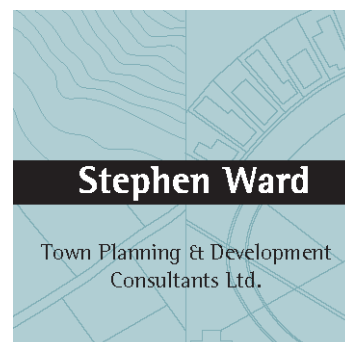


# Childcare Demand Assessment

**Old Slane Road, Mell/Tullyallen,  
Drogheda, Co.Louth**



Prepared on behalf of  
Lagan Homes Tullyallen Ltd



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This assessment accompanies a planning application to modify a permitted Strategic Housing Development (SHD) by way of a planning application for a Large Residential Development (LRD). A crèche is permitted as part of the SHD to serve the needs of future residents. The permitted crèche was to be at ground floor level of Block M (488sq.) with 6no. three-bedroom apartments above at first and second floor level. The crèche was designed to cater for 65no. childcare places and had a secure outdoor play area of 209sq.m.

As part of the proposed modifications a new stand-alone crèche will be provided with potential full time capacity of 58no. childcare places. The crèche will be two storey with four care rooms and outdoor play area (87sq.m). On street car parking and a set down area are proposed in front of the crèche building as illustrated on JFOC Architects drawing no. 22.127.PP1002. The crèche is centrally located within the site with easy access from the main access route from Old Slane Road. Full footpath connectivity is provided to and from the crèche for surrounding residents. Footpath connectivity will also be improved along the Old Slane Road under the permitted SHD, providing access from the crèche to existing residents in the area.

Louth County Council have advised the applicant at pre-planning that a Childcare Assessment should accompany the LRD planning application in keeping with section 13.12.1 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2017 (as amended) to assist in calculation of the actual scale of childcare need in this location.

## 1.1 PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The proposed modifications will alter the mix of units across the SHD site. The total number of units remains 237no. as permitted.

<b>Table 1: Permitted SHD ABP-311678-21 (as modified by P.A.Ref. 2360368)</b>					
	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Duplex / ground floor Apartments</b>	<b>Multi-Level Apartments</b>	<b>Total</b>	
<b>1-bed</b>	-	-	19	<b>19</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>2-bed</b>	1	15	80	<b>96</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>3-bed</b>	76	21	12	<b>109</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>4-bed</b>	13	-	-	<b>13</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Table 2: Proposed modifications</b>					
	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Duplex / ground floor Apartments</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>1-bed</b>	-	21		<b>21</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>2-bed</b>	28	21		<b>49</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>3-bed</b>	142	-		<b>142</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>4-bed</b>	25	-		<b>25</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>237</b>	<b>100%</b>

2.0 PROPOSED CHILDCARE FACILITY

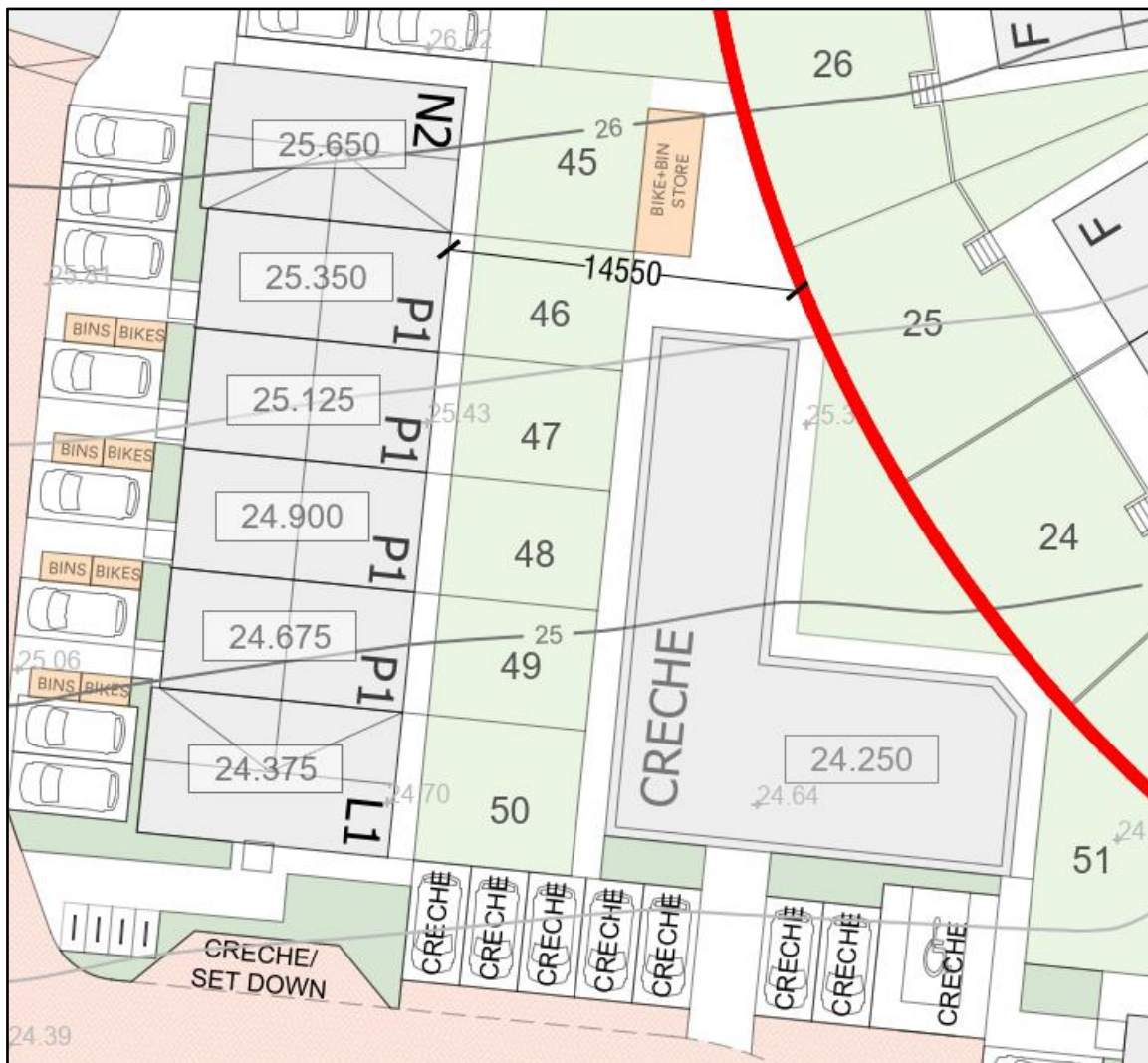


Figure 1: Extract from JFOC drawing no. 22.127.PD1003: Phase 2 Site Layout Plan

The proposed creche building is a two storey standalone building designed in an L-shape. There is a safe and enclosed space for young children to play that can be well supervised with an additional garden to the east of the building. Storage for bins and secure bicycle parking is provided to the rear of the property. As detailed by the site layout plan submitted with the planning application, the creche is centrally located with allocated car parking and a set down area provided.

The internal arrangement of rooms has taken full consideration of the adult to child ratios and requirements for clear space as outlined by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

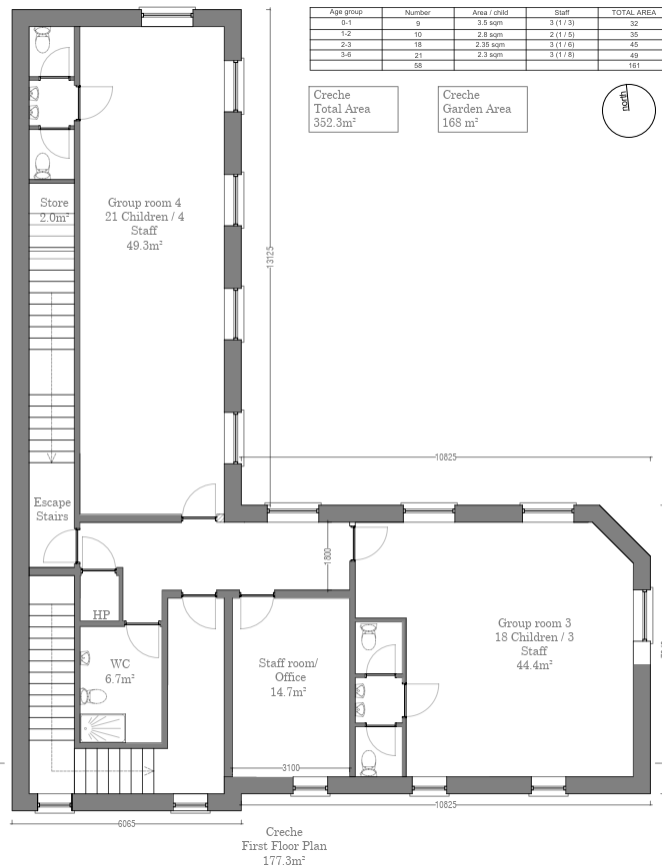
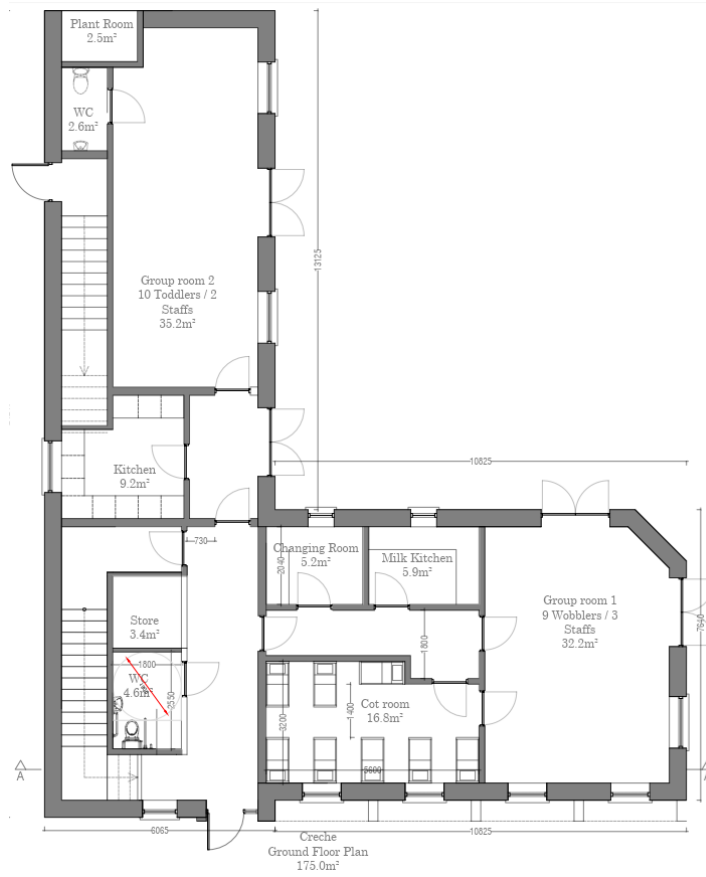


Figure 2 & 3: Floor plans extracted from JFOC Architects Drawing No. 22.127.PD5101

## 3.0 CHILDCARE FACILITIES – POLICY CONTEXT

### 3.1 SECTION 28 GUIDELINES

Section 2.4 of the *2001 Childcare Facilities- Guidelines for Planning Authorities* recommend that in new housing areas at least one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. According to the Guidelines, appropriate locations for childcare facilities are as follows-

- (i) In new communities/larger new housing estates.
- (ii) The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working.
- (iii) In the vicinity of schools.
- (iv) Neighbourhood and town centres.
- (v) Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

By reference to Circular Letter PL 3-2016 issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government dated 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2016, it is noted the Department is considering revising the 2001 Childcare Guidelines. The content of the Circular is reflected in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2023) which states at section 4.7;

*“Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a 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.”* (emphasis added)

***The size of the childcare facility proposed as part of the modifications to the permitted SHD has been calculated on the basis that one-bedroom apartments will not contribute to a requirement for childcare provision. Using the benchmark of 20no. child places for every 75no. dwellings, this results in a requirement for 58no. child places. The design of the proposed childcare facility provides 58no, child places across all age ranges.***

### 3.2 LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

The objective of the Guidelines outlined above has been carried through at county and local level by the Louth County Plan 2021-2027 (as amended) with Policy SC 35;

*To support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate and suitable locations and seek their provision concurrent with new residential development, all having regard to the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) and Childcare Regulations (2006) and any subsequent guidelines, in consultation with the Louth County Childcare Committee. Such facilities will be directed to settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy.”*

According to the Plan;

*“For new residential schemes, one childcare facility will be required to cater for 20 places in developments of 75 houses. Having regard to the guidelines, the Planning Authority will take account of existing childcare provision when considering the delivery of new facilities as part of residential development in order to avoid over provision.” (para.13.12.1)*

***The capacity of the proposed childcare facility has been calculated on the basis of the entire SHD site as modified by the proposed LRD, excluding one-bedroom apartments. The total number of units permitted and proposed remains at 237no. Excluding one-bedroom apartments it has been presumed that the remaining 216no. housing units will generate a demand for childcare in line with the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities. Using the required adult to child ratios and clear floor space standards as outlined by the Childcare Regulations, the childcare facility provides these spaces as full time and in the following age groups-***

- 0-1 years            9 spaces
- 1-2 years            10 spaces
- 2-3 years            18 spaces
- 3-6 years            21 spaces

Total                      58 spaces

## 4.0 CENSUS 2022 RESULTS

According to Census 2022 results for Drogheda, of the 15,751 households in the town, 11,187 (71%) are occupied by families and 52% are families with children. Discounting one-bedroom apartments (216no.) and presuming 52% of all other housing is occupied by families, this would equate to 112no. of the 237no. dwellings being occupied by families with children. According to the same Census results, families with children have on average 1.9 children per family household in Drogheda. This would generate a population of **213no. children** within the SHD as modified. Based on the demographic profile of Drogheda from the 2022 Census results, the 213no. have been profiled as follows-

- 45no. aged 0-4
- 121no. aged 5-14
- 47no. aged 15-18

Childcare data is gathered on the basis of children aged 0-4 and 5-14. The proposed development could potentially have a population of 166no. under 15 years. Census data for Drogheda indicates 27% of the population under 15 uses childcare. On this basis, 45no. children would use some form of childcare, including a creche.

***It is submitted that the capacity of 58no. full time childcare places within the proposed creche is adequate to cater for potential demand from the permitted SHD as modified.***

## 5.0 EXISTING CHILDCARE SERVICES

An audit of existing childcare facilities and schools has been undertaken within the area illustrated by figure 4. Information was obtained from the Louth Childcare Committee, Pobal and Tusla Inspection Reports. There are three existing childcare facilities within a 2km radius of the application site. These facilities have a combined capacity of c.91 child spaces based on information from Tulsa Regulatory Inspection Reports. Little Rascals is the only facility offering full, part time and sessional services and is located in Tullyallen 5km from the application site.

Provider		Age Range (years old)	Service Type			Capacity
			Full Time	Part Time	Sessional	
1	Playmates	2years-5 years	-	-	X	36
2	Olive Tree	6months - 12years	X	-	-	21*
23	Little Rascals	6months - 12years	X	X	X	34
<b>Total Capacity</b>						91

\*The total capacity was not stated by the Inspection Report. 21no. children were on the premises during the inspection.



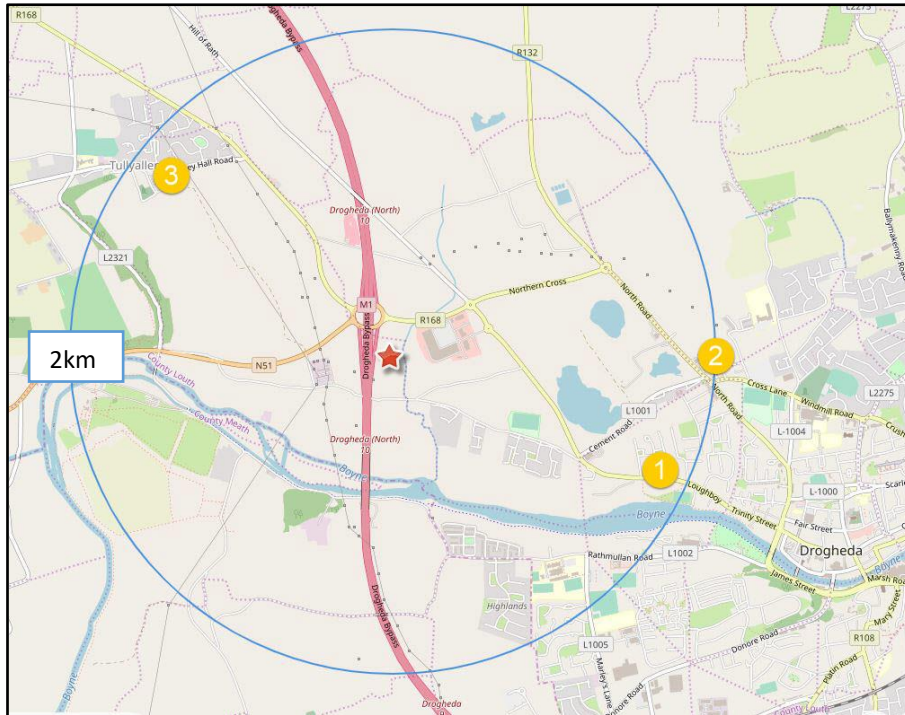


Figure 4: Childcare Facilities within 2km of the SHD site (red star)

### 6.0 PLANNED CHILDCARE SERVICES

An online planning search was undertaken within the study area using the Louth County Council eplan tool. Two planning applications have been granted planning permission for residential developments which include a creche; P.A. Ref. 22/1018 and P.A.Ref. 22/713. According to the information available online, the creche are designed to accommodate 52no. and 65no. childcare spaces respectively.

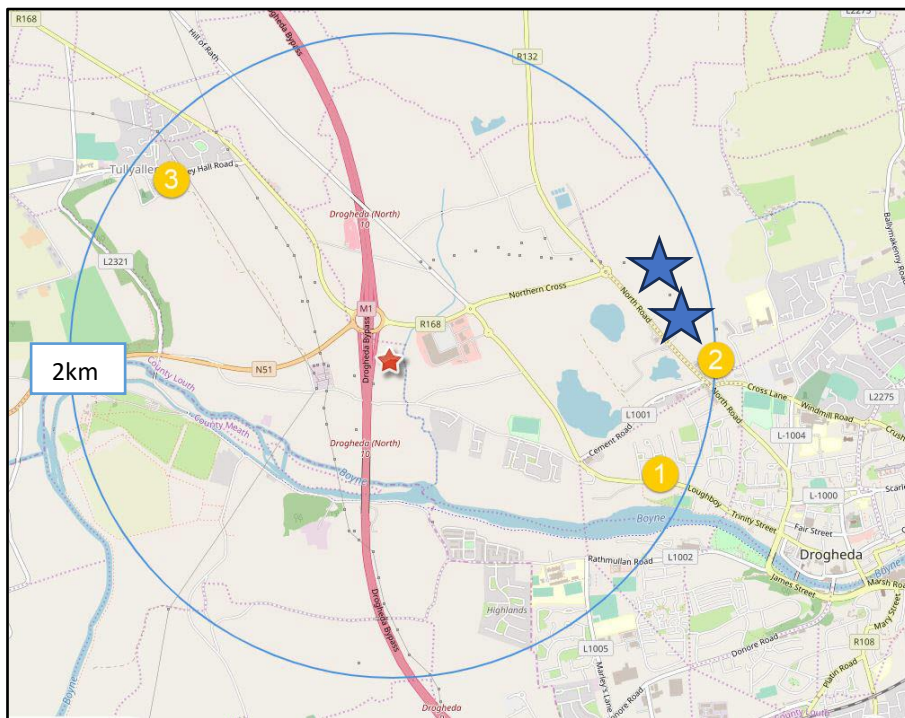


Figure 5: Planning childcare facilities within 2km of the SHD site indicated by blue star

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

It is considered appropriate to retain a childcare facility within the permitted SHD as modified based on its location relative to existing services and the projected pre-school population that the new neighbourhood would cater for.