

Childcare Demand Report

For Development at

on behalf of Cumnor Construction Ltd.

March 2022



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Prepared by	Gemma Glenn	
Checked by	Cora Savage	
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CORK

6 Joyce House
Barrack Square
Ballincollig
Cork
P31 YX97

T. +353 (0)21 420 8710

DUBLIN

Kreston House
Arran Court
Arran Quay
Dublin 7
D07 K271

T. +353 (0)1 676 6971

www.mhplanning.ie

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1. Introduction

McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants are appointed by Cumnor Construction Ltd. to prepare a Childcare Demand Report which considers the existing childcare facilities in the settlement of Fermoy, Co. Cork. The report will inform the proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) of 336 no. residential units at a site located c. 1 km from Fermoy town centre.

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



Figure 1: Site Location

2. The Study Area

The study area consists of the settlement of Fermoy as defined in Census 2016. The settlement area has a Census 2016 population of 6,585. Fermoy is a medium size settlement with a substantial population allowing sufficient scope for the research.

The study area for the proposed development has been determined by applying a 2km radius or equivalent 10-20 minute travel time to ensure that childcare facilities can be accessed via a number of travel alternatives including walking, cycling and driving. Public transport is not considered given the relatively short distances from the subject site to the various school locations.

CSO data for the settlement outlines that c. 65% of the population aged over 5 travel between 0-30 mins each day for work, school or college. Based on this data, it is possible to argue that a 10-20 minute travel time is reasonable to access essential services such as childcare.

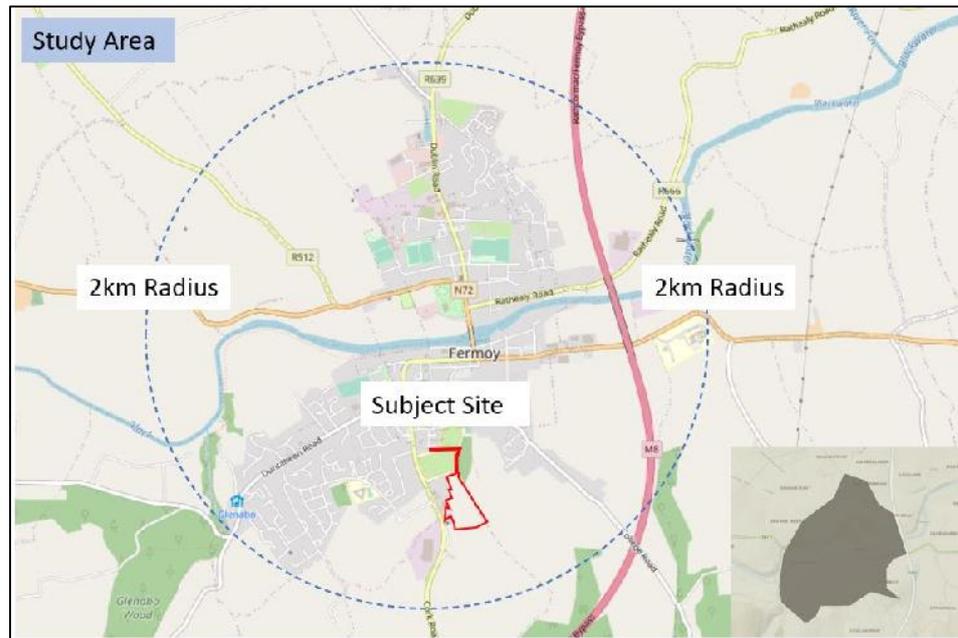


Figure 2: The Study Area (Insert – CSO Settlement Map)

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

- Tusla Reports;
- Census 2016 SAPMAP data;
- The Cork County Development Plan;
- The Fermoy Municipal District Local Area Plan;
- The 2020 Apartment guidelines; and
- The Childcare Guidelines.

3. Policy Context

The Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020 and the Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 published by the Department of Environment require the provision of a creche be assessed where in excess of 75 dwellings are being proposed.

3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2014 – 2020

Objective SC3-1: Childcare Facilities of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (CDP) relates to the provision of childcare facilities. It states that the Council will:

“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 Guidelines on Childcare Facilities and the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006”.

Paragraph 5.3.2 addresses the issue of providing childcare facilities in tandem with new residential developments, stating:

“The Council will take account of existing childcare provision when considering new childcare/crèche facilities provision as part of residential developments in order to avoid over provision of these facilities”.

3.2 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 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.

3.3 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018

In relation to the provision of childcare facilities as they relate to apartments developments, Section 4.7 of the 2018 Apartment Guidelines provides the following guidance in relation to studio and one-bedroom units:

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 current guidelines. In accordance with the Childcare Guidelines, the following 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

In assessing the current and likely childcare demand for the catchment area, an analysis of the CSO data for the settlement of Fermoy, as well as an assessment of childcare facilities located within a 10-20 minute travel time (2 km) of the site was undertaken.

The following data analysis will therefore use 2016 Census data for the settlement area, Cork County and the State. The demographic profile of Fermoy was examined from the CSO Census of Population Statistics 2016 in which include a comparative analysis with National and County averages across a number of datasets.

In Census 2011, the area was classified as the 'Fermoy Legal Town and its Environs' and in Census 2016 this changed to the 'Settlement of Fermoy'. As identified in figure 2, this has led to a slight change in the boundary of the settlement in the intercensal period. However, the change in area is minimal and it is still possible to compare the areas over the two census results.

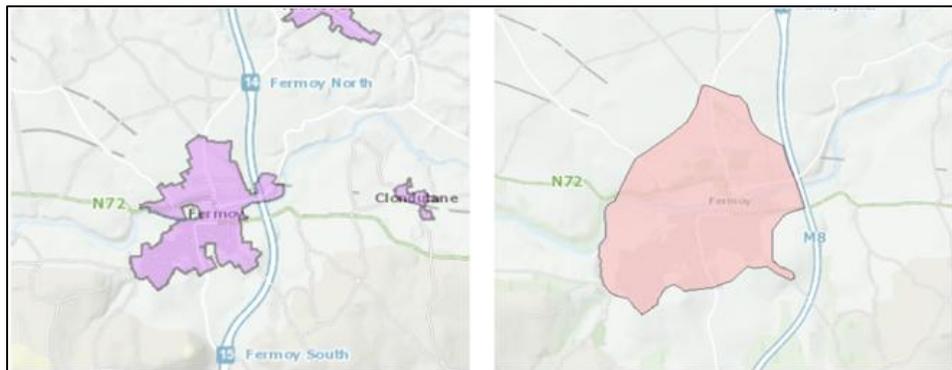


Figure 3: Fermoy as defined in Census 2011 and 2016

The population of Fermoy increased from 6,489 in 2011 to 6,585 in 2016 which represents an increase of 1.5%. This is lower than the equivalent values for the State (3.8%) and County (4.4%). In 2016, 7.3% of the total population of the settlement were of pre-school going age (i.e. 0-4 years), which represents a slight decrease of 0.8% from 8.1% in 2011. This is slightly lower than the recorded County-wide average of 7.5% for persons in this age category in 2016.

By way of comparison, 12.6% of the population of the settlement were over the age of 65 in 2016. Approximately 16.9% (i.e. 1,117) of the population were aged between 30-39. 10% of the population make up 'One Person' households and 'Couples without Children' was 28% in 2016, just 1% below the comparable State average of 29% for the same period.

Demographic travel trends indicate that considerable numbers of people commute from the settlement. Employment centres in the Cork Metropolitan area such as Ringaskiddy, Carrigtwohill and Little Island are accessed for work purposes on a daily basis. A total of 1,410 of the total population aged 5 years and over (i.e. 4,020) travel a distance of between 15 mins and 45 mins each day to work, school or college. This equates to 35%, with a further 20% travelling for a longer period.

This data points to a considerable amount of commuting from the area owing to its proximity to large employment areas in the Cork Metropolitan area. Because of this, it is considered very likely that a sizeable proportion of both the existing and future populations of Fermoy will avail of childcare facilities outside the area.

4.2 Distribution of Childcare Facilities in the Study Area

The study area reflects a 10-20-minute travel time from the subject lands, the equivalent of c. 1-2 km which is regarded as a reasonable travel time to access essential services. This study area yielded a total of 7 no. childcare facilities. The location of these facilities is outlined in figure 3 below, with the list of facilities outlined in Table 1. This table identifies the distance of each facility from the site and the relevant recorded travel times – the modes of travel considered to be feasible are walking, cycling and driving.

No.	Name	Distance	Walk	Cycle	Drive
1	Blackwater Childcare	2 km	20	5	3
2	Fermoy Montessori School	1.6 km	18	4	2
3	O'Reilly Montessori School	1.5 km	17	3.5	3
4	Jolly Tots Community Playschool	1 km	10	2.5	1.5
5	Fermoy Community Preschool Playgroup	600 m	8	1.5	1
6	Teach Na Leanaí	900 m	9	2	1.5
7	Wee Wisdoms				

Table 1: Childcare Facilities and Travel Times from Subject Site (travel times in minutes)

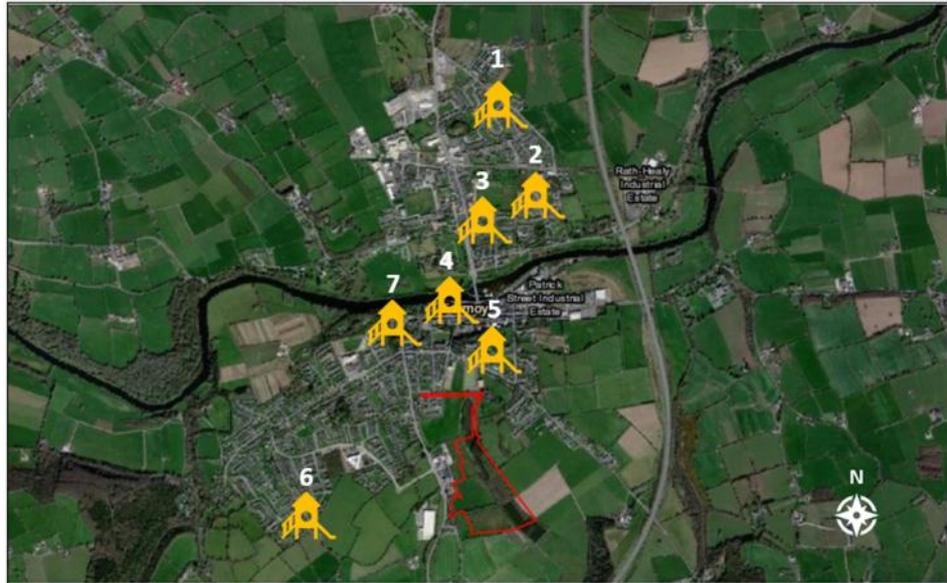


Figure 4: Location of Childcare Facilities (site outlined in red)

Fermoy is located close to major employment areas in the Metropolitan Cork area. 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.

Preschool inspection reports from TUSLA are available for all 6 identified facilities. However, few of these reports are up to date for the current year, thus, not all the relevant data necessary to carry out the assessment was available within these reports. In the absence of this data, information in relation to the facilities was gathered by conducting a survey of the existing operators and requesting the details of their current total capacity and the number of available places.

Childcare Facility	Capacity of Facility in Places	Available Places (2021/2022)	%Available Places
Blackwater Childcare	70	0	0%
Fermoy Montessori School	11	0	0%
O'Reilly Montessori School	18	3	16%
Jolly Tots Community Playschool	14	0	0%
Fermoy Community Preschool Playgroup	88	21	23%
Teach Na Leanáí	47	6	12%
Wee Wisdoms	40	0	0%
Total	288	30	10%

Table 2: Capacity of Childcare Facilities in the Study Area

Contact was made with the remaining childcare facilities who indicated they were either full or had some capacity, as outlined in the above table. In total, there is a 10% availability within the study area in Fermoy town centre.

4.3 Future demand as a result of the proposed development

The proposed scheme consists of 336 no. dwelling units. The 2018 Apartment Guidelines indicate that studio and 1 bedroom units need not be considered in determining the appropriate level of childcare required. Based on this guidance, 39 no. 1 bed units have been omitted from this assessment. The 297 no. 2-bed plus units (mix of houses and duplex/simplex units) will be considered to determine the future childcare requirements for the proposed development.

Based on the State average household size of 2.75, the 297 no. units which require childcare provision are likely to generate a population of 816 persons. Based on the assumption that 7.3% of the population of Fermoy 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 59. As outlined previously, it is not probable that all children will require childcare so the figure of 59 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 11 no. childcare places.

The proposed residential development includes an 86-no. place childcare facility. The size of the proposed creche has had regard to the availability of capacity in the existing local facilities. In addition, consideration has been given to providing a creche which will provide childcare places for babies, toddlers and pre-school age children at a size which will attract a local operator.

5. Conclusion

This Childcare demand Report has been carried out to determine the existing childcare facilities within a 10-20 minute travel time of the proposed development site and has been carried out in accordance with Cork County Council policy and National Childcare Guidelines. 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.

This assessment has found that a slight decrease in this requirement is appropriate for this development based on current Census data outlining the demographic of the area and evidence of national trends regarding the uptake of childcare facilities. Based on the worst-case scenario, the subject site may generate an additional 59 no. childcare places, although it has been outlined previously that in accordance with national research it is not probable that all 59 children will require childcare.

The research undertaken identifies that there is capacity in childcare places within a 10-20 minute travel time of the subject site and will provide a suitable childcare facility for residents of the proposed development. Currently, there is significant demand for childcare places in the area and it is anticipated that this situation is unlikely to change in the short to medium term. Having regard to the above, it is considered that the provision of a creche on site to cater for 86 no. children, which is in excess the projected childcare needs of the proposed development, will meet current market demands for a viable operator.