



THORNTON O'CONNOR  
TOWN PLANNING

# Schools Demand Assessment

## Schools Demand Assessment

Prepared in Respect of a Large-Scale Residential Development Application at a Site fronting Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin

Prepared on Behalf of Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited

September 2024

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Schools Demand Assessment has been prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (TOC), on behalf of Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited in support of a proposed Large-Scale Residential Development at a c. 0.8731 Ha site fronting Swords Road, Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin. The purpose of this report is to examine the capacity of existing primary and post-primary facilities located in the vicinity of the development site, alongside the demographic demands of the area and the proposed development. This report provides a detailed review of the statutory, strategic and policy context that relates to the provision of educational facilities in the area, with the aim to:

- Outline the existing and proposed range of educational services within the relevant School Planning Area (SPA) of the subject site;
- Describe the demographic demand for school places for the Swords SPA, alongside the demand generated by the proposed development; and
- Offer insights into the likelihood of the future capacity of the existing educational services to support future residents.

The Government's Provision of Schools and Planning System: A Code of Practice stipulates the methodology for forecasting future education demand based upon the anticipated increase in overall population for the county plan area over the next nine years (as set out in the Local Authority Development Plan/Local Area Plan), the current school-going population based on school returns, and the increase in school-going population and the classrooms required. Fingal County Council specify that planning applications for Large-Scale Residential Developments should aim to support local authorities by identifying potential shortfalls in infrastructure based on up-to-date demographic and schooling data.

The Schools Demand Assessment provided herein accompanies a planning application for a residential development comprising 123 No. units.

### 1.1 Approach

As part of this development proposal, we have carried out an assessment of the existing and proposed primary and post-primary facilities in the area in order to assess the need for additional infrastructure. A desktop study was used to collect the baseline information. The facilities in each category were recorded in an Excel table then mapped using the ArcGIS ecosystem. A large number of public and private geospatial datasets were used in the course of the survey, including but not limited to:

- 2024 Google Places Dataset;
- 2024 ESRI and Mapbox Ireland Basemaps;
- 2011, 2016 and 2022 Census Boundaries and Small Area Population Statistics;
- 2010-2024 Department of Education and Skills - Irish Schools;
- 2024 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Register of Private Higher Education Institutions in Ireland;
- 2024 Individual School Admission Notices; and
- 2024 Fingal County Council Online Planning Register.

Having regard to the Provision of Schools and Planning System: A Code of Practice, it is evident that an assessment of the existing school facilities is hugely beneficial to establish the existing and future levels of demand for schooling infrastructure in the local area into the future. It is therefore

necessary to carry out a demographic assessment of the local populations and identify existing (and proposed) school facilities within the area to allow for demand estimations to be made with respect to the impact of the proposed development. A methodology for the assessment of educational facilities and schools has been developed in accordance with the directions provided in planning policy (described in Section 2.0 to follow), and it involves the following steps:

1. Defining an appropriate Study Area;
2. Undertaking a study of the demographic composition of the population of the Study Area;
3. Determining the extent and provision of existing educational facilities and schools within the Study Area; and
4. Estimating the level of demand for schools that may arise from the development proposal.

The school demand assessment described in the following sections will follow this methodology as a structural framework. The existing supply of educational facilities and schools were assessed to establish the baseline scenario, followed by a demographic analysis that provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the population of the Study Area, prior to finally determining the potential demand generated by the proposed development. It is important to note that in assessing potential demand generated by the proposed scheme, an absolute maximum scenario was presented. It therefore follows that it is reasonable to conclude that there will be in all likelihood a lower than depicted demand for enrolment places within the school network.

## 1.2 Study Area and Accessibility

Swords town has grown considerably in recent years, it is identified as a 'Key Town' within the Dublin Metropolitan Area and the town has a broad range of uses, with residential, retail, offices, and logistics. Swords has a population estimated at 40,776 in the latest Census 2022, and the document 'Your Swords: An Emerging City, Strategic Vision 2035' envisages Swords growing into a city of 100,000 people by 2035.

Geographically, Swords is located c. 12km north of Dublin City Centre, and is within close proximity to the M1, which links to the M50, Dublin Airport and Dublin Port Tunnel while providing the main transport link to Louth and Northern Ireland. In addition to the broad range of uses located within Swords town centre, a number of large-scale shopping centres and retail parks operate within the Swords area, including the adjacent Airside Retail Park, Pavilions Shopping Centre, Swords Business Campus, and Swords Business Park and the Airside Business Park, in addition to the myriads of employment generating uses at and around Dublin Airport.

The subject site, covering approximately c. 0.8731 hectares, is situated toward the eastern periphery of Swords, less than 1 km from Swords Town centre, and is c. 2km from the employment hub of Dublin Airport to the south. The site is currently undeveloped, with the northern boundary of the site adjoined by Swords Business Park, a residential housing estate (Seamount View) to the west, an existing access road which serves the Applegreen service station and local business park to the east, and an apartment complex to the south (St Werburghs). Access to the site is provided via a gated entrance to the east of the site from the local access road. A public footpath is provided along the southern and eastern site boundary.



**Figure 1.1: Site Location**

**(Source: Bing Maps, annotated by Thornton O’Connor Town Planning, 2024)**

The proposed development site is located within the Swords Planning Area (SPA) identified by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), as shown in Figure 1.2. This SPA comprises 14 No. existing primary schools and 5 No. post-primary schools and is adjoined by the feeder areas of Ashbourne SPA to the west, Rush/Lusk SPA to the north, the Whitehall/Santry SPA to the south and the Malahide/Nevinstown SPA to the east.

The Study Area for this assessment is therefore defined by the Swords SPA as identified by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). It was judged that the SPA area offered the best capacity to evaluate the needs of Swords town in line with DES methodology. In addition, Fingal County Council within the *Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029* (Section 4.5.1.4) also reference the as the Provision of Schools and the Planning System 2008 guidelines and ensuring alignment with the DES methodology.

The subject site is also located at the edge of a rapidly growing settlement and at the edge of the SPA boundary, therefore a secondary analysis was also carried to survey and include relevant schooling infrastructure that lies tangent to, but outside of the immediate vicinity but is directly relevant to assessing future needs of the settlement of Swords.

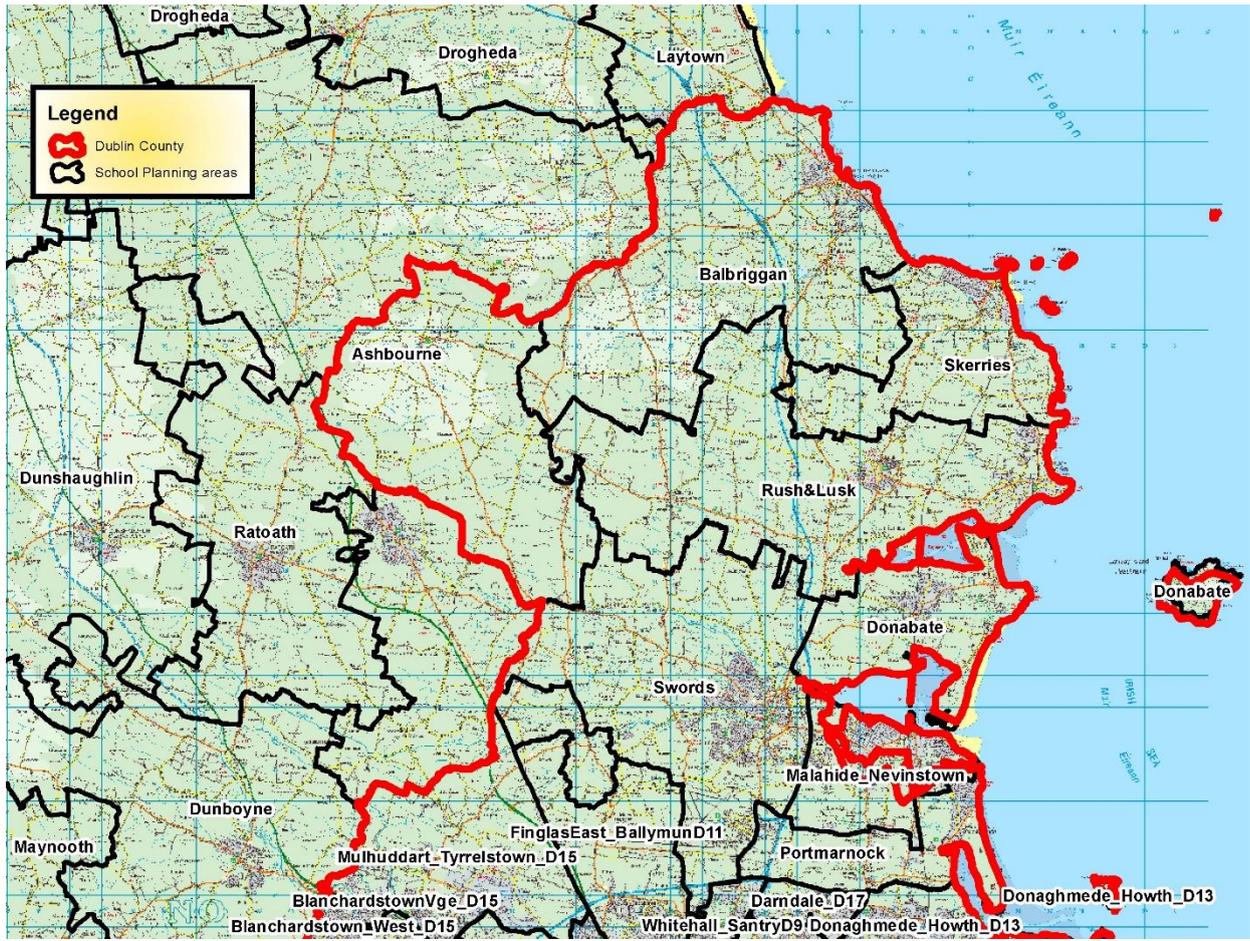
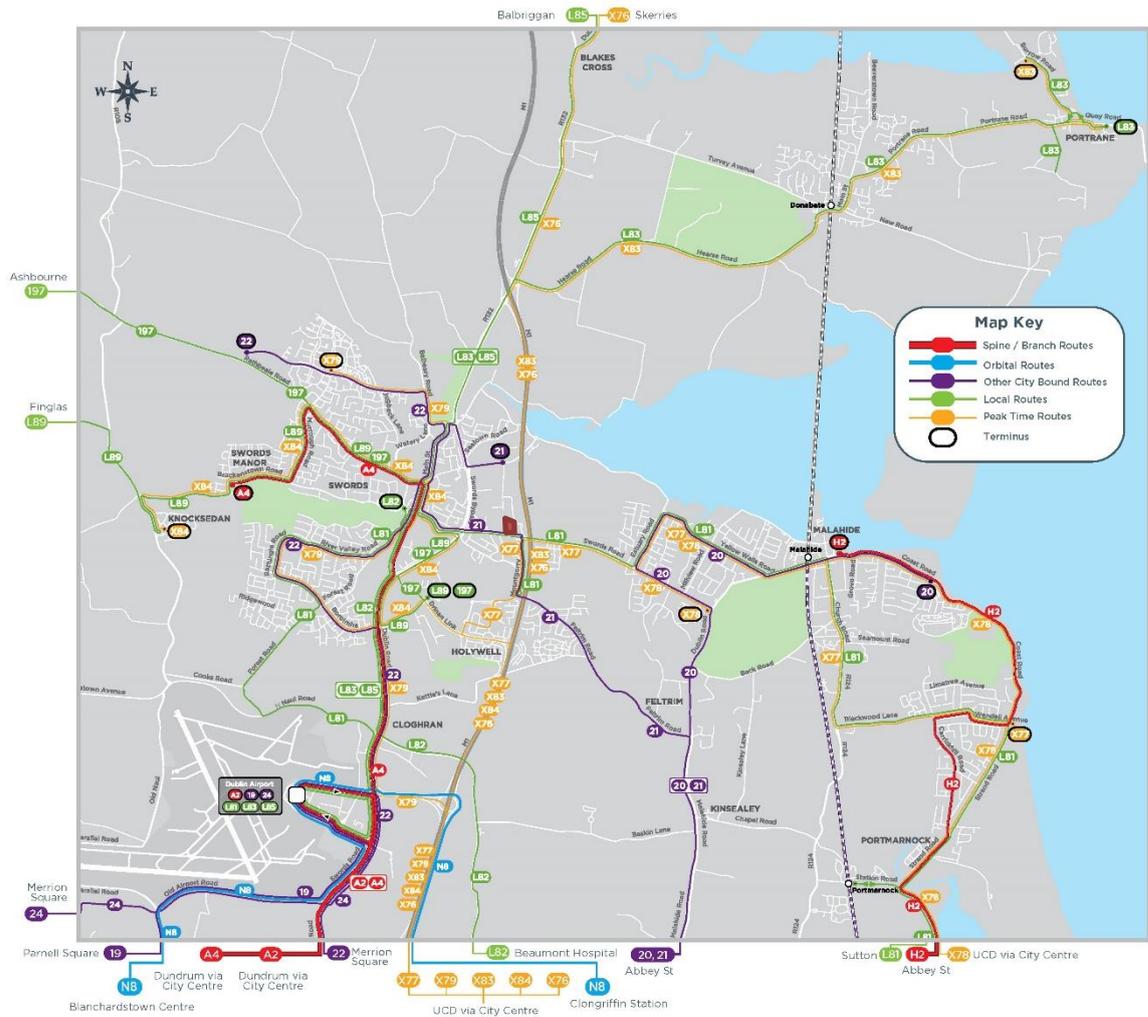


Figure 1.2: Study Area

(Source: Bing Maps, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

The site is well serviced by public transport with high capacity, frequent bus services. A number of bus stops are located within 500m walking distance to the site, providing for a high capacity and frequent service to the city centre, along with direct links with Dublin Airport, and Dublin City Centre. This includes the Swords Express bus services (including routes 503, 506 and 507), and a range of Dublin Bus and GoAhead services (including routes the 41, 42d, 43, 102, 142 & 197).

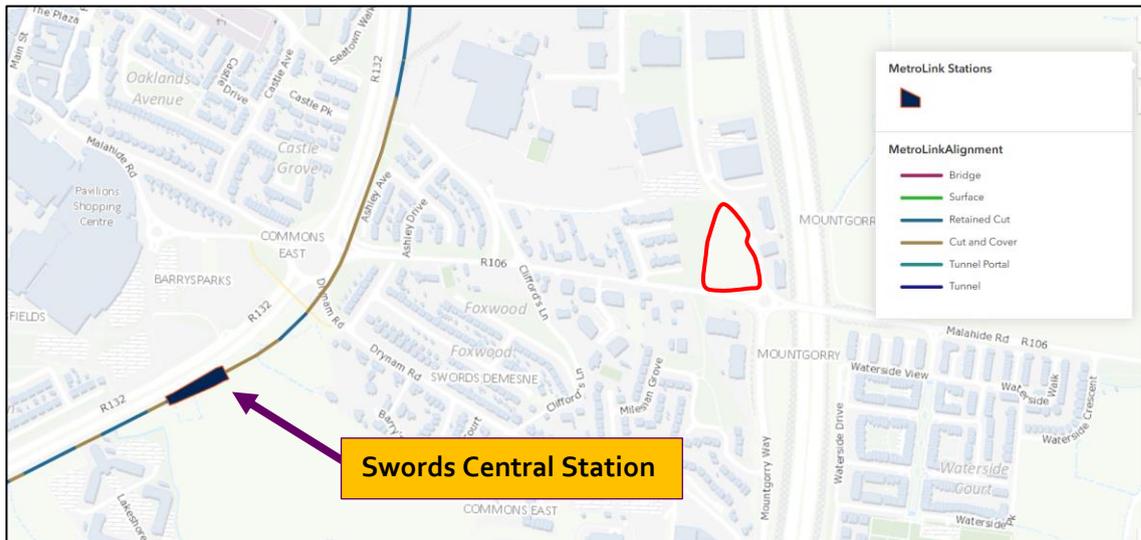
Future proposals for public transport in the area include Bus Connects and a section of the Core Bus Corridor 2 (Swords to Dublin City Centre) preferred route passes near the site to the west, along the R132/Dublin Road. Bus Connects aims to introduce 'next generation' bus services and corridors in Dublin. With the aim of significantly cutting existing journey times and ensuring that services are predictable and reliable. A section of the Core Bus Corridor 2 preferred route passes along the R132/Dublin Road to the west of the site. These corridors will have continuous bus priority, along with segregated cycle lanes where possible. The route will run service to the City Centre running every 10-15 minutes. This will provide significantly improved bus transport access to the subject site in the coming years.



**Figure 1.3: Bus Connects Network (Site Identified in Red Outline)**

(Source: **BusConnects.ie, September 2020, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)**

The site will also benefit from the future Metro Link line, which will run along a corridor linking Swords, Dublin Airport and the City Centre, and will terminate at Charlemont. The proposed Metro Link will provide a station in Swords, 'Swords Central Station', which will be approximately 800 metres (c. 10 minutes' walk) to the south-west of the site along the R132 (see Figure 1.4).



**Figure 1.4: Site Proximity to MetroLink Line (Swords Central Station)**

Source: [metrolink.ie](http://metrolink.ie), Annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

### 1.3 Proposed Development

Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited intend to deliver a residential development on the c. 0.8731 Ha development site. The development will consist of 123 No. apartments, with supporting resident amenity facilities. The development is arranged in a courtyard style with communal open space proposed in the centre.

Per the statutory public notices, the proposed development is as follows:

*“Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited intend to apply for permission for development for a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) at this c. 0.8731 Ha site fronting the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin. The site is bounded to the west by open space, with Seamount View Housing Estate further beyond, to the south by the R106, to the east by an access road to the Applegreen Service Station and to the north by Swords Business Park.*

*The development’s surface water drainage network shall discharge from the site into the existing manhole located along the access road to the east of the site. The development site area and drainage work area will provide a total application site area of c. 0.8792 Ha.*

*The proposed development will principally consist of: the construction of 123 No. residential units (55 No. one bed apartments and 68 No. two bed apartments). The development will be provided in a courtyard block arrangement ranging in height from part 4 No. to part 5 No. storeys. The proposed development has a gross floor area of c. 10,291 sq m.*

*The proposed development will also provide: vehicular access from the access road to the east; 24 No. car parking spaces; bicycle parking spaces; motorcycle parking spaces; pedestrian/cycle entrances at the south-west and north of the site, and along the western boundary connecting into the adjoining open space; a footpath and bicycle path around the south, east and north of the site perimeter and a shared cycle/pedestrian path along the western boundary; balconies and terraces facing all directions; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; green roofs; lift overrun; PV panels; lighting; ESB substation; switchroom; plant; and all associated works above and below ground.”*

Unit Type	Units	% of Total
1-Bedroom Units	55	45%
2- Bedroom Units	68	55%
Total units	123	100%

Table 1.1: Schedule of Accommodation

(Source: Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)



Figure 1.5: Site Layout Plan

(Source: Coady Architects, 2024)

#### 1.4 Layout of this Report

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

- **Section 2.0** provides the policy context and considers standards against which provision can be assessed;
- **Section 3.0** provides an overview of the population and demographic profile of the Study Area and assesses the likely future demographic trends as a result of the implementation

- of the proposed development;
- **Section 4.0** reviews existing local school infrastructure, as well as proposed future infrastructure; and
  - **Section 5.0** identifies gaps in the existing provision of infrastructure and makes recommendations to address deficiencies.

## 2.0 RELEVANT POLICY GUIDANCE

For the purposes of this Schools Demand Assessment, a range of national, regional and local planning policies relating to school and educational infrastructure provision have been reviewed, including the *Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029*. These documents provide guidance with respect to the provision of new facilities in residential development areas. The key points relating to this study, as derived from each policy document, will be highlighted in this Section.

### 2.1 National Planning Policy

#### 2.1.1 *National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040*

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

A key focus of the NPF is on sustainable and compact development within pre-existing urban areas and the provision of accessible services and facilities for all communities. Chapter 6 of the NPF states that the "ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure and social interactions available to us and the prospect of securing employment" is intrinsic to providing a good quality of life for new and existing communities.

The NPF includes National Strategic Outcome 10 which seeks to provide access to quality childcare, education and health services. This requires an evidence-led planning approach. While there is no guidance on what infrastructure is required to service developments of different sizes, the NPF does provide a hierarchy of settlements and related infrastructure.

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

#### 2.1.2 *Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework (July 2024)*

On 10th July 2024, in accordance Section 20C(5)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Government published a draft of the first 6-year revision of the NPF. The Draft Revision focuses on updates to the NPF to reflect significant and sustained population growth observed since the publication of the NPF in 2018 and updates to Government policy, amongst other factors. This section focuses on the main changes reflected in the Draft Revision which can be summarised as follows:

- National Population Growth Target increased from 5.8 million to 6.1 million by 2040. This represents an additional 300,000 people compared with the original NPF and would result in a total increase of 950,000 people over 2022 Census population figures. This projected increase in population is in line with the Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) baseline population projections contained in their July 2024 outlook.
- Extension of policy directing 50% of national growth amongst Ireland's five cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. Establishes new minimum growth

targets for Ireland's five cities.

- Amends regional population growth targets with the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA) increasing by approximately 470,000 additional people between 2022 and 2040 (c. 690,000 additional people over 2016-2040) i.e. a population of almost 3 million. Dublin City and Suburbs is expected to absorb a majority of this increase and is projected to grow by 295,000 people over the period.
- Reinforces compact urban form objectives of the 2018 *NPF* requiring 40% of all new housing to be built within existing urban footprints (50% in cities/30% elsewhere).
- Outlines a national requirement for 50,000 homes to be completed per year to satisfy demand. This is also in line with the ESRI projections; however, it is noted that this does not take account of existing structural pent-up demand nor a significant fall in household size (as outlined by the Housing Commission).
- Places greater emphasis on the accelerated delivery of transport orientated development (TOD) opportunities at greenfield and brownfield sites adjacent to major public transport hubs in the five cities, suburbs and metropolitan towns.

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

### **2.1.3 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2024)**

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

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

- a) "*In city and town centres and at high capacity public transport nodes and interchanges (defined in Table 3.8), development should consist of high intensity mix-use development (residential, commercial, retail, cultural and community uses) that responds in scale and intensity to the level of accessibility. At major transport interchanges, uses should be planned*

*in accordance with the principles of Transport Orientated Development.*

- b) *In city and town centres, planning authorities should plan for a diverse range of uses including retail, cultural and residential uses and for the adaption and re-use of the existing building stock (e.g. over the shop living). It is also important to plan for the activation of outdoor spaces and the public realm to promote more liveable city and town centres. Much of this can be achieved through the implementation of urban enhancement and traffic demand management measures that work together to free up space for active travel and create spaces that invite people to meet, mingle and dwell within centres.*
- c) *In areas that are less central, the mix of uses should cater for local services and amenities focused around a hierarchy of local centres that support residential communities and with opportunities for suitable non-residential development throughout.*
- d) *In all urban areas, planning authorities should actively promote and support opportunities for intensification. This could include initiatives that support the more intensive use of existing buildings (including adaption and extension) and under-used lands (including for example the repurposing of car parks at highly accessible urban locations that no longer require a high level of private car access).*
- e) *It will be important to align the integration of land uses and centres with public transport in order to maximise the benefits of public transport.*
- f) *The creation of sustainable communities also requires a diverse mix of housing and variety in residential densities across settlements. This will require a focus on the delivery of innovative housing types that can facilitate compact growth and provide greater housing choice that responds to the needs of single people, families, older people and people with disabilities, informed by a Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) where possible. Development plans may specify a mix for apartment and other housing developments, but this should be further to an evidence-based Housing Needs and Demand Assessment.”*

This School Demand Assessment has regard to these Guidelines which prescribe more compact city spaces and a wider diversity of social and community uses within walkable distances. These criteria were considered with respect of the future needs of proposed development and applied during the course of the study area audit.

#### **2.1.4 Action Plan for Education (Statement of Strategy 2023–2025)**

#### **2.1.5 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice**

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

1. Schools provision should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities;
2. The provision of any new schools (both primary and post-primary) should be driven by and emerge from an integrated approach between the planning functions of planning authorities and the Department of Education; and
3. Local authorities, as planning authorities, will support and assist the Department in ensuring the timely provision of school sites.

The document provides guidance when assessing future development potential of certain areas and establishing demand for schools. This document states that in some cases it “*may be more complex as it involves not just an assessment of likely population growth but also an appraisal of the*

*capacity of existing post-primary schools, coupled with an assessment of the enrolment patterns in existing and anticipated 'feeder' national schools."*

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

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

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

## **2.2 Regional Planning Policy**

### **2.2.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region**

The *Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy* (Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly) (*RSES*) states that social infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities. Section 9.1 of the *RSES* details that the availability of, and access to, education facilities is key to creating healthier places. The *RSES* includes the following Regional Policy Objectives which relate to access to social infrastructure and its overall improvement:

**RPO 9.14** – *"Local authorities shall seek to support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve."*

**RPO 9.18** – *"Support the implementation of local authority Local Economic and Community Plans, in collaboration with Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and through the use of spatial planning policies, to seek to reduce the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the Region."*

**RPO 9.19** – *"EMRA shall work collaboratively with stakeholders including the wide range of service providers through the LECs to effectively plan for social infrastructure needs."*

Regarding schools, the *RSES* states that Local Authorities should consider demographic trends and patterns when carrying out an assessment of the need for social infrastructure.

**RPO 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.*

**RPO 9.22** - *To support the role of Higher Education Institutions and Educational Training Boards in addressing skills shortages and life-long learning needs in the Region, and to support the further development of multi-campus Technological Universities to drive research and innovation.*

The *RSES* has been consulted in this Schools Demand Assessment to ensure the range of services, community facilities, and standards deemed to improve quality of life are considered.

## 2.3 Local Planning Policy

### 2.3.1 *Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029*

The *Fingal County Development Plan 2023 -2029* ('*Development Plan*') was completed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 and came into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The *Development Plan* provides the statutory planning policy framework for the growth and development of the County during its lifetime, with an underlying and cross-cutting theme promoting the creation of sustainable, healthy communities where people can access jobs, housing, and services, and enjoy a high-quality of life. A key priority of the *Development Plan* is to create sustainable neighbourhoods, with a range of household types and tenures located in close proximity to community facilities and services. The following policies and objectives are set out below in relation to a proposed development and school infrastructure provision:

**“Objective CIOSP<sub>9</sub> – Education and Health:** *Continue to work collaboratively with Educational and Health care providers to ensure the timely provision of educational facilities, health care and community resources throughout Fingal. The Plan will support the provision of education and healthcare facilities in line with national and regional policy objectives.”*

**“Objective CIOSO<sub>17</sub> – Educational Infrastructure:** *Encourage the continued use and possible intensification of existing educational infrastructure where appropriate. Facilitate the development of new schools, the re-development of existing schools and extensions planned as part of the Government’s School Building Programme.”*

**“Objective CIOSO<sub>18</sub> – Sites for Primary and Secondary Schools:** *Identify sites for primary and secondary schools in consultation with the Department of Education based on future population growth projections and in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.”*

**“Objective CIOSO<sub>19</sub> – Additional Schools Facilities:** *Facilitate the development of additional schools, including Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí, at both primary and secondary level in a timely manner in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and/or other bodies.”*

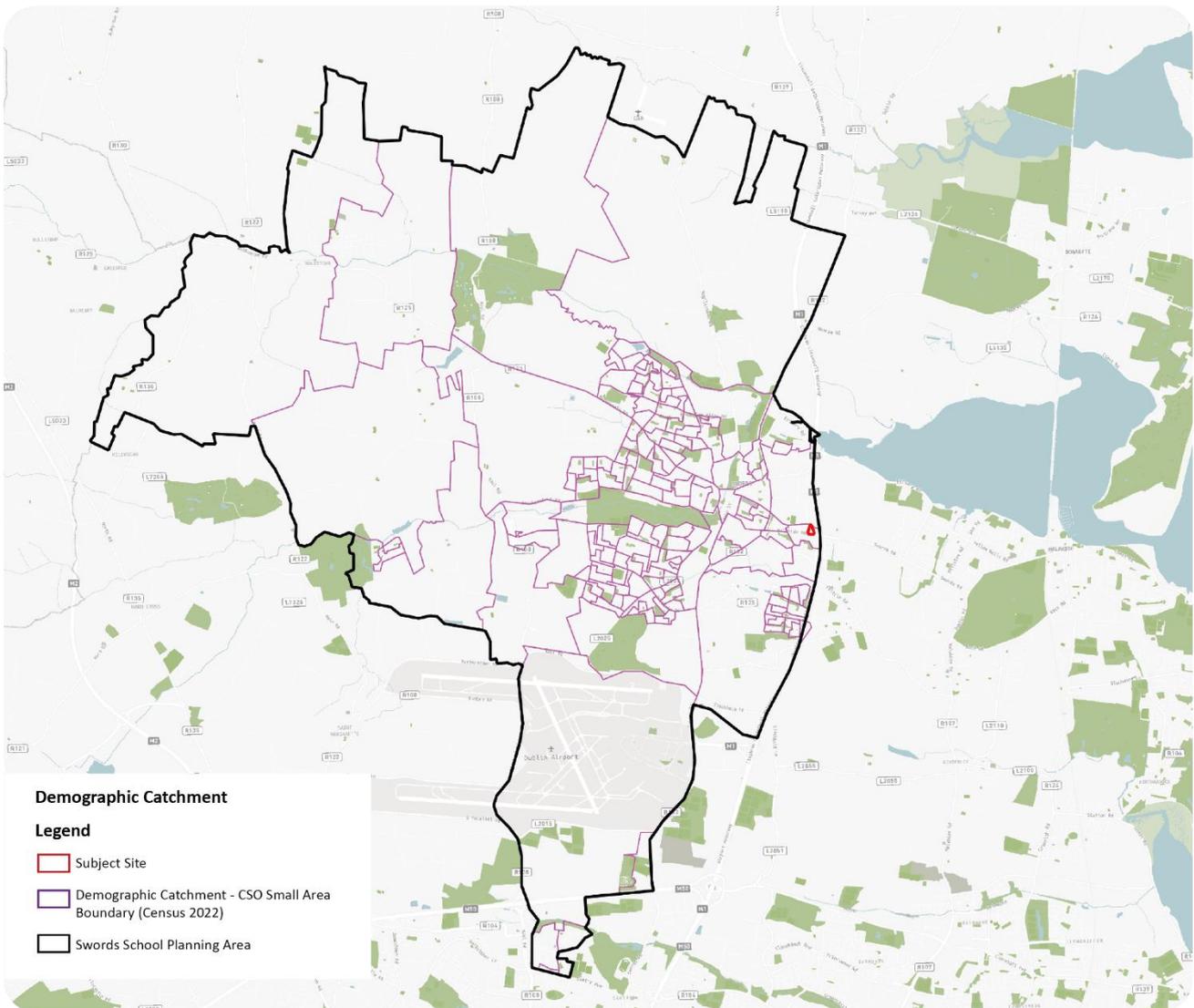
With respect to new significant development and education infrastructure provision, the *Development Plan* states that it should only take place where sufficient schooling infrastructure, and other social infrastructure already in place, or are proposed for development. The proposed development is consistent with the abovementioned Policy Objectives. It provides for high-quality housing, in accordance with the Core Strategy of the *Development Plan*, and in close proximity to the full range of education infrastructure. The proposed development will provide needed housing development to support the existing and future population of Swords.

Each of the relevant national, regional and local Guidelines and policy documents outlined above have been consulted in the development of this Schools Demand Assessment to review the existing capacity of community facilities within the Study Area.

### 3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the subject lands was examined using the Census 2016 and 2022 results, as the latest Census available on the CSO website. The scope of the assessment is determined by identifying the relevant School Planning Area related to the application lands and assessing the relevant spatial unit in demographic analysis. For the subject site, the CSO Small Area Statistics (as outlined in purple in Figure 3.1) were selected as the optimal statistical unit to measure precise levels of demand. The Study Area selected refers to the aggregated data of 156 No. Small Area statistical units.

This Study Area provides insight into the composition of the local population and relevant demographic trends. Specifically, the study reviews the historic and current population’s age profile, in addition to an assessment of the potential number of school-going residents will be generated by the proposed development.



**Figure 3.1** Extent of Demographic Study Area comprising the 156 CSO Small Areas

(Source: CSO, 2022, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

### 3.1 Population Trends

According to the 2022 Census, Ireland’s population reached 5,149,139 in April 2022 – representing growth of 8.1% from the previous Census in 2016. Fingal’s population stood at 330,506 at the time, an increase from 2016 of 11.6%, or just over 34,000 people. The county hence accounts for 6.4% of Ireland’s population, with only Dublin City and Cork City and County accounting for higher proportions. Fingal’s population is expected to continue to grow with the *Development Plan* forecasting that the county’s population will increase by approximately 73,000 people by 2031 (+22.1% versus 2022). Between 2016 and 2022, Fingal was the third fastest growing county in Ireland, with only Longford (+14.4%) and Meath (+13.2%) growing at faster paces.

Further breakdowns show that 26.7% of the Fingal population was under 18 years old in 2022, while 134,264 people (40.6%) were under 30. This compares to 28.3% of the population under 18 years old and 42.2% under 30 years old in 2016. The proportion of under 30s in Fingal was higher than at the national level, where 38% of the population was under 30. Fingal had the youngest average age in 2022 at 36.2 years, with some 63% of its population below the age of 44, compared to 58.3% nationally.

Over the same period, by contrast, the population within the Study Area SPA decreased by 1,353 persons or 2.6% from 51,220 to 49,867 persons. Table 3.1 outlines the population of the Study Area and Fingal County as recorded during the Census in 2016 and 2022, as well as the percentage change in population during this period to highlight overall residential patterns.

Area	Population, 2016	Population, 2022	2016-2022 Change (Number)	2016-2022 Change (%)
Fingal County	296,020	330,506	34,486	11.6%
Study Area	51,220	49,867	1,353	-2.6%

**Table 3.1: Population Change 2016-2022.**

(Source: CSO, 2022, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

### 3.2 Age Profile

The analysis of CSO data for the Study Area illustrates a strong representation of working age population within the 20-65 age groupings, with 62.4% of total resident population classified within these age cohorts. The 20-49 age cohort further highlights this concentration of young professionals, with 45.7% of total population classified in this group. The area has a low average age at 35.7 with a lower proportion of population older age cohorts. Some 21.5% of the population is aged under 14 years old, while 10.1% of the population are aged over 65 years old.

Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of the recorded population, categorised by age. It offers a breakdown of the area’s age profile that allows a more detailed overview of the specific cohorts that have experienced the greatest change. Different age cohorts of a population have different requirements, with young families in need of childcare and educational facilities, a strong working age population requiring employment opportunities, and those of retirement age in need of care and health services.

Age Cohort	2016 (Number)	2016 (% Total)	2022 (Number)	2022 (% Total)
0-4	3,988	7.79%	3,222	6.46%
5-9	4,101	8.01%	3,644	7.31%
10-14	3,263	6.37%	3,840	7.70%
15-19	2,868	5.60%	3,022	6.06%
20-24	3,153	6.16%	2,875	5.77%
25-29	3,645	7.12%	3,175	6.37%
30-34	4,864	9.50%	3,746	7.51%
35-39	5,243	10.24%	4,439	8.90%
40-44	4,329	8.45%	4,646	9.32%
45-49	3,560	6.95%	3,906	7.83%
50-54	3,138	6.13%	3,208	6.43%
55-59	2,573	5.02%	2,856	5.73%
60-64	1,929	3.77%	2,251	4.51%
65-69	1,644	3.21%	1,679	3.37%
70-74	1,205	2.35%	1,372	2.75%
75-79	738	1.44%	955	1.92%
80-84	480	0.94%	548	1.10%
85+	499	0.97%	483	0.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,220</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>49,867</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 3.2: Population by Age 2016-2022**

(Source: CSO, 2022, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

The focus of this age profile is on primary and post-primary aged school children, comprising persons within the age cohort of 5–18 years which is the standard age range for educational facilities. Over the six-year period between 2016 and 2022, the number of people in the age cohort of 5–18 years has increased by 264 persons in the catchment, from 9,634 children in 2016 to 9,898 people in 2022 (Table 3.3). Notably, the population aged 0-6 has decreased significantly over the same period. This is in line with DES modelling which forecasts a significant drop off in demand for primary and post-primary school infrastructure in the coming years in the Dublin Region. This modelling is assessed in greater detail in Section 4 of this report.

Age Bracket	Population, 2016	2016 (% Total)	Population, 2022	2022 (% Total)	Change
Junior/Senior Infant (Age 5-6)	1,785	3.5%	1,393	2.8%	- 392
Grade 1-6 (Age 7-12)	4,341	8.5%	4,626	9.3%	285
Junior Cycle (Age 13-15)	1,801	3.5%	2,108	4.2%	307
Senior Cycle (Age 16-18)	1,707	3.3%	1,771	3.6%	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,220</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49,867</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>- 1,353</b>

**Table 3.3: Number and Percentage of the Total Population Aged 5-18 by Year 2016-2022**

(Source: CSO, 2022, and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

Having ascertained the overall demographic trends as relevant to the age cohort pertaining to primary and post-primary provision, the impact of the proposed development in this context will

now be examined.

### 3.3 Projected Demand Generated by Scheme

The proposed development will comprise 123 No. units of various typologies. Excluding one-bed units there are 68 units capable of supporting families with children. The average household size in the Study Area recorded by the 2022 Census was 2.90 No. persons per household, which generates a total indicative population of 200 No. persons when applied to the proposed development. For this assessment it is assumed that only units greater than 1-bedroom can reasonably accommodate families due to the likelihood of these units being occupied by young couples looking to get on the property ladder, older people looking to downsize, or single people.

The average number of children per family recorded in the State in Census 2022 was 1.34 No. children<sup>1</sup>, which generates an indicative population of 92 No. children (between the ages of 0-18 years) when applied to the number of units that can accommodate families within the proposed development. Of this figure, an estimated 71 No. children (77.3%) would be considered school age (including 42 No. primary school children and 29 No. post-primary school children), as per the age cohorts recorded for Fingal<sup>2</sup> in 2022 (see Table 3.4).

Age Group	Pre-school children (0-4 years)	Primary school children (5-12 years)	Secondary school children (13-18 years)	All children (0-18 years)
Fingal 2022 Population	21,017	42,248	29,301	92,566
% of Total Cohort	22.70%	45.64%	31.65%	100.00%

**Table 3.4: Breakdown of 0-18 Year Age Cohort for Fingal County Council.**

(Source: CSO, 2022)

Taking this into account, the development has the potential to generate an additional 198 No. persons within the area, including an estimated 71 No. school-age children (including 42 No. primary school children and 29 No. post-primary school children), when the proposal is fully occupied.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp3/censusofpopulation2022profile3-householdsfamiliesandchildcare/>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>

## 4.0 SCHOOL FACILITIES AUDIT

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

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

1. Defining a Study Area using relevant School Planning Areas (SPA) as developed by the Department of Education (DES);
2. A demographic and socio-economic evaluation of the composition of population within the Study Area;
3. Determining the extent and provision of existing educational facilities and schools within the Study Area; and
4. Estimating the level of demand for schools that may arise from the development proposal.

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

### 4.1 Existing Infrastructure Analysis

#### 4.1.1 School Catchment Area

The proposed development site is located within the Swords School Planning Area identified by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as shown in Figure 4.1, which is adjoined by the feeder areas of Ashbourne SPA to the west, the Rush/Lusk SPA to the north, the Whitehall/Santry SPA to the south and the Malahide/Nevinstown SPA to the east.

This SPA comprises 14 No. existing primary schools, and 5 No. post-primary schools.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Education and Skills – National School Annual Census for 2023/2024, which is returned via the Primary Online Database (POD). This includes both the Census and the Special School Annual Census. Only schools aided by the Department of Education and Skills are included in this list. Data was published June 2023.



#### 4.1.2 Primary Schools

The 14 No. existing primary schools identified within the Swords SPA held a combined provisional enrolment of 5,470 No. students during the 2023/2024 school year as per the Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. The majority of the schools identified are co-educational (mixed) schools. The except to this are the 2 No. primary school that are located nearest to the subject site which is split into boys and girls (St S N Cholmille B National School and St S N Cholmille C – identified in blue in Table 4.1) which held a combined enrolment of 732 No. students (352 No. students and No. 380 students respectively) in 2023/2024.

Supplementary to the enrolment information acquired from the DES, a review of the schools' websites and the 2024/2025 Schools' Admission Notice was carried out in January 2024 by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning to ensure that available spaces in classes are captured in this audit. Table 4.2 provides a detailed breakdown of this available capacity per school. As per Section 63 of the *Education (Admissions to School) Act*<sup>4</sup>, in 2018, the schools are required to publish an Annual Admissions Notice each year with key information about the annual admissions process.

This review helped determine the trend in schools for admitting students into the classes each year. For the 2024/2025 academic year, the admissions notices for primary schools indicated a total enrolment capacity of 984 No. students in the catchment (950 No. spaces for Junior Infants, and 34 spaces for Other Years). These 984 No. places refer to the places made available each academic cycle resulting from graduating students, rather than any additional capacity to the overall schooling infrastructure. Where schools have not provided sufficient information on their intake for the next academic year, these have been assumed to be zero.

No.	Roll No.	School Name	Distance from Site (km)	Females	Males	2023-2024	Available Capacity per School Websites (2024/25)		
						Enrolment	Jnr Infants	Other Years	Total
1	12358M	Swords Borough N S	1.3	51	51	102	4	0	4
2	17820J	Brighde Naofa	7.6	188	176	364	19	0	19
3	18976W	S N Cholmille B	0.8	0	352	352	48	0	48
4	18977B	S N Cholmille C	0.8	380	0	380	60	9	69
5	19456B	St Cronans Junior National School	2.2	238	265	503	144	3	147
6	19535U	Brackenstown Senior NS	2.1	266	286	552	130	3	133
7	19693P	Mary Queen Of Ireland NS	5.8	47	50	97	14	0	14
8	19721R	Holy Family Junior NS	2.5	290	299	589	144	13	157
9	19877C	Holy Family Senior NS	2.5	309	328	637	144	0	144
10	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóirimhe	3.4	220	222	442	56	0	56
11	20145O	Swords Educate Together Ns	3.4	191	225	416	48	0	48

<sup>4</sup> Section 62 of this Act requires that, from 1 February 2020, boards of management have 3 months to revise their Admission Policies in line with the commenced provisions of the Act.

12	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together National School	2.8	174	143	317	34	0	34
13	20348F	Holywell Educate Together National School	1.1	298	365	663	75	0	75
14	20529J	Broadmeadow Community National School	3.2	23	33	56	30	6	36
<b>Total</b>				<b>1,123</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>2,253</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>984</b>
<b>*Note: Where there was no information on the number of spaces made available, we have assumed that the capacity is 0</b>									

**Table 4.1: Recorded Enrolments for Primary Schools**

(Source: DES, 2022, and Individual School Admission Notices, 2024)

Table 4.2 below provides information on each of the primary schools, inclusive of their enrolment numbers for the previous 5 No. academic years (2019–2020 to 2023–2024). The overall enrolment figure associated with the primary schools within the catchment has decreased significantly over the past 5 No. years (436 No. fewer children, -7.4%), and has continued to shrink despite the overall increases in population in and around Swords. St S N Cholmille B National School and St S N Cholmille C National School (identified in blue in Table 4.2), has decreased by 110 No. students over the same 5-year period indicating the school would have enough capacity to grow with increases in the population of the area into the future, and would indicate that there is available capacity within the existing primary schools.

No.	Roll No.	School	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
1.	12358M	Swords Borough N S	106	108	107	106	102
2.	17820J	Brighde Naofa	361	362	333	333	364
3.	18976W	S N Cholmille B	407	404	371	374	352
4.	18977B	S N Cholmille C	435	421	390	397	380
5.	19456B	St Cronans Junior National School	544	540	512	520	503
6.	19535U	Brackenstown Senior N S	626	604	586	573	552
7.	19693P	Mary Queen Of Ireland N S	95	107	91	88	97
8.	19721R	Holy Family Junior N S	644	642	634	621	589
9.	19877C	Holy Family Senior N S	726	704	672	642	637
10.	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóroimhe	488	484	460	452	442
11.	20145O	Swords Educate Together Ns	442	439	438	425	416
12.	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together National School	355	353	342	341	317

13.	20348F	Holywell Educate Together National School	677	675	686	677	663
14.	20529J	Broadmeadow Community National School	-	13	30	50	56
		<b>Total</b>	<b>5,906</b>	<b>5,856</b>	<b>5,652</b>	<b>5,599</b>	<b>5,470</b>

**Table 4.2: Existing Primary Schools' Enrolment Figures 2018-2019 to 2022-2023**

(Source: DES, 2023)

#### 4.1.2.1 Historic Enrolment Statistics

Historic enrolment trends for the catchment show consistent fluctuations in enrolment at primary school level for the historic 10-year interval, with an overall increase of 201 No. students (c. 3.8% decrease) from 2013/2014 to 2023/2024. Over the past 10 No. years, St S N Cholmille B National School and St S N Cholmille C National School experienced decreases in student numbers of 116 No. students or 13.7%. The analysis of student population growth indicates a recently decreasing demand for additional primary school places within the town coming from a peak enrolment in the SPA in 2018-2019 of 5,930 students.

No.	Catchment		Enrolment Year			Historic Change	
	Roll No.	School Name	13/14	19/20	23/24	5-year	10-year
1.	12358M	Swords Borough NS	110	106	102	-4	-8
2.	17820J	Brighde Naofa	287	361	364	3	77
3.	18976W	S N Cholmille B	395	407	352	-55	-43
4.	18977B	S N Cholmille C	453	435	380	-55	-73
5.	19456B	St Cronans Junior National School	651	544	503	-41	-148
6.	19535U	Brackenstown Senior NS	601	626	552	-74	-49
7.	19693P	Mary Queen Of Ireland NS	68	95	97	2	29
8.	19721R	Holy Family Junior NS	671	644	589	-55	-82
9.	19877C	Holy Family Senior NS	581	726	637	-89	56
10.	20095C	Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóirimhe	427	488	442	-46	15
11.	20145O	Swords Educate Together NS	444	442	416	-26	-28
12.	20302E	Thornleigh Educate Together National School	255	355	317	-38	62
13.	20348F	Holywell Educate Together National School	326	677	663	-14	337

14.	20529J	Broadmeadow Community National School	-	-	56	56	56
	<b>Total</b>		<b>5,269</b>	<b>5,906</b>	<b>5,470</b>	<b>-436</b>	<b>201</b>

**Table 4.3: Historic Change in Enrolment (Primary) in Recent 5- and 10-year Period**

(Source: DES, 2023)

No special education facilities were identified within the Swords SPA; however, the area appears to be served by 1 no. special education facility to the south-east in Hacketstown – St Michaels House Special School which provides a comprehensive range of services and supports to men, women, and children with intellectual disabilities and their families in 170 locations in the greater Dublin Area. It supports c. 2,300 people and this has an impact on thousands of family members. St. Michael’s House is a company funded by the HSE, TUSLA and the Department of Education and Skills. This facility recorded a provisional enrolment of 57 no. students during the 2023/2024 school year as per Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. It was not possible to determine the enrolment capacity in the 2024–2025 academic year from Admissions Notices.

Roll No.	School Name	Females	Males	2023–2024 Enrolment	Available Capacity per School Websites (2024/25)
18210K	St Michaels House Special School	24	33	57	-
<b>Total</b>				<b>30</b>	<b>No Data</b>

**Table 4.4: Recorded Enrolments for Special Education School**

(Source: DES, 2023, and Individual School Admission Notices, 2024)

Table 4.5 indicates that the enrolment figures for the special education school at this location has remained generally consistent from the 2019–2020 academic year to the 2023–2024 academic year.

Roll No.	School Name	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024
18210K	St Michaels House Special School	56	58	58	58	57
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>57</b>

**Table 4.5: Existing Special Education School: Enrolment Figures 2019–2020 to 2023–2024**

(Source: DES, 2023)

#### 4.1.3 Post Primary Schools

There were 5 No. post-primary schools identified within the Swords SPA which held a co-educational enrolment of 3,455 No. students during the 2023–2024 school year, as per the Department of Education and Skills (DES) records. The post-primary school, Fingal Community College, is a mixed/co-educational school located in the settlement in walking distance of the

subject site with a combined enrolment of 861 No. students in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Supplementary to the enrolment information acquired from the DES, a review of the schools' website and the 2024/2025 Schools' Admission Notice was carried out in January 2024 by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning to ensure that available spaces in classes are captured in this Audit. Table 4.6 provides a detailed breakdown of this available capacity. As per Section 63 of the *Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018*, schools are required to publish an Annual Admissions Notice each year with key information about the annual admissions process.

This review helped determine the trend in the school for admitting students into the classes each year. For the 2024/2025 academic year, the Admissions Notice for the post-primary school indicated a total enrolment capacity of 824 No. students (794 No. spaces for First Years, and 30 No. spaces for Other Years). These 824 No. places refer to the places made available each academic cycle resulting from graduating students, rather than any additional capacity to the overall schooling infrastructure.

No.	Roll No.	School Name	Distance from Site (km)	Females	Males	2023-2024 Enrolment	Available Capacity per School Websites (2024/25)		
							First Years	Other Years	Total
1	60383I	Coláiste Choilm	1.40	0	423	423	240	0	240
2	60810B	Loreto College	2.72	619	0	619	120	0	120
3	70120F	St Finians Community College	1.81	312	346	658	120	12	132
4	70121H	Fingal Community College	1.09	393	468	861	170	0	170
5	76475D	Swords Community College	3.25	377	517	894	144	18	162
<b>Total</b>				1,701	1,754	3,455	794	30	824

*\*Note: Where there was no information on the number of spaces made available, we have assumed that the capacity is zero.*

**Table 4.6: Recorded Enrolments for Post-Primary Schools**

(Source: DES, 2023, and Individual School Admission Notices, 2024)

Table 4.7 provides an overview of the post-primary school within the catchment, inclusive of their enrolment numbers according to data published by the DES for the academic years 2019–2020 to 2023–2024. As highlighted in Table 4.7, the overall enrolment figure associated with the post-primary schools in the catchment area has increased during this period from 2,344 No. to 3,455 No. pupils; 609 No. additional pupils (21.4%). This indicates recent growth in demand for post-primary school infrastructure within the catchment.

No.	Roll No.	School Name	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
1	60383I	Coláiste Choilm	550	532	504	470	423
2	60810B	Loreto College	629	628	621	641	619

3	70120F	St Finians Community College	647	634	642	644	658
4	70121H	Fingal Community College	854	879	876	867	861
5	76475D	Swords Community College	166	366	579	738	894
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,846</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>3,222</b>	<b>3,360</b>	<b>3,455</b>

**Table 4.7: Existing Post-Primary Schools' Enrolment Figures 2018-2019 to 2022-2023**

(Source: DES, 2023)

#### 4.1.3.1 Historic Enrolment Statistics

Historic enrolment trends for the catchment show increases at post-primary school level for the historic 5-year interval, with an overall increase of 609 No. students (c. 21.4% increase) from 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, and 48.0% or 1,121 No. students over the past 10 No. years. Similarly, Fingal Community College has experienced growth in student numbers of 325 No. additional students or 60.6% over the past 10 No. years.

Catchment			Enrolment Year			Historic Change	
No.	Roll No.	School Name	13/14	19/20	23/24	5-year	10-year
1	60383I	Coláiste Choilm	553	550	423	-127	-130
2	60810B	Loreto College	629	629	619	-10	-10
3	70120F	St Finians Community College	616	647	658	11	42
4	70121H	Fingal Community College	536	854	861	7	325
5	76475D	Swords Community College	-	166	894	728	894
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,334</b>	<b>2,846</b>	<b>3,455</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>1,121</b>

**Table 4.8: Historic Change in Enrolment (Primary) in Recent 5- and 10-year Period**

(Source: DES, 2023)

The analysis of student population growth over the past 10 No. years indicates a continued demand for additional post-primary school places within the School Planning Area.

#### 4.1.4 Future Demand Analysis

##### 4.1.4.1 Demographic Growth Projection

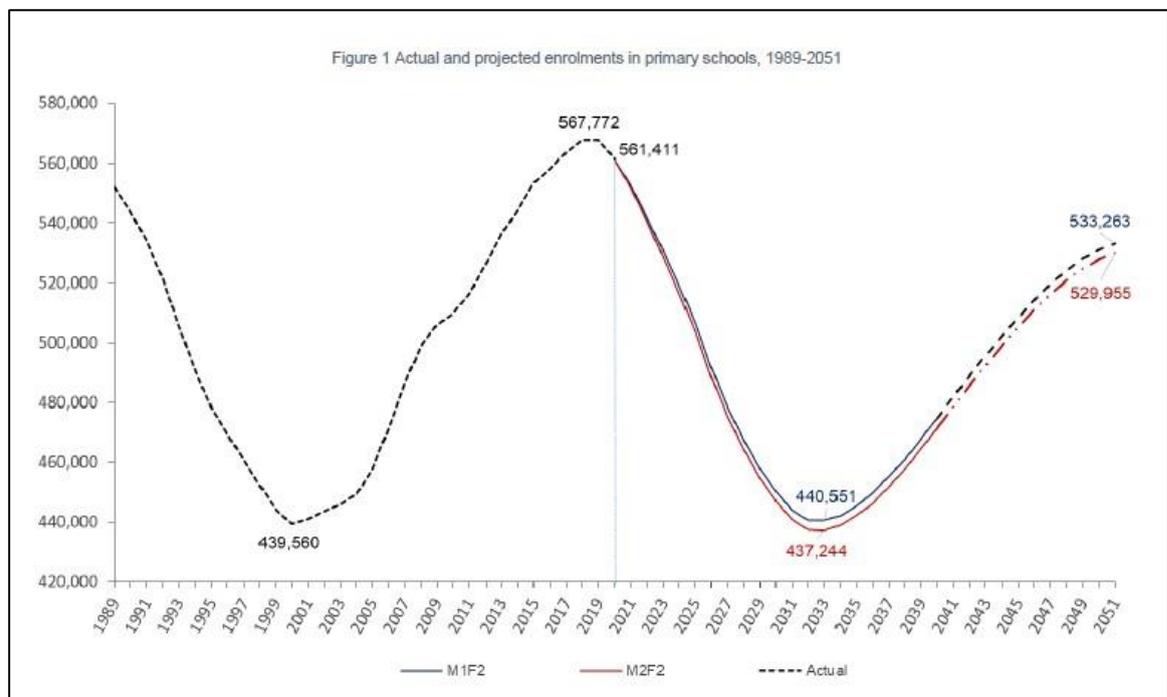
In November 2021, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) reported that enrolment figures for primary schools in Ireland were likely to have reached peak levels in 2019 and will fall gradually to a low point in 2033 (see Figure 4.2), in line with revised migration and fertility

assumptions for the country as a whole. The latest statistical release<sup>5</sup> by the DES in this respect states:

*"Enrolments in primary schools in Ireland in 2020 stood at 561,411 down by almost 6,000 on 2019 (567,716). Enrolments are now projected to fall over the coming years under all scenarios, and under the M1F2<sup>6</sup> scenario will reach a low point of 440,551 by 2033. This is 120,860 lower than today's figure. Enrolments will rise again thereafter and are projected to stand at 474,888 by 2040, a rise of some 34,300 over the seven years 2033 to 2040."*

The study also concluded that post-primary school enrolments, however, will continue to rise in the short-term and will likely reach peak enrolment levels in 2024 (see Figure 4.3). The DES Report<sup>7</sup> states:

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



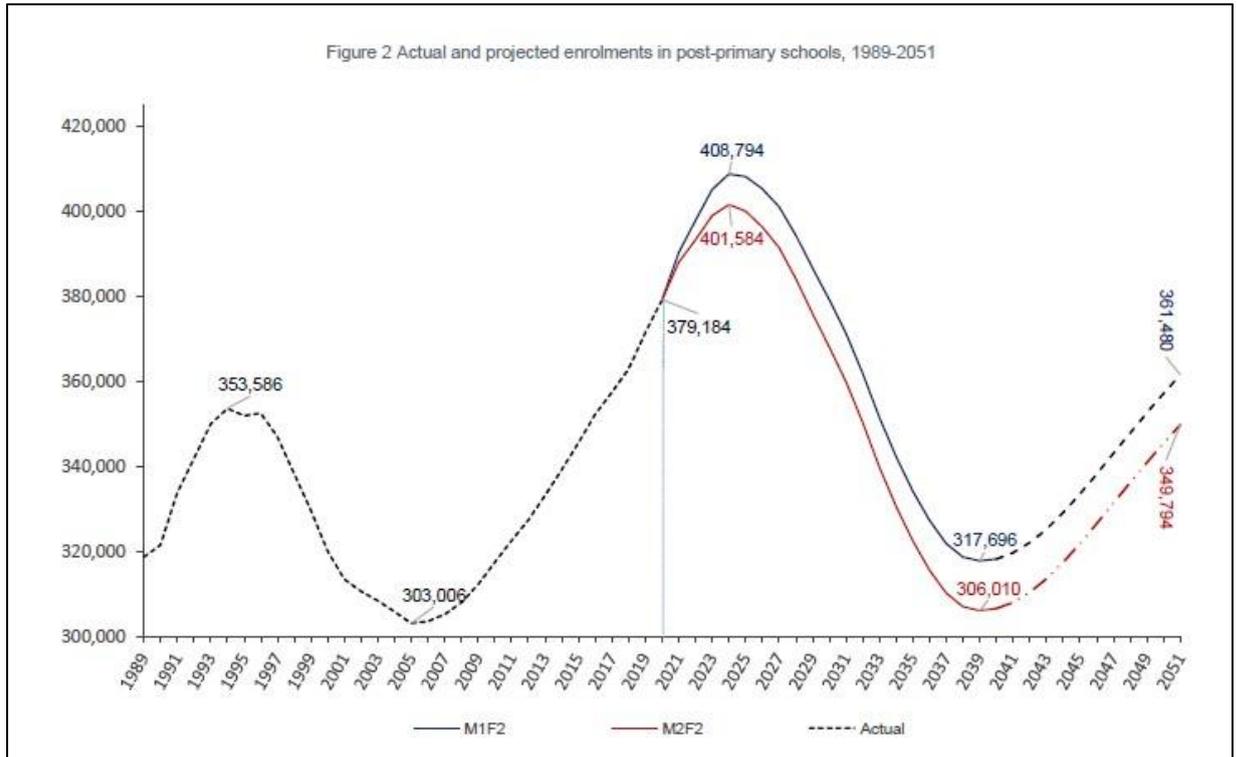
**Figure 4.2: Actual and Projected Enrolments in Primary Schools, 1989–2051, Organised by Growth Projection Scenarios Created by the CSO**

(Source: DES, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, November 2021), pg. 6.

<sup>6</sup> The CSO's Regional Population Projections utilise six variant scenarios with relative assumptions in relation to regional fertility, mortality trends and external migration from and to each region. The Department of Education and Skills anticipates that M1F2 is the most likely scenario regarding migration and fertility, which encompasses the assumption of high migration and low fertility falling from 1.8 to 1.6 by 2031.

<sup>7</sup> Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, November 2021), pg. 11.



**Figure 4.3: Actual and Projected Enrolments in Post-Primary Schools, 1989–2051, Organised by Growth Projection Scenarios Created by the CSO**

(Source: DES, 2021)

#### 4.1.4.2 Potential Impact on Swords SPA Schools

Using the projected enrolment figures<sup>8</sup> for the Dublin Region, as set out in the Department of Education and Skills’ *Projections for Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040*, the study can extrapolate future enrolment for the 2027/2028 academic year for Swords. The 2027/2028 academic year has been selected in this study as the year the proposed development should be completed and occupied. The Report projects the enrolment figures in primary schools within the Dublin Region to drop by 11.7% between the academic years 2023/2024 and 2027/2028 (4-year period). Applying this future projection figure to the current enrolment figures within Swords it is estimated that enrolments in the 14 No. primary schools identified in the Assessment are set to reduce by 640 No. spaces by the 2027/2028 academic year.

At the post-primary level, the Report projects the enrolment figures to increase marginally by 0.8% between the 4 academic years from 2023/2024 to 2027/2028. This would result in an increase of 28 No. children in the 5 No. post-primary school identified within the catchment by the 2027/2028 academic year. We note that the indicative change figures provided are an estimate of potential enrolments is based on the regional population projections included in the DES Report<sup>9</sup> and do not represent localised values.

<sup>8</sup> Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, 2021), Table 4.

<sup>9</sup> Source: *Projections of Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* (DES, 2021), Table 7.

Catchment	Enrolment Year		% Change Estimate	Change
	23/24	27/28		
Primary Schools (14)	5,470	4,830	-11.7% decrease	-640
Post-Primary Schools (5)	3,455	3,483	+0.8% increase	28

**Table 4.9: Projected Enrolment Trends – 2023 to 2028**

(Source: DES, 2023)

#### 4.1.4.3 Completed and Planned Infrastructure

Fingal County Council is the youngest Local Authority in the State (at 33.8 years) which is 3.7 years lower than the State, 2.2 years lower than the region and 2.5 years lower than Dublin average. As such, the demand for school places and new schools is high in the County. Fingal County Council continues to work collaboratively with the Department of Education in relation to the identification of schools and associated facilities. Over the past 5 No. years 4 new schools have opened in Swords (3 No. within the Swords SPA) (Table 4.10).

We note that there is an additional post-primary school which is omitted from the analysis above (as it lies outside of the SPA area). Malahide / Portmarnock Secondary School opened in 2018, hence its low enrolment figures at present (this school has a co-educational enrolment of 488 students in 2023-2024), is envisaged could cater for up to 1,000 secondary school students when fully occupied.

School Name	Location	School Type	Opening Year
Rivervalley Community National School	Swords	Primary	2019
Broadmeadow Community National School	Swords	Primary	2020
Malahide & Portmarnock ETSS	Kinsealy	Post Primary	2018
Swords Community College	Swords	Post Primary	2018

**Table 4.9: New Primary and Post-Primary Schools opened in Fingal since 2018**

(Source: Fingal County Development Plan, 2023)

While the provision of new schools is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Fingal County Council has and will continue to work collaboratively with the Department and with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in relation to the identification of suitable sites for the delivery of new and expanded educational facilities in Fingal.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) announced in April 2018 that more than 40 No. new primary and post-primary schools are to be established throughout the country by 2022 with subsequent additions to establishment list announced in 2019, 2020 and 2021. There are a number of extensions to existing schools currently proposed within the Swords SPA, we note that as of the latest School Building Programme Release (November 2023) there were 7 No. pipeline expansions planned for primary schools and post-primary schools at varying stages of development (Table 4.10).

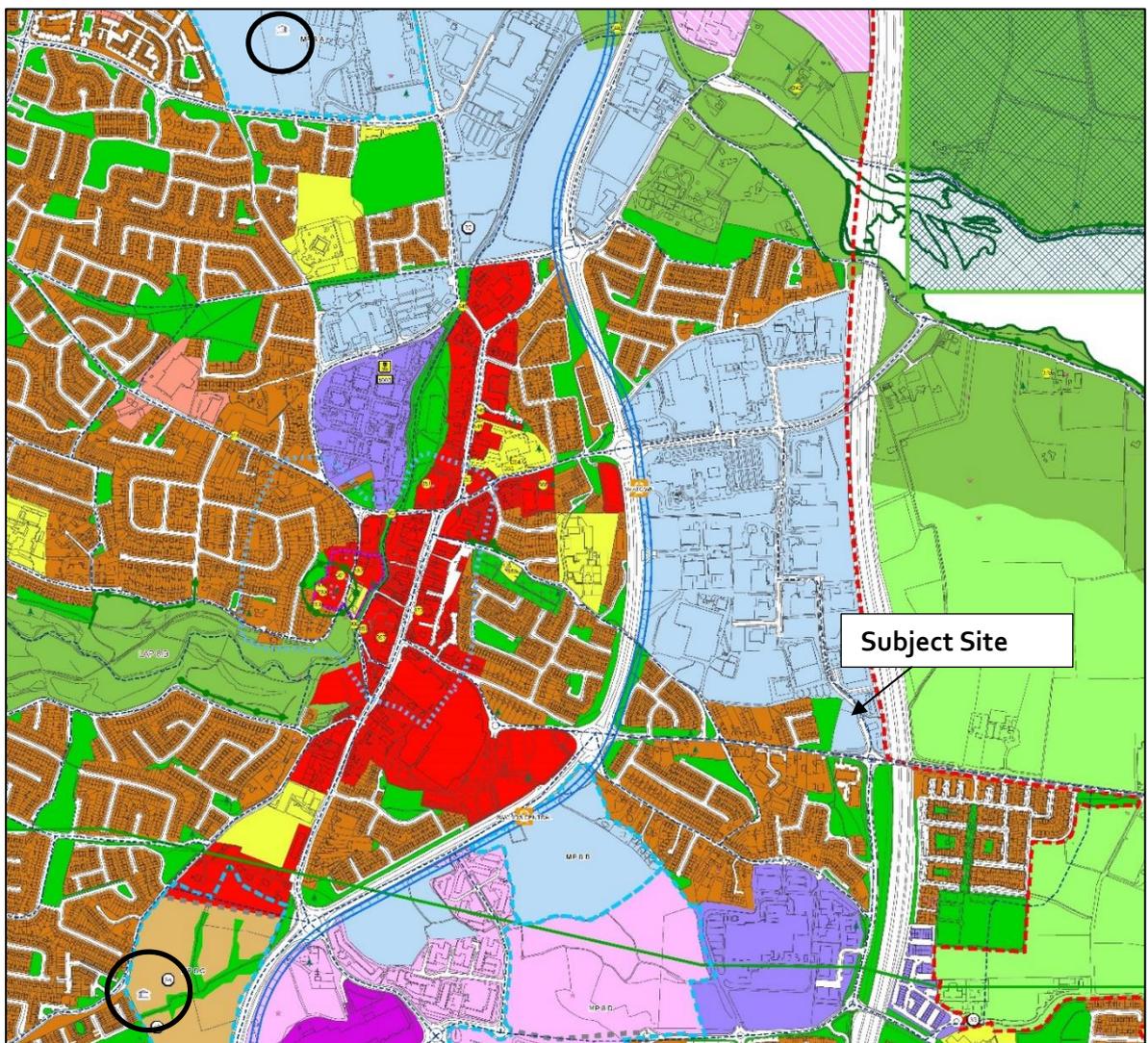
Roll No.	School Name & Address	Current Development Status
19456B	Brackenstown Jnr & Snr NS (St Cronans), Swords	Stage 2b (Detailed Design)

19535U	Brackenstown Senior NS, Swords	Stage 2b (Detailed Design)
20528H	Rivervalley CNS, Swords	Site Acquisition Process
20529J	Broadmeadow Community National School, Mooretown, Swords	Pre-Stage 1
60810B	Loreto College, SwordsSwordsRivervalley	Pre-Stage 1
68308L	Malahide & Portmarnock ETSS, Swords	Stage 3 (Tender Stage)
70120F	St Finian's CC, Swords	Pre-Stage 1

**Table 4.10: Upcoming Primary and Post-Primary Schools developments within Swords**

(Source: DES, 2023)

Notwithstanding the existing schools in the area, the *Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029* identifies 2 No. other strategic locations for additional schools within the settlement of Swords. The *Fosterstown Masterplan 2019* identifies the requirement of a primary school to be delivered as part of the overall proposals for the masterplan lands. Equally, another school is to be provided at Estuary West in the north of the settlement.



**Figure 4.4: Proposed School Locations (Outlined in Black) within 2km of Subject Site**

(Source: *Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029*, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning, 2024)

#### **4.1.5 Facilities Summary**

There are 14 No. existing primary schools, and 5 No. existing post-primary school in the catchment area, to which the subject site belongs. These facilities cater to a student population of 5,470 No. primary school students and 3,455 No. post-primary school students and have demonstrated different levels of growth in the recent 5-year period, with primary school enrolments decreasing by 7.4% and post-primary school enrolments increasing by 21.5% over the same period. Admissions Notices from schools within the catchment indicate a healthy combined total of 1,808 No. spaces available for incoming Junior Infants/First Years, of which 984 No. spaces are available in primary schools and 824 No. spaces are available in post-primary schools.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are 14 No. existing primary schools, and 5 No. existing post-primary school in the catchment area, to which the subject site belongs. These facilities cater to a student population of 5,470 No. primary school students and 3,455 No. post-primary school students and have demonstrated different levels of growth in the recent 5-year period, with primary school enrolments decreasing by 7.4% and post-primary school enrolments increasing by 21.5% over the same period.

The proposed scheme has the potential to generate 71 No. school going children between 5-18 age group once the development is fully occupied and established. **This includes 42 No. primary and 29 No. post primary school children.** Combining this demand with the possible demand generated by developments currently in pipeline within the study area, it is highly likely that the potential school demand generated by the development can readily be absorbed by the available capacity.

With respect to future enrolments, it is projected within the latest Department of Education and Skills' *Projections for Full-Time Enrolment: Primary and Second Level, 2021–2040* that the region will experience a c. 11.7% decrease in primary school enrolments and a c. 0.8% decrease in post-primary school enrolments between the academic years 2023/2024 and 2027/2028, and will continue to fall gradually to a low point by 2039, with respect to the most recent regional population projections published by the DES. **The visible decline in enrolments at primary school level is in line with government demographic projections. Post-primary school enrolments are projected to peak in 2024/2025, and it is thus likely that Fingal and the Swords SPA area will see a significant reduction in the need for places into the remainder of the decade.**

There are a number of extensions to existing schools currently proposed within the Swords SPA, we note that as of the latest School Building Programme Release (November 2023) there were 7 No. pipeline expansions planned for primary schools and post-primary schools at varying stages of development. Notwithstanding the existing schools in the area, the *Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029* also identifies 2 No. other strategic locations for additional schools within the settlement of Swords. The Fosterstown Masterplan 2019 identifies the requirement of a primary school to be delivered as part of the overall proposals for the masterplan lands. Equally, another school is to be provided at Estuary West in the north of the settlement. It is judged that these schools would provide adequate space to cater for future enrolment demand based on forecasted population increases.

Admissions Notices from schools within the catchment indicate a healthy combined total of **1,808 No. spaces available** for incoming Junior Infants/First Years, of which 984 No. spaces are available in primary schools and 824 No. spaces are available in post-primary schools. We also note that there is 1 No. additional post-primary schools which is omitted from the analysis above (as it lies outside of the SPA area). Malahide / Portmarnock Secondary School opened in 2018, hence its low enrolment figures at present (this school has a co-educational enrolment of 488 students in 2023-2024) is envisaged could cater for 1,000 secondary school students.

The development has the potential to generate an additional 198 No. persons within the area, including an estimated **71 No. children (including 42 No. primary school children and 29 No. post-primary school children)**, when fully occupied. It is our professional opinion that the potential school demand generated by the proposed development can readily be absorbed by the available capacity.