

Childcare Demand Report

For Development at Broomfield West, Midleton, Co. Cork.

on behalf of Castle Rock Homes (Midleton) Ltd.

November 2023



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CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Study Methodology..... | 4 |
| 3. Policy Context | 6 |
| 3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 | 6 |
| 3.2 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 | 6 |
| 3.3 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2020..... | 7 |
| 4. Assessment..... | 7 |
| 4.1 Demographic Profile of the Area | 8 |
| 4.2 Distribution of the Childcare Facilities in the Area..... | 8 |
| 4.3 Future Demand as a Result of the Proposed Development | 11 |
| 4.4 Demand from the Neighbouring Permitted Scheme Based on the Number of Permitted Units..... | 12 |
| 5. Conclusion | 14 |

1. Introduction

McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants have been appointed by Castle Rock Homes (Midleton) Ltd., to prepare a Childcare Demand Report which considers existing facilities within a 2.0 km radius of Broomfield West, Midleton, Co. Cork.

The report will inform the proposed development of 272 no. units, creche, community use, and all associated site development works at Broomfield West, Midleton, Co. Cork.

This report provides details on the current and future capacity of existing proposed childcare facilities in the area along with the demand for places likely to be generated by the proposed development.



Figure 1: Site Layout Plan

2. Study Methodology

The Central Statistics Office began the publication of the Census 2022 data results on May 30th, 2023. The publication began with a national summary for Census 2022 followed by a series of themed reports. Profile 4 – Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) provides a range of geographical levels from state to small areas. This includes a series of themes for each small area. For the purpose of this assessment a comparison of the 2022 Census Data and 2016 Data will be used.

The study area consists of two no. Electoral Districts (Eds): Midleton Rural and Midleton Urban. The site is situated within the Midleton Rural ED, however both Electoral Districts are considered in this study, as it is reasonable that residents will avail of these services in both rural and urban Eds. The combined ED's have a total population of 13,486 persons (3,797 Midleton Urban, 10,049 Midleton Rural). Both electoral divisions have been included within this assessment as it would be considered reasonable that residents would avail of services within both ED's.



Figure 2: Mapped Electoral Divisions - Midleton Rural and Urban (Site Location indicated with a red star)

The study area chosen for the proposed development has been determined by applying a 2 km radius and/or 0–20-minute travel time to ensure that the childcare facility can be accessed by a range of travel resources such as walking, cycling, and driving.

For the purpose of this assessment, public transport has not been considered as a travel mode option given the relatively short distance from the subject site to the childcare locations.

A number of sources were consulted in the preparation of the report.

- Tusla Reports;
- Census 2022 and 2016 SAPMAP Data;
- The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028; and
- The Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001.

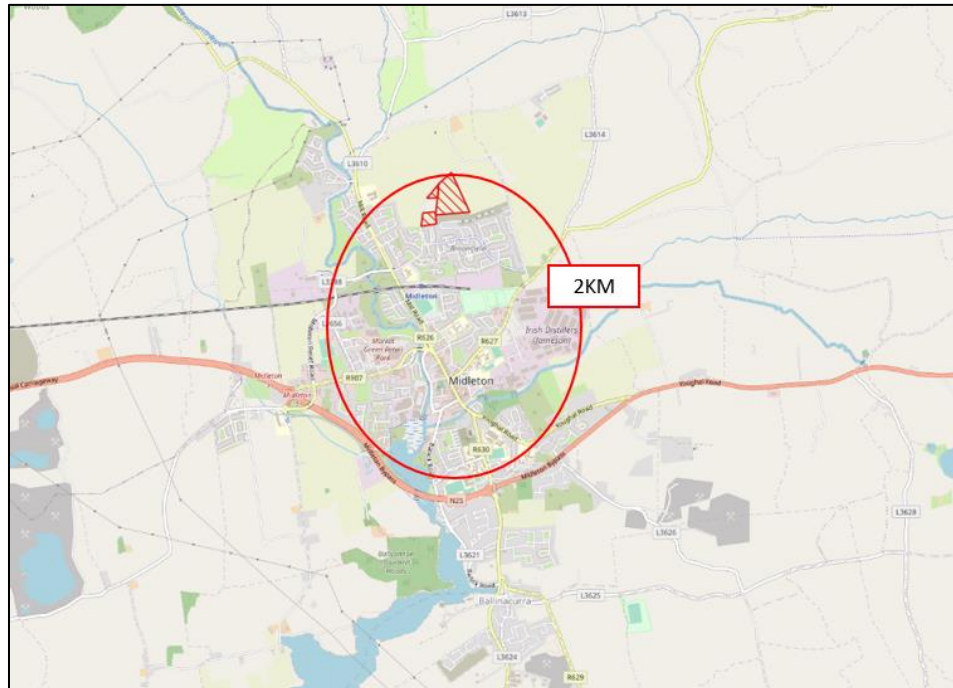


Figure 3: The Study Area (2KM)

3. Policy Context

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 require the provision of a creche be assessed where in excess of 75 dwellings are proposed.

This policy review looks at the following material to guide our assessment approach.

- Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001;
- Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2022; and
- Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028.

3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 outlines that the provision of childcare units forms a large key component of social infrastructure within new developments. Cork County Development Plan (2022-2028) Objective SC6-4 relates to the provision of childcare and states the following:

‘To support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations and seek their provision concurrent with development, having regard to population targets for the area and in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Local Authorities 2001 and regard to the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Centres 2019.’

The plan has regard to the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities for Planning Authorities and outlines that the Council will have regard to the existing provision of childcare facilities when considering new facilities as part of residential developments. This is to ensure there isn't an over provision of creche facilities within an area.

Finally, the Development Plan states that childcare facilities are acceptable in principle subject to normal planning considerations in all land use categories but must be developed in a sustainable manner and at an appropriate scale in the areas where they are needed.

3.2 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

Appendix 2 of the 'Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001' establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. One facility providing a minimum of 20 new childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The Guidance further acknowledges that other case specific assumptions can lead to an increase and/or decrease in this requirement.

Further to this assumption, the result of any childcare needs analysis should be considered as part of the overall county childcare strategy.

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

3.3 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2022

With regard to Childcare Facilities and apartment developments, Section 4.7 of the 2022 Apartment Guidelines notes the following:

'Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which 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'.

4. Assessment

The local childcare demand likely to be generated by the proposal and the number of existing facilities in the vicinity to cater for such demand was examined in accordance with the current guidelines and policies. In the first instance, the TUSLA Pre-School Inspection Reports for different facilities in the locality were examined. However, it was found that these are often outdated and thus required closer inspection. Therefore, in order to gain more detailed information, a survey of the different childcare facilities in the area was carried out, seeking numbers of current Pre-School children registered for the academic 2022/2023 school year, as well as the available capacity of each facility. Where proprietors could not be contacted, figures from the most recent TUSLA reports are referenced. In accordance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 the following assessment was established:

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

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Area

The demographic profile of Midleton was examined in the CSO Census of Population Statistics 2022 and includes a comparative analysis with National averages. The results of the Census 2022 showed an overall population increase to 5,149,139 persons in Ireland from 2016 to 2022, a total increase of 8% nationally. This is also reflected within the growth of the population within the settlement of Midleton. In 2016 the combined rural and urban population for Midleton was a total of 12,496. The total population in 2022 was 13,846 persons. This represents a 11% increase of persons within the space of six years.

Demographic trends indicate the largest proportion of the population within the Midleton settlement is between the age of 45-49, totalling 1,283 persons. Following closely behind is the age 40-44 bracket, with a total of 1,206 persons.

In 2016, the total population of pre-school going age (i.e., 0-4 years) was 1,027 persons (8.2 % of the population). In 2022, the total pre-school going age population was 902 persons for Midleton's settlement. This represents a decrease of 125 from the 2016 figures of 1,027 and an overall decrease of 12%. The current percentage of 6.5% of pre-school age (0-4), includes both the urban and rural ED's of Midleton. This is below average for both the State (6.9%) and Cork County Wide (7.5%) percentage figures.

4.2 Distribution of the Childcare Facilities in the Area

As outlined in Section 2 of this report, the study area has been defined by a 2 km radius from the proposed development, encompassing 2 no. Electoral Divisions; Midleton Urban and Midleton Rural. This allowed for a travel time of 0-20 minutes to access childcare services via walking, cycling, and driving. A total of 10 facilities were located within the study area.

The location of these facilities is outlined within Figure 4 below and the list of facilities along with the travel times are outlined within Table 1 below.

Table 1: Childcare Facilities and Travel Time (all times in minutes)

| No. | Name | Distance | Walk | Cycle | Drive |
|-----|---------------------------------|----------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Midleton Community Forum CLG | 2.0 km | 29 mins | 6 mins | 7 mins |
| 2 | Midleton Montessori & Preschool | 2.0 km | 24 mins | 6 mins | 5 mins |
| 3 | Darling Buds Pre-School | 550m | 5 mins | 1 mins | 1 mins |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| 4 | Jack and Jill Childcare Centre Limited | 450m | 4 mins | 1 mins | 1 mins |
| 5 | Singing in the Rain | 1.7 km | 22 mins | 6 mins | 5 mins |
| 6 | Tiny Tots Pre-School | 1.6km | 20 mins | 5 mins | 5 mins |
| 7 | Willow bank Pre-School Group | 400m | 5 mins | 1 mins | 1 mins |
| 8 | Tinga Tinga Childcare | 1.9 km | 23 mins | 6 mins | 5 mins |
| 9 | Sandy Walk | 1.3 km | 17 mins | 4 mins | 3 mins |
| 10 | First Steps Creche | 2.0 km | 29 mins | 6 mins | 7 mins |



Figure 4: Childcare Facilities (1-10 as per the Table above)

The subject site is located just a short walking distance from Midleton's town centre which offers a wide range of amenities services and employment. Midleton is a short drive from Little Island and Cork City which are both central hubs of employment for the surrounding catchment with the location

of international companies such as Eli Lilly, PepsiCo and many more. Therefore, it is considered reasonable that a sizeable proportion of the population commuting to these employment centres would avail of facilities closely located to these areas. The Census 2022 noted a total of 2,495 persons commuting to work, school and/or college from the Midleton Urban ED whilst a total of 7,752 persons commuted from the Rural ED, a combined total of 10,427 aged 5 years and over. This research illustrates that the identified capacity should be viewed as a minimum due to the high likelihood of commuters availing of childcare facilities in closer proximity to employment hubs.

Table 2 outlines the childcare facilities and their current and predicated capacities. This table was informed by contacting the individual facilities by phone and email on two different occasions. By engaging with individual properties, a figure on the total capacity/available capacity of each facility was obtained. When this data could not be acquired from facilities the most up to date TUSLA report was utilised. This was used for 'Midleton Montessori & Preschool' for Table 2 below.

Table 2: Capacity of Childcare Facilities

| No. | Name | Capacity of Facilities | Available Places |
|-----|--|------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Midleton Community Forum CLG | 50 | 10 |
| 2 | Midleton Montessori & Preschool | 60 | 0* |
| 3 | Darling Buds Pre-School | 60 | 33 |
| 4 | Jack and Jill Childcare Centre Limited | 11 | 0 |
| 5 | Singing in the Rain | 17 | 0 |
| 6 | Tiny Tots Pre-School | 5 | 0 |
| 7 | Willow bank Pre-School Group | 8 | 0 |
| 8 | Tinga Tinga Childcare | 95 | 0 |
| 9 | Sandy Walk | 14 | 0 |
| 10 | First Steps Creche | 64 | 18 |

4.3 Future Demand as a Result of the Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of 272 no. units comprising of 22 no. of 4-Bed units, 94 No. of 3 Bed units, 122 No. of 2 Bed- Houses and 34 No. 1 Bed units. The 34 no. 1 bedroom units are considered unsuitable for families and are therefore omitted from this assessment.

Based on the State average household size of 2.75, the 238 no. units are likely to generate a total of 655 no. of persons. Based on the assumption that 8% of the two ED combined are of pre-school age, the number of pre-school children likely to be generated as a result of this development is approximately 52.

The Quarterly National Household Survey Childcare, Q3 2016 outlines that the percentage of pre-school children minded by their parents equals 62%. This means the remaining 38% require alternative arrangements. A further 19% noted within the survey of pre-school, childcare require non-parental childcare, attending either a crèche, Montessori, playgroup and/or an afterschool facility.

The proposed development includes an 88-place childcare facility to the northwest of the site. This childcare facility has been designed to regard the current availabilities and capacities within the local area of Midleton.

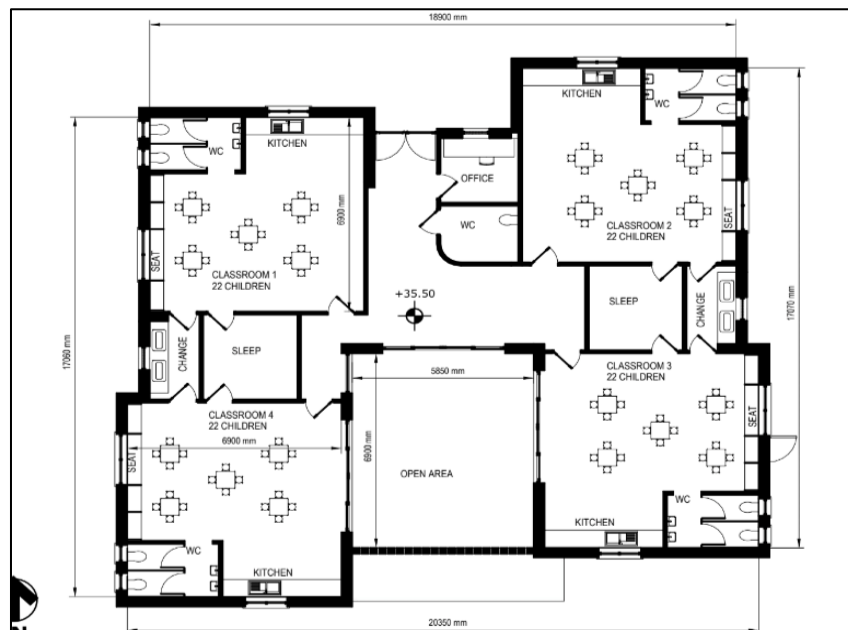


Figure 5: Proposed Creche Facility

Furthermore, the Annual Years Sector Profile Report 2020-2021 published by the Department for Children Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth reported a decrease in the number of children enrolled in the time period of 2018-2021. The report suggested this could be a disruption from the COVID19 pandemic combined with an indication of demographic changes.

The report also indicated services who responded to the survey had at least one or more vacant places within their services. The report outlines that over 24% of childcare facilities operating with vacant spaces has doubled since 2018/2019.

The proposed childcare facility will also allow for the provision of the development to the south of the subject site (Blossom Hill – which takes account of the 100 no. units as permitted under the 16/6818, ABP Ref: 04.249008).



Figure 6: Creche and Community Facility

4.4 Demand from the Neighbouring Permitted Scheme Based on the Number of Permitted Units

The residential development of 'Blossom Hill' is located to the south of the proposed development. Castle Rock Homes Ltd sought permission for 100 no. dwellings, a creche and all ancillary site development works on the 11th of November 2016. The proposed creche was omitted from the final grant of permission due to the zoning designation of the subject site's lands. The application was appealed to An Bord Pleanála in which it was concluded the creche was not in a suitable location given the context of zoning within open space and the isolation of the creche from the 'Broomfield' residential area. A condition was applied to this permission seeking the re-location of a creche once 75 no. dwellings had been constructed.

Utilising the same assessment criteria for the current proposed development, taking 100 no. units as permitted under the 16/6818 application and applying the State Average Household size of 2.75, the total development was likely to have generated 275 persons. Based on the average that 8% of these are likely to be aged 0-4 the total number of pre-school aged children likely to be generated from the permitted development of Blossom Hill is a total of 22 childcare spaces at the highest case scenario.

The proposed development includes a childcare facility which accommodates 88 child spaces. Based on the highest case scenario the subject site generates

52 no. of childcare spaces whilst the demand from the neighbouring permitted scheme of 'Blossom Hill' generates 22 no. children., Therefore a total no of pre-school children is approximately 74 no. childcare places if combining both developments. Therefore, the childcare facility proposed would have sufficient spaces to accommodate the generated places from the proposed development and neighbouring permitted scheme.

5. Conclusion

To summarise, this Childcare Demand Assessment has been conducted to determine the existing childcare facilities within 20 minutes of the proposed development site and has been carried out in accordance with the Cork County Council Development Plan 2022-2028 and National Childcare Guidelines 2001.

As outlined in Section 3 of this report, Appendix 2 of the 'Childcare Guidelines for the Planning Authorities 2001' established an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in newly proposed housing areas. One facility providing a minimum of 20 no. childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The Guidelines further seek to acknowledge that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase and/or decrease in the required provision of places.

Overall, based on the highest case scenario the subject site generates an additional 52 no. of childcare spaces which is considered at the highest case scenario generated by the proposed development. The childcare facility provides 88 child spaces which is sufficient to accommodate for the childcare places that are likely to be generated by the development.