

STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, BLACKWOOD SQUARE, NORTHWOOD, SANTRY, DUBLIN 9

Childcare Demand Analysis



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CHILDCARE DEMAND ANALYSIS

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1 INTRODUCTION

RPS Group Ltd. has been commissioned by Cosgrave Developments (the Applicant) to prepare this Childcare Demand Analysis (report) in relation to the proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) off Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9.

This report has been prepared in response to An Bord Pleanála's Opinion which sets out that a report be included with the application for permission which demonstrates that the proposed childcare facility is appropriate with respect to its scale given the location of the development and extent of childcare facilities operating in the area.

This report has had regard to the Opinion, Inspector's Report and Meeting Record issued by An Bord Pleanála following the Tripartite Preapplication Meeting held in relation to the subject site (Ref. ABP-305029-19) and whether the 72no. place childcare facility originally proposed may provide places in excess of demand.

This report sets out relevant planning guidance, policies and objectives relating to the provision of childcare facilities and how these apply to the proposed development. The report also includes a description of existing and permitted childcare facilities available to future residents of the proposed development and the likely demand for a future facility at this location. This report is set out under the following sections:

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 2 – Proposed Development

Section 3 – Planning Policy Context

Section 4– Existing and Permitted Childcare Facilities

Section 5 – Analysis

Section 6 – Conclusion

2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The subject site is located within the former Santry Demesne, c.7km north from Dublin City Centre. To the west of the site is the proposed Metrolink Northwood stop (c.350m). To the north of the site is a residential development that is currently under construction (Reg. Ref. F15A/0440 as modified) and to the west is an existing carpark associated with Gulliver's Retail Park. The site is bound to the east by an internal roadway and beyond that car parking associated with the Swift Square Office complex and housing under construction (Reg. Ref. F15A/0440 as modified). The site is bound to the south by a McDonald's fast food outlet and Gulliver's local centre. The context of the site is illustrated in **Figure 2-1**.

The proposed development will consist of the phased construction of:

- 4 no. 7-storey plus penthouse apartment blocks (A, B, C and D) containing 331 no. apartment units comprising: 6 no. one bedroom units, 292 no. two bedroom units and 33 no. three bedroom units over a shared basement;
- 5 no. ground floor mixed use commercial units within Blocks B and C;
- A multi-function area and a resident gym within Block A;
- A childcare facility within Block C; and;

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- Associated car and bicycle parking spaces, landscaping, public open space, communal open space, pedestrian and cycle paths and services.

The proposed development is fully illustrated in the drawings prepared by McCrossan O'Rourke Manning Architects which are submitted as part of the planning application documentation.

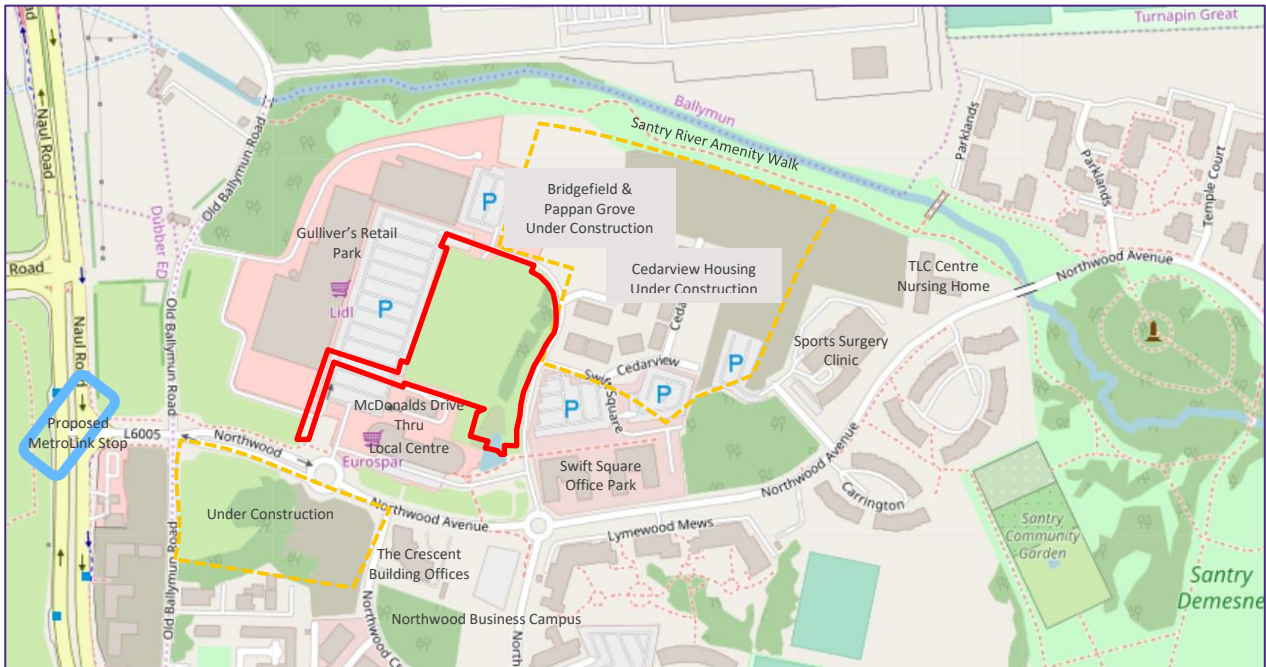


Figure 2-1: Site Location (indicative subject lands outlined in red)

Source: www.openstreetmap.org

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The following section provides a summary of the key elements of national guidance and local policy relevant to childcare facilities and the proposed development.

3.1 Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

Issued in 2001 the *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (the Childcare Guidelines) provide qualitative and quantitative recommendations for planning authorities for assessing planning applications. The Childcare Guidelines seek to ensure high quality childcare services that are accessible, affordable and appropriate for all are provided as part of future development proposals. The following locations are listed in the Childcare Guidelines as being appropriate for the provision of new childcare facilities:

- *“New communities/Larger new housing developments;*
- *The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working;*
- *Neighbourhood, District and Town Centres; and*
- *Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways”.* (page 5&6)

With regard to childcare facilities within residential developments, the Childcare Guidelines state that planning authorities should require:

“a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate. This is a guideline standard and will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site”. (page 9)

Having regard for the above, it is highlighted that the standards set out by the Childcare Guidelines are recommendations only and do not represent minimum requirements. Furthermore, the Guidelines recognise the need to assess proposals based on the circumstances of each individual site.

3.2 Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)

The *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)* (the Residential Development Guidelines) aim to ensure the sustainable delivery of residential development throughout the country. With regard to childcare facilities, the Guidelines reiterate the recommendation of *“the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units” (page 26)* as specified by the Childcare Guidelines. However, it is highlighted that the Residential Development Guidelines state that:

“The threshold for such provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas, in consultation with city/county childcare committees”. (page 26)

Having regard for the above, it is highlighted that the Residential Development Guidelines acknowledge the need to consider the availability of existing childcare facilities in an area as there may be enough provision to accommodate the demand generated by new residential schemes.

3.3 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

In March 2018, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government published the updated *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018* (the Apartment Standards). With regard to childcare facilities, the Apartment Standards recognise the provision for such facilities recommended in the Childcare Guidelines as *“one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units” (page 21)*. However, the Apartment Standards further state that:

“...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.” (page 21)

It is highlighted that these Guidelines acknowledge the need to consider the level of childcare facilities required for new residential schemes based on the unit mix proposed.

3.4 Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023

The *Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023* (the Development Plan) sets out an overall strategy for the planning and sustainable development of Fingal and includes planning policies, objectives and design standards to guide future development in the administrative area.

Under the Development Plan, the subject lands are zoned ‘Objective ME *“which further seeks to facilitate opportunity for high density mixed use” (page 386)*. The vision for lands with this zoning objective is to:

“Facilitate opportunities for high density mixed use employment generating activity and commercial development, and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro Economic Corridor.” (page 386)

The Development Plan recognises the importance of childcare facilities in contributing positively to an enhanced quality of life, given their economic and social value. In this regard, the Development Plan seeks to ensure that a sufficient provision of facilities is achieved throughout the administrative area and includes Objective PM74 which states:

“Encourage the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations, including residential areas, town and local centres, areas of employment and areas close to public transport nodes”. (page 83)

4 EXISTING AND PERMITTED CHILDCARE FACILITIES

4.1 Existing Childcare Facilities

In order to assess the level of childcare facilities in the area a 3km radius was selected as a fair representation of childcare facilities that would be easily accessible from the proposed development.

As illustrated in **Figure 4-1**, a total of 20 no. facilities were identified within 3km walking distance of the subject site. In addition to these facilities, it should be noted that several additional childcare facilities are located further to the 3km radius in neighbouring areas including Beaumont, Whitehall and Kilmore. A full list of services within the 3km walking distance is provided in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Childcare Facilities within a 3km Radius of the Subject Site

No.	Name:	Address:
1.	Little Harvard	Bridgefield, Northwood, Santry, Dublin 9.
2.	Pop Up Preschool	St Joseph’s Junior School, Balcurris Road, Dublin 9.
3.	St Margaret’s Pre School	St Margaret’s Road, Dublin 11.
4.	Poppintree Early Education Centre	Ballbutcher Lane, Dublin 11.
5.	Aisling Project	Poppintree Sport and Community Centre, Ballybutcher Lane North, Dublin 11.
6.	Naionra Glor na nGael	Sli Sheantraibh, Baile Munna
7.	Bernie/Sharons Preschool	Longdale Terrace, Santry. Dublin 9.
8.	Ballymun East Community Centre Ltd	Ballymun East Community Centre, Woodhazel Close, Dublin 9.
9.	Aisling Project (Ballymun)	Ballymun East Child & Youth Centre, Woodhazel Close, Dublin 9.
10.	Axis Creche	Main Street, Dublin 9.
11.	Aisling Project (Sillogue Road)	The Lighthouse, Sillogue Road, Ballymun, Dublin 11.
12.	Tír na nÓg Early Childhood Care & Education Centre	Ballymun Day Nursey, Sillogue Road, Dublin 11.
13.	Our Lady’s Nursery	121 Sillogue Gardens, Dublin 11.
14.	Naionra an T-Seachtar Laoch	Scoil an t-Seachtar Laoch, Bothar Baile Munna
15.	Mother of Divine Grace Playgroup	Riversdale Sports Club, Glasnevin Avenue, Dublin 11.
16.	Playpals	131 Glasnevin Avenue, Dublin 11.
17.	Pinocchio’s Little Treasures	Silverdale, Old Swords Road, Dublin 9.
18.	The Playhouse Preschool	Santry Community Resource Centre, Domville Court, Dublin 9.
19.	Happy Ways Preschool	Greenfield Community Centre, Shanliss Avenue, Dublin 9.
20.	Sunshine Creche and Montessori	Unit D2, Santry Hall Industrial Estate

Source: www.pobal.ie

Having regard to the large number of existing facilities in the area, it is considered that there are several viable options located within a reasonable distance of the subject site for future residents of the proposed scheme to avail of.

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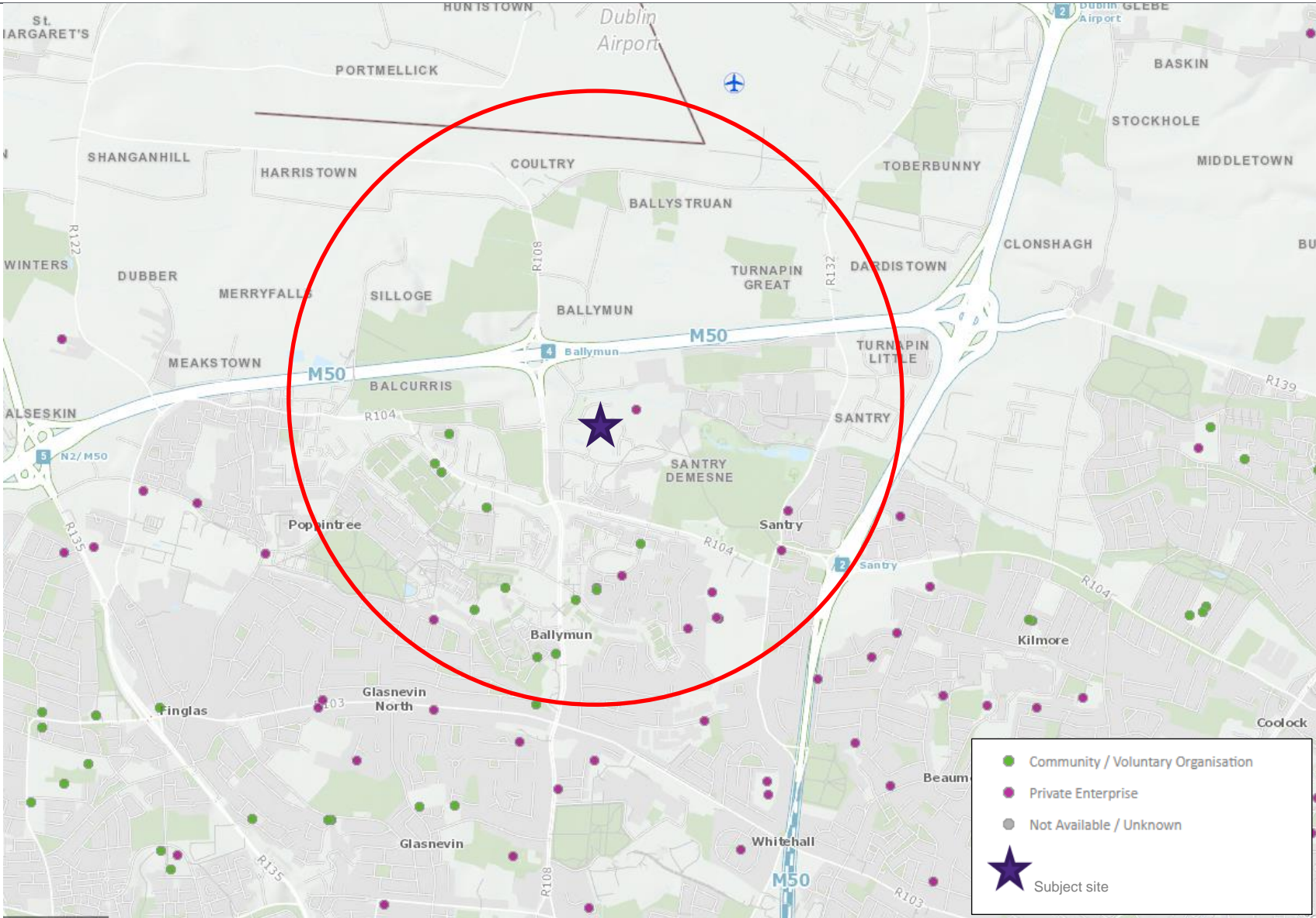


Figure 4-1: Childcare Facilities within a 3km Radius
 Source: Pobail.ie, RPS annotation.

4.2 Permitted Childcare Facilities

A desktop review of the planning history for the surrounding area in vicinity of the subject lands was undertaken using the myplan.ie online planning search facility. Recent planning permissions in the vicinity of the subject site are illustrated on **Figure 4-2** and include:

- F18A/0421:** Planning permission was granted for a residential development which included provision for a childcare facility to include 33 no. childcare spaces. This site is located at the south-eastern junction of Northwood Avenue and Domville Wood (the Old Ballymun Road) in Northwood south of the subject site and which is under construction.
- F15A/0440:** Planning permission was granted for a residential development which included provision for a childcare facility to include 100 no. childcare spaces. This site adjoins the subject site and the planning consent is under construction. A Little Harvard childcare facility has recently opened on this site.

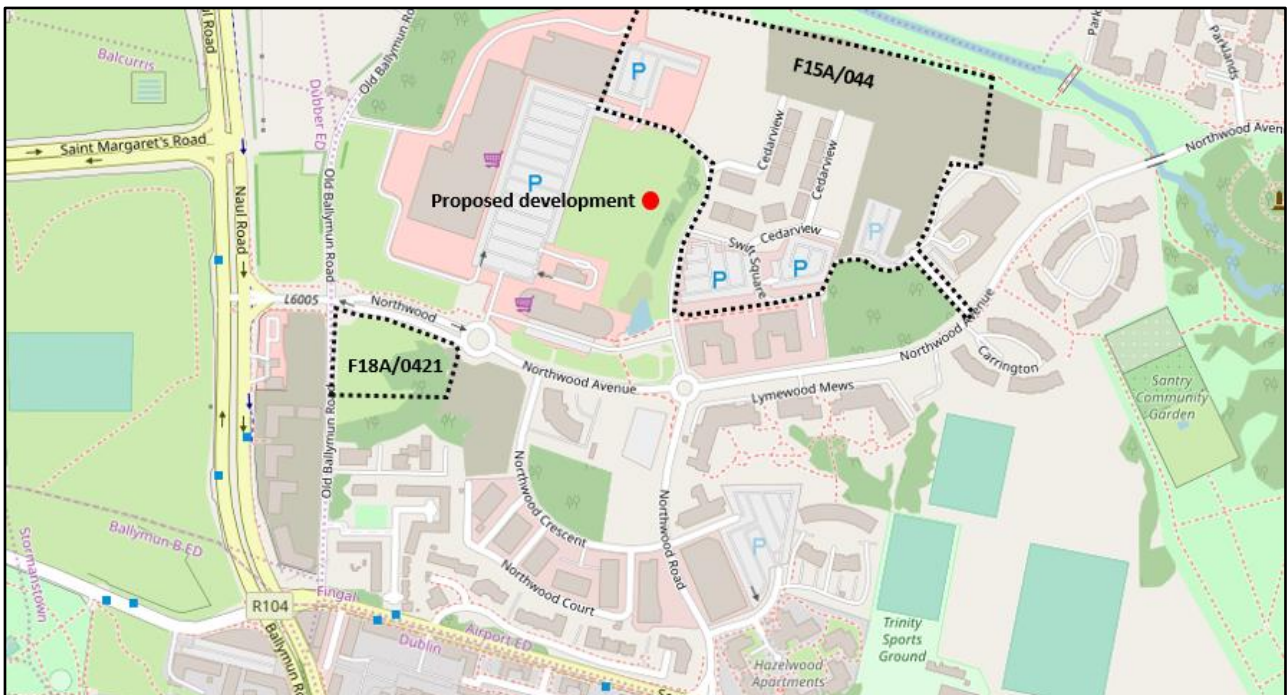


Figure 4-2: Permitted Childcare Facilities outlined in black
 Source: www.openstreetmap.org, www.fingal.ie

5 ANALYSIS

The proposed development will contain 331 no. residential units comprising of 6 no. 1-bedroom units, 292 no. 2-bedroomed units and 33 no. 3-bedroomed units. Using a strict application of the Childcare Guidelines to the level of residential units proposed, the development would generate a need for 88 no. childcare spaces.

The preapplication meeting with An Bord Pleanála and Fingal County Council noted that the 72no. place childcare facility proposed as part of the preapplication submission may provide places in excess of demand thereby rendering the unit vacant in the longer term. In order to determine a more appropriate level of childcare spaces to be provided, the following factors, in addition to the policy context outlined above, are considered:

- Site location and access.
- Level of current childcare facilities in the vicinity.

- Level of permitted childcare facilities in the vicinity.
- Demographic profile
- Estimate of Demand
- Consultation with industry operators and Fingal County Childcare Committee.

5.1.1 Site Location and Access

As set out in **Section 2** the proposed development site is located within a mixed use area and convenient to existing and proposed transport services.

5.1.2 Level of Current Childcare Facilities in the Vicinity

As set out in **Section 4** there are 20 no. operating childcare facilities located within 3km of the subject site.

5.1.3 Level of Permitted Childcare Facilities in the Vicinity

As set out in **Section 4** there are 2 no. permitted childcare facilities located within the vicinity of the subject site. One of these facilities, Little Harvard, opened in 2019 and the other is under construction.

5.1.4 Demographic Profile

Population figures from the Census of Population in 2011 and 2016 were used to create a profile of the area surrounding the subject site. These were examined at Electoral District (ED) level. In order to create a fair representation of childcare facilities within the area, a 3km isochrone was selected.

The subject site is located within the Airport ED (CSO Area Code ED: 04001). The wards below were also included within the analysis:

- Ballymun B (CSO Area Code ED: 02016)
- Ballymun C (CSO Area Code ED: 02017)
- Ballymun D (CSO Area Code ED: 02018)
- Ballygall C (CSO Area Code Ed: 02013)
- Whitehall A (CSO Area Code ED: 02090)
- Whitehall B (CSO Area Code ED: 02091)

The context of the subject site is illustrated in **Figure 5-1**.

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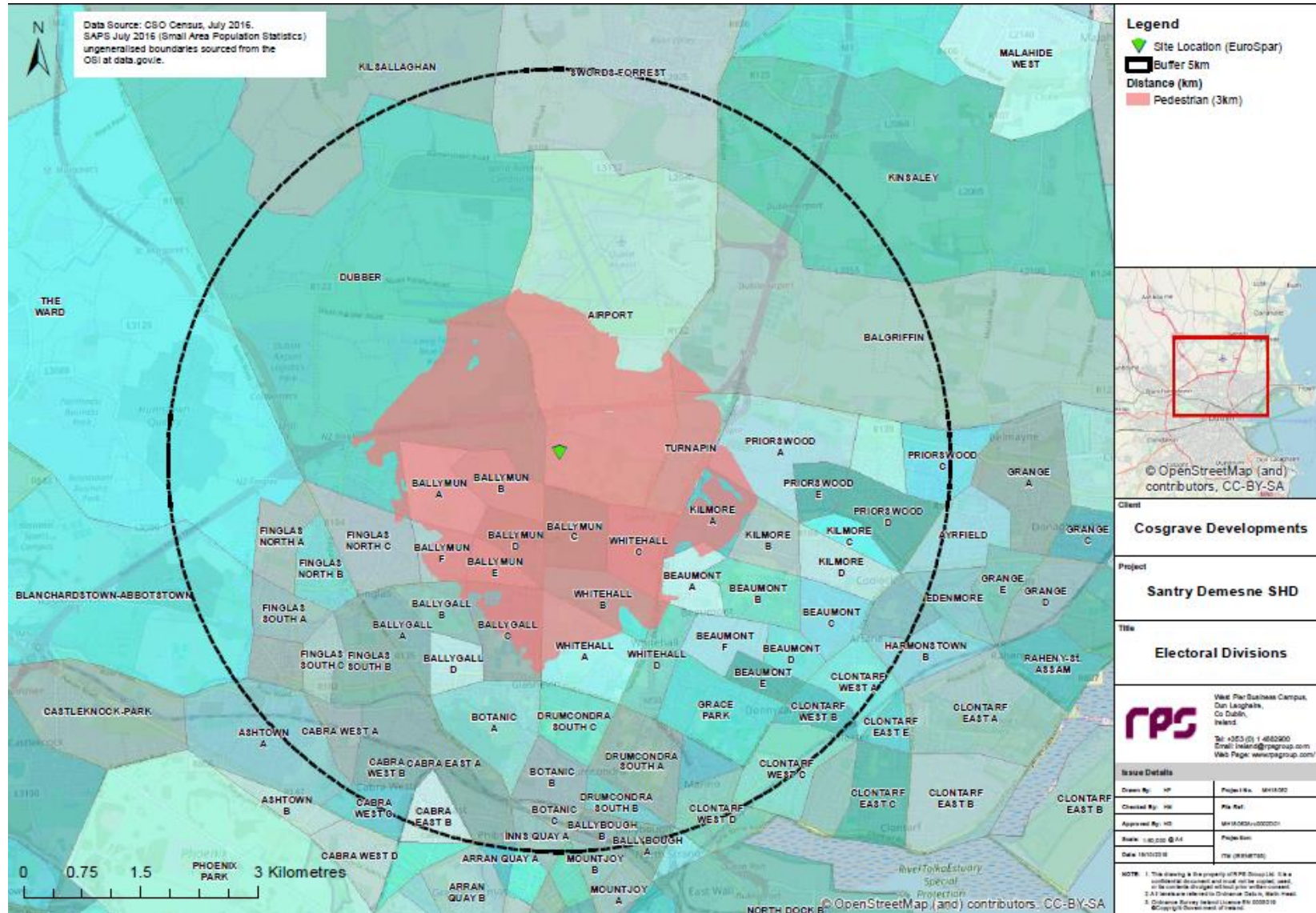


Figure 5-1: The Study Area (3km isochrone)
Source: CSO, RPS annotation

The demographic profile of the subject site within the context of the State, Fingal and the Study Area are provided in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1: Demographic Profile of the State, Fingal and Study Area

	Total Population 2016:	0-4 year old population	% of 0-4 year olds within total population
State:	4761865	331515	7.0%
Fingal:	296020	24899	8.4%
Study Area:	28902	1691	5.9%
<i>Airport</i>	<i>5018</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>7.4%</i>
<i>Ballymun B</i>	<i>4379</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>5.9%</i>
<i>Ballymun C</i>	<i>6112</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>5.7%</i>
<i>Ballymun D</i>	<i>2458</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>7.3%</i>
<i>Ballygall C</i>	<i>3521</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>4.9%</i>
<i>Whitehall A</i>	<i>3286</i>	<i>133</i>	<i>4.0%</i>
<i>Whitehall B</i>	<i>4128</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>0.1%</i>

Source: www.CSO.ie

Based on CSO data for 2016, there was a pre-school population (0-04 age cohort) of 5.9% within the Study Area which is less than the State (7.0%) and County (8.4%) levels.

5.1.5 Estimate of Demand

In 2016 the national average household size was 2.75. In calculating the demand likely to be generated by the proposed development, the future demand for pre-school spaces the following formula is applied:

$$7.0\% \text{ (0-4 age cohort – State)} \times 331 \text{ no. units} \times 2.75 \text{ (State avg household size)} = 64 \text{ spaces}$$

Based on the calculation above, the proposed development of 331 no. residential units would generate a demand for an additional 64 no. pre-school spaces. Thus, potentially increasing the total number of children entering the preschool system by 16 children for each pre-school year.

According to the NPF the average household size is expected to decline to 2.5 people by 2040. The decline in average household size suggests that family sizes are becoming smaller therefore there will be a decline in the number of childcare spaces required by the proposed development.

Having regard to the proposed development, it is also highlighted that the Apartment Standards recognise the need to assess proposals, like the proposed development, based on their individual merits and having regard for unit mix. We note that the proposed development includes 6 no. 1-bedroom units and 292 no. 2-bedroom units. By their nature apartments tend to attract a lower portion of family purchasers and will generally attract those with no dependents, both young professionals and downsizers. This is bore out in the 2016 Census which indicates that the average occupancy rate in apartments was 2.1. This signals that the proposed development will therefore create less business potential for childcare operators. Reapplying the formula to estimate the need for childcare spaces using this average occupancy rate would result in a requirement for 48 no. spaces.

$$7.0\% \text{ (0-4 age cohort – State)} \times 331 \text{ no. units} \times 2.1 \text{ (State avg household size (apt))} = 48 \text{ spaces}$$

In reflecting demographic trends, which show a reduction in national household sizes, proposed unit mix and existing services in the area it is legitimate to reduce the baseline requirement for childcare places.

5.1.6 Consultation

As advised at the Tripartite Preapplication Meeting with An Bord Pleanála and Fingal County Council the Applicant contacted the Fingal County Childcare Committee during the preparation of this report and analysis. The Fingal County Childcare Committee confirmed that the provision of childcare facilities should be in accordance with published guidelines.

The Applicant also engaged with the adjoining childcare facility which has recently opened in Bridgefield to the north of the subject site. They indicated that a facility catering for c.48 no. spaces would be appropriate given the population profile of the area, the level of facilities which exist in the area and the proximity to their business.

6 CONCLUSION

RPS Group Ltd. prepared this report on behalf of Cosgrave Developments to accompany a SHD planning application for the development of 331 no. apartment units, associated residential amenity functions, a childcare facility and 5 no. mixed use commercial units off Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9.

This report provides an overview of the proposed development and highlights the relevant planning policies and objectives relating to the provision of childcare facilities as outlined in the policy documents.

Considering existing and permitted childcare facilities in the vicinity, population data and the relevant policy and guidelines and consultation with the Fingal County Childcare Committee and industry operators, it is concluded that a childcare facility accommodating 48 no. childcare spaces is appropriate at this location.
