

Childcare Assessment Report

For Residential Development at Stepside, Co. Dublin
on behalf of McGarrell Reilly Homes Ltd.

July 2022



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1. Introduction

McGarrell Reilly Homes Ltd., the Applicant, intend to apply for permission to An Bord Pleanála for a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) that will consist of 118 no. residential units and a 156sq.m. childcare facility at a site located in Stepside, Co. Dublin.

To support this application, McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants (MH Planning) were appointed to carry out a Childcare Demand Assessment to understand the need, or otherwise, for a childcare facility to form part of the proposed development.

This report examines childcare need in the context of (a) pre-school care i.e., children aged 0-4 years, and (b) part-time care for after school i.e., primary school aged children.

To inform this assessment, relevant data from Census 2016 is analysed. Existing and permitted childcare provision within 1km of the proposed development site is identified along with permitted residential development located within the catchment area. The demand for childcare spaces likely to be generated by the proposed development is also calculated.

Having regard to the information gathered it is deemed appropriate that the proposed development include a childcare facility and accordingly the design submitted includes a creche capable of accommodating 27 no. pre-school and primary school children.

2. Methodology

MH Planning assessed a variety of sources in the preparation of this report that included;

- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Childcare Committee for supplementary information on future childcare provision and demand;
- Pobal Childcare Map and TUSLA Maps to identify the existing childcare facilities in the study area;
- TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) Early Years Inspectorate Report and School Age Register to gather capacity and service type data;
- An Bord Pleanála and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's online planning database for details relating to development proposals in the surrounding area; and
- Phone survey to ascertain the capacity of existing childcare facilities.

McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants contacted Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Childcare Committee on 14th June 2022. They advised that National Childcare Scheme (NCS) portal and TUSLA Register for Early Years Inspectorate and School Age should be consulted for information regarding the current provision of childcare for pre-school and after school.

Early Years Inspectorate Reports¹ from TUSLA were available for all identified pre-school facilities and the School Age register² was available for all after school services. The relevant data extracted from the reports and register have been used to carry out the assessment.

In addition, a supplementary phone survey was undertaken with childcare providers in the local area to ascertain their capacities. It should be noted that it was not possible to get definitive information on capacities due to low levels of response and facilities citing commercial sensitivities/data protection issues.

In accordance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001, this Childcare Assessment Report establishes the following:

- The emerging demographic profile of the area, and;
- The existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities in the study area.

¹ [Early Years Inspection ReportsTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

² [04_April_End_External_Register_-_School_Age_1.pdf \(tusla.ie\)](#)

To conduct the study of the emerging demographic profile, census data from Glencullen Electoral Division (ED) was assessed and compared with national and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's averages across a number of datasets that include:

- Total Population;
- Children aged 0-4;
- Children aged 5-12;
- Females aged 25-44 (peak fertility);
- Females aged 45+ (outside peak fertility); and
- Total population aged 65+.

2.1 Study Area

Within the context of this urban location, it was deemed appropriate to audit existing childcare provision within a 1km catchment of the subject site, equitable to a c.10 to 15-minute walk time. Given the site's location and access to public transport, this distance is considered to be a reasonable catchment for future occupants of the proposed development to access childcare services.

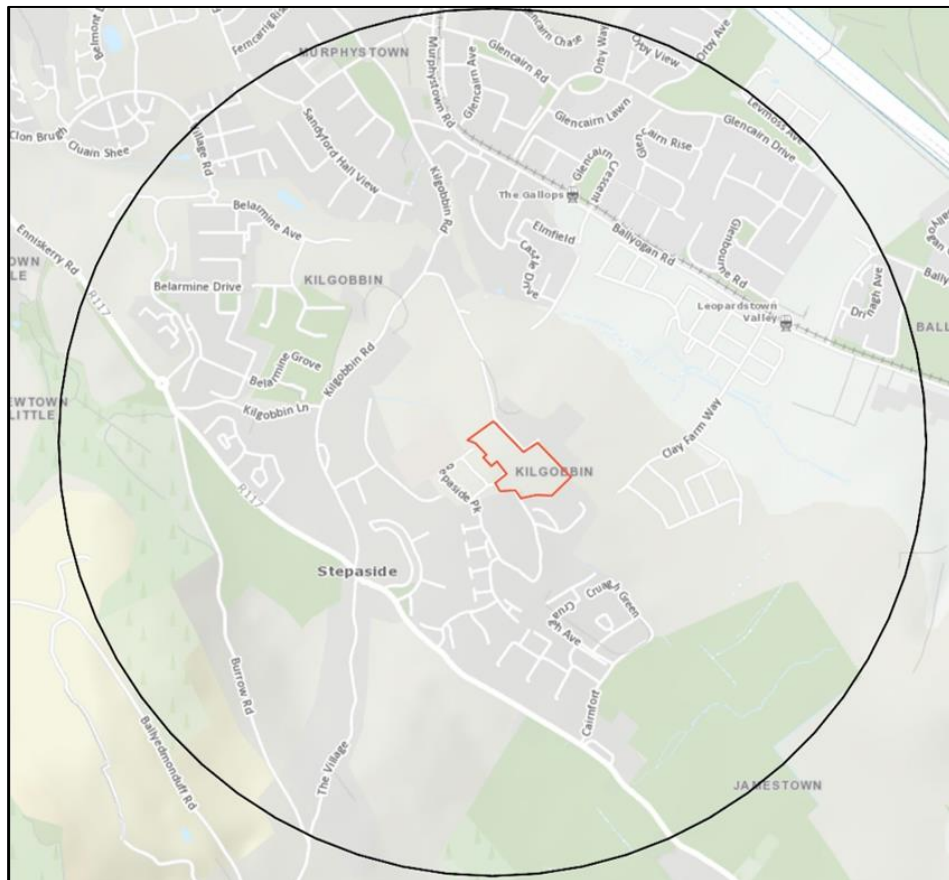


Figure 1 - 1km Catchment Area with subject site outlined in red (maps.ie)

3. Planning Policy

The relevant policy for the provision of childcare facilities is as follows:

3.1 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001

The Childcare Guidelines (2001) highlight that planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary e.g., where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments.

One childcare facility for each 75 dwellings is considered appropriate. The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

Any modification of the indicative standard should have regard to:

- The make-up of the proposed development; and
- The results of any childcare needs analysis.

3.2 Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, as amended, 2020

Regarding the provision of childcare facilities, **Section 4.7** the Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (the Apartments Guidelines) (2020) states:

Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for the Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in the apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic area.

Further to the above, the Apartments Guidelines (2020) also note:

***One bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision** and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms. (emp. added)*

3.3 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 (The Development Plan) includes **Policy PHP6** that aims to:

- *Encourage the provision of appropriate childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments and to improve/expand existing childcare facilities across the County. In general, at least one childcare facility should be provided for all new residential developments subject to demographic and geographic needs.*
- *Encourage the provision of childcare facilities in a sustainable manner to encourage local economic development and to assist in addressing disadvantage.*

The proposed development is in line with Policy PHP6, by providing for a childcare facility.

Policy PHP3 of the Development Plan concerns 'Planning for Sustainable Communities' and includes policy objectives to:

- *Plan for communities in accordance with the aims, objectives, and principles of 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide' and any amendment thereof.*
- ***Ensure that an appropriate level of supporting neighbourhood infrastructure is provided*** or that lands are reserved for Sustainable Neighbourhood Infrastructure (SNI), in conjunction with, and as an integral component of, residential development in new residential communities as identified in the Core Strategy (see Figure 2.9, Chapter 2).
- *Identify, provide and/or improve (as appropriate) supporting sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure in tandem with residential development in renewal/ redevelopment areas and existing residential neighbourhoods.*
- *Create healthy and attractive places to live consistent with NPO 4 of the NPF and RPO 9.10 of the RSES.*

The proposed development is consistent with objective PHP3 of the Development Plan regarding provision of supporting neighbourhood infrastructure, by incorporating a childcare facility.

Section 12.3.2.4 of the Development Plan states:

- *"Where it is proposed or required to provide a new childcare facility as part of a new residential or commercial development, **the facility shall be constructed in tandem with the overall scheme.**"*
- *"To address the need for childcare and make childcare more accessible to everybody in the County, the developer shall seek to secure an operator and open the facility at an early stage preferably prior to the occupation*

of the residential units. In this regard, the developer shall and submit phasing details for the development and include details of the intended operation of the facility relative to the completion and occupation of dwellings / commercial buildings.

4. Demographic Profile

In advance of analysing the local demographics, some key State and County statistics that emerged from the 2016 Census (CSO) that are of particular relevance include:

- Birth rates in the State are continuing to fall since 2009;
- The number of pre-school children in the State fell by 7% between 2011 and 2016;
- The State's 65 years and over age group had the largest increase in population, rising by 19.1%;
- The population aged 65 and over in DLR increased by 16%;
- Old age dependency in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is 24.2%, four percent higher than the State average;
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has one of the lowest youth dependency ratios (0-14) in the State, at 27.9%; and,
- The average age in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is 39.7 years, higher than the state average which is 37.4.

4.1 Census 2016 Relevant Statistics

The site is located within the Glencullen ED.

The relevant 2016 Census (CSO) data was retrieved and analysed, as well as for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, and the State. The key statistics relevant to childcare requirements are set out below.

In the **0 to 4** age group:

- 7% of the State's population is aged 0-4.
- 6.3% of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown population is aged 0-4.
- 9% of the Glencullen ED is aged 0-4.

In the **5 to 12** age group:

- 11.5% of the State's population is aged 5-12.
- 9.8% of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown population is aged 5-12.
- 13.3% of Glencullen ED population is aged 5-12.

In the female **25 to 44** age category:

- 28% of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown's female population is aged 25-44.
- 36% of the female population in the ED are aged 25-44.

In the female **45 plus** age category:

- 41.7% of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown female population are aged 45+.
- 27.7% of the female population in the ED are aged 45+.

In the **65 plus** age category:

- 13.4% of State population is aged 65 years and over
- 16% of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown population is aged 65 years and over.
- 6.2% of Glencullen ED population is aged 65 years and over.

5. Demand Generated by the Proposed Development

The proposed development provides for a total of 118 no. residential units. The breakdown of the proposed units is as follow:

- 28 no. 1-bedroom apartment units,
- 69 no. 2-bedroom apartment units,
- 10 no. 3-bedroom housing units,
- 11 no. 4-bedroom housing units.

As stated, all 1-bedroom units can be discounted. Furthermore, notwithstanding that the Apartment Guidelines state 2-bedroom units may in whole or part be discounted for the purpose of calculating childcare provision needs, this assessment takes a robust approach and includes all 2-bedroom plus units.

As such, there are 90 no. units that would be suitable for families that may generate a demand for childcare spaces.

Utilising the State's average household size of 2.75 persons per unit, in accordance with standardised Census of Population data for Dublin City, 90 no. units, capable of accommodating families, will yield a population of 248 people.

5.1 Pre-School: Demand Resulting from the Proposed Development

Data extrapolated from Census 2016 identified that 9% of children in the Study Area are aged 0-4 years old. The proposed development would thus generate 23 no. children in the 0-4 age category, i.e., pre-school age.

The Quarterly National Household Survey, Childcare, Quarter 3, 2016 is the most recent published information on childcare uptake in creche settings. The most common non-parental childcare type identified in the survey for pre-school children is a creche/Montessori/playgroup facility. This type of childcare is used by 19% of the State’s pre-school age children, while the Dublin uptake is higher at 25%.

It is considered the introduction of the Government’s Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme has likely increased the percentage utilising creches. Accordingly this assessment assumes that all 3- and 4-year-old children generated by the proposed development will require care in a childcare facility and that the higher Dublin uptake of 25% for 0–2-year-olds will require care in a childcare facility.

In 2016 there were 1,781 no. 0–4-year-olds in the Study Area and more specifically 1,073 no. (60.2%) 0–2-year-olds and 708 no. (39.8%) 3 and 4-year-olds.

Applying these percentages to the proposed development, of the 23 no. children generated by the scheme, 14 no. would be in the 0-2 age category and 9 no. would be aged 3-4 years.

Estimated Childcare Generation from the Proposed Development		
State (2016 Census)	Average Household Size	2.75
Proposed Development	No. of family units (exc. 1 bed and studio)	90
	No. of residents within family units	248
	No. of children 0-4 category (9%)	23
	No. of Children 0-2 (Study Area 60.2%)	14
	No. of Children 3-4 (Study Area 39.8%)	9
	Q3, 2016 QHNS Childcare (Dublin 25% of 0-2 utilise creche)	4

Table 1 - Estimated Childcare Generation from the Proposed Development

Therefore, the scheme would generate a total pre-school demand of **13 no. pre-school childcare spaces.**

5.2 Primary After-School Care: Demand Resulting from the Proposed Development

Census 2016 data identified that 13.3% of children in the Study Area are aged 5-12 years. The proposed development would therefore generate 33 no. children in this age category, i.e., primary after-school care age.

The Quarterly National Household Survey, Childcare, Quarter 3 2016 identifies that nationally 8% of primary school children are cared for in a crèche/Montessori/playgroup/after-school facility, with parental/relative care accounting for 90%. In Dublin, 11% require external after-school care.

Estimated Primary After School Generation from the Proposed Development		
Proposed Development	No. of residents within family units	248
	No. of children 5-12 category (13.3%)	33
	Q3, 2016 QHNS Childcare (Dublin 11% utilise creche)	4

Table 2 - Estimated Primary After School Generation from the Proposed Development.

Applying the Dublin rate of 11% to the proposed development, then the number of primary after school places likely to be generated by the proposed development will be 4 no. spaces.

Therefore, the proposed development would generate a combined requirement (pre-school and after-school care) for 17 no. childcare spaces.

6. Existing Childcare Facilities Audit

A total of 15 no. existing childcare facilities were identified in the study area, catering for pre-school and afterschool (see **Figure 2**). The facilities are geographically concentrated at Leopardstown Valley/Ballyogan, Bellarmine and Murphystown areas within c.10 to 15-minute walking distance from the subject site.

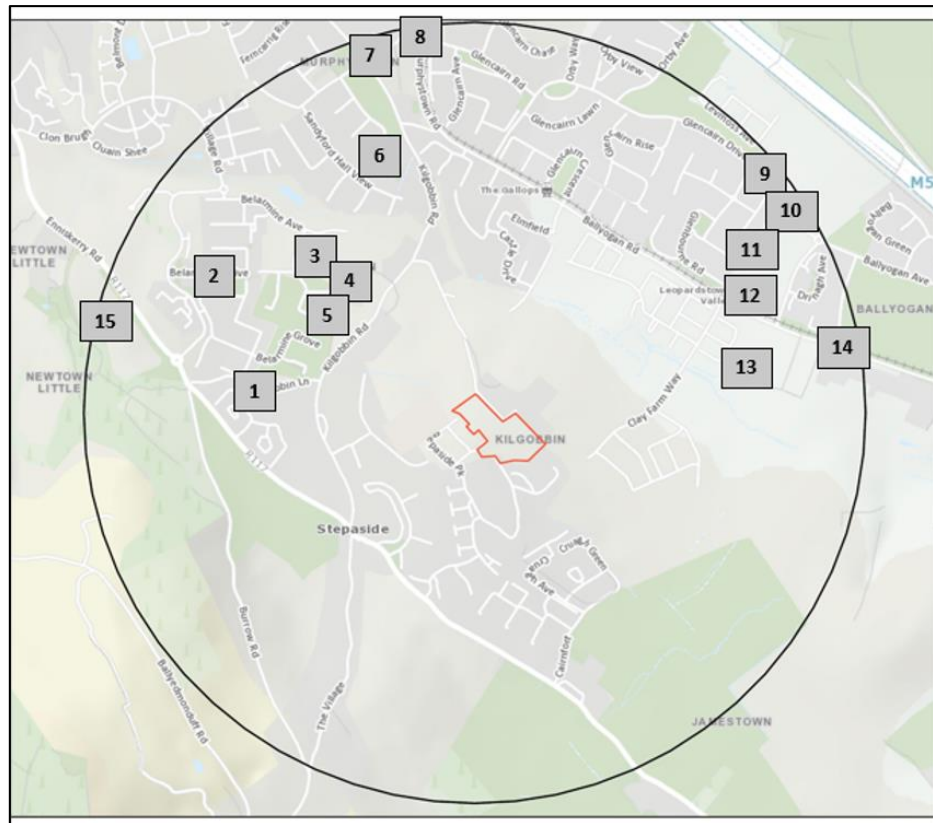


Figure 2 - Existing Childcare Facilities within the Study Area.

The childcare capacity was retrieved from TUSLA Register and Inspectorate Reports (See table 3).

1,129 no. childcare spaces are currently available, comprised of 825 no. pre-school spaces and 304 no. after school spaces. (Table 3)

No.	Name	Facility Type	Capacity
1	Daisy Chain Montessori & Childcare Stepside	Full Day/ Part Time/ Sessional After School	48 0
2	Giraffe Childcare Stepside	Full Day/ Part Time/ Sessional	130
3	Explorers After School Stepside Educate Together	After School	72

No.	Name	Facility Type	Capacity
4	Naíonra Thaobh na Coille	Sessional	44
5	Naíonra Seomra Mary	Part Time/ Sessional After School	22 20
6	Kid's Biz Day Nursery	Full Day/ Part Time/ Sessional After School	36 16
7	Roola Boola Creche & Montessori - Kilgobbin	Full Day	21
8	Park Montessori School	Sessional	24
9	Mountainside Montessori	Part-Time	22
10	Kids Inc After School Holy Trinity	After School	40
11	Tigers Childcare Leopardstown	Full Day/ Part Time	110
12	Roola Boola Creche & Montessori - Leopardstown	Full Day After School	48 12
13	Links Childcare Leopardstown	Full Day/ Sessional	82
14	Dimples Creche, Montessori & After School	Full Day/ Sessional After School	151 55
15	Rosemont Preschool	Part Time After School	66 60
		Total:	1,079
		Pre-School (Full Day/Sessional/ Part-Time):	804
		After School:	275

Table 3 Existing Childcare Facilities & Capacity in the Study Area

7. Cumulative Demand

7.1 Existing Demand

There are 1,781 no. children aged between 0-4 within the study area and more specifically 1,073 no. 0-2-year-olds and 708 no. 3-4-year-olds.

For consistency, the same assumption has been made to the existing population as has been applied to the demand generated by the proposed development (section 5) i.e.:

- i. 25% of 0-2 age category would require a creche space.
- ii. 100% of 3-4 age category would require a creche space.

The existing demand for pre-school childcare spaces in the catchment is 977 no. spaces and based on the audit undertaken to inform this report the existing capacity is 804 no. spaces.

In addition, there are 2,621 no. primary school children located within the study area. As previously mentioned, 11% of children in the Dublin area require external after-school care. Therefore, the existing demand is 289 no. spaces, with existing facilities having capacity for 275 no. children.

7.2 Future Demand from Permitted Development

In addition to the proposed development, a further 3 no. permitted developments have been granted permission in the local area for residential led developments that include childcare facilities. These include;

- **ABP 304288-19:** Strategic Housing Development – Phase 1C at Clay Farm was granted permission by An Bord Pleanála for 192 no. residential units comprising of 12 no. studio units, 70 no. 1-bed units and 110 no. 2-bed units. The proposed development also included a childcare facility of 399 sq.m.

It is estimated that approximately 20% of this childcare facility would be reserved for support facilities such as staff rooms, toilets, kitchenet, storage and circulation etc. The remaining 319.2 sq.m can be considered 'clear floor space' for children. It is estimated that the capacity of this creche will be 117 no. children.

- **ABP 301522-18:** Strategic Housing Development – Phase 2 at Clay Farm, Stepside was granted by An Bord Pleanála for 927 no. residential units of 115 no. 1-bed units, 391 no. 2-bed units, 200 no. 3-bed units, 221 no. 4+ bed units. The proposed development also included a neighbourhood centre and childcare facility of 604sqm.

It is estimated that approximately 20% of this childcare facility would be reserved for support facilities such as staff rooms, toilets, kitchenet, storage and circulation etc. The remaining 483.2 sq.m can be considered 'clear floor space.' It is estimated that the capacity for this creche will be 177 no. children.

- **ABP 307415-20:** Strategic Housing Development at Lisieux Hall, Murphystown Road, Dublin 18 was granted permission by An Bord Pleanála for 200 no. apartments comprising of 20 no. studio units, 72

no. 1-bed units, 100 no. 2-bed units and 8 no 3-bed units and a 356 sq.m creche with capacity for c. 60 children.

Estimated Childcare Generation from the Permitted Developments		
State (2016 Census)	Average Household Size	2.75
Permitted Developments	No. of Units suitable for families (exc. 1 bed and studio)	1,030
	No. of residents within family units	2,833
	No. of children 0-4 category (9%)	255
	No. of Children 0-2 (Study Area 60.2%)	154
	No. of Children 3-4 (Study Area 39.8%)	102
	Q3, 2016 QHNS Childcare (Dublin 25% of 0-2 utilise creche)	39
	No. of children 5-12 category (13.3%)	377
	Q3, 2016 QHNS Childcare (Dublin 11% utilise creche)	42

Table 4 -Demand Generated from the Permitted Developments

Applying the same methodology, only 2 or more bedrooms are considered as a family unit.

The combination of all permitted schemes would provide for 1,030 no. units suitable for families which would yield a population of 2,833 no. people, including 255 no. children aged 0-4 years and 377 no. children aged 5-12 years old.

In total, the schemes would generate a demand for 141 no. childcare spaces and 42 no. after school care spaces.

In total the permitted developments would generate a combined requirement (pre-school and after-school care) for 183 no. childcare spaces.

It is noted that the three approved childcare facilities are sufficiently sized to accommodate the demand that is likely to be generated by these permitted developments.

7.3 Cumulative Demand

The cumulative demand has regard to the following:

- i. Existing Demand, as per Section 7.1 (977 no. pre-school places and 289 no. after-school care places).
- ii. Future Demand from Permitted Developments, as per Section 7.2 (141 no. childcare places and 42 no. after school care places).
- iii. Demand Generated by the Proposed Development, as per Section 5 (13 no. pre-school places and 4 no. after-school care places).

Therefore, the calculated combined demand is 1,131 no. pre-school places and 335 no. afterschool spaces. The total calculated demand for both pre-school and after school spaces is 1,466 spaces.

8. Assessment

The Childcare Guidelines indicate that in new communities/new housing areas, planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas and other areas of residential development unless there are significant reasons to the contrary. For housing, a benchmark provision of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings is recommended.

The proposed development includes 90 no. units capable of generating a childcare need and the combined demand for pre-school and primary after school care is 17 no. spaces. The total pre-school demand is 13 no. spaces of which 8 no. are in the 0-2 age category and 5 no. are in the 3-4-year category. 4 no. children would be in the 5+ age category for after school care.

This proposed development incorporates a 156 sq.m. creche. The clear floor space for children is calculated to be 68.7 sq.m, the remaining space is reserved for support facilities such as offices, kitchen/canteen, buggy storage, toilets, and circulation space.

The proposed design is consistent with the requirements of S.I. No. 632/2016 - Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. It incorporates a dedicated secure outdoor play area that is directly accessible from the creche and exclusively for the use of children.

Schedule 7 of the Childcare Regulations, 2016, establish the minimum floor space requirements for childcare facilities. As established in Table 5, the total capacity of the proposed creche is 27 no. pupils. The proposed childcare facility is thus appropriately sized to accommodate the demand generated by the proposed development and will contribute to the provision of childcare facilities locally.

Age	Floor Space Required per Child (sq.m.)	Total Floor Space (sq.m)	Average no. of Children per Age Group
1-2	2.8	21	7
2-3	2.35	17.7	7
3-6+	2.3	30	13
Total Capacity of Creche (No. children)			27

Table 5 Capacity of Proposed Creche

9. Conclusion

This Childcare Assessment Report has been carried out to determine the existing childcare provision in the study area and to ascertain the need, or likely demand, if any, for a creche facility to be provided as part of the proposed development.

A demographic study of the locality confirmed that the study area has a higher rate of children compared with the DLR County and State averages. 9% of the population of the study area is aged 0-4, compared to 6.3% in the county and 7% in the state. 13.3% of children are aged between 5-12 years are within the study area. This contrasts with 9.8% in the County and 11.5% in the State.

The childcare assessment identified 15 no. childcare facilities within the catchment area with a capacity of 804 no. pre-school and 275 no. after school places. Furthermore, 3 no. childcare facilities have also been approved within the catchment area with an estimated capacity of 354 no. places to serve the future developments.

Based on the robust methodology applied, the proposed development would generate a demand for 13 no. pre-school childcare spaces and 4 no. after-school spaces for children of primary school age (i.e. 17 no. total).

The provision of a 156sq.m childcare facility with capacity for 27 no. children as part of the development proposal will accommodate the demand likely to be generated by the proposed development and is sufficiently over-sized to supplement wider need locally.