

ARMSTRONG FENTON

ASSOCIATES

PROJECT: Strategic Housing Development at
Baltrasna & Milltown, Ashbourne, Co. Meath

REPORT: SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

CLIENTS: Arnub Ltd. & Aspect Homes (ADC) Ltd

DATE: September 2022

Planning &
Development
Consultants



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1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. This Social Infrastructure Assessment (hereafter 'SIA') has been prepared by Armstrong Fenton Associates, Planning & Development Consultants, on behalf of Arnub Ltd. & Aspect Homes (ADC) Ltd. (the Applicants) to accompany the application for permission for a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) submitted to An Bord Pleanála in respect of a site measuring c. 20.04 hectares, located in the townlands of Baltrasna and Milltown, Ashbourne, County Meath.

1.1.2. It is generally recognised that proposals for large-scale residential development should be accompanied by proposals for associated community infrastructure and / or an assessment of existing community infrastructure which demonstrates that there is sufficient existing infrastructure to meet the expected demand generated by a new development. This SIA satisfies the need for same and is put forward in support of the proposed SHD application in the townlands of Baltrasna and Milltown, Ashbourne, County Meath.

1.1.3. The aims of the SIA are as follows:

- i. Review the existing planning policy context relating to the provision of social and community infrastructure;
- ii. Identify existing social and community infrastructure in proximity to Ashbourne;
- iii. Consider the social and community infrastructure proposed as part of the subject development;
- iv. Evaluate if expected demand will be appropriately met by existing and proposed services.

1.2. Structure of Report

1.2.1. The remainder of this SIA is structured in four sections as follows:

- **Section 2** provides for an overview of the proposed development.
- **Section 3** reviews the existing planning policy context relating to the provision of social and community infrastructure.
- **Section 4** identifies existing social and community infrastructure in proximity to Ashbourne, including for consideration of services proposed as part of the development.
- **Section 5** provides for conclusions to the SIA.

2.1. Development Overview

2.2. Site Location

2.1.1. The subject site is in Ashbourne, in the administrative area of Meath County Council, which is identified in the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (hereafter 'CDP') as a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town'. Ashbourne is located approximately 22 km to the north-west of Dublin City Centre and 29.5 km to the south-east of Navan town.

2.1.2. More specifically, the site is located to the west / south-west of Dublin Road (R135), south-west of Cherry Lane, west of the existing dwellings at The Briars and Cherry Court, south of the existing dwellings at Alderbrook Heath, Alderbrook Downs & Alderbrook Rise, east / south-east of the existing dwellings at Tara Close & Tara



Place, and north-west and south-west of Hickey's Lane, and is located in the townlands of Milltown and Baltrasna.

2.1.3. The Alderbrook housing estate is located to the north of the site. Lands to the immediate west are zoned 'F1 - Open Space' in the existing CDP, reflecting the established open space facilities at this location. Lands to the east, are zoned for 'A1 – Existing Residential' and further east are zoned 'E1/E3 Strategic Employment Zones', while lands to the south are zoned 'RA – Rural Areas'. The application site is subject to three land use zoning objectives as follows:

- i. Land use zoning objective A2 – New Residential: *“To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate”*. Circa 19 Ha is zoned A2.
- ii. Land use zoning objective G1 - Community Infrastructure: *“To provide for necessary community, social, and educational facilities”*. Circa 1 Ha is zoned G1.
- iii. A small portion of the site, to the south-east, occupied by a single dwelling & associated outbuilding, of c.0.2Ha, is zoned objective A1 – Existing Residential: *“To protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities”*. zoned 'A2 – New Residential' which has an objective in the existing CDP to: *“Provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate.”*

2.1.4. The subject site is well served by public transport facilities. Several bus routes connect the area with Dublin City Centre, Dublin Airport, Blanchardstown, Ratoath, Swords, and Balbriggan.

2.2. Description

2.2.1. The subject site measures approximately 20.04 hectares and is irregular in shape. The site is comprised of 10 no. agricultural fields / field sections and is traversed centrally by, and bounded by field boundaries, drainage ditches and mature trees and hedgerows.

2.2.2. The northern boundaries of the site are defined by Alderbrook housing estate boundaries with hedge planting. The eastern boundary of the site is defined by part The Briars housing estate, Cherry Court residential estate and the upper eastern boundary includes part of Dublin Road. The southern boundaries of the site are defined by field boundaries with hedge planting. The upper section of the western boundary is defined by Tara Close residential estate with hedge planting, while the lower section of the western boundary includes a field boundary that is marked by hedge planting.

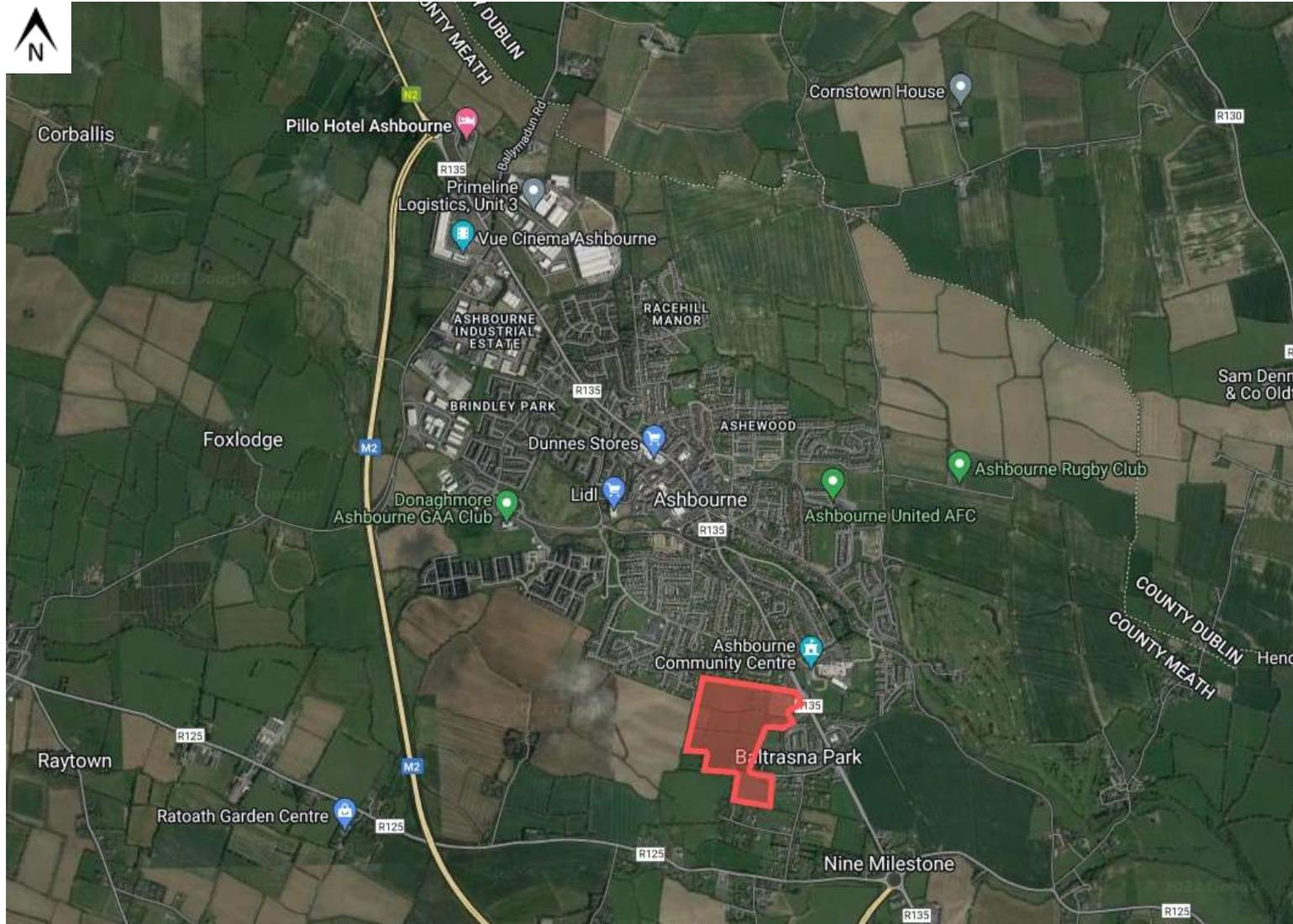


Figure 1: Application Site in Context of Ashbourne.



Figure 2: Application Site



2.3. Planning Context

- 2.3.1. The relevant Plan for the application site is the existing Meath County Development Plan, 2021-2027 (hereafter “CDP”).

The application site was previously zoned as ‘A2 New Residential’ on the 2009 Ashbourne Local Area Plan (LAP) map – See Figure 3 over.

The subject site represented the development of area ‘A2’, however, the LAP has now expired and is superseded by the more up to date policy context contained in the existing CDP, as acknowledged by An Bord Pleanála’s Inspectors in the previous applications made on the site (Ref.s DA/140010 and PL17.243223)

- 2.3.2. Zoning designations have been maintained and carried forward to the existing CDP with the subject site zoned primarily objective ‘A2 – New Residential’, which has the objective *“To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate”*. The other main land use attached to the site is ‘G1 – Community Infrastructure’, the objective of which is *“To provide for necessary community, social, and educational facilities”*, refer to Figure 4 overleaf.
- 2.3.3. All of the proposed development will occur on lands zoned ‘A2 - New Residential’, G1 - Community Infrastructure’ and ‘A1 - Existing Residential’. It is proposed to provide road upgrades / improvement works to both Cherry Lane and Hickey’s Lane and their junctions with Dublin Road (R135) and a pedestrian and bicycle green link point from Dublin Road (R135), along with the provision of open spaces etc.

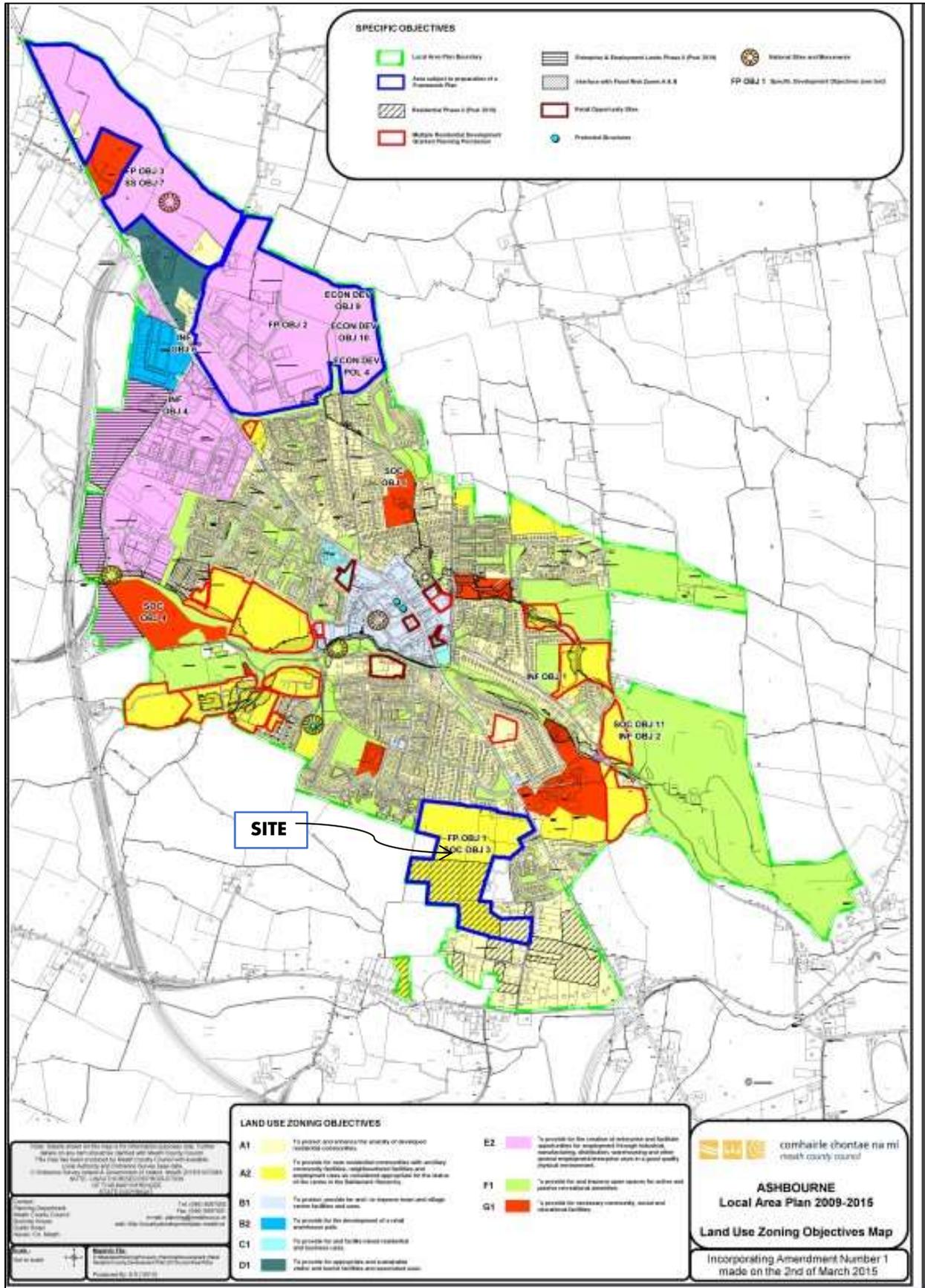


Figure 3: Site Indicated on Ashbourne Local Area Plan 2009 map (Now Expired).

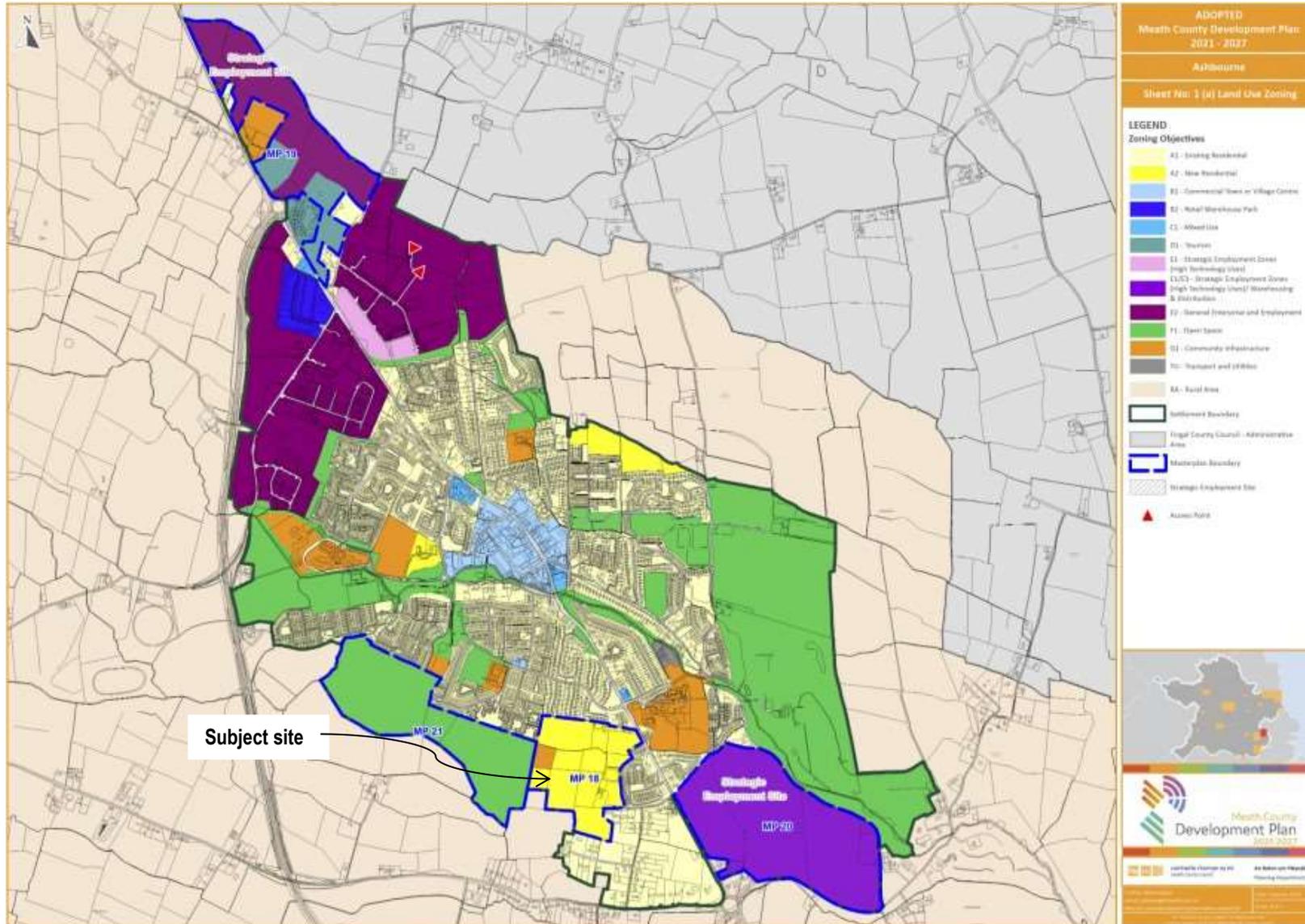


Figure 4: Site Indicated on Extract from Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027



2.4. Development Proposal

2.4.1. The subject site measures c.20.04 hectares located in townlands of Baltrasna and Milltown, in Ashbourne, County Meath. The applicant is Arnub Ltd. & Aspect Homes (ADC) Ltd

The proposed development can be described as follows:

Arnub Ltd. & Aspect Homes (ADC) Ltd. intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a strategic housing development, on an overall site of c. 20.04 hectares, located in the townlands of Baltrasna and Milltown, Ashbourne, County Meath. The application site is located to the west / south-west of Dublin Road (R135), south-west of Cherry Lane, west of the existing dwellings at The Briars and Cherry Court, south of the existing dwellings at Alderbrook Heath, Alderbrook Downs & Alderbrook Rise, east / south-east of the existing dwellings at Tara Close & Tara Place, and north-west and south-west of Hickey's Lane.

The development will consist of the following:

- (1) Demolition of all existing structures on site, comprising 3 no. single storey dwellings and their associated outbuildings (total demolition area: c.659m²).
- (2) Construction of 702 no. residential dwellings comprised of: 420 no. 2 & 3 storey 2, 3, 4, & 5 bed houses, 38 no. 2 & 3 bed duplex units in 19 no. 3 storey buildings, and 244 no. 1, 2, & 3 bed apartments in 20 no. buildings ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys.
- (3) The development also includes for the following non-residential uses: (i) 2 no. childcare facilities located in Blocks A and A1 (c. 289m² & c.384m² respectively), (ii) 4 no. retail units comprised of: 2 no. units in Block A (c.106m² & c.174m² respectively), 1 no. unit in Block A1 (c.191m²), & 1 no. unit in Block B1 (c.469m²), and (iii) 1 no. GP practice / medical use unit located in Block A1 (c.186m²).
- (4) The development provides for a basement level car park located under Block A1 (c. 4,095m²) and, 2 no. undercroft car parks located at the ground floor level of Block A (c. 466m²) and Block B1 (c. 1,466m²).
- (5) The development provides for an area of c.1 hectare reserved for a future school site and playing pitch at the western boundary of the site.
- (6) Vehicular access to the development will be via 2 no. access points as follows: (i) from Cherry Lane, located off Dublin Road (R135), in the north-east of the site and, (ii) from Hickey's Lane, located off Dublin Road (R135), to the east of the site. The development includes for road upgrades / improvement works to both Cherry Lane and Hickey's Lane and their junctions with Dublin Road (R135). A new east-west access road through the development site extending from Cherry Lane to the western boundary of the site and all associated site development works is proposed. The development includes for 1 no. pedestrian / bicycle green link access point from Dublin Road (R135) and pedestrian and cycle paths throughout the development site.
- (7) The development also provides for (i) all ancillary / associated site development works above and below ground, (ii) public open spaces (c.28,885m² total), including hard & soft landscaping, play equipment & boundary treatments, (iii) communal open spaces (c.3,180m² total) (iv) undercroft, basement, and surface car parking, including for EV, mobility impaired, and car share parking



spaces (total 1,262 no. car parking spaces) (v) 869 no. dedicated bicycle parking spaces at under-croft and surface level, including for external bicycle stores & visitor spaces (vi) bin storage, (vii) public lighting, (viii) signage (ix) plant (M&E) & utility services, including for 7 no. ESB sub-stations (x) green roofs, all on an overall application site area of 20.04 hectares.

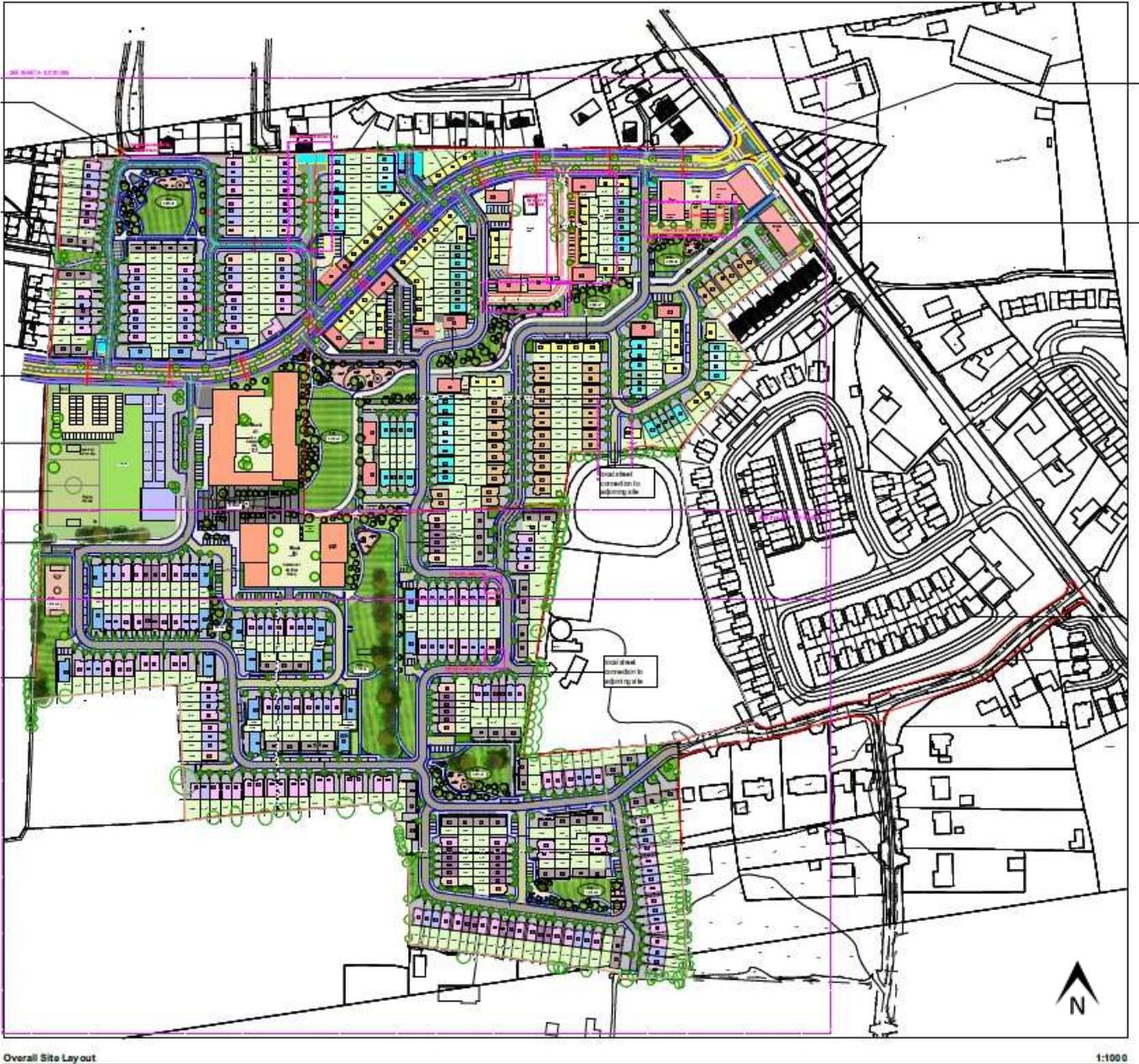


Figure 5: Proposed Site Layout



3.1. Planning Policy

3.1.1. For the purposes of this SIA, Armstrong Fenton Associates have conducted a brief review of national, regional, and local planning policy relating to the provision of social infrastructure. These policy documents are discussed in this section of the SIA.

3.2. The National Planning Framework

3.2.1. The National Planning Framework (hereafter 'NPF') is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to cater for a projected population increase of c. one million people up to the year 2040. The NPF is accompanied by the National Development Plan, a 10-year capital investment strategy, and together they are known as Project Ireland 2040.

3.2.2. Of relevance to this SIA is the following objective of the NPF:

- **National Policy Objective 31** - *"Prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with investment in:*
 - *A childcare/ECCE planning function, for monitoring, analysis and forecasting of investment needs, including identification of regional priorities;*
 - *The provision of childcare facilities and new and refurbished schools on well located sites within or close to existing built-up areas, that meet the diverse needs of local populations;*
 - *The expansion and consolidation of Higher Education facilities, particularly where this will contribute to wider regional development, and*
 - *Programmes for life-long learning, especially in areas of higher education and further education and training where skills gaps are identified."*

3.2.3. This SIA considers the above national policy objective in relation to the provision of childcare facilities and schools.

3.3. Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031

3.3.1. The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (hereafter 'RSES') is the relevant regional strategy. The RSES is a strategic plan and investment framework which aims to shape the future development of the Eastern and Midland region up to the year 2031 and beyond. The Eastern and Midland region is the smallest in terms of area but the largest terms of population. The region is therefore considered to be the primary economic engine of the State.

3.3.2. The RSES emphasises the important role social infrastructure has in developing strong, inclusive, and successful communities and re-iterates the need for local authorities, service providers, and stakeholders to work together to ensure that future demands for facilities are identified and met proactively.

3.3.3. Of relevance to this SIA are the following objectives of the RSES:

- **Regional Policy Objective 9.13** - *"Local authorities and relevant agencies shall ensure that new social infrastructure developments are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by adopting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full, active, valued and healthy lives."*
- **Regional Policy Objective 9.20** - *"Support investment in the sustainable development of the Region's childcare services as an integral part of regional infrastructure to include:*
 - *Support the Affordable Childcare Scheme.*



- *Quality and supply of sufficient childcare places.*
- *Support initiatives under across Government Early Years Strategy.*
- *Youth services that support and target disadvantaged young people and improve their employability”.*

- **Regional Policy Objective 9.21** - *“In areas where significant new housing is proposed, an assessment of need regarding schools provision should be carried out in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills and statutory plans shall designate new school sites at accessible, pedestrian, cycle and public transport friendly locations.”*

3.3.4. This SIA considers the above regional policy objectives in relation to the provision of childcare facilities and schools.

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

3.4.1. The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009, (hereafter ‘Guidelines’) set out the core principles of urban design to ensure the creation spaces with a distinct identity and sense of place. The principles contained in the Guidelines are to be used by Planning Authorities in writing their County Development Plans and in assessing development proposals.

3.4.2. The Guidelines state that *“The relationship and linkages between the area to be (re)developed and established neighbourhoods, including the availability of existing community facilities, and the provision of pedestrian and cycle networks”* is a fundamental question to be addressed at the outset of the planning process.

3.4.3. In particular, the Guidelines state that *“no substantial residential development should proceed without an assessment of existing schools capacity or the provision of new school facilities in tandem with the development”* and, as such, the Guidelines recommend that applications for 200 or more dwellings are accompanied by a report detailing existing school capacity and the impacts of the new development on same.

3.4.4. In tandem with the Childcare Facilities - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) the Guidelines detail that 20 no. childcare places should be provided for every 75 no. new dwellings however, the Guidelines note that existing facilities and demographics of the area should also be taken into consideration.

3.4.5. In relation to community centres, healthcare facilities and district /neighbourhood centres, the Guidelines generally consider that the need for these facilities should be assessed at LAP level and at the drafting stage of new development plans in consultation with the relevant providers. To this end it is noted that the lands subject to development proposal are zoned ‘A2 - New Residential’, G1 - Community Infrastructure’ and ‘A1 - Existing Residential’. in the existing CDP.

3.4.6. This SIA has considered the above guidance to ensure that the development proposal is sustainable.

3.5. Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020)

3.5.1. The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines, 2020, (‘Apartment Guidelines’) were adopted in response to growing demand for apartment living in the State.

3.5.2. Of particular relevance to this SIA, the Apartment Guidelines state that:

“Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be



progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the ***scale and unit mix of the proposed development 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.***” (Emphasis added by Armstrong Fenton Associates).

3.5.3. The Apartment Guidelines also detail the requirements for communal facilities within new apartment developments, including for: communal amenity space/facilities, children’s play, internal storage and bicycle parking etc.

3.5.4. The development proposal has considered the recommendations of the Apartment Guidelines with regard to the above. Full details of communal facilities provided within the development can be found in the Planning Statement, architectural drawings and Housing Quality Assessment submitted with the application – please refer to same.

3.5.5. This SIA addresses the above guidance with regard to the provision of childcare services.

3.6. Childcare Facilities - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

3.6.1. The Childcare Facilities - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001, (hereafter ‘Guidelines’) direct Planning Authorities to facilitate the provision of childcare facilities as part of the development of sustainable communities.

3.6.2. The Guidelines define childcare as:

“full day-care and sessional facilities and services for pre-school children and school-going children out of school hours. It includes services involving care, education and socialisation opportunities for children. Thus, services such as pre-schools, naíonraí (Irish language playgroups), day-care services, crèches, playgroups, and after-school groups are encompassed by these Guidelines. Conversely childminding, schools, (primary, secondary and special) and residential centres for children are not covered by these Guidelines”

3.6.3. The Guidelines require Planning Authorities to include childcare facilities as part of their County Development Plan objectives as a specific use in ‘appropriate locations/zones’. These locations include for ‘new communities / larger new housing developments.’ The Guidelines advise that sites should be identified for such facilities as an integral part of the pre-planning discussions.

3.6.4. In relation to new housing developments, the Guidelines state:

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

3.6.5. The development proposal caters for 2 no. childcare facilities to serve the future residents of the development in compliance with the above guidelines, and this SIA also considers the existing childcare facilities available in the area.



3.7. Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (CDP)

3.7.1. Ashbourne is identified as a “Self-Sustaining Growth Town” in the CDP.

3.7.2. Section 7.7.2. of the CDP has regard to the provision of “Community Infrastructure, Facilities and Services”. Of relevance to this SIA are the following objectives of the CDP:

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

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

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

Objective SOC OBJ3 – *“To facilitate the development and improvement of new and existing residential and day care facilities throughout the county.”*

3.7.3. Regarding educational facilities, the CDP states that *“To facilitate the development of preschool, primary, post primary, third level, outreach, research, adult and further educational facilities to meet the educational need of the citizens of the County.”*

3.7.4. Regarding health care facilities, the CDP states that *“To encourage the integration of healthcare facilities within new and existing communities and to discourage proposals that would cause unnecessary isolation or other access difficulties, particularly for the disabled, older people and children.”*

Under Chapter 3 “Settlement and Housing Strategy” the following policy and objectives are relevant to the SIA:

- **Policy SH POL 7:** *“To encourage and foster the creation of attractive, mixed use, sustainable communities that include suitable mix of housing types and tenures with supporting facilities, amenities and services that meet the needs of the entire community and accord with the principles of universal design, in so far as practicable.”*
- **Policy SH POL 9:** *“To promote higher residential densities in appropriate location and in particular close to town centres and along public transport corridors, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG (2009).”*
- **DM POL 5:** *“To promote sustainable development, a range of densities appropriate to the scale of settlement, site location, availability or public transport and community facilities including open space will be encouraged.”*



3.7.5. The development proposal has considered the above policy objectives of the CDP and this SIA demonstrates that existing provision in the environs of Ashbourne ensures that the development is sustainable and provides for an appropriate level of social infrastructure to support future residents.

3.8. Policy Conclusions

3.8.1. While all foregoing policy detailed in Section 3 of this SIA is not meant to be exhaustive, it is evident that an assessment of the existing social infrastructure available to serve the development proposal should be undertaken, particularly with regard to childcare and educational provision. This assessment can be found in Section 4 of the SIA.

4.0. Social Infrastructure Assessment

4.1.1. This SIA aims to evaluate the capacity of existing social and community infrastructure available in the vicinity of the development site to serve the needs of future residents of the development.

4.1.2. To evaluate same, it is first necessary to determine an appropriate catchment area for the SIA. It is generally considered that a distance of c. 5km is appropriate for such assessments, however, given the rural setting of Ashbourne in County Meath, it has been deemed appropriate to consider a distance of c. 10km in the subject SIA so that the neighbouring settlements of Ratoath, which offer many services and facilities currently used by existing residents of Ashbourne, are also considered in the SIA in order to give a wholistic overview of services available. It should be noted however, that the SIA only considers such facilities where appropriate.

4.1.3. In Section 7.7 of the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 has regard to the provision of “Community Infrastructure” and considers the following:

- Health & Wellbeing Facilities/Services
- Childcare Facilities
- Education Facilities (Primary, Post-Primary, Third level and Further Education & Training)
- Sports & Recreation (Parks, Playgrounds, Sports Clubs, Fitness Facilities and Recreation); and
- Other Community Services (Social Service or Information Centre, Retail, Religion or Emergency Services)

As such, the above categories have been considered as part of the SIA, the details of which can be found in the following sub-sections.



4.2. Health & Wellbeing

4.2.1. This section of the SIA identifies the existing health care providers in the vicinity of Ashbourne.

4.2.2. The identified health care providers include for medical doctors, dentists, mental health professionals, pharmacists, physiotherapists etc.

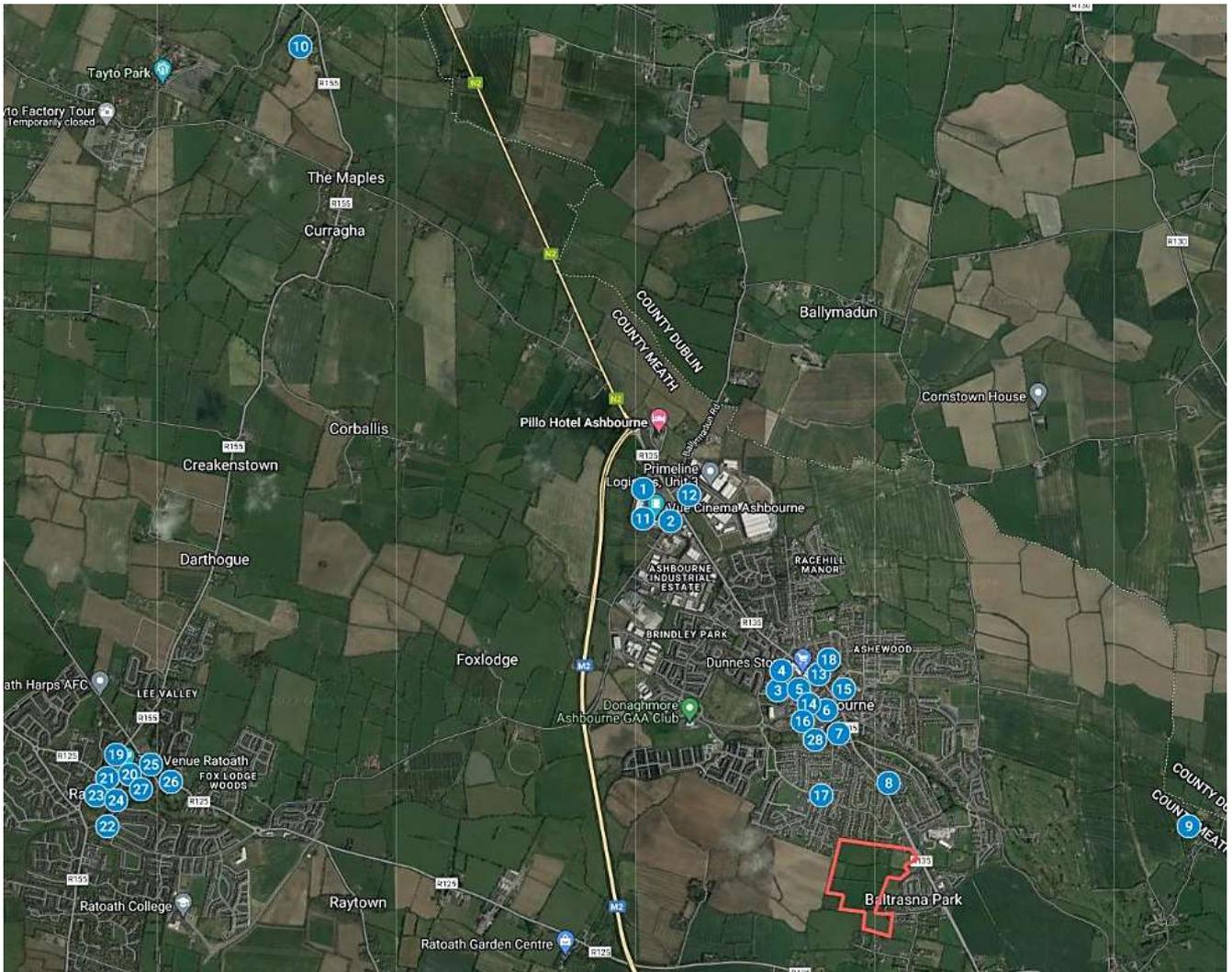
4.2.3. Overall, the SIA identified 18 no. health care providers in Ashbourne. In addition, a further 10 no. health care providers were identified in the nearby settlements of Ratoath and Kilbrew. The identified health care providers are detailed in Table 1 and Figure 6 below.

Table 1: Health and Wellbeing Facilities:

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Kati Simpson Roc Doc	Counselling	3.5km
2	Roc Doc Ashbourne	Medical Centre	3.2km
3	Ashbourne Primary Care Centre	Health Centre	1.5km
4	Ashbourne Family Practice	Doctor	1.5km
5	Dental Care Ireland Ashbourne	Dentist	1.5km
6	Ashbourne Medical Centre	General Practitioner	1.3km
7	24Hr Care Services	Nursing Agency	1.2km
8	The Maple Clinic	Doctor	600m
9	Dr Michelle Rockingham Rose Clinic	Doctor	5.0km
10	Kilbrew Nursing Home	Nursing Home	7.3km
11	Chemist Warehouse Ashbourne	Pharmacy	3.4km
12	Medguard Healthcare	Medical Supply Store	3.4km
13	Nolans Pharmacy	Pharmacy	1.4km
14	Boots	Pharmacy	1.4km
15	Conways Pharmacy	Pharmacy	1.3km
16	Adrian Dunne	Pharmacy	1.3km
17	O'Donnell's Pharmacy	Pharmacy	1.4km
18	Ashbourne Physiotherapy Clinic	Physio Therapist	1.5km
19	Ratoath Dental & Implant Centre	Dentist	7.9km
20	Ratoath Medical Centre	Medical Centre	7.8km
21	Ratoath Orthodontics	Orthodontist	7.9km
22	Meadowbank Medical Centre	Medical Centre	7.8km
23	Stack's Pharmacy	Pharmacy	7.9km
24	Kavanagh Pharmacy	Pharmacy	7.8km
25	Ratoath Pharmacy	Pharmacy	7.7km
26	Lilly's Pharmacy & Health Store	Pharmacy	7.4km
27	Ratoath Physiotherapy	Physio Therapist	7.7km
28	Specsavers Opticians & Audiologists	Optician	1.3km



Figure 6: Health and Wellbeing Facilities



- 4.2.4. As detailed in Table 1 and Figure 6 above, there are a total of 6. no medical/health centres, 10 no. pharmacies, 3 no. doctor practice / clinics, 3 no. dentist / orthodontist, 2 no. physiotherapists, 1 no. optician, 1 no. nursing home, 1 no. counselling practice and 1 no. medical supply store available in the vicinity of the development site to serve the future population of the development.
- 4.2.5. The list of health care providers detailed in this section of the SIA is not meant to be exhaustive and, given the proximity of the development site to other larger settlements, it is considered that other health care providers and hospitals are also available to serve future residents of the development. Notwithstanding same, it is considered evident from the above that there is a wide-ranging number and variety of existing health care providers available to serve the future population of the development. It should also be noted that the proposed development includes a GP practice / medical use unit accommodated in Block A1 (c.186m²) which will serve the local community.



4.3. Childcare Facilities

4.3.1. This section of the SIA identifies the existing childcare providers in the vicinity of Ashbourne

4.3.2. Information regarding existing childcare services was sourced from the following:

- Tusla (www.tusla.ie)
- Pobal (www.pobal.ie)
- Meath County Childcare Committee (www.mccc.ie)

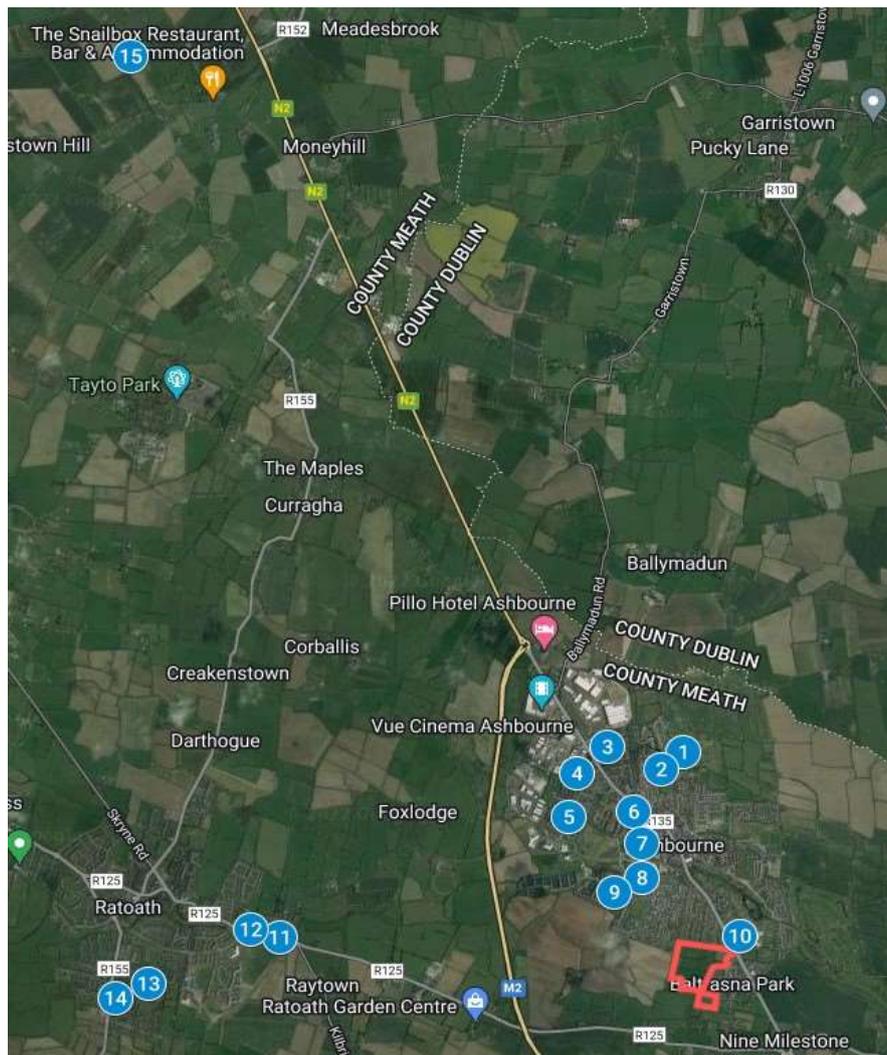
4.3.3. Overall, the SIA identified 15 no. existing childcare services in the vicinity of the development site. The identified childcare providers are detailed in Table 2 and Figure 7 below:

Table 2: Childcare Facilities

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Bumble Bee Day Care	Day Care	2.4km
2	Little Buddies Playgroup & Montessori	Montessori	2.0km
3	Tigers Childcare Ashbourne	Child Care Agency	2.5km
4	KHM Childcare	Childcare	4km
5	Stars of Wonder	Creche	2.6km
6	Killelland Tiny tots	Creche	1.7km
7	Cazzy Cuddles	Preschool	1.8km
8	Naionra Bruach na hAhann	Preschool	1.4km
9	Churchfields Tint Tots	Creche	1.8km
10	Little Leaps Preschool & Afterschool	School	400m
11	Little Ruggers Pre-school	Pre- School	6.9km
12	Ratoath Childcare	Creche	6.9km
13	Flintstone's Pre school	Pre- School	8.5km
14	Scope to Grow Childcare	Creche	8.5km
15	Cushenstown Preschool	Preschool	9.9km



Figure 7: Childcare Facilities



4.3.4. It is considered that Table 2 and Figure 7 above demonstrates an ample provision of existing childcare services in the vicinity of the development site. Notwithstanding same, it is particularly relevant to note that the development proposal caters for purpose-built childcare facilities to serve the future population of the development. The 2 no. proposed childcare facilities are in the form of a 1 no. crèche of c. 289m² which is accommodated in Block A at the northeaster boundary of the scheme and a 1 no. crèche of c. 384 m² which is accommodated in Block A1. As set out in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020), 1 bed units should not generally be considered to contribute a requirement for childcare provision. Therefore, excluding the proposed 47 no. 1 bed units, the proposed development comprises 655 no. 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed units which would give a requirement for c. 175 no. childcare spaces based on the standards of the 2001 Guidelines. Based on the required floor area standards of the Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) the proposed c2 no. childcare facilities combined can accommodate 175 no. children (63 no. children in the creche in Block A and 110 no. children in the creche in Block A1).

4.3.5. Given all the above, it is considered that the development proposal, which includes for 2 no. purpose-built childcare facilities accommodating 175 no. childcare places, ensures that there will be a more than adequate provision of childcare places to serve future residents of the proposed development.



4.4. Primary Education

- 4.4.1. This section of the SIA identifies the existing primary schools in the vicinity of Ashbourne.
- 4.4.2. Overall, the SIA identified 8 no. existing primary schools in the vicinity of the development site. The identified primary schools are detailed Figure 8 below.

Table 3: Existing Primary Schools:

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Capacity	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	St. Marys National School	Mixed	482	2.0km
2	St. Declan's National Catholic School	Mixed	650	1.5km
3	Gaelscoil na Cille	Mixed	225	550m
4	Gaelscoil na Mi	Mixed	336	2.3km
5	St. Paul National Catholic School	Mixed	609	7.2km
6	Ratoath Junior National School	Mixed	300	8.2km
7	St. Andrews National School	Mixed	112	6.3km
8	Scoil Naomh Cianain	Mixed	77	9.6km
9	Educate Together Ashbourne	Mixed	443	2.4km
Total Enrolment			3,234	

- 4.4.3. Details of existing primary schools identified and their enrolment figures for the 2021/2022 academic year can be found in Table 3 below. Enrolment figures for individual schools were sourced from the Department of Education website (<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/primary-schools/>).
- 4.4.4. It is evident from the above that there are 9 no. primary schools in the vicinity of the development site which have a total existing enrolment of c. 3,234 no. students.
- 4.4.5. The demand for primary school places created by a development is projected on the basis that an average of 12% of the population are expected to present for primary education as per the methodology of the 'The Provisions of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government' guidance (DEHLG, 2008).
- 4.4.6. The development proposal consists of 702 no. dwellings however, for the purposes of primary school demand calculations, it is considered reasonable to discount the 47 no. proposed 1-bedroom dwellings within the development proposal due to the likelihood of these units being occupied being young childless couples or single workers.

Accordingly, the projected primary school attending population for the development is based upon 655 no. dwellings (702 no. dwellings total minus 47 no. 1- bedroom dwellings). Based on 655 no. dwellings, and assuming an average household occupancy of 2.75 persons per dwelling as per the 2016 Census statistics, the development will likely generate a population of c. 1,801 no. persons. On the assumption that 12% of the population will be of primary school age this equates to c. 216 no. additional primary school places being generated by the development.



- 4.4.7. The 9-no. existing primary schools identified in the SIA have a current enrolment of c. 3,234 no. students or an average of c. 404 no. students in each school year (i.e., junior & senior infants and 1st - 6th class). It is therefore considered reasonable to estimate that a combined number of c. 404 no. students will graduate from the primary school system each year amongst these 9-no. identified primary schools. As such, it is considered reasonable to conclude that there will be an adequate number of primary school places available to cater for expected primary school aged population generated from the development.
- 4.4.8. In addition, an analysis of the enrolment figures for the 9 no. identified primary schools from the 2020/2021 academic year (sourced from Department of Education website - <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/primary-schools/>) details that enrolment figures in the
- 4.4.9. 9 no. identified primary schools have dropped by a combined total of 96 no. students in the last two years, thus indicating evidence of a large number of vacant places amongst the 9 no. identified primary schools.
- 4.4.10. Based on all the foregoing, it is considered that the expected primary school population generated by the development proposal can be adequately meet by existing primary schools in the vicinity of the development site.
- 4.4.11. Notwithstanding the above, the application site includes c.1Ha of land, zoned G1 – Community Infrastructure that is proposed to be reserved to accommodate a future primary school, in accordance with the agreed Masterplan for the lands. The submitted drawings illustrate that the reserved site can accommodate 16 classroom school as per design standards of the Department of Education and Skills. The site shall remain reserved to accommodate a school until confirmation is received from the Department of Education and Skills as to their need for same.

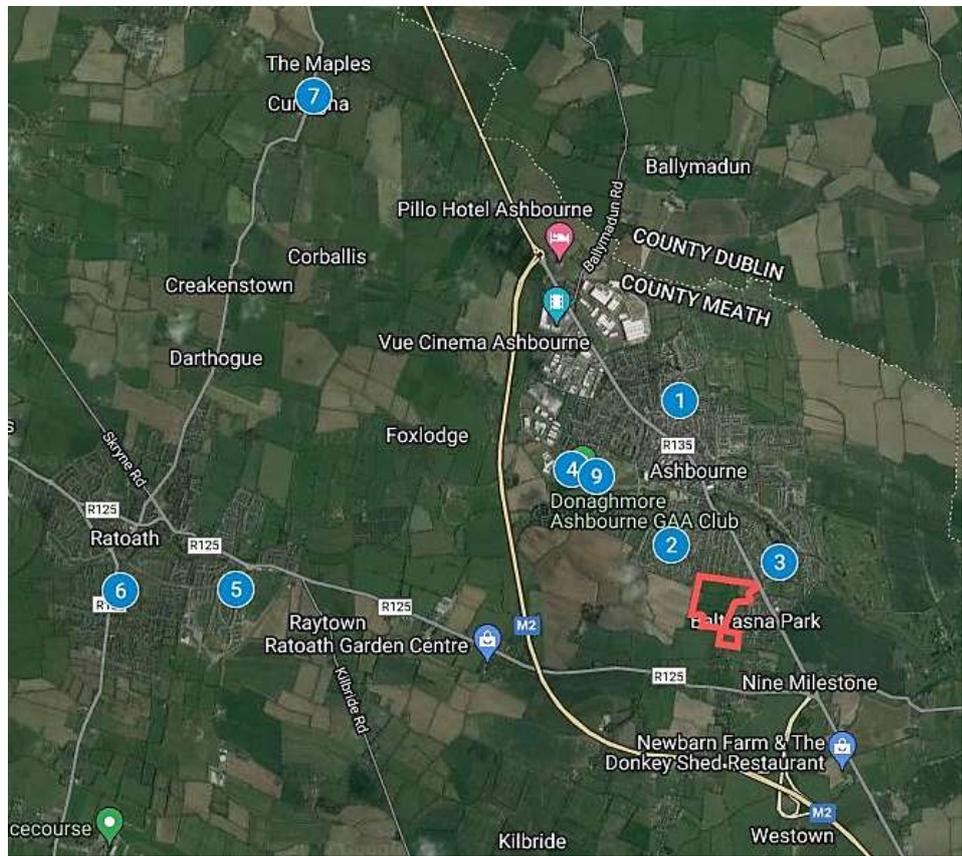


Figure 8: Primary Schools



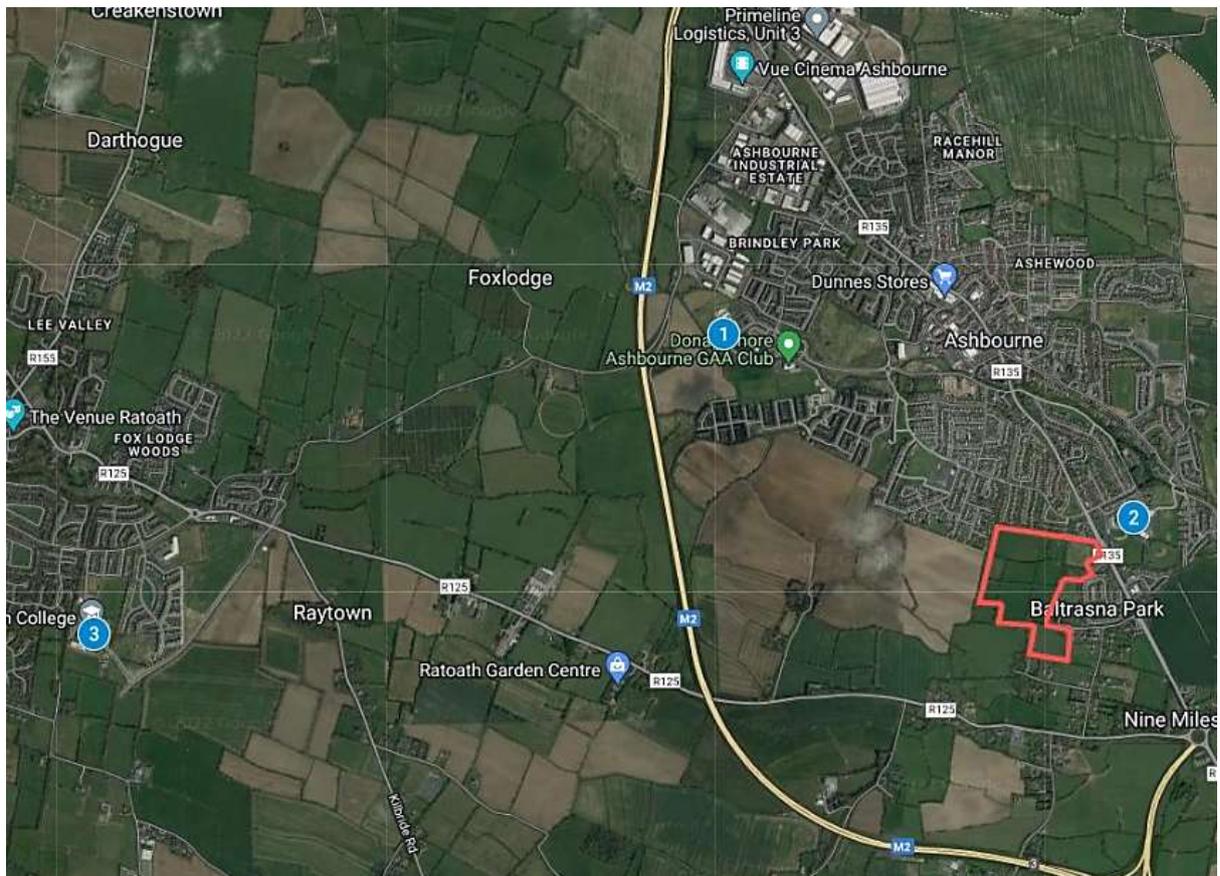
4.5. Post Primary Education

- 4.5.1. This section of the SIA identifies the existing post-primary schools in the vicinity of Ashbourne.
- 4.5.2. Overall, the SIA identified 3 no. existing post-primary schools in the vicinity of the development. The identified post-primary schools are detailed in Table 4 and Figure 9 below.
- 4.5.3. Details of existing post-primary school identified and their enrolment figures for the 2021/2022 academic year can be found in Table 4 over. Enrolment figures for individual schools were sourced from the Department of Education website (<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/post-primary-schools/#20212022>).

Table 4: Post Primary School

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Capacity	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Colaiste De Lacy	Mixed	772	2.3km
2	Ashbourne Community School	Mixed	539	550m
3	Ratoath College	Mixed	1,112	7.6km
Total Enrolment			2,423	

Figure 9: Post-Primary Schools



- 4.5.4. It is evident from the above that 3 no. post-primary schools were identified in the vicinity of the development site, which have a total existing enrolment of c. 2,423 no. students.



4.5.5. *The Provisions of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, the Department of Education and Science, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance (DEHLG, 2008) does not provide a methodology for calculating the demand for school places in secondary schools and states that the procedure for establishing demand for new second-level schools is, in some cases, more complex. Notwithstanding this, it is assumed here that the identified primary school going population of the development would be matched by the secondary school going population i.e., c. 404 no. additional places as per Section 4.4.7 of this SIA.*

4.5.6. Based on all the foregoing, it is considered that the expected post-primary school population generated by the development proposal can be adequately meet by existing post-primary schools in the vicinity of the development site.

4.6. Sports and Recreation

4.6.1. This section of the SIA identifies the existing sports and recreation facilities in the vicinity of Ashbourne.

4.6.2. Overall, the SIA identified 45 no. in Ashbourne and the surrounding settlements. The identified sports and recreation facilities are detailed in Table 5 and Figure 10 over.

Figure 10: Sports and Recreational Facilities

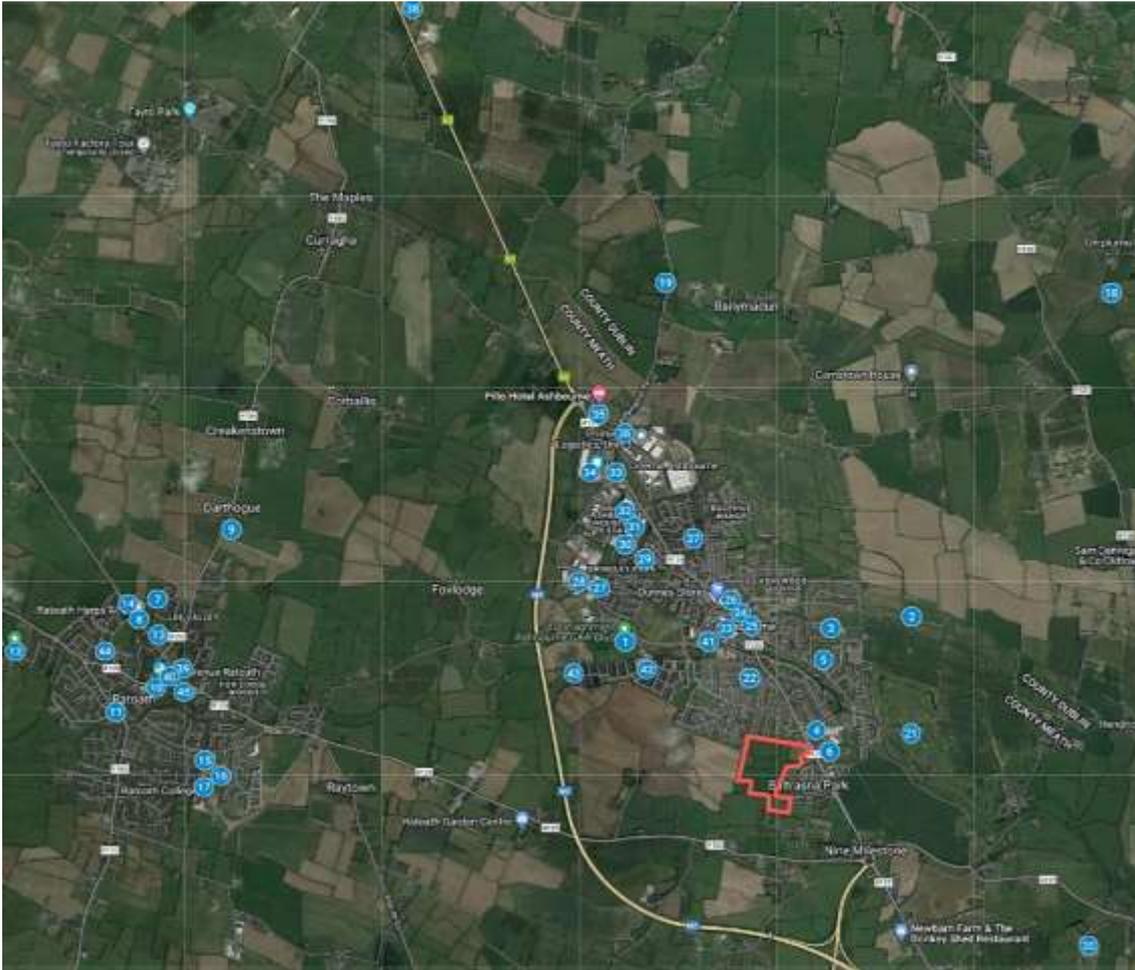




Table 5: Sports & Recreation Facilities

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Donaghmore Ashbourne GAA Club	GAA	1.5km
2	Ashbourne Rugby Club	Rugby Club	1.8km
3	Ashbourne United AFC	Soccer Club	900m
4	International Baseball Centre	Baseball	1.6km
5	Ashbourne United SSG Pitch	Soccer Pitch	550m
6	Ashbourne Cricket Club	Cricket Club	1.5km
7	Ratoath Harps AFC Astro	Soccer	8.5km
8	Ratoath Harps AFC	Soccer club	8.4km
9	Ratoath RFC	Rugby Club	8.4km
10	Ronnie Walsh Physical fitness	Gym	8.1km
11	Service Your Body Ratoath	Pilates Studios	8.6km
12	Ratoath GAA	GAA Club	9.3km
13	Dunshaughlin Youths FC	Football Club	8.2km
14	Ratoath Pitch &Putt Club	Pitch &Putt Club	8.5km
15	Ratoath Tennis Club	Tennis Club	7.8km
16	Ratoath Athletic Club	Athletic Club	7.8km
17	Ratoath RFC, Jamestown Campus	Rugby Club	7.9km
18	Oldtown Riding Stables	Horse Riding	5.4km
19	Ballymadun Stables	Equestrian Centre	3.6km
20	Broadmeadow E.C	Equestrian Centre	3.7km
21	Ashbourne Golf Club	Golf Club	1.2km
22	Ashbourne Boxing Club	Boxing Club	1.0km
23	Gym Plus Ashbourne	Gym	700m
24	Stringer Fitness	Gym	600m
25	Burke Body Shop	Fitness Centre	600m
26	Fit Haus	Gym	750m
27	Crossfit Meath Ashborne	Gym	3.3km
28	CRsculpt Gym	Gym	3.2km
29	Coolmine Gymnastics Club	Gymnastics Club	3.0km
30	Love the place Your in Yoga	Yoga Studio	3.0km
31	SDF	Gym	3.1km
32	Platinum Physique Limited	Gym	3.1km
33	Gracie Barra BJJ Ashbourne	Jiujitsu club	2.3km
34	Go Gym	Gym	2.3km
35	Clannlife Fitness Ashbourne	Leisure Centre	3.0km
36	Impulse Fitness	Gym	2.4km
37	Feel the Byrne Fitness	Personal Training	1.4km
38	Hybrid Fitness & Performance	Gym	5.9km
39	Ger Conroy Fitness Ratoath	Gym	8.0km
40	The Yoga Room	Yoga Studio	8.0km
41	Ashbourne Playground	Playground	800m
42	Churchfield Playground	Playground	1.7km
43	Churchfield Crescent Playground	Playground	2.2km
44	Ratoath Playground	Playground	9.0km
45	Ratoath Broadmeadow Riverwalk	Park	7.5km



- 4.6.3.** As detailed in Table 5 and Figure 10 above, there are a total 12 no. gyms, 5 no. soccer clubs, 4 no. playgrounds and 3 no. rugby clubs, horse riding & equestrian centres, yoga & pilates studios, 2 no. GAA clubs, leisure & fitness centres and 1 no. cricket club, boxing club, golf club, personal training, athletic club, baseball centre, tennis club, pitch & putt club, gymnastics club, jiu-jitsu club and 1 no. park available in the vicinity of the development site to serve the future population of the development.
- 4.6.4.** The list of sports and recreation facilities detailed in this section of the SIA is not meant to be exhaustive and, given the proximity of the development site to other larger settlements, it is considered that other sports and recreation facilities are also available to serve future residents of the development. Notwithstanding same, it is considered evident from the above that there is a wide-ranging number and variety of existing sports and recreation facilities available to serve the future population of the development.
- 4.6.5.** It is also considered noteworthy that the development proposal provides as a new pedestrian and bicycle green link access point from the Dublin Road (R135) and pedestrian and cycle paths throughout the site, which caters for both recreation and accessibility improvements in Ashbourne. The development also provides for new public open spaces, MUGA and children’s play areas, all of which add to the recreational choices in the immediate area. Furthermore, the G1 lands within the application site, which are to be reserved for use as a school site, are also to accommodate a playing pitch in the future in accordance with the agreed Masterplan for the site, which will provide an additional sporting and recreational facility for the local community.

4.7. Other Community Facilities

4.7.1. This section of the SIA identifies the remaining community facilities of relevance in the vicinity of Ashbourne.

4.7.2. Retail Facilities

Overall, the SIA identifies 76 no. retail facilities in Ashbourne and the surrounding settlements. The identified retail facilities are detailed in Table 6 and Figure 11 & 12 over.

Table 6: Retail Facilities

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Choice Ashbourne	Home Goods Store	3.7km
2	Argos Ashbourne Retail Park	Department Store	3.6km
3	Maxi Zoo Ashbourne	Pet Supply Store	3.6km
4	JYSK Ashbourne	Furniture Store	3.7km
5	Tile Merchant	Home Goods Store	3.6km
6	Ashbourne Retail Park	Retail Park	3.4km
7	MrPRICE Ashbourne	Discount Store	3.3km
8	Divinity Tile & Bathrooms	Home Goods Store	3.3km
9	Crown Decorating Centre	Paint Store	3.4km
10	Ashbourne Home Centre	Furniture Store	3.4km
11	Ashbourne Automotive Services	Motor Vehicle Dealer	3.1km
12	N2 Electrical & Security Supplies	Electrical Supply Store	2.3km
13	William Roche Motors	Motor Vehicle Dealer	2.2km
14	Applegreen	Gas Station	2.4km
15	Tyre Starrs	Tire Shop	2.6km



16	O'Neills Cycle Store	Bike Shop	1.8km
17	Stone & Stoves	Wood Stove Shop	3.2km
18	Ashbourne Upholstery	Upholstery shop	2.4km
19	Waveform Electrical Wholesale	Electrical Supply Store	2.9km
20	WOW Balloons	Balloon Store	2.9km
21	Plumb4less Bathrooms & Heating Supplies	Plumbing Supply Store	2.8km
22	Ashbourne Tyre Centre	Tire Shop	2.8km
23	Diamond Car Parts	Car Part Supply Store	2.7km
24	Tyreland Ashbourne	Tire Shop	2.7km
25	HLS	Tool Store	3.0km
26	JD Kitchens & Interiors	Furniture Store	3.0km
27	Diesel Electric Power Ltd.	Electrical Supply Store	3.0km
28	henworld	Party Store	3.0km
29	Ace Plant & Tool Hire Ashbourne	Plant & Machinery Hire	3.1km
30	Euro Car Parts	Auto Parts Store	3.1km
31	BBQ 4 You Shop	Grill Store	3.1km
32	Spurga	Grocery Store	1.5km
33	Roberts Furniture Ireland	Furniture Store	3.2km
34	Dillons Kitchens	Kitchen Supply Store	3.2km
35	Uniwear Ltd	Uniform Store	2.2km
36	Lee's XL Shop	Convenience Store	1.1km
37	Dunnes Stores	Retail Store	800m
38	SuperValu Ashbourne	Supermarket	700km
39	Ashbourne Store	Convenience Store	700km
40	Jennys Shoe Boutique	Shoe Store	650m
41	Jenny's Boutique	Boutique	650m
42	Topline Murtaghs (Main Shop)	Hardware Store	600m
43	MC Geever Menswear	Men's Clothing Store	700m
44	Topline Murtaghs (Trade Centre)	Hardware Store	700m
45	ALDI	Supermarket	65m
46	Centra Ashbourne	Convenience Store	1.1km
47	The Book Haven - Ashbourne	Book Store	2.9km
48	Hannon's SuperValu Ratoath	Supermarket	8.2km
49	Tesco Express	Supermarket	8.3km
50	Daybreak	Convenience Store	1.6km
51	Circle K	Gas Station	3.3km
52	The Goddess Essence	Candle Store	1.2km
53	KRS Upholstery	Upholstery shop	550km
54	HandPaint Furniture	Furniture Store	800m
55	Lidl	Supermarket	1.0km
56	Cinnamon Spice Heaven	Asian Grocery Store	950km
57	New Look	Clothing Store	750km
58	EuroGiant	Discount Store	700m
59	Life Style Sports	Clothing Store	650m



60	Holland & Barrett	Health Food Shop	650m
61	Polonia	Grocery Store	650m
62	The Bookmark Ashbourne	Book Store	650m
63	Tesco Superstore	Supermarket	600m
64	Hugh Maguire Butchers Online Butcher	Butchers	650m
65	F&F Clothing	Clothes Store	600m
66	eir	Phone Shop	600m
67	O'Briens Wine Off-Licence Ashbourne	Off- Licence	600m
68	High Street Ashbourne	Shopping Mall	800m
69	numberOne Ashbourne	Supermarket	800m
70	Hyland Jewellers	Jewellery Shop	800m
71	Love Lucy	Women's Clothing Store	800m
72	Hale Ashbourne	Vape Shop	750km
73	Cardfactory	Card Retail Shop	700m
74	Irish Deaf Society Ashbourne	Thrift Shop	850m
75	Ratoath Garden Centre	Garden Centre	5.1km
76	Newbarn Farm & The Donkey Shed Restaurant	Farm Shop	3.1km

As detailed in Table 6 and Figures 11 & 12 the list of retail facilities detailed in this section of the SIA is not meant to be exhaustive and, given the proximity of the development site to other larger settlements, it is considered that other retail facilities are also available to serve future residents of the development. Notwithstanding same, it is considered evident from the above that there is a wide-ranging number and variety of existing retail facilities available to serve the future employment population of the development.

It is also considered noteworthy that the development proposal provides 4 no. retail units which caters for both retail and employment development in Ashbourne.



Figure 11: Ashbourne Retail Facilities





Figure 12: Ratoath Retail Facilities



4.7.3. Religion Facilities

This section of the SIA identifies the existing religious facilities in the vicinity of Ashbourne.

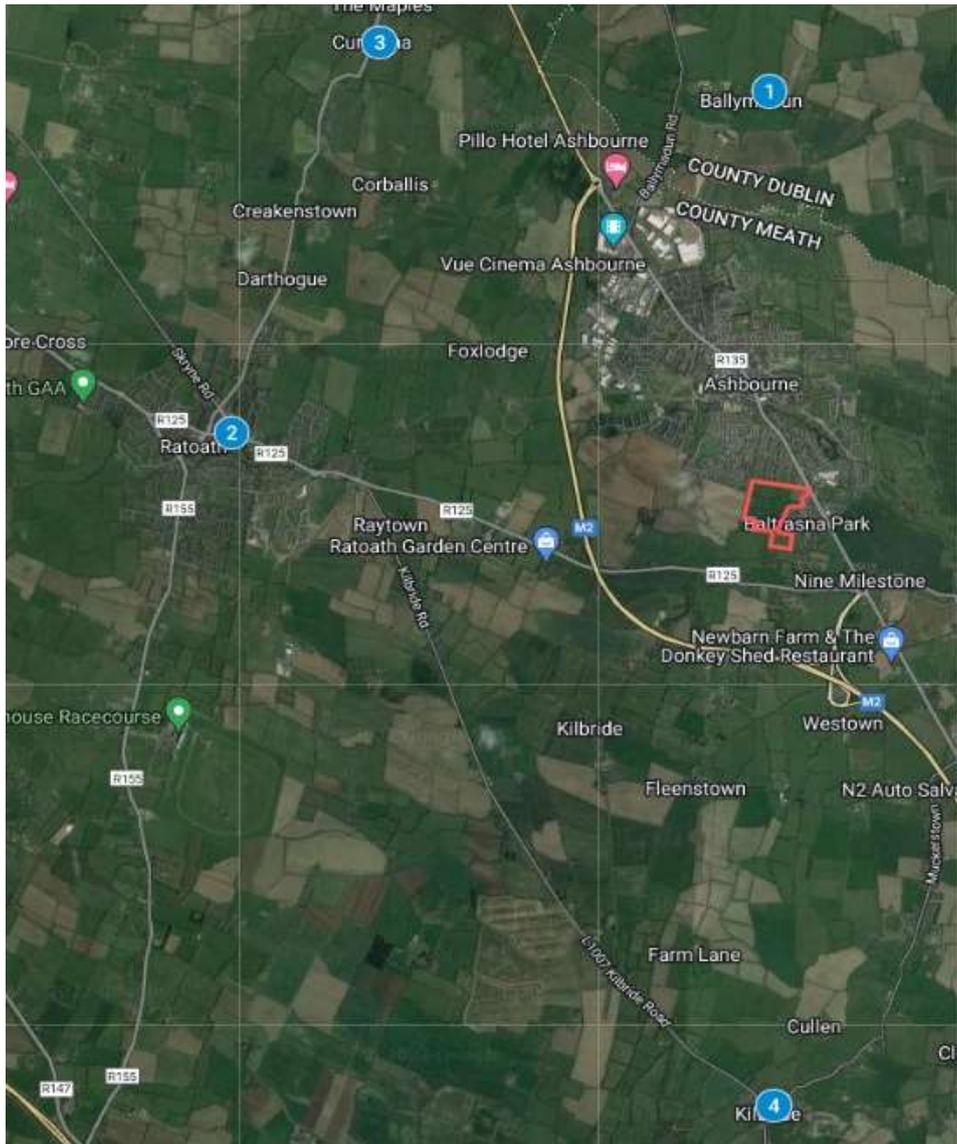
Overall, the SIA identified 4 no. places of worship. The identified places of worship are detailed in Table 7 and Figure 13.

Table 7: Religious Facilities

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	St. Joseph`s	Catholic Church	4.2km
2	Holy Trinity Ratoath Parish Church	Catholic Church	7.9km
3	Curraha Parish	Catholic Church	5.4km
4	St. Brigid's Church Kilbride	Catholic Church	7.7km



Figure 13: Religion Facilities



The list of religious facilities detailed in this section of the SIA is not meant to be exhaustive and, given the proximity of the development site to other larger settlements, it is considered that other places of worship and burial grounds are also available to serve future residents of the development. Notwithstanding same, it is considered that it is evident from the above that there is a wide-ranging number and variety of existing religious facilities available to serve the future population of the development.

4.7.4. Social & Information facilities

This section of the SIA identifies the social and information facilities of relevance in the vicinity of Ashbourne.

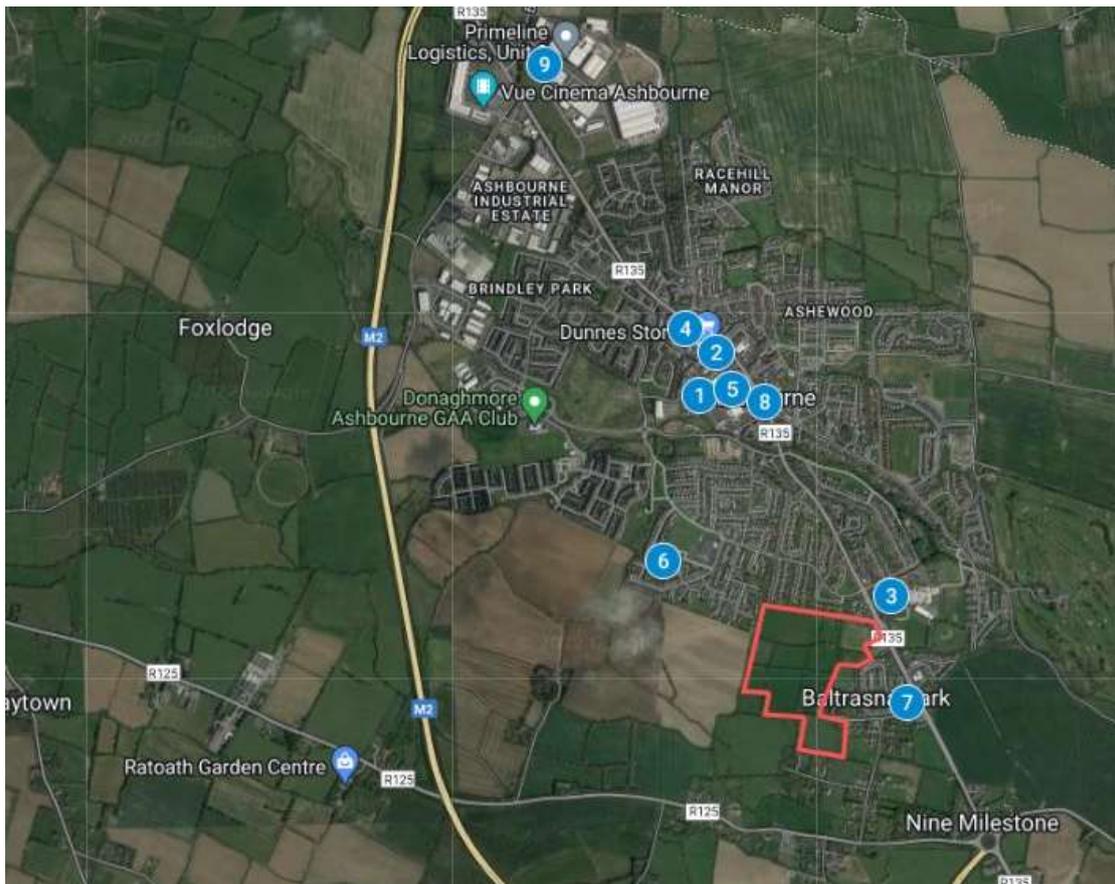
Overall, the SIA identified 9 no. social and information facilities available, as detailed in Table 8 and Figure 14



Table 8: Social & Information Facilities

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Citizens Information Centre	Citizens Information Bureau	850m
2	Vincent's Ashbourne	Charity	800m
3	Ashbourne Community Centre	Community Centre	1.4km
4	Ashbourne Credit Union St. Declan's	Credit Union	1.0km
5	Ashbourne Library	Library	800m
6	Ashbourne PC & Web Design Services	Computer Repair Service	1.6km
7	One Hour for Me	Mental Health Service	1.8km
8	Affinity Counselling Ashbourne	Mental Health Service	500m
9	Health Service Executive	HSE Corporate Office	2.5km

Figure 14: Social & Information Facilities



It is considered evident from the above that there is a wide range of social and information facilities in the vicinity of the development site to serve the future population of the proposed development however, the above list is non-exhaustive.



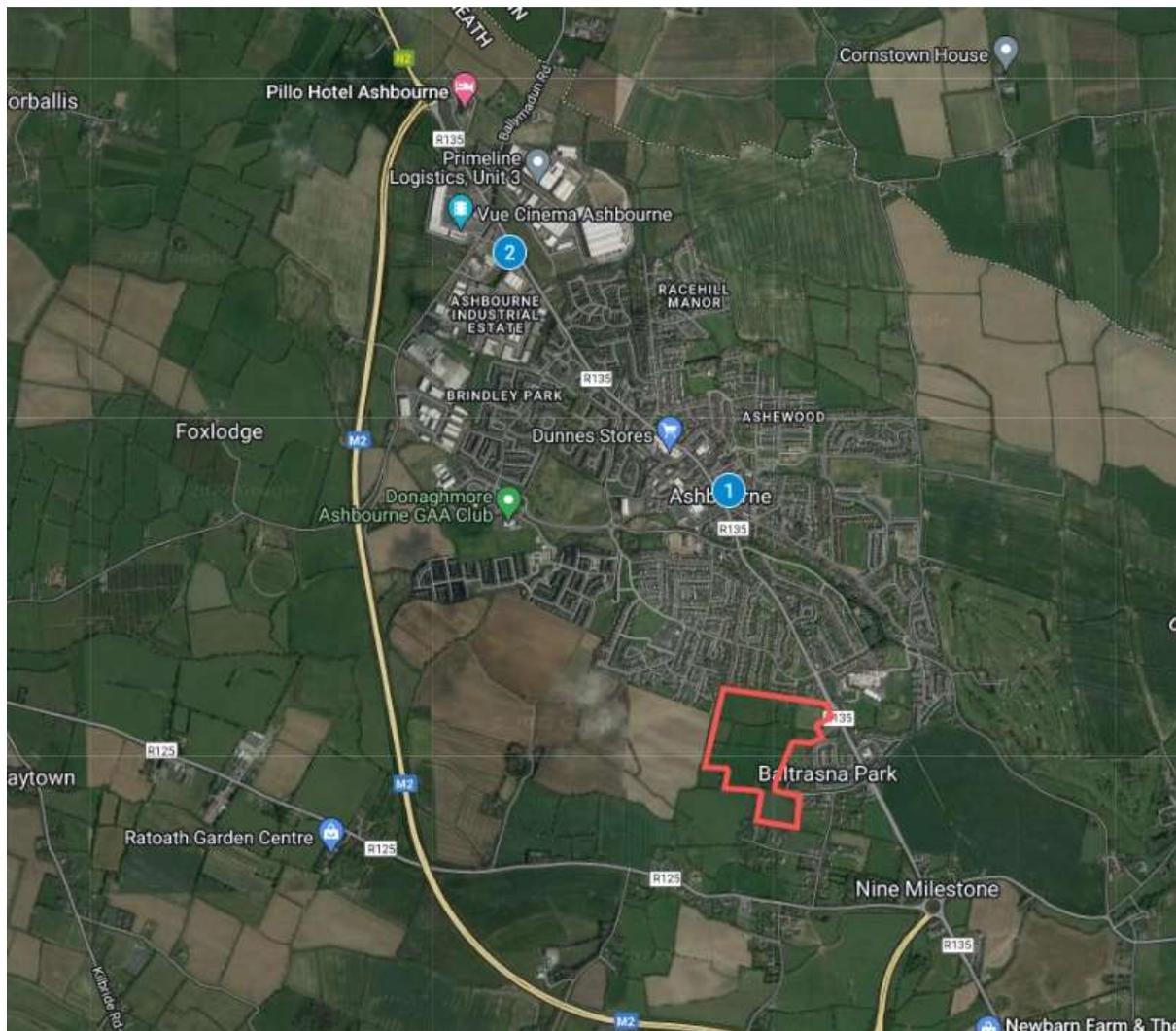
4.7.5. Emergency Services

This section of the SIA identifies the emergency services of relevance in the vicinity of Ashbourne. The SIA identified 2 no. emergency services available as detailed in Table 9 and Figure 15 below.

Table 9: Emergency Services

Number	Name	Type of Facility	Approx. Distance from subject site
1	Ashbourne Fire Station	Emergency Services	1.9km
2	Ashbourne Garda Station	Police Station	500m

Figure 15: Emergency Services





5.0. Conclusions

5.1. This SIA is put forward in support of the proposed SHD application submitted to An Bord Pleanála in respect of a site measuring c. 20.04 hectares located in the townlands of Baltrasna and Milltown, Ashbourne, County Meath

5.2. The aims of the SIA were as follows:

- i. Review the existing planning policy context relating to the provision of social and community infrastructure.
- ii. Identify existing social and community infrastructure in proximity to Ashbourne.
- iii. Consider the social and community infrastructure proposed as part of the subject development.
- iv. Evaluate if expected demand will be appropriately met by existing and proposed services.

5.3. A review of existing planning policy context relating to the provision of social and community infrastructure identified a need for an assessment of the existing social infrastructure available to serve the development proposal, particularly with regard to childcare and educational provision. The SIA was based on the categories of “Community Infrastructure” detailed in Section 7.7 of the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

5.4. In the vicinity of the development site, this SIA Identified:

- 28 no. Health & Wellbeing Facilities
- 15 no. Childcare Facilities
- 9 no. Primary Education Facilities
- 3 no. Post-Primary Education Facilities
- 45 no. Sports & Recreation Facilities
- 76 no. Retail Facilities
- 4 no. Religious Facilities
- 9 no. Social & Information Facilities
- 2 no. Emergency Facilities

5.5. It is considered that, based on all the information provided in this SIA, the development proposal and its future population will be adequately supported by existing social and community infrastructure. In addition, the development proposal provides for new infrastructure which includes for: 2 no. childcare facilities, 4 no. retail units, 1 no. GP practice / medical use unit, 1 no. pedestrian / bicycle green link access point from Dublin Road (R135), 1Ha of land reserved to accommodate a future primary school and playing pitch and includes public open spaces, MUGA and children’s play area etc.

5.6. Having regard to this SIA, it is considered that the proposed development represents efficient and sustainable development of the site and complies with the zoning objectives attached to the site, specifically the requirement to provide for necessary social and physical infrastructure to support the new residential community.