

Linguistic Impact Statement

Proposed Part X
Development, Claregalway,
Co. Galway

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DOCUMENT DETAILS

Client: **K King Construction**

Project Title: **Proposed Part X Development, Claregalway, Co. Galway**

Project Number: **200516**

Document Title: **Linguistic Impact Statement**

Document File Name: **LIS - F - 200516 - 2022.06.27**

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Rev	Status	Date	Author(s)	Approved By
01	Final	2023.03.29	DMG	DMG

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1.

INTRODUCTION

This assessment examines the likely impact of the proposed development of 88 no. social and affordable residential units on lands at Cluain na Gaoithe, Baile Chlair, Co. Galway on the usage of the Irish language among the population of the settlement of Baile Chlair, Co. Galway.

The Irish Gaeltacht covers large sections of Mayo, Kerry, Donegal, Galway, Cork, Meath and Waterford. The An tEachréidh Gaeltacht is a Gaeltacht area located to the north of Galway City and includes the settlements of Eanach Dhuin and Baile Chlair.

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (GCDP) reports that this linguistic community in the Gaeltacht Areas is under severe pressure for many reasons, one being the pressure of people with no ability to speak the Irish language moving into the area, as well as other external influences and a lack of service provision in their own language. The official Gaeltacht consists of a number of different communities and the Council recognises that the Irish language is stronger in some communities than in others.

The aim of this Linguistic Impact Statement (LIS) is to assess the possible impact of the proposed development on the use of the Irish language on the community of Baile Chláir. This LIS should be read in conjunction with all other documentation submitted with the planning application.

1.1

Background and Development Context

The settlement of Baile Chláir lies c. 9km north east of Galway City on the N17 Galway-Tuam Road. Due to its proximity to Galway City, Baile Chláir has experienced significant growth. The current GCDP recognises that the future prosperity of towns and villages near the City and the quality of life of people living within the commuter band around Galway City depend on the city retaining its dynamic growth character.

The application site is located within the Galway Transportation and Planning Study (GTPS) area and is subject to the development policies and controls that apply in this area under the GCDP.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & SITE LOCATION

2.1 Development Description

The full development description of the proposed development is as follows:

“The Development will consist of the construction of a total of 88 residential units, and creche. The proposal includes two estate entrances, one from R381 (to Oranmore) and one from the L7110. The proposed units mix is as follows: 2 four bedroom two storey houses, 19 three bedroom two storey houses, 18 two bedroom two storey houses, 15 three bedroom apartments, 21 two bedroom apartments, 13 one bedroom apartments and a Crèche. The development also includes a children’s playground to Lakeview Road, landscaped amenity public open space, and IW pumping station, ESB substation and all necessary site development works.

The Proposal also includes car parking, bicycle parking, hard & soft landscaping, site clearance works, roads, footpaths, amenity facilities, public lighting, signage, connections to existing services and all ancillary site development works”.

2.2 Site Location

The site is bounded to the north by the Cuir na hAbhainn residential development, Claregalway Community Centre and GAA Pitch to the east, agricultural land to the south and low-density residential developments to the west.

In addition to this, Coláiste Bhaile Chláir, a secondary school is located approximately 250 metres to the southeast of the site. Access is gained from Lakeview, which has been recently upgraded, including the widening of the road, associated footpath and traffic signals with the junction of the R381 road (formerly the N18 road). The site is characterised by gently rolling farmland under a variety of agricultural uses.

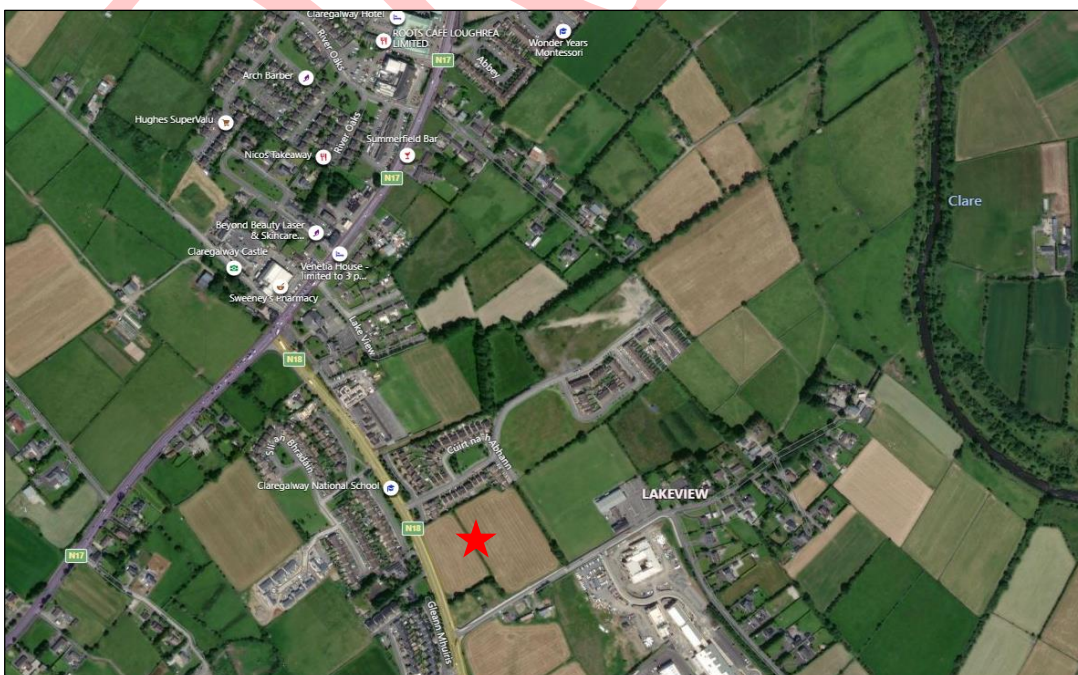


Figure 1: Site Location, outlined in red (source: Google Maps)

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Policy Framework

National and Local planning policies recognise the importance of the Irish language. The effect of development on the Irish language is therefore a planning matter. Accordingly, this LIS has been prepared in accordance with the advice and policy provisions contained in the following documents:

- 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

3.1.1 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030

The 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language outlines an integrated approach to the Irish language, in which nine areas of action are specified, which are education, the Gaeltacht, the family, public services, the media and technology, dictionaries, legislation, the economy and cross-cutting initiatives. Údarás na Gaeltachta, under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, is responsible for the implementation of the language planning process in the Gaeltacht.

3.1.2 Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

The proposed site is governed by the policies and provisions contained in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (GCDP). The extant plan was adopted by the Members of Galway County Council and brought into effect on 21st June 2022.

Baile Chláir is located within the Galway Transportation and Planning Study (GTPS) area and is subject to the development policies and controls that apply in this area under the Galway GCDP.

Policy Objective GA 1 – Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of An Gaeltacht:

“It shall be a policy objective of the Planning Authority to promote, enhance and protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as the community language.”

Policy Objective GA 4 – Language Enurement Clause:

“A) A Language Enurement Clause will be applied on a portion of residential units in developments of two or more units in District D Cois Fharraige. The proportion of homes to which a language enurement clause will be a minimum of 80% or to the proportion of persons using Irish Language on a daily basis, in accordance with the latest published Census whichever is greater. A Language Enurement of 15 years duration will apply to approved developments in this category.”

“B) A Language Enurement Clause will be applied on a portion of residential units in developments of two or more units in the remaining Gaeltacht Districts excluding District D Cois Fharraige. The proportion of homes to which a language enurement clause will be a minimum of 20% or to the proportion of persons using Irish Language on a daily basis, in accordance with the latest published Census whichever is greater. A Language Enurement of 15 years duration.”

Policy Objective GA 4 – Linguistic Impacts Statements:

“Galway County Council shall require the submission of the Linguistic Impact Statement for housing proposal for two or more houses in the Gaeltacht area in order to protect and strengthen the Irish language and cultural heritage of the Galway Gaeltacht areas. A Language Inurement Clause of 15 years duration shall apply to approved development, of two or more units.”

Baile Chláir is located within the boundary of the Imeall Na Cathrach/An Eachreidh area. The plan notes that this is the part of the Gaeltacht which abuts and surrounds Galway City and is the area under greatest pressure from City growth.

The plan notes that most of the population is not of Gaeltacht origin and the use of Irish as a ‘family’ language has continued to decline. However, the Plan notes that there is a strong desire among people who are native to the area to maintain their Gaeltacht status and create a climate where there is a willingness to learn the language and express the area’s distinctiveness in an ever-modernising environment.

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LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

In order to be able to fully assess the impact of the proposed development on the Irish language within the community of Baile Chláir it is essential to establish the existing use of the Irish language within the community. For the purposes of this Linguistic Impact Statement, the study area has been defined as the settlement of Baile Chláir as identified in the Census of Ireland 2016 with data for the overall Galway Gaeltacht Area provided for comparison purposes (see Figure 1). Relevant data has been extracted from the Central Statistics Office databases pertaining to Census 2011 and Census 2016. Reference is also made to secondary data sources such as the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan 2008 – 2018 and statistics available through the Údarás na Gaeltachta webpage¹.

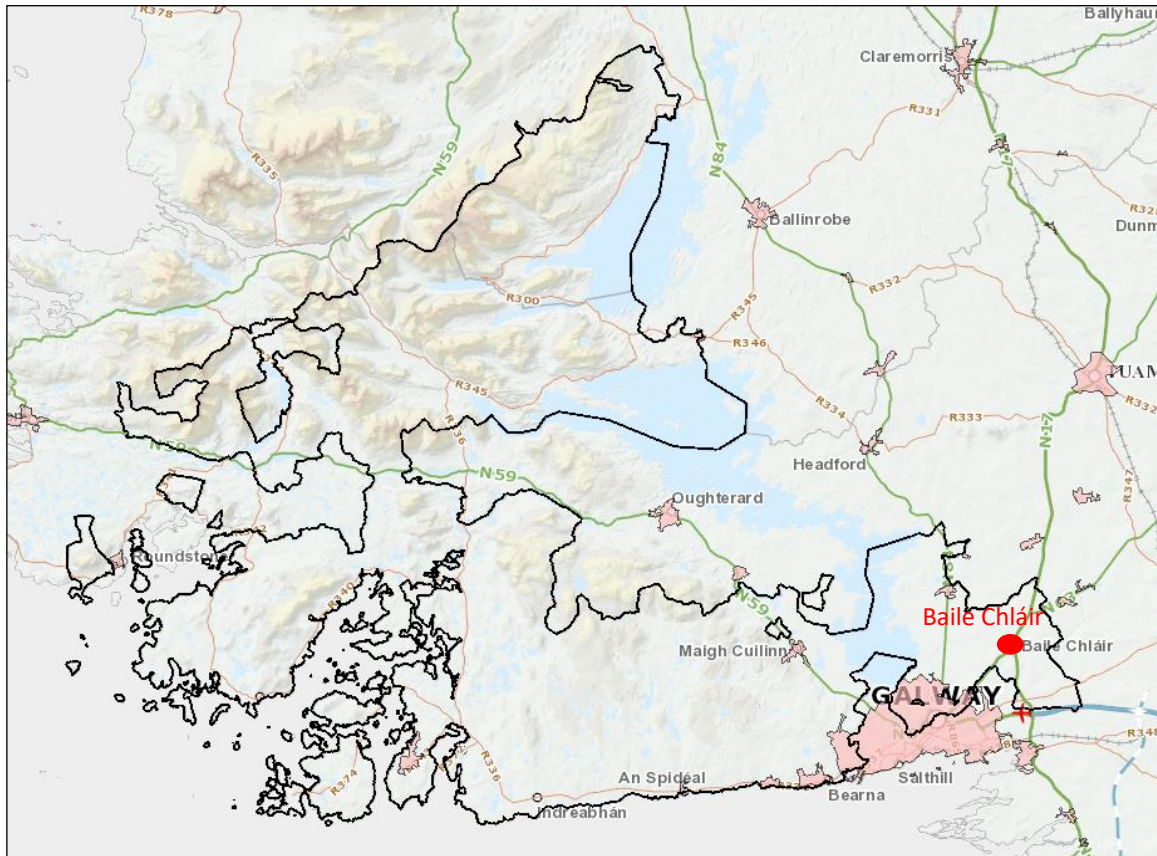


Figure 2 - Galway Gaeltacht & Settlement Boundaries

The Galway Gaeltacht covers extensive parts of County Galway, mainly in the west of the County and is the single largest and most populated Gaeltacht area in the country. The Galway Gaeltacht encompasses a geographical area of 1,225km² which represents 26% of the total Gaeltacht land area.

Census 2016 revealed that the Galway Gaeltacht has a population of 47,385 a decrease of 3.1% since the previous Census 2011. The settlement of Baile Chláir, Co. Galway experienced a population increase of 2.5% (31 no. persons) during the 2011-2016 inter-censal period, with a population of 1,248 persons recorded during Census 2016.

¹ Available on: <http://www.udaras.ie/en/an-ghaeilge-an-ghaeltacht/an-ghaeltacht/gaillimh>

Table 1 - Study Area Population Change 2011-2016

Town	2011	2016	Actual Change 2011-2016	% Change 2011-2016
Galway Gaeltacht Areas	48,907	47,385	-1,522	-3.1
Baile Chláir	1,217	1,248	31	2.5

Source: Census 2011 & Census 2016, Theme 1: Sex, Age and Marital Status. Available on: <http://census.cso.ie/>

Table 2 and Table 3, below, provide some indicators of the ability and frequency of Irish speaking within the defined study area – derived from census publications.

As illustrated by Table 2 the number of persons aged 3 and over with the ability to speak Irish within the settlement of Baile Chláir increased from 479 to 515 persons between the 2011 and 2016, representing an increase of 7.5%. During the same period, the overall Galway Gaeltacht Area experienced a significant drop on persons aged 3 and over with the ability to speak Irish, decreasing from 30,978 to 29,232 persons respectively (-5.63%).

Table 3 depicts the number of Irish speakers aged 3 or over by frequency of speaking Irish within the study area. The settlement of Baile Chláir experienced a change in the pattern of the usage of the Irish language, with a significant rise in Irish speakers within the educational system, rising from 137 to 183 no. persons between 2011 and 2016 which represents a 33% increase while the number of persons speaking Irish on a daily basis, outside of education system, dropped slightly from 17 no. persons in 2011 to 15 no. persons in 2016.

The Census data shows a slight increase in the number of persons speaking Irish daily, within and also outside education system, from 5 no. persons in 2011 to 8 no. persons in 2016. Conversely, during the same period the overall Galway Gaeltacht Area experienced a decline within all areas indicating falling levels of the usage of the Irish language in the Galway Gaeltacht Area during the intercensal period.

Table 2 - Population Aged 3 or Over by Ability to Speak Irish

	2011		2016		% Change 2011-2016	
	Galway Gaeltacht Area	Settlement of Baile Chláir	Galway Gaeltacht Area	Settlement of Baile Chláir	Galway Gaeltacht Area	Settlement of Baile Chláir
Yes	30,978	479	29,232	515	-5.63	7.5
No	15,074	588	15,530	630	3.02	7.1
Not stated	651	19	837	25	28.56	31.5
Total	46,703	1,086	45,599	1,170	26	-0.36

Source: Census 2011& 2016, Theme 3 - 1: Number of persons aged 3 years and over by ability to speak Irish (Table CD936)

Table 3 - Irish Speakers Aged 3 or Over by Frequency of Speaking Irish

	2011		2016		% Change 2011-2016	
	Galway Gaeltacht Area	Settlement of Baile Chláir	Galway Gaeltacht Area	Settlement of Baile Chláir	Galway Gaeltacht Area	Settlement of Baile Chláir
Speaks Irish Daily, Within Education System Only	7,190	137	7,163	183	-0.37	33.00

Speaks Irish Daily, Within And Also Outside Education System	2,540	5	2,122	8	-16.45	60.00
Outside Education System, Never	2,670	83	2,791	85	4.53	2.4
Outside Education System, Not Stated	416	3	249	5	-40.14	66.6
Total	12,816	228	12,325	281	-3.8	23.24
Source: Census 2011 & 2016, Theme 3 - 2: Irish speakers aged 3 or over by frequency of speaking Irish (Table CD936) (Selected Entries)						

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LINGUISTIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A review of available census data published by the Central Statistics Office reveals the settlement of Baile Chláir experienced population growth of 1,217 to 1,248 no. persons between 2005 and 2011 which equates to 2.5%. As outlined above in Section 5 the number of people in the settlement, over the age of 3, who could speak Irish rose from 479 to 515 no. persons which is an increase of 7.5%. During the same period the Galway Gaeltacht experienced a decline in the numbers of people, over the age of 3, speaking Irish from 30,978 to 29,232 no. persons (5.6% drop).

In an effort to support and protect the distinct linguistic heritage of the Galway Gaeltacht Area, Policy Objective GA 4 of the GCDP 2022-2028 relates to a Language Enurement Clause for Two or More Houses in and Baile Chláir *“A Language Enurement Clause will be applied on a portion of residential units in development of two or more units in Baile Chláir. The proportion of homes to which a language enurement clause will be a minimum of 20% or to the proportion of persons using Irish Language on a daily basis, in accordance with the latest published Census whichever is greater.”*

The proposed development comprises 88 no. residential units, therefore in compliance with the relevant planning policy, 18 no. residential units will be reserved for Irish speaking members of the community for a period of 7 years in accordance with the Enurement clauses as set out in the Galway County Development Plan.

The information contained in Table 1 to Table 3 (inclusive) presented above in Section 4, which has been compiled based upon the most recent Census data available, demonstrates an upward trend in the percentage of population aged 3 and over with the ability to speak Irish within Baile Chláir; consequently, it is considered that the proposed development will have an imperceptible impact on the use of the Irish language in Baile Chláir. In fact, it is considered that the proposed development will help strengthen the language in the village by way of the Enurement clause on 18 no. units and that this is in addition to any further Irish speakers that may occupy the 70 no. remaining proposed units.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any undue negative impact on the Irish language or the Irish culture in Baile Chláir. The proposed development involves the construction of 88 no. units within the designated development envelope of Baile Chláir which is clearly in line with the Policies and Objectives, contained in the relevant planning guidance. Therefore, the proposed scheme is in accordance with the principles of sustainable planning and development of the area.

The proposed development will provide additional residential units within Baile Chláir which will augment and support the existing population centre. The provision of an additional 88 no. units at this location will not have an adverse impact on the linguistic integrity of the area due to the population levels and numbers of Irish speakers in the vicinity. Furthermore, in compliance with the extant planning policy documents, 18 no. residential units will be reserved for Irish speaking members of the community. The reservation of these houses for Irish speakers will help strengthen the language in the village and that this is in addition to any further Irish speakers that may occupy the 70 no. remaining proposed units. This will have a positive impact on the Irish language and culture in Baile Chláir.

While many of the benefits of the proposed development from a linguistic impact viewpoint will be indirect and difficult to measure, the provision of additional residential development must be accommodated within the village of Baile Chláir in order to comply with the objectives contained in the current Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and most importantly in relation to the Settlement Strategy and Core Strategy targets. Overall, it is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any undue negative impact on the Irish language or the Irish culture in Baile Chláir.

It is submitted that the proposed development will cater for local housing requirements in line with the relevant national, regional and local planning policy context and will strengthen the identity of the community and the Irish language in Baile Chláir.

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