



Social Infrastructure Audit

In respect of

A Proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) on Lands at
Ratoath, Co. Meath

On behalf of

Beo Properties Limited

May 2022

Document review and approval

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1.0 Introduction

This Social Infrastructure Audit has been prepared by KPMG Future Analytics, 1 Stokes Place, St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2 (Chartered Town Planning and Development Consultants), on behalf of Beo Properties Limited in support of a planning application for a proposed Strategic Housing Development in Ratoath, Co. Meath. This report provides a detailed review of the statutory, strategic and policy context that relates to the provision of social infrastructure with the aim to:

- Outline the existing range of social infrastructure within the vicinity of the subject site
- Determine if the existing social infrastructure provision supports the needs of the existing population; and
- Offer insights into the likelihood of the capacity of the existing services and facilities to support future residents.

A large number of public and private geospatial datasets were used in the course of the survey, including but not limited to:

- 2016 and 2011 Census Boundaries and Statistics;
- 2022 OSi and ESRI Ireland Basemaps;
- 2022 Google Places Dataset;
- 2021 OSM Ireland POI Datasets – Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- 2012-2022 Department of Education and Skills - Irish Schools;
- 2022 QQI Register of Private Higher Education Institutions in Ireland;
- 2022 Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Reports – Registered Childcare Facilities; and
- 2022 HSE Records – ‘Find Your Local Health Service’

1.1 Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life. It is a key part of the fabric of an area, not just in terms of wellbeing, but also in terms of creating a sense of place for the population of the area and forming a part of the local identity.

For the purposes of this report, an array of services and facilities defined as social infrastructure have been categorised into the following typologies:

Table 1-1: Community Infrastructure Categories applied to Audit

Category	Facility Type
Education and Training Services	Primary, Post-Primary, Third Level, Further Education, and other lifelong Training Centres
Childcare Facilities	Registered Childcare Facilities incl. Full Day, Part-Time and Sessional services
Community Facilities (incl. Libraries)	Community Centres and meeting halls, Libraries, Senior and Youth Centres/Cafes and Day Care Facilities, Community Gardens and Allotments
Arts and Cultural Facilities	Theatres, museums, galleries, performance and outdoor events spaces, other venues, incl. dance studios, art clubs, music schools, etc.
Healthcare Services	Hospitals, health centres, doctors and specialty clinics, nursing homes, mental health services and other therapy providers

Open Space and Recreation	Parks, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, MUGAs, sports centres and clubs, leisure centres, gyms and training facilities, swimming pools
Religious Institutions	Churches, multi-faith centres and other places of worship
Retail Centres and Services	District, neighbourhood, and local centres

1.2 Report Structure

This report will comprise a further three sections.

Section 2 provides site context, a description of the Study Area and details relating to the proposed development

Section 3 provides an overview of the Proposed Development including a development description

Section 4 presents the changing demographic profile of the Study Area

Section 5 provides a review of National, Regional and Local level planning policy

Section 6 provides a detailed assessment of the capacity of the existing social infrastructure in the area. This section also includes an analysis on the capacity of existing services and facilities to support future residents.

Section 7 provides a conclusion to the Social Infrastructure Audit

2.0 Subject Site and Study Area

The subject site is located on lands to the south of the town centre in Ratoath, Co. Meath, which are bound to the north by existing residential development and the grounds of Ratoath College, to the east and south by the proposed Ratoath Outer Relief Road extension and to the west by the R155 (Fairyhouse Road). The Study Area for this assessment is defined by an indicative c. 2 km radius of the subject site, equivalent to a c. 20- to 30-minute walking distance considered to be accessible to future residents of the proposed development.



Figure 2-1: Site Location with the extent of the site identified in red

2.1 Transport Access

Ratoath is a well-connected town to the Northwest of Dublin City, approximately c. 40-50 minutes by car or via the 103 Bus Éireann route from Dublin City Centre. Dublin Airport is located within c. 25km and served directly by the 109A Bus Éireann route. Ratoath is located c.5km from Ashbourne to the east, the second largest town in Co. Meath, and c. 6km from Dunshaughlin to the west.

The subject site is located along the Fairyhouse Road (R155), with the Ratoath NS Bus Stop located c. 650m to the north of the site and Fairyhouse RC Bus Stop located c. 600m to the south. The site is served by the 105 and 105X Bus Éireann routes from Fairyhouse Road (R155), as well as the UM03 Finlay Coach Hire service to the Maynooth University Campus.

3.0 Proposed Development

The subject proposal seeks to provide 452 no. units on a site of c.13 ha. The proposal provides 150 no. houses, 182 no. maisonettes, and 120 no. apartments comprised of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed units. The breakdown of the unit mix can be found in Table 32-1 below. See Figure 3-1 for indicate Site Layout Plan.

Table 3-1: Unit breakdown summary

Unit breakdown summary	Number of units	%
3 bed houses	150	33.2%
Total houses	150	33.2%
3 bed maisonettes	167	36.9%
1 bed maisonettes	15	3.3%
Total maisonettes	182	40.3%
3 bed apartments	20	4.4%
2 bed apartments	100	22.1%
Total apartments	120	26.5%
Total 1 bed units	15	3.3%
Total 2 bed units	100	22.1%
Total 3 bed units	337	74.6%
Total units	452	100%

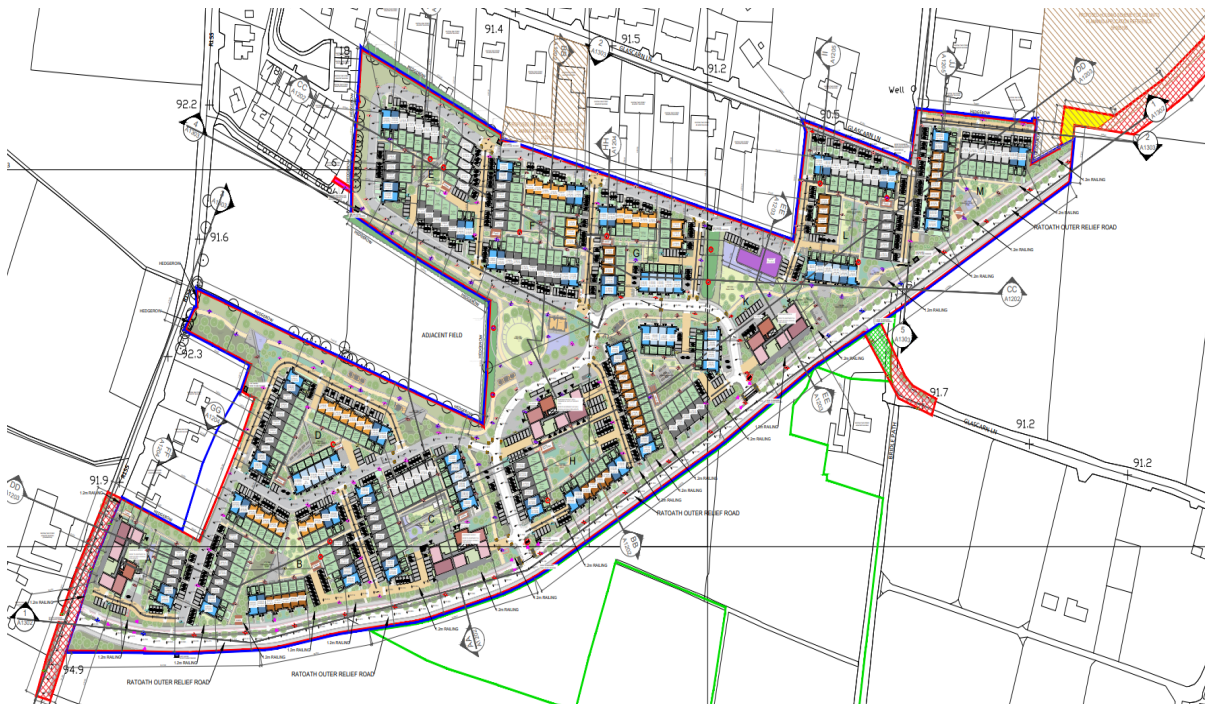


Figure 3-1: Site layout plan (Source; RKD)

3.1 Development Description

Please refer to the statutory development description below for more detail on the scheme:

“We, Beo Properties Limited, intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a strategic housing development at this site (c.14.166 ha), on existing agricultural lands located immediately to the south of the existing built area of Ratoath in County Meath. The site is generally bound to the north by Glascarn Lane, the rear of houses at Glascarn Lane, further existing residential dwellings and a permitted strategic housing development (Reg Ref: TA17/305196); to the east and south by existing agricultural fields and by Glascarn Lane; and to the west by Fairyhouse Road (R155), the rear of houses at Fairyhouse Road, the Carraig Na Gabhna and Cairn Court developments, and existing agricultural fields. The subject site is located on lands within the following town lands (in part): Legagunia, Commons, Jamestown, Glascarn and Newtown.

The proposed development will principally consist of the construction of 452 no. residential units and all associated ancillary accommodation, open space and site development works. The total gross floorspace (GFA) of the overall development is c.55,714.4 (c.59,177 with ancillary uses included) of which c.54,175 is residential and c.1,539.4 is non-residential uses. The proposed development will principally consist of 150 no. semi-detached and terraced dwelling houses (3-bed - with option to convert attic in 89 no. units, thereby creating 4-bed houses), 182 no. maisonettes (15 no. 1-bed & 167 no. 3-bed) and 120 no. apartments (100 no. 2-bed and 20 no. 3-bed)(with balconies/terraces across all elevations), with heights ranging from 2-3 storey terraced houses and 3-4-storey duplex buildings (1 storey ground floor units and 2 storey first and second floor units; 2 storey ground and first floor units and 2 storey second and third floor units) and 6-storey apartment blocks. The scheme provides the following house types (as detailed in the application pack materials):61 no. A1 (with the option to provide as A2 given similar appearance), 28 no. A2 (with the option to provide as A1 given similar appearance), 30 no. B1, 31 no. B2, 42 no. M1, 42 no. M2, 34 no. M3, 34 no. M4, 15 no. M5, 15 no. M6, 60 no. D1, 20 no. D2, 20 no. D3, 20 no. D4. The scheme is presented across 12 neighbourhoods (A-H & J-M), each with its own designated central communal open space, car and cycle parking (746 no. car parking spaces and 816 no. cycle parking space) as follows:

Neighbourhood A: *consisting of 38 no. units comprising 4 no. 2 storey three-bedroom terraced housing units, 30 no. apartments (25 no. two-bedroom units and 5 no. three-bedroom units), 4 no. 2 storey three-bedroom maisonettes, ancillary accommodation, including lobby (c.53 sq. m), post room (c.13 sq. m), ESB storage (c.11 sq. m), water storage (c.14 sq. m), refuse storage (c.29 sq. m), bike storage (c.135 sq. m), car park (c.702 sq. m) associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens, communal open space (c.662 sq. m), 51 no. surface and undercroft car parking spaces (42 no. residential and 9 no. visitor) and 92 no. cycle parking spaces.*

Neighbourhood B: *consisting of 43 no. units comprising 23 no. terraced housing units (10 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 13 no. 3 storey three-bedroom units), 20 no. 2 storey three-bedroom maisonettes, ancillary accommodation including, associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens/winter gardens, communal open space (c.1,753 sq. m), 76 no. car parking spaces (66 no. residential and 10 no. visitor) and 52 no. cycle parking spaces.*

Neighbourhood C: *consisting of 62 no. units comprising 12 no. 2 storey terraced housing units, 30 no. apartment units (25 no. two-bedroom units and 5 no. three-bedroom units), 20 no. maisonette units (18 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 2 no. single storey one-bedroom units), ancillary accommodation, including lobby (c.53 sq. m), post room (c.13 sq. m), ESB storage (c.11 sq. m), water storage (c.14 sq. m), refuse storage (c.29 sq. m), bike storage (c.135 sq. m), , car park (c.702 sq. m), associated private balconies/ terraces/rear gardens, communal open space (c. 1,270 sq. m), 96 no. surface and undercroft car parking spaces (74 no. residential and 22 no. visitor) and 142 no. cycle parking spaces.*

Neighbourhood D: consisting of 38 units comprising 14 no. terraced housing units (7 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 7 no. 3 storey three-bedroom units), 24 no. maisonettes (20 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 4 no. single storey one-bedroom units), ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens, communal open space (c.798 sq. m), 62 no. car parking spaces (52 no. residential and 10 no. visitor), 60 no. cycle parking spaces and an ESB substation (c.14 sq. m).

Neighbourhood E: consisting of 30 units comprising 18 no. 2 storey three-bedroom terraced housing units, 12 no. 2 storey three bedroom maisonettes, ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens, communal open space (c.643 sq. m), 56 no. car parking spaces (48 no. residential and 8 no. visitor), 30 no. cycle parking spaces and an ESB substation (c.14 sq. m).

Neighbourhood F: consisting of 36 units comprising 20 no. terraced housing units (12 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 8 no. 3 storey three-bedroom units), 16 no. 2 storey three-bedroom maisonettes, ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens, communal open space (c.664 sq. m), 64 no. car parking spaces (56 no. residential and 8 no. visitor) and 42 no. cycle parking spaces.

Neighbourhood G: consisting of 29 units comprising 11 no. 3 storey three-bedroom terraced housing units, 18 no. maisonettes (15 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 3 no. single storey one-bedroom units), ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens/winter gardens, communal open space (c.430 sq.m), 48 no. car parking spaces (40 no. residential and 8 no. visitor), 48 no. cycle parking spaces and an ESB substation (c.14 sq.m).

Neighbourhood H: consisting of 50 units comprising 8 no. terraced housing units (4 no. 2 storey three-bedroom terraced housing units, 4 no. 3 storey three-bedroom terraced housing units), 30 no. apartments units (25 no. two-bedroom units and 5 no. three-bedroom units), 12 no. 2 storey three-bedroom maisonettes, ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens/winter gardens, 4 no. commercial/local retail units (c.533.6 sq. m), 4 no. wc (c.44 sq. m), lobby (c.50 sq. m), post room (c.14 sq. m), ESB storage(c.13 sq. m), water storage (c.14 sq. m), refuse storage (c.30 sq. m), communal bins (c.11 sq. m), bike storage (107 sq. m), communal open space (c.1,153 sq. m), 76 no. surface and undercroft car parking spaces (58 no. residential and 18 no. visitor) and 118 no. cycle parking spaces and an ESB substation (c.14 sq. m).

Neighbourhood J: consisting of 37 units comprising 13 no. terraced housing units (5 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 8 no. 3 storey three-bedroom units), 24 no. maisonette units (20 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 4 no. single storey one-bedroom units, ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens/winter gardens, communal open space (c.1,148 sq. m), 56 no. car parking spaces (50 no. residential and 6 no. visitor) and 60 no. cycle parking spaces.

Neighbourhood K: consisting of 30 no. apartment units (25 no. two-bedroom units and 5 no. three-bedroom units), ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies, ancillary childcare facility (c.1,003 sq. m) with associated play areas (c.727 sq. m), lobby (c.53 sq. m), post room (c.14 sq. m), ESB storage (c.13 sq. m), water storage (c.14 sq. m), refuse storage (c.28 sq. m), bike storage (c.132 sq. m), car park (c.702 sq. m) communal open space (c.200 sq. m), 38 no. surface and undercroft car parking spaces (30 no. residential and 8 no. visitor) and 92 no. cycle parking spaces, in addition to 22 no. car parking spaces for the creche.

Neighbourhood L: consisting of 35 units comprising 15 no. terraced housing units (11 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 4 no. 3 storey three-bedroom units), 20 no. maisonettes (18 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 2 no. single storey one-bedroom units), ancillary accommodation, including associated private balconies/terraces/rear gardens/winter gardens, communal open space (c.845 sq. m), 57 no. car parking spaces (50 no. residential and 7 no. visitor), 50 no. cycle parking spaces and an ESB substation (c.14 sq. m).

Neighbourhood M: consisting of 24 units comprising 12 no. terraced housing units (6 no. 2 storey three-bedroom units and 6 no. 3 storey three-bedroom units), 12 no. 2 storey three-bedroom maisonettes, ancillary accommodation, including associated balconies/terraces/rear gardens/winter gardens, communal open space (c.1,017 sq. m), 39 no. car parking spaces (36 no. residential and 3 no. visitor), 30 no. cycle parking spaces and an ESB substation (c.14 sq. m).

The proposed development also includes 2.247 ha of landscaped public open space which includes a civic plaza (0.513 ha), greenway spine (1.087 ha) and parklands (0.674 ha); solar PV Panels in various locations; and public lighting. All associated site development works above and below ground including hard and soft landscaping, roads/footpaths/cycle paths, play areas, boundary treatments, SuDs, pumping station, EV charging points, green roofs, ESB substations and services to facilitate the development.

Planning permission is also sought for a second phase of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road (RORR) (c. 22,825 sq. m), that will run along the southern boundary of the application site and join up to the existing constructed section of the RORR. The section of the RORR proposed as part of this development runs from a new signalised junction on the R155, east for approximately 1100m, to the end of the site boundary. The proposed roadway will provide access for the site in the form of two priority controlled junctions. A series of pedestrian and cycle connections are provided to site from the Fairyhouse Road (R155), Glascarn Lane and the new RORR as well as a pedestrian link to Carraig Na Gabhna. The site provides permeability through its internal road and shared surface networks, including pedestrian and cycle paths (implementing a segregated pedestrian and cycle path proposed along the RORR) but also within the site. A greenway will be provided across the site that will connect the R155 Fairyhouse Road with Garraig Na Gabhna road and Glascarn Lane. This greenway will provide pedestrian/cyclist connection to the newly proposed pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure along the RORR. Planning permission is also sought for all associated site development and infrastructural works, services provision, foul and surface water drainage, an extension to the foul water network, surface water and watermain along the RORR required to facilitate the development, access roads/footpaths, lighting, landscaping and boundary treatments."

4.0 Demographic Profile

The study area for the purposes of the demographic analysis comprises 24 no. CSO Small Area Boundaries which intersect a c. 2km radius from the subject site by c. 10% or more, as indicated in Figure 4-1 below, and provide insight into the character of the local population with respect to demographic trends. This local Study Area is compared to larger trends within Co. Meath in Sections 4.1-4.4 to follow.

The following section will provide a socio-economic profile of the study area with respect to the population’s age profile, educational attainment, and economic status of the local population, to better understand the needs of the area with respect to social infrastructure services and facilities.

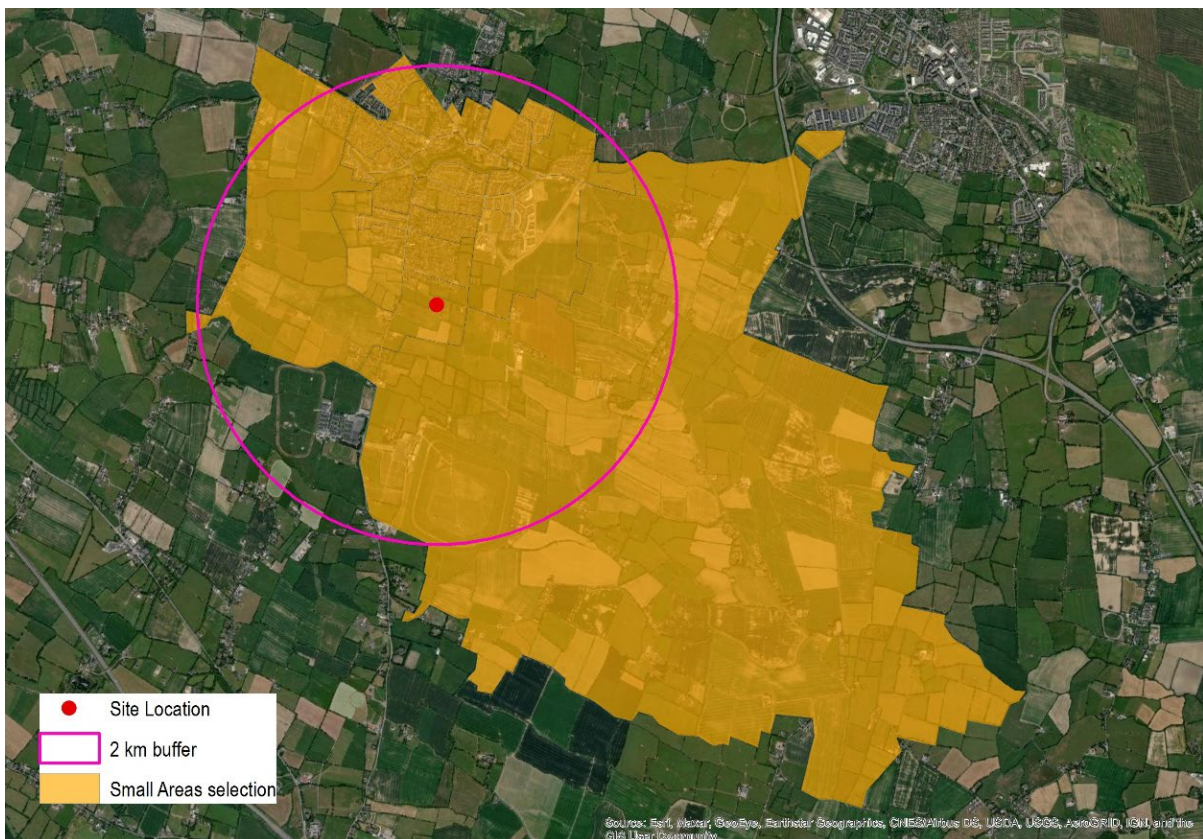


Figure 4-1: Extent of Demographic Study Area (shown in orange) comprised of 24 no. CSO Small Area Boundaries which intersect the 2km radius from the subject site (red point) by more than 10% of total area. Source: CSO 2016/KPMG-FA.

4.1 Population Trends

Table 4-1 outlines the populations of the Small Areas within the Study Area as recorded during the Census 2011 and 2016, as well as the percentage change in population during this period to highlight overall residential patterns. As illustrated in Table 4-1, the Study Area has experienced a population increase of 4% between 2011 and 2016, which is similar with the growth recorded for the Co. Meath (6%) for the same period.

Table 4-1: Population Change 2011-2016

Area	2011 Population	2016 Population	2011-2016 Change (#)	2011-2016 Change (%)
Study Area	8,614	8,977	+363	+4%
Co. Meath	184,135	195,044	+10,909	+5.9%

4.2 Age Profile

Tables 4-2 and 4-3 provide a breakdown of the recorded population, categorised by age to allow a more detailed overview of the specific cohorts that have experienced the greatest change. Different age cohorts of a population have different requirements, with young families in need of childcare and educational facilities, while a strong working age population will require more significant employment opportunities and those of retirement age in need of care and health services. Thus, it is necessary to address those age cohorts that are experiencing the most significant change to ensure that there is an adequate provision of services and facilities.

Table 4-2: Population of Study Area by Age 2011

Age Group	Study Area 2011	% Total	Meath 2011	% Total
0-14	2,802	32.5%	46,466	25%
15-64	5,448	63.3%	121,347	66%
65+	364	4.2%	16,322	9%
Total	8,614	100%	184,135	100%

Table 4-3: Population of Study Area by Age 2016

Age Group	Study Area 2016	% Total	Meath 2016	% Total
0-14	2,719	30.3%	48,931	25%
15-64	5,783	64.4%	125,325	64%
65+	475	5.3%	20,788	11%
Total	8,977	100%	195,044	100%

As illustrated above, the Study Area had a predominantly working age structure in both 2011 and 2016. In Table 4-3, 64.4% of its population aged 15-64 years and only 35.6% of its population considered to be 'dependent' (i.e. aged 0-14 years or 65+ years) at the time of the 2016 Census. The Study Area population comprised a lower percentage (5%) of older adults (aged 65+) than elsewhere in the County (11%) in 2016, with a relatively higher percentage (30%) of young people (aged 0-14) than larger Co. Meath (25%).

While the overall age composition was largely maintained within the local study area and County from 2011-2016, we note that the older adults cohort (aged 65+) increased by more than 26% during this period within the study area, compared to 27% growth within Co. Meath. The number of young people (aged 0-14) also declined marginally from 2011-2016 within the study area but increased by more than 5% within the larger County.

4.3 Educational Attainment

The largest proportion of residents within the local Study Area had completed 'Third Level' Education (48%) as of 2016, compared to 40% within the larger County. A higher 9% of the Study Area had also completed 'Postgraduate' Education or higher, compared to only 8% within Co. Meath. We note that less than 1% were recorded as having 'No Formal Education' in both areas, with higher levels of educational attainment within the Study Area than elsewhere in Co. Meath.

Table 4-4: Population age 15+ years by highest education completed (CSO,2016)

Education Level	Study Area 2016	% Total	Meath 2016	% Total
No Formal Education	34	0.6%	1,672	1%
Primary Education	274	5.5%	11,622	10%
Secondary Education	1,615	32.4%	42,478	35%
Third Level Education	2,395	48%	48,820	40%
Postgraduate Education or Higher	447	9%	10,183	8%
Not Stated	228	4.5%	6,604	5%
Total	4,993	100%	121,379	100%

4.4 Economic Status

The economic profile of the Study Area is similar to Co. Meath, with the majority of the population being categorised as 'At Work' in 2016. However, a larger percentage of the population in the Study Area was categorised as being 'At Work' (63%) compared to the larger County (57%), with a higher proportion of 'Students' (14%) and lower proportion of 'Retired' persons (8%) overall. The percentage of 'Unemployed' persons in the Study Area was also lower (4%) in 2016, compared to 6% within Co. Meath.

Table 4-5: Economic Status

Principal Economic Status	Study Area 2016	% Total	Meath 2016	% Total
At Work	5,183	63%	83,259	57%
Looking for First Regular Job	27	<1%	1,092	<1%
Unemployed	319	4%	9,431	6%
Student	1,162	14%	16,065	11%
Looking After Home/Family	679	8%	13,236	9%
Retired	686	8%	17,481	12%
Unable to Work	175	2%	5,124	4%
Other	14	<1%	425	<1%
Total	8,245	100%	146,113	100%

4.5 Demographic Summary

The demographic profile for the local Study Area is largely consistent with the rest of Co. Meath, with the population in both areas recorded as having increased by 4% from 2011-2016. The majority of the Study Area population in 2016 was aged 15-64 (64.4%), followed by 30.3% aged 0-14 and the remaining 5.3% aged 65+.

We note that the population of Study Area aged 15 years or older was largely at work (63%) or in school (14%) at the time of the 2016 Census, and that a significant percentage of this population had completed 'Third Level Education' (48%) or 'Post Graduate or Higher' (9%) at the time of the Census. We note that a small percentage of the total population of Study Area and the County had received 'No Formal Education' in 2016, with only 4% of the population in the Study Area recorded as being 'Unemployed' in 2016.

These statistics indicate that a higher proportion of community facilities may be required for the working population and families with school-aged children in this area than other demographic groups, with additional consideration required for the growing population of older adults (26% increase from 2011-2016). However, we note that the current population figures do not account for the development capacity of additional zoned land within the study area and potential population growth arising from future developments.

This Social Infrastructure Audit has identified and established the level of existing social infrastructure provision within and bordering the c. 2km study area to support the needs of the existing population and offered insights into the likelihood of the capacity of the existing services and facilities to support future residents. The baseline study undertaken identified a significant range of services which contribute to quality of life for local residents, with more than 75 no. facilities located in close proximity to the subject site.

On the basis of this audit, the proposed development site is supported by an existing schools' network, childcare facilities and has access to a range of other community, cultural, religious and recreational facilities within the identified c.2km radius. We also note that the proposal also includes a creche facilities (c. 1003 sqm) and 4 no. commercial/retail units (c. 536 sqm total), which will positively contribute to the amenity of the resident population once completed.

5.0 Policy Context

For the purposes of this Social Infrastructure Audit, a range of national, regional and local planning policies relating to social infrastructure have been reviewed. The key points relating to this study, as derived from each policy document, will be highlighted in this section.

5.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF), under Project Ireland 2040, forms the overarching framework for the spatial development of Ireland to 2040. A key focus of the NPF is on sustainable and compact development within pre-existing urban areas and the provision of accessible services and facilities for all communities.

Given its focus on sustainable development, the NPF includes a number of points related to social infrastructure inclusive of ‘National Strategic Outcome 10: Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services’ which seeks to provide good accessibility to quality health services, childcare and education facilities, supported by compact growth in urban areas.

Furthermore, Chapter 6 of the NPF states that the “ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure and social interactions available to us and the prospect of securing employment” is intrinsic to providing a good quality of life for new and existing communities. Chapter 6 additionally includes a Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure that indicates the services and facilities necessary within settlements of different size to serve their populations (Figure 5-1).



Figure 5-1: Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure.

5.2 Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) outline the key principles which should be considered in the establishment of new residential developments. They recognise the significance of social infrastructure to quality of life and state that new development should take into consideration the social infrastructural needs of the community and the existing provision of same. The Guidelines notably stipulate the significance of a local assessment of the need to provide social infrastructure in the provision of such services and facilities.

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) also specifies the provision of 1 no. childcare facility for every 75 no. units pursuant to the local context, as follows:

“When considering planning applications, in the case of larger housing schemes, the guidelines recommend the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units. However, the threshold for such provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas”.

(Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) Section 4.5, pg. 26-27.)

The Guidelines “recommend” the provision of childcare facilities and do not require them; notably, they stipulate the importance of a local assessment to determine if there is a need to provide them.

The Guidelines additionally outline that an assessment of existing schools within the vicinity of the subject site to cater for such demand should accompany applications for substantial residential development (200+ no. units). Furthermore, they detail that the provision of health and community facilities should be determined according to the particular circumstances of the area.

5.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA) 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031 (RSES) sets out a 12-year strategic development framework for the Eastern and Midland Region. Supportive of the implementation of the NPF, the RSES reflects its focus on the provision of accessible services and facilities for communities within the Eastern and Midland Region.

Section 9.1 of the RSES details that the availability of, and access to, services and facilities, inclusive of healthcare services, education facilities and community/recreational facilities is key to creating healthier places. This is supported by Regional Policy Objective 9.14 which calls for Local Authorities to

“support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve”.

In addition, the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) set out in the RSES emphasises the need to provide accessible services and facilities and supports “ongoing collaboration between regional stakeholders to ensure that social infrastructure such as education, health and community facilities are provided in tandem with the development of strategic development areas”.

5.4 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020)

The recently revised Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020) specifies the provision of 1 no. childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 no. child places) for every 75 no. proposed residential units, albeit informed by the demographic profile of the area and the existing capacity of childcare facilities, as follows:

“Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms.”

(Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020) Section 4.7, pg. 20-21.)

This provides an element of flexibility in the provision of childcare facilities, provided a sufficient demographic and/or geographical justification can be provided. It also states that studio and one-bedroom units do not need to be included in any count that estimates the number of minors in a development and this may also apply to a portion of units with 2 no. or more bedrooms.

5.5 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

The Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) state that 1 no. childcare facility should be provided for new large-scale housing developments unless there are significant reasons to the contrary:

“Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary for example, development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments. For new housing areas, an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas. Authorities could consider requiring the provision of larger units catering for up to 30/40 children in areas of major residential development on the basis that such a large facility might be able to offer a variety of services – sessional/drop in/after-school, etc.”

(Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) Section 2.4, pg. 5-6)

The provision of childcare facilities is further elaborated in Section 3.3.1 of the Guidelines which states that “a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate” for new residential developments. However, they continue by clarifying that such Guidelines are exactly that – guidelines and not a strict prescription or requirement – and the provision of childcare facilities will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site and development.

5.6 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted at a Special Planning Meeting, 22nd September 2021. The Plan comes into effect 6 weeks from the 22nd of September – 3rd November 2021. With respect to community and social infrastructure provision within Co. Meath, the MCDP 2021-2027 states

“Community infrastructure is an essential part of all communities. Facilities such as community centres, sports centres, libraries and playgrounds can serve as a focal point for communities they serve, and provide venues for local sporting, cultural, community, education and social events. The Council recognises that the provision of good quality community facilities in existing and developing areas is a key element in the development of sustainable, healthy communities across the County... Different levels of service provision are appropriate to settlements of different sizes, it is therefore important that the Council ensures that an appropriate range of community facilities are provided in all communities, taking account of the population profile and growth targets identified in the Core Strategy.”

(Section 7.7, Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027)

Other key policies with respect to social infrastructure provision set out in the CDP include:

Policy SOC 1: *To promote and facilitate the delivery of the objectives and actions set out in the Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (or any subsequent replacement).*

Policy SOC 2: *To support the provision and distribution of a range of community infrastructure facilities in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies to meet the needs of the County’s population in conjunction with other statutory, voluntary, private sector and community groups.*

Policy SOC 3: *To ensure that, where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are clustered, with the community facilities being located in local centres or combined with school facilities, as appropriate. Community facilities should be located close to or within walking distance of housing, accessible to all sectors of the community and facilitate multi-use functions through their design and layout.*

Policy SOC 4: *To seek to ensure the efficient and timely delivery of community facilities commensurate with the needs of the resident population and to assist in the delivery of such facilities.*

Policy SOC 5: *To require, as part of all new large residential and commercial developments, and in existing developments, where appropriate, that provision is made for facilities including local/neighbourhood shops, childcare facilities, schools and recreational facilities, and to seek their provision concurrent with development.*

SOC POL 6: *To require that all new residential development applications of 50 units or more on zoned lands are accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents (of all age cohorts). This should include details regarding the following essential facilities: Playgrounds, parks and other green spaces, education, childcare, health, and others such as shops, banks, post offices, community meeting rooms/centres and recreational facilities. The assessment should identify membership and non-membership facilities which allow access for all groups. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to accompany the Planning application to address the deficiency.*

In certain cases, however, residential development under these thresholds may, at the discretion of the Planning Authority, require the submission of a SIA.

SOC POL 7: *To promote and encourage social inclusion through universal access to services and facilities and to encourage the upgrade of community facilities.*

SOC POL 8: *To continue to provide care facilities for older people, such as own homes (designed to meet the needs of older people), sheltered housing, day-care facilities, nursing homes and specialised care units at appropriate locations throughout the County.*

SOC POL 9: *To provide and promote adaptability and flexibility in the design of homes and community facilities.*

SOC POL 10: *To require that all residential care facilities for the elderly comply with all relevant standards set out in the 'National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland' published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (February 2009) or the relevant standards for any subsequent national guidelines.*

SOC POL 11: *To support the implementation of the Meath County Age Friendly Strategy, 2017-2020 (or its replacement) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.*

SOC POL 12: *To support the implementation of the Meath Joint Policing Strategy, 2015-2020 (or its replacement) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.*

SOC POL 13: *Ensure that all buildings, public and open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of 'Building for Everyone' (National Disability Authority) and 'Access for the Disabled' (No. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board).*

SOC POL 14: *To support the implementation of the Joint Migrant Integration Strategy, 2019-2022 (or its replacement) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities*

5.7 Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009

The Ratoath Local Area Plan sets down the policy framework for the future growth of Ratoath. This LAP has been amended following the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.

The following are policies of Meath County Council:

Educational Facilities:

SOC POL 1 *To ensure the provision of community, educational, cultural, recreational and amenity facilities in tandem with residential, commercial and other development.*

SOC POL 2 *To co-operate with the Department of Education and Science and School Management Boards in the provision of school places.*

SOC POL 3 *To implement the Code of Practice for 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System' prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Education and Science in order to facilitate the timely and cost effective roll-out of school facilities by*

the Department of Education and Science and in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development

Childcare Facilities:

SOC POL 4 *To encourage and promote the provision of childcare facilities in Ratoath in accordance with national policy and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government document ‘Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities.’*

SOC POL 5 *To seek to realise the objectives of the “Meath County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan 2007-2010” or any subsequent Strategic Plan as pertinent to Ratoath, to ensure the balanced provision of quality childcare facilities throughout the town.*

SOC POL 6 *To consider childcare needs in future framework plans and all residential planning applications.*

SOC POL 7 *To permit childcare facilities in existing residential areas provided that they do not have a significant impact on the character or amenities of an area, particularly with regard to car parking, traffic generation and noise disturbance. Where proposed facilities relate to properties which have been designed and built as dwellings and are surrounded by other houses, a significant residential element should be retained*

Healthcare Facilities:

SOC POL 8 *To facilitate the provision of health services in suitable locations and in accordance with the zoning matrix. Such health services should provide safe links for pedestrian movement, good access and adequate planning facilities.*

SOC POL 9 *To co-operate with the Health Service Executive (North East) and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of adequate health care facilities for all members of the public.*

Recreational, Sport and Leisure Facilities:

SOC POL 10 *To support and encourage local sports and community groups in the provision, expansion and development of outdoor and indoor community facilities and where appropriate encourage the input of a third party.*

SOC POL 11 *To encourage and support the work of community groups in Ratoath.*

SOC POL 12 *To ensure that provision is made for such community facilities as is deemed appropriate in consultation with local interested parties and to assist in the provision of community and resource centres by identification and reservation of suitable sites.*

SOC POL 13 *To encourage the development of children’s playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed residential areas.*

SOC POL 14 *To encourage and support the provision of additional youth facilities in Ratoath.*

Open Space:

SOC POL 15 *To ensure that high quality open space is provided to serve the active and passive recreational needs of the population of Ratoath.*

SOC POL 16 *No residential development shall be permitted on lands that are subject of a deed of dedication or identified in a planning application as open space to ensure the availability of community and recreational facilities for the residents of the area.*

Libraries:

SOC POL 17 *To recognise the important role that the library service plays in the community and to facilitate the library service in enhancing its service delivery to the public, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.*

Arts & Culture

SOC POL 18 *To continue to enhance and support the range and quality of arts provision in Ratoath.*

SOC POL 19 *To liaise with the County Arts Officer on any development proposal that is likely to have a significant impact on the arts.*

SH OBJ 5 *To prepare new local area Plans for the following settlements within the lifetime of this Plan: Navan, Dunboyne/Dunboyne North/Clonee, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Enfield, Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East Donacarne- Mornington, Oldcastle, Athboy, Duleek, and Stamullen. As part of the preparation of these Plans, a detailed infrastructure assessment, consistent with the methodology for a Tiered Approach to Zoning under Appendix 3 of the NPF will be undertaken for each settlement.*

6.0 Existing Facilities

This Social Infrastructure Audit has been completed by using the policies above and the policies regarding community facilities in the Meath County Council Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Ratoath Local Area Plan, to review the existing capacity of community facilities in the area that MCC deem vital to creating healthier communities. These types of facilities have been examined and the result of this Social Infrastructure Audit has identified that there is sufficient existing capacity of these services and facilities within a 2 km radius of the subject site.

6.1 Facilities Audit

The Infrastructural Study Area for this assessment is defined by a c. 2 km radius of the subject site, equivalent to a c. 20- to 30-minute walking distance (see Figure 6-1 overleaf for extent). Given that the subject site is largely surrounded by existing residential development, this catchment forms a logical spatial area for this Social Infrastructure Assessment.

A total of 8 no. categories of facilities that align with the policies set out in the Development Plan, were utilised for this audit. More than 75 no. social infrastructure facilities and services were identified within and immediately bordering the Study Area and, in our opinion, there is sufficient provision of social infrastructure in the vicinity of the subject site (c. 2 km radius) to support the proposed development.

Table 6-1: Community Infrastructure Categories applied to Audit.

Category	Facility Type
Education and Training Services	Primary, Post-Primary, Third Level, Further Education, and other lifelong Training Centres
Childcare Facilities	Registered Childcare Facilities incl. Full Day, Part-Time and Sessional services
Community Facilities (incl. Libraries)	Community Centres and meeting halls, Libraries, Senior and Youth Centres/Cafes and Day Care Facilities, Community Gardens and Allotments
Arts and Cultural Facilities	Theatres, museums, galleries, performance and outdoor events spaces, other venues, incl. dance studios, art clubs, music schools, etc.
Healthcare Services	Hospitals, health centres, doctors and specialty clinics, nursing homes, mental health services and other therapy providers
Open Space and Recreation	Parks, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, MUGAs, sports centres and clubs, leisure centres, gyms and training facilities, swimming pools
Religious Institutions	Churches, multi-faith centres and other places of worship
Retail Centres and Services	District, neighbourhood and local centres

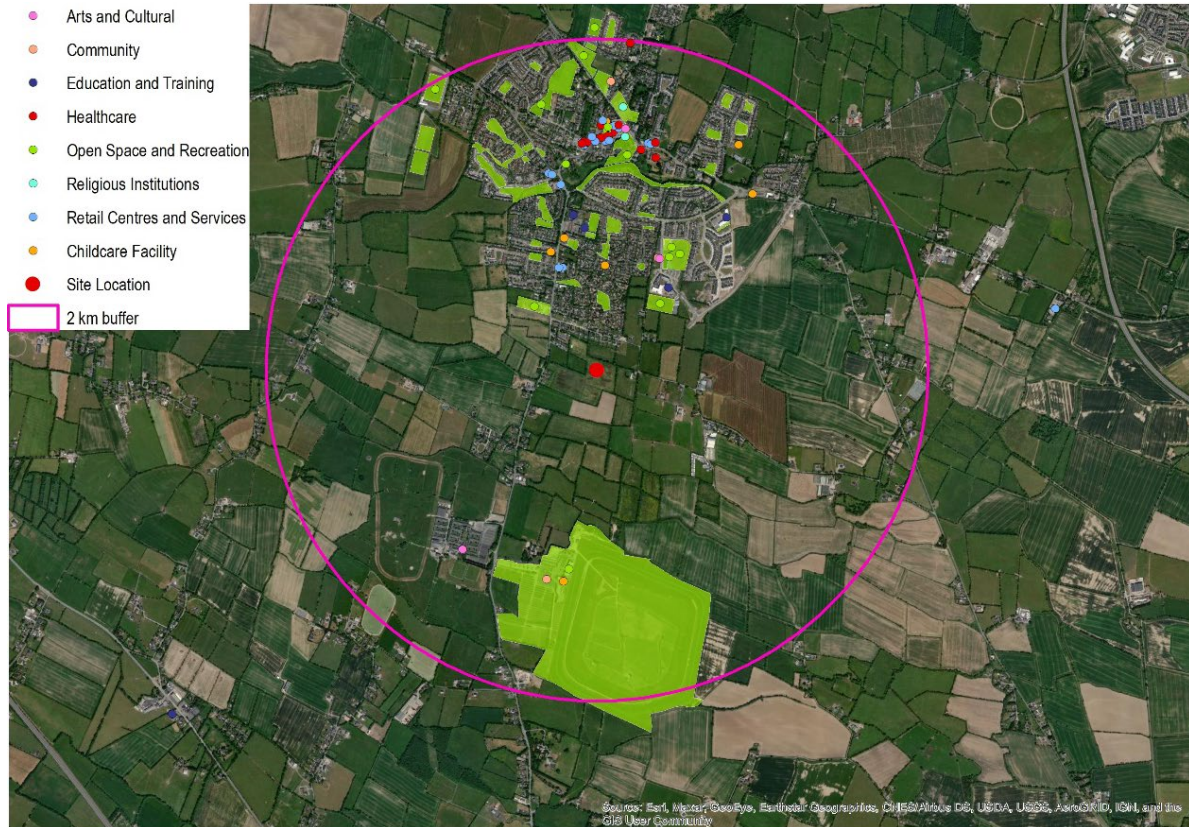


Figure 6-1: Existing social infrastructure facilities identified within c. 2km radius of subject site

6.2 Education and Training

A total of 4 no. education and training facilities were identified within or just outside the Study Area. Within the Study Area, 3 no. primary schools and 1 no. post primary school were recorded. For further detail in relation to the school capacity in the area, please refer to section 6.1.1 below.



Figure 6-2: Location of existing education and training facilities within c. 2km radius of the subject site

Table 6-2: Education and Training facilities within 2km of the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Primary	Ratoath Junior National School, Ratoath Senior National School, St. Paul's National School - Other's within c. 3km: Rathbeggan National School
Post Primary	Ratoath College
Special Education	None within 2km study area - Other's within c. 10km: Stepping Stones Special School (Harristown)
Third Level and Training	None within 2km study area

It is noted that there is no special education school or third level training centre within the study area. Given the more rural context of the area, it would not be expected to have a third level facility and generally residents would typically travel a longer distance for third level education. However, the area would benefit from the addition of a special education school or a training facility.

6.3 Schools Demand Assessment

In order to plan for school provision and analyse the relevant demographic data, the country is divided into 314 school planning areas¹ by the Department of Education. A Geographical Information System, using data from a range of sources, including school enrolments, Child Benefit records and information

¹ gov.ie - Establishment of a New School (www.gov.ie)

on residential development is used to identify where the pressure for school places across the country will arise. With this information, nationwide demographic exercises are carried out to determine where additional school place provision is needed at primary and post-primary level.

The proposed development is located within the Ratoath School Planning Area (SPA), as identified by the Department of Education and Skills and indicated in Figure 6-3 below. The Ratoath SPA, to which the subject site belongs, is bound to the east by the Ashbourne SPA, to the south by the Dunboynne SPA and to the west by the Dunshaughlin SPA.

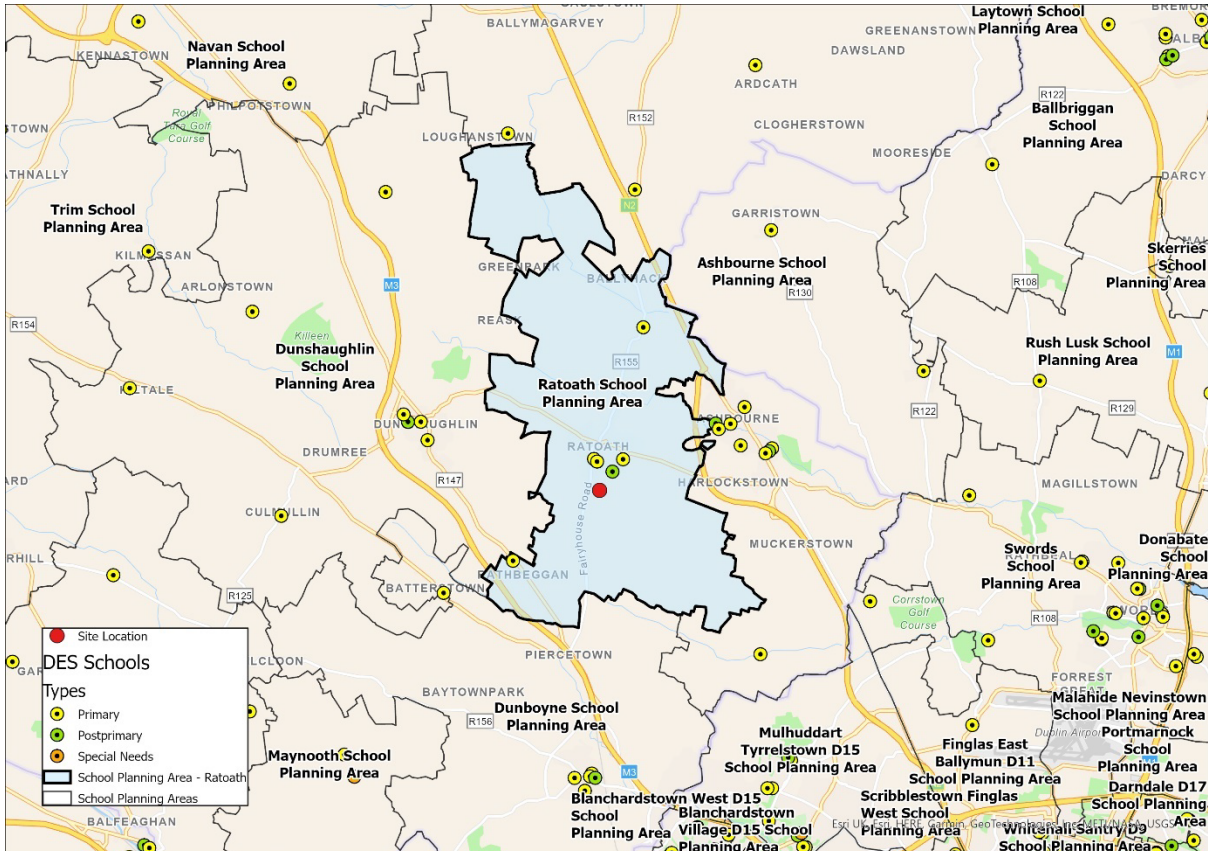


Figure 6-3: Extent of Ratoath School Planning Area (shown in pale blue) with respect to Subject Site (shown in red). Existing Primary (shown as yellow points) and Post-Primary Schools (shown as green points) within each area are also identified. Source: DES/KPMG-FA.

6.4 Primary Schools

As mentioned in section 6.1.1, the subject site is location with the Ratoath SPA, as designated by the Department of Education. A total of 5 no. primary schools were identified within the Ratoath SPA. These schools held a combined provisional enrolment of 1,662 no. students during the 2021/2022 school year as per Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. We note that of this cohort, all schools within the SPA were co-educational (mixed).

An e-mail/phone survey was carried out in April 2022 by KPMG Future Analytics to determine the available capacity in the schools within the catchment area. The result of this survey can be found in Table 6-3 and 6-4 below. This survey determined that the available capacity in the SPA currently is 27 places.

Table 6-3: Recorded Enrolments for Primary Schools –Ratoath SPA

Roll No.	School Name	Females	Males	2021/22 Enrolment ²	Available Capacity
17857J	St Andrew's Curraghera (S N Andreis Naofa)	59	53	113	15
20215J	St Paul's NS Ratoath	304	305	609	Full capacity
20200T	Ratoath Senior NS	232	238	470	No Information Provided
00885T	Ratoath Junior N S	161	139	300	No Information Provided
18448U	Rathbeggan NS (S N Rathbeagain)	82	88	170	12
Total		838	823	1,662	27

6.5 Special Education Schools

We note that no special education facilities were identified within the Ratoath SPA, however the area appears to be served by 1 no. special education facility to the west in Harristown, Kilcone – Stepping Stones Special School. This facility recorded a provisional enrolment of 29 no. students during the 2021/2022 school year as per Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. An e-mail/phone survey was carried out in April 2022 by KPMG Future Analytics to determine the available capacity in the schools within the catchment area. As no information was provided, the survey was unable to confirm the available capacity in Stepping Stones Special School.

Table 6-4: Recorded Enrolments in Nearby Special Education Schools – Adjoining SPA

Roll No.	School Name	Females	Males	2021/22 Enrolment ³	Available Capacity
20379Q	Stepping Stones Special School	1	28	29	No Information Provided

6.6 Post Primary Schools

The Ratoath SPA is served by one post-primary school, Ratoath College, which recorded a provisional enrolment of 1,112 no. students during the 2021/2022 school year as per Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. We note that 4 no. additional post-primary schools are located within the adjoining feeder areas of the Dunboyne, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin SPAs (see previous Figure 6-3), which have been included in Table 6-6 for reference purposes.

An e-mail/phone survey was carried out in April 2022 by KPMG Future Analytics to determine the available capacity of schools within the catchment area. The result of this survey can be found in Table 6-5 and 6-6 below. Ratoath College confirmed capacity for 5 no. students, however, it is worth noting that some upgrade works to the school are currently underway which will increase capacity in the area.

Table 6-5: Recorded Enrolments for Post-Primary Schools – Ratoath SPA

² Department of Education and Skills – The source for this data is the National School Annual Census for 2021/2022, which is returned via the Primary Online Database (POD). This includes both the Mainstream Census and the Special School Annual Census. Data is anchored on the census date of 30th September 2021. Note that only schools aided by the Department of Education and Skills are included in this list.

³ See previous footnote.

Roll No.	School Name	Females	Males	2021/22 Enrolment	Available Capacity
76088T	Ratoath College	536	576	1,112	Capacity for 5

Table 6-6: Recorded Enrolments for Post-Primary Schools – Adjoining SPAs

Roll No.	School Name	Females	Males	2020/21 Enrolment	Available Capacity
71960I	Community College Dunshaughlin	519	646	1,165	Full capacity
76196W	De Lacy College (Coláste De Lacy)	379	343	722	Full capacity
91495T	Ashbourne Community School	457	539	996	Full capacity
71950F	St. Peter's College	573	656	1,229	No Information Provided
Total		1,928	2,184	3,977	

6.7 Historic Enrolments and Trends

Historic enrolment trends for the Ratoath SPA indicate there was a increase in growth at primary level for the historic 5-year interval, with a decrease of 274 students within the cohort from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021 (as indicated in Table 6-7). Low levels of growth were identified for the historic 10-year interval, and an overall decrease of 172 students within the cohort from 2010/11 to 2020/21.

Table 6-7: Historic Change in Enrolment (Primary)

Ratoath SPA			Enrolment Year			Historic Change	
No.	Roll No.	School Name	11/12	16/17	21/22	5-year	10-year
1	17857J	St Andrew's Curraghera (S N Andreis Naofa)	103	114	113	+11	+10
2	20215J	St Paul's NS Ratoath	524	709	609	+185	+84
3	20200T	Ratoath Senior NS	571	468	470	-103	-101
4	00885T	Ratoath Junior N S	442	439	300	-3	-142
5	18448U	Rathbeggan NS (S N Rathbeagain)	195	206	170	+11	-25
			1,835	1,936	1,662	+101	-172

Table 6-8: Historic Enrolment (Post-Primary)

Ratoath SPA			Enrolment Year			Historic Change	
No.	Roll No.	School Name	11/12	16/17	21/22	5-year	10-year
1	76088T	Ratoath College	845	1,050	1,112	+205	+267

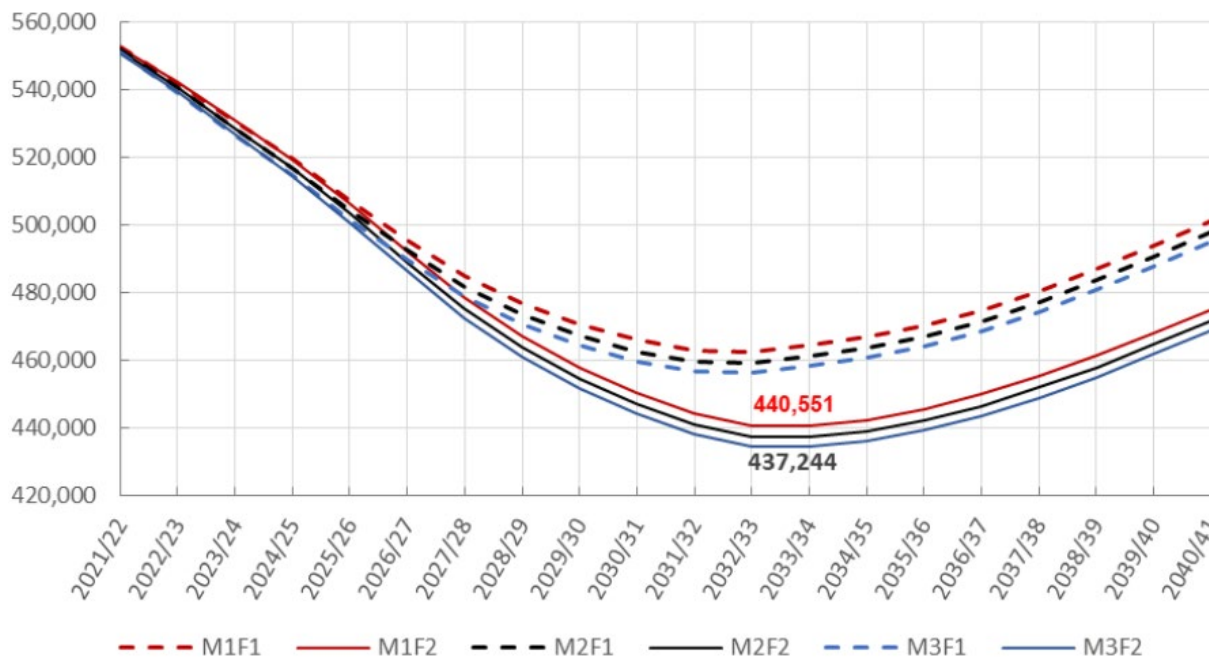
6.8 Future Growth Projections

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) reported in November 2021⁴ that enrolment figures for primary schools in Ireland were likely to have reached peak levels in 2018 and are now projected to gradually decline in all population scenarios, with the preferred M1F2 scenario⁵ suggesting a low point of c. 440,000 pupils by 2033. This projection then anticipates an increase over the next 4 years (2034-2038) of c. 13,000 primary pupils, in line with revised migration and fertility assumptions for the country (see Figure 5-4 overleaf). The latest statistical release by the DES in this respect states: “Enrolments in primary schools in Ireland in 2019 stood at 567,716, down slightly on 2018 (567,772).

“Enrolments are projected to fall by 120,860 pupils over the coming years (under the M1F2 scenario), reaching a low point of 440,551 by 2033 (Fig 1; Tab A.1). The sharpest falls will be in the early period and will average 12,000 pupils per year between 2022 and 2028. Following the low point in 2033 enrolments will rise more slowly in 2034-2036 before accelerating in 2040 (+6,967).”

(DES Enrolment Projections (November 2021), Page 5)

Figure 6-4: Projections of Enrolments at Primary Level 2021-2041, organized by projection scenarios created by the CSO (Source: DES, Nov. 2021)



⁴ Source: Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2020-2038 (DES, Nov. 2020).

⁵ Given the strong inward migration in recent years, combined with falling fertility, the projected females used in the CSO report are taken from the M1F2 CSO scenario of population projections. M1 indicates net inward migration of 30,000 persons per year, while F2 indicates falling fertility (from 1.8 to 1.6).

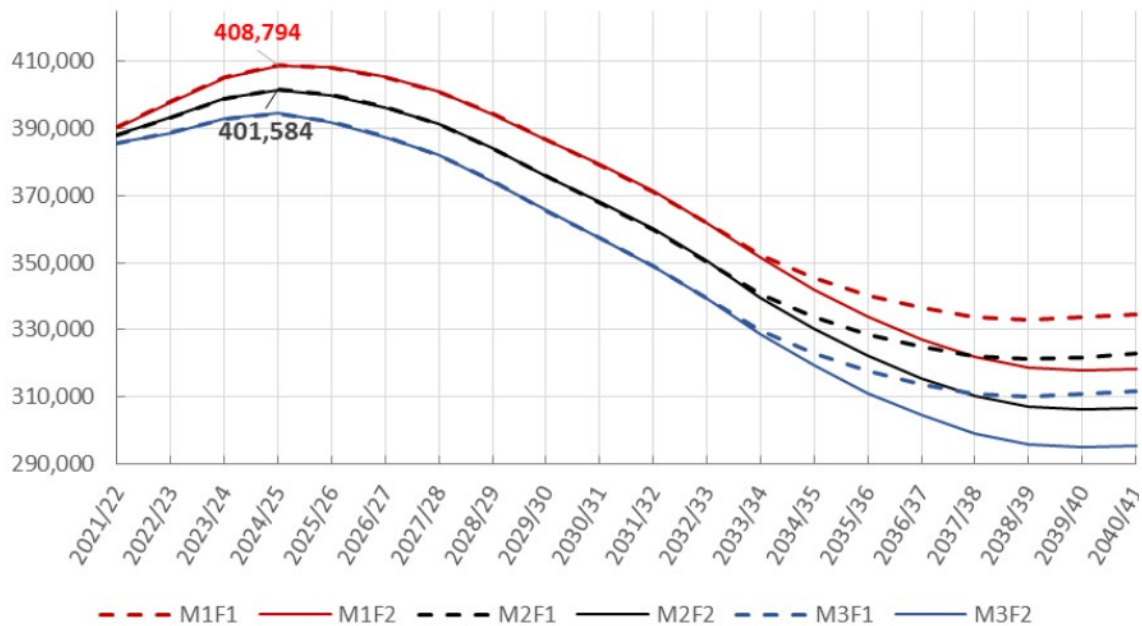


Figure 6-5: Projections of Enrolments at Post-Primary Level 2021-2041, organized by projection scenarios created by the CSO (Source: DES, Nov. 2021).

It is anticipated that post-primary enrolments, however, will continue to rise in the short-term and will likely reach record levels in 2024, with a peak of c. 410,000 pupils, before falling gradually to c. 318,000 pupils by 2038 (see Figure 5.5 overleaf). The DES report states that enrolments within the Mid East Region will decline by 11.9% between 2020-2036,

“In sharp contrast, two regions can expect to see total falls in enrolments of 8,171 (South-East) and 9,838 (South-West), representing falls of 22.1 and 18.0 per cent, respectively. In the MidEast, the numbers will fall by 7,204, or 11.9 per cent”.

6.9 Potential Impact on the Ratoath SPA

Using the projected enrolment figures⁶ included in the DES Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021-2038, we were able to extrapolate the future enrolment for the 2027-28 academic year for Ratoath SPA. The report projects the enrolment figures in primary schools nationally to drop by c. 13% between 2021-22 academic year and 2025-26 academic year. Applying this future projection figure to the current enrolment figures within the Ratoath SPA it is estimated that the enrolments in the 5 no. primary schools identified in the assessment are set to reduce by 219 spaces by 2027/28 academic years (Table 6-9).

At the post-primary level, the report projects that enrolment figures will increase by c. 2.7% between 2021-22 academic year and 2027-28 academic year. This would result in an increase of 30 children in the 1 no. post primary school identified within the Ratoath SPA. We note that the indicative change figures provided are an estimate of potential enrolments at each school level based on the national population projections included in the DES report⁷ and do not represent localized values.

⁶ Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2020-2038 - Table 4 and Table 7 (DES, Nov. 2020).*

⁷ Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2020-2038, Table 4 and Table 7 (DES, Nov. 2020).*

Table 6-9: Projected Enrolment Trends - 2020 to 2025

Ratoath SPA	Enrolment Year		Future Trends	
	21/22	27/28 ⁸	% Change	Est. Change
Primary Schools (5)	1,662	1,443	-13.2%	-219
Post Primary Schools (1)	1,112	1,142	+2.7%	+30

6.10 Potential Demand Generated by Scheme

The proposed development will comprise a maximum of 452 no. units of various typologies as indicated in Table 6-10. The average household size for Co. Meath was recorded as 3.03 no. persons per household in 2016, which generates a total indicative population of c. 1,370 no. persons when applied to the proposed development. It is assumed that only the 437 no. two and three- bedroom units proposed (highlighted below in Table 6-10) can reasonably accommodate families, which would comprise c. 1,324 no. persons within the development.

Table 6-10: Proposed Schedule of Residential Units – Combined Development

Unit Type	No. of Units Proposed	% Total Development
1-bedroom units	15	3%
2-bedroom units	100	22%
3-bedroom units	337	75%
Total Units	452	100%

The average number of children per family recorded in the State in Census 2016 was 1.38 children⁹, which generates an indicative population of 603 No. children (between the ages of 0-18 years) when applied to the number of units that can accommodate families within the proposed development. Of this figure, an estimated 444 no. children would be considered school age (including 274 no. primary school children and 170 no. post-primary school children), as per the age cohorts recorded for Co. Meath¹⁰ in 2016 (see Table 6-11).

Table 6-11: Breakdown of 0-18 Year Age Cohort for Co. Meath (2016 CSO)

Age Group	2016 Population	% of Total Cohort
Pre-school children (0-4)	15,736	26.3%
Primary school children (5-12)	27,198	45.5%
Secondary school children (13-18)	16,807	28.1%
All children	59,741	100.0%

With respect to these calculations, the development has the potential to generate an additional c. 1,370 no. persons within the area, including an estimated 444 no. school-age children (274 no. primary school children and 170 post-primary school children), when the proposal is fully occupied.

⁸ Figure estimated using the projected decrease of c. 13.2% at primary level and increase of c. 2.7% at post- primary level from 2020 to 2025 as per M1F2 scenario.

⁹ Source: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp4hf/cp4hf/>

¹⁰ Source: <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>

6.11 Planned Facilities Network

Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCDP) provides a holistic assessment of educational needs and has regard to the requirements of The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities (DES & DEHLG, 2008) and Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009 in its identification of school sites throughout the local authority. Relevant policies for the development of primary and post-primary schools are also set out in Chapter 7 of the MCDP, as shown in Table 6-12.

Table 6-12: Selected Policies/Objectives for Community Infrastructure (SDP) - Schools

Policy	Description
SOC POL 15.	<i>To facilitate the development of preschool, primary, post primary, third level, outreach, research, adult, and further educational facilities to meet the educational needs of the citizens of the County.</i>
SOC POL 16	<i>To ensure the provision of preschool, primary and post primary education facilities in conjunction with the planning and development of residential areas, maximises opportunities for use of walking, cycling and use of public transport.</i>
SOC POL 17	<i>To ensure that adequate lands and services are zoned and reserved to cater for the establishment, improvement, or expansion of all educational facilities in the County. The Council also supports the concept of multi-campus educational facilities.</i>
SOC POL 18	<i>To continue to support and promote existing schools serving communities in town and village centres.</i>
SOC POL 19	<i>To encourage, support and develop opportunities to open up schools to wider community usage in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills and other stakeholders.</i>

We also note that additional schools' requirements are identified within the new *County Development Plan 2021-2027*, which include requirements for a new primary and post-primary school facility within Ratoath, as follows:

"The Department of Education and Skills has identified that the following areas are likely to require additional school facilities/ reservation of sites over the plan period:

- *A new primary school in Ashbourne, Navan, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath, Trim and Kilcock Environs.*
- *A new post primary school in Drogheda Environs, Ashbourne, Navan, Dunboyne, Enfield Trim and Ratoath.*
- *A new third level (PLC) facility for Dunboyne."*

In addition to the above locations, the Plan makes provision for future educational facilities through the identification and reservation of potential new sites/ sites to accommodate the potential future expansion/relocation of existing facilities. In the identification of sites, consideration needs to be given both to the co-location of childcare provision and the potential use of school facilities by the wider community outside of school hours and during school holidays.

"Future school provision, within new growth areas specifically, will be planned and implemented in tandem with residential development. The age profile of the County is of particular relevance and it is likely that additional schools provision will be required over the plan period... While the reservation of sites for educational use does not in itself guarantee the timely provision of

necessary educational facilities, the Council will continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills, the Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) and other stakeholders to assist, where possible, in the development of suitable educational facilities.”

(Section 7.7.3.1, MCDP – Our emphasis)

6.12 New Schools to be Established from 2019 -2022

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) announced in April 2018 that more than 40 No. new primary and post-primary schools are to be established throughout the country by 2022 with subsequent additions to establishment list announced in 2019, 2020 and 2021. While there are no new schools currently proposed within the subject Ratoath SPA, we note that there were 2 no. new primary schools and 1 no. new post-primary schools proposed to open by 2021 within the feeder areas of Dunshaughlin SPA and Ashbourne SPA (see Table 6-13). All of the proposed schools have been established to date, with capacity for 16 additional primary classrooms and 1000 post-primary pupils to be provided within the area.

- Ashbourne CNS is currently operating from temporary facilities within the Ashbourne Education Campus beside Colaiste de Lacy, with permanent facilities underway to the east across from the GAA Club.
- Dunshaughlin CNS is currently operating from temporary facilities within Dunshaughlin GAA, with permanent facilities to be provided within the larger Dunshaughlin Education Campus
- Coláiste Ríoga is currently operating from temporary facilities beside The Willows on Dublin Road, with permanent facilities also proposed to be provided within the Dunshaughlin Education Campus.

Table 6-13: New Schools to be Established in Neighbouring Feeder Areas 2019-2022 (DES)¹¹

Type	School Planning Area/Name	Size	To Open
Primary	Ashbourne - Ashbourne CNS	16 classrooms	Established 2019
Primary	Dunshaughlin - Dunshaughlin CNS	8 classrooms	Established 2020
Post-Primary	Dunshaughlin - Coláiste Ríoga	1000 pupils	Established 2021

With respect to other large-scale education projects in the vicinity of the Ratoath SPA, there were 6 no. school facilities identified under the DES school building programme under development as of July 2021, including upgrades to the existing Ratoath Community College (now on site), 2 no. schools within Dunshaughlin (as design stage) and 3 no. schools within Ashbourne (at various tender, briefing and design stages – see Table 6-14 below).

In a consultation with Coláiste Ríoga in April 2022 it was highlighted that the school has been set up in temporary accommodation. The school will move into its new permanent building in 2024 and will have capacity for 150 children that year.

Dunshaughlin CNS noted that it currently has 8 classrooms with potential to expand to 16 classrooms if demand increases in the area. This will create a significant number of additional spaces for primary school children in the area. Ashbourne CNS were unable to provide an update.

¹¹ Source: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2018-press-releases/PR18-04-13.html> and <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2e535-new-schools-list-2019-2022/>

Table 6-14: Status of Large-Scale Projects in Vicinity of Ratoath School Planning Area¹²

Ref.	Roll No.	School Name & Address	Status
287	20521Q	Dunshaughlin Primary - Dunshaughlin CNS	School opened in September 2020 in interim start-up accommodation. Stage 2b (Detailed Design)
288	20546J	Ashbourne Community N.S.	School opened in September 2019 in interim start-up accommodation. Stage 3 (Tender Stage)
295	76196W	De Lacy College, Ashbourne	Stage 3 (Tender stage)
298	76614O	Colaiste Rioga - Dunshaughlin Post-Primary	School to opened in 2021 in interim start-up accommodation - Stage 2b (Detailed design)
299	91495T	Ashbourne Community School	Project Brief Stage

6.13 Schools Summary

The Study Area provides an insight into the immediate context of Ratoath. A total of 4 no. education and training facilities were identified within or just outside the Study Area. Within the Study Area, 3 no. primary schools and 1 no. post primary school were recorded. It is worth noting that there is no special school or third level training facility in the Study Area.

On a more regional scale, the area is located in a School Planning Area which has been defined by the Department of Education. There are 5 no. existing primary schools and 1 no. existing post-primary school currently operating in the Ratoath SPA to which the subject site belongs. These facilities cater to a student population of 1,662 no. primary school students and 1,112 no. post-primary school students, with growth in the recent 10-year period demonstrated at both levels. An email and phone survey determined that within the SPA, there 27 no. available places in primary schools, with the available capacity in post-primary schools at 15.

With respect to future enrolments, we note that a c. 13% decrease in enrolments in primary school level and a 3% increase in post-primary school enrolments is anticipated nationally from 2021/22 to 2027/28, with respect to the most recent regional population projections published by the Department of Education and Skills.

There are no new schools currently proposed within the subject Ratoath SPA. However, we note that there were 2 no. new primary schools and 1 no. new post-primary schools proposed to open by 2021 within the feeder areas of Dunshaughlin SPA and Ashbourne SPA. All of the proposed schools have been established to date, with capacity for 16 additional primary classrooms and 1000 post-primary pupils to be provided within the area. Colaiste Rioga noted capacity for 150 students upon completion of new school building in 2024 and Dunshaughlin noted potential to double classroom size if required. With respect to other large-scale education projects in the vicinity of the Ratoath SPA, there were 4 no. school facilities identified under the DES school building programme under development as of April 2022, including upgrades to the existing Ratoath Community College (now on site), 2 no. schools within Dunshaughlin (as design stage) and 3 no. schools within Ashbourne (at various tender, briefing and design stages).

¹² Extracted from *Current status of large-scale projects being delivered under the school building programme* list published 31 July 2021. Source: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/c5b56b-major-projects/>

It is expected that the additional school infrastructure will be able to cope with the demand generated by the proposed development. As primary projections are currently decreasing there will be no strain on the existing primary school infrastructure as the demand generated by the proposed development will be phased over a number of years. Additionally, Dunshaughlin CNS will have capacity to double the number of classrooms if necessary.

Coláiste Ríoga will provide an additional 150 spaces at post primary level at the height of enrolment projections. This additional capacity will be able to cope with the demand generated by the proposed development as the demand generated will be phased over a long-term period. The 170 post primary places generated will be phased out long term. Final phases of the proposal will be during the declining enrolment years and thus more capacity will be available within the post primary school infrastructure. It is considered that the future demand generated by the proposed development (i.e. 444 No. places – including 274 No. primary and 169 No. post- primary school children) is likely be absorbed by the existing schools network and other planned schools currently under development within the area, namely the upgrades to Ratoath Community College which is located just north east of the subject site and both primary and post primary schools in Ashbourne (11 minute drive) and Dunshaughlin (7 minute drive) which are located a short distance from the subject site.

6.14 Childcare Facilities Audit

A total of 11 no. childcare facilities were identified in the Study Area using the latest Tusla Early Years Inspectorate data which could be accessed within a c.2 km radius of the site. Table 6-15 sets out each of the facilities listed by name. The Table also details the total enrolment numbers for each provider, according to Tusla data, and the maximum capacity figure, according to Tusla data.

These results indicate that of the 11 no. existing childcare facilities in the area, there is 130 no. available spaces.



Figure 6-6: Location of existing childcare facilities within c. 2km radius of subject site

Table 6-15: Current Capacity of Existing Childcare Facilities in and bordering the Study Area

No.	Childcare Facility	Service Type	Capacity
1	Happy Days (Ratoath)	Part-Time Sessional	No answer
2	Little Robyn'z Montessori	Sessional	Full capacity
3	Fox Lodge Manor Montessori & Playschool	Full Day Part Time Sessional	3
4	Millview Childcare	Full Day Part Time Sessional	Full capacity
5	Seagrave Montessori	Sessional	No answer
6	Flintstones Pre-school	Sessional	No answer
7	Ratoath Childcare Centre	Full Day Sessional	Full capacity
8	Home from Home Daycare	Full Day Sessional	Full capacity
9	Forever Friends Pre-school	Sessional	Full capacity
10	The School House Montessori	Sessional	Full capacity
11	Scope to Grow	Full Day	3
Total			6

6.15 Potential Demand Generated by Scheme

Given the focus of this childcare assessment, specific regard will be paid to the 0-6 years age cohort within the local population, as it comprises the standard age range for childcare facilities. We note that the number of people within 0-6 years age cohort decreased within the Study Area from 2011-2016, dropping from 1,456 children in 2011 (10.1% of total population) to 1,162 children in 2016 (10% of total population – see Table 6-16). Having ascertained the overall demographic trends as relevant to the age cohort pertaining to childcare provision, the impact of the proposed development in this context will now be examined.

Table 6-16: Number and Percentage of Population Aged 0-6 with Respect to Total Population, 2011-2016

Age	2011 Population (0-6 years)	% Total (0-85+ years)	2016 Population (0-6 years)	% Total (0-85+ years)
0	192	1.3%	114	1%
1	214	1.5%	130	1.1%
2	225	1.6%	140	1.2%
3	233	1.6%	179	1.5%
4	216	1.5%	194	1.7%
5	198	1.4%	197	1.7%
6	178	1.2%	208	1.8%
Total	1,456	10.1%	1,162	10%

As highlighted in previous Section 5.0, studio and one-bedroom units can be excluded in estimations of minors within a development and this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms. As such, all one-bedroom units and 30% of two-bedroom units have been excluded in the estimation of 0–6-year-old residents, leaving a total of 401 no. units.

In arriving at the estimated number of 0–6-year-old residents in the proposed development, the proposed unit mix and form of the development, as well as the following indicators, have been used:

- Persons per unit proposed (determined by the proposed development and the average household size within Co. Meath is established as 3.03 persons per unit¹³ using the Census 2016); and
- Proportion of the Study Area’s population within the 0–6 years age cohort (identified as 10% in 2016).

Analysis of these factors allows for a determination of the total number of 0–6-year-old residents in the proposed development. As highlighted in Table 6-17, it is estimated that 122 no. children aged 0–6 years may reside in the proposed development. However, it should be noted that simply being resident at the development does not equate to a demand for childcare services.

Table 6-17: Methodology for Estimating the Number of Children Aged 0-6 Years in the Proposed Development

Total Units ¹⁴	Average Household Size	Residents (Number)	0-6 Years (% of Total Population)	0-6 Years (Number)
401	3.03	1,215	10%	122

6.16 Estimated Childcare Generated (QNHS)

The CSO’s Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) provides a study specifically on childcare take-up for Q3 of 2016. This release is especially relevant for the purposes of this assessment as it indicates the extent to which childcare facilities are utilised by the general population. Table 6.18 shows the range of methods parents use for the purposes of childcare for their pre-school children in the Mid-East region (incl. Meath) compared to the larger State, with respect to QNHS figures

Table 6-18: Type of Childcare Utilised by Parents of Pre-School Children.

Type of Childcare	Mid-East (incl. Meath)	State
Parent/Partner	65%	62%
Unpaid Relative/Friend	16%	17%
Paid Relative/Friend	5%	3%
Childminder/Au-Pair/Nanny	13%	13%
Childcare Facility	14%	19%
Other	<1%	1%

¹³ CSO statistics record a total of 193,727 no. residents in 63,861 no. private households: <https://data.cso.ie/table/E1011/>

¹⁴ Total units excluding all 1 bed and 30% of 2 bed apartment units

The majority of pre-school children in the Mid-East region (incl. Meath) are cared for by their parents or partners of their parents (65%), with only 14% of pre-school children attending a childcare facility compared to 19% nationally. While it is reasonable to assume that the CSO's QNHS is an accurate and representative measure of the population, it is acknowledged that this figure may be considered to be conservative and as such a scenario where 40% of pre-school children attend a childcare facility is also considered herein. Table 6-19 applies both the QNHS's 14% figure and a 40% figure to the estimated number of residents aged 0–6-year-old (26%), as determined under the quantitative demographic analysis above.

Table 6-19: Number of Pre-School Children Requiring Access to Childcare Facilities.

Total Units	0-6 Years (Number)	0-6 Years Total at 14%	0-6 Years Total at 40%
401	122	17	49

6.17 Creche Phasing Justification

A creche is being provided by the applicant within phase 3 of the proposed development. Firstly, looking at phase 4, this phase includes neighbourhoods K, L and M. Tables 6-20 and 6-21 outline the demand generated by the proposed development in phases 1, 2 and 3. As shown below a demand for 15 no. children will be generated under the 14% QNHS scenario. Under the 40% scenario there is a total demand for 42 no. children.

Furthermore, analysis of the demand generated by the proposed development was calculated during phase 3 of the development. Tables 6-22 and 6-23 outline the demand generated by the proposed development during phases 1 and 2. As indicated on Table 6-23 the demand generated will be 10.

Table 6-20: Methodology for Estimating the Number of Children Aged 0-6 Years in the Proposed Development (Phase 1, 2 & 3 total units (Excluding 1 beds and 30% of 2 beds))

Total Units ¹⁵	Average Household Size	Residents (Number)	0-6 Years (%of Total Population)	0-6 Years (Number)
323	3.03	979	10%	98

Table 6-21: Number of Pre-School Children Requiring Access to Childcare Facilities (Phase 1, 2 & 3 total units (Excluding 1 beds and 30% of 2 beds))

Total Units	0-6 Years (Number)	0-6 Years Total at 14%	0-6 Years Total at 40%
323	98	14	39

Table 6-22: Methodology for Estimating the Number of Children Aged 0-6 Years in the Proposed Development (Phase 1 & 2 total units (Excluding 1 beds and 30% of 2 beds))

Total Units ¹⁶	Average Household Size	Residents (Number)	0-6 Years (%of Total Population)	0-6 Years (Number)
231	3.03	700	10%	70

Table 6-23: Number of Pre-School Children Requiring Access to Childcare Facilities (Phase 1 & 2 total units (Excluding 1 beds and 30% of 2 beds))

¹⁵ Phase 1, 2 & 3 total units (Excluding 1 beds and 30% of 2 beds)

¹⁶ Phase 1 & 2 total units (Excluding 1 beds and 30% of 2 beds)

Total Units	0-6 Years (Number)	0-6 Years Total at 14%	0-6 Years Total at 40%
231	70	10	28

The DES projections highlighted that there is currently a decrease in enrolments at primary school level. This decrease trend will continue until 2033 as indicated in section 6.1.6. With this information we can also expect a decrease in the numbers attending childcare facilities and thus there will not be an under provision if the creche is provided within phase 3. The decrease in primary school projections can be seen in Figure 6-4 within section 6.1.6.

6.18 Consultation with Meath County Childcare Committee

Meath County Childcare Committee (MCCC) was contacted as part of the consultation process. This was done in order to gauge capacity and levels of demand from a reputable source within the area. MCCC provided a letter which outlined current provision and prediction of need. It was concluded that, *“It is therefore realistic to anticipate with additional dwellings signposted for Ratoath that need for childcare and early learning facilities will increase as well.”*

This consultation letter can be found in Appendix A of this report.

6.19 Summary of Childcare Assessment

In order to determine the current levels of childcare provision, a review of the demographics of the local Study Area was undertaken. A total of 11 no. childcare facilities were identified in the area using the latest Tusla Early Years Inspectorate data¹⁷ and it was determined that there is capacity of 6 no. additional children in these facilities.

In addition to these findings, a calculation was made to estimate that the proposed development could generate 122 no. 0–6-year-old children (that could potentially require a space in the childcare facility). However, per the QNHS (see previous section 6.2.3), children in the Mid-East region (incl. Meath) are cared for by their parents or partners of their parents (65%), with only 14% of pre-school children attending a childcare facility compared to 19% nationally. This would mean that from the potential 122 no. 0- to 6-year-olds resident at the proposed development, only 17 no. children would attend a childcare facility. It is acknowledged that this percentage is conservative and hence the potential capacity of 49 no. children was calculated to be availing childcare facility, which is 40% of the total children expected to reside within the proposed development.

We also note that the subject proposal also includes the provision of a childcare facility of c. 1,003 sqm, with capacity for 121 children. It is therefore considered that the demand created by the proposed development can be absorbed by the existing provision in conjunction with the proposed facility.

6.20 Community Facilities

¹⁷ The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013). Inspection Reports for active facilities are available online for public inspection and are updated at regular intervals by the service. Visit the Tusla website for more detail: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/creche-inspection-reports/>

The proposed development is supported by a number of local social and community service facilities, including the Ratoath Community Centre, the Ratoath Men’s Shed, the Ratoath Scout Den, Ratoath Allotments and the Fairyhouse weekly market. A full list of the facilities can be found in Table 6-24. Figure 6-10 below illustrates the distance of each facility from the subject site. The 9th Meath Scout Den, also called the Ratoath Scout Den is less than 2km from the subject site.

Table 6-24: Existing Community Facility types identified within c. 2km radius of subject site.

Type	Facilities
Community and Social Services	Ratoath Community Centre, Ratoath Men’s Shed, 9 th Meath Scout Den, Ratoath Allotments, Fairyhouse Market (weekly)
Libraries	None within 2km study area - Others within c. 10km: Ashbourne Library, Dunshaughlin Library



Figure 6-7: Ratoath Community Centre



Figure 6-8: 9th Meath Ratoath Scout Group



Figure 6-9: Fairyhouse Sunday Market



Figure 6-10: Location of existing community facilities within c. 2km radius of subject site.

6.21 Arts & Cultural

The Study Area is served by a small number of Arts & Culture facilities, including the Venue Theatre, Ratoath School of Music, Clarke Art School, Fit Teens Dance Class and other attractions like the Grotto and Tattersalls Ireland Country House. A full list of the facilities can be found in Table 6-25. Figure 6-16 illustrated the distance of each facility from the subject site.

Table 6-25: Existing Arts and Cultural Facility types identified within c. 2km radius of subject site.

Type	Facilities
Arts and Cultural Facilities	The Venue Theatre (Ratoath Community Centre), Ratoath School of Music, Clark Art School, Fit Kids/Fit Teens Dance Class
Other Attractions	The Grotto, Tattersalls Ireland Country House



Figure 6-11: Venue Theatre



Figure 6-12: Ratoath School of Music



Figure 6-13: Marian Grotto



Figure 6-14: Tattersalls



Figure 6-15: Tattersalls Country House



Figure 6-17: Ratoath Manor Nursing Home



Figure 6-18: Location of existing healthcare facilities within c. 2km radius of subject site

6.23 Open Space, Sport and Recreation

There are a broad range of facilities for open spaces, sports, and recreation in the Study Area. The facilities are covered in five categories. These include Sports Centres and Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Nature, Trails and Gardens, Golf Courses, Equestrian Centres, and other Training Facilities. A full list of these facilities can be found in Table 6-27 below. Figure 6-23 below illustrates the distance of each facility from the subject site.

Table 6-27: Existing Open Space and Recreation Facility types identified within c. 2km radius of subject site.

Type	Facilities
Sports Centres and Grounds	Ratoath Community Sports Complex (Jamestown Sports Campus), Ratoath Athletics Club, Ratoath GAA (Sean Eiffe Park), Ratoath Harps AFC and Main Astro Pitches, Ratoath College Astro Pitches, Ratoath Rugby Club, Ratoath Tennis Club, Ratoath Boxing, Ratoath BMX Club
Parks, Playgrounds, Nature Trails and Gardens	Steeplechase Green and Playground, Ratoath Broadmeadow Riverwalk, Ratoath Allotments
Golf Courses	Ratoath Pitch and Putt Club
Equestrian Centres	Fairyhouse Racecourse
Other Training Facilities	Ratoath Fitness Studio, Fitness Factory, The Yoga Room



Figure 6-19: Ratoath Rugby Football Club



Figure 6-20: Ratoath Athletic Club



Figure 6-21: Ratoath GAA Club



Figure 6-22: Ratoath BMX Club



Figure 6-23: Fairyhouse Racecourse



Figure 6-24: Location of existing open space, sport, and recreation facilities within c. 2km radius of subject site.

6.24 Religious Institutions

With respect to religious services and facilities in the area, there are 2 no. religious institutions. The subject site is served by the Holy Trinity Church, however, there are no other facilities in the c. 2km Study Area to provide for other religions. The facilities are listed in Table 6-28 below. Figure 6-26 illustrates the distance of the facility from the subject site.

Table 6-28: Existing Religious Facility types identified within c. 2km radius of subject site

Type	Facilities
Churches and Multi-faith Centres	Holy Trinity Church
Burial Grounds	Ratoath Parish Cemetery



Figure 6-25: Holy Trinity Church



Figure 6-26: Location of existing religious facilities within c. 2km radius of subject site.

6.25 Retail Centres and Services

A review of the retail offerings within a c. 2km radius of the subject site was also conducted, which identified c. 17 facilities within 20-30 minutes walking distance of the site. The site is served by retail services that include Supervalu, Tesco Express, the Ratoath Garden Centre Ratoath Post Office and Bank of Ireland. A full list of these facilities can be found in Table 6-29 below. Figure 6-27 below illustrates the distance of the facilities from the subject site.

Table 6-29: Existing Retail Facility types identified within c. 2km radius of subject site.

Type	Facilities
Shopping Centres	Corballis Shopping Centre, The Village Centre, Centrepoint (neighbourhood centre)
Supermarkets and Specialty Foods	Supervalu, Tesco Express, Dolan’s Butchers, Tony’s Butchers
Comparison Shops	Homeworld, Donnelly Builder’s Providers, Ratoath Books (Forever Amber), Ratoath Garden Centre
Convenience and Off Licences	Centra, Spar, Conway’s Off Licence Ratoath, The Cellar Off Licence
Other Retail Services	Ratoath Post Office, Ratoath Credit Union, Bank of Ireland

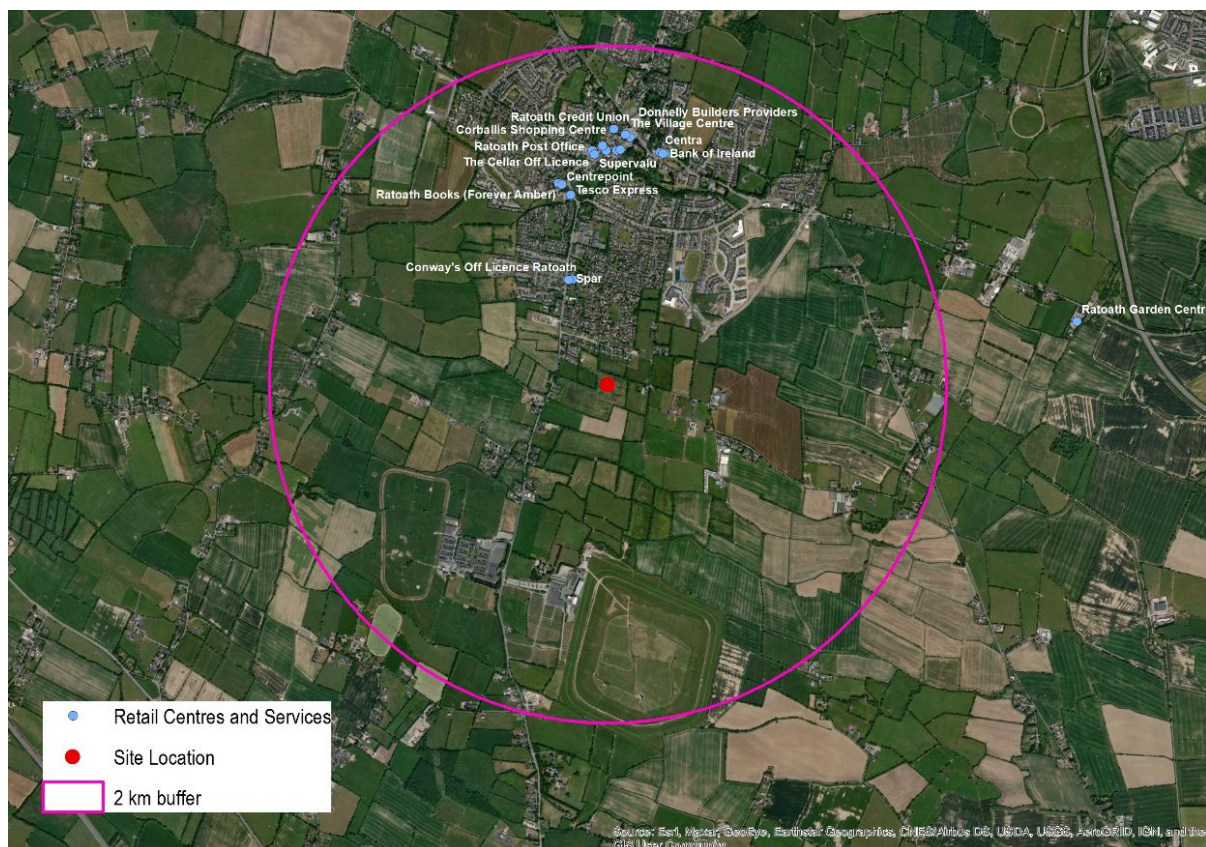


Figure 6-27: Location of existing retail centres and facilities within c. 2km radius of subject site.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed residential development provides for 452 no. residential units comprising of 150 no. houses (3-bed), 182 no. maisonettes (15 no. 1-bed & 167 no. 3-bed) and 120 no. apartments (100 no. 2-bed and 20 no. 3-bed), located in 12 neighbourhoods. The proposed development also provides for a crèche (c. 1,003 sq. m), with associated outdoor play areas at ground floor (c.342 sq. m) and at roof level (c. 384.8 sq. m).

The demographic profile for the local Study Area is largely consistent with the rest of Co. Meath, with the population increasing within the study area by 4% and 6% in county Meath from 2011-2016. The majority of the Study Area population in 2016 was aged 15-64 (64%), followed by 30% aged 0-14 and the remaining 5% aged 65+.

We note that the population of Study Area aged 15 years or older was largely at work (63%) or in school (14%) at the time of the 2016 Census, and that a significant percentage of this population had completed 'Third Level Education' (46%) or 'Post Graduate or Higher' (11%) at the time of the Census. We note that less than 1% of the total population in the Study Area and the County had received 'No Formal Education' in 2016, with only 6% of the population in the Study Area recorded as being 'Unemployed' in 2016, compared to 4% in Co. Meath.

There are 5 no. existing primary schools and 1 no. existing post-primary school currently operating in the Ratoath SPA to which the subject site belongs. An email and phone survey determined that within the SPA, there are 27 no. available places in primary schools, and 5 no. available in post-primary schools.

There are no new schools currently proposed within the subject Ratoath SPA. However, we note that there were 2 no. new primary schools and 1 no. new post-primary schools proposed to open by 2021 within the feeder areas of Dunshaughlin SPA and Ashbourne SPA. All of the proposed schools have been established to date, with capacity for 16 additional primary classrooms and 1000 post-primary pupils to be provided within the area.

With respect to other large-scale education projects in the vicinity of the Ratoath SPA, there were 6 no. school facilities identified under the DES school building programme under development as of July 2021, including upgrades to the existing Ratoath Community College (now on site), 2 no. schools within Dunshaughlin (at design stage) and 3 no. schools within Ashbourne (at various tender, briefing and design stages).

It is considered that the future demand generated by the proposed development (i.e. 444 No. places – including 274 No. primary and 169 No. post- primary school children) is likely to be absorbed by the existing schools network and other planned schools currently under development within the area.

With regard to childcare facilities, a total of 11 no. childcare facilities were identified in the Study Area using the latest Tusla Early Years Inspectorate data¹⁸ which could be accessed within a c.2 km radius of the site. The results indicated that of the 11 no. existing childcare facilities in the area, there is 6 no. available spaces. It was further estimated that the proposed development would generate 122 no. 0-6 year old children.

¹⁸ The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013). Inspection Reports for active facilities are available online for public inspection and are updated at regular intervals by the service. Visit the Tusla website for more detail: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/creche-inspection-reports/>

Further analysis was conducted and found that according to the QNHS children in the Mid-East region (incl. Meath) are cared for by their parents or partners of their parents (65%), with only 14% of pre-school children attending a childcare facility compared to 19% nationally. Hence, assuming a conservative approach (40% of the total children population), it is estimated that 70 no. children may attend a childcare facility. We note that the subject proposal also includes the provision of a childcare facility of c.1,003 sqm, with capacity for 121 children.

This Social Infrastructure Audit has identified and established the level of existing social infrastructure provision within and bordering the c.2km study area to support the needs of the existing population and offer insights into the likelihood of the capacity of the existing services and facilities to support future residents. The baseline study undertaken identified a significant range of services which contribute to quality of life for local residents, with more than 75 no. facilities located in close proximity to the subject site.

On the basis of this audit, the proposed development site is supported by an existing schools' network, childcare facilities and has access to a range of other community, cultural, religious and recreational facilities within the identified c.2km radius. We also note that the proposal includes a creche facility (c. 1,003 sqm) and 4 no. commercial/retail units (c.536 sqm total), which will positively contribute to the amenity of the resident population once completed.

In conclusion, the existing social infrastructure provision identified within the c. 2km study area, in conjunction with the commercial space and childcare facility proposed with the subject application will be capable of serving the existing population and potential demand generated by the proposed development scheme, with no significant gaps in the existing services network identified.

Appendix A: Meath County Childcare Committee Consultation Letter



Meath County Childcare Committee

Commons Road,
Navan, Co. Meath.
Tel: 046 - 9073010
Fax: 046 - 9067221
Email: meathchildcare@eircom.net
Website: www.mccc.ie

7th April 2022

To whom it concerns,

Thank you for your recent request to liaise with Meath County Childcare Committee on the planning application for circa 450 units and providing a creche for approx. 120 children.

Current Provision in Ratoath, Co. Meath

There are three main types of childcare services currently operating in Ratoath that are registered with Tusla the Child and Family Agency, they are Full and Part time childcare services, Sessional only services, and School aged childcare services.

Full Day-care Services -these generally cater for children ranging on a combination of hours from early morning to late evening. There are five such facilities in Ratoath and depending on enrolments these services can cater for up to 360 childcare places.

Sessional Playschool from approx. 9 am until 12 daily -these generally cater for preschool aged children only from 2 ½ years to 5 years. There are six sessional only services in Ratoath and depending on enrolments these services combined, can cater for 146 childcare places.

School Aged Services take children before and after national school and operate during summer holidays

There are four services that cater for School Aged Childcare and depending on enrolments can cater for 129 Before and After School places.

Prediction of need

It is extremely difficult to predict childcare need in any given area however at present the demand for Full / Part time and School aged Places is high across the county of Meath. The demand for childcare must consider existing external factors that cannot be predicted at such time such as the profile of purchasers for these dwellings and their family structures.

It is therefore realistic to anticipate with additional dwellings signposted for Ratoath that need for childcare and early learning facilities will increase as well.

Yours Sincerely

Catherine Coogan

Support and Development Officer

Transforming Ireland

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Appendix B: Inventory

Name	Category
Ratoath Junior N S	Primary
Ratoath Senior Ns	Primary
St Pauls Ns	Primary
Ratoath College	Post-primary
Flintstones Pre-school	Childcare facility
Forever Friends Pre-school	Childcare facility
Fox Lodge Manor Montessori & Playschool	Childcare facility
Happy Days (Ratoath)	Childcare facility
Little Robyn'z Montessori	Childcare facility
Millview Childcare	Childcare facility
Ratoath Childcare Centre Limited Building B	Childcare facility
Seagrave Montessori	Childcare facility
The Venue Theatre	Arts and Cultural
Clarke Art School	Arts and Cultural
Fit Kids/Fit Teens Dance Classes	Arts and Cultural
Tattersalls Ireland Country House	Arts and Cultural
Ratoath School of Music	Arts and Cultural
The Grotto	Arts and Cultural
Ratoath Community Centre	Community
Ratoath Allotments	Community
9th Meath Ratoath Scout Den	Community
Fairyhouse Market	Community
Ratoath Men's Shed	Community
Ratoath Dental Centre	Healthcare
Kavanagh's Pharmacy	Healthcare
Ratoath Medical Centre	Healthcare
Ratoath Manor Nursing Home	Healthcare
Vitality Holistic Therapy	Healthcare
Lilly's Pharmacy	Healthcare
Clinico Aesthetics	Healthcare
Ratoath Orthodontics	Healthcare
Ratoath Pharmacy	Healthcare
Ratoath Sports Injury Centre	Healthcare
Ratoath Physiotherapy	Healthcare
Ratoath Eyecare	Healthcare
Stack's Pharmacy	Healthcare
Ratoath Community Sports Complex (Jamestown Sports Campus)	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Playground	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Pitch and Putt Club	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Harps AFC	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath GAA (Sean Eiffe Park)	Open Space and Recreation

Ratoath Tennis Club	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Athletics Club	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath College Astro turf Pitches	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath BMX Club	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Rugby Club	Open Space and Recreation
Fairyhouse Racecourse	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Broadmeadow Riverwalk	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Boxing	Open Space and Recreation
The Fitness Factory	Open Space and Recreation
The Yoga Room	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Fitness Studio	Open Space and Recreation
Ratoath Allotments	Open Space and Recreation
Holy Trinity Church	Religious Institutions
Ratoath Parish Cemetery	Religious Institutions
Tesco Express	Retail Centres and Services
Centra	Retail Centres and Services
The Cellar Off Licence	Retail Centres and Services
Bank of Ireland	Retail Centres and Services
Supervalu	Retail Centres and Services
Ratoath Post Office	Retail Centres and Services
Spar	Retail Centres and Services
Ratoath Garden Centre	Retail Centres and Services
Corballis Shopping Centre	Retail Centres and Services
Donnelly Builders Providers	Retail Centres and Services
The Village Centre	Retail Centres and Services
Ratoath Credit Union	Retail Centres and Services
Dolan's Butchers	Retail Centres and Services
Tony's Butchers	Retail Centres and Services
Homeworld	Retail Centres and Services
Ratoath Books (Forever Amber)	Retail Centres and Services
Centrepoint	Retail Centres and Services
Conway's Off Licence Ratoath	Retail Centres and Services