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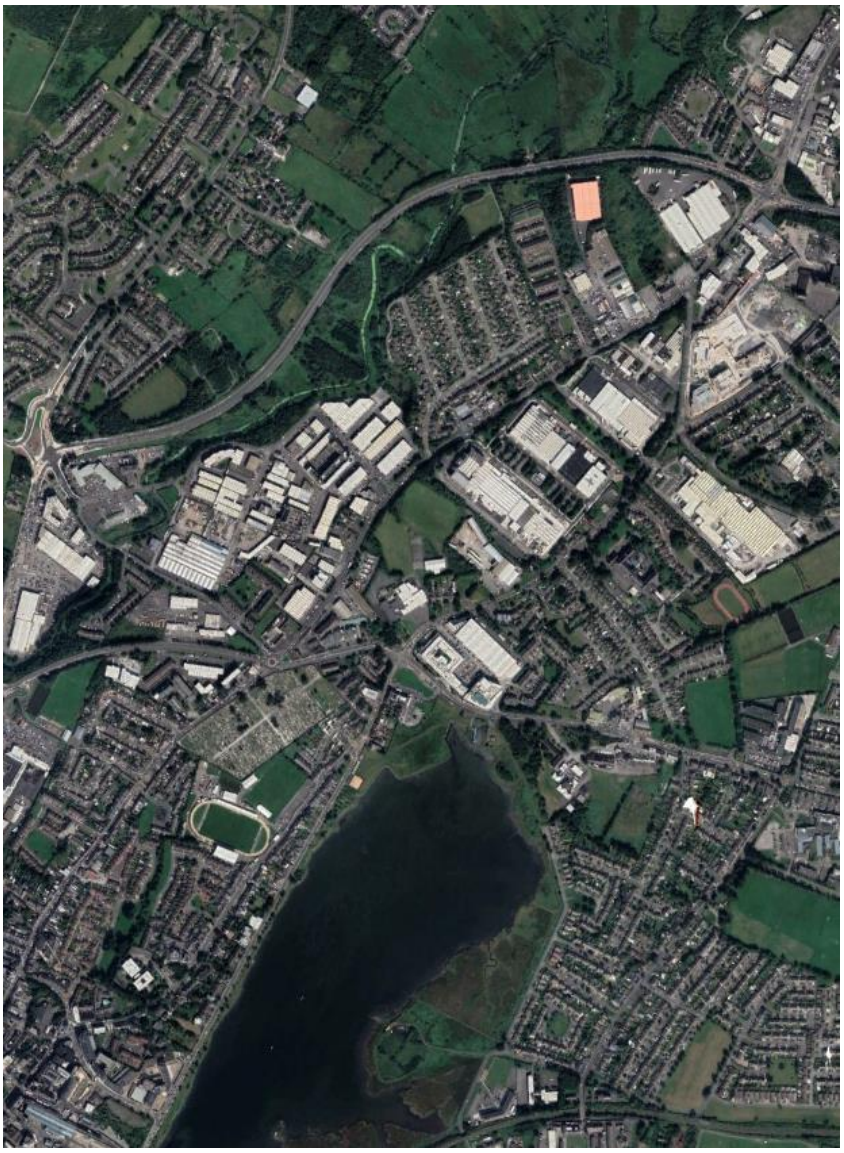
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT – LANDS AT SANDY ROAD, GALWAY

FOR ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED MASTERPLAN AT SANDY ROAD, GALWAY



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Land Development Agency (LDA)[1] have requested Tom Phillips and Associates (TPA) to prepare a Social Infrastructure Audit in relation to lands at Sandy Road, Galway City, to be developed through a master planning scheme to determine the overall provision of social infrastructure facilities within the study area.

1.1 Social Infrastructure Audit Methodology

With respect to this development, the Land Development Agency has requested that a Social Infrastructure Audit be undertaken by Tom Phillips + Associates (TPA) for the site, using geospatial survey methods. This survey was conducted in March 2022 and identified more than 200 No. relevant social infrastructure facilities in the vicinity of the subject proposal for further assessment. A number of public and private geospatial datasets were used in the course of the survey, including but not limited to:

- 2016 and 2011 Census Boundaries and Statistics
- 2022 Eircode Address Database (ECAD)
- 2022 OSM Ireland POI Datasets
- 2022 OSi and ESRI Ireland Basemaps
- 2021-2022 Department of Education and Skills - Irish Schools
- 2022 HSE Records – 'Find Your Local Health Service'

This survey demonstrated that there is a fairly adequate supply of primary education, childcare facilities, healthcare and retail facilities within c. 15-miute walking distance from the subject lands with a high provision of retail services including shops, supermarkets and hotels. Potential gaps in the existing service provision of the area are include Arts and Cultural facilities, facilities for the increasing aging population, such as nursing homes, secondary schools, community services such as libraries, and dedicated playgrounds for children.

1.2 Masterplan Site Context

The c. 8.8 ha subject site, spread across 5 no. individual blocks, is situated approximately 1.5 km to the northeast of Galway City Centre, within the Mervue area. Block A is c. 3.69 ha, Block B c. 2.95, Block C c. 0.65 ha, Block D c. 1.12, while Block E is c. 0.4 ha. The site is located within the existing built-up area of Galway City, along the Tuam Road, which is an important arterial route in and out of the City Centre. Sandy Road runs from the Joyce Roundabout to the roundabout at the junction of Headford Road and Bóthar na dTreabh, a distance of c. 700m. Access to Blocks A,B and D is along Sandy Road. Block D is can also be accessed along the Sean Mulvoy Road. Block C is accessed along the Tuam Road, while block E is accessed from with the Tuam Road or the Moneenageisha Road.

[1] Land Development Agency, 2nd Floor Ashford House, Tara Street, Dublin 2, Dublin, D02 VX67

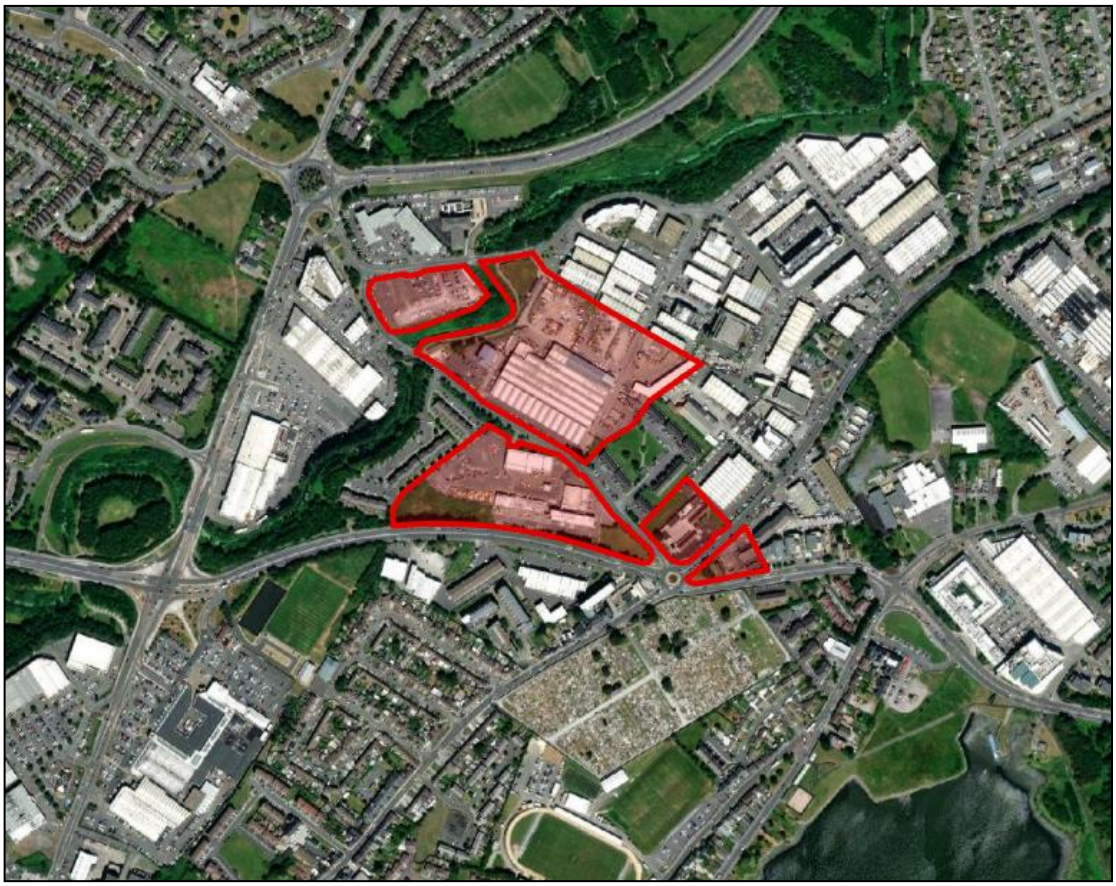

Figure 1.1: Indicative Site Location, aerial view. Source: Esri Satellite Basemap/TPA.

The site comprises of an extensive mixture of zonings, although the Blocks A, B and E are generally characterised as commercial, and enterprise uses. Block D is largely characterised by open space, while Block C currently contains a vocational education centre. The Sandy Road site is of strategic importance and will have the potential to provide housing and places to work for thousands of people over the course of its development.

Currently, the subject lands comprise a mix of existing land uses such as institutional, industrial and recreation. A majority of the lands are in institutional use and form part of the Lisboan Industrial Estate (1), Sandy Road Industrial Park (3), ESB Networks Depot (2), and the Moneenageisha 38kV Substation (7). There is also an existing parking lot (6) to the northwest of the subject lands which serve the neighbouring industrial use lands. There is also an institutional use within the site which contains the VTOS Further Education Centre (5). A small portion of the Terryland Forest Park (4) runs through the northern portion of the site forming the lands in recreational use within the subject site. (See Figure below)

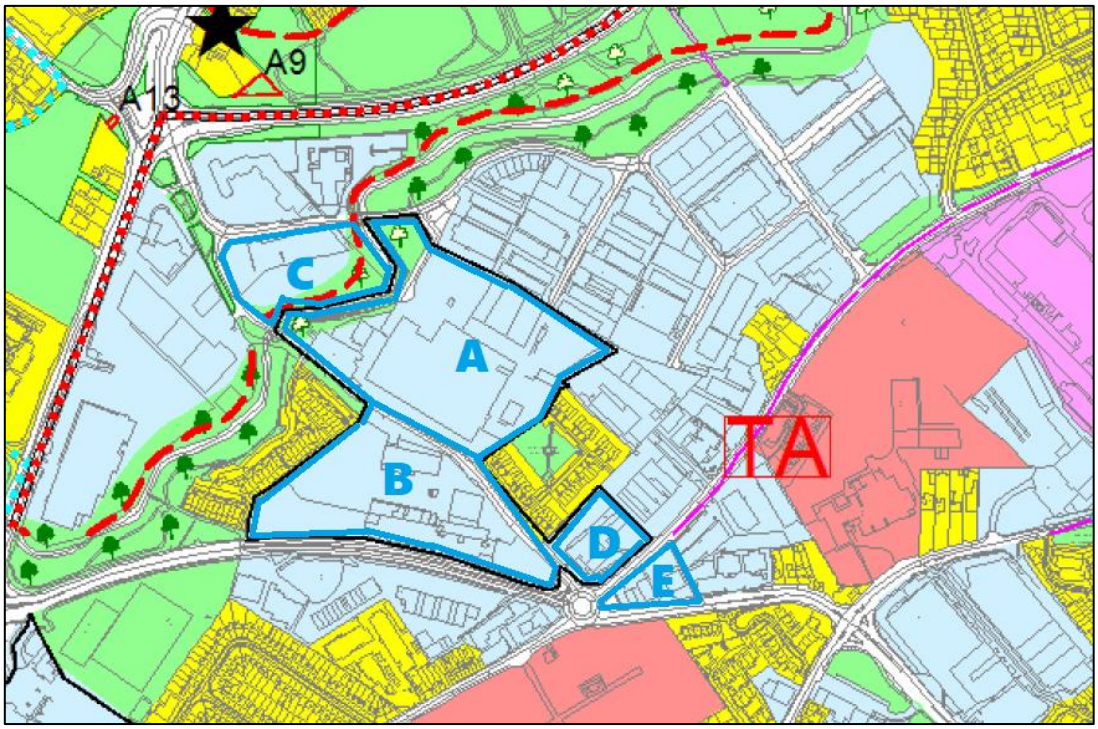

Figure 1.2: Existing Land Uses within the subject Lands. Indicative site boundary shown in red line. Source: Google Maps, Galway City Development Plan Zoning Map, TPA, 2022.

There are 3 no. bus routes which serve the eastern portion of the site, numbers 402 and 405 which run along Bohermore Road; and 427 along Tuam Road. In addition to this there is the 407 route bus stop located to the west of the subject lands. There are 2 no. schools which serve children and young adults with special needs situated c. 800m from the subject site (Lakeview School and Rosedale School). Scoil San Phrionsias lies c. 500m northwest of the site. Galway Shopping Centre lies c. 900m southwest of the subject site.

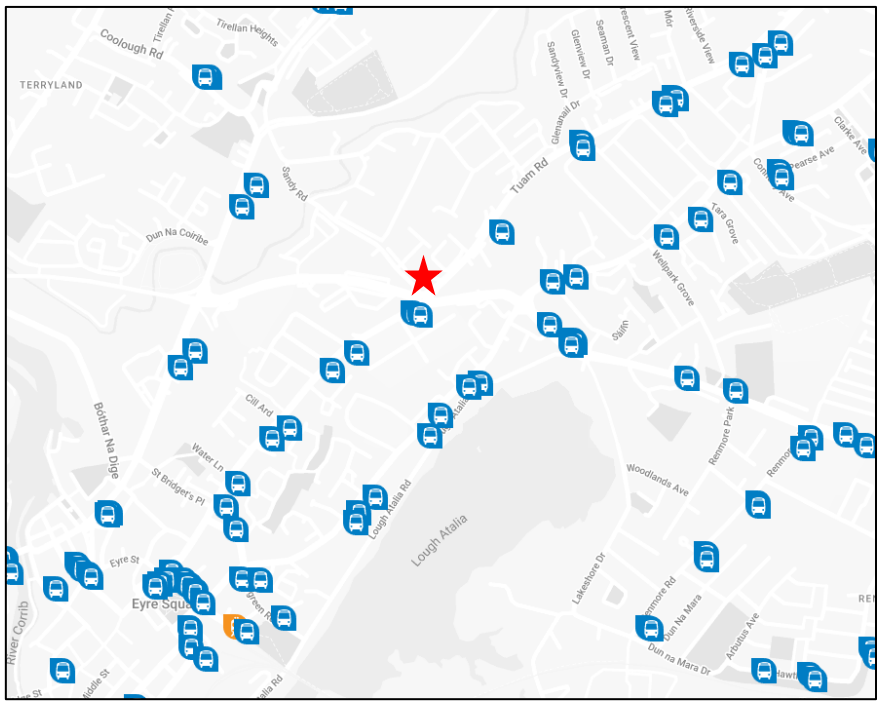

Figure 1.3: Indicative location of bus stops in the vicinity of subject site. Location of subject lands indicated by red star. Source: TFI, May 2022. Cropped and annotated by TPA.

There are also a number of proposed core bus routes and cycle routes as outlined by the RSES (NWRA) that are located in close proximity to subject lands (See Figure below).

Figure 22: Galway – Core Bus Routes

Figure 23: Galway – Proposed Cycle Routes

Figure 1.4: Proposed bus and cycle routes, Source RSES NWRA. Location of subject lands indicated by red star. Cropped and annotated by TPA, 2022.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING GUIDANCE

2.1 Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

This audit has regard to the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (DoEHLG, 2009)* set out the following categories of community infrastructure as being most relevant in the development of new residential areas:

Table 2.1: Community Infrastructure Categories as per DoEHLG Guidelines	
Infrastructure Types	**Sample Facilities**
Schools	Primary, Post-Primary, Special Education, Third-Level Institutions
Childcare	Registered Facilities (Full Time, Part Time, Sessional)
Community Centres	Community, Youth and Sports Centres, Resource and Training Centres
Healthcare Facilities	General Practitioners, Healthcare Centres, Hospitals, Nursing Homes
District Centres	Supermarkets, Shops, Convenience Shops

These criteria were considered in the development of the comprehensive infrastructure categories applied during the course of the study area audit, as set out in Section 4.0 to follow.

2.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (NWRA)

We note that the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES)* prepared by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) and supersedes the previous *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region Area 2010-2022*. This document takes account of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Galway, which identifies strategic residential and employment corridors within the area and provides guidance for development opportunities including housing delivery.

With respect to the provision of social infrastructure within the Northern and Western Region, the RSES outlines specific policies in terms of social infrastructure as part of 'Growth Ambition 4'. Specific policy objectives for the development of social infrastructure throughout the region are also included in the RSES, as follows:

Table 2.2: Select Regional Policy Objectives for Social Infrastructure (RSES)	
Health and Wellbeing	
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 3.6.11	*It is an objective of the Assembly to support the delivery of an enhanced regional healthcare service, including a modern hospital at Merlin Park that will serve the Metropolitan Area and its catchment (M/L).*
Education	

RPO 3.6.12	*The Assembly supports the designation of a technological University in the region which will be partially located in Galway; to complement existing third-level educational facilities and to foster the innovative knowledge-based economy of the region.*
RPO 7.7	*Support and promote the growth, development and success of the Connacht Ulster Alliance consortium's ambition towards becoming a Technological University serving the west and north-west.*
Green Network and Public Open Space	
RPO 3.6.13	*The Assembly supports the delivery of a strategic Greenway Network for the GTS to include National Dublin to Galway Cycleway, Oranmore to Bearna Coastal Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway (S/M).*
RPO 3.5	*Identify and develop quality green infrastructure, within and adjacent to City, Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns.*
RPO 7.9	*Promote the provision of high-quality, accessible and suitably proportioned areas of public open spaces and promote linkage with social, cultural and heritage sites and buildings. In this process prioritise access for walking and cycling.*
Aging Population Services	
RPO 7.8	*To support the implementation of the objectives of Sláinte Care, including the development of a Single Tier Health Service, and the advancement of Primary Care Centres in our Urban Places.*
RPO 7.13	*Aim to make this region an Age-Friendly one by working with constituent Planning Authorities and recognising the demographic challenges that face the region and ensure the provision of suitable facilities and services at appropriate locations.*
RPO 7.14	*The Assembly supports the specific designation of lands in development plans for nursing homes and sheltered housing, whilst ensuring these facilities are integrated within the communities they serve.*
Childcare	
RPO 7.15	*Encourage multi-agency approaches for delivering the health, social care, education and community services needed by growing, diverse or isolated communities.*

2.3 Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 (CDP)

The proposed development area is located within the Galway City Council administrative area and is to be governed by the provisions of the adopted *Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 (CDP).* General policies for the development of social infrastructure within the *CDP* include:

Table 2.4: General Policies included in *CDP 2023-2029 with respect to community and culture.*	
Policy	**Description**
Policy 7.1 General Policies	
1	*Support and facilitate the sustainable development of community, social and cultural infrastructure in collaboration with all stakeholders that affords inclusive opportunities for everyone to shape their own lives, enables communities to realise*

	their full potential and that contributes to a high quality of life and wellbeing for all who live work and visit the city.
2	*Support and facilitate key infrastructure and actions that encourages expanded development of the city's culture, arts and creative industries and strengthens the linguistic heritage.*
3	*Facilitate a balanced and equitable provision of community social and culture services and facilities in collaboration with key stakeholders in alignment with the core/settlement strategy through policies, zoning objectives and specific designations.*
4	*Work in partnership with the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to achieve the aims of Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) to ensure that Galway City is an equal and inclusive city.*
5	*Promote and facilitate in conjunction with key stakeholders the co-location of community services and infrastructure to allow for shared use for a variety of purposes including health, education, social and local enterprise and community activities.*
6	*Encourage design flexibility in buildings of culture, arts and community use, so that the buildings can be adapted in ways, which allow for a diversity of different uses and include for accessibility for all, including people with disabilities.*
7	*Explore innovative models of delivery, ownership and management of community facilities and infrastructure.*
8	*Support the refurbishment of community and cultural venues to improve the energy efficiency performance of these buildings to reduce the carbon footprint of the cultural and community activity that takes place within them.*

The Development Plan recognises that arts and cultural life form an important part of the city as it is home to festivals of national and international importance including the Galway International Arts Festival Cúirt International Festival of Literature, The Galway Film Fleadh and the Baboró International Arts Festival for Children among others. In this regard the Plan outlines a 'Creative City' policy (Policy 7.2) which specific objectives to:

- *''**Facilitate the delivery of public art by ensuring large-scale developments incorporate and deliver works of public art that facilitate interpretation of place and community**.*
- *Enable **expansion of accessible arts and culture infrastructure** by requiring such facilities to be integrated into planned development on designated Regeneration and Opportunity Sites.*
- *Ensure that **future culture and arts facilities are located, designed and laid out to be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport,** in particular the sustainable networks and associated proposals included for in the Galway Transport Strategy.''*
- ***Support the delivery of strategic arts and cultural infrastructure** in the city including the expansion of the City Museum; a new arts performance and exhibition space; a municipal gallery; a new city public library; a creative and cultural hub for children and young people and other key infrastructure as identified in Everybody Matters A*

Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework for Galway 2016-2025 and New Directions: Galway City Council Arts Plan 2021-2026.

- ***Support the use of public outdoor spaces for public performance, festivals, events and engagement with the arts and culture activities*** *in accordance with Galway City Public Realm Strategy 2019 and accompanying manuals.*

- ***In conjunction with the Arts Office and in line with the aims of Everyone Matters A Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework For Galway 2016-2025 seek to develop a feasibility model for the provision of artist live-work space*** *during the lifetime of the Development Plan.*

- ***Promote a high standard, sustainable quality and innovativeness in architecture and design, recognising Places for People - the National Policy on Architecture*** *and the contribution of architecture to culture and its value as an art form.''*

[Out Emphasis, CDP, Ch 7]

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

For the purposes of the demographic analysis, the study area comprises 2 No. distinct enumeration areas identified by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of relevance to the subject development, as follows:

1) The local Electoral Divisions; and
2) The larger Galway City local authority (LA) administrative boundary.

These enumeration areas (identified in Figure 3.1) provide demographic information for the local and regional populations which are likely to be impacted by the subject development.

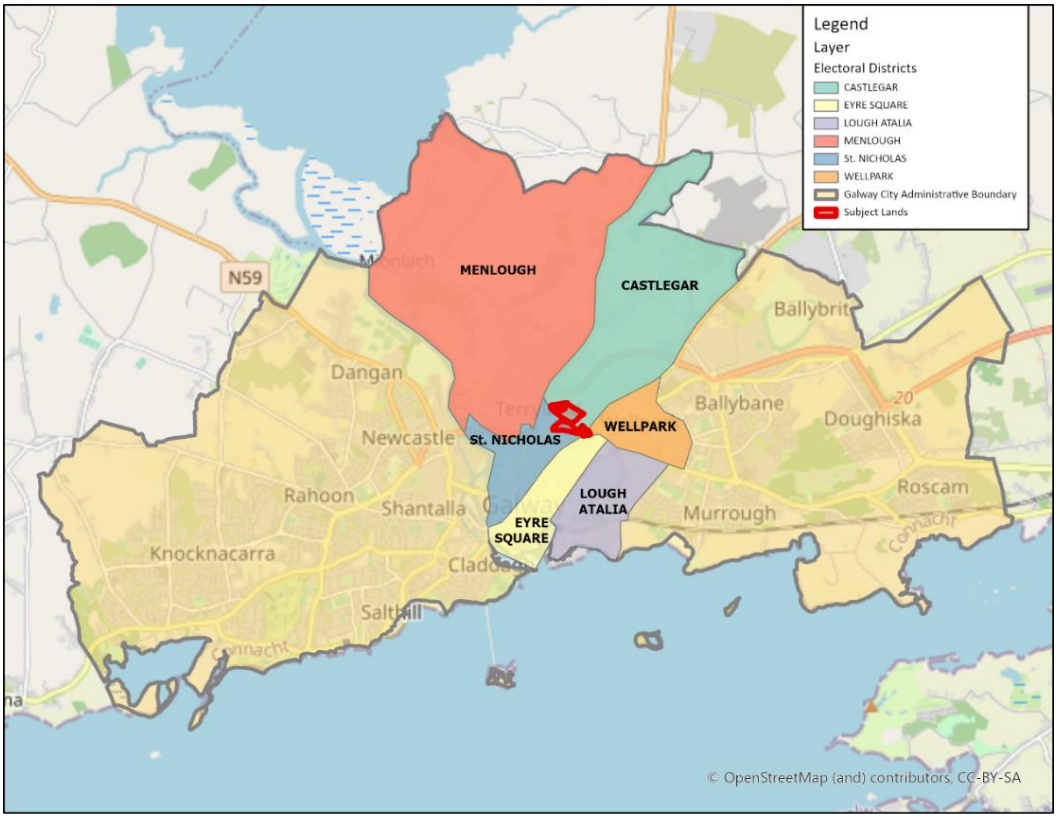

Figure 3.1: Extent of CSO enumeration areas utilised in demographic analysis. Location of subject site within the Castlegar and St. Nicholas EDs indicated by red polygon. Source: CSO/TPA, 2022.

The proposed development site is located partially within the 'Castlegar' Electoral Division (ED), Wellpark and the 'St. Nicholas' ED, which had a combined population of 8,115 No. persons at the time of the 2016 Census. Whereas the combined population of all EDs immediately adjacent to the subject site was 18,251 No. persons as of the 2016 Census. The population for this area appears to have been declining overall in the last 5 years compared to the rest of Galway City, which has grown by 4.2%.

3.1 Population Trends

Population demographics for each of the study areas were obtained from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) for the purposes of this assessment and have been summarised in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. As outlined previously, the local study area is comprised of 6 No. Electoral Divisions (EDs), including: Mionlach, Castlegar, Eyre Square, Wellpark, Lough Atalia and St. Nicholas.

During the period 2011 to 2016, all but one of these EDs recorded a decrease in population, by in the 5-year Census period. We note that the EDs within which the site is located all saw a decline in population by c.2 – 9.5% (see Table below).

Table 3.1: Population Trends at LA and State Level (Source: CSO 2011, 2016).

Study Area	2011	2016	% Change
Galway City	75,529	78,668	+4.2%
Ireland	4,588,252	4,761,865	+3.8%

Table 3.2: Population Trends at Local Electoral Division Level (Source: CSO 2011, 2016).			
Local Electoral Divisions	**2011**	**2016**	**% Change**
Castlegar (An Caisleán Gearr)	4,135	4,053	**-2.0%**
Mionlach	4,990	5,118	**+2.6%**
St. Nicholas (Paróiste San Nicoláis)	2,598	2,394	**-7.9%**
Eyre Square	4,461	4,108	**-7.9%**
Wellpark	1,843	1,668	**-9.5%**
Lough Atalia	920	910	**-1.1%**
Cumulative ED Study Area	18,947	18,251	**-3.7%**

Population Projections (RSES – NWRA)

As published in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Galway has historically seen a higher growth in population and is predicted to have the highest growth in the future to 2031 (See Figure below). Galway is also recognised in the RSES to be the fastest growing city in Ireland over the past 50 years.

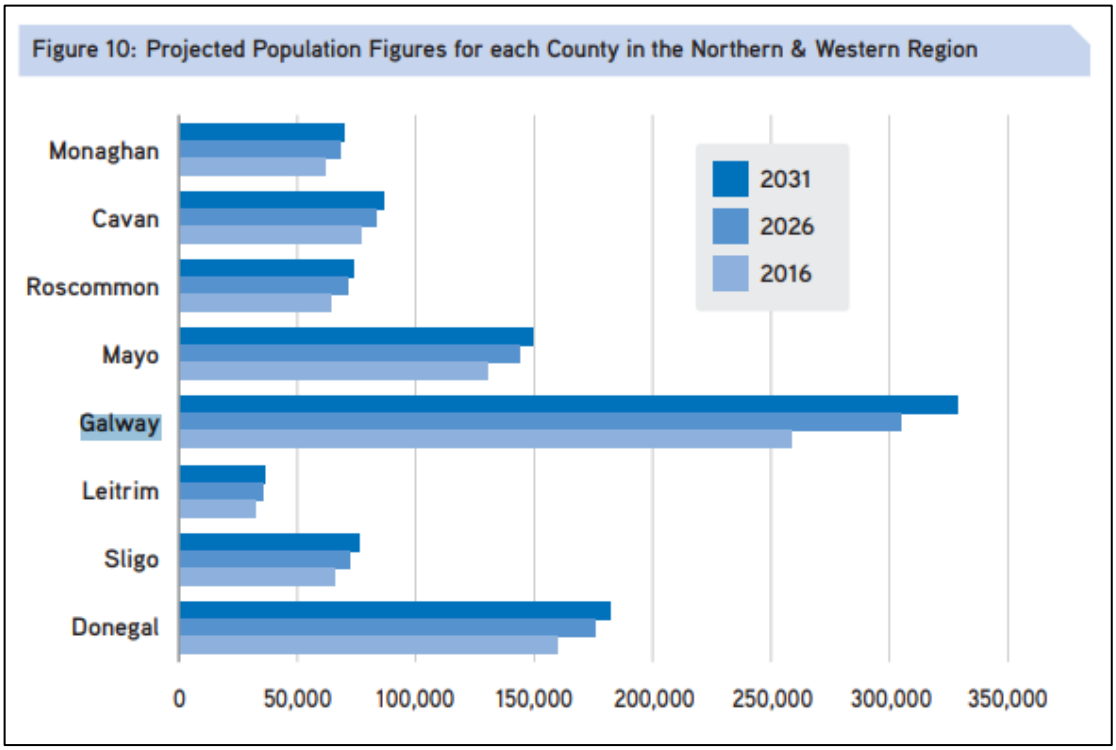

Figure 3.2: Population projections for each County in the Northern and Western Region, Source: RSES NWRA.

The population for Galway City stands at 79,000 as per the 2016 Census population with a projected growth by a minimum of 50-55% to 2040 which results in a 'transitional target population' of 115,000 persons in 2031 as predicted by the RSES (NWRA) (See Figure below).

	Settlement	Population 2016 census	% increase to 2040 (min)	Uplift to 2040	Proposed 2026 uplift (min)	Proposed 2031 uplift (min)	Transitional Target Population[2]
	Galway City	79,900	50 - 55	42,000	23,000	12,000	115,000
Regional Growth Centres	Athlone	21,300	40	8,700	4,800	2,400	28,500
	Letterkenny	19,300	40	8,000	4,400	2,200	26,000
	Sligo	19,200	40	8,000	4,400	2,200	26,000

Figure 3.3: MASP and Regional Centres population targets. Source RSES NWRA.

The West region to which Galway City belongs is projected to grow to 542,000-559,500 No. persons in 2031. Galway City accounts for approximately 20-21% of the overall West region's population.

Region	2016	2026	2031
Border	394,000	430,000-437,000	444,500-454,500
West	453,000	512,500-524,500	542,000-559,500
NWRA	847,442	942,500-961,500	986,500-1,014,500

Figure 3.3: Population Projections by region. Source RSES NWRA.

3.2 Age Profile

With respect to the population breakdown of the study area, the age profile of the local ED area is broadly similar to that of the wider LA area, as shown in Table 3.3. However, the Adults (25-64 years) cohort and Young Adults (19-24 years) cohort forms higher percentage of the local ED area (56.4% and 19.0% respectively), compared to the rest of Galway City (54.8% and 12.9% respectively). Whereas the 'Preschool', 'Primary', 'Secondary' and 'Older Adult' population cohorts form a proportionally lower segment of the population, at 4.1%, 5.5%, 4.4% and 10.7% respectively.

Table 3.3: Comparison of Age Profile of ED and LA Study Areas (Source: CSO 2016).

Age Cohorts	Combined ED Area		Galway City	
Population	**Population**	**% Total**	**Population**	**% Total**
Preschool (0-4 years)	742	**4.1%**	4,772	**6.1%**
Primary (5-12 years)	1,007	**5.5%**	6,840	**8.7%**
Secondary (13-18 years)	797	**4.4%**	4,934	**6.3%**
Young Adults (19-24 years)	3,468	**19.0%**	10,173	**12.9%**
Adults (25-64 years)	10,286	**56.4%**	43,101	**54.8%**
Older Adults (65+ years)	1,951	**10.7%**	8,848	**11.2%**
Total	18251	**100.0%**	78,668	**100.0%**

The table below reflects changes in age cohorts for the local ED area as well as Galway City. At a local level as identified earlier, the population has declined with highest reduction in the 'Secondary' age cohort (20.8%) followed by the 'Preschool' age cohort (12.5%). The 'Young Adult' and 'Adult' age cohorts have also seen a reduction by 5.7% and 5.9% respectively. Whereas the 'Secondary', Young Adult', and 'Adult' population all increased in the 5-year period in Galway City. We also find that there has been a significant increase in the 'Older Adults' age cohort (25.6%) which has increased at a similar rate as the rest of Galway City (25.3% increase).

Table 3.4: Change in Age Profile of ED and LA Study Areas (Source: CSO 2016).

Age Cohorts	Combined ED Area			Galway City		
Population	**2011**	**2016**	**% Change**	**2011**	**2016**	**% Change**
Preschool (0-4 years)	848	742	**-12.50%**	4,869	4,772	**-1.99%**
Primary (5-12 years)	928	1,007	**+8.51%**	6,217	6,840	**+10.02%**
Secondary (13-18 years)	1,006	797	**-20.78%**	4,735	4,934	**+4.20%**
Young Adults (19-24 years)	3,677	3,468	**-5.68%**	9,998	10,173	**+1.75%**
Adults (25-64 years)	10,935	10,286	**-5.94%**	42,651	43,101	**+1.06%**
Older Adults (65+ years)	1,553	1,951	**+25.63%**	7,059	8,848	**+25.34%**
Total	**18947**	**18251**	**-3.67%**	**75,529**	**78,668**	**+4.16%**

3.3 Average Age and Dependency Ratio

The average age of the local ED population was slightly higher at 37.6 than the local authority population (35.9) in 2016, and also slightly higher than the national average of 37.4, ranging from 33.8 (Castlegar) to 44.1 (Lough Atalia) across the study area. The average dependency ratio within the local ED area (32.4) was lower than elsewhere in the Local Authority or State (39.0 and 52.7 respectively), with a ratio of 23.8 recorded for St. Nicholas, which partially includes the subject lands.

Table 3.5: Dependency Ratio of LA and State Study Areas (Source: CSO 2016).				
Enumeration Area	**Average Age[2]**	**Population**	**Dependent Population**	**Dependency Ratio[3]**
Galway City	35.9	75,529	22,087	39.0
Ireland	37.4	4,761,865	1,644,119	52.7

Table 3.6: Dependency Ratio of Local ED Study Area (Source: CSO 2016).				
Local Electoral Divisions	**Average Age[4]**	**Population**	**Dependent Population[5]**	**Dependency Ratio[6]**
Castlegar	33.80	4,053	1,153	32.3
Mionlach	34.10	5,118	558	29.1
St. Nicholas	36.90	2,394	990	23.8
Eyre Square	36.70	4,108	460	15.7
Wellpark	40.20	1,668	410	32.6
Lough Atalia	44.10	910	345	61.1
Cumulative ED Study Area	37.6	3,042	653	32.4

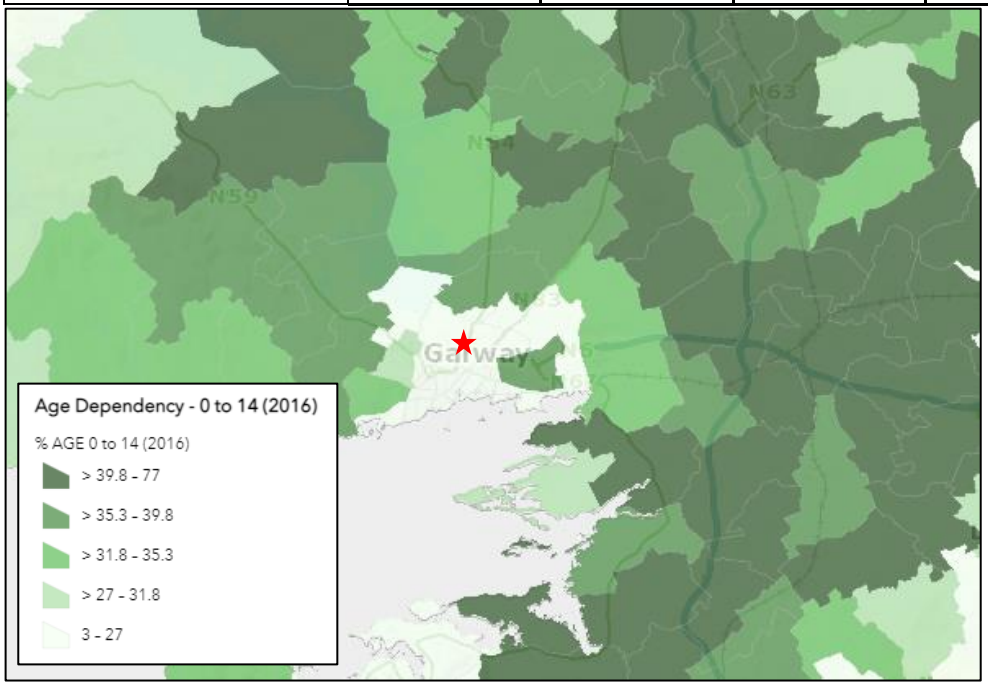

Figure 3.4: Extract of 'Young Age Dependency Ratio by Electoral Division, 2016' Map showing concentrations of younger populations within Galway City. Location of subject lands indicated by red star. (Source: CSO, 2016).

[2] Source: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp3oy/cp3/aad/
[3] Source: https://data.cso.ie/table/E3013
[4] Source:https://cso.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4717b52109bf49189f40dbe61133f365
[5] Population aged 0-14 years of age or 65+ years of age at time of 2016 Census.
[6] *Census of Population 2016 - Profile 3 An Age Profile of Ireland:* Dependents are defined for statistical purposes as people outside the normal working age of 15-64. Dependency ratios are used to give a useful indication of the age structure of a population with young (0-14) and old (65+) shown as a percentage of the population of working age (15-64). Source: https://cso.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d821fc9ffd594e379885ccfde94bb15c

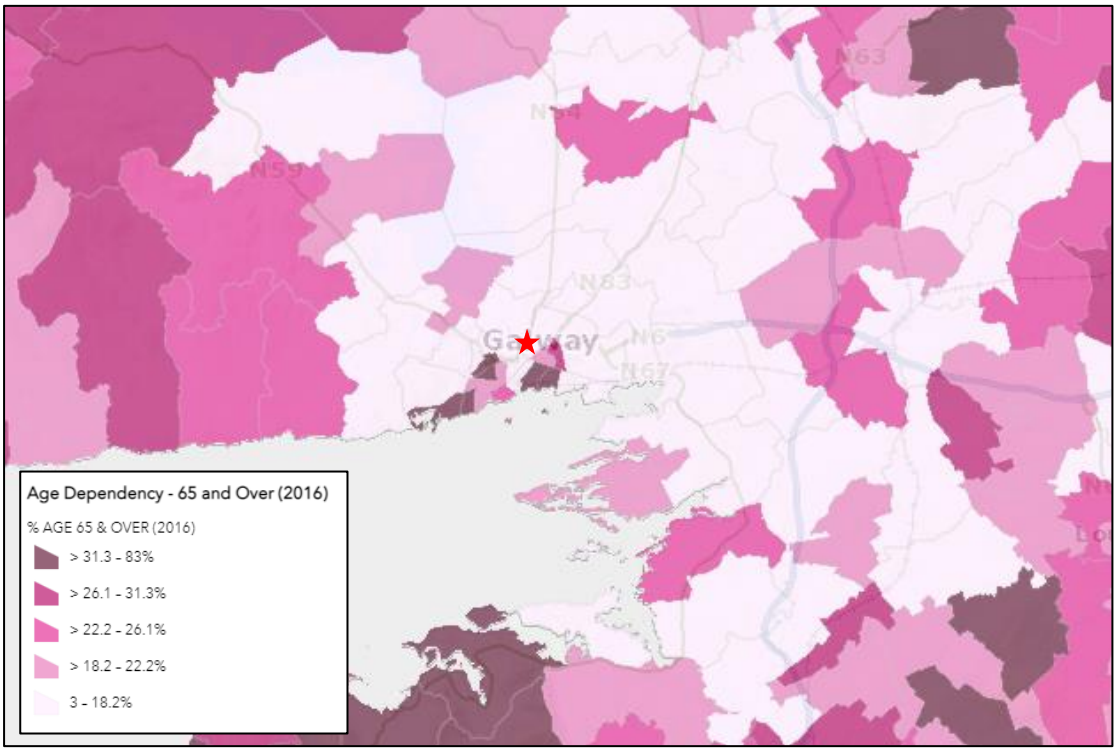

Figure 3.5: Extract of 'Old Age Dependency Ratio by Electoral Division, 2016' Map showing concentrations of older populations within Galway City. Location of subject lands indicated by red star. (Source: CSO, 2016).

This indicates that a higher proportion of community facilities may be required for the working population and older age groups at this time, though the current population figures do not account for the development capacity of additional zoned land within the study area and potential population growth arising from future developments.

3.4 Land Use and Settlement Patterns

With respect to land use patterns within the country, the latest Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) *Quarterly Economic Commentary (Winter 2021)* notes that:

> *''In Q3 2021 there were 4,656 new residential completions,* ***a 7.7 per cent decline on the same period in the previous year.*** *These data are presented in Figure 25. Any* ***decline in housing completions is unwelcome given the ongoing issue of undersupply*** *in the market;* ***however the current quarter drop may be a timing issue and relate to the public health restrictions*** *which were in place earlier in the year. The overall drop* ***masks considerable variation in the type of dwelling as new apartment completions increased by nearly 40 per cent year-on-year while scheme house completions declined by 14 per cent****.''*
>
> *[ESRI Economic Commentary (Winter 2021) -* ***Our emphasis****].*

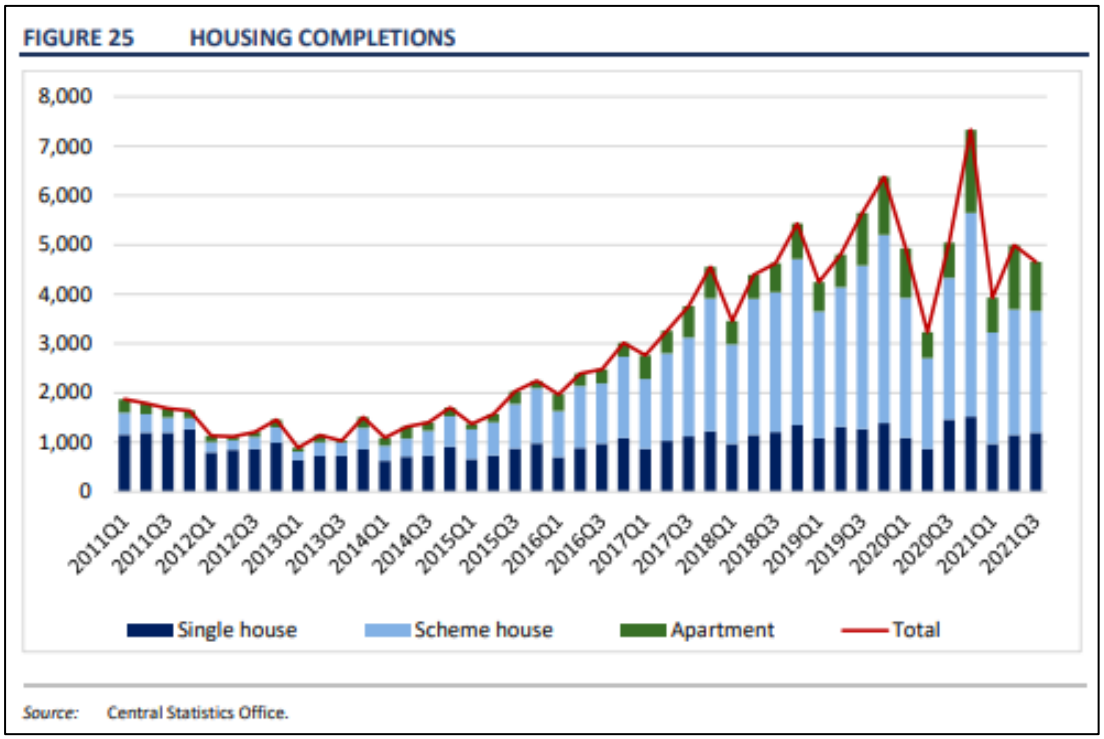

Figure 3.6: Housing Completions provided by ESRI Economic Commentary, Winter 2021. Source: ESRI.

The quarterly profile of commencements shows a significant rise in the Q1 of 2021 but a sharp decline to Q3 of 2021 as seen in Figure 3.7 below. This is understood to be due to the COVID-19 lockdown early in 2021, a 'lower-than-expected' completions was seen. However, the ESRI Quarterly Economic Commentary (Winter 2021) expects number of new completions to have risen to 21,000 units by 2021 and forecasts a rise to 26,000 in the following year.

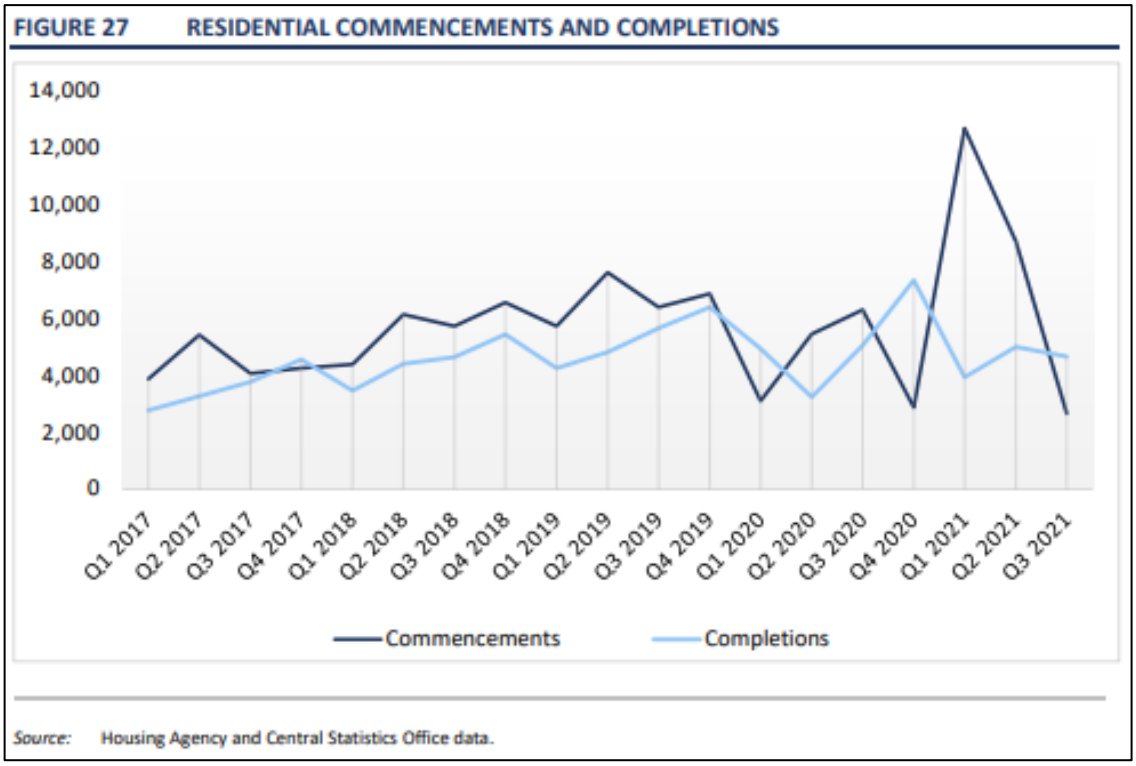

Figure 3.7: Quarterly Residential Commencements and Completions provided by ESRI Economic Commentary, Winter 2021. Source: ESRI.

At the local level, we note that the total permanent private housing stock recorded for the local ED study area was 9,276 No. units in 2016 which has since decreased to 8,620 units in 2022. The vacancy rate for the study area was higher (15.92%) than the national average of 12.3% in 2016, with 1,477 No. housing units identified as vacant within cumulative ED study area (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Change in Total Permanent Private Housing Stock (CSO 2011-2016)[7]

Year	2011			2016			2022		
Study Area	8Total Stock[9]	10Vacant Stock[11]	Vacancy Rate	Total Stock	Vacant Stock	Vacancy Rate	Total Stock	Vacant Stock	Vacancy Rate
ED Study Area[12]	-	-	-	9,276	1477	15.92%	8,620	987	11.45%
Galway City	33,655	3,755	11.20%	33,847	3,166	9.40%	35,594	2,963	8.32%
Ireland	1,994,845	289,451	14.50%	2,003,645	245,460	12.30%	2,124,590	166,752	7.85%

The most recent Census figures for the area indicate that housing completions in Galway City, where the subject site is located, have increased since 2012 and peaked in 2021, with 304 No. dwellings completed in the area in 2021 (Table 3.8). Whereas, at a national level new dwelling completions peaked in 2020 and showed a slight decline since by 2021.

Table 3.8: New Dwelling Completions by Eircode Output and Year (Source: CSO)

Area	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Galway City	22	50	47	51	113	149	139	254	205	304	**1334**
Ireland	4911	4575	5518	7219	9852	14329	17903	21049	20526	20433	**126315**

3.5 Economic and Employment Activity

The Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) *Quarterly Economic Commentary (Winter 2021)* suggests that the combination of robust economic activity coupled with decreased levels of unemployment indicated that COVID-19 related pressures on public finances have 'eased considerably'. However, the increase in infections in Q4 of 2021 have increased the possibility of public health restrictions in early 2022 which creates uncertainty for those operating in the sectors of the economy most affected.

[7] Source: https://data.cso.ie/table/E1071
[8] The housing stock is defined as the total number of permanent residential dwellings that were available for occupancy at the time of census enumeration. In this report, the housing stock consists of permanent private households (inhabited by both usual residents and visitors), holiday homes, vacant houses or apartments along with dwellings where all the occupants were temporarily absent on Census Night. However, communal establishments, temporary private households (e.g., caravans and mobile homes), along with dwellings categorised by the enumerators as being derelict, commercial only, or under construction are excluded from this definition. Applies to both 2011 and 2016 figures.
[9] Includes vacant houses, apartments and holiday homes. Applies to both 2011 and 2016 figures.
[10] Source: https://data.cso.ie/table/EP009

Additionally, the possibility of 'significant' disruption in the EU-UK trade will have a negative impact on the Irish Economy. It is now anticipated that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will have increased by 13.6% in 2021, whereas only a 7% increase is expected in 2022, with unemployment peaking at c. 26% in Q1 before falling to c.7% in the final quarter.

A strong recovery in the domestic economy is also anticipated, with consumption forecast to have increased by c. 7.5%, whereas investments will have decreased by c. 50% in in 2021. Although the export sector is also likely to have continued to perform strongly in 2021, 'Brexit disruptions in trade deal' and Brexit Article 16 and a potential trade war' both greatly increase the costs and trade uncertainty. However, the costs related to the COVID restrictions will have a lasting but improving impact on public finances, with a deficit of nearly €10 billion expected in 2021, equivalent to c. 42.3% of the GDP.

3.6 Employment Rates

With respect to national employment figures, the ESRI Commentary anticipates that the national unemployment rate as a percentage of the total labour force is expected to fall to 5.8% in 2022 from 16.1% recorded in 2021[13]. The report further states that,

> *''Unemployment, which had averaged over 26 per cent in the first quarter of this year is now set to finish the year at 7 per cent in the final quarter.* ***The fall in unemployment will continue into 2022 and is expected to be at a pre-pandemic low of 5 per cent by Q4 2022.****''*
>
> *[**Our Emphasis**, ESRI Quarterly Economic Commentary, Winter 2021]*

At the local level, unemployed persons comprised c. 6.9% of the working population (aged 15+ years) within the ED Study Area in 2016, which is slightly lower compared to the national average of c. 7.1%. More recent unemployment figures are provided by the CSO Labour Force Survey[14], which was last released for Q4.2021 and adjusted to account for the impact of COVID-19 on the national economy. This survey identified that *'in Q4 2021, the unemployment rate was 4.9% for those aged 15-74 years with a rate of 10.2% for those aged 15-24 years; these rates are down from 5.9% and 14.2% respectively in Q4 2020*'. Whereas '*the associated COVID-19 Adjusted Unemployment Rate increased from 7.4% in December 2021 to 7.8% in January 2022'*.

Table 3.9: Socio-Economic Status of Population Aged 15+ (Source: CSO 2016).

Economic Status	ED Study Area	% Total	Galway City	% Total	Ireland	% Total
At work	41696	**53.2%**	34951	**53.4%**	2,006,641	**53.4%**
Looking for first regular job	762	**1.0%**	634	**1.0%**	31,434	**0.8%**
Unemployed	5383	**6.9%**	4541	**6.9%**	265,962	**7.1%**
Student	13836	**17.7%**	11187	**17.1%**	427,128	**11.4%**
Looking after home/family	4161	**5.3%**	3609	**5.5%**	305,556	**8.1%**

[13] *ESRI (Winter 2021) Quarterly Economic Commentary*
[14] Source:https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/plfs/labourforcesurveyquarter42021/summaryresults/

Retired	9543	**12.2%**	8012	**12.2%**	545,407	**14.5%**
Unable to Work	2469	**3.2%**	2146	**3.3%**	158,348	**4.2%**
Other	504	**0.6%**	349	**0.5%**	14,837	**0.4%**
Total	78354	**100.0%**	65429	**100.0%**	3,755,313	**100.0%**

The CSO Live Register is a monthly measurement of the numbers of people (with some exceptions) registering for Jobseekers Benefit (JB) or Jobseekers Allowance (JA) or for various other statutory entitlements at local offices of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). This data source, whilst not an unemployment register, can provide a general indication of recent employment trends and economic activity in the local area.

Live Register figures are available at a national, county or local level, with respect to the jurisdiction of DEASP welfare offices. We note that the number of people on the register decreased at all levels (except the 1-month period at State level) in the recent 3-month period, with Galway City (0.8% decrease) on par with rest of the country (0.8% decrease).

Table 3.10: Persons on Live Register by Month and Area, 2021-2022 (Source: CSO[15]).

Area Definition	2021.M11	2021.12	2022.M1	2022.M2	1-mo. trend	3-mo. trend
Galway City[16]	3,920	3,918	3,892	3,888	-0.1%	-0.8%
Ireland	164,626	163,856	162,578	163,248	+0.4%	-0.8%

3.7 Deprivation Index

Regarding the socio-economic status of local residents, the Pobal Deprivation Index utilises CSO statistics to analyse areas with high levels of affluence or disadvantage throughout the country. A majority of the subject EDs within the study area were identified as 'marginally above average with the 'Eyre Square ED' identified as 'Affluent' across 2011 to 2016 by Pobal. These values represented similar levels of affluence to the surrounding Local Development Company (LDC) area and county for the same period. We note that the deprivation index appears to have declined in both the LDC area and a majority of the subject EDs from 2011-2016, (see table below); however, the county index has increased within their respective ranges.

Table 3.11: Deprivation Indices (Source: Pobal 2021, based on CSO 2011, 2016)[17]

Area Definition	2011	2016
Castlegar	3.47 - marginally above average	3.76 - marginally above average
Mionlach	4.08 - marginally above average	2.92 - marginally above average
St. Nicholas	4.93 - marginally above average	2.11 - marginally above average

[15] Live Register, Selected from CSO PxStat Table LRM07.
[16] Social Welfare Offices in Galway City.
[17] Source: https://maps.pobal.ie/WebApps/DeprivationIndices/index.html

Eyre Square	13.49 - affluent	10.71 - affluent
Wellpark	5.78 - marginally above average	1.7 - marginally above average
Lough Atalia	-0.43 – marginally below average	4.83 - marginally above average
Galway City Partnership Limited	5.09 - marginally above average	4.91 - marginally above average
Co. Galway	1.56 - marginally above average	1.81 - marginally above average

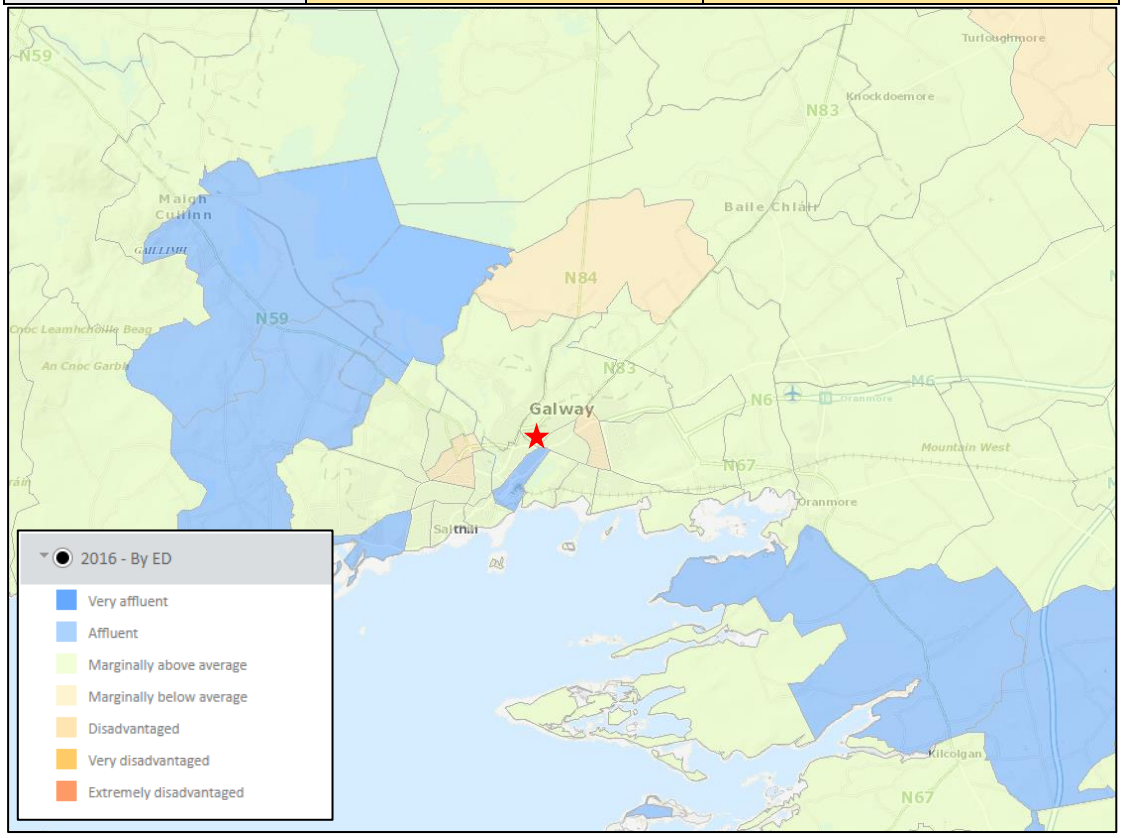

Figure 3.8: Extract of 'Deprivation Indices' Map showing 2016 deprivation index rates by Electoral District. Location of proposed development indicated by red star. (Source: Pobal 2022/CSO 2016).

3.8 Educational Attainment

With respect to the levels of educational attainment within the study area, the largest proportion of residents had completed 'Third Level' education (44%) in 2016, compared to 42% in the rest of the county and only 38% in the rest of the country. We note that 14% of the population had also completed 'Post-graduate Education or higher'[18] at the time of the Census, compared to 10% elsewhere in the country, and that less than 1% were recorded as having 'No Formal Education'. These figures indicate higher levels of educational attainment within the study area population compared to the national average.

[18] Comprised of the following CSO sub-categories: Postgraduate Diploma or Degree, Doctorate (Ph.D) or higher.

Table 3.12: Population aged 15+ years by highest level of education completed (CSO 2016)						
Education Level	**ED Study Area**	**% Total**	**Galway City**	**% Total**	**Ireland**	**% Total**
No Formal Education	164	**1%**	**672**	**1%**	52,214	**2%**
Primary Education	707	**6%**	**3156**	**7%**	334,284	**11%**
Secondary Education	2885	**25%**	**12035**	**25%**	1,023,409	**33%**
Third Level Education	5051	**44%**	**20457**	**42%**	1,175,611	**38%**
Postgraduate or higher	1664	**14%**	**8301**	**17%**	312,866	**10%**
Not stated	1094	**9%**	**3896**	**8%**	198,668	**6%**
Total	**11565**	**100%**	**48517**	**100%**	**3,097,052**	**100%**

3.9 Means of Travel

Within the ED Study Area, the majority of residents travel to work by private car (39.9%) as a driver or passenger, followed closely by pedestrians (34.8%). The modal share for public transport are relatively low, with Bus, minibus or coach at 9.1%, and commuter rail including train at 0.3%. Figures for the rest of Galway City indicated a higher percentage of private car users (57.9%), with pedestrians and public transport users at just 13.9% and 12.9% respectively. We note a slightly higher proportion of commuters within the county use bus, minibus or coach services (10.2%) than within the local ED area (9.1%).

Table 3.13: Means of Travel for Population Aged 5+ Years (Source: CSO 2016).				
Transport Mode	**ED Study Area**		**Galway City**	
	No. Persons	**% Mode share**	**No. Persons**	**% Mode share**
On foot	4178	**34.8%**	426221	**13.9%**
Bicycle	713	**5.9%**	82123	**2.7%**
Bus, minibus or coach	1092	**9.1%**	313097	**10.2%**
Train	41	**0.3%**	82627	**2.7%**
Motorcycle or scooter	32	**0.3%**	8565	**0.3%**
Car driver	3569	**29.7%**	1202441	**39.3%**
Car passenger	1221	**10.2%**	570254	**18.6%**
Van	242	**2.0%**	128310	**4.2%**
Other (incl. lorry)	19	**0.2%**	11917	**0.4%**
Work mainly at or from home	189	**1.6%**	96057	**3.1%**
Not stated	726	**6.0%**	136995	**4.5%**
Total	**12022**	**100.0%**	**3058607**	**100.0%**

4.0 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

The study area for the existing facilities audit comprises a c. 15-minute walk distance surrounding the subject lands which is broken down into three catchments of 5, 10 and 15 minutes as seen in the figure below.

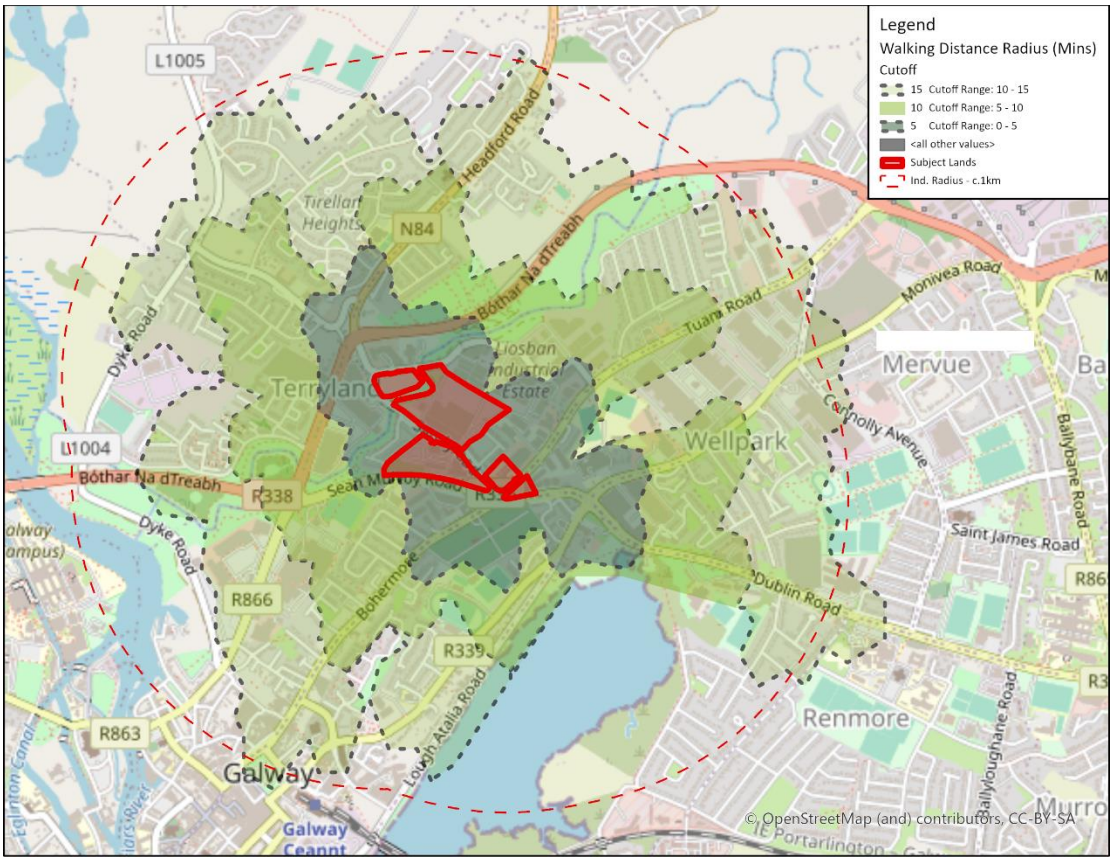

Figure 4.1: Walking distance catchments from the subject lands at 5-, 10- and 15-minute catchments. (Source: ESRI Basemapping, ArcGIS and TPA 2022)

The following categories of social infrastructure were utilised during the course of the survey in order to identify and code facilities within in the study area and highlight potential deficiencies in the existing levels of service provision:

Table 4.1: Social Infrastructure Categories Applied During Audit

Category	Surveyed Facilities
Childcare Facilities	Childcare Facilities (Full Time, Part Time, Sessional)
Educational Facilities	Primary, Post-Primary, Special Education, Third-Level Education, Training Centres
Healthcare Facilities	GPs, Healthcare Centres, Specialty Clinics, Hospitals, Opticians, Pharmacies, Nursing Homes
Social and Community Services	Community Centres, Youth Centres, Bring Centres/Recycling, Libraries, Post Offices, Banks, Garda Station, Fire Station, Town Halls, County Council Offices

Retail, Services and District Centres[19]	Supermarkets, Shops, Convenience Shops, Newsagents, Retail Services, Hotels
Sports, Recreation and Amenity	Parks, Public Open Space, Sports Centres, Playgrounds, Swimming Pools, Natural Amenities
Religious and Burial	Places of Worship, Burial Grounds, Crematoriums, Heritage Burial Grounds

With respect to these infrastructural categories, a geospatial survey was undertaken using GIS-software which identified more than 200 No. relevant social infrastructure facilities in the vicinity of the subject proposal for further assessment. The facilities identified in each category are described in more detail in Sections 4.1 through 4.7 to follow.

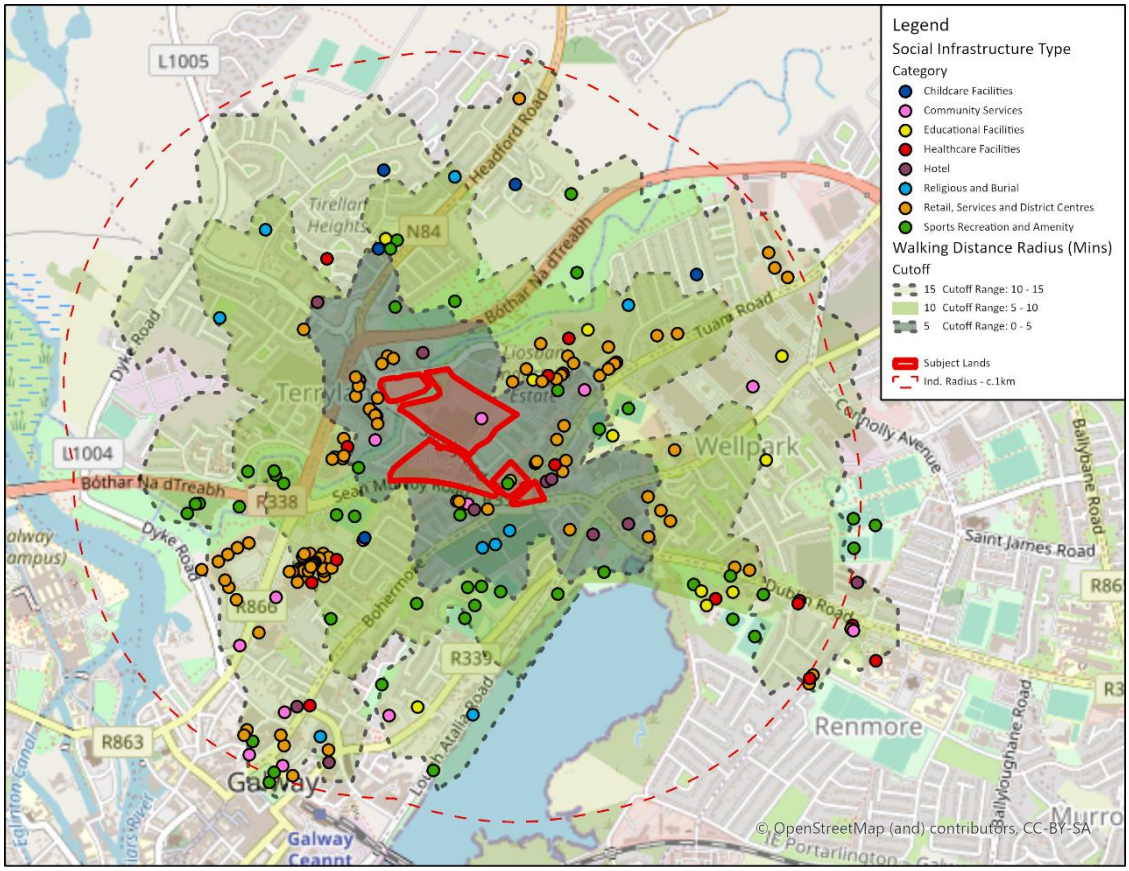

Figure 4.2: Indicative location of 200+ No. social infrastructure facilities in the vicinity of subject site. Source: TPA, 2022

The subject lands are located adjacent to the Terryland Forest park which partially runs through the site and is in close proximity to a number of retail parks and shopping centre, such as the Terry land Retail Park and Shopping Centre and Tuam Road Retail Centre, as seen in the Figure below.

[19] This category does not account for local food and beverage offerings and small service shops (i.e. restaurants, pubs, cafes and takeaways and mobile phone shops, hairdressers, beauty shops, jewellers, laundry and bicycle shop).

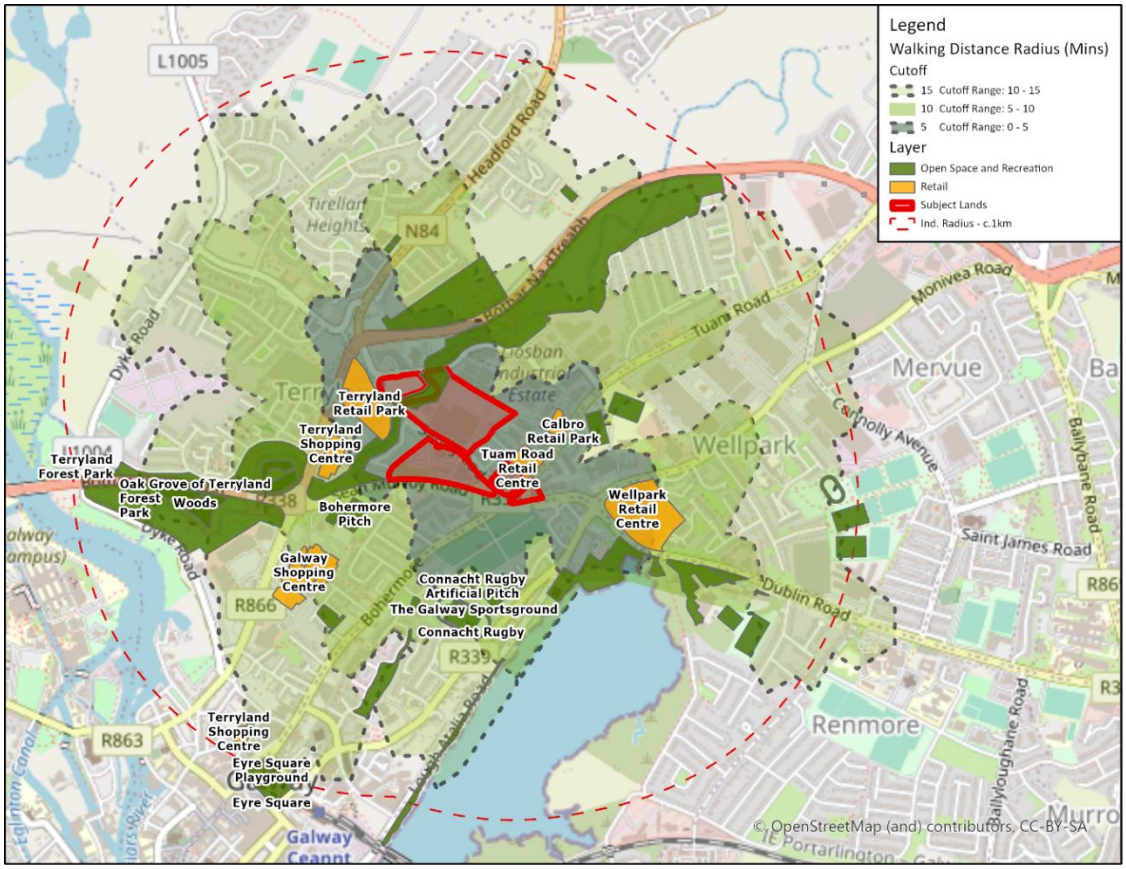

Figure 4.3: Location of subject lands in relation to retail centres and outdoor recreational spaces, March 2022.

4.1 Childcare Facilities

With respect to the current childcare provision within the area, it is estimated that about 293 No. childcare places are on offer in the 7 No. existing facilities (with an additional 24 spaces for Drop ins at Friendly Fellows Connacht Hotel), as shown in Table 4.1.

We note that 'maximum capacity' refers to the number of childcare places recorded in the most recent Register for Early Years Services available for Dublin through the Tusla Early Years Portal and does not relate to the number of childcare places which may be available for new enrolments. Please refer to the childcare demand assessment report for a childcare facilities audit conducted by TPA for the study area prepared in March 2022 and updated in May 2022.

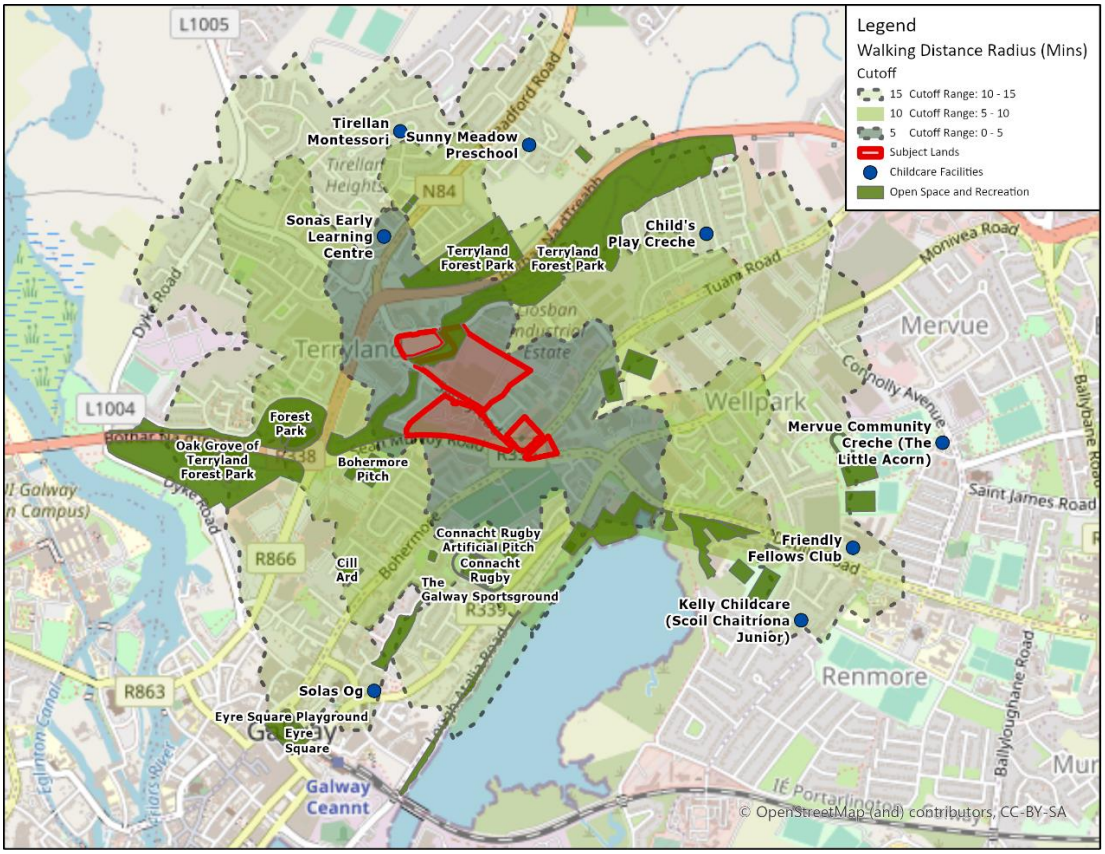

Figure 4.4: Location of childcare infrastructure in vicinity of subject site, March 2022.

Table 4.1: Childcare facilities identified within a 15-minute walk from subject site.

No.	Facility Name	Type	Age Group	Max Capacity[20]
1	**Child's Play Creche TU2015GY064**	Full Day	0-6 years	**40**
2	**Sonas Early Learning Centre TU2015GY115**	Full Day	1-6 years	**64**
8	**Mervue Community Creche (The Little Acorn) TU2015GY259**	Full Day	0-5 years	**79**
3	**Tirellan Montessori TU2015GY205**	Sessional	2-6 years	**22**
4	**Sunny Meadow Preschool TU2015GY252**	Sessional	2-6 years	**44**
5	**Solas Og (Cope Galway Watersid House) TU2015GY073**	Sessional	2-6 years	**22**
7	**Kelly Childcare (Scoil Chaitríona Junior) TU2015GY191**	Sessional	2-6 years	**22**
			Total Indicative Capacity	**293**

[20] TUSLA Register of Early Years services, March 2022. Available at: https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/list-of-pre-school-services-by-county/.

4.2 Educational Facilities

The area surrounding the subject site contains a small number of existing schools, including 1 No. primary school (Tirellan Heights National School) and 2 No. post primary schools (Galway Community College and Coláiste Na Coiribe) operating within a 15-minute walk distance from the subject lands. There are 2 No. special education facilities identified within a 10minute walk distance (Rosedale School and Lakeview School). There are also several training centres such as, National Training Centre Galway and Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board Training Centre, which are located within 1 km radius from the site along with further education and third level institutions such as, VTOS further Education Centre, Synergie Education and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology.

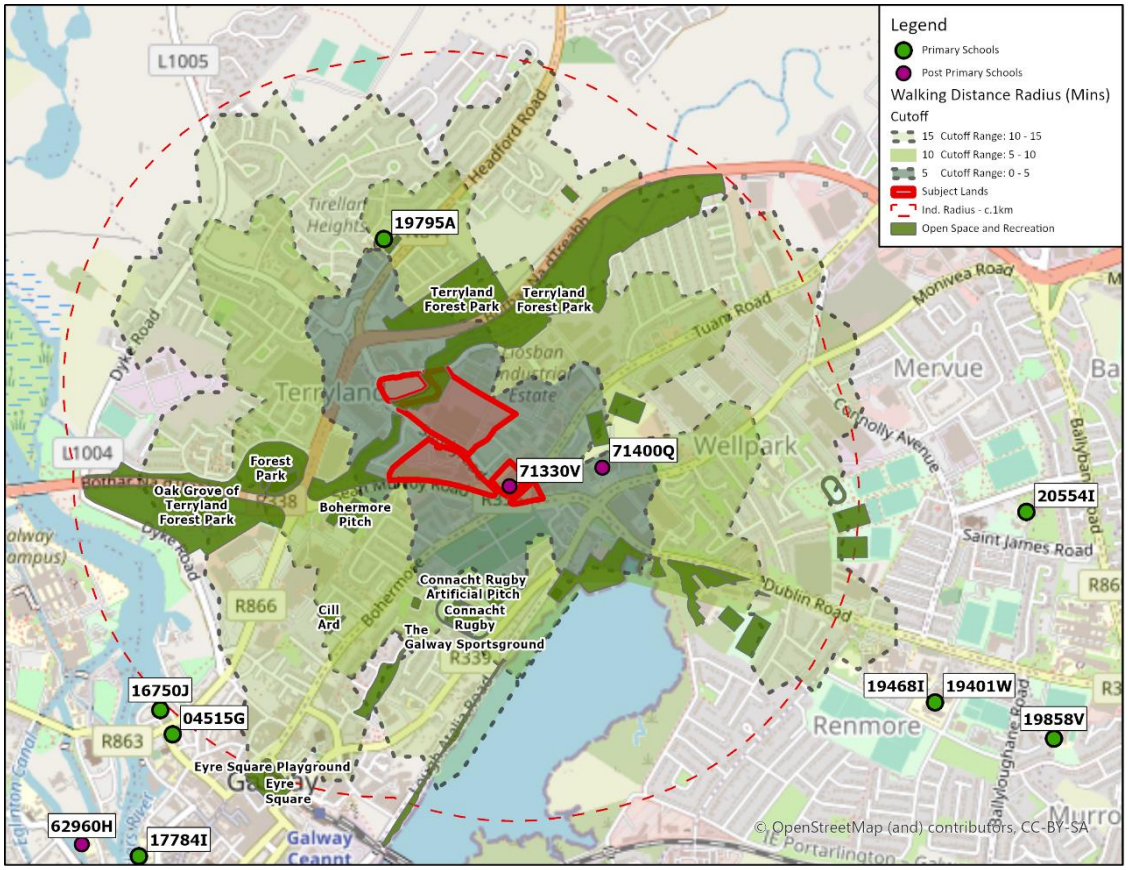

Figure 4.5: Location of primary and post primary schools in relation to parks, playgrounds and pitches, March 2022.

Table 4.2: Education and Training Infrastructure within 15-minute walking distance	
Type	**Facilities**
Primary Schools	Tirellan Heights NS
Post-Primary Schools	Galway Community College, Coláiste Na Coiribe
Special Education	Rosedale School, Lakeview School
Third Level Institutions	Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Galway City CTC, Georgina Price College of Beauty Therapy, VTOS further Education Centre, Synergie Education

Training	CPC Prestige Training Galway, National Training Centre Galway, Pitman Training Galway, Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board Training Centre, Galway School of English, Atlantic Language School

In terms of the provision of schools in the Galway City and Oramore SPA, there has been a new post primary school proposed to accommodate 1000 pupils as part of the school building programme 2019-2022 by the Department of Education. However, due to the baby boom in the late 2000s there appears to be a demand for more secondary school spaces than anticipated by the Department of Education. Please refer to the Schools Demand Assessment for more information on schools.

4.3 Healthcare Facilities

The subject site is well served by existing healthcare facilities including the Bon Secours Hospital Galway located within 15-minute walking distance to the east from the site. With respect to routine health care, there are numerous health centres, pharmacies and General Practitioners located within walking distance from the site.

Table 4.3: Select Healthcare Infrastructure within 15-minute walking distance from site

Type	Facilities
Hospitals	Bon Secours Hospital Galway
Health Centres and General Practitioners	Westdoc, Castle Medical Centre, Renmore Park Medical Practice, Doctor Mcloughlin, R. Dent, Prospect Health Centre, Headford Road Medical Clinic, Doctor D. Kelly
Speciality Clinic	Renmore Dental Practice, The Galway Dental Laboratory, Artwell Art Pschotherapy, Foster Court Dental Centre, Galway Holistic Clinic, Daily Smile Dental Clinic, John Butler Sports Therapy Clinic,
Pharmacies	Lohan's, Duggans Pharmacy, Haven Pharmacy, Boots, Matt O'Flaherty Chemists, McSharry's Pharmacy, Homecare Medical Shop

We note that there are no nursing homes identified within a 15-minute catchment from the subject lands. The nearest nursing homes to the subject lands are Coral Haven Nursing Home and Castlegar Nursing Home which are located within c.2 km to the northeast of the site and St Mary's Residential Care Centre which is located in the city. As the CSO age profile data for 2011 to 2016 demonstrated a c. 25% increase in aging population across the study area, it is noted that there is a need for special healthcare services which cater to the growing aging population such as Nursing homes within the study area.

4.4 Social and Community Facilities

The subject site is supported by a number of local community and cultural facilities, including social services.

Some of the local social services include services such as the Galway 2020 Cultural Centre, Ballinfoyle Castlegar Neighborhood Centre, Bohermore Community Centre, Snipe Resource Centre, and the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland. In addition to this there are local community facilities such as, post offices including An Post Bohermore and Renmore Post Office, a variety of banks such as AIB, Permanent TSB, Ulster Bank and bank of Ireland all located within a 15-minute walk from the subject lands.

Bohermore Community Centre

Snipe Resource Centre

Ballinfoyle Castlegar Neighborhood Centre

Brothers of Charity Services Ireland

There are also the larger communal facilities such as the Eye Cinema and County Hall located in close proximity.

Table 4.4: Social and Community Facilities

Type	Facilities
Social Services	Eye Cinema, County Hall, Galway City Council, Ballinfoyle Castlegar Neighborhood Centre, Bohermore Community Centre, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Helpline Support Services, Snipe Resource Centre, Galway Childcare Committee, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, Galway 2020 Cultural Centre
Community Facilities	An Post Bohermore, Renmore Post Office, AIB, Permanent TSB, Bank of Ireland, EBS, FBD Insurance, Ulster Bank, Galway City Council Recycling Centre.

In terms of emergency and safety services the local Garda along with the local Fire Sation are located under 2km from the subject lands within the Galway City Centre. It is identified that the study area could benefit from additional Arts and Cultural Facilties. The library building nearest is the Galway City Library located about 1.5km from the subject site.

4.5 Sports, Recreation and Amenity

There are a few open spaces and parks located in the vicinity of the site, with Terryland Forest Park just a few hundred metres from the proposed development. The site is also located within a 15minute walking distance to Eyre Square.

Terryland Forest Park

Eyre Square

A number of sports facilities are located within walking distance from the site, including The Galway Sportsground, Galway Greyhound Stadium and the Bohermore Pitches accessible from Sean Mulvoy Road, as well as a few local football clubs and playing pitches. There also several gym facilities located within a 15-minute walking distance from the site such as Snap Fitness, The Coven Pole and Fitness Studio, Goals Gym Galway, Galway Wellness Studio, The Planet Health and Fitness Club, Galway City Gym, Mindful Movements.

Galway Greyhound Stadium

Goals Gym Galway

Galway City Karting

Mervue United A.F.C

Table 4.5: Select Open Space and Recreation Infrastructure within c. 2km	
Type	**Facilities**
Parks	Terryland Forest Park, Eyre Square, Woods, Eamonn Deacy Park, Oak Grove of Terryland Forest Park, Wildflower Meadow
Sports Grounds and Pitches	Connacht Rugby Artificial Pitch, Connacht Rugby, The Sportsground, Mervue United AFC, Bohermore Pitch, Bohermore Astroturf, Galway City Karting, Galway Kettle Bells
Playgrounds	Eyre Square Playground, Playground (Coole Park), Playground (Loyola Park)
Gym	Snap Fitness, The Coven Pole and Fitness Studio, Goals Gym Galway, Galway Wellness Studio, The Planet Health and Fitness Club, Galway City Gym, Mindful Movements.

In terms of provision of playgrounds for children, there are 3 no. playgrounds all of which are located further towards the south of the site with the closest playground being a local playground near the Lough Atalia Road. It is therefore identified that the provision of playgrounds in the study area could be improved particularly along key pedestrian and cycle routes as well as in close proximity to areas with a higher number of older adults.

4.6 Retail, Retail Services and Neighbourhood Centres

There are several major retail centres, located within a 15-minute walking distance from the site, such as the Terryland Retail Park and Shopping Centre, Galway Retail Park and Shopping Centre, Tuam Road Retail Centre, Corrib Shopping Centre, The Plaza, Calbro Retail Park, and Well Park Retail Centre.

Corrib shopping Centre

Tuam Road Retail Centre

With respect to local retail provision, there is an assortment of small shops, professional services, takeaways, cafés and pubs and other services within c. 2km of the site. There are a variety of supermarkets and convenience stores located within a 15 minute walking distance from the site, such as Lidl, Dunnes, ALDI, Tesco, Centra, Eurospar and SuperValu.

There is also a number of hotels within the study area such as Maldron Hotel, Connacht Hotel, The Dean Hotel, Forster Court Hotel and the Western Hotel within walking distance from the subject lands.

Table 4.6: Select Retail and Retail Services Infrastructure within c.15-minute walking distance	
Type	**Facilities**
Shopping Centres	Terryland Retail Park and Shopping Centre, Galway Retail Park and Shopping Centre, Tuam Road Retail Centre, Corrib Shopping Centre, The Plaza, Calbro Retail Park, and Well Park Retail Centre.
Supermarkets	Lidl, Tesco, Dunnes, ALDI, Mr. Price
Convenience	Spar, Centra, Tesco Express, Seasons, Terryland Fruit and Veg, Hynes, Circle K, Mace, Moldova, Applegreen, Dealz, Terryland Asian Food Market, Green Chilli Asian Foods
Hotels	Forster Court Hotel, The Huntsman Inn, Swuite Galway, Connacht Hotel Galway, Travelodge, Maldron Hotel Sandy Road Galway, The Dean Hotel, Nox Hotel, Western Hotel

4.7 Religious and Burial

There are a 2 No. Christian places of worship (Saint Patrick's church and Church of Resurrection) located within a 15-minute walking distance from the subject lands. In addition to this there is also the Islamic cultural centre located in close proximity to the north of the site.

In addition to this there is the Bohermore Cemetery grounds located in close proximity to the south of the subject lands which is a historical site and includes 2 no. chapels dated between 1840-1880 (Reg, Nos. 30310002 and 30310003) having architectural, artistic and social value as identified by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage[21]. Both of these chapels are still in use.

Bohermore Cemetery Chapels

[21] Source: https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/30310003/bohermore-cemetery-bohermore-townparksst-nicholas-parish-galway-galway

Table 4.7: Select Religious and Burial Infrastructure within c.15-minute walking distance	
Type	**Facilities**
Religious	Saint Patrick's Church, Bohermore Cemetery Chapels, Church of Resurrection, Kingdom Hall, Saint Augustine's Well, Islamic Cultural Centre
Burial	Bohermore Cemetery, Terryland Cemetery

5.0 CONCLUSION

The subject lands comprise c. 8.8 hectares of brownfield land at Sandy Road, Galway City, Galway. The subject lands are located partially across the CSO Electoral Divisions (ED) of 'Castlegar', 'St. Nicholas' and 'Wellpark'.

The study area (defined by 6 No. EDs, namely Castlegar, St. Nicholas, Wellpark, Lough Atalia, Eyre Square and Mionlach) broadly appears to be decreasing in population since 2011 with only the 'Mionlach' ED having grown by 2.6% in the 5-year period since 2011.

The study area surrounding the subject lands was largely comprised of Adults (c. 56.4%) at the time of the most recent Census (2016) and contained lower levels of 'Preschool' (c. 4.10%) children than elsewhere in the county. Whereas there was an increase in the aging population ('Older Adult' age cohort) by c.26% since 2011.

This indicates that a higher proportion of community facilities may be required for the working population and older age groups at this time, though the current population figures do not account for and potential population growth arising from future developments.

In terms of the socio-economic status of the local ED population, a majority of the area was 'marginally above average' with deprivation indices ranging from 1.7 to 4.83 in most EDs within the study area according to the 2016 census. However, it was found that the deprivation indices were broadly decreasing across the study area with only Lough Atalia and Castlegar to have shown an increase. A majority of the study area population are employed (53.2%) which is similar to the Galway City and State levels of employed persons. In terms of level of education attained, the region along with Galway City showed a majority of the population having completed third level education (44% and 42% respectively) compared to Ireland (38%). This indicated higher levels of educational attainment than the rest of the country.

The modal share within the study area was recorded to be similar to the Galway City level with a majority of the population commuting by Car as driver or passenger (39.9%) closely followed by pedestrians (34.8%) which is much higher than the Galway City modal share for this transport mode.

With respect to the range of community facilities identified in the study area (i.e. within a c. 15-minute walking distance catchment, there is a relatively sufficient provision of existing social infrastructure in the vicinity to support the proposed development.

There is a large number of retail and healthcare facilities within walking distance of the subject lands, and as well as large public parks and amenity areas, playing pitches. There is a relatively low provision of childcare facilities, and primary schools within the catchment area. However, no demand for additional primary school spaces have been anticipated by the Department of Education. There is however an increase demand of secondary school spaces within the Galway City and Oranmore SPA which is currently under pressure to accommodate new enrolments as all schools were found to be operating at capacity as of March 2022 according to the Connacht Tribune article[22].

Owing to the increasing aging population additional facilities that cater to the 'Older Adult' age cohort could potentially be required. The need could also arise for additional childcare and playground facilities should there be further residential development in the area. Due to a majority of the population within the local area being in the 'Adult' and 'Young Adult' age cohort, additional facilities that cater to the working population would potentially benefit the local population.

On the basis of this audit, there is a fairly adequate supply of primary education, childcare facilities, healthcare and retail facilities within c. 15-miute walking distance from the subject lands with a high provision of retail services including shops, supermarkets and hotels. Potential gaps in the existing service provision of the area are include Arts and Cultural facilities, facilities for the increasing aging population, such as nursing homes, secondary schools, community services such as libraries, and dedicated playgrounds for children.

[22] Source: https://www.advertiser.ie/galway/article/127971/urgent-accommodation-needs-in-galways-fastest-growing-secondary-school