

Language Impact Assessment

Part 8 Application for
Social Housing
Development in Machaire
Gathlán (Magheragallan),
Na Doirí Beaga (Derrybeg),
Co. Dhún na nGall (Donegal)





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1.

INTRODUCTION

This Linguistic Impact Assessment (LIA) has been prepared by MKO on behalf of Donegal County Council (‘the applicant’) in support of a ‘Part 8’ planning application¹ for a social housing development of 19 no. social housing units at Machaire Gathlán (Maheragallan), Na Doiri Beaga (Derrybeg), Co. Dhún na nGall (Donegal). It is proposed that Phase 1 of the proposed development will comprise the construction of 12 no. social housing units consisting of 2 no. 1-bed apartments, 2 no. 2-bed apartments, 4 no. 2-bed houses, 3 no. 3-bed houses and 1 no. 4-bed house with associated onsite wastewater treatment system. Phase 2 will comprise the development of 7 no. social housing units consisting of 4 no. 2-bed apartments and 3 no. 2-bed houses. The LIA examines the likely impact of the proposed residential development on the use of the Irish Language among the population of the Electoral Division (ED) of Doiri Beaga (Derrybeg).

Doiri Beaga is a village situated within the parish of Gweedore and around 22km northwest of Letterkenny. It lies within the heart of ‘An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair (Gweedore), Rann na Feirste (Rannafast), Anagaire (Anagaire) agus Loch an Iúir (Loughanure)’ in the Donegal Gaeltacht, a region where the Irish language remains a dominant part of daily life. The Donegal Gaeltacht is the second-largest Gaeltacht area in Ireland and covers 26% of the county. It has a population of 24,220 people which equates to 16.2% of County Donegal’s total population (2022 Census).

The [Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030](#) (DCDP) recognises “*that the Gaeltacht faces significant social, economic, and infrastructural challenges*” whilst also acknowledging that the area benefits from “*a high quality of life, a well-educated workforce, a rich social and cultural heritage, outstanding natural beauty... significant marine and coastal resources and skillsets, Údarás Na Gaeltachta business parks and the Gteic digital hub network, an improving strategic road network (e.g. N56) and significant healthcare related employment.*”

Under the DCDP, Donegal County Council has committed to enhancing the vitality of the Irish Language in the Gaeltacht. **Objective GAE-O-1** of the plan seeks:

“To sustain and strengthen the Irish Language, to protect the cultural heritage of, and facilitate the sustainable social, physical, cultural, and economic development of the Gaeltacht.”

In order to protect the linguistic and cultural heritage value of the Gaeltacht at a local level, **Policy GAE-P-2** of the DCDP states that the Council will:

- a) *Impose a language condition on any planning permission for multiple residential development of 2 more dwellings in the Gaeltacht requiring that the **proportion of units to be occupied by Irish speakers equates to the proportion of Irish speakers within the subject DED** (based on the latest available census data) subject to a minimum of 85% rounded to the nearest whole number of units where necessary. A language condition shall be applied to all applicable units for a duration of 15 years from the date of the first occupancy of the unit.*
- b) ***Require Language Impact Assessments** for Multiple Residential Developments within Gaeltacht areas of 10 or more dwellings in all cases, and less than 10 dwellings where there is potential for a significant impact on the Irish language in the area, in accordance the associated technical standards of this plan. (emphasis added by MKO)*

As the proposed development comprises 19 no. social housing units within the Gaeltacht area, a LIA is required to ascertain the possible impacts of the development on the use of the Irish language on the

¹ Part 8 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, allows for the application of planning permission for projects by local authorities, in this case Donegal County Council.

Doiri Beaga (Derrybeg) ED. Therefore, the planning application for the proposed social housing development at Doiri Beaga will be accompanied by this LIA.

Figure 1-1 and **Figure 1-2** overleaf show the extent of An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir and the location of Doiri Beaga within this Gaeltacht Area.

This LIA is structured as follows:

- **Section 2: Background and Context** – Describes the background and context for the LIA.
- **Section 3: Proposed Development** – Describes the proposed residential development (in both English and Irish).
- **Section 4: Planning Policy Context** – Outlines the relevant national, regional and local planning policies which seek to protect and enhance the linguistic and cultural heritage of Gaeltacht areas.
- **Section 5: Linguistic Profile of the Area** – Demonstrates the current usage of the Irish language within the development site area.
- **Section 6: Linguistic Impact Assessment** – Demonstrates the level of impact of the proposed development on the use of the Irish language.
- **Section 7: Conclusion** – Summaries the main conclusion of the LIA.

This LIA should be read in conjunction with all other planning documents submitted with the application.

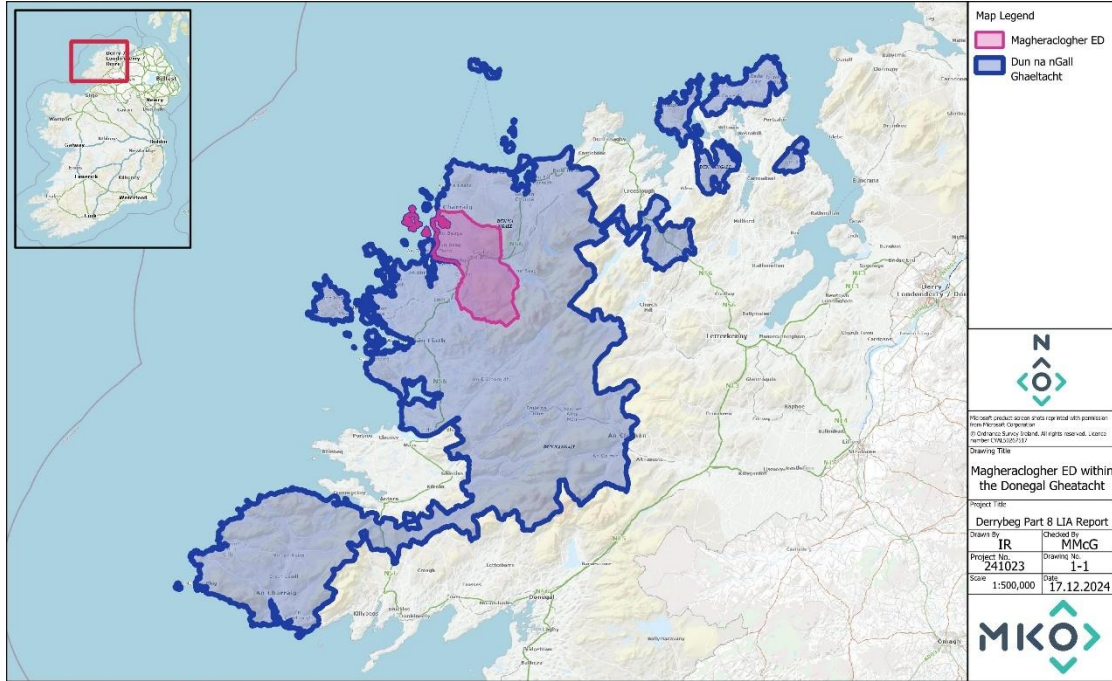


Figure 1-1: Location of Magheraclogher ED within the Donegal Gaeltacht

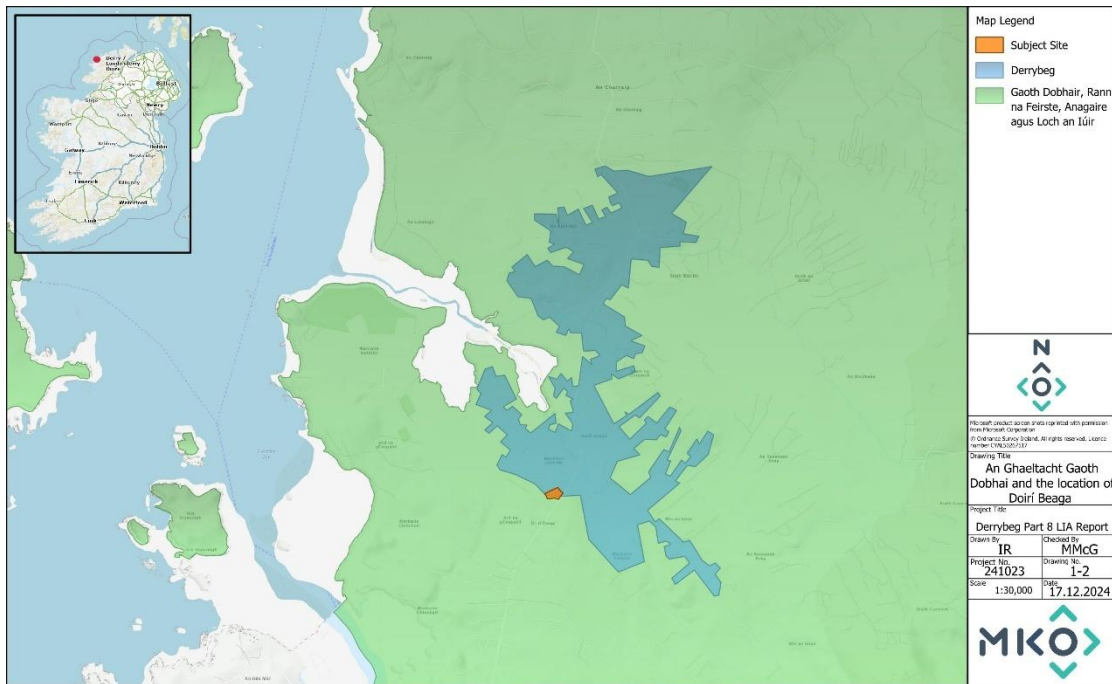


Figure 1-2: An Gaeltacht Gaith Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir and the location of Doiri Beaga within this Gaeltacht Area

2.

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

The term ‘Gaeltacht’ is used to describe the regions in Ireland in which the Irish language is, or was until recently, the primary spoken language of the majority of the community. The use of the Irish language has been declining for many years, but it still survives as a living language in the Gaeltacht regions (Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Cork, Meath and Waterford).

There are many challenges facing Gaeltacht areas, including the erosion of the use of the Irish language, a lack of available housing, high proliferation of short-term lets / holiday homes, a lack of employment opportunities, high levels of emigration of young people, and an aging population. Therefore, it is essential for Gaeltacht Areas to attract new development whilst ensuring that they support or complement the linguistic and cultural heritage of the area.

The [Donegal County Development Plan \(DCDP\) 2024-2030](#) and [An Ghaeltacht Láir Language Plan](#) recognise that population decline is a key issue in Gaeltacht areas and establishes a framework for sustainable development in rural settlements such as Doiri Beaga. The DCDP requires a language condition to be imposed on developments of over 2 housing units in Gaeltacht areas to help halt the language shift away from Irish in Gaeltacht areas. The Language Plan also sets out a series of measures to strengthen the Irish language in communities.

The purpose of the LIA is to assess the potential impact of new developments on the use of Irish as the community language and to determine whether the proposed new development would have a positive, neutral or adverse effect on the use of the Irish language in the area.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND SITE LOCATION

3.1 Proposed Development

The proposed development as per the public notices is detailed in the paragraphs below.

3.1.1 English Version

TAKE NOTICE that Donegal County Council (“the Council”) proposes to carry out the development specified in paragraph (b) below and in relation thereto: -

- (a) The location of the development is on lands at ***Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí, Doire Beag, Dhún na nGall.***
- (b) The nature and extent of the proposed development is as follows: -

Development of 19 no. social housing units including all associated site development works in 2 phases with Phase 1 being developed initially and Phase 2 as a future phase of development to be progressed upon installation of wastewater infrastructure.

Phase 1 will comprise the construction of 12 no. units consisting of 2no. 1-bed apartments, 2no. 2-bed apartments, 4no. 2-bed houses, 3no. 3-bed houses, 1no. 4-bed house with associated onsite wastewater treatment system (WWTS).

Phase 2 (future development) of the project will consist of the development of an additional 07 no. units consisting of 4no. 2-bed apartments and 3no. 2-bed houses. This phase is dependent on the connection to a public sewerage network, decommissioning and removal of the onsite WWTS.

All associated ancillary site works shall be located within the townlands of Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí.

- (c) The proposed development is sub-threshold for the purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) per Article 92 of the Regulations and the Council has concluded on the basis of a Preliminary Examination of the nature, location and size of the proposed development in accordance with Article 120 (1)(b)(i) thereof that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) is not required. A copy of this Preliminary Examination and conclusion will be available for inspection or purchase along with the documents referred to at paragraph (e) below.

Where however any person considers that the proposed development to be carried out by the Council would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, he or she may at any time before the expiration of 4 weeks beginning of the date of publication of this notice apply under Article 120(3)(b) of the Regulations to An Bord Pleanála (64 Marlborough Street, Rotunda, Dublin 1, D01 V902) for a screening determination as to whether the development would be likely to have such effects.

- (d) In order to ascertain whether the proposed development required Appropriate Assessment (“AA”) the Council carried out a screening of same in accordance with Article 250(1) of the Regulations and made a determination in view of best scientific knowledge that the development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site in view of the site’s conservation objectives and that AA was

not required. A copy of this determination including the main reasons and considerations on which the determination was based will be available for inspection or purchase along with the documents referred to at paragraph (e) below.

Where however any person considers that the proposed development to be carried out by the Council would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, he or she may apply under Article 250(3)(b) of the Regulations to An Bord Pleanála (64 Marlborough Street, Rotunda, Dublin 1, D01 V902) for a determination as to whether the development would be likely to have such significant effect and the Board will make a determination on the matter as soon as possible. Any application for such determination in order to be considered by the Board must state the reasons for the forming of the view that the development would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site.

- (e) Plans and particulars of the proposed development will be available for inspection online at <https://consult.donegal.ie> or for inspection at the Council's offices. The said plans and particulars will be available for inspection as above from **13th March 2025 – 11th April 2025 (inclusive)**.
- (f) Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development is situated may be made in writing to the Housing Capital Section, Donegal County Council, Three Rivers Centre, Lifford F93 Y622 or by email to housingcapital@donegalcoco.ie on or before 4:00pm on 29th April 2025.

3.1.2

Irish Version

TUGTAR FÓGRA leis seo go bhfuil Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall (“an Chomhairle”) leis an fhorbairt bheartaithe a dhéanamh mar atá sonraithe in alt (b) thíos agus a bhaineann le:-

- (a) Láthair na forbartha atá suite ar thalamh i ***Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí, Doire Beag, Dún na nGall.***
- (b) Cur síos agus méid na forbartha atá beartaithe: -

Forbairt a dhéanamh ar 19 aonad tithíochta sóisialta, ina mbeidh oibreacha forbartha an láithreáin go léir san áireamh. Beidh dhá chéim ann - déanfar Céim 1 a fhorbairt ar dtús agus Céim 2 a fhorbairt amach anseo nuair a chuirfear infreastruchtúr fuíolluisce isteach.

I gCéim 1 den fhorbairt bheartaithe, go dtógfáir 12 aonad ina mbeidh 2 árasán le seomra leapa amháin, 2 árasán le dhá sheomra leapa, 4 teach le dhá sheomra leapa, 3 teach le trí sheomra leapa agus teach amháin le ceithre sheomra leapa agus go mbeidh córas i gcomhair cóireáil fuíolluisce ar an láithreán (WWTS) fosta.

I gCéim 2 (forbairt amach anseo), go dtógfáir 07 n-aonad sa bhreis ina mbeidh 4 árasán le 2 sheomra leapa agus 3 teach le dhá sheomra leapa. Tá an chéim seo ag brath ar cheangal le córas séarachais poiblí agus ar dhíchoimisiúnú a dhéanamh ar an chóireáil fuíolluisce ar an láithreán (WWTS) agus go dtógfáir ar shiúl í.

Beidh oibreacha coimhdeacha forbartha an láithreáin ag tarlú sna bailte fearainn Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí.

- (c) Is fothairseach í an fhorbairt bheartaithe le haghaidh measúnacht tionchair timpeallachta (“MTT”) mar atá leagtha amach in Airteagal 92 de na Rialacháin agus measann an Chomhairle, bunaithe ar réamhscrúdú a rinneadh ar nádúr, ar láthair agus ar mhéid na forbartha atá beartaithe de réir Airteagal 120 (1)(b)(i), gur beag an éifeacht a bheadh ag an fhorbairt bheartaithe ar an timpeallacht agus nach gá measúnacht tionchair timpeallachta (“MTT”) a dhéanamh. Beidh fáil ar chóip den Réamhscrúdú féin agus den chonclúid agus is féidir

mionscrúdú a dhéanamh orthu nó iad a cheannach mar aon leis na cáipéisí a bhfuil tagairt déanta dóibh in alt (e) thíos.

Mar sin féin, má mheasann aon duine go mbeadh éifeacht ag an fhorbairt atá beartaithe ag an Chomhairle, ar an timpeallacht, is féidir leis nó léi ag aon am taobh istigh de thréimhse 4 seachtaine ó dháta foilsithe an fhógra seo, iarratas a dhéanamh faoi Airteagal 120(3)(b) de na Rialacháin, chuig An Bord Pleanála (64 Sráid Mhaoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath 1, D01 V902) ar dheimhniú a bhaineann le scagadh a dhéanamh, a thabharfadh le fios cé acu a bheadh nó nach mbeadh a leithéid d'éifeacht amhlaidh.

- (d) Rinne an Chomhairle scagadh den chineál céanna de réir Airteagal 250(1) de na Rialacháin chun a chinntiú nach gá measúnacht chuí (“AA”) a dhéanamh ar an fhorbairt bheartaithe agus dheimhniú siad i bhfianaise na heolaíochta nach mbeadh éifeacht mhór ag an fhorbairt seo ar bhun aonair nó i gcomhar le pleananna nó le tograí eile, ar láithreán Eorpach i bhfianaise aidhmeanna caomhnaithe an láithreáin agus nach gá measúnacht chuí (“AA”) a dhéanamh. Beidh fáil ar chóip den deimhniú seo, ina bhfuil na príomhchúiseanna agus ceisteanna ar a raibh an deimhniú féin bunaithe, agus is féidir mionscrúdú a dhéanamh air nó é a cheannach mar aon leis na cáipéisí a bhfuil tagairt déanta dóibh in alt (e) thíos.

Mar sin féin, má mheasann aon duine go mbeadh éifeacht ag an fhorbairt atá beartaithe ag an Chomhairle, ar Láithreán Eorpach, is féidir leis nó léi iarratas a dhéanamh faoi Airteagal 250(3)(b) de na Rialacháin, chuig An Bord Pleanála (64 Sráid Mhaoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath 1, D01 V902) ar dheimhniú a thabharfadh le fios cé acu a bheadh nó nach mbeadh a leithéid d'éifeacht amhlaidh agus cuirfidh an Bord deimhniú ar fáil a luaithe is féidir. I gcás aon iarratas a dhéanfar, ní mór go gcuirfear síos ar na cúiseanna a mheastar go mbeadh éifeacht ag an fhorbairt bheartaithe ar Láithreán Eorpach.

- (e) Is féidir mionscrúdú a dhéanamh ar na pleananna agus ar na mionsonraí a bhaineann leis an fhorbairt bheartaithe ar líne ag <https://consult.donegal.ie/> nó in oifigí na Comhairle mar atá leagtha amach thíos. Is féidir mionscrúdú a dhéanamh ar na pleananna agus ar na mionsonraí thuas idir **13 Márta 2025 – 11 Aibreán 2025 (san áireamh)**.
- (f) Is féidir aighneachtaí nó tuairimí a bhaineann leis an fhorbairt bheartaithe, a bhaineann leis an phleanáil chuí agus leis an fhorbairt inbhuanaithe sa cheantar ina mbeidh an fhorbairt ag tarlú, a chur i scríbhinn chuig an Rannóg Tithíochta, Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall, Ionad na dTrí Abhainn, Leifear F93 Y622 nó ar ríomhphost chuig housingcapital@donegalcoco.ie ar nó roimh 4.00in ar an 29 Aibreán 2025.

3.2 Site Location and Description

The proposed development site is located in Machaire Gathlán (Magheragallan), situated within the parish of Gweedore and 22 km northwest of Letterkenny, within the heart of the Donegal Gaeltacht. This area is a vital hub for the Irish language and is renowned for its cultural and linguistic heritage, contributing significantly to the broader identity of An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Íúir.

The subject site is positioned near the western edge of the settlement, close to key community amenities and offering expansive views of the surrounding rural landscape. Machaire Gathlán is characterised by its unique blend of scenic beauty and vibrant cultural life, central to the Gaeltacht region.

Nearby notable features include Teach Pobail Naomh Mhuire (St. Mary’s Church) to the west and several established residential properties to the north and east of the site. The site is located within the settlement boundary, aligning it with the core urban framework of Machaire Gathlán. This positioning ensures accessibility to essential infrastructure while maintaining the area’s characteristic rural charm.

The surrounding area includes a mix of residential properties, community facilities, and open green spaces, reflecting the settlement's role as a focal point for both local residents and the wider Gaeltacht community.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the site's location.

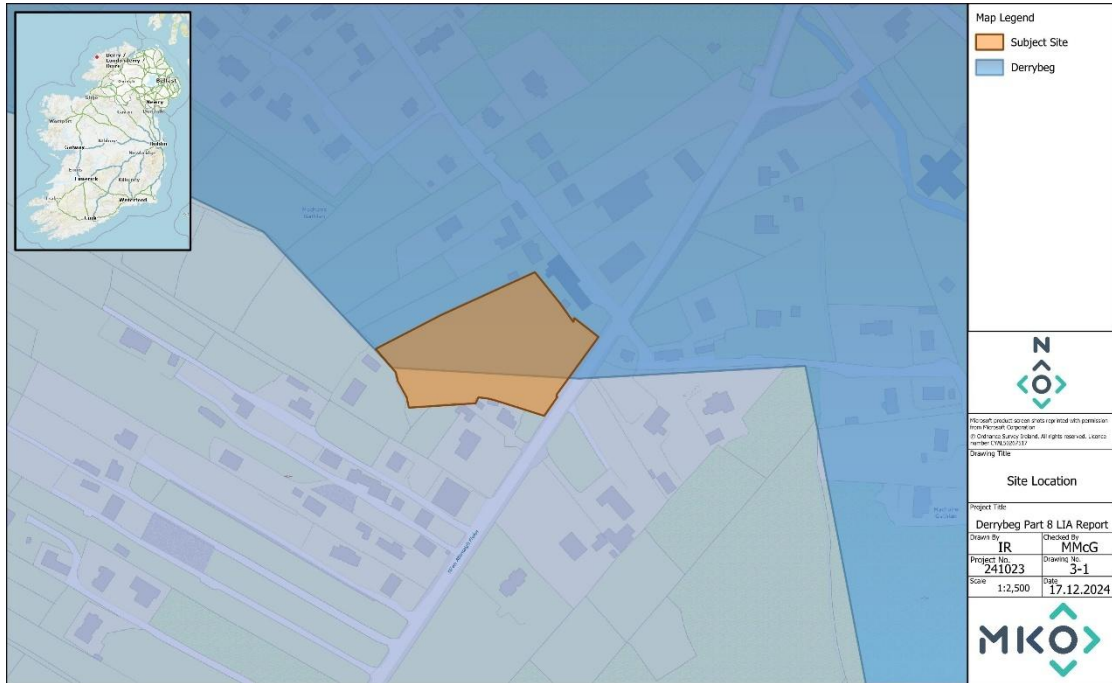


Figure 3-1 Site Location within Doiri Beaga

4. POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Policy Framework

National, regional 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 LIA 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 (2010).
- Gaeltacht Act 2012 (2012).
- National Planning Framework (2018) and Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework (2024).
- Northern and Western Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (2020).
- Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030 (2024).
- An Ghaeltacht Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure Language Plan (2016).

4.2 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030

The objective of the [20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030](#) is to increase on an incremental basis the use and knowledge of Irish as a community language. Specifically, the Government's aim is to ensure that as many citizens as possible are bilingual in both Irish and English. It is an integral component of the Government's Irish language policy that close attention be given to its place in the Gaeltacht, particularly in light of research which indicates that the language's viability as a household and community language in the Gaeltacht is under threat.

The aim of Government policy is also to:

- increase the number of families throughout the country who use Irish as the daily language of communication;
- provide linguistic support for the Gaeltacht as an Irish-speaking community and to recognise the issues which arise in areas where Irish is the household and community language;
- ensure that in public discourse and in public services the use of Irish or English will be, as far as practical, a choice for the citizen to make and that over time more and more people throughout the State will choose to do their business in Irish; and
- ensure that Irish becomes more visible in our society, both as a spoken language by our citizens and also in areas such as signage and literature.

The Strategy sets out a number objectives including the following:

- **Objective 3:** The Irish language community inside and outside the Gaeltacht will be given encouragement and support to transmit Irish to the next generation as a living household language. Towards this end, a wide range of services in Irish will be provided.

4.3 Gaeltacht Act 2012

The [Gaeltacht Act 2012](#) redefined the Gaeltacht areas on linguistic criteria instead of on geographic areas which had been the position until 2012. While the traditional Gaeltacht boundaries still exist, the Act sets out ways where areas outside the Gaeltacht can be formally designated as Irish Language Networks and Gaeltacht Service Towns. The Gaeltacht Act also makes provision for language plans to be prepared in areas that are recognised as potential Gaeltachta language planning areas, Gaeltacht

service towns or as Irish language networks. The Act also gave statutory effect to the implementation of the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.

4.4

National Planning Framework

The [National Planning Framework](#) (NPF) (2018) and the [Updated Draft Revised NPF](#) (November 2024) recognise that Gaeilge is the first official language of Ireland. However, once widely spoken throughout the island of Ireland, approximately only 2% of Ireland's population now live in Gaeltacht areas (Census 2022). The NPF states that “*the existence of areas where Irish lives as a community language is an important cornerstone in the building of a bilingual society in Ireland, and provides an environment where the language can evolve naturally in a modern setting*”.

The NPF and Updated Draft Revised NPF set out a number of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) to preserve and strengthen the Irish Language. Amendments to the NPOs, as proposed in the Updated Draft Revised NPF, are in italics:

- **NPO 29:** Support the implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks (NPO 39 in the Updated Draft Revised NPF).
- **NPO 15:** Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid overdevelopment, while sustaining vibrant rural communities (NPO 24 in the Draft Revised NPF).
- **NPO 1b:** Northern and Western Region: 160,000 – 180,000 additional people i.e. a population of just over 1 million. *NPO 3 in the Draft Revised NPF: Northern and Western Region: approximately 150,000 additional people between 2022 and 2040 (c. 210,000 additional people over 2016-2040) i.e. a population of just over 1 million.*
- **NPO 3a:** Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements *and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth (NPO 7 in the Draft Revised NPF).*
- **NPO 33:** Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location (NPO 43 in the Draft Revised NPF).
- **NPO 35:** Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, reuse of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights *and more compact forms of development (NPO 45 in the Draft Revised NPF).*

4.5

Northern & Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) adopted the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) on the 24 January 2020. The RSES is a 12-year strategic regional development framework to guide strong and balanced regional growth in the northern and western region. It establishes a broad framework for the way in which our society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve. It includes a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Galway City and a regional strategy for ‘Key Towns’, towns, villages and rural areas.

Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 3.12 of the RSES states that “*within Gaeltacht Areas and Gaeltacht Towns, in particular, emphasis shall be assigned to the impacts of proposed developments and their impact on the community of language and the maintenance and development of its socialisation networks*”.

Relating to ‘towns and villages’ the RSES sets out the following objectives which seek to protect and enhance the linguistic and cultural value of Gaeltacht areas:

- **RPO 5.8:** “Promote, enhance and protect the linguistic, cultural and heritage value of our Gaeltacht Communities. This shall include development and implementation of language Plans as the key Planning Framework and the development of the Gaeltacht brand as a tool to provide a competitive advantage”.
- **RPO 5.12:** “Support and assist the formulation and implementation of Irish Language Plans through the lead agency Údarás Na Gaeltachta, across the Gaeltacht areas and within Gaeltacht areas and within Gaeltacht service Towns, as defined under the Gaeltacht Act, 2012. All future Development Plans and Local Area Plans shall be consistent with the Irish Language Plans, where applicable”.

4.6

Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030

The [Donegal County Development Plan \(DCDP\) 2024-2030](#) (DCDP) sets out the local vision and goals for development within Doiri Beaga and An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir. The DCDP highlights the importance of protecting and promoting the use of Irish as a community language. It also sets out the policy objectives for the development of housing within the county over the duration of the plan.

Chapter 3 of the DCDP sets out the settlement hierarchy and core strategy, which categorises Bunbeg-Derrybeg as part of the ‘Service Towns’ category and distributes 11.71% of the county’s projected population growth to these areas.

Table 4-1 is extracted from the DCDP and shows the current and proposed population and housing allocations for Bunbeg-Derrybeg under the plan. By 2030, the population of Bunbeg-Derrybeg is predicted to increase by 319 people. An additional 120 new homes will be required by 2030 in the area (1.41% of the total provision of homes in Donegal).

Table 4-1: Core Strategy of the DCDP (Extracted from Table 3.7 of the DCDP, emphasis added by MKO).

Settlement Name/Type	Existing Population		Housing and Population Targets		
	Census 2022 Population	Census 2022 (%)	Housing Target 2030 (Units)	Population Target 2030	Housing Target 2030 (Units) % of Total
Bunbeg-Derrybeg					
All	1,543	0.92	120	1862	1.41

Of key importance to the proposed development, which consists of 19 no. units of social housing, is **Objective RH-P-4** and **Policy TV-P-2**:

- **Objective RH-P-4:** “It is a policy of the council to consider opportunities **to deliver necessary social and affordable housing at locations around (i) rural schools and; (ii) rural settlements**; subject to wastewater services being appropriately delivered and maintained by Donegal County Council as part of a social housing scheme and subject to all other relevant objectives and policies of the plan, including environmental considerations and compliance with the Habitats Directive.” (emphasis added by MKO)
- **Policy TV-P-2:** “To **encourage proposals for small scale residential development, including social housing schemes in towns and villages** that will contribute to revitalisation and renewal subject to other policies of this Plan and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.” (emphasis added by MKO)

Donegal County Council’s vision and goals for the preservation and support of the Irish Language are set out in **Chapter 13: An Ghaeltacht**. The DCDP acknowledges the historic and embedded social, economic, poverty, and infrastructural challenges that Ghaeltacht areas face in Donegal and nationally. It also notes that the Donegal “has a weak urban structure and many towns and villages require significant urban regeneration interventions.” In line with this assessment, the DCDP sets an overarching objective, **Objective GAE-O-1**, which seeks “To sustain and strengthen the Irish Language, to protect the cultural heritage of, and facilitate the sustainable social, physical, cultural, and economic development of the Gaeltacht.”

Of primary note to the proposed development is **Policy GAE-P-2**, which sets out the conditions for the development of housing schemes of over 2 units and states that Donegal County Council will:

- a) *“Impose a language condition on any planning permission for multiple residential development of 2 more dwellings in the Gaeltacht requiring that the proportion of units to be occupied by Irish speakers equates to the proportion of Irish speakers within the subject DED (based on the latest available census data) subject to a minimum of 85% rounded to the nearest whole number of units where necessary. A language condition shall be applied to all applicable units for a duration of 15 years from the date of the first occupancy of the unit.*
- b) *Require Language Impact Assessments for Multiple Residential Developments within Gaeltacht areas of 10 or more dwellings in all cases, and less than 10 dwellings where there is potential for a significant impact on the Irish language in the area, in accordance the associated technical standards of this plan.” (emphasis added by MKO)*

Finally, the content of **Chapter 21: Settlement Frameworks**, as it relates to Doiri Beaga (see **Figure 4-1**), is noted within the framework of the policies and objectives related to the Gaeltacht and Housing contained within the rest of the DCDP. The stated goals of the settlement frameworks key to the proposed development are to create compact urban forms, protect rural character, ensure the location of new residential development in proximity to key services, and to create vibrant and accessible town centres. It is noted that the proposed development lies within the settlement boundary for Doiri Beaga, contributing to the compact and sustainable growth of the area.

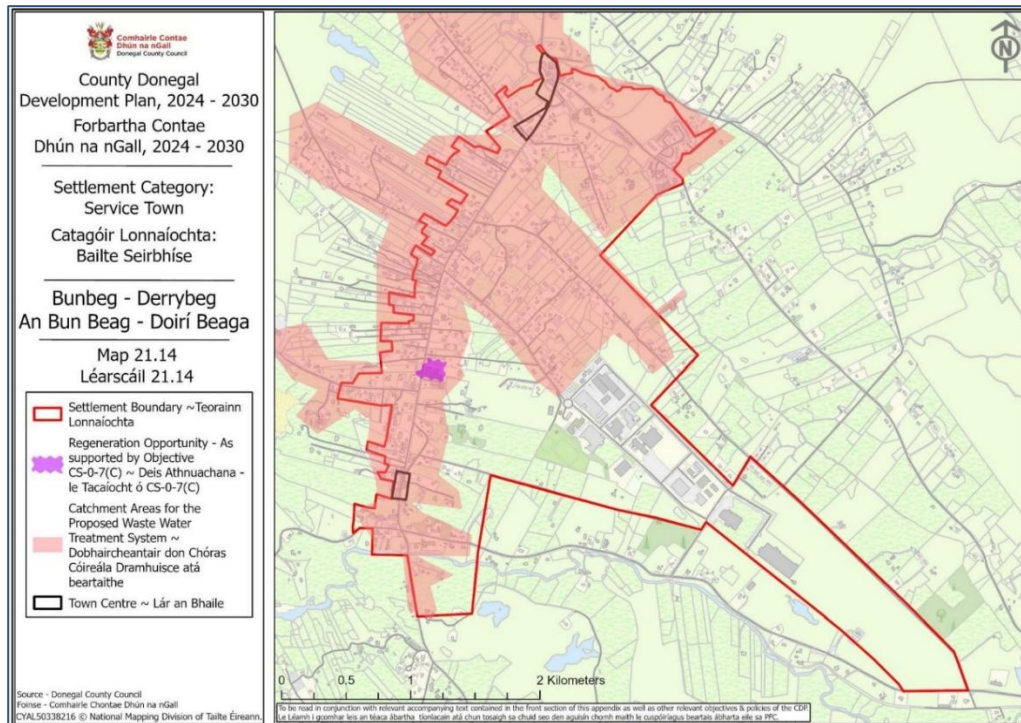


Figure 4-1 Bunbeg-Derrybeg Settlement Framework from the DCDP 2024-2030

4.7

An Ghaeltacht Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure Language Plan

The subject site is located within Limistéar Pleanála Teanga (LPT) An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Íúir in the wider Donegal Gaeltacht. The 2022 Census population of 5,895 people in An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Íúir represents c.5.7% of the total number of Gaeltacht inhabitants.

[An Ghaeltacht Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure Language Plan](#) (2016) highlights the key characteristics and heritage of the area. It notes that the area is one of the few inland Gaeltachts. There is a strong literary and musical tradition in the area. Similar to other Gaeltacht areas, An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Íúir is experiencing several challenges, including population decline and a reduction in daily use of the Irish language, which are discussed in detail in the Language Plan.

The Language Plan's main aim is to stall or reverse the language shift away from Irish in Gaeltacht areas. It focuses on a number of key themes including education; childcare/family support; young people; business and public sector organisations; media; public services; social and recreational services; physical planning and development; and implementation. It outlines a number of measures designed to strengthen the Irish Language under these broad themes:

Early Childhood and Education

- Measure 6.3.1: Strengthen Irish language use in preschools and educational institutions, providing resources for teachers and enhancing immersive environments.
- Measure 6.3.2: Support transitions between preschool, primary, and secondary education with a focus on sustaining language use among students.
- Measure 6.4.2: Provide language support for family and community groups, including early childhood engagement.

Youth Engagement

- Measure 6.5.1: Establish two youth clubs to promote Irish as a social language among young people.
- Measure 6.5.3: Develop 'drop-in' centres for youth to act as language sanctuaries.

Adult and Community Learning

- Measure 6.6.2: Create community skill and recreation workshops for adults.
- Measure 6.6.3: Provide Irish language socialisation opportunities, bringing learners and fluent speakers together.

Employment and Economic Development

- Measure 6.7.2: Create a Central Gaeltacht employment taskforce.
- Measure 6.7.3: Encourage local businesses to operate bilingually, including signage, communication, and customer interactions.
- Measure 6.7.4: Provide grants and incentives for businesses promoting the Irish language in the workplace.

Public Services and Health

- Measure 6.9.1: Promote Irish-language training for public servants to enhance accessibility for Irish speakers in administrative services.
- Measure 6.9.2: Integrate bilingual signage and communication across public amenities.

- Measure 6.9.3: Increase Irish language proficiency among health service providers serving the community.

Cultural and Social Activities

- Measure 6.11.1: Organise annual cultural festivals celebrating Irish traditions and language.
- Measure 6.11.2: Develop mentorship programmes pairing fluent speakers with learners.
- Measure 6.11.3: Offer a variety of leisure activities to people who speak Irish, encouraging regular social usage.

Media and Awareness

- Measure 6.8.1: Collaborate with local and national media to increase Irish-language content and visibility.
- Measure 6.8.2: Develop social media campaigns to engage younger demographics with the language.

The plan does not make any provisions specifically relating to housing or language conditions to be imposed in new developments in the Gaeltacht area.

5.

LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

In order to be able to fully assess the impact of the proposed development on the Irish language in the settlement of Doiri Beaga, it is essential to establish the existing use of the Irish language within the community. For the purposes of this Linguistic Impact Assessment (LIA), the study area has been defined as the Magheraclogher Electoral Division (ED) which includes Doiri Beaga, with the overall An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir provided for comparison purposes (see **Figure 5-1** below). Relevant data has been extracted from the Central Statistics Office databases pertaining to Census 2016 and 2022.

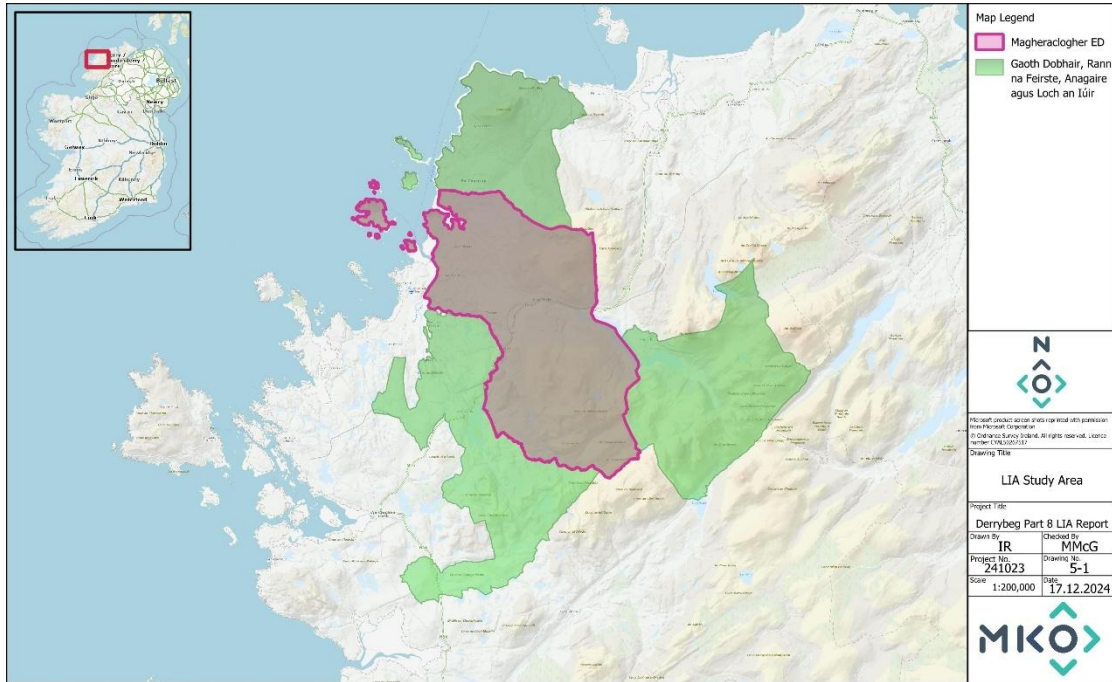


Figure 5-1 LIA Study Area

The subject site is located within An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir of the wider County Donegal Gaeltacht which is the second most populous Gaeltacht in the country. The 2022 Census population of 5,895 people represents c.5.7% of the total number of Gaeltacht inhabitants. **Table 5-1** outlines the demographic characteristics of the study area, derived from Census publications.

Between 2016 and 2022, the population of Magheraclogher ED increased by 3.3%, rising from 2,750 to 2,841 residents. This is slightly below the growth rate of 4.1% observed in the broader Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure Gaeltacht area.

Table 5-1: Study Area Population Change 2016-2022

Town	2016	2022	Actual Change 2016-2022	% Change 2016-2022
Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	5,895	6151	256	4.1%
Magheraclogher	2,750	2,841	91	3.3%

Source: Census 2016 & Census 2022, Theme 1: Sex, Age and Marital Status. Available on: <http://census.cso.ie/>

Table 5-2 and Table 5-3 detail the ability and frequency of Irish speaking within the defined study area, derived from the Census publications.

As illustrated in Table 5-2, the number of people aged 3 and over with the ability to speak Irish within Magheraclogher ED declined slightly from 2,206 people to 2,175 people, representing a decrease of 1.4%. The number of Irish speakers in the wider Gaeltacht area also declined slightly from 4,773 to 4,696, representing a decrease of 77 individuals (-1.6%). During the same period, the number of non-Irish speakers increased marginally in both the Magheraclogher ED and wider Gaeltacht area (0.9% and 3% respectively). A notable change occurred in the 'Not Stated' category, which rose significantly by 74.5% in the Magheraclogher ED and by 77.6% in the wider Gaeltacht area. The increase in unreported ("Not Stated") data may suggest challenges in capturing linguistic data during the Census process.

Table 5-2 Population aged 3 or over by ability to speak Irish: An Magheraclogher ED & Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure

Ability	2016		2022		% Change 2016-2022	
	Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	Magheraclogher ED	Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	Magheraclogher ED	Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	Magheraclogher ED
Yes	4,773	2206	4,696	2175	-1.6%	1.4%
No	839	417	865	413	3%	0.9%
Not Stated	92	44	411	173	77.6%	74.5%
Total	5,704	2667	5,972	2761	4.4%	3.4%

Source: CSO Interactive Map. Theme: Irish Language.

<https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2016&boundary=C03786V04535&guid=2AE1962921C913A3E055000000000001>

Table 5-3 overleaf depicts the number of Irish speakers aged 3 and over by frequency of speaking Irish within the study area. The Magheraclogher ED saw a 7.2% decrease in those who spoke Irish daily (within and/or outside the education system in any combination) between Census 2016 and 2022. During the same period, An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir saw a 8.3% decrease in those who spoke Irish daily (within and/or outside the education system in any combination). The data reveals a nuanced picture of linguistic trends in Magheraclogher ED and the

wider Gaeltacht area. While the population is increasing, the overall ability to speak Irish is in slight decline, and the frequency of daily use is falling. These trends indicate that additional measures are needed to sustain and strengthen the use of Irish within the community.

Table 5-3 Irish speakers aged 3 or over by frequency of speaking Irish

Frequency	2016		2022		% Change 2016-2022	
	Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	Magheraclogher ED	Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	Magheraclogher ED	Gweedore, Rannafast, Annagary and Loughanure	Magheraclogher ED
Daily only within the education system	1,082	499	805	360	-25.6%	-38.6%
Daily within and daily outside the education system	578	298	681	336	17.8%	12.7%
Daily within and weekly outside the education system	9	7	3	2	-66.6%	-71%
Daily within and less often outside the education system	1	0	5	1	No Change	100%
Daily within and never outside the education system	0	0	0	0	0	0
Daily only outside the education system	2,322	1,136	2165	1101	-6.6%	-3%
Weekly only outside the education system	289	110	340	127	17.6%	15.4%
Less often only outside the education system	392	129	444	153	-61%	18.6%
Never speaks Irish	58	13	68	19	17.2%	46%
Not Stated	41	14	165	76	302%	443%
All Irish Speakers	4,773	2,206	4686	2,175	-1.8%	-1.4%

Source: <https://data.cso.ie/table/F8071> <https://data.cso.ie/table/SAP2016T3T2ED>; <https://data.cso.ie/table/SAP2022T3T2ED>;

6.

LINGUISTIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The foregoing sections provide a brief outline of recent population developments in the Magheraclogher ED and An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir, both of which contain Doiri Beaga (Derrybeg).

The DCDP designates Bunbeg-Derrybeg as a **Service Town** within its Core Strategy settlement hierarchy. The location context described in the DCDP states:

“The service towns of ... Bunbeg-Derrybeg,...provide important local retail and employment functions. This Core Strategy recognises these important roles and, having regard also to their servicing capacities, allocates 11% of the total projected growth to these settlements.”

Table 4-1 in **Section 4.6** earlier shows that there is a housing target of 120 units for Bunbeg-Derrybeg, with an anticipated population growth of 319 people between 2022 and 2030. It is considered that the proposed development’s 19 no. social housing units are in line with the Core Strategy of the DCDP.

A review of the data from Census 2016 and 2022 published by the CSO reveals that the Magheraclogher ED has experienced a population increase of 3.3% between 2016 and 2022. The Magheraclogher ED, however, saw a 7.2% decrease of those who spoke Irish daily (within and/or outside the education system in any combination) between 2016 and 2022. During the same period, An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir saw a 8.3% decrease in the same thing during the time period.

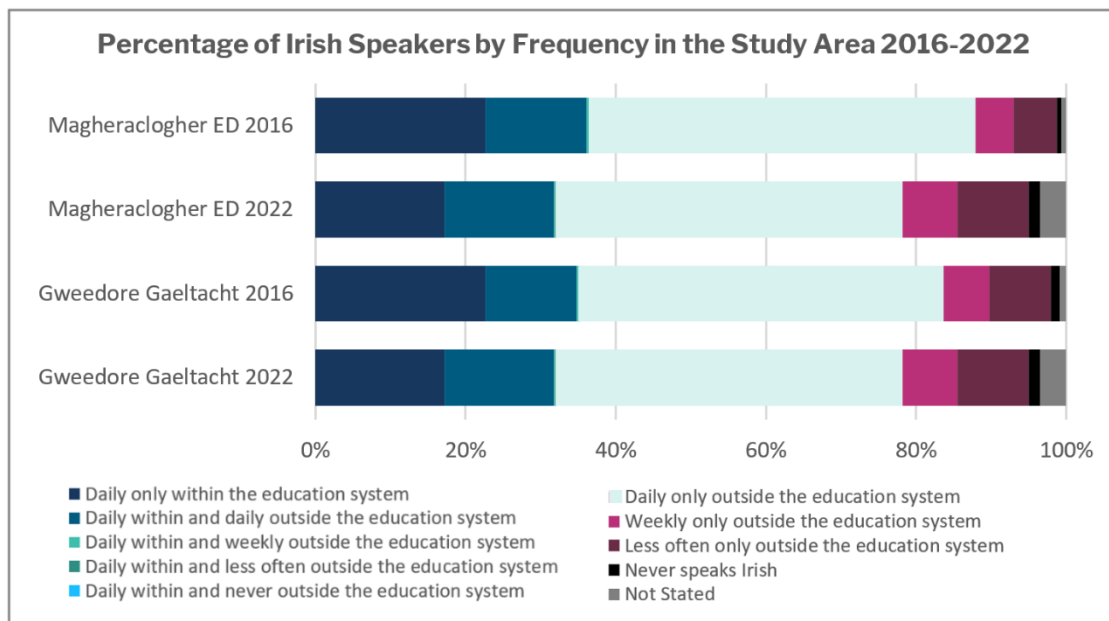


Figure 6-1: Percentage of Irish Speakers by Frequency in the Study Area 2016-2022.

The 7.2% decrease of people who speak Irish daily within the Magheraclogher ED from 2016-2022 shows that there is significant pressure on the Irish Language in the local area. However, as displayed by **Figure 6-1** above, which visualises the data in **Table 5-3**, the majority of people in both the Gaeltacht and the Electoral District speak Irish on a daily basis (78% in the Gaeltacht and 83% in the ED). It is also important to note that due to the relatively small populations in the Magheraclogher ED and to an extent An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir, a relatively small number of people shifting between categories can have a significant effect on the changes to percentages. However, overall the data which is included in **Table 5-1** to **Table 5-3** (inclusive), represents a downward trend in the number of people able to speak the Irish Language in both An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir and the Magheraclogher ED.

Policy GAE-P-2 of the DCDP requires a language condition to be imposed “*on any planning permission for multiple residential development of 2 more dwellings in the Gaeltacht requiring that the proportion of units to be occupied by Irish speakers equates to the proportion of Irish speakers within the subject DED (based on the latest available census data) subject to a minimum of 85% rounded to the nearest whole number of units where necessary*”. The assignment of 16 or more units would achieve the 85% rate set out in **Policy GAE-P-2** of the DCDP and would be considered to have a positive effect on the use of the Irish language. This will serve to ensure the area continues to have a strong Irish Language speaking population, within sociable proximity and is the recommended approach.

7.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any undue negative impacts on the Irish Language or the Irish culture in Doiri Beaga itself, the Magheraclogher ED, or An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir, should **Policy GAE-P-2** of the DCDP be applied.

The proposed development of 19 no. social housing units is in line with the policies and objectives which are contained within the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region, the Donegal County Council Development Plan 2024-2030 and An Ghaeltacht Gaoth Dobhair, Rann na Feirste, Anagaire agus Loch an Iúir Language Plan. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with the principle of sustainable planning and development of the area.

The proposed development will provide additional residential units within Doiri Beaga which will augment and support the existing population. The provision of additional housing units in the Gaeltacht area can have a positive impact on the linguistic integrity of the area by virtue of ensuring the supply of high-quality housing stock in the Irish speaking region which has faced current and previous shortages. Furthermore, the provision of 16 no. homes, which are subject to the enurement clause for Irish speakers as outlined in **Policy GAE-P-2** of the DCDP, will have a positive impact on the linguistic integrity of the area by ensuring the number of Irish speakers in the vicinity is increased.

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 within Doiri Beaga.

