

HERBATA DATA CENTRE, NAAS

EIAR
VOLUME I MAIN TEXT – CHAPTER 14 POPULATION



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14 POPULATION

14.1 Introduction

This section of the EIAR assesses the impact of the Project on the population the general area of the Project. Specific aspects that will be examined include population levels, impact on employment and social facilities.

Population assessment is a broad ranging topic and interacts with all other environmental factors to some degree or another. The effects of any development on the environment may impose on humans directly and indirectly, positively, and negatively. Any significant impact on the status of the population that may be potentially caused by a development proposal must, be addressed as in much detail as possible.

In particular, this chapter:

- Presents the existing environmental baseline established from desk-based studies.
- Identifies any assumptions and limitations encountered in compiling the environmental information; and,
- Highlights any necessary monitoring and/or mitigation measures that could prevent, minimise, reduce or offset the possible impacts in the EIA process.

The KCC County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Chapter 15 Development Management Standards states that “childcare facilities will also be required to be provided in large-scale employment centres with an excess of 100 employees”. The Project will generate more than 100 no. jobs. The provision of c. 225 no. jobs over a c.37ha site in proximity to other low density employment generators is not considered to be a “large scale employment centre”. It is therefore considered that there is no requirement to provide a childcare facility at this location. However, given the absence of clear guidance on what might constitute a large-scale employment centre childcare facilities in the wider locale have been identified as part of this chapter.

14.2 Methodology

The following assessment of the predicted impacts on population was undertaken based on:

- Local population information from the Central Statistics Office’s (CSO) Census of Population and Kildare County Council.
- A desk based assessment to establish residential properties and settlements in proximity to the Project.
- A desk based assessment to establish existing social assets including hospitals, schools and childcare facilities within the wide locale.

With respect to the nature and scale of the Project, it was considered that an assessment of residential properties within a 1km radius and population, employment, and social facilities within a 3km radius of the boundary of the Project site would be appropriate as illustrated by Figure 14.1 below.



Figure 14.1: Catchment Area of the Assessment Defined as 1 & 3km Radius from the Project Site

With regards to the impact on population, the demographic scope of the assessment is determined by overlaying the 3km radius buffer zone from the Project site and the Electoral Divisions National Statutory Boundaries as illustrated in Figure 14.2 below. The Electoral Divisions which have been used in this assessment includes the following:

- Carragh (87019)
- Naas Rural (87070)
- Naas Urban (87071)
- Ladytown (87062)



Figure 14.2: Demographic of the Scope of the Assessment

14.2.1 Limitations

It should be noted that although there is data available from the 2022 Census it has not been made available in a format that facilitates spatial interrogation, therefore, the 2011 and 2016 Census data have been used unless stated otherwise.

14.3 Characteristics of the Project

The Project includes two main elements, namely:

- (a) The Data Centre, comprising 6 no. two storey Data Centre buildings, an administration/management building, car parking, landscaping, energy infrastructure and other associated works. These elements are the subject of the planning application submitted to KCC, and that application is referred to hereafter as “the Data Centre Application”.
- (b) The substation, comprising a grid substation and 110kV transmission connection. These elements are subject of the SID application to An Bord Pleanála, and that application is referred to hereafter as “the Substation Application”.

14.4 Baseline

14.4.1 Physical Context

The Project is located in the townlands of Halverstown, Jigginstown, Osberstown and Newhall is located on the western side of the M7 motorway, between Junctions 9a and 10, and is bound to the north by the R409 which provides a direct link to the centre of Naas, c.2.5km to the east.

The 'M7 Business Park' is located immediately to the south of the site and the 'Osberstown Business Park' is located to the north of the R409 (Caragh Road). The Osberstown Wastewater Treatment Plant is located further north. The site is bounded to the east by the M7 motorway and to the west by agricultural lands. The 'Newhall Retail Park' is located to the south of the site, on the east side of the M7 motorway. There has been significant development in the locality in recent years, particularly light industry, logistics and services. Lands to the east on the other side of the motorway form part of the Naas Northwest Quadrant.

Figure 14.3 below highlights the towns and settlements within a 3km radius of the Project which includes the towns of Carragh, Clarkstown, Sallins and Naas



Figure 14.3: Towns and Settlements within a 3km radius

Figure 14.4 below identifies the residential properties in close proximity to the Project

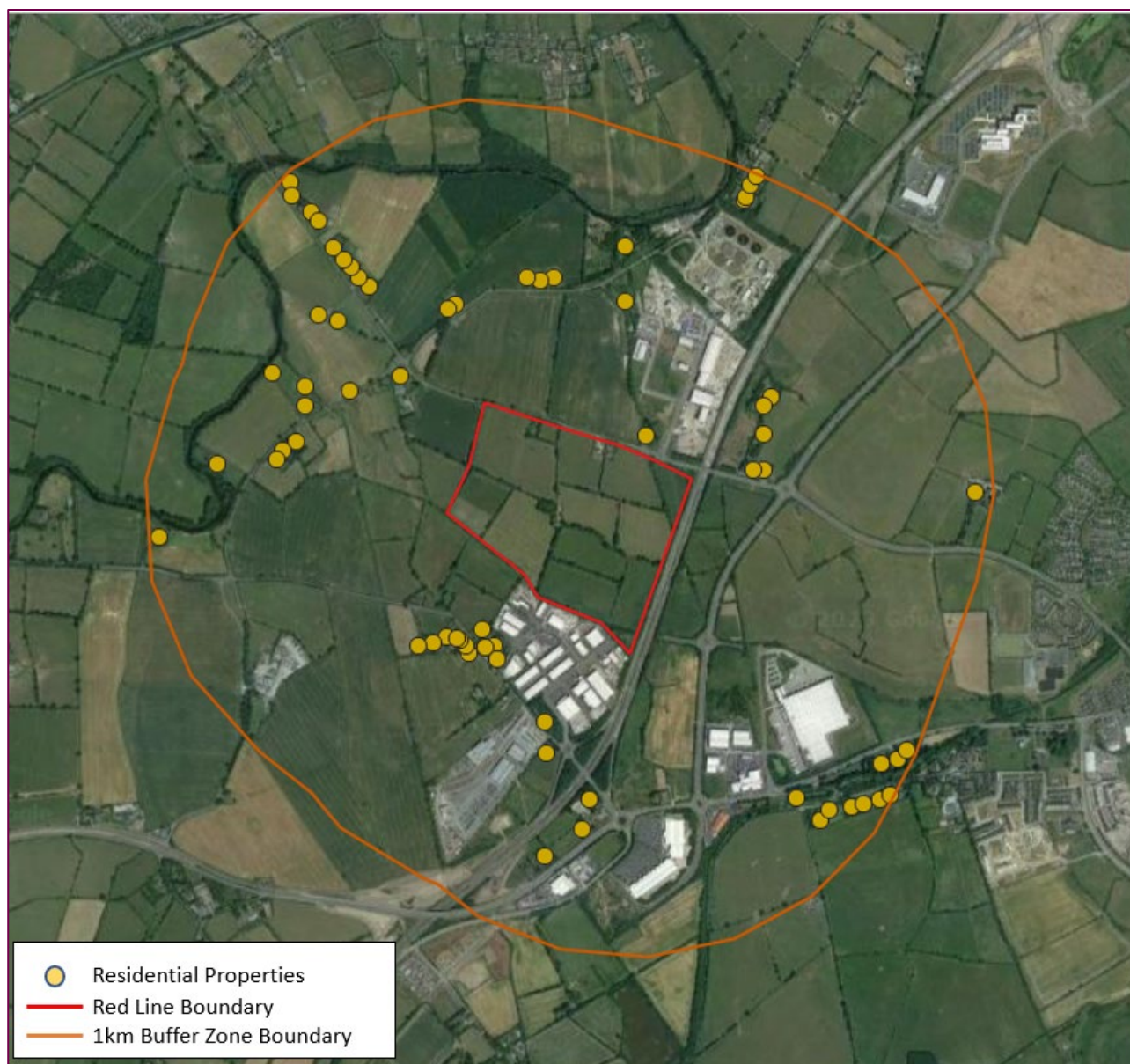


Figure 14.4: Residential Properties within a 1km radius

14.4.2 Demographic Context

14.4.2.1 Population

The latest Census 2022 results show that Ireland's population stood at 5,149,139. This was an 8% increase on the 2016 census. The trend has been represented in Kildare County Council with a growth rate of 11% to 247,774, which means the number of people in the county rose by 25,270 between April 2016 and April 2022. The Census 2022 Data is not available for interrogation at a more local level therefore data from 2016 and 2011 have been used to set out the baseline and assessment for the Electoral Divisions.

Census 2016 results show that the assessment area's population stood at 27,123 in April 2016, which indicates an increase of 5.4% since the last Census in 2011. This is submitted to be in line with the overall demographic trend Kildare County Council. Breaking down the growth into the Electoral Division's, as illustrated in Table 14.1 below, all electoral divisions had a growing population. However, Nass Rural recorded a notable growth rate standing at +16.4% with an actual increase of +386 persons over 2011-2016. This is then followed by Carragh (+5.7%), Nass Urban (+4.2%), and Ladytown (+2.4%).

Table 14.1. Population Change in the Assessment Area against the overall Stats of the Administrative Areas, 2011-2016

Area	Census 2011	Census 2016	Actual Change	Percentage Change
Kildare County Council	210,312	222,504	25,270	+5.8%
Carragh	1,725	1,823	98	+5.7%
Nass Rural	2,353	2,739	386	+16.4%
Nass Urban	20,713	21,597	884	+4.2%
Ladytown	941	964	23	+2.4%

14.4.2.2 Age

The age profile of a population in the area is an important parameter as it provides a good insight into the potential labour force, the demand for schools and social facilities. Investigating the age profile of Kildare Council and each of the ED's, the more urbanised areas follow the same pattern. Kildare County Council, Naas Urban and Naas Rural illustrates a peak of births in 1980's which shows up in the 30-39 age category, and another peak in the number of births occurred in 2000's and shows up in the 0-9 age category.

Ladytown and Carragh show a lower number of people between the 20 – 39 age categories which can be explained by younger people moving away from these small settlements for work or education.

Overall, the age pyramids indicates a young population residing in the area, which is expected to grow in the coming years.

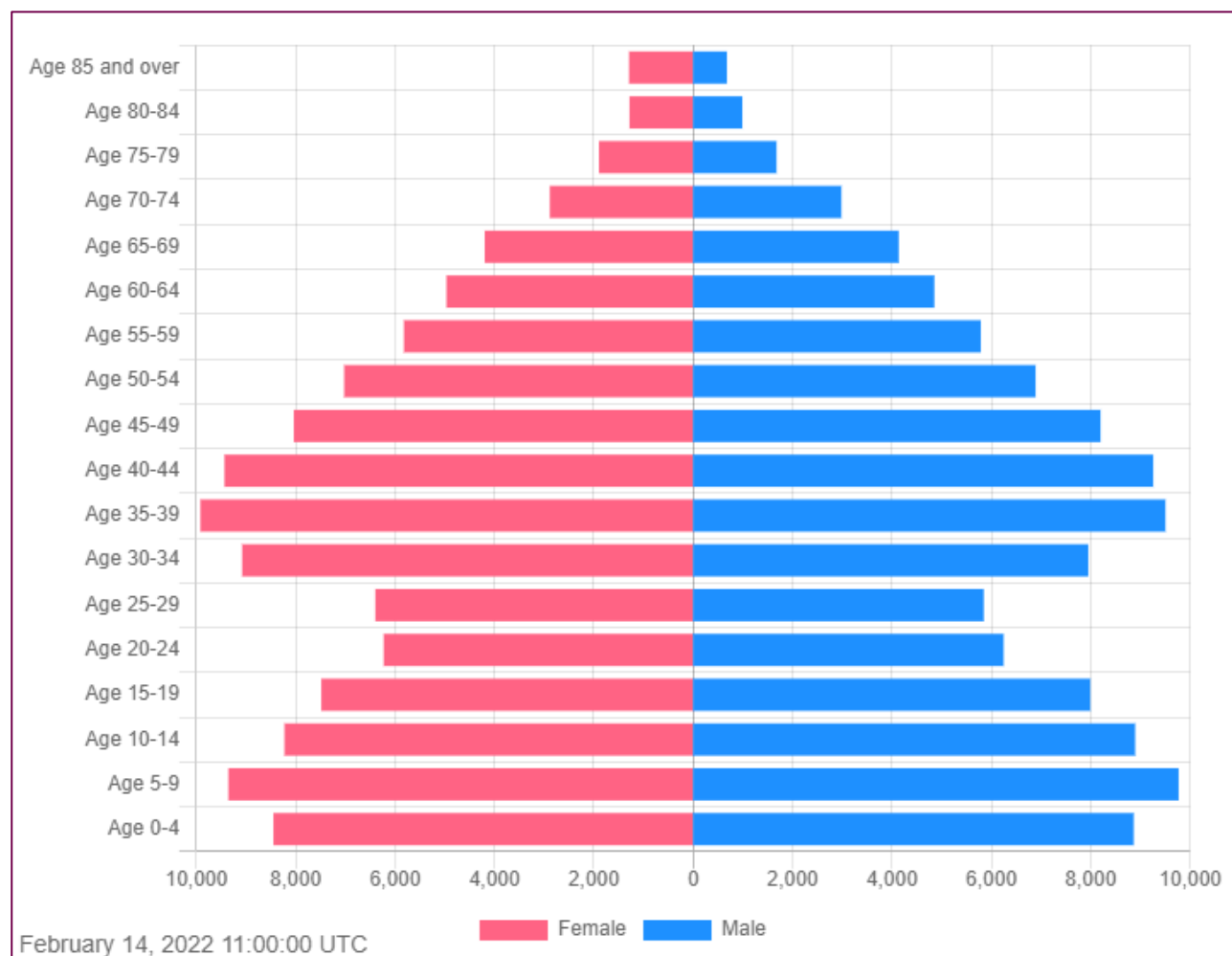


Figure 14.5: Kildare County Council Age Pyramid

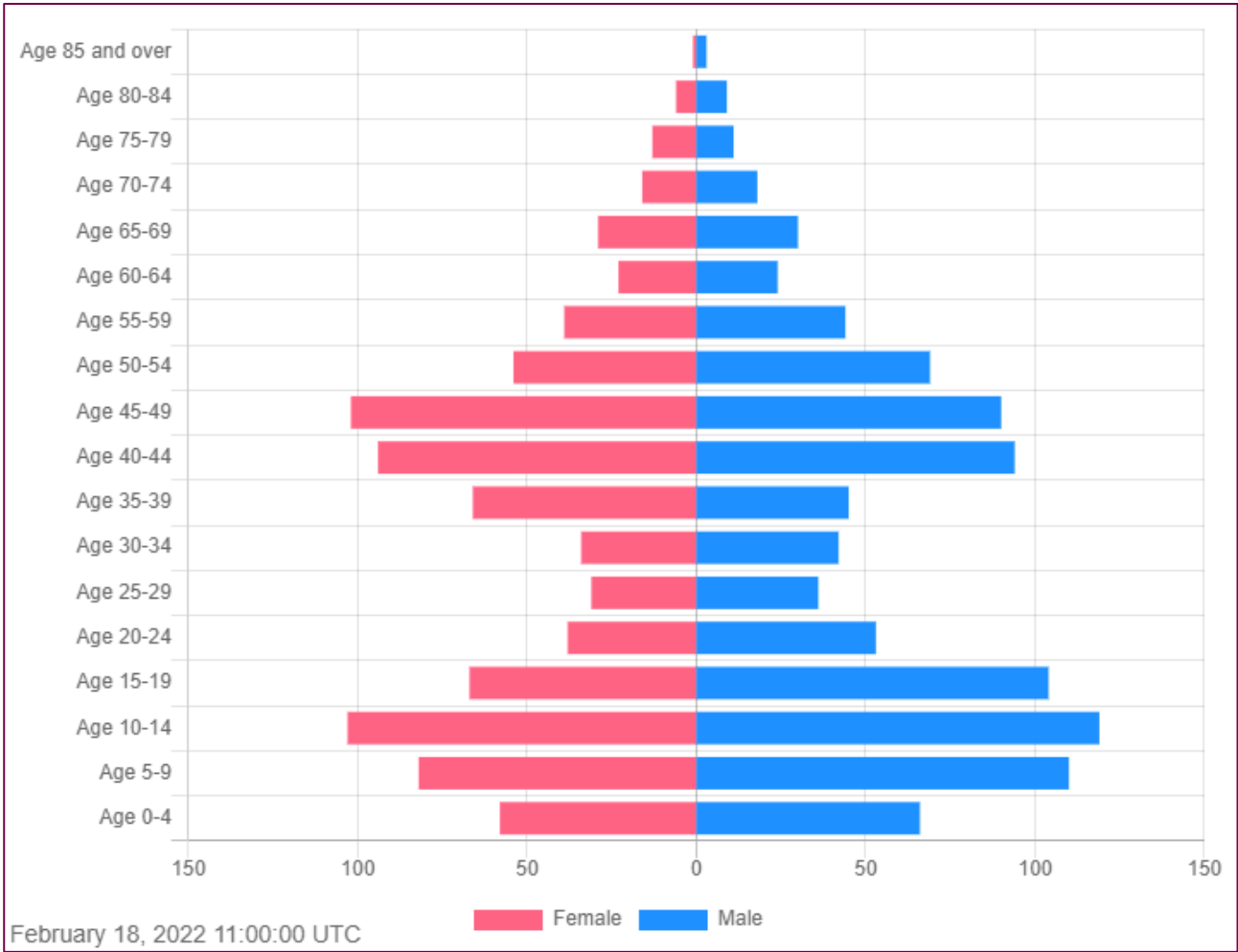


Figure 14.6: Carragh Age Pyramid

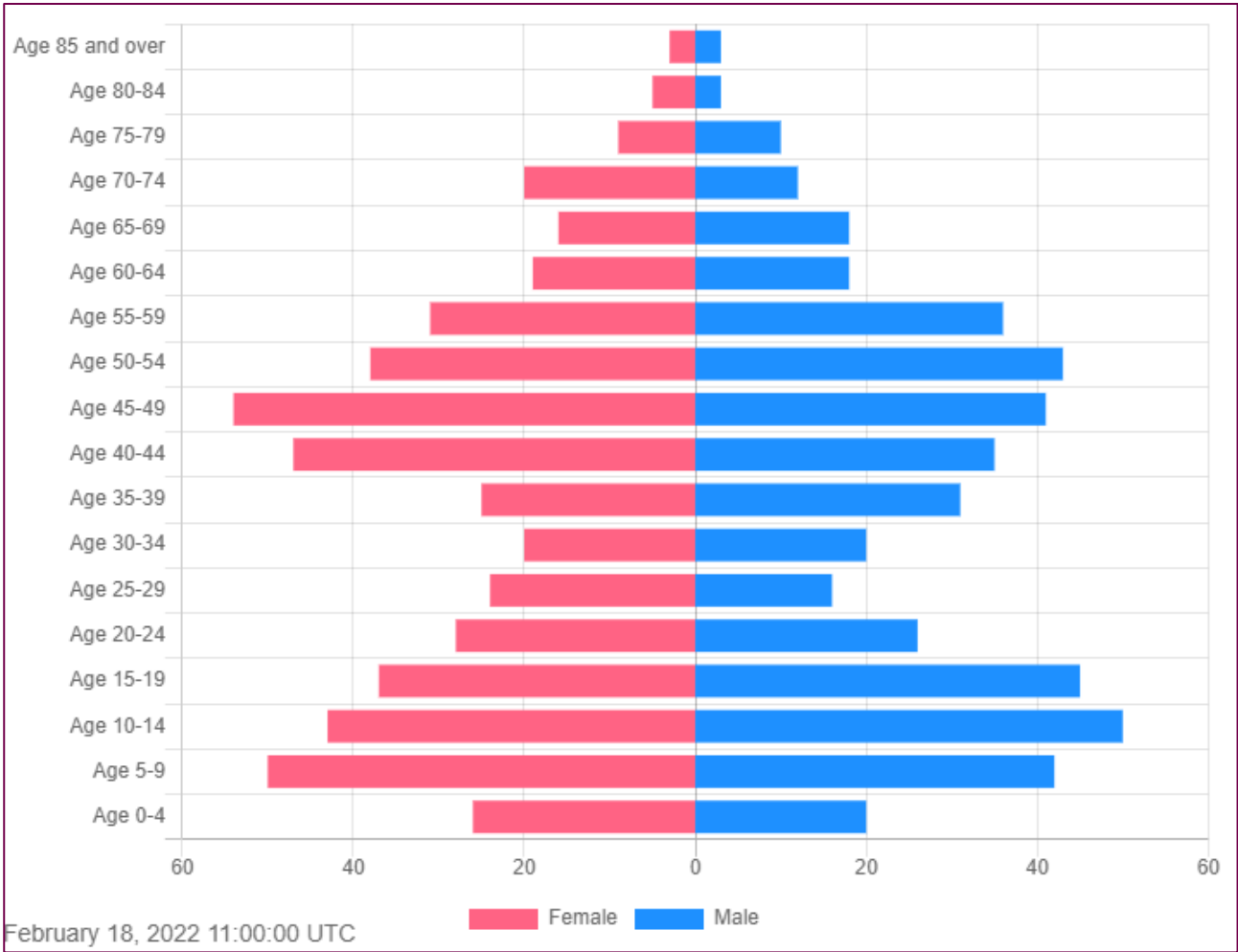


Figure 14.7: Ladytown Age Pyramid

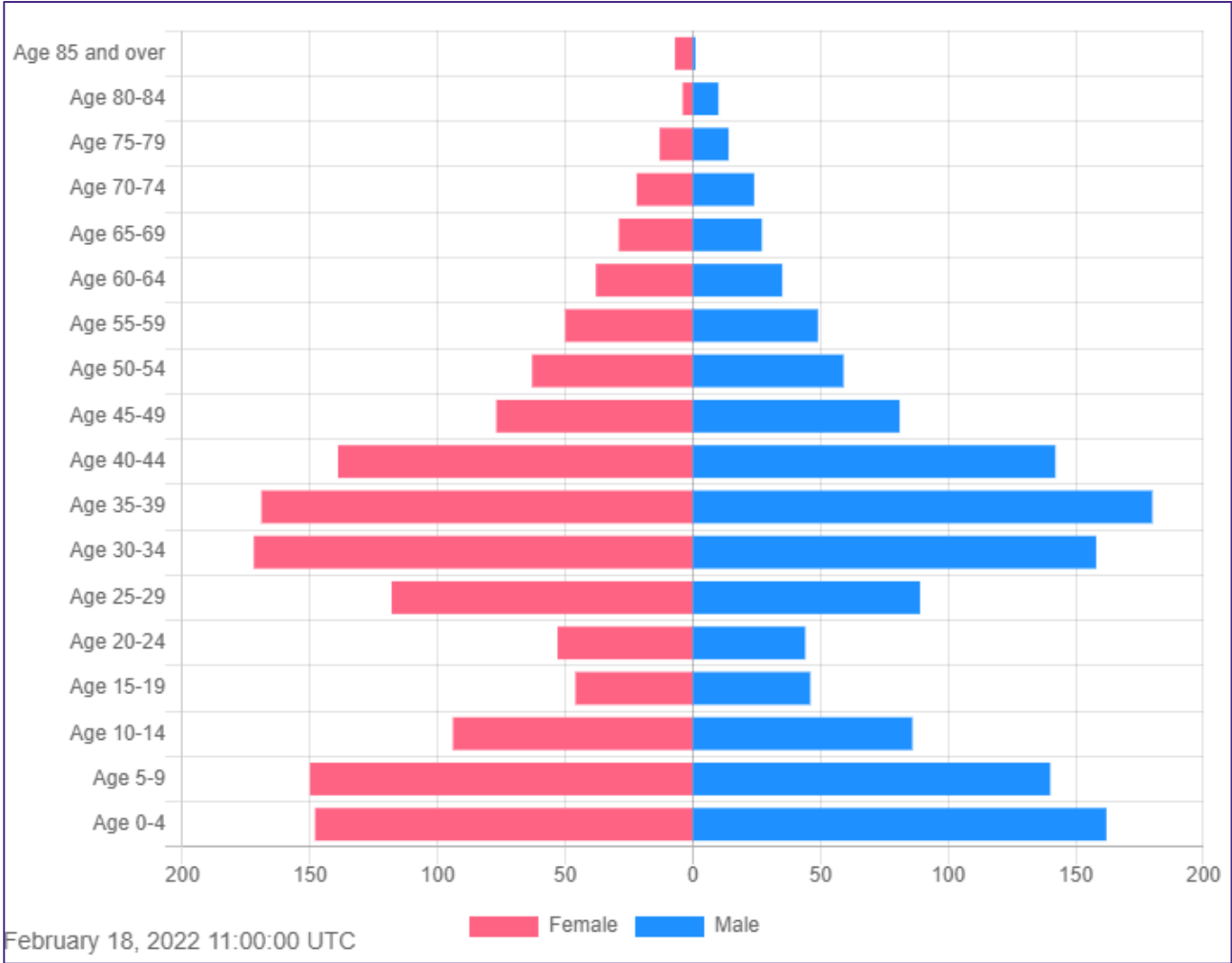


Figure 14.8: Naas Rural Age Pyramid



Figure 14.9: Naas Urban Age Pyramid

14.4.3 Employment

The latest Census 2022 results show that overall, in Ireland the number of people aged 15 and over at work in April 2022 stood at 2.3 million, up 16% in six years. In Kildare County there were 114,829 people (aged 15 and over) at work, an increase of 18,882 people (+20%) between 2016 and 2022.

The CSO data from 2011 to 2016 show that there has been an increase in employment levels within the assessment areas and across all four Electoral Divisions as illustrated in table xx below. The most notable increase has been in Ladybarn with a +22% increase, followed by Nass Rural (+16.4%), Carragh (+15%) and Nass Urban (+8%).

Table 14.2. Total Number of Persons aged +15 years at Work in the County and Study Area, 2011-2016

Persons at Work				
Area	Census 2011	Census 2016	Actual Change	Percentage Change
Carragh	678	780	102	+15%
Nass Rural	1,206	1,404	198	+16.4%
Nass Urban	9,253	9,990	737	+8%
Ladytown	367	448	81	+22%

14.4.4 Social Assets

The assessment area is well served by Childcare Facilities, Pre-Schools and Schools are illustrated by Figure 14.10 below. These are mainly located in Nass with some located in Carragh.

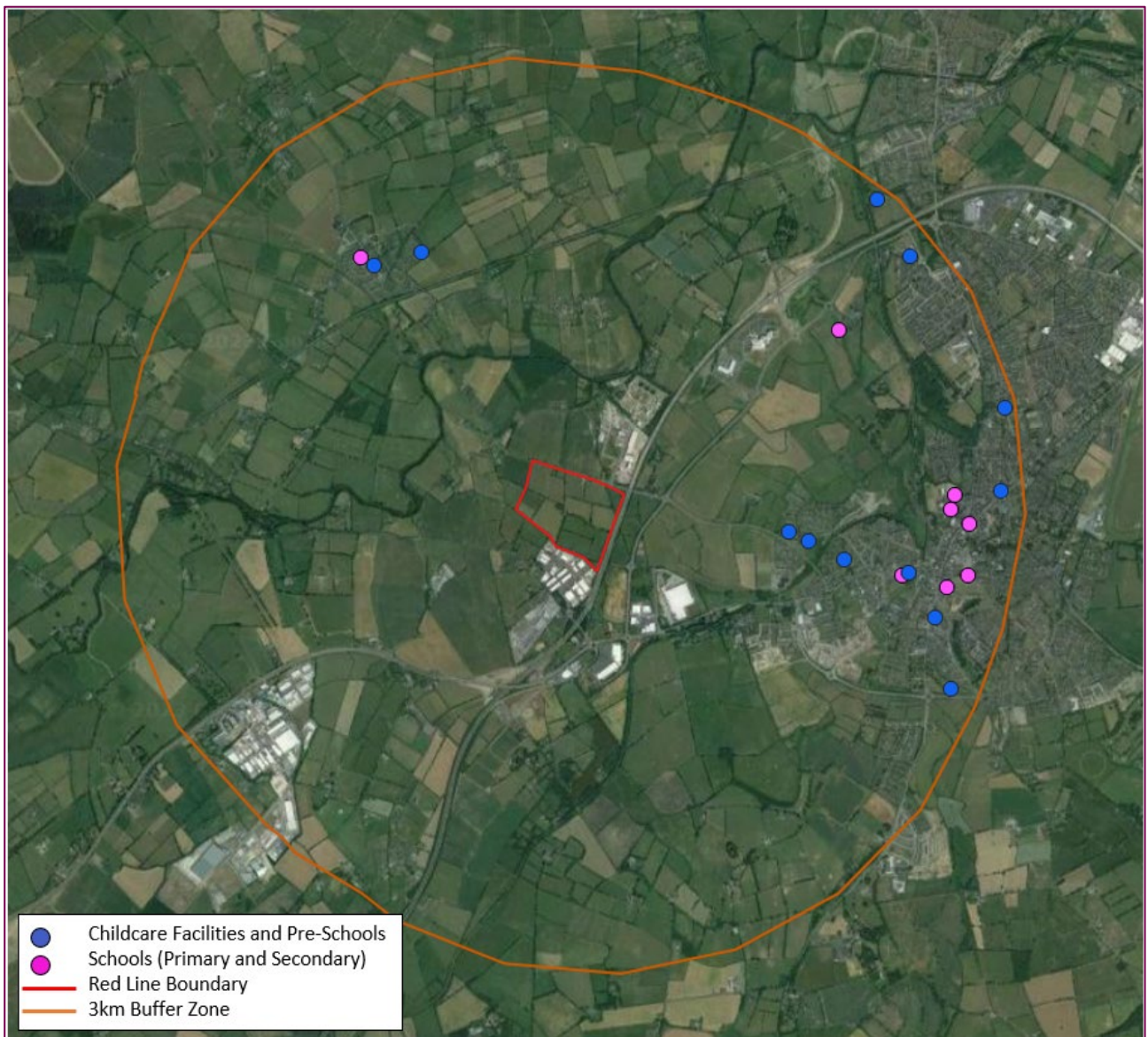


Figure 14.10: Childcare Facilities, Pre-Schools and Schools within a 3km radius

Figure 14.11 below identifies Hospitals within 3m of the Project of which there is only one, Nass General



Figure 14.11: Hospitals Within a 3km Radius

14.5 Impact Assessment

14.5.1 Do Nothing Scenario

A “Do Nothing” scenario is not considered appropriate as the Project aligns with national, regional and local policy supporting the ICT sector and Data Centres as a key component of this sector. At construction and operation phases the Project will generate significant direct, indirect and induced employment. The Proposed Data Centre use at this site accords with the local land use zoning objective set out in the Naas LAP which has explicitly identified this location as being appropriate for a Data Centre.

However, if a do-nothing scenario were to occur, the lands would not be developed and therefore there would be no beneficial or adverse impacts to population. In the event that the Project does not proceed, the lands would remain in its current condition in the short term or until alternative development proposals are granted planning permission.

14.5.2 Likely Significant Environmental Effects – Population

The construction phase of the Project should not have any direct impact on the population of the area or the subject lands. It is expected that the work force will generally travel to the Project site rather than take up residence in the immediate vicinity.

14.5.3 Likely Significant Environmental Effects – Employment

The delivery of c. 225 no. jobs in the IT sector accords with the policy vision for growth in key towns and will help provide employment opportunities for those living in the local area.

The Project will deliver significant new employment at construction and operational stages and support a key sector of the economy in Kildare. As such it is considered that the Project is in accordance with the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (KCDP) objectives regarding economic and employment growth.

The associated substation (subject to a separate SID application) will deliver an enhanced electricity grid with the potential for importing energy from the proposed Data Centre and will also support the Project of other SME businesses by providing spare 110kV circuits if required.

14.5.4 Likely Significant Environmental Effects – Social Assets

This assessment has focused on social assets in the context of childcare facilities, schools and hospitals.

With regards to childcare facilities, as previously stated the KCC County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, Chapter 15 Development Management Standards states that “childcare facilities will also be required to be provided in large-scale employment centres with an excess of 100 employees”. The Project will generate more than 100 no. jobs. The provision of c. 225 no. jobs over a 38ha site in proximity to other low density employment generators is not considered to be a “large scale employment centre”. However, the provision of childcare facilities has been considered along with pre-schools and schools. It is concluded that the surrounding area is well served by childcare facilities, pre-schools and schools there are a large number of childcare facilities in the immediate surrounds. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be no significant effects on childcare facilities as a result of the Project.

14.5.4.1 Mitigation

The Project will generate more than 100 no. jobs. The provision of c. 225 no. jobs over a c.37ha site in proximity to other low density employment generators is not considered to be a “large scale employment centre”. It is therefore considered that there is no requirement to provide a childcare facility at this location. The surrounding area is well served by childcare facilities, pre-schools and schools there are a large number of childcare facilities in the immediate surrounds. No further mitigation measures are proposed.

14.5.4.2 Residual Impacts

No other residual negative effects will arise from this development which are significant in magnitude.

14.6 Interactions

The main interactions relating to population are water, air quality, noise, and traffic during the construction phase. Construction activities will have a temporary impact on the landscape of the area by way of visual disturbance. These impacts are not considered to be significant. During the operational phase, the main interactions relating to population are water, air quality, noise, and traffic. These impacts are not considered to be significant. Please refer to the associated chapters for further information on these interactions.

14.7 Cumulative Effects

14.7.1 Other Projects

As identified in Chapter 1 of the EIAR (Section 1.4), there are a number of other projects which have been identified for consideration in terms of their potential for cumulative effects. These projects have been

considered in regard to population and potential cumulative effects. During construction there are no other construction projects within 350m of the project site. No construction or operational population impacts are anticipated.

14.7.2 Gas Connection

As identified in Chapter 1 of the EIAR (Section 1.4.4), the Project will require a physical connection to the gas network to supply the on-site gas turbines. The final, detailed design, consent and construction of the required infrastructure works will be the responsibility of GNI in the exercise of their own statutory functions, and therefore Herbata Ltd is not seeking planning consent to carry out these works as part of the Project.

The GNI Infrastructure Upgrade Outline Report, identifying the specification and most likely route for the connection and a description of the works required to provide same, is included in Volume II, Appendix 1.2. The report provides sufficient detail and information to allow a robust cumulative impact assessment to be conducted.

The GNI Infrastructure Upgrade Outline Report indicates that the most likely route for the new high-pressure gas distribution pipeline will be from the location of the existing GNI above ground installations (AGIs) at Glebe West and Naas Town to the Project site following a combination of the existing road network and the route of existing utilities. The nature and extent of the required works indicate a likely construction programme of 7-12 months, during which there will be an increase in employment opportunities.

Once operational, there will be no requirement for additional employment associated with the gas connection, therefore there will be no impacts associated with the gas connection.

Due to the nature of the development, it is not anticipated that there will be any impacts on the social or demographic characteristics of the Population as a result.