



Statement of Childcare Rationale

Proposed Strategic Housing Development, Units 64 & 65, Cherry Orchard Industrial Estate, Dublin 10.

Client: AAI Palmerstown Ltd.

November 2021

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Connecting places.

Introduction

1.1 Context

This Childcare Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the development of 144 residential units in 4 no. apartment buildings ranging in height from 1-9 storeys, complete with supporting tenant amenities at Units 64 & 65, Cherry Orchard Industrial Estate, Dublin 10. This statement examines whether the proposal in the context of national policy and existing off-site childcare facilities will reasonably give rise to a level of childcare demand which would warrant the inclusion of a standalone crèche-facility.



Figure 1.1 Site Context

The proposed development is a high-density apartment scheme that is intended to primarily cater for the significant numbers of people employed in Dublin City Centre and other employment centres in the vicinity of Palmerstown. It is envisaged that the occupancy in the development will be characterized mainly by young working professionals, therefore, the scheme consists of a mixture of 1-2 bed apartments. The 2020 Apartment Guidelines state that *'one-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute towards any requirement for childcare provision'*. Having regard to this, it is considered that when 1-bedroom apartments are excluded from consideration of childcare demand, the residual 72 no. 2-bedroom apartments falls below the 75 unit threshold that would typically trigger the requirement for a 20 no. child place crèche. Alongside this, a review of the capacity in existing childcare facilities in the vicinity based on available Tusla Pre-School Inspection Reports indicates there is capacity available. Furthermore, at pre-consultation stage it was established by South Dublin County Council that this scheme would not require a crèche.

Planning Policy Context

2.1 Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

The national Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

Appendix 2 of the guidelines establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. 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 guidelines emphasize that the results of any childcare needs analysis carried out as part of a 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.

2.2 Circular PL 3/2016

In March 2016, the Government issued a circular in relation to childcare facilities under the early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. In accordance with the stated aspiration to increase access to childcare nationally, the circular requests that local planning authorities:

- *“Expedite all pre-planning application consultation requests from childcare facility providers in relation to proposals to extend opening hours, to increase capacity or to provide new facilities.”*
- *Expedite, insofar as is possible, consideration of all planning applications or Section 5 declaration submissions in respect of childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of required capacity as appropriate”.*

2.3 Universal Design Guidelines 2019

On 10th June 2019, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone, launched the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings. These guidelines are an important step in making all Early Learning and Care services accessible to all children. This publication offers guidance on the refurbishment, renovation and building of centres for Early Learning and Care in Ireland. The guidelines apply to both new-build and retrofit projects and provide a flexible Universal Design framework to ensure that settings are accessible, understandable and easy to use for all children, staff, families and visitors.

The Universal Design ELC setting comprises four quality features:

- Site Location, Approach, Entry and Site Layout
- Entering and Moving about the ELC setting
- Key Internal and External Spaces
- Elements and Systems

2.4 South Dublin County Development Plan 2016

Policy C8 of the County Development Plan states:

- (a) *It is the policy of the Council to support and facilitate the provision of good quality and accessible childcare facilities at suitable locations in the County.*
- (b) *It is the policy of the Council to require the provision of new childcare facilities in tandem with the delivery of new communities.*

Objective 3 set out:

To support the provision of small-scale childcare facilities in residential areas subject to appropriate safeguards to protect the amenities of the area, having regard to noise pollution and traffic management.

2.5 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2020)

As outlined, section 4.7 of the 2020 Apartment Guidelines which states that:

- *'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'.*

Assessment

3.1 Housing Mix

The proposed Built-to-Sell (BTS) scheme will consist of 50% 1-bedroom apartments and 50% 2-bedroom apartments. This housing mix is consistent with the Specific Planning Policy Requirement 8(i) of the 2020 Apartment Guidelines.

Total Residential Units	144
1 Bedroom Apartment	72
2 Bedroom Apartment (3 person)	72

Table 01 – Proposed Unit Mix

We note section 4.7 of the 2020 Apartment Guidelines which states that:

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.

We envisage that the primary market for the proposed apartments in Palmerstown will be young professionals working in Dublin City Centre and other nearby employment centres, therefore all the units are 1 and 2 bed apartments. Given the strong connectivity of the site which includes access to high frequency bus routes and direct access to pedestrian and cycle routes, we envisage the proposed development will provide sustainably located residential accommodation that will allow workers to live close to their employment source as well as Dublin City Centre and the wide array of associated services and amenities that the locale provides.

In view of the central and accessible location and proposed housing mix of the development, it is envisaged that it will house relatively few families when compared to a typical residential scheme. As a result, we consider that the resulting demand for childcare will not be comparable to an average suburban residential development.

3.2 Demographics

The proposed development is located within the Electoral Division of Palmerstown Village. Given this electoral division contains the whole of the Cherry Orchard Industrial Estate, a review the local demographic catchment extended to include the 6 no. electoral divisions within walking distance (c 1,500 metres) of the site, as outlined in Figure 3.1, to get a more comprehensive demographic profile of the Palmerstown/Cherry Orchard area. This included the following electoral divisions:

- Palmerstown Village

- Palmerstown West
- Cherry Orchard A
- Carna
- Clondalkin- Moorfield
- Drumfinn.

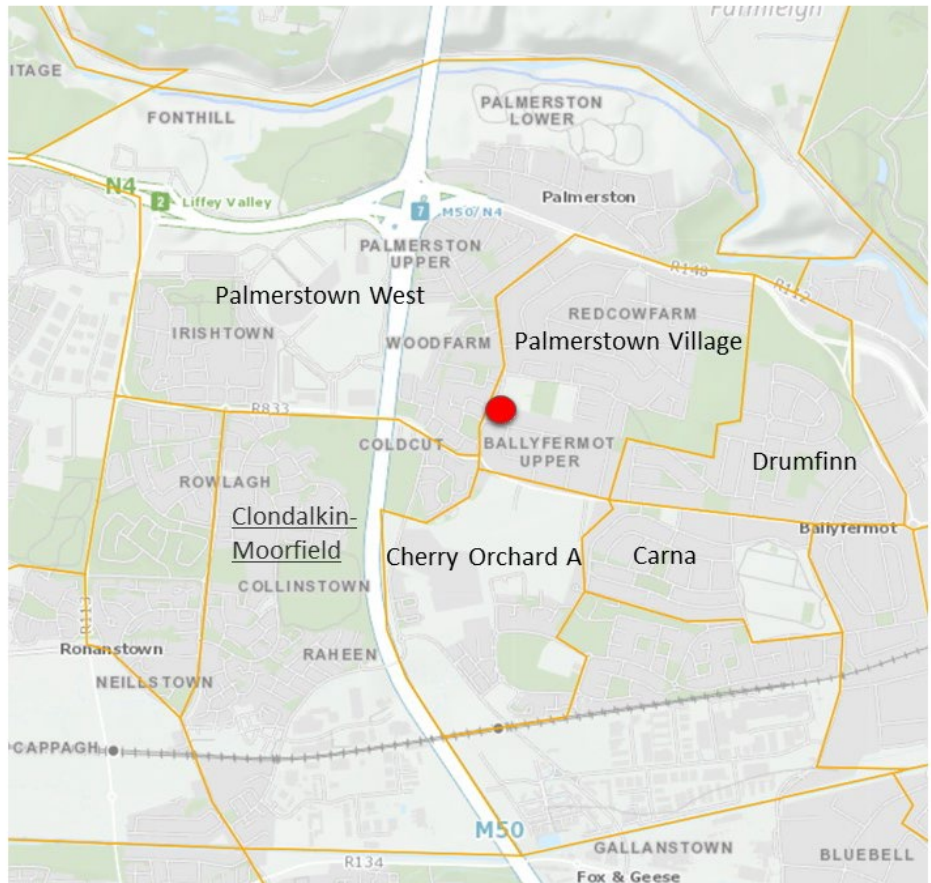


Figure 3.1: Defined Electoral Divisions in the vicinity of the subject site

The resident population of the local demographic catchment is 27,200. Within this figure, the total population between the ages of 0 and 5 years (inclusive) amounted to 1,676 individuals or 6.2% of the overall population. This figure is significantly lower than the average of 9.4% for the South County Dublin area for this age cohort.

Existing Childcare Provision

The following resources were also investigated to establish the number of existing childcare services in the vicinity of the subject site and Palmerstown:

- TUSLA Inspection Reports
- Pobal Maps - Childcare Services

There are 6 childcare facilities within walking distance (c 1,500 metres) of the site with an equivalent capacity of 284 childcare spaces. Pre-School Inspection reports are available for all these facilities which identify a total of 121 no. available spaces.

It is recognised that identified capacity numbers represent a snapshot in time, as recorded on the date of childcare site inspections. We have used the most recent figures where possible for this analysis. It is also acknowledged that some reports were carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, where attendance levels may have fluctuated.

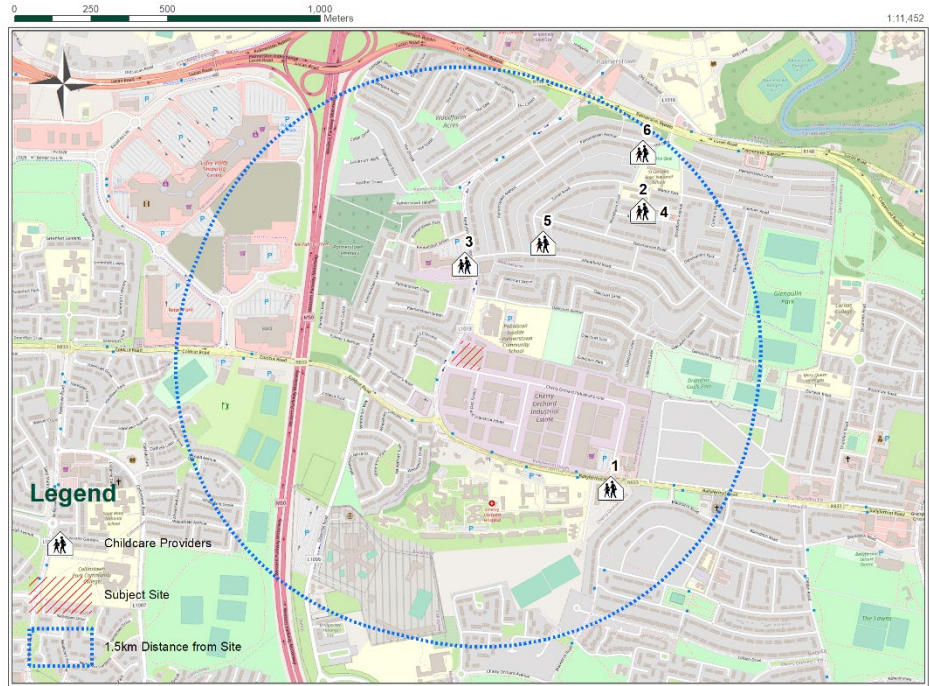


Figure 3.2: Distribution of Existing Childcare Facilities in the vicinity of the Subject Site

Map Reference Number	TUSLA Reference Number	Name	Identified Capacity	Potential Capacity
1	TU2015DY282	Daughters of Charity, St. Vincent's Early Childhood Development Centre	65	34
2	TU2015DS241	Hi 5 Playschool Sessional Services	36	4
3	TU2016DS003	Kids Inc Palmerstown	75	47
4	TU2015DY389	Magic Moments Crèche & Montessori Limited	28	8
5	TU2015DS035	Maureen's Playgroup	20	-1
6	TU2015DS133	The Oval Crèche	60	29
Total	-	6 Facilities	284	121

Summary

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the adopted policies of South Dublin County Council and the National Childcare Facilities Guidelines. We conclude that a crèche is not required as part of this development for the following reasons:

- Having regard to the 2020 Apartment Guidelines, it is considered that the 72 no. 2-bedroom apartments falls below the 75-unit threshold that would typically trigger the requirement for a 20 no. child place creche. Within this, the guidelines readily acknowledge that not all 2-bed units will reasonably give rise to childcare demand.
- Given the nature of the scheme and its proximity to existing and future employment centres and high frequency public transport, it is envisaged that the proposed development will be attractive to young professionals and will consist of a smaller proportion of families, as reflected in the existing population profile of the area.
- Based on a review of the capacity in existing childcare facilities in the vicinity, we consider that there is sufficient capacity available to cater for any childcare demand that may arise from the proposed scheme.
- In their Section 6(4)(b) consultation opinion, South Dublin County Council confirmed their view that the rationale for the non-provision of a creche as part of the proposed development is "*considered acceptable*".

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