improvement of road safety as a result of the reduction in traffic levels through Athy town centre (for example there is a predicted 42% reduction in annual average daily traffic (AADT) along Leinster Street in the 2035 model as a result of the Athy Distributor Road).

It is envisioned that the reduction in traffic along the N78, resulting from the Athy Distributor Road and the potential modal shift to active travel modes from walking and cycling measures (removing some car based internal trips) will result in a significantly less congested main street (i.e. the commercial core, Leinster Street – Duke Street axis). This will result in safety improvements, particularly for vulnerable road users.

However, there are two regional roads converging on Athy from the north (R428 to Stradbally and R417 north to Monasterevin) which will not be able to bypass the town centre via the new distributor road. As such, there will still be a level of regional through traffic along the main street. Measures are proposed in this section to accommodate the remaining through traffic to further accommodate active travel modes and the public realm in Athy town centre.

This is in line with the main objective of this ABTA in terms of roads, to reduce unnecessary vehicular trips through Athy town centre and identify mitigation measures to improve road safety and minimise collision hotspots.

3.5.2 Roads Options

This section presents the roads options brought forward as part of the ABTA. Roads options are split into two groups; new infrastructure (Table 24) and supporting measures (Table 25). Figure 55 illustrates the options on a map of Athy.

Table 24: Road Options – New Infrastructure

Option	Description
RN1	North-eastern Distributor Road
RN2	North-western Distributor Road
RN3	New Street From junction of Leinster Street and St. Michael's Terrace as far as junction of Barrow Quay and N78
RN4	Athy Distributor Road

Table 25: Road Options – Supporting Measures

Option	Description
RS1	Divert HGV's from the town centre (only viable on completion of the North-East Distributor Road and North-West Distributor Road)
RS2	Make Leinster Street one way for vehicles, with traffic travelling from west to east (see Figure 55 for extents). Traffic travelling from east to west will be diverted along the New Town Centre Street. This will allow for good quality public realm and active mode infrastructure along this part of the main street
RS3	Upgrade Junctions (Note: Not shown on Figure 55): • N78 / Kirwans Lane • N78 / Church Road • N78 / Chapel Lane • N78/ Meeting Lane • N78 / St John's Lane • N78 / Green Alley • N78 / Nelson Street • Mount Hawkins / Chapel Lane • Kirwans Lane / Mount Hawkins • Woodstock Street / Barrack Lane • To improve the junctions of the R418 (Castledermot Road) with the N78 • To improve the junction of the Kildare Road with the N78, having regard to the constraints of nearby protected structures
RS4	Gateway features on the west-end of the N78 and to introduce gateway features on the eastern-end of the N78 to alert drivers that they are entering an urban area. This will include improved lighting, traffic calming measures, along with additional public realm enhancement measures
RS5	To implement traffic calming and other associated measures on the R417 and R428 (Note: Not shown on Figure 55)
RS6	To implement traffic calming measures on Stanhope Place and Mount Hawkins (Note: Not shown on Figure 55)
RS7	To implement traffic calming measures on the N78 at the GAA club (Note: Not shown on Figure 55)
RS8	Reservation to allow upgrading of the railway bridge
RS9	Changes to road network due to Emily Square Public Realm Project (Figure 54)

Discussion:

New Street:

In 1999, Shaffrey Associates prepared a report for the Planning Authority "Athy – New Street Proposals 1999." This Report contains recommendations on the development of the Athy Inner Relief Road as a New Town Centre Street within Athy.

Similar recommendations are made in the Athy Traffic Management Plan prepared in 2009 by WSP Ireland, it recognises that this link will function as a street and not as a relief road as it was originally envisaged in the 1970's. The development of Athy town centre in the intervening years between its initial proposal and today has surpassed the need for a Relief Road at this location; there is however significant benefits arising from the construction of part of the street originally envisaged.

In this ABTA, the section crossing the River Barrow and Grand Canal have been removed, in line with Variation No. 1 to the Athy Town Development Plan 2012 – 2018 which specifically removed objectives which contained vehicular crossings of the River Barrow (for environmental reasons).

New Street will contribute fundamentally to the connectivity of the town and allow for significant improvements to be made along a section of the main street, catering for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic appropriately. This will be achieved by making the section of Leinster Street parallel to New Street one-way from west to east, opening up road space for active travel modes. In turn, New Street will run one-way from east to west, allowing for appropriate pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure.

Phasing Considerations:

The proposed roads options are interdependent, and phasing needs to be carefully considered. For example, it will only be possible to divert HGV's from the town centre once both the north-east and north-west distributor roads are constructed. Eliminating HGV's and reducing through traffic will then make it possible to complete a quality urban environment free of significant congestion. The routes for the north-east and north-west distributor roads must be protected to allow them to be constructed in the long term. Phasing and interdependencies of options are discussed further in Section 4.2.

Emily Square Public Realm Project:

As part of the Emily Square Public Realm Project, the roads either side of the square will be made one-way, as shown in Figure 54. In addition, a swept analysis showed that the yellow box at the junction between Leinster Street and Barrow Quay will need to be extended to accommodate HGVs turning onto Leinster Street. These road interventions are included in roads option RS9.

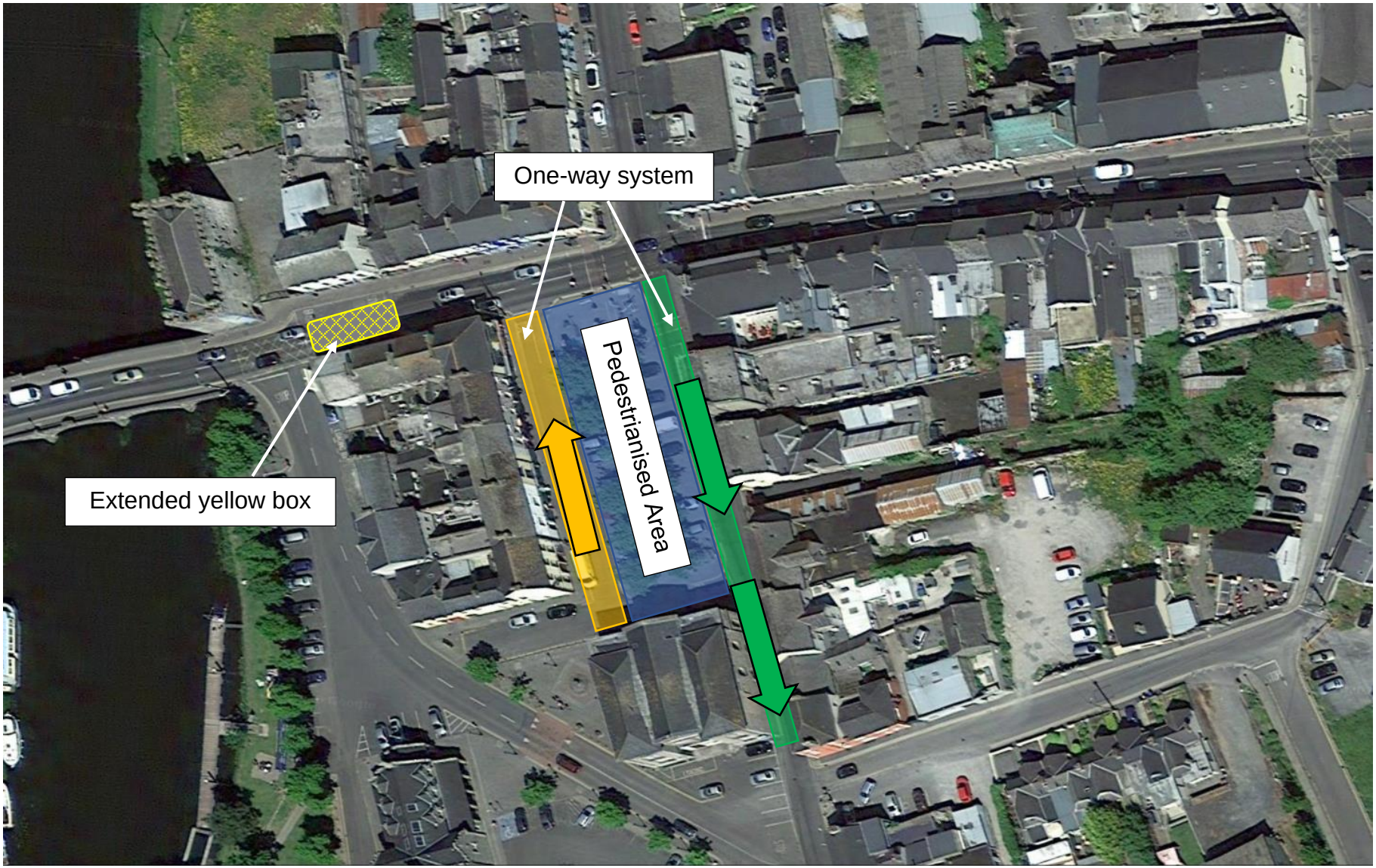

Figure 54: Changes to Road Network as a Result of Emily Square Public Realm Project

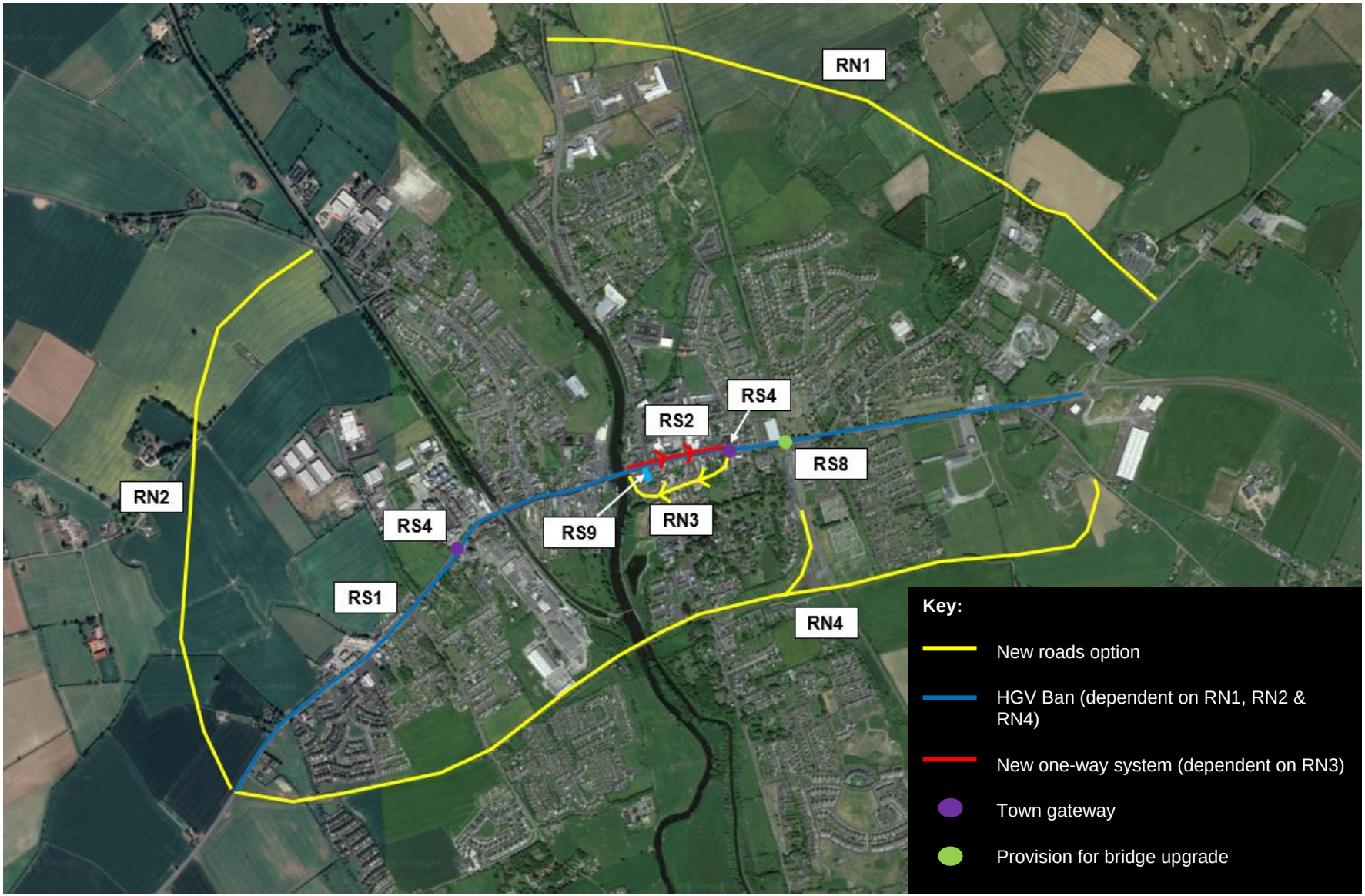

Figure 55: Roads Options for Athy

3.6 Parking Strategy

3.6.1 Parking Overview and Objectives

Athy is well served by off-street car parks which can be accessed without having to travel through the town centre yet are in easy walking distance of the main retail areas. There is no evidence of parking shortages in the town currently.

The Urban Regeneration Framework identifies that a Public Realm Strategy is required for Athy, within 12 months of the adoption of the LAP. As part of this Public Realm Strategy, a car parking analysis of the town would be undertaken, the outputs of which will comprise a comprehensive parking plan for the town centre. This will balance the needs of vehicular access to the town centre without compromising the overall quality and visitor experience of the public realm. As such, this ABTA aims to provide high-level parking objectives to guide this future parking plan.

It should be noted that current perpendicular parking at Emily Square, the south side of the Heritage Centre and the junction of Meeting Lane with the R417 will be removed as part of public realm and junction upgrade projects in the future.

3.6.2 Parking Options

Parking options brought forward as part of the ABTA are presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Parking Options

Option	Description
PK1	Improve parking signage into and around the town
PK2	Relocate some parking on Leinster Street as necessary for public transport option PTB4
PK3	Conduct a car parking analysis of the town, the outputs of which will comprise a comprehensive parking plan for the town centre. This will balance the needs of vehicular access to the town centre without compromising the overall quality and visitor experience of the public realm. Car parking surveys should be conducted once Covid-19 disturbances have ceased to inform this plan
PK4	Investigate and identify the potential location of a number of Age Friendly Parking Spaces in Athy. Potential locations are opposite AIB Bank, Post Office/ Dealz Area, Leinster Street and Library Areas
PK5	Identify car parks and other suitable locations for the provision of appropriate battery charging infrastructure for electrically powered cars/vehicles

Option	Description
PK6	New car park on site south of Leinster Street, as indicated on in framework for this site (see Figure 37)
PK7	Implement parking changes required as a result of Public Realm Projects, described in Section 2.3.3

Part 4 Implementation

4.1 Note on detailed design

This ABTA examines the transport network within Athy in order to provide supportive analysis which will assist in providing an evidence-based development of future revisions of the Athy Local Area Plan. The ABTA examines possible objectives which may be included as objectives in the Athy LAP.

The Athy LAP 2021 - 2027 will bring forward objectives which may include those identified in the Athy ABTA. However, it must be remembered that the objectives of the Athy LAP will then form the basis for individual projects. These projects will be examined on their own merits and be subject to the rigorous analysis requirements of the Public Spending Code (PSC) and the Common Appraisal Framework for Transport Projects and Programmes (CAF). The PSC and CAF require the identification and examination of various options including the following:

- Do Nothing;
- Do Minimum;
- Pedestrian;
- Cycle;
- Public Transport in various forms; and
- Road or Street improvement.

While the Athy ABTA includes some high-level discussions on some options, these would not be sufficient for the purpose of assessing an individual project developed from an objective within the Athy LAP. This ABTA does not proport to be a definitive analysis of all the options for the possible objectives, but rather a broad reckoning which indicates they are suitable for inclusion as potential transport objectives for inclusion in the upcoming statutory LAP reviews.

It should also be noted that the individual projects will be subjected to public consultation, environmental and heritage studies, relevant statutory procedures and consultation with the relevant statutory stakeholders.

4.2 Implementation of Options and Timeframes

This section sets out the potential timelines for the implementation of the preferred approach within the period of this ABTA up to 2035. Timescales are defined as follows:

- **Short term:** Measure intended for implementation within 1-2 years
- **Medium term:** Measure intended for implementation within 3-5 years
- **Long term:** Measure intended for implementation within 6-10 years

In considering the implementation of the preferred approach, it must be kept in mind that Athy is one of a number of development areas throughout Kildare which require investment in transport infrastructure and services.

Their development will also require corresponding planning and design work to be undertaken on each of the relevant transport measures. As such, these timescales are indicative only and will be subject to funding and resource availability.

4.2.1 Phasing of Public Transport Options

Table 27 and Table 28 below indicate the proposed timeframes for each of the public transport options. Many of the options are outside the direct control of Kildare County Council. In these instances, "ongoing" is used to indicate Kildare County Council's continuous commitment to supporting these measures.

Table 27: Proposed Phasing of Rail Options

Option	Description	Timeframe
PTR1	Support the upgrade of facilities at Athy Train Station. This would entail installing a lift for the pedestrian bridge over the railway and other improvements such as accessible toilets and leap card machines (tying in with option PTR5)	Ongoing
PTR2	Support the extension of Phoenix Park Tunnel Services to Athy	Ongoing
PTR3	Support the provision of an additional stop at Naas/ Sallins and Hazelhatch	Ongoing
PTR4	Liaise with Irish Rail to improve the frequency of the train services stopping in Athy. In particular, early morning services should be provided towards Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford	Ongoing
PTR5	Leap card integration. At present, the Leap card is only available on rail services in the 'Short hop zone' which ends at Naas/Sallins. Lack of Leap card integration reduces the appeal of bus-rail interchange and public transport services. This option proposes that KCC should support the provision of Leap card payment facilities even if Athy is not included in the short hop zone.	Ongoing

Table 28: Proposed Phasing of Bus Options

Option	Description	Timeframe
PTB1	Improve bus stop environments and usability by providing bus shelters, seating and real time passenger information	ST
PTB2	Rationalise bus stops in the town and provide pull in bays where possible. In particular, investigate the feasibility of providing new bus stops to the east of the town (in addition to option PTB4).	ST
PTB3	Support the provision of increases in frequency and improvement of reliability of bus services to key destinations from Athy and origins to Athy, particularly to accommodate AM and PM peak commuter trips	Ongoing
PTB4a **PTB4b**	To create a new bus interchange, close to the train station and extend certain bus routes to access the interchange. PTB4B would tie in with the indicative design framework for the site to the rear of Leinster Street (Figure 37). PTB4A would require the relocation of some on-street parking on Leinster Street.	LT and dependent on Roads Option RN3
PTB5	Support the increased connection of bus services, particularly to local areas identified as being popular commuting destinations / origins	Ongoing

4.2.2 Phasing of Connectivity Options

Table 29 to Table 31 show the proposed timelines for connectivity options. In instances where connectivity measures refer to new development lands, it is noted that the timeline is dependent on when the lands are developed.

Table 29: Walking / Connectivity Options - Existing Infrastructure

Number on Connectivity Options Map V3	Description	Timeframe
WE1	Barrow Blueway The blueway is proposed to consist of the development of a multi-use shared leisure route on the existing navigation towpath, which is a National Waymarked Route. This will include tailored surface finishes, information, directional, and safety signage, and all other associated ancillary works. The blueway will cater for both pedestrians and cyclists and the section through Athy is due for completion by Q1 2022.	ST/MT
WE2	Improve link along the eastern side of the River Barrow from Barrow Quay to link with the Barrow Blueway at Horse Bridge. This will require upgrades to the existing bridge along this route	MT/LT
WE3	Improve link along western side of River Barrow, from N78, north to new pedestrian / cyclist bridge WN6	MT
WE4	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, north to St. Dominic's Park	MT
WE5	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, south to new pedestrian bridge (part of Barrow Blueway)	MT
WE6	Upgrade and improve pathway between St. John's Lane and Greenhills	MT
WE7	Footpath surfacing improvements as determined by the upcoming N78 upgrade project through Athy town centre (removal of street clutter, footpath improvements, etc.)	ST
WE8	Conduct a survey to highlight the defective footpaths and design a priority list for repair works in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders.	ST

Table 30: Walking / Connectivity Options – New Infrastructure

Number	Description	Type	Timeframe
WN1	North-western Distributor Road	New Road	LT
WN2	North-eastern Distributor Road	New Road	LT
WN3	Athy Distributor Road (plus associated links, including link to train station)	New Road	ST
WN4	New Street	New Road	LT
WN5	Bridge over the River Barrow at Athy Library	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge	MT
WN6	Bridge over the River Barrow at Barrack Lane / Woodstock Castle to Stanhope Street / R417	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge	MT
WN7	Boardwalk along Cromaboo Bridge It is an objective of this ABTA to carry out a feasibility study regarding the provision of a boardwalk along Cromaboo Bridge. The scope of this study must have regard to the design and impact of the proposed boardwalk, having regard to the protected structure status of the bridge; it's location within the ACA and the SAC status of the River Barrow and the associated requirements of the Habitats Directive. Currently this bridge is very narrow and heavily trafficked. During a recent walkability audit of the town centre, participants found the slope and narrowness of the footpaths very difficult to negotiate. The bridge was noted as one of the biggest limitations on the walkability of Athy.	Boardwalk	LT
WN8	Coney Green - Glebelands	New Link	MT
WN9	Chanterlands – New residential lands. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed

Number	Description	Type	Timeframe
WN10	Kingsgrove – New residential lands and link to to ADR via section of Aughaboura Rd. . As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN11	Mansfield Grove – Athy Distributor Road footpath / cycleway	New Link	MT
WN12	New residential lands site at Ardrew – *incl. links to* *ADR* *Fortbarrington Rd (incl. new footpath on west side of road)* *Adrew Meadows* *Corán Ard x2 – via perimeter of new pitches*	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN13	Moneen Lane – New residential lands. Along Moneen River and via rail underpass	New Link	MT
WN14	New residential lands - Geraldine Road. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN15	New residential lands – Hollands Cl. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN16	Rheban Avenue & Moneen View - Moneen River. Connects to WN15	New Link	MT
WN17	Hollands Park - Moneen View (currently an informal path)	New Link	ST
WN18	Moneen Lane - Stanhope Street, with offshoot into school. Links to bridge (WN6)	New Link	MT
WN19	WN20 - Ard Bhearú and White Castle Lawn. Connectivity links within new residential area. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed

Number	Description	Type	Timeframe
WN20	Links into Schools Campus from residential estate to the south	New Link	MT
WN21	Tonlegee Lawns and Branswood – Athy Distributor Road / Fortbarrington Road Junction. As part of new development	New Residential Lands Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN22	New link as part of Dominican lands indicative framework. Links new bridge WN5 – Convent Lane	New Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN23	Janeville to new bridge WN5	New Link	ST
WN24	Link in Dominican Lands from new bridge WN5 to Barrow Blueway	New Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN25	Link to People's Park from New Street (WN4) – As part of indicative framework for site to rear of Leinster Street	New Link	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
WN26	R418 Dublin Road (Texaco Station) to Clanard Court Hotel (including section along Gallow Hill Ct)	New Link	ST
WN27	Barrow Blueway to Woodstock Industrial Estate	New Link	MT

Table 31: Walking / Connectivity Options – Supporting Measures

Option	Description	Timeframe
WS1	Increase priority for pedestrians at signalised junctions in Athy.	ST
WS2	Provide pedestrian crossings at locations as determined by the upcoming N78 upgrade project through Athy town centre.	ST

4.2.3 Phasing of Cycling Options

Table 32 and Table 33 show the proposed timelines for cycling options. In instances where cycling measures refer to new development lands, it is noted that the timeline is dependent on when the lands are developed.

Table 32: Cycling Infrastructure Measures

Option	Description	Type	Timeframe
CI1	North-western Distributor Road	New Road	LT
CI2	North-eastern Distributor Road	New Road	LT
CI3	Athy Distributor Road	New Road	ST
CI4	New Street	New Road	LT
CI5	Barrow Blueway	Blueway	ST/MT
CI6	Bridge over the River Barrow at Athy Library	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge	MT
CI7	Bridge over the River Barrow at Barrack Lane / Woodstock Castle to Stanhope Street / R417	Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge	MT
CI8	Improve link along the eastern side of the River Barrow from Barrow Quay to link with the Barrow Blueway at Horse Bridge. This will require upgrades to the existing bridge along this route and a suitable cycle path under or around Horse Bridge to make safe for cycling	Greenway	MT/LT
CI9	Improve link along western side of River Barrow, from N78, north to new pedestrian / cyclist bridge CI7	Greenway	MT
CI10	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, north to St. Dominic's Park	Greenway	MT
CI11	Improve link along eastern side of Grand Canal, from N78, south to new pedestrian bridge (part of Barrow Blueway)	Greenway	MT
CI12	Geraldine Road	Cycle track / lane	MT/LT

Option	Description	Type	Timeframe
CI13	Dublin Road R418 – From N78 Roundabout to junction with Gallow Hill Ct	Cycle track / lane	LT
CI14	N78 – From Roundabout with Dublin Road to Canal Bridge	Cycle track / lane	ST
CI15	R417 – Junction with N78 to junction with new pedestrian bridge over River Barrow (CI7)	Cycle track / lane	MT
CI16	R417 – From new pedestrian bridge over River Barrow (CI7) to Schools Campus	Cycle track / lane	ST
CI17	R417 – Schools Campus to junction with new North-eastern Distributor Road	Cycle track / lane	LT
CI18	Link between CI7 and CI10, via Barrack Lane, Green Hills, Woodstock Street and St. Dominic's Park	Cycle track / lane	ST
CI19	Improve pathway between St. John's Lane and Greenhills	Cycle track / lane	MT
CI20	N78 – From Canal Bridge to junction with Athy Distributor Road / North-western Distributor Road	Cycle track / lane	LT
CI21	Fortbarrington Road – From junction with Athy Distributor Road to N78	Cycle track / lane	MT
CI22	R417 – From junction with Athy Distributor Road to N78	Cycle track / lane	MT
CI23	Canal Side, Green Alley and Convent Lane and around Library to new pedestrian/cyclist bridge (C16) – As part of Dominican lands indicative framework	Cycle track / lane	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
CI24	New cycle link between Janeville and new pedestrian/cyclist bridge (C16)	Cycle track / lane	ST
CI25	Link to People's Park from New Street (CI4) – As part of indicative framework for site to rear of Leinster Street	Cycle track / lane	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed

Option	Description	Type	Timeframe
CI26	Link between N78 and train station, via Church Road	Cycle track / lane	MT
CI27	Upgrade link between Barrow Blueway and R417 between Oak Lawn and Kingsgrove	Cycle track / lane	MT

Table 33: Supporting Cycling Measures

Option	Description	Timeframe
CS1	Provision of cycle parking at train station and bus interchange	ST
CS2	Provision of cycle parking at schools, healthcare centres and sports facilities	ST

4.2.4 Phasing of Roads Options

Table 34 and Table 35 show the proposed timelines for roads options.

Table 34: Road Options – New Infrastructure

Option	Description	Timeframe
RN1	North-eastern Distributor Road	LT
RN2	North-western Distributor Road	LT
RN3	New Street From junction of Leinster Street and St. Michael's Terrace as far as junction of Barrow Quay and N78	LT
RN4	Athy Distributor Road	ST

Table 35: Road Options – Supporting Measures

Option	Description	Timeframe
RS1	Divert HGV's from the town centre	LT - Only viable on completion of the North-eastern Distributor Road and North-western Distributor Road

Option	Description	Timeframe
RS2	Make Leinster Street one way for vehicles, with traffic travelling from west to east (see Figure 55 for extents). Traffic travelling from east to west will be diverted along the New Town Centre Street. This will allow for good quality public realm and active mode infrastructure along this part of the main street	LT
RS3	Upgrade Junctions: • N78 / Kirwans Lane • N78 / Church Road • N78 / Chapel Lane • N78/ Meeting Lane • N78 / St John's Lane • N78 / Green Alley • N78 / Nelson Street • Mount Hawkins / Chapel Lane • Kirwans Lane / Mount Hawkins • Woodstock Street / Barrack Lane • To improve the junctions of the R418 (Castledermot Road) with the N78 • To improve the junction of the Kildare Road with the N78, having regard to the constraints of nearby protected structures	MT/LT
RS4	Gateway features on the west-end of the N78 and to introduce gateway features on the eastern-end of the N78 to alert drivers that they are entering an urban area. This will include improved lighting, traffic calming measures, along with additional public realm enhancement measures	MT
RS5	To implement traffic calming and other associated measures on the R417 and R428	MT
RS6	To implement traffic calming measures on Stanhope Place and Mount Hawkins	MT
RS7	To implement traffic calming measures on the N78 at the GAA club	MT
RS8	Reservation to allow upgrading of the railway bridge	LT
RS9	Changes to road network due to Emily Square Public Realm Project (Figure 54)	MT

4.2.5 Phasing of Parking Options

Table 36 shows the proposed timelines for parking options. In instances where parking measures refer to new development lands, it is noted that the timeline is dependent on when the lands are developed. Similarly, some parking measures are interlinked with public realm projects and their timeframe will coincide with the implementation of these public realm projects.

Table 36: Parking Options

Option	Description	Timeframe
PK1	Improve parking signage into and around the town	MT
PK2	Relocate some parking on Leinster Street as necessary for public transport option PTB4	LT
PK3	Conduct a car parking analysis of the town, the outputs of which will comprise a comprehensive parking plan for the town centre. This will balance the needs of vehicular access to the town centre without compromising the overall quality and visitor experience of the public realm. Car parking surveys should be conducted once Covid-19 disturbances have ceased to inform this plan	ST
PK4	Investigate and identify the potential location of a number of Age Friendly Parking Spaces in Athy. Potential locations are opposite AIB Bank, Post Office/ Dealz Area, Leinster Street and Library Areas	ST
PK5	Identify car parks and other suitable locations for the provision of appropriate battery charging infrastructure for electrically powered cars/vehicles	ST
PK6	New car park on site south of Leinster Street, as indicated on in framework for this site (see Figure 37)	Timeline dependent on when lands are developed
PK7	Implement parking changes required as a result of Public Realm Projects, described in Section 2.3.3	As per timeline of Public Realm Projects

Part 5 ABTA Finalisation & Conclusions

5.1 Consultation

Once consultation for the Athy LAP 2021 – 2027 has been completed, any submissions relating to transport and movement will be considered and incorporated into this ABTA where necessary.

5.2 Finalisation of ABTA and Conclusions

Following consultations as per Section 5.1, any changes to the proposals contained within the ABTA will be listed. In addition, this section will provide high level conclusions from the ABTA process.

Part 6 Monitoring & Review

6.1 ABTA Assumptions

This ABTA has been developed on the basis of a number of assumptions. The main assumptions are:

1. The Athy Distributor Road will be constructed;
2. New development within the town will occur in locations as shown in the preliminary draft land-use zoning map;
3. Travel demand and commuting patterns are as per the Census 2016 data; and
4. Traffic levels in the town are as per the traffic surveys conducted for the Athy Strategic Transport Model in 2015.

Given that the conclusions of this ABTA rest on these assumptions, it is prudent that a monitoring and review strategy is developed so that if changes occur, the ABTA can be adapted to suit actual development / traffic conditions.

6.2 Monitoring Strategy and ABTA Review

At the end of each timeframe – short term (1-2 years), medium term (2-5 years) and long term (5-10 years), monitoring should be conducted which establishes the following:

- Progress on implementation of options for each transport mode
- Cross-check of assumptions in the ABTA against current conditions (this may need traffic surveys to establish travel patterns as required and an updated analysis of Census commuting data when available)
- Development in the town since the completion of the ABTA and if it has occurred as originally assumed

The outcomes of the monitoring strategy should feed into a review of the ABTA at 2 years (2022), 5 years (2025) and 10 years (2030) from publication.

The ABTA reviews should adapt the ABTA to the actual conditions and amend the transport options as necessary. Any changes to the ABTA will need to feed into the Athy LAP and any reviews of same.

Given the uncertainty surrounding current Covid-19 travel patterns and how travel patterns will change in the future, the 2-year ABTA review will identify any changes to previous normal travel patterns and the ABTA should be updated taking this into consideration.

6.3 Future Developments / Roads Interventions

Major developments in the town, including large residential developments and new roads interventions, may be required to submit traffic modelling results (using the Athy Strategic Transport Model as a base), in order to show that the development is sustainable within the transport network of Athy.

Any proposed future growth in the town should be assessed having regard to:

1. Specific land use proposals and associated trip generation;
2. Improvements and/or proposals to the road network and/or junction capacity;
3. Detailed Traffic Management Plans;
4. Impact on the national road infrastructure, having regard to the Department's National Planning Policy Guidelines, No. 21 Spatial Planning and National Roads; and
5. Consistency with the objectives and measures within this ABTA.