

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**Report of Loughrea Area Committee Meeting held at Áras an Chontae
on the Tuesday 25th October 2011**

I LATHAIR

Baill:

Cllr. B. Willers, Chairperson
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. P. Feeney
Cllr. G. Finnerty
Cllr. M. Maher
Cllr. P. Hynes

Oifigigh:

Mr. K. Kelly, Director of Services, Planning and Human Resources
Ms C McConnell S.P. Planning Unit
Ms Gerardine Kavanagh A.P. Planning Unit
Mr A Comer S.E.O. Planning Unit
Ms C. Crawford A.P. Planning Unit
Ms.K. Walsh A.P. Planning Unit
Mr Martin Lavelle S.E Water Services Unit
Ms. M. McGrath SSO Planning Unit

REVIEW OF THE ATHENRY LOCAL AREA PLAN

Mr Kelly explained that the purpose of the meeting was to brief the Members on the approach that had been taken on the Draft Athenry Local Area Plan 2012-2018 and the reason for this approach before it goes out on Public display in November/December 2011.

Mr Kelly explained that the population target as set out by the Regional Planning Guidelines was 15,750 persons for the County over the lifetime of the plan. He added that it was now necessary to retro fit population into each of the individual town plans with the resultant residential requirement. He explained that the Core Strategy had identified target populations for each town across the County.

Mr Kelly referred to the Core Strategy Table and to the Core strategy population allocations for the towns and stated that the target population growth for Athenry up to 2016 was up to 1,122 persons.

Mr Kelly stated that there was almost 32ha zoned as Residential Phase 1 within the plan boundary of Athenry, to accommodate the residential units over the plan period. He explained that this amount was fixed as per the Core Strategy and Regional planning Guidelines and added that the locations were contiguous to existing development on lands that were serviceable; He explained that it wouldn't be possible to extend the amount of zoning in Phase 1.

Cllr Feeney stated that much of the lands zoned residential in the plan would not become available for development for different reasons such as proximity to floodplains.

Ms Mc Connell stated that while the amount of residential zoning was set as per the Coe Strategy, the locations of the zoning were not.

Cllr Feeney also outlined that the proposed plan does not take account of the location of Athenry situated at a junction of two motorways, a railway line and situated within 10 minutes drive of Galway City.

Ms McConnell stated that the importance of Athenry's strategic location was a key issue and consideration throughout the plan. She added that it had also been acknowledged in the plan under the Section on "Strategic Vision and Development Strategy" and she stated that the IDA had also signalled Athenry and Oranmore as key areas.

Ms McConnell stated that most of the proposed residential sites on the map had been visited and that road access and connection to the sewer were possible and that there were very few areas that could not be development in the short term.

Cllr. Feeney suggested proposed zoning of lands along sections of the proposed Athenry Relief Road due to its strategic location.

Cllr. Feeney also raised the issue of the availability of lands for school sites in Athenry.

Mr. Kelly stated that the zonings in the draft plan would allow for the development of a school but added the other issues such as the catchment area need also to be considered.

Cllr. Feeney referred to the proposed zoning on lands at Gortnahown and the issue of flooding there. He also referred to lands zoned at Cullairbawn and suggested that this may be a green area. He also made references to the location of a treatment plant and a medical/health care centre on residentially zoned lands within the town. Mr Kelly explained that the location of the residential Phase 1 lands can be reviewed if there are pieces of lands that will not become available for development but added that lands that are remote or not contiguous to the town should not be zoned. The further out from the town the zoned lands are, the greater the risk of not getting Departmental approval for the plan.

He added that there was no limitation on the amount of industrial zoned lands in the plan but added that the locations must be practicable taking account of servicing and traffic and that there needs to be the possibility of planning permission being granted at these locations.

Cllr. Feeney questioned the proposed change of zoning from 'Transitional Agricultural uses' to 'Agricultural'.

Cllr. Feeney also identified lands around Furseypark and suggested these lands as an ideal location for development.

Ms. Kavanagh stated that the NRA requested that the junction be preserved from development and raised concerns in relation to the existing industrial zoned lands at Gortnahown.

In response to Cllr Feeney's query in relation to development along the relief road, Ms McConnell stated that development cannot be leapfrogged 500 to 600m over substantial portions of agriculturally zoned lands'. She added that only portions of the road were being built and there was no indication as to when it would be completed. Cllr. Feeney stated that provisions should be made for future development. He added that the Athenry Northern Ring Road was not a boundary for the town.

Mr Kelly added that it was not advisable to zone ahead in the absence of infrastructure.

Cllr Feeney also added that the location of Athenry was central to its development and not just the location of the IDA site.

Mr Kelly stated that draft Local Area Plan would go on public display shortly and that there would be an information meeting organised in Athenry during the public display period.

Chriochnaigh an crunniú ansin