



Senior Executive Officer,
Planning Department,
Kildare County Council,
Áras Chill Dara,
Naas,
County Kildare

16 October 2025

**Re: Proposed Variation No. 2 (Newbridge Settlement Plan) of the Kildare
County Development Plan 2023- 2029**

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to the above. The Department of Education and Youth wishes to make the following submission to proposed Variation No. 2 of the Kildare CDP 2023-2029.

The department has considered the above document and notes that the purpose of the variation is to provide a Settlement Plan for Newbridge to replace the Newbridge Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019.

In the context of future population trends and their potential impact on school place requirements, the department notes that this variation refers to the population growth identified for Newbridge in the recent draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029. The department notes that the population scenario envisaged in Kildare overall is the high NPF target of 266,500 by 2031. The department made its submissions to the CDP regarding Newbridge on the basis of the potential population growth within the settlement and its environs between 2023 and 2031.

In terms of future population growth in Newbridge as identified in this variation, the department notes that section 3.6 Estimated Residential Growth in Newbridge 2025-2029 has a total revised housing target of 1,796 units (Table 3.7). It is noted that the total amount of units may not be delivered over the lifetime of the plan. Nevertheless, taking into account the Census 2022 average of 2.97 persons per household in County Kildare, a development of 1,796 units could result in an additional cc 5,334 people for Newbridge at some stage between 2029 and beyond, which could see the projected population for Newbridge rise to cc 29,700 from its Census 2022 figure of 24,366. If this growth materialises, it will result in a substantial additional requirement for school provision in Newbridge.

There are currently 15 schools (nine primary, two special education and four post-primary schools, one of which is a fee paying school) located in Newbridge. The department's preference would be to expand these existing facilities (if possible)



should there be a requirement for additional school places resulting from planned population increases.

The housing unit targets identified in the Newbridge settlement Plan would see the demand for primary and post primary school places increase substantially and could place significant pressure on existing schools to cater for the extra school place requirement. In this regard, it has been noted and welcomed that the Council has reserved a site in Crotanstown and an additional site in Cornelscourt for future school provision. The requirement for these potential new school facilities may not materialise until a sizeable portion of the planned new residential development has been completed. It is also noted that additional land has been zoned for future expansion of educational facilities at Scoil na Naomh Uilig.

It is important to add that it is generally considered that schools are enabling infrastructure for housing and as such, schools should be positioned in the heart of new and expanding sustainable communities, allowing for the maximum benefit to the community inside and outside school hours. Further to this, other community facilities and amenities should also be positioned close to school facilities to allow for all community facilities be complimentary to each other for the benefit of the whole community. All enabling infrastructure required to develop and operate school facilities should be provided in advance of the need for such schools. This infrastructure includes road, electricity, water infrastructure, sustainable transport links, active travel networks, road safety measures and safe routes to school facilities. It should be noted that it is not within the remit of the Department of Education and Youth to develop or fund this enabling infrastructure.

In relation to other aspects of the draft plan, the department notes that the Council plans a range of Safe Routes to School improvements to deliver safe, accessible and child-friendly walking and cycling infrastructure. The department notes and welcomes Active Travel Objective MATO 2.6 to support the implementation of School Safe Zones identified in Map 7.1 in line with the National Transport Authority's Safe Routes to School Programme. The department supports the development of sustainable travel links between schools and residential areas.

The department notes and welcomes the following Education and Training Objectives; HCO 2.1 To support and facilitate new schools and improvements/expansion of existing educational facilities, including special needs education and further educational opportunities which may arise, at appropriate locations, accounting for the 10-minute settlement concept.

HCO 2.2 To continue to engage with the Department of Education and Youth in respect of the identification and phased delivery of the following:

- A new 24 -32 classroom primary school at Crotanstown on lands zoned as 'E (1): Community and Education'.
- A 1,000 pupil post primary school in Newbridge at Cornelscourton lands zoned as 'E (3): Community and Education'.



The department also anticipates that additional Special Education Needs (SEN) provision at both Primary and Post Primary level will be required in the future throughout the country and this may result in schools requiring additional accommodation or space to meet this growing need. On a point of information, the Department of Education and Youth engages closely with the National Council for Special Education in relation to the forward planning of new special classes and additional special school places. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has a statutory function to plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs, in consultation with the relevant education partners and the Health Service Executive (HSE). This includes the establishment of special class and special school placements in various geographical areas where there is an identified need.

The department and the NCSE are working with schools and patrons to make increased provision for children with special education needs, both in special classes at mainstream schools and in special schools. At post primary level, all schools have been advised to plan for an average of 4 special classes. At primary level, the focus is on ensuring appropriate provision at all medium to large primary schools (8 mainstream classes or more) in the first instance.

Most special classes are established in existing accommodation and where there is a further requirement within that accommodation, additional capacity can be catered for through the provision of extension facilities.

In recent years, the department has seen an increase in SEN school place requirement. Since 2019, 11 new special schools have been established, with five more due to be established for the 2025/26 school year. The continuing need for additional provision across the country, including in the Kildare area, is kept under constant review. In this regard, the department will consult with the Council if and when additional special education needs accommodation or sites for future special schools are required within specific locations. In the context of this Framework plan and being mindful of a substantial population growth that may arise from the various future planned housing developments within the Newbridge area and its surrounds, the department would welcome explicit support within the plan for the provision of school accommodation for children and young people with special educational needs.

In terms of assessing current and future capacity, the Department of Education and Youth has to be mindful of potential unforeseen circumstances such as the Ukrainian crisis, which have the ability to put undue pressure on school place provision and could necessitate reassessments of school place provision from time to time. The department will engage with the Council where the findings of an assessment require a review of existing or future school site provision within a specific location.



Finally, the department welcomes the continued engagement with the Council regarding the development of both new and existing schools, as appropriate, and emphasizes the critical importance of the ongoing work of the Council in ensuring sufficient land is zoned for this purpose. We look forward to continuing to work with you. If you have any queries in respect of the above, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mairead Garry
Statutory Plans
Forward Planning & Site Acquisition Section