

# Childcare Provision Assessment

Castletreasure / Maryborough (townlands), Carr's Hill, Douglas, Cork

April 2019



Prepared on behalf of  
Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.

## 1.0 Introduction

Cairn Homes Properties Ltd. are applying for a Strategic Housing Development comprising the construction of 472 no. residential units, a creche and all associated development at Castletreasure/Maryborough (townlands), Carr's Hill, Douglas, Co. Cork.

This Childcare Provision Assessment is submitted in response to item 7 of An Bord Pleanála's Opinion which required the following:

*A report identifying the demand for school and creche places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools and creches in the vicinity to cater for such demand.*

Accordingly, the following examines the existing childcare facilities located in the vicinity of the development site, their capacity and the resultant need to incorporate any on-site crèche facilities as part of the development proposal, with specific focus on the relevant planning policy and demographic statistics.

The report is set out as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Planning Policy Context
3. Assessment
4. Future Demand Generated by the Proposed Development
5. Conclusion



**FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT OF DOUGLAS, AND OTHER RELEVANT POPULATION CENTRES TOGHER, MAHON AND CORK CITY**

## 2.0 Planning Policy Context

Both the 'Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2001) published by the Department of Environment, and the Cork County Development Plan 2014 require the provision of a crèche where in excess of 75 dwellings is proposed.

### Cork County Development Plan 2014

Objective SC 3-1: Childcare Facilities of the Cork County Development Plan (CDP) 2014 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 (Preschool Services) Regulations 2006.*

### 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.

## Assessment

The local need for a new crèche facility at the subject site in Castletreasure, Douglas was examined in detail in accordance with current guidelines. In the first instance, the TUSLA Pre-School Inspection Reports for different facilities in the locality were examined in detail. However, it was found that these are often outdated and not an accurate reflection of current provision in the area. 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 goers registered for the academic 2018/2019 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, the assessment is set out as follows:

- The emerging demographic profile of the area;
- The existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities in the area.

### Demographic Profile of the Area

The demographic profile of Castletreasure, Douglas was examined using the CSO Census of Population Statistics 2016. Due to the site's location within the Douglas Electoral Division (ED), which incorporates the largest residential areas in Douglas namely Maryborough, Rochestown and Castletreasure, this ED was used in the assessment, which includes a comparative analysis with National and County averages across a number of datasets.

The population of the Douglas ED increased from 20,397 in 2011 to 21,041 in 2016 which represents an increase of 3.2%. In 2011, nearly 7.7% of the total population of the Douglas ED were of pre-school going age (i.e. 0-4 years), which represents a decrease of 0.6% to 7.1% in 2016. Despite this slight reduction, the figure

recorded is broadly in line with those identified at County (7.5%) and State level (6.9%) in the same age category.

By way of comparison, 10.5% of the population of the Douglas region were over the age of 65 in 2016. Approximately 17.4% (i.e. 3,669) of the population were aged between 30-39, however at a cumulative 22.6% of the population, the number of 'One Person' households and 'Couples without Children' was 4,751 in 2016, just 0.3% below the comparable State average of 22.3% for the same period.

Demographic travel trends indicated that considerable numbers of people commute to Cork City and its surrounding environs, as well as other employment centres in the area such as Mahon, Ringaskiddy and Little Island on a daily basis. A total of 9,610 of the population aged 5 and over travel a distance of between 0mins and 30mins each day, to work, school or college. This equates to 65.2% of the total (i.e. 14,731), with a further 22% (i.e. 3,344 people) travelling between 30mins and 45mins. This suggests an amount of commuting and owing to the site's proximity of these larger employment areas, it is considered likely that a proportion of both existing and future populations in Douglas will avail of childcare facilities outside the area. This view was confirmed anecdotally among childcare providers during the course of the research.

### Distribution of Childcare Facilities in Douglas.

A total number of 42 crèches/childcare facilities were identified within a fifteen – twenty minute drivetime of the site, hence the study area was reduced to a ten – twelve minute drivetime which yielded a total of 20 facilities within this area. The locations of these facilities are outlined in Figure 2 below and listed in Table 1. This table identifies the distance of each crèche from the site and the relevant recorded drive times.

**TABLE 1: LIST OF CHILDCARE FACILITIES WITH DISTANCE AND SUBSEQUENT DRIVETIME FROM SITE**

	Name	Distance	Drive Time
1	Canterbury Montessori School	3.8 km	9 mins
2	Springbrook Montessori Crèche	3.5 km	9 mins
3	BEL Childcare – Bilingual Early Learning Childcare	2.8 km	7 mins
4	The Treehouse Playschool	2.7 km	3 mins
5	Pathways Childcare Ltd	1.2 km	4 mins
6	Little Fingers Playgroup	2.6 km	7 mins
7	St. Columba's Montessori School	2.5 km	6 mins
8	Douglas Community Pre-School	1.7 km	4 mins
9	Mount Oval Childcare Limited	4.1 km	9 mins
10	Bright Beginnings	4.0 km	8 mins
11	ABC Childcare	4.4 km	9 mins
12	Little Stars Montessori	4.4 km	10 mins
13	Little Paradise Crèche	4.9 km	12 mins
14	Sunny Days Montessori	3.9 km	10 mins
15	Maryborough Montessori School	2.4 km	5 mins
16	Little Wonders Daycare Rochestown	4.8 km	6 min
17	Naoinra na Dubhglaise	2.6 km	7 mins
18	Orchard Childcare	3.3 km	9 mins
19	Tir na nOg Montessori School AMI	2.4 km	8 mins
20	Lilliput Montessori School	3.6 km	6 mins



**FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF CHILDCARE FACILITIES WITHIN 12 MINUTE DRIVETIME (I.E. 5KM)**

Douglas is located in the South Environs of Cork City and lies in close proximity to major employment centres such as Ringaskiddy, Little Island and Carrigtwohill. Given the findings of the demographic research above, it is considered reasonable that a sizeable proportion of those commuting from Douglas to these employment centres may also avail of childcare facilities in these surrounding areas. For the purpose of this preliminary assessment, such facilities have been omitted from the research undertaken. As such, the identified capacity in the surrounding area should be viewed as a minimum.

Preschool inspection reports from TUSLA are available for all of the identified facilities. However only some of these reports are up to date for the previous academic year, thus, not all the relevant data necessary to carry out the assessment was available within these reports. In the absence of this information, information in relation to the facilities was gathered by speaking directly with their proprietors who advised on the total capacity of the relevant facility and the corresponding number of available places. If the provider was unreachable after several attempts by email and phone, the TUSLA figures were used as referenced.

The overall findings are summarised as follows in Table 2:

**TABLE 2: CAPACITY OF CHILDCARE FACILITIES IN THE DOUGLAS AREA**

Childcare Facility	Capacity of Facility in Places	Available Places (2018/2019)	% Available Places
Canterbury Montessori School	17	3	18%
Springbrook Montessori Crèche	44	0	0%
BEL Childcare – Bilingual Early Learning Childcare	44* (TUSLA 2016)	0	0%
The Treehouse Playschool	26	0	0%
Pathways Childcare Ltd	100	0	0%
Little Fingers Playgroup	16* (TUSLA 2016)	0	0%
St. Columba Montessori School (part time)	44	37 (in afternoon session only)	84% (in afternoon session only)
Douglas Community Pre-School	37	21	0%
Mount Oval Childcare Limited (Kangakare Creche)	225 (full time, part-time, sessional)	0	0%
Bright Beginnings	26	3	11.5%
ABC Childcare	148	0	0%
Little Stars Montessori	32	0	0%
Little Paradise Crèche	38	0	0%
Sunny Days Montessori	44	0	0%
Maryborough Montessori School	13	3	23%
Little Wonders Daycare Rochestown	37	4	11%
Naíonra na Dúbhglaise	74	0	0%
Orchard Childcare	22	37 (Sep. 2019)	168%
Tir na nOg Montessori School AMI	66	0	0%
Lilliput Montessori School	40* (TUSLA 2018)	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1093</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>7%</b>
*Representation taken from most recent TUSLA Reports as Service Provider was Uncontactable			

Of the 20 no. identified childcare facilities within 5km of the subject site, 3 no. were uncontactable after several attempts. In the interest of accuracy, it was assumed that these creches were working at full capacity.

Of the remaining 17 no. facilities, 8 are operating at full capacity for the current academic year, with a total of 74 no. childcare places available in the remaining 9 no. childcare facilities. This represents a total of 7% availability of places within the identified 5km / 4-12 minute drivetime.

## Future Demand Generated by the Proposed Development

The total number of units within the proposed development is 472 no. units. Excluding the 1 bed units (75 no.) there are a total of 352 no. units appropriate for families (i.e. 2 beds and greater). Assuming an average household size in the range of 2.4 (Cork City average household size) to 2.8 (Douglas ED and Cork County average household size) people, it is envisaged that the proposed development will accommodate a projected population of between 1,132 and 1,321 people.

Based on the assumption that 7.1% of the population in Douglas are of pre-school going age (i.e. 0-4 years), the number of pre-school children that will live in the completed development is likely to be in the range of 80 to 93. As stated previously it is unlikely that all children will require childcare within the subject site (i.e. some

will be cared for at home, some by other family members/friends, or will attend another childcare facility in the area), therefore a creche to cater for the maximum level is unlikely to be required.

In the interest of commercial viability, a creche of 642sqm is proposed which will provide 75 no. childcare places.

## Conclusion

The above assessment has been prepared in accordance with national and local childcare guidelines.

Evidence from the CSO Census confirms that a large proportion of the population in Douglas commute to school, college or work, with 65.2% of the population in the ED travelling a distance of between 0mins and 30mins daily and a further 22% travelling between 30mins and 45mins. This suggests a considerable amount of commuting and owing to the site's proximity of these larger employment areas, it is considered very likely that a sizeable proportion of both existing and future populations in Douglas will avail of childcare facilities outside the immediate area.

Notwithstanding this, the research undertaken identified a capacity of 74 childcare places or 7% available within a 5km / 12-minute drivetime of the site, with the furthest away being Little Paradise Crèche (12 minutes to the west). This excludes the 24 no. additional childcare facilities located within a 15-20 minute drivetime of the site as well as available capacity in wider areas, including the Cork City environs and other employment centres, where it can be reasonably inferred that future residents may avail of childcare services.

On this basis the proposed development makes provision for a crèche providing 75 no. childcare places and is located to the north west of the site. This provision is deemed appropriate given:

- the number of childcare facilities identified in the area;
- the availability of childcare places for the current year 2018/2019; and
- the established demographic trend towards commuting.

Given the existing provision in the area, it is considered that there is enough places available to meet the short to medium term childcare requirements of the area. Notwithstanding this, the creche is proposed to be provided within Phase 1 of the development which will ensure that the creche will be established as development proceeds and the population grows.