

2023

Kildare Town Social Infrastructure Audit

January 2023

A Supporting Document of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029

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1 Introduction

1.1 Study Purpose

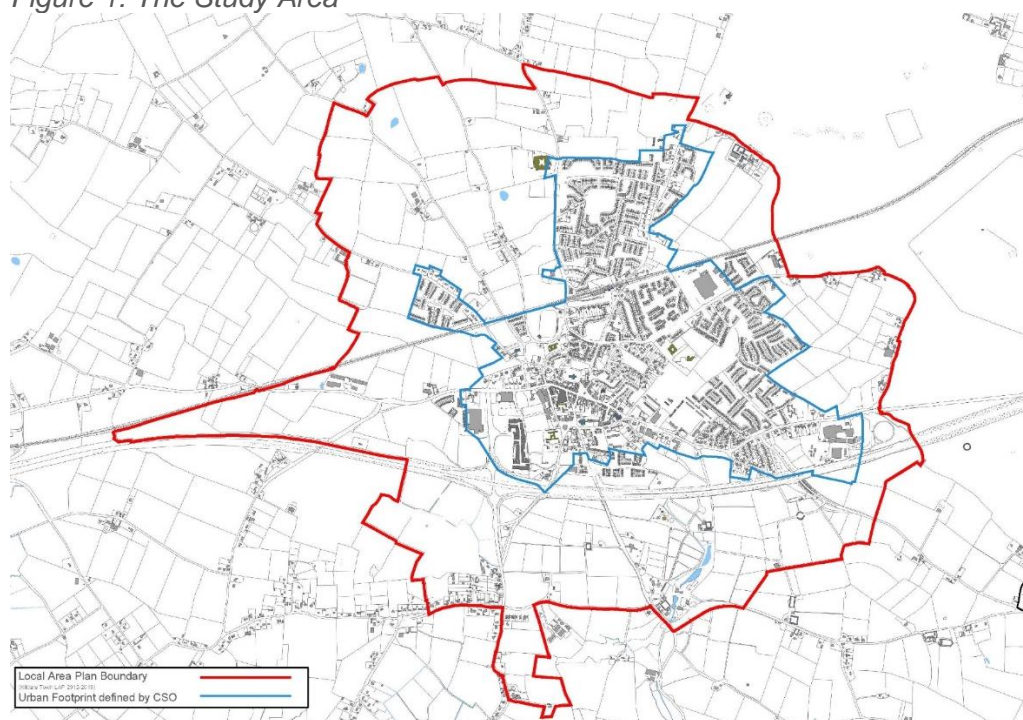
The function of a Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA) is to examine and analyse the availability and capacity of existing social infrastructure facilities, and to determine future requirements, and make recommendations based on anticipated settlement growth. This report is a statement of the outcome of the SIA.

The following Social Infrastructure Audit was prepared by Kildare County Council (KCC) for the purposes of informing the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029 (LAP).

Social infrastructure relates to the provision of services and facilities which are essential for health, well-being and social development of a town / place. Social infrastructure facilities include for example education, childcare facilities, health services such as doctor's surgeries and community specific services as well as areas which can offer active sports and passive recreational activities. In addition, to the actual activity and function, social infrastructure facilities can provide an invisible platform of community and social interaction which some residents may rely upon for personal well-being. The provision of the requisite levels of social infrastructure within the town of Kildare is therefore important and vital to support the planned residential base in both physical facilities and social engagement.

The study area for examining the existing provision of social infrastructure in Kildare Town (Figure 1) is within the red line boundary of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018. While the study area used to provide a demographic profile of Kildare Town is within the blue line boundary (Figure 1) which is the 2016 CSO Settlement boundary of Kildare Town.

Figure 1: The Study Area



1.2 Policy Context

The assessment of ‘social infrastructure’ has been considered in the context of spatial development objectives for the town of Kildare, the parameters of which have been defined in statutory policy documents at national, regional and local level.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040. It recognises the importance of quality of life and notes that how future development in Ireland is planned will continue to be a significant determinant of people's quality of life. National Strategic Outcome No. 10 is ‘Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services’. Furthermore, National Policy Objective 33 seeks to “prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location”.

The Regional and Economic Spatial Strategy (RSES) prepared for the Eastern and Midland Region seeks to support the implementation of the NPF, and prioritises the creation of healthy and inclusive places, which require improvements to and the identification of social infrastructure needs within urban centres. There are a number of regional policy objectives (RPO's) within the RSES which support the provision of and access to social infrastructure, including RPO 9.13, which ensures that new social infrastructure developments are accessible and inclusive for a range of users and RPO 9.19 which states that the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) shall work collaboratively with stakeholders including the wide range of service providers through the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) to effectively plan for social infrastructure needs.

The Settlement Hierarchy of the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 designates Kildare Town as one of four Self-Sustaining Growth Towns in the county. The RSES refer to these settlements as regionally important local drivers providing a range of functions for their resident population and their surrounding catchments including housing, local employment, services, retail and leisure opportunities.

This SIA is guided by the housing and population allocations for Kildare Town as per the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (Table 1, refers). For the purpose of preparing the SIA the growth in population and housing allocations have been annualised to cover the plan period to the end of 2029 (Table 2, refers).

Table 1: Kildare Town – Draft Core Strategy

Census 2016 Population	2021 Population Estimate (based on % growth from 2011-2016)	Housing & Population Target %	Population Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4)	Housing Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4)
8,634	9,134	4.7%	1,182	430

Table 2: Population and Housing Targets for the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029

Population Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4)	Housing Target 2023 to 2028 (end of Q4)	Annualised Housing Target to 2029 (end of Q4)	Annualised Population Target to 2029 (end of Q4)	Growth in Population over the lifetime of the Plan	Growth in Units over the lifetime of the Plan
1,182	430	72 ¹	198 ²	1380 ³	502

The Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 provides an estimated population for 2021, in the absence of up-to-date Census data. However, the Plan states that the 2021 population estimate is a holding figure and is used as a guide only until Census 2022 is published, and any local area plan prepared before the publication of Census 2022 will require an updated population estimate to be prepared. To this effect the population the estimated population to April 2022 is 10,161 persons⁴ which will be used to determine the assessment of social infrastructure need. Thereby providing an overall population of 11,541 for the lifetime of the Plan.

1.3 Methodology

The Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA) was conducted using desktop research and surveys in the field, as well as incorporating data previously logged and mapped by Kildare County Council to collate baseline information across the range of community infrastructure. The SIA assessment comprises three parts; an assessment of the existing situation with regards to infrastructure provision; a future demand analysis; and social infrastructure recommendations.

1. Existing Infrastructure Provision

The 'baseline' assessment was derived from a desktop-based examination of available information and use of digital mapping techniques to identify spatial relationships between community infrastructure and population catchment in conjunction with several site visits for verification purposes. This assessment included.

- (i) The identification and cataloguing of existing community infrastructure features (including where relevant, their capacity) under a number of predefined themes including education / training, childcare, health, sports and recreation, social / community services, arts and culture, faith and other features.

¹ Annualised growth (430/6) for the additional 12 months.

² Annualised growth (1,182/6) for the additional 12 months.

³ Population growth over the lifetime of the Plan (1,182+197) = 1,379

⁴ The Central Statistics Office (CSO) Preliminary Results (June 2020) showed an increase of 1,747 persons across the Kildare Electoral Division (ED) from 9,874 persons in Census 2016 to 11,621 persons in Census 2022. The growth in population across the Electoral Division between the Census years of 2016 and 2022 is 17.69%. Applying the same growth rate to Kildare Town results in an increase of 1,527 persons. This provides an estimated population of 10,161 person to April 2022.

2. Future Demands Analysis

Consideration of existing infrastructure provision relative to the existing and planned population and best practice provision. This study seeks to rationalise the demand for community infrastructure and to determine need through application of national standards and best practice recommendations where possible.

3. Recommendations

Recommendations for future social infrastructure provision will inform the preparation of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029, and other social and community programmes. The spatial and demographic outputs will bring significant added value to the preparation of spatial development objectives.

2 Community Profile - Population Dynamic

2.1 Demographic Profile

While small area statistics have not yet been tabulated by the CSO for the 2022 Census (at the time of writing this Plan), the population of the Electoral Division (ED) of Kildare has been released. At 11,621 persons, Census 2022 saw a growth of 1,747 persons (+17.7%) on the 2016 population at the ED level. However, this ED is much larger than the Plan area and therefore does not accurately reflect the population of the town.

The 'settlement' of Kildare Town as defined by the Central Statistics Office is more appropriate for the purposes of informing the Plan and currently only 2016 Census results are available at the settlement level. Therefore, in order to provide a demographic profile of the town, the CSO defined Settlement Boundary under Census 2016 has been used as the Study Area. Although the extent of the built-up area has increased since then, it is the only available relevant data for Kildare Town to formulate historic comparisons and trends.

Census 2016 recorded a population of 8,634 persons in Kildare Town which represents a 6.0% (492 persons) increase in population from 2011 (8,142 persons). The population of Kildare Town represents 3.9% of the county population (222,504) in 2016.

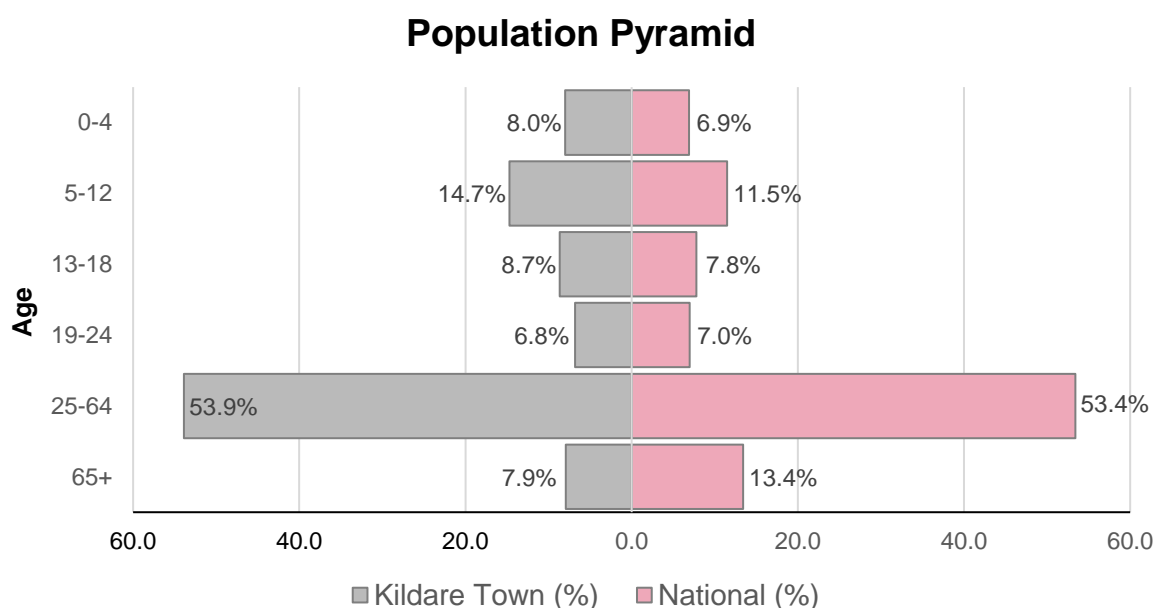
According to Census 2016, the age profile of Kildare Town includes a high percentage of children, young people and those at work. The 0-18 age cohort makes up 31.4% of the population which is higher than the percentage recorded nationally (26.3%), while the 19-64 age cohorts make up 61.7% of the population which is slightly higher than the national proportion of 60.3%. However, there is a lower proportion of the population over 65 years with 7.9% compared to 13.4% nationally.

Table 3: Population Profile

Age Group	Population	% Of Total Population	National %
0-4	691	8.0%	6.9%
5-12	1,269	14.7%	11.5%
13-18	748	8.7%	7.8%
19-24	589	6.8%	7.0%
25-64	4,654	53.9%	53.4%
65+	683	7.9%	13.4%

Source: Census of Population, 2016

Figure 2: Age Profile



Source: Census of Population, 2016

2.1.1 Household composition and Family Cycle

There are 2,266 families recorded within the town (CSO defined Settlement Boundary). The most common family type comprises two persons (34.1% of all families) followed by families comprising three persons (25.3%), four persons (25.0%), five persons (11.3%), and then those with more than five persons (4.3%).

It is noted that 22.0% of all families (499) have no children, while 41.1% (931) have a child or children under 15 years old. Families comprising of a single parent structure (mother or father) accounted for 18.5% of the total families (420).

The predominant categorisation of family by ‘family cycle’ is adult (24.9% of total family persons). This group is defined where the oldest child is 20 years or older and is slightly lower than the national figure of 27.3% of total persons.

Pre-adolescent is the next largest group (18.1%) followed by the early school group (17.7%) where the oldest child is aged 5-9 years, followed by adolescent (16.4%) where the oldest child is aged 15-19 years. The retired group is the smallest cohort representing 3.3% of total persons comparable with the national figure of 6.3%. The combined pre-school and early school’s years (those aged 0-9), and which typically represent crèche and primary school age profile, comprise 27.2% of total persons which is above the national figure of 24.3%. Interestingly the pre-family group (married or cohabiting couple without children where the female is under 45 years) is just below the national average of 5.7% at 5.2%.

2.1.2 Accommodation and Home Ownership

Census 2016 recorded that the house/bungalow is by far the largest accommodation type, accommodating 89.0% of the population with 9.6% comprising apartment/flat living. The level of home ownership (outright ownership) is 20.5% and ownership with a mortgage account for 38.3%, these are comparable with the national rate of

between 30-40% of households. Within the study area 36.6% of households are renting their accommodation. This is divided between 20.9% are rented from private landlords, 12.3% from local authority and 3.4% from voluntary housing bodies. The national rate in the rental sector, of housing rented from a local authority is 8.4% compared to within the study area the proportion is 12.3%

2.1.3 Mobility

Car ownership within households is slightly lower in Kildare Town than the national average with 18.3% of households recording no car ownership compared to 15% for the State. However, it is noted 34.8% of the population aged 5 years and over travel under 15 minutes to school, college or work and 25.7% travel between 15-30 minutes. This is somewhat in line with national figures (32% and 29% respectively). However, those whose travel times range between 60-90 minutes is 9.6%, which is higher than the national figure at 8.3% and is likely to be associated with travel time to / from Dublin city or surrounding metropolitan hinterland.

It is also observed that 30.9% of those aged 5 years and over commute to work, school or college using sustainable means, including walking, cycling and public transport (bus or the train). However, the majority use private transportation means including car driver (37.9%), car passenger (22.3%) and van (3.0%). Census 2016 recorded only a very small proportion of the working population as work from home at 1.0%. It is considered that such a pattern may have changed with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent changes to work practices. The outcome of such a shift in work patterns will only become clear over the longer term.

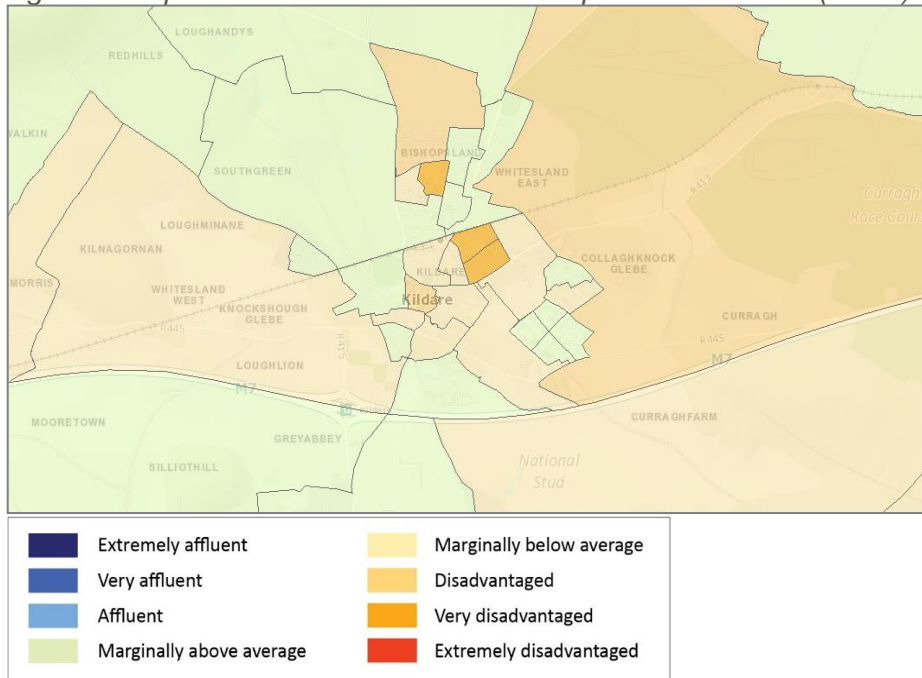
It is also observed that 13.4% of those aged 5 years and over walk to work, school or college whilst the figure for cycling is 1.3%, which is lower than the national figure in relation to cycling with 2.5% of those aged 5 years and over travelling to work, school or college by bike.

2.1.4 Health and Deprivation

In the Census 2016 survey, 86.7% of the Kildare Town population described their personal health to be either 'Very Good' or 'Good', while 9.7% of the population of Kildare Town described their health in a negative light as '*Fair, Bad or Very Bad*'. This compares to 88% of the population of the State describing their health positively and 9% describing their health negatively.

At national level the 2016 Pobal Deprivation Index revealed dramatic increases in deprivation between 2006 and 2011 following the economic collapse in 2008 and then partial recovery between 2011 and 2016. Despite this, County Kildare has maintained a static deprivation index score of 'marginally above average' between 2006, 2011 and 2016. Within the Small Area Populations (SAPs) of Kildare Town (Figure 3 below), the Deprivation Index (2016) indicates significant proportions which are deemed to be 'marginally above average' and significant proportions deemed 'below average', whilst smaller proportions are deemed to be disadvantaged or very disadvantaged and no areas deemed to be affluent.

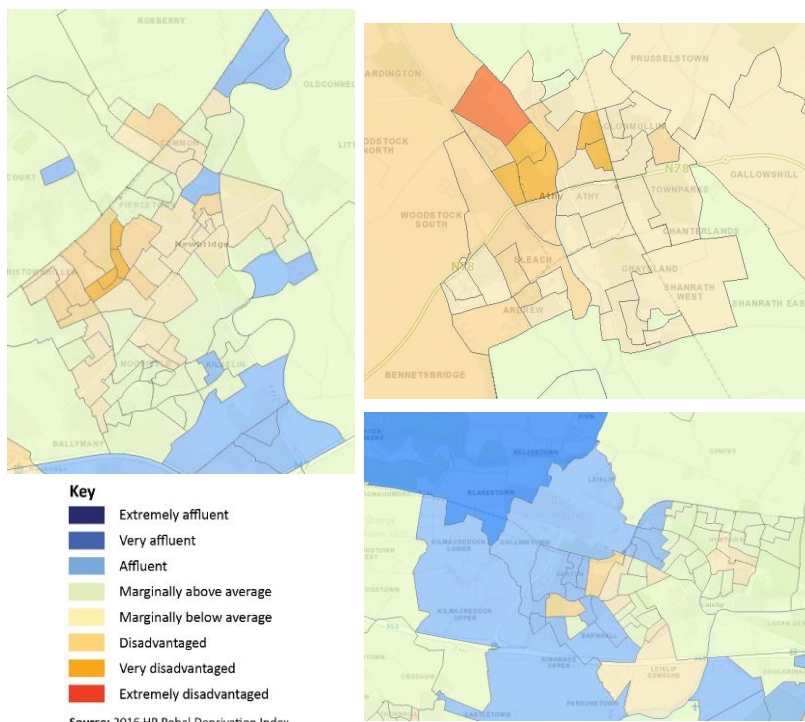
Figure 3: Deprivation index of Small Area Population Statistics (SAPs) in Kildare Town



Source: <https://maps.pobal.ie/WebApps/DeprivationIndices/index.html>

When comparing the deprivation index of Kildare Town to other self-sustaining growth towns including Newbridge, Athy and Leixlip (Figures 4 below), the index indicates higher levels of deprivation in Kildare Town than in Newbridge and Leixlip. However, Athy indicated higher levels of deprivation than Kildare Town.

Figure 4: Deprivation index of SAPs in Newbridge, Athy and Leixlip



Source: <https://maps.pobal.ie/WebApps/DeprivationIndices/index.html>

2.1.5 General Employment Profile

The Census 2016 results of Kildare Town reflects an active employment base with 55% of the population aged 15 years and over recorded as being at work - which is slightly higher than the national figure (53%).

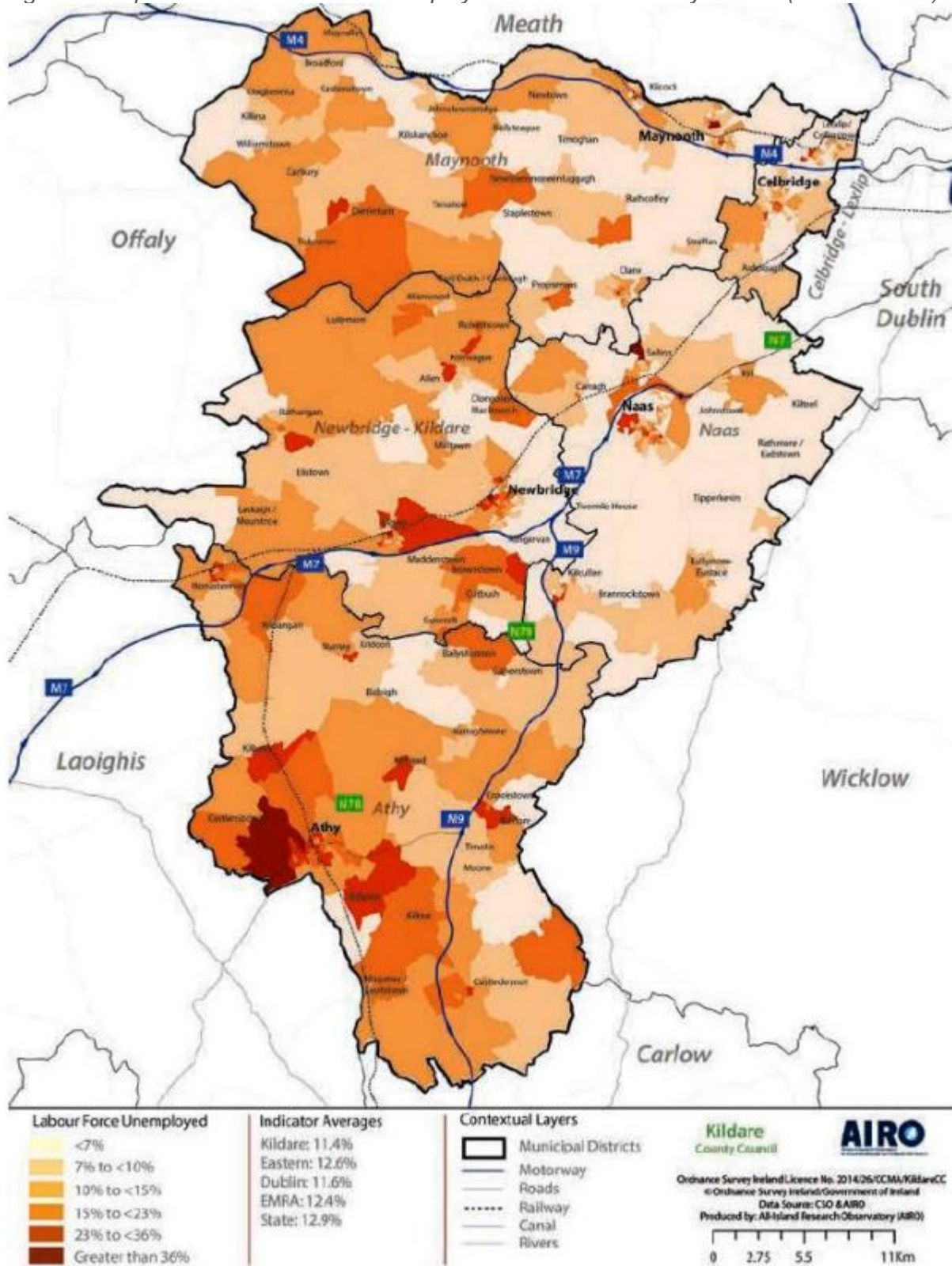
The level of persons looking after their home/family or those persons that are unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability (14%) is also higher than the national average of 12%.

However, it is also noted that Kildare Town stands out as one of the areas of high labour force unemployment in County Kildare and this is illustrated in Figure 5 below. The unemployment figure (12%) of the population aged 15 years and over in Kildare Town is moderately higher than the national figure (8%) according to 2016 Census results.

The largest workforce group are those employed in the Managerial and Technical Sector (21.2%) followed by non-manual accounting for 21.0%, then those in the category 'all others gainfully occupied and unknown' at 20.4%. The skilled manual group accounts for 14.3% and semi-skilled at 13.0%. The smallest workforce group accounting for 5.0% is professional workers.

The percentage of people with no formal education or who dropped out of school after primary school (15 years and over) is similar to that of the State, at 12.4% compared to 13.3% nationally. However, the level of educational attainment in the form of those holding professional qualifications including ordinary and higher bachelor's degrees (13.5%) is lower in Kildare Town than the national figure of 18.3%. This trend is reflected also in those holding 'postgraduate' qualification (5.1%) over the national figure of 9.1%.

Figure 5: Map of the Labour Force 'Unemployment' Rates in County Kildare (Census 2016)



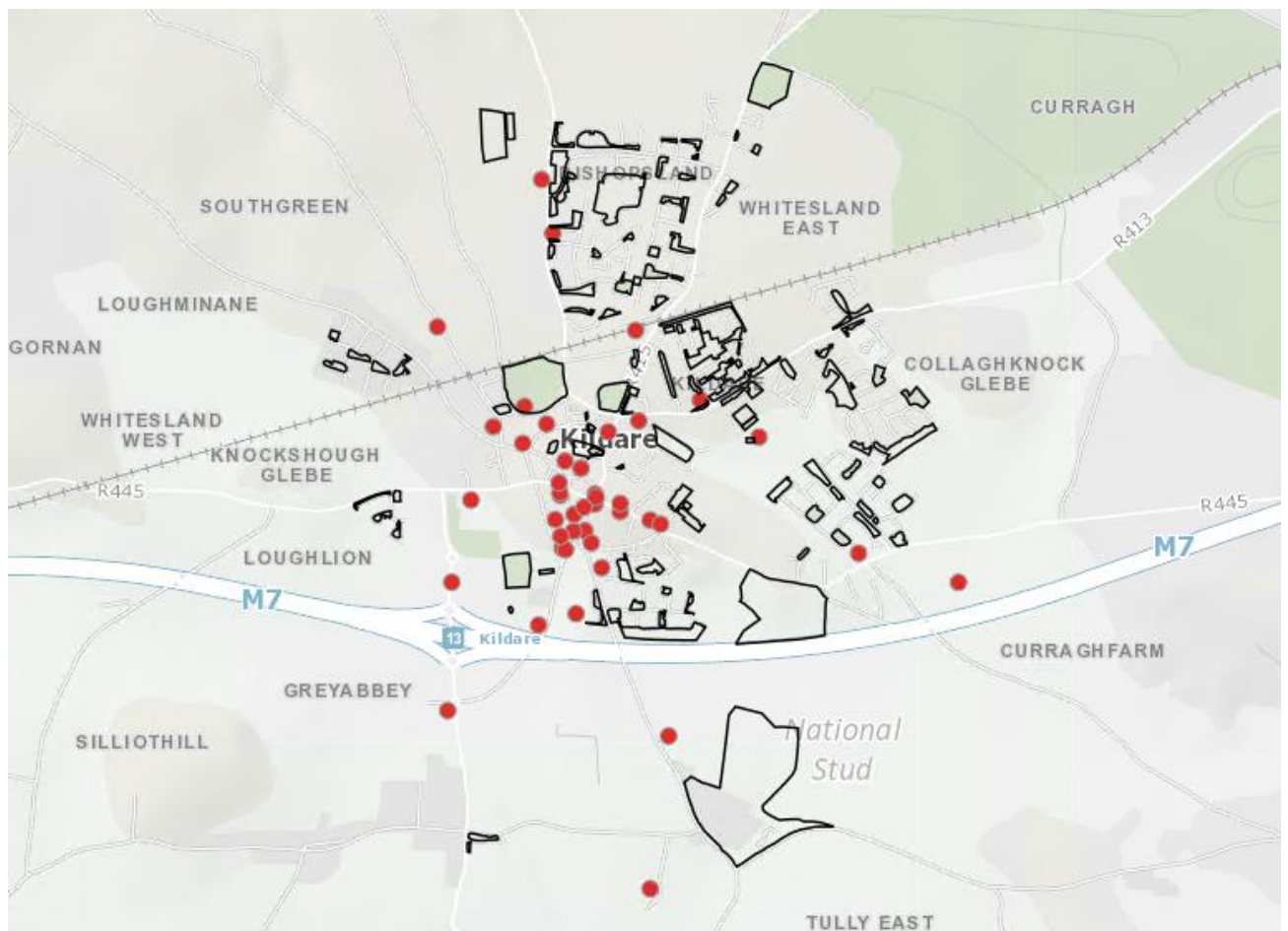
Source: Kildare Census 2016 Profile Employment Industry and Occupations, Kildare County Council and All Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO)

3 Community Profile - Existing Infrastructure

3.1 Existing Infrastructure

An audit of social infrastructure within the town of Kildare was undertaken using a series of pre-defined themes including education / training, childcare, health, sports and recreation, social / community services, arts and culture, faith and other features. The Study area for the purposes of the audit was the boundary of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2012-2018. For illustration purposes, all physical social infrastructure features identified and assessed in the study area are illustrated in Figure 6 below. Larger scaled maps for each defined theme are provided at the end of this report.

Figure 6: All Community Infrastructure



The following analysis seeks to categorise infrastructure features by typology of use, to determine where possible, the level of sufficiency based upon recognised national/international thresholds (where possible), or from consideration of spatial coverage. Each theme contains a 'demand analysis' based on the examination of the themed infrastructure, its capacity and coverage. The outputs of the analysis are then used to inform future recommendations.

3.2 Education and Training

Facilities examined under this theme include primary schools, post-primary schools along with third-level evening classes and skills development programmes. Within the study area there are three primary schools, one post-primary school and three further education / training centres. The location of these facilities is illustrated in *Figure 7* with further analysis of each type set out under the following sections.

3.2.1 Primary Schools

The three primary schools are located within the existing built-up area of the town. Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha and Kildare Town Educate Together are located adjacent to one another on the former Magee Barracks lands (northwest of the overall site) and accessed off Melitta Road. St Brigid's Primary School comprises of three separate buildings on separate sites (as illustrated in *Figure 7*), all located in close proximity to Market Square (ca. 350 metres). An 800m radius circle has been drawn around each primary school building to indicate a 10-minute⁵ walking distance. A capacity audit of primary schools is presented in *Table 4* below.

Table 4: Capacity of Primary Schools

Map Ref	Name	Capacity	Enrolled 2022/23	Operating level	Places available
E1	Kildare Town Educate Together	448	440	98%	Places available for 8 pupils. (1 st Class only)
E2	Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha	213	213	100%	No places available.
E3 (a, b, c)	St. Brigid's Primary School	1080	966 ⁶	89%	Place available for 114 pupils.
	TOTAL	1,741	1,619	93%	122

Direct consultation with each school confirmed that the primary school infrastructure can accommodate 1,741 children. There are 1,619 pupils enrolled in the three primary schools for the 2022/23 academic year.

Census 2016 data indicates that within the study boundary 1,269 children are of primary school going age – i.e., 5 to 12 years inclusive. The number of pupils enrolled in Kildare Town primary schools for the academic year 2021/2022 is 1,619 which is 350 pupils above those within the primary school age bracket (Census 2016).

As part of Census 2016 all resident workers and students are geo-coded to their place of work or school/college which is known as the POWSCAR⁷ data. *Table 5* below shows that in 2016 most trips to primary schools in Kildare Town originated within the town itself (76%) or in the 'Kildare Rural' area (13%). The largest single concentration of pupil origins outside of Kildare Town is found in Monasterevin, from which there were 39 pupils travelling to primary school in Kildare Town.

⁵ Section 14.3.3 of Volume 1 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029

⁶ The number of students enrolled in St. Brigid's Primary School for the 2022/2023 school year is expected to return to over 1,000 students, according to the School Principal (as of Sept. 2022)

⁷ Place of Work, School, or College – Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR).

Table 5: Kildare Town Primary School Catchment (POWSCAR, 2016)

Primary School Catchment		
Kildare	746	76%
Kildare Rural	128	13%
Monasterevin	39	4%
Newbridge	9	1%
Suncroft	7	1%
Rathangan	6	1%
Kill	6	1%
Other	44	4%
Total	985	100%

Source: Kildare Town Transport Strategy, Vol. 2, Part 1, Section 4.2.2.2

3.2.2 Post-primary Schools

Kildare Town has one post-primary school located north of the town, on the western side of the R401 (Dunmurry Road) as illustrated in Figure 7.

Kildare County Council, in conjunction with the Department of Education, has identified a portion of the former Magee Barracks site, adjacent to the existing primary schools, for the future provision of a new 1,000 pupil post-primary school. Once the site becomes operational for educational purposes, the Curragh Community College (which has 196 pupils enrolled for the 2022/2023 academic year) will relocate to the site.

Table 6: Capacity Audit of Post-primary Schools

Map Ref	Name	Capacity	Enrolled 2022/23	Operating level	Places available
E4	Kildare Town Community School	1000	996	98%	Places available for 4 pupils
pE5	Proposed post-primary school	1000	N/A	N/A	N/A

Census 2016 population analysis indicates that there are 748 people of post-primary school going age (13-18 years inclusive) within the CSO defined Settlement Boundary of Kildare Town. The capacity analysis confirms that the post-primary school in Kildare Town is operating just below capacity, with 996 students enrolled for the 2022/2023 academic year, which is 248 pupils above those within the post-primary school age bracket (Census 2016).

Examining the POWSCAR data (Table 7, refers) the Kildare Town Community School serves a dispersed catchment with just over half of pupils (53%) from Kildare Town itself in 2016. Almost one third of pupils attending post-primary school in Kildare Town came from the 'Kildare Rural' area. The largest concentration of pupil origins with respect to defined settlements (excluding Kildare Town) include: Nurney (5%); Newbridge (3%); Suncroft (2%) and Kildangan (2%). There is a tendency for students to travel further for post-primary education often due to necessity and in some cases personal preference. It should be noted that there are no post-primary schools in Nurney, Suncroft and Kildangan.

Table 7: Kildare Town Post-Primary School Catchment (CSO POWSCAR, 2016)

Post-Primary School Catchment		
Kildare	372	53%
Kildare Rural	201	29%
Nurney	35	5%
Newbridge	21	3%
Suncroft	13	2%
Kildangan	12	2%
Monasterevin	9	1%
Naas	7	1%
Other	31	4%
Total	701	100%

Source: Kildare Town Transport Strategy, Vol. 2, Part 1, Section 4.2.2.2

3.2.3 Further Education and Training Facilities

There are three further education facilities in the study area with courses available from Level 2 to Level 6 of the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Table 8 outlines the level and type of courses available.

Table 8: Overview of Adult Further Education Facilities

Map Ref	Name	Description of courses	Level attainment
E6	Further Education & Training Centre	Range of part-time Adult Basic Education courses and Back to Education Initiative courses.	QQI Level 2 to QQI Level 6
E7	RACE (Racing Academy & Centre of Education)	Horsemanship for the Thoroughbred Industry Equine Anatomy & Physiology Equine Nutrition Short courses including: Amateur Schooling Progression Course, Amateur Schooling preparation, Trainers Licensing Courses, Equine Transport License Course.	QQI Level 5 QQI Level 5
E8	Kildare Education Support Centre	Local courses, workshops, webinars, projects and initiatives to support teaching and learning in our schools.	QQI Level 6

While Kumon Maths and English (E8) is mapped it was concluded that this facility is more involved with maths and English tutoring for children than providing further education for adults.

Table 9: Tutoring for children

Map Ref	Name	Description of courses	Level attainment
E9	Kumon Maths & English	Supplementary, individualised maths and English programmes for children 5 years and under, Aged 6-11 and Aged 12+.	

Analysis of CSO data shows that 31% (1,592) of those aged 15 and over in Kildare Town have not completed their leaving certificate, when they ceased education. While 12% (637) have not completed the junior certificate. It should be noted a further 7.8% (403) did not state the level of education completed.

3.2.4 Demand Analysis

There is no guiding population benchmark for the provision of primary or post-primary school facilities in Ireland. The Department of Education’s approach to calculating projected future educational requirements to cater for additional population is as follows:

- 11.5% of the population at any given time is of primary school age.
- 7.5% of the population at any given time is of post-primary school age.
- At primary level, school accommodation is calculated in the basis of a Pupil Teacher Ratio of 24:1, meaning each individual classroom in a school will have 24 pupils.

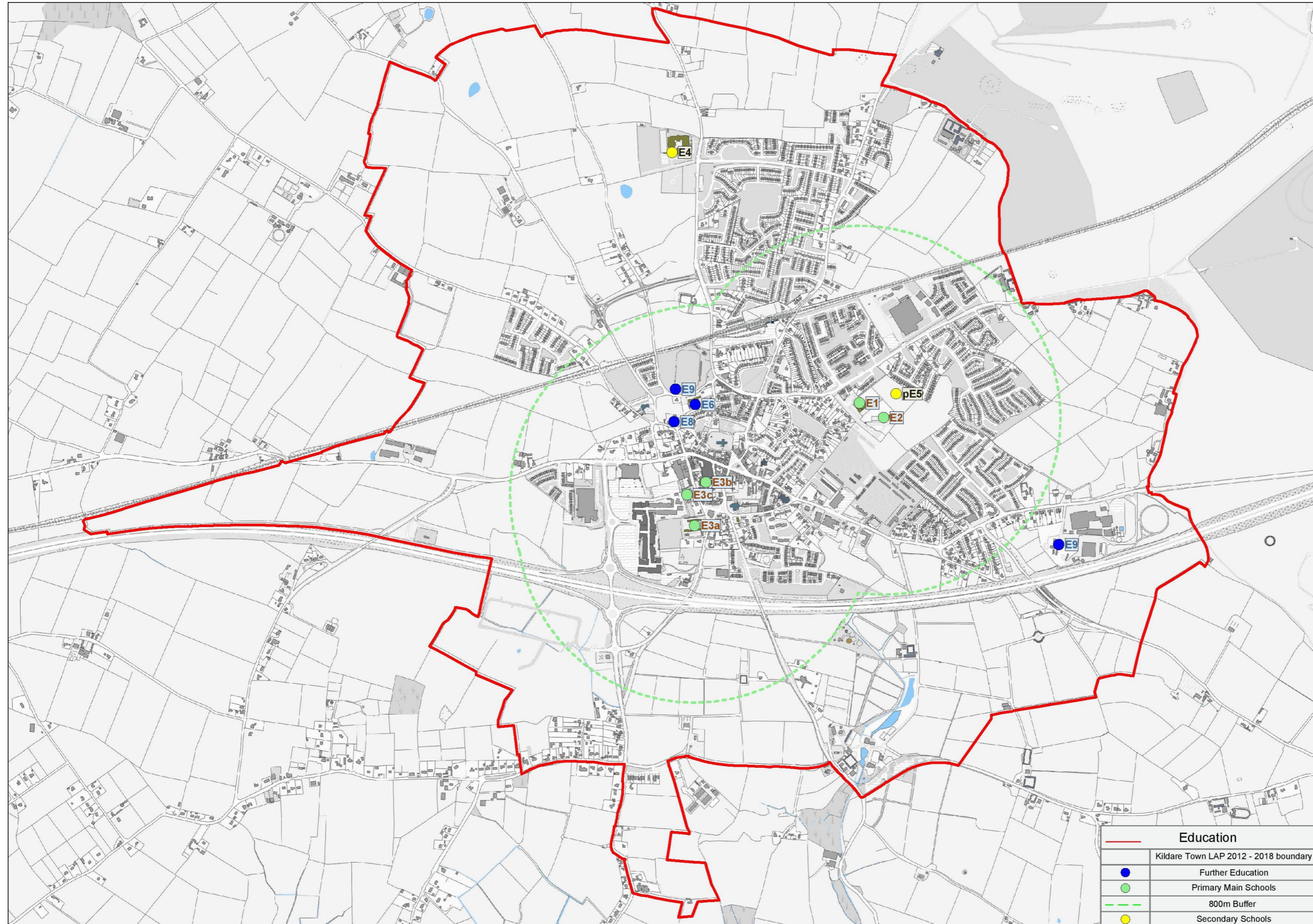
Primary Schools in the town are hosting 18.8% of the Census 2016 population, which indicates the larger catchment that they serve. Applying the current figure of 18.8% (to take account the wider catchment) to the projected population growth during the lifetime of the Plan to 2029 (1,380 persons) will require an additional 260 student places to be made available. This accounts to an additional 11 classrooms comprising of 24 student places. These could be provided within the existing schools⁸ if there is capacity to expand or through the provision of a new school.

The post-primary school currently hosts 11.5% of the Census 2016 population (3% points above the standard applied) while it is 8.6% based on the projected population of 11,541 to 2029. However, applying the current figure of 11.5% to the projected population growth, to accommodate the larger catchment area that a post-primary school would typically serve, and which has been demonstrated through the POWSCAR data, the requirement would be for an additional 159⁹ places. The proposed addition of a new 1,000 pupil post-primary school will offset the additional demand.

⁸ Department of Education stated in their submission on the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 that additional primary level places in Kildare Town could be met by a minor expansion of existing facilities (if required).

⁹ Population growth of $1,380/100 \times 11.5 = 159$ places.

Figure 7: Location of Primary Schools, Post-Primary Schools and Further Education and Training Facilities



3.3 Childcare

Childcare infrastructure is spatially well distributed in Kildare Town, with six facilities spread throughout the area pre-dominantly located close to or within existing residential developments.

Figure 8 illustrates the location of each existing childcare facility as noted by An Tusla and / or Pobal and the location of those that currently have planning permission. Also, in Figure 8 an 800-metre radius has been plotted around each existing childcare facility. This illustrates areas that are within 10-minute walk¹⁰ of each facility.

The capacity audit of each childcare provider is set out in Table 10 below. The details of extant permissions for childcare facilities are provided in Table 11 below.

Table 10: Capacity of existing childcare facilities

Map Ref	Name	Capacity	Enrolled	Places Available	Note
C1	Toad Hall Childcare	26	47	0	Sessional. (2-6 years)
C2	Bright Beginnings (Dunmurray Road)	175	225	0	Full day, part time, sessional. (0-6 years) After school.
C3	Child's Play Early Education	41	41	0	Sessional. (2-6 years) After school.
C4	Naíonra Uí Shionnaigh	22	33	0	Sessional. (3-6 years)
C5	Bright Beginnings (St. Brigid's Primary School)	44	66	0	Part time, sessional. (3-6 years)
C6	Kildare Village Little Stars	36	36	6	Full day, part time and sessional. (2-6 years)
	TOTAL	344	448	6	

Table 11: Extant Permission for Childcare Facilities

Map Ref	Address	File Ref	Note	Capacity
pC7	Magee Barracks (SHD)	19/305007		58 ¹¹
pC8	Whitesland East	19/946	Note new application 21/1033. Appealed to ABP	30 ¹²

¹⁰ This standard is taken from Section 14.3.3 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 -2029 Volume 1.

¹¹ According to Drawing No.: P445-101 the proposed crèche of 680 m² includes three rooms (each 45 m²). The Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2001) states that the minimum floor space per child standard is 2.32 m², therefore the crèche could accommodate at least 58 children.

¹² Planning Application (File Ref. 19/946), Whitesland Residential Crèche Proposal (25 July 2019) states this crèche would offer 6 spaces for 0-1 year olds, 10 spaces for 1-2 year olds and 14 spaces for 2-6 year olds.

Map Ref	Address	File Ref	Note	Capacity
			due 22 nd Oct.	
pC9	Greyabbey	17/523	-	63 ¹³
pC10	Loughlion	19/961	-	29 ¹⁴
pC11	Southgreen	17/764	-	39 ¹⁵
pC12	Southgreen (Dunmurry Road)	18/1028	-	66 ¹⁶
pC13	Rathbride Road	16/1227	-	26 ¹⁷

Figures obtained from the six childcare facilities show that there is capacity for 344 children within them at any one time. Overall, there are 448 children enrolled in these facilities for the 2022/23 year. Five of the six facilities are at capacity with no available places. Some are restricted due to staffing while others physically cannot accommodate more.

Two of the six facilities may close in the next year if they cannot source new premises due to their facilities being taken back by schools to accommodate additional children. This could reduce the number of facilities to four and the number of childcare places at any one time in Kildare to 281.

One of the facilities which may close has secured permission for a new premises at the site of Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha (Planning Ref: 21/1587 this is not included in table 11 above) as it is simply moving so no provision for extra places. However, it is unlikely to be built as it is understood the Department of Education now require this land to expand school facilities therefore a further planning application will be required at a different location.

Another facility is due to provide an additional 22 sessional places next year once their change of circumstances application is approved by Tusla. It should be noted that all additional 22 places are booked, and these are included in the number of children enrolled above.

Overall childcare facilities are operating at 100% capacity in the morning while there are only six available places for an afternoon session only. Operators have stated that they have long waiting lists in operation. It should be noted that smaller facilities with three children or less do not need to be registered with Tusla and therefore could not be surveyed due to the informal arrangement of those facilities.

Census 2016 shows that 691 children are under the school going age i.e., 0-4 years and may require childcare. Based on the number of children enrolled this would indicate almost 65% of children eligible for childcare in the town avail of childcare services. It should be noted that some children aged five years may also require pre-school care.

¹³ Planning and Environmental Report - April 2017 (File Ref. 17/523), Section 5.5, page 39 states this crèche would offer 6 spaces for 0-1 year olds, 15 spaces for 1-2 year olds, 18 spaces for 2-3 year olds and 24 spaces for 3-6 year olds.

¹⁴ Drawing No.: PA-031 REV A of the Planning Application (File Ref. 19/961)

¹⁵ Correspondence – Re: Compliance Submission Condition No. 3 (i) & (ii), 19 January 2021

¹⁶ Planning Application Report – August 2018 (File Ref. 18/1028), Section 4.3, page 12

¹⁷ Planning Application Report (File Ref. 16/1227), Section 5.5, page 5

In total there are two full-time services in Kildare however only one caters for children from 0-2 years and which currently has a waiting list greater than 12 months for this age cohort. All six facilities offer sessional services (generally three hours per day 9:00am to 12:00 for children aged between two and five years).

3.3.1 Demand Analysis

In 2018, Kildare County Childcare Committee commissioned a study to conduct a childcare needs analysis. The report titled, 'Needs Analysis of Early Years Childcare in County Kildare' found that Kildare Town was one of the areas poorly served by childcare services relative to its population size and trends in births.

Appendix 2 of the Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June,2001) establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in a new housing area. One facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The guidance acknowledges that other case specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement.

Whilst the provision of childcare facilities must be spatially considered in the context of existing levels of service, an additional 134 places¹⁸ are anticipated to be required in Kildare Town over the plan period, having regard to the 502 additional residential units projected to be developed in Kildare Town by 2029.

To comply with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, the study area therefore requires the provision of 140 childcare places. This can be achieved in any format, for example 7 facilities with capacity for 20 children each, or 3 facilities with capacity for 45 each.

However, it should be noted that there are seven extant permissions (Figure 8 and Table 11, refers) which have been permitted in new residential areas for new childcare facilities which can accommodate circa 389 places. If all seven permissions are implemented, it is considered that these childcare facilities will make sufficient provision for childcare places and the unmet demand which is currently not being catered for during the lifetime of the plan to 2029.

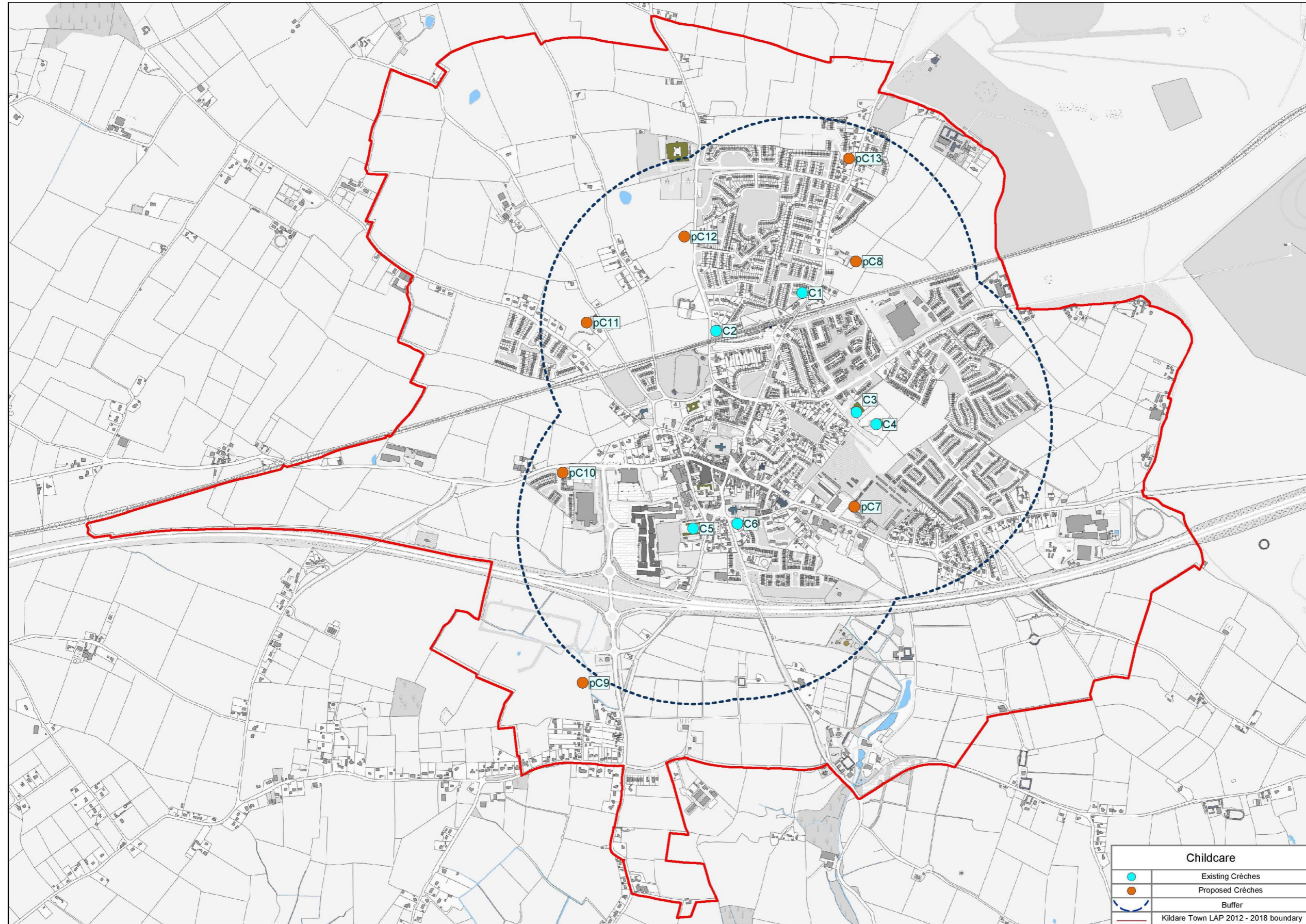
Based on the Census 2016, circa 8% of the population (691 children) were between 0-4 years old. It is anticipated the population will be 11,541 by 2029 therefore should that cohort remain at 8% there could be 923 children eligible for childcare.

Potentially, in 2023 with facilities struggling to secure premises there may be only 281 places available at any one time and if no further facilities are developed and occupied by 2029 the infrastructure will only be capable of accommodating less than 30% of eligible children (excluding five-year-olds who may be eligible).

¹⁸ Appendix 2 of the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. The additional unit growth envisaged over the lifetime of the LAP is 502 units. Therefore, 134 [(502/75) x20] new childcare places are envisaged.

The best-case scenario if all permitted childcare facilities are developed and existing facilities are retained there may be capacity for up to 733 children and could accommodate 79% of children on the 0-4 age cohort should it remain at 8% by 2029.

Figure 8: Location of Childcare facilities



3.4 Health

The assessment of health facilities included GPs, health centres, dentists, pharmacy care and other related facilities.

A total of 21 health facilities were identified in Kildare Town comprising of one Primary Healthcare Campus (including Health Service Executive, a General Practitioner Surgery, and a Pharmacy), three General Practitioners (GPs), two Dentist Practices, three Physiotherapists, one Optician and Hearing Centre, three Nursing Homes, five Pharmacies and four other Specialist Services which provide mental health services for adults, a service for intellectual disability, an infant health service and an acupuncturist. An audit of these facilities including their location and services available are set out in Table 12 and their location is illustrated in Figure 9 below.

Table 12: Available Healthcare Facilities and Services Provided

Map Ref	Name / Location	Facilities / Services
H1	Cill Dara Primary Healthcare Campus Hospital Street Kildare Town	The Campus includes a building occupied by the Health Service Executive, a General Practitioners Surgery, and a Pharmacy. <u>General Practitioner (GP)- (Kildare Medical Centre)</u> Six GPs (All work on average three or four days per week), four nurses (One of the nurses works four days per week and the rest of the nurses works three days per week). The surgery operates five days per week. Are not taking any new patients and are not operating a waiting list. <u>HSE Services</u> Psychology service, Ophthalmology, South Kildare Network Disability Team
H2	Watermills Family Practice, Tully Road, Kildare	Four GPs, one GP registrar, two nurses & one chronic diseases nurse. (Time equally divided between the Monasterevin and Kildare Town branch). The surgery operates five days per week.
H3	Dr Brian Lee, Doctors Surgery, Bride Street	One GP and one nurse. The surgery is open five days a week (Wednesdays half day). Waiting list of 300 plus.
H4	Sensational Kids, Unit F2 Kildare Business Park, Melitta Road, Kildare Town, County Kildare R51 R281 ¹⁹	Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy, Paediatric Occupational Therapy, Specialist Literacy Teaching, Educational Psychological Assessments and Baby and Toddler Developmental Stimulation Groups.
H5	Kildare Pharmacy, Monasterevin	Pharmacy

¹⁹ It is noted Planning Permission was approved (Reg. Ref. 21261) in April 2021 for a new facility on Grey Abbey Road.

Map Ref	Name / Location	Facilities / Services
	Rd, Kildare	
H6	Whelan's Pharmacy, Kildare Town Shopping Centre, Claregate St, Kildare	Pharmacy
H7	Connolly's Pharmacy, The Square, Kildare Town	Pharmacy
H8	McHugh's Chemist, The Square, Kildare Town	Pharmacy
H9	Whelan's Pharmacy, Cill Dara Primary Healthcare Campus, Curragh Road, Kildare	Pharmacy
H10	Kildare Dental Centre, Claregate Street, Kildare, R51P963	Dentists, Orthodontist.
H11	Fairgreen Dental, Fairgreen Court, 2 Station Rd, Kildare.	Dentists, Dental Hygienist, Orthodontist.
H12	The Waterfall Clinic, 6 Claregate Street, Kildare	Physiotherapy
H13	Kildare Physio & Sports Injury Clinic, Bride Street, Kildare Town	Physiotherapy, Pilates
H14	MDC Physio, Tully Road, Kildare	Physiotherapy, Pilates, Food Intolerance Testing, Strength & Conditioning Coaching
H15	Tus Nua Dublin Road, R51 P589	Services for adults who experience mental health difficulties, intellectual difficulties, Asperger's Syndrome, and Physical and Sensory disabilities
H16 ²⁰	Lourdesville Nursing Home, Brallistown, Kildare	Nursing Home
H17 ²¹	Ashley Lodge Nursing Home, Tully East, Kildare	Nursing Home
H18 ²²	Beechpark Nursing Home, Dunmurray Road	Nursing Home
H19	Zing True Health Clinic, Saint Jude's, Station Rd, Kildare	Acupuncture, Nutritional Therapy and Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy
H20	KARE, Tully Road, Kildare	Intellectual disability service
H21	Kelliher Opticians & Hearing Centre, Unit 2 Claregate St, Kildare	Opticians & Hearing Centre

Table 13: Extant Permission for Healthcare Facilities

Map Ref	Name	Location	File Ref	Note
N/A	Cancer Treatment Clinic (Proton Therapy) ²³	Former Magee Barracks site	18/149	Permission expiry date: 05/11/2023

²⁰ This nursing home is located outside of LAP Boundary and not mapped in Figure 9 above.

²¹ This nursing home is located outside of LAP Boundary and not mapped in Figure 9 above.

²² This nursing home is located outside of LAP Boundary and not mapped in Figure 9 above.

²³ It is understood by Kildare County Council that the planned development of the new Cancer Treatment Clinic is not proceeding.

3.4.1 Demand Analysis

Census 2016 data show that almost 87% of the population consider themselves to be in good or very good health, while just below 10% consider themselves to be in fair, bad or very bad health. Almost 4% did not state the condition of their health.

There are no national standards for health provision in Ireland relating to the provision of primary care centres or the number of doctors in an area. However, the HSE has confirmed that a typical primary care centre can serve a population of between 10,000-20,000 people, subject to appropriate resourcing. Therefore, Kildare Town is well served in that regard.

The Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (GMENAC) suggests a standard of 0.25 General Practitioners per 1,000 population. The current doctor to population ratio in Kildare Town is 1.27 per 1,000 population with 11 doctors practicing from three different surgeries which is above the recommendations of GMENAC. It should be noted that most of these doctors do not work five days per week and one of the surgeries has four doctors that share their time between the Watermills Family Practice Kildare and Monasterevin branches (Table 12 refers).

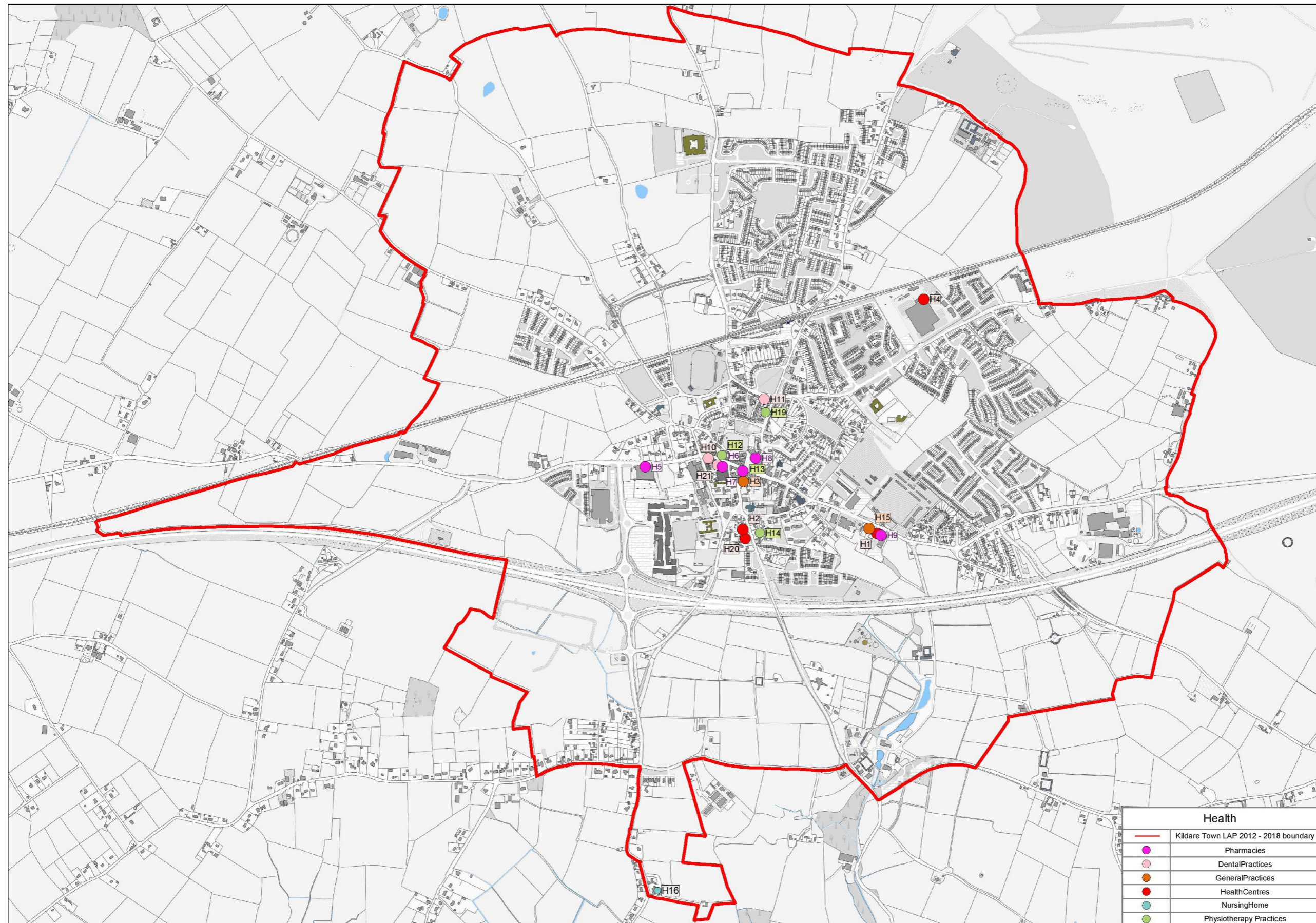
Should the population grow as anticipated to 11,541 persons by 2029 the ratio of existing doctors per population will fall to 0.95 per 1,000 population which is still above the recommended standard. This assumes no increase or decrease in doctor numbers during that period. While it appears that there are sufficient practitioners to cater for the existing and projected population, the reality is quite different with the doctors working part-time and all three practices operating waiting lists for new patients. Furthermore, it is important to note that health services in Kildare Town serve a larger catchment outside the scope of this study.

Ireland has an ageing population with the growth in the older age groups exceeding growth in other age cohorts. By 2036, the most conservative estimate is that Ireland is likely to have a national population of 5.33 million²⁴. Census 2016 indicates 7.9% of the population in Kildare Town is over 65 years of age.

In relation to care for the elderly it is noted that there are 144 bed spaces in the three nursing homes located within close proximity of the study area. This would cater for 21% of the those aged 65 and over (683) as outlined in the Census 2016. It should be noted that these care homes which are privately run are likely to have a catchment which extends beyond the study area. Kildare Town is also well-served by a high proportion of mental health services, there are no national standards for such provisions.

²⁴ Central Statistics Office. Press Statement Regional Population Projections 2017-2036. <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2019pressreleases/pressstatementregionalpopulationprojections2017-2036/>. Date of Access: 08/09/2022

Figure 9: Location of Health Facilities



3.5 Open Space

The open space audit was carried out, having regard to the overall public open space minimum standard and the public open space hierarchy contained in the Kildare County Council Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2022. The settlement level includes urban neighbourhood parks, local parks, local linear parks, small parks, and pocket parks. The definition of each typology is outlined in Table 16 below. The spatial location and distribution of the open space by typology of use, is illustrated in Figure 11 Open Space Survey by Typology in Kildare Town. The overall audit of open space is presented in Table 18.

Table 14: Public Open Space Standards

Standards	Public Open Space Standards (minimum)
Overall Standard	2.5 Ha per 1,000 population to comprise of formal and informal public open space areas as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Formal</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Open Space (outdoor sports, pitches, courts.) • Neighbourhood/local park • Play areas <u>Informal</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Gardens • Amenity Green Space • Natural and Semi-natural

Table 15: Audit of amenity open space by typology

Name/ Typology	Definition
Urban Neighbourhood Park	Large Parks range in size between 16 and 50 hectares and are located within settlements for local use to contain facilities for active recreation and a wide variety of facilities and uses, to be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and provides linkages between settlements; biodiversity areas can also be retained, enhanced, and accommodated.
Local Parks	Local Parks range in size between 2 and 16 hectares and are located within settlements for local use for passive recreation, playing fields, organised sports, biodiversity, play facilities.
Local Linear Park	Linear parks follow a defined corridor such as the riparian corridor of a river, canal and/or disused railway line.
Small Parks	Small parks range in size between 0.2 ha and 2 hectares and can accommodate play facilities, kick-about areas and passive recreation. Small parks should be generally within 400m walking and cycling distance of homes and centrally located within new developments.
Pocket Parks	Pocket parks are less than 0.2 hectares in size and provide facilities for smaller children and have an important visual and social function. Pocket parks must not be to the side or back of houses and must be adequately overlooked. They should contain natural play elements. Each home should be within 500m walking distance (5 minute walk) to a pocket park and centrally located within all new developments.

Table 16: Audit of amenity open space in Kildare Town

Name/ Typology	Area in Hectares
National Stud and Gardens (*see note below)	16.71 Ha
Playground	0.16 Ha
Proposed Parks and Gardens	7.58 Ha
Amenity Green Space	27.14 Ha
Sports Pitches	25.75 Ha
Parks and Gardens	2.33 Ha

Urban Neighbourhood Park

There are no public parks within the study area which meet the criteria of an Urban Neighbourhood Park. While the National Stud and Gardens* at nearly 17 hectares in area meets much of the criteria for such an open space it cannot qualify as it is a private facility which requires a fee for entry. However, it is acknowledged this national attraction provides a wide range of active recreation and facilities used by the residents of Kildare Town.

It is also noted that the Curragh Plains serve some of the recreational needs of residents within the town. However, this large open space does not contain facilities associated with a Neighbourhood Park and it is located outside of the study area.

Local Park

None of the open spaces in Kildare Town are of sufficient size to qualify as a Local Park. However, should the approved Cherry Avenue, Part 8 proposal be developed as planned it would constitute a local park given its size (7.48 Ha). Furthermore, it is noted its proposed facilities are of such a high quality, the uses would be akin to an Urban Neighbourhood Park (although smaller in size). It is noted section in 6.1 of Appendix 3 Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2039 that Cherry Avenue is listed as an Urban Neighbourhood Park.

The development of the park would consist of a perimeter path catering for pedestrians and cyclists, demonstration gardens, community garden, amphitheatre, land art feature, playground, wetlands and extensive tree planting.

Local Linear Parks

There are no linear parks within the study area as the Railway line is in use and there are no water bodies, rivers or canals running through the town.

Small Parks

There is a small park circa 0.5 hectares at Lourdesville / Bride Street which contains a path for passive recreation, planting and an adventure playground for a wide age range of children. The only other small park is 1.8 hectares in area and is located to the rear of the Carmelite Friary Church. This amenity space just contains an open grass area which was previously used as GAA pitch.

Pocket Parks

It is noted that a piece of land (circa 0.1 Ha in area), adjoining Church Lane has also recently been acquired by the council. A small medieval garden is proposed for this area. As this proposal has not yet been completed it cannot be factored into any calculations. There is also a very small community garden at Campion Crescent (0.04ha in area) to the rear of the Men's Shed. While this facility is noted it is not mapped in *Figure 9* above nor is it factored into any calculations.

3.5.1 Demand Analysis

Using the Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy standards (Appendix 3, of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029) 2.5 hectares of open space should be provided per 1,000 population.

Excluding the private lands of the National Stud and Gardens and the proposed Cherry Avenue and Church Lane Medieval Park, existing provision of public open space within the study area is circa 55.4 ha. 49% (27.14 ha in area) of this provision is classified as amenity green space within residential estates, while over 46% (25.75 ha in area) is classified as sports pitches only 4% of this provision comprises public parks and gardens (2.33 ha in area).

The estimated population of Kildare Town in early 2022 is 10,161 persons²⁵, therefore Kildare Town currently provides 5.4 hectares per 1,000 population based on the 55.35 hectares of Public Open Space surveyed in *Figure 11*. This is within Development Plan standards.

Over the plan period this population is predicted to rise to 11,541 persons by 2029. If no further open space were to be provided Kildare Town would provide 4.8 hectares per 1,000 persons which also exceeds Development Plan standards.

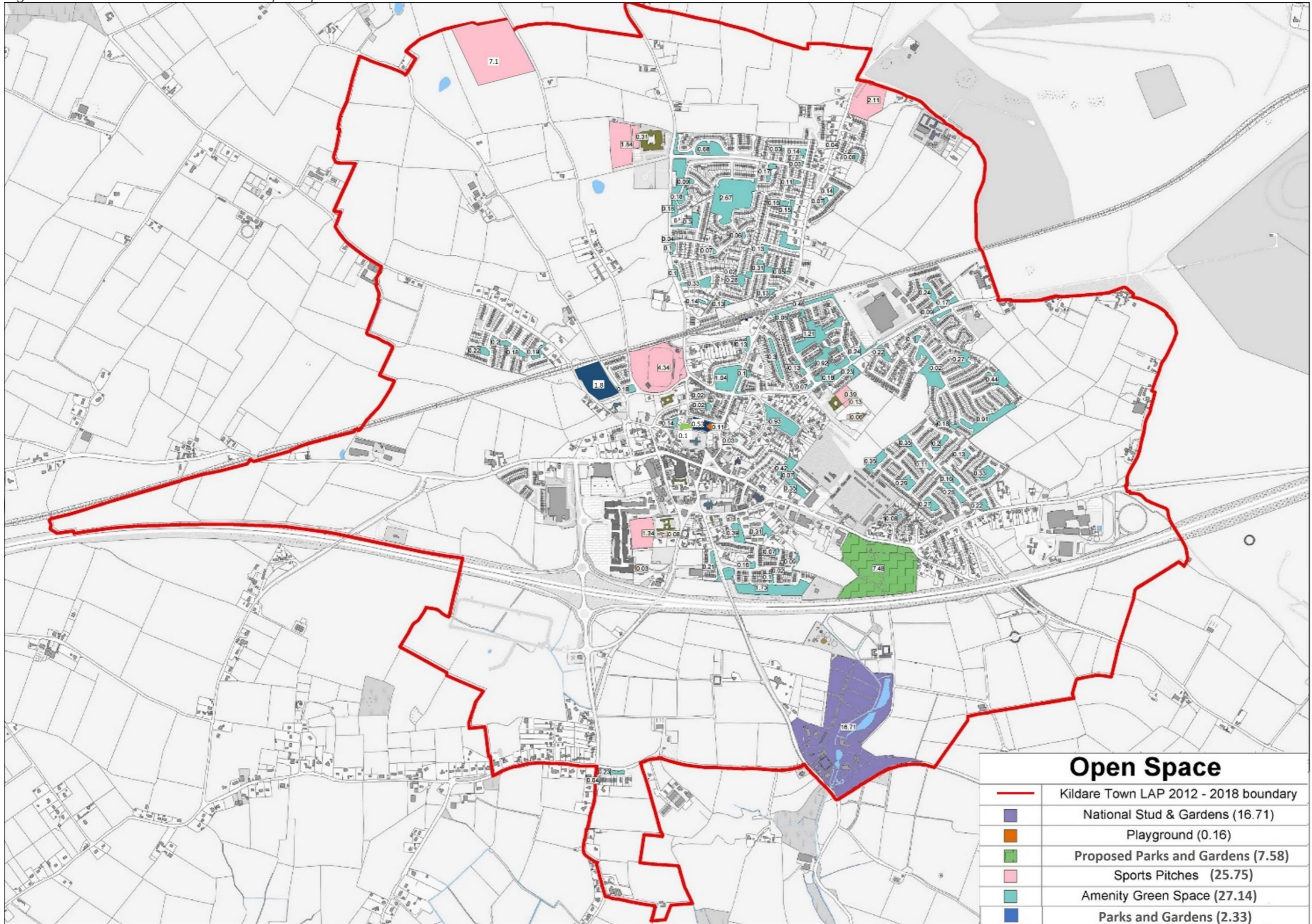
However, sports pitches within Kildare Town are mainly associated with educational premises and clubs, and therefore have very limited public access. Excluding these sports pitches Kildare Town would provide only 2.45 hectares of amenity open space per 1,000 persons by 2029.

Furthermore, Kildare Town currently only has two open spaces that qualify as public parks using the categorisation outlined in *Table 15*. These small parks add up to only 2.33 ha in area. All other surveyed amenity green spaces do not meet the criteria to be considered as a public park as they mainly comprise of open grassland that provide little or no facilities. No Irish standards exist to further analyse this open space provision, so consideration has been given to the 2015 'FIT' (Fields in Trust) recommended benchmark guidelines for 'outdoor space'. These guidelines recommend 0.8 ha of parks and gardens be provided per 1,000 persons. This would require Kildare Town to provide 9.2 ha of parks and gardens by 2029 or a further 6.97ha when taking into account existing provision. If the local park at Cherry

²⁵ The Central Statistics Office (CSO) Preliminary Results (June 2020) showed an increase of 1,747 persons across the Kildare Electoral Division (ED) from 9,874 persons in Census 2016 to 11,621 persons in Census 2022. The growth in population across the Electoral Division between the Census years of 2016 and 2022 is 17.69%. Applying the same growth rate to Kildare Town results in an increase of 1,527 persons. This provides an estimated population of 10,161 person to April 2022.

Avenue and pocket park adjoining Church Lane were to be developed, Kildare Town would not require a further parks and gardens by 2029.

Figure 10: Formal and Informal Public Open Space



3.6 Sports and Recreation

There are 13 sports facilities / clubs in Kildare (this does not include Cill Dara Rugby Club which is located outside the study area). These facilities accommodate three outdoor playing pitches; two all-weather six-a-side pitches; a walking/running track at St Brigid's Park. Five of the clubs operate from the CMWS Hall at St Brigid's Square. It should be noted that several of these clubs also use school sports facilities within the town.

Other amenities include two playgrounds, two gyms / fitness clubs. The location of these facilities is illustrated in *Figure 10* and an audit of each of these sports facilities is set out in *Table 9* below.

It is noted that both the Scouts and a Forest School which provide outdoor activities to children are currently using the Cherry Avenue Park development lands.

Table 17: Audit of Existing Sport Facilities and Recreation

Map Ref	Name / Location	Description / Facilities / Services
SR1	Round Towers GAA Club, St. Brigid's Park, Kildare	St. Brigid's Park grounds; one pitch and smaller pitch. Kildare Athletics Club also located here. A walkway runs inside perimeter of facility. It is also noted Round Towers GAA Club has 2 full size pitches, a training area and associated carpark on Old Road ²⁶ .
SR2	Kildare Town AFC, Rathbride Rd, Cloghgarrett Glebe	2 full size pitches and 2 all-weather 6-a-side pitches with floodlights
SR3 ²⁷	Cill Dara Golf Club, Little Curragh	18-hole golf course with clubhouse
SR4	Kildare Town Community School	1 full size GAA pitch, 6 hard surface playing areas and indoor gymnasium.
SR5	CMWS Community Hall, Saint Brigid's Square,	Badminton Club, Kildare Indoor Bowls Taekwondo Club Fithitt Gym
SR6	Playground (Lourdesville) Bride Street	Play facilities for young children
SR7	Irish National Stud Park and Gardens, Tully Road	Fee paying
SR8	St. Brigid's Boxing Club, Unit 8A, Kildare Business Park, Melitta Road	
SR9	Playground, Kildare Village Outlet Centre, Grey Abbey	Play facilities for young children
SR10	Kildare Shotokan Karate Club, Kildare	

²⁶ Although no planning permission is noted for this facility.

²⁷ This golf course is located outside of LAP Boundary and not mapped in Figure 10 above.

	Town Educate Together School, Melitta Road	
SR11	CiDs Gymnastics, Kildare, Academy Street	Gymnastics Centre
SR12	4th Kildare Town Scouts, Academy Street	Temporary location due to maintenance of Den on Meadow Road.
SR13	Pilates Studio Kildare, Claregate Street	
SR14	Playground, Oaktree Road	
pSR15	Proposed Park, Cherry Avenue, Dublin Road	Part 8 application approved in 2018.

3.6.1 Demand Analysis

There are no relevant standards in Ireland for sport and recreational facilities. Therefore, consideration is given to comparative recommendations and specifically, 'Fields in Trust (FIT)' recommendations which in the UK, has set out benchmark guidance for the provision of amenity and open space use in urban planning and design. The recommendations of 'FIT' go beyond the established 'six-acre standard' (six acres or 2.4 hectares (ha) per 1,000 population) and now provides quantitative guidance in relation to a range of open space typologies.

The 'FIT' benchmark guidance recommends that 1.6 hectares of outdoor sports area should be provided per 1,000 population and that outdoor sports should be located within 1.2km of all dwellings in major residential areas. Other 'FIT' benchmark guidance recommendations for 'formal outdoor space' which are of interest in this study are set out in Table 15 below.

Table 18: Fields in Trust (FIT) Benchmark Guidance for Different Recreational Facilities

Type	Hectares per 1,000 population	Walking distance from dwelling
Playing Pitches	1.2	1,200m
All outdoor sports	1.6	1,200m
Equipped / Designated play areas:		
- Local Areas for Play - aimed at very young children.	0.25	100m
- Local Equipped Areas of Play – aimed at children who can go out to play independently.	0.25	400m
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play aimed at older children.	0.25	1,000m
- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and skateboard parks etc.	0.3	700m

Source: Fields in Trust 2015 (FIT)

Within the study area there are 25.14 ha of outdoor playing pitches (soccer, GAA and rugby) and multi-use games areas (hockey, basketball and tennis). Based on the estimated population of Kildare Town in early 2022²⁸, the current outdoor sports

²⁸ The Central Statistics Office (CSO) Preliminary Results (June 2020) showed an increase of 1,747 persons across the Kildare Electoral Division (ED) from 9,874 persons in Census 2016 to 11,621

area provision is 2.47 ha per 1,000 population. Accordingly, it would appear using FIT (2015) standards there is more than adequate area for outdoor sports within the LAP boundary to serve the existing population. If the area and number of these facilities were to remain the same over the course of the plan this would reduce to 2.17 ha per 1,000 population, which would still exceed FIT (2015) standards.

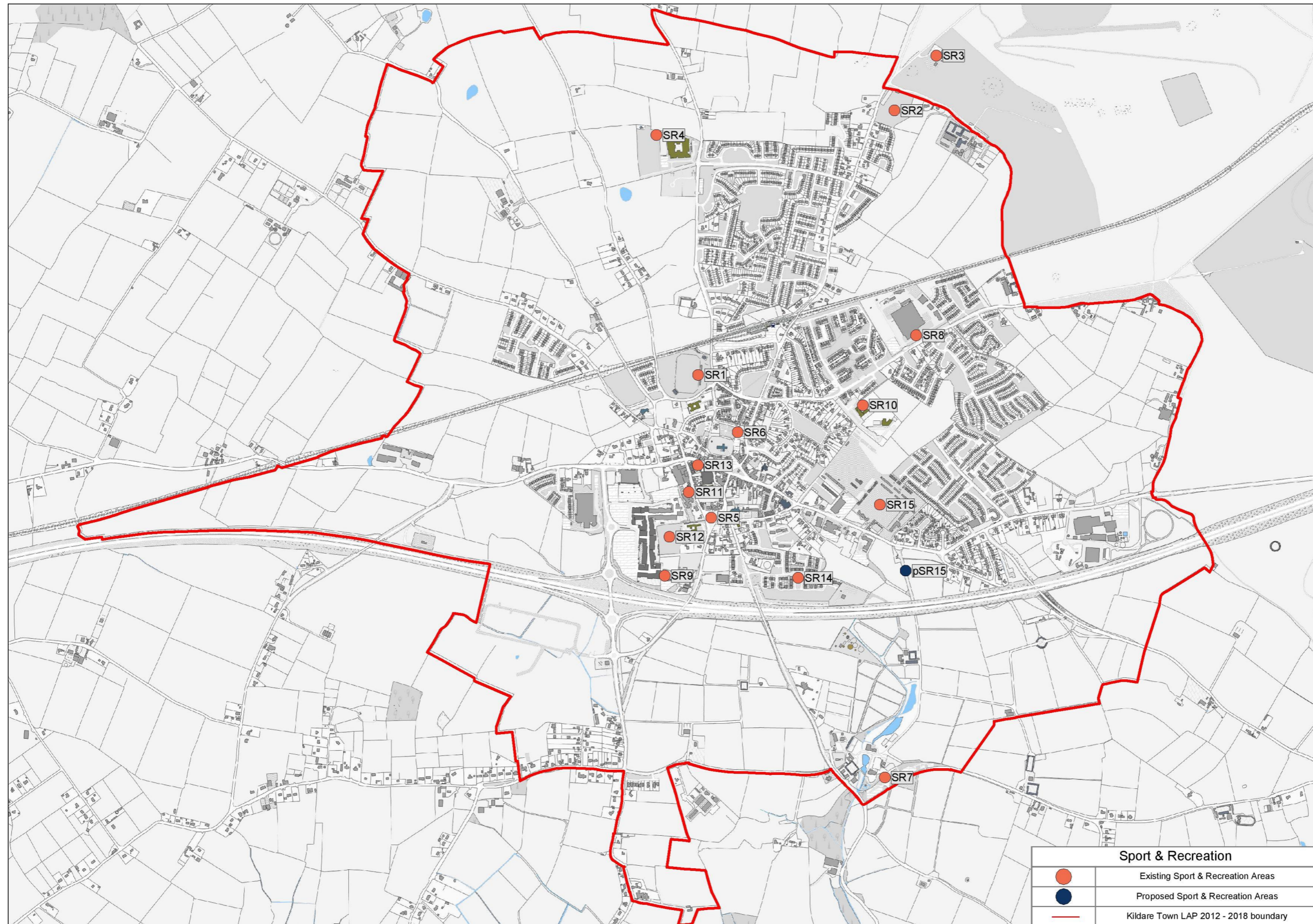
However, most facilities are associated with schools and have limited availability to the public and the majority of facilities are located to the north of the town. Further public outdoor sports provision will therefore be a requirement over the plan period especially within any new public parks to the south of Kildare Town.

In terms of the provision of playgrounds within the study area, the existing three totalling 0.16 ha in area fall well short of the benchmark FIT guidance in terms of quantity to serve the existing population. FIT guidance advises that 0.25 ha of playing space be provided per 1,000 population or 2.9 ha over the plan period. Furthermore, while each playground provides adequate facilities for a range of age groups, the location of these playgrounds is not evenly distributed around the town as they are all located south of the rail line.

An additional playground and an outdoor sports facility could be accommodated in a multi-use games area which caters to a wide range of age groups and sporting interests.

persons in Census 2022. The growth in population across the Electoral Division between the Census years of 2016 and 2022 is 17.69%. Applying the same growth rate to Kildare Town results in an increase of 1,527 persons. This provides an estimated population of 10,161 person to April 2022.

Figure 11: Location of Sports Facilities and Amenities



3.7 Social and Community

Social and Community facilities are varied in nature and can include general civic services as well as services targeted to specific sections of the community. There are nine social/community services identified within the study area, which includes facilities such as the Library and the Garda station. Most of these facilities are located within the town centre area as detailed on Figure 12.

Table 19: Audit of Social and Community Services

Map Ref	Name / Location	Facilities / Services
SC1	Garda Station, Dublin Road	District HQ (Naas station is the Divisional HQ), open full time, 7 days a week.
SC2	St Brigid's Parish Centre, Bride Street	
SC3	St Conleths Day Care Day Centre, Bride Street	Meals, bus service, arts/crafts, bingo, movement/exercise, yoga, social activities/trips, music, knitting, spiritual and pastoral needs
SC4	Teach Dara - Community & Family Centre, Academy Street	Counselling rooms, knitting group, grandparents group, coffee doc, chess club
SC5	CMWS Hall, St Brigids Square	Fitness classes, meeting rooms/ groups, bingo, concerts.
SC6	The Hive Youth Centre, Dublin Street	Comprehensive youth, child, and family services.
SC7	Library, Kildare Town Shopping Centre, Claregate Street	Dedicated adult, children, and teenage areas, public IT access and gallery space.
SC8	Kildare Men's Shed, Campion Crescent	Range of activities - gardening, woodwork, restoration, community projects.
SC9	Courthouse, Dublin Street	Occasional seasonal events

Kildare Town also has a Tidy Towns group, an Active Retirement group and a Kildare Local History group.

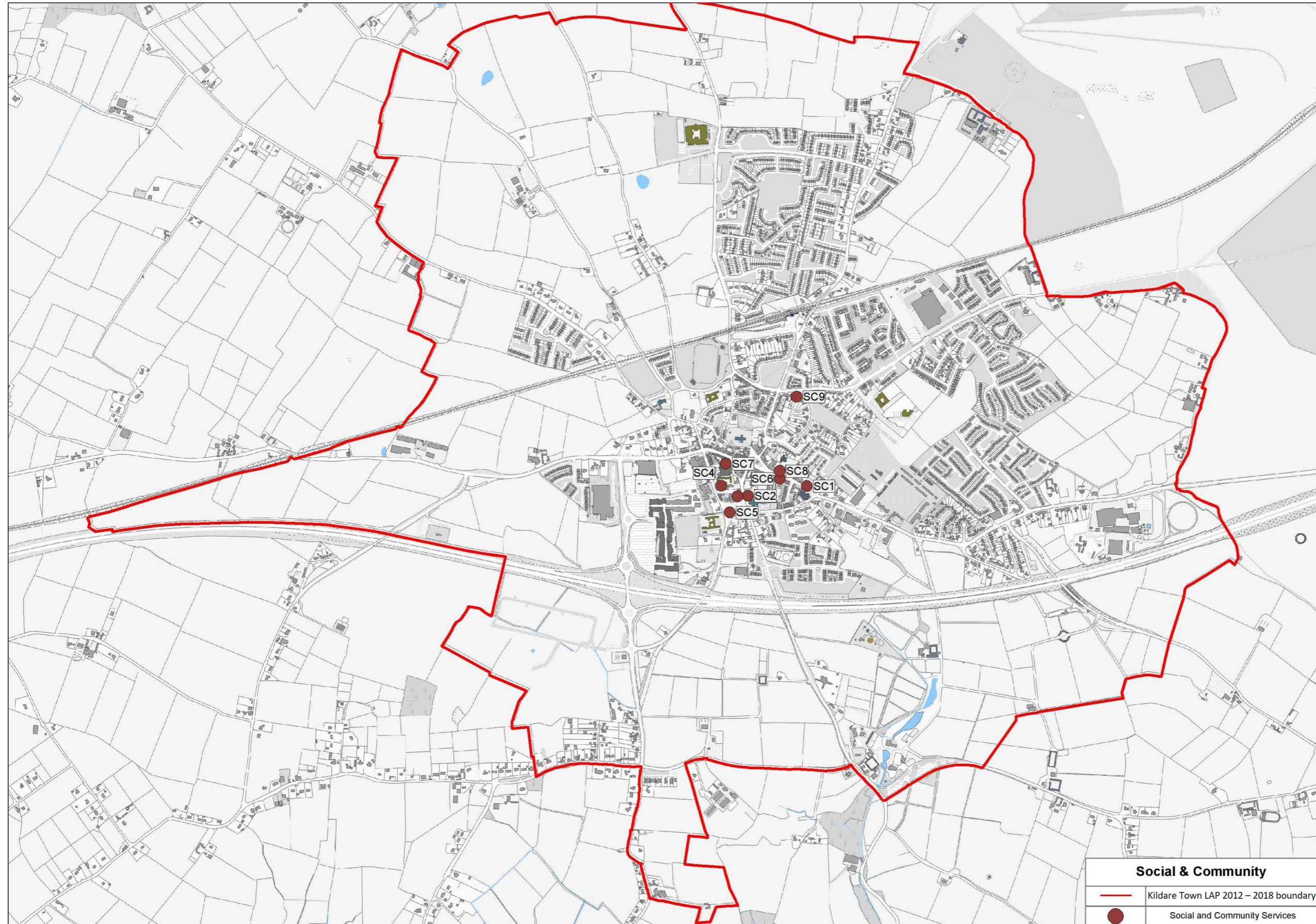
3.7.1 Demand Analysis

There are no national standards for the provision of social or community services. However, good neighbourhood planning can be achieved by following the recommendation of 0.3 community facilities per 1,000 population²⁹. However, this standard is quite crude as it does not distinguish between the various kinds of facilities, measuring only their quantity. Nevertheless, applying this benchmark indicates that Kildare Town currently has a ratio of 0.89 facilities per 1,000 population (based on nine facilities, which exclude the garda service). The provision decreases to the rate of 0.78 per 1,000 population in 2029, still within an appropriate standard. However, without doubt Kildare Town as a service town serves a wider catchment who use many of these facilities and even if the quantity of services does

²⁹ Barton et al. (2010). *Shaping Neighbourhoods: For Local Health and Global Sustainability* 2nd Edition. London: Routledge.

not increase, the capacity and potentially, the variety of them may have to, regardless of the benchmark guidance.

Figure 12: Location of Social and Community Facilities



3.8 Arts and Cultural Facilities

There are seven arts and cultural facilities in Kildare Town most of which are related to tourism, music, dance, and drama. The facilities are dispersed across the town with a concentration of facilities located in the town centre. Figure 12 shows the location of each facility and Table 19 below provides further details on each facility.

Table 20: Arts and Culture Facilities

Map Ref	Name	Location	Facilities / Services
A1	Kildare Town Tourist Office & Heritage Centre	Market Square, Kildare	Tourist information, a self-guided audio tour of The Kildare Town Heritage Trail, Legends of Kildare VR,
A2	O'Rourke School of Ballet	CMWS Hall, Saint Brigid's Square	Ballet
A3	Leah Moran Stage School	CMWS Hall, St Brigid's Square	Drama, singing, dancing
A4	Vicky Barry Performing Arts	Gaelscoil Mhic Aodha, Melitta Road	Drama, singing, dancing
A5	St. Brigid's Cathedral	Market Square	Tourist attraction
A6	Round Tower	Market Square	Tourist attraction
A7 ³⁰	St. Brigid's Well	Tully Road	Tourist attraction

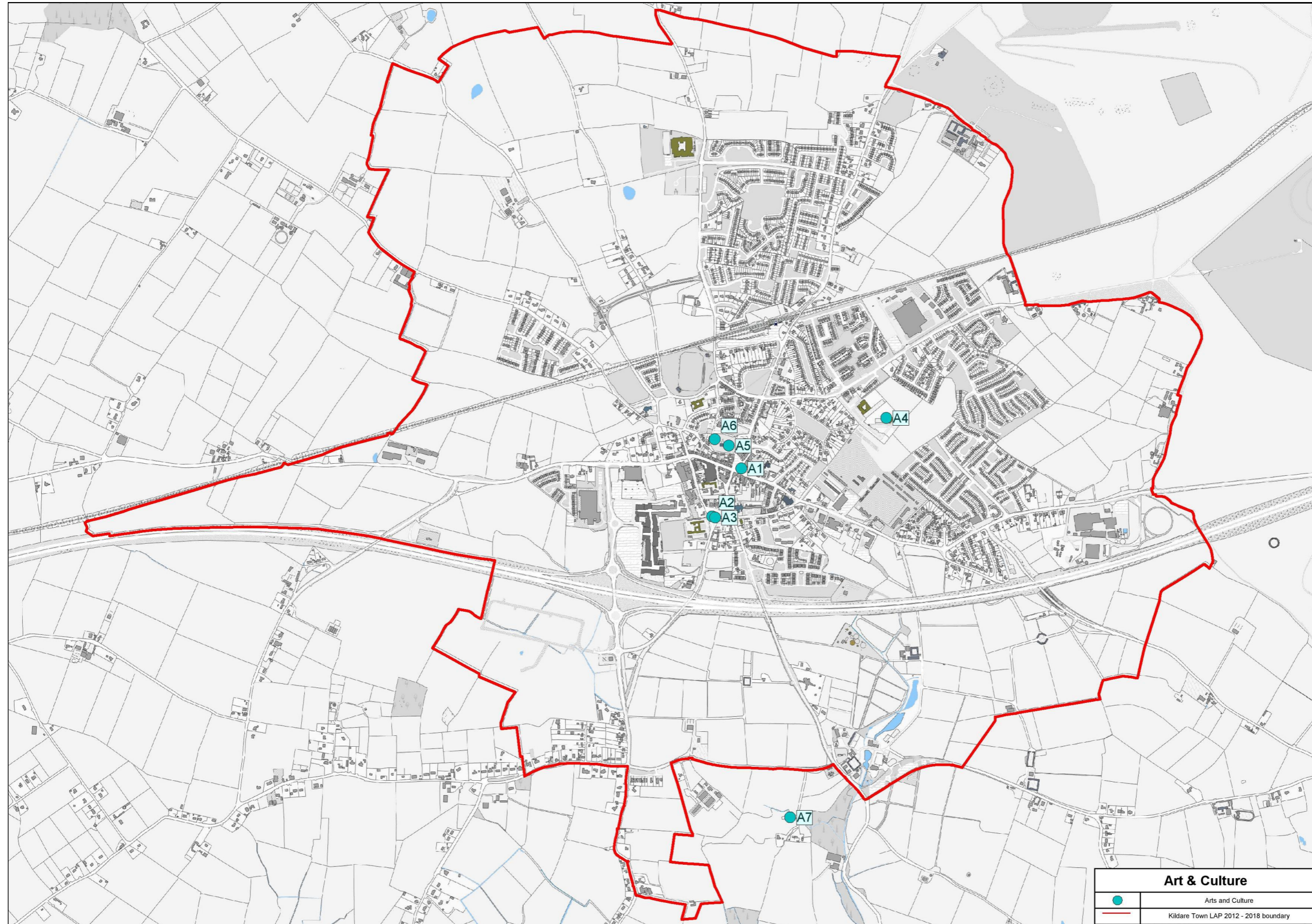
In addition to the facilities and groups listed above, festivals form a significant part of the arts and cultural identity of Kildare Town. Namely, the Kildare Derby Festival, the Kildare Town Medieval Festival, Féile Bríde Kildare Drama Festival. The year 2023, will also see the town celebrating the 1500th anniversary of St Brigid through the Brigid 1500 project.

3.8.1 Demand Analysis

Typical benchmarking standards for arts and cultural facilities relate to the spend per capita in a given area, as opposed to the provision of physical infrastructure. There is no record of such spending patterns in Kildare Town.

³⁰ This tourist attraction is outside the study area.

Figure 13: Location of Arts and Culture facilities



3.9 'Faith' Facilities

A total of five faith facilities were identified in Kildare Town, comprising of three churches, one cemetery and one spirituality centre. While one church is of Christian domination the other two in the town are of Catholic domination. The 2016 census found that over three quarters (78%) of Kildare Town identified as Catholic 78%.

Table 21: Audit of Existing 'Faith' Facilities

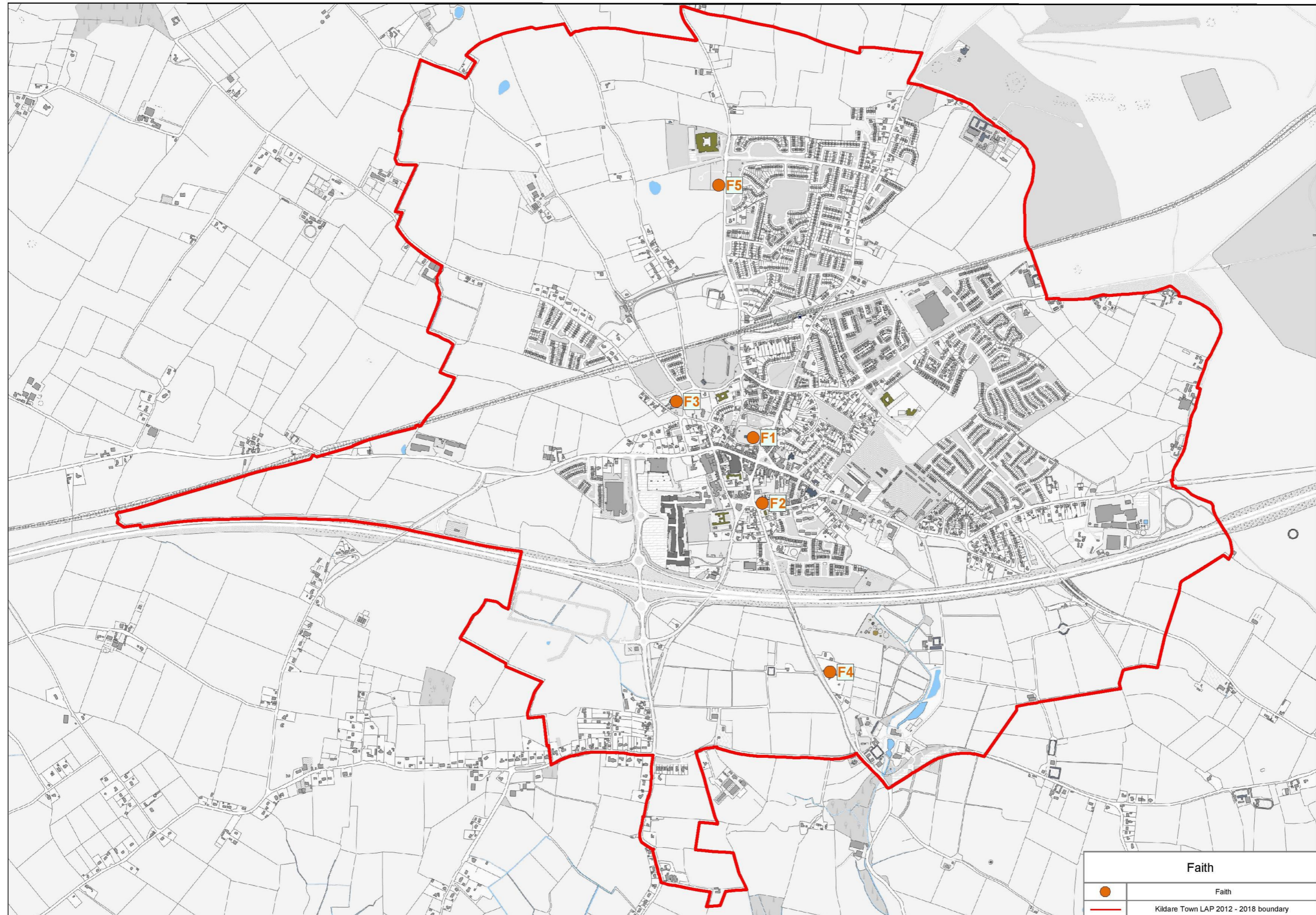
Map Ref	Name / Location	Description / Facilities / Services
F1	St Brigid's Cathedral, Market Square	Church and Graveyard
F2	St Brigid's Catholic Church, St. Brigid's Square	Church, Parish Office, and Convent
F3	Carmelite Catholic Church, Green Road	Catholic Church and Graveyard
F4	Solas Bhríde Centre, Tully Road	Christian Spirituality Centre
F5	St Conleth's Cemetery, Dunmurry Road	Graveyard

3.9.1 Demand Analysis

There are no known benchmarking standards for this category of infrastructure provisions.

St Conleth's Catholic Graveyard is the only graveyard in the town and correspondence with Environmental Section in Kildare County Council dated November 2022 indicates that there is only 10 years of capacity left in this graveyard. It is also noted that there is no crematorium or columbarium within the SIA study area.

Figure 14: Locations of 'faith' facilities



3.10 Other Facilities Including Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood centres, as defined in the Retail Planning Guidelines (2012), generally comprise a small group of shops, typically a newsagent, small supermarket/general grocery store, sub-post office and other small shops of a local nature serving a small, localised neighbourhood catchment population.

In Kildare Town there is one definable neighbourhood centre in the town on Melitta Road which serves the east of the town. Figure 14 illustrates the location of the neighbourhood centre and Table 21 below presents an audit of this centre in terms of retail types and the number of units.

A spatial catchment as defined by a 10-minute walk-time (800 metre radii) from the neighbourhood centre is also shown in Figure 14. This spatial catchment reflects the general and accepted threshold of distance that people are prepared to walk to access such local services and facilities, while not precisely reflecting routes within an urban context.

There are a number of convenience stores throughout the town which serve a local retail function however they would not fall within the definition of a neighbourhood centre. These are also depicted in Figure 14 and listed in Table 21 below.

Table 22: Audit of Existing Neighbourhood Centres

Map Ref	Name / Location	Description / Facilities / Services	Comment
NC1	Centra, Melitta Road	Centra, butcher, catering company, beauty salon, equine services	6 units
CR2	Tesco SC, Monasterevin Road	Convenience retail store	
CR3	Dunmurry Store, Dunmurry Road	Convenience retail store	
CR4	Londis, Dublin Road	Convenience retail store	
CR5	Centra, Junction 13, Greyabbey	Convenience retail store	

Table 23: Audit of Other Commercial Services and Facilities

Map Ref	Name / Location
O1	Credit Union
O2	Post Office
O3	Bank Of Ireland
O4	Train Station
O5	Bus Stop
O6	Bus Stop
O7	Grey Abbey Veterinary
O8	Glennon's Funeral Home
O9	Kildare Veterinary Surgery

Figure 15: Location of Neighbourhood Centres

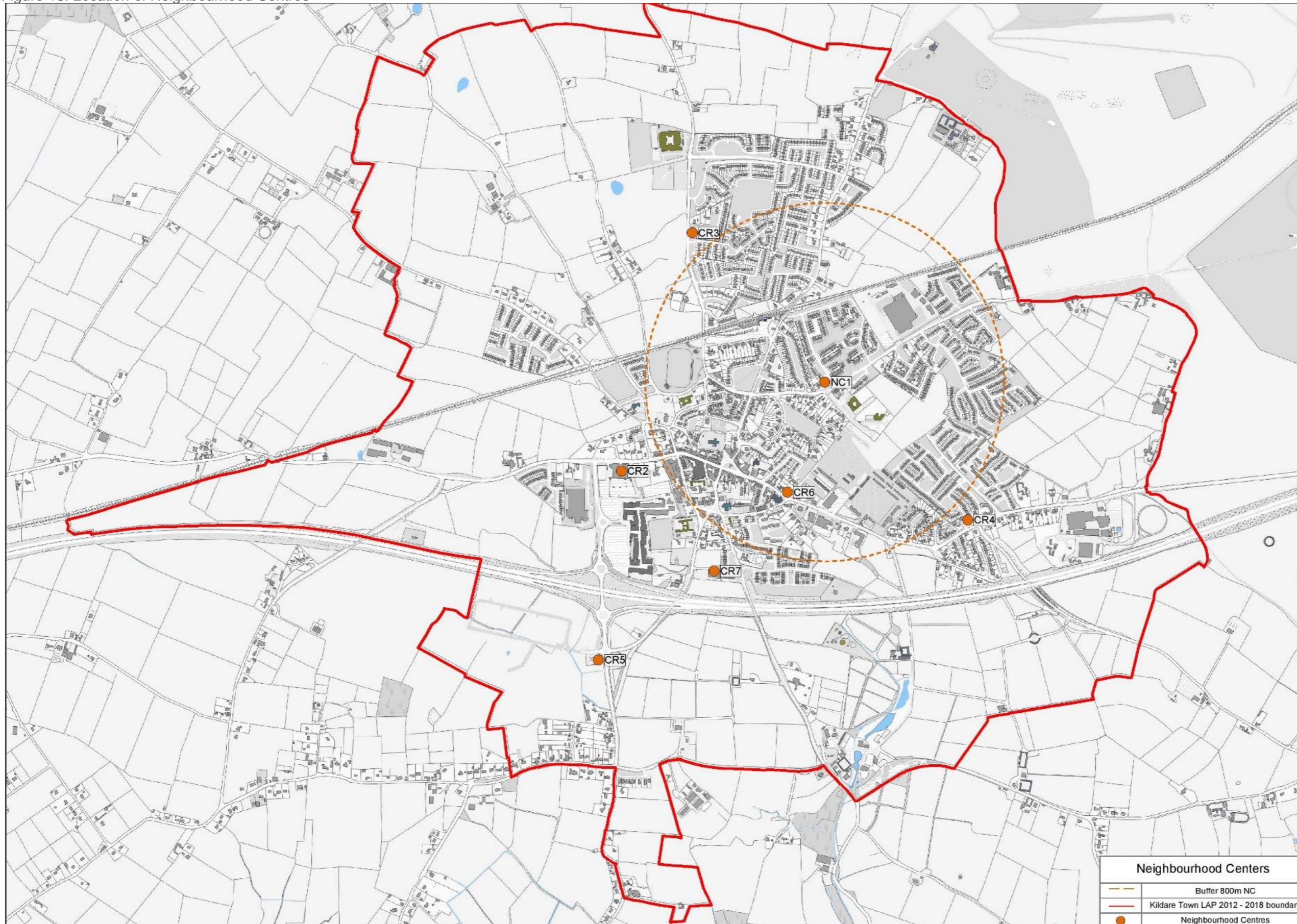
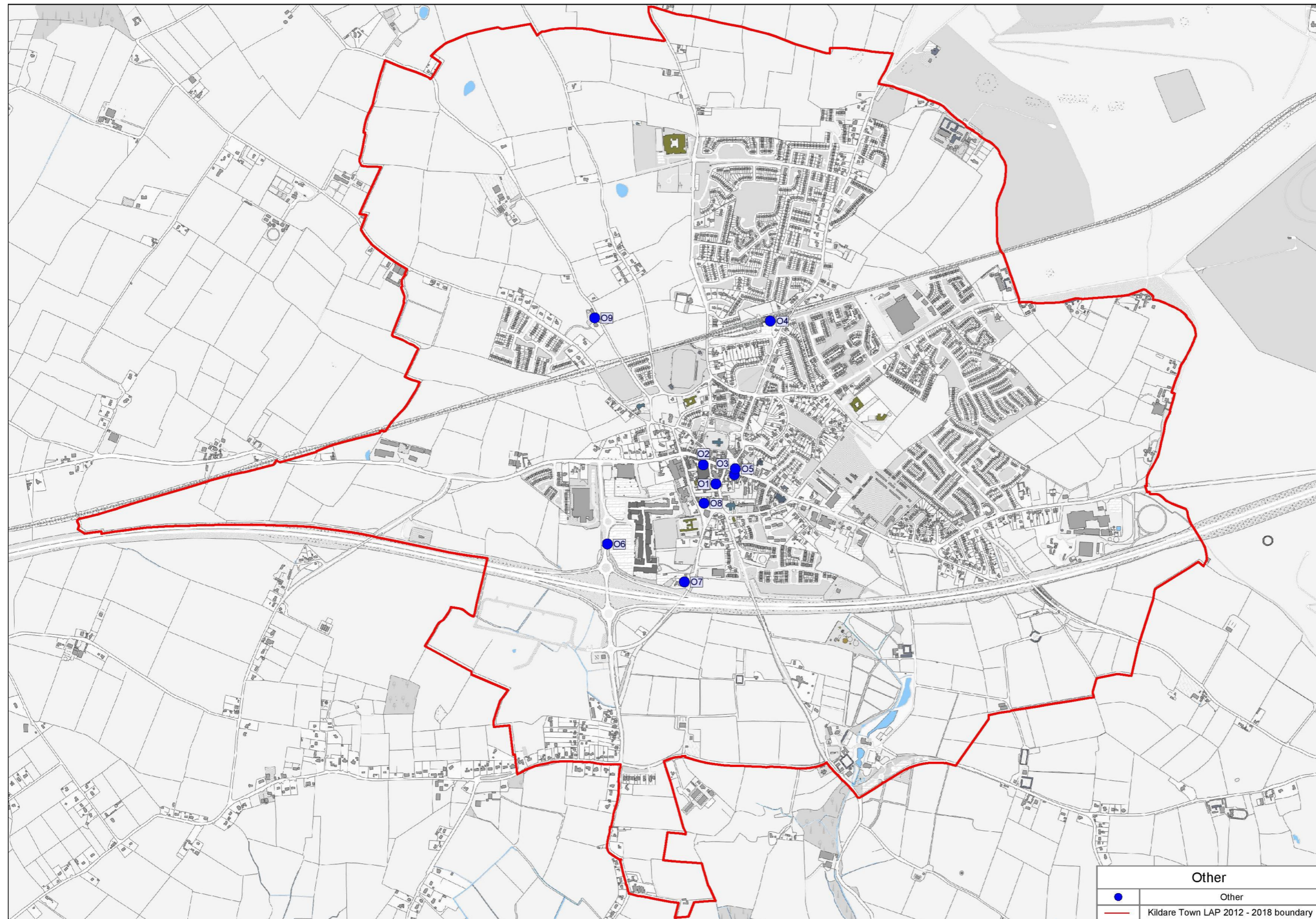


Figure 16: Other Commercial Services and Facilities



3.10.1 Demand Analysis

There is no standard per population guidance for neighbourhood centres or other commercial premises, including financial institutions. Infrastructure requirements are dependent on market conditions and consumer demand, factors which are beyond the scope of this study.

However, it is in the remit of local area plans to designate land as neighbourhood centre within a town. It is considered that the town centre and the number of existing convenience retail stores throughout the town serve a localised retail function to their immediate surrounding area as can be observed in Figure 15 above. These are categorised as CR in Figure 15 and Table 24.

4 Recommendations

The Social Infrastructure Audit has identified certain specific requirements for future provision of social infrastructure facilities/services for Kildare Town. These requirements are based on current level of provision within the town and the projected population growth to 11,541 persons to the end of 2029. This assessment can inform the future spatial development objectives for the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and in this regard makes a number of recommendations.

4.1 Education and Training

Primary schools in Kildare Town are currently at capacity (average of 93%) and it is analysed that an additional 260 additional student places are required over the plan period. While it is noted the Department of Education stated in their submission on the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 that additional primary level places in Kildare Town could be met by a minor expansion of existing facilities if so required, further consideration will be in the Local Area Plan as to where these 11 additional classrooms can be accommodated.

The existing post-primary school in the town is at capacity at present at 98%. Approximately 159 additional places will be required over the plan period. A requirement for one additional post-primary school has been identified. Kildare County Council, in conjunction with the Department of Education have identified a site within the study area (the former Magee Barracks site, adjacent to the two primary schools). The Department of Education is monitoring the demand for and provision of schools in the study area on an ongoing basis and KCC will continue to consult and liaise with the Department of Education in this regard.

4.2 Childcare

Childcare facilities in Kildare Town are currently at capacity and approximately 134 additional childcare places will be required over the plan period. However, it should be noted that there are seven extant permissions (Figure 8 and Table 11, refers) which have been permitted in new residential areas for new childcare facilities which can accommodate circa 389 places. If all seven permissions are implemented, it is considered that these childcare facilities will make sufficient provision for childcare places and the unmet demand which is currently not been catered for during the

lifetime of the plan to 2029. Furthermore, Objective SC O78 of the County Development Plan 2023-2029 now requires childcare provision to be delivered in phase 1 of any new residential or commercial development.

4.3 Health

The current doctor to population ratio in Kildare Town is 1.27 per 1,000 population with 11 doctors practicing from three different surgeries which is above the recommendations of Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (GMENAC). Should the population grow as anticipated to 11,541 persons by 2029 the ratio of existing doctors per population will fall to 0.95 per 1,000 population which is still above the recommended standard. This assumes no increase or decrease in doctor numbers during that period. However, in reality health practises in Kildare Town are currently oversubscribed, indicating they serve a larger catchment outside the scope of this study. This will be a consideration when ensuring adequate land is zoned for Community purposes It would appear that Kildare Town is well served by nursing homes when compared to other surrounding similar sized towns.

4.4 Open Space

While the quantity of public open space per 1,000 population will comply with Development Plan Open Space and Recreation Strategy standards over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, the current provision is considered poor in quality. This is because the town currently only contains one small public park, the majority of sports pitches have little public access and the open spaces within residential estates provide few facilities with many too small in area to provide any significant amenity to residents. No Irish standards exist to further analyse this open space provision, so consideration has been given to the 2015 'FIT' (Fields in Trust) recommended benchmark guidelines for 'outdoor space'. These guidelines recommend 0.8 ha of parks and gardens be provided per 1,000 persons. This would require Kildare Town to provide 9.2 ha of parks and gardens by 2029.

This would be improved by the delivery of a recently approved Part 8 proposal for a public park (Cherry Avenue). The development of the park will consist of a perimeter path catering for pedestrians and cyclists, demonstration gardens, Community Garden, Amphitheatre, Land Art Feature, Playground, Pump Track, Wetlands and extensive tree planting. It is further noted that a piece of land, adjoining church lane has also been acquired by the council and a medieval garden is proposed for this area which will further enhance the open space provision within the town centre. If this local park at Cherry Avenue and pocket park adjoining Church Lane were to be developed over the lifetime of the Plan further parks and gardens will not be required by 2029.

All new residential development should aim to provide amenity green space as per the requirements set out in the Draft Kildare County Development Plan, 2023-2029. The delivery of open space areas should be carried out in a phased manner. The purpose of phasing is to ensure that infrastructure, facilities and amenities are provided together with new residential development. The phasing schedule should be based on the premise that the number of dwelling units/bed spaces that may be

permitted in each phase of development is dependent on the provision of a predetermined amount of infrastructure, facilities and amenities to serve each phase. To ensure flexibility, the proposed phasing schedule should be sequential (linked to housing output/bed space delivery) rather than time specific.

4.5 Sports and Recreation

Within the study area there are 25.14 ha of outdoor playing pitches (soccer, GAA and rugby) and multi-use games areas (hockey, basketball and tennis). Based on the estimated population of Kildare Town in early 2022, the current outdoor sports area provision is 2.47 ha per 1,000 population. Accordingly, it would appear using FIT (2015) standards there is more than adequate area for outdoor sports within the LAP boundary to serve the existing population. If the area and number of these facilities were to remain the same over the course of the plan this would reduce to 2.17 ha per 1,000 population, which would still exceed FIT (2015) standards.

However, most facilities are associated with schools and have limited availability to the public and the majority of facilities are located to the north of the town. Further public outdoor sports provision will therefore be a requirement over the plan period especially within any new public parks to the south of Kildare Town. In terms of the provision of playgrounds within the study area, the existing three totalling 0.16 ha in area fall short of the benchmark FIT guidance in terms of quantity to serve the existing population. FIT guidance advises that 0.25 ha of playing space be provided per 1,000 population or 2.9 ha over the plan period. Furthermore, while each playground provides adequate facilities for a range of age groups, the location of these playgrounds is not evenly distributed around the town as they are all located south of the rail line.

An additional playground and an outdoor sports facility could be accommodated in a multi-use games area which caters to a wide range of age groups and sporting interests.

4.6 Community Services

The location of future community services should be provided relative to the location of target user groups and their level of accessibility insofar as practical. Based on benchmarks used in Northern Ireland (*Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision, 2016*) there is no requirement for additional facilities in the town as the existing number will exceed the benchmark of 0.30 per 1,000 people in 2027 at 0.55 per 1,000 (based on existing facilities excluding the Garda Station).

4.7 Neighbourhood Centres

While there are single Convenience Retail shops dotted around the Retail Core Area which cater to local demand, currently there is only one Neighbourhood Centre in Kildare Town which meets the definition outlined in the Retail Planning Guidelines (2012). This Neighbourhood Centre is located east of town centre on Melitta Road. It also noted a Neighbourhood Centre has been permitted as part of the SHD on the former Magee Barracks lands (KCC Planning Reference 19305007). Having regard

to Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 policy to create 10-minute settlements in urban areas, it is considered a further Neighbourhood Centre north of the rail line would improve sustainable movement within the Plan area.

4.8 Best Practice

In addition to the above specific community and social infrastructure requirements, this study recommends the following practices in the provision of social infrastructure consistent with best practice and the sustainable and effective use of resources:

Co-location

Co-location and clustering of complementary community services thus facilitating coordination, convenience and access for service users.

Multi-purpose and multi-function

Facilities and spaces should offer flexible and diverse space and uses over a range of times to maximise efficiency, utilisation and adaptability of physical assets.

Place making and community identity

Promotion and encouragement of community facilities that create a sense of place and identity, that have a civic quality, and level of amenity that can foster community ownership, offer a focus to support community engagement and the strong 'informal community network' that exists in Leixlip.

Partnership

Encourage delivery of infrastructure services and facilities through partnerships between different bodies for maximum efficiency and co-ordination.

Community Asset Management

For the local authority to maintain and enhance their strategic role in co-ordination and engagement between different service providers to ascertain up to date information of community infrastructure and facilities for the benefit of the community and service providers.

5 Conclusion

Social and community infrastructure is essential to achieving a balanced approach to sustainable local communities and it is of critical importance to the economic and social development of Kildare Town. This study examined the current context with respect to social infrastructure facilities in Kildare Town, determining future requirements based on projected population growth. The findings highlight the presence of some excellent social infrastructure facilities in the area, and a shortfall or absence of some others, that will influence the delivery of future improvements.

The role of social infrastructure in integrating new and existing communities in the study area is critical. In essence, the provision of social infrastructure in an area is fundamentally about making the most of and developing the local network of assets, be they facilities, services or the programmes that bring this together. The production of this audit will function as an important evidence base for the Kildare Local Area Plan 2023-2029, in highlighting the provision of accessible social and community infrastructure, which is critical for the quality of life off all the town's population.