



Statement of Consistency

Proposed Strategic Housing Development at
Cartrontroiy, Kilnafaddoge, Lissywollen and Ardnaglug
(townlands), Athlone, County Westmeath.

Avenir Homes Limited

December 2021

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Connecting places.

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01. Introduction

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Statement

This statement of consistency has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 5(2) of the Planning and Development Acts and accompanies a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application. The SHD legislation specifies that all SHD applications must be accompanied by a statement which demonstrates that they are consistent with the objectives of the relevant Development Plan, Local Area Plan, and any relevant guidelines issued by the Minister under section 28 of the Act of 2000:

The proposed development of a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) which will consist of the construction of a mixed-use residential development of 122 no. residential units with ancillary creche, 46 no. student apartments consisting of 283 bed spaces, and all associated site development works. The proposed development makes provision for 60 no. dwelling houses comprising 38 no. 2-storey 3-bed townhouses, 7 no. 2-storey 4-bed townhouses, 7 no. 3-storey 4-bed townhouses, 6 no. 2 storey 4-bed semi-detached and 2 no. 2 storey 4-bed detached. The proposed development includes 62 no. apartments / duplexes to be provided as follows: Block R1 containing 38 no. apartments (16 no. 1 bed units and 22 no. 2 bed units) in a 3-6 storey building, and Block R2 containing 20 no. duplex units (10 no. 2 bed units and 10 no. 3 bed units) over 4 storeys with 4 no. apartments (4 no. 2 bed units) in one 5th storey feature area. The proposed student accommodation makes provision for 283 no. bed spaces in 3 no. blocks to be provided as follows: Block S1 containing 18 apartments with 117 bed spaces over 5-6 storeys, Block S2 containing 16 apartments with 107 bed spaces over 6-7 storeys, and Block S3 containing 12 apartments with 59 bed spaces over 4-5 storeys.

The proposed development will provide for two new vehicular accesses as well as pedestrian entrances onto Lissywollen Avenue east-west access road (as permitted under An Bord Pleanála Reference ABP-309513-21). Minor modifications to ABP-309513-21 are proposed to cater for these access points, alterations to cycle/pedestrian paths, the removal of a central island to facilitate the south-eastern entrance, and provision of bus stop infrastructure. Ancillary site works include public and communal open spaces, hard and soft landscaping, pedestrian / cycleways, car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, public lighting, roof mounted solar panels, ESB substation and supporting distribution kiosks, and all other ancillary works above and below ground. The proposal includes pedestrian and cycle linkages onto the Old Rail Trail Greenway to the south and Blackberry Lane (L40061) to the west.

02. National Planning Policy

2.1 Rebuilding Ireland

The action plan for housing and homelessness is based around 5 pillars, including the aim of building more homes as well as improving the rental sector. The plan includes several action points relating to the 5 key pillars.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>Pillar 3 – Build More Homes</p> <p>Key Objective: Increase the output of private housing to meet demand at affordable prices</p> <p>Build More Homes aims to support the building of new homes and outlines the Government objective “to ramp up delivery of housing from its current under-supply across all tenures to help individuals and families meet their housing needs”. This Plan sets ambitious targets to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes and deliver 47,000 units of social housing in the period to 2021.</p> <p>The plan outlines a number of key steps that should be taken to deliver on the pillar three objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning reforms ▪ Putting in place a National Planning Framework and land management actions ▪ Efficient design and delivery methods to lower housing delivery costs ▪ Measures to support construction innovation and skills. 	<p>The location and suitability of the subject site, as well as proposed mix of dwellings, including social housing component, ensures that the subject proposal will contribute positively to meeting the pillar three objective of doubling the completion level of additional homes in the next four years to deliver over 25,000 homes on average per annum.</p> <p>The proposed development falls under the new Strategic Housing Development planning process aimed at fast tracking the delivery of much needed housing. In addition, as outlined below, the proposal is consistent with the National Planning Framework and its stated aim of consolidating new population and housing growth within the footprint of the existing settlements.</p>
<p>The action plan notes: <i>“locating housing in the right place provides the opportunity for wider family and social networks to thrive, maximises access to employment opportunities and to services such as education, public transport, health and amenities, while delivering on sustainability objectives related to efficiency in service delivery and investment provision.”</i></p>	<p>The proposed development site is in a key sustainable location within walking/cycling distance of all educational, employment, economic public transport and recreational opportunities in Athlone. The sites location adjacent to the ‘Old Rail Greenway’ and other existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure will promote sustainable modes of travel and will represent a sustainable new neighbourhood within the settlement.</p>

The sites' location within walking and cycling distance of all areas of the town will provide future residents with convenient access to the following services and amenities.

- **Educational** – Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone Community College, Athlone Educational Centre, Marist College, Scoil na gCeithre Máistrí, Cornamaddy National School, Our Lady's Bower secondary school, and various other educational institutions in the town centre.
- **Recreational** – Old Rail Greenway, Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone Regional Sports Centre, Garrycastle GAA Club, Athlone GAA club, Athlone Town FC grounds, Athlone Tennis Club.
- **Employment** – Athlone town centre, Golden Island Shopping Centre, Strategic Employment Locations at the Athlone Business & Technology Park and Blyry Business & Commercial Park.
- **Public Transport** – Athlone bus and rail stations and local bus stops on the R446 and R915.
- **Other** – All other services and amenities in the town centre including shops, pubs, restaurants, doctors surgery, pharmacies, physiotherapists post office, pharmacy, beauticians and gyms.

The proposed development provides for diverse, mixed-tenured accommodation with 122 no. conventional residential units and 283 no. student bedspaces to serve Athlone Institute of Technology (now known as Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest Athlone Campus) approximately 400-500 metres to the south. The proposed development will contribute positively to addressing the shortage of student accommodation and apartment type development in Athlone.

2.2 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

National Planning Framework outlines the policies and objectives for development in Ireland up to 2040 given the expected population growth of 1 million people. The Framework is underlined by a number of strategic outcomes including compact growth, sustainable mobility and the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. The purpose of the NPF is outlined as being to enable all parts of the country to successfully accommodate growth and change, by facilitating a shift towards Ireland’s regions and cities other than Dublin, while also recognising Dublin’s ongoing key role.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>The NPF outlines 10 national strategic outcomes which include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compact Growth ▪ Enhanced Regional Accessibility ▪ Sustainable Mobility ▪ Enhanced Amenity and Heritage ▪ Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society <p><i><u>National Policy Objective 1a</u> - The projected level of population and employment growth in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area will be at least matched by that of the Northern and Western and Southern Regional Assembly areas combined.</i></p> <p><i><u>National Policy Objective 1b - Eastern and Midland Region: 490,000 - 540,000 additional people, i.e. a population of around 2.85 million;</u></i></p> <p><i><u>National Policy Objective 2b</u> - The regional roles of Athlone in the Midlands, Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West and the Letterkenny-Derry and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border networks will be identified and supported in the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy</i></p> <p><i><u>National Policy Objective 3c</u> - Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints.</i></p> <p><i><u>National Policy Objective 4</u> - Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.</i></p> <p><i><u>National Policy Objective 5</u> - Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.</i></p>	<p>The proposed development is consistent with all strategic aims and objectives contained in the NPF. The proposed development will promote compact growth in Athlone and promote sustainable mobility in a local and wider context. The sites' location immediately adjacent to the Greenway and existing pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure will also promote sustainable mobility and reduce car dependency.</p> <p>The subject site's location on the Greenway and the surrounding pedestrian and cyclist facilities results that the proposed development is ideally placed to capitalise on its sustainable location within walking/cycling distance of all areas of Athlone.</p> <p>The development is in accordance with National Policy Objectives (NPO) 1a, 1b, 2b, 3c, 4, 5 and 6 which aim to concentrate growth in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area, with NPO 2b specifically referencing Athlone as a settlement with a central role in the future economic development of the Midlands and where growth should be promoted.</p> <p>Located in a highly sustainable and well-serviced location, the proposed development is certain to be a highly sought-after place to live and visit, through its well-considered mix of residential units and student quarter, and thoughtful design. The accompanying Design Statement further explores the proposals design rationale and how it will contribute directly to securing NPOs 4, 5 and 6 for the subject site and surrounding area.</p>

National Policy Objective 6 - Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.

National Policy Objective 7 - Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on:

- Strengthening Ireland's overall urban structure, particularly in the Northern and Western and Midland Regions, to include the regional centres of Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West, Athlone in the Midlands and cross-border networks focused on the Letterkenny-Derry North-West Gateway Initiative and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry on the Dublin-Belfast corridor.
- Encouraging population growth in strong employment and service centres of all sizes, supported by employment growth.
- In more self-contained settlements of all sizes, supporting a continuation of balanced population and employment growth.

National Policy Objective 11 - In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.

National Policy Objective 13 - In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes, provided public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected.

National Policy Objective 27 - 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

Athlone's strategic importance to the wider Midland region is further demonstrated in NPO 7 of the NPF. The proposed development will assist in strengthening the urban fabric of the settlement and contribute to a more compact and self-contained settlement where walking and cycling are prioritised. The proposed development will enhance the local economy of Athlone by providing student accommodation and conventional housing and assist in attracting further investment and economic opportunities to the town.

The proposed development is consistent with NPO 11 of the NPF. The subject land is included within the settlement of Athlone. The proposal will contribute directly to a positive increase in residential density in the area, whilst appropriately respecting the established built environment. It will contribute directly to the realisation of compact growth and provide a critical mass of population to underpin the viability of the enhanced public transport, promote sustainable mobility across the site and to other areas.

In accordance with NPO 13, the proposed development has considered and complied with all relevant standards and guidelines, and are dealt with in the following sections. Where a policy has not been fully complied with it has been clearly highlighted, and our rationale has been presented.

The encouragement of sustainable modes of travel serves as a core guiding principle for the proposed development. The proposal benefits from being located alongside the Old Rail Trail Greenway and incorporates direct links to same, with additional access points onto Blackberry Lane to the west, and dedicated North/South cycle lane within the development. Part of the proposed development also includes the provision of two new public bus stops along the eastern boundary. These measures, coupled with a reduced car parking rate (relative to existing residential developments in the area) will promote modal shift and

developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

National Policy Objective 32 - To target the delivery of 550,000 additional households to 2040.

National Policy Objective 33 - To prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.

National Policy Objective 35- Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, reuse of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights.

Section 6.6- *“Demand for student accommodation exacerbates the demand pressures on the available supply of rental accommodation in urban areas in particular. In the years ahead, student accommodation pressures are anticipated to increase. The location of purpose-built student accommodation needs to be as proximate as possible to the centre of education, as well as being connected to accessible infrastructure such as walking, cycling and public transport. The National Student Accommodation Strategy supports these objectives.”*

ensure walking, cycle and future public transport is a viable alternative to the car (NPO 27).

The proposed development is also consistent with NPO's 32, 33 and 35 as it promotes sustainable urban living at a location well served by existing amenities. Although the subject lands have never been developed, they represent an identified strategic development site which can positively contribute to the housing and student accommodation needs of Athlone. The sites' location adjacent to the Greenway, town centre, AIT, and various other employment and educational opportunities reflects that compact, higher density residential development is appropriate.

The proposed development is located within 10-15 minutes walking distance (5-minute cycle) of Athlone Institute of Technology's main campus. The site is supported by existing and permitted safe pedestrian and cycle linkages to/from the site to the campus.

The site is situated approximately 30 minutes' walk (10-minute cycle) from Athlone train station which provides the following rail services.

- Dublin Heuston – Galway
- Dublin Heuston - Westport and Ballina
- Galway - Limerick

Athlone bus station is situated immediately adjacent to the town train station which serves several local routes and a number of inter-city and regional routes to Galway No. 20 route), Dublin Airport (X20 route), Waterford City (No. 73 route), Longford (No. 466 route) and Limerick (No. 72 route) amongst others.

2.3 National Student Accommodation Strategy

The Strategy was released as a follow up to the Rebuilding Ireland National Strategy for Housing and Homelessness and seeks an expanded and improved student accommodation sector capable of meeting the needs of our growing third level population into the future. It outlines ambitious targets including the delivery of an additional 7,000 purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) bed spaces by the end of 2019 and an additional 21,000 by 2024. The strategy estimates that for every 4 students housing in PBSA or digs, an additional housing unit is freed up in the private rented sector. The strategy also identifies that based on the existing demand for student housing and projects that demand in 2019 will exceed supply by almost 26,000 bed spaces. This is provided that the targets for new PBSA spaces are met. The strategy also estimated that in 2017 only

about 18% of all students lived in PBSA, a lower figure than most other comparable countries.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>By developing and utilising an appropriate Management Plan for PBSA, the managers of PBSA can minimise any potential negative impacts from the development and its occupants on surrounding properties and neighbourhoods and can create a positive and safe living environment for students and develop and enhance the neighbourhoods in which they are situated for the betterment of the whole community.</p>	<p>The application for the proposed development includes a Student Management Strategy Report for the operational phase of the student accommodation. The management of this accommodation will be governed by strict policies and procedures related to amenity, utilities, cleaning, waste management, health and safety, access and security measures. The development will be run in a proactive manner which works with the local community to develop strong and constructive relationships with its nearest neighbours including residential, commercial, and local community representatives.</p>
<p>Construction of at least an additional 7,000 PBSA bed spaces by end 2019. This is in line with the target set in Rebuilding Ireland.</p>	<p>The proposed scheme will contribute 283 no. student bed spaces which will serve the AIT to the south.</p>
<p>All developers and managers of PBSA should put in place an appropriate Management Plan for PBSA in order to minimise potential negative impacts of the development and its occupants on surrounding properties and neighbourhoods and to create a positive and safe living environment for students and develop and enhance the neighbourhoods in which they are situated for the betterment of the whole community.</p>	<p>The application for the proposed development includes a Student Management Strategy Report for the operational phase of the student accommodation.</p>

2.4 Department of Education and Science ‘Guidelines on Residential Development for Third Level Students Section 50 Finance Act 1999’ (1999).

These Guidelines are intended to assist developers and designers in formulating proposals for student residential development. The Guidelines define minimum standards and best practice for Student Apartment developments.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>Total Floor Areas of Qualifying Premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation under the scheme shall be provided by groupings of study bedrooms in "house" units. Accommodation under the scheme shall be provided by groupings of study bedrooms in "house" units. Each unit shall consist of a 	<p>As detailed in the submitted breakdown on schedule of student accommodation by Henry J Lyons Architects, the development has been designed in full accordance with the 1999 guidelines. As detailed,</p>

minimum of 3 bed spaces and an overall minimum gross floor area of 55 sq. metres, up to a maximum of 8 bed spaces and a maximum of 160 sq. metres.

- Study bedrooms shall be arranged in units sharing a common entrance hall and kitchen/living room.
- Rooms shall have reasonable shapes and proportions and have adequate space for normal living purposes.
- Accurate adult sized furniture shall be indicated on layout plans.
- Units shall in turn share common entrances, access stairs and corridors, and ancillary facilities.

Kitchen/Living Room

- **4 sqm**

Bedrooms

- Single study – **8 sqm**
- Single study bedroom with ensuite shower – **12 sqm**
- Twin study bedroom – **15 sqm**
- Twin study bedroom with ensuite shower – **18 sqm**
- Single disabled study room with ensuite disabled shower, toilet and basin - **15 sq. metres**

Bathrooms

- These shall be either ensuite with the study bedrooms or separately provided to serve a maximum of 3 bedspaces. Bathrooms shall have adult sized sanitary fittings, consisting of wash hand basin, water closet, and shower/bath, with sufficient room to ensure ergonomically adequate spacing in the layout.

Circulation and storage

- In addition to the above minimum requirements an adequate entrance hallway and circulation space shall be provided within each unit. A hot press/store should also be provided to facilitate use of the unit.

Community Facilities and Amenities

- Communal facilities to service the needs of student residents should be provided for. The definition of qualifying developments includes "house" units and ancillary spaces including: - caretaker/security office and apartment; centralised storage; laundry facilities; drying rooms and utility rooms; and a seminar room. The floor area of these

the design approach is also consistent with other permitted student schemes elsewhere which were also designed by Henry J Lyons.

facilities shall not exceed 12% of the total area of the development.

- Due consideration should be given to the needs of disabled students in the location, layout and design of any communal facilities.
- Developments should include reasonable provision for secure bicycle storage within the site.
- Facilities for the handling, storage and collection of refuse should be provided with access for frequent collection. Such facilities should be conveniently located, well ventilated and comply with all fire safety and public health requirements. As a general guide in determining storage capacity required, an output of 0.1 cubic metres of refuse per unit per week may be assumed.

Internal Design and Layout

- Entrance hallways and corridors in developments should be well designed with good lighting and ventilation.
- Vertical and horizontal circulation should be arranged so that corridors do not extend more than 15 metres from a widened "landing" area which should include natural lighting where possible.
- Corridors should be widened at entrances to apartments.
- Service ducts serving two or more apartments should as far as practicable be accessible from common circulation areas for maintenance purposes.
- The number of apartment units per lift/core in a development should not exceed a maximum of 30.

Disabled Access and Provision of Accessible Bedrooms

- A minimum of one out of every fifty, or part thereof, of the total number of bedspaces in a development should be designed for students with disabilities. These study bedrooms shall be fully wheelchair accessible complete with ensuite bathroom facilities.
- Part M of the Building Regulations, 1997, sets out the legal requirements in relation to access to and use of building facilities by disabled persons. Part M of the regulations applies to public buildings and the common areas of apartment blocks. It is proposed to extend Part M to require new dwellings

	commencing on or after the 1 July 2000 to be visitable by the disabled. The design of residential accommodation for students should take this pending development of Part M into account.	
Data Connection	Internet services shall be made available to each student study bedspace, as a standard Ethernet connection (10 BASET). A minimum bandwidth of 64kb/s shall be provided by an Internet Service Provider (ISP) per each 30 student bedspaces.	

2.5 Department of Education and Science ‘Matters Arising in Relation to the Guidelines on Residential Developments for Third Level Students Section 50 Finance Act 1999’ (July 2005).

This document was prepared to address several specific matters that had arisen since the publication of the aforementioned 1999 guidelines for residential developments for third level students. Many of these matters were minor and technical in nature, but some more substantive matters are also addressed. Those that are substantive, and relevant to the proposed development are noted below.

Policy		Consistency with Scheme
Disabled Access and Provision of Accessible Bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part M requires new dwellings commencing on or after the 1 July 2000 to be accessible by all. The design of residential accommodation for students must take this into account. 	The design of the proposed student development provides for disabled access and provision of accessible bedrooms. Please refer to the submitted Architectural Design Statement.

03. S. 28 Ministerial Guidelines & Urban Design Manual

3.1 Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009

The ‘Guidelines for Planning Authorities: Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009’ (SRDUA) were developed with the objective of delivering high quality and sustainable residential developments. With a population of 21,349 in the 2016 census, Athlone can be defined as a ‘Large Town’ according to criteria identified in the SRDUA with a population of over 20,000 people.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>The SRDUA outline common planning goals for housing developers, their design teams, the planning system, and the community they serve as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, and minimise the need to use cars; • Deliver a quality of life which residents and visitors are entitled to expect, in terms of amenity, safety and convenience; • Provide a good range of community and support facilities, where and when they are needed and that are easily accessible; • Present an attractive, well-maintained appearance, with a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm that is easily maintained; • Are easy to access for all and to find one’s way around; • Promote the efficient use of land and of energy, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions; • Provide a mix of land uses to minimise transport demand; 	<p>By virtue of its location, the proposed development has the potential to deliver on the quality of life aims of the Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed development promotes walkability, cycling and sustainable transport patterns by way of its location close to considerable amenities in Athlone and existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. The proposed development is also poised to benefit from cycle/pedestrian upgrades permitted as part of the ‘Alanna Roadbridge Developments Ltd’ SHD to the west of the site. (ABP Reference: ABP-309513-21). Under 309513-21 permission was granted for the construction of an east-west access route (Lissywollen Avenue) extending from the existing Ballymahon roundabout (on the R915 - to the west) to the existing Garrycastle roundabout (on the R916 - to the east). ▪ As detailed in the accompanying architectural and landscape documentation, the public amenity areas/open spaces have been designed in accordance with the highest urban design principles. They will all be conveniently located in accessible areas of the site and the provision of raised tables/surface treatments and pedestrian crossings at key locations will provide a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors

- Promote social integration and provide accommodation for a diverse range of household types and age groups;
- Enhance and protect the green infrastructure and biodiversity; and
- Enhance and protect the built and natural heritage.

alike. The development will enhance permeability throughout the settlement by providing pedestrian and cycle paths through the site benefitting the existing residents in the area.

- The design and layout of the proposed open spaces will contribute to an enhanced sense of place and will serve as nodes for communal activities. The proposed landscape strategy provides for high quality publicly accessible amenity areas including an 'Urban Student Corridor' and 'South Parkland' which will link in with the Greenway to the south. The landscape strategy provides for a series of linkages and connections assisting in providing a legible and coherent layout.
- The proposed housing mix provides for a wide range of house/apartment types from 1,2 and 3 bedroom apartments to, 3 and 4 bedroom, semi-detached and townhouses. The proposed student apartment element will not only provide much needed student accommodation in Athlone, but also promote a more diverse and vibrant growth centre in the context of the wider settlement which promotes social integration and cohesion.
- The proposed open spaces associated with the scheme have been designed according to best practice Urban Design principles.

The subject site can be described as being an 'Outer Suburban/Greenfield Site' in the context of settlement of Athlone. Regarding these sites, Section 5.11 of the SRDUA states

"These may be defined as open lands on the periphery of cities or larger towns whose development will require the provision of new infrastructure, roads, sewers and ancillary social and commercial facilities, schools, shops, employment and community facilities.

.....the greatest efficiency in land usage on such lands will be achieved by providing net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare and such densities (involving a variety of housing types where possible) should be encouraged generally."

The proposed development is divided into distinct character areas including a Student Accommodation Quarter and conventional residential accommodation, consistent with the sites local zoning context.

- When assessed cumulatively, the proposed development provides for a residential density of 70 units per hectare of the overall developable site area of 3.75 hectares. (For the purposes of density calculations, 2 no. student bed spaces equate to 1 residential unit).
- The net area of the conventional residential accommodation portion of the site (minus the student accommodation area) is 3.05 hectares. The proposed residential development of 122 no. units reflects a density of 40 units per hectare.

This is in accordance with the density recommendations identified in the SRDUA for 'Outer Suburban/Greenfield Sites'.

3.2 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018

The Building Height Guidelines published in December 2018 have arisen from a recognition that the ambitious targets contained within the NPF, particularly in relation to accommodating 50% of future growth within the existing footprint of our settlements, will not be met unless developments of greater height and scale are supported by the Planning Authorities.

The Guidelines recognise that that our towns and cities must evolve to accommodate increased building heights at appropriate locations. There is an acceptance that:

"We need to shift away from energy intensive "business as usual" development patterns and create more mixed, more dynamic and more sustainable cities and towns, that carefully employ the delivery of increased building heights..."

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>Regarding building heights in suburban/edge locations (City and Town), section 3.4 of the Building Height Guidelines state</p> <p><i>"Newer housing developments outside city and town centres and inner suburbs, i.e. the suburban edges of towns and cities, typically now include town-houses (2-3 storeys), duplexes (3-4 storeys) and apartments (4 storeys upwards). Such developments deliver medium densities, in the range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare net....."</i></p> <p>Section 3.6 of the Guidelines state</p> <p><i>"Development should include an effective mix of 2, 3 and 4-storey development which integrates well into existing and historical neighbourhoods and 4 storeys or more can be accommodated alongside existing larger buildings, trees and parkland, river/sea frontage or along wider streets."</i></p> <p>Section 3.7 of the Guidelines state:</p> <p><i>"Such development patterns are generally appropriate outside city centres and inner suburbs, i.e. the suburban edges of towns and cities, for both infill and greenfield development and should not be subject to specific height restrictions....."</i></p>	<p>The proposed residential development is consistent with the 2018 Building Height Guidelines. As detailed in the accompanying Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons, the proposed development provides for a wide range of building heights ranging from 2/3 storey dwellings, 3-6 storey apartments and 5-7 storey student accommodation.</p> <p>The proposed building heights have been informed by guidance contained in sections 3.4-3.7 of the Building Height Guidelines which recommends that suburban locations should contain a range of buildings heights including buildings of 4 storeys and upwards.</p> <p>The proposed building heights assist the development in achieving a residential density of 40 units per hectare in accordance with section 3.4 of the guidelines.</p>

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 4

It is a specific planning policy requirement that in planning the future development of greenfield or edge of city/town locations for housing purposes, planning authorities must secure:

- 1) the minimum densities for such locations set out in the Guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), titled “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007)” or any amending or replacement Guidelines;
- 2) 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.

The proposed development achieves in delivering the stated objectives of SPPR 4.

- 1) The proposed density of 40 no. units per hectare, is in accordance with density requirements in the Building Height Guidelines and the SRDUA, where densities of 35-50 units per hectare are promoted.
- 2) As detailed in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons, the variety and mix of building heights across the scheme greatly contributes to the architectural quality of the scheme. The building typology has assessed the sites existing context in Athlone and also the permitted Alanna Roadbridge SHD to the west.
- 3) The proposed development provides for wide range of building typologies. The nature of the scheme which provides for student accommodation, apartment living, duplexes and more conventional family dwelling houses results in a diverse housing mix, contributing to the creation of a new and vibrant community in Athlone.

Development Management Criteria

In the event of making a planning application, the applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority/ An Bord Pleanála, that the proposed development satisfies the following criteria:

- At the scale of the relevant city/town
- At the scale of the district / neighbourhood/ street
- At the scale of the site/building
- Specific Assessments

As detailed in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons, the proposed taller buildings will positively contribute to the townscape of Athlone. The design, location and architectural treatments proposed ensure that the proposed apartment/student accommodation buildings are reflective of the sites wider and local contexts.

3.3 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2020:

The ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments’ guidelines, were published in 2020. The guidelines refer to the need to significantly increase supply as a key pillar of the overarching Rebuilding Ireland Housing Action Plan.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p><u>Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1</u></p> <p>Apartment developments may include up to 50% one bedroom or studio type units (with no more than 20-25% of the total proposed development as studios) and there shall be no minimum requirement for apartments with three or more bedrooms. Statutory development plans may specify a mix for apartment and other housing developments, but only further to an evidence-based Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), that has been agreed on an area, county, city or metropolitan area basis and incorporated into the relevant development plan(s).</p> <p>2.21 The mix parameters set out above that generally apply to apartments, do not apply to purpose-built student accommodation or to certain social housing schemes, such as sheltered housing.</p>	<p>As demonstrated in the accompanying Housing Quality Assessment prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects, the proposed development is consistent with SPPR 1 relating to apartment mix.</p>
<p><u>Safeguarding Higher Standards</u></p> <p>The majority of all apartments in any proposed scheme of 10 or more apartments shall exceed the minimum floor area standard for any combination of the relevant 1, 2 or 3 bedroom unit types, by a minimum of 10%.</p>	<p>As confirmed in the accompanying Housing Quality Assessment prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects, the vast majority of proposed apartment/duplex units are well in excess of 10% of minimum floor areas</p>
<p><u>Specific Planning Policy Requirement 3</u></p> <p>Minimum Apartment Floor Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio apartment (1 person) – 37 sq. m • 1-bedroom apartment (2 persons) – 45 sq. m • 2-bedroom apartment (4 persons) – 73 sq.m • 3-bedroom apartment (5 persons) – 90 sq. m 	<p>The accompanying Housing Quality Assessment prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects demonstrates that all apartments within the proposed scheme are consistent with the minimum floor areas as set out in SPPR3.</p>
<p><u>Specific Planning Policy Requirement 4</u></p> <p>In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following shall apply:</p> <p>(ii) In suburban or intermediate locations, it is an objective that there shall generally be a minimum of 50% dual aspect apartments in a single scheme.</p>	<p>As outlined in the accompanying schedule of accommodation, the vast majority of the proposed apartment units are at least double aspect.</p>

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 5

Ground level apartment floor to ceiling heights shall be a minimum of 2.7m and shall be increased in certain circumstances, particularly where necessary to facilitate a future change of use to a commercial use. For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis, subject to overall design quality.

Ground level floor to ceiling heights of 2.7 metres are provided for in the proposed apartments.

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 6

A maximum of 12 apartments per floor per core may be provided in apartment schemes. This maximum provision may be increased for building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25 ha, subject to overall design quality and compliance with building regulations.

In accordance with this requirement no one apartment block contains more than 12 apartments per floor per core.

A general minimum standard of 1 cycle storage space per bedroom shall be applied. For studio units, at least 1 cycle storage space shall be provided. Visitor cycle parking shall also be provided at a standard of 1 space per 2 residential units.

The proposed development provides for 519 no. bicycle spaces across the entire scheme, broken down as follows.

- Block R1 – 60 spaces
- Block R2 – 58 spaces
- Student Housing – 283 spaces
- External spaces – 118 spaces

In accordance with the standards identified in the apartment guidelines.

A minimum of 7 sq. m of private open space required for 2-bedroom apartments (4 person) with 3 sq. m to be provided for 1-bedroom apartment units.

All proposed apartment units have been equipped with the required private open space provision. Please refer to the attached Housing Quality Assessment prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects.

3.4 Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with best practice as outlined in the 2009 Urban Design Manual. The Manual outlines 12 criteria that should guide urban residential development in the context of the individual homes, the site on which they are located and the wider neighbourhood. A Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects accompanies this application which addresses the proposed developments compliance with these 12 criteria.

3.5 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

The National Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p><u>The Guidelines were intended to:</u></p> <p>Provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals. Planning permission for premises for childcare had been identified as an area of concern for childcare service development. These Guidelines are intended to ensure a consistency of approach throughout the country to the treatment of applications for planning permission for childcare Facilities.</p> <p>They outline appropriate locations for childcare facilities including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New communities / Larger new housing developments ▪ The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working. ▪ In the vicinity of schools. ▪ Neighbourhood, District and Town Centres. ▪ Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways. 	<p>A Statement of Rationale on Childcare Needs Assessment prepared by HW Planning accompanies this submission.</p> <p>There are 16 no. existing childcare facilities in close proximity to the subject site. Based on available TUSLA Pre-School inspection reports, there are approximately 380 available childcare places in these facilities. It is recognised that identified capacity numbers represent a snapshot in time, as recorded on the date of childcare site inspections.</p> <p>In addition to the existing facilities, there are 2 no. creches permitted at the adjacent Alanna Roadbridge Developments Ltd. SHD to the west of the site with a combined capacity of 145 childcare places, which is in excess of the expected demand to be generated by that development.</p> <p>The proposed development provides for a 20 no. child place creche in accordance with the guidelines.</p>

3.6 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) provides guidance relating to the design of urban roads and streets. The DMURS presents a series of principles, approaches, and standards necessary to achieve the best design outcomes regarding same. A detailed compliance statement has been prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers, which explores how the development is in compliance with DMURS Standards.

3.7 The Planning System and Flood Risk Management

Planning Authorities must implement these Guidelines in ensuring that, where relevant, flood risk is a key consideration in preparing development plans and local area plans and in the assessment of planning applications. The Guidelines will also assist regional authorities in preparing regional planning guidelines and should be utilised by developers and the wider public in addressing flood risk in preparing development proposals.

Policy	Consistency
<p>Among the core objectives of the Guidelines are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. <p>Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off;</p>	<p>As outlined in the accompanying Civil Engineering Report prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers, the subject lands are located in an area of identified flood risk having regard to OPW mapping, including historical flood records. As such, the proposed development will not have any adverse impact on flood risk in the area.</p>

04. Regional Planning Policy

4.1 Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy

The purpose of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework while facilitating choices that reflect the differing needs of the regions. The strategies are being proposed in the context of a renewed focus on “Regional Parity” in the NPF, being promoted to address anti-competitive pressures on Dublin by offering more sustainable choices and options for people, businesses and communities that can positively influence more sustainable patterns of living and working which benefit our entire society and make our economy more equitable and resilient.

The vision statement for the Eastern and Midland Region in the RSES as follows:

“To create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all”.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p><u>Regional Growth Centres</u></p> <p>The RSES profiles the Eastern & Midland Region identifies 16 no. Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) for the Region including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable Settlement Patterns ▪ Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration ▪ Integrated Transport and Land Use ▪ Enhanced Green Infrastructure ▪ Improve Education Skills and Social Inclusion <p>Athlone is categorised as a ‘Regional Growth Centre’ in the settlement hierarchy of the RSES. The RSES supports the direction of significant population and economic growth towards the key Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Drogheda and Dundalk.</p> <p>Chapter 3 of the RSES, ‘Growth Strategy’ states that <i>‘At the core of the RSES is the consideration of a settlement hierarchy for the Region, which sets out the key locations for population and employment growth, coupled with investment in infrastructure and services to meet those growth needs’</i></p>	<p>The proposed development is in accordance with all relevant core objectives of the RSES. The proposed development will positively contribute to the achievement of the RSOs identified in the RSES and Athlone’s status as a ‘Regional Growth Centre’ in the region. ‘Regional Growth Centres’ are second only to Dublin City and Suburbs in the settlement hierarchy of the RSES in terms of centres for targeted growth and expansion.</p> <p>The proposed development will provide both conventional family housing and student accommodation which will support the future development of Athlone Institute of Technology which is one of the main strategic assets of the town.</p> <p>The proposed development will also assist Athlone in realizing its strategic role as a ‘Regional Growth Centre’ in the Core Strategy of the RSES, which requires a population of approximately 30,000 by 2031. According to 2016 census figures Athlone has a population of 21,349, requiring an increase of population of over 40% in the time period 2016-2021.</p>

Table 4.2 of the RSES describes the function of Regional Growth Centres as.

“Regional Growth Centres are large towns with a high level of self-sustaining employment and services that act as regional economic drivers and play a significant role for a wide catchment area.”

Regarding the ‘Settlement Strategy’ of the region the strategic role of Athlone is described as

“Support significant population and economic growth to drive effective regional development, with a vision for Athlone to act as a lead town for the Midlands growing to around 30,000 by 2031”

Section 3.2 of the RSES states the key enablers and priorities for growth across the Region which include.

Target significant growth in the Regional Growth Centres of Athlone, Drogheda and Dundalk to enable them to act as regional drivers, with a focus on improving local economies and quality of life to attract investment and the preparation of urban area plans (UAPs).

Athlone is contained within the ‘Gateway Region’ of the RSES with a key growth enabler of the region stated as being:

- Support continued growth of Athlone, with a focus on quality of life and securing the investment to fulfil its role as a key Regional Growth Centre and economic driver in the centre of Ireland.
- Promote the Region as a key destination for tourism, leisure and recreation activities and support the development of an integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways while ensuring that high value assets and amenities are protected and enhanced.

Athlone Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP)

The RSES envisages a population target of 30,000 for the entire settlement of Athlone up to 2031.

In tandem with the requirements outlined in the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework, the joint UAP for the Regional Growth

The proposed development will support Athlone’s status as an economic driver for the midlands region by providing much needed student accommodation for AIT and providing new conventional residential accommodation for anticipated future investment and employment opportunities in the town reflective of Athlone’s status as a Regional Growth Centre.

The subject lands form part of the ‘Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024’. As confirmed in the Athlone UAP, the Lissywollen South lands is considered a strategic landbank which provides opportunities to develop a new urban quarter extending from the town centre. The delivery of the proposed development in addition to the permitted Alanna Roadbridge SHD scheme to the west will contribute to the ultimate realization of the Lissywollen

Centre of Athlone should endeavour to support and provide for the following:

- support the achievement of compact growth targets with a minimum of 30% of new homes to be built within the existing built up area, supported by the large scale delivery of lands at Curragh Lissywollen, Lissywollen South, Cornamagh, Cornamaddy and Monksland / Bellanamullia.
- The identification of infrastructural investment priorities and promotion of a joined-up approach to the delivery of key enabling infrastructure to facilitate the sequential delivery of strategic residential, employment and regeneration development areas.

Regarding Residential Development the RSES states that

“The development of lands at Curragh Lissywollen, Lissywollen South, Cornamagh, Cornamaddy and Monksland / Bellanamullia, have the potential to deliver the population targets identified in the RSES. In particular, the development of the strategic landbank at Lissywollen South, also offers the opportunity to develop a new urban quarter extending from the town centre”

Regional Policy Objectives - Athlone Regional Growth Centre

Regional Policy Objective 4.5

Promote Athlone as a key location for regional economic development supporting the provision of increased employment through the expansion of the existing enterprise ecosystem in Athlone and smart specialisation, that have developed through collaboration with the relevant enterprise agencies including the IDA, Athlone Institute of Technology and the Midlands Innovation and Research Centre and support the provision of physical infrastructure and zoned lands to realise the phased delivery of strategic employment lands in central accessible locations.

Regional Policy Objective 4.6

Support the role of Athlone Institute of Technology as a centre of excellence for education and in achieving its status as a Technological University.

South Framework Plan which is of local and regional strategic importance.

The proposed development is in full accordance with RPO's 4.5, 4.6 and 4.8 of the RSES. As referenced previously the proposed development will positively contribute to Athlone's strategic function as an economic driver for the midlands and support the future growth of AIT by providing high quality student accommodation.

The subject lands represent a greenfield 'infill' and serviced site in the context of its existing environment and will contribute to a compact urban form focused on the sites location on the Greenway and within walking/cycling distance of local amenities, employment and education opportunities.

Regional Policy Objective 4.8

Support the regeneration of underused town centre and brownfield / infill lands along with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate significant population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth targets of 30% of all new homes to be built within the existing built-up urban area.

Integration of Land Use and Transport

The following principles of land use and transport integration will guide development:

- For urban-generated development, the development of lands, within or contiguous with the existing urban areas will be prioritised over development in less accessible locations. Residential development will be carried out sequentially, whereby lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport– including infill and brownfield sites are prioritised.
- Support the '10 minute' settlement concept, whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or accessible by high quality public transport to these services in larger settlements

Mobility Management and Travel Plans

Regional Policy Objective 8.7

To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behavior change and more sustainable transport use.

The proposed development satisfies all the criteria outlined for the integration of land use and transport.

The proposed development satisfies the sequential test for residential development in the Lissywollen South lands with the Alanna Roadbridge lands immediately to the west. The subject lands are also the most proximate Lissywollen South lands to AIT. As reflected in the sites zoning context the subject lands are the most appropriate location for student accommodation in the wider Lissywollen lands.

The proposed development will also support the '10 minute' settlement concept promoted in the RSES. As illustrated in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons, the sites location proximate to the existing Greenway, existing pedestrian/cycle infrastructure and the future delivery of Lissywollen Avenue (permitted as part of the Alanna Roadbridge SHD scheme). This will ensure that future residents and occupants will have convenient pedestrian and cycle links to all amenities in Athlone.

A Mobility Management Plan (MMP) prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers accommodates this submission. The MMP adopts 'Smart Travel' principles whereby walking and cycling are strongly supported. It is considered that the proposed development offers a real alternative to 'car orientated' travel and that walking, and cycling will serve the as the primary means of transport for the development.

05. Local Planning Policy

5.1 Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (CDP) came into effect on May 3rd, 2021, and replaced the previous 2014-2020 County Development Plan.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>The stated ‘Strategic Vision’ of the CDP is:</p> <p><i>“To create and facilitate sustainable competitive growth throughout the County that supports the health and well-being of the people of Westmeath, providing an attractive destination, as a place in which to live, work, invest, do business and visit, offering high quality employment and educational opportunities within sustainable communities whilst safeguarding the environmental, cultural, heritage and tourism assets of the County”.</i></p>	<p>The proposed development is consistent with principles of the strategic vision of the CDP. The proposed development is consistent with a ‘plan led approach’ promoted by the CDP with Athlone being identified at local and regional level as a key location for housing and population growth.</p>
<p>Athlone is categorised as a ‘Regional Growth Centre’ in the CDP, reflective of the towns status as same in the RSES.</p> <p>Table 2.6 of the Core Strategy of the CDP identifies a population target of 27,693 in Athlone by 2027 and 30,000 by 2031. This represents a population increase of 30% by 2027 and a further 14% by 2031.</p> <p>Section 2.9 of the Core Strategy refers specifically to the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. The following Core Strategy Policy Objectives refer to Athlone.</p> <p>Table 2.9 of the Core Strategy of the CDP identifies a housing yield of 2,590 units for Athlone over the duration of the plan.</p> <p><u>CPO 2.2</u> – ‘Support the continued growth of Athlone, with a focus on quality of life and securing the investment to fulfil its role as a key Regional Growth Centre and economic driver in the centre of Ireland, with a target population of 30,000 up to 2031.’</p> <p><u>CPO 2.3</u> ‘Prepare a joint statutory Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP) for Athlone with Roscommon County Council in collaboration with EMRA and NWRA.’</p>	<p>The development will support Athlone’s categorization as a ‘Regional Growth Centre’ in the settlement hierarchy of the CDP. Athlone is specifically referenced as a settlement where economic and population growth will need to occur for the County to fulfill its strategic objectives.</p> <p>Core Strategy policies CPO 2-2, 2.3 & 2.4 further stress the importance of the continued growth in Athlone which is of significant regional importance. The development of the site would contribute towards the realization of the core strategy housing targets for Athlone as set out in Table 2.9 of the CDP.</p>

CPO 2.4 'Promote Athlone as a sustainable transport hub, of national and regional importance and support the preparation of a Joint Transport Plan between Westmeath and Roscommon County Councils in collaboration with transport agencies and key stakeholders to improve sustainable mobility in the town.'

Other Core Strategy Policy Objectives include

CPO 2.14 – 'Implement all land use planning policy and objectives in a manner which takes account of and is consistent with the Core Strategy in order to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient County with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns'

CPO 2.16 - 'Promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.'

CPO 2.17 – 'Support the regeneration of underused town centre and brownfield / infill lands along with the delivery of existing zoned and serviced lands to facilitate population growth and achieve sustainable compact growth targets of 30% of all new housing to be built within the existing urban footprint of targeted settlements in the County.'

Chapter 3 – Housing

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to promote the following housing strategy policy objectives.

CPO 3.2 Ensure that settlements grow in a manner that is self-sustaining with sufficient social and economic infrastructure, and to a scale which aligns with the Settlement Hierarchy prescribed in the Core Strategy.

CPO 3.7 – 'Apply higher densities to the higher order settlements of Athlone and Mullingar to align with their roles as Regional Growth Centre and Key Town, subject to good design and development management standards being met.

CPO 3.14 – 'In developments of 20 units or above, the development should achieve, where possible, a minimum of 5% of units designed and built to facilitate occupation by persons with a disability

The proposed development will support all relevant core policy objectives in the CDP. The subject lands represent an infill greenfield landbank in the 'Regional Growth Centre' of Athlone. The subject lands are served by existing and future pedestrian and cycle upgrades to service centres including the town centre, AIT, regional sports centre and employment locations. As referenced previously in this report, the proposed development is also compliant with the 2009 Guidelines relating to appropriate scales and densities of development.

The proposed development will support the housing strategy and policy objectives of the CDP. The proposed development is consistent with the settlement hierarchy of the CDP which identifies Athlone as a 'Regional Growth Centre'.

Objective CPO 3.7 of the CDP specifies that higher density developments are appropriate in Athlone given the towns strategic importance and ambitious growth targets set.

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with Part M requirements and will enable future occupants of all abilities to access new residential accommodation in Athlone. The proposed apartment blocks and student accommodation have been equipped with an elevator and proposed dwellings are at street level ensuring ease of access for all future residents. CPO 3.14.

The proposed development is fully compliant with the requirements set out in CPO 3.15, as detailed previously.

without structural changes, in accordance with 'Universal Design Guidelines for Homes 2015'

CPO 3.15 To support the development of quality residential schemes with a range of housing options having regard to the standards, principles and any specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) set out in the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009); 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018) and the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2020).

Chapter 7 – Urban Centres and Placemaking

CPO 7.1 - Provide for a high-quality public realm and public spaces by promoting quality urban design that accommodates creative patterns of use having regard to the physical, cultural, and social identities of individual settlements.

Chapter 10 – Transport, Infrastructure and Energy

CPO 10.8 - Prepare in conjunction with Roscommon County Council and relevant agencies, an Area Based Transport Plan for Athlone to facilitate the growth of Athlone as a regional economic driver.

CPO 10.10 – Support the National Smarter Travel policy and make central tenets of its transport strategy: Killucan Station, a regular bus services to Westmeath towns and villages and the re-opening of light rail on the old Mullingar to Athlone Rail line.

CPO 10.33 – Support the reopening of the Mullingar to Athlone Rail Line and Moate Railway Station, thereby increasing connectivity between these Towns.

CPO 10.54 - Implement the recommendations of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and relevant 'TII Publications' in relation to urban streets and roads within the 50/60 km/h zone.

CPO 10.62 – Require all applications for significant development proposals affecting Regional or Local Roads to be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit (RSA), carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines.

A variety of public open spaces are seen throughout the development, finished with high quality soft and hard landscaping.

A Mobility Management Plan accompanies this application which outlines key measures that constitute the Smarter Travel Strategy for the proposed development, one of which includes locating the development an attractive distance to and between key locations encouraging behavioural change and consequently reducing car dependency serves as a core guiding principle. Proximity to the Old Rail Trail Greenway and the provision of direct walking and cycling access to same is key to realizing this. The manner in which sustainable modes of transport are promoted within the development ensures that scheme will support the preparation of an Area Based Transport Plan, noted under CPO 10.8.

A detailed DMURS compliance statement prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers accompanies this application, which illustrates how the proposed scheme is in full compliance with DMURS and objective CPO 10.54.

A Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) prepared for the proposed development concludes that junction arrangements within the development will operate satisfactorily in accommodating the levels and types of traffic likely to be generated by the development in terms of traffic capacity. Section 6 of the TTA is concerned with Roads and Safety. (CPO 10.62).

CPO 10.104 – Implement and comply fully with the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared as part of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

CPO 10.105 – Have regard to the “Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management” (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014, through the use of the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests in Development Management.

CPO 10.119 - Require that planning applications are accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment that addresses run-off quantity, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality.

As stated previously, the subject site is not located within an area of defined flood risk. It is therefore, considered suitable for the proposed development.

ORS Consulting outline the Drainage Strategy for the development within their Civil Engineering Report. SuDS are used throughout the site to help mitigate the adverse effects of urban stormwater runoff on the environment. Some of these measures include the use of green roofs, rain gardens, permeable paving and attenuation systems which promote infiltration. (CPO 10.119.)

Chapter 16 - Development Management Standards

CPO 16.20 - Private Open Space – ‘All dwelling houses should generally have an area of private open space located to the rear of their dwelling and comprise a

Accommodation size	Min private open area
1-2 bedrooms	48m ²
3-4-5 bedrooms	60-75m ²
Inner urban infill dwellings.	25m ²

minimum area as follows’

CPO 16.21 - Public Open Space Provision & Recreational Amenities- ‘In general, 15% of gross site area should be provided for multifunctional open spaces at suitable locations within new residential scheme’.

CPO 16.24 – Residential Density

Increased residential density within Athlone Regional Centre and Mullingar (key town) in principle where the subject lands are:

- within walking distance of the town centre, or
- are adequately serviced by necessary social infrastructure and public transport and/or
- designated regeneration sites and development lands which comprise in excess of 0.5ha, subject to quality design and planning merit in ensuring compact growth and the creation of good urban places and attractive neighbourhoods.

CPO 16.25 – Residential Density

New development proposals should be fully permeable for walking and cycling and the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling facilities should be undertaken where practicable in existing neighbourhoods, in order to give a competitive advantage to these modes for local trip making.

Where possible, new residential developments should provide for filtered permeability, i.e. provide for walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle

The proposed development is in accordance with all development management criteria identified in Chapter 16 of the CDP

Private Open Space: As demonstrated in the Housing Quality Assessment prepared by Henry J Lyons, all proposed dwelling houses exceed the minimum private open space area referenced in the CDP.

Public Open Space: 20% of the subject site area has been reserved for public open space.

16.24, 16.25 Residential Density:

The proposed density of the residential element of the scheme is 40 units per hectare. Given the proximity of the site to Athlone Town Centre, Old Rail Trail Greenway, and the quality of the overall design of the scheme, this density is considered both appropriate and warranted for the subject lands. The accompanying Planning Statement, Statement of Material Contravention, and Design Statement further explore the design rationale of the proposed scheme and its appropriateness given its local context.

16.35 Roads and Transportation

As outlined previously, a DMURS compliance report, Traffic and Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit and Mobility Management Plan have been prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers outlining how the design of the proposed development is fully

access while restricting or discouraging private car through trips.

CPO 16.35 – Roads and Transportation

Traffic Management and Road Safety

All new road layouts should be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and relevant TII publications.

Development proposals should also include provision for a sustainable modal split, with pedestrian and cycling facilities recognised as an important aspect of new design proposals.

Road Safety Audit

A Road Safety Audit may be required to demonstrate that a proposed development does not pose a risk to road users, create a traffic nuisance or contribute to congestion. It should be carried out on all new national road infrastructure projects and on any schemes/proposal which results in a permanent change to the layout of a national road by suitably competent persons, in accordance with TII Publications GE-STY-01024 Road Safety Audit).

Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA)

A Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA) provides a strategic comparative analysis of the impact of a new road, or for substantial modifications to an existing road, on the safety performance of the road network as defined within the EU Directive on Road Infrastructure Safety Management (EU RISM) 2008/96/EC. The RSIA shall be prepared by suitably competent persons, in accordance with TII Publications PE-PMG-02001 Road Safety Impact Assessment.

Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTAs)

Development proposals that are likely to create significant vehicular movements will be required to undertake a site-specific assessment to demonstrate the impact of the proposal on the integrated transport system by means of a Transport and Transport Assessment (TTA). The TTA should include an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the full range of modes of transport and incorporate traffic impact statements, road safety audits and measures

compliant with their respective European and National directives or guidance documents.

to maximise accessibility of non-private car related movement, carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the 'TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines'.

Mobility Management Plans (MMPs)

Mobility Management Plans should include achievable measures to reduce dependency on private car use for daily commutes and incorporate where possible;

Measures to promote use of public transport, cycling and walking;

- Car sharing/carpooling;
- Charges for parking;
- Staggered working/business hours.

Mobility Management Plans may be subject to annual reviews. It is recognised that the first (and subsequent) annual reviews of a Mobility Management Plan are the key stages in making them tangible as they will be tailored to real travel-to-work patterns and not a generic model based upon assumptions).

CPO 16.36 - Car Parking Standards

Disabled Parking - A minimum of 5% of car parking spaces provided should be designed for disabled car parking.

Residential Dwelling - 1 no. space per unit

Visitor Parking for Residential - 1 visitor space for every three dwellings

CPO 16.37 – Cycle Storage

Assess all planning applications for development having regard to the cycling storage requirements set out under Table 16.3, which are considered to be a minimum requirement.

CPO 16.43 – Childcare Facilities

- Demonstrate compliance with the 'Guidelines on Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) and Circular Letter PL3 2016 or any superseding guidelines.

16.36, 16.37 Car parking standards

As per discussions with Westmeath County Council, the proposed development makes provision for reduced car parking ratios of 1.3 spaces per residential unit, and 0.1 spaces per student housing bedroom. This equates to

157 no. resident car parking spaces

39 no. student car parking spaces

4 no. creche car parking spaces

In total, the development provides 4 car parking spaces.

The proposed development provides 519 cycle storage spaces in total, comprising:

118 no. residential storage spaces

283 no. student Housing storage spaces

118 no. other external spaces storage spaces

16.43 Childcare facilities

A Childcare Needs Assessment was carried out for the proposed development, in compliance with CPO 16.43. Based on available records, the assessment identified notable capacity within existing and planned childcare

- Provide justification for proposed site location.
- Provide details on accessibility, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport provisions and linkages to the proposed development.
- Identify adequate and safe set-down and collection areas to facilitate peak traffic movements.
- Identify adequate on-site car parking for staff.
- Identify adequate play area(s) for pupils.
- New or expanded premises should have regard to traffic impact associated with the number of children and staff to be accommodated and should provide adequate set-down areas and car parking areas to prevent traffic congestion.
- Large scale proposals may be required to present a Mobility Management Plan to mitigate against traffic volumes by proposing staggered opening hours and drop off times to avoid congestion at peak times.

The following locations are considered appropriate for the provision of childcare facilities:

- In communities/larger new housing estates.
- The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working.
- Near schools.
- Neighbourhood and town centres.
- Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

CPO 16.61 – Climate

Assess applications for development, having consideration to any national guidelines and criteria set out under the sub-headings below in respect of sustainable building practices and renewable energy that serve to reduce energy demand, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change in accordance with national and regional policy.

facilities in close proximity to site, which can potentially cater for any increased demand in childcare services generated from the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, provision has been made for a 20-place childcare creche as part of the proposed development in compliance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001, and Local Policy Objective CPO 16.43. We refer you to the accompanying Childcare Needs Assessment Report for further detail. The creche is located in an accessible part of the site and includes dedicated car parking facilities.

All new development proposals will be required to include measures that incorporate sustainable building practices in accordance with the following criteria:

Low Energy Buildings:

- Include design measures which minimise energy use, including by passive solar design, energy-efficient building design and emission reduction measures;
- Design measures which promote renewable and low carbon energy;
- Is designed for flexible use throughout its lifetime;
- Promote the use of green roofs and natural ventilation;
- Promote the use of permeable surfaces to decrease runoff rates;
- Institute grey-water recycling schemes to decrease abstraction of potable surface water resources, thus reducing water stress during periods of low rainfall;
- Maximise water conservation;
- Avoids internal overheating and excessive heat generation;
- Supplies energy efficiently and incorporates decentralised energy systems such as District Heating and uses renewable energy where feasible;
- Procures materials sustainably using local suppliers wherever possible ensuring designs make the most of natural systems both within and around the building;
- Manages flood risk, including through sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and flood resilient design for infrastructure and property;
- Enhance flood resilience of buildings, e.g. elevated work surfaces and storage facilities, raised sockets and electrical infrastructure, enhanced flood boards;

All civil engineering works have been designed in accordance with Irish Building Regulations Technical Guidance Documents. There are 14 separate documents within these guidelines, one of which includes specific guidance on conservation of fuel and energy for dwellings and other buildings (Technical Guidance Document L). Please refer to the Civil Engineering Report prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers for further detail. (16.61).

The application includes a building lifecycle report which confirms that the development will be constructed using sustainable materials, which will effectively reduce costs for the benefit of future residents. The proposal makes provision for renewable energy generation and incorporates detailed SuDs measures.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensures developments are comfortable and secure for users; ■ Conserves and enhances the natural environment, particularly in relation to biodiversity, and enables easy access to open spaces; ■ Avoids the creation of adverse local climatic conditions; ■ Reduces air and water pollution; ■ Promotes sustainable waste behaviour in new and existing developments. 	
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5.2 Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 – (As amended)

The subject lands are contained within the functional area of the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 (ATDP). Variation 3 of the ATDP represents the ‘Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024’ which will be assessed in Section 5.3 of this report.

Policy	Consistency with Scheme
<p>Core Strategy Policies include.</p> <p>P-CS7 - <i>“To ensure a sequential approach to development and promote residential development, prioritisation of infill sites / developments and the occupation of residential units in the town core, in order to promote the achievement of critical mass and protect and enhance town centre function.”</i></p> <p>P-CS8 - <i>“To promote the integration of land use and transportation policy and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.”</i></p> <p>P-CS11 - <i>“To promote the appropriate use and re-use of town centre backland and under-utilised sites and to promote the regeneration of areas in need of renewal.”</i></p>	<p>The proposed development will support the core objectives of the ATDP by delivering new residential development on an infill greenfield site within the defined settlement boundary and promote walking and cycling within the wider settlement.</p>
<p>The Core Strategy of the ATDP contains the following Strategic Aims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting the development and expansion of Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) 	<p>The proposed student accommodation will also support the long-term future of AIT in the town which is one of Athlone’s most important strategic assets.</p> <p>The location of the proposed student blocks to the southeast of the site is consistent with guidance contained</p>

Regarding Student Accommodation serving Athlone Institute of Technology, the ATDP states it is a policy of the Council to.

P-SA1 - To support the provision of high quality, professionally managed and purpose built third level student accommodation on campus or in appropriate locations close to the main AIT campus or adjacent to high quality public transport corridors and cycle routes, in a manner which respects the residential amenity of the surrounding area.

in Objective P-SA1. The student accommodation will be situated a short distance from the campus which is serviced by cycle and pedestrian path infrastructure. It will support The subject sites suitability for accommodating student accommodation is reflected by the sites zoning context in the Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024 which earmarks it as a suitable location for such purposes.

Table 3.3 of the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 provides for the following in respect of density of development.

Location for new Residential Development	General Density Parameters
Town Centre & Brownfield Sites	Site Specific 35 per ha
At strategic locations including public transport nodes	35 units per ha
Inner suburban/Infill	Site Specific
Outer Suburban/Greenfield	30-35 per ha
Outer edge of Urban/Rural Transition	20-35 per ha

The ATDP sets out a density range of 30-35 dwellings per hectare in outer suburban / greenfield sites unless otherwise prescribed in Local Area Plans. Separately the Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024 states that in general, a residential density of 35 units per hectare shall apply across the Framework Plan area, noting that there is scope for increase densities in prescribed areas. The proposed residential component is 40 dwellings per hectare consistent with the Framework Plan and national policy. A Statement of Material Contravention is enclosed with the application in this regard.

5.3 Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024

The subject lands forms part of the wider Lissywollen South Framework Plan area which is approximately 78 hectares in area. The Vision Statement of the corresponding Lissywollen South Framework Plan (LSFP) is.

‘To create a vibrant and sustainable residential quarter which supports and encourages economic, social and community development, and which is attractive to residents and visitors alike, maximises connectivity to both the town centre and Old Rail Trail and offers a high level of environmental quality to ensure an excellent quality of life for all.’

Policy

Section 3.2 of the LSFP describes the principles which elaborate the vision and underpin the Plan’s Strategies.

Consistency with Scheme

The layout, scale and form of development is consistent with the vision and principles of the LSFP. As detailed in the Architectural Design Statement, the proposed development will provide for a distinctive new mixed

- To protect and enhance existing positive aspects of character, environment and heritage.
- To create distinctive attractive places with identity and a sense of place and community.
- To enhance connectivity, accessibility and permeability throughout the plan area by creating strong linkages to the town centre, the Old Rail Trail and key destinations such as the Regional Sports Centre and AIT.
- To promote a mix of uses and diversity of activities throughout the area with a focus on certain functions in different areas
- To add strong and complementary destination functions to the existing uses.
- To create a quality landscape, urban and open space structure.
- To provide and enhance community, educational and recreational facilities.
- To provide for sustainable patterns of movement and access with priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- To provide high quality of architectural design and innovative layouts incorporating elements of special heritage value and character.
- To promote energy efficiency and adaptable lifelong dwellings.

The plan strategies provide the basic overall structure and the planning and design rationale for the plan. They are driven by the vision and principles and form the basic structure under the following headings:

- Land use and function
- Landscape and urban form
- Access and movement.

Land Use & Function Strategy

Map 1 of the LSFP demonstrates the 'Land Use & Function Strategy' for the area with the subject lands contained within 'Area 4-Residential' which is to accommodate significant population and housing growth in Athlone in the coming years.

neighbourhood in Athlone with permeability and sustainable travel a key design consideration.

The location of the higher density student accommodation and apartment/duplex buildings to the south of the site reflects the maximisation of the site's location adjacent the Old Rail Greenway and AIT to the south.

The proposed architectural design compliments the sites' sustainable location and provides for high quality public realm and open space areas providing for an efficient and adaptable mixed-use scheme.

As described in the Architectural Design Statement and landscape package, the key design objectives of the proposed development are consistent with the guiding principles of the LSFP.

- To provide a landscape scheme which delivers a high quality of visual amenity and passive recreation for all residents all year round.
- To create an attractive, high-quality landscape for the residents and their lifestyles. Well-designed landscapes, especially in neighbourhoods contribute to an overall sense of well-being by providing places for people to meet up for a walk, for collaboration or just to chat. People places are successful places.
- To ensure that the plants proposed are suitable in terms of scale, species selection, ongoing maintenance and overall longevity.
- To adopt a repetition and rhythm of plant species to ensure a cohesive style and an overall consistency.
- To retain and reinforce hedgerow boundaries of the scheme, where appropriate, which will provide a positive aspect to the landscape and offer significant ecological mitigation measures.

The proposed development complies with the Land Use & Function Strategy of the Lissywollen Framework. The proposed development provides for an appropriate scale, mix and form of residential development in the 'Area 4-Residential' designation.

The proposed mix will satisfy various sectors of the local housing and rental market with dedicated student

Regarding this area section 3.4.1 of the LSFP states.

“Area 4 provides for in excess of 20 hectares of land for residential use within four distinctive land parcels. The plan will provide for the creation of sustainable residential neighbourhoods together with a range of dwelling sizes and typologies to accommodate emerging demographic trends. The success of good housing and environs anchors strong balanced and cohesive communities. There is a need to provide for an adequate level of diversity in the building form; diversity of layout and tenure can contribute to making successful living environment. It is essential that each Neighbourhood is within walkable distance to public transport nodes.”

The LSFP contains the following objectives regarding the ‘Land Use & Function Strategy’ of the area.

O-LUF5 - To ensure the timely provision of community facilities and services in tandem with the development of lands.

O-LUF10 - To promote a variety of residential typologies, including terraced, semi-detached, detached housing, duplexes and apartments with coherent streets and connected open spaces to create distinctive neighbourhoods that will promote adaptable whole life-cycle living

accommodation, young professional and family housing provided.

The is significant diversity in built form as well as function promoted via the proposed layout. two bus stops are proposed as part of the development which will benefit the wider area and future residential and student populations will benefit from direct access to high quality amenities, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure. A childcare facility is included in the design as part of supporting community use.

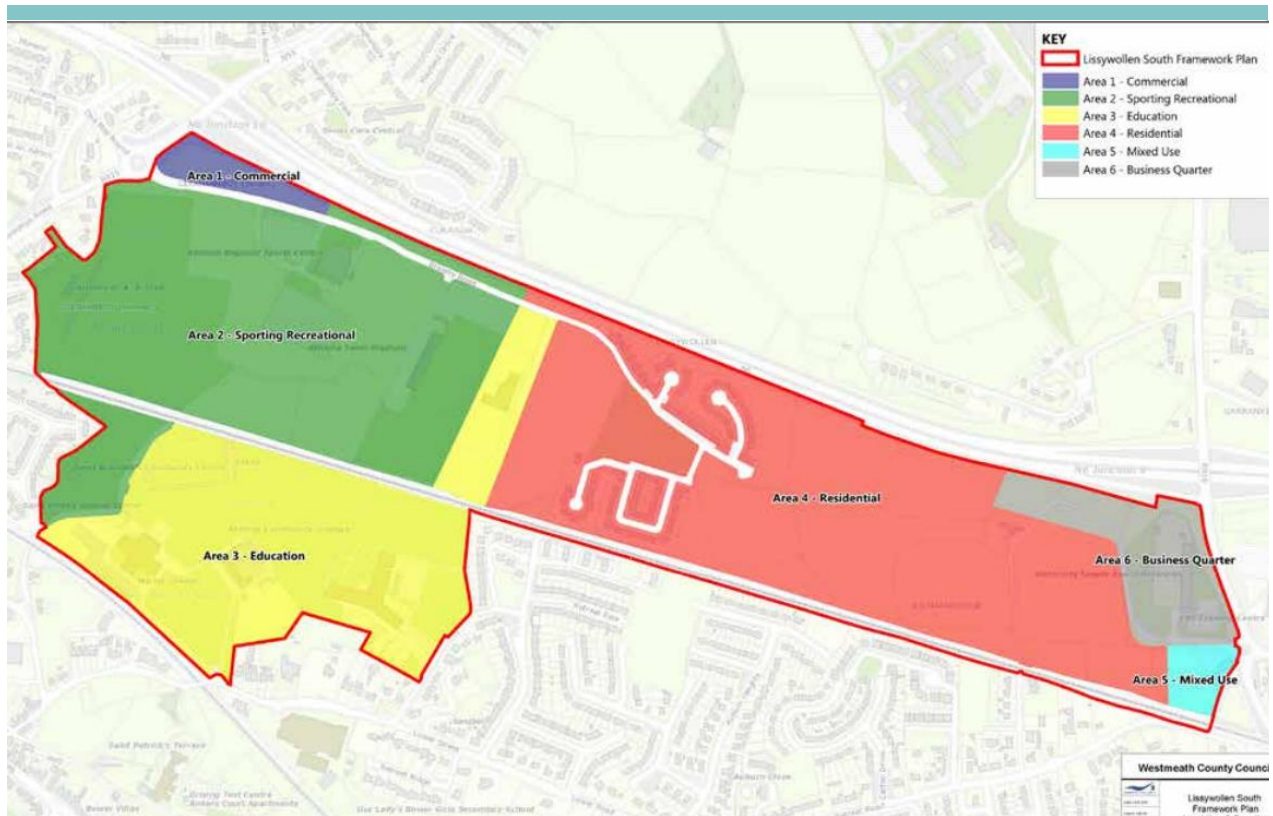


Figure 1: Land Use & Function Strategy – (Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024)

Landscape and Urban Form

Map 2 of the LSFP describes the Landscape & Urban Form Strategy for the LSFP lands.

The LSFP contains the following objectives regarding 'Landscape and Urban Form' of the area.

O-LUF1 - To protect and supplement existing landscape features of amenity and biodiversity value such as established field boundaries, significant hedgerows and stands of trees, and to incorporate same into the new urban structure.

O-LUF4 - To provide a hierarchy of linked urban and open spaces across the plan area with connectivity to the Regional Sports Centre, business quarter, new residential areas and the Old Rail Trail including the creation of active and passive recreation areas and children's play areas.

O-LUF5 - To promote biodiversity by surveying and protecting existing areas of biodiversity value and provide for new and extended areas of biodiversity, where identified.

The accompanying landscape details and Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons provides a full analysis of how the proposed development satisfies the 'Landscape and Urban Form' strategy of the LSFP.

The proposed development provides a linked necklace of urban green spaces within the site which will not only serve the subject site but provide a distinctive eastern 'gateway' to the Lissywollen lands. The landscape and urban strategy for the site allows for strong desire lines to the Greenway to the south, ensuring the development promotes permeability and pedestrian movements within the site.

In line with O-LUF1, the most significant existing landscape features have been retained, and incorporated into the design of the proposed development which are described in Landscape Drawings no. L206-208. This has been informed by arborist and ecological surveys.

In accordance with O-LUF5 ecological surveys have been undertaken to promote biodiversity value and retention.

O-LUF7 - To ensure a continuous frontage and passive supervision over open spaces and green links, in particular, along the Old Rail Trail Greenway.

O-LUF8 - To provide a distinctive urban form that responds to the character of the locality and allows for ease of access and navigation.

Q-LUF9 - To ensure new development proposals respond to the local context and avoid monotonous and repetitive styles of 'volume building' type schemes."

O-LUF10 - To ensure a continuous frontage and appropriate massing and scale along new routes and focal spaces.

O-LUF12 - To promote high quality architect designed innovative layouts and energy efficient design.

O-LUF13 - To consider opportunities for higher buildings where they provide a clear benefit for legibility and identity for the area, and where they are compatible with the skyline and development management standards prescribed in the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020.

O-LUF14 – To promote the development of a landmark building within the Student Quarter to denote this important entry point to Athlone.

O-LUF15 – To protect environmental quality in Lissywollen through the implementation of European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management, in order to support the national transition to a climate resilient low carbon society and economy, at a local and county level.

To allow for passive surveillance of the Old Rail Trail Greenway, Housing Blocks S1 and R1 are designed and orientated to overlook same over. These measures have been taken to comply with O-LUF7. The submitted Statement of Material Contravention addresses any perceptions that continuous built form should be positioned along the greenway. This is not deliverable due to legal landownership and would conflict with other objectives to retain trees and hedgerows at this location.

The Student Quarter to the southeast of the scheme comprises three distinct landmark buildings, created having regard to O-LUF 14. These buildings will denote the entrance to Lissywollen and the wider area of Athlone, serving as important local landmarks and wayfinding points once constructed. A detailed Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects submitted with this application offers further insight into the design rationale of the scheme.

All the proposed urban spaces provide for welcoming environments for future residents and visitors to enjoy and will ensure that the site becomes a 'destination point' in its own right. The urban design and communal nature of the urban/amenity spaces will promote community interactions ensuring that the student accommodation quarter and the conventional residential housing units will develop as a new mixed and vibrant community in Athlone.

The interrelationship between the proposed buildings and the public urban spaces provides passive surveillance and an attractive environment for relaxation and recreation. The sites' location adjacent to the greenway and existing pedestrian/cycle infrastructure in the area will ensure that walking/cycling will be the primary means of access to the site. The presence of the taller apartment buildings along the southern areas of the site represents a key interface between the site and the greenway promoting a strong urban form.

The proposed landscape and urban strategy of the site will positively contribute to the development of the wider Lissywollen lands and compliment the core principles of the plan which promotes the green infrastructure strategy in the LSFP,

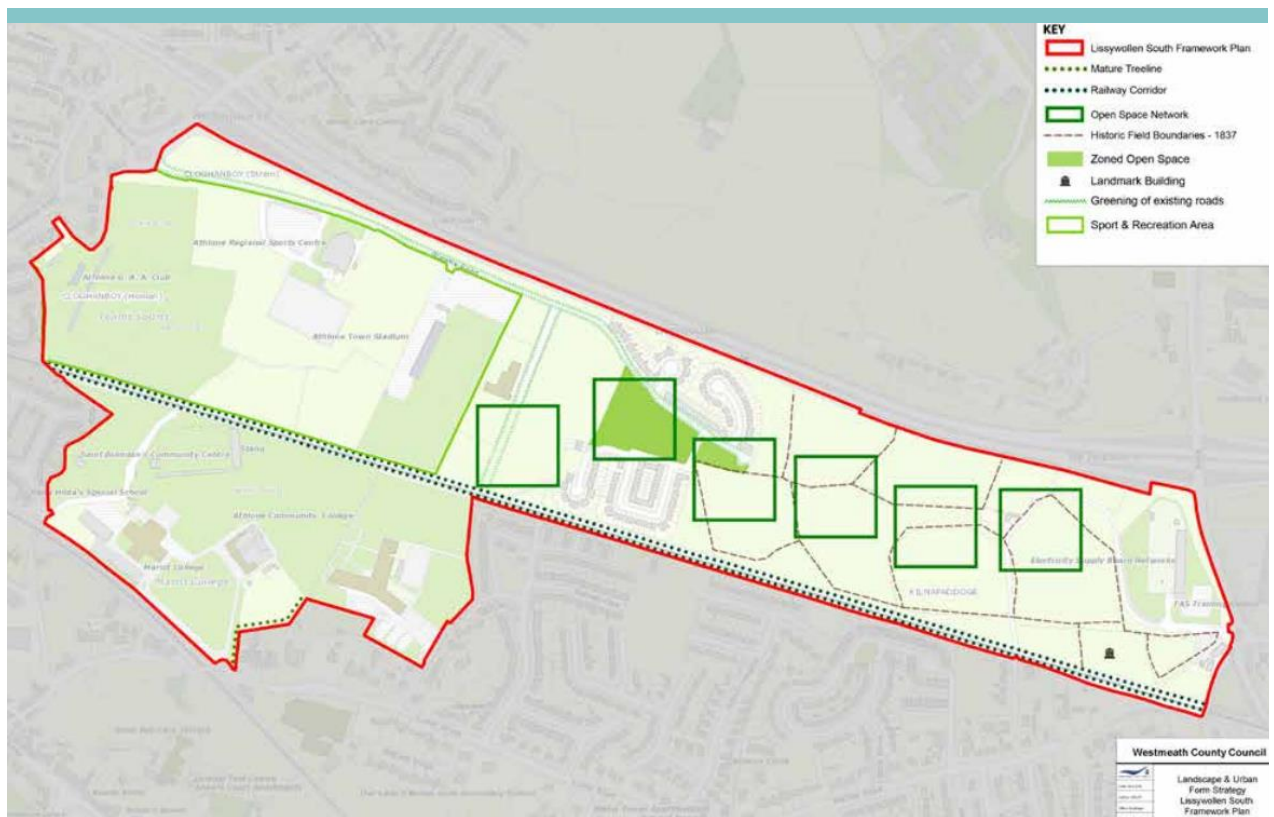


Figure 2: Landscape and Urban Form Strategy (Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024)

Access and Movement

Map 3 of the LSFP describes the Access & Movement Strategy for the LSFP lands. The strategy aims to address current issues of connections and barriers and presents a framework for more sustainable transport forms and movement such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The strategy seeks to capitalise on existing infrastructure such as the Old Rail Greenway and deliver new access routes including the Lissywollen Avenue (east – west access route) and North – South Avenue.

The LSFP contains the following objectives regarding ‘Access and Movement’ in the area.

O-AM1 - To provide a new and extended east west Lissywollen Avenue in the form of an urban boulevard linking and unifying all parts of the plan area.

O-AM2 -To integrate a secondary network of streets with Lissywollen Avenue and the existing street network.

O-AM4 To promote and support a culture of sustainable travel in conjunction with the local schools

The accompanying landscape details and Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons confirms that the proposed development is in accordance with the access and movement strategy in the LSFP. A core design principle of the proposed development has been to promote sustainable mobility within the site and to link in with existing and future pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the area.

The ‘east-west’ urban boulevard, permitted as part of the Alanna Roadbridge SHD (Lissywollen Avenue) will provide vehicular access to the subject lands in addition to pedestrian and cycle access from the north. The presence of Lissywollen Avenue/ Blackberry Lane along the subject sites boundaries results that there is an existing cycle/pedestrian route abutting the subject lands which connects to the Old Rail Greenway to the south.

The proposed development promotes permeability though the site and provides a clear hierarchy of streets and pedestrian priority areas ensuring that the development is easily accessible and walkable for people of all ages.

and AIT, whilst maximising the user potential of the Old Rail Trail.

O-AM5 - To provide an integrated and permeable network of streets with high quality pedestrian and cycle networks, maximising linkages within the area, to the Old Rail Trail and to the wider environs.

O-AM7 - To provide for a high-quality safe pedestrian and cycle network within the Plan Area with high levels of permeability, passive surveillance and supervision and to ensure that this network will provide attractive, legible and direct links to the Town Centre, AIT, the Regional Sports Centre, Bus Stops and the wider environs.

O-AM11 - To prohibit the siting of rear elevations/gardens onto public open spaces, streets and the N6 national route.

The subject site is very well served by existing and permitted cycle and pedestrian facilities. A dedicated north-south cycle lane will be provided linking Lissywollen Avenue and the greenway.

In accordance with O-AM7, all cycle, pedestrian and public open spaces are overlooked.

Noting the wording of Policy O-AM11, it is proposed to back housing onto Blackberry Lane. This has been done consciously by the architects to maintain the historic character and biodiversity value of Blackberry Lane. We consider that this approach is supported by the Landscape and Urban Form Objectives as set out in Section 3.5.5 of the plan. The rationale for same is set out in the submitted Architectural Design and Planning Statements. This matter is also included in the Statement of Material Contravention in the event that An Bord Pleanála consider that it may contravene local policy.

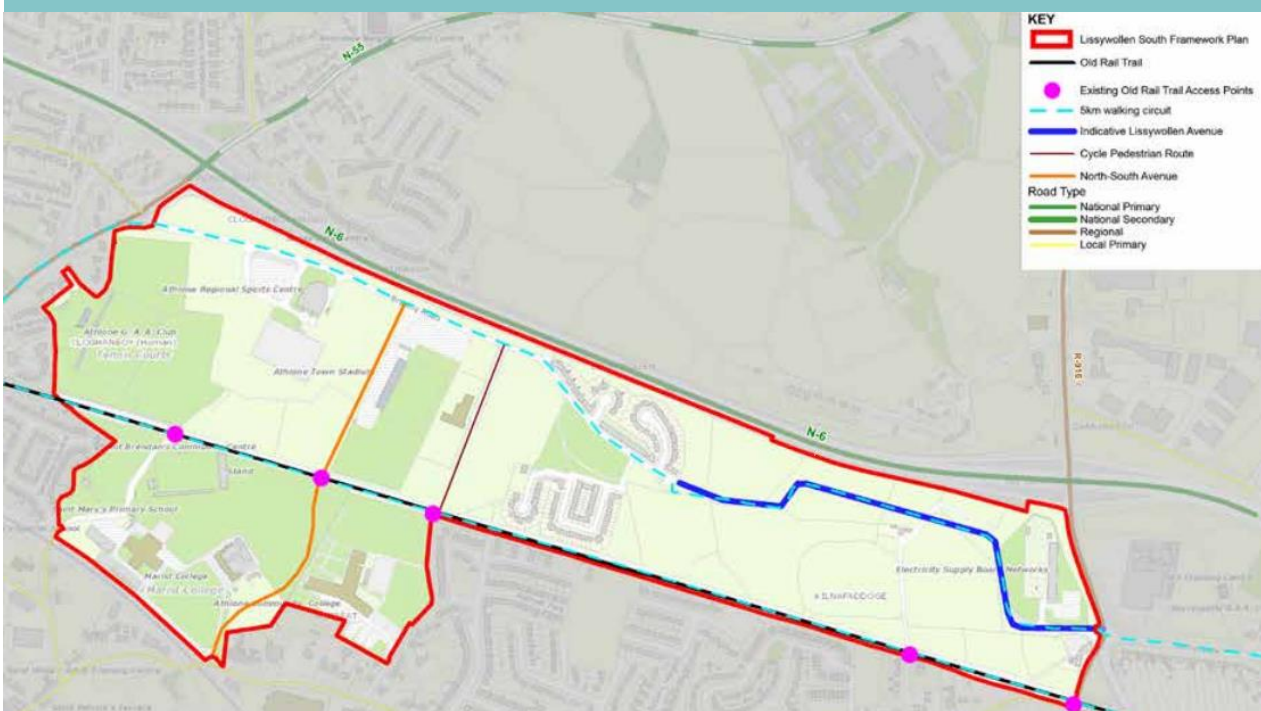


Figure 3. Access and Movement Strategy (Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024)

Section 4 'Framework Strategies' of the LSFP divides the residentially zoned lands within the plan area into 4 parcels of land, each with their own vision and objectives. The subject lands are contained within parcels 2 and 4 of the framework strategy.

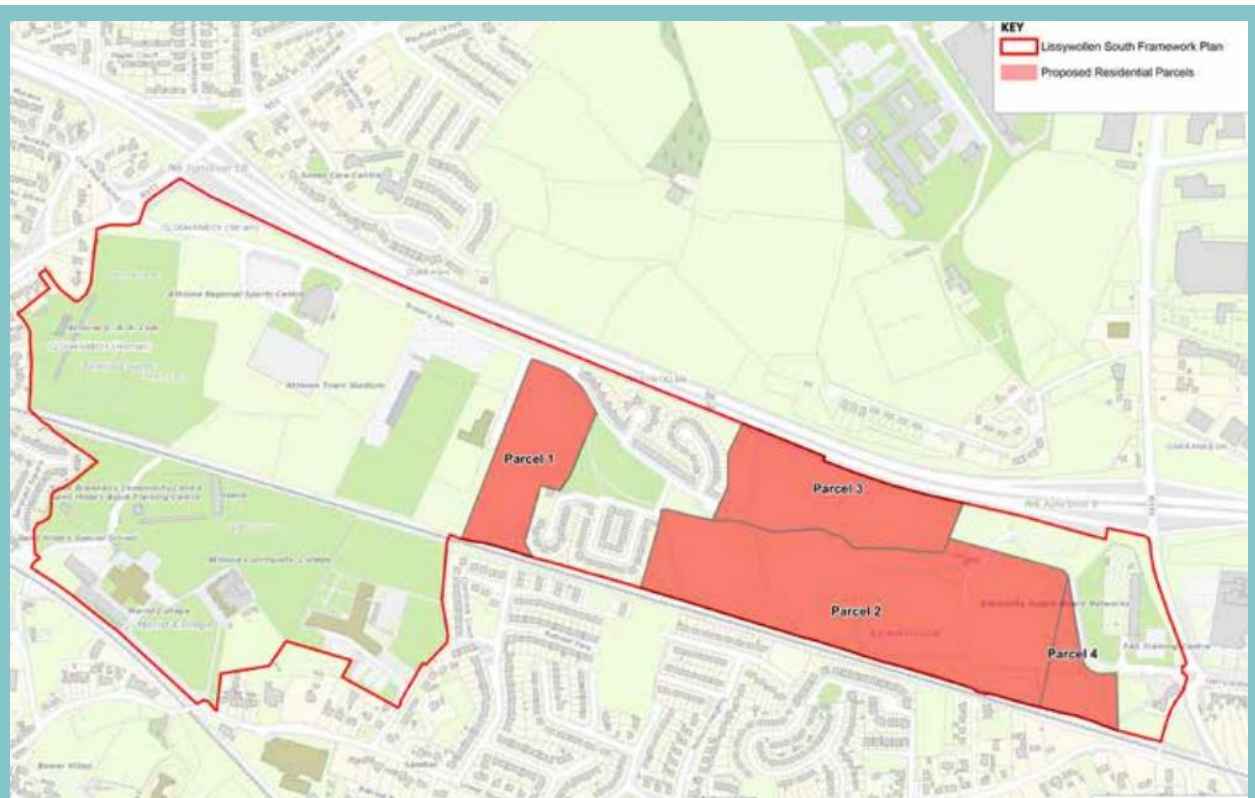


Figure 4. Residential zoned land parcels within the Lissywollen South Framework Plan

Parcel 2

Table 7 of the LSFP describes the 'Guiding Principles' of the development of Parcel 2 which include.

- To create a central east-west avenue/urban boulevard, Lissywollen Avenue, in the form of a Main Street or boulevard linking the Brawny scheme to the R916. The route shall be dictated by the existing landscape character to provide a distinctive urban form with landmarks and vistas to provide ease of orientation.
- To provide for an adequate level of diversity in the building form, tenure and layout to contribute to successful living and working environments.
- To establish a coherent spatial structure, based on urban design principles, as a focus for a new community and its integration with the established Brawny community.

The relevant objectives for the Parcel 2 lands are.

P2-KS03 - To create and improve a hierarchy of interconnecting green spaces which link existing public open space with the Regional Sports Centre

The proposed development supports and compliments the 'guiding principles' of both Land Parcels 2 and 4 of the LSFP.

- The central east-west avenue/urban boulevard, Lissywollen Avenue has been permitted through the Alanna Roadbridge SHD site to the west. The proposed development is ideally placed to capitalise on the future delivery of the road and will assist in justifying the significant investment in critical infrastructure in the area.
- The proposed development provides for diverse range of building heights, architectural treatments and public realm improvements which will contribute to the long term sustainable and successful regeneration site in Athlone.
- As demonstrated in the accompanying Architectural Design Statement, the proposed development has been designed in accordance with guidance within the Urban Design Manual and will assist in creating diverse new communities in Athlone.

complex through the provision of safe pedestrian and cycle routes through the area, having regard to the Landscape Framework & Access Strategy.

P2-KS04 - To provide a series of pocket parks as informal recreational spaces.

P2-KS06 - To provide a public park along the eastern end of Parcel 2 to serve new residential development, the student quarter and adjoining business district.

The proposed scheme will achieve the objectives of Parcel 2. As detailed in the landscaping details prepared by Forestbird Design, the proposed development provides for high quality green spaces which will facilitate interactions. The layout of the site will assist in attracting people to the southern areas of the site most proximate to the greenway with future connections provided.

The landscape strategy provides for a necklace of green/ and urban public open spaces, capturing the sites traditional rural setting and its evolving urban context.

Objective P2-KS06 of the Framework Plan includes an objective to provide a public park along the eastern end of Parcel 2. The requirements for same are not defined in any prescriptive manner, rather an audit of existing local amenities has been undertaken alongside the identification of future residential, student and business need to develop an appropriate approach. This has culminated in the creation of a series of linked spaces as part of a modern parkland approach.

Parcel 4

The relevant objectives for the Parcel 4 lands are.

P4-KS01 - To support the provision of high-quality, professionally managed and purpose built third-level student accommodation adjacent to high-quality public transport corridors and cycle routes, in a manner which respects the residential amenity and character of the surrounding area.

P4-KS02 - To promote modern architectural expression in the design of higher density buildings and apartments. In particular where the buildings define public spaces, the design creates architectural individuality, the material choice is varied and includes high quality and durable finishes that complement the public realm

P4-KS03 - To provide satisfactory arrangements for the future management of multiple unit developments as an integral part of a scheme planning proposal to ensure that residential amenities are protected in the management of completed developments.

The proposed student accommodation quarter is consistent with the objectives of 'Parcel 4' in the LSFP.

- The proposed development provides for 283 no. student bed spaces in 3 no. purpose-built apartment buildings. The proposed student buildings are to the southeast of the site immediately adjacent to the greenway and existing pedestrian and cycle paths to AIT. The height and form of the proposed student buildings has been informed by a detailed analysis of the existing environment and proximity to residential properties. As confirmed in the accompanying reports prepared by DK Partnership, the proposed buildings will not have any negative effects on existing dwellings and other receptors in the area in terms of daylight/sunlight impacts.
- As detailed in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons the proposed architectural techniques and materials have been designed to respond to the site-specific context. The height and orientation of the buildings will respond positively to the proposed public urban spaces in the vicinity.

P4-KS04 - To promote Athlone as an international student destination and to support and encourage the provision of necessary infrastructure such as high quality, custom-built and professionally managed student housing.

P4-KS06 - To provide a landmark building in Parcel 4 to signify entry into the Regional Centre of Athlone for users of the National Greenway.

P4-KS07 - To facilitate sustainable transport links between the proposed student quarter, AIT campus and the town centre.

P4-KS08 - To provide a landmark building in Parcel 4 to signify entry into the Regional Centre of Athlone for users of the National Greenway.

P4-KS09 - To conduct a survey for bats and badger setts by a suitably qualified ecologist in advance of any development proposal within this parcel.

- A 'Student Accommodation Management Plan' has been prepared and will accompany the SHD application.
- The proposed development will enhance Athlone's standing as an important third level educational institution and ensure that future students of AIT will be provided with improved selection of high-quality student accommodation.
- The subject site's location proximate to the aforementioned Old Rail Trail Greenway, the future Lissywollen Avenue and existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure on the R916 will promote walking and cycling as the primary modes of travel from the site.
- The proposed student buildings range in height from 4-7 storeys and reflect a landmark building in the site's existing context and built environment. The concentration of increased heights in this portion of the site is appropriate given the site's location adjacent to the greenway and pedestrian/cycle links to AIT. The design steps up in height at this location to form a cluster of landmark structures and will serve as a key focal point of interest on the greenway.
- Dedicated bat and badger surveys have been undertaken to inform the design approach in full accordance with P4-KS09.

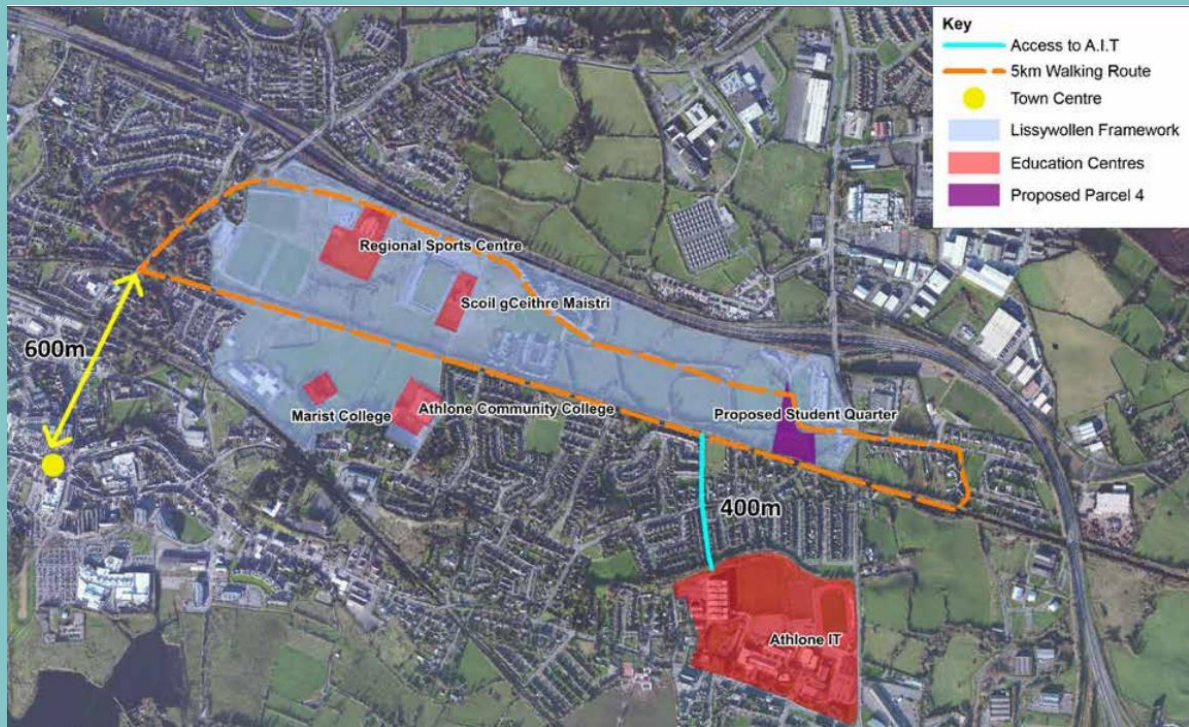


Figure 5. Student accommodation objective in Proposed Parcel 4 (Lissywollen South Framework Plan)

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