

Childcare Demand Report

For Development at Spa Glen, Mallow, Co. Cork

on behalf of O'Flynn Construction Co. Unlimited Company

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1. Introduction

McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants are appointed by O'Flynn Construction Co. Unlimited Company to prepare a Childcare Demand Report that considers the existing childcare facilities in the settlement of Spa Glen (townland), Mallow, Co. Cork. The site is located to the north of Mallow's town centre. The report will inform the proposed development consisting of the construction of 186 no. residential units to include comprising of a mix of 1, 2, 3, & 4 bed, detached, semi-detached, and duplex houses and 1 no. creche and all associated ancillary development works at Spa Glen (townland), Mallow, Co. Cork. When considering these residential units, a Childcare Demand Report is useful to determine if the development will impact the capacities for facilities in the local area.

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



Figure 1: Site Location – Site outlined in red.

2. Study Methodology

The study area for the proposed development has been determined by applying a 5 km radius or equivalent 20 min travel time to ensure that childcare facilities can be accessed via a number of travel alternatives including walking, cycling, and driving.

CSO Data (2022) for the electoral division of Mallow Rural outlines that c. 73% of the population aged over 5 travels between 0-30 mins each day for work, school, or college. Based on this data, as well as the diverse accessibility in and out of Mallow, it is possible to argue that a 20-minute travel time is reasonable to access essential services such as childcare.

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

- Tusla Reports;
- Census 2022 and 2016 SAPMAP data;
- The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028;
- Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022); and
- The Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001.



Figure 2: The Study Area with subject site identified in red.

Mallow is located within Cork County and within close proximity to the major employment centres of Cork City's extended boundary and city peripherals including Blackpool, Blarney. 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.

3. Policy Context

The Cork County Council Development Plan 2022 and the Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 published by the Department of Environment require the provision of a crèche be assessed where in excess of 75 dwellings are being proposed. With regard to this development, the dwelling units are adjacent to a larger residential development which will increase the number of units in the area over 75. The development of a crèche is needed in order to be in alignment with both relevant policies.

3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The newly enacted Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 provides an up-to-date approach to the implementation of Childcare Facilities in Cork County. Objective SC 6-4: Social and Community Infrastructure Provision 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 Childcare Facilities guidelines for Local Authorities 2001 and regard to the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Centres 2019.”

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, 2022

In relation to the provision of childcare facilities as they relate to apartment developments, Section 4.7 of the 2020 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 recommended 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’

3.4 Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage has developed a proposed policy approach as part of the preparation of Ministerial Guidelines on Sustainable and Compact Settlements. The Guidelines replace the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The proposed policy approach is *'focused on the interaction between residential density, housing standards, quality design and placemaking'*. The Guidelines seek to;

'Expand on the high-level strategy of the NPF and set detailed criteria for residential development to support the development of compact and sustainable settlements. The guidance will reinforce the need for more compact and efficient forms of development and the need to consider the different context in which housing development can take place.'

4. Assessment

The local childcare demand likely to be generated by the proposed masterplan 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 Mallow Urban (North and South) and Mallow Rural Electoral Divisions was examined from the CSO Census of Population Statistics 2022 and 2016 and includes a comparative analysis with National averages across a number of datasets.

The population of the Mallow Urban and Rural Electoral Division increased from 12,958 in 2016 to 14,408 in 2022 which represents an increase of 11%. In 2016, 1,114 of the total population of Mallow Urban and Rural Electoral Division were of pre-school age (i.e. 0-4 years). In 2022, 865 of the total population for Mallow Urban and Rural ED's were of pre-school age (i.e. 0-4

years). This represents a decrease of 22% of the total population of pre-school age (0-4 years).

Demographic travel trends indicated that considerable numbers of people commute to access services and employment within the Mallow area. A total of 3,686 persons from the Mallow Rural ED and 6,164 persons of Mallow Urban (South and North) aged 5 years and over travel a distance between 15 minutes and 45 minutes each day to work, school, or college according to the CSO Data for 2022. This suggests that there is a considerable amount of commuting experienced by Mallow residents within the Mallow Rural and Electoral Division. It is considered very likely that a sizeable proportion of both the existing and future populations of Mallow will avail of childcare facilities within the study area.

4.2 Distribution of Childcare Facilities in Mallow

The study area reflects a 0-20-minute drive time from the subject site, the equivalent of a 5 km radius which is regarded as a reasonable travel time to access essential services via, walking, cycling, and driving. A total of 13 no. of facilities were located within the study area.

The location of these facilities is outlined in Figure 3 and the list of facilities in addition to the approximate travel times is given in Table 1.

No.	Name	Distance	Walk	Cycle	Drive
1	ABCs & 123s Pre-school	800 m	9	2	1
2	Le Cheile Family Resource Centre	1.3 km	17	4	3
	Fairy Godmother Pre-School				
3	Bright Start Montessori and Pre-School	1.9 km	24	7	5
4	Serendipity Montessori & Childcare Facility	2.0 km	25	8	5
5	Tir na nOg Ballydesmond Ltd.	2.0 km	24	7	4
6	Rising Stars Childcare	2.8 km	35	10	7
7	Tiny Tots Montessori School	2.9 km	35	10	8
8	Naionra Thomáis Dáibhís	3 km	36	10	8
9	Quality Childcare Mallow	3.6 km	44	13	7
10	Oakfield Close Playgroup	3.6 km	33	10	9
11	Mallow Community Childcare	3.8 km	46	14	7
12	Ash's Angels Preschool	4.1 km	51	15	8
13	Dina's Den Breakfast and Afterschool	2.0 km	25	8	5

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

The location for all childcare facilities in this assessment are shown in the map below:

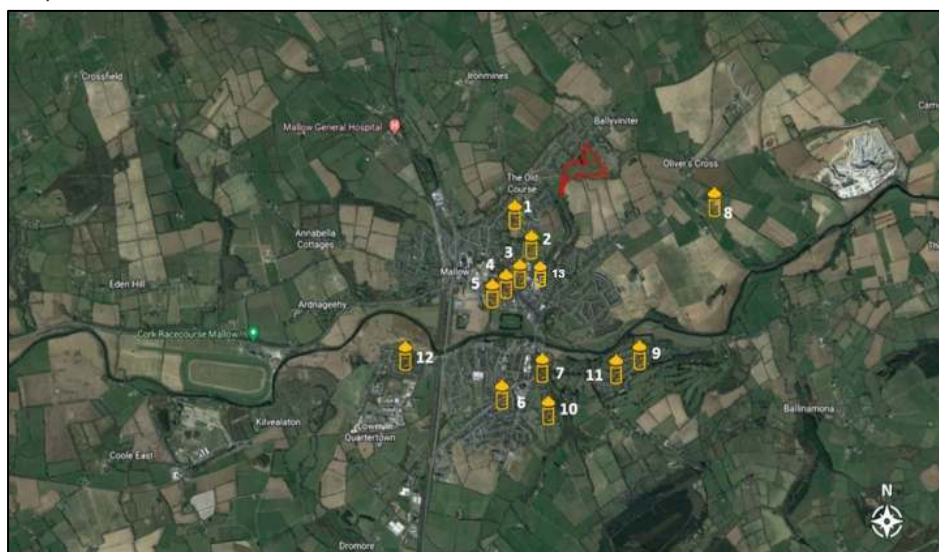


Figure 3: Location of the Childcare facilities (subject site outlined in red)

No.	Childcare Facility	Capacity of Facility in Places	Available Places
1	ABCs & 123s Pre-school	44	10
2	Le Cheile Family Resource Centre	102	12
3	Bright Start Montessori and Pre-School	30	0
4	Serendipity Montessori & Childcare Facility	24	0
5	Tir na nOg Ballydesmond Ltd.	70	0
6	Rising Stars Childcare	55	0
7	Tiny Tots Montessori School	13	0
8	Naionra Thomáis Dáibhís	132	66
9	Quality Childcare Mallow	120	0
10	Oakfield Close Playgroup	22	0
11	Mallow Community Childcare	54	0
12	Ash's Angels Preschool	22	1

No.	Childcare Facility	Capacity of Facility in Places	Available Places
13	Dina's Den Breakfast and After school Club	74	0
TOTAL	-		89

Table 2: Childcare Facilities and Associated Capacities and Availability

Capacity information was gathered through phone calls and emails to the facilities directly. Facilities which did not answer either form of contact, the data was collected based on existing TUSLA inspection reports under the assumption that these were at full capacity. In total, there are 89 available childcare spaces in the Mallow area.

4.3 Future Demand as a Result of the Proposed Development

The proposed scheme consists of 186 no. residential units, 18 no. of which are duplex units. The 2020 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, all 18 no. of the 1-bed duplex units is omitted from this assessment. The 168 no. 2-bed plus units will be considered to determine the future childcare requirements for the proposed development.

Based on the State average household size of 2.74, the 170 no. units which require childcare provision are likely to generate a population of 460 persons. Based on the assumption that 8% of Mallow's residents 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 37. As outlined previously, it is not probable that all children will require childcare so the figure of 37 is effectively a "highest-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 7 no. childcare places.

The proposed development includes a 50-no. place childcare facility. The size of the proposed crèche has regard to the availability of capacity in the existing local facilities. In addition, consideration has been given to providing a crèche 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 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 (refer to paragraphs 2.4 and 3.31). 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 increase in this requirement is appropriate for this development based on current Census data outlining the demography of the area and evidence of national trends regarding the uptake of childcare facilities. Based on the 'highest-case' scenario, the subject site may generate an additional 37 no. childcare places, although it has been outlined previously that in accordance with national research it is not probable that all 37 no. children will require childcare.

The research conducted identifies that there is capacity in childcare places within a 10-minute travel time of the subject site and will provide a suitable childcare facility for residents of the proposed development. This capacity is more than sufficient to accommodate for the projected childcare places generated by the proposed development.