

CHILDCARE PROVISION ASSESSMENT REPORT



**Proposed Strategic Housing Development
on Lands at Kilnahue & Gorey Hill,
Carnew Road & Kilnahue Lane,
Gorey, Co. Wexford**

Applicant: Gerard Gannon Properties

March 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Downey, Chartered Town Planners, 29 Merrion Square, D02 RW64, have prepared this Childcare Provision Assessment Report, on behalf of the applicant, Gerard Gannon Properties, to accompany a planning application for a proposed Strategic Housing Development on lands at Kilnahue & Gorey Hill, Carnew Road & Kilnahue Lane, Gorey, Co. Wexford.

The proposed development subject to this SHD application provides for construction of 421 no. residential dwellings, comprising of 133 no. houses, 228 no. apartments, and 60 no. duplexes. The proposed development also provides for 1 no. childcare facility, 2 no. community rooms and 2 no. retail units, a large parkland and numerous pocket parks across the subject lands, car and cycle parking spaces, and all associated ancillary site development infrastructure, works necessary to facilitate the development. Furthermore, the proposed development provides for a new vehicular access to Carnew Road and new vehicular accesses to Kilnahue Lane.

This report is being submitted in support of the justification for the proposed development and to provide a detailed assessment of the existing childcare facilities within the subject area, thus assessing the current capacity of the surrounding environs as well as whether the proposed childcare facility would be sufficient to cater for the proposed development.

As such, this report will provide an overview of the current existing childcare provision in Gorey and surrounding environs, as well as the future demand arising from the proposed development. An overview of the pertaining planning policy and guidance is also provided.

At this juncture, it is important to note that the proposed development generates a requirement of 80 no. childcare spaces. The proposed childcare facility would provide c. 89 no. childcare spaces to cater for the proposed residential scheme.

This report demonstrates that based on the results provided by the assessment, the childcare facility proposed as part of the development is considered sufficient to cater for the potential demand generated by the proposed development.

The following planning policy and guidance documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this report:

- *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Environment (2001),*
- *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (December 2020),*
- *Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019, and*
- *Gorey Town & Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023.*

In addition to the above, the assessment of current and future childcare facilities for the area includes the analysis of CSO data and childcare facilities located within the Gorey area and the current trends and details provided by the TUSLA and Pobal websites, as well as information provided by the Wexford County Childcare Committee.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2001)

Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community. These ‘*Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities*’ provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

The following definition of Childcare is included in the Guidelines:

“In these Guidelines, “childcare” is taken to mean full day-care and sessional facilities and services for pre-school children and school-going children out of school hours. It includes services involving care, education, and socialisation opportunities for children. Thus services such as pre-schools, naíonraí (Irish language playgroups), day-care services, crèches, playgroups, and after-school groups are encompassed by these Guidelines. Conversely childminding, schools, (primary, secondary and special) and residential centres for children are not covered by these Guidelines.”

For housing schemes, the Guidelines provide a benchmark provision of 1 no. 20 space childcare facility per 75 dwellings. The threshold for provision should be established having regard to existing location of facilities and the emerging demography of the area where new housing is proposed. The recommendations provided within the Guidelines must be considered in the context of the ‘*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*’ (2020), which state that:

“Notwithstanding the Department’s Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities, which are currently subject to review and recommend the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision in apartment scheme 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 for the area.”

It is important to note that the apartment guidelines also state that, “*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*”. As such, the calculations submitted as part of this report have taken cognisance of the above and demonstrate that as part of the proposal 1 no. childcare facility would be required to cater for the influx of population arising from the proposed scheme.

2.2 Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019

As stated within the Development Plan, the “*provision of childcare facilities is recognised as being important for economic and social well-being. It not only enables parents to participate in the workforce but can also make a significant contribution to a child’s emotional and educational development in the early years of their life.*” Furthermore, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy 2007-

2016 indicates that, “the provision of childcare is essential to enable parents to participate in the workforce and to obtain an income that provides an acceptable standard of living for both them and their children.”

By supporting the County Childcare Committee, Wexford County Council seeks to ensure that any new facilities are suitably located, are of a high quality and are inclusive of all children, including disabled children.

The Development Plan reinforces the views taken within the Guidelines in which the Council aims to:

Objective CF20: Encourage and facilitate the provision of childcare facilities, in accordance with *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)*, within new or existing places of work, residential areas, educational establishments, town centres and adjacent to public transport nodes. Where childcare facilities are proposed to be located within established residential areas, applications for such uses will be assessed having regard to the likely effect on the amenities of adjoining properties, the availability of space for off-street parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points and outdoor playspace. In some cases, it may be necessary to attach a condition that would require some residential content to be maintained in the premises.

Objective CF21: Require the provision of purpose-built childcare facilities in new residential developments in accordance with “*Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)*” and “*We Like This Place: Guidelines for Best Practice in the Design of Childcare Facilities (2005)*”. The indicative standard is one childcare facility, accommodating 20 children, for approximately 75 dwellings. This standard may be modified in any particular case where there are significant reasons for doing so. Criteria that may be taken into account in such an assessment include the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

Objective CF22: Support the Wexford County Childcare Committee/Wexford County Development Board in carrying out an audit of childcare facilities.

It is submitted that given the nature, scale, and proposed mix of units of the proposed development, as well as the potential demand arising from the proposed scheme and available capacity within the area, the provision of 1 no. childcare facility within the subject lands is sufficient to cater for the proposed development.

2.3 Gorey Town & Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023

To achieve its vision, Gorey Local Area Plan has defined a number of Key Principles, including “continue to ensure that adequate provision is made for childcare, educational and recreational facilities”. Based upon population profile of the settlement, LAP acknowledges the need for childcare and educational facilities, seeks to “ensure that sufficient childcare, primary and post-primary education and recreation facilities will be available.”

Outlined in the LAP, the “*provision of ‘social infrastructure’ in the form of buildings, facilities, clubs and the means of accessing and using services, is necessary for the development of sustainable communities. The purpose of such infrastructure is both to provide a service and also to promote community cohesion and community identity and in doing so combat social isolation and alienation. A wide variety of facilities are required and... these include:*

- *Education facilities,*
- *Healthcare, nursing homes, residential care homes, childcare and pre-schools,*
- *Community facilities including community centres, youth clubs/cafes and sports clubs,*
- *Cultural facilities such as libraries, theatres, arts centres, places of worship and burial grounds.”*

Outlined in the LAP, it is the **Objective CF01** of plan to:

“Support the provision of a multi-user community building at an appropriate location in the plan area”.

It is submitted that provision for 1 no. childcare facility in the form of a standalone building within the subject lands is consistent with the local level planning policy.

3.0 CHILD CARE PROVISION ASSESSMENT

In accordance with current guidelines, the following provides a detailed examination of local need for a new childcare facility at the subject lands. Accordingly, 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/or not necessarily an accurate reflection of current provision in the area.

Thus, in order to garner a more accurate information, a survey of different childcare facilities in the area was carried out by contacting these facilities, seeking numbers of current pre-school goers registered for the academic 2021-2022 school year, as well as the available capacity of each facility.

It is important to note that not all the childcare facilities decided to participate in the assessment. Therefore, where proprietors did not participate or 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 existing childcare facilities in the vicinity of the subject lands, and their spatial distribution in the area,
- Catchment area of the existing childcare facilities, and
- The emerging demand for childcare facilities including the future demand in the town and the generated demand from the proposed development.

3.1 Existing Early Childcare Facilities

3.1.1 Existing Childcare Capacities

As part of this Audit, Downey carried out an analysis of the provision and capacity of childcare facilities in the area. The TUSLA database, as shown on the Figure 1 below, indicates that there is a total of 12 registered childcare providers within the area. Downey have assessed the Early Years Inspectorate inspection reports in relation to details pertaining to these facilities, and contacted these childcare providers to update the existing and available capacities. The relevant details are summarised in the Table 1 on the next page.

As illustrated in Table 1, the existing childcare facilities within the area provide for a total maximum potential capacity of 513 children, of which 5 spaces are available currently and 15 further spaces are available for 2023.

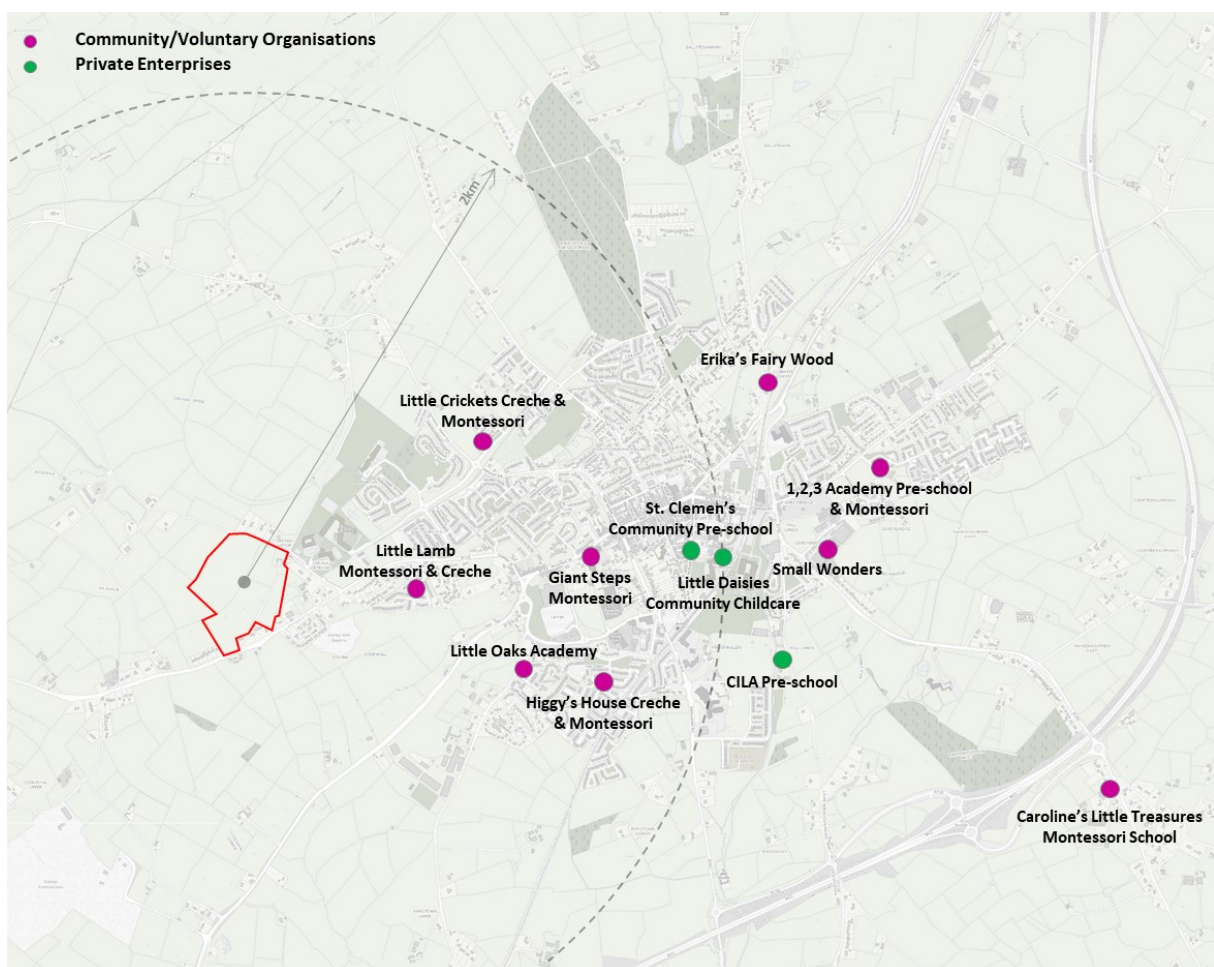


Figure 1. Existing Childcare Provider within the Area and 2km Radius of the Subject Lands

As shown on the Table below, of the overall registered childcare providers within the area, 7 no. childcare facilities are within 1km radius of the subject lands and surrounding area. This provides for 5 no. spare spaces within accessible distance of the subject lands.

Table 1. Childcare Facilities within 1-2km Radius of the Subject Lands (source: Tulsa.ie updated by Downey)

	Name	Address	Max Capacity	Type of Service Age Profile
Within 1km Radius of the Subject Lands	Little Lambs Montessori & Creche	49 Ardmore Carnew Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford	34 children	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (2-6 years)
	Little Crickets Creche and Montessori	145 Pearson's Brook, Holyfort Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford	75 children	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (0-6 years)
	Giant Steps Montessori	Christ Church Old School, Charlotte Row, Co. Wexford	22 children	Sessional (2-6 years)
	Little Oaks Academy Ltd.	Oakwood Estate, Rams town, Gorey, Co. Wexford	52 children	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (0-6 years)
	Higgy's House Creche and Montessori	Ramsgate Village, Gorey, Co. Wexford	65 children (5 spare spaces)	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (1-6 years)
	Sr. Clemen's Community Playschool Ltd.	Grattan Terrace, Gorey, Co. Wexford	44 children	Sessional (2-6 years)
	Little Daisies Community Childcare	Gorey Community Youth and Childcare, Gorey, Co. Wexford	67 children	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (0-6 years)
Above 2km Radius of the Subject Lands	CILA Pre-school	St. Aidan's Services, Milllands, Gorey, Co. Wexford	8 children	Sessional (2-6 years)
	Small Wonders Creche and Pre-school	Courtown Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford	29 children	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (0-6 years)
	1.2.3. Academy Pre-School & Montessori	3 Clonattin Village, Gorey, Co. Wexford	32 children	Sessional (2-6 years)
	Erika's Fairy Wood	Castlerock, Clonattin Lwr, College Rd, Gorey, Co. Wexford	63 children (15 spare spaces for 2023)	Full Day/Part time/Sessional (2-6 years)
	Caroline's Little Treasures Montessori School	Courtown Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford	22 children	Sessional (2-6 years)
Total Maximum Potential Capacity			513 Children (20 spare spaces)	

It is important to note that there are a few more childcare facilities and 1 no. childminder registered as operating childcare providers within Gorey on the TUSLA website. However, these facilities are considered difficult to access, since they are located beyond the Gorey Urban & Rural ED's boundaries.

3.1.2 Catchment Area of the Existing Childcare Facilities

As part of the threshold for provision of childcare facilities, a spatial analysis of the catchment area of the existing childcare providers within Gorey was also carried out. This is to identify the *walkable distances* from the childcare facilities, which is defined as 500 to 800m distances from the childcare facilities on the street network. As shown on the Figure 2 below, existing childcare facilities are evenly distributed across the town, providing a good level of accessibility for residents. Given the location of the subject site, this catchment area does not cover the lands, i.e., using the available childcare capacity requires driving.

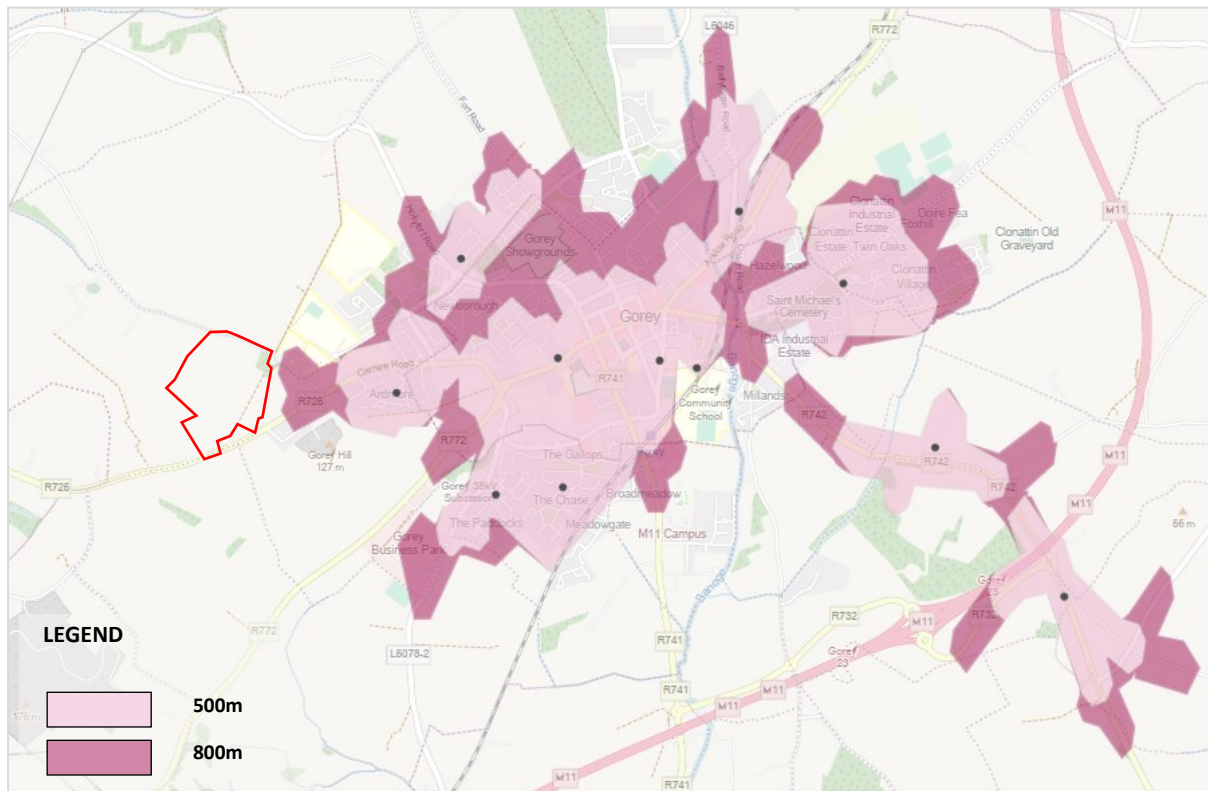


Figure 2. Walkable Buffer Zones from Existing Childcare Facilities on Street Network, Gorey (approximate boundaries of the subject site outlined in red)

It is submitted that the provision of 1 no. childcare facility as part of the scheme would provide additional capacity, catering for the proposed development, as well as its wider context. Moreover, it will extend the walkable buffer zones to access childcare facilities along the Carnew Road and Kilnahue Lane, promoting walkability.

3.2 Future Demand

3.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Area

The demographic profile of the subject lands was examined using the Census 2016 results, as the latest Census available on the CSO website. With respect to the site’s location within the Gorey Rural Electoral Division (ED), in the immediate vicinity of Gorey Urban ED (Figure 3), these ED’s were used in the following assessment.

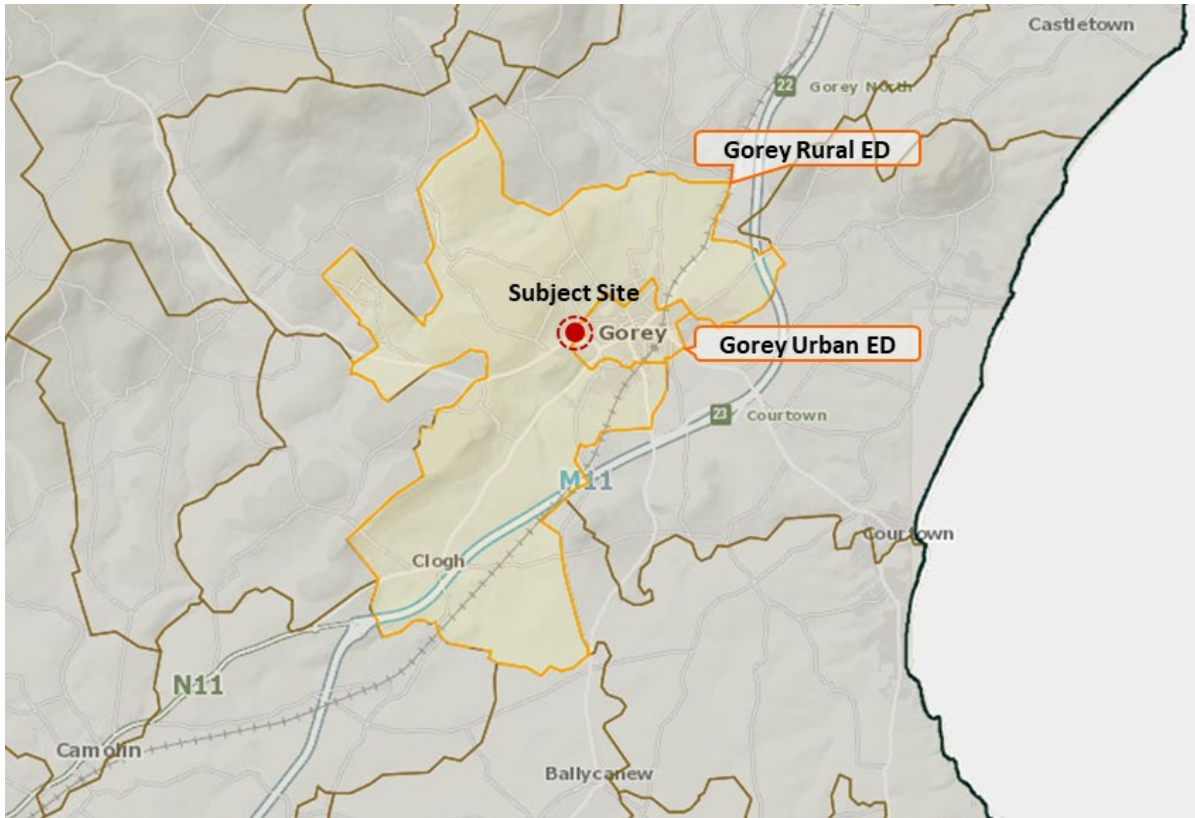


Figure 3. Subject Site Location within the Gorey Urban & Rural ED's

Census 2016 results show that Gorey Urban & Rural ED's population stood at 10,446 in April 2016, which indicates an increase of 882 (8.5%) since the last Census in 2011. This is considerably higher than the growth rate experienced in the overall County, which demonstrates a growing demand for the housing market in Gorey. It is noted that the population change in urban and rural ED's did not necessarily increase at the same rate. As illustrated in the Table 2 below, the Gorey Rural ED had the greater share of the population growth in the overall Gorey Urban and Rural ED's, increasing with a rate of 11.6% to 6,876 in 2016. This is also indicative of spatial distribution of Gorey's growing housing demand.

Table 2. Population Change in Gorey Urban & Rural ED's against the overall Stats for the County

	Co. Wexford (Administrative Area)	Gorey Urban ED (23084)	Gorey Rural ED (23096)
Census 2016	149,722	3,570	6,876
Census 2011	145,320	3,463	6,161
Actual Change	44,042	107	715
Percentage Change	3.2%	3.08%	11.6%

Source: CSO StatBank

With an average household size of 2.7, there were 3,782 private households in Gorey Urban & Rural ED's in 2016. As shown in the Table 3 below, nearly 70% of the households residing in this area in 2016 were small sized households ranging from 1- to 3-person households (2,624 households). It is noted that the average household size in the Gorey Urban ED stood at 2.3, while this is recorded as 2.9 for the Gorey Rural ED in 2016.

Table 3. Private Households in Gorey Urban & Rural ED's by Household Size, 2016

Size of household	Households	%
1-person Households	917	24.2
2-person Households	1,053	27.8
3-person Households	672	17.8
4-persons Households	678	17.9
5-person and over Households	462	12.2
Total	3,782	-

Source: CSO StatBank

3.2.2 Childcare Demand

Investigating the age profile of the area, the proportion of the population that are of pre-school-going age are those children aged between 0 and 4 years old. Census 2016 recorded a total pre-school-attending population of 908 within the assessment area, which represents 8.7% of the total population residing in the area. As illustrated in the Table 4 below, while there was a drop in the number of pre-school-attending population in both Gorey Urban and Rural ED's with the Gorey Urban ED declining by 18 children (-7.2 growth rate) and Gorey Rural declining by 35 children (-4.9 growth rate) over 2011-2016.

Table 4. Pre-school-age Going Population in the Assessment Area (0-4-year-old age cohort), 2011-2016

Assessment Area	ED ID	CSO 2016 0-4 years old	% Town Population	CSO 2011 0-4 years old	% Town Population	Change 2011-2016
Gorey Urban	051	230	2.2	248	2.6	-7.2%
Gorey Rural	052	678	6.5	713	7.4	-4.9%

Source: CSO StatBank

As summarised in Table 1 (Section 3.1), there were 513 childcare places to cater for the pre-school population in the assessment area during 2020-2021 academic year. By 2023, if this proportion of pre-school age population remains constant with the figures and trends recorded in the intercensal period 2011-2016, the pre-school age population is expected to be 851¹ children in the study area, which is a decline of 57 children. Therefore, the number of children within the study area requiring childcare places would remain lower than the capacity of existing childcare facilities.

3.2.3 Demand Generated by the Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises 421 no. residential dwellings, comprising of a mix of houses and apartments. The breakdown of these units are as follows:

¹ This is calculated by applying an annual growth rate of -0.01 to Gorey Urban and Rural ED's over the 2018-2023.

Table 5. Proposed Residential Mix Statistics

Dwelling Type	Bedroom Provision	No. of Units
Apartments & Duplex Units	1 Bed	80
	2 Bed	171
	3 Bed	37
Houses & Duplex Houses	3 Bed	115
	4 Bed	18
Total no. of Units		421

Excluding the 1-bedroom apartment/duplex units, this leaves a total of 341 no. units that can be deemed to accommodate families and therefore may generate demand for childcare places. As mentioned earlier, Census 2016 recorded an average household size of 2.7 persons per unit for the assessment area. Applying the average household size to 341 apartment/duplex units capable of accommodating families would generate 921 total residents within these units. Across the assessment area's population in 2016, 8.7% were in the 0-4 age cohort. When the proportion of pre-school-attending population applied to total number of potential residents in 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units, *it is estimated that up to 80 children will be at this age cohort.*

3.2.4 Cumulative Demand

As outlined above, there are currently 513 no. childcare places to cater for pre-school age population of the area. In 2023, should the population follow the same growth path that 2011-2016 intercensal figures, the demand for early childcare places will be 851 children. An additional of 80 potential children is expected to be derived from the proposed scheme. This suggests an overall of 931 children by 2023.

On the other hand, Census 2016 identifies that the percentage of pre-school children minded by parents in the south-east region is 67%, meaning 33% of pre-school children attend some sort of childcare facility or are minded informally by a family friend or an unpaid relative. The latter is indeed the most common non-parental childcare type in the region recorded as 20% of the children in this region. Applying the south-east region childcare uptake ratio of 33% to the cumulative demand in the assessment area, then the overall number of childcare facilities required to meet the future demand in the area is expected to be 307 no. childcare spaces, which falls well below the actual existing childcare facilities.

However, as per the requirements of *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2001)*, the proposed development also provides for 1 no. childcare facility with a gross floor area of 565 sqm, capable of catering for c. 89 children. With respect to the spatial catchment of the existing childcare facilities, the proposed creche will further extend this catchment area and therefore facilitates the community's access to these facilities.

In light of the above, it is submitted that the current provision of early childcare facilities in the area can sufficiently cater the town's future population and the influx of population arising from the proposed development, and therefore, the scheme is considered to be consistent with the relevant policies and guidelines.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Downey have prepared this Childcare Provision Assessment on behalf of Gerard Gannon Properties, in support of this planning application for the proposed Strategic Housing Development on lands at Kilnahue & Gorey Hill, Carnew Road & Kilnahue Lane, Gorey, Co. Wexford. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a mixed-use development comprising a total of 421 no. residential units including 133 no. houses, 228 no. apartment units, 60 no. duplex units, all with associated car parking and bicycle parking spaces, a multi-purpose building (including 2 no. retail units and 2 no. community rooms), and 1 no. childcare facility.

This Assessment identifies 12 no. childcare facilities within 1-2km radius of the assessment area, which is defined as Gorey Urban and Rural ED's. It then provides a detailed evaluation of maximum and available capacities of these facilities, as well as their catchment area, defined as the walkable distance to these facilities. Having regard to the analysis of current childcares' capacities and available demographic data in the assessment area, together with the emerging demand of the proposed development, it is concluded that there is generally sufficient capacity of childcare facilities in the area to cater for the future population and proposed development. However, as per the requirements of *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG (2001)*, the proposed development also provides for 1 no. childcare facility with a gross floor area of 565 sqm, capable of catering for c. 89 children. With respect to the spatial catchment of the existing childcare facilities, the proposed creche will further extend this catchment area and therefore facilitates the community's access to these facilities. Therefore, the proposed development will also help to sustain the existing facilities, and support a sustainable development of residential lands within Gorey.