



Childcare Demand Assessment

For the Proposed Strategic Housing Development at Bridgegate,
Rathgory & Mulladrillen, Drogheda Road, Ardee, Co. Louth

On behalf of The Ardee Partnership

November 2021

Document Control Sheet

Project	Ardee Socio-Economic Report and Crèche Assessment
Project No.	2-1015
Document Title	Childcare Demand Assessment

Contents	No. of Pages
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Control Sheet	1
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Rev	Distribution	Author	Checked	Approved	Day	Month	Year
1	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	17	08	2020
2	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	19	08	2020
3	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	25	08	2020
4	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	31	03	2021
5	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	01	06	2021
6	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	13	10	2021
7	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	18	11	2021
8	John Spain Associates	MH	SMP	SMP	26	11	2021

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1.0 Introduction

KPMG Future Analytics, 1 Stokes Place, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 (Chartered Town Planning and Development Consultants) have been appointed by The Ardee Partnership to prepare a Childcare Demand Assessment in support of the proposed Strategic Housing Development at Bridgegate, Rathgory and Mulladrillen, Drogheda Road, Ardee, Co. Louth (see Figure 1 below).

This report provides a detailed review of the statutory, strategic and policy context that relates to the provision of childcare facilities in the area with the following aims:

- Outlining the existing range of childcare services on offer in the Study Area;
- Describing the demand generated by the proposed development; and
- Offering insights into the capacity of the existing facilities.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

The Government's *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)* instructs Local Authorities to set objectives in their respective Development Plans relating to the provision of childcare facilities. The Guidelines recommend the provision of at least one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places for every 75 dwellings. The focus of the Guidelines is to promote sustainable communities, having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. The Guidelines acknowledge that particular case specific circumstances based on the aforementioned factors may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement. The Childcare Demand Assessment prepared herein accompanies a planning application to An Bord Pleanála for a development comprising 272 no. units.

1.2 Approach

Having regard to the relevant planning policy outlined in Section 2.0, it is evident that an assessment of the existing childcare facilities in the Study Area is required. It is thus imperative that a baseline is identified which would then allow demand estimations to be made based on demographic change and the associated impact of the proposed development. Therefore, a methodology for the assessment of childcare facilities has been developed in accordance with the directions provided in the aforementioned planning policy documents. It involves the following steps:

1. Determining the extent and provision of childcare facilities within the Study Area;
2. Undertaking a study of the demographic make-up of the population of the Study Area; and
3. Estimating the level of demand for childcare facilities that may arise from the development proposal.

The following sections will follow this methodology as a structural framework to determine whether the likely demand generated by the proposed development warrants the provision of a new childcare facility.

1.3 Subject Site and Study Area

The subject site extends to c. 13.03 ha in at Bridgegate, Rathgory and Mulladrillen, Ardee, Co. Louth. It is bound to the north by the Dawsons Demesne residential estate while lands to the south and east are characterised as greenfield serving an agricultural use. To the west the site adjoins Phases 1-3 at Bridgegate (under construction), accessed from the N2 Drogheda Road. The proposed development overlaps with the boundary of permitted development Reg. Ref.: 10174; ABP Ref: PL15.238053 (as amended) and will supersede granted development in this area which consists of 31 no. dwellings, crèche and community building and public open space.

The site has good accessibility to Ardee town and is located approximately 1 km south of the town centre. The site also benefits from good accessibility to the surrounding hinterland by way of the R170 and R171 regional roads and the N2, N33 and N52 national roads. To the east, the N33 merges with the M1 motorway, providing access by car to the towns of Dundalk to the north-east and Drogheda to the south-east.



Figure 1: Site Context Map.

The Study Area for this Childcare Demand Assessment has been defined as the CSO Settlement Boundary for Ardee (Figure 2). The settlement boundary encompasses the existing built-up area of Ardee and a range of residential and other land uses, and so forms a logical area of study for the Assessment.

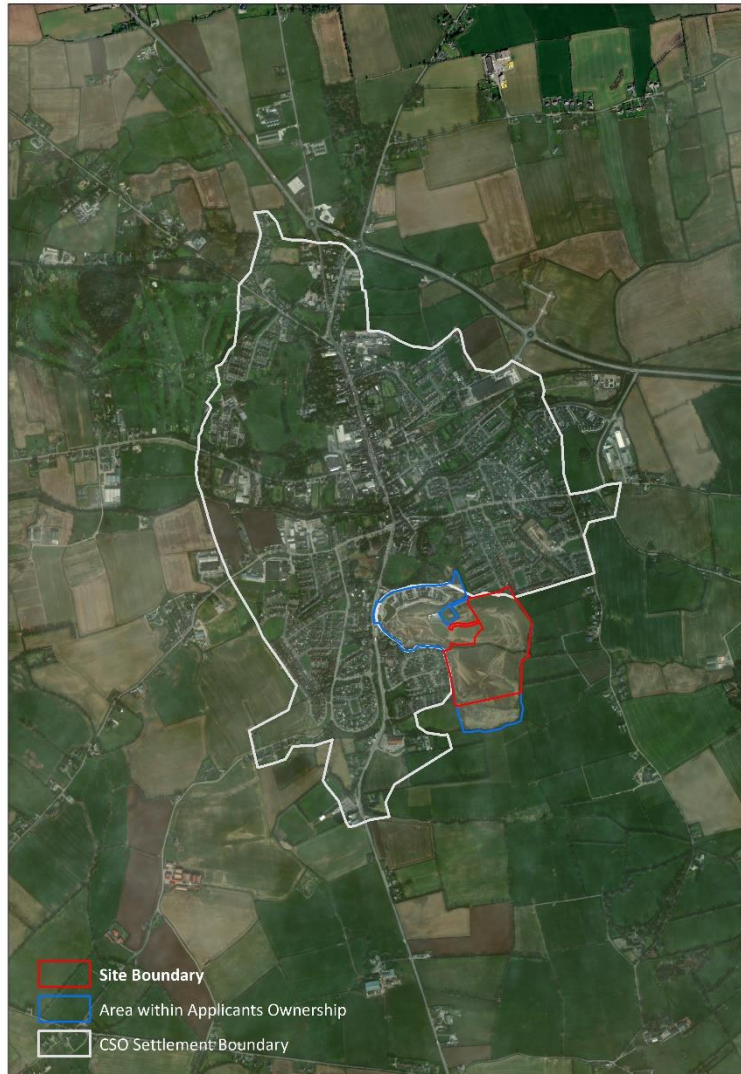


Figure 2: Aerial Image of the Study Area with the Subject Site and Lands Within the Applicants Ownership Outlined.

1.4 Planning History

As per Figure 2, the boundary of the subject site overlaps with neighbouring lands within the applicants ownership. Residential development granted planning permission under a previous application has commenced on these lands. This section provides a brief overview of the planning history for this adjacent development in relation to the provision of childcare facilities within the subject site and other lands within the applicants ownership.

Reg. Ref. 10174/ABP. Ref. PL15.238053: After a third-party appeal to An Bord Pleanála, planning permission was granted for 144 no. residential units, as well as a community building with a crèche.

Reg. Ref. 19336 (Amendment 1): Represents the first of four amendments that were granted planning permission to amend the development permitted under Reg. Ref. 10174/PL15.238053. This amendment provided for an additional 9 no. residential units within the overall development. Planning permission was also granted for a new 378 sq.m crèche which could accommodate 42 children.

Reg. Ref. 19353 (Amendment 2): The second amendment to Reg. Ref. 10174/PL15.238053. This permitted an additional 6 no. units, providing for an overall increase from 144 no. units to 159 no.

Reg. Ref. 19549 (Amendment 3): The third amendment involved replacing 6 no. previously permitted units with 6 no. new units and associated car parking, landscaping and infrastructure works.

Reg. Ref. 19875 (Amendment 4): The fourth amendment consisted of the replacement of 1 no. previously permitted unit with private and public open space landscaping and the provision of 4 no. additional car parking spaces.

1.5 Proposed Development

The development will consist of:

- A) The construction of 272 no. residential units comprising a mix of 206 no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses (all 2 storeys) including 50 no. 2-bedroom houses (Type 1), 145 no. 3-bedroom houses (Types 2, 3, 6) and 11 no. 4-bedroom houses (Types 4, 5) all with private open space and car parking, alongside 66 no. duplex units (all 3 storeys) including 17 no. 1-bedroom units (Types D5, D8), 24 no. 2-bedroom units (Types D1, D3, D6) and 25 no. 3-bedroom units (Types D2, D4, D7), all with private open space in the form of terrace at upper floor level and external garden space, with 499 sqm of communal open space serving Duplex Blocks A-B (48 no. units) (served by 2 no. bin and bike stores [each c. 51 sqm] adjacent) at Bridgegate Avenue, providing a total residential gross floor area of c. 28,168.9 sqm;
- B) A part 1, part 2 no. storey crèche (c. 484.1 sqm) and playground and a single storey community building (c. 165 sqm) located adjacent at a central community hub (with bin and bike store [c. 23 sqm]) accessed from Bridgegate Avenue served by car parking located on Bridgegate Green and Bridgegate Avenue;
- C) A landscaped Public Park located in the northern part of the site extending to c. 3.6 ha accessed from the community hub and between duplex Blocks B & C at Bridgegate Avenue, with 2 no. pedestrian links to permitted public park adjoining to the west and 1 no. pedestrian footpath extending to the northern perimeter at Hale Street, with a reservation for a future link road to lands to the east facilitated in the northern section of the park;
- D) Works to the Rathgory Tributary located to the south of Bridgegate Avenue comprising the realignment of the channel and regrading and reprofiling of land (as required), implementation of 2 no. vehicular crossings (including culverts and mammal passes) and the provision of a riparian corridor based around the open watercourse comprising landscaping and planting with safe access to the watercourse provided for maintenance purposes and 1 no. pedestrian and cyclist crossing;
- E) A series of landscaped public open spaces provided throughout the site with Public Open Space 01 (c. 1.05 ha) and Public Open Space 2 (c. 0.43 ha) located within the linear park (including riparian corridor) adjacent to the Rathgory Tributary with Public Open Space 03 (c. 0.29 ha) centrally located in the southern part of the site; open spaces will provide a mix of

hard and soft landscaping, pedestrian and cycle access (cycle lanes provided at POS 1 and POS 2) and a range of activities including fitness spaces, kickabout area, amphitheatre and nature based play areas;

- F) Provision of shared surfaces, landscaped streetscapes including planting and landscaping at two neighbourhood streets in the southern part of the site, with roads provided to site boundaries to the east, south and west to facilitate possible future connections;
- G) All landscaping including planting to consolidate treelines and hedgerows forming existing site boundaries with agricultural lands to the east and Cherrybrook residential development to the west and all boundary treatments;
- H) Roads and access infrastructure taken from Bridgegate Avenue (permitted under Reg. Ref.: 10/174; ABP Ref: PL15.238053 [as amended]), the provision of a bus stop on the south side of Bridgegate Avenue adjacent to community hub and provision of cycle lanes at this location (continued through Public Open Space 01); a total of 480 no. car parking spaces (362 no. serving houses, 84 no. serving duplexes, 23 no. serving crèche and community building and 11 no. visitor and public open spaces), a total of 278 no. bicycle parking spaces (186 no. spaces serving duplexes [80 visitor spaces], 32 no. spaces at the community hub and 60 no. visitor spaces);
- I) Provision of 2 no. ESB substations, all associated drainage and services infrastructure (surface water, foul and water supply), public lighting, SUDS drainage and works to facilitate the development.

The unit mix of the proposed development is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Proposed Unit Mix.

Unit Type	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4-Bed	Total
Duplex	17	24	25	-	66
House	-	50	145	11	206
Total	17		170	11	272

As noted above, the north-western boundary of the subject site overlaps with other lands under the ownership of the applicant, with residential development granted and commenced on these lands. The proposed development intends to replace the currently permitted crèche (Reg. Reg. 19336) with a new crèche with a greater floor area in order to accommodate the demand generated by the proposed development, as well as that generated by the currently permitted development on the adjoining site. The size and increased floor area of the proposed crèche is discussed in greater detail in Section 6.2.

1.6 Report Structure

This report will comprise a further six sections.

Section 2 identifies the local and national planning and childcare policy context within which this assessment is framed.

Section 3 provides a detailed analysis of the existing supply of childcare facilities in the Study Area.

Section 4 provides an overview of the population and demographic profile of the Study Area and a detailed analysis of the demand generated by the proposed development.

Section 5 sets out the factors that may impact upon childcare demand, including the residential and childcare planning permission pipelines for the Study Area.

Section 6 presents the rationale for the proposed crèche with regard to the likely demand generated and the current supply of childcare facilities in the Study Area.

Section 7 provides an overview of the preceding analysis.

2.0 Policy Context

For the purpose of this report, national-level planning policy relating to childcare, as well as the relevant Development Plan, has been reviewed. The key points relating to this study, as derived from each policy document, will be highlighted in this section.

2.1 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020)

The recently revised *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020)* specifies the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 residential units albeit dependent upon the demographic profile of the area and the existing capacity of childcare facilities:

“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 childcare 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.”

This provides an element of flexibility with regards to the provision of childcare facilities in residential developments, dependent on the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, as well as relevant geographic and demographic factors. It is also noted that studio and one-bedroom units should not be included in an estimation of the number of potential minors in a development, and this may also apply in part or whole to units with two- or more bedrooms.

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

Under Chapter 4: Planning for Sustainable Neighbourhoods, the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* state that childcare facilities are an essential element of sustainable neighbourhoods. The Guidelines recommend the provision of one childcare facility for every 75 dwelling units, dependant on the local geographic and demographic context.

“When considering planning applications, in the case of larger housing schemes, the guidelines recommend the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units. However, 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.”
(pp.26-27).

The Guidelines stipulate the importance of a local assessment of the need to provide childcare facilities in residential developments.

2.3 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

The *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* state that one childcare facility should be provided for new large-scale housing developments unless there are significant reasons to the contrary:

“Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary for example, development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments. For new housing areas, an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas. Authorities could consider requiring the provision of larger units catering for up to 30/40 children in areas of major residential development on the basis that such a large facility might be able to offer a variety of services – sessional/drop in/after-school, etc.” (pp.5-6).

Section 3.3.1 provides further elaboration on the provision of childcare facilities for new residential developments, stating that *“a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate.”* (p.9) (emphasis added). However, it clarifies that the provision of such facilities will depend on the particular circumstances of a specific site.

2.4 Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

The *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027* reiterates the importance of suitable provision of childcare facilities. The provision of childcare facilities is noted as a *“vital component of social infrastructure, fundamental to national economic and social wellbeing as it facilitates participation in the workforce, education and social networks.”* The Development Plan further refers to the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and the recommended standard for a 20 unit crèche or childcare facility to be provided for every 75 houses within new residential developments.

As per Policy Objective SC 35 new childcare facilities are to be directed to settlements that are identified in the Settlement Hierarchy for Louth.

*“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.”*

Ardee is identified as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town in the Settlement Strategy contained within the Development Plan. These are described as regionally important local drivers that provide a reasonable level of jobs and services for their resident population and surrounding catchments.

3.0 Supply

This section provides a profile of the existing supply of childcare facilities in the Study Area.

3.1 Childcare Facilities

In order to establish a baseline of existing capacity in the Study Area it is necessary to first identify each of the existing childcare facilities. This was undertaken through a comprehensive desktop research exercise which used publicly available information and sources. Tusla is the most appropriate source of information on childcare facilities as it is the dedicated State agency charged with undertaking a comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services in Ireland. In this regard, Tusla provides the most definitive and accurate source of information on childcare facilities.

3.2 Existing Provision

Figure 3 illustrates the locations of all childcare facilities registered with Tusla within the Study Area (the blue symbols represent each childcare facility and the numbers are their unique identifiers and correspond to enrolment and capacity numbers set out in Table 2). In total, six childcare facilities were identified within the Study Area. It should be noted that of these childcare facilities, two offer full-time services and four offer part-time or sessional services. These childcare services on offer reflect a demand for different types of childcare and thus should be recognised as important contributors in achieving a viable childcare service.

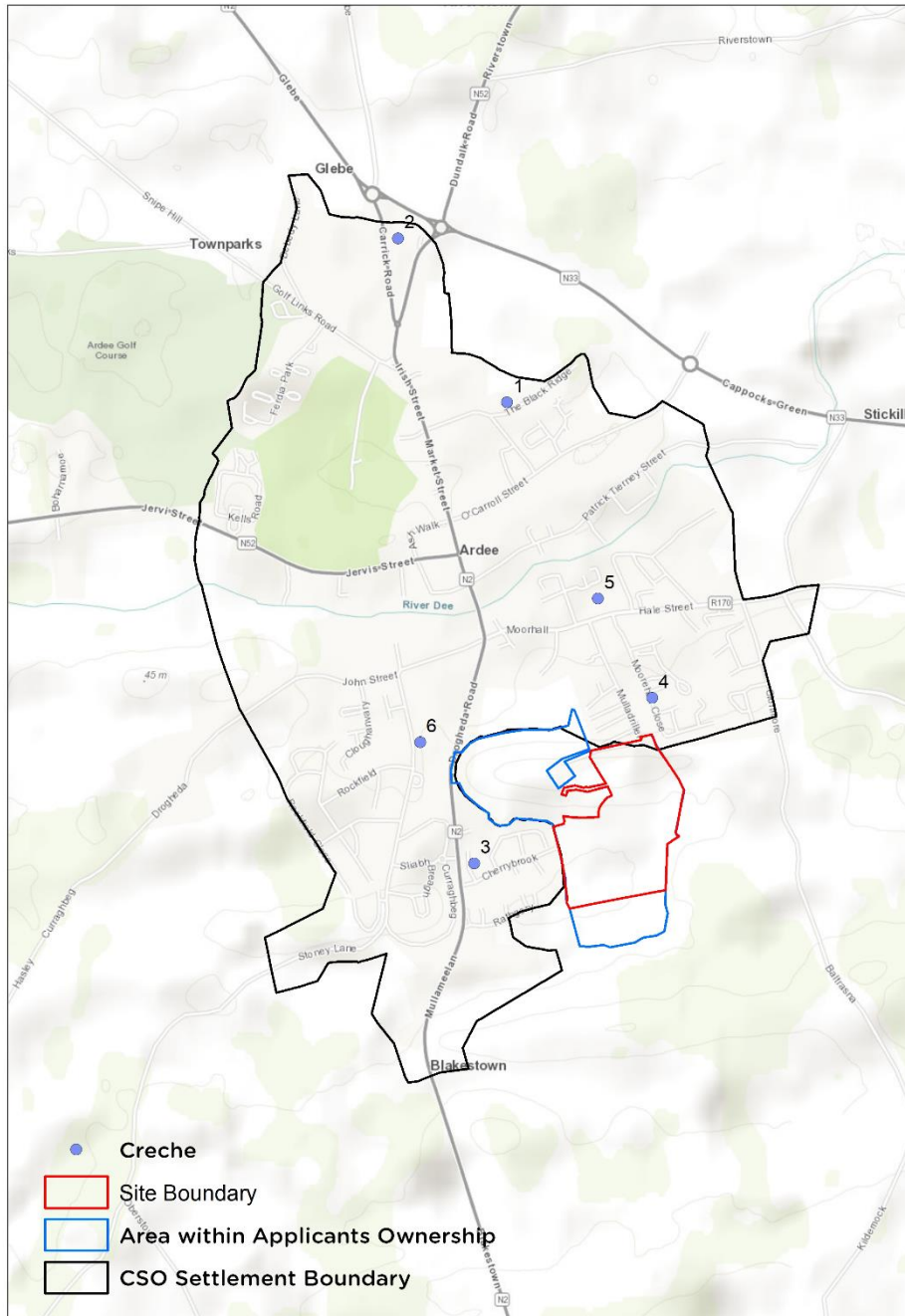


Figure 3: Existing Childcare Facilities in the Study Area.

3.3 Consultation

In total, six childcare facilities were identified within the Study Area. Available Tusla data was used to determine the total enrolments of each identified childcare facility within the Study Area. This data is based on enrolment numbers only, and does not indicate the quantum of additional spaces available. As such it was necessary to contact each identified facility to request information regarding their current capacity. Each facility was contacted by phone and requested to provide details regarding their capacity. The response rate to these requests was 100%, with all six identified facilities providing information on their current capacity. The enrolment figures for each childcare

facility and the extent to which additional capacity is available is set out in Table 2 below. Two of the facilities contacted indicated that they currently have capacity, which amounts to a total available capacity in the Study Area for ten pupils.

Table 2: Capacity of Existing Childcare Facilities.

Map ID	Childcare Facility	Eircode	Tusla Enrolments*	Available Capacity**
1	Venessa's Little Legends	A92F2Y6	3	Full capacity until 2023
2	Kidz Cottage Montessori School	A92R6E5	8	Full capacity until 2022
3	Shining Stars Pre-School	A92HN72	9	Full capacity until 2021
4	Toddlers' Hill Crèche & Montessori	A92Y958	52	Capacity for 8 pupils
5	Cheeky Monkey School & After School Club	A92X5DE	39	Capacity for 2 pupils
6	Aladdin's Cave Montessori School and Crèche	A92WN26	53	Full capacity until 2021
Total			164	Capacity for 10 pupils

* Source: Tusla (based on AM) ** Source: KPMG Future Analytics Consultation

4.0 Demand

The following section provides an assessment of the potential demand for childcare facilities created by the proposed development in Ardee.

4.1 Demographic Profile

As previously outlined, the Study Area is defined as the CSO Settlement Boundary for Ardee. The following section will outline the demographic profile of the Study Area.

Table 3 outlines the population of the Study Area as recorded during the Censuses of 2011 and 2016, and the percentage change in population during this period to highlight overall residential patterns. It is evident that the population has effectively stayed static.

Table 3: Population Change 2011-2016.

2011 (Number)	2016 (Number)	2011-2016 Change (Number)	2011-2016 Change (%)
4,927	4,928	1	0.02%

Table 4 provide a breakdown of the recorded population, categorised by age. It offers a breakdown of the area's age profile that allows for a more detailed overview of the specific cohorts that have experienced the greatest change. Different age cohorts within a population have different requirements, with young families in need of childcare and educational facilities, a strong working age population requiring employment opportunities, and those of retirement age in need of care and health services. As illustrated in Table 4, the Study Area has a strong working age structure. This is indicated by the high proportions of adults aged 25-54 years, who amount to 43.6% of the population of the Study Area. However, in terms of single age cohorts the Study Area has a high proportion of children aged 0-4 years, comprising 8.2% of the population and matched only by the 35-39 years age cohort. Additionally over the five-year period from 2011 to 2016, the number of people in the 0-4 years cohort has slightly increased, rising from 394 people in 2011 to 406 people in to 2016.

Table 4: Population of the Study Area by Age 2011-2016.

Age Cohort	2011 (Number)	Percentage of 2011 Total	2016 (Number)	Percentage of 2016 Total
0-4	394	7.9%	406	8.2%
5-9	303	6.1%	379	7.7%
10-14	312	6.3%	302	6.1%
15-19	294	5.9%	289	5.9%
20-24	337	6.8%	246	5.0%
25-29	407	8.2%	351	7.1%
30-34	416	8.4%	394	8.0%
35-39	361	7.3%	406	8.2%
40-44	367	7.4%	362	7.3%
45-49	352	7.1%	326	6.6%
50-54	281	5.7%	314	6.4%
55-59	242	4.9%	266	5.4%
60-64	193	3.9%	217	4.4%
65-69	161	3.2%	167	3.4%
70-74	142	2.9%	147	3.0%
75-79	139	2.8%	120	2.4%
80-84	121	2.5%	112	2.3%
85+	105	2.1%	124	2.5%
Total	4,927	100%	4,928	100%

The CSO also provides data on the proportion of the population aged 0-19 broken down by each year of age. Ages 0-6 comprises the standard age range for childcare facilities. Table 5 illustrates that this age cohort comprise 11.5% of the total population of the Study Area (based on figures for 2016).

Table 5: Population of the Study Area Aged 0-6 2016.

Age Cohort	Number	Percentage of Total
Age 0	68	1.4%
Age 1	76	1.5%
Age 2	79	1.6%
Age 3	91	1.8%
Age 4	92	1.9%
Age 5	78	1.6%
Age 6	82	1.7%
Total Aged 0-6	566	11.5%

4.2 Childcare Demand

As previously detailed, the proposed development comprises a total of 272 no. residential units of various sizes and compositions. As highlighted in Section 2.0, policy guidance indicates that studio and one-bedroom units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision. Therefore, all one-bedroom units have been excluded in the calculation of likely demand generated by the proposed development. Further, according to the *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*, this exclusion may also apply, in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms. As such, a conservative proportion of the two-bedroom units within the proposed development (30%) have also been excluded from the calculation of likely demand generation. This is to reflect that a number of the two-bedroom units may be occupied by single people or couples without children. Thus, the total number of units in the scheme which have been included in relation to the requirements for an additional childcare facility amounts to 233 no. units.

Based on the recommended provision of 20 no. childcare places for every 75 no. units, it is calculated the proposed development may generate the need for 62 no. childcare places.

5.0 Factors Influencing Demand

Although the analysis indicated that a demand for childcare places will be generated by the proposed development, there are important factors to consider that will undoubtedly reduce this demand. These should be considered closely for the reasons set out below.

5.1 Quarterly National Household Survey

The CSO's Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) provides a study specifically on childcare take-up for Q3 of 2016¹. This release is especially relevant for the purposes of this Assessment as it indicates the extent to which childcare facilities are utilised by the general population. An adaption of a similar table found in the QNHS is illustrated in Table 6 and shows the range of methods parents utilise for the purposes of childcare for their pre-school children in Ireland's Border counties, compared with national figures of same.

Table 6: Type of Childcare Utilised by Parents of Pre-School Children.

Type of Childcare	Border	State
Parent/Partner	65%	62%
Unpaid Relative/Friend	16%	17%
Paid Relative/Friend	2%	3%
Childminder/Au-Pair/Nanny	13%	13%
Childcare Facility	15%	19%
Other	1%	1%

The vast majority of pre-school children in Ireland's Border counties are cared for by their parents or partners of their parents (65%), while 15% of respondents stated they utilise childcare facilities, compared to 19% nationally. It is noted that this data presents an estimation of childcare options used across Ireland's Border counties and does not necessarily represent an exact picture of the usage of childcare in Co. Louth and the Study Area of Ardee. As such, this data should be taken as indicative that though the majority of pre-school children are cared for by parents and/or their partners, professional childcare facilities still play an important, albeit small, role in meeting childcare demand in the Study Area.

5.2 Planning Permission Pipeline

An examination of the Louth County Council Online Planning Register indicated that there are six residential development sites in the Study Area for which planning permission has been granted. Table 7 below lists the planning permissions for these developments, including the parent permission as well as the reference number for any amendments and extension of duration of

¹ The QNHS is released by the CSO each quarter and surveys a random sample of the population. Percentage totals may amount to over 100% due to some respondents providing multiple answers. This is the most recent QNHS study on childcare take-up: https://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170706100048_QNHS_Childcare_Quarter_3_2016_full.pdf

permissions that relate to the same development site. It was determined that the Study Area's residential planning permission pipeline provides a total of 486 no. units.

The childcare planning permission pipeline indicates that one new childcare facility has been granted planning permission in the Study Area, comprising an extension to an existing facility and providing a total of 9 no. childcare spaces (Table 8).

Table 7: Residential Planning Permission Pipeline in the Study Area.

Reg. Ref. (including parent permissions, amendments and EOD's)	Address	Decision Date	Expiry Date	Appeal	Units	Childcare Facility	Status
081220/ 19178 (EOD)	Cappocksgreen, Ardee, Co Louth	18/04/2019	09/08/2024		143		Plans Granted
051442/ 12100 (EOD)/ Amended: 16719/ 17683 (EOD)/ Amended: 18321	Castle Guard Road, Dawsons Demesne, Ardee, Co Louth	14/06/2018	15/07/2023		102		Commenced
17330/ Amended: 19319	Dawsons Demense, Clonmore, Ardee, Co Louth	14/06/2019	15/07/2024	PL15 .300936	55		Commenced
11168/ 15529 (EOD)	Cappocksgreen, Ardee, County Louth	02/10/2015	21/06/2021		2		Plans Granted
10174/ Amended: 19336/ Amended: 19353/ Amended: 19549	Rathgory/ Mulladrillen/ Stoney Lane, Drogheda Road, Ardee, County Louth	28/08/2019	14/01/2022	PL15 .238053	158	1 no. childcare facility to be extended by the subject application. ²	Partially Commenced
19734	John Street/Stoney Lane, Ardee, Co Louth	10/07/2020	06/12/2025	PL15 .307819	26		Plans Granted
Total Units Permitted					486		

² It is highlighted that the proposed development includes a crèche that is intended to supersede the childcare facility granted permission under Reg. Ref. 10174.

Table 8: Childcare Planning Permission Pipeline in the Study Area.

Reg. Ref.	Location	Size of Childcare Facility	Spaces	Status
20208	The Black Ridge, Ardee	19.7 sq.m (Comprises an extension to the existing Vanessa’s Little Legends childcare facility).	9	Plans Granted

It should be noted that the existence of the planning permissions listed in Table 7 and Table 8 does not necessarily lead to the development of same. Thus far, three out of six of the residential developments in the planning permission pipeline have been commenced, comprising 315 no. units. The single childcare permission is yet to commence. The commencement of the aforementioned residential permissions, combined with implementation of the remaining three residential permissions, could create further childcare demand in addition to the proposed development.

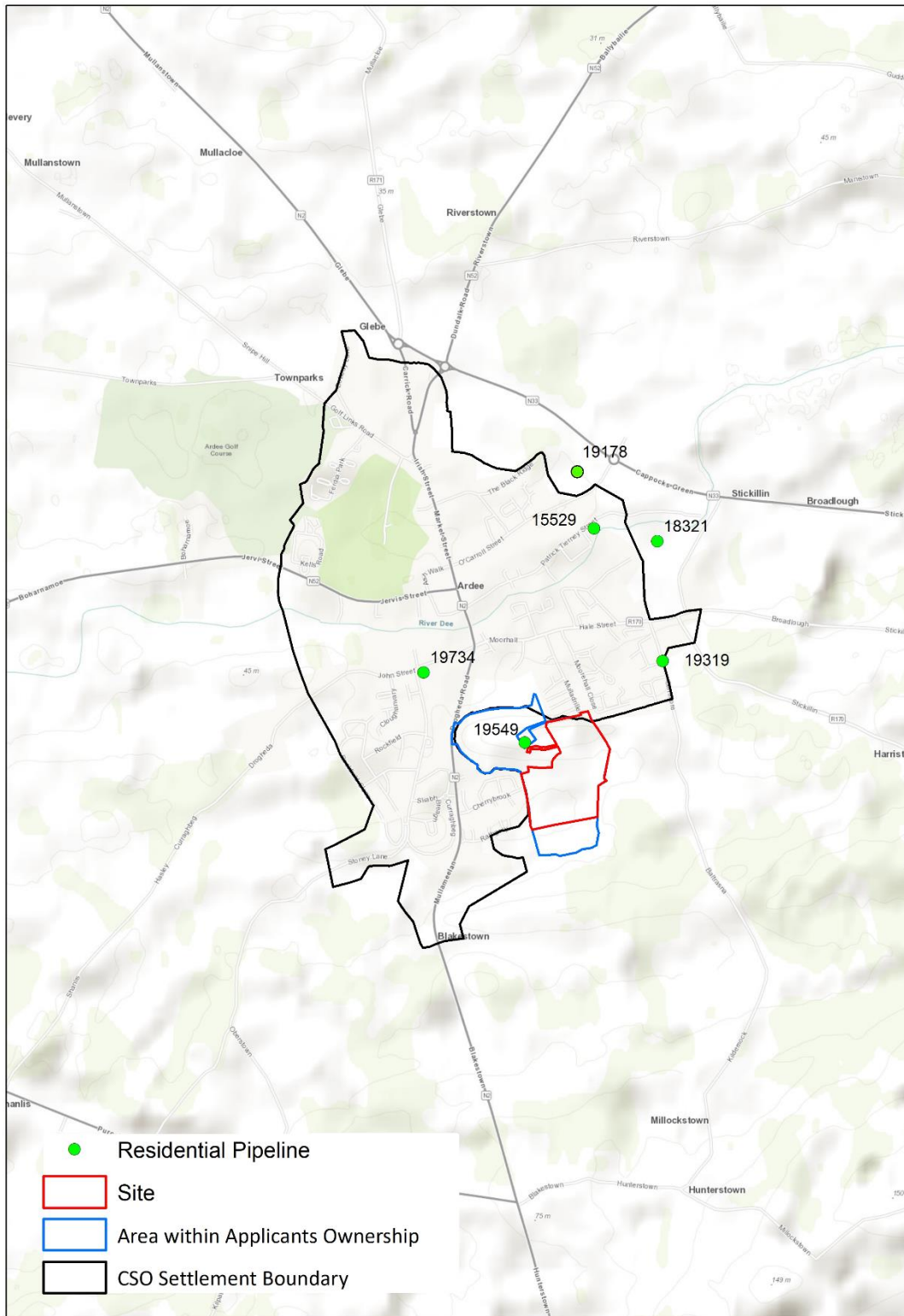


Figure 4: Residential Planning Permission Pipeline (most recent application number shown for each development).

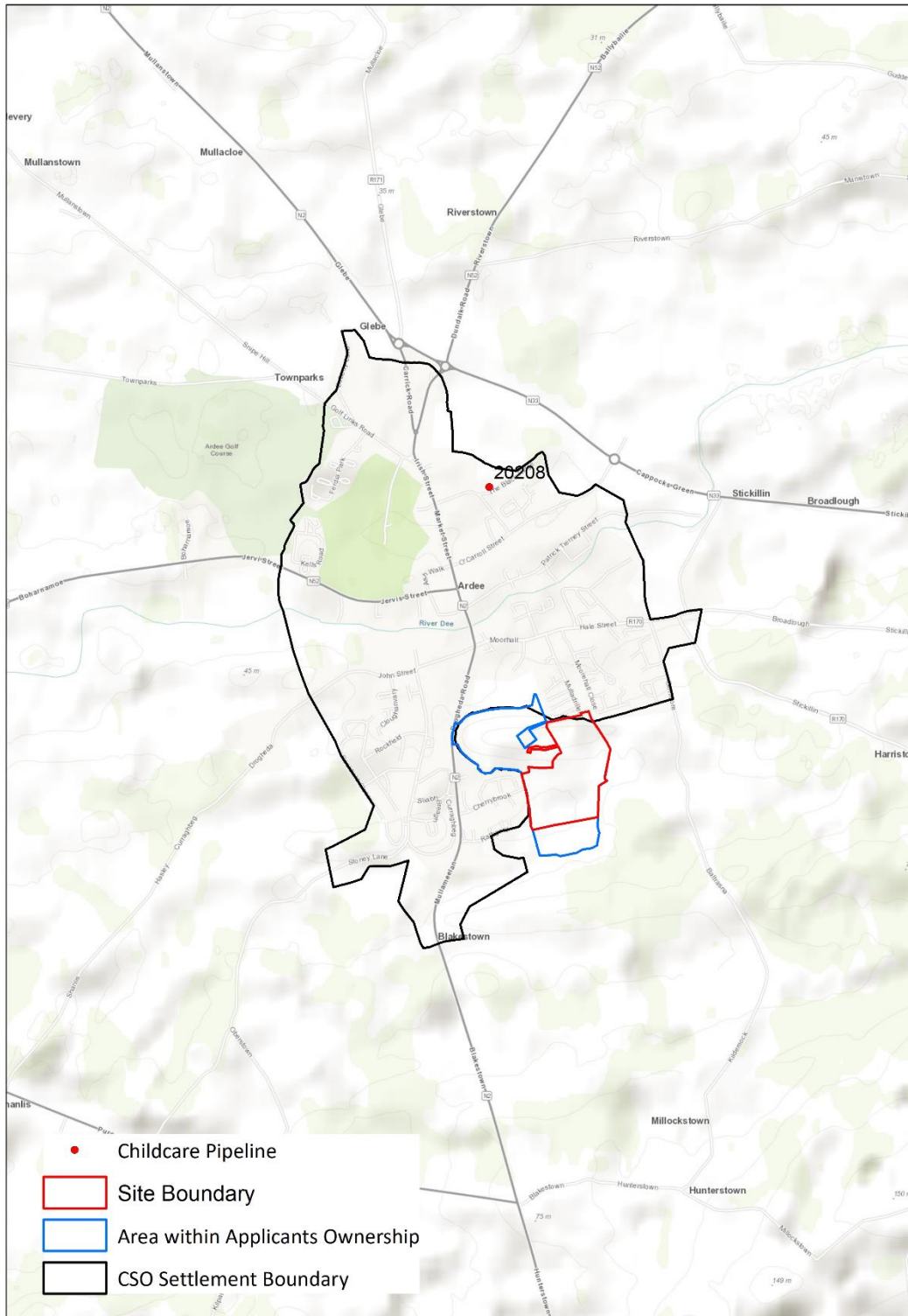


Figure 5: Childcare Planning Permission Pipeline.

6.0 Rationale for the Proposed Crèche

6.1 Demand and Supply

As set out in Section 4.2, the proposed development will generate a demand for 62 no. childcare spaces based on the proposed development mix and the policy recommendation that 20 no. childcare spaces be provided per 75 no. residential units. The previously permitted crèche (Reg. Ref. 19336) that is to be replaced under the proposed development is intended to provide 42 no. childcare spaces. Cumulatively this suggests an overall demand for 104 no. childcare spaces across the proposed development and the permitted adjacent development. However, regard should be had to other factors in determining the likely childcare demand generated by a proposed development, including the current capacity of existing childcare facilities, trends in childcare facility take-up and the planning permission pipeline for the Study Area.

As set out in Section 3.0, a total of 6 no. childcare facilities offering a range of full-time and sessional services were identified in the Study Area during the baseline survey. Upon consultation with each facility it was determined that two of these facilities currently have additional capacity for a total of 10 no. childcare spaces, and so are posed to help meet a small portion of the demand generated by the proposed development.

In addition, a number of other factors have been considered that will reduce the demand for childcare spaces generated by the proposed and adjacent development. As detailed in Section 5.1, available data from the 2016 QNHS indicates that the childcare needs of only 15% of pre-school children in the Border Region are met by professional childcare facilities, compared to 19% nationally. Furthermore, as noted in Section 5.2, a facility in the childcare planning permission pipeline has been granted permission for an additional 9 no. childcare spaces to further provide for future childcare demand. Other factors should also be considered in determining the childcare demand generated by the proposed development, including accessibility and the consideration of employment destinations as preferred childcare locations. It is suggested that cumulatively these factors will serve to reduce the likely childcare demand generated by the proposed development and the adjacent permitted development.

With regard to the foregoing analysis it is submitted that the childcare demand generated by the proposed development cannot be accommodated within the childcare facilities in the vicinity of the subject site. In accordance with national- and local-level planning policy relating to childcare facilities, a crèche is thus provided as part of the proposed development. A new crèche with a larger floor area to that granted under Reg. Ref. 19336 is proposed in order to accommodate the cumulative demand generated by the proposed development and the demand generated by the currently permitted development on the adjoining site.

6.2 Size of the Proposed Crèche

Having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, the distribution of childcare facilities in the Study Area and the demographic profile of the area, it is proposed to increase the floor area of the currently permitted crèche (Reg. Ref. 19336) from 378 sq.m to 484.1 sq.m across a new two-storey crèche.

The ground floor of the proposed crèche has a gross floor area of 375.5 sq.m and comprises 5 no. childcare rooms, a sleep room, an office and staff room/kitchenette as well as bathroom and storage facilities. The first floor has a gross floor area of 108.6 sq.m and comprises 1 no. childcare room, a staff room/kitchenette and associated bathroom and storage facilities. Figures 6 and 7 include drawings of the ground and first storeys of the proposed crèche and outline their layout (please see Appendix 1). The design of the proposed crèche has been informed by minimum floor area standards under the *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016*, which designates the minimum space required to provide a space for children of different age groups. As set out in in Table 9, across 6 no. rooms the proposed crèche provides capacity for 100 childcare spaces as consistent with minimum standards under the childcare regulations. This is sufficient to meet the likely demand generated by the proposed development, as well as that generated by the currently permitted residential development on the adjoining site.

Table 9: Capacity of Proposed Crèche by Age of Children.

Age	Min. Required Space (per sq.m)	Area Provided (sq.m)	No. of Childcare Places
0-1 (Room 01)	3.5	45.6	13
1-2 (Room 02)	2.8	33.2	13
2-3 (Room 03)	2.35	33.6	14
3-6 (Room 04)	2.3	44	19
3-6 (Room 05)	2.3	46.6	20
3-6 (Room 06)	2.3	46.6	20
Total		156.4	100

6.3 Phased Delivery of the Proposed Crèche

Under the Site Phasing Plan for the proposed development the proposed crèche is to be delivered across two of six phases (please see Figure 8 in Appendix 2). This is in order to meet the demand for childcare spaces as they are generated and the proposed development is completed. The phasing plan for the proposed development is summarised in Table 10. As per Table 10, the first stage of the proposed crèche will be delivered in Phase 1, alongside 40 no. residential units and the proposed community centre for the development. The final stage of the crèche will be delivered in Phase 3, alongside 48 no. units and the proposed park.

Table 10: Summary of Proposed Site Phasing Plan.

Phase	Deliverable
Phase 1	40 no. units, part crèche and community centre.
Phase 2	45 no. units.
Phase 3	48 no. units, part crèche and park.
Phase 4	49 no. units.
Phase 5	46 no. units.
Phase 6	44 no. units.

7.0 Conclusion

This Childcare Demand Assessment has assessed the likely demand generated for a childcare facility as a result of a proposed Strategic Housing Development at Bridgegate, Rathgory and Mulladrillen, Ardee, Co. Louth. The potential level of demand generated by the proposed development has been considered in the context of:

- The quantum and composition of the proposed development and the adjacent permitted development;
- The demographics of the Study Area; and
- The existing childcare capacity of the Study Area.

The quantitative modelling of projected demand assumes that all pre-school children resident in a development will require childcare within the Study Area. However, regard should be had to the following factors when considering the childcare demand generated by any development:

- The current capacity of existing childcare facilities in the Study Area;
- Childcare facility take-up;
- The planning permission pipeline for the Study Area; and
- Accessibility and consideration of other destinations (e.g. employment destinations) as preferred childcare locations.

Our review has concluded the following in relation to the need for a childcare facility associated with the proposed development:

- Based on the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, as well the demand generated by the permitted adjacent development, both developments will cumulatively generate a likely demand for a total of 62 no. childcare spaces.
- Consultation with all existing childcare facilities located in the Study Area indicates available capacity in existing facilities of 10 no. childcare spaces.
- The QNHS Q3 2016 indicates that only 15% of pre-school children in Ireland's Border Region attend a childcare facility.
- The childcare planning permission pipeline for the Study Area shows that an extension to an existing childcare facility has been granted planning permission, providing a total of 9 no. childcare spaces.

It is suggested that the cumulative demand generated by the proposed development and adjacent permitted development may outstrip the current capacity of childcare facilities in the Study Area. As such, the provision of a new childcare facility to meet this demand is warranted.

In accordance with national and local-level planning policy relating to childcare facilities and to meet the cumulative likely childcare demand generated by the proposed development and the previously permitted adjacent development, it is proposed to provide a two-storey crèche with a gross floor area of 484.1 sq.m. This larger crèche will replace the crèche previously permitted under Reg. Ref. 19336, providing for a greater floor area and quantum of childcare spaces.

In conclusion, and for the reasons set out above, the proposed development warrants the construction of a new, larger crèche facility. This will be provided for by replacing a previously permitted crèche with a new crèche with a larger floor area and increased capacity.

Appendix 1: Proposed Crèche

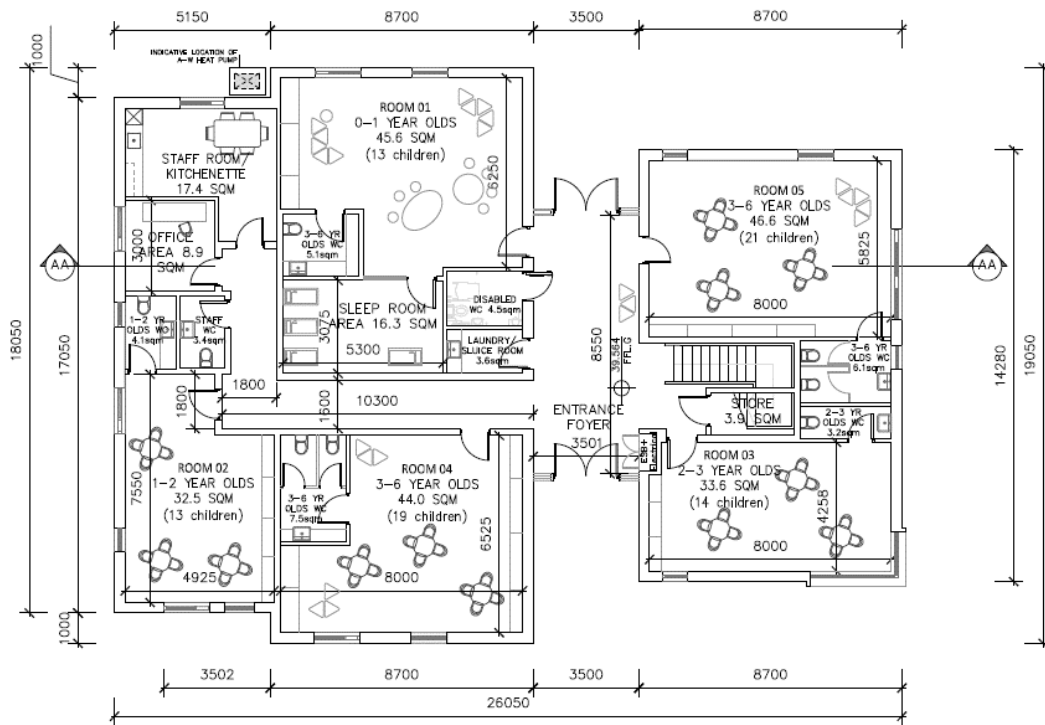


Figure 6: Ground floor of the Proposed Crèche (Darmody Architects).

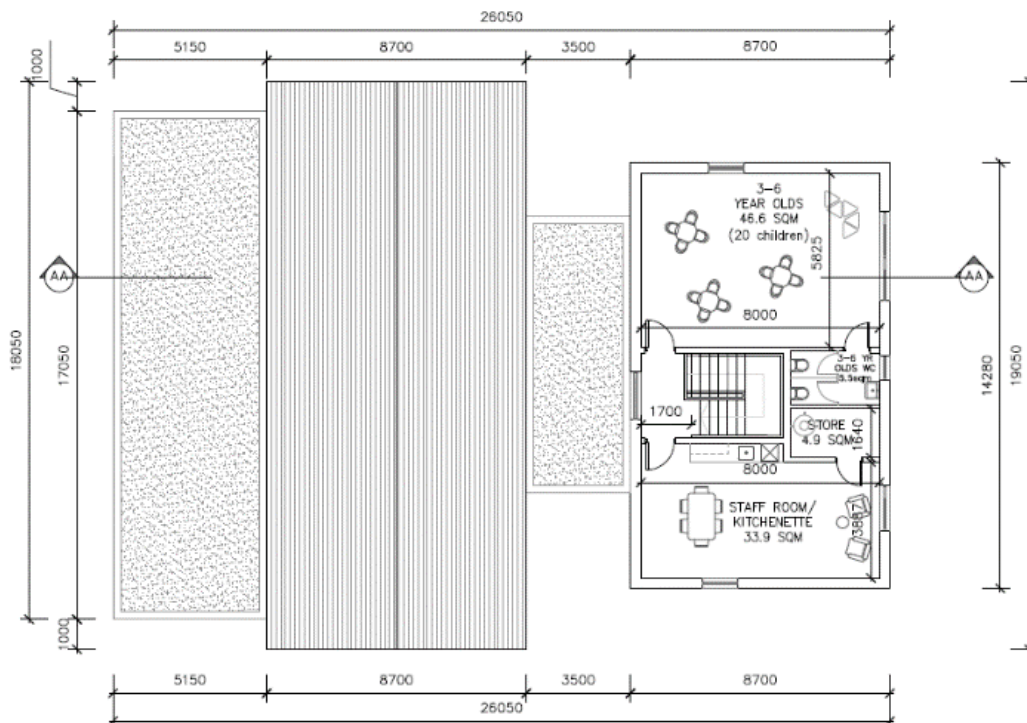


Figure 7: First Floor of Proposed Crèche (Darmody Architects).

Appendix 2: Proposed Site Phasing Plan

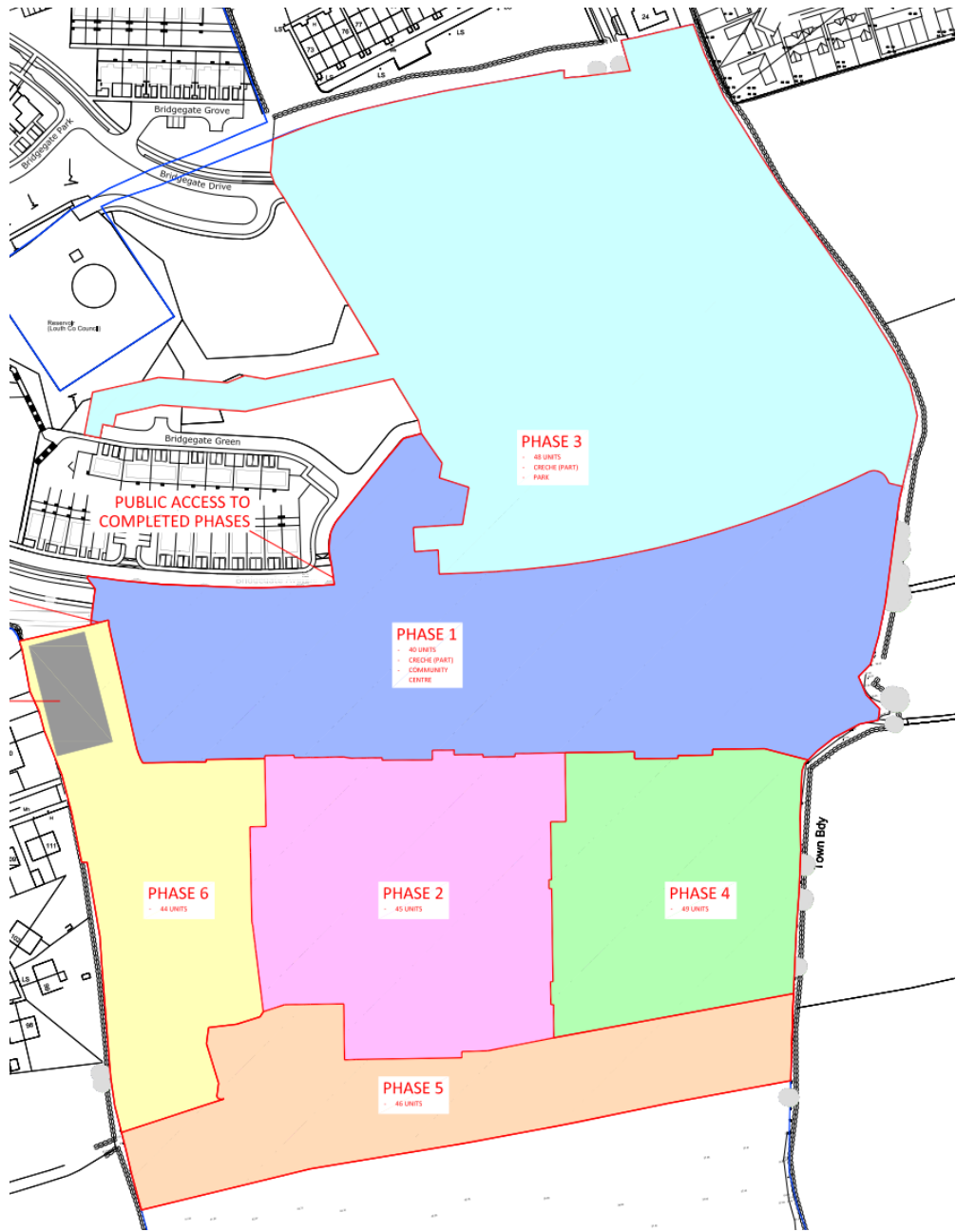


Figure 8: Proposed Site Phasing Plan (Darmody Architects).