

Childcare Demand Report

Millfield Service Station, Redforge Road, Blackpool, Cork

September 2021



Prepared on behalf of
Bellmount Developments Limited

1.0 Introduction

McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants have been appointed by Bellmount Developments Limited to undertake a Childcare Demand Report as part of a proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) at Millfield Service Station, Redforge Road, Blackpool, Cork.

The proposed development consists of:

-) The demolition of existing structures on site including a single storey building, pump island canopy, 4 no. fuel pumps and the decommissioning/removal of 4 no. underground fuel tanks; and
-) The construction of 114 no. Build to Rent apartments (comprising a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartments) in 2 no. blocks, ranging in height from 4 to 9 storeys;
-) Residential amenity facilities including a reception, residents gym, lounge area and shared workspace;
-) The provision of landscaping and amenity areas including an enclosed courtyard and 1 no. rooftop garden;
-) The provision of public realm improvements on Redforge Road including widened footpaths and pavement improvements, pedestrian crossing, tree planting, raised tables/planters and seating areas; and
-) All associated ancillary development including pedestrian/cyclist facilities, lighting, drainage, boundary treatments, bin and bicycle storage, ESB Sub-station and plant at ground floor level.

National Planning Guidelines outline that childcare facilities are not necessarily required within apartment schemes and should be assessed on an individual basis. They also outline that studio and 1-bed units should be discounted when assessing childcare demand arising from a residential scheme.

This report will demonstrate that the childcare demand generated from the 2-bed units on site will be minimal and can be accommodated in the existing childcare facilities within the area. The following report will assess the relevant planning policy, the demographics of the area and will provide information on the childcare facilities and their capacity levels.



Fig. 1 Site location (site outlined in red)

1.1 Study Methodology

Given the urban nature of the area, the study area was defined as a 2km radius from the subject site. This distance is considered reasonable when accessing essential services such as childcare. A 2km radius offers people the option to access these services by means other than private vehicles – the alternative means considered feasible in this area includes on foot, and by bike. This view is justified based on Central Statistics Office (CSO) data outlined below.

Census 2016 data highlights that 36% of the population of the Commons Electoral Division (ED), the location of the subject site, travel on foot, by bicycle and/or public transport to access work, school or college. Other data identifies that 34% of the Commons ED population do not have access to a car, meaning over 1/3 of the ED population access services via alternative means of travel to private vehicle transport.

The 'Study Area' encompasses a number of ED areas, as outlined in figure 2. The urban nature of the area ensures a substantial catchment area population is captured over a relatively small study area. Data from the combined ED areas will be used in section 3 of this report. The ED areas include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Commons | 7 Fair Hill C |
| 2 St. Mary's (part rural) | 8 Fair Hill B |
| 3 The Glen B | 9 Farranferris B |
| 4 The Glen A | 10 Farranferris A |
| 5 Mayfield | 11 Blackpool A |
| 6 Montenotte B | |

A number of sources were consulted in the preparation of this report:

-) Tusla Reports;
-) Census 2016 SAPMAP data; and
-) Direct contact was made, via email and phone, with each of the childcare facilities identified within the study area.

The response levels from the childcare facilities was relatively high with only 3 no. facilities not responding. This has allowed the report to reach definitive conclusions regarding available childcare capacity in the study area.

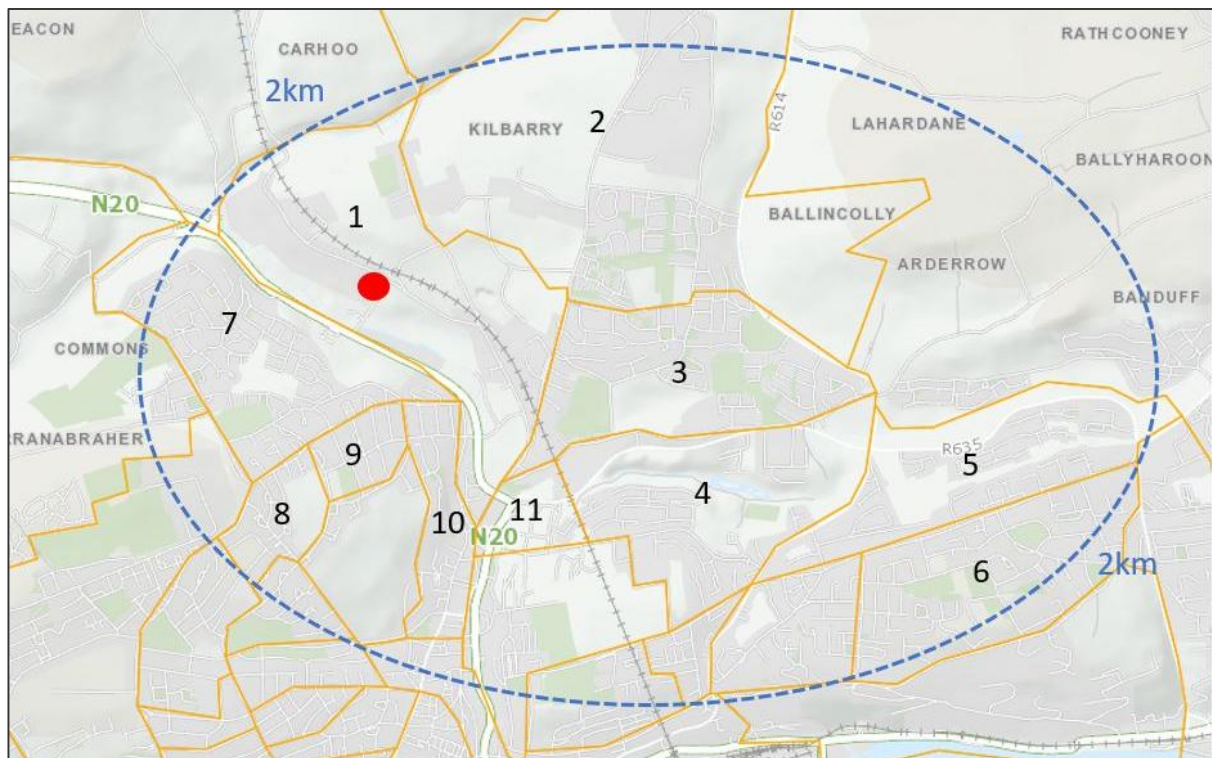


Fig. 2 The study area (site identified in red)

2.0 Planning Policy Context

The Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 and the Childcare Facilities Guideline (2001) published by the Department of Environment require the provision of a crèche where in excess of 75 dwellings is proposed.

2.1 Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021

Objective 7.7 Childcare Facilities outlines Cork City Council's objectives regarding childcare facilities in the Cork City area, these include:

Cork City Council will support the provision of high quality childcare facilities throughout the city suited to the needs of the given area and will:

i) Require purpose built childcare facilities as part of proposals for new residential developments of more than 75 dwelling units. However, where it can be clearly established that existing facilities are sufficient, alternative arrangements will be considered.

Paragraph 7.11 identifies the correct locations for childcare facilities, stating:

Suitable locations for childcare facilities are considered to be places of employment, educational and community establishments, city, district, neighbourhood and local centres as well as areas convenient to public transport nodes and residential areas.

2.2 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

Appendix 2 of the 'Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities' establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas (Paragraphs 2.4 and 3.3.1 refer). One facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The Guidance acknowledges that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement.

The results of any childcare needs analysis carried out as part of a city / county childcare strategy should also be considered.

Appendix 2 also states that the threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.

2.3 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2020

The Design Standards for New Apartments was first published in 2018 and was updated in 2020 to include the Shared Living / Co-living accommodation sector. Section 4.7 of the Guidelines states:

Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in 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 profile of the area. 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.

With regards to Build to Rent (BTR) developments, the guideline outlines the type of residential support facilities required in BTR schemes – these include facilities aligned to the operation of the scheme such as 'laundry facilities, concierge and management facilities, maintenance and repairs as well as waste management'.

Recommended residential services and amenities for communal purposes include 'sports facilities, shared TV/lounge areas, work/study spaces, function rooms for use as private dining and kitchen facilities'. The Guidelines do not recommend the provision of childcare facilities within BTR schemes.

3.0 Assessment

The local need for new childcare facilities in the study area was considered in detail in accordance with current guidelines. Consistent with the Childcare Guidelines, we established the following:

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

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Area

The study area, comprising a combined 11 no. ED areas, contains the following data taken from Census 2016. The demographic profile of the study area will be compared with City and National averages across a number of datasets.

The population of the study area as per Census 2016 is 26,053 persons, this has increased from a 2011 Census population of 25,420 - an increase of 2.5%. This percentage increase is low when compared to the

city wide growth of 5.4% and country wide growth of 3.8%. In 2016, 5.8% of the population of the study area were of pre-school going age (i.e. 0-4 years), which represents a drop in numbers when compared to the 6.4% in 2011. This is slightly above the citywide average of 5% and lower the national average of 6.9%.

By way of comparison, 15.4% of the study area population were over the age of 65 in 2016. Approximately 14.5% (i.e. 3,705) of the population were aged between 30-39, however at a cumulative 16.2% of the population, the number of 'One Person' households and 'Couples without Children' was 3,845 in 2016, 2.7% below the comparable state average of 18.9% for the same period.

Demographic travel trends indicate that significant numbers of people commute from the study area to various employment locations in Cork city centre and the wider metropolitan region. A total of 7,024 of the population aged 5 years and over travel a distance of between 15 and 45 mins each day to work, school and college. This equates to 27.6% of the total study area population, and 47.8% of the commuting population aged 5 years and over.

This indicates substantial levels of commuting to the large employment areas of Cork city centre and various other employment locations throughout Metropolitan Cork. As a result, it is highly probable many of these commuters avail of childcare services outside of the study area.

3.2 Distribution of Childcare Facilities in the Study Area

The study area reflects a 10-20 minute travel time from the subject site, the equivalent of 2km which is regarded as a reasonable travel time to access essential services. This study area yielded a total of 9 no. childcare facilities. The location of these facilities is outlined in Figure 3 below, with the list of the facilities outlined in Table 1. This table identifies the distance of each facility from the site and the relevant recorded travel time the modes of travel considered to be feasible are walking, cycling and driving - public transport is not considered given the configuration of bus routes in the area and the relatively short distances involved.



Fig. 1 Location of childcare facilities (site outlined in red)

No.	Creche Facility	Distance from Site	Walk	Cycle	Drive
1	Muin Preschool	700m	9	4	2
2	Tir Na Nog Montessori	1km	11	5	3
3	Glenfield's Community Childcare	800m	10	4	3
4	Farranree Stepping Stones	1km	11	5	3
5	Little Hands Childcare	750m	9	4	3
6	Glentrasna Community Playschool	1km	11	5	3
7	Oak Park Preschool	1.8km	17	9	5
8	Mayfield Community Playschool	2km	20	10	6
9	The Glen Community Creche	1km	11	5	3

Table 1 Travel times to childcare facilities (all times in minutes)

Table 1 outlines the travel times to the various childcare facilities from the proposed development site. Three possible transport modes – walking, cycling and driving - are considered viable within the study area. All travel times were determined through Google Maps and are deemed to be approximate in nature. All travel times are shown in minutes.

The study area is located close to Cork City Centre and within easy commuting distance of major employment centres within Metropolitan Cork. It is considered reasonable that a sizeable proportion of those commuting to these employment centres may also avail of childcare facilities in these areas. This has been illustrated in the above demographic research and therefore, for the purpose of this preliminary assessment, such facilities have been omitted from the research undertaken. As such, the identified capacity in the area should be viewed as a minimum.

Tusla Regulatory Inspection Reports are available for all 9 no. identified facilities. However, not all reports are current with 2/9 reports dating from 2019 and 7 reports from 2020, see table 2. Thus not all of the relevant data necessary to carry out the assessment was available within these reports.

Creche Facility	Tusla Report
Muin Preschool	2020
Tir Na Nog Montessori	2019
Glenfield's Community Childcare	2020
Farranree Stepping Stones	2020
Little Hands Childcare	2019
Glentrasna Community Playschool	2020
Oak Park Preschool	2020
Mayfield Community Playschool	2020
The Glen Community Creche	2020

Table 1 Tusla Reports

In the absence of this information, data in relation to the facilities was gathered by speaking directly with proprietors of the childcare facilities who advised on the total capacity of the relevant facility and the corresponding number of available places.

The services were first contacted by email inquiring as to the enrolment numbers and current capacity, a number of responses were received via email. Services that did not respond via email were subsequently contacted by phone. Of the 9 no. services identified, no response was received from 3, with all other services responding via email and or over the phone.

The overall findings are summarised as follows:

Creche Facility	Capacity of Facility	Available Places
Muin Preschool	N/A	N/A
Tir Na Nog Montessori	44	5
Glenfield's Community Childcare	46	Full
Farranree Stepping Stones	N/A	N/A
Little Hands Childcare	110	Full
Glentrasna Community Playschool	18	3
Oak Park Preschool	N/A	N/A
Mayfield Community Playschool	24	3
Tir Na Nog Community Creche	19	Full
Total	261	11

Table 2 Capacity of Childcare Facilities

3.3 Future demand as a result of the proposed development

The proposed development consists of 114 no. BTR apartments comprising a mix of 1 and 2-bed units. The unit configuration is as follows – 77 no. 1-bed units and 37 no. 2-bed units. Of the 2-bed units, 6 no. are 3-person and 31 no. are 4-person. As outlined in the planning policy section above, the Apartment Guidelines advise that 1-bed and studio apartments should be discounted when assessing the appropriate level of childcare generated from a scheme. Based on this recommendation, the 77 no. 1-bed units will be excluded from the assessment.

Based on the State average household size of 2.75, the 37 no. units which require childcare provision are likely to generate a population of 102 persons. Based on the assumption that 5.8% of the population of the combined ED areas are of pre-school age (i.e. 0-4 years), the number of pre-school children likely to be generated as a result of the completed development is approximately 6. As outlined previously, it is not probable that all children will require childcare so the figure of 6 is effectively a worst-case scenario in relation to the demand for childcare spaces generated from the proposed development.

The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), Childcare, Q3 2016 states that the percentage of pre-school children minded by their parents is 62%, meaning that 38% of children attend some sort of childcare facility. The most common non-parental childcare type identified in the survey is crèche/Montessori/playgroup/after-school facility. This type of facility is used by 19% of the State's pre-school age children. In light of the foregoing, figures from the QNHS were applied to the proposed scheme resulting in the generation of a potential 1 no. childcare place.

It is clear from the research conducted as part of the assessment that the childcare demand arising from this proposed BTR scheme will be minimal and that the existing childcare facilities in the study area will accommodate such demand.

4.0 Conclusion

This Childcare audit and assessment has been carried out to determine the existing childcare provision within 2km (10-20 minute travel time) of the proposed development site. A catchment area of 2km from the subject site is utilised as this is considered a reasonable distance for future occupants to access childcare services. The modes of travel identified as feasible within the study area are walking, cycling and driving. Public transport was not considered given the configuration of bus routes in the area and the relatively short distances involved.

Based on the worst-case scenario, the subject site may generate an additional 6 no. childcare places, although it has been outlined previously that in accordance with national research it is not probable that all children will require childcare. This, coupled with the high levels of commuting from the area, and the probability of accessing childcare services in these locations, indicate that any childcare demand arising from the proposed development will be accommodated by existing childcare facilities in the area.