



**COAKLEY O'NEILL**  
town planning

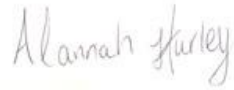
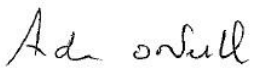

Childcare Needs Assessment  
**PROPOSED STRATEGIC HOUSING  
DEVELOPMENT, MONACNAPA,  
BLARNEY, CORK**

Prepared in February 2022 on behalf of  
**Eoin Sheehan**

Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd.

## Document Control Sheet

<b>Client</b>	Eoin Sheehan
<b>Project Title</b>	PROPOSED STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, MONACNAPA, BLARNEY, CORK
<b>Job No.</b>	CON17113
<b>Document Title</b>	Childcare Needs Assessment
<b>Number of Pages</b>	11

Revision	Status	Date of Issue	Authored	Checked	Signed
1	Draft	25 <sup>th</sup> August, 2021	AH	AON	
2	Final Draft	1 <sup>st</sup> September, 2021	AH	AON	
3	Final	10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2022	AH	AON	

### Confidentiality Statement

*This report has been produced for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd., no other party may copy, reproduce, distribute, make use of, or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd. for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of Coakley O'Neill using due skill, care and diligence in the preparation of same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd. has been made.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We, Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd, NSC Campus, Mahon, Co. Cork, have been instructed by Eoin Sheehan, to prepare this Childcare Needs Assessment to accompany this application to An Bord Pleanála for a Strategic Housing Development, as enacted under the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, as amended, at Monacnapa, Blarney, Cork.
- 1.2.1 This Childcare Needs Assessment examines the need to incorporate any on site creche facilities as part of the development proposal, with specific focus on the relevant planning policy, demographic statistics and an assessment of existing childcare facilities in the area.



Figure 1 3D image of proposed Creche

## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The requirement for the provision of a creche for residential developments over 75no. dwelling is outlined in both national guidance under the “Childcare Facilities Guidelines” (2001) published by the Department of Environment and in local planning policy under the Cork County Development Plan (2014).

### **Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)**

- 2.2 These guidelines provide a framework to guide both developers formulating development proposals, and local authorities in assessing these proposals.
- 2.3 Appendix 2 of the Guidelines established an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. It is stated that one facility providing a minimum of 20no. childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. It is acknowledged in the guidance that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement.

- 2.4 Furthermore, Appendix 2 states that the threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profiles.

**Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018**

- 2.5 The *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)* as amended, also requires that childcare facilities be provided in accordance with the demographic profile of the area and the existing capacity of childcare centres. The guidelines also specifically state;

*'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.'*

**Cork County Development Plan 2014**

- 2.6 Objective SC3.1 of the Development Plan relates to the provision of childcare facilities and is outlined as follows;

*"Support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations and seek their provision concurrent with development, having regard to the population targets for the areas and in accordance with the Guidelines on Childcare facilities and Childcare (pre-school Services) regulations 2006"*

- 2.7 Section 5.3.2 of the Development Plan outlines the issues of providing childcare facilities in tandem with new residential development as follows;

*"The council will take account of existing childcare provision when considering new childcare/creche facilities provision as part of residential development in order to avoid an overprovision of these facilities."*

**Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022**

- 2.8 As Blarney is now located in an expanded Cork City, and is identified as an Urban Town, the provisions of the draft Plan are taken into consideration.

- 2.9 Section 3.65 of the draft Plan states that:

*the provision of childcare should be addressed where, or within walking distance to where the need arises. In accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001), new residential developments of more than 75 homes will be expected to provide purpose-built as part of the development unless it can be demonstrated there is sufficient capacity in existing facilities. Large employment development, either new developments or expansion of existing developments, will be required to provide childcare facilities.*

- 2.10 Objective 3.21 of the draft Plan seeks to support the provision and expansion of high quality childcare facilities throughout the city. The Council will:
- a. 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.*
  - b. Consult with the Cork City Childcare Company and the HSE on planning applications where childcare facilities are proposed.*
  - c. Require employers with more than 500 members of staff to provide childcare facilities as part of planning applications for significant new and extended development.*
- 2.11 Section 11.166 of the draft Plan states that *childcare facilities in new residential developments or as part of new or extended employment facilities should be provided at ground floor level in purpose built, preferably standalone buildings.*
- 2.12 Section 11.167 of the draft Plan states that *Within existing residential areas, detached or substantial semi-detached properties are the most suitable for the provision of full day care facilities. Properties with childcare should include a residential component within the dwelling, and preferably should be occupied by the operator or a staff member of the childcare facility. Applications for childcare facilities in existing residential areas will be treated on their merits, having regard to impacts on amenities of adjoining properties and the surrounding area.*

### **3.0 FUTURE DEMAND CREATED BY THE DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 The proposed development in this instance will provide 143no. residential units. In calculating the likely future demand for childcare spaces as a result of the proposed development, regard must be had to the planning policies in place pertaining to the provision of childcare facilities as part of apartment developments.
- 3.2 In this instance it is noted that there are 8no. 1 bedroom apartments. Having regard to the planning policies outlined in Section 2 above, the 8 no. 1 bedroom apartments will not be included in calculations regarding likely demand for childcare spaces. Accordingly, this assessment is restricted to considering the likely demand arising from the proposed development in respect of the proposed 135 no. 2, 3 and 4 bed units.
- 3.3 Based on the average household size of 2.8 people per household for Cork County (CSO: 2016), it can be estimated that the proposed development will result in 378 people. According to the 2016 census, the average family in the State contains 1.38 children (0-18 years old), therefore, the proposed development could theoretically accommodate 186 no. children.
- 3.4 In order to establish a statistical basis for levels of pre-school children utilising creche/childcare services in Blarney, the CSO's Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), Childcare, Quarter 3 2016, is utilised. This is the most recent data available in relation to same. This survey reports:

- *In 2016 19% of pre-school children were cared for in Creche / Montessori / Playgroup / After-school facility, as opposed to 62% who were cared for by a parent/partner.*
  - *The percentage of pre-school children being cared Creche / Montessori / Playgroup / After-school facility was slightly lower in the southern region with 17% availing of the services in the south-east and 16% availing of the services in the south-west.*
- 3.5 Data extracted from the census 2016, identified that there were 31,337 no. children (7.5%) aged between 0-4 in the County Cork. Using a total population of 378no. people based on average household size, it is estimated that there could be 28no. children in the 0-4 age bracket. Using the national percentage of pre-school children who are cared for in a Creche / Montessori / Playgroup / After-school facility (19%), theoretically, 5 no. childcare spaces could be generated as a result of the proposed development.
- 3.6 However, this assessment will proceed based on worst case scenario (i.e. that all children aged 0-4 years would be cared for in a creche). This assessment will therefore proceed on the basis that the development will generate 28 no. childcare spaces.
- 3.7 For the sake of completeness, childcare provision for primary school going children is also considered as part of this assessment. Census data from the 2016 census indicates that there were 52,587 no. (12.6%) children in the 5-12 age bracket in County Cork in 2016. 48 no. children in the 5-12 age bracket could be resident at the proposed development.
- 3.8 The CSO's Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), Childcare, Quarter 3 2016 states that;
- *Nationally, 8% of primary school children are cared for in a Creche / Montessori / Playgroup / After-school facility, with 74% being cared for by a parent/partner.*
  - *7% of primary school children are cared for in a Creche / Montessori / Playgroup / After-school facility in both the south-east and south-west.*
- 3.9 Therefore, the proposed development could generate a requirement for 4no. childcare spaces, at primary school level.
- 3.10 Overall, the proposed development could potentially generate a requirement for a total of 32no. childcare places.

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 In order to establish the local need for a new creche as part of the proposed development, a thorough examination was undertaken in line with current guidelines. In the first instance, the Cork County Childcare Committee website was utilised to garner a better sense of the number of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the site.
- 4.2 In order to determine which services remained operational, a review of TUSLAs website was undertaken and all services within 5km of the proposed development site. It was considered that a 5km radius was appropriate having regard to its status as a Metropolitan Town, as well as the high level of commuting taking place in the Town as per the 2016 census.
- 4.3 In accordance with the childcare guidelines, we subsequently established the following;
- The emerging demographic profile of the area
  - The existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities in the area.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- 4.4 Initially, the demographic profile of Cork County was examined. While the proposed development site is now located within the City Boundary, following the boundary extension in May 2019, it was located within the County as per the 2016 census. It is noted that the population of Cork County increased from 399,802 in 2011 to 417,211 in 2016. This represents an increase of 17,409 no. people or 4.4% in population over the intercensal period.
- 4.5 However, it is noted that over the same period, the no. of children in the 0-4 age bracket decreased from 34,146 in 2011 to 31,337 in 2016, representing a decrease of 2,809 no. children over the same period. Therefore, in contrast to the overall population which has experienced an increase of over 4.4% in the 5 year period, the number of children in the 0-4 age bracket has actually reduced.
- 4.6 In terms of commuting times within the County, it is noted that 128,708 no. people over the age of 5 travel between 15minutes and 45 minutes to school, college or work each day, representing 49% of the population of the County. It is further noted that an additional 28,815 no. people or 11% travel between 45 and 90 minutes to work, school or college each day. This suggests that a sizeable portion of the existing and future population of the County will avail of childcare outside their immediate area.

### SETTLEMENT OF BLARNEY

- 4.7 The demographic profile of Blarney was examined utilising the CSO data for 2016.



Figure 2 Extract from SapMap showing Blarney, with the proposed development site identified by dashed red line

- 4.8 The population of Blarney increased from 2,437 in 2011 to 2,539 people in 2016, representing an increase of 4.2% over the 5-year period. Of note is that over the same period, and despite the overall increase in population in the settlement, the number of children in the 0-4 age bracket decreased by 45, representing a decrease of over 26.6% over the same period.
- 4.9 In terms of commuting times within the settlement of Blarney, in 2016 826 no. people over the age of 5 years, travelled between 15minutes and 45 minutes to work, school or college each day, representing 53% of the total population of Blarney. A further 113 no. people or 7% travelled over 45 minutes to work, school or college every day. Given the proximity of Blarney to larger employments areas in the City, Tivoli, Little Island and Mahon, and available half hourly bus connections to the City Centre and Mahon in particular, it is considered likely that a sizeable portion of the existing and future population of Blarney will avail of childcare outside the town.

#### **DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDCARE FACILITIES IN BLARNEY**

- 4.10 An audit of all pre-schools within the immediate vicinity of Blarney was carried out to collate a list of all providers. The geographical distribution of the facilities is outlined in Figure 3 below.



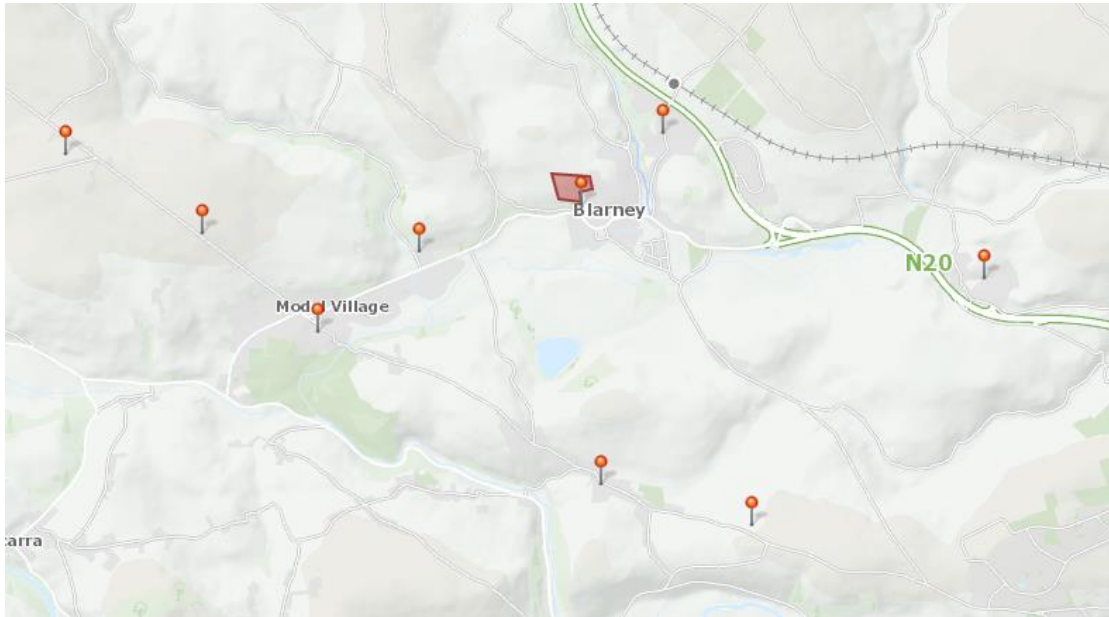


Figure 3 Geographical distribution of childcare facilities in the context of the subject site which is outlined in red

- 4.11 TULSA Pre-School Inspection reports were examined in relation to each of the services in order to determine their available capacity (pre-COVID-19 information).

Childcare Facility	Address	Capacity of facility in places	Available spaces	% Available spaces
Blarney Community Playschool	Scoil Chroi Iosa	32	3	9%
TLC Unlimited	Woodfield Blarney	92	0	0
Shournagh Childcare	Elmgrove, Shournagh Road, Blarney	77	0	0
Stepping Stones Pre School	6 Muskerry Heights, Dromasmole, Blarney,			
Tiny Toes Pre-School	Kerry Road, Tower	25	0	0
Vicarstown Playschool	Kileen, Vicarstown	12	0	0
Laugh and Learn Ltd.	An Seanabhair Estate, Killeens, Blarney	30	6	20%
Kerry Pike Montessori (emailed)	Kerry Pike	18	3	16%
Árd Na Laoi Montessori School	Clogheen	11	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>297</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4%</b>

Table 1 Capacity of childcare facilities in Blarney

- 4.12 Having regard to Table 1 above, it is concluded that there are only 12 no. childcare spaces available in the Blarney area, representing 4% availability.

## 5.0 CHILDCARE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Appendix 2 of the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities establishes a standard that, where 75no. dwellings are proposed, one childcare facility providing a minimum of 20 no childcare spaces is considered reasonable. On this basis, the need to provide 40 no. childcare spaces would be triggered if a development meets a threshold of 150 no. units, 60 places by a threshold of 225 no. units and 80 places by a threshold of 300 units.
- 5.2 The Guidelines note that the threshold for provision should be established having had regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.
- 5.3 Following consultation with Janet Dennehy of the Cork Childcare Committee, it was agreed to provide a total of 42no. places. It is noted that this exceeds the theoretical quantitative number of places (i.e. between 20-40no. places for between 75-150 no. residential units as set out in the Guidelines, as well as the anticipated requirement of 32no. places based on a statistical analysis of the future population of the proposed development.
- 5.4 This 42no. child place crèche would not only cater for the potential demand generated by the proposed development, but also potential demand from existing residents in Blarney, representing a significant planning gain, and will ensure that the proposed development will contribute to the sustainable development of Blarney into the future.
- 5.5 In addition, the design of the proposed creche has been discussed and agreed with the Cork Childcare Committee. The proposed floorplan of the crèche is illustrated in Figure 4 below.

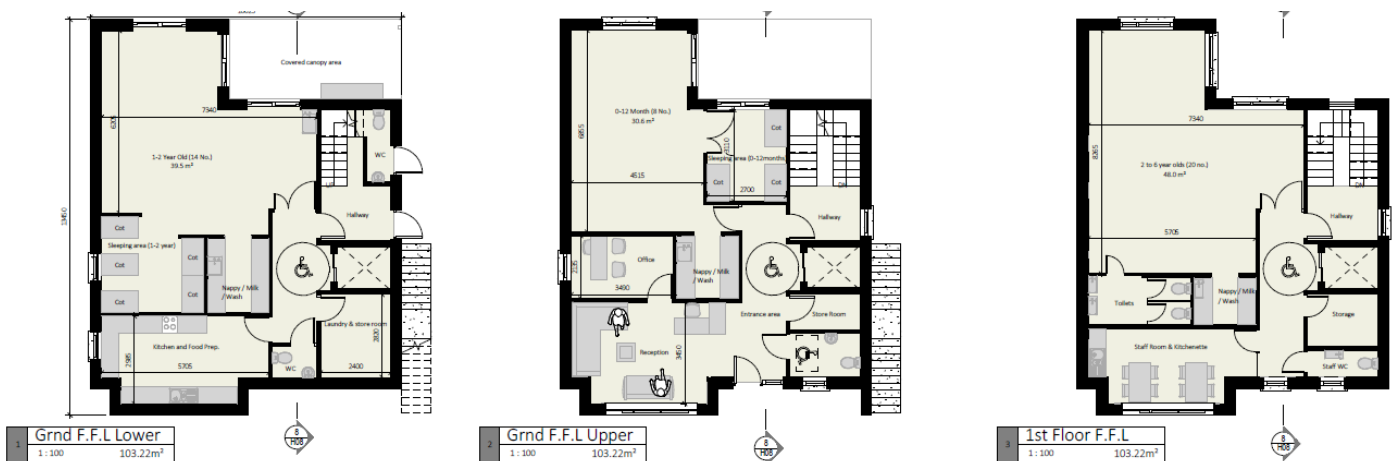


Figure 4 Proposed Floor Plan of the Crèche Facility to be provided as part of this SHD Application

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The above assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001), and the Cork County Development Plan 2014, and has had regard to the provisions of the draft Cork City Development Plan 2022.
- 6.2 Section 3 of this reports notes that based on current demographic trends in Blarney, it is possible that the proposed development will result in a maximum of 28no. children in the 0-4 age range. Based on data relating to the take-up of pre-school places in the 0-4 age range nationally, it is likely that only 5 no. childcare spaces will be generated by the proposed development. However, a cautious approach has been taken in this regard and the assessment has been carried out on the basis of 28no. spaces being generated. In addition, the proposed development could generate a requirement for 4no. childcare spaces at primary school level.
- 6.3 Having reviewed available capacity in existing childcare facility in the wider Blarney Area, it has been established that only 12 no. spaces are available.
- 6.4 In response, and following consultation with Janet Dennehy of the Cork City Childcare Committee, it has been agreed to provide a 42 no. place crèche to cater for 100% of the demand likely to be created by the proposed development, as well as providing additional capacity for the Blarney area in cognisance of the general shortage of childcare places available. This exceeds both the likely demand to be generated by the proposed development, as demonstrated in Section 3 above, as well as the requirements set out in the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001).
- 6.5 The proposed crèche is located along the southern boundary within easy reach of the access to the proposed development, with its own parking/drop-off area, private open space, and access to the large central public open space area. It is of a similar design and character to the proposed dwellings in Character Area 1 within which it is located. The crèche facility will also be developed in Phase 1.
- 6.6 On this basis, it is considered the proposed crèche is in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of Blarney.