SDCC Rathcoole Housing Development

Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)
Chapter 05: Population and Human Health

South Dublin County Council (SDCC)

October 2026

Quality information

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5 Population and Human Health

5.1 Introduction

This section of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared by MacCabe Durney Barnes on behalf of South Dublin County Council. This chapter of the EIAR addresses the likely direct and indirect effects positively or negatively on Population and Human Health of the proposed housing development at Rathcoole, County Dublin..

5.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The methodology is based on established best practice with cognisance given to all relevant guidelines and legislation and, in particular,

- Guidelines on Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA. 2022)
- European Commission, Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (2017)

The assessment of population is primarily based on a desk-based assessment. It seeks to determine the existing background environment (in terms of population), including the existing population, future population projections, existing and future economic activity in the area, employment, community infrastructure and recreation amenities in the subject areas. It is important that the Population analysis is highly aware of local sensitivities and issues at a very micro level, taking account of factors such as geographic proximity, established movements patterns or usage experiences of places that may potentially be affected.

5.2.1 Desktop Research – Principal Data Sources

The assessment involved desk-based research and analysis of existing documentation to build up profiles of the communities that would likely be affected by the Proposed Project. This desk-based assessment has been undertaken based on information from the following principal data sources:

- Central Statistics Office (CSO) Census of Population, including Census 2016 and 2022;
- Pobal Maps;
- Geodirectory data sourced from www.myplan.ie
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland aerial photography;
- Planning search of recently submitted and granted planning applications for development in the area;
- Tusla; and
- Department of Education and Youth.

A range of strategic planning guidance documents and technical reports were reviewed as part of the assessment process. The following presents a list of the key documents reviewed as part of this study:

- Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (DEHLG 2017);
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) (EMRA 2019);
- South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2029;
- Proposed Variation No. 2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

5.2.2 Human Health

The Human Health assessment of the EIAR focuses on identifying the areas where human health impacts have been assessed, drawing on their assessments to ensure that all relevant human health impacts (particularly local community health) have been appropriately considered to reduce/avoid adverse impacts.

In addition to the general EIA Guidance documentation set out above, this assessment has been prepared having regard to the following guidelines:

- The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Resource and Tool Compilation (United States EPA 2016);
- Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 2022);
- Health in Environmental Impact Assessment – A Primer for a Proportionate Approach (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2017); and
- Health Impact Assessment Guidance (Institute of Public Health in Ireland 2009).

The European Commission guidance relating to the implementation of the 2014 Directive, in reference to 'human health' states:

> *'Human health is a very broad factor that would be highly Project dependent. The notion of human health should be considered in the context of other factors in Article 3(1) of the EIA Directive and thus environmentally related health issues (such as health effects caused by the release of toxic substances to the environment, health risks arising from major hazards associated with the Project, effects caused by changes in disease vectors caused by the Project, changes in living conditions, effects on vulnerable groups, exposure to traffic noise or air pollutants) are obvious aspects to study'.*

The Human Health chapter of the EIAR focuses on identifying the areas where human health impacts have been assessed, drawing on their assessments to ensure that all relevant human health impacts (particularly local community health) have been appropriately assessed to reduce/avoid adverse impacts.

The 2022 EPA guidelines also note that, in an EIAR:

> *'the assessment of impacts on population & human health should refer to the assessments of those factors under which human health effects might occur, as addressed elsewhere in the EIAR e.g. under the environmental factors of air, water, soil etc.', and that, 'assessment of other health & safety issues are carried out under other EU Directives, as relevant. These may include reports prepared under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, Industrial Emissions, Waste Framework, Landfill, Strategic Environmental Assessment [SEA], Seveso III, Floods or Nuclear Safety Directives. In keeping with the requirement of the amended Directive, an EIAR should take account of the results of such assessments without duplicating them.'*

Potential impacts of the Proposed project on population and human health arise from traffic and transportation, air quality and climate, noise and vibration, townscape and visual, material assets: utilities and the risk of major accidents and/or disasters. These aspects are dealt with in the specific chapters in this EIAR dedicated to those topics. This chapter refers to the findings of those assessments included elsewhere in this EIAR which human health effects might occur.

In order to establish the existing receiving environment and compile a robust baseline for the application site, the methodology includes site visits in June 2026. The purpose of the site visits was to review and record the land use and property types located within the study area in order to inform the baseline assessment and to determine the location of potentially sensitive receptors (residential properties/developments, businesses, community infrastructure and recreational amenities). GeoDirectory, a complete database of all buildings in the Republic of Ireland and their geolocation, was also used to inform and validate the baseline assessment.

Varying catchment areas around the site were used in accordance with good practice or, where available, guidelines. No formal national guidance is available on the appropriate study area to focus the assessment of population and human health: population impacts arising from residential development. As such, professional judgement was applied in determining the appropriate study areas. A general local catchment of 2km from the subject site set the context of the site adjoining the settlement of Rathcoole (to include the extents of the settlement to the west). Not all services considered within this chapter are within walking distance of the site. Where relevant facilities to which access must be provided through public transport or school buses are considered. Census information used in this chapter include State, County, Town and Electoral Divisions.

5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises a residential-led scheme providing a total of 130 no. residential units together with associated recreational facilities, open space, active travel infrastructure, landscaping and supporting infrastructure.

The residential element of the development comprises 43 no. two-storey houses, including 39 no. three-bedroom units and 4 no. four-bedroom units, arranged within 12 no. terraced rows. In addition, 16 no. duplex apartments, comprising 8 no. one-bedroom units and 8 no. three-bedroom units, are provided within 2 no. three-storey blocks. A further 4 no. age-friendly duplex apartments, comprising 2 no. one-bedroom units and 2 no. two-bedroom units, are provided within a separate two-storey block. The development also includes 7 no. age-friendly single-storey houses together with 1 no. age-friendly consultation room. The apartment component comprises 60 no. units, including 17 no. one-bedroom apartments and 43 no. two-bedroom apartments, accommodated within 4 no. apartment blocks ranging in height from four to five storeys.

Landscaping and public realm works form a significant component of the proposed development and include the provision of approximately 11,763m^2 of public open space incorporating formal and informal play areas. A network of pedestrian and cycle routes is proposed throughout the site, including the formalisation and enhancement of existing trails within the transitional woodland area. The landscape proposals also include vegetation removal where necessary to facilitate development, replacement planting, enhancement of riparian corridors and woodland areas, and the provision of boundary treatments throughout the site. The development will provide approximately 1,040m^2 of communal open space to serve the proposed apartment and duplex units, together with private open space in the form of gardens, terraces and balconies associated with the residential accommodation.

A total of 143 no. car parking spaces are proposed to serve the residential development, 24 no. EV, 4 no. accessible and 15 no. EV/accessible parking spaces. Bicycle parking provision comprises 169 no. residential bicycle parking spaces of which 12 spaces are provided to serve the proposed GAA pitches. Vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is proposed throughout the site. Access will be provided via a new pedestrian and cycle access from Mullally's Lane; widening works along Mullally's Lane; cycle path from entrance to development connecting to existing bike lane at Stoney Park; a new T-junction with vehicular and pedestrian access from Greenogue Drive and associated upgrade of access to existing adjoining roundabout including upgrade and modification of existing roundabout to reduce the number of vehicular arms from five to four; pedestrian and cycle access from Coolamber Drive and Coolamber Road; an internal access road connecting the new junction, the approved school development (Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336) and the residential area of the site, including boundary treatments; and a bridge crossing the Coolmine Stream.

The recreational component of the development comprises 2 no. senior GAA pitches measuring approximately 20,800m^2 and 1 no. junior GAA pitch measuring approximately 6,240m^2. These facilities will be served by a GAA pavilion measuring approximately 137.26m^2 together with 43 no. associated car parking spaces. Ancillary works include boundary treatments, site levelling, topsoil stripping and placement, pitch construction works and all associated engineering and landscaping interventions necessary to facilitate the development.

The proposed development also includes ESB substations and switchrooms, public lighting, surface water and foul drainage infrastructure, water supply infrastructure, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) features including green/blue roofs and detention basins, and all associated site development works above and below ground necessary to facilitate the development.

5.3.2 Baseline Description

A description of the receiving environment relevant to the proposed development in relation to population and human health is given in this section. Specific sections of this EIAR provide the baseline scenario relevant to the environmental effect being assessed. The reason is so as not to duplicate baseline scenarios in this EIAR section. However, the assessment of effects on population and human health refers to those environmental topics under which human health effects may occur (e.g. noise, water quality, air quality, etc.).

The EPA Guidelines (2002) and (2022) and the EPA Advice Notes (2003) and (2015) identify sensitive receptors as neighbouring landowners, local communities and other parties likely to be impacted by the proposal. Surrounding developments including homes, schools have been identified. Consideration has also been given to the potential temporary populations such as tourists and the cultural heritage/historical and natural heritage sites they may visit as walkers, cyclists, and drivers.

The following provides a description of the receiving environment, with focus on demography, land use and local amenity.

The findings of the 2022 census have been used to determine the current population characteristics of the study area with a comparison to South Dublin as a whole to benchmark the data. Through understanding the characteristics of the existing population residing in the study area, it is possible to assess the potential impacts that the proposed development will have upon the population.

It should be noted that the description of the baseline environment of those factors under which human health effects might occur has also been addressed elsewhere in this EIAR, under the environmental factors of traffic and transportation, air quality and climate, noise and vibration and material assets.

5.3.2.1 Land Use and Settlement Patterns

The Proposed Project is located in the administrative area of South Dublin County Council in County Dublin, within the townland of Rathcoole and the Electoral Divisions (EDs) of Rathcoole and Saggart. The subject site is undeveloped and sits on the edge of the RathcooleTown as defined in the Census. This settlement area captures the census information data on Rathcoole and presents benchmark information on the town and profile of the population.

The application site consists of a site of c.11.4ha to the south and southeast of Rathcoole Village, County Dublin. Rathcoole Village is located c.15km to the southwest of Dublin City Centre, c.13km northeast of Naas, County Kildare and c.13km to the north of Blessington, County Wicklow. The established settlement largely consists of a traditional development pattern with a central main street which contains local shops and facilities and is surrounded by relatively low density housing estates.

Rathcoole Village Centre is approximately 2km from the Red Line Luas stop at Saggart which is located at Fortunestown Lane to the east of the Citywest Golf Course. Bus stops serving Kildare, Newbridge and Dublin are located along Main Street, School Road and at the slip road to the north of the N7. The site is well connected to Dublin and Kildare with direct access to the N7 motorway to the north of Rathcoole Village.

The greenfield site is situated adjacent to Rathcoole Park, which extends along its northwestern boundary. Saggart's western residential estates bound the site to the east and existing residential estates extend along the site's northern boundary. Those at Beechwood Lawns are separated from the site by the existing Rathcoole Park and approved Department of Education school development (SDCC Ref. SD23A/0336). To the west, Rathcoole Woodlands extends to residential estates proximate Mullally's Lane Roundabout. Agricultural lands are located to the southwest and south of the site.

Access to the site is currently via Mullally's Lane and Rathcoole Park. Future access is to be provided via a new access road also forming part of this application running eastwards through the approved Department of Education lands from Mullally's Lane Roundabout. This road will also provide access to the new school. An Irish Water Easement runs along the southeastern extent of the subject lands.



Plate 5-1: Location of subject and 2km catchment for illustrative purposes (Source: CSO & MDB)

5.3.3 Site Context

The site is located within the administrative area of South Dublin County Council. Rathcoole Village is a designated 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' within the SDCC Development Plan 2022-2028, which is not considered to be situated within Dublin City and its suburbs. It is however situated within the metropolitan area identified within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP).

The policies and objectives found within the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 form the relevant plan for the area. The subject site is zoned for New Residential (RES-N), Open Space (OS), and Rural and Agriculture (RU). Rathcoole Village, located to the north of the site, is predominantly zoned Objective RES (Residential). A cluster of existing residential properties is also located to the north-west of the site. A c.5.8 ha site to the east of Stoney Hill Road is zoned Objective RES-N and was recently the subject of a residential development proposal (ACP Ref. 324071), which was refused permission on appeal. Several Specific Local Objectives (SLO) also apply to the site. TA indicates an objective to provide for traveller accommodation at the site. There is an SLO to provide a school (S) on the RES-N zoning. Two local green infrastructure and community objectives additionally apply to the site:

- GI7 SLO1 – maintain the green wildlife corridor between Saggart and Rathcoole and incorporate it into the designs for Rathcoole Park.
- GI7 SLO2 – protect and augment the Alluvial Woodlands within the RU zoning with consideration of linages to proximate amenity areas and provision of sensititve passible amenity uses.
- CS10 SLO1 – provide a primary school, library hub, 2 full sized GAA and 1 junior GAA pitch, pavilion, access road and open space.

The subject site measures 11.4ha to the south and southeast of Rathcoole Village. The site comprises an undeveloped greenfield area which is characterised by a combination of Annex I hay meadow, scrub, hedgerows and immature woodland. The site boundaries are generally defined by established hedgerows with tree cover concentrated primarily along these hedgerows. The Camac River is situated to the east of the site, the Crockshane (Slade) Stream to the south and the Coolmine Stream bisects the western portion of the site and flows into Rathcoole Park.

5.3.3.1 Demography

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) provides information on population and socio-economic aspects of the population residing within the Settlement of Rathcoole, which the subject lands are located within and adjacent, within the administrative area of South Dublin County Council. The most recent census of population by the CSO was undertaken in 2022. The census provides demographic trends for the Country, region, county, town and local levels. The CSO population statistics relevant to this EIAR are set out in Table 5-1 below.

Table 5-1: Population Change 2016-2022 (Source: CSO)

Area	2016	2022	% Change 2016-2022
Ireland	4,761,865	5,149,139	8.1%
South Dublin County	278,767	301,075	8%
Rathcoole ED	5,009	6,590	31.6%
Saggart ED	4,640	6,248	34.7%
Rathcoole Town[1]	4,351	5,792	33.1%

Source: CSO

It is notable that Saggart ED, which is located more proximate to Dublin City, grew at a slightly stronger rate (2.9%) than Rathcoole ED.

Comparing findings for Rathcoole Town to South Dublin County as a whole, can also provide insight into the performance of an area in facilitating future population growth. Both Rathcoole Town (+33.1%) and the wider Rathcoole ED (+31.6%) experienced population growth approximately four times greater than the national (+8.1%) and South Dublin County (+8.0%) averages over the 2016–2022 period.

According to the 2022 census, Rathcoole Town had a population of 5,792 people in a catchment of 1,924 households. The highest proportion of households are 2 person (27%), 3 person (19.5%) and 4 person (22.5%). The remainder of household sizes make up a total of 31%. The household composition for the study area is broadly in keeping with South Dublin as a whole. On average, the household size in South Dublin County is 2.97 persons while in Rathcoole Town it is 2.96 persons. Saggart ED has a slightly lower average household size of 2.93 persons while Rathcoole ED has a higher average household size of 3 persons.

[1] Rathcoole Town (2022) is compared with Rathcoole Settlement (2016). While the areas are broadly equivalent, minor differences in settlement boundaries exist between the datasets and should be considered when interpreting the results

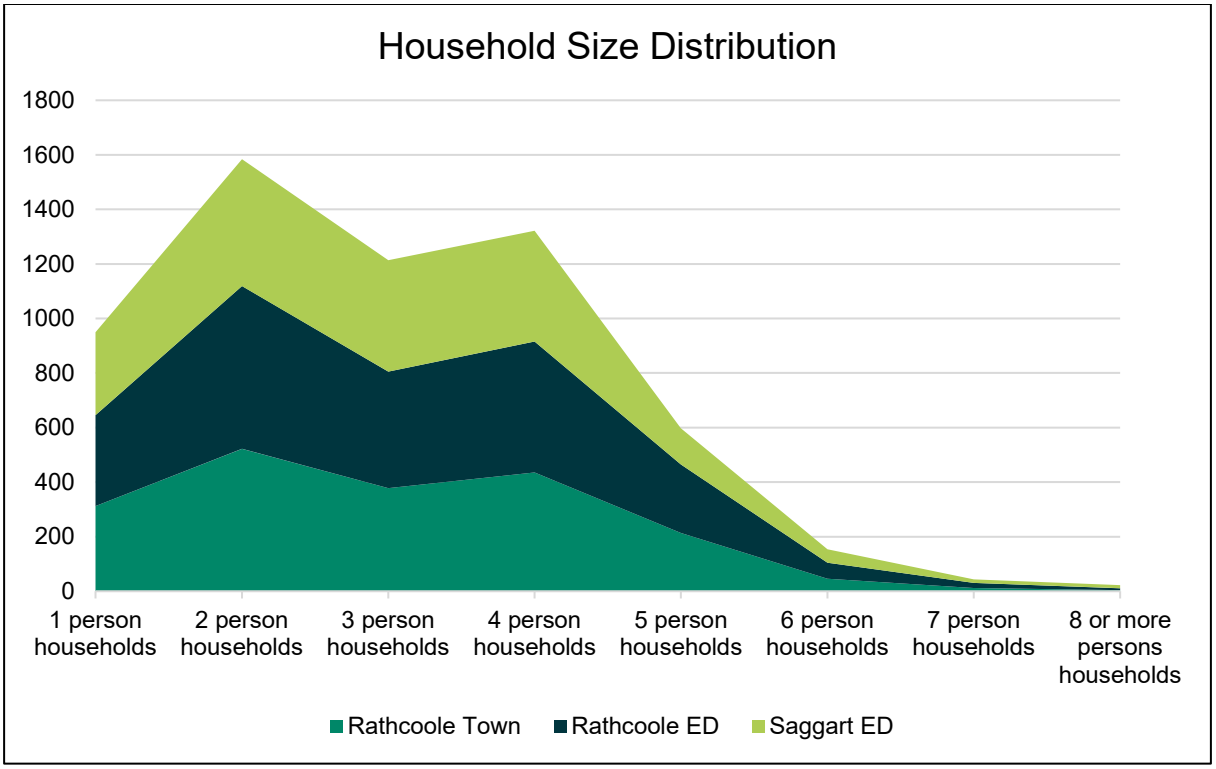


Plate 5-2: Household Size Distribution (Source: CSO)

Rathcoole Town has a higher proportion of dependent children than South Dublin (c.31.5% versus c.28%), and a slightly lower working aged cohort (c.55% versus 59%). The retirement aged cohort is also equivalent (c.13%). The age distribution of Rathcoole and Saggart EDs is visible in Plate 5-3 below.

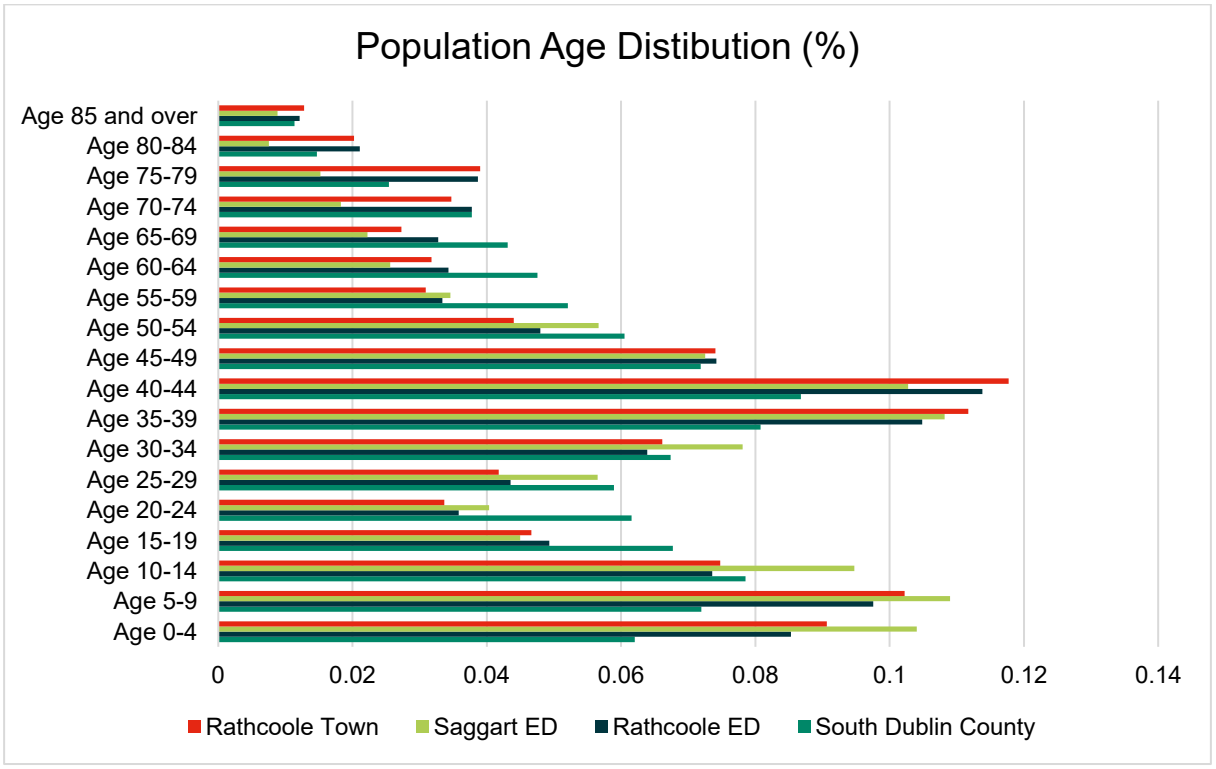


Plate 5-3: Age Distribution (Source: CSO)

5.3.3.2 Population and Housing Targets

The SDCCDP 2022-2028 outlines the population change for Rathcoole Town (settlement) and its projected population target. These figures are updated on the basis of the revised NPF and CSO Census data within proposed Variation No.2. The high population target (increase of 50,233 persons) from 2016-2031 was

selected in the SDCCDP 2022-2028. Proposed Variation No.2 acknowledges that while the NPF provides revised national, regional and city level population projections to 2040, population projections at a local authority (LA) level have not yet been updated to reflect the revised NPF.

The proposed Variation No.2 updates the adopted plan's housing supply figures and targets as follows. In 2022, South Dublin County contained 106,074 residential units, of which 3,899 were vacant, representing a vacancy rate of 3.68%. The housing stock increased by 7,867 units between 2016 and 2022, representing growth of 7.81%, while vacancy levels remained relatively low and below what would generally be considered a normal market vacancy rate.

Since the adoption of the SDCCDP in 2022, housing delivery has remained consistent, with approximately 2,600 dwellings completed annually. At the end of 2025, planning permission existed for 12,616 residential units across the county, with almost 5,000 units under construction on 50 active sites.

The revised NPF (2025) and accompanying *'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (2025) have significantly increased housing delivery requirements for South Dublin County. While the annual housing supply target at the time of Development Plan adoption was 2,596 units per annum, the revised housing growth requirement has increased to 3,270 units per annum for the period 2025–2034, reducing to 2,414 units per annum for the period 2035–2040. This represents a substantial increase in housing delivery expectations and highlights the continued need to bring forward appropriately located residential development within the county.

In addition to the baseline housing growth requirements, the *'NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements*' require planning authorities to provide additional flexibility to provide for up to 50% additional housing provision above the baseline housing growth requirements. This additional provision does not alter the baseline targets but is intended to ensure that housing delivery requirements can be achieved flexibly where opportunities arise.

Table 5-2: Population Change 2016-2022 (Source: CSO)

Housing Growth Requirement (No. of Dwellings Equivalent)	2025–2028	2029–2030	2031–2034	2035–2040
Annual Baseline Housing Growth Target	3,270	3,270	3,270	2,414
Cumulative Baseline Housing Growth Target (less completed in Q1 and Q2 2025)	11,699	18,239	31,319	45,803
Maximum Additional Provision (50% above baseline requirement)	5,850	9,120	15,660	22,902
Maximum Housing Growth Requirement and Additional Provision	17,549	27,359	46,979	68,705

Source: SDCCDP 2022-2028 Proposed Variation No.2

Having regard to the housing growth requirements set out in the Guidelines, along with the maximum allowable additional provision of 50%, the total housing growth requirement for South Dublin County increases to 17,549 dwellings for the period 2025–2028, 27,359 dwellings by 2030, 46,979 dwellings by 2034 and 68,705 dwellings by 2040. These figures demonstrate the significant scale of housing delivery required within the County over the lifetime of the revised National Planning Framework and further highlight the need to facilitate appropriately located residential development on lands identified for growth within the settlement hierarchy.

5.3.3.3 Settlement Capacity Audit

SDCC undertook an updated Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) in 2025. The purpose of the audit was to review the capacity of existing zoned lands to accommodate the revised housing growth requirements arising from the revised NPF. The SCA assessed all undeveloped and underdeveloped lands with residential or mixed-use development potential. Following completion of the updated audit, and excluding long-term strategic land reserves, the County was found to have a developable capacity of approximately 35,411 dwellings across 568 hectares of zoned land. This is an increase of 13,921 units and c.140.4ha since 2022.

At a settlement level, the updated assessment indicates a modest reduction in the capacity identified for Rathcoole. The estimated residential capacity has decreased from 806 units under the adopted SDCCDP 2022–2028 to 711 units under proposed Variation No. 2. It is assumed that this is on the basis of units

constructed. Table 9.2 of the proposed Variation No.2 forecasts 119 units on 3.5ha to be delivered in Rathcoole prior to 2028. More broadly, the total capacity identified across the County's towns has reduced from 1,772 units to 1,702 units, while capacity within Dublin City and Suburbs has increased significantly (13,991 units), reflecting the increased emphasis on compact growth and consolidation within the existing built-up metropolitan area.

Table 5-3: Capacity of Undeveloped Lands in Rathcoole 2022 and 2025

Settlement	Developable Greenfield (ha)	Developable Brownfield (ha)	Total Capacity (ha)	Developable Greenfield (units)	Developable Brownfield (units)	Total Capacity (Units)
Rathcoole (SDCC Development Plan 2022–2028)	21.22	1.13	24.29	699	107	806
Rathcoole (Proposed Variation No. 2)	17.8	3.2	21	579	132	711
Change	**-3.42**	**2.07**	**-3.29**	**-120**	**25**	**-95**

Source: SDCCDP 2022-2028 and Proposed Variation No.2

Overall, a shortfall of c.2,000 dwellings to meet the revised zoning growth requirements to 2028 was identifies and the zoning of additional lands required. 2ha of additional lands and 69 additional units have been proposed for Rathcoole under Variation No.2 resulting in a total of 188 potential units to 2028 identified in the Core Strategy.

5.3.3.4 Economic Activities and Employment

In Rathcoole the working population (19-64 years) accounts for 55% of the total population. This is slightly below the county average as a whole at 59%. The total population at work in Rathcoole town is 2,854 persons across a range of occupations (see Plate 5-4). 'Professional Occupations' comprise the largest portion of the workforce 22%. 'Associate Professional and Technical Occupations' and 'Administrative and Secretarial Occupations' comprise a further 25% of the workforce.

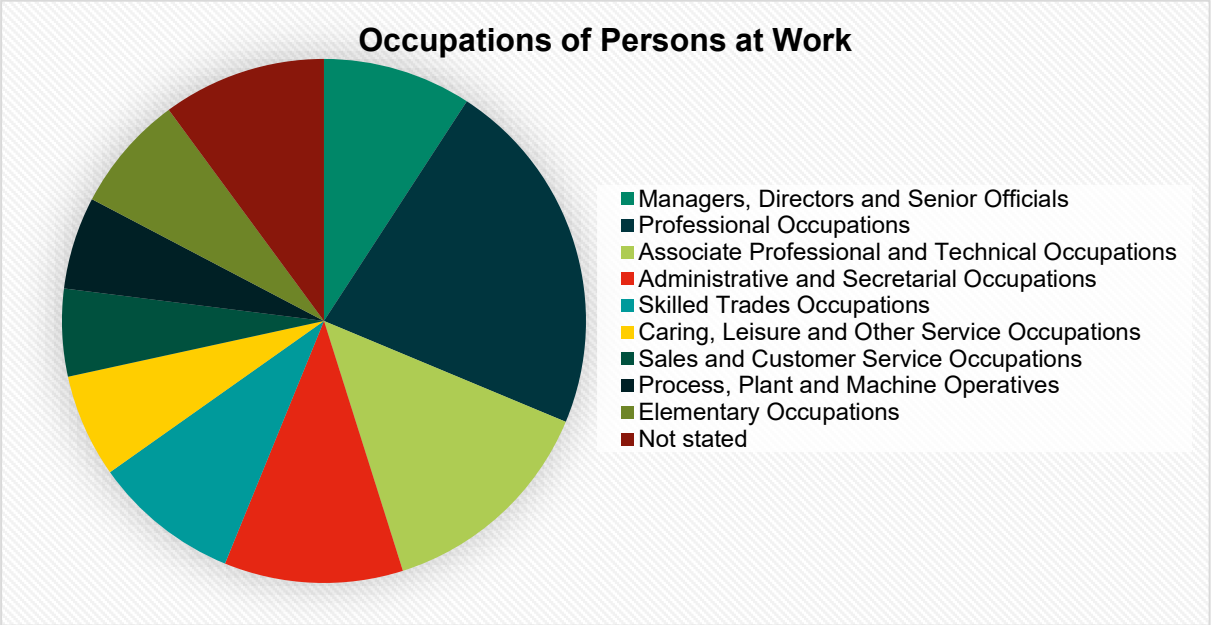


Plate 5-4: Occupations of Persons at Work in Rathcoole Town (Source: CSO)

Of the resident workforce, c. 72% travel to work by public transportation or private vehicle.[2] It is likely that this segment of the workforce are travelling outside of Rathcoole Town for work, which is a general trend

[2] Usually resident by means of travel to work, school, college or childcare

for towns within the greater Dublin Metropolitan Area. Of the remainder, 19.5% travel to work by foot, bicycle or work from home while c.7.5% work from home.

NPO 20 of the 2025 NPF supports development which supports the local economy, leading to the creation of new local businesses on foot of a growing population.

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

The SDCCDP 2022-2028 identifies Rathcoole Town as a village with a unique character which offers a diverse range of professional and retail services. Rathcoole is situated Level 4 within the retail hierarchy. It is stated that:

> *'The jobs to residents ratio in 2016 was 0.44314 which indicates a net-outflow commuter settlement dependent on outlying areas for jobs. However […] there is a substantial employment base in close proximity to Rathcoole within industrial lands to the north at Greenogue and Baldonnell in addition to the Citywest Business Campus to the east.'*

The town resides adjacent the Greenogue and Aerodrome Business Parks which serve as large industrial campuses comprising a mix of largely warehousing and manufacturing facilities. These provide potential for new jobs or any displacement of jobs from the Naas Road or Tallaght REGEN lands over the coming years.

5.3.3.5 Health Demographics

54.8% of the population in Rathcoole Town reported themselves to be in very good health and 28.7 in good health according to the 2022 census, whilst conversely 1.2% reported themselves to be in bad or very bad health. This is in line with the County wide figure of 83% in very good and good health and 1.8% in bad or very bad health. A breakdown of the findings for general health in the study area is illustrated in

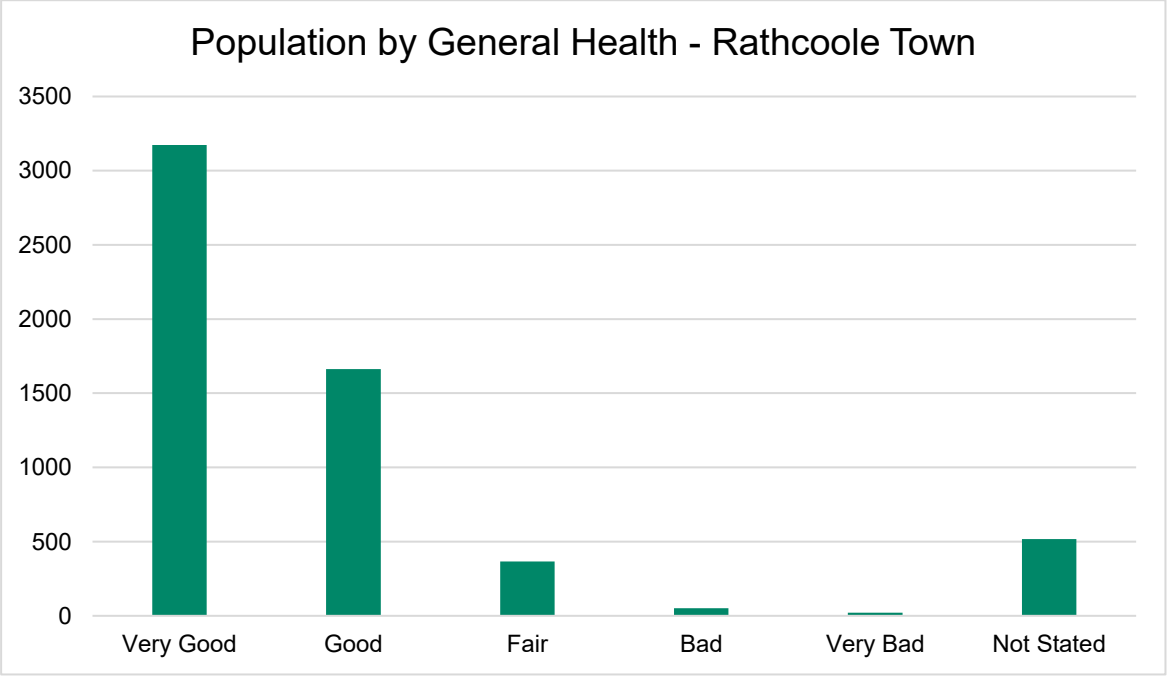


Plate 5-5: Population Health Status Rathcoole Town (Source: CSO)

5.4 Baseline Environment

5.4.1 Social Infrastructure

This section presents the findings of an audit of community infrastructure situated within 2.5km of the subject site, which is equivalent to the western boundary of Rathcoole Town. Community infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life. The purpose of reviewing current provision of community infrastructure is to ascertain the likely future need for facilities and services in the area. MacCabe Durney Barnes undertook an audit of existing social and community infrastructure in the vicinity of the site (February and June 2026).

National Policy Objective 43 seeks to *"prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location"*. The National Planning Framework 2025 outlines the broad national objectives for residential development in the State. NPO 41 regarding the delivery of childcare and schools is also addressed in this section.

These high-level objectives are and will be filtered downwards to be integrated into the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region, which is currently under review. The Regional and Economic Spatial Strategy 2019-2031 (RSES) prepared for the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) seeks to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region. RPO 9.13, states *"to ensure that new social infrastructure facilities are accessible and inclusive for a range of users"* is a regional policy objective (RPO) within the RSES which supports the provision of, and access to social infrastructure in a town setting.

The SDCCDP 2022-2028 states that a Social Infrastructure Audit is required for developments of 50 or more residential units. CS3 Objective 6 additionally aims to '*ensure the phased development of new housing areas in tandem with the delivery of physical and social infrastructure provision'* while CS10 Objective 4relates specifically to Rathcoole Town and requires the facilitation of residential development in a coordinated manner '*ensuring alignment with investment infrastructure and supporting amenities and services*' and CS10 Objective 3 further requires development in Rathcoole

> *'To proactively support and promote the highest levels of services, social infrastructure, facilities, retail and economic activity to meet the needs of current and future growth in line with the scale and function of Rathcoole within the settlement hierarchy.'*

S10 SLO 1 applies to the landbank on which the site is located:

> *'To ensure that the provision of a primary school, library hub, 2 full sized GAA pitches and 1 junior pitch and associated pavilion, access road and open space is provided in tandem with new residential development having regard to the provisions of GI7 SLO2.'*

Key themes that constitute community facilities as outlined below.

- Childcare Facilities
- Education
- Open Space, Sports and Leisure
- Health Facilities and Social Services
- Community Facilities
- Arts and Cultural Facilities
- Religious & Worship Facilities
- Retail Facilities

5.4.1.1 Childcare

TUSLA is the State agency that oversees the provision of childcare and other family support services. A list of childcare facilities were obtained from the Tusla early years services registration list showing enrolment figures and capacity available in childcare facilities located within a 2km radius of the subject site. These

facilities were contacted by MacCabe Durney Barnes in July and August 2026. These childcare facilities are tabulated below. All childcare facilities were contacted by phone, with a follow up email sent where a response was not received. In some cases, it was not possible to retrieve a response from the childcare operators.

Table 5-4: Childcare Facilities

Childcare Facility Name	Address	Enrolment 2025 (TUSLA)	Enrolment 2025 (Facility)	Vacancies	Waiting list	Distance (km)
Kidorama Creche & Montessori	20 Slade Castle Wood, Saggart, Co. Dublin	102	-	0	-	0.73
Teach na Leanaí	Ionad Phobail, Rathcuil, Co. Dublin Rathcuil, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	30	-	-	-	0.77
Happy Feet Early Learning Centre	Rathcoole community centre, Main Street, Rathcoole, Dublin24, Co. Dublin	56	-	-	-	0.77
Little Saints Creche	Unit 4 Eaton House, Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	105	-	-	-	0.87
Lily's Childcare Ltd in Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre	Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre, School Road, Saggart, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin	44	41	5	-	0.93
Happy Feet Early Learning Centre	Rathcoole Boys Football Club, Frank Cox Park, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	59	-	-	-	1.01
Happy Feet Early Learning Centre	1 Blackthorn Hill Close, Rathcoole, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin	50	-	-	-	1.32
Little Fingers	23 Broadfield Court, Broadfield Manor, Rathcoole, Dublin 24, Co. Dubli	11	-	3	-	1.44
Grian na nÓg	Greenogue, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	82	-	-	-	2
	Total	**539**		**5**		

Source: TUSLA

Several further facilities have been permitted, are under appeal or are awaiting planning permission within a 2km radius of the site. These are predominantly being provided as elements of other residential planning applications.

Table 5-5: Childcare - Permitted and Pending Planning Applications

Reference Number	Address	Status	Description	Distance from Site (km)
SDCC Ref. LRD25A/0012W ABP Ref. 324127	Townland of Boherboy, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Application granted, appeal granted June 2026	Residential development of 611 dwellings and a 2 storey creche. Submitted with EIAR.	2km

Reference Number	Address	Status	Description	Distance from Site (km)
ACP Ref. 312501	Mill Road, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted 2022	Demolition of an existing dwelling, construction of 274 no. residential units (51 no. houses, 223 no. apartments), creche and associated site works.	0.7km
ACP Ref. 305563	Fortunestown Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted 2020	488 no. apartments, creche and associated site works. Permission granted for an additional 86no. Units under SDCC Ref. LRD24A/0006W on September 16 2024.	1.5km

Childcare Requirement

Within the Governmental Document on *Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities* it is established that where 75 dwellings are constructed, one childcare facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places may be appropriate. Section 2.4 states that this is the case unless there are significant reasons to the contrary. For example, where '*development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments… The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas'*. Section 3.3.1 furthermore specifies that this is a guideline standard and will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site.

Section 4.7 of the *Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities,* 2025 highlights that the Childcare Guidelines are currently under review and reiterate the need to establish the threshold for provision with regard to scale, unit mix, geographical distribution of childcare and emerging demographic profile. The guidelines also state that the omission of one-bedroom units *'may also apply in part or in whole, to units with two or more bedrooms'*. All 1-bed and age friendly 2-bed housing units have been omitted and we note that on the basis of the provisions of the Apartments Guidelines stated above there may also be scope to omit further 2-bed units from the assessment.

The provision of 130 units is above the 75 units which results in the consideration of a requirement for a childcare facility under the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001). Discounting the one bed and age friendly units, a total of 94 may give rise to a need for childcare spaces.

Childcare Demand

According to Census 2022, the population of Rathcoole Town was 5,792 no. persons, an increase of 33% on the 2016 figure of 4,351 no. persons. Of the 2022 total, 525 no. persons (9%) were aged 0–4 years, which is considerably higher than the South Dublin County average of 6.2%. Within South Dublin County Council, there were 18,677 children between the age of 0 and 4 at the time of the 2022 census.[3] Of these, 8,640 (46.2%) were in childcare. Of the children within this age range in childcare, 5,194 (60.1%) attend a creche/Montessori/playgroup/after school facility[4]. Taking the average household size of 2.96 no. persons within the study area, the 94 no. appropriate two-bedroom and larger units proposed could generate an indicative population of c.278 no. persons within the units capable of accommodating children. Applying the Rathcoole Town proportion of 9% aged 0–4 years, c.25 no. children within the scheme would fall within this cohort, of whom c.12 no. would require childcare on the basis of the SDCC childcare rate of 46.2%. Of these, c.7 would require a space in a creche, Montessori, playgroup or an afterschool facility. The childcare audit identified 9 no. facilities within c.2km of the site (539 no. registered places), with a further 3 no. facilities within c.3km at Citywest reasonably accessible to commuting residents. All were contacted to confirm capacity: 8 no. vacancies have been confirmed, with responses outstanding from a number of providers. Beyond existing places, permitted provision in the wider area includes a surplus of c.3 no. places at the crèche permitted at Mill Road, Saggart (c.0.7km from the site), and a permitted crèche of c.150 no. places at Cuil Duin Avenue, Citywest — a South Dublin County Council capital project not tied to the demand of any single development. The proposed development, is expected to generate a requirement for c.7 no.

[3] https://data.cso.ie/table/SAP2022T1T1ACTY
[4] https://data.cso.ie/table/F3061

creche places. This is a conservative estimate that treats every two-bedroom plus unit other than age-friendly accommodation as capable of accommodating children.

5.4.1.2 Education

Every year, the Department of Education and Youth release details on enrolment figures for all primary schools. Currently there are 2 no. existing primary schools and 1no. approved primary school across the catchment area of the subject site. Outside of the catchment area, two further primary schools are situated in Citywest and Saggart. Despite their respective locations outside of the 2km catchment these schools are considered accessible from the site on the basis of their being within a 20-25 minute public bus journey from the proposed development. These schools are Citywest & Saggart Community National School, Citywest Educate Together National School and St. Mary's National School Saggart. St. Finian's Primary School, located in Newcastle, is a 27 minute public bus journey from the site. A further catchment of 3.75km was considered for secondary schools as it is considered that the 15 minute cycle from the site to these schools is reasonable for secondary school students to travel. 2 no. secondary schools are located within cycling distance, St Aidan's Community School and Mount Seskin Community College.

There is currently no dedicated special school for pupils with intellectual disabilities within Rathcoole. However, the primary schools serving Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest provide a range of special educational supports and services. The nearest dedicated special school is St. Raphael's Special School in Celbridge, Co. Kildare, located approximately 20 minutes from the site by car or dedicated school transport.

The total number of primary school level students enrolled in the study area is c.2,533 no. pupils. This information was acquired by accessing school lists on the Department of Education's (DoEs) website, or through making contact with the school where required. It is noted that the upcoming completion of Gaelscoil Lir's new school building will likely increase the total number of primary school students in the area by c.315 students (16 classrooms x 23 students per classroom average – 53 students enrolled 2025/2026).

Table 5-6: Primary Schools

School name	Address	Distance from Site (km)	Enrolment 2024/2025	Enrolment 2025/2026	Available Capacity
Scoil Chrónáin	D24YW81		381	354	27
Holy Family National School	D24XH22		699	671	28
Citywest Educate Together National School	D24CF1P		378	376	2
Citywest & Saggart Community National School	D24R920		419	413	6
St. Mary's National School Saggart	D24VW9P		673	666	7
Gaelscoil Lir	D24PFV5		48	53	16 classroom school building June 2026
Total			3,598	2,533	70

Source: Department of Education and Youth

Table 5-7: Secondary Schools

School Name	Address	Distance from Site (km)	Enrolment 2023/2024	Enrolment 2025/2026	Available Capacity
Holy Family Community School	Heritage Village, Garter's Lane,	1.45	545	758	Full (admissions notice 2026/27)

School Name	Address	Distance from Site (km)	Enrolment 2023/2024	Enrolment 2025/2026	Available Capacity
	Saggart, Co. Dublin				
Coláiste Pobail Fóla	Kilteel Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	1.49	985	998	2425
St Aidan's Community School	Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24	3.15	484	561	-
Mount Seskin Community College	Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24	3.19	339	350	-
Total			**2,353**	**2,667**	**242**

Source: Department of Education and Youth

The general trend as is visible in the tables above is that 5 of the 6 primary schools in the area have seen a decrease in enrolment (-65 places) over the past two academic years (2024-2025) while secondary schools have seen a general increase in enrolment (+314 places/11.8%).

Several current and upcoming primary school developments have been noted in the area and on this basis significant new places are expected. The Citywest Educate Together National School and Citywest and Saggart Community National School have both relocated to a new campus to the north of Parklands Parade and Fortunestown Lane. Gaelscoil Lir is moving into a new 16 classroom building with a 2 classroom special needs unit at the site on which it is currently located as constructed under PA Reg. Ref. SD19A/0393 in June 2026. An additional 20 classroom primary school (SD23A/0336 & APB-321696-25) has been permitted within the RES-N zoning at the subject site. It is also noted that a site of 1.03ha within the townland of Boherboy has been reserved for the future development of a school (not known if this is primary or secondary; ABP Ref. 324127) as per the SDCCDP 2022-2028.

Table 5-8: Schools - Permitted and Pending Planning Applications

Reference Number	Address	Status	Description	Distance from Site (km)
SDCC Ref. SD23A/0336 ACP Ref. 321696	Lands south of Coolamber Drive, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Granted on appeal	New primary school (Roll No. 20549P), including 20 classrooms, with a gross floor area of 3,449 sq.m over 3 storeys.	0km
SDCC Ref. SD21A/0231	Scoil Chrónáin, Lands Opposite Rathcoole Community Centre, Rathcoole, Dublin	Granted	Removal of all existing temporary accommodation and construction of a new 16 classroom part three storey, part two storey primary school (Roll No 19503H); including GP Hall, 2 classroom Special Educational Needs Unit and all ancillary site works. The proposed project also incorporates associated staff car parking, delivery aces, drop off areas, pedestrian/bicycle access, construction of 2 external ball courts, acoustic boundary wall plus additional boundary treatments, landscaping, connection to public services and all associated site works.	0.6km
SD19A/0393/EP	Fortunestown Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Grant extension of duration of permission 2026	New educational campus of 2 new school buildings to be delivered on a phased basis including the demolition/removal of the existing 4 four storey educational/former short stay residential blocks (golf apartments) on the site; provision of 1 part three storey, 1000 pupil post primary school	1.7km

[5]Planning permission granted for 1,000 pupil secondary school under PA Reg. Ref. SD19A/0393

Reference Number	Address	Status	Description	Distance from Site (km)
			including 4 classroom special educational needs unit with a gross floor area of 11,331sq.m including a sports hall and all ancillary teacher and pupil facilities; 1 two storey 16 classroom primary school and 2 classroom special educational needs unit; a general purpose hall and all ancillary teacher and pupils facilities with a gross floor area of 2,820sq.m	

Source: SDCC & ACP

Enrolment Projections

In 2022, the percentage of the of the population of primary school-going age totalled at 10.8%. These shares are higher than those observed in the population data analysis but are used to show the most extreme scenario. The Department of Education reported in December 2025 that enrolment figures for primary schools in Ireland reached peak levels in 2018/2019 and will fall gradually to a low point in 2040/41. Enrolments under the most conservative scenario M1F2 will decrease by 70,500 from September 2024. This is in contrast to the 2024 report which projected 2036 as the expected low point. The longer-term projection to 2024/2025 illustrates how the projected fall in enrolment will be temporary in nature but may not return to the previous peaks due to a lower fertility rate.

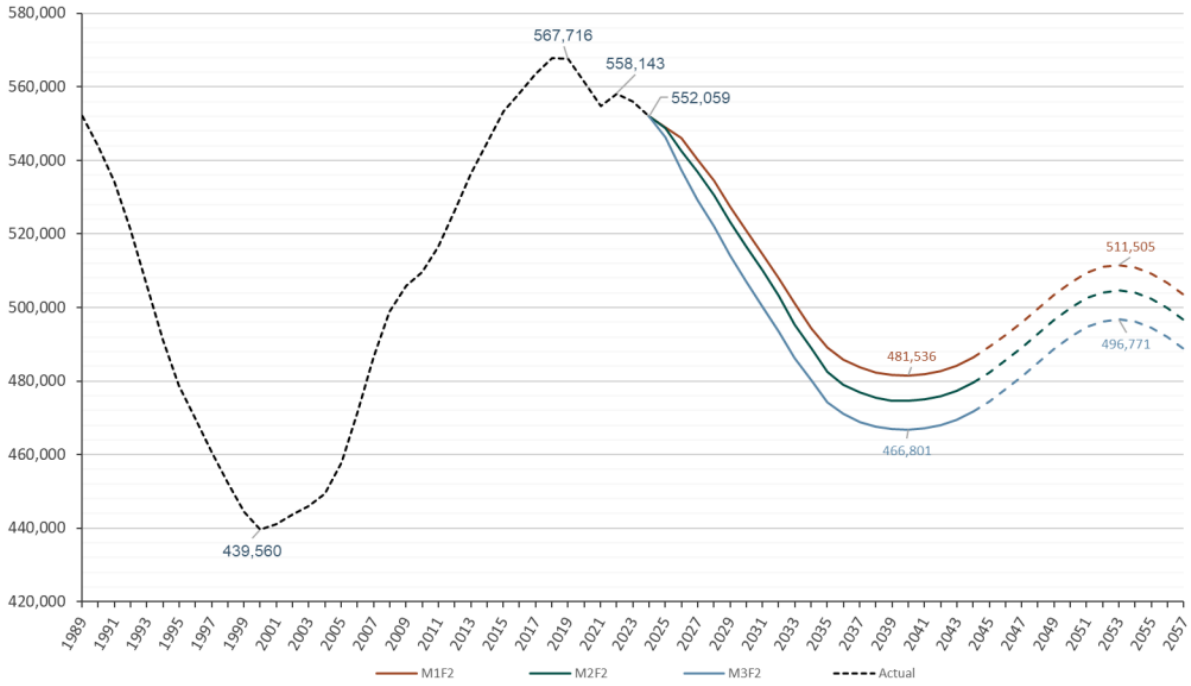


Plate 5-6: Enrolment Projections for Primary Schools (Source: Department of Education, 2025)

The above report calculates primary school enrolment inclusive of enrolment in Special Schools while total enrolment in mainstream schools for 2022 was 553,003. Total mainstream primary school enrolment in the country for the academic year of 2024/2025 was 542,417 and preliminary figures for the 2025/2026 academic year 535,620 based on the Department of Education Primary School Enrolment Figures. This is a 1.25% reduction in primary school in one academic year and overall 3.14% decrease in enrolment since 2022. The DoE's projections state that the low point in primary school enrolments will be in 2036, with an expectation of rising numbers after this point.

There is no specific population benchmark for the provision of **secondary school** facilities in Ireland. The Department of Education's approach includes a general standard that for every 1,000 dwellings in an area, circa 8.5 % of the population will require post-primary school places. The Department of Education reported in December 2025 that post-primary school enrolments are expected to peak in the current, 2025, academic year and fall thereafter. The Department of Education's 2025 report states:

'Post-primary school enrolments have risen by almost 54,000 pupils since 2019/20, an increase of 14.5% in the last 5 years. Enrolments are expected to peak in 2025/26 under all three migration scenarios, with 429,350 students under the M1F2 scenario. From 2026/27 onwards, enrolments are projected to fall over the coming years, with a decrease of over 78,000 over the next 20 years.'

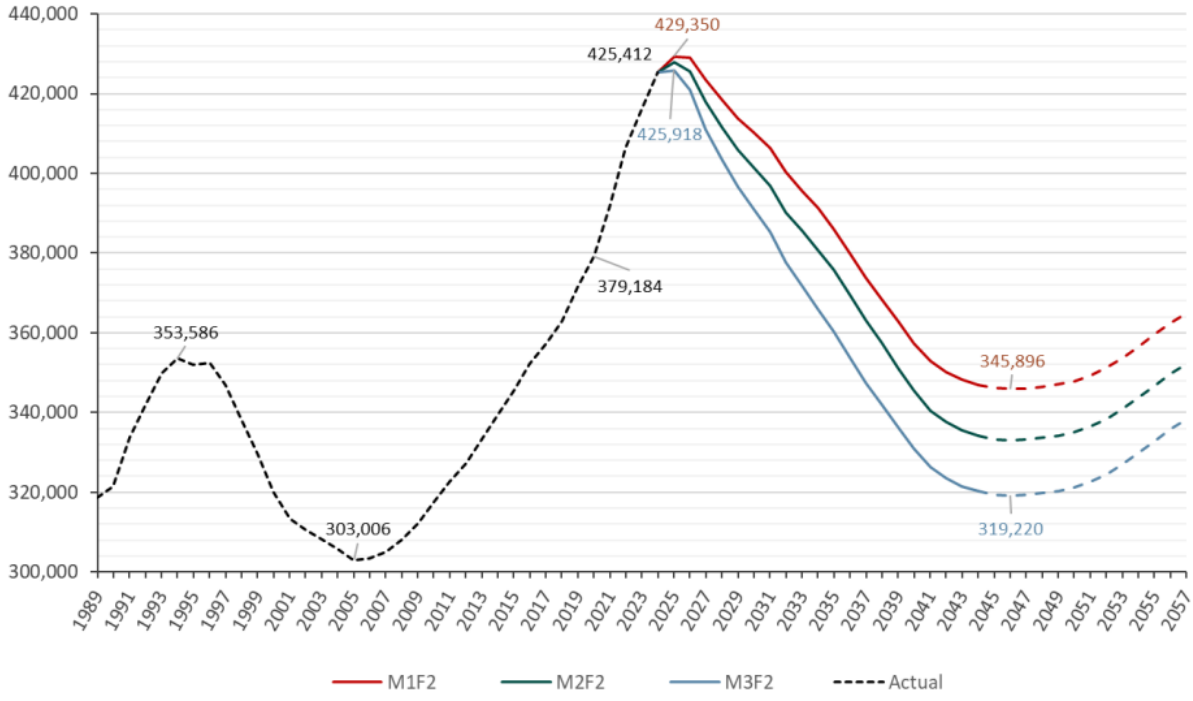


Plate 5-7: Enrolment Projections for Secondary Schools (Source: Department of Education, 2025)

Actual enrolment figures for the 2024/2025 academic year are 425,411. Preliminary enrolment figures for the 2025/2026 academic year are 429,654. This is 0.8% lower than the projected peak in the DoE's 2024 report. Enrolment is projected to decrease under all future scenarios.

Primary and Secondary School Demand

In terms of the proposed development, excluding the one bed and age friendly units, this leaves a total of 94 no. units that can be considered to accommodate families and thus may generate demand for school places. When an average household size of 2.96 is applied to the total number of applicable units, an indicative population of 278 persons is found. With 14% of the population in Rathcoole Town being of primary school going age (5-12) the indicative number of primary school aged children generated by the proposed development is 39. With 8.5% of secondary school going age (13-19), the indicative number of secondary school aged children generated by the proposed development is 24.

Considering the remaining available capacity within accessible primary schools and Coláiste Pobail Fóla, along with the projected national decrease in secondary school enrolments from 2025 onwards, there is adequate secondary school capacity in Rathcoole to accommodate the demand generated by the proposed development.

5.4.1.3 Open Space, Sports and Leisure

The application site is located on the southeastern edge of Rathcoole Town and occupies a strategic position between the existing urban area and the network of agricultural, natural and recreational assets surrounding the settlement. The town benefits from a broad range of existing public open space and recreational facilities while additionally benefiting from natural amenities such as Lugg Woods to the south.

The principal public open space serving Rathcoole is Rathcoole Park, located immediately west of the application site. Rathcoole Park is a substantial neighbourhood park providing formal and informal recreational opportunities including walking routes, seating areas, basketball court, children's play facilities, open grassed areas and water features. The park functions as a key recreational resource for the settlement and forms an important component of the area's wider green infrastructure network.

The site itself transitional and alluvial woodland, meadows, hedgerows, grassland and riparian habitat associated with the Coolmine, Crockshane and Camac corridors. Adjacent the site to the west is the Rathcoole Woodland, measuring approximately 12.5ha which offers simultaneously significant amenity and biodiversity value to the site.

In addition to Rathcoole Park and Woodland, the settlement contains a range of local open spaces associated with established residential neighbourhoods, including amenity greens, pocket parks and informal recreation areas at Rathcoole Anglican and Holy Family Parish Churches, the Square residential estate, at Peyton Close, Main Road and a variety of residential estates to the west of the town. These spaces provide opportunities for passive recreation and contribute to the overall quality of the residential environment. The town is also served by a variety of sports clubs and leisure facilities which are visible in the table below.

Table 5-9: Open Space, Sports and Leisure Facilities within 2km of the Site

Space/Facility	Address
Rathcoole Park – playground and basketball court	Rathcoole, County Dublin
Rathcoole Woodland	Rathcoole, County Dublin
Rathcoole Community Centre Sports Hall	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin
Rathcoole Community Centre Gym	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin
St. Mary's GAA Club	Saggart, Co. Dublin
Commercials Hurling & Camogie Club	Collegeland, Dublin
Rathcoole Football Club – Frank Cox Park	Frank Cox Park, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin
Parklands District Park	Parklands Parade, Citywest, Co. Dublin
Lugg Woods	Lugg, Co. Dublin
The Spring Saunas	Coolmine, Saggart, Co. Dublin, D24 N282
Citywest Health and Leisure Club	Citywest Hotel, Garter Ln, Saggart, Co. Dublin
Unlock Fitness & Yoga	Avoca, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin
Good Vibes Fitness	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, D24 DX57
Crookes Nutrition & Fitness Rathcoole	College Lane, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin
Slade Valley Golf Club	Brittas, Crockaunadreenagh, Co. Dublin

Source: MacCabe Durney Barnes

The current SDCCDP 2022-2028 requires minimum 15% of public open space while proposed Variation No. 2 to the South Dublin County Development Plan notes a requirement for the provision of a minimum of 20% public open space within residential developments located in sensitive areas. The proposed development will provide 11,763 m2 through the delivery of public open spaces throughout the residential portion of the development. The transitional woodland area to the southwest is not included in this quantum, however, it is proposed to enhance the existing trails within this section of the woodland to further augment the natural amenities at Rathcoole Town. The open space strategy has been informed by the site's landscape character and seeks to integrate active recreation through formal and informal play areas at the site, seating, formal paths and informal trails and biodiversity enhancement.

A key component of the proposal is the delivery of two senior GAA pitches and one junior pitch, which will provide an important recreational resource for both existing and future residents of Rathcoole and the wider area. These facilities will contribute to addressing existing demand for outdoor sports infrastructure and will be supported by a pavilion building, associated parking and ancillary facilities.

The proposed development also retains and manages a substantial area of existing Annex I alluvial woodland located within the southern portion of the site. This woodland forms an important landscape and ecological asset and will be protected and enhanced through a long-term management approach.

In addition, the development incorporates an extensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes linking the residential areas, woodland, public open spaces and sports facilities. New and upgraded trails will be provided both within the transitional woodland area and around the proposed pitches, creating a connected

recreational network that encourages walking, jogging and cycling. These routes will integrate with the wider green infrastructure network and provide opportunities for active recreation for all age groups.

5.4.1.4 Health Facilities and Social Services

Primary Care services are broadly defined as the health or social care services that a person can use and find in a community, outside of a hospital setting. Primary Care includes GPs, Public Health Nurses and a range of other services provided through your Local Health Office, by the HSE (Health Service Executive).

General service hospitals are accessible at Tallaght University Hospital, Cherry Orchard Hospital or elsewhere within Dublin City. Blackrock Clinic is a private service c.10km from the site. A variety f further services are available c.10-12km from Rathcoole in Kill, Naas and Sallins.

Table 5-10: Health facilities and Social Services

Space/Facility	Address	Facility Type
Rathcoole Health Centre	D24 EY68	Primary Care Centre
Rathcoole Medical Centre	D24AK65	General Practitioner
Saggart Medical Centre	D24 AK65	General Practitioner
Swiftbrook Medical Centre	D24 K5KC	General Practitioner
Citywest Medical, Centric Health	D24W583	General Practitioner
Slade Castle Family practice	D24NTE2	General Practitioner
Rathcoole Dental	D24H027	Dentist
Truly Dental Citywest	D24 HE2F	Dentist
Lisheen Nursing Home	D24Y042	Nursing Home
Millbrook Manor Nursing Home	D24 A9RY	Nursing Home
Reidy's Pharmacy	D24 Y53K	Pharmacy
Rathcoole Vital Pharmacy	D24 HH51	Pharmacy
Saggart Pharmacy	D24 Y38C	Pharmacy

Source: MacCabe Durney Barnes

Table 5-11: Health - Permitted and Pending Planning Applications

Reference Number	Address	Status	Description	Distance from Site (km)
SDCC Ref. SD24A/0187W **ACP Ref. 321950**	Lands at Citywest Campus, Garters Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin.	Granted 2025	Primary Care Centre building which will provide HSE Services such as general primary care, mental health, disability and older person services. SuDS drainage, PV panels at roof level, signage, landscaping, boundary treatment and all associated site works and services.	1.1km

Source: SDCC & ACP

5.4.1.5 Community Facilities

Social and Community facilities are varied in nature and can include general civic services and services targeted to specific section of the community. There is a dedicated Community Centre in Rathcoole, operated by Rathcoole Community Council. The Council offers a community centre and community employment scheme with the aim of supporting social, educational and recreational development and supporting community cohesion. A variety of services are available in the centre inclusive of meeting rooms, gym and sports hall. Activities ranging from fitness, martial arts and dance classes, bridge clubs, mens clubs and pre-school services are available within the centre.

While there is no official library facility in Rathcoole, South Dublin County Council operate a mobile library service within Broadfield Meadows, Tootenhill, Rathcoole every Monday evening between 6pm and 7pm.

Table 5-12: Community Facilities

Space/Facility	Address
Rathcoole Community Centre	D24 DX57
Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre	D24V04D
Saggart Village Heritage and Arts Centre	D24 DX43
St. Finian's Community Hall	D22 Y5T7
South Dublin County Council Mobile Library	D24C780
Scout Hall – Scouting Ireland 73rd	D24XR83

Source: MacCabe Durney Barnes

Further to the above, SDCC is investing in a number of projects in the Citywest area in relation to recreation and amenity. Three local recreation and amenity projects are included in the SDCC Capital Programme 2026 – 2028:

- Citywest Community Centre
- Citywest Youth facility fit-out
- Citywest Library

These projects are allocated €6,865,000 expenditure in 2026 and €14,907,000 over the course of the capital programme.

5.4.1.6 Arts and Cultural Facilities

The level of dedicated arts and cultural infrastructure in Rathcoole is modest when compared to larger settlements such as Tallaght, Naas, or Dublin City. The settlement does not contain a dedicated arts centre, theatre or gallery. Instead, cultural activity is generally centred around the community centre, local schools, heritage assets and events organised through community groups and in the surrounding area.

The principal facility within the town is the Rathcoole Community Centre, which accommodates a range of local events and activities throughout the year. Rathcoole also contains a number of heritage assets and historic buildings which contribute to the cultural identity of the village, including the historic village core and associated architectural heritage. These facilities and assets provide opportunities for community interaction and local cultural activities.

The Rathcoole Community Council is currently working with South Dublin County Council on proposals to restore the former Rathcoole Courthouse, which is presently used as a community hall, and convert it into a heritage museum. The project seeks to preserve and showcase the history of Rathcoole and its hinterland, reflecting the settlement's historic role as an administrative centre within the wider area.

While dedicated arts infrastructure within Rathcoole is limited, residents benefit from access to the wider network of cultural facilities located in larger towns and settlements including Naas, Tallaght and Dublin City along with smaller offerings in villages such as Kilteel, which hosts an annual art exhibition and various events in its community hall. Cinemas and theatres are accessible in Naas and Tallaght. South Dublin County Council actively supports arts and cultural participation through its Arts Office, public art initiatives, community arts programmes, grants, events and youth arts programmes. As a result, cultural needs are generally met through a combination of local community facilities and larger arts and cultural venues located elsewhere within the county.

5.4.1.7 Religious and Worship Facilities

The Church of the Holy Family and the Church of Ireland Church in Rathcoole provide the principal places of worship within the settlement. These facilities serve the local community and contribute to the social and community infrastructure of the area.

The religious infrastructure within Rathcoole is relatively limited and there do not appear to be dedicated places of worship serving other faith groups within the settlement. However, residents have access to a wide range of religious and faith-based facilities throughout the greater Dublin Area.These facilities are generally concentrated within the wider Dublin metropolitan area and are accessible from Rathcoole via the regional road network and public transport services.

5.4.1.8 Retail

Rathcoole has a number of retail and commercial services relative to its size. Retail provision is concentrated within the village centre along Main Street, which is the principal retail and commercial core of the settlement. The village centre contains a mix of convenience retail, service and commercial uses which serve the day-to-day needs of local residents and the surrounding catchment area.

Convenience retail provision includes a number of established retailers and supermarket operators, including Tesco and Centra, together with a range of smaller convenience stores and neighbourhood services. Additional retail and service provision is available within Rathcoole Shopping Centre, which hosts local businesses and convenience retail units. The village centre also supports hair and beauty salons, Paddy Powers, cafés, restaurants and takeaways, pubs and a Bank of Ireland.

Avoca Rathcoole is situated to the northeast of the town adjacent the N7. Avoca provides a range of retail, food and hospitality services including a clothing a goods store, food market, café and restaurant facilities. The destination attracts visitors from across South Dublin and the wider Dublin Region and represents a significant retail and employment asset within the local area.

For additional shopping and larger retail facilities, residents have access to a number of major retail destinations within the wider area, including Citywest Shopping Centre and The Square Shopping Centre in Tallaght. Additional retail, leisure and commercial opportunities are available throughout the wider Dublin metropolitan area, including Liffey Valley Shopping Centre and Dublin City Centre.

Given the established retail offer within Rathcoole and the accessibility of larger retail centres nearby, it is considered that the settlement is well positioned to accommodate future population growth while continuing to provide an appropriate range of retail and commercial services for residents.

5.5 Potential Impacts

This section provides assessment of all the potential direct and indirect significant effects impacts of the proposed development on population and human health. In accordance with the EPA guidelines, the assessment of impacts on population and human health refer to the assessment of those factors under which human health effects might occur, this is also as addressed elsewhere in this EIAR e.g. under the environmental factors of air, water, soil etc.

The analysis comprises a study of the key assessment themes as well as consideration of the construction phase, with a conclusion reached in relation to the proposed development on the baseline characteristics as described above. The characteristics of this impact assessment are defined below, as per the Guidelines on Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA. 2022) and European Commission, Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (2017).

5.5.1 Human Health

5.5.1.1 Construction Phase

Various elements associated with the construction phase of the proposed development have the potential to impact local ambient air quality, however the potential construction phase impacts shall be mitigated as detailed in Chapter 9 - Air Quality and Climate. The proposed construction works associated with the development proposed in this planning application is expected to take c. two years to complete.

Potential air quality impacts during Construction can occur as a result of the following areas:

- Dust emissions associated with excavations
- Construction transport emissions
- Aspergillus emissions from excavation and earthmoving activity

The potential air quality impacts during Construction are summarised as follows,

- The setting up of the site shall involve the construction of site security hoarding and site compounds, site offices, materials and waste storage areas and staff welfare facilities. These temporary activities will have a minimal potential to generate fugitive dust emissions or combustion gas emissions.

- Site clearance and ground excavation works will be undertaken in separate phases and these activities have the potential to generate fugitive windblown dust emissions rising from the operation of mechanical plant such as excavators and tipper trucks and the movement of these vehicles on exposed surfaces at the site.
- With regard to the volume of waste material (sub soils) generated during site clearance, there will be a requirement for HGV trucks to remove the material from the site.
- The movements of construction vehicles on the site shall also generate windblown dust emissions.
- During the construction phase CO2 will be released into the atmosphere as a result of the movement of construction vehicles and the use of construction plant including generators and cranes.
- Construction equipment including generators and compressors will also give rise to diesel and petrol engine exhaust emissions.
- Dust emissions from the construction phase of the proposed development have the potential to impact human health through the release of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions. As set out in Chapter 9 - Air Quality, the construction dust assessment considered human receptors within 250m of the site boundary and within 50m of the routes used by construction vehicles. While residential properties on Greenogue Drive, Mullally's Lane, Coolamber Road, Coolamber Drive and Beechwood Lawns are located in proximity to the site, the sensitivity of the area to human health effects is low. The risk of human health impacts was assessed as low during earthworks and construction works and negligible during trackout. With the implementation of the dust control measures set out in Chapter 9, residual effects on human health as a result of construction dust and PM_{10} emissions will be negligible and not significant.

In relation to human health the overall impact in terms of noise and vibration are addressed in Chapter 11. During the construction phase, residual construction noise and vibration effects are predicted to be Adverse, Not Significant and Short-Term. The exception is an Adverse, Very Significant to Profound and Short-Term Effect associated with changes in traffic flows on Link ID 8 (Mullally's Lane), which is temporary in duration and limited in extent. Subject the adoption of the mitigation measures detailed in Chapter 11, the Proposed Development is considered suitable for residential use from a noise and vibration perspective and is not predicted to result in any likely significant operational noise or vibration effects.

5.5.1.2 Operational Phase

The only predicted air quality impacts associated with operation of the development are emissions to atmosphere from traffic associated with the development.

The only predicted air quality impacts associated with the operation of the development are emissions to atmosphere from traffic associated with the development. As set out in Chapter 9 - Air Quality, annual mean NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations were predicted at worst-case sensitive receptors for the 2029 opening year. All receptors are predicted to experience concentrations below the relevant air quality limit values, with the largest predicted change in any pollutant concentration being 0.2 µg/m³ (annual mean PM_{10}). A worst-case receptor located on the site boundary is also predicted to experience concentrations well below the limit values, confirming that the proposed development does not introduce future residents to an area of poor air quality. The effects of the proposed development on local air quality, and therefore on human health, are considered to be neutral and not significant, and no operational phase mitigation is required.

The operational phase of the development has the potential to generate additional traffic on the roads in the vicinity of the local area. These additional vehicle movements have been considered in combination with those that will be generated by neighbouring developments. This is detailed in the traffic assessment for the operational phase of the potential impact section. The cumulative impact of the proposed development in combination with neighbouring developments has been determined as imperceptible and long term.

In summary there is the potential for effects on human health once operational. As set out in further detail within Chapter 9 this is considered to be neutral and not significant in terms of Air Quality and in terms of climate impacts. In regard to noise, Chapter 11 indicates that no likely significant residual operational noise or vibration effects are anticipated. ·The residual operational traffic noise effects are predicted to be Adverse, Slight and Permanent along Road Link ID 7 (Greenogue Drive) and Road Link ID 8 (Mullally's Lane). Population

5.5.1.3 Construction Phase

The construction phase will generate increased employment and capital spend on materials and services, which will benefit the local economy. The effect on Population will be moderate, positive and short-term.

5.5.1.4 Operational Phase

The proposed development will comprise 130 no. units. The average household size recorded by the Census 2022 was 2.96 persons per household for the Rathcoole Study area. This generates an indicative population of c. 385 persons when applied to the proposed scheme.

In line with the Guidelines on Design Standards for New Apartments (2022), which states.

> *"one bedroom or studio units should not general be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms."*

Therefore, all the one-bedroom units and age friendly within the proposed scheme have been deducted in the estimation of families with children expected to be residing within the development. Hence, it is assumed that 94 no. two, three and four bedroom units are proposed, which can reasonably accommodate families.

Taking the average household size of 2.96 persons within the Study Area, the 94 no. appropriate two bedroom and larger units proposed could generate an indicative population of c.278 no. persons. On basis of Plate 5-3, 31.5 % is aged between 0 and 19 years, which would translate to c.88 no. persons within this development.

An examination of the total number of children of primary and post primary age groups that are expected to reside within the development has been undertaken. This is determined on the basis of the total proportion of children under this age cohort residing within the study area as per the Census 2022. On this basis, of the indicative c.88 no. children, an estimated 25 no. would constitute pre-school aged children (0–4 years), 39 no. would constitute primary school aged children (5–12 years) and 24 no. would constitute post-primary school aged children (13–19 years). This has been estimated on the basis of the age cohorts and their subsequent composition within the study area.

The SIA has demonstrated that sufficient capacity exists within the existing services and amenities to cater for the demand generated from the proposed development. It is considered that there is sufficient capacity in the study area to cater for the demand generated by the proposed development. In terms of Population, any impact on of social infrastructure in Rathcoole would be imperceptible and there would be a neutral to slight positive long-term impact on the Population in terms of addressing education (pre-school) and community needs.

5.5.2 Social Patterns

5.5.2.1 Construction Phase

The construction phase of the project is unlikely to have any significant impact on social patterns within the surrounding area. Some temporary additional local populations may arise out of construction activities. However, these impacts are imperceptible, temporary in nature and therefore not considered significant.

It is acknowledged that the construction phase of the project may have some short-term negative impacts on local residents. Such impacts are likely to be associated with construction traffic and possible nuisances associated with construction access requirements. These impacts are dealt with separately and assessed elsewhere in in the EIAR Chapter 9 - Air Quality and Climate and Chapter 11 - Noise and Vibration and also in Chapter 14 – Material Assets (Transport).

Such impacts will be short term and in the longer term, it is considered that the completed scheme will have beneficial impacts for local businesses, residents and the wider community. Any disturbance is predicted to be commensurate with the normal disturbance associated with the construction industry where a site is efficiently, sensitively, and properly managed having regard to neighbouring activities. The construction methods employed and the hours of work proposed will be designed to minimise potential impacts to nearby residents. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan is submitted with this planning application. In addition please also see Chapter 2 for detail of construction stage.

5.5.2.2 Operational Phase

The addition of new residents will improve the vibrancy and vitality of the area and will help to support existing community and social infrastructure to further supporting the Town Centre and commercial businesses. As set out within the SIA submitted as a standalone report with the application, there is a good range of existing community and social infrastructure within a 2km radius of the subject site, which the project will be able to avail of. purpose of the SIA is to determine if the Rathcoole area is well served by community related facilities to support the future residents of the proposed development

The SIA also assesses the potential demand created by the proposed development. The total number of primary school pupils enrolled in the schools currently amounts to 2,533, with the total number of secondary school pupils amounting to 2,667. Planning permission for a new 20 classroom primary school has been approved adjacent the site. The indicative number of primary school aged children generated by the proposed development is 39 and the indicative number of secondary school aged children generated by the proposed development is 24. Considering the remaining available capacity within accessible primary schools, Coláiste Pobail Fóla and pipeline facilities within the surrounding area, along with the projected national decrease in secondary school enrolments from 2025 onwards, there is adequate school capacity in Rathcoole to accommodate the demand generated by the proposed development.

It is considered that Rathcoole is accessible to a range leisure facilities including; football/ hurling / GAA clubs, gyms and playground along with a number of education facilities and a quantum of community facilities located throughout the town centre. As such, the facilities that Rathcoole offers are of high quality and, in combination with the significant sporting provision of the proposed development, will be able to support the future residents of the town. The proposed development will additionally include high quality public open space including calisthenics area, seating areas and playground.

Considering the scale, unit and tenure mix of the proposed development, associated demand of c.8 no. crèche places derived from recorded childcare participation in the area, and existing and permitted provision within Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest, it is concluded that the childcare needs arising from the proposed development can be accommodated within the established and permitted network of facilities without the provision of a dedicated facility on site.

Once operational, the scheme will give rise to much needed additional residential accommodation. Residents will spend a portion of their income locally which would not happen without the project. The project will provide jobs to those involved in the development of the project during the construction phase.

Having regard to the fact that the area within which the development is situated benefits from a good level of social and community infrastructure, and noting the elements of the project which will improve and strengthen this infrastructure, it is concluded that the project will precipitate a moderate, positive, long term impact on social patterns in the operational phase.

5.5.3 Land Use and Settlement Patterns

5.5.3.1 Construction Phase

The construction phase of the project will primarily consist of site clearance, excavation and earthworks, the construction of the proposed 130 no. residential units, the junior and two senior GAA pitches and pavilion, the new access road from Mullally's Lane Roundabout, drainage and SuDS infrastructure, and associated landscaping works. The construction phase is envisaged to span approximately two years, from June 2027 to May 2029, with handover expected to be completed in 2030. During this period the existing greenfield lands will be given over to construction activity, including site compounds, material staging areas and temporary hoarding, and the construction phase has the potential to impact adversely and result in the temporary degradation of the local visual environment on a short-term basis. The visual impacts precipitated by the project are assessed in greater detail in Chapter 18 of the EIAR 'Landscape and Visual'.

The site presently comprises an undeveloped greenfield area to the southeast of Rathcoole Village, characterised by open grassland, scrub, hedgerows and immature woodland, bounded by Rathcoole Park to the northwest, existing residential estates to the north, and agricultural lands to the southwest and south. The temporary change in the character of these lands during the construction period will be experienced principally by the established residential communities adjoining the northern site boundary and by users of Rathcoole Park. Construction working hours will be restricted (Monday to Friday 07:00–19:00, Saturday 08:00–17:00, with no activity on Sundays or public holidays), and construction activity will be managed in accordance with the outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan and outline Construction

Traffic Management Plan submitted with the application, mitigating impacts on the amenity of the existing settlement.

The construction phase may result in a marginally increased population in the wider area due to increased construction employment, and will generate positive, albeit temporary, economic effects through direct construction employment and expenditure in the local economy of Rathcoole and its environs. This impact would be short-term in nature and imperceptible in terms of land use and settlement patterns.

5.5.3.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase of the project will result in the permanent change of use of the lands from generally undeveloped greenfield and informal pitch to residential and recreational uses in accordance with the policies and objectives of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022–2028.The project will accord with national and local planning policy objectives which seek to deliver compact growth at suitable locations, providing a plan-led urban extension to Rathcoole as a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the Dublin Metropolitan Area.
The project will respond to the housing need and demand in the area of the project and the wider region. The provision of age-friendly accommodation will facilitate older members of the existing community to remain living in Rathcoole, supporting the maintenance of established social networks. The scheme also benefits from a high level of quality communal and public open space, with approximately 11,763 sqm of public open space incorporating formal and informal play areas, 1,040 sqm of communal open space, and the junior and two senior GAA pitches and pavilion, which will serve both the new and existing communities and consolidate the recreational amenity network extending through Rathcoole Park.

Chapter 13 of this EIAR assesses the Landscape and Visual Impact. In summary, during the operational phase of the development, visual impacts are likely to be long term in duration. It should be noted that the character of the impact of changes to the visual environment on human health (positive, negative or neutral) will depend on how well a development is received by the public, and on the general contribution of the development to the built environment. In this instance, the proposed development comprises a coherently designed residential neighbourhood on lands zoned for that purpose, arranged around a network of green spaces, active frontages and pedestrian connections to Rathcoole Park and the retained riparian corridors of the Camac River, Coolmine Stream and Crockshane Stream, and is likely to be perceived by many as making a positive contribution to the built environment at the southeastern edge of the village.

The proposed development will result in the loss of a portion of the existing natural and semi-natural environment currently present within the site, including areas of grassland and woodland habitat. As a consequence, there will be a reduction in the extent of natural areas currently available for informal recreation and nature appreciation. This may result in a localised adverse effect for some existing users. However, the proposed development has been designed to retain, protect and enhance substantial areas of woodland and green infrastructure throughout the site. While a localised reduction in natural habitat will occur, this is offset to a significant degree by the provision of enhanced recreational opportunities, improved public accessibility and long-term ecological management measures.

The adequate provision of high-quality mixed housing to serve the existing and future population of the county and the wider South Dublin area is an important contributor to the establishment and maintenance of good human/public health. The high-quality design of the project, including individual units which meet the relevant standards for houses, duplex units and apartments, will contribute to a positive impact on the wellbeing of future residents. The operational phase will generate an indicative additional population of c.385 no. persons, and this population can be accommodated by existing and committed social and community infrastructure, including capacity within the local school network and the surrounding childcare network. The location of the development, adjoining the established residential edge of Rathcoole Village and its social and community infrastructure, together with the delivery of new recreational facilities as part of the project, will result in a direct, positive, permanent and moderate impact on land use, settlement patterns and the wellbeing of future residents.

5.5.4 Employment and Economic Activity

5.5.4.1 Construction Phase

The construction phase of the project is likely to result in a positive net improvement in economic activity in the area of the project site particularly in the construction sector and in associated secondary building services industries. The construction sector (including associated services) was documented as one of the

most adversely impacted sectors of the Irish economy following the economic downturn in 2008 and Covid-19 downturn in 2020-21.

The construction of 130 residential units, 3no. pitches and all associated infrastructure will precipitate a positive impact on construction-related employment for the duration of the construction phase. The construction phase will also have secondary and indirect 'spin-off' impacts on ancillary support services in the area of the site, such as retail services, together with wider benefits in the building supply services, professional and technical professions etc. These beneficial impacts on economic activity will be largely temporary but will contribute to the overall future viability of the construction sector and related services and professions over the construction period.

The project could have a slight, short term, negative economic impact on the surrounding area during the construction phase due to traffic and associated nuisance, dust and noise. These issues and appropriate mitigation measures are addressed in Chapters 9 - Air Quality, 11 - Noise and Vibration, 14 – Traffic and Transport, 17 – Waste and 17 – Material Assets (Transport), of the EIAR, the Traffic and Transport Assessment and Construction and Environmental Management Plan. A detailed Construction Management Plan will be provided prior to the commencement of works on site.

5.5.4.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase of the development will result in the delivery of additional housing to support planned and projected population growth which will support a wide range of additional local businesses, services, transport infrastructure and employment opportunities. Rathcoole Town Centre will benefit from the increased local populace and allow for improved local generation of job opportunities. An increase in visitors to the town will also be generated as a result of the proposed pitches.
The project will help to meet established housing need and demand within Dublin COunty, at a location which will encourage the use of public transport and active transit modes due to its proximity to existing and proposed public transport provision, and a range of existing uses, facilities and amenities.

The proposed tenure is that of social and affordable housing, which will provide for an enhanced mix of tenures within Rathcoole town, and add to the existing social housing stock. The overall benefit to the economic activity of the surrounding area resulting from the development can be considered moderate, long term, and positive.

5.5.5 Water

5.5.5.1 Construction Phase

Provision of water infrastructure for the proposed development would involve construction activities within the subject lands and connections to the Ringsend wastewater treatment plant. The potential impact on the local public water supply network would be short term and imperceptible. Therefore, the impact on human health and population in this regard is considered to be imperceptible.

During the course of the construction phase of the proposed development, there is potential, in the absence of mitigation, for surface water runoff to suffer from increased levels of silt or other pollutants, particularly towards the surrounding Camac River, Crockshane (Slade) Stream and Coolmine Stream in addition to potential pollution from spillages, wheel washing and water from trucks on site. The Construction and Environmental Management Plan, and the Construction and Waste Management Plan, set out how all materials will be managed, stored and disposed of in an appropriate manner, mitigating the potential negative effects as outlined.

Potential impact on water is addressed in Chapter 10 - Water and a number of mitigation measures are outlined in that chapter of this Environmental Impact Assessment Report. These mitigation measures will serve to minimise potential adverse impacts of the construction phase to the water environment including the River Camac, Coolmine and Crockshane Streams, thereby minimising any associated risk to human health from water contamination. Therefore, the impact of construction of the proposed development in relation to water is likely to be short-term and imperceptible with respect to human health.

5.5.5.2 Operational Phase

SuDS will be implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the GDSDS and South Dublin County Council requirements. In addition, the requirements of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' will be adhered to.

In the absence of SuDS measures, surface water run-off discharge rates from the development sites may be increased because of increase in impermeable surfaces, however the implementation of SuDS features proposed for the subject site will ensure that any such increased runoff is attenuated on site with discharge being controlled. Further details on the mitigation measures are set out in Chapter 10 – Water of this EIAR. Therefore, the potential impact on population and human health in this regard is considered to be insignificant.

5.5.6 Health and Safety

5.5.6.1 Operational Phase

The construction phase of the proposed development may give rise to short-term impacts associated with construction traffic, dust, noise and littering. Secondary impacts may include resulting increased traffic arising from hauling building materials to and from the proposed development site which are likely to affect population and human health distant from the proposed development site, including adjacent to aggregate sources.

Construction impacts are likely to be short term and are dealt with separately in the relevant chapters of this EIAR document and will be subject to control through a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, and a Resource and Waste Management Plan. The construction methods employed and the hours of work proposed will be designed to minimise potential impacts. The development will comply with all Health & Safety Regulations during the construction of the project. Where possible, potential risks will be omitted from the design so that the impact on the construction phase will be reduced.

5.5.6.2 Operational Phase

No significant health and safety effects are envisaged during the operational phase of the project. The operational stage of the development is unlikely to precipitate any significant impacts in terms of health and safety. The design of the project has been formulated to provide for a safe environment for future residents and visitors alike. The paths, roadways and public areas have all been designed in accordance with best practice and the applicable guidelines including Design Manual Urban Roads Streets. A Road Safety Audit has also been carried out and submitted with the application which promotes a high standard of health and safety for all occupants and visitors.

The project will not result in any significant impacts on human health and safety once completed and operational. The proposed development therefore is unlikely to result in negative impacts in relation to population and human health in this regard and the resulting impact will be negligible.

5.5.7 Indirect, Secondary & Transboundary Effects

The proposed development will result in indirect effects through the accommodation of additional population within Rathcoole and the associated increase in demand for local services. As identified within the baseline assessment, significant population growth is anticipated in Rathcoole. The proposed development will contribute to the population required to support the continued vitality and viability of existing retail, commercial, educational, recreational and community facilities within the settlement.

Potential secondary effects might arise through future investment in community facilities, recreational infrastructure and local services facilitated by population growth within Rathcoole. However, any such development would be subject to separate.

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, no transboundary effects on population and human health are anticipated.

5.6 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures relating to those factors under which human health effects might occur have been addressed elsewhere in this EIAR, under the environmental factors of Material Assets (Transport), Air Quality, Climate, Noise and Vibration, Landscape and Visual and Material Assets (Utilities).

Avoidance, remedial and mitigation measures describe any corrective or mitigative measures that are either practicable or reasonable, having regard to the potential likely and significant environmental impacts. An oCEMP prepared by AECOM on behalf of the applicant SDCC, is included with the application material.

5.6.1 Construction Phase

A range of construction related remedial and mitigation measures are proposed throughout this EIAR document with reference to the various environmental topics examined and the inter-relationships between each topic. These remedial and mitigation measures are likely to result in any significant and likely adverse environmental impacts on population and during the construction phases being avoided.

In order to protect the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents, premises and employees a Construction Environmental Management Plan (including traffic management) shall be submitted by the contractor and implemented during the construction phase. This will mitigate potential local disturbance or severance to local populations that may arise from construction activity.

With reference to the construction phase of the proposed development, the objective of the Construction Waste Management Plan as integrated into Chapter 17 of this EIAR is to ensure that waste generated during the proposed construction and operation phases will be managed and disposed of in a way that ensures the provisions of the Waste Management Acts 1996 - 2013 are complied with.

5.6.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase is considered to have likely moderate positive impacts on human beings in relation to the provision of additional residential units, open space, community facilities, active open space (sports pitches) to cater for the demands of a growing population in accordance with the residential and open space zoning objectives pertaining to the site.

During the operational phase of the development the design of the scheme has undergone a Road Safety Audit and has had regard to Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) during its design. This will promote a pedestrian friendly environment, promoting sustainable development and reducing the influence of cars. This has the potential to reduce accidents within the proposed development.

The operation of proposed development will result in the loss of a portion of the existing natural and semi-natural environment within the site. To minimise the effects of this change, substantial areas of woodland will be retained and protected as part of the development. A Woodland Management Plan will be implemented to ensure the long-term protection, maintenance and enhancement of these areas and to maintain their recreational, landscape and ecological value.

5.7 Residual Impacts

Following implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in relevant sections of this EIAR, the residual impact on population and human health is considered to be positive moderate longterm in delivering the residential population for Rathcoole Town consistent with SDCC's development objectives in the SDCCDP 2022-2028.

The proposed mitigation measures will avoid, prevent, or reduce impacts on the human environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Residual impacts are those which remain following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, however no significant adverse residual impacts have been identified.

The land will have a suburban character, with significant tracts of woodland and recreational facilities. However, this change is in context with the specific zoning of the site and the impact is considered acceptable when balanced with the other positive impacts on amenity, such as the provision of active public amenity spaces, recreational spaces, enhanced access to natural amenities and much needed housing in the greater Dublin Metropolitan Area.

5.8 Cumulative Impacts

5.8.1 Cumulative Impacts

The proposed development will introduce a new residential population to a greenfield site at the edge of Rathcoole Town, a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town within South Dublin. Based on the average household size identified within the baseline assessment, the proposed development is expected to

accommodate approximately 385 persons upon completion. The development will deliver 130 units together with significant supporting infrastructure including public open space, active travel connections, woodland management and enhancement measures, upgraded recreational trails, two senior GAA pitches, one junior GAA pitch and an associated pavilion building. The proposed development therefore represents not only a residential scheme, but also a significant investment in recreational infrastructure that will serve both future residents and the existing population of Rathcoole.

A search was undertaken to identify existing and permitted developments that may contribute to cumulative effects in combination with the proposed development. Sources consulted included:

- South Dublin County Council Planning Register;
- An Coimisiún Pleanála Planning Register;
- South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028;
- Proposed Variation No. 2 to the South Dublin County Development Plan;
- Relevant planning permissions and appeals within the Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest areas; and
- The EIAR Portal.

The principal developments identified within the vicinity of the application site are outlined below.

5.8.1.1 Relevant Planning History – Application Site and Immediate Area

One notable planning approval has been identified at the site.

Table 5-13: Planning Permissions at the Site

Reference Number	Address	Status	Description	Distance from Site (km)
SDCC Ref. SD23A/0336 ACP Ref. 321696	Lands south of Coolamber Drive, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Granted on appeal	New primary school (Roll No. 20549P), including 20 classrooms, with a gross floor area of 3,449 sq.m over 3 storeys.	0km

5.8.1.2 Relevant Planning History – Application Site and Immediate Area

The application site forms part of lands identified for residential growth within Rathcoole. The following nearby permissions and proposals are considered most relevant from a cumulative Population and Human Health perspective.

Table 5-14: Planning Permissions in the Immediate Area

Reference	Address	Status	Summary	Distance from Site (km)
SDCC Ref. SD25A/0266W	Muldowney's Pub, Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, D24 AE33	Grant permission 2026	a) the part demolition of Muldowney's Pub to the rear; b) the change of use of the front portion of the pub to provide for 2no. 1-bed units; c) the construction of 8 no. own-door residential units within a single three storey block to provide 4no. 1- bed units and 4no. 2-bed units and ancillary development	0.5km
ACP Ref. 312501	Mill Road, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted on appeal with conditions - constructed	Demolition of an existing dwelling, construction of 274 no. residential units (51 no. houses, 223 no. apartments), creche and associated site works.	0.7km
SDCC Ref. SD24A/0092W ACP Ref. 322539	Lands located adjacent to Drury Mills and Drury	Granted on appeal with conditions 2026	73 units: 6 houses, 59 duplex, 8 apartments within the curtilage of protected structures. Associated and ancillary site development works.	0.7km

Reference	Address	Status	Summary	Distance from Site (km)
	Park, Swiftbrook, Saggart, Co. Dublin			
SD22A/0342	Lands located to the east of Tay Lane, Newcastle Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Permission Granted 2023	4 storey apartment block comprising of 58 age-friendly residential units and community facilities	0.8km
SD25A/0161W	13 Mill Road, Saggart, Co. Dublin, D24PK27	Permission Granted 2025	3 residential dwellings	0.9km

Source: SDCC & ACP

5.8.1.3 Relevant Development Proposals in the Wider Area

A number of residential, educational, recreational and employment developments have been permitted within the wider Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest area in recent years. These include residential developments, employment-generating warehouse developments within Greenogue Business Park and Greenogue Logistics Park, recreational facility upgrades and educational infrastructure.

Table 5-15: Planning Permissions in the Surrounding Area

Reference	Address	Status	Summary	Distance from Site (km)
SDCC Ref.SD21A/0206 ACP Ref. 311626	Long Acre, School Road, Rathcoole, Dublin 24	Grant permission with conditions 2022	Demolition of 1 dwelling and 4 out-buildings/sheds and the construction of 14 residential units, all with associated private open spaces areas in the form of balconies and gardens.	1km
SDCC Ref. SD23A/0100	Land at Citywest Hotel and Convention Centre, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Grant permission 2024	Construction of a Photovoltaic Solar development to the North of the Citywest hotel on lands formally in use as a golf course at a site of 6.7ha.	1km
SDCC Ref. SD24A/0187W ACP Ref. 321950	Lands at Citywest Campus, Garters Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin.	Grant permission 2025	Primary Care Centre building which will provide HSE Services such as general primary care, mental health, disability and older person services. SuDS drainage, PV panels at roof level, signage, landscaping, boundary treatment and all associated site works and services.	1.1km
SDCC Ref. SD21A/0087 ACP Ref. 310688	Rathmill Manor, Tootenhill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Grant permission 2022 – partially constructed (34u)	Construction of a residential development with 98 residential units consisting of 51 houses, 37 apartments and 10 duplexes.	1.3km
SD25A/0106W	St Marys GFC, Pairc Mhure, Saggart, Co Dublin, D24 PH31	Permission Granted	Upgrade of existing football facilities including synthetic pitch	c.1.4km
ACP Ref. 305563	Fortunestown Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Permission Granted – under construction	488 no. apartments, creche and associated site works. Permission granted for an additional 86no. Units under SDCC Ref. LRD24A/0006W on September 16 2024.	c.1.5km

Reference	Address	Status	Summary	Distance from Site (km)
SD23A/0286	Greenogue Recycling, Tay Lane, Rathcreedan, Rathcoole, Co Dublin	Permission Granted	7 warehouse units with associated employment floorspace	c.1.5km
SD24A/0234W	Lands on Jordanstown View, Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Permission Granted	Waste transfer facility, office buildings, and associated infrastructure	c.1.9km
SDCC Ref. SD25A/0259W	lands (c. 8.72 Ha) at Greenogue Logistics Park	Grant Permission 2026	Warehouse and ancillary employment development	c.1.1km
SDCC Ref. LRD25A/0012W, ACP Ref. 324127	Townland of Boherboy, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted on appeal June 2026	Large-scale residential development of 611 no. dwellings (306 no. houses, 133 no. duplex units and 172 no. apartments), a two-storey crèche of c.630 sqm. C.1.03 ha reserved for the potential future development of an 8–16 classroom primary school. Submitted with EIAR.	2km

Source: SDCC & ACP

5.8.1.4 Assessment of Cumulative Effects

This assessment has had regard to the population growth objectives contained within the National Planning Framework (2025), the *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements* Guidelines (2025), the RSES and the SDCCDP 2022-2028, including Proposed Variation No. 2. The cumulative assessment has also considered the capacity of existing and planned social infrastructure within Rathcoole, including educational facilities, childcare facilities, healthcare services, community facilities, sports facilities, retail provision and public open space.

Approximately 1,324 no. permitted units which are not yet constructed or completed have been identified within 2km of the site. Of these, 1,175 no. units are located in Saggart including the 611 no. units permitted at Boherboy in June 2026 and will therefore likely avail of services within Saggart and Citywest Town Centres. Of the 149 no. remaining units permitted in Rathcoole Town, 58 no. are age-friendly, which results in a total of c.91 no. standard residential units.

All units excepting those permitted in 2026, were considered as part of the Settlement Capacity Audit prepared by SDCC to inform Proposed Variation No. 2 of the SDCC Development Plan in 2025. The Audit concluded that a further 69 units could be accommodated in Rathcoole, resulting in a total capacity of 188 potential units to 2028 identified within the Core Strategy. The identification of this level of growth reflects the Council's assessment that Rathcoole has the capacity to accommodate and support such residential development having regard to available services, infrastructure and the planned growth strategy for the settlement. The proposed development is consistent with this planned growth trajectory, accords with the capacity identified under the proposed variation, and will contribute towards the achievement of the residential growth envisaged for the town.

The most significant permitted development in the wider area is the 611-unit residential scheme at Boherboy, Saggart), granted on appeal in June 2026. Located on the Saggart side of the study area, the development will orient principally towards services in Saggart and Citywest and is largely self-mitigating in social infrastructure terms, incorporating a crèche and reserving a c.1.03 ha site for a potential future school. The principal cumulative interaction with the proposed development arises at post-primary level, where both schemes fall within the catchment of Coláiste Pobail Fóla. The proposed development generates a modest demand of c.24 no. post-primary places, capacity remains within Coláiste Pobail Fóla's permitted 1,000-pupil school, and the Department of Education projects a sustained national decline in post-primary enrolments from 2025/26. The cumulative demand arising from both developments can therefore be accommodated without significant adverse effects on social infrastructure capacity.

The approved primary school immediately adjoining the application site is of particular relevance from a cumulative perspective, as it will increase educational capacity within the area and support the planned growth of the settlement. Various warehousing and employment-based developments will increase potential employment in the area.

While the proposed development will contribute to population growth and generate additional demand for services and facilities, Rathcoole is identified as a growth settlement within South Dublin County and has been planned to accommodate future residential development. Furthermore, the proposed development provides significant social and recreational infrastructure as part of the scheme, reducing the potential for adverse cumulative effects on existing facilities. The cumulative effect of the proposed development, when considered alongside existing and permitted development within Rathcoole and the wider area, is therefore considered to be **moderate, long-term and positive**. The development will contribute towards the delivery of housing, recreational facilities and active travel infrastructure within a planned growth settlement, thereby supporting the sustainable long-term development of Rathcoole.

5.9 'Do Nothing' Scenario

In the event that the proposed development does not proceed, the application site would largely remain in its current condition as a mixture of woodland, grassland and land on which informal sports pitch is located. Existing opportunities for informal recreation and biodiversity would be retained and there would be no loss of natural habitat associated with the development of the site. However, the do-nothing scenario would also result in the loss of an opportunity to deliver housing on lands identified for residential development within Rathcoole, a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the SDCCDP 2022-2028. The development would contribute towards meeting identified housing need within the County and support the population growth objectives set out within national, regional and local planning policy. In the absence of the proposed development, these housing units would not be delivered.

The do-nothing scenario would also result in the non-delivery of significant recreational infrastructure proposed as part of the development, including active travel connections, woodland trail upgrades, two senior GAA pitches, one junior pitch and an associated pavilion. Opportunities to improve public access to and management of the retained transitional woodland areas would also not arise.

While the retention of the existing natural environment would represent a positive outcome for biodiversity and informal recreation, the absence of new housing, recreational facilities and active travel infrastructure would represent a lost opportunity to enhance population and human health outcomes within Rathcoole. On balance, the do-nothing scenario is therefore considered likely to result in a slight negative effect on population and human health when compared to the proposed development.

5.10 Summary

The proposed development comprises a residential-led scheme providing 130 no. residential units together with associated community, recreational and infrastructure provisions, including two senior GAA pitches, one junior GAA pitch, a pavilion building, public open space, active travel infrastructure and associated services.

The assessment has considered the potential effects of the proposed development on population and human health having regard to the existing demographic profile of Rathcoole, the availability of social and community infrastructure, and the findings of other environmental assessments contained within this EIAR.

The baseline assessment demonstrates that Rathcoole has experienced significant population growth between 2016 and 2022, substantially exceeding both county and national growth rates. National, regional and local planning policy identifies a continued requirement for residential development within South Dublin County and Rathcoole in particular. The Settlement Capacity Audit undertaken by South Dublin County Council confirms the capacity of Rathcoole to accommodate additional residential development and identifies a requirement for further housing delivery within the settlement.

The proposed development will contribute towards the delivery of housing targets identified under the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the South Dublin County Development Plan. The development will support population growth within a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town and will assist in consolidating the existing settlement in accordance with national and regional planning policy.

The assessment of social infrastructure has identified an extensive range of childcare, educational, community, recreational and retail facilities within the study area. In addition, the proposed development includes significant community infrastructure in the form of GAA facilities, public open space, active travel connections and supporting infrastructure. The development will therefore make a positive contribution to the social and recreational amenities available within Rathcoole.

Potential effects on human health associated with noise and vibration, air quality and climate, traffic and transportation, water, material assets and major accidents and disasters have been assessed within the relevant chapters of this EIAR. Subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures identified throughout the EIAR, no significant adverse effects on population or human health are predicted.

Overall, the proposed development will result in significant positive effects through the delivery of housing, community infrastructure, recreational facilities and investment within Rathcoole and South Dublin County.

5.11 References

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Full Text
ACP	An Coimisiún Pleanála
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ED	Electoral Division
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMRA	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EV	Electric Vehicle
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GI	Green Infrastructure
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
MDB	MacCabe Durney Barnes
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPO	National Planning Objective
OS	Open Space
RES	Residential
RES-N	New Residential
RPO	Regional Policy Objective
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
RU	Rural Amenity Objective
SDCC	South Dublin County Council
SDCCDP	South Dublin County Development Plan
SLO	Specific Local Objective
SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
TA	Traveller Accommodation
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency