



THORNTON O'CONNOR
TOWN PLANNING

Culture and Social Infrastructure Audit

**In Respect of a Proposed Large-Scale Residential
Development at a Site of 1.62 Ha at Galway Port,
Galway City**

**Prepared on Behalf of The Land Development
Agency**

September 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This *Culture and Social Infrastructure Audit* (CSIA) has been prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning on behalf of the Land Development Agency in support of a Planning Application for a Mixed-use Residential-Led Development proposed at a brownfield site of 1.62 Ha facing Lough Atalia in Galway Harbour, to provide 356 homes, a crèche and complementary cafe/restaurant and retail use. The Report provides a detailed review of the statutory, strategic and policy context that relates to the provision of Social Infrastructure with the following aims:

- To provide a survey and audit of existing Culture, Community and Social Infrastructure, Open Space and Amenities serving the identified Study Area and the subject site;
- Catalogue all infrastructure under the facilities categories identified through policy guidance;
- Establish if suitable Infrastructure is provided in the area to support the needs of the existing population; and
- Assess the nature of the infrastructure and likelihood of the capacity of the existing facilities to support the needs of future residents.

This Report, therefore, identifies existing Community Facilities in the local area and includes an analysis and identification of potential shortfalls in infrastructure.

1.1 Approach

As part of this Planning Application, an assessment of the existing facilities in the area has been carried out in order to assess the need for Culture, Community and Social Infrastructure. A desktop study was used to collect the baseline information. The facilities in each category were recorded in an Excel Table, and then mapped using the ArcGIS Ecosystem. A large number of public and private geospatial datasets were used in the course of the survey, including but not limited to:

- 2025 Google Places Dataset;
- 2025 ESRI and Mapbox Ireland Basemaps;
- 2011, 2016 and 2022 Census Boundaries and Small Area Population Statistics;
- 2010-2025 Department of Education and Skills – Irish Schools;
- 2025 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Register of Private Higher Education Institutions in Ireland;
- 2025 Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Reports – Registered Childcare Facilities; and
- 2025 HSE – ‘Find Your Local Health Service’.
- 2025 Galway City Council Online Planning Register

Social Infrastructure includes a range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life, and is a key part of the fabric of an area, not just in terms of wellbeing, but also in terms of creating a sense of place for the population of the area and forming a part of the local identity. For the 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 Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 of the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* (Table 1.1).

A radius of 1.5 km from the subject site was used as the focus for this assessment as it is considered a relatively short distance for residents to access via foot, bicycle or public transport. It is also broadly aligned with the principles of the policy objectives for Social Infrastructure assessment outlined in Sections 11.14, 11.15, 11.26, and 11.27 of the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* related to development standards, the ‘15-minute city’ and walkable neighbourhood concepts

(outlined in greater detail in Section 2.0).

Category	Facility Type
Education and Training Services	Primary, Post-Primary, Third Level, Further Education, Other Lifelong Training Centres
Childcare Facilities	Registered Childcare Facilities Incl. Full Day, Part-Time and Sessional Services
Social, Community and Cultural Facilities	Community Centres, Libraries, Senior and Youth Centres, Post Offices, Banks and Credit Unions, Museums, Galleries, Theatres, Cinemas, Music Venues, Historical Cultural Sites
Healthcare and Emergency Services	Hospitals, Health Centres, Primary Care Centres, Doctors and Specialty Clinics, Dental, Physiotherapy, Counselling, Optician, Pharmacy, Garda Stations, Fire Stations
Open Space and Recreation	Parks, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, Sports Centres and Clubs, Leisure Centres, Gyms and Training Facilities, Swimming Pools
Religious Institutions	Areas of Worship, Churches, Cemeteries
Retail Centres and Services	Convenience Retailing, Other Relevant Retail

Table 1.1 Social and Community Infrastructure Categories Applied to Audit

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

1.2 Study Area and Accessibility

The subject site, which measures 1.62 Ha in area, is situated in the Docks area of Galway City, immediately southeast of Lough Atalia Road and the city centre. Galway is a growing city where the population has increased from 47,000 in 1986 to over 85,000 in 2023, with projections for a planned population of 120,000 by 2040.

The subject site is situated at the confluence of the Corrib, Lough Atalia and Galway's inner harbour and comprises an irregular shaped parcel of brownfield land currently in use for storage of wind turbines and partially as a bus car parking facility. The site is largely composed of reclaimed lands close to where Lough Atalia connects with Galway Bay, and is a short walk from both Eyre Square and Galway (Ceannt) Train Station, and is proximal to all the amenities of the core city centre retailing area, such as restaurants, cafés, shops, and entertainment venues. The central location provides great connections to other major cities, allowing for easy travel and transport. The site has great connectivity to nature both visually and in terms of access. Lough Atalia to the northeast of the site contains walks along the shore front, and over the water to the south is South Park with recreational sports pitches and sports clubs.

The subject site is zoned 'CC – City Centre' by the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* (Development Plan), which has the following objective:

"To provide for city centre activities and particularly those, which preserve the city centre as the dominant commercial area of the city."

However, the site is also located within the designated 'Inner Harbour Regeneration Site', which is one of 19 No. such regeneration/opportunity sites in the City Council's jurisdictional area. The Inner Harbour Regeneration Site "...has potential for significant redevelopment providing an opportunity to re-establish links between the city centre and the sea, to create a high quality waterfront setting, a new city centre mixed use neighbourhood..." The Development Plan requires the preparation of a masterplan for the Regeneration Site, with a prescriptive series of criteria (e.g. height, plot ratio, connectivity and permeability, uses, etc.) to be addressed. Lands located a short distance over the water are zoned for enterprise, industry, and related uses. To the northwest of the site, there is Forthill graveyard which is zoned for community, cultural, and institutional use.



Figure 1.1: Site Location

(Source: Bing Maps, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

The Study Area for this Assessment is defined by a 1.5 km radius of the subject site, equivalent to a c. 15- to 20-minute walking distance, which is considered accessible to future residents of the proposed development. No prescribed spatial distances have been defined by Galway City Council within the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* as the radius for future Community and Social Audits. As such, given that the subject site is located on the coast, with a substantial portion of the spatial area occupied by Galway Bay and Lough Atalia, it was judged that a typical 1 km walkable distance (< 15 minutes) should be extended to 1.5 km to capture, survey and include all

relevant infrastructure that lies tangent to, or immediately outside of a 1 km Study Area but is directly relevant to assessing future needs of the settlement of Galway City and the proposed development.



Figure 1.2: Study Area

(Source: Bing Maps, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

Galway City benefits from good connectivity around the city centre and suburbs, the wider County Region, and its international port and via the high capacity rail and road networks. It is well served with rail services and the expanding motorway network provides access to Dublin, Limerick, Shannon and further afield. Galway City is a significant rail destination with direct intercity services to Dublin via Athlone and Limerick via Ennis, facilitating access to neighbouring commuter zones, employment hubs, and retail destinations along the Dublin–Westport/Galway corridor. Galway City is a primary location for employment in the wider area. The site is located next to Ceannt Station which plays a key role in offering sustainable travel alternatives for longer distance trips, providing improved interregional connectivity. It also provides a valuable commuter service to towns such as Ballinasloe, Athenry and Oranmore. Galway is less than an hour's drive from 2 No. international airports, including Shannon, with direct flights to North America, UK and Europe.

The nearest bus stop (from the subject site) is located approximately 0.5 kilometres away (approximately a 5-minute walk). The proposed development will be adequately served by public transport, via Eyre Square, with access to a number of bus stops within walking distance from the site:

- Bus Éireann Route No. 401: Parkmore – Salthill;
- Bus Éireann Route No. 402: Shangort Road – Merlin Park;
- Bus Éireann Route No. 404: Newcastle – Oranmore;
- Bus Éireann Route No. 405: Ragoon – Ballybane;
- Bus Éireann Route No. 407: Eyre Square – Bother Na Choiste;
- Bus Éireann Route No. 409: Eyre Square – Parkmore Industrial Estate;
- City Direct Route No. 410: Eyre Square – Knocknacarra;
- City Direct Route No. 411: Eyre Square – Cappagh Road;
- City Direct Route No. 412: Eyre Square – Western Distributor Road;
- Bus Éireann Route No. 424: Eyre Square – Barna.

The planned future Galway BusConnects project will deliver a network of 5 No. high-performing cross-city routes. All routes will serve major city centre attractions as well as linking major destinations across the city. Galway BusConnects will comprise next generation bus lanes, enhanced services, cashless fares and account-based ticketing. As part of this programme delivery, a network of park and ride sites, serviced by the more efficient bus network, will be put in place. The plan will also encompass a variety of city centre public realm enhancements which will enhance the overall transport experience and improve the attractiveness of the city centre. It is expected that all major cross-city services will converge at Eyre Square (Routes 1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 424), which is a walkable distance from the subject site, as per the current BusConnects network proposals. These key routes will conveniently connect the subject site to all areas within the proposed network and provide efficient, high frequency public transport to the resident population.

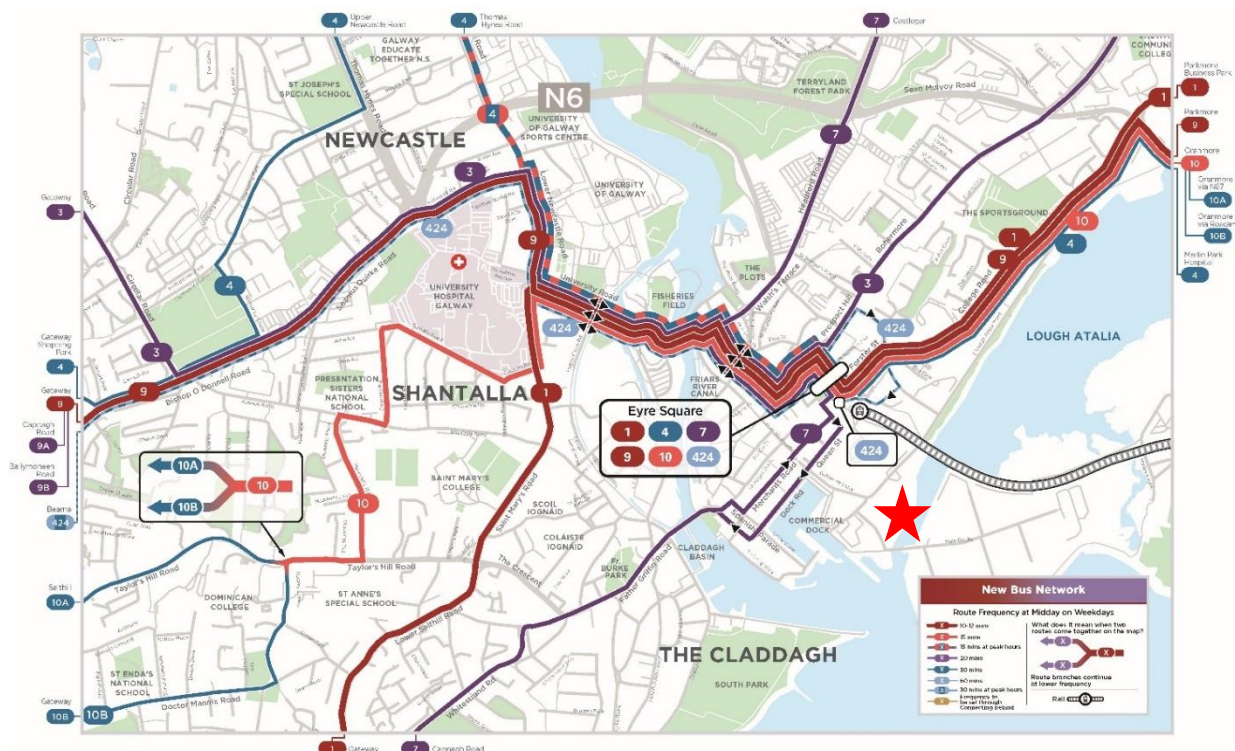


Figure 1.3: BusConnects Network (Indicative Location of the Subject Site Denoted By Red Star)

(Source: BusConnects.ie, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

The subject site would encourage greater active travel to and from the area. It will be a short walking distance to the city centre and core retailing area of the city, the upgraded community and public realm infrastructure to be developed as part of the proposal will further increase permeability and connectivity in the city centre for residents and visitors, but also the site is located close to multiple bus stops and Ceannt Station ensuring frequent services to and from the City from morning to midnight daily.

1.3 Proposed Development

Permission, as described in the Statutory Notices, is sought by the Land Development Agency for the following:

"The Land Development Agency intends to apply to Galway City Council for permission for a 'Large-Scale Residential Development' (LRD) at a site of 1.621 Ha in Galway Port at Dock Road and Lough Atalia Road, Galway City, and extending to include parts of both roads for road infrastructure works and water services infrastructure works.

The proposed development principally consists of: the demolition of the existing office / bus depot building (370.2 sq m) and ancillary building (26 sq m); the partial demolition of the existing ESB sub-station (67.4 sq m); the demolition of existing boundary walls at the south-west and north-west; and the construction of a mixed-use development.

The proposed mixed-use development primarily comprises: 356 No. residential apartments (172 No. 1-bed, 169 No. 2-bed and 15 No. 3-bed); crèche (255.9 sq m); 2 No. café/restaurant units (totalling 428.4 sq m) and 1 No. retail unit (156.0 sq m). The development has a total floor area of 32,096.0 sq m and is primarily proposed in 4 No. blocks (identified as A–D) that generally range in height from 6 No. to 13 No. storeys.

The proposed development also includes: new internal street and pedestrian network, including a one-way vehicular route at the north-western side of the site and new junctions with Dock Road at the south-west and with the access road from Lough Atalia at the north-west; upgrades to Lough Atalia Road and the access road from it at the north-west of the site, including the provision of a new toucan pedestrian/cycle crossing at Lough Atalia Road; upgrades to the footpath and road interface with Dock Road to the south-west; 37 No. car parking spaces; 1 No. set-down/delivery bay; 741 No. cycle parking spaces; hard and soft landscaping, including public open spaces and communal amenity spaces; private amenity spaces as balconies and terraces facing all directions; boundary treatments; public lighting; bin stores; plant rooms; rooftop lift overruns; rooftop telecommunications and plant infrastructure and enclosure at Block C; recladding of the existing sub-station and pumping station; and all associated works above and below ground."

Unit Type	Units	% of Total
1-Bedroom Units	172	49%
2-Bedroom Units	169	47%
3-Bedroom Units	15	4%
Total No. of Units	356	100%

Table 1.2: Schedule of Accommodation

(Source: ALTU Architects, 2025)

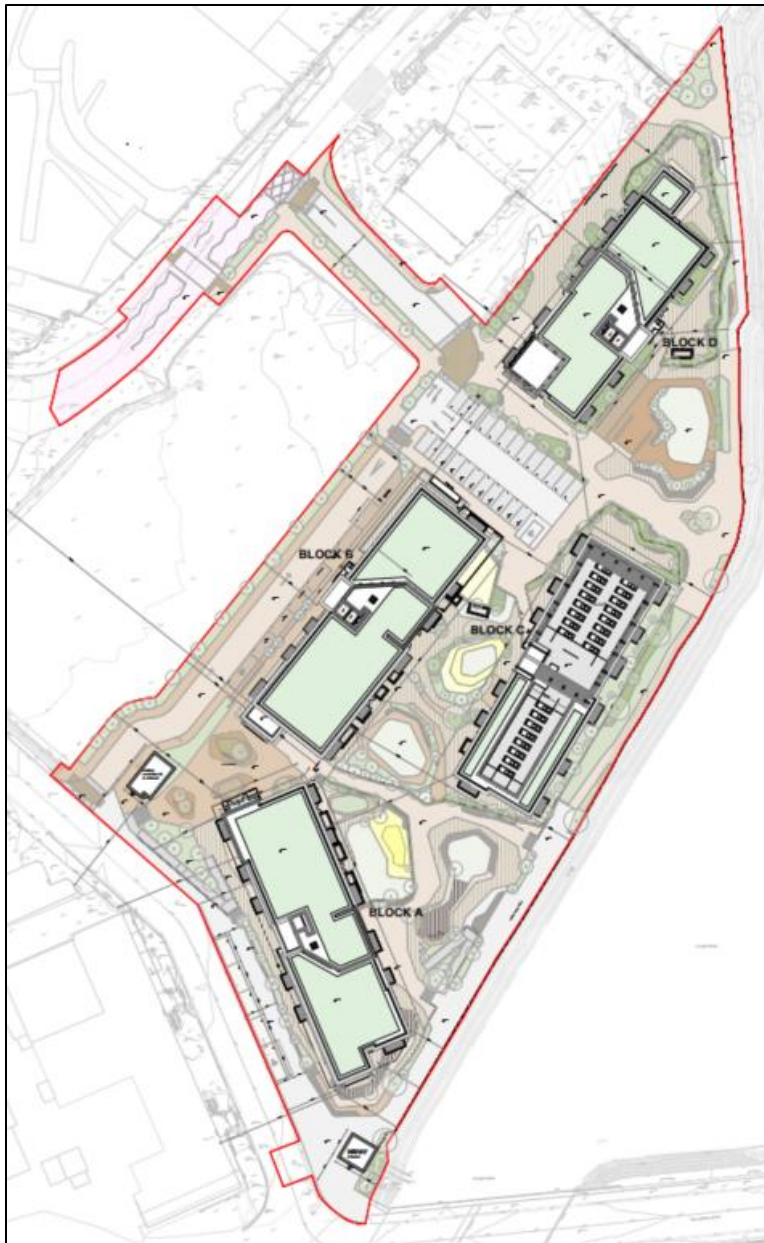


Figure 1.4: Proposed Site Layout

(Source: ALTU Architects, 2025)

1.4 Layout of this Report

The remaining Sections of this Report will follow the approach outlined in Section 1.1 as a structural framework with the identification and categorisation of all current Culture, Community, Recreational and Social Infrastructure in the area, followed by a demographic analysis that provides valuable insight into the characteristics of the population of the Study Area, prior to determining the potential demand impacts of the proposed development. The Report will comprise a further four Sections:

- **Section 2.0** provides the policy context and considers standards against which provision can be assessed;
- **Section 3.0** provides an overview of the population and demographic profile of the Study

Area and assesses the likely future demographic trends as a result of the implementation of the proposed development;

- **Section 4.0** reviews existing local Community, Cultural, Recreational and Social Infrastructure; and
- **Section 5.0** identifies gaps in the existing provision of Community Infrastructure and makes recommendations to address deficiencies.

2.0 RELEVANT POLICY GUIDANCE

For the purposes of this *Culture and Social Infrastructure Audit*, a range of National, Regional and Local Planning Policies relating to Social Infrastructure have been reviewed, including those within the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029*. These documents provide guidance with respect to the provision of new social and community facilities in residential development areas in a number of categories, including education and childcare services, healthcare facilities, cultural institutions, recreational facilities and other key services. The key points relating to this study, as derived from each policy document, will be highlighted in this Section.

2.1 National Planning Policy

2.1.1 National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

The *National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040* (2018) ('NPF') sets a vision for the planning and development of Ireland to 2040 which is to be implemented through Regional, County and Local Plans. The NPF sets out 50% of future population is to be accommodated within the existing footprint of Dublin and the four other cities, including Galway. The proposed development will contribute to this target.

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 "*ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure and social interactions available to us and the prospect of securing employment*" is intrinsic to providing a good quality of life for new and existing communities.

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.

With the lack of alternative guidance and in order to provide a policy and evidence-based approach to the Assessment, within this Report we use the NPF hierarchy to assess the infrastructure but defer to catchment specification prescribed in Local Development Plan Policy.

2.1.2 First Revision to the National Planning Framework

On 8th April 2025, in accordance Section 20C(5)(a) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) the Government published the first 6-year revision of the NPF. The Revision focuses on updates to the NPF to reflect significant and sustained population growth observed since the publication of the NPF in 2018 and updates to Government policy, amongst other factors. This section focuses on the main changes reflected in the Draft Revision which can be summarised as follows:

- National Population Growth Target increased from 5.8 million to 6.1 million by 2040. This represents an additional 300,000 people compared with the original NPF and would result in a total increase of 950,000 people over 2022 Census population figures. This projected increase in population is in line with the Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) baseline population projections contained in their July 2024 outlook.
- Amends regional population growth targets with the Northern and Western Region

increasing by approximately 150,000 additional people between 2022 and 2040 (approximately 210,000 additional people over 2016–2040) i.e. a population of just over 1 million. Galway City and Suburbs is expected to accommodate 36,000 of these people, thereby increasing to a population of over 122,000.

- Outlines a national requirement for 50,000 homes to be completed per year to satisfy demand. This is also in line with the ESRI projections, however, it is noted that this does not take account of existing structural pent-up demand nor a significant fall in household size (as outlined by the Housing Commission).
- Places greater emphasis on the accelerated delivery of transport orientated development (TOD) opportunities at greenfield and brownfield sites adjacent to major public transport hubs in the five cities, suburbs and metropolitan towns.

Taken together, the revised framework presents the same National Strategic Objectives with regards to social infrastructure and childcare, but places revised figures in relation to expected demographic demands and the requirements for significantly more residential units to be completed to meet demand.

2.1.3 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2024) provide national planning policy and guidance on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements in both urban and rural areas in Ireland. The aim is to promote environmentally friendly practices, efficient land use, and community-focused development. The guidelines recognise the importance of compact growth in urban areas and the importance of walkable well-designed neighbourhoods that can meet day-to-day needs of residents within a short 10- to 15-minute walk of homes. These day-to-day needs refer to social infrastructure, including access to educational facilities and childcare, as essential to good quality of life, and state that new development should take into consideration the SI needs of the community and the existing provision of same. Under the chapter titled 'Sustainable and Compact Settlements', the process for the delivery of successful quality placemaking is reviewed and the provision of key community facilities such as amenities, schools, crèches and other community services are referenced as forming essential elements. In applying this methodology, the guidelines note it will be necessary to make an "*informed estimate of net developable area taking account of factors such as the need for roads and parks, schools*" and planning for same.

The Guidelines promote a move away from segregated land use areas (residential, commercial and employment) that have reinforced unsustainable travel in favour of mixed-use neighbourhoods. Ensuring that there is a good mix and distribution of activities around a hierarchy of centres has many benefits in terms of reducing the need to travel and creating active and vibrant places. It states that specific key principles (noted below) should be applied in the preparation of local plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications:

- "In city and town centres and at high capacity public transport nodes and interchanges (defined in Table 3.8), development should consist of high intensity mix-use development (residential, commercial, retail, cultural and community uses) that responds in scale and intensity to the level of accessibility. At major transport interchanges, uses should be planned in accordance with the principles of Transport Orientated Development.*
- In city and town centres, planning authorities should plan for a diverse range of uses including retail, cultural and residential uses and for the adaption and re-use of the existing building stock (e.g. over the shop living). It is also important to plan for the activation of outdoor*

spaces and the public realm to promote more liveable city and town centres. Much of this can be achieved through the implementation of urban enhancement and traffic demand management measures that work together to free up space for active travel and create spaces that invite people to meet, mingle and dwell within centres.

- c) In areas that are less central, the mix of uses should cater for local services and amenities focused around a hierarchy of local centres that support residential communities and with opportunities for suitable non-residential development throughout.*
- d) In all urban areas, planning authorities should actively promote and support opportunities for intensification. This could include initiatives that support the more intensive use of existing buildings (including adaption and extension) and under-used lands (including for example the repurposing of car parks at highly accessible urban locations that no longer require a high level of private car access).*
- e) It will be important to align the integration of land uses and centres with public transport in order to maximise the benefits of public transport.*
- f) The creation of sustainable communities also requires a diverse mix of housing and variety in residential densities across settlements. This will require a focus on the delivery of innovative housing types that can facilitate compact growth and provide greater housing choice that responds to the needs of single people, families, older people and people with disabilities, informed by a Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) where possible. Development plans may specify a mix for apartment and other housing developments, but this should be further to an evidence-based Housing Needs and Demand Assessment."*

This audit has regard to these Guidelines which set out the distribution of uses and community infrastructure as being most relevant in the development of new residential areas. These criteria were considered in the development of the comprehensive infrastructure categories applied during the course of the study area audit.

2.1.4 Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025) out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of apartments in all housing or mixed-use developments that include apartments that may be made available for sale, whether for owner occupation or for individual lease, or for rental purposes.

The guidelines also includes 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), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms."

The document specifies the provision of 1 No. childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 No. child places) for every 75 No. proposed residential units. The application of this standard is, however, informed by the demographic profile of the area and the existing capacity of childcare

facilities.

In line with the above National Guidelines, any one-bedroom units within the proposed development would have been discounted in estimating the total number of minors (children aged 0–4 years) and school going children (5–18 years) expected to reside within the development. Instead, in the case of the proposed development, 184 No. units have been included. The estimation of children population and the likely demand for childcare services arising from them has been further detailed in the Audit in Section 4.o.

2.1.5 Action Plan for Education (Statement of Strategy 2023-2025)

The Department of Education has operated an *Action Planning Framework* to provide an overview of the activity associated with the strategic progress of the 2021-2023 strategy and priorities since 2021. The plan sets out key priorities on an annual basis, with the most recent Plan published in September 2023. This Plan translates the strategic priorities to actions and makes progress towards achieving the high-level goals for the Department and the sector. The high-level roadmap of how to achieve the Department's priorities over 2023–2025 are:

1. Enable the provision of high-quality education and improve the learning experience to meet the needs of all children and young people, in schools and early learning and care settings;
2. Ensure equity of opportunity in education and that all children and young people are supported to fulfil their potential;
3. Together with our partners, provide strategic leadership and support for the delivery of the right systems and infrastructure for the sector;
4. Organisational Excellence and Innovation

The *Action Plan for Education (Statement of Strategy 2023–2025)* provides useful insights into the requirements for new schooling infrastructure and the standards to ensure high-quality learning for all students.

2.1.6 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice

The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice (2008) is part of a wider package of initiatives designed to facilitate the provision of schools and schools-related infrastructure within the planning system and in line with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The following core objectives aim to provide an effective integration of schools in relation to the planning system:

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,
3. Local Authorities, as Planning Authorities, will support and assist the Department in ensuring the timely provision of school sites.

The document provides guidance when assessing future development potential of certain areas and establishing demand for schools. 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."

The Code of Practice stipulates the methodology for forecasting future education demand. Identification of future primary school demands should be based upon:

- *"The anticipated increase in overall population for the city/county plan area over the next nine years (as set out in relevant development or local area plans);*
- *The current school-going population based on school returns;*
- *The increase in school going population, assuming that an average of 12% of the population are expected to present for primary education; and*
- *The number of classrooms required in total derived from the above."*

The Report addresses reasonable estimates of future demand based on the influx of population arising from the proposed development in a manner that is consistent with national and regional estimates sourced by CSO results.

2.1.7 *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

Appendix 2 of the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001) produced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government state the following with respect to the provision of new communities/larger new housing developments (Paragraphs 2.4 and 3.3.1 also refer to this standard):

"Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary for example, development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments. For new housing areas, an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate [...]"

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

This document establishes an indicative standard of 1 No. childcare facility per 75 No. dwellings in new housing areas, where the facility provides a minimum of 20 No. childcare places. However, the guidance acknowledges that other case-specific insights may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement. Appendix 2 of the Guidelines states that the threshold and level of potential provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of an area.

The results of any childcare needs analysis carried out as part of a County Childcare Strategy should also be considered.

2.2 Regional Planning Policy

2.2.1 *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region*

The *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (Northern and Western Regional Assembly) (2020) ('RSES') was adopted in January 2020 and also includes the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Galway. This MASP sets a co-ordinated framework for planning and investment in Galway City and its environs. The RSES recognises the strategic importance of Galway City being

a connected city and a strategic link for the region. The social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Galway City and the Northern and Western Region is dependent on transport and infrastructure investment in order to improve accessibility and connectivity to the County and areas beyond. The RSES identifies transport investment priorities in accordance with the NDP investment commitments to bring a number of key enabling schemes to delivery in the Region by 2027 and includes the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR). The RSES also highlights the importance of Galway Port as a Port of regional significance, the Western Rail Corridor as a rail project with strategic importance and supports the development of a Strategy for the electrification of the rail network. It endorses greenway and blueway projects as a priority across the region and highlights the importance of walking and cycling in facilitating a modal shift to more sustainable transport options, promoting healthier lifestyles, better traffic management and assisting in mitigating climate change.

The RSES states that Social Infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities. Section 3.6 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 within the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan area. The RSES includes the following Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) which relate to access to Social Infrastructure and its overall improvement:

RPO 3.6.10 – *"Support the provision of Childcare, Education and Health Services within the same timeframes as the residential and employment uses outlined above."*

RPO 3.6.4 – *"The Assembly support the regeneration and development of city centre sites at Galway Harbour, Ceannt Station and Headford Road (S/M)."*

Regarding childcare facilities and schools, the RSES states that Local Authorities should consider demographic trends and patterns when carrying out an assessment of the need for Social Infrastructure.

Section 3.6 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 *Culture and Social Infrastructure Audit* to ensure the range of services, community facilities, and standards deemed to improve quality of life are considered.

2.3 Local Planning Policy

2.3.1 Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029

The *Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029* sets out a vision and an overall strategy for the planning and sustainable development of Galway City. Also included in the Development Plan are guiding policies and objectives for the development of Galway in terms of physical growth and renewal, economic, social, and cultural activity, and environmental protection and enhancement. While the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* does not provide specific guidance on the execution of social infrastructure audits, the plan includes a chapter on community development and culture. The plan recognises the importance of social infrastructure for creating diverse and vibrant communities that have access to a collection of social amenities that contributes their

well-being. The plan outlines the key policies and policy objectives aimed at the provision of general social infrastructure in Section 7. A key priority of the Development Plan is to create sustainable neighbourhoods, with a range of household types and tenures located in close proximity to community facilities and services. The following Policies and Objectives set out below are in relation to proposed developments and Community and Social Infrastructure Audits.

Policy 7.5 – Community Facilities:

1. *Facilitate a balanced and equitable provision of diverse community services and facilities in collaboration with key stakeholders in alignment with the core/settlement strategy through policies, zoning objectives and specific designations*
2. *Support the location and concentration of local community facilities and services in accordance with the aim to build sustainable, compact neighbourhoods in line with the '15-minute city' concept so that these can be easily accessible by walking and cycling. Where larger scaled facilities and services are provided these should be aligned with existing /proposed public transport links.*
3. *Ensure that all facilities designed for community use are suitable for use by people of all ages and abilities in accordance with the Building for Everyone – Universal Design Guidance.*
4. *Encourage and facilitate the provision of community facilities and local services of a nature and scale appropriate to serve the needs of the local community in tandem with the development of residential areas.*
5. *Maintain existing burial grounds and make provision for new cemeteries and associated services such as a crematorium to serve the existing and future targeted population of the city.*

Policy 7.6 – Education:

1. *Ensure that sufficient land is reserved for the establishment, improvement or expansion of education facilities within the city in accordance with the settlement strategy, targeted population and in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills (DES).*
2. *Support the ongoing development and provision of third level education, further education and lifelong learning in the city.*
3. *Facilitate the upgrade and expansion of existing education facilities and the provision of new education facilities as required, including to:*
 - a) *Support the future improvement and sustainable expansion of University of Galway;*
 - b) *Support the development of Atlantic Technological University (ATU);*
 - c) *Support the role of the GTI in the delivery of education;*
 - d) *Support the role of the GRETB in the delivery of Further Education and Training in the city.*
4. *Ensure that the design and layout of all educational establishments incorporate facilities for sustainable transport measures and public transport.*

Policy 7.7 – Childcare:

1. *Facilitate the development of childcare facilities, including afterschool services, at a number of suitable locations, such as, within residential areas, places of employment, city centre, neighbourhood and district centres, schools, in the vicinity*

of educational and community establishments and adjacent to public transport nodes in consultation with the Galway Childcare Committee.

2. *Contribute to the provision of childcare facilities by requiring that such facilities be provided in conjunction with residential developments over 75 dwelling units. An exception can only be considered where it can be clearly established and professionally supported that adequate childcare facilities already exist to service the area and where acceptable alternative arrangements to support childcare, play and or other child specific facilities are deemed acceptable.*

Policy 7.8 – Healthcare Facilities:

1. *Promote the delivery and enhancement of health care facilities in the city having regard to the designated role of Galway as a Regional City under the NPF/RSES.*
2. *Support the development and expansion of existing healthcare infrastructure by the HSE, statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers to support the provision of healthcare, including community based care, mental health and social care services as appropriate and in accordance with the local need and the regional role of the city.*
3. *Ensure healthcare facilities are delivered in tandem, and at an appropriate scale, with new residential development and in locations that are easily accessed by walking, cycling and public transport.*
4. *Support the delivery of an enhanced regional healthcare service, including for a new Emergency Department at University Hospital Galway (UHG) and expanded hospital services at Merlin Park University Hospital (MPUH) that will serve the Metropolitan Area and the wider regional catchment.*
5. *Support the delivery of key strategic healthcare infrastructure, including a new Elective Hospital, within the city with the preferred location at Merlin Park Hospital campus.*

With respect to new development and social infrastructure provision, the Development Plan states that it should only take place where sufficient schools, parks and other resources are already in place or are proposed for development. The proposed development is consistent with the abovementioned Policy Objectives. It provides for high-quality housing, on lands zoned for residential use, in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Development Plan, and in close proximity to the full range of Social and Community Infrastructure. The proposed development will provide much needed housing development to support the existing and future population of Galway City.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

To fulfil the strategic priorities of Galway City Council, it is essential that all areas have a strong sense of community, provide access to natural surroundings, and are well integrated with essential services, public amenities, and open spaces. This will contribute to fostering a healthy, resilient, and sustainable community. To gain insights into the specific requirements of the local residents, an in-depth examination of the demographic features of both the Study Area and the broader Galway City region has been conducted using data from the Census of 2016 and 2022. This analysis aims to identify the significant traits of the local population.

The assessment of the subject site was examined using the Census 2016 and 2022 results, as the latest Census available on the CSO website. The scope of the assessment was determined by overlaying a 1.5 km radius buffer zone over the application lands and assessing the relevant Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) Statutory Boundaries. For the subject site, the CSO Small Area (SA) Statistical Unit (as outlined in purple in Figure 3.1) was selected as the optimal measurement of local level insight. The Study Area selected refers to the aggregated data of 69 No. Small Area statistical units. Specifically, the study reviews the population's age profile, education attainment and economic status, to best understand the needs of the population regarding social and community facilities. This Study Area is also compared to larger trends within Galway City.



Figure 3.1: Extent of Demographic Study Area Comprising 69 No. CSO Small Area Boundaries of the Catchment Area

(Source: CSO, 2022, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

3.1 Population and Age

According to the 2022 Census, Ireland's population reached 5,149,139 in April 2022 – representing growth of 8.1% from the previous Census in 2016. Galway City's population stood at 84,414 in 2022, an increase from 2016 of 7.3%, or just over 5,700 people, and accounts for 1.6% of Ireland's population (Table 3.1). The NPF envisages the population of Galway City and Suburbs to grow by between 40,000–45,000 people by 2040 which is an increase of almost 55%. The Galway City Core Strategy presents a target, under the selected *50:50 City* scenario¹, to reach 96,167 persons by the end of the current Development Plan period in 2029. This would see the population in the City grow by a further 11,753 persons or 13.9%, from a 2022 baseline. Further age breakdowns indicate that 19.7% of the City population in 2022 was 18 years old or under, while 34,016 people (42.0%) were under 30. This compares to 18.6% of the population under 18 years old and 43.2% under 30 years old in 2016.

Area	Population, 2016	Population, 2022	2016-2022 Change (Number)	2016-2022 Change (%)
Study Area – 1.5 kilometre Radius	14,833	17,121	+2,288	+15.43%
Galway City	78,668	84,414	+5,746	+7.30%

Table 3.1: Population Change 2016–2022

(Source: CSO, 2022)

Over the same period, the population within the Study Area grew at a significantly faster rate, increasing by 2,288 persons (15.4%). Analysis of CSO data (Table 3.2) illustrates a strong representation of working age population within the 20–65 age groupings, with 72.6% of the total resident population classified within these age cohorts. The 20–49 age cohort further highlights this concentration of younger professionals, with 59.9% of the total population classified in this group. The area had an average age at 38.6 years which is in close alignment with Galway City. Just 8.0% of the population is aged under 14 years old, compared to 15.4% at the City-wide scale, while there was a higher proportion of the resident population (14.9%) aged over 65 years old.

Age Cohort	Study Area 2016 (Number)	Study Area 2016 (% Total)	Study Area 2022 (Number)	Study Area 2022 (% Total)
0-4	432	2.91%	480	2.80%
5-9	328	2.21%	421	2.46%
10-14	274	1.85%	470	2.75%
15-19	740	4.99%	772	4.51%
20-24	2,644	17.83%	2,765	16.15%
25-29	1,958	13.20%	2,336	13.64%
30-34	1,620	10.92%	1,702	9.94%
35-39	1,089	7.34%	1,337	7.81%
40-44	730	4.92%	1,165	6.80%
45-49	607	4.09%	945	5.52%
50-54	644	4.34%	745	4.35%
55-59	640	4.31%	772	4.51%
60-64	725	4.89%	664	3.88%

¹ Further refinement of projections completed by the Economic Social Research Institute (ESRI) and published as *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning* (Section 28 Guidelines, 2020).

Age Cohort	Study Area 2016 (Number)	Study Area 2016 (% Total)	Study Area 2022 (Number)	Study Area 2022 (% Total)
65-69	682	4.60%	639	3.73%
70-74	596	4.02%	585	3.42%
75-79	448	3.02%	520	3.04%
80-84	365	2.46%	409	2.39%
85+	311	2.10%	394	2.30%
Total	14,833	100.00%	17,121	100.00%

Table 3.2: Number and Percentage of the Total Population each Age Cohort 2016–2022

(Source: CSO, 2022)

In terms of cohort stability, the working age population (20–64 years) has remained broadly the same in the period since 2016, increasing by 1,806 persons, and maintaining a similar proportion of total population at 77.1% in 2022. This is also true for older cohorts with persons aged 65+ growing by just 145 persons since 2016. The number of people under 14 years of age has increased since 2016, with 337 more children in the catchment (a single percentage point increase in terms of overall population composition). Growth in population across all age cohorts indicates increasing demand requirements for social infrastructure. Growth of population in younger age groups would indicate an increasing demand for facilities and services such as sport and recreation. It also indicates increased demand for schooling and childcare infrastructure into the future. An increasing proportion of population in older age groups indicates higher demand for health facilities and aged care in the Study Area.

3.2 Household Composition

The Study Area consists of a near even mix of dwellings with 56.5% of dwelling units in 2022 registered as Houses, while 43.2% were classified as Apartment units. Rates of owner-occupancy in the area are comparatively low with just 35.0% of households owing their own home (with or without mortgage), with 49.6% of households privately rented, and the remaining a further 4.0% socially rented. The average household size in 2022 was 2.38 persons per household, below the average for Galway City (2.62 persons per household). Some 27.7% of all households consist of 1 No. person, with a further 35.9% consisting of 2 person households, and just 17.5% of all households consisting of 4 No. or more persons living together (Table 3.3). Both Galway City and the Study Area have a similar profile of persons per household but the Study Area has notably higher proportion of 2-person households and lower proportion of 4-person and large households.

Compositional data indicates that just 25.9% of all households contain children. In analysing the breakdown of 'Single' persons it is noted that 52.2% of all households consist of either a 'single' person, or 'non-related' persons living in Group Accommodation (Shared). Some 22.8% of all households are classified as 'retired' or 'older couple' indicative of mature neighbourhoods. Taken collectively, the data suggests that the catchment area primarily consists of single young professionals living in apartments or shared houses, with some concentrations of families with children or retired households located to the west and north-east of the catchment.

Household Type	Study Area Households 2022	Galway City Households 2022
1 Person Households	27.7%	25.5%
2 Person Households	35.9%	30.6%
3 Person Households	19.0%	19.2%
4 Person Households	10.7%	15.1%
5+ Person Households	6.8%	9.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3.3: Persons Per Household in the Study Area and Galway City – 2022

(Source: CSO, 2022)

3.3 Education

The largest proportion of residents had completed 'Third Level' education (38.0%) in 2022. This is comparable to, although slightly less than, the levels of educational attainment in Galway City, with 42.4% of the population having completed 'Third Level' education, but is significantly higher than the national average. It should be noted that a further 18.0% of the population have also completed 'Post-Graduate Education or Higher' at the time of the Census, compared to 17.1% in Galway City, and just 1.4% were recorded as having 'No Formal Education'. Taken together, these figures indicate a well-educated population in the Study Area, that surpasses attainment in most areas of the county and nationally.

Education Level	Study Area	% of Total	Galway City	% of Total
No Formal Education	170	1.4%	672	1.4%
Primary Education	482	4.0%	3,156	6.5%
Secondary Education	2,179	18.2%	12,035	24.8%
Third Level Education (Any Level)	4,542	38.0%	20,457	42.2%
Postgraduate or Higher	2,151	18.0%	8,301	17.1%
Not Stated	2,421	20.3%	3,896	8.0%
Total	11,945	100.0%	48,517	100.0%

Table 3.4: Population Aged 15+ Years by Highest Level of Education Completed in Galway City and the Study Area – 2022

(Source: CSO, 2022)

3.4 Affluence and Deprivation

The purpose of an affluence and deprivation index is to assess social conditions using a single indicator. The *Pobal HP Deprivation Index* (2022) is used by public bodies across Ireland to identify potentially disadvantaged communities and target investment/policy to improve the quality of life and access to opportunities for those living in them. The subject site is located in an area (based on Small Areas) that is classified in aggregate as 'Marginally Above Average'. This profile is highly contrasted spatially, with areas closer to Eyre Square classified as 'Affluent', while areas closer to Claddagh are largely classified as 'Marginally Below Average'. The profile suggests a need to provide for a diverse mix of social and community infrastructure to cater for both needs. The aggregate scoring of 'Marginally Above Average' indicates that the area has higher than average educational attainment, lower levels of unemployment, low age dependency, lower rates of disability, etc. relative to other parts of the country.

3.5 Employment

The economic profile, based on Census 2022, indicates a young population with a large cohort of the population in the 20-49 age cohorts. The area continues to have an active workforce age bracket, with a high proportion of the population at work. The majority of the population over 15 years of age are categorised as 'At Work' in 2022 (55.5%). The percentage of people unemployed in the area is lower (5.5%) than Galway City (5.7%). The percentage of students (16.7%) in the Study Area is also marginally higher than the percentage of students in Galway City (16.0%). Galway City is considered a major destination for higher education (National University of Ireland Galway, and Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology are located in the city with a combined enrolment of over 25,000 No. students) and thus has a higher proportion of population classified as student that is seen nationally (11.1%). The number of people retired in the Study Area is marginally higher (14.7%) to that of Galway City (13.3%).

The Galway City Centre core area would be classified as a major employer, given its central location. The daytime population of the Study Area was registered at 42,061 No. persons in 2016. This refers to those persons that are typically located within the area during the daytime hours for school, work or living and not leaving for work. Some 21,391 No. persons are employed within the Study Area, classifying it as the largest employment destination in Galway City. Those working in the area largely do so in either 'education, human health, and social work activities' (34.7%), or 'wholesale, retail trade' (28.7%), or 'information, communication and financial services (14.4%). Given these employment opportunities the Study Area will continue to attract population of working age.

3.6 Religion, Transport and International Community

Within the Study Area, 54.2% of the population identify as 'Not Religious' with the remaining 26.2%² identifying as religious and likely have some need for religious place of worship. Equally, ensuring there is adequate community infrastructure to help diverse communities feel included and empowered is critical. The Study Area has a comparably large international community with 30.2% of the local population born outside of Ireland.

A large proportion (46.2%) of the resident population rely on green modes of transport for daily activities, with 'Bike' (4.8%), 'Walking' (33.8%), and 'Public Transport' (7.7%) making up a large portion of transportation. Daily commuting patterns show 60.8% of trips to work/school are under 30 minutes, with just 2.9% indicating a travel time of over an hour. Trips by 'Private Car (Driver or Passenger)' constitute a comparably lower 28.4% of all daily movements indicating an increasing car-free community. Some 18.4% of households do not access to a Car.

² 19.5% of the population did not state their religion in 2022, which constitutes the remaining percentage value.

4.0 FACILITIES AUDIT

As stated previously, the subject site, measuring 1.62 Ha in area, is situated in the Docks area of Galway City, immediately southeast of Lough Atalia Road and the city centre. The site is largely composed of reclaimed lands close to where Lough Atalia connects with Galway Bay, and is a short walk from both Eyre Square and Galway (Ceannt) Train Station, and is proximal to all the amenities of the core city centre retailing area, such as restaurants, cafes, shops, and entertainment venues. The central location provides great connections to other major cities, allowing for easy travel and transport via the existing bus and rail networks.

The Study Area for this Assessment is defined by a 1.5 km radius of the subject site, equivalent to a c. 15- to 20-minute walking distance, which is considered accessible to future residents of the proposed development. No prescribed spatial distances have been defined by Galway City Council within the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* as the radius for future Community, Culture and Social Infrastructure Audits. As such, given that the subject site is located on the coast, with a substantial area occupied by Galway Bay and Lough Atalia, it was judged that a typical 1 km walkable distance (< 15 minutes) should be extended to 1.5 km to capture, survey and include all relevant infrastructure to the Study Area and the proposed development.

The survey identified a large range of community facilities within the Study Area. A total of 7 No. categories of facilities that align with the Policies set out in the Development Plan were utilised for this Audit. Some 170 No. community, cultural or social infrastructure facilities were identified as part of this Audit within a radius of 1.5 km of the subject site.

Category	Facility Type
Education and Training Services	Primary, Post-Primary, Third Level, Further Education, Other Lifelong Training Centres
Childcare Facilities	Registered Childcare Facilities Incl. Full Day, Part-Time and Sessional Services
Social, Community and Cultural Facilities	Community Centres, Libraries, Senior and Youth Centres, Post Offices, Banks and Credit Unions, Museums, Galleries, Theatres, Cinemas, Music Venues, Historical Cultural Sites
Healthcare and Emergency Services	Hospitals, Health Centres, Primary Care Centres, Doctors and Specialty Clinics, Dental, Physiotherapy, Counselling, Optician, Pharmacy, Garda Stations, Fire Stations
Open Space and Recreation	Parks, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, Sports Centres and Clubs, Leisure Centres, Gyms and Training Facilities, Swimming Pools
Religious Institutions	Areas of Worship, Churches, Cemeteries
Retail Centres and Services	Convenience Retailing, Other Relevant Retail

Table 4.1: Community Infrastructure Categories Applied to Audit

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)



Figure 4.1: Principal Study Area

(Source: Bing Maps, Annotated By
Thornton O'Connor Town
Planning, 2025)

4.1 Education Facilities

A Schools Demand Assessment has been carried out to examine the capacity of existing primary and post-primary school facilities located in the vicinity of the subject site, alongside the demographic demands, to understand the direction of demand and the resulting need for additional schooling infrastructure in the future.

A methodology for the assessment of educational facilities and schools has been developed in accordance with the directions provided in planning policy, and it involves the following steps:

1. Defining a Study Area using relevant spatial jurisdictions;
2. A demographic and socio-economic evaluation of the composition of population within the Study Area;
3. Determining the extent and provision of existing educational facilities and schools within the Study Area; and
4. Estimating the level of demand for schools that may arise from the development proposal.

In accordance with current guidelines, the following Section provides an examination of local need for educational facilities at the subject site and its wider surroundings. Accordingly, the latest data was obtained from the Department of Education and Skills, Primary Online Database (POD)³ and the National School Census, for existing educational facilities in the locality. Reporting also provides detail on the current and future capacity of existing and planned schools in the area. The aim of this assessment is to establish projected demand for school places within the existing schools network generated by the proposed development.

³ Department of Education and Skills – National School Annual Census for 2024/2025, which is returned via the Primary Online Database (POD). This includes both the Census and the Special School Annual Census. Only schools aided by the Department of Education and Skills are included in this list. Data was published June 2024 and is the latest available as of July 2025.

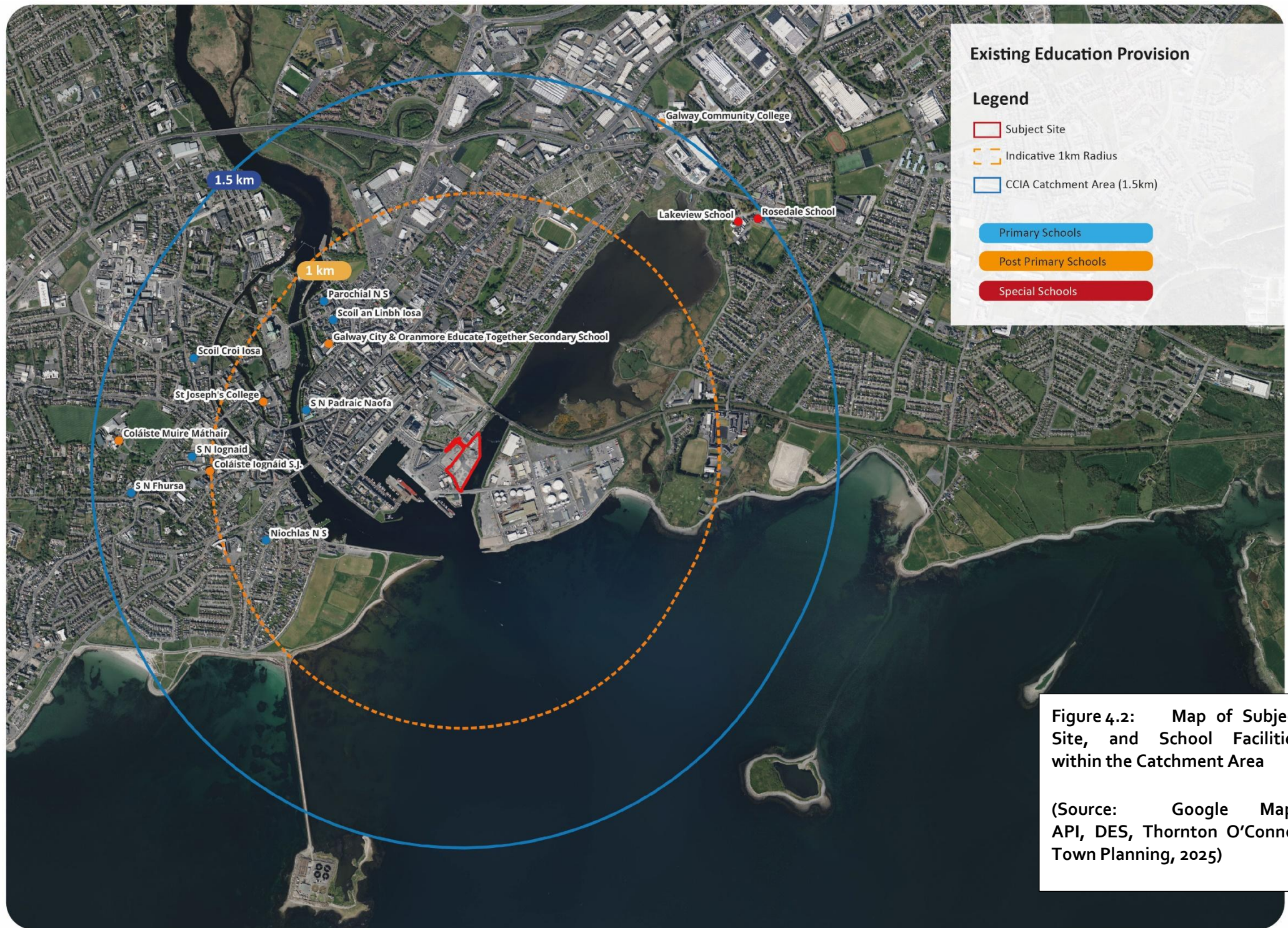


Figure 4.2: Map of Subject Site, and School Facilities within the Catchment Area

(Source: Google Maps API, DES, Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

4.1.1 Primary Schools

The 7 No. existing primary schools identified within the catchment held a combined enrolment of 1,669 No. students during the 2024/2025 school year as per the Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. All 7 No. of the schools identified are co-educational (mixed) schools. The primary school that is located nearest to the subject site (S N PADRAIC NAOFA National School – identified in blue in Table 4.2) held a co-educational enrolment of 231 No. students in 2024/2025.

Supplementary to the enrolment information acquired from the DES, a review of the schools' websites and the 2025/2026 Schools' Admissions Notices was carried out in June 2025 by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning to ensure that available spaces in classes are captured in this Audit. Table 4.2 provides a detailed breakdown of this available capacity per school. As per Section 63 of the *Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018*⁴, schools are required to publish an Annual Admissions Notice each year with key information about the annual admissions process.

This review helped determine the trend in schools for admitting students into the classes each year. For the 2025/2026 academic year, the Admissions Notices for primary schools indicated a total enrolment capacity of 228 No. students in the catchment (224 No. spaces for Junior Infants, and 4 No. spaces for Other Years). These 228 No. places refer to the places made available each academic cycle resulting from graduating or moving students, rather than any additional capacity to the overall schooling infrastructure. Where schools have not provided sufficient information on their intake for the next academic year, these have been assumed to be zero.

No.	Roll No.	School Name	Distance from Site (km)	Females	Males	2024-2025 Enrolment	Available Capacity per School (2025/26) Websites		
							Junior Infants	Other Years	Total
1	01013N	SCOIL CROI IOSA	1.2	74	62	136	20	0	20
2	04515G	SCOIL AN LINBH IOSA	0.8	144	117	261	40	1	41
3	16750J	PAROCHIAL N S	0.9	36	35	71	11	0	11
4	16937C	S N FHURSA	1.4	102	98	200	20	0	20
5	16943U	NIOCHLAS N S	0.8	115	156	271	36	3	39
6	17784I	S N PADRAIC NAOFA	0.7	82	149	231	30	0	30
7	19371Q	S N IOGNAID	1.1	229	270	499	67	0	67
Total				782	887	1,669	224	4	228

Table 4.2: Recorded Enrolments for Primary Schools

(Source: DES, 2025, and Individual School Admission Notices, 2025)

Table 4.3 below provides information on each of the primary schools, inclusive of their enrolment numbers for the previous 10 No. academic years (2014–2015 to 2024–2025). Changes over the last 5 and 10 years are presented to provide an understanding of trends in the recent and more distance past. The overall enrolment figure associated with the 7 No. primary schools within the catchment has decreased over the past 5 and 10 No. years (56 No. fewer children over the past 10 No. years), despite the population increases in the city. S N PADRAIC NAOFA National School (identified in blue in Table 4.3), has decreased marginally to 231 No. students in the 2024–2025 academic year (from 232 No. students in 2014–2015). This area has enough capacity to grow with increases in the population of the area into the future, and would indicate that there is available capacity within the existing primary schools.

⁴ Section 62 of this Act requires that, from 1st February 2020, Boards of Management have 3 No. months to revise their Admission Policies in line with the commenced provisions of the Act.

Catchment		Enrolment Year			Historic Change	
Roll No.	School Name	14/15	19/20	24/25	5-year (20–25)	10-year (15–25)
01013N	SCOIL CROI IOSA	89	128	136	8	47
04515G	SCOIL AN LINBH IOSA	188	205	261	56	73
16750J	PAROCHIAL N S	93	86	71	-15	-22
16937C	S N FHURSA	248	260	200	-60	-48
16943U	NIOCHLAS N S	304	288	271	-17	-33
17784I	S N PADRAIC NAOFA	232	205	231	26	-1
19371Q	S N IOGNAID	571	539	499	-40	-72
Total		1,725	1,711	1,669	-42	-56

Table 4.3: Existing Primary Schools: Enrolment Figures 2013–2014 to 2024–2025

(Source: DES, 2025)

There are 2 No. special education schools located within the 1.5 km catchment (Table 4.4), that held an enrolment of 147 No. students in the 2024–2025 academic year. Admissions Notices indicate the enrolment capacity in the 2025–2026 academic year to be approximately 24 No. places.

No.	Roll No.	School Name	Females	Males	2023–2024 Enrolment	Available Capacity per School Websites (2025/26)
1	19201O	Lakeview School	20	54	74	12
2	20070J	ROSEDALE SCHOOL	33	40	73	12
Total					147	24

Table 4.4: Recorded Enrolments for Special Education School

(Source: DES, 2025, and Individual School Admission Notices, 2025)

Table 4.5 indicates that the enrolment figures for the special education school in the area have generally increased from the 2020–2021 academic year to the 2024–2025 academic year, with the total enrolment increasing by 41 No. students over the period.

School	Roll No.	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025
Lakeview School	19201O	41	50	54	65	74
ROSEDALE SCHOOL	20070J	65	69	69	70	73
Total		106	119	123	131	147

Table 4.5: Existing Special Education School: Enrolment Figures 2020–2021 to 2024–2025

(Source: DES, 2025)

4.1.2 Post-Primary Schools

There were 5 No. post-primary schools identified within the catchment which held a co-educational enrolment of 2,973 No. students during the 2024–2025 school year, as per the Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. Enrolment in Galway City & Oranmore Educate Together Secondary School (identified in blue in Table 4.3), which opened in 2019, has increased to 350 No. students in the 2024–2025 academic year (from 37 No. students in 2019–2020). Galway City & Oranmore Educate Together Secondary School is a mixed/co-educational school currently holding a temporary residence in the city centre, with plans to build a new

secondary school with capacity for one thousand students (up from the approximate 300–350 No. student capacity currently). As of May 2024 it was announced that An Bord Pleanála has approved a compulsory purchase order to acquire lands in Oranmore for a new secondary school. The site at Coast Road is 8 km east of Galway City, and 1 km northwest of the centre of Oranmore and will significantly increase the capacity for post-primary places in the catchment in the coming years.

Supplementary to the enrolment information acquired from the DES, a review of the schools' website and the 2025/2026 Schools' Admission Notice was carried out in June 2025 by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning to ensure that available spaces in classes are captured in this Audit. Table 4.6 provides a detailed breakdown of this available capacity. As per Section 63 of the *Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018*, schools are required to publish an Annual Admissions Notice each year with key information about the annual admissions process.

This review helped determine the trend in the school for admitting students into the classes each year. For the 2025/2026 academic year, the Admissions Notice for the post-primary school indicated a total enrolment capacity of 556 No. students (547 No. spaces for First Years, and 9 No. spaces for Other Years). These 556 No. places refer to the places made available each academic cycle resulting from graduating and moving students, rather than any additional capacity to the overall schooling infrastructure.

No.	Roll No.	School Name	Distance from Site (km)	Females	Males	2024-2025 Enrolment	Available Capacity per School Websites (2025/26)		
							First Years	Other Years	Total
1	62960H	St Joseph's College	0.8	0	767	767	150	1	151
2	62970K	Coláiste Iognáid S.J.	1.0	281	355	636	104	2	106
3	68347V	Galway City & Oranmore Educate Together Secondary School	0.7	165	185	350	72	0	72
4	68405J	Coláiste Muire Máthair	1.3	294	471	765	144	6	150
5	71400Q	Galway Community College	1.5	206	249	455	77	0	77
Total				853	1,964	2,817	547	9	556

Table 4.6: Recorded Enrolments for Post-Primary School

(Source: DES, 2025, and Individual School Admission Notice, 2025)

Table 4.7 provides an overview of the post-primary schools within the catchment, inclusive of their enrolment numbers according to data published by the DES for the academic years 2014–2015 to 2024–2025. Changes over the last 5 and 10 years are presented to provide an understanding of trends in the recent and more distance past. As highlighted in Table 4.7, the overall enrolment figure associated with the 5 No. post-primary schools in the catchment area has increased during this period from 2,459 No. to 2,973 No. pupils; 514 No. additional pupils (20.9%). This indicates recent growth in demand for post-primary school infrastructure within the catchment, and indicates a continued demand for additional post-primary school places within the city.

Catchment		Enrolment Year			Historic Change	
Roll No.	School Name	14/15	19/20	24/25	5-year	10-year
62960H	St Joseph's College	757	755	767	12	10
62970K	Coláiste Iognáid S.J.	624	627	636	9	12
68347V	Galway City & Oranmore Educate Together Secondary School	0	37	350	313	350
68405J	Coláiste Muire Máthair ⁵	441	626	765	139	324
71400Q	Galway Community College	637	265	455	190	-182
Total		2,459	2,310	2,973	663	514

Table 4.7: Existing Post-Primary School: Enrolment Figures 2014–2015 to 2024–2025

(Source: DES, 2025)

4.1.3 Future Demand Analysis

4.1.3.1 Demographic Growth Projection

In November 2021, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) reported that enrolment figures for primary schools in Ireland were likely to have reached peak levels in 2019, and will fall gradually to a low point in 2033 (see Figure 4.3), in line with revised migration and fertility assumptions for the country as a whole. The latest statistical release⁶ by the DES in this respect states:

"Enrolments in primary schools in Ireland in 2020 stood at 561,411 down by almost 6,000 on 2019 (567,716). Enrolments are now projected to fall over the coming years under all scenarios, and under the M1F2⁷ scenario will reach a low point of 440,551 by 2033. This is 120,860 lower than today's figure. Enrolments will rise again thereafter and are projected to stand at 474,888 by 2040, a rise of some 34,300 over the seven years 2033 to 2040."

The study also concluded that post-primary school enrolments, however, will likely reach peak enrolment levels in 2024 (see Figure 4.4). The DES Report⁸ states:

"Enrolments in post-primary schools have risen by 26,923 (8%) over the past five years and are projected to continue rising over the short term. Under M1F2 they are projected to peak in 2024 with 408,794 pupils, some 29,610 higher than in 2020."

⁵ Our Lady's College 68285C and St. Mary's College 62980N have amalgamated into Coláiste Muire Máthair 68405J as per the Dept. of Education.

⁶ Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, November 2021), pg. 6.

⁷ The CSO's Regional Population Projections utilise six variant scenarios with relative assumptions in relation to regional fertility, mortality trends and external migration from and to each region. The Department of Education and Skills anticipates that M1F2 is the most likely scenario regarding migration and fertility, which encompasses the assumption of high migration and low fertility falling from 1.8 to 1.6 by 2031.

⁸ Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, November 2021), pg. 11.

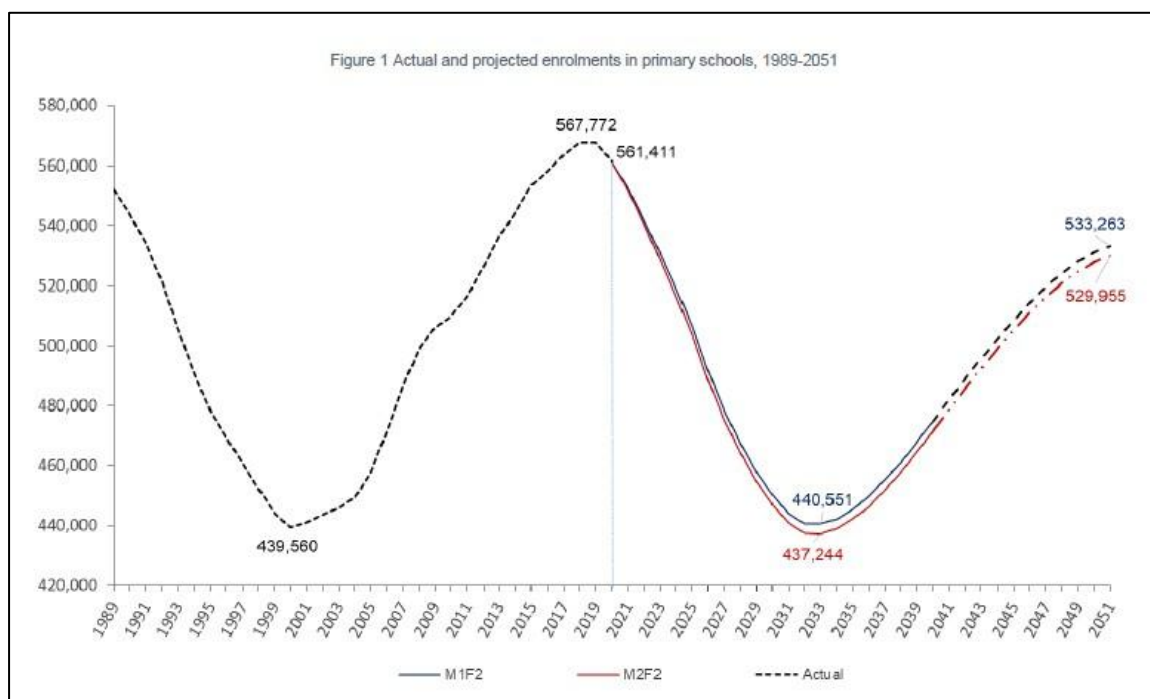


Figure 4.4: Actual and Projected Enrolments in Primary Schools, 1989–2051, Organised by Growth Projection Scenarios Created by the CSO

(Source: DES, 2021)

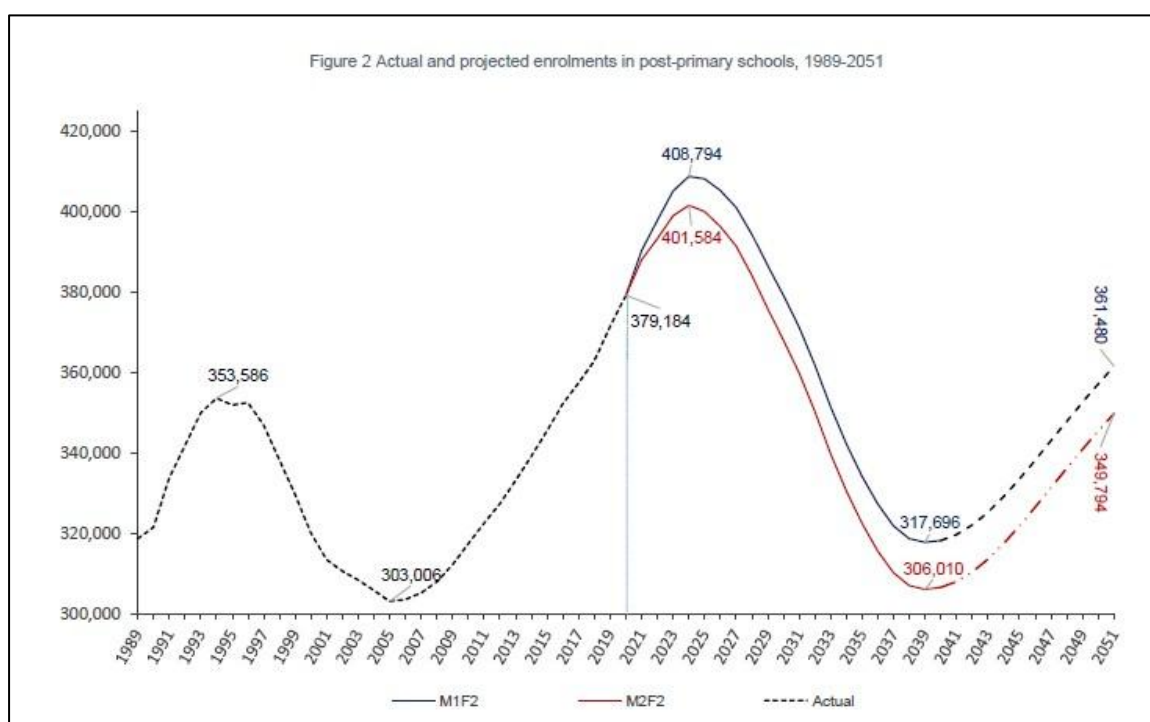


Figure 4.5: Actual and Projected Enrolments in Post-Primary Schools, 1989–2051, Organised by Growth Projection Scenarios Created by the CSO

(Source: DES, 2021)

4.1.3.2 Potential Impact on Catchment Schools

Using the projected enrolment figures⁹ for the West Region, as set out in the Department of Education and Skills' *Projections for Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040*, the study can extrapolate future enrolment for the 2028/2029 academic year for Galway City. The 2028/2029 academic year has been selected in this study as the year the proposed development should be completed and occupied. The Report projects the enrolment figures in primary schools within the West Region to drop by 15.1% between the academic years 2024/2025 and 2028/2029 (4 year period). Applying this future projection figure to the current enrolment figures within the Galway City catchment schools it is estimated that enrolments in the 7 No. primary schools identified in the Assessment are set to reduce by 252 No. spaces by the 2028/2029 academic year.

At the post-primary level, the Report projects the enrolment figures to decrease marginally by 3.3% between the 4 academic years from 2024/2025 to 2028/2029. This would result in an decrease of 98 No. children in the 5 No. post-primary school identified within the catchment by the 2028/2029 academic year. We note that the indicative change figures provided are an estimate of potential enrolments and are based on the regional population projections included in the DES Report¹⁰ and do not represent localised values.

Catchment	Enrolment Year		% Change Estimate	Change
	24/25	28/29		
Primary Schools (7)	1,669	1,417	-15.1% decrease	-252
Post-Primary Schools (5)	2,973	2,875	-3.3% decrease	-98

Table 4.9: Projected Enrolment Trends – 2025 to 2029

(Source: DES, 2024)

4.1.3.3 Projected Demand Generated by Proposed Development

The proposed development will comprise 356 No. units, of which for this study all are assumed to be able accommodate a children (1-bedroom units are included for this study as they reflect the existing housing stock and census findings). The average household size in the Study Area recorded by the 2022 Census was 2.38 No. persons per household, which generates a total indicative population of 848 No. persons when applied to the proposed development.

Assuming the proposed development will preserve the same cohort proportions represented at Study Area level (see Table 4.10 below) then the development is likely to generate an indicative population of 90 No. children (between the ages of 0–18 years) when applied to the total number of units. Of this figure, an estimated 66 No. children would be considered school age (including 35 No. primary school children and 31 No. post-primary school children), as per the age cohorts recorded for Galway City¹¹ in the Census 2022 (Table 4.10).

⁹ Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, 2021), Table 4.

¹⁰ Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, 2021), Table 7.

¹¹ Source: <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>

Age Group	Pre-School Children (0–4 years)	Primary School Children (5–12 years)	Post-Primary School Children (13–18 years)	Total Population
Study Area 2022 Population	480	713	620	17,121
% of Total Cohort	2.80%	4.16%	3.62%	100%

Table 4.10: Breakdown of 0–18 Year Age Cohort for Study Area

(Source: CSO, 2022)

Having regard to the foregoing, the development has the potential to generate an additional 848 No. persons within the area, including an estimated 66 No. children (including 36 No. primary school children and 30 No. post-primary school children), when fully occupied.

4.1.4 Completed and Planned Infrastructure

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) announced in April 2018, as part of their School Building Programme, that more than 40 No. new primary and post-primary schools were to be established throughout the country by 2022. Since 2018, over 40 No. new schools have been completed across the country. Subsequent additions to the School Building Programme list have been announced each year between 2018 and 2024 in line with demographic and local needs analyses. A small number of the 42 No. schools from the original list have not been completed as of 2025, or have been deferred for a variety of reasons (i.e. planning, phasing, or demographics).

The *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029* notes that educational infrastructure will need to be improved in order to meet future population demand. Relevant to the subject site, and the current demands for post-primary places in particular, there are 2 No. post-primary school sites and 1 No. special school site that has been designated to meet the needs of the City's growing population (including of the proposed development). As of June 2025, the status of these projects to increase capacity in the area are as follows:

- The Department has identified and purchased a permanent site to accommodate the 1,000-pupil capacity Galway Educate Together post-primary school that was established in 2019 to serve the Galway city and Oranmore school planning areas as a regional solution (capacity of current school is approximately 300–350 No students). As of May 2024, it was announced that An Bord Pleanála has approved a compulsory purchase order to acquire lands in Oranmore for a new secondary school. The site at Coast Road is 8 km east of Galway City, and 1km northwest from the centre of Oranmore and will significantly increase the capacity for post-primary places in the catchment in the coming years. As of the June 2025 release of the School Building Programme status report this project is reported at Pre Stage 1.
- In June 2024, Galway City gave planning permission for a new 1,000-pupil secondary school to be built in Dangan – as a new home for St Joseph's College, The Bish (current holding a capacity of 750 No. students). The permitted development, on a site close to the University of Galway sports campus off the Galway-Clifden Road, will involve the construction of a modern 11,134 square metre school to include classrooms, a PE/multi-purpose Hall, a two-classroom Special Needs Unit and specialist room accommodation. As of the June 2025 release of the School Building Programme status report this project is reported at Stage 2b (Detailed Design).
- The Department of Education has given the go-ahead for a new permanent building for Galway's Ábalta Special School, which will be located in Oranmore. Ábalta Special

School will provide 26 No. new classrooms, a substantial increase over the current 3 No. that they can support at Parkmore East Business Park. As of the June 2025 release of the School Building Programme status report, this project is reported at Pre Stage 1.

The Department also has building projects at primary, post-primary and special schools across Galway City and County, including new school buildings for Scoil Chaitríona Junior and Senior Schools, Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, Rosedale Special School, Scoil Mhuire, Moycullen and St. Teresa's Special School, among others. There are also multiple large and small scale extension projects planned across the county.

The Minister for Education (Norma Foley) responded to a parliamentary question on educational capacity in Galway City in May 2024 noting that:

"As part of planning for September 2024, data on applications for admission has been received by the Department from post-primary schools across areas of enrolment pressure, including Athenry, Oranmore and Galway City and updated data on offers and acceptances continues to be received as admissions processes transact. The sharing of this data has been very effective in the identification of school place requirements across the areas. In the majority of areas through the work of schools, patrons, management bodies and the Department, there are sufficient school places available to meet the needs of children in the area. However, there is an identified requirement for additional first year places in the Galway City and Athenry School Planning Area and the Department has been liaising with schools and patrons in this respect, with a view to advancing a solution as soon as possible.

*The Deputy will appreciate that there can often be significant overlap across areas and schools and the nature of the admissions processes is quite complex. As a result there can be multiple iterations, where applicants may accept a place but subsequently be offered and accept a place at a second school, freeing up capacity at the first school accepted. In that context, while some applicants may not yet have received an offer of a school place for 2024/25, families can be assured that all children who require a school place will be provided with one. The Department is continuing to work with schools and patrons to ensure that there are sufficient school places available, and to put any required solutions in place."*¹²

It is judged that the proposed level of educational infrastructure can support the ongoing residential development occurring in Galway City, and that the Department of Education will progress the sustainable development of new schooling infrastructure to meet future demand.

4.1.5 Conclusion

There are 7 No. existing primary schools, 5 No. existing post-primary school and 2 No. existing special education school in the catchment area, to which the subject site belongs. These facilities cater to a student population of 1,669 No. primary school students and 2,973 No. post-primary school students and have demonstrated different levels of growth in the recent 10-year period, with primary school enrolments decreasing by 3.2% and post-primary school enrolments increasing by 20.9% over the same period.

With respect to future enrolments, it is noted that an approximate 15.1% decrease in primary school enrolments and an approximate 3.3% decrease in post-primary school enrolments is anticipated between the academic years 2024/2025 and 2028/2029, but will fall gradually to a low point by 2039 (Figure 4.5), with respect to the most recent regional population projections

¹² Source: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2024-05-28/58/>

published by the DES. **The visible decline in enrolments at primary school level is in line with government demographic projections, and is expected to continue to 2033. Post-primary school enrolments are projected to peak in 2024/2025, and it is thus likely that Galway City will see a reduction in the need for places into the remainder of the decade.**

The *Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029* notes that educational infrastructure will need to be improved in order to meet future population demand. Relevant to the subject site, and the current demands for post-primary places in particular, there are 2 No. post-primary school sites and 1 No. special school site that have been designated to meet the needs of future residents. The additional capacity being provided by all of these projects is being considered in the context of the projected future requirements in the area. Moreover, the planned infrastructure for Galway City has already been specifically earmarked as a result of the demographic modelling carried out by the DES across various national, regional and local levels to cater for demand over the next 20 No. years.

Admissions Notices from schools within the catchment indicate a healthy combined total of **784 No. spaces available** for incoming Junior Infants/First Years, of which 228 No. spaces are available in primary schools and 556 No. spaces are available in post-primary schools.

The development has the potential to generate an additional 848 No. persons within the area, including an estimated **66 No. children (including 35 No. primary school children and 31 No. post-primary school children)**, when fully occupied. It is our opinion that the potential school demand generated by the proposed development can be absorbed by the available capacity, in combination with the planned education infrastructure to be developed by the Department of Education in the coming years, **especially in light of projections that see enrolments decreasing due to current demographic compositions.**

4.2 Childcare

This assessment identifies 11 No. TUSLA registered childcare facilities within a 1.5 km radius of the subject site, it illustrates their maximum potential capacities based on the latest TUSLA inspection data, and their levels of accessibility with respect to walkable distances from the subject lands. These facilities were reported as having a combined total capacity of 296 No. childcare places at the time of the survey (June 2025). Table 4.11 below provides facility-level detail for each of the childcare providers considered in the study alongside maximum insured capacity, including full day, part-time and sessional services.

An examination of Galway City Council's Online Planning Register showed the planning and development pipeline consisted of no additional granted planning applications for childcare facilities in the Study Area as of June 2025. However, we note Condition No. 2(d) assigned by An Bord Pleanála in respect of the Ceannt Station / Augustine Hill development (Reg. Ref. 2047, ABP Ref. 310568) required the provision of a childcare facility with adequate space for 80 No. children.

The demographic profile of this area provided in Section 3.0 also provides a baseline for understanding the pre-school age population and the emerging demand for childcare facilities in the area.

TUSLA ID	Childcare Facility	Distance (km)	Service Type	Indicative Max Capacity
TU2017GY504	St. Pat's Pre-School And Afterschool	0.69	Part Time	39
TU2015GY221	SALI Childcare Service Ltd	0.81	Full Day	57
TU2015GY238	St. Nicholas' Pre-School Service Activity Club -Claddagh	0.90	Sessional	14
TU2015GY223	Naíonra Iognáid	1.14	Full Day / Part Time / Sessional	39
TU2015GY222	Scoil Croi Iosa Presentation Early Year Services	1.22	Sessional	22
TU2015GY146	Little Red Hen Creche	1.25	Full Day / Part Time / Sessional	27
TU2015GY010	Amy's Montessori and Afterschool	1.38	Sessional	11
TU2015GY006	Acorn Pre-School	1.40	Sessional	7
TU2015GY204	Oakwood Creche	1.50	Full Day / Part Time	29
TU2015GY261	The Oak Tree Ltd	1.50	Full Day	30
TU2015GY191	Naionra Scoil Caitriona	1.50	Sessional	21
			Total (Within 1.5 km Catchment)	296

* Source: Combination of: TUSLA Inspections (Based on AM) and TUSLA Listing (June 2025) Provided By Fingal County Council.

Table 4.11: Current Capacity of Existing Childcare Facilities in a 1.5 km Study Area

(Source: TUSLA Inspections (Based on AM) and TUSLA Listing (June 2025) Provided By Galway City Council, Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

Figure 4.7 overleaf provides the spatial location of each childcare facilities considered in the study.



4.2.1 Evaluation

As stated previously in Section 2.0, the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001) recommend that a crèche or childcare facility with capacity for 20 No. children should generally be provided for every 75 No. dwellings within new residential developments. However, both the Guidelines and Galway City Council further advise that regard should be had to existing childcare provision when considering the delivery of new facilities as part of residential development in order to avoid overprovision.

The *Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* augment these, stating that studio and 1-bed units (and some 2-bed units) can be considered to not generate a childcare requirement. Omitting the 1-bed units from the 356 No. total proposed units, results in 184 No. units that may require childcare provision. **Applying the 20:75 ratio, results in a need for 49 No. childcare places.**

The Guidelines also allow for the demographic composition and Census data of the Study Area to be used to guide the possible childcare requirement. For this, we first assume that all 356 No. units can accommodate children. In order to calculate the number of 0–6-year-old residents in the proposed development, the study utilises 3 No. key number of indicators:

1. The proposed unit mix of the development;
2. Persons per unit proposed (this is calculated by using the average household size within the Study Area, established as 2.38 No. persons per unit¹³ using the Census 2022); and
3. Proportion of the Study Area’s population within the 0–6 years age cohort (determined as 3.79% using Census 2022 data).

Analysis of these factors allows for a determination of the total number of 0–6-year-old residents in the proposed development. As highlighted in Table 4.12, it is estimated that 33 No. children aged 0–6 years may reside in the proposed development (rounded from 32.1).

Description	No.	Value	Method
Units in Proposed Development	a	356	a
Average Household Size	b	2.38	b
Potential Residents (Number)	c	848	a * b = c
0–6 Years (% of Total Population)	d	3.79%	d
Potential 0–6 Years (Number)	e	32.1	d * c = e

Table 4.12: Estimation of Children Aged 0–6 Years in the Proposed Development

(Source: Thornton O’Connor Town Planning, 2025)

In 2023, the Central Statistics Office, as part of the latest Census release, provided a detailed statistical module¹⁴ on the rates of take-up for childcare at a national and city/county level for 2022. This analysis highlighted that almost one-third (331,783) of children under the age of 15 in the State were in some form of formal childcare. This release is relevant for this Assessment as it indicates the extent to which childcare facilities are utilised by the general population. An adaption of a table found within this module (Table 4.13) shows the range of methods parents use for the purposes of childcare for their pre-school attending children in the State and at City level.

¹³ CSO statistics record a total of 14,762 No. residents in 6,213 No. households within the catchment in 2022.

¹⁴ CSO Census of Population, 2022. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp3/censusofpopulation2022profile3-householdsfamiliesandchildcare/childcare/> Specific code @ <https://data.cso.ie/table/FY014>

Type of Childcare	Parent/ Partner	Unpaid Relative/Friend	Paid Relative/ Friend	Childminder/ Au-Pair/Nanny	Childcare Facility	Other
Galway City	58%	7%	1%	6%	27%	1%
State	55%	10%	2%	10%	22%	1%

Table 4.13: Type of Childcare Utilised By Parents of Pre-School Children

(Source: CSO, 2023)

The Study indicates that the vast majority of pre-school children across Ireland are cared for by their parents or partners of their parents, while 22% of pre-school children attend a childcare facility nationally, and 27% in Galway City. This module from the CSO is not an approximation or a random sample survey, but a direct representation of the population in 2022. Since the previous analysis carried out in 2016, the level of pre-school children attending a childcare facility has not materially increased (increased in raw numbers, decreased in proportion). Table 4.14 applies the CSO's 27% figure to the estimated number of residents aged 0–6 years old¹⁵ in the proposed development, as determined under the quantitative demographic analysis above. **The results indicate a potential need for approximately 9 No. childcare places to be available to support the additional local need (value rounded from 8.7).**

Description	Ref.	Value	Method
Units in Proposed Development	a	356	A
0–6 Years (Number)	b	32.1	B
0–6 Years Total at 27%	c	8.7	$b * 27\% = c$

Table 4.14: Number of Pre-School Children Requiring Access to Childcare Facilities

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

The subject development comprises 356 No. units, of which for this study all are assumed to be able accommodate a children (1-bedroom units are included for this study as they reflect the existing housing stock and census findings). The potential childcare uptake of the proposal is likely to be 9 No. places, and the local childcare network will have an indicative maximum capacity of 296 No. spaces based on existing provision within 1.5 km. Demographic cohort demand in the catchment area is persistently extremely low (~4%) when compared to Galway and National averages, equally the existing childcare per capita capacity is high (with existing capacity for 45.6% of all children aged 0-6 years old).

Despite this favourable *per capita* provision, consultation with childcare facilities in the catchment area indicated no notable spare capacity for new enrolments as of June 2025 in the majority of facilities. Moreover, certain childcare facilities have waitlists indicating a pent up demand for childcare that is not currently being met by existing services in the area. It should be noted that given the location of the catchment its highly likely that a portion of demand is coming from those living outside the catchment but commute to the city centre to work. It was also identified in the audit that 4 No. childcare facilities, identified within the catchment area, have closed in recent years.

Taken together, the analysis of existing capacity indicates a demand for additional childcare places. **Given the childcare demand generated by the proposed development, its unit**

¹⁵ This analysis adopts the rate of formal childcare utilisation for children aged 0–8 years old for Galway City. While a like-for-like analysis of those aged 0–6 would be ideal, the CSO only provides outputs for specific cohorts (specifically, 0–2, 3–4, 5–8, 9–14, and under age 15 cohorts). In order to capture the key demographic of formal childcare take-up for those children aged 5–6, the percentage rate of take-up for all children aged 0–8 was selected and applied to the study.

typology, alongside the shifting age and demand profile, it is considered that an additional childcare facility would be a favourable addition to the area. While demand from the proposed scheme could potentially be absorbed by the existing and planned facilities network, it is judged that given the location of the site and higher than average demand from non-origin households, that an additional purpose-built, modern childcare facility would offer community benefits to the local area and future populations.

4.2.2 Justification for Proposed Crèche

Notwithstanding the demographic insights, the required scale of childcare provision was estimated using the methodology outlined within the *Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities* (2001) and *Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2025) which recommend the delivery of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units. Using this standard, an estimate of providing approximately 49 No. childcare places would be required for the 184 No. 2-bed or larger units. We note that this figure of approximately 49 No. childcare places was significantly above the projected demand from the proposed development (approximately 9 No. childcare places).

Schedule 7 of the *Childcare Regulations (2016)* establishes the minimum 'clear floor space'¹⁶ requirements for childcare facilities based on the age group. As shown in Table 4.15 below, assuming an even split across the 0–6-years age cohorts, there would be a requirement for 133.5 sq m of clear floor space to cater for the 49 No. childcare places.

Age	Clear Floor Space Per Child (sq m)	Childcare Places ¹⁷	Min. Clear Floor Space Required (sq m)
0	3.5	7.0	24.5
1	3.5	7.0	24.5
2	2.8	7.0	19.6
3	2.35	7.0	16.5
4	2.3	7.0	16.1
5	2.3	7.0	16.1
6	2.6	7.0	16.1
Total		49.1	133.5

Table 4.15: Clear Floor Spaces Required for the Childcare Requirement Generated by the Proposed Development

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

However, this area is effectively a net 'care' area, and excludes back-of-house and operational spaces. From experience, combining both the former and latter results in a gross floor area requirement of approximately 5 sq m per child. The proposed childcare facility has been designed with a gross floor area of 255.1 sq m. On the basis of 5 sq m gross floor area per child, we estimate that this will have capacity for approximately 51 No. children; in excess of the requirement generated by the development and markedly in excess of the demand estimation, discussed above.

Based on the size of the proposed childcare facility, which has been designed to be consistent

¹⁶ Per the Regulations, excludes storage, furniture, permanent fixtures and "areas ancillary to the provision of the pre-school service" (i.e. kitchens, staff rooms, etc.). Given its adoption after the Guidelines, we are of the opinion that the clear floor area requirements in the Regulations supersede those the Guidelines.

¹⁷ There are 7 No. separate age groups, so 1/7 of the 49 No. places assigned to each age group.

with the requirements of *S.I. No. 632/2016 - Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016*, there is ample space to cater for the needs of the established and growing community in the wider catchment area.

4.2.3 Conclusion

This Section provides an estimation of the potential number of 0–6-year-old children that may reside in the proposed development and may require a space in a childcare facility. Over the past 6 No. years (between 2016–2022), the population of the Study Area increased by 15.4% to 17,121 No. persons. The proportion of the population aged between 0–6-years old was estimated to be just 3.79% or 649 No. children. The Study uses this proportion to estimate the number of 0–6-year-olds that could potentially reside in the proposed development. Using the average household size (2.38 No. persons per household) and the percentage of 0–6-year-olds (3.79%) in the Study Area, a calculation was made to estimate that the proposed development could generate 33 No. 0–6-year-old children. Notably, while the population of the catchment area increased by 2,288 No. persons between 2016 and 2022, the number of children aged between 0- and 6-years only increased by 70 No children.

Further analysis released by the CSO, based on Census 2022, indicated that 27% of pre-school children in Galway City attend a childcare facility. This would mean that from the potential 32.1 No. 0–6-year-olds residing at the proposed development, only **9 No. children would attend a childcare facility**. Based on existing population aged 0-6 years old there is comparatively healthy *per capita* provision of childcare places available (268 No. places) per child aged 0-6 years old (649 No. children). This rate of 45.6% is significantly above the aforementioned household take up rate of 27% in Galway as a whole.

Taking both the requirements generated using the 20:75 childcare requirement ratio and the demographic demand assessment, it is evident that the proposed facility's capacity for 51 No. children is ample to meet both possible outcomes, whilst also retaining additional capacity to cater for the community.

4.3 Social, Community and Culture Facilities

Access to quality community services and facilities can have a significant bearing on the quality of life and health and well-being of a community, by encouraging social interaction, promoting learning and providing support services for those living, working and visiting an area. An urban neighbourhood should be big enough to support a range of services and small enough to foster a sense of belonging and community; it should be sufficiently dense to enable all of its essential facilities to be within easy walking distance of the urban centre. In addition to community facilities, the significance of arts and culture in the sustainable development of new communities is widely acknowledged. They play a vital role in defining and preserving identity, fostering social engagement, and providing valuable educational and economic benefits.

The baseline study undertaken identified 22 No. community, culture and social facilities in the 1.5 km Study Area, including 2 No. community centres and youth centres, 3 No. centres for further education, and a library. In addition to the community and social assets, 27 No. cultural facilities were identified in the audit within a 1.5 km radius of the subject site.

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
1	Galway City Fire Station	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
2	An Post	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
3	Fr Griffin Road Post Office	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
4	Galway City Council	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
5	Galway City Library	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
6	GRETB FET Centre - Tuam Road	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
7	Galway Courthouse	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
8	Claddagh Hall	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
9	Galway Technical Institute	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
10	PTSB	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
11	Bohermore Community Centre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
12	Galway City Partnership	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
13	University of Galway	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
14	Bank of Ireland Eyre Square	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
15	Bank of Ireland	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
16	PTSB Eyre Square	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
17	Claddagh Credit Union	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
18	St. Columbas Credit Union	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
19	St Jarlaths Credit Union	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
20	Galway City Council Recycling Centre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
21	Mill Street Garda Station	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
22	Brothers of Charity	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
23	Spanish Arch	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
24	Róisín Dubh	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
25	Lynch's Castle	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
26	Town Hall Theatre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
27	126 Artist-run Gallery	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
28	Galway City Museum	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
29	Black Box Theatre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
30	Nuns Island Theatre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
31	The Shed Galway	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
32	Galway Bay Boat Tours	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
33	Galway Christmas Market	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
34	Galmont Conference Centre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
35	Eye Cinema Galway	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
36	Galway Docks	Social, Community and Culture Facilities

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
37	Magdalen Laundry Women's Cemetery	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
38	Galway International Oyster Festival Ltd	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
39	The Latin Quarter	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
40	Pálás	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
41	Lynch Memorial Window	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
42	The Browne Doorway	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
43	Galway Arts Centre	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
44	Famine Ship Memorial	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
45	IMC Cinema Galway	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
46	James Mitchell Geology Museum	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
47	Galway International Arts Festival Gallery	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
48	Outset Gallery	Social, Community and Culture Facilities
49	Grace Cunningham Fine Art Gallery	Social, Community and Culture Facilities

Table 4.16: Social, Community and Cultural Infrastructure within an approximate 1.5 km Radius of the Subject Site

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

Community Centres provide a range of universal and targeted services and development opportunities that address the needs of families and residents in communities. Moreover, the changing cultural profile of Ireland and Galway City means that Local Authorities may need to facilitate the development of additional places to accommodate a broader diversity of ethnic backgrounds.

In addition to key community facilities, sustainable communities require a range of ancillary facilities and services such as state or local authority provided services e.g. credit unions, libraries, retail centres, emergency facilities, post offices and general community facilities. The catchment area has a post office, recycling centre, banks and credit unions. Galway City Public Library provides a key asset to the local community including a quiet room with assistive technology and smartboard, photocopying and printing services and is wheelchair accessible. A local Fire Station and Garda Station were identified in the Study Area. Both of these facilities would provide necessary emergency provisions as needed and are sufficient to support the needs of current and future residents.

The catchment area has a vibrant local community with a wide range of clubs and societies many of whom come together to celebrate in festivals during the year. Galway City boasts a robust network of artists, performers, and musicians who actively promote cultural activities. Supported and facilitated by Local Authorities, access to quality health services and facilities is a key element to creating sustainable neighbourhoods. Some 27 No. cultural assets were identified within the catchment area as part of the audit.

The catchment area offers a number of community spaces catering for local populations and also acts as attractions to those from outside the locality to explore it as an amenity. Although a range of community assets were identified as part of this Audit, there is need to emphasise the ongoing and continued demand for new and improved community infrastructure in the area. Participation in community activities contributes to social cohesion, reduces isolation and enriches the lives of residents. As such, community infrastructure is a key social asset, and Audits such as this provide visibility on current assets, as well as potential gaps for the local area.

All facilities identified in the audit have been mapped in Figures 4.8 and 4.9 overleaf.

Figure 4.8: Map of Subject Site, and Social, and Community Assets

(Source: Google Maps API, OSi, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)



Figure 4.9: Map of Subject Site, and Cultural Assets

(Source: Google Maps API, OSi, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)



4.4 Healthcare and Emergency Services

Supported and facilitated by Local Authorities, access to quality health services and facilities is a key element to creating sustainable neighbourhoods. A total of 37 No. health services and facilities, comprising 1 No. hospital, 6 No. General Practitioners and Health Centres, 6 No. Physical Therapy Clinics, 8 No. Pharmacies, and 6 No. Dental Care Practices, and a Nursing Home were identified within and bordering the Study Area during the baseline survey.

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
1	The Crescent Medical Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
2	The Claddagh Medical Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
3	Moughan's Pharmacy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
4	University Hospital Galway	Healthcare and Emergency Services
5	Corrib Medical Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
6	Gary Burke Podiatry and Chiropractic Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
7	Galway City Medical Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
8	Gate Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
9	Evidence-Based Therapy Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
10	Quay Dental	Healthcare and Emergency Services
11	Crescent ENT & Audiology	Healthcare and Emergency Services
12	Boots	Healthcare and Emergency Services
13	Leo Walsh Pharmacy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
14	Flanagan's totalhealth Pharmacy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
15	Whelan's CarePlus Pharmacy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
16	Boots Pharmacy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
17	University Late Night Pharmacy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
18	Galway Eye Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
19	Specsavers Opticians & Audiologists - Galway - Headford Road	Healthcare and Emergency Services
20	Helen Walsh Opticians - Independent opticians, Galway	Healthcare and Emergency Services
21	Kelly Eyecare	Healthcare and Emergency Services
22	Specsavers Opticians & Audiologists - Galway - Eyre Square Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
23	Optilase Galway Laser Eye Surgery	Healthcare and Emergency Services
24	Westend Dental	Healthcare and Emergency Services
25	Niall Cronin Dental Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
26	Cross Street Dental	Healthcare and Emergency Services
27	Eyre Square Dental Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
28	Forster Court Dental Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
29	Maple Motion Chartered Physiotherapy.	Healthcare and Emergency Services
30	KT Physical Therapy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
31	Sportsmed West	Healthcare and Emergency Services
32	Flood Street Physiotherapy	Healthcare and Emergency Services
33	Galway Bay Medical Centre and Physio	Healthcare and Emergency Services
34	Doctors Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services
35	Walsh's Pharmacy, Corrib Centre	Healthcare and Emergency Services
36	St Mary's Nursing Home	Healthcare and Emergency Services
37	Darren Macfarlane Pain & Injury Clinic	Healthcare and Emergency Services

Table 4.17: Health Infrastructure within approximately 1.5 km Radius of the Subject Site

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

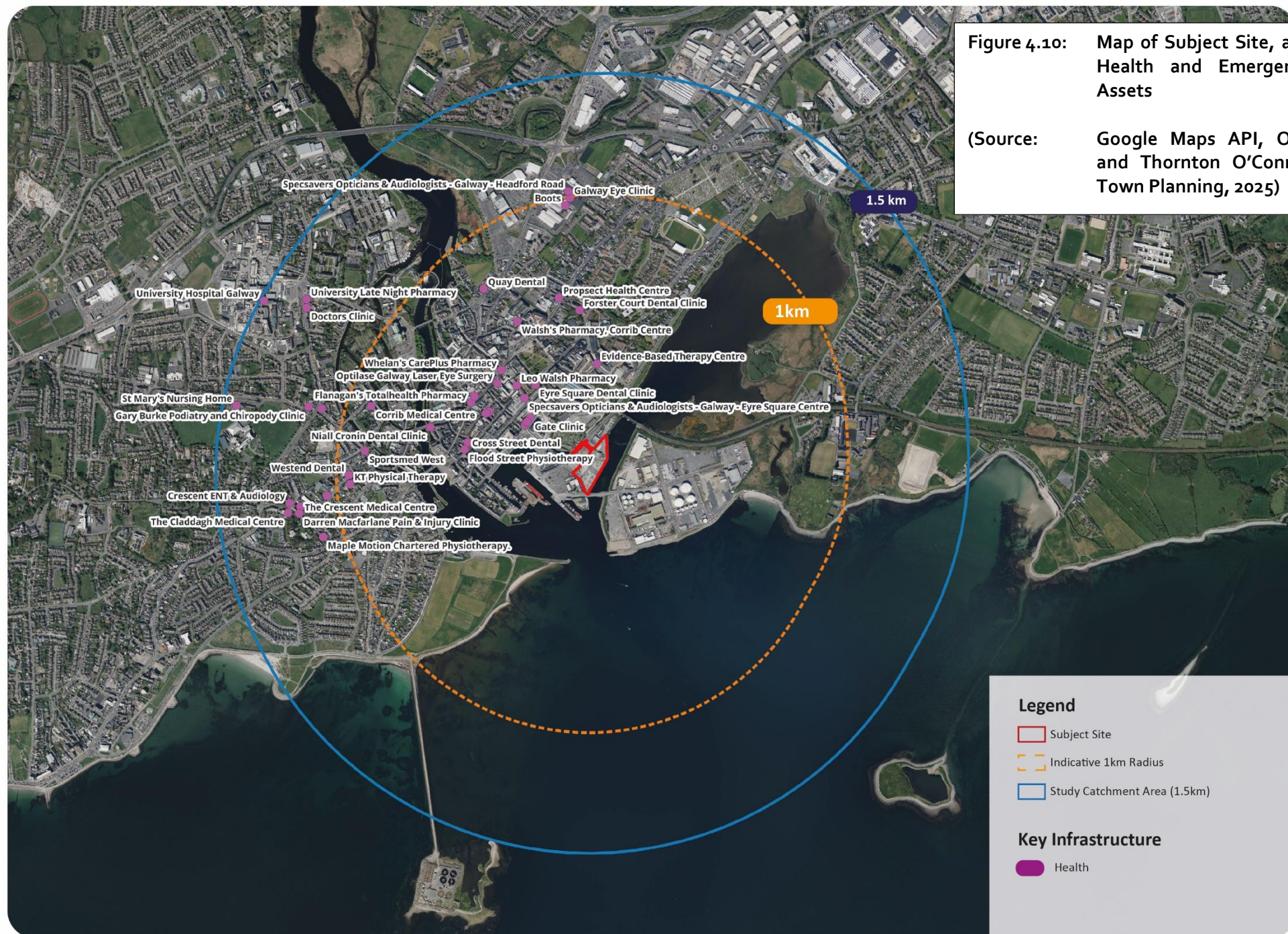
A concentration of health facilities and infrastructure is located close to the centre of the city, much of which is within walking distance to the subject site. These centres provide for an extensive range of services, including general medical, surgery and physiotherapy services. For specific specialist services, individuals may be willing to travel further. The proposed development is located in close proximity to University Hospital Galway¹⁸, and is close to the national motorway network and public transport provision either by bus or by rail. This provides access to national public hospitals, private hospitals, high-tech hospitals, accident and emergency services, psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation centres, orthopaedic hospitals and hospices.

As the demographic profile of the Study Area continues to change, it will be critical to ensure that the provision of health services and facilities takes into consideration not only the needs of the existing population but future demand for such services and facilities. As illustrated above, a range of health services and facilities are available within the Study Area. Irrespective of demographic change, the population increase that would occur as a result of the proposed development is unlikely to place any undue stress on the extensive range of health services and facilities available within and bordering the Study Area.

¹⁸ University Hospital Galway is a Model 4 hospital providing 24/7 acute surgery, acute medicine, and critical care.

Figure 4.10: Map of Subject Site, and Health and Emergency Assets

(Source: Google Maps API, OSi, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)



4.5 Open Space and Recreation

Having access to open spaces is a key factor in maintaining good health and wellbeing. This is compounded when living in a dense, built-up urban environment where access to green spaces can be limited. Recreation and open space form an important part of placemaking and community development.

The baseline study undertaken identified 41 No. sport, open space and recreational infrastructures within the 1.5 km Study Area, including gyms, sport and leisure centres, large parks, and a range of other sporting facilities and clubs. The facilities discussed above are represented in the map below and accompanying table.

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
1	Mellows Pitch & Putt Club	Open Space and Recreation
2	Deadmans Beach	Open Space and Recreation
3	Eyre Square	Open Space and Recreation
4	Galway Greyhound Stadium	Open Space and Recreation
5	Hustle fitness	Open Space and Recreation
6	Galway Hibernians Soccer Club	Open Space and Recreation
7	Galway Kayak Club	Open Space and Recreation
8	Pitch Woodquay	Open Space and Recreation
9	West United Fc	Open Space and Recreation
10	Claddagh Playground	Open Space and Recreation
11	University of Galway Sailing Club	Open Space and Recreation
12	Energize Fitness & Leisure	Open Space and Recreation
13	Exercise Park	Open Space and Recreation
14	Connacht Rugby	Open Space and Recreation
15	Lakeshore Playground	Open Space and Recreation
16	Ballinfoile Mór Community Garden	Open Space and Recreation
17	Galway City Karting	Open Space and Recreation
18	NRG Health & Fitness	Open Space and Recreation
19	Galway City Gym Limited	Open Space and Recreation
20	Lough Atalia Walkway	Open Space and Recreation
21	Open The Door Escape Room	Open Space and Recreation
22	Riverside Soundwalk (O'Briens Bridge)	Open Space and Recreation
23	Water's edge garden	Open Space and Recreation
24	Great Escape Rooms	Open Space and Recreation
25	Fr Burke Park Playground	Open Space and Recreation
26	South Park Pitches	Open Space and Recreation
27	Celia Griffin Memorial Park	Open Space and Recreation
28	Henry Street Playground	Open Space and Recreation
29	Planet Health Club	Open Space and Recreation
30	Coole Park Playground	Open Space and Recreation
31	Black Dragon Kickboxing Gym	Open Space and Recreation
32	Kennedy Park Playground	Open Space and Recreation
33	Millennium Children's Park and Playground	Open Space and Recreation
34	Millennium Park Skatepark	Open Space and Recreation
35	Millennium Climbing Play Ground	Open Space and Recreation
36	Fisheries Field	Open Space and Recreation

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
37	Corrib Rowing & Yachting Club	Open Space and Recreation
38	Snap Fitness Galway	Open Space and Recreation
39	Little Mellows GAA Club	Open Space and Recreation
40	Lough Atalia Rd Playground	Open Space and Recreation
41	POWER Gym Galway	Open Space and Recreation

Table 4.18: Social, Community and Cultural Infrastructure within approximately 1.5 km Radius of the Subject Site

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

The area benefits from a number of large public parks and open spaces that generally serve a larger catchment beyond their immediate environs, in addition to a proliferation of smaller local greens and spaces. The catchment area is located on the coast and provides an array of walking trails, as well as beach and maritime activities. In addition to pitches within the public parks, the area also has a significant number of sports clubs who have their own sports grounds, providing both indoor and outdoor sporting amenities. The catchment has a high number of gyms / fitness centres, with many based in industrial and retail units, and with classes also taking place in schools and community and sports centres.

The provision of well-managed and maintained open spaces can provide an amenity that enhances the area and be beneficial to the wellbeing of local residents. Having regard to the open space and existing amenities provided, it appears that the site at the catchment area is well served and would provide future residents with choice and variety that would be engaged with. It appears that there are no deficiencies in this area in relation to provision of open space, sport and leisure facilities. All of the facilities identified in the Audit seem to be of good quality and there are no known capacity issues at present.



Figure 4.11: Map of Subject Site, Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assets

(Source: Google Maps API, OSi, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

Legend

- Subject Site
- Indicative 1km Radius
- Study Catchment Area (1.5km)

Key Infrastructure

- Open Space and Recreation

4.6 Faith Institutions

The predominant religion in the Republic of Ireland is Christianity, with the largest denomination being Catholicism. The second largest Christian denomination, the Church of Ireland (Anglican) has more recently experienced an increase, as have other small Christian denominations.

Within the Study Area 54.2% of the population identify as religious, and 44.8% within the Catholic faith. The timely provision of faith facilities is of considerable importance to ensuring the religious needs of the existing and future population is met. A total of 13 No. places of worship were identified within the Study Area during the baseline survey.

All of these faith facilities appear to be in good condition and there are no reported capacity issues and no specified unmet needs of note at present. However, the changing cultural profile of Ireland means that Local Authorities may need to facilitate the development of additional places of worship to accommodate different religions in the future.

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
1	St Ignatius Catholic Church	Faith
2	St Mary's Catholic Church, Claddagh	Faith
3	St. Patrick's Church	Faith
4	Living Hope Church	Faith
5	St Augustine's Catholic Parish	Faith
6	Galway Cathedral	Faith
7	St Joseph's Catholic Church, Galway	Faith
8	Sf Nicolae Biserica Ortodoxa Romana	Faith
9	St Patrick's Garrison Church, Renmore Barracks	Faith
10	New Cemetery, Bohermore	Faith
11	Sisters of Mercy Convent Cemetery	Faith
12	St. Vincent's Convent of Mercy, Francis Street, Galway	Faith
13	Forthill Graveyard	Faith

Table 4.19: Social, Community and Cultural Infrastructure within approximately 1.5 km Radius of the Subject Site

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)



Figure 4.12: Map of Subject Site, and Faith Assets

(Source: Google Maps API, OSi, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)

4.7 Retail Centres and Services

The baseline study undertaken identified 8 No. large convenience retail destinations within the 1.5 km Study Area catering for the daily needs of local populations providing a full convenience retail experience. Analysis of convenience retailing indicates that there is adequate floorspace provision within the Study Area. The retail offering within 1.5 km is also classified by smaller top-up shopping, restaurants, take-aways, butchers, chemists and personal services like hairdressers and post offices serving a localised catchment population (within walking distance of the site). The catchment has a diverse range of comparison shopping options owing to its location in the centre of the city.

The subject site is located proximal to Eyre Square Shopping Centre also, incorporating numerous shops including a mix of local Irish retailers as well as well-known brands from the high street including Penneys, Dunnes, JD Sports, Born clothing, DV8, Specsavers, Vero Moda, Jack and Jones, Regatta, Diesel, Bperfect, Evergreen, Starbucks, etc. As well as a mix of fashion and leisure retailers, Eyre Square Shopping Centre has a selection of eateries offering a range of choices for food and drink. The streets surrounding Eyre Square Shopping Centre provide further shopping options to local and visitor populations.

There was minimal retail vacancy identified and there is no deficit of retail facilities in the area. Moreover, it is considered that increasing the level of residential development in the area would contribute to the sustainability and viability of local businesses in the area.

No.	Name of Asset	Facility Type
1	Tesco Superstore, Father Griffin Rd	Retail Centres and Services
2	Dunnes Stores, City Centre	Retail Centres and Services
3	ALDI, Galway Shopping Centre	Retail Centres and Services
4	Dunnes Stores- Terryland	Retail Centres and Services
5	Lidl, Galway Shopping Centre	Retail Centres and Services
6	Marks and Spencer, City Centre	Retail Centres and Services
7	Tesco Superstore, Galway Shopping Centre	Retail Centres and Services
8	Tesco Express, University Rd	Retail Centres and Services

Table 4.20: Social, Community and Cultural Infrastructure within approximately 1.5 km Radius of the Subject Site

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2025)



5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In our opinion, there is a sufficient existing provision of community, cultural and social infrastructure in the vicinity of the subject site (i.e. within an approximate 1.5 km radius) to support the proposed development. As the above study demonstrates, there is an adequate supply of education, healthcare, and community facilities within reasonable walking distance of the subject site, as well as a number of parks and amenity areas, playing pitches and sporting facilities available to local residents. The subject site has access to a frequent public transport network providing quick connections from the subject site directly to any specialised services and facilities located in nearby areas. The proposed development will stitch into an already established urban area with adequate local facilities.

The baseline study undertaken identified a significant range of services and facilities which contribute to quality of life for local residents, comprising 170 No. facilities within close proximity to the subject site (1.5 km radius). The Study Area is particularly well served in terms of healthcare provision, faith infrastructure, and retailing amenities.

Overall, healthcare, sports and recreation, community, education, and other facilities are all well-represented within the area and cater for the existing and proposed new residential community. While a current shortage in childcare spaces was identified in the childcare survey, it is expected that the large childcare facility proposed as part of this development will adequately cater for demand associated with the proposed development as well the wider local community. The proposed development also includes passive and active open spaces as well as pedestrian links throughout the site. Having regard to the above, we submit that the catchment area provides a wide range of existing social and community infrastructure to support the development and this is an ideal location for the proposed development.

This *Culture and Social Infrastructure Audit* has been completed with regard to national, regional and local policy relating to the provision of suitable community facilities. In particular, consideration has been made to the policies on social and community infrastructure in the *Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029*. The recommended types of facilities have been examined and the result of this audit has identified that there is adequate existing capacity in these services and facilities within a reasonable catchment of the subject site. It is concluded that the existing school provision in the area is sufficient to cater for the needs of the current and future population of the area and the proposed development will be adequately catered for both in terms of school and childcare provision.

Despite this, it is important to continually ensure good accessibility to quality services and facilities, inclusive of but not limited to health services and facilities, education facilities, community facilities and sports and recreation facilities.