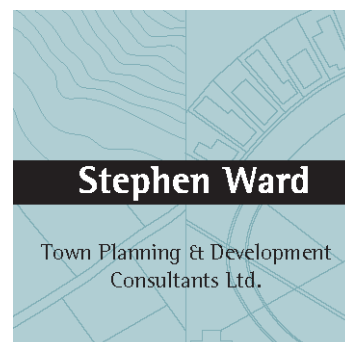


Childcare Demand Assessment

**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). The development known as Gort Mell is at an advanced stage of construction and occupation (30no. units). It is intended that the proposed development (Phase 3) will commence during Q4 2025 and will be the final phase of the Gort Mell development. The modifications to the permitted SHD include an additional 47no. dwellings bringing the total number of dwellings within Gort Mell development to 284no.

A crèche is permitted as part of the SHD (as modified under 2460266 and 2360368) to serve the needs of future residents and is at an advanced stage of construction. The two storey stand-alone creche was designed with potential full time capacity of 58no. childcare places with four care rooms and outdoor play area (171sq.m). On street car parking and a set down area are proposed in front of the creche building as illustrated on JFOC Architects drawing no. 22.127.PP1002. The creche is centrally located within the site and will be within c.180m of the proposed dwellings in Phase 3. Full footpath connectivity is provided to and from the creche for surrounding residents.

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 childcare demand from phase 3 in addition to the permitted Gort Mell development.

1.1 PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The proposed modifications will result in an additional 47no. residential units (10no. apartments and 37no. houses) being provided bringing the total number of dwellings within Gort Mell development to 284no. as detailed by Table 2.

Table 1: Permitted				
	Housing	Duplex / ground floor Apartments	Total	
1-bed	-	21	21	8%
2-bed	28	21	49	20%
3-bed	142	-	142	62%
4-bed	25	-	25	10%
Total	195	42	237	100%

Table 2 Residential Mix - SHD with proposed modifications				
	Housing	Duplex / ground floor Apartments	Total	
1-bed	-	26	26	9%
2-bed	39	26	65	23%
3-bed	165	-	165	58%
4-bed	28	-	28	10%
Total	232	52	284	100%

2.0 PERMITTED CHILDCARE FACILITY

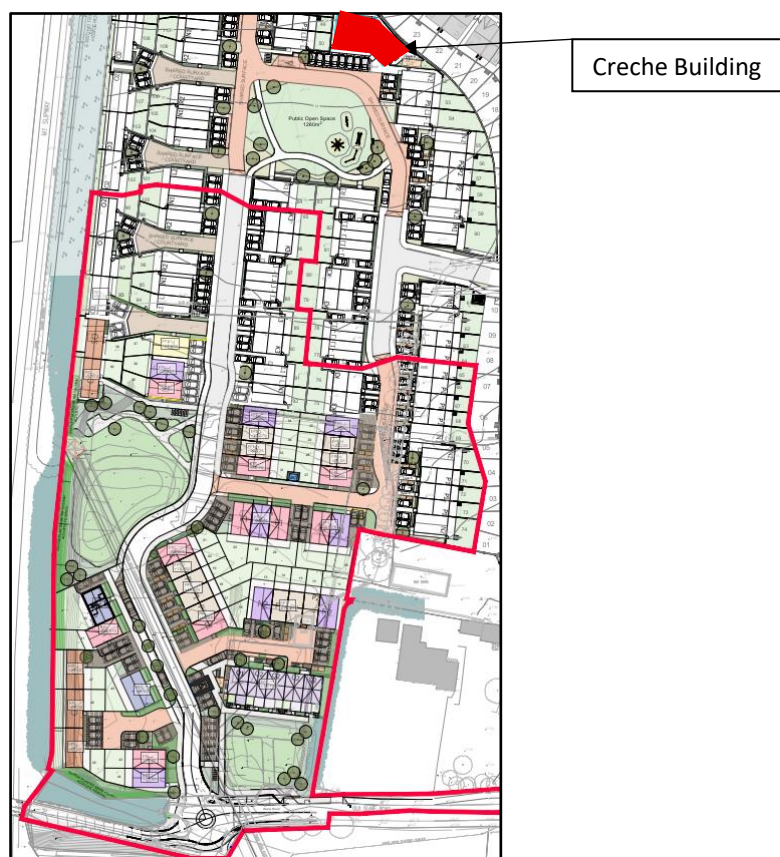


Figure 1 Location of the permitted Creche relative to Phase 3 (Extract from JFOC drawing no.31003)

The permitted 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.

Table 3 Creche Full Time Capacity			
Age Group	No. of Childcare Spaces	Area/Child(m ²)	Staff (ratio)
0-1	9	3.5	3 (1:3)
1-2	15	2.8	3 (1:5)
2-3	13	2.35	3 (1:6)
3-6	21	2.3	3 (1:8)
	58		12

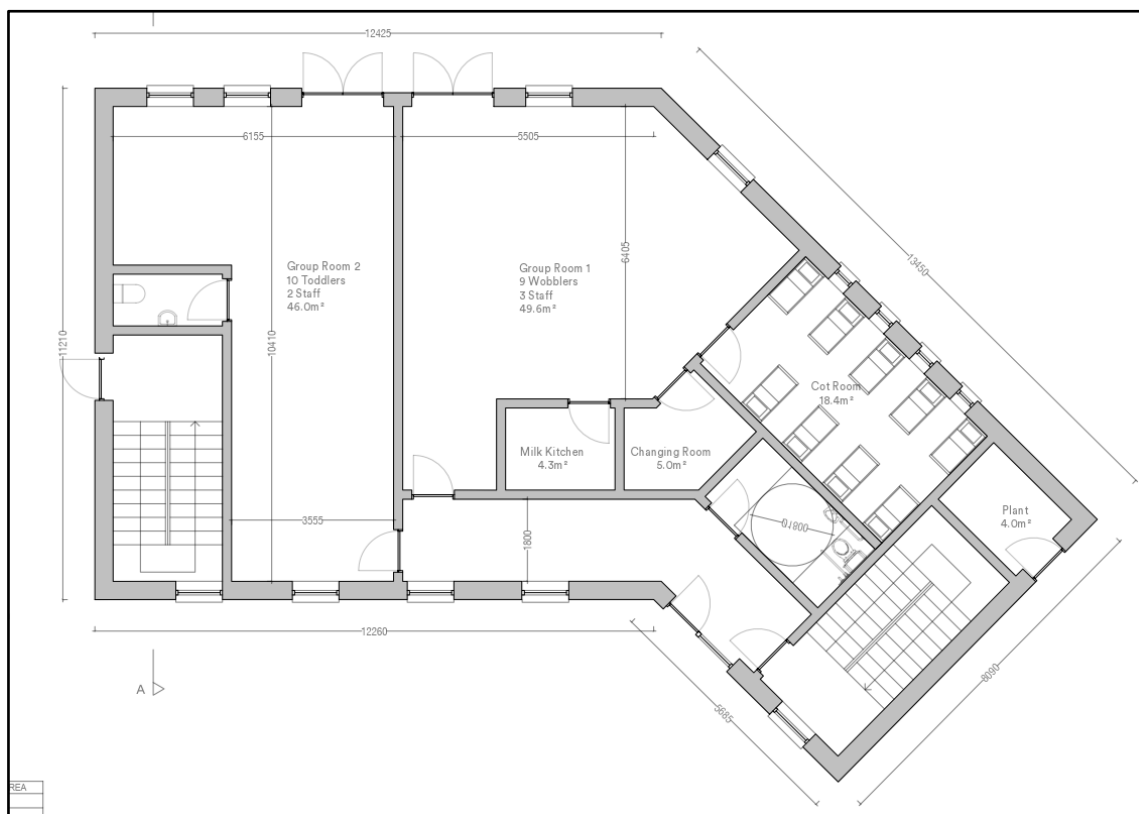


Figure 2 Ground Floor Plan - Creche

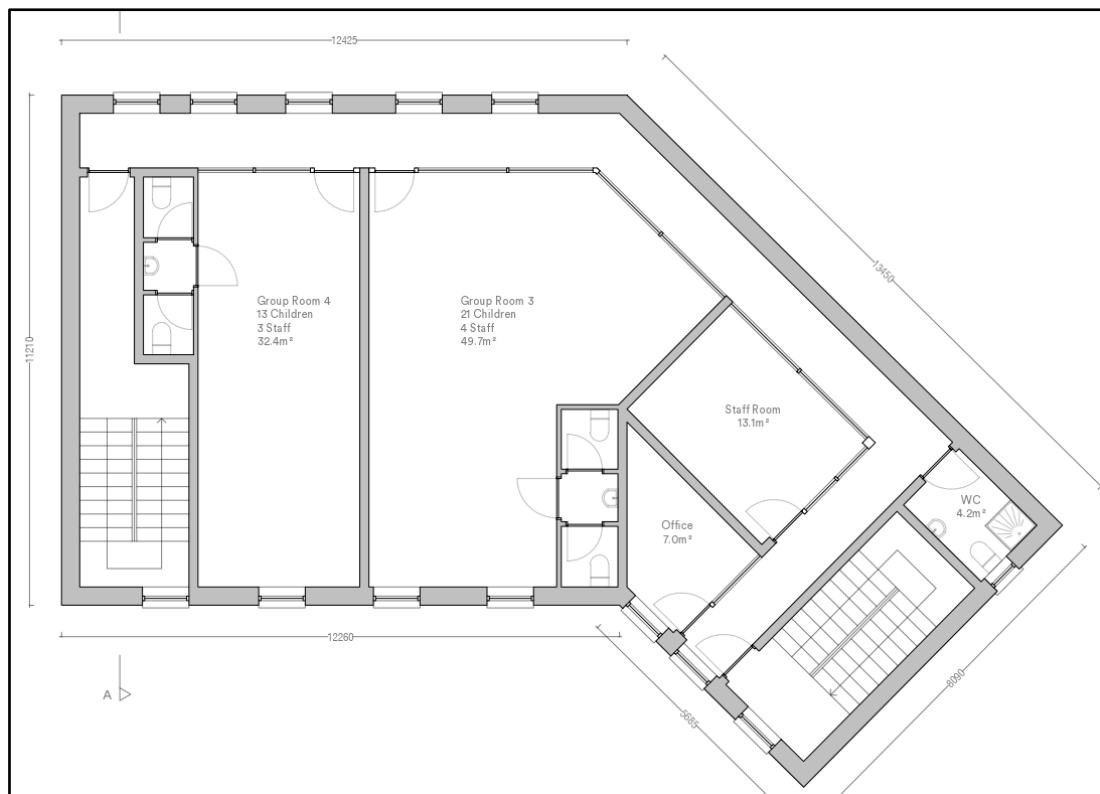


Figure 3 First Floor Plan - Creche

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 31st 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)

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 permitted childcare facility was calculated on the basis of 237no. residential units, using the benchmark of 20 places in developments of 75 houses, excluding one-bedroom apartments. Excluding one-bedroom apartments it was presumed that the remaining 216no. housing units would generate a demand for childcare in line with the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities resulting in 58no. childcare spaces being provided. The development of 47no. dwellings falls below the benchmark for a stand alone childcare facility. In addition, 5no. of the proposed units are one-bedroom apartments which are not considered to generate any demand for childcare. It is submitted that the permitted creche and existing services in the area can adequately cater for the additional demand for childcare generated by the proposed development.

4.0 CENSUS 2022 RESULTS

As part of the Childcare Demand Assessment submitted as part LRD P.A.Ref. 2460266 for modifications to the permitted SHD including the redesign of the creche, an assessment of potential demand was undertaken based on the 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.**

Based on the assessment undertaken based on the most recent available demographic statistics from CSO, the permitted creche provided a facility for 58no. full time childcare spaces for a potential demand of 45no. childcare spaces.

The same calculation has been undertaken to assess the potential demand for childcare from the additional 47no. units proposed as part of the subject planning application for modifications to the permitted SHD. Discounting one-bedroom apartments and presuming 52% of all other housing is occupied by families with children, this would equate to 22no. of the additional dwellings generating potential demand for childcare. 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 42no. children within the phase 3 development. Based on the demographic profile of Drogheda from the 2022 Census results, the 42no. children have been profiled as follows-

- 9no. aged 0-4
- 24no. aged 5-14
- 9no. aged 15-18

The Phase 3 development of Gort Mell when considered in isolation could potentially have a population of 33no. children under 15years. Census data for Drogheda indicates 27% of the population under 15 uses childcare. On this basis, **9no. children would use some form of childcare, including a creche.**

It is submitted that the permitted childcare facility will cater for the SHD as amended. The creche has been designed for 58no. full time child spaces. The Census based analysis indicates that a total of 54no. children within the SHD (as modified) are likely to use a type of formal childcare including a creche. End services will be dependent on the operator who could provide sessional services as well as full time childcare. Sessional services open up additional childcare spaces including the free childcare offered under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme which provides free care and education for pre-school children for 3 hours a day.

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 158 child spaces based on information from Tulsa Regulatory Inspection Reports.

Provider		Age Range (years old)	Service Profile			Capacity
			Full Time	Part Time	Sessional	
1	Playmates	3years-10 years	-	-	X	36 ¹
2	Olive Tree	1- 12years	X	-	-	37 ²
23	Little Rascals	0 - 12years	X	X	X	85 ³
Total Capacity						158

¹ Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report dated 17/10/2024

² Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report dated 18/07/2024

³ Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report dated 25/04/2024

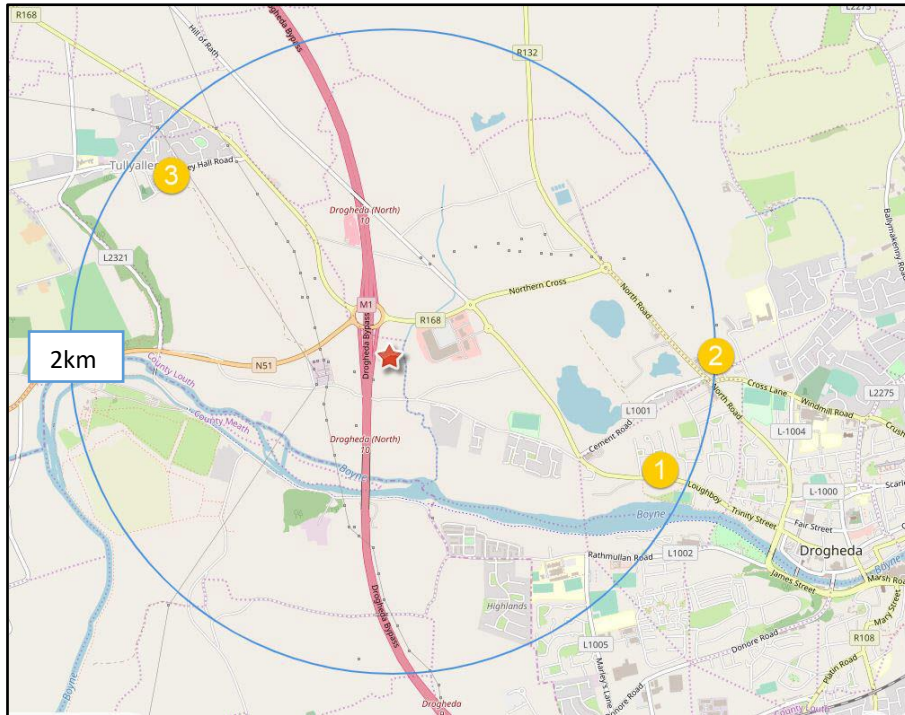


Figure 4 Childcare Facilities within 2km of the SHD site (red star)

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.

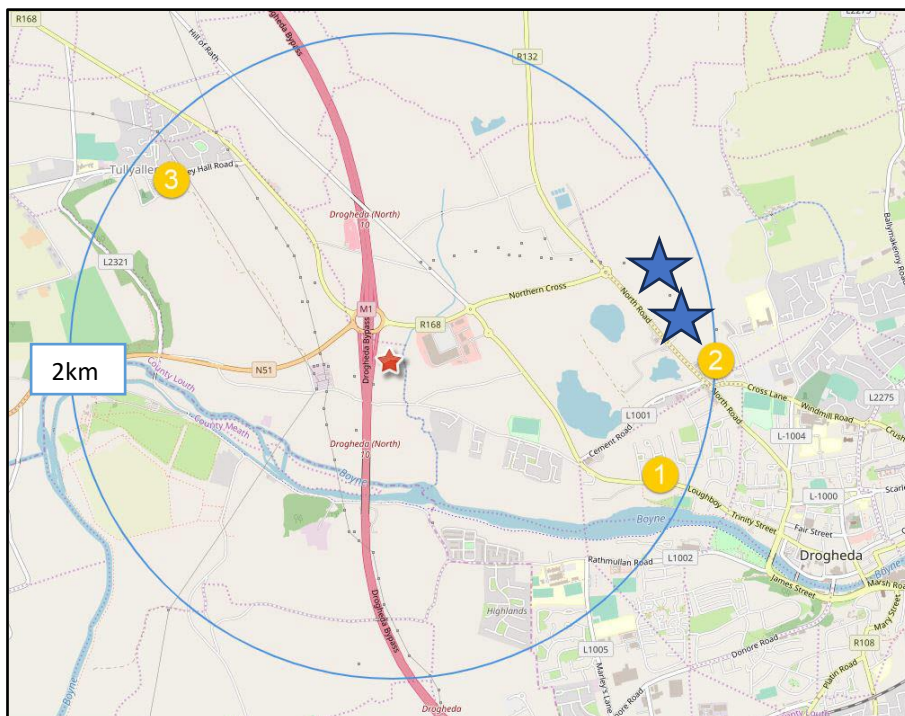


Figure 5 Planning childcare facilities within 2km of the SHD site indicated by blue star

7.0 CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the creche as permitted and under construction within Gort Mell will provide adequate childcare for the predicted demand.

The creche has been designed for 58no. full time child spaces. The Census based analysis indicates that a total of 54no. children within the Gort Mell development with modifications are likely to use a type of formal childcare including a creche. End services will be dependent on the operator who could provide sessional services as well as full time childcare, increasing the number child spaces further.