Social Infrastructure Audit

Rathcoole Lands

South Dublin County Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA) was prepared by MacCabe Durney Barnes on behalf of South Dublin County Council, to inform a Part 10 Planning Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála for the proposed development of 130 no. residential units and 3 no. GAA pitches at a site of c. 11.4ha to the south and southeast of Rathcoole Village, County Dublin. 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.

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).



Figure 1: Zoning at the Subject Site *(Source: MDB & ArcGIS)*

The subject lands are zoned Objective RES-N (New Residential), Objective OS (Open Space) and Objective RU (Rural and Agriculture) in the County Development Plan. Rathcoole Village to the north of the site is predominantly zoned Objective RES (Residential), with a cluster of existing residential properties also located to the north-west. Several Specific Local Objectives (SLOs) apply to the lands. These comprise an objective for the provision of traveller accommodation (TA); an objective to provide a school (S) on the RES-N zoning; objectives GI7 SLO1 and GI7 SLO2, which respectively seek to maintain the green wildlife corridor between Saggart and Rathcoole and to protect and augment the alluvial woodlands within the RU zoning; and objective CS10 SLO1, which seeks the provision of a primary school, library hub, two full-sized GAA pitches and one junior GAA pitch, a pavilion, an access road and open space.

Social Infrastructure Audits, in line with the requirements for development in excess of 50 residential units under the South Dublin County Development Plan (SDCDP) 2022-2028, are carried out to ensure new developments take account of existing social infrastructure and provide for new community services where required. These are facilities that will form elements of the key fabric of the area in terms of social, physical, and mental well-being of the community. The purpose of this report is to provide an audit of the existing community and social provision in the surrounding area covering a c.750m to 2km radius of the site.

1.2 Development Overview

The proposed development comprises 130 no. residential units, together with a range of community, recreational and infrastructural facilities, on lands at Rathcoole, Co. Dublin. The scheme provides a mix of house and apartment typologies designed to accommodate a differing household types and life stages. Of the units proposed 49.2% are allocated as social housing and 50.8% as affordable purchase. The residential element consists of 43 no. two-storey houses (39 no. three-bed and 4 no. four-bed) arranged in 12 no. terraced rows; 16 no. duplex apartments (8 no. one-bed and 8 no. three-bed) within 2 no. three-storey blocks; and 60 no. apartments (17 no. one-bed and 43 no. two-bed) within 4 no. four/five-storey blocks. A dedicated age-friendly provision is also proposed, comprising 4 no. age-friendly duplex apartments (2 no. one-bed and 2 no. two-bed) within 1 no. three-storey block, 7 no. single-storey age-friendly houses, and 1 no. age-friendly consultation room to support the independent living needs of older residents.

Table 1: Unit Mix of the Proposed Development

Proposed Development:		
Dwelling Type	**No. of Units**	**% Mix of Total**
Apartments	60	46.2%
Duplexes	20	15.4%
Houses	50	38.5%
Total No. Units	**130**	**100%**
Unit Mix (Apartments)	**No. of Units**	**% Mix of Type**
1 Bed	17	28.3%
2 Bed	43	71.7%
Total No. Apartments	**60**	**100%**
Unit Mix (Duplexes)	**No. of Units**	**% Mix of Type**
1 Bed	10	50.0%
2 Bed	2	10.0%
3 Bed	8	40.0%
Total Duplexes	**20**	**100%**
Unit Mix (Houses)	**No. of Units**	**% Mix of Type**
1 Bed	7	14.0%
3 Bed	39	78.0%
4 Bed	4	8.0%
Total Houses	**50**	**100%**
Unit Mix (Total)	**No. of Units**	**% Mix of Total**

1 bed	34	26.2%
2 bed	45	34.6%
3 bed	47	36.2%
4 bed	4	3.1%
Total Units	**130**	**100%**

The scheme is supported by 11,763 sqm of public open space incorporating formal and informal play areas, alongside 1,040 sqm of communal open space and private open space serving the residential units. Landscaping works include replacement planting, enhancements to riparian corridors and boundary treatments. Residential parking provision comprises 143 no. car parking spaces (including 24 no. EV, 4 no. accessible and 15 no. EV/accessible spaces) and 181 no. bicycle parking spaces. The significant community and recreational component comprising 2 no. senior GAA grass pitches (measuring 20,800 sqm) and 1 no. junior grass pitch (6,240 sqm), served by a GAA pavilion of 185 sqm and associated car and bicycle parking is integral to the development..

The development places a strong emphasis on active travel and connectivity. A new vehicular entrance and internal access road are proposed, connecting a new junction, the approved school (Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336) and the residential portion of the site. New pedestrian and cycle access is provided from Mullally's Lane (which is to be widened) and from Coolamber Drive, together with a new T-junction and vehicular and pedestrian access from Greenogue Drive. Pedestrian links are provided to Coolamber Road and to Rathcoole Park, and a new bridge over the Coolmine Stream is proposed. The development also includes ESB substations/switchrooms, lighting, site drainage works, SuDS features and all ancillary site development works above and below ground.

1.3 Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

1. **Introduction** – this section
2. **Area Context** – Considers the site and surroundings in addition to transport accessibility.
3. **Context, Approach and Scope of Report** – Outlines the relevant policies at a National, Regional and Local Level and considers standards against which provision can be assessed.
4. **Demographic Review** - Provides a demographic analysis of the catchment area and assesses the likely future demographic trends as a result of the implementation of the proposed development.
5. **Existing Community Facilities**- Reviews existing local community, recreational and social infrastructure.
6. **Assessment** - Identifies gaps in the existing provision of community infrastructure; and
7. **Conclusions** – Make recommendations to address deficiencies.

2. AREA CONTEXT

2.1 General Area

Rathcoole is located approximately 15km to the south-west of Dublin City Centre, approximately 14km north-east of Naas, County Kildare, and approximately 13km to the north of Blessington, County Wicklow. The application site comprises c.11.4ha of land to the south and south-east of Rathcoole Village. It forms part of a wider landbank extending to 17.78ha which is divided across two ownerships, comprising South Dublin County Council (c.15.93ha) and the Department of Education (c.1.85ha). The site lies wholly within the administrative area of South Dublin County Council.

Rathcoole is designated as a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022–2028 and, while not situated within Dublin City and its suburbs, falls within the metropolitan area identified in the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region. The established settlement is characterised by a traditional development pattern, with a central Main Street accommodating local shops and facilities, surrounded by relatively low-density housing estates. The village therefore presents a compact, village-scale urban form set within a predominantly rural and agricultural hinterland to the south and west.

The site is bounded to the north-west by Rathcoole Park, which extends along that boundary and forms the principal area of public open space serving the village. Existing residential estates extend along the northern boundary, with Coolamber Drive, Coolamber Road and Greenogue Drive bounding the lands. The estate at Beechwood Lawns is separated from the site by Rathcoole Park and by the approved Department of Education school development. Saggart's western residential estates bound the site to the east, with the River Camac forming the eastern boundary. To the west, Rathcoole Woodlands extends towards residential estates in the vicinity of Mullally's Lane Roundabout. Agricultural lands are located to the south-west and south.

2.2 Development Site

The site itself is a generally undeveloped greenfield area characterised by a combination of open grassland, scrub, hedgerows and immature woodland. The approved Department of Education school development (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336), forms part of the subject lands (outside of the site redline) to the north-west of the primary proposed residential area. The development's access road and that of the school extend along the northern boundary of the school site and is proposed to serve both developments. An existing junior GAA pitch is located to the north-east of the site. Areas of Annex I alluvial woodland are present to the west of the central residential area and to the south of the proposed access road at Mullaly's Lane while Annex I hay meadow extends to the north of the proposed residential area and senior GAA pitches and to the south-east of the site. The Coolmine Stream bisects the western portion of the site and flows northwards into Rathcoole Park, while the Crockshane (Slade) Stream runs along the southern boundary. These features have informed a landscape-led design approach.

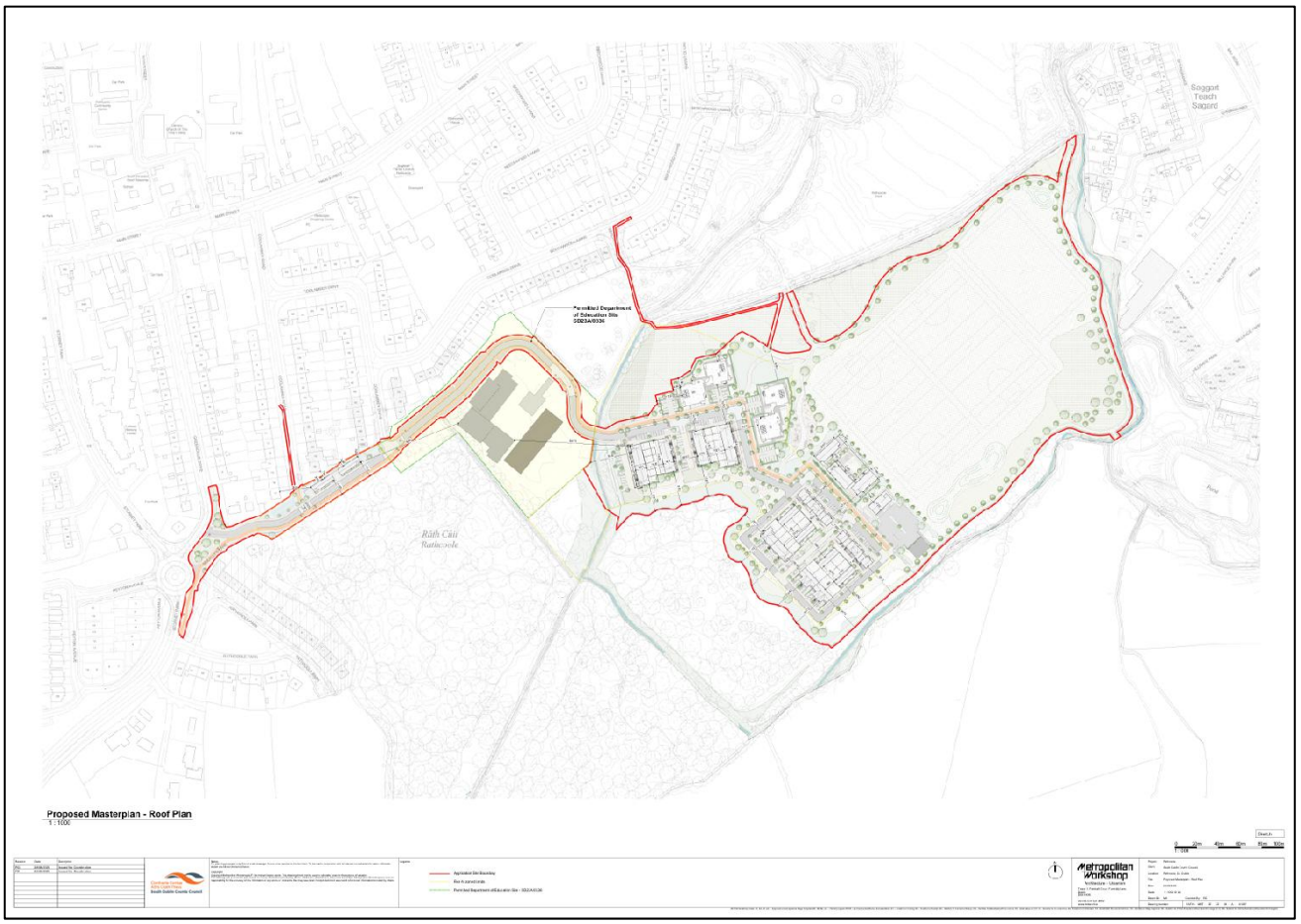


Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout Plan *(source: Metropolitan Workshop)*

2.3 Transportation

2.3.1 Public transport

The site is located approximately 1.5km west of the Saggart Red Line Luas stop, to the east of Citywest Golf Course forming the south-western terminus of the Red Line. The Red Line provides high-frequency light rail services via Citywest, Belgard and the Red Cow interchange to Heuston Station, the city centre, Connolly Station and The Point in the Docklands, with interchange to the Green Line at Abbey Street and O'Connell Street and to Iarnród Éireann services at Heuston and Connolly. Cheeverstown Luas Stop is situated 6km from the site and provides a Park and Ride facility.

The subject site is located approximately 8.5km from Hazelhatch and Celbridge Station, which is served by frequent rail services connecting Dublin City Centre with a range of destinations including Portlaoise, Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford. The station accommodates a Park and Ride facility providing 400 no. car parking spaces, together with 30 no. sheltered cycle parking spaces and bicycle lockers. The availability of these facilities means that rail represents a realistic and convenient commuting option for future residents of the proposed development, whether accessed by car or by bicycle.

Bus stops serving Dublin, Kildare, Maynooth and Newbridge are located along Main Street, Fitzmaurice Road and School Road within Rathcoole Village, and at the slip road to the north of the N7. The village is served by Dublin Bus Route 69, which operates between Rathcoole and Hawkins Street in the city centre via Clondalkin, together with the associated peak-hour 69X express service and by W6 serving Maynooth and the Square

Tallaght. The peak hour frequency of bus services at Maple Grove (Stop ID 3439) and Fitzmaurice Road (Stop ID 3437) is 45 minutes to 1 hour for route 69 and c.30 minutes for route W6.

Route 68 and Route 68a operate on the adjoining Newcastle corridor, leaving from Greenogue Business Park at a peak hour frequency of c.30-60 minutes. In addition, the N7 interchange (Stop ID 104301 / 10385), located c.630m from the centre of the residential portion of the site, or an approximate 9 minute walk, is served by Go-Ahead Ireland Route 126, a Dublin Commuter Service operating between Dublin and Rathangan via Naas, Newbridge and Kildare. Reasonably frequent services are available at the N7 Interchange (Stop ID 104301 / 10385), located c.630m from the centre of the residential portion of the site, or an approximate 9 minute walk. Collectively, these services provide the village with direct radial access to the city centre and to the principal towns of north Kildare.

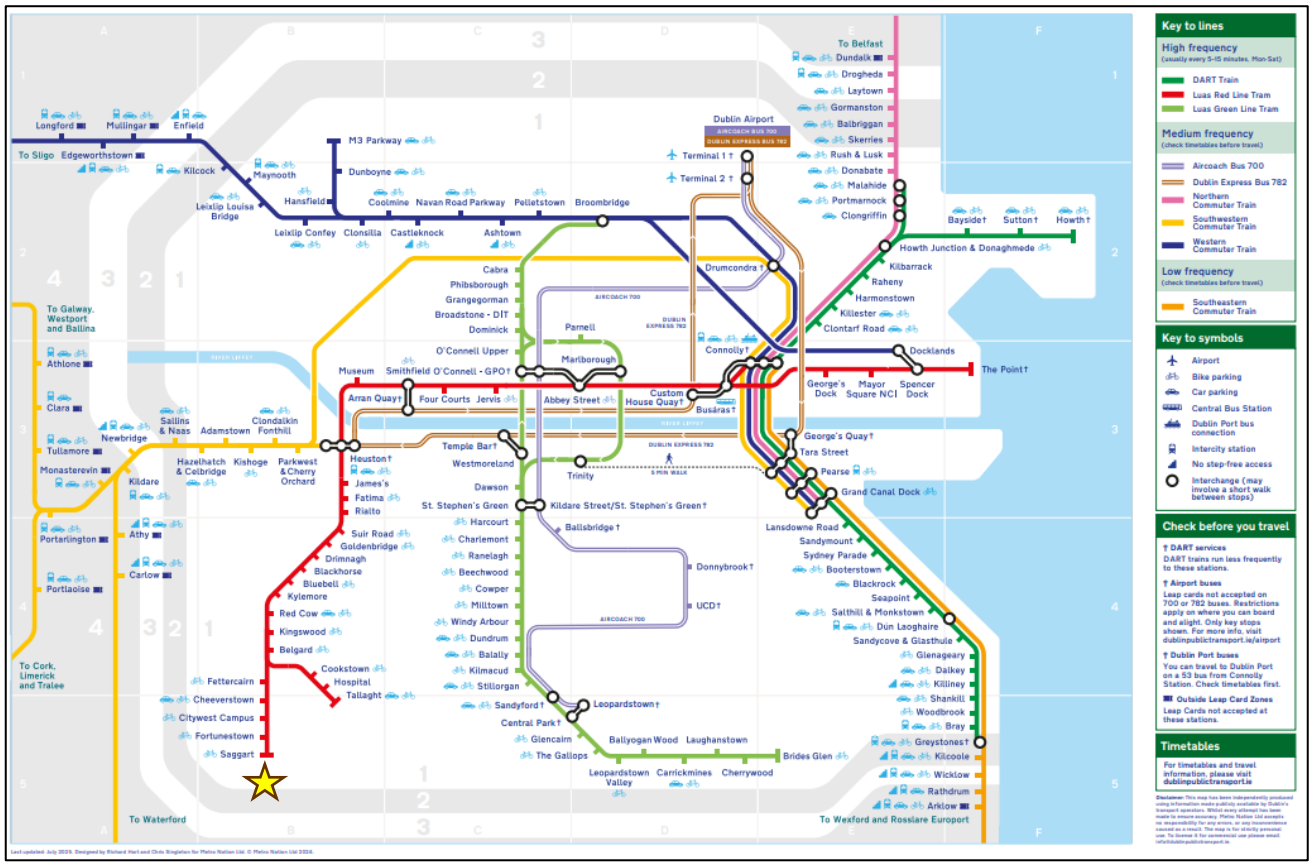


Figure 3: Dublin Luas, tram and train station map (Source: Dublin Public Transport)

2.3.2 BusConnects

The aim of BusConnects is to enhance bus infrastructure by improving speed, efficiency and reliability along the 12 corridors, while providing enhanced walking and cycling facilities through the provision of dedicated cycle lanes that are separated from traffic as much as possible. The overall objective of the Bus Connects project is to support the development of a sustainable and integrated public transport system in the Dublin Region that enables the delivery of compact urban growth that is sustainable and supports a low carbon future.

Rathcoole is to be served by Phase 8 of the BusConnects Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign, which forms part of the wider 'D' Spine changes. Under these proposals, a new Route 58 will operate between Rathcoole and the City Centre (Mountjoy Square) at a half-hourly frequency. A new half-hourly Route 57 will operate between Greenogue and the City Centre. The two routes will combine to provide a bus every fifteen minutes. Bus route W6 will remain. Together with a new Route X58, these services will replace existing Routes 68, 68a, 69 and 69x.

Phase 8 will also introduce new Routes D2, D4, and S8 in the wider area. The delivery of Phase 8 will therefore improve the frequency of bus services available to residents of the proposed development, doubling the service frequency between Rathcoole and the city centre relative to both the existing service pattern and the frequency originally proposed under the network redesign.

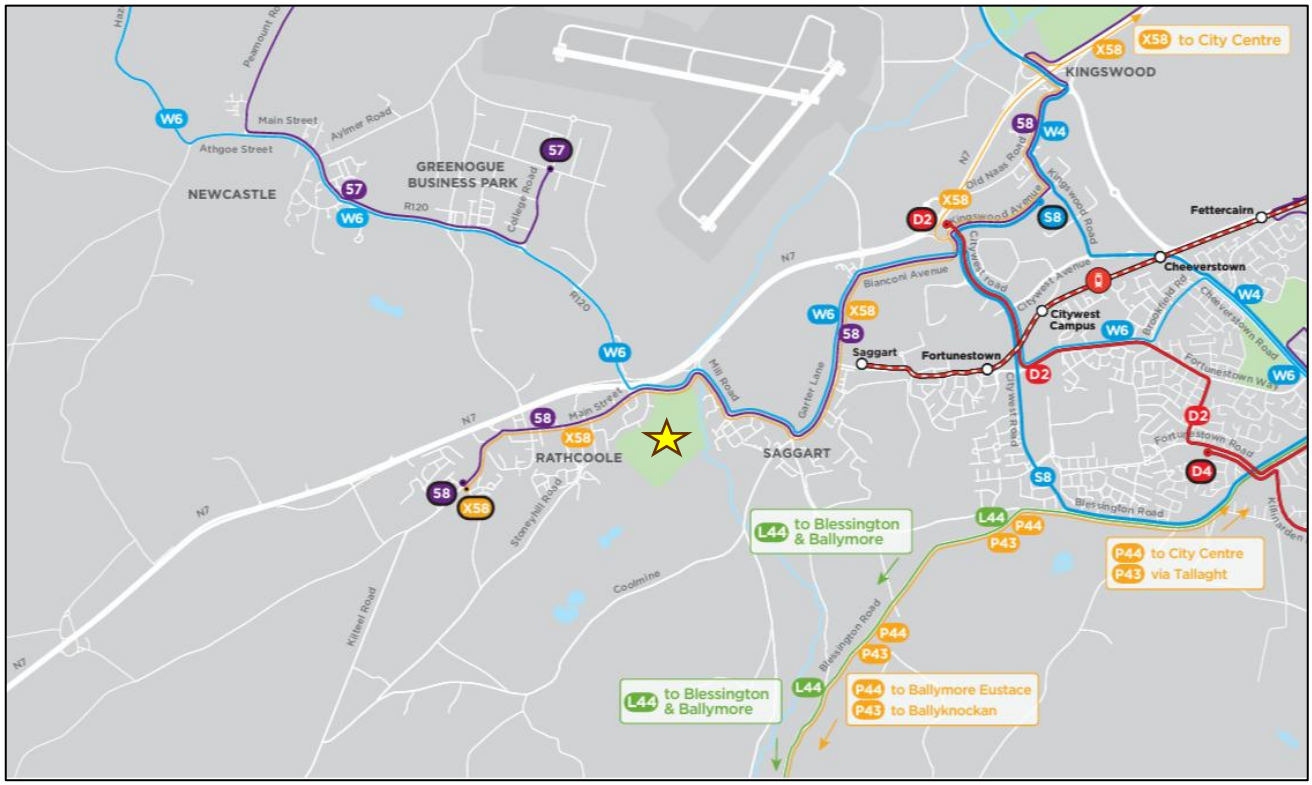


Figure 4: Rathcoole Area BusConnects Map *(source: NTA)*

2.3.3 Cycling and Walking

The site is situated in a highly accessible location where provision for pedestrian movement is good. Locally, footways are provided on both sides of the carriageway. Within a 15-minute walking distance of the site are a variety of services and amenities which are generally considered sufficient to serve the community, discussed in further detail in Section 5 below.

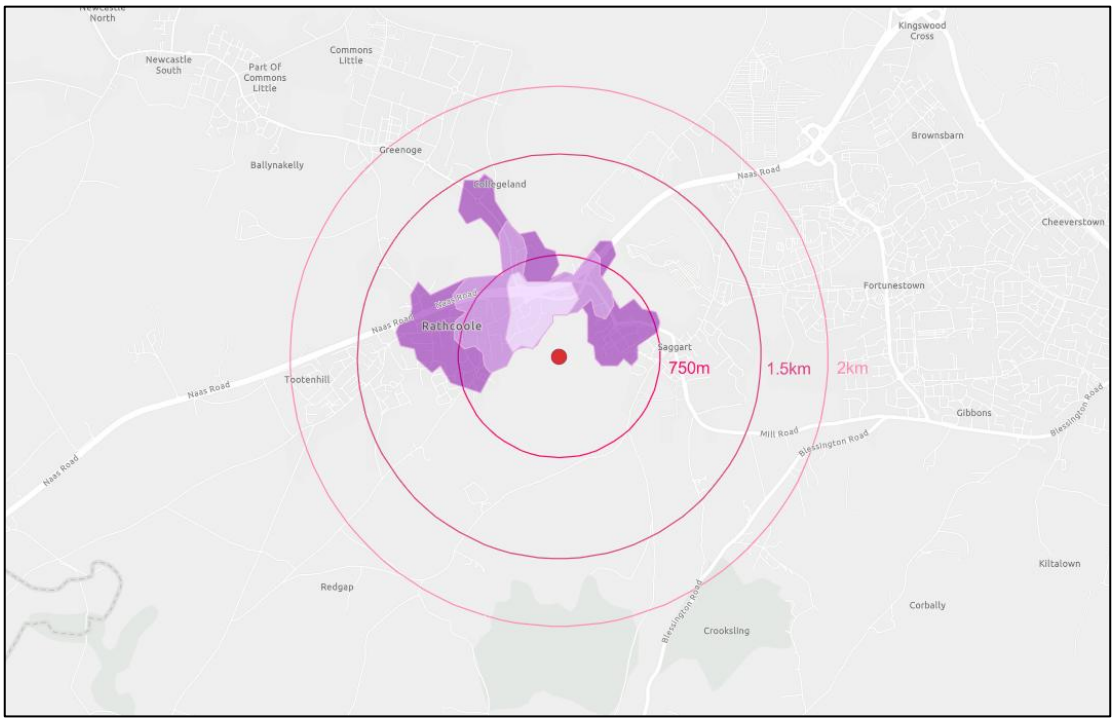


Figure 5: Walkability Patterns in 5-, 10- and 15-minute intervals

While the existing cycling infrastructure in the area is limited, inter-urban connections are proposed to be delivered through the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Cycle Network. The Plan identifies a secondary route running between Kill, Rathcoole and Saggart and a feeder route running to the south from Rathcoole Town. A further proposed secondary inter-urban cycle route, designated 'D5', running along the R120/Main Street through Rathcoole would provide direct cycling connections to Newcastle to the north and Kill to the south, while also linking the village into the wider Cycle Network. Figure 6 below demonstrates the possibility of accessing a wide variety of services within a 15-minute cycle from the site, which equates to approximately 3.75 km.



Figure 6: 5, 10 and 15- minute cycling catchment

3. CONTEXT, APPROACH AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

3.1 Policy Context

3.1.1 National Planning Framework (2025)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040. It was revised in April 2025. It recognises the importance of quality of life and notes that how future development in Ireland is planned will continue to be a significant determinant of people's quality of life. A key focus of the *NPF* is on sustainable and compact development within pre-existing urban areas and the provision of accessible services and facilities for all communities. Chapter 6 of the *NPF* states that the *"our ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure and social interactions available to us and the prospect of securing employment, all combine to make a real difference to people's lives"* is intrinsic to providing a good quality of life for new and existing communities.

The *NPF* includes National Strategic Outcome 10 which seeks to provide Access to quality childcare, education and health services. This requires an evidence-led planning approach. While there is no guidance on what infrastructure is required to service developments of different sizes, the *NPF* does provide a hierarchy of settlements and related infrastructure.

National Policy Objective (NPO) 12 seeks to "*Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being"*. Meanwhile, NPO 41 seeks to '*Prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with investment in:*

- A childcare / ECCE planning function, for monitoring, analysis and forecasting of investment needs, including identification of regional priorities;
- The provision and timely delivery of childcare facilities and new and refurbished schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas, including in support of infill and brownfield development, that meet the diverse needs of local populations and act as a key enabler for housing development, thereby contributing to the development of sustainable communities;
- The expansion and consolidation of Further and Higher Education facilities, particularly where this will contribute to wider regional development, and
- Programme for life-long learning, especially in areas of higher education and further education and training where skills gaps are identified.

NPO 43 intends 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 NPF outlines the broad national objectives for residential development in the State. This high-level objective is filtered downwards to be integrated into the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region.

3.1.2 Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

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 RSES also states that "Local authorities and relevant agencies shall ensure that new social infrastructure developments are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by adopting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full, active, valued and healthy lives".

Section 9.1 of the RSES details that the availability of, and access to, services and facilities, inclusive of healthcare services, education facilities and community/recreational facilities is key to creating healthier places. This is supported by Regional Policy Objective 9.14 which calls for Local Authorities to "support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve."

Section 9.7 highlights that social infrastructure should be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Shared use and co-location of facilities should be encouraged, in order to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation. The RSES has been consulted in this Social Infrastructure Audit to ensure the range of services, community facilities, and standards deemed to improve quality of life are considered.

3.1.3 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice (2008)

The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, prepared by the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government was part of a wider package of initiatives designed to facilitate the provision of schools, particularly primary schools, and schools related infrastructure within the planning system coupled to new mechanisms for site identification and acquisition. The Code indicates that the role of the Department of Education is to ensure effective forecasting and planning mechanisms for the provision of new schools. It assumes that an average of 12% of the population are expected to present for primary education. The role of planning for new schools by Local Authorities is through Development Plans. The Code of Practice states that the effective integration of the schools programme and planning system has three core objectives:

1. *"Schools provision should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities;*
2. *The provision of any new schools (both primary and post-primary) should be driven by and emerge from an integrated approach between the planning functions of planning authorities and the Department of Education and Science; and*
3. *Local authorities, as planning authorities, will support and assist the Department in ensuring the timely provision of school sites." This document states that in some cases it "may be more complex as it involves not just an assessment of likely population growth but also an appraisal of the capacity of existing post-primary schools, coupled with an assessment of the enrolment patterns in existing and anticipated 'feeder' national schools."*

3.1.4 Inclusive Education for All (Statement of Strategy 2025-2028)

The Department of Education and Youth published Inclusive Education for All: Statement of Strategy (2025–2028) in 2025, superseding the Department's previous Statement of Strategy for the period 2023–2025. The Statement of Strategy sets out the strategic direction, high-level goals and work programme of the Department over the three years to 2028, and reflects the commitments of the Programme for Government 2025 Securing

Ireland's Future. It also reflects the transfer of responsibility for youth services to the Department, such that references to the education system are understood to encompass both formal and non-formal education and to be inclusive of youth services. Progress against the Statement of Strategy is to be monitored through the publication of an annual Education Plan, which replaces the annual action planning framework operated by the Department since 2016.

The vision of the Statement of Strategy is "*a world-class education system where every child and young person is supported and nurtured to achieve their full potential and where barriers to their learning are removed*." This vision is to be delivered through five strategic goals:

1. *Deliver a learning experience for students to highest international standards.*
2. *Break down barriers for groups at risk of exclusion.*
3. *Equip learners of all ages and abilities to participate and succeed in a changing world.*
4. *Support Ireland to be a leader across a broad range of fields.*
5. *Support students and all those who work in the education sector.*

Several objectives included within the Statement of Stratefy are relevant to the assessment of educational infrastructure in the context of new development. Objective 1.10 commits the Department to implement a school building programme which prioritises new school places in areas of demographic growth, Objective 1.11 seeks to strengthen long-term strategic and contingency planning while Objective 2.1 provides for access to appropriate education and equitable supports for all children and young people. Objective 2.3 seeks to implement policies and improve supports for learners with special educational needs.

Of particular relevance to the assessment of social infrastructure, Objective 2.5 commits the Department to take steps to ensure that schools can support their local communities through the use of school buildings and facilities outside of school hours. Objective 2.6 provides for an efficient, effective and sustainable school transport service. The Statement of Strategy accordingly provides useful insights into the requirements for new school infrastructure in areas of demographic growth, and the standards necessary to ensure high-quality and inclusive learning for all students.

3.1.5 Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)

The Guidelines were published in July 2025 and supersede the 2023 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2023. It is noted that the Department has published a draft National Planning Statement on Planning Design Standards for Apartments 2026 which is intended to replace the 2025 Guidelines once approved under Section 25 of the Planning and Development Act 2024. As of the date of this application this remains in draft and has not been adopted or commenced. The proposed development has accordingly been assessed against the current statutory Guidelines (2025), which remain the operative standard. The current Guidelines refer to the aforementioned Compact Settlement Guidelines with a view to identifying locations that would be suitable for apartment developments. Minimum floor areas for apartments are defined under Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 2.

Table 2: Minimum Apartment Floor Areas as Per SPPR2 *(source: DHLGH)*

Apartment Type	Minimum Floor Area
Studio	32 sqm
One bedroom	45 sqm
Two bedrooms (3 person)	63 sqm

Two bedrooms (4 person)	73 sqm
Three bedrooms (4 persons)	76 sqm
Three bedrooms (5 persons)	90 sqm

The Guidelines incorporate one significant departure from its predecessor with Specific Planning Policy Requirement 6 – Communal, Community and Cultural Facilities, which states:

> *'The provision of new Communal, Community and Cultural facilities within apartment schemes shall only be required in specific locations identified within the development plan and shall not be required on a blanket threshold-based approach in individual apartment schemes.'*

The Guidelines include specific guidance with respect to childcare provision in the design and development of apartment schemes, as follows:

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

Guidelines for the provision of communal amenity space are also included within this document. Specifications for the required areas as set out in Appendix 1 of the document are illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Minimum Floor Areas for Communal Amenity Space *(source: DHLGH)*

Apartment Type	Minimum Floor Area
Studio	4 sqm
One bedroom	5 sqm
Two bedrooms (3 person)	6 sqm
Two bedrooms (4 person)	7 sqm
Three bedrooms (4 persons)	7 sqm
Three bedrooms (5 persons)	9 sqm

This communal amenity space prioritises accessible and secure outdoor space with adequate levels of sunlight throughout the year. It is noted that the recreational needs of children should be considered within this space with '*small play spaces (about 85 – 100 sq. metres) for the specific needs of toddlers and children up to the age of six, with suitable play equipment, seating for parents/guardians, and within sight of the apartment building, in a scheme that includes 25 or more units with two or more bedrooms'*.

3.1.6 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

These Guidelines set out general standards and guidance for the land use planning of childcare facilities in Ireland. It advocates a more proactive role by the planning authority in the promotion and management of childcare provision in their area. Section 2.4 of the Guidelines sets out the appropriate locations for childcare facilities, stating that:

> *"Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments."*

The Childcare Guidelines recommend the provision of 1 no. childcare facility, or 20 no. childcare spaces, for every 75 no. dwellings in a permitted residential scheme.

The Childcare Guidelines acknowledge the factors associated with determining the appropriate level of childcare facilities required in an area, including:

- The current provision of childcare in the area;
- The nature of emerging new communities; and
- Current demographic trends.

The Guidelines specifically state that:

> *"The threshold for provision should be established having had regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas".*

3.1.7 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022–2028 is the current statutory development plan and provides the overarching planning policy which applies to the subject site and landbank. Rathcoole is identified in the settlement hierarchy of the CDP as a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town', described in Table 14 of the Plan as a settlement "with a moderate level of jobs and services … with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining".

3.1.7.1 Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy

Chapter 2 of the CDP contains settlement-specific objectives for Rathcoole:

- ***CS10 Objective 1*** *"To facilitate the commencement and completion of development on zoned residential lands within and contiguous to the settlement boundary of Rathcoole which recognises natural heritage assets and facilitates connections to the village core and other areas to provide for active travel opportunities."*
- ***CS10 Objective 3*** *"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."*
- ***CS10 Objective 4*** *"To facilitate the delivery of new residential development in a coordinated manner, ensuring alignment with investment infrastructure and supporting amenities and services. Such measures shall be delivered through appropriate phasing in line with CS10 SLO1 and SLO2."*

In addition to settlement specific objectives, the following relevant Specific Local Objectives apply to the site:

- ***CS10 SLO 1*** *"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."*
- ***Objective TA*** *an objective to provide for traveller accommodation at the site.*

- ***Objective S*** *an objective to provide a school on the RES-N zoning."*

CS10 SLO 1 specifies the items of social infrastructure to be delivered at the Rathcoole site, requiring that they be delivered in tandem with new residential development and with regard to the requirement to protect the Alluvial Woodlands within the RU zoning. The subject site are the lands to which that objective relates, and the proposed development is proposed to provide 2 no. senior GAA grass pitches, 1 no. junior grass pitch, a GAA pavilion, and 11,763 sqm of public open space, along with the delivery of the access road serving the approved primary school on the adjoining Department of Education lands (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336). 4 no. traveller accommodation units are proposed within the RES-N zoned lands at the site.

The site is located within the 'Citywest / Saggart / Rathcoole / Newcastle' Neighbourhood Area, the key objectives for which are collated at Appendix 12: Our Neighbourhoods. The provision of a new Library in Rathcoole and the refurbishment of Rathcoole Courthouse as a community centre are specifically noted. An upgrade is also proposed for Rathcoole Park.

3.1.7.2 Community Infrastructure and Open Space

Standards for Social Infrastructure Provision

Section 8.4.1 of the CDP states that a Social / Community Infrastructure Audit of the County was undertaken to inform the preparation of the CDP, the purpose of which was to review the availability of existing social and community facilities, to determine future requirements based on anticipated population growth, and to identify where future investment may be required. This section sets out the quantitative standards which the Council applies to social infrastructure provision in new development areas:

- **Primary Care Centres** – 1 centre per 7,000-10,000 population in accordance with Department of Health standards;
- **Childcare Facilities** – 1 facility providing for 20 places per 75 dwellings in new residential areas in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001), subject to flexibility which may be applied under Circular PL3 / 2016 and *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities*;
- **Schools** – Department of Education and Youth states the national primary school going population to be 10.8% and secondary school- going population to be 8.5% with numbers decreasing across both school types;
- **Community Centres** – 1 large multifunctional centre of approximately 1,200-1,800 sq m per 8,000 population and / or smaller local community centres (350-650 sq m) as may be identified by the local authority to meet local need. Such local need may be determined by demographic, accessibility or other factors;
- **Public Open Space and Parks** – 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population.

These standards provide the benchmarks against which the demand generated by the proposed development is assessed in Section 6 of this Audit. It is noted that the CDP applies a primary school assumption of 11.5% and a post-primary assumption of 7.5% of population, which has been updated in more recent Department of Education and Youth enrolment projections.

The CDP further provides, at COS5 Objective 6, that public open space calculations are to be based on an occupancy rate of 3.5 persons in the case of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and 1.5 persons in the case of dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms. Applying that rate to the proposed dwelling mix, the proposed

development generates a design population of 297 persons for public open space purposes. The table below applies the Section 8.4.1 standards to the proposed development of 130 no. units.

Table 4: SDCDP 2022-2028 standards for social infrastructure provision *(source: SCDP 2022-2028)*

Standard (CDP s.8.4.1)	Basis	Requirement	Proposed
Public open space – 2.4ha per 1,000 population	297 persons (COS5 Obj 6 occupancy)	c.7,128 sqm	11,763 sqm
Primary school places – 11.5% of population	281 persons (average household size of 2.99 and 94no. 2+ not age friendly bed units)	c.32 places	Approved school SD23A/0336 (400 pupils) enabled by scheme
Post-primary places – 7.5% of population	281 persons (as above)	c.21 places	n/a
Childcare – 20 places per 75 dwellings	130 units (94 excl. 1-beds and age friendly units)	c.25	None proposed, addressed in Section 6.2 below.
Community centre – 1,200–1,800 sqm per 8,000 population	297 persons	c.45–67 sqm. Library Hub under SLO1.	GAA pavilion and approved school to provide community facilities out of hours. Library hub not provided.
Primary care centre – 1 per 7,000–10,000 population	297 persons	Below threshold	Existing Rathcoole Health Centre / Rathcoole Green Medical Centre

Chapter 8 of the CDP contains the relevant policy and objectives regarding social infrastructure and open space:

- ***Policy COS2 Social / Community Infrastructure*** *"Support the planned provision of a range of universally accessible and well-connected social, community, cultural and recreational facilities, close to the communities they serve, consistent with RPO 9.14 of the RSES."*
- ***COS2 Objective 1*** *"To support the provision of a wide range of community facilities and to ensure that such facilities are provided in new and existing communities in tandem with housing development, with special consideration for a period of review to adapt to the needs of an increasingly multi-cultural and diverse community, in accordance with the phasing requirements of Local Area Plans and Planning Schemes."*
- ***COS2 Objective 2*** *"To continue to work closely with the Health Service Executive, Department of Education and the relevant public bodies and state agencies to meet the necessary provision of primary care centres, childcare facilities, schools, community centres and public open space according to the standards set out in section 8.4.1 of this Plan."*
- ***COS2 Objective 3*** *"To protect and enhance existing community facilities, and to support the development and expansion of new and existing facilities and services, in proximity to the populations they serve, where their need is identified."*
- ***COS2 Objective 4*** *"To support the clustering of community facilities such as community centres, sports and leisure facilities, schools, childcare facilities and open spaces to create multi-purpose community hubs without negatively restricting the range of services provided in any one centre."*
- ***COS2 Objective 5*** *"To promote accessible and inclusive social infrastructure for a range of users by adopting a universal design approach where feasible and to provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full, active, valued and healthy lives, consistent with RPO 9.12 and RPO 9.13 of the RSES and having regard to Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach – Planning and Policy' (2012)."*

COS2 Objective 4 is satisfied by the proposed development, which proposes to deliver 130 residential units, the GAA pitches and pavilion, the public open space and the access road serving the approved primary school on a single landbank, creating a multi-purpose community hub. COS2 Objective 5 is addressed through the provision of 11 no. dedicated age-friendly dwellings arranged around a central communal courtyard, 5 no. Universal Design Plus (UD+) units, 13no. UD units, an age-friendly consultation room and accessible apartment accommodation integrated throughout the scheme.

Relevant policy and objectives for community centres, healthcare facilities, childcare facilities, schools and open space are as follows:

- ***Policy COS3 Community Centres*** *"Ensure that communities across the county have access to multifunctional and intergenerational community centres that provide a focal point for community activities."*
- ***COS3 Objective 2*** *"To ensure the provision of new community centres in new and existing development areas or where provision is the responsibility of the developer, the Council will ensure the developer provides, in proximity to the population they serve and in accordance with the standard of one centre per 8,000 population with a size of approximately 1,200-1,800 sq m, or dependent on specific local demographic or other needs, smaller centres at a more local level, generally between 350-650 sq m in size at the discretion of the Council, or as may be updated by any future community centre strategy carried out by the Council."*
- ***COS3 Objective 3*** *"To provide discretion to the Council to require residential or mixed used developments in new development areas to provide a pro rata contribution towards the provision of a community centre, in accordance with the standards set out in COS3 Objective 2 and in line with the Development Contribution Scheme."*
- ***COS3 Objective 4*** *"To ensure that community buildings are multi-functional and adaptable, can be used by all age cohorts (intergenerational), providing for indoor and supporting outdoor use, for example, café seating areas, and are accessible to as many different users as possible including our teens and young people."*
- ***COS6 SLO 1*** *"To engage with stakeholders and to investigate the possibility of providing senior accommodation on the Rathcoole Health Centre site (protected structure RPS 316), ensuring that any future development is appropriate, having full regard to the setting and integrity of the protected structure, the location of the site within the Rathcoole Architectural Conservation Area, and the amenities of adjoining housing and other land-uses."*

COS6 SLO 1 is a Rathcoole-specific objective and is of contextual relevance to this Audit in that it identifies the Rathcoole Health Centre as a site with potential for senior accommodation. The proposed development contributes to the same policy aim through the delivery of 11 no. age-friendly dwellings and an age-friendly consultation room within the settlement.

- ***Policy COS7 Childcare Facilities*** *"Support and facilitate the provision of good quality and accessible childcare facilities at suitable locations within the County in consultation with the County Childcare Committee."*
- ***COS7 Objective 2*** *"To require provision of appropriate childcare facilities as an essential part of new residential developments in accordance with the provisions of the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) or any superseding guidelines, or as required by the Planning Authority. The Guidelines recommend one childcare facility with a minimum of 20 places for each 75 units for new residential developments, with any variation to this standard being justified having regard to factors such as type of residential units, emerging demographic profile and availability of existing childcare services in the vicinity."*

- ***COS7 Objective 3*** *"To require childcare facilities to be provided in new communities in tandem with the delivery of residential development and, where a Local Area Plan or Planning Scheme applies, in accordance with the phasing requirements of that plan / scheme."*
- ***Policy COS8(a)*** *"Work in conjunction with the Department of Education to promote and support the provision of primary and post-primary schools in the County to reflect the diverse educational needs of communities."*
- ***Policy COS8(b)*** *"Engage with the Department of Education and support the Department's School Building Programme by actively identifying sites for primary and post primary schools at suitable locations, based on forecast need."*
- ***COS8 Objective 3*** *"To require schools to be provided in new communities on a phased basis in tandem with the delivery of residential development, unless the Department of Education requests otherwise and provides evidence to the Council and the elected members that existing schools can cater for requirements through extensions if necessary. Assuming a new school is required, to ensure that its delivery is planned in tandem with the delivery of the residential development, in accordance with the phasing requirements of Local Area Plans and Planning Schemes or as may be otherwise required."*
- ***COS8 Objective 8*** *"To promote and support schemes that facilitate the shared use of school facilities, particularly at planning stage, such as sports halls, ball courts and all-weather pitches for community use outside of school hours and to support the co-location of pre and after-school childcare facilities on new primary school developments and to promote this using the Council's land management and ownership policy."*
- ***COS8 SLO 1*** *"To identify a site for the appropriate location of a new post primary school within the Neighbourhood Area of Citywest / Saggart / Rathcoole / Newcastle to provide for the needs identified for the catchment area by the Department of Education."*

The subject lands are subject to an SLO for the provision of a school, and permission was granted under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 for a 20 classroom primary school with capacity for 400 pupils on the adjoining Department of Education lands. COS8 SLO 1 confirms that a need for additional post-primary provision has been identified for the Neighbourhood Area within which the site is located.

- ***COS5 Objective 5*** *"To require the provision of public open space as part of a proposed development site area in accordance with the Public Open Space Standards (minimum) set out in Table 8.2. The Council has the discretion to accept a financial contribution in lieu of any remaining open space requirement to achieve the overall standard of 2.4 ha per 1,000 population …"*
- ***COS5 Objective 6*** *"To require that public open space calculations be based on an occupancy rate of 3.5 persons in the case of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and 1.5 persons in the case of dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms."*

Public open space standards for the proposed development are outlined in Table 4 above.

3.2 General Benchmarking

There is no national set of guidelines that specifically outlines how to provide and manage the implementation of community infrastructure in existence. However, there are a number of statutory and non-statutory documents and guidelines setting out standards of provision of community and social infrastructure provision. Of particular relevance are the following sources of information and policies which guide the spatial development of the catchment:

1. The National Planning Framework (NPF) 2040 recognises that it is important that the community infrastructure should be considered in tandem to the population to ensure that there is a sustainable level of provision. It proposes a hierarchy of social infrastructure, whereby specialist and high-quality functions such as hospitals are expected in larger settlements whereas small communities need to sustain strong community infrastructure such as a multi-purpose hall, primary school, post office, local shop or pub.
2. The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 has wide strategic objectives for the development of towns within the county and which are intended to guide development in the forthcoming years.
3. Under the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025), the provision of communal, community or cultural facilities within apartment schemes is only required where specifically identified in the development plan, and not on a blanket threshold basis. The need for such facilities, including childcare, should be assessed having regard to the scale and mix of the development, the availability of existing facilities in the area, and the local demographic profile. One-bedroom and studio units are generally excluded from contributing to childcare requirements, and this may also apply, in part or whole, to larger units depending on the circumstances.
4. The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) emphasise that sustainable residential development should be located in settlements where residents can access education, healthcare, childcare and other day-to-day services within a short walking or cycling distance.
5. The Urban Design Manual states that there should be an emphasis on the provision of good urban design, open space and public plaza's which can facilitate social interaction and provide opportunities that the provision of facilities alone may not.
6. The Retail Planning Guidelines (2012) support the provision of local retail units as they provide access to local facilities especially the elderly, persons with mobility impairments, families and those without access to private transport.
7. For new housing developments, Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) recommends an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings.
8. The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities; the Department of Education and Science (renamed Department of Education) and the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (renamed Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government) (2008) advised that 12% of the population are expected to present for primary education. Based on this, plus an estimate of future growth, plus an assessment of the capacity of the existing primary and post primary schools in the area, the Department of Education will supply estimates to the local authority for the need for new schools or the extension of existing schools based on the requirements arising from new developments.
9. Under the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (December 2022), communal rooms may be provided in apartment schemes for the use of residents as meeting rooms or community rooms.

The most widely referenced source for benchmarking standards is 'Shaping Neighbourhoods for Local Health and Global Sustainability' (Hugh Barton et al, 2021). The tables below illustrate the levels of facility and community infrastructure that may be required for typical population catchments.

Table 5: Community Infrastructure Hierarchy and Accessibility *(source: Hugh Barton, 1995)*

Hierarchy Level	Population	Accessibility	Typical Facility
Town Centre	80,000-120,000	4,000m	Civic Centre, Cultural Centre, art gallery, theatre
District	25,000-40,000	1,600m	Library, multi-purpose community, primary healthcare centre, council offices, major recreational centre, older persons daycare
Neighbourhood	4,000-8,000	800m	Parish centre, community hall, youth centre Scouts den, local Health Centre, family resource centre, post office
Local	<4,000	400m	Community room, small neighbourhood centre, men's shed

3.3 Approach

As part of this development proposal, we have carried out an assessment of the existing facilities in the area in order to assess the need for social and community infrastructure. A desktop study was used to collect the baseline information. The facilities in each category were recorded in an Excel table and mapped in ArcGIS.

3.3.1 Data Sources

Numerous public and private geospatial datasets were used to gather the baseline information, including but not limited to:

- Central Statistics Office, Census 2016 and Census 2022 Small Area Population Statistics and Small Area boundary datasets;
- Central Statistics Office, Census 2022 childcare statistics, at Administrative County and settlement level;
- Department of Education and Youth, Data on Individual Schools, primary and post-primary, academic years 2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026;
- Department of Education and Youth, Projections of Full Time Enrolment, Primary and Second Level, 2024;
- Department of Education and Youth, School Building Programme;
- Department of Education and Youth, Circular 0025/2026 (primary staffing schedule);
- Tusla Register of Early Years Services, 2025;
- Health Service Executive, service directories and records, 2025;
- South Dublin County Council online planning register;
- An Coimisiún Pleanála case files, including Inspectors' Reports;
- South Dublin County Council Capital Programme 2026–2028 and Capital Programme Update, April 2026;
- Google Places datasets;

3.3.2 Classifications

This Social Infrastructure Audit assesses a range of services and facilities that would be expected in a community, conducive to enabling a high-quality standard of living for the existing and future residents. For the purpose of this report, the array of services and facilities defined as social infrastructure have been categorised into a defined number of typologies that correspond to those set out in the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028.

Table 6: Categories of Social and Community Facilities

Category	Description
Arts and Culture	Art Galleries provide exhibition spaces and may offer educational programs as well as meeting and workshop spaces for artists. Galleries are often co-located with libraries, Civic facilities, and museums. A space for art, rehearsal and performance ranging from small playhouse to a large multi-purpose performance centre supporting a wide variety of performing arts. Includes arts workshop and music schools.
Community Centre / Halls	General community use facility providing meeting spaces, social, educational, and recreational activities and/or health, support and information. Includes community centres, parish centres, local halls, and meeting rooms.
Childcare Facilities	Registered Childcare Facilities including full day, part time and sessional services.
Healthcare and Social Services	Hospitals, Health Centres, Family Resource Centre, Primary Care Centres, GPs and Speciality Clinics and Pharmacy.
Education	Primary, Post-Primary, Third Level, Further Education and Other Lifelong Training Centres
Religious & Worship Facilities	Churches, Cemeteries and Places of Worship
Open Space, Sports and Leisure	Parks, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, Sports Centres and Clubs, Leisure Centres, Gyms and Training Facilities, Swimming Pools, Public indoor facility which caters for indoor sports (e.g. Swimming pool, gym, sports) and other multi-purpose rooms for Pilates, yoga, meetings/classes.
Retail & Entertainment	District, Neighbourhood and local centres

3.4 Study Area

Having regard to the 10 to 15-minute walk time recommended by the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DHLGH, 2024) a radius of 1.5km is considered. In this instance, however, the built-up extent of Rathcoole village extends to approximately 2km from the application site, and it is considered relevant to take into account the social infrastructure serving the entire settlement to avoid the exclusion of services within the boundary of Rathcoole Town on which the residents of the proposed development would in practice rely. It is accordingly considered reasonable to extend the study area to 2km for the purposes of this audit, so that it reflects the functional catchment of the village as a whole. A distance of 2km additionally falls within a 10-minute cycle of the site and is consistent with the walking and cycling catchments. In a limited number of instances, facilities located beyond the 2km study area have also been included where they are readily accessible from the site by public transport or by dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure.



Figure 7: 750m, 1.5km and 2km catchment *(Source: MDB & ArcGIS)*

4. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

4.1 Study Area Demographics

Population modelling and demographics have been provided by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The scope of the assessment is determined by overlaying the 2km radius zone from the centre of the application site and identifying the Small Areas (SAs) which fall within it. Small Area boundaries do not align precisely with a radius drawn from a fixed point, and a best-fit approach has therefore been adopted. The general principle applied is that an SA has been included where its resident population lies substantially within the 2km radius, and excluded where it does not. Whole SAs have been used in each case, as SAPS data cannot be disaggregated below SA level.

Applying this principle, SA A267107009 has been excluded. While the SA falls within the radius, the portion lying inside the catchment comprises the industrial lands at Greenogue Business Park, and the residential properties within that SA are located outside the 2km radius. Its inclusion would therefore attribute a resident population to the catchment which does not in fact live within it. Conversely, SA A267119002 extends beyond the catchment to the south, and SAs A267107002/A267112005 extend beyond it to the north. In each case the lands lying outside the radius are at Lugg Woods and within Casement Aerodrome and generally not residential in character. Retaining these SAs is not considered to distort the demographic profile of the catchment, while including them ensures that the resident populations which do lie within the radius are captured.

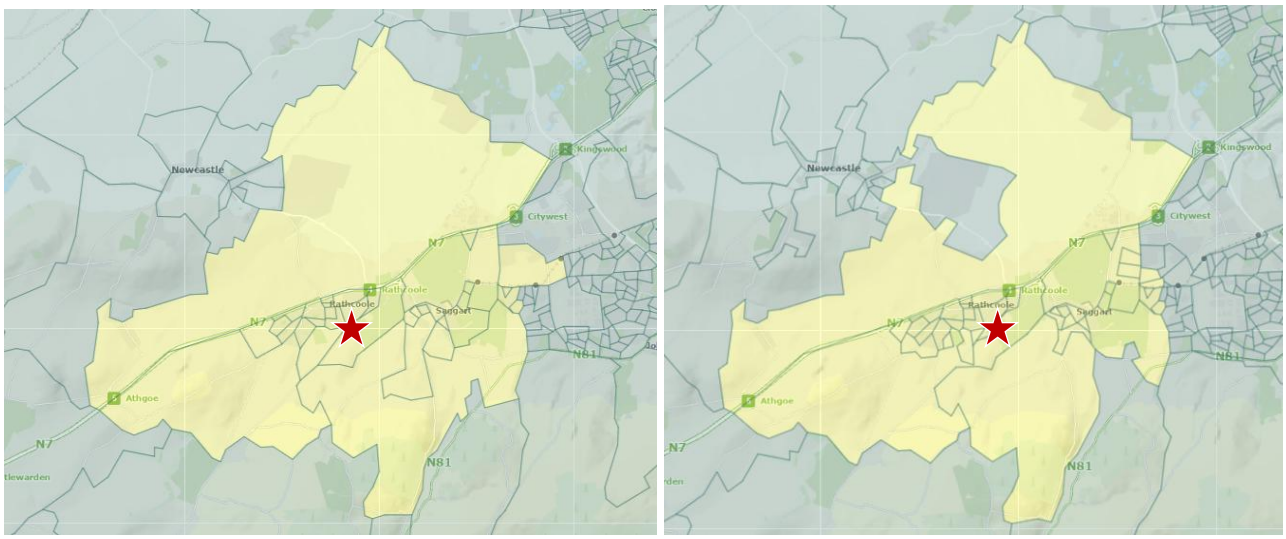


Figure 8: Extent of Demographic Study Area 2016 (left) and 1022 (right)

Small Area boundaries are subject to revision between census cycles in order to maintain broadly comparable population sizes as settlements grow. As a result, the Small Area geography published for Census 2022 is not identical to that published for Census 2016, and a number of the SAs which comprise the Demographic Study Area were amended between the two censuses. The Demographic Study Area comprises 40 no. Census 2022 SAs. These are covered by 34 no. Census 2016 Small Areas. There are two exceptions, A267107002 extended northwards to include the industrial lands at Greenogue Business Park, whereas its Census 2022 counterpart, A267107002/A267112005, does not. 2016 A267138001 was sub-divided into 7 no. Census 2022 Small Areas, of which only /01, /05 and /06 fall within the 2km radius; the 2016 area is retained in full, which marginally overstates the 2016 baseline for that part of the Study Area. Here we present the population change on the basis of the total study area, in addition to a like for like presentation which excludes those SA's which have been impacted by boundary changes.

4.2 Population Trends

Analysis of the Census 2022 Small Area Population Statistics confirms the total population of the Demographic Study Area to be 14,680 persons at Census 2022, measured across the 40 no. Small Areas comprising the Study Area. The comparable Census 2016 baseline, was 10,797 persons.

One SA accounts for a significant proportion of the recorded 2022 population. SA A267119013/01 records a population of 1,471 persons, which is approximately four times the average of the rest of the study area. This SA contains the Citywest Hotel and Convention Centre International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) centre. Of the 1,471 persons recorded, only 515 were resident in private households, indicating that approximately 956 persons were accommodated outside private households and may not necessarily be indicative of a settled resident population, which would generate sustained long term demand for social infrastructure. Excluding this Small Area and its 2016 antecedent from both censuses, the Study Area population rose from 9,924 to 12,779 persons, an increase of 28.8%. This is addressed further at Section 4.4 and in the assessment of individual facility types at Section 6.

Table 7: Population Trends in Study Area (Source: CSO)

Basis	CSO 2016 Population	CSO 2022 Population	Change 2016–2022	% Change 2016–2022
Study Area	10,797	14,680	+3,883	+36%
Study Area excluding A267119013(/01, 02, 03)	9,924	12,779	+2,855	+28.8%

4.3 Age Profile

At Census 2022 the Study Area recorded a total population of 14,680 persons. Of this total, 1,390 persons (9.5%) were aged 0–4 years, 1,523 persons (10.4%) were aged 5–9 years, 1,268 persons (8.6%) were aged 10–14 years and 698 persons (4.8%) were aged 15–19 years. Persons of working age, being those aged 20–64 years, accounted for 8,337 persons or 56.8% of the total, while 1,464 persons or 10.0% were aged 65 years and over.

In order that the age structure of the settled population can be assessed, the table also sets out an adjusted basis which excludes, from both census years, the SAs comprising the Citywest Hotel and Convention Centre and its immediate environs. This comprises Small Area A267119013 in 2016 and Small Areas A267119013/01, /02 and /03 in 2022, being the areas into which the 2016 area was sub-divided. The adjustment is applied symmetrically to both censuses so that the comparison can be measured on a consistent basis.

Table 8: 2022 Age Profile in the Study Area

Cohort	2016 (No.)	2016 (%)	2022 (No.)	2022 (%)	2016 Adjusted (%)	2022 Adjusted (%)
0–4 years	1,223	11.3%	1,390	9.5%	11.6%	8.3%
5–9 years	915	8.5%	1,523	10.4%	8.8%	9.5%
10–14 years	549	5.1%	1,268	8.6%	5.3%	8.2%
15–19 years	399	3.7%	698	4.8%	3.7%	5.2%
20–64 years	6,522	60.4%	8,337	56.8%	59.8%	58.0%
65 years and over	1,189	11.0%	1,464	10.0%	10.9%	10.9%
Total	**10,797**	**100%**	**14,680**	**100%**	**9,924**	**12,779**

On the adjusted basis, children aged 0–19 years accounted for 31.2% of the population at Census 2022, compared with 29.4% at Census 2016. The proportion of children within the Study Area has therefore remained broadly stable over the intercensal period. This is different to the unadjusted figures, which record an apparent increase from 28.6% to 33.3%; a significant part of that apparent increase is likely attributable to the child population accommodated in temporary accommodation on and is not indicative of a change in the settled population.

The composition of the child population has shifted markedly. In both cases, the 0-4 age group has decreased (by c. 2 and 3% respectively). The 5-9 age group has increased by c.3% in both cases and the amount of children within the 10-19 age group has also increased. This pattern indicates a child population progressing through the age bands rather than continuing to expand at the youngest ages, and is consistent with the maturing of the substantial volume of family housing delivered in the Citywest, Saggart and Rathcoole area since 2016. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over remained stable at 10.9% on both bases.

4.4 Household Composition

The number of private households recorded within the Demographic Study Area, and the resulting average household size, is set out in the table below. In accordance with Central Statistics Office practice, average household size is calculated as persons in private households divided by the number of private households.

Table 9: No. of Persons per Household

Census	No. of Private Households	Persons in Private Households	Total Population	Average No. Persons Per Household
2016	3,514	10,144	10,797	2.89
2022	4,512	13,470	14,680	2.99
Change	**+998**	**+3,326**	**+3,883**	**+0.10**

The number of private households within the Study Area increased from 3,514 to 4,512 between 2016 and 2022, an increase of 998 households or 28.4%. The average number of persons per private household rose marginally over the same period, from 2.89 to 2.99 persons. The Study Area therefore records an average household size above the national average recorded at Census 2022.

The presence of three nursing homes within the Study Area is of note, both in confirming an established local provision of residential care for older persons and in the context of the age-friendly accommodation proposed as part of the subject development. The IPAS centre at Citywest is of a different character, accommodating a transient population whose demand for local social infrastructure is met in part through provision made at the centre itself.

5. EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This section presents the findings of an audit of community infrastructure situated between 750m and 2km of the subject site. Community infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life. The purpose of reviewing the current provision of community infrastructure is to ascertain the likely future need for facilities and services in the area. An audit was conducted for the existing social and community infrastructure in the vicinity of the site. For the purposes of this report, it is necessary to view distances from the site in differing contexts, dependent on the service itself. This gives a genuine and reasonable expectation regarding the review of existing community facilities.

5.1 Education

Information regarding both primary and secondary school enrolment and capacity has been obtained from the Department of Education database for academic years ranging between 2023/2024 and 2025/2026. All schools were additionally contacted individually to ascertain available capacity for the current (2025/2026) academic year. Where a response has been received from the schools relating to a more recent available capacity, this figure has been included in place of that derived from the DoE data. These figures are marked with an asterix (*) in the tables below. This information will be updated as further responses are received.

5.1.1 Primary Schools

Based on the analysis undertaken there are 6 primary schools within a 2km radius and a further 6 within 6km of the site. It is considered that there is a wide choice of school types available, including Gaelscoileanna. The distribution of these schools is visible in Figure 13 below.

***Table 10**: List of Primary Schools within 2km of the site, distance and enrolment data*

School Name	Address	2023 Enrolment	2025-26 / 2026-27 Enrolment	Change %	Available Capacity	Distance (in Km)
Scoil Chrónáin	An tSráid Mhór, Ráth Cúil, Co. Átha Cliath	396	354	-10.6%	13	0.71
Holy Family National School	Kilteel Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	718	660	-8.1%	0*	1.18
St. Mary's National School (SN Naomh Mhuire)	Garter's Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	686	666	-2.9%	20	1.20
Gaelscoil Lir	Lána Bhaile Uí Fhoirtcheirn (Fortunestown Lane), Teach Sagard, Dublin 24	40	80*	+100%	Has capacity*	1.42
Citywest & Saggart Community National School	Fortunestown Lane, Citywest, Dublin 24	435	400*	-8%	0*	1.42
Citywest Educate Together National School	Cooldown Commons, Fortunestown Lane, Citywest, Dublin 24	388	376	-3.1%	7	1.88
	Total	**2,663**	**2,536**	**-4.8%**	**40**	

Enrolment data was collected from previous years to gain an understanding of capacity within the identified primary schools in the area. The total number of enrolments in 2025/2026 or 2026/2027 where information has been provided by the schools within 2km of the site is 2,536 pupils. Overall, the number of children enrolled in primary school education within the catchment decreased by 4.8% between 2023 and 2025. The audit has found that in 2025/2026, capacity was available in the existing primary schools located in the study area. Rathcoole

ETNS, located outside of the catchment area in Newcastle has confirmed 14 available spaces. Gaelscoil Lir have noted that they are currently accepting applications and that as a developing school, enrolment and capacity will continue to grow. Thus it is considered that in excess of 40 places are available in the study area.

5.1.2 Secondary Schools

In terms of secondary school students, a total of 2 post-primary schools were identified within a 2km radius of 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. further secondary schools are located within cycling distance. One further post primary school is situated just beyond this range, 4km from the site, at Killinarden in Tallaght. This school saw a 1.9% decrease in enrolment between 2023 and 2025.

Table 11: List of Secondary Schools within 3.75km of the site, distance and enrolment data

School Name	Address	2023 Enrolment	2025-26/ 2026-27 Enrolment	Change %	Available Capacity	Distance (in Km)
Coláiste Pobail Fola	Heritage Village, Garter's Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	545	900*	+65.1%	180*	1.45
Holy Family Community School	Kilteel Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	985	998	+1.3%	-	1.49
St Aidan's Community School	Brookfield, Tallaght, Dublin 24	484	561	15.9%	-	3.15
Mount Seskin Community College	Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24	339	350	3.2%	-	3.19
	Total	**2,353**	**2,809**	**19.4%**	**180**	

Secondary schools in the catchment show a total enrolment increase of 19.4% between the 2023 and 2025-26 / 2026-27 academic years. Available capacity is 180 no. places. Further enrolment and available capacity information will be updated following the receipt of responses from the schools contacted.

5.1.3 Relevant Planning Permissions and Department of Education Large-Scale Projects in the Vicinity of the Site

In addition to the existing primary and post-primary school facilities located within the catchment of the subject site, a number of approved planning permissions and large-scale school building projects have been identified within 2km of the site. These arise both from the Department of Education and Youth's School Building Programme and from recent decisions of South Dublin County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Of these, the most significant in the context of the subject site is the new 20 no. classroom primary school (Roll No. 20549P) permitted on lands immediately adjoining the application site to the south of Coolamber Drive, which was granted on appeal on 19th May 2025. On the basis of Circular 0025/2026 the primary level staffing schedule will operate on the basis of a general average of 1 teacher per 23 students for the 2026/2027 academic year. This would result in the provision of c.400 additional places within the new primary school adjacent the site.

A replacement 16 no. classroom school building for Scoil Chrónáin has also been permitted on lands opposite Rathcoole Community Centre. This project is at tender stage. Additionally, a second floor comprising 9 no. additional classrooms together with 2 no. special education classrooms has been permitted at Holy Family

Community School in Kilteel. These two projects together are set to provide at a minimum 207 no. additional primary school places within the catchment. Further detail regarding these projects is provided in the tables below.

An extension of duration of permission for the development of a 1000 student secondary school (Coláiste Pobail Fola) and 16 classroom primary school (Gaelscoil Lir, c.368 students) has been granted at Fortunestown Lane, Saggart less than 2km from the site. Coláiste Pobail Fola had 758 students enrolled in 2025/2026.

The classrooms, special education classrooms and ancillary facilities permitted under the following decisions will assist in meeting the demand generated by the subject development and by the wider Rathcoole and Saggart area. The relevant permissions are set out individually below.

Table 12: Relevant Planning Permission SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 / ACP Reg. Ref. 321696

Planning Reference	Address	Status	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 / ACP Reg. Ref. 321696	Lands south of Coolamber Drive, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Granted on appeal with revised conditions 19th May 2025	New primary school (Roll No. 20549P) comprising 20 no. classrooms with a gross floor area of 3,449 sq.m over three storeys. Vehicular access is to be provided initially via Coolamber Drive, with a condition requiring that this access be restricted to pedestrian and cycle use, and bollards installed within six months, upon delivery of an alternative vehicular access via Mullally's Lane. A further condition requires that the school be made available for community use outside of school hours and term time. The layout was revised at Further Information stage to remove all development from lands zoned 'RU' in order to protect the adjoining Rathcoole Woodlands.



Figure 9: Site Plan SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 / ACP Reg. Ref. 321696 (Source : Axiseng)

Table 13: Relevant Planning Permission SDCC Reg. Ref. SD21A/0231

Planning Reference	Address	Status	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD21A/0231	Scoil Chrónáin, lands opposite Rathcoole Community Centre, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Granted 12th October 2021. At tender stage.	Removal of all existing temporary accommodation and construction of a new 16 no. classroom, part three storey / part two storey primary school (Roll No. 19503H), including a GP hall, a 2 no. classroom Special Educational Needs unit, staff car parking, delivery access, drop-off areas, pedestrian and bicycle access, 2 no. external ball courts, an acoustic boundary wall, landscaping and all associated site works.

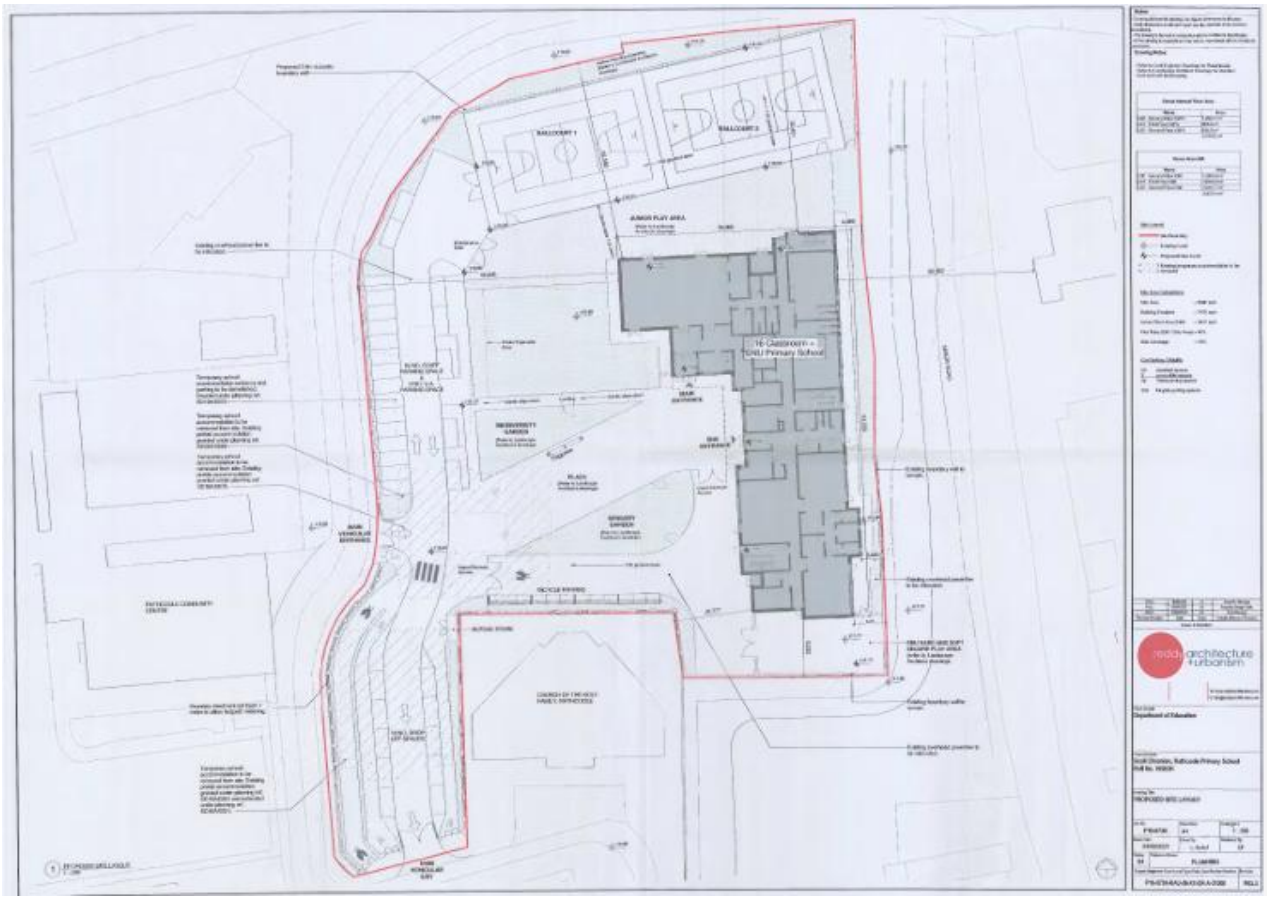


Figure 10: Site Plan SDCC Reg. Ref. SD21A/0231

Table 14: Relevant Planning Permission SDCC Reg. Ref. SD26A/0145W

Planning Reference	Address	Date	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD26A/0145 W	Holy Family Community School, Kilteel Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, D24 FT54	Granted 10th August 2026	Amendments to permission SDCC Reg. Ref. SD16A/0029 for the addition of a second floor to the south-west wing, comprising 9 no. additional full-sized classrooms and ancillary accommodation (941.4 sq.m), and extension of the ground floor of the south-west wing to incorporate 2 no. additional special needs classrooms and ancillary accommodation (163.9 sq.m), giving a total additional floor area of 1,105.3 sq.m, together with an entrance ramp and steps onto Kilteel Road and associated site works.
SDCC Reg. Ref.	Holy Family Community School,	Extension of duration of permission	Phased demolition of the existing school buildings and phased construction of a new part three, part two and part single storey school building of 10,429 sq.m; refurbishment of the existing vehicular

SD16A/0029/ EP	Kilteel Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	granted 15th June 2021	entrance; a new pedestrian entrance off Kilteel Road and a new emergency and service vehicle entrance off St. Anne's Terrace; 97 no. car parking spaces; a new ESB substation; and associated landscaping and hard play areas.

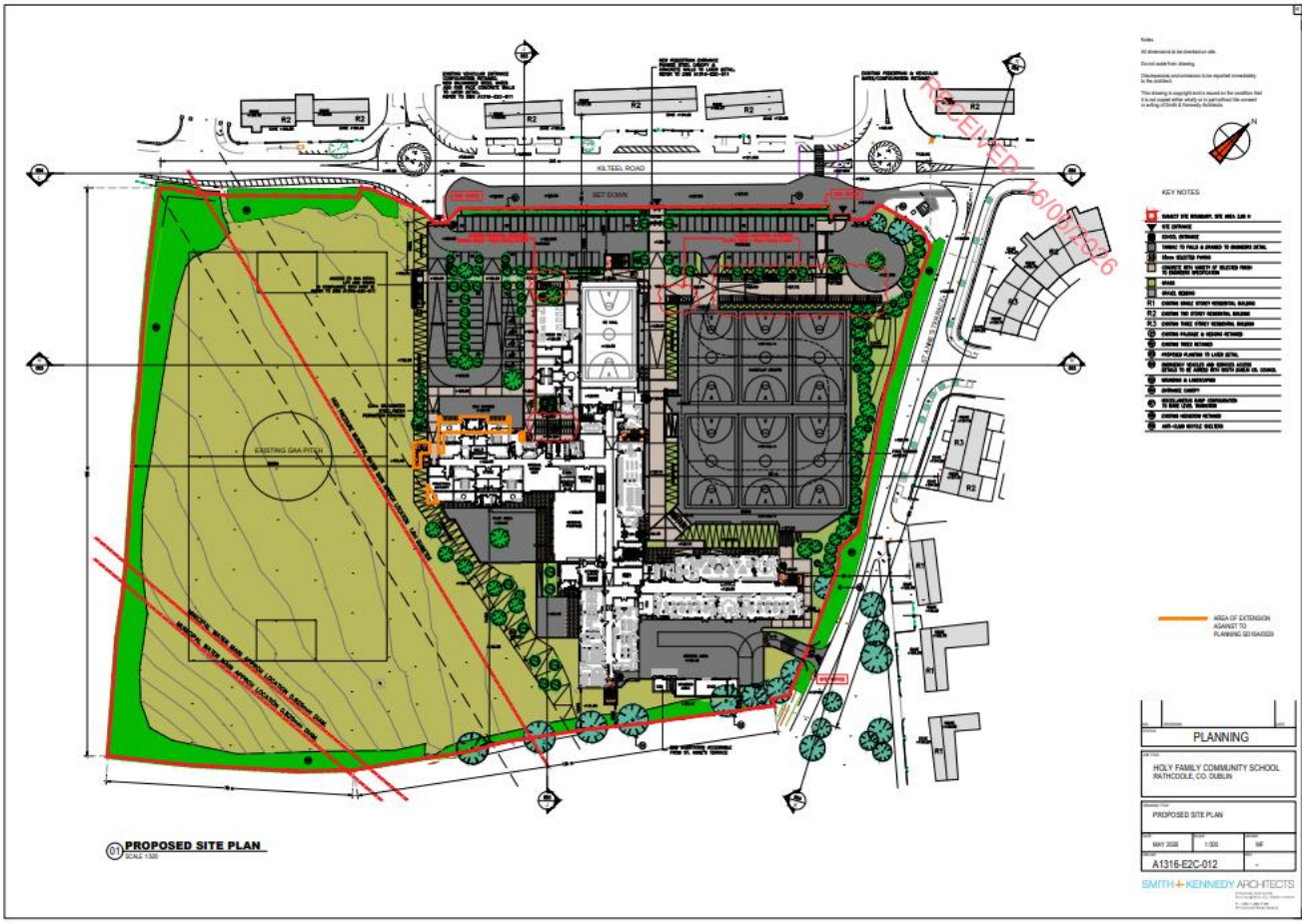


Figure 11: Site Plan SDCC Reg. Ref. SD26A/0145W

Table 15: Relevant Planning Permission SDCC Reg. Ref. SD19A/0393/EP

Planning Reference	Address	Date	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD19A/0393/EP	Fortunestown Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Extension of duration of permission granted 12th March 2026	New educational campus comprising 2 no. school buildings to be delivered on a phased basis: a part three storey, 1,000 pupil post-primary school (Coláiste Pobail Fola) including a 4 no. classroom special educational needs unit, sports hall and ancillary accommodation (11,331 sq.m); and a two storey, 16 no. classroom primary school (Gaelscoil Lir) with a 2 no. classroom special educational needs unit and general purpose hall (2,820 sq.m). Includes the demolition of the existing four storey educational / former short stay residential blocks on the site.

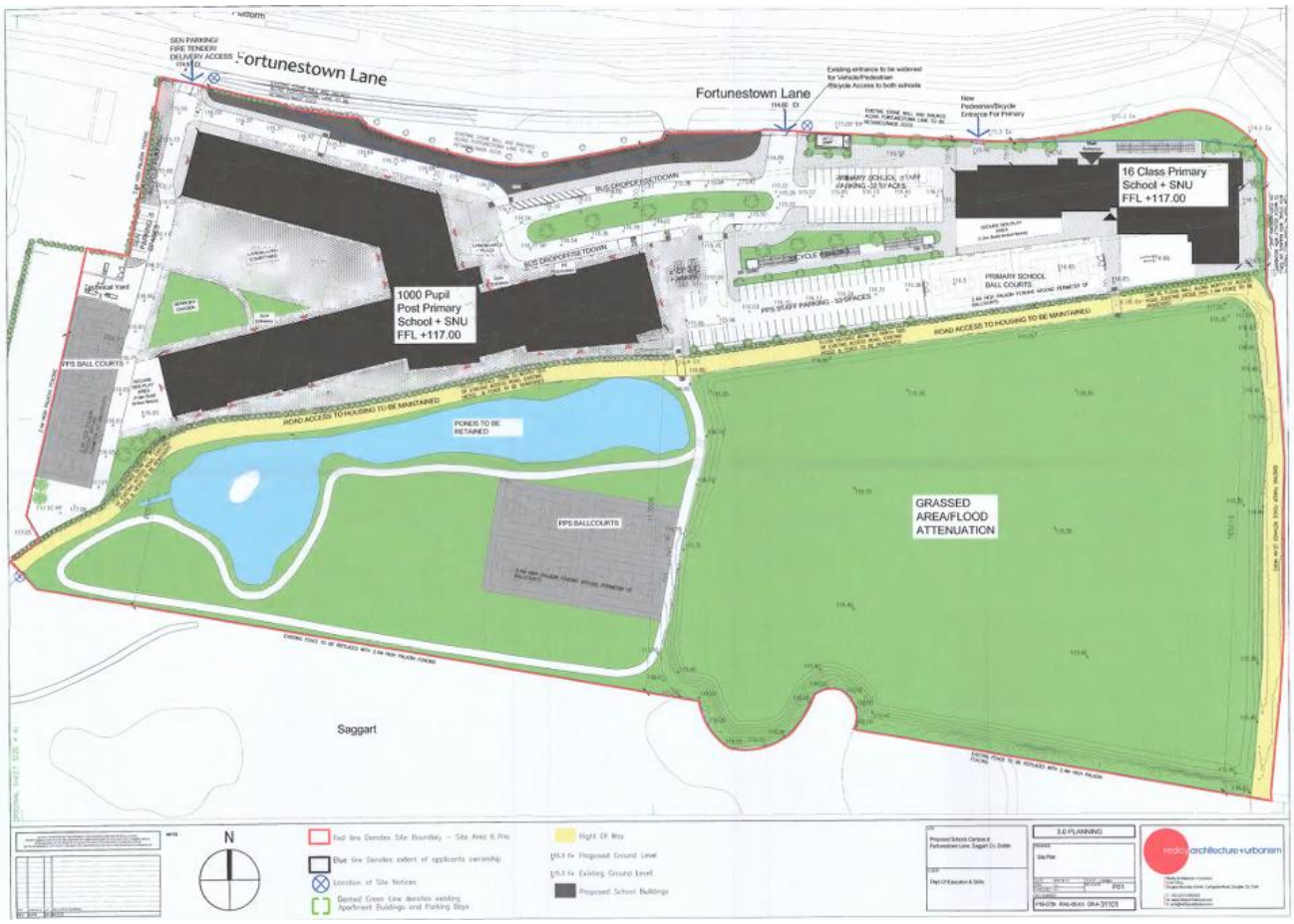


Figure 12: Site Plan SDCC Reg. Ref. SD19A/0393

5.1.4 Adult Education Facilities

There are no third level educational facilities within Rathcoole Town. The nearest facility is situated c.7km to the east of the site in Tallaght. A variety of third level facilities are available in Dublin City, accessible by means of bus and Luas from the site.

Third Level Education	Distance
University College Dublin	20km
Trinity College Dublin	16.5km
Dublin City University	25.9km
TU Dublin – Tallaght	7.0km
TU Dublin – Grangegorman	23.4km

5.2 Childcare Facilities

Consideration is given during the planning process to ensure there is an adequate supply of high quality, safe childcare alongside the provision of housing itself. It is seen as a prudent measure to ensure that there are local and easily accessible options for families in the vicinity of their homes. TUSLA is the State agency that oversees the provision of childcare and other family support services. A list of childcare facilities was obtained from the TUSLA early years services registration list to understand the enrolment figures and capacity available in childcare facilities located within a 2km radius of the subject site can be seen in the following table. All facilities have been contacted to confirm existing enrolment and capacity. Where a figure is based on a direct response from the childcare provider, it is marked with an asterix in the table below.

Table 16: List of Childcare Facilities Identified within 2km of the Site

Childcare Facility Name	Address	Capacity 2025 (TUSLA)	Capacity 2025 (Facility)	Vacancies	Distance (km)
Kidorama Creche & Montessori	20 Slade Castle Wood, Saggart, Co. Dublin	102	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. Dublin	11	11	3	1.44
Grian na nÓg	Greenogue, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	82	82	0	2
	Total	**539**		**8**	

The audit has identified 9 no. childcare facilities operating within c.2km of the site. Additionally, there are 3 no. childcare facilities within 3km of the site at Citywest, which is considered reasonably accessible to residents of Rathcoole, particularly in cases where parents are commuting to Dublin City. Combined, these three facilities (Cocoon Childcare Citywest, Steppingstones Creche and Links Childcare) have capacity for 290 additional children. Cocoon Childcare is noted to have no available spaces as of August 2026.

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities (2001) indicate that Development Plans should facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations. These include larger new housing estates where planning authorities should require the provision of a minimum of one childcare facility with 20 places for each 75 dwellings.

The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities nuances the childcare requirement by stating that: '*Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development*'. One-bedroom units are excluded for the purposes of calculating requirements.

Table 17: Relevant Planning Permissions for Childcare Facilities in the Vicinity of the Site

Planning Reference	Address	Date	Description
ACP Reg. Ref. 312501	Mill Road, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted with conditions 2nd August 2022	Demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of 274 no. residential units (51 no. houses and 223 no. apartments), a c.276sqm crèche and associated site works.
ACP Reg. Ref. 305563 / SDCC Reg. Ref. LRD24A/0006W	Fortunestown Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted with conditions 3rd February 2020; additional units granted 16th September 2024	488 no. apartments, a crèche (431 sqm) and associated site works, currently under construction. Permission for an additional 86 no. units was granted under SDCC Reg. Ref. LRD24A/0006W.
SDCC Reg. Ref. LRD25A/0012W / ABP Reg. Ref. 324127	Townland of Boherboy, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Granted by the planning authority; appeal granted June 2026	611 no. dwellings together with a 2 no. storey crèche and all associated site works, including c.2.3ha of public open space and the reservation of c.1.03ha within the site as a future school site. The decision is currently under appeal.

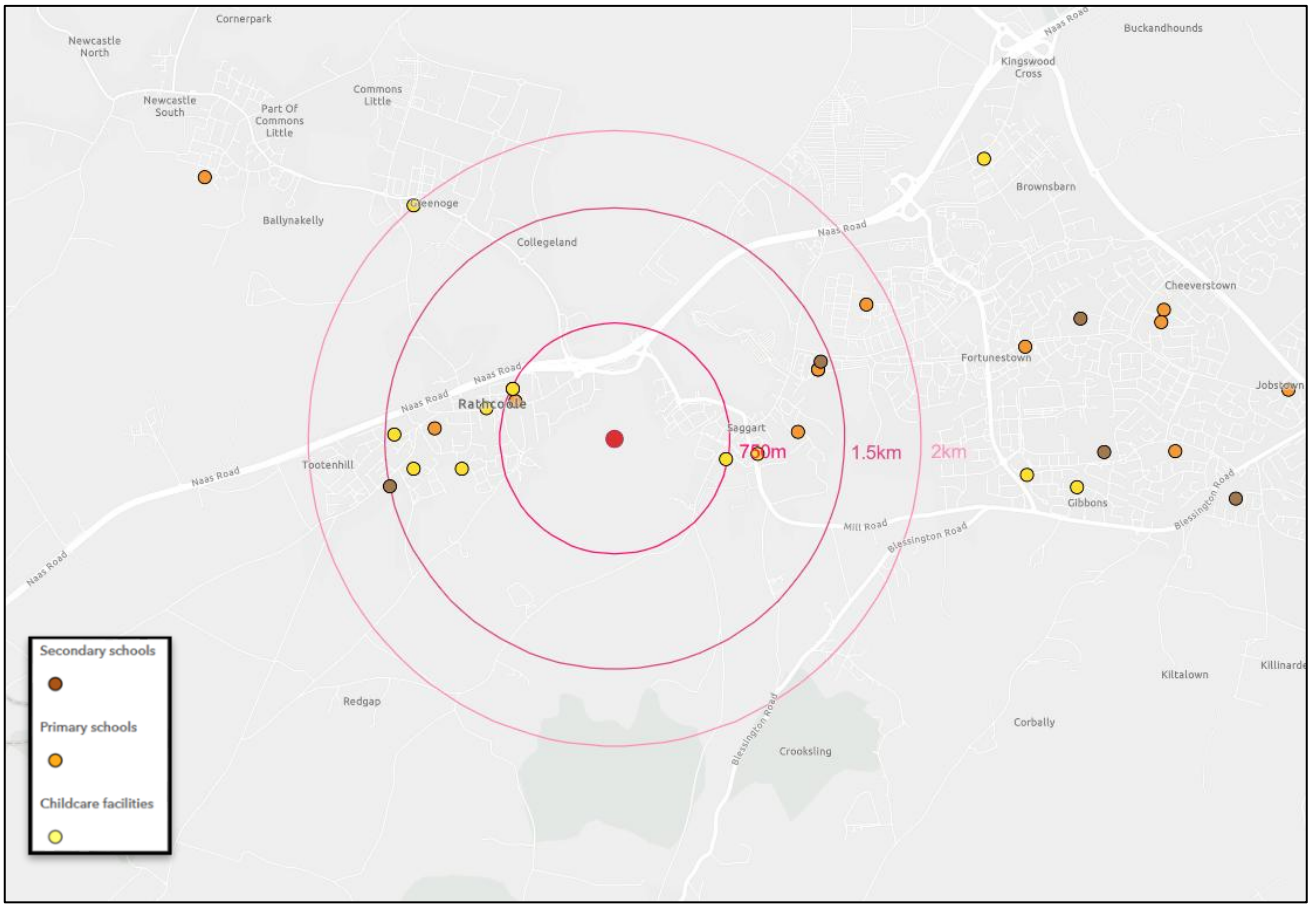


Figure 13: Education and Childcare Facilities Identified within 6km of the Site (2km buffer shown)

5.3 Open Space, Sports and Leisure

There is an established network of open space, sports and recreation facilities within the study area. Rathcoole Park adjoins the subject lands to the north and is located adjacent the site, while the Four Districts (Rathcoole) Woodlands lie adjacent the site to the west. The village supports an active sporting community, with St. Mary's GAA Club at Páirc Mhuire, Saggart (c.1.05km), Commercials GAA Hurling and Camogie Club at Collegeland (c.1.12km) and Rathcoole Boys Football Club at Frank Cox Park (c.1.01km). Three commercial gyms operate

within the catchment, together with yoga and martial arts studios and the Citywest Health and Leisure Club (c.1.16km), which provides indoor swimming facilities. The table below identifies the range of open space, sports and leisure facilities available within the study area and the distance of each from the subject site.

Table 18: List of Open Spaces, Sports and Leisure Facilities Identified within 1km of the Site

Name of Facility	Address	Facility details	Public/Private	Distance (in km)
Four Districts (Rathcoole) Woodlands	Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Woodland / green space	Public	0.49
Rathcoole Park	Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Public park / open space	Public	0.57
Good Vibes Fitness	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Gym	Private	0.77
Rathcoole Boys Football Club (Frank Cox Park)	Frank Cox Park, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Football club	Club	1.01
Superfit Gym	Frank Cox Park, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Gym	Private	1.01
St. Mary's GAA Club	Saggart, Co. Dublin	GAA club	Club	1.05
Flawless Yoga	36 Páirc Mhuire, Saggart, Dublin	Yoga Studio	Private	1.06
Commercials GAA Hurling & Camogie Club	Collegeland, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	GAA club	Club	1.12
Fitness Company Commercial Gym	Commercials GAA, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Gym	Private	1.12
Citywest Health & Leisure Club	Citywest Hotel, Garter Ln, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Leisure club	Private	1.16
Eagle Rifle & Pistol Club	Lugg, Saggart, Co. Dublin	Sports club	Private	1.63

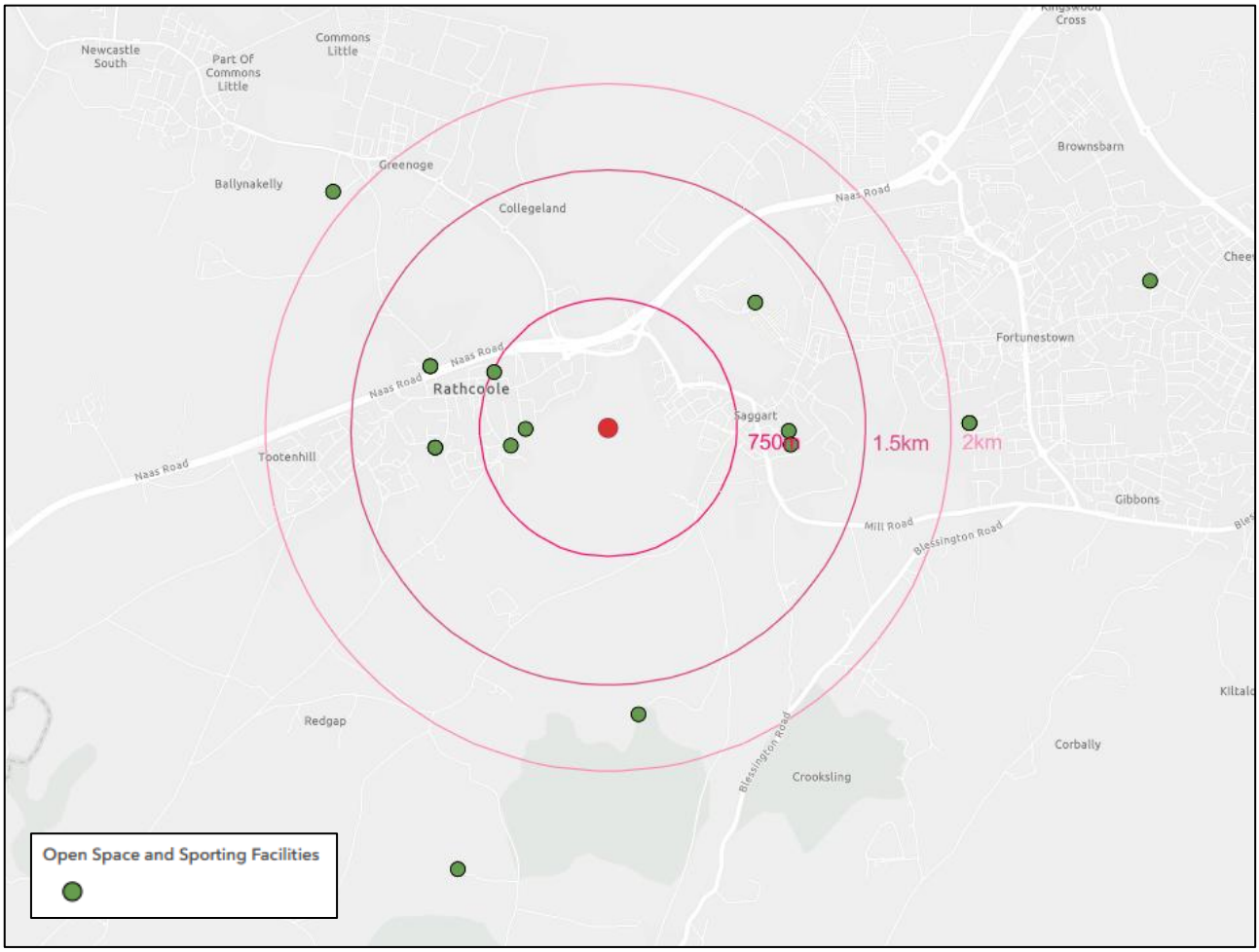


Figure 14: Open Space, Sports and Playground Facilities in the catchment

Two relevant permissions have been identified in this category, both relating to St Mary's GAA Club at Páirc Mhuire, Saggart. These are set out in the table below.

Table 19: Relevant Planning Permissions for Open Space, Sport and Leisure Facilities in the Vicinity of the Site

Planning Reference	Address	Status	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0106 W	St Mary's GFC, Páirc Mhuire, Saggart, Co. Dublin, D24 PH31 (1.4km)	Granted 11th August 2025	Replacement of the existing grass football pitch with a synthetic grass 3G all-weather pitch to a maximum size of 139m x 87m; re-profiling of ground levels to achieve a more level playing surface; installation of perimeter weld mesh fencing of varying heights (1.2m–3.0m); relocated ball-stop netting and posts behind the goals; an extended spectators' area and goal storage area; and associated hard and soft landscaping.
ACP Reg. Ref. 317990	St Mary's GAA, Páirc Mhuire, Saggart, Co. Dublin (1.4km)	Granted with revised conditions 28th May 2021	Replacement of the existing 16m floodlight with a new 20m high structure carrying telecommunications equipment and floodlights, together with a ground level equipment cabin and fencing.

5.4 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 the Local Health Office by the Health Service Executive (HSE). These services operate alongside wider community health and social care provision, including dental, pharmacy, physiotherapy, mental health and older person services.

Rathcoole and Saggart are served by an established network of primary healthcare provision. Rathcoole Health Centre is located c.0.47km from the subject site on Main Street, and a further four GPs operate within the study area at Slade Castle Court (c.0.85km), Saggart Main Street (c.0.99km), Rathcoole Green (c.1.13km) and Citywest (c.1.90km). Three pharmacies, a dental practice and a physiotherapy service (ICARE, at Library Square) are also located within c.1.15km of the site. Lisheen Nursing Home on Stoney Lane, c.0.67km from the site, provides residential care for older persons. General hospital services are available at Tallaght University Hospital, c.8km to the east, and at Naas General Hospital, c.13km to the south-west. The facilities identified within the study area are set out in the table below.

Table 20: List of Health Facilities and Social Services

Name of Facility	Address	Distance	Facility Type
Rathcoole Health Centre	Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.47	Health centre
Rathcoole Dental	Unit 3, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.56	Dentist
Total Health (Rathcoole Vital) Pharmacy	Rathcoole Shopping Centre, Main Street, Rathcoole	0.56	Pharmacy
Lisheen Nursing Home	Stoney Lane, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.67	Nursing home (residential social care)
Slade Castle Family practice	6A Slade Castle Court, Saggart, Co. Dublin	0.85	GP / mental health
Saggart Pharmacy	Saggart, Co. Dublin	0.85	Pharmacy
ICARE	Library Square, Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.87	Physiotherapy
Saggart Medical Centre	Main Street, Garter Ln, Saggart, Co. Dublin	0.99	GP / medical centre
National Transit Centre Clinic	Garter Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin	1.08	GP (international protection service)
Rathcoole Green Medical Centre	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin,	1.13	GP / medical centre
Reidy's Pharmacy	The Green, Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	1.13	Pharmacy
Swiftbrook Medical Centre	The Residence, Citywest Rd, Citywest Dr, Citywest, Dublin	1.90	GP

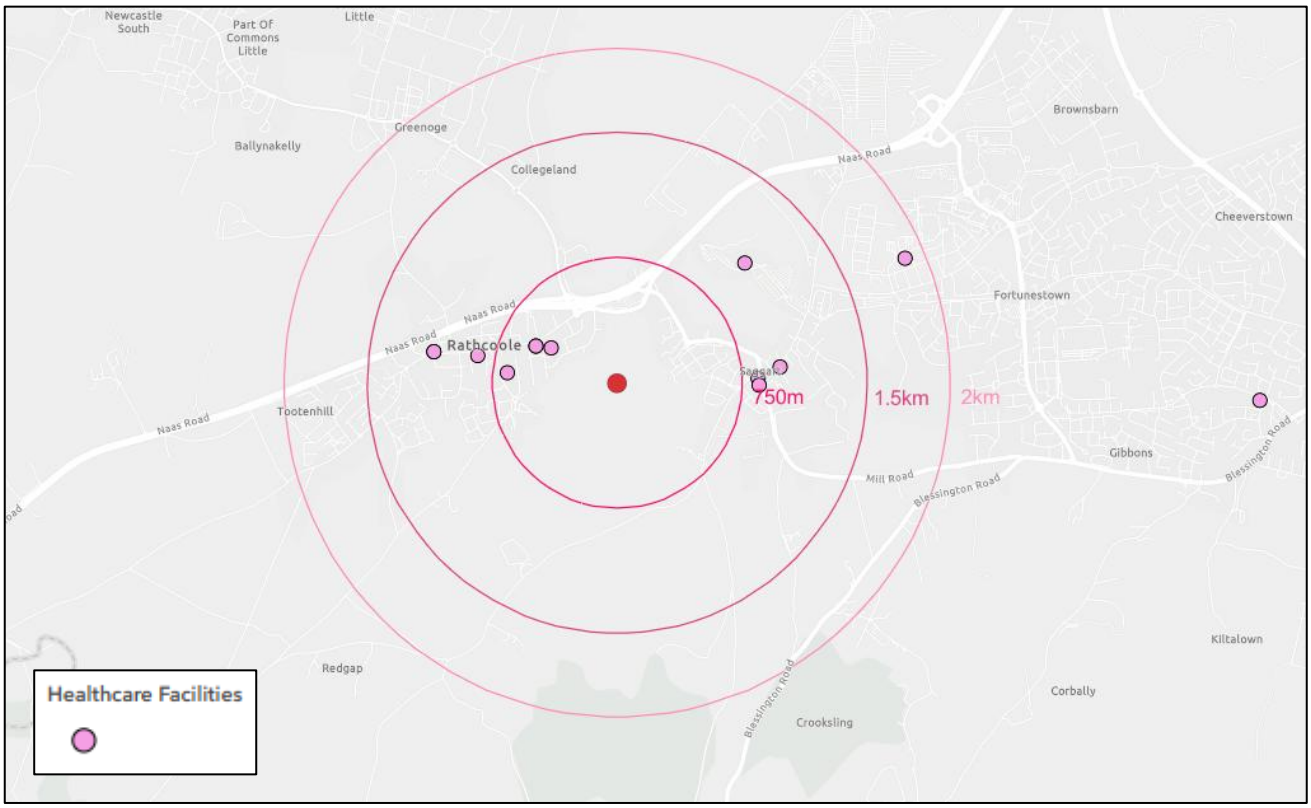


Figure 15: Healthcare Facilities in the catchment

One relevant permission has been identified in this category. A Primary Care Centre has been permitted at Citywest Campus, Garters Lane, Saggart, c.1.1km from the subject site, comprising a four storey building of c.7,760 sq.m accommodating HSE general primary care and treatment rooms, mental health, disability and older person services, a day care centre and a pharmacy, served by 130 no. car parking spaces and 90 no. cycle parking spaces. This represents a significant addition to the healthcare provision serving the Rathcoole and Saggart area.

Table 21: Relevant Planning Permissions for Health Facilities in the Vicinity of the Site

Planning Reference	Address	Status	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD24A/0187W / ACP Reg. Ref. 321950	Lands at Citywest Campus, Garters Lane, Saggart, Co. Dublin (1.1km)	Granted with revised conditions 15th July 2025	Primary Care Centre providing HSE services including general primary care, mental health, disability and older person services, together with SuDS drainage, roof-mounted PV panels, signage, landscaping, boundary treatment and all associated site works and services.

5.5 Community Facilities

The study area comprises an established village settlement with a network of community facilities focused on Rathcoole village centre. Social and community facilities are varied in nature and include general civic services, meeting and activity space, and services directed at particular sections of the community.

Rathcoole Community Centre, located c.0.77km from the subject site, is the principal community facility serving the village. It accommodates a conference hall and dance studio, a music studio, a commercial gym and a sports hall, and is the base for Rathcoole Community Council and Rathcoole Tidy Towns. The centre also accommodates two childcare services, Teach na Leanaí and Happy Feet Early Learning Centre. The Old Rathcoole Courthouse on Main Street, c.0.88km from the site, operates as a community hall and is the subject of a proposal by

Rathcoole Community Council for a heritage museum. Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre, c.0.93km from the site, serves the adjoining village of Saggart and accommodates Lily's Childcare.

Civic services within the village include Rathcoole Garda Station (c.0.53km) and the post office on Main Street (c.0.56km). Library services are provided by the South Dublin County Council mobile library, which serves Broadfield Meadows, Tootenhill, c.1.58km from the subject site. There is no permanent library facility within Rathcoole.

Table 22: List of Community Facilities within the study area

Name of Facility	Address	Distance (in Km)	Facility details
Rathcoole Garda Station	Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.53	Garda (police) station
Post Office	Unit 3, Post Office, Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.56	-
Rathcoole Community Centre	Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.77	Community centre – conference hall/dance studio, music studio, commercial gym, sports hall; home of Rathcoole Community Council & Tidy Towns
Old Rathcoole Courthouse (community hall)	Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.88	Community hall; proposed heritage museum
Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre	Saggart, Co. Dublin	0.93	Community centre
SDCC Mobile Library	Broadfield Meadows, Tootenhill, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	1.58	Library

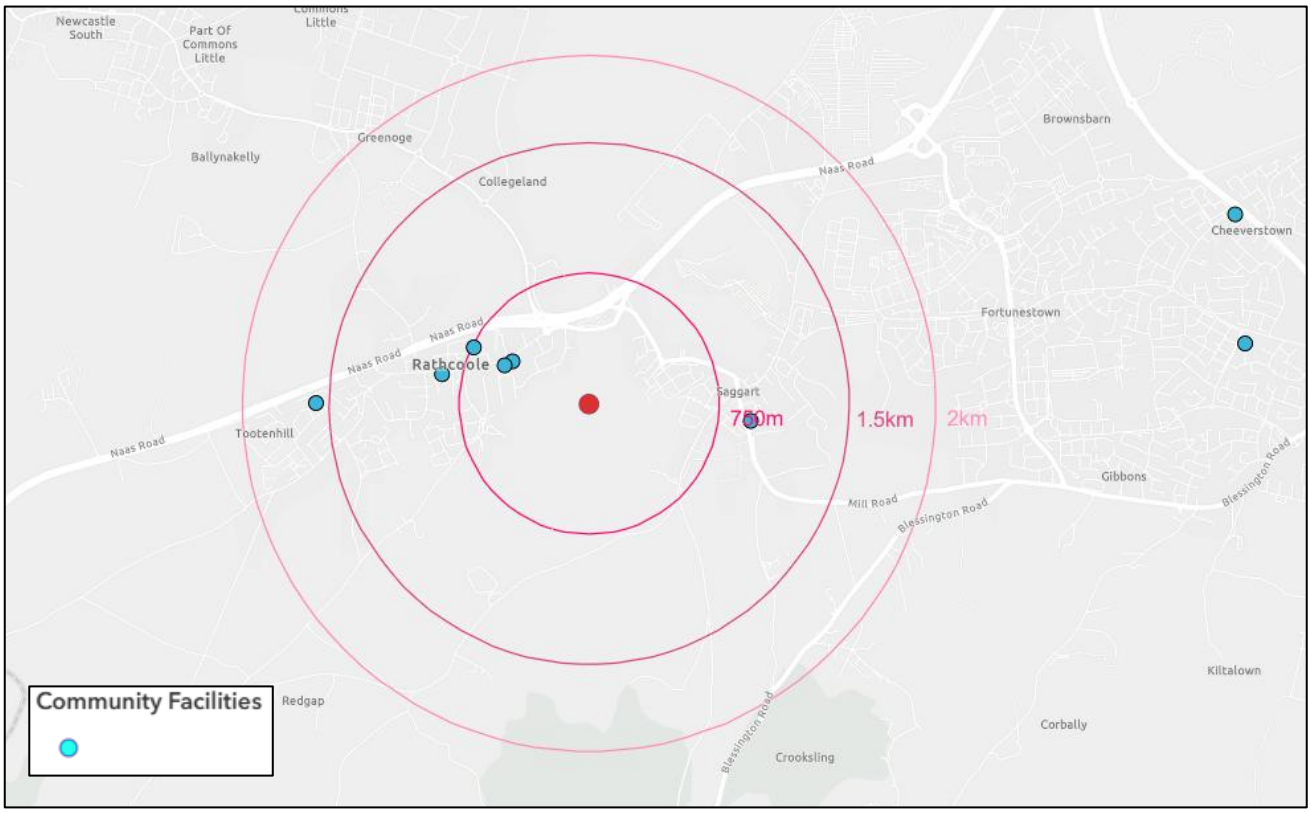


Figure 16: Community Facilities in the catchment

A number of permitted developments within 2km of the subject site will add to the community infrastructure available to residents. Most directly, the proposed extension of the period of retention of the prefabricated accommodation at Rathcoole Community Centre (870 sq.m) would maintain the existing level of community and recreational floorspace in the village, while a new community facility of 99.3 sq.m has been permitted as part of the age friendly residential scheme at Tay Lane (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD22A/0342). A further 186 sq.m of community space forms part of the residential development permitted at Parklands Parade, Fortunestown Lane (ACP Reg. Ref. ABP-305563-19), located within Blocks A and B, which are unaffected by the subsequent modification permitted under SDCC Reg. Ref. LRD24A/0006W.

Community use frequently overlaps with cultural, sporting and recreational use, particularly within residential developments where community rooms accommodate a variety of classes, meetings and functions. It is therefore considered that the floorspace identified below will provide for community uses for at least a portion of the time. Also recorded below is the cemetery permitted at Citywest (ACP Reg. Ref. 317989), which provides additional burial ground capacity for the wider area, together with the three storey crèche and community centre permitted at Cuil Duin Avenue, Citywest, which is a South Dublin County Council capital project and represents the largest single item of community infrastructure in the pipeline serving the wider area.

Table 23: Relevant Planning Permissions for Community Facilities in the Vicinity of the Site

Planning Reference	Address	Date	Description
"SDCC Ref. SD23A/0336 ACP Ref. 321696"	Lands south of Coolamber Drive, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Granted on appeal 19th May 2026	New primary school (Roll No. 20549P), including 20 classrooms, with a gross floor area of 3,449 sq.m over 3 storeys. The Board required that the school be made available for community use outside of school hours and term time, thereby enhancing the social and community value of the development.
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD26A/0074	Rathcoole Community Centre, Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Additional Information requested 13th May 2026	Permission to extend the period of retention (previously permitted under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD19A/0355), for a period of six years, of single storey prefabricated buildings (floor area 870 sq.m) to the side and rear of the existing Community Centre for community and recreational use.
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD22A/0342	Lands to the east of Tay Lane, Newcastle Road, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin (0.8km)	Granted 7th June 2023	Four storey apartment block (4,224 sq.m) comprising 58 no. age friendly residential units (20 no. one bedroom and 38 no. two bedroom units), together with a community facility of 99.3 sq.m, landscaped public open space (907.4 sq.m), communal open space (1,225.6 sq.m), 30 no. car parking spaces and 80 no. cycle parking spaces. Vehicular access is via an upgraded entrance from Tay Lane, with pedestrian access from Eaton Drive providing a direct link to the village centre.
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD22A/0398 / SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0223W	Cuil Duin Avenue, Citywest, Co. Dublin (beyond the 2km study area, 2.3km from the site)	Granted; modified permission granted March 2026	Construction of a three storey crèche and community centre facility of 1,610 sq.m, reduced to 1,596.8 sq.m under the modified permission, including a crèche of c.665 sq.m and a community facility of c.335 sq.m, together with car parking, play areas and associated site works. The facility is a South Dublin County Council capital project included in the Capital Programme 2026-2028.

5.6 Religious and Worship Facilities

There are a number of churches and places of worship within the study area serving a range of denominations. The Church of the Holy Family (Roman Catholic) on Main Street is located c.0.7km from the subject site and Rathcoole Anglican Parish Church, also on Main Street, is c.0.51km from the site. The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Saggart is located c.1.03km from the site, and the Fountain of Victory International Church operates at Mill Road, Saggart, c.0.64km from the site. A burial ground has also been permitted at Citywest (ACP Ref. 317989).

Table 24: List of religious and worship facilities within 2km of the site

Name of Facility	Address	Distance (in km)
Rathcoole Anglican Parish Church	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.51
Fountain of Victory International Church-Ireland	The forge guesthouse, Mill Rd, Saggart, Dublin	0.64
Church of the Holy Family, Rathcoole (Roman Catholic)	Main St, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	0.70
Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Church of Our Lady's Nativity, Saggart Main Street, Saggart, Co. Dublin	1.03

5.7 Arts and Cultural Facilities

Arts and cultural facilities provide an important creative outlet for the community, catering to people of all ages and abilities, and contribute to social inclusion and community wellbeing. The audit has identified limited dedicated arts and cultural provision within the study area. The Old Rathcoole Courthouse on Main Street, c.0.88km from the site, is the subject of a proposal by Rathcoole Community Council for a heritage museum, and the Saggart Village Heritage and Arts Centre operates at Garter's Lane, Saggart, c.1.1km from the subject site. There is no permanent library, theatre, gallery or arts centre within the study area.

Arts and cultural activity in Rathcoole is accommodated principally within multi-purpose community and sports facilities. Rathcoole Community Centre accommodates a music studio together with a conference hall and dance studio, and the halls attached to the local schools and the facilities of the local GAA and soccer clubs are used for classes, exhibitions and functions. The nearest civic library, theatre and gallery facilities are located in Tallaght, c.7km to the east, and in Dublin City Centre.

Table 25: Lists of Arts Facilities in the Study Area

Facility Name	Address	Activities offered	Distance (km)
Old Rathcoole Courthouse	Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin	Proposed heritage museum (Rathcoole Community Council)	0.88
Saggart Village Heritage and Arts Centre	Garter's Lane, Saggart, Dublin	Markets and fairs, craft days, space to rent	1.09

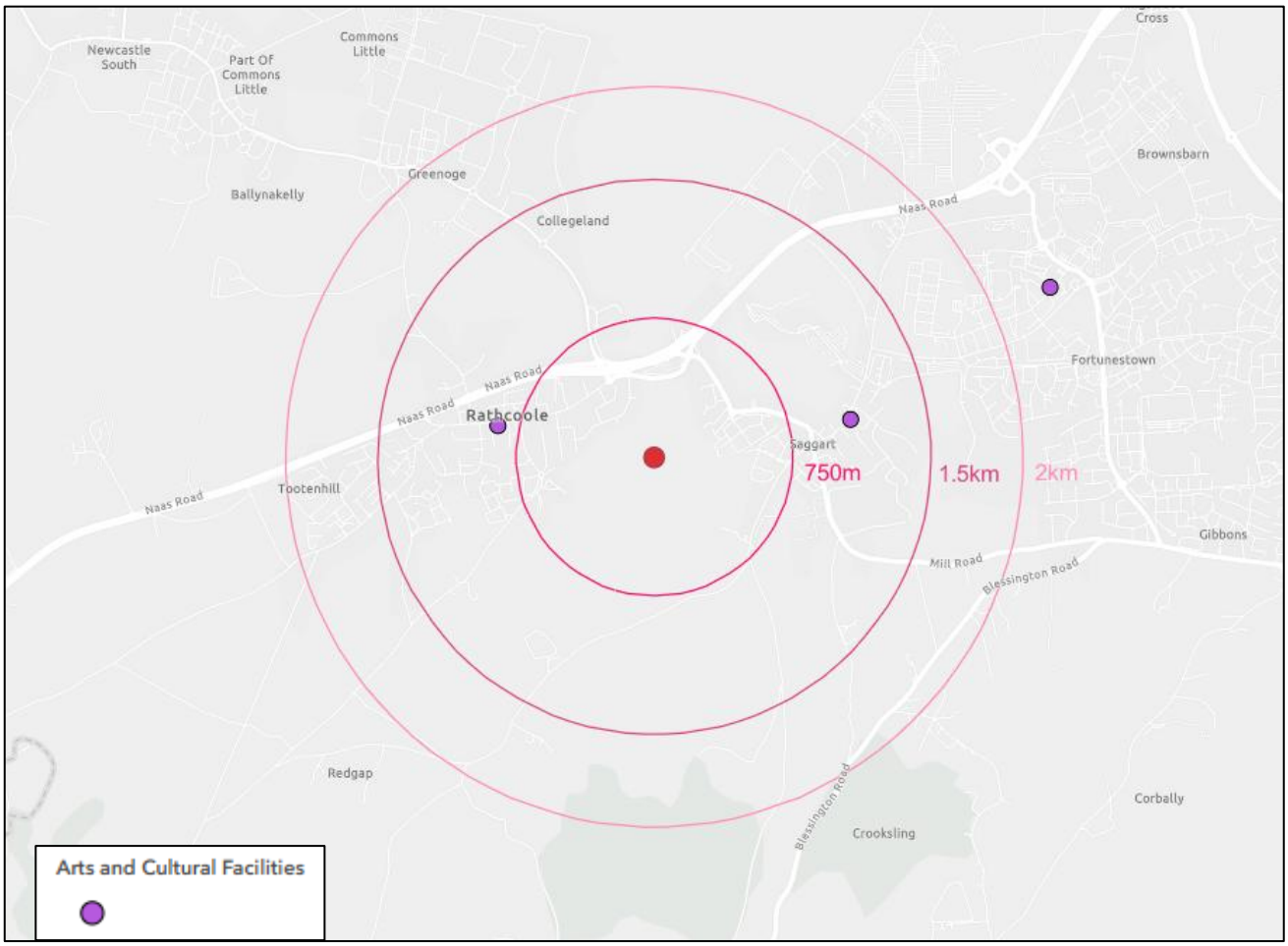


Figure 17: Arts and cultural Facilities in the catchment

No new library, arts or cultural facility has been permitted within 2km of the subject site. It is noted in this regard that Specific Local Objective CS10 SLO 1 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022–2028 identifies the provision of a library hub as part of the community infrastructure serving Rathcoole; no such facility has yet been permitted or delivered.

Within the catchment, no development proposing dedicated arts or cultural floorspace has been approved or granted planning permission in the period reviewed. Arts and cultural activity in Rathcoole is accommodated principally within multi-purpose community and sports facilities, notably Rathcoole Community Centre, the facilities of the local GAA and soccer clubs, and the halls attached to the local schools.

The new primary school permitted immediately adjacent to the subject site (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 / ACP Reg. Ref. 321696) is subject to a condition requiring that it be made available for community use outside of school hours and term time. Together with the general purpose hall permitted at Scoil Chrónáin (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD21A/0231), this will increase the quantum of indoor space in Rathcoole capable of accommodating cultural, recreational and community activity.

5.8 Retail and Entertainment

The table below identifies the existing retail centres within the study area and the services provided. The subject site is located c.0.56km from Rathcoole Shopping Centre and c.0.68km from the Rathcoole retail core on Main Street, which accommodates a range of convenience retail and service uses including Tesco, Centra and Spar

convenience stores, hair and beauty salons, bookmakers, bars and restaurants, Bank of Ireland and a credit union. Avoca at Fitzmaurice Road, adjoining the N7, is located c.0.6km from the site.

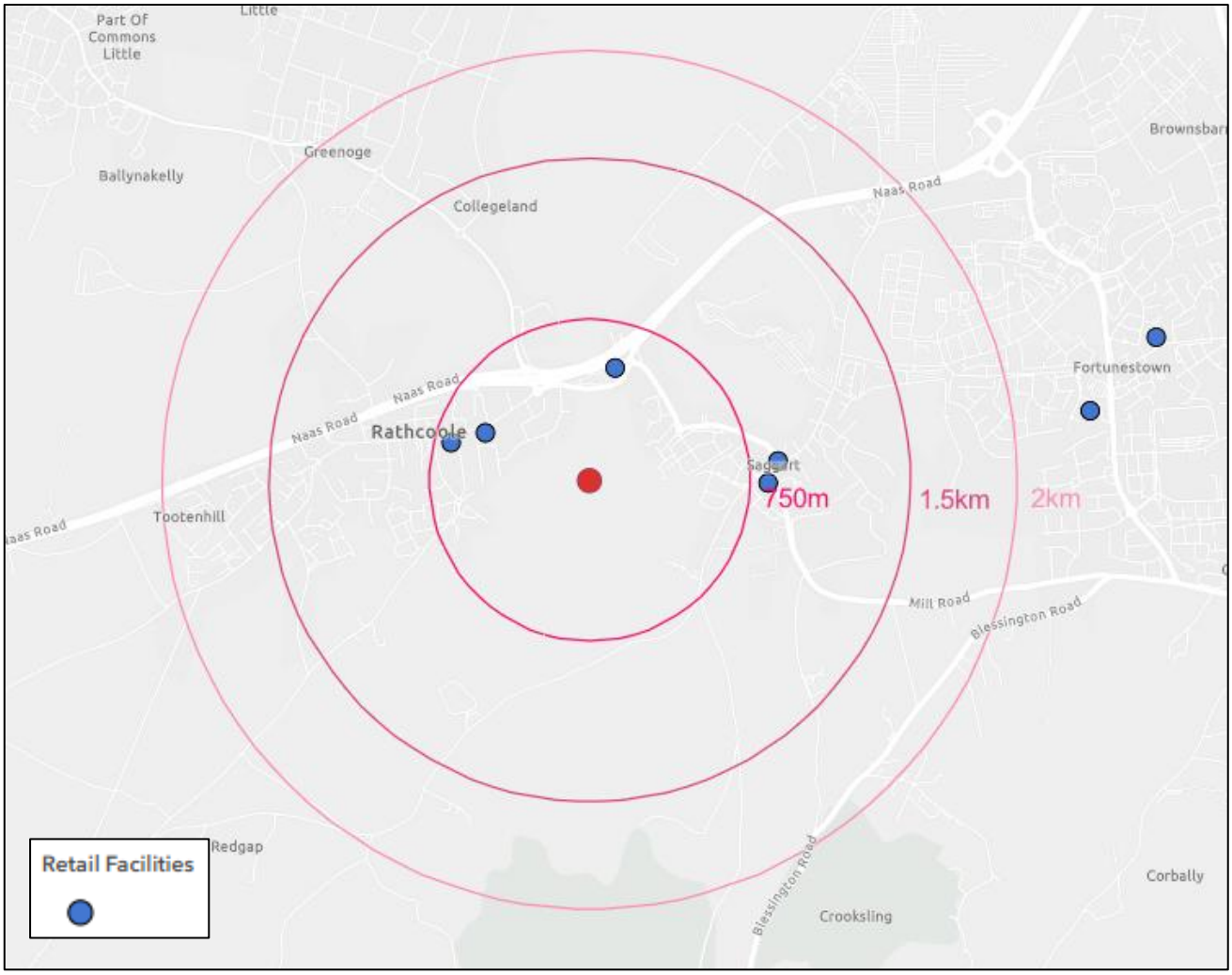


Figure 18: Retail facilities in the catchment

Table 26: Retail Centres in the Study Area

Retail Centre	Existing Services	Distance (In Km)
Rathcoole Shopping Centre	Convenience shops & stores	0.56
Avoca, Rathcoole	Retail store (N7 / Fitzmaurice Rd)	0.59
Rathcoole Retail Core / Main Street	Tesco, Centra, Spar convenience shops, hair & beauty salons, bookmakers, bars, restaurants, Bank of Ireland, Credit Union	0.68
Dunnes Stores, Saggart	Supermarket	0.83
Centra, Saggart	Local supermarket	0.89

Rathcoole has retained its core function as a traditional village centre, providing day-to-day retail, service and convenience functions for the surrounding community. The village centre is supplemented by convenience provision in the adjoining village of Saggart, where Dunnes Stores (c.0.83km) and Centra (c.0.89km) are located. The wider area is served by the retail and service uses at Citywest, and by The Square Town Centre and the associated retail parks at Tallaght, c.7km to the east. Both are accessible by bus from the village and by Luas from Saggart.

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022–2028 identifies Rathcoole as a Village Centre, within which retail and service development is supported at a scale appropriate to the settlement and its catchment. The principal change to the village retail and entertainment offer identified in the period reviewed is the proposed part demolition and change of use of Muldowney's Pub on Main Street to residential use.

It is further noted that the residential development permitted at Parklands Parade, Fortunestown Lane (ACP Reg. Ref. ABP-305563-19, as modified under SDCC Reg. Ref. LRD24A/0006W) includes a total of c.1,224 sq.m of retail, commercial and café/bar floorspace, of which 3 no. retail/commercial units of 555 sq.m and a licensed café/bar/restaurant of 197 sq.m are located at ground floor level in Block C fronting the permitted local square.

Table 27: Relevant Planning Permission SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0266W

Planning Reference	Address	Date	Description
SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0266W	Muldowney's Pub, Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, D24 AE33 (0.5km)	Further information requested 12th December 2025; application under appeal	Part demolition of Muldowney's Pub to the rear; change of use of the front portion of the pub to provide 2 no. 1-bed units; construction of 8 no. own-door residential units within a single three storey block (4 no. 1-bed and 4 no. 2-bed units); enlargement of residential bin storage; reallocation of permitted car parking; and all ancillary landscaping, boundary treatment, signage and site development works.

6. ASSESSMENT

This Social Infrastructure Audit demonstrates the existing in provision of community infrastructure facilities for the study area for the following categories:

- Open Space, Sports and Leisure;
- Education;
- Childcare;
- Health Facilities and Social Services;
- Community;
- Arts and Cultural; and
- Retail and Entertainment.

The subject site is located at the southern edge of Rathcoole village, within walking distance of the village centre and its established range of services and facilities. The proposed development of 130 no. residential units is modest in the context of the wider Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest area and is not considered to give rise to a material adverse impact on the provision of services and facilities.

The site is located c.2km from the Luas Red Line terminus at Saggart and is served by bus services operating through Rathcoole village and on the N7 corridor. The proposed development includes a new active travel route through the site, a new pedestrian and cycle connection to Coolamber Drive and pedestrian links to Coolamber Road and Rathcoole Park, which will improve permeability between the subject lands, the village centre and the primary school permitted on the adjoining lands.

6.1 Education

6.1.1 Future Provision - Primary Schools

There is no specific population benchmark for the provision of primary school facilities in Ireland. The Department of Education's general approach indicates that, for every 1,000 dwellings in an area, approximately 12% of the population may require primary school places and approximately 8.5% may require post-primary school places. The Department also uses an assumption that approximately 11.3% of the population is of primary school-going age.

The Department of Education and Youth's *National Projections of Full-Time Enrolment, Primary and Post-Primary Level 2025/26–2044/45*, published in December 2025, provides the most recent national projections for school enrolment. The report notes that enrolments in primary schools in Ireland stood at 552,059 pupils in September 2024, representing a decrease of 4,047 pupils compared with the previous school year. Since the peak in 2018/19, primary enrolments have generally been decreasing in line with school-age demographic trends, bar the rise in 2022/23 associated with increased inward migration.

Under all scenarios, primary school enrolments are projected to fall until 2040/41 before beginning to rise again. Under the M1F2 scenario, which the Department considers the most likely outcome, primary enrolments are projected to reach a low of 481,536 pupils in 2040/41, representing a decrease of over 70,500 pupils from September 2024.

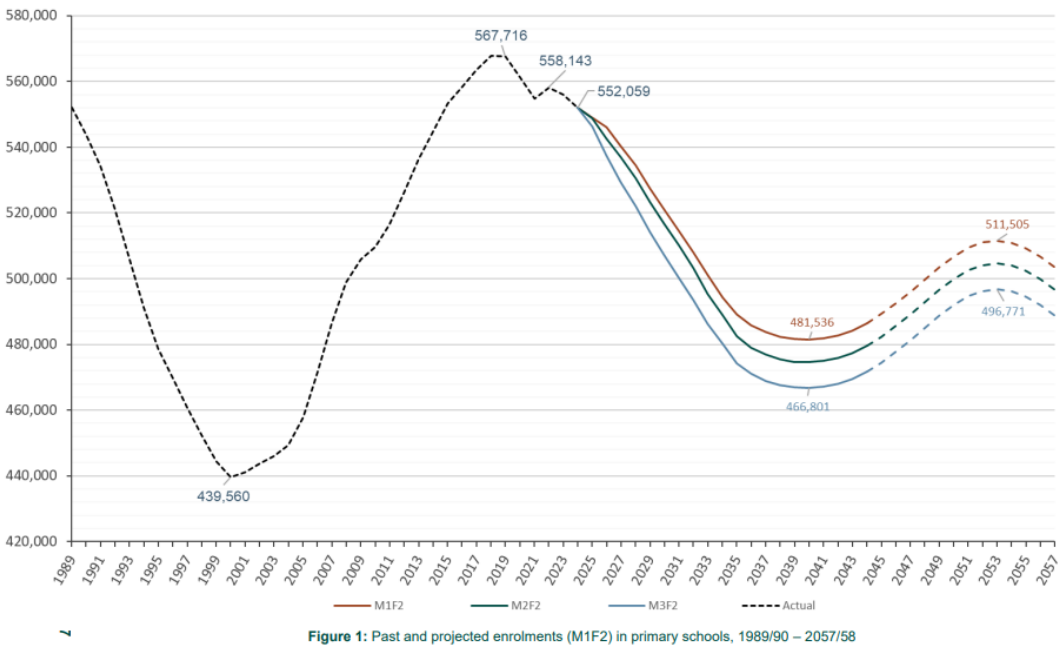


Figure 19: Enrolment Projections for Primary Schools (source: Department of Education, 2025)

6.1.2 Future Provision – Post Primary Schools

There is no specific population benchmark for the provision of secondary school facilities in Ireland. The Department of Education reported in December 2025 that post-primary school enrolments are anticipated to continue to rise in the short-term and will likely peak in 2025/26 as shown in the figure below. 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."*

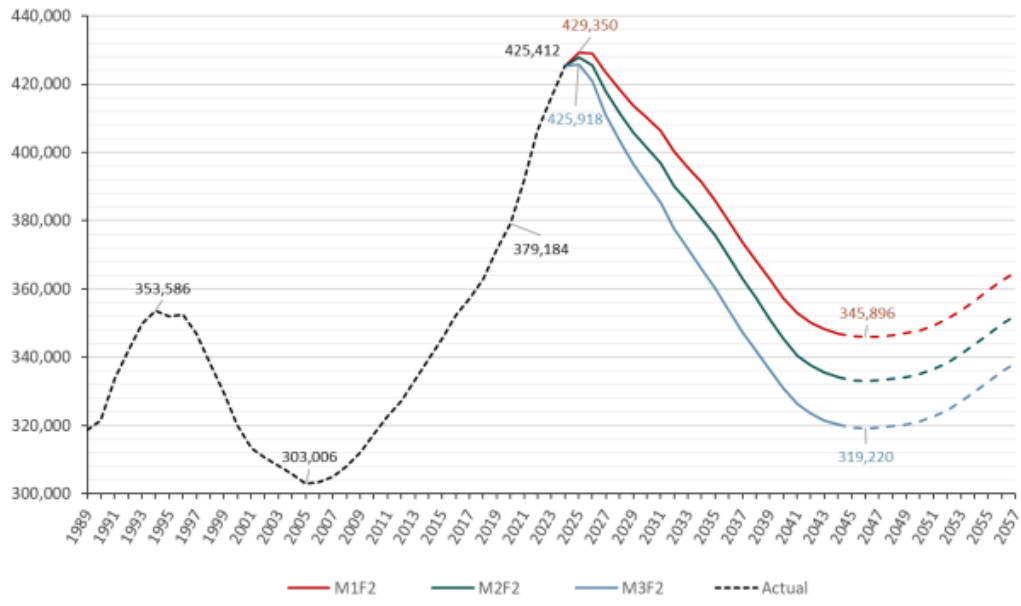


Figure 20: Enrolment projections in Post-Primary School (source: Department of Education, 2025)

6.1.3 Potential Demand Generated by Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises 130 no. residential units, including 34 no. one bedroom, 45 no. two bedroom, 47 no. three bedroom and 4 no. four bedroom homes. Two of the two bedroom duplex units are age friendly units. As set out in Section 4.4, the average household size within the Study Area at Census 2022 was 2.99 persons. Applied to the proposed scheme, this generates an indicative population of c.389 no. persons.

In line with the Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines, *"one bedroom or studio units should not generally 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*." Accordingly, the 34 no. one bedroom units and age friendly duplex units within the proposed scheme have been deducted in the estimation of families with children expected to reside within the development. It is therefore assumed that 94 no. two, three and four bedroom units are proposed, which can reasonably accommodate families.

Taking the average household size of 2.99 persons within the Study Area, the 94 no. appropriate two bedroom and larger units proposed could generate an indicative population of c.281 no. persons. On the adjusted basis set out in Section 4.3 which accounts for the settled resident population, 31.2% is aged between 0 and 19 years, which would translate to c.87 no. persons within this development. An examination of the total number of children of pre-school, primary and post-primary age expected to reside within the development is set out in the table below. This is determined on the basis of the proportion of children within each age cohort residing within the Study Area as recorded at Census 2022.

Table 28: Estimated Pre-School and School Age Children Generated within the Proposed Scheme

Age Group	Total no. Study Area 2022 (adjusted)	% of Total Study Area Population	% of Total Study Area Child Population	Indicative Population of Children within Scheme
Pre-School Children (0-4)	1,061	8.3%	26.6%	23
Primary School Children (5-12)	5-9 year olds = 1,214 10-14 year olds = 1,048/2 = 524 Total = 1,738	13.6%	43.6%	38
Post-Primary School Children (13-19)	10-14 year olds = 1,048/2 = 524 15-19 year olds = 665 Total = 1,189	9.3%	29.8%	26
Total	**3,988**	**31.2%**	**100%**	**87**

Therefore, an estimated 23 children would be of preschool age. 64 no. of the indicative children population would constitute school age children, 38 no. of which would be of primary school age and 26 no. of which would be of post-primary school age. The proportion of primary school aged children in the catchment (13.6%) is higher than the 2022 national figure of 10.8%, and the indicative proportion of post-primary school aged children (9.3%) is higher than the Department's estimate of 8.5% of the population being of post-primary age. This reflects the young family profile of the Study Area, which has accommodated a substantial volume of new family housing since 2016.

The calculations have been estimated on the basis of the age cohorts and their subsequent composition within the Study Area. It is not possible to retrieve the population breakdown at a smaller scale to estimate the exact number of children of primary school (5-12 years) and post-primary school age (13-19 years) residing in the study area. In this regard, the population cohorts derived from Census 2022 have been used as an estimate to calculate an indicative demand for the proposed scheme, from which the 10-14 age group was split in half to derive estimated figures for the 10-12 and 13-14 age groups.

6.1.4 Summary of Schools Assessment

Based on an assumed population of c.281 no. persons within the two bedroom and larger units, an estimated 87 no. children between the ages of 0 and 19 will reside in the proposed development. Of these, c.38 no. are expected to be of primary school age and c.26 no. are expected to fall within the post-primary school age group.

An assessment of schools within 2km of the subject site was undertaken, and a wider catchment of 3.75km was applied to post-primary schools on the basis that a c.15 minute cycle from the site is reasonable for post-primary school students. All schools within these catchments were contacted to confirm enrolment and available capacity for the 2025/2026 academic year. Within the 2km catchment, 6 no. primary schools and 2 no. post-primary schools have been identified, with a further 2 no. post-primary schools within 3.75km.

Total enrolment in the 6 no. primary schools within 2km of the site was 2,536 no. pupils in 2025/2026, a decrease of 4.8% on the 2,663 no. pupils enrolled in 2023. The audit has identified 40 no. available places across these schools. Given that the proposed development is likely to generate demand for c.38 no. children of primary school going age, the existing capacity within the catchment, taken together with the recent and projected decrease in enrolment, is considered sufficient to accommodate the demand arising. In addition, and as set out in Section 5.1.3, a new 20 no. classroom primary school (Roll No. 20549P) has been permitted on lands immediately adjoining the application site, which will provide in the order of 460 no. additional primary school places. A replacement 16 no. classroom school building for Scoil Chrónáin has also been permitted and is at tender stage, and a 16 no. classroom primary school (Gaelscoil Lir) forms part of the permitted educational campus at Fortunestown Lane. The current enrolment for this school is 80 students. The completion projects will substantially increase primary school capacity within the immediate catchment of the subject site.

In terms of post-primary schools, the audit has identified 2 no. schools within 2km of the subject site and a further 2 no. schools within 3.75km. All are considered accessible to post-primary school aged persons, having regard to the school transport arrangements serving the village and a cycling time of c.15 minutes to the schools located at Tallaght.

Total enrolment in the 4 no. post-primary schools identified was 2,809 no. pupils in 2025-26 / 2026-27, an increase of 19.4% on the 2,353 no. pupils enrolled in 2023. Coláiste Pobail Fola at Garter's Lane, Saggart, c.1.45km from the site, recorded the strongest growth, with enrolment capacity increasing by 65.1% over the period to 900 no. pupils with 180 spaces available. A second floor comprising 9 no. additional classrooms together with 2 no. special education classrooms has also been permitted at Holy Family Community School, Kilteel Road, c.1.49km from the site. Given that the proposed development is likely to generate demand for c.26 no. children of post-primary school going age, it is considered that the permitted expansion of post-primary capacity within the catchment is sufficient to accommodate the demand arising.

The Department of Education and Youth is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of admissions to primary and post-primary schools, and school place requirements across South Dublin County are kept under review by

the Department in conjunction with the planning authority. Under all migration scenarios, secondary school enrolment is expected to have peaked in 2025/2026. It is noted that the projected demand for primary and post-primary school places generated by the proposed development is modest and would not of itself justify the provision of a new school. The permitting of a 20 no. classroom primary school on the lands immediately adjoining the subject site, and the reservation of c.1.03ha as a future school site within the permitted development at Boherboy, indicate that school provision in the area is being planned in advance of population growth.

6.2 Childcare Facilities

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities (2001) indicate that Development Plans should facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations. These include larger new housing estates, where planning authorities should require the provision of a minimum of one childcare facility with 20 no. places for each 75 no. dwellings. 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. It is noteworthy that according to a recent CSO publication, since 2010, the number of births in Ireland has continued to decline, with 55,000 under one-year-olds living in Ireland in 2026. This is a decrease of 19,900 or 27% in 16 years which will precipitate a decrease in the need for childcare and school facilities over the coming years.

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.

On the adjusted basis set out in Section 4.3, the Study Area recorded a population of 12,779 no. persons at Census 2022, an increase of 28.8% on the adjusted 2016 figure of 9,924 no. persons. Of the 2022 total, 8.3% were aged 0–4 years. This remains considerably higher than the South Dublin County average of 6.2%, notwithstanding that the proportion of the Study Area population within this cohort has fallen from 11.6% in 2016, consistent with the maturing of the family housing delivered in the area since that date.

Within South Dublin County Council, there were 18,677 children between the age of 0 and 4 at the time of the 2022 census.[1] 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[2]. Applying this to the proposed development, 11no. children within the scheme would require childcare. Of these, 6 would require a space in a creche, Montessori, playgroup or after school facility.

[1] https://data.cso.ie/table/SAP2022T1T1ACTY
[2] https://data.cso.ie/table/F3061

The audit has identified 9 no. childcare facilities operating within c.2km of the subject site, with a combined registered capacity of 539 no. places. A further 3 no. facilities are located within c.3km of the site at Citywest, with a combined capacity of 290 no. places, which is considered reasonably accessible to residents of Rathcoole, particularly where parents are commuting to Dublin City. All facilities were contacted to confirm current enrolment and available capacity. At the date of this report, 8 no. vacancies have been confirmed, at Lily's Childcare in Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre, and Little Fingers creche.

The crèche permitted at Parklands Parade under ACP Reg. Ref. ABP-305563-19 comprises 431 sq.m and is stated to accommodate 100 to 110 no. childcare places. Excluding one bedroom units, this provision caters for the demand generated by the development as originally permitted and as subsequently revised, being a total of 574 no. units of which c.149 no. are one bedroom units, without providing excess places. The Large-scale Residential Development at Boherboy, Saggart, permitted under SDCC Reg. Ref. LRD25A/0012W and ABP Reg. Ref. 324127, comprises 611 no. dwellings of which 57 no. are one bedroom units, together with a two storey crèche of c.630 sq.m stated to accommodate 148 no. childcare places. The 554 no. relevant units within that development generate a requirement for c.148 no. places, such that the provision is in line with the demand generated by the development.

The residential development permitted at Mill Road, Saggart, under ACP Reg. Ref. 312501, is located c.0.7km from the subject site. The development comprises 274 no. residential units, of which 64 no. are one bedroom units, together with a four classroom crèche of c.276 sq.m stated to accommodate c.59 no. children. Applying the standard set out in the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001*), as qualified by the *Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines*, the 210 no. relevant units within that development generate a requirement for c.56 no. childcare places. That development therefore has the capacity to provide a surplus of c.3 no. childcare places over and above the demand generated within the development itself.

Of greater significance for childcare availability is the three storey crèche and community centre permitted at Cuil Duin Avenue, Citywest under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD22A/0398, as modified under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0223W granted in March 2026, which comprises 1,596.8 sq.m of floorspace including a crèche of c.665 sq.m. This is estimated to accommodate in the order of 150 no. childcare places and which, as a South Dublin County Council capital project, is not tied to the demand arising from any single residential development.

The proposed development does not include a childcare facility. As set out above, an indicative 23 no. children of pre-school age are expected to be accommodated within the proposed development, of which c.6 no. are expected to require a place in a crèche-based service. This is a conservative assessment, in that it treats every two bedroom unit other than those specifically allocated as age friendly accommodation as capable of accommodating children. The audit has identified 8 no. confirmed available places within the existing facilities in the study area, together with a surplus of c.3 no. places within the permitted crèche at Mill Road, Saggart and c.150 spaces at Cuil Duin Avenue, Citywest.

It is acknowledged that confirmed vacancies within the existing facilities are limited at the date of this report and that responses remain outstanding from a number of providers. While the standard set out in the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)* would indicate a requirement for c.25 no. places, Section 3.3.1 of those Guidelines states that this is a guideline standard which "*will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site*". The *Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)* further provide that the threshold for provision should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, and that the exclusion of one bedroom units may apply in part or in whole to units with two or more bedrooms, which are included in this assessment.

Having regard to the scale of the proposed development, to the unit and tenure mix proposed, to the demand of c.6 no. crèche places derived from recorded childcare participation in the area, and to the existing and permitted provision within Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest, it is considered 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.

6.3 Open Space, Sports and Leisure

The study area is well served with open space. Rathcoole Park adjoins the subject lands to the north, c.0.57km from the site, and the Four Districts (Rathcoole) Woodlands are located c.0.49km to the west. The audit has identified an established network of sports clubs within the catchment, including St. Mary's GAA Club, Commercials GAA Hurling and Camogie Club and Rathcoole Boys Football Club, together with three commercial gyms and a number of yoga and martial arts studios. Indoor swimming provision is available at the Citywest Health and Leisure Club, c.1.16km from the subject site, and the nearest public swimming pool is located at Tallaght, c.7km to the east. Having regard to the established network of open space, sports and leisure facilities within the study area, and to the substantial additional sports and open space provision proposed as part of the development, it is considered that there is sufficient provision to meet the needs of the scheme's future residents and to absorb the demand arising.

Development plan requirements for the provision of communal amenity space, public open space, play infrastructure etc. must be taken into consideration in the development of the design. The CDP states that public open space calculations are to be based on an occupancy rate of 3.5 persons in the case of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and 1.5 persons in the case of dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms. Applying that rate to the proposed dwelling mix, the proposed development generates a design population of 297 persons for public open space purposes, and a corresponding public open space requirement of 0.71 hectares (c.7,128 sqm) at the standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population. The proposed provision of 11,763 sqm of public open space is therefore c.2.5 times that which is required, before account is taken of the 2 no. senior and 1 no. junior GAA grass pitches also proposed.

The minimum communal amenity space requirement for the apartment and duplex element of the scheme, calculated in accordance with the *Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines*, is set out in the table below. The calculation applies to the 80 no. apartment and duplex units proposed and assumes that two bedroom units are four person units and three bedroom units are five person units.

Table 29: Minimum Communal Amenity Space Requirement (apartment and duplex units)

Unit Type	No. of Units	Minimum Communal Amenity Space per Unit	Requirement
One bedroom	27	5 sq.m	135 sq.m
Two bedrooms (4 person)	45	7 sq.m	315 sq.m
Three bedrooms (5 persons)	8	9 sq.m	72 sq.m
Total	**80**	**–**	**522 sq.m**

On this basis a minimum of c.522 sq.m of communal amenity space is required to serve the apartment and duplex element of the proposed development. 1,040sq.m is proposed and designed to serve the needs of all age groups within the development.

The proposed development includes 2 no. senior GAA grass pitches measuring 20,800 sq.m, 1 no. junior grass pitch measuring 6,240 sq.m and a GAA pavilion of 185 sq.m with associated changing facilities, 43 no. car parking spaces and 12 no. cycle parking spaces. This represents a significant addition to the sports infrastructure available in Rathcoole and will serve the wider village and its clubs in addition to the residents of the proposed development.

6.4 Health Facilities and Social Services

There are no published standards to facilitate assessment or adequacy of need for health facilities and social services. However, the Primary Care Strategy, issued by the Department of Health and Children in 2001, provides some form of guidance regarding the implementation of Primary Care Centres and their staffing. The starting point for service delivery in the sector is the Primary Care Team. In 2020, the HSE adopted a Capital & Estates Strategy to enable the delivery of high-quality healthcare infrastructure that can support current and future service needs, setting out a clear strategic direction for the future management and development towards 2050. The Strategy aims to address including but not limited to the growing population, changing demographics and increasing demand for access to healthcare and the requirement for better links to wider Government policies such as Transport and Housing for All. A Capital Expenditure Plan is prepared annually, which provides significant public investment in health infrastructure to meet current needs, to cater for an estimated population growth of one million people and to respond to the changing demographic profile in Ireland.

It is considered that there is adequate provision of health and social services in the area. Rathcoole Health Centre is located c.0.47km from the subject site, and four GPs, three pharmacies, a dental practice and a physiotherapy service operate within c.1.15km. A Primary Care Centre has been permitted at Citywest Campus, c.1.1km from the site (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD24A/0187W / ACP Reg. Ref. 321950), comprising a four storey building of c.7,760 sq.m accommodating general practice and treatment rooms, mental health, disability and older person services, a day care centre and a pharmacy, served by 130 no. car parking spaces and 90 no. cycle parking spaces. That development will strengthen the network of community health provision serving Rathcoole and Saggart. General hospital services are available at Tallaght University Hospital and Naas General Hospital. Having regard to the existing and permitted provision, it is considered that the demand arising from the proposed development can be accommodated.

6.5 Community Facilities

The increase in population arising from the proposed development, will generate additional demand for community facilities in Rathcoole. The subject site is located within an established village settlement with a network of existing community facilities focused on Rathcoole village centre. Rathcoole Community Centre, c.0.77km from the site, is the principal facility and accommodates a conference hall and dance studio, a music studio, a commercial gym and a sports hall, together with two childcare services. The Old Rathcoole Courthouse operates as a community hall, and Saggart Schoolhouse Community Centre serves the adjoining village.

The continued reliance on 870 sq.m of single storey prefabricated accommodation to the side and rear of Rathcoole Community Centre, the retention of which is the subject of a current application to extend the period of retention for a further six years (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD26A/0074), indicates that the permanent community floorspace available within the village is constrained relative to demand. A new community facility of 99.3 sq.m has been permitted as part of the age friendly residential development at Tay Lane, Newcastle Road, c.0.8km from the subject site (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD22A/0342), and a further 186 sq.m of community space forms part of the residential development permitted at Parklands Parade, Fortunestown Lane (ACP Reg. Ref. ABP-305563-19). A cemetery comprising 8,047 no. burial plots has also been permitted at Citywest, c.1.4km from the site (ACP Reg. Ref. 317989).

The primary school permitted on lands immediately adjoining the subject site (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 / ACP Reg. Ref. 321696) is subject to a condition requiring that the school be made available for community use outside of school hours and term time. Together with the general purpose hall permitted at Scoil Chrónáin, this will increase the indoor space in Rathcoole capable of accommodating community activity.

Significant for the wider area is the three storey crèche and community centre permitted at Cuil Duin Avenue, Citywest under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD22A/0398, as modified under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0223W granted in March 2026, comprising 1,596.8 sq.m of floorspace and including a community facility of c.335 sq.m. This is an SDCC capital project included in the Capital Programme 2026-2028. Having regard to the existing network of community facilities within Rathcoole and Saggart, the additional community floorspace permitted at Tay Lane and at Parklands Parade, the community use of the primary school permitted on the adjoining lands, and the facility permitted at Cuil Duin Avenue, it is considered that the demand arising from the proposed development can be accommodated.

It is noted, however, that Specific Local Objective CS10 SLO 1 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies the provision of a library hub as part of the community infrastructure serving Rathcoole, and that no such facility has been permitted or delivered. The proposed development, taken together with the primary school permitted on the same landholding under SDCC Reg. Ref. SD23A/0336 and ACP Reg. Ref. 321696, delivers five of the six elements identified in the objective. The subject lands are subject to significant environmental constraints, comprising the Annex I Alluvial Rathcoole Woodlands, areas of Annex I Lowland Hay Meadow, the green infrastructure corridor to which GI7 SLO1 applies, and the riparian corridors of the Coolmine and Crockshane Streams. The layout has been developed to retain the largest possible extent of assets, with the consequence that once the permitted primary school, the three pitches and pavilion, access road, residential units and public open space have been provided, only a limited residual area of land zoned Objective RES-N remains, situated to the west of the Coolmine Stream. This is capable of development only by way of a further crossing of the stream which would encroach on the riparian corridor. Having regard to the express qualification of CS10 SLO 1 by reference to GI7 SLO2, and to the Annex I habitats present at the site, the library hub is considered to be more appropriately delivered elsewhere within the surrounding area.

6.6 Religious and Worship Facilities

There are a number of places of worship within the study area, including the Church of the Holy Family (Roman Catholic) and Rathcoole Anglican Parish Church on Main Street, the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Saggart and the Fountain of Victory International Church at Mill Road, Saggart. There is no standard measure in place in Ireland regarding the provision of religious places of worship. Having regard to the scale of the proposal and to the range of existing facilities, together with the burial ground permitted at Citywest, the existing provision is considered sufficient to meet the needs arising from the proposed development.

6.7 Arts and Cultural Facilities

The audit has identified limited dedicated arts and cultural provision within the study area. The Saggart Village Heritage and Arts Centre operates at Garter's Lane, Saggart, c.1.09km from the subject site, and a heritage museum is proposed by Rathcoole Community Council at the Old Rathcoole Courthouse on Main Street, c.0.88km from the site. Arts and cultural activity in Rathcoole is accommodated principally within multi-purpose community and sports facilities, including the music studio and dance studio at Rathcoole Community Centre and the halls attached to the local schools. The nearest library, theatre and gallery facilities are located in

Tallaght, c.7km to the east, and in Dublin City Centre, which is accessible by bus and by Luas from Saggart. . Library services within the village are currently provided by the South Dublin County Council mobile library.

As noted in Section 6.5, Specific Local Objective CS10 SLO 1 identifies the provision of a library hub as part of the community infrastructure serving Rathcoole, and no such facility has yet been permitted or delivered. The primary school permitted immediately adjoining the subject site is subject to a condition requiring that it be made available for community use outside of school hours and term time, which will increase the indoor space available for cultural and recreational activity within the village.

Arts and cultural provision within the study area is limited relative to the population it serves, and access to the principal civic arts and library facilities relies on travel to Tallaght or to Dublin City Centre. Having regard to the scale of the proposed development, it is not considered that a dedicated arts or cultural facility is required as part of the scheme. It is recommended, however, that the delivery of the library hub identified under CS10 SLO 1 be progressed as part of the wider planning for community infrastructure in Rathcoole.

6.8 Retail and Entertainment

The study area is well supplied in terms of retail services and facilities. The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies Rathcoole as a Village Centre. Rathcoole Shopping Centre is located c.0.56km from the subject site, and the retail core on Main Street, c.0.68km from the site, accommodates a range of convenience retail and service uses. Additional convenience provision is available at Dunnes Stores and Centra in Saggart, and the wider area is served by the retail and service uses at Citywest and by The Square Town Centre and the associated retail parks at Tallaght.

It is considered that the retail provision described above will serve the retail needs of the residents of the proposed development, and that no shortfall in retail or entertainment facilities arises. It is noted that a current application proposes the part demolition and change of use of Muldowney's Pub on Main Street to residential use (SDCC Reg. Ref. SD25A/0266W), which would reduce the licensed premises and entertainment provision within the village centre.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development of 130 no. residential units will give rise to an indicative population increase of c.389 no. persons. This is a modest addition in the context of Rathcoole and of the wider Saggart and Citywest area, and the audit has demonstrated that the subject site is located within walking distance of Rathcoole village centre and of the established range of education, childcare, healthcare, community, recreational, religious and retail facilities serving the village.

In terms of education, the audit concludes that the demand for c.38 no. primary and c.26 no. post-primary school places arising from the proposed development can be accommodated within the existing and permitted school infrastructure serving the catchment. Primary school enrolment within the catchment is falling and capacity is presently available, and the permitting of a 20 no. classroom primary school on the lands immediately adjoining the application site represents a substantial and directly accessible addition to provision. At post-primary level, enrolment growth is being met through the permitted expansion of the schools serving the area. No new school provision is required as a consequence of the proposed development.

In terms of childcare, the demand arising is estimated at c.6 no. crèche places. Having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, the Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines 2025, and to the established and permitted provision within Rathcoole, Saggart and Citywest, it is concluded that this demand can be accommodated without the provision of a dedicated facility on site. It is nonetheless acknowledged that confirmed vacancies within the existing facilities are limited at present, and it is recommended that provision be kept under review and secured at the time of occupation.

The proposed development will contribute significantly to the open space provision within Rathcoole Town. Public open space is provided at c.22% of the residential site area, in excess of the Development Plan requirement, and the GAA pitches and pavilion proposed represent a significant addition to the sporting facilities available to Rathcoole and its clubs, serving the existing population of the village as well as the future residents of the scheme.

The subject site is well served by healthcare and social services, with an established network of general practice, pharmacy and allied health provision within walking distance and residential care for older persons within the study area. The Primary Care Centre permitted at Citywest Campus will consolidate HSE community, mental health, disability and older person services within the catchment, and the audit concludes that the demand arising from the proposed development can be readily accommodated.

An established network of community facilities serves the village, anchored on Rathcoole Community Centre and supplemented by the community floorspace permitted at Tay Lane and Parklands Parade and by the crèche and community centre permitted at Cuil Duin Avenue as a South Dublin County Council capital project. The requirement to make the permitted primary school available for community use outside school hours will further increase the indoor space available for community activity in Rathcoole. In respect of the library hub identified under Specific Local Objective CS10 SLO 1, the environmental constraints of the site leave only a limited area of land zoned Objective RES-N following provision of the school, pitches, pavilion, access road and open space, and it is concluded that the provision of a library hub as an element of this phase of development would not represent the optimal use of the limited residual land available, and would be achievable only at the expense of the Annex I habitats and riparian corridors which the layout has been developed to protect. It is therefore concluded that the library hub is more appropriately delivered in a subsequent phase or elsewhere in the surrounding area.

Arts and cultural provision within the study area is limited, and access to civic arts and library facilities relies on travel to Tallaght or Dublin City Centre. However, having regard to the scale of the proposed development, a dedicated arts or cultural facility is not considered to be required as part of the scheme, and the additional multi-purpose indoor space arising from the community use of the permitted school will support cultural and recreational activity within the village.

The proposed development is well served by existing retail and local services, and the audit concludes that no shortfall in retail or entertainment provision arises.

Overall, the audit concludes that the proposed development is located within a well served and accessible village settlement, and that the population arising from the scheme is not expected to give rise to undue pressure on existing social infrastructure. The GAA facilities, public open space and active travel connections proposed will make a positive and lasting contribution to the social infrastructure available to the existing and future population of Rathcoole.



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