

## 4. Homes and Communities

### Aims:

- *To support and facilitate the development of integrated sustainable neighbourhoods that respond to the needs of changing demographics and provide community, recreational and amenity facilities in tandem with housing delivery;*
- *To require residential developments be built at sustainable densities in appropriate locations, incorporating a mix of tenures and integrating the principles of healthy and age friendly placemaking to ensure that Athy enhances its attractiveness as a place to live and work;*
- *To promote and support innovative housing models including live-work units and specific needs housing.*

### 4.1 Overview

The development of integrated sustainable communities is one of the key principles underpinning the Local Area Plan for Athy. In achieving such an aim, the town faces many challenges; its urban form is sprawling and low density in nature, and its residential estates are self-contained and car-dependent in design. Furthermore, while the town's social infrastructure was found to be good in some respects, for example with regards to further education and training facilities, other more basic amenities, such as the provision of playing pitches and playgrounds are noted to be deficient for the size of the population currently being served. Accordingly, the realisation of healthy placemaking in the town will require sustained measures and targeted investment over the long term. In this regard, the Plan highlights the key obstacles and the specific deficiencies in social infrastructure which hamper the development of sustainable communities and outlines a range of policies, objectives and actions to address these issues over the life time of the Plan and beyond.

### 4.2 Socio-Economic Profile

#### 4.2.1 Population Change

Census 2016 recorded a population of 9,847 persons in Athy (within the Legal Town boundary) which represents a small increase of 2.7% (260 persons) in population from 2011 (9,587 persons)<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 4.1:** Population Change in Athy 1986 to 2016

Census Year	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016
Population	5,449	5,204	5,306	6,058	7,943	9,587	9,847

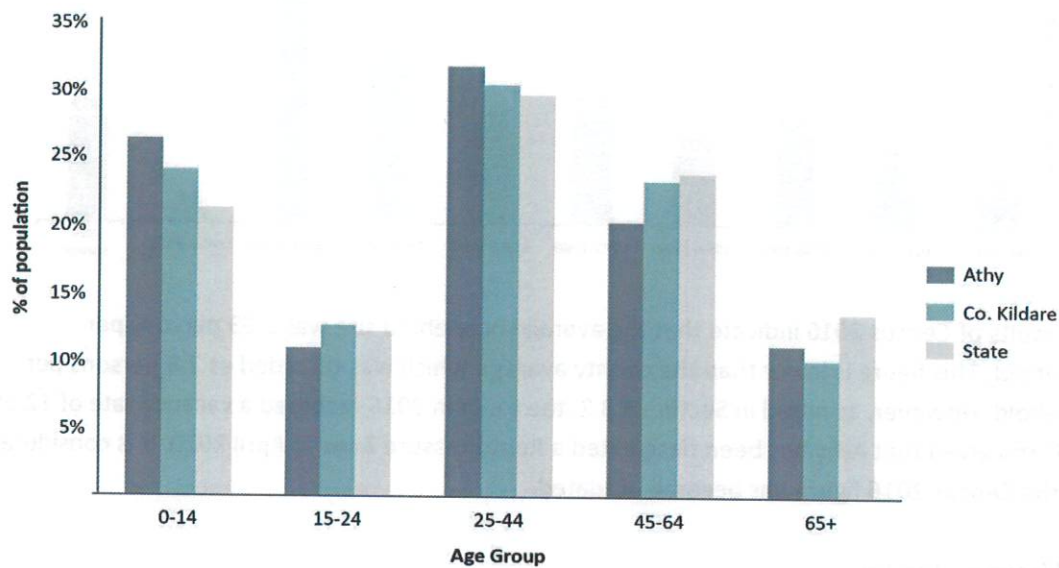
The low rate in population growth over the intercensal period between 2011 and 2016 followed a sustained period in which the town experienced rapid growth. For example, the population of Athy increased by 81% between 1996 and 2011. In comparison the population of County Kildare increased from 134,992 in 1996 to 210,312 in 2011, representing a growth of 57%. The population growth in Athy equated to three times the national population increase of 27% between 1996 and 2011.

<sup>7</sup> The population figures referenced here and in Table 4.1 are based on the area comprising *Athy Legal Town* and were used in this instance to provide a like-for-like comparison over three decades. It is noted that settlement boundaries were only introduced by the CSO in Census 2016. In this regard the 2016 population of 9,677 is based on the 2016 settlement boundary of the town and is used in this Plan as the baseline figure for population projections to 2027 (see Table 3.1).

### 4.2.2 Age Profile

According to Census 2016, Athy has a noticeably higher proportion of its population within the 0-14 age group (26.2%) than either the county as a whole (24%) or the State (21.1%) (see Figure 4.1). Indeed, it is noted that the age profile of Athy includes a high percentage of children, young people and those at work. The 0-24 age group comprises 37.1% of the population which is noticeably higher than the national average of 33.2%. Athy also has a higher percentage of population aged 65+ (11.1%) when compared to the county average of 9.9%. However, it is below the national average of 13.4%.

**Figure 4.1:** Population Profile by Age



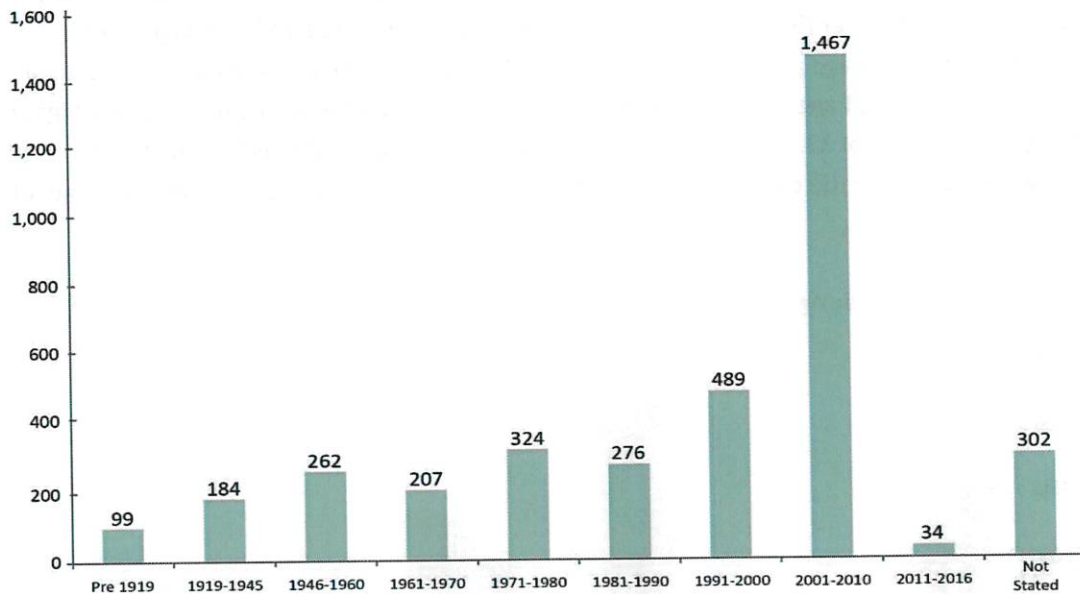
Echoing national trends, the population of Athy is ageing with Census 2016 recording an increase in the average age of persons in the town, rising from an average age 33.8 years in 2011 to 34.6 years in 2016. The population of Athy is however, younger than the 2016 national average of 37.4 years.

### 4.2.3 Housing Stock and Household Size

Census 2016 recorded a total of 3,650 households within the settlement of Athy. In the decade from 2001 to 2010 an additional 1,467 residential units were constructed in the town (see Figure 4.2). This equates to 40.3% of all housing stock in the town and coincided with a period of rapid population growth (as discussed in Section 4.2.1). By contrast only 34 residential units were constructed between 2011 and 2016.

Census 2016 also recorded that that vast majority of the population of Athy (86.4%) live in conventional housing (i.e. bungalow/house) while another 11.7% live in apartments. By contrast the figures for the county note that 89.2% live in conventional houses, while the corresponding figure for apartments is 9.5%<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Source: CSO and the All Ireland Research Observatory.

**Figure 4.2:** Private Households Built by Year

The results of Census 2016 indicate that the average household size was 2.63 persons per household. This figure is lower than the county average which was recorded as 2.8 persons per household. However, as noted in Section 3.3.2, the town in 2016 recorded a vacancy rate of 12.5% in 2016<sup>9</sup> and given that Athy has been designated a Rent Pressure Zone in April 2020, it is considered that the Census 2016 figure has become outdated.

#### 4.2.4 Housing Tenure

Census 2016 records that 57.9% of all homes in Athy as being owner occupied whilst 21.7% of the housing stock is privately rented with 15.6% being socially rented. Athy has a higher proportion of both social and privately rented housing than the county and national recorded average in 2016 (see Table 4.2 below).

**Table 4.2:** Housing Tenure Breakdown 2016

	Athy	Co. Kildare	National Average
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	57.9%	72%	67.6%
<b>Privately Rented</b>	21.7%	17.2%	18.2%
<b>Socially Rented</b>	15.6%	7.1%	9.4%

Source: Census 2016 and AIRO

#### 4.2.5 Educational Attainment

The results of Census 2016 show that a high proportion of the population of Athy received either no formal education or primary education than the population of the county or state. This pattern is mirrored at second level. However, Census 2016 does indicate that a higher proportion of the population of the town has a Technical/Apprentice qualification than the national average or county average.

<sup>9</sup> Note: This figure excludes holiday homes.

**Table 4.3:** Percentage Breakdown of Educational Attainment in 2016

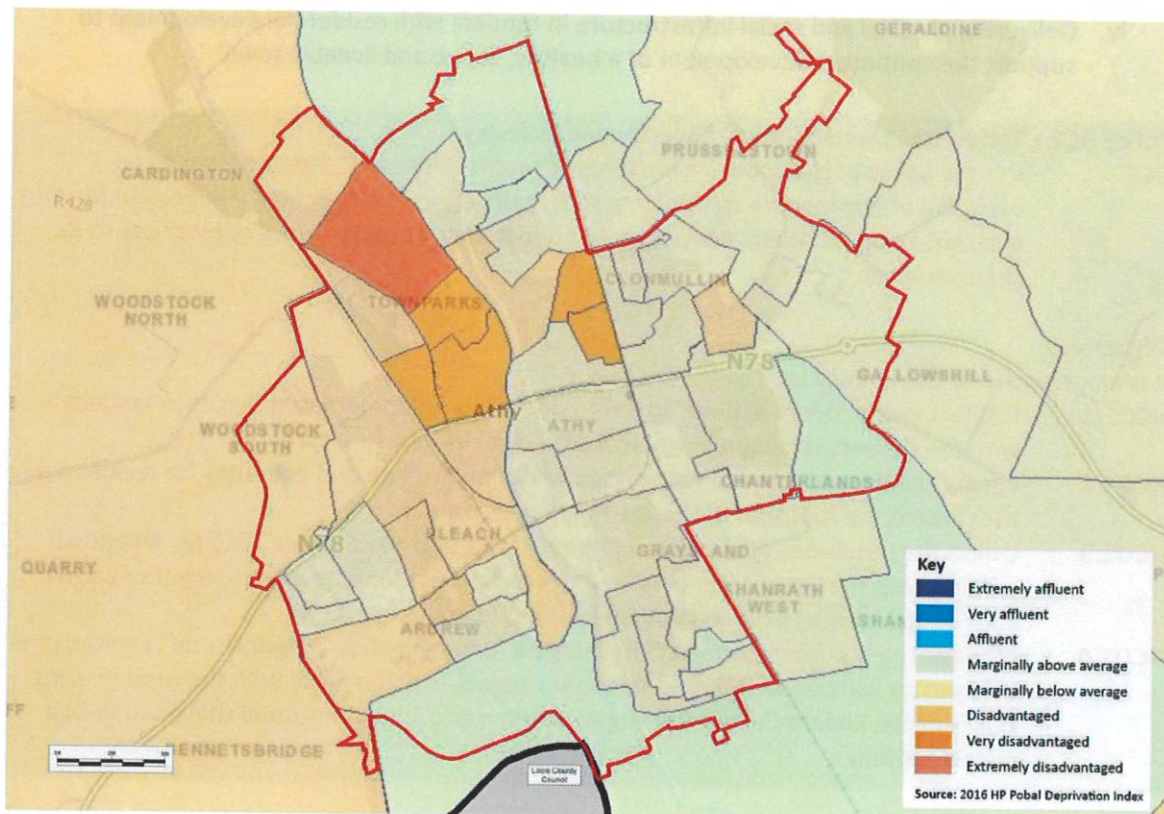
	No formal Education / Primary	Higher Secondary	Technical / Apprentice / Certificate	All Third Level
<b>Athy</b>	14.2%	20.7%	16.6%	22.2%
<b>Kildare</b>	10%	19.5%	15.6%	36.3%
<b>State</b>	12.5%	18.5%	14.7%	33.4%

Source: Census 2016 and AIRO

#### 4.2.6 Social Deprivation

The Pobal Trutz Haase and Jonathan Pratschke (HP) Deprivation Index for 2016 recorded that Kildare as a whole is the 5<sup>th</sup> most affluent local authority in the country (out of 34 local authorities). However, there are variations in areas of affluence or disadvantage across the county. For example, the most disadvantaged parts of the county are in the west and south with one Small Area (Athy West Urban) being the most disadvantaged Small Area in Kildare.

**Figure 4.3:** 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Map for Athy<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> The Plan area is outlined in red.

### 4.3 Residential Development: Capacity and Delivery

This Local Area Plan seeks to develop Athy in a manner that is consistent with its status as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the settlement hierarchy outlined in the Kildare County Development Plan (CDP). Key to achieving this is ensuring the delivery of the residential units allocated to Athy under the Core Strategy of the CDP. The Sustainable Planning and Infrastructural Assessment (SPIA) which accompanies this Plan, notes that the lands identified for new residential uses have the ability to accommodate such development subject to the delivery of specified servicing infrastructure (see **Section 11.3 Phasing and Infrastructure Delivery Schedule**).

Residential delivery will be achieved through a combination of the following measures:

- i. Supporting intensification and consolidation within the existing residential and built-up area including redevelopment and infill opportunities, where appropriate.
- ii. Implementing the active land management measures set out in Section 3.3.2 having specific regard to prioritising residential development within the town centre as well as reducing elevated levels of residential vacancy in this area.
- iii. Developing new residential lands at sustainable densities in appropriate locations.
- iv. Delivering physical and social infrastructure in tandem with residential development to support the continued development of a healthy, active and liveable town.

#### Policy HC1 - Residential Development: Capacity and Delivery

**HC1** *It is the policy of the Council to ensure that sufficient zoned land continues to be available at appropriate locations to satisfy the Core Strategy growth allocation for Athy and that each household has access to good quality housing that is appropriate to its circumstances.*

#### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- HCO1.1** Support new residential development and infill development that occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure.
- HCO1.2** Encourage the appropriate redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites for residential uses within the footprint of the existing built-up area.
- HCO1.3** Utilise the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) with regards the Vacant Site Levy to facilitate the appropriate development of vacant sites on Residential land and Regeneration (Town Centre) land<sup>11</sup>.
- HCO1.4** Manage the provision of one-off housing on lands zoned as '1: Agricultural'. Limited one-off housing will be permitted in this zone subject to compliance with the rural housing policy of the Kildare County Development Plan and all other normal siting and design considerations.

### 4.4 Residential Density, Mix and Design

The housing allocation for Athy on New Residential zoned lands is based on an average density of 35 units per hectare (uph) which is considered appropriate given the role and character of Athy as a *Self-Sustaining Growth Town* located within the Hinterland Areas, surrounding the Dublin Metropolitan Area. It should be noted however, that the average density with respect to the

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Part 2 of Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) for definition.

provision of group/special needs housing (see Section 4.4.1.) may be less than the envisaged average of 35 uph for new residential development within the town.

Government policy outlined in *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DECHG, 2009) and *Urban Development and Building Heights: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DHP&LG, 2018) state that land is a scarce resource and should be managed efficiently. The guidelines provide, inter alia, indicative appropriate residential density standards to apply to settlements depending on population size. For towns in excess of 5,000 persons, i.e. Athy, no upper limit should, in principle, apply to town centres subject to specified requirements. Similarly, on brownfield sites higher densities would also apply. On public transport corridors in proximity to bus stops or rail stations minimum net densities of 50uph are advised while on outer suburban/greenfield sites net densities of 35-50uph would be encouraged while discouraging densities below 30uph.

There is a high proportion of 3-bed semi-detached type dwellings within Athy. The Plan seeks to address this monotype housing pattern in the town and will seek to ensure a greater mix and variety of housing within individual sites. Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 4 of the Guidelines on Building Heights (2018) states that in planning for the future development of greenfield or edge of city/town locations for housing purposes, planning authorities must:

1. Ensure the minimum densities for such locations set out in the Guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007) or any amending or replacement Guidelines;
2. Ensure a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations; and
3. Avoid mono-type building typologies (e.g. two storey or own-door houses only), particularly, but not exclusively so in any one development of 100 units or more.

Accordingly, residential schemes in Athy should therefore provide for both a mix of dwelling size and dwelling type to cater for a diverse range of housing needs. The overall design and layout of residential development should be of high-quality and comply with the urban design principles contained in the Kildare County Development Plan along with the provisions of the relevant Section 28 Ministerial guidelines.

#### **4.4.1 Group/Special Needs Housing**

There are a number of groups with specific design and planning needs including older people, people with disabilities and members of the travelling community. This Plan places emphasis on universal design in order to provide for those with specific housing needs. The mix and design of new housing for group/special needs housing in Athy will be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Consideration of the nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;
- Desirability of providing for mixed communities;
- Provision of a range of new housing types and tenures;
- The need to provide a choice of new housing types, suitable and adaptable for all age groups; abilities; and
- The need to cater for groups with specific needs.

#### 4.4.2 Housing for Older People

Supported housing and longer-term residential care facilities for older people should be fully integrated into the local community. Such facilities should be within walking distance of the town centre, key services and public transportation, car parking and public spaces while integrated into a universally accessible and age friendly public realm.

#### 4.5 Becoming an Age Friendly Town

As outlined in Section 2.3.1 one of the cross-cutting strategic development principles of this Plan is to put in place supporting measures to cater for the ageing population. In future proofing Athy to cater for an increased older population we can help make it a town that allows people to age in their community whilst also creating stronger more sustainable settlements.

Such an aspiration requires an integrated approach and targeted investment at many levels from social infrastructure, to mobility and housing. In this regard, Kildare County Council is leading the way and there are many examples where measures are actively being implemented to make Athy an age friendly town. For example, the Kildare Age Friendly Programme Manager has worked with various stakeholders to identify how new and existing infrastructure/buildings can be made age friendly by implementing the new policies and guiding documents from *Age Friendly Ireland*. This has resulted in cooperation between the Council, the HSE and the developer to make the Athy Primary Care Centre the first Age Friendly Primary Care Centre (PCC) in the country. This work will feed into guidelines being prepared to inform all other future PCCs nationally.

Another example of an age friendly public building is the new Athy Library (the former Dominican Church) which was the first in the country to receive age friendly status from Age Friendly Ireland. Since its opening in 2018 the library has become a key piece of social infrastructure and the hub of the local community, receiving over 100,000 visitors in its first year of operation.

The creation of an age friendly town also means that key destinations within the town should all be easily accessible by foot, particularly within the commercial core. The Athy Walkability Audit (April 2020) conducted an in-depth survey of the town centre and recommended a number of actions be taken in order to provide a more age friendly pedestrian experience in the town.

Furthermore, in the provision of housing, Kildare County Council has appointed an age friendly housing specialist who will be involved in developing a programme to implement the age friendly housing policy at local level ("*housing options for the ageing population*"). In relation to housing provision in Athy there are plans afoot to develop independent living units for people aged 55+ on the Dominican lands in the centre of the town.

**Policy HC2 - Residential Density, Mix and Design**

**HC2** *It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all new residential development provides for a sustainable mix of housing types, sizes and tenures and that new development complements the existing residential mix.*

**Objectives**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- HCO2.1** Ensure that a good mix of housing types and sizes is provided in all new residential areas including the Ardrew Key Development Area (KDA) and appropriate infill/brownfield locations to meet the needs of the population of Athy, including housing designed for older people and people with disabilities.
- HCO2.2** Support the actions set out in Kildare Age Friendly County Strategy 2019 – 2021 and any subsequent strategy, regarding the implementation of Age Friendly principles in the planning, design and delivery of physical infrastructure, public realm works, business and commercial premises.
- HCO2.3** Require that residential schemes in close proximity to heavily trafficked roads within the Plan area are designed and constructed to minimise noise disturbance, follow a good acoustic design process and clearly demonstrate that significant adverse noise impacts will be avoided.
- HCO2.4** Seek to provide Traveller Specific Accommodation at appropriate locations close to key services and public transport facilities in accordance with Kildare County Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 and any subsequent traveller accommodation programme.
- HCO2.5** Comply with the Special Policy Planning Requirements (SPPRs) for apartment standards and building heights issued under Section 28(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- HCO2.6** Apply a 10% social housing requirement, pursuant to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to all sites that are zoned solely for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses (save where the development is exempt from the provisions of Part V).

**4.6 Social Infrastructure**

As part of the plan-making process a Social Infrastructure Audit (published alongside this plan) was carried out to examine the availability and capacity of existing social infrastructure facilities in Athy, to determine future requirements and make recommendations based on anticipated settlement growth.

In addition to the actual activity and function, 'social infrastructure' facilities can provide an invisible platform of community and social interaction which many residents may rely upon for personal well-being. The provision of the requisite levels of social infrastructure within Athy is therefore important and vital to support the needs and quality-of-life of the existing and planned residential base as well as the local catchment area.

**What is social infrastructure?**

'Social Infrastructure' relates to the provision of services and facilities which are essential for health, wellbeing and the social development of a town. Social infrastructure facilities include but are not limited to schools, health services, community facilities, sports and recreational activities.

**4.6.1 Assessment of the Existing Situation and Future Demand**

Assessing the existing situation included:



- Establishing a social and demographic profile of the community who live in Athy.
- Identifying existing community infrastructure features (including where relevant, their capacity) under a number of predefined themes including 'Education/Training', 'Childcare', 'Health', 'Sports & Recreation', 'Open Space', 'Social and Community', 'Faith', 'Arts and Culture', and 'Other Facilities Including Neighbourhood Centres'.
- A walkability analysis based on defined walking distances from specific community facilities in order to evaluate proximity, accessibility and coverage of those facilities to target user groups.

The Audit also considered the existing infrastructure provision relative to the existing/planned population and best practice provision.

Below is a summary of the findings from the Athy Social Infrastructure Audit, September 2020 which accompanies this Local Area Plan.

### ***Education and Training***

Facilities examined under this theme included primary schools, secondary schools along with third-level, evening classes and skills development programmes. Within the Plan boundary there are four primary schools, two post-primary schools and four further education/training centres.

The primary schools in Athy were found to be nearing capacity, while secondary schools were found to be overcapacity, with Athy Community College relying on prefab classrooms. Athy is well served by further education facilities and courses. However, it is noted from the Census 2016 records that attainment of third level degrees is lower than the national average. The Council will support these existing facilities and support any development that would help to address any lack of higher educational attainment.

The walkability and primary school catchment analysis indicates that there is a significant proportion of residential units falling outside a 10-minute walking distance of existing primary schools.

### ***Childcare***

Childcare facilities are well distributed spatially within Athy with 12 facilities spread throughout the Plan area, predominantly located close to or within existing residential developments. Figures obtained from these facilities show that 492 children were enrolled for the 2019/20 year but that there was capacity for 479 children. Overall, childcare facilities are operating at 95% capacity in Athy. Furthermore, it was calculated using Appendix 2 of the '*Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)*' that over the period of this Plan an additional 206 childcare places are required within the Plan area.

### ***Health***

Healthcare facilities included GPs, health centres, dentists, pharmacies, care and other related facilities. The Audit indicated a total of 27 health facilities including: a Primary Care Centre, one Health Centre, five General Practitioners (GPs), four Dentist Practices, four Physiotherapists, two Nursing Homes, four Specialist Services and six Pharmacies. Healthcare facilities are dispersed throughout the town, although there is some clustering within the new primary care centre.

Using the Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (GMENAC) standard of 0.25 physicians per 1,000 population the current doctor to population ratio in Athy (excluding hospital services) is 1.4 per 1,000 population, with 14 doctors practicing from 26 different facilities. Should the population grow by the anticipated 2,160 persons by the end of the Plan period in 2027 the ratio of existing doctors per population will fall to 1.2 per 1,000 population which is almost five times higher than the recommended standard. Assuming no increase or decrease in doctor numbers during that period this indicates that provision in Athy would appear to be well catered for. Coupled with this adequate provision it is noted Athy also benefits from a high level of community nurses. However, it must be noted the health services in Athy serve a large rural hinterland that extends outside of the scope of this study.

### ***Social and Community***

Social and Community facilities are a broad category and can include general civic services and services targeted at specific sections of the community. Excluding the Fire Station and Garda Station, there are 18 other social/community services. While it appears that Athy is well served by community facilities/services, it is noted there is a high level of deprivation present in Athy. Pobal's Map of Deprivation based on Census 2016 results indicate a high level of deprivation in Athy, with no areas indicated as either affluent or very affluent. This contrasts starkly with surrounding neighbouring towns in Kildare and Carlow. Taking this into consideration more community facilities/services may be required to cater for the demand in Athy on a per capita basis.

### ***Faith***

A total of ten faith facilities were identified in Athy comprising six places of worship / churches and four cemeteries within the SIA study area. Most facilities are located within the town centre. Athy is adequately served by cemeteries but has no crematorium within the Plan area.

### ***Sports and Recreation***

There are 21 sports facilities/clubs in Athy. The town provides a wide variety of sporting facilities including Athy GAA Club, Athy RFC, Athy Town FC and Athy Tennis Club. Also provided is the Arch Community Centre and a 25m swimming pool and gym at K-Leisure. It was calculated that currently Athy has an outdoor sports provision of 1.96 hectares (ha) per 1,000 population which exceeds Fields in Trust (FIT) UK standards. It is noted that a further 5 ha of Kildare County Council lands are proposed to be designated as open space with the potential future sports training hub in the south-eastern corner of Athy.

### ***Open Space***

There is one Neighbourhood Park within the study area, which is located north of the town centre on the western bank of the River Barrow. This park is mainly used for passive recreation but also includes a children's playground, a 5-a-side all-weather pitch, a soccer pitch and Woodstock Castle. The only other park in Athy is called the 'People's Park' which is classified as a local park and contains facilities for active recreation including a playground and outdoor adult gym equipment. In terms of amenity green space, green corridor and natural/semi-natural green spaces Athy provides a high quantum of area per capita in excess of Fields in Trust (FIT) UK standards. However, it was evident that Athy did not achieve the minimum recommended area of playground space.

Furthermore, it is noted the Kildare Open Space Strategy 2011<sup>12</sup> recommends an additional local park if the population is to rise over the plan period to in excess of 10,000 persons.

#### 4.6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for future social infrastructure provision have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the Athy Plan 2021-2027. Table 4.4 provides a breakdown of the requirements under relevant themes that are required to provide for the future needs of the projected population. Figure 4.4 also outlines an indicative location for each of the themes detailed in Table 4.4.

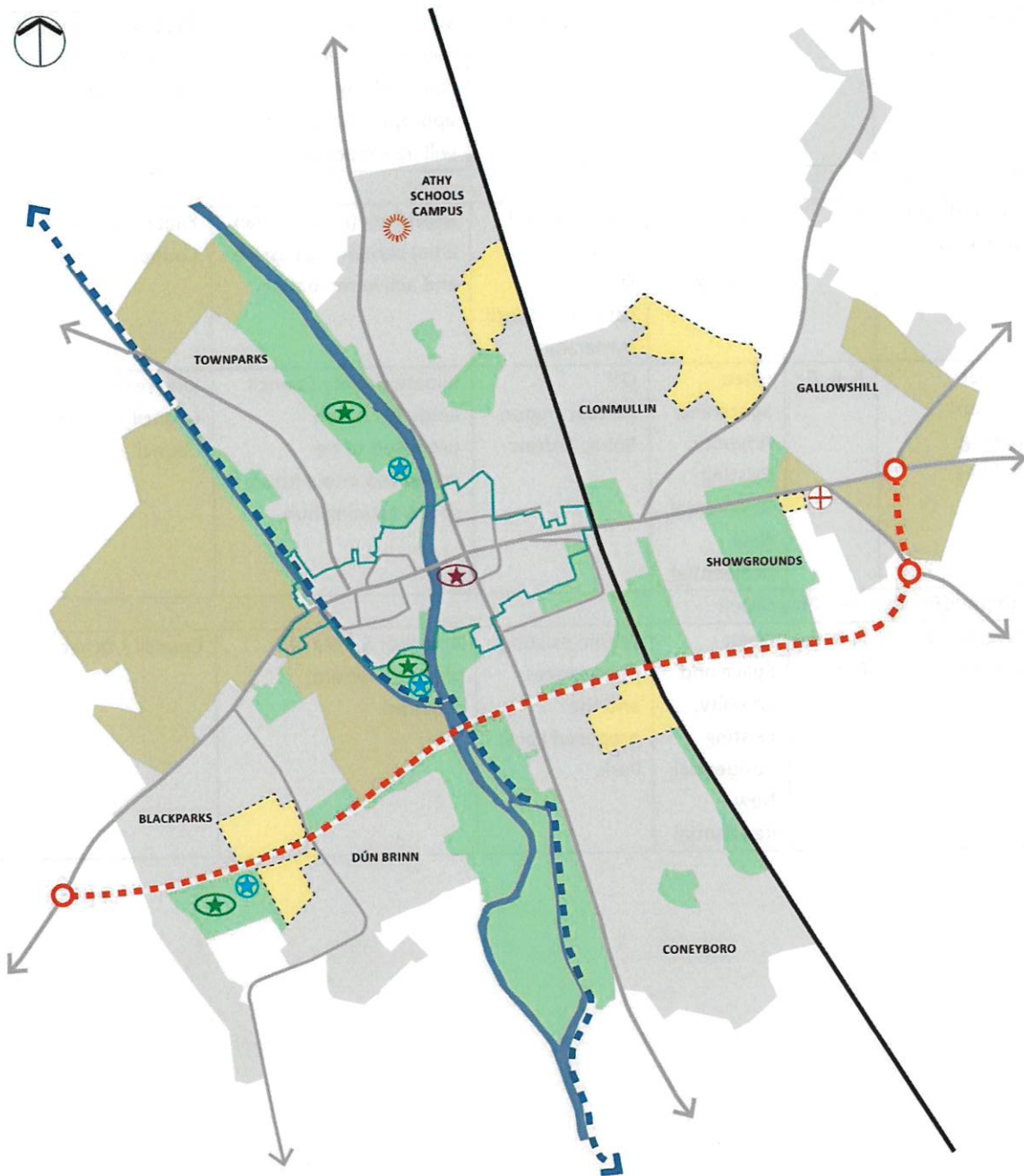
**Table 4.4:** Social Infrastructure Requirements

Theme	Zone	Land use	Potential Location	What is required	Delivery Mechanism
<b>Education</b>					
Secondary school extension	E	Educational	Adjacent to Athy Community College.	An extension to Athy Community College which would provide capacity for 560 pupils.	Dept. of Education and Skills
<b>Childcare</b>					
20 childcare places per 75 new residential units	Refer to zoning matrix Ch 11.	Childcare	Adjacent to / within new residential developments.	206 additional childcare places	Private developer-led alongside new development.
<b>Health</b>					
No critical infrastructure required.	-	-	Not applicable.	While no further health infrastructure is required over the period of the plan appropriate applications will be supported.	Developer / Kildare County Council / HSE / Other
<b>Social/Community</b>					
No critical infrastructure required.	-	-	Not applicable.	While no further Social/Community facilities are required over the period of the plan appropriate applications will be supported.	Developer / Kildare County Council / Charity sector / HSE / other
<b>Arts/Culture</b>					
No critical infrastructure required.	-	-	Not applicable.	While no further Arts/Cultural facilities are required over the period of the plan appropriate applications	Developer / Kildare County Council / Charity Sector / Irish Arts / Other

<sup>12</sup> The Kildare Open Space strategy is currently being reviewed and expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2021.

				will be supported.	
<b>Faith</b>					
No critical infrastructure required.	-	-	Not applicable.	While no further cemetery spaces are required any appropriate applications will be supported.	Religious institutions / Kildare County Council / Other
<b>Outdoor Sports</b>					
One additional Local Park is required.	F	Open Space and amenity	To be located on the Dominican Lands in Council ownership	Local Park (greater than 2 ha) containing passive and active recreation	Kildare County Council / Other
Further outdoor training facilities	F, B, C	Open Space and Amenity, Existing Residential, New Residential	Off Fortbarrington Road, Ardrew	Kildare County Council lands (5 Ha) are proposed to be converted into a future sports training hub.	Kildare County Council / Irish Sports Council / Other
<b>Equipped/Designated Play Space</b>					
Playground facilities	F, B, C, E, T	Open Space and amenity, Existing Residential, New Residential	Within existing open spaces and the proposed Local Park.	A further 5.7 Ha of playgrounds are required.	Council / Other

Figure 4.4: Indicative Locations of Proposed Social Infrastructure



Key	
	Railway line
	Key routes
	Athy Distributor Road Scheduled for completion in late 2023
	Barrow Blueway Under Construction
	Existing Urban Form
	Strategic Open Space
	New Residential Areas
	Employment Lands
	Athy Town Centre
	Athy Primary Care Centre
<b>Proposed Social Infrastructure</b> (Indicative locations)	
	Education
	New Outdoor Sports
	New Equipped/Designated Play Spaces
	New Social and Community (Including Arts/Culture etc.)

## 4.7 Education, Childcare and Health Facilities

### Policy HC3 – Social Infrastructure

**HC3** *It is the policy of the Council to facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities within the Plan area, in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.*

#### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- HCO3.1** Support and facilitate improvements to existing primary schools and secondary schools to resolve current capacity issues and facilitate forecasted future growth.
- HCO3.2** Promote initiatives with relevant agencies to expand training and education that meets the wide range of business skills located in Athy.
- HCO3.3** Require the provision of appropriately located and purpose-built early learning and childcare facilities to meet the pro-rata childcare needs of housing development during the plan period.
- HCO3.4** Support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations in Athy.

## 4.8 Other Community, Sports and Recreational Facilities

### Policy HC4 – Community Facilities

**HC4** *It is the policy of the Council to facilitate and support a broad range of community, cultural and recreational facilities to serve the needs of the residents of Athy.*

#### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- HCO4.1** Support and facilitate the provision of multi-functional community facilities to meet the needs of the population of Athy.
- HCO4.2** Support, promote and facilitate the development of cultural, arts and performance spaces in Athy.
- HCO4.3** Support any appropriate development or extension of places of worship/burial in Athy.
- HCO4.4** Require, promote and facilitate the development of a new local park (2 ha or larger in area) which would contain both passive and active recreation.
- HCO2.5** Support and facilitate the provision of children's play facilities in Athy within existing and proposed green spaces, for children of all ages while also having regard to those with special needs.