

# **Strategic Housing Development at Coolagad, Greystones, Co. Wicklow**

## **Childcare Analysis Report**

**March 2022**



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MacCabe Durney Barnes  
20 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2  
T:+353 1 6762594 F +353 1 6762310  
W: [www.mdb.ie](http://www.mdb.ie)

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of Report

This report has been prepared in response to an opinion of An Bord Pleanála (ABP) issued in response to a pre-application consultation for a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) at Coolagad, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. An Bord Pleanála considered that the following issue should be addressed:

*“Childcare demand analysis, including but not restricted to the justification for size and location of the proposed crèche, having regard to existing childcare facilities in the vicinity of the site and the likely demand for childcare places resulting from the proposed development.”*

This Childcare Demand Assessment provides a detailed review of the statutory, strategic and policy context that relates to the provision of childcare facilities with the following aims:

- Establish the existing childcare infrastructure in the study area;
- Identify the demand likely generated by the proposal; and
- Capacity in the vicinity to cater for the demand.

This report addresses reasonable estimates of future demand based on the estimated population arising from the proposed development in a manner that is consistent with national and regional estimates sourced by CSO results.

## 2 Relevant Planning Policy

### 2.1 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

These Guidelines set out general standards and guidance for the land use planning of childcare facilities in Ireland. It advocates a more proactive role by the planning authority in the promotion and management of childcare provision in their area.

Section 2.4 of the Guidelines sets out the appropriate locations for childcare facilities, stating that:

*“Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments.”*

The Childcare Guidelines recommend the provision of 1 no. childcare facility, or 20 no. childcare spaces, for every 75 no. dwellings in a permitted residential scheme.

The Childcare Guidelines acknowledge the factors associated with determining the appropriate level of childcare facilities required in an area, including:

- The current provision of childcare in the area;
- The nature of emerging new communities; and
- Current demographic trends.

The Guidelines specifically state that:

*“The threshold for provision should be established having had regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas”.*

## **2.2 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)**

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) aim to ensure the sustainable delivery of residential development throughout the country. With regard to childcare facilities, these guidelines state the recommendation of:

*“Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which a review is to be progressed, and which recommend the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development”.*

## **2.3 Circular Letter PL3/2016**

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government issued a Circular Letter (PL3/2016 – Childcare facilities operating under the Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Scheme (Planning System support for childcare post September 2016-Implementation of the Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001), in which it is noted that the Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) has been expanded to make it available to all children from the age of 3 years until they transfer to primary school.

Planning Authorities have been asked that:

*“Insofar as is possible, consideration of all planning applications or Section 5 declaration submissions in respect of childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of required capacity as appropriate.”*

While we note that emphasis is placed on ‘*expansion of required capacity as appropriate*’. This would suggest that some demand analysis within a given catchment is appropriate, in order to determine whether capacity expansion is required.

This Circular further requests that Planning Authorities exclude, from their consideration of planning applications, matters relating to the childcare facility design standards outlined in Appendix 1 of the Childcare Guidelines 2001. TUSLA, as opposed to the Planning Authority, is responsible for enforcing compliance with the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006.

## **2.4 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (amended)**

The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines (2020) introduce some further clarification and flexibility to the blanket requirement of the Childcare Guidelines 2001 to provide 1. no. childcare facility (20 no. spaces) for every 75 no. new dwellings.

The Apartment Guidelines state that the threshold for provision of childcare 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.”*

## 2.5 Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 – 2022

The provision of childcare and preschool facilities is recognised by Wicklow County Council as a key piece of social infrastructure. The Wicklow County Development Plan 2016 - 2022 outlines specific objectives, including:

*“CD22 To facilitate the provision of childcare in a manner which is compatible with land-use and transportation policies and adheres to the principles of sustainable development.*

*CD23 To facilitate the provision of a network of childcare facilities that reflects the distribution of the residential population in the County, in order to minimise travel distance and maximise opportunities for disadvantaged communities.*

*CD24 Where considered necessary by the Planning Authority, to require the provision of childcare facilities in all residential developments comprising 75 houses or more (including local authority and social housing schemes).”*

## 2.6 Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019

The Delgany – Greystones & Kilcoole LAP 2013 – 2019 outlines specific objectives regarding the provision of childcare facilities, including:

*“SOC16: A new community building / facility shall be provided within AP1: Coolagad Action Plan. The size/configuration shall be determined in consultation with the Community and Enterprise Section of the Council.*

*SOC13: Allow for the development of new and improved community services, for health, welfare, community, education, civic and institutional uses including schools, childcare, nursing homes, community buildings, churches, Garda station, health centre etc. on suitably zoned lands.”*

## 3 Methodology

A desk-based approach was undertaken to collate baseline information and undertake analysis of existing childcare facilities in the area. Digital mapping and satellite systems were used to identify the existing and planned childcare facilities along with published databases of relevant information. Census data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Electoral Divisions (ED’s) surrounding the site were also analysed to determine the demographics for the area in order to obtain a profile of the area. An estimated profile based upon unit mix and local profile was undertaken and the effect of the proposed development upon existing / proposed capacity. The capacity of existing childcare facilities was identified from published Tusla information on childcare facilities within the area.

The following documents were consulted as part of the review:

- Census 2016 and 2011 SAPMAP data as provided by the Central Statistics Office;
- Survey of existing childcare capacity available undertaken by MacCabe Durney Barnes; and
- Tusla Register of Early Services in Wicklow County Council published in January 2022.

Tusla is considered 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

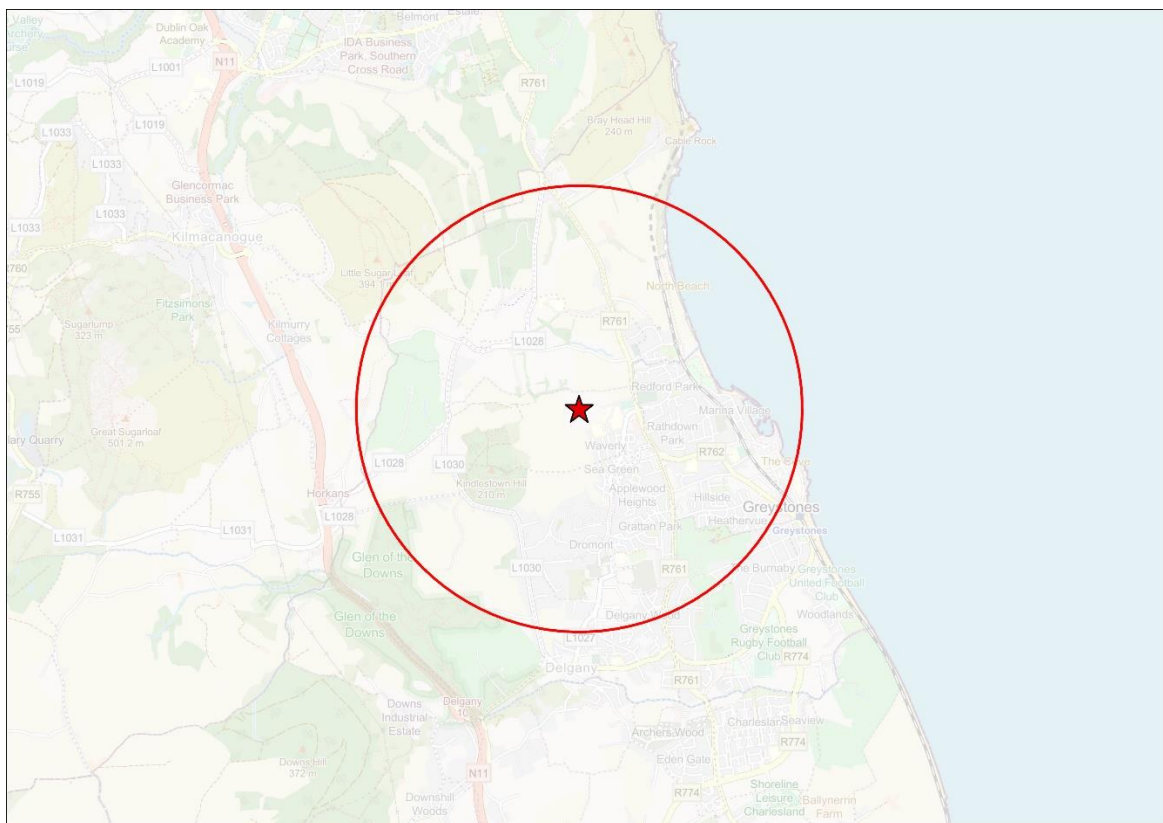
definitive and accurate source of information on childcare facilities for the purpose of this report.

### 3.1 Catchment Area

The proposed development cannot be looked at in isolation from the existent community that adjoins the site. It is necessary to account for the existing facilities and childcare services and their accessibility within a reasonable distance of the new development, for future residents.

Childcare facilities and services have been examined in a 2km radius buffer from the site. This buffer represents a realistic catchment and accessibility to childcare services in the vicinity of the site, and that are available in the context of both the urban form of Greystones town itself, and that of the surrounding hinterland including the settlement of Delgany.

**Figure 1: Subject Site and 2km Radius Buffer**



This would be deemed a reasonable extent that residents would be likely to travel to access childcare services from their homes. Many other factors also influence the choice of childcare, including proximity to employment location, proximity to after school centres, proximity to schools and proximity to extended family.



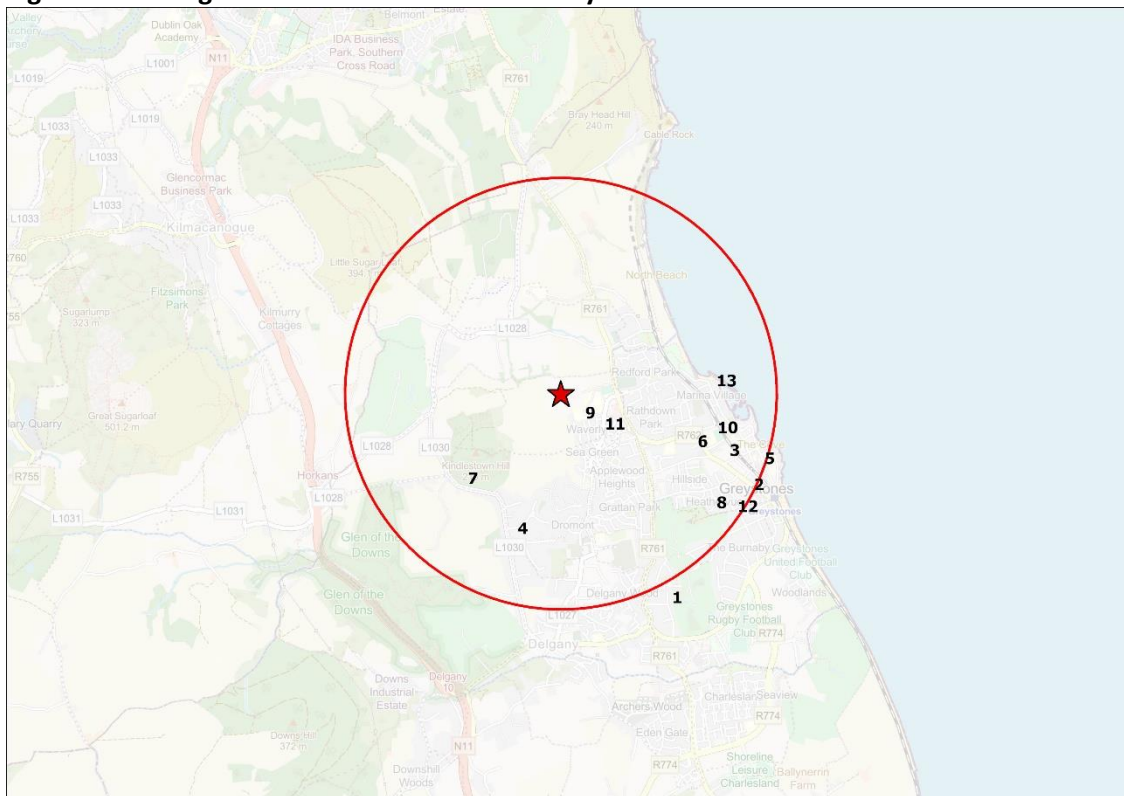
## 4 Existing Childcare Infrastructure

### 4.1 Review of existing Childcare facilities in the study area

A total of 13 childcare facilities were found in the study area. Table 1 sets out each childcare facility registered with Tusla within the study area., the distance from the site, service type, Tusla enrolment numbers according to Tusla’s registration list from January 2022, and the extent of their available capacity. Each childcare facility identified were contacted to provide information on the available capacity to accommodate more children.

All 13 identified childcare facilities are operating on a part time and sessional services type in the study area. MacCabe Durney Barnes contacted the below childcare facilities with regard to their available capacity. A phone survey was conducted to determine the spare capacity within the area. It was not possible to determine the available capacity of all 13 childcare facilities in the study area. In total, 5 childcare facilities provided details of their available capacity. Based on the survey conducted two childcare facilities indicated they have availability, amounting to approximately 58 places available in existing childcare facilities across the study area.

**Figure 2: Existing Childcare Facilities in the Study Area**



**Table 1: Existing Childcare in Vicinity**

Map ID	Name of Facility	Address	Distance from Site (km)	Service Type	Tusla Enrolment	Capacity Available
1	Footprint Montessori	8 Carrig Villas, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	3	Sessional	42	No information provided
2	Naionra an Lana	Theatre Lane, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	1.8	Part Time Sessional	61	42
3	Knockeevin Montessori	Knockeevin Montessori School Delgany, El Pinar, Kindlestown Heights, Kindlestown Upper, Delgany, Co. Wicklow	2.8	Part Time	31	No availability
4	Knockeevin Montessori	Knockeevin Montessori, Knockeevin, Church Rd, Rathdown Lower, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	1.5	Part Time Sessional	44	No availability
5	Global Garden Pre-School	La Touché Road, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	1.8	Sessional	17	No availability
6	Greystones Montessori	St Patrick's WRC, Church Rd, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	1.2	Sessional	22	No information provided
7	Bellevue Montessori	Groom's House, Bellevue Demesne, Delgany, Co. Wicklow	1.3	Part Time	17	No information provided
8	Woodlands Montessori	162 Heatherview, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	2.0	Sessional	22	No information provided
9	Naionra na Gcloch Liath	Gaelscoil Na gCloch Liath, Blacklion, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	0.3	Part Time	16	16
10	Smiley Sunflowers Pre-School	Church Rd, Rathdown Lower, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	1.3	Part Time Sessional	20	No information provided
11	The Nest	The Nest School, Waverly Hill, Blacklion, Greystones, Co. Wicklow	0.6	Part Time Sessional	61	No response
12	Naionra Ná Clocha Beaga	Unit 5 Theatre Lane, Hillside Road, Greystones, Wicklow	1.8	Part Time	18	No information provided
13	The Convent Montessori	Unit 3, Marina Village, The Harbour.	1.8	Part time/ Sessional	20 sessional and 8 part time	No response
Total					399	58

It can be seen from the above table there is spare capacity for **58** pre-school children.

## 5 Future Childcare Facility Needs

### 5.1 Demographic Profile

The 2km buffer comprises the electoral divisions of Greystones and Delgany which forms the basis for the demographic data used in this report. The following section will outline the demographic profile of the Study Area in order to provide a baseline that can be used to predict future demand. Table 2 provides an overview of the population of the Delgany and Greystones area as recorded during 2011 and 2016 Census. It also details the percentage change in population during this period to highlight overall residential growth patterns

In 2016, there were 13,238 people living in the study area, which is a 3.3% increase compared with 2011 census data. The proposed development is located within the Delgany ED with a population of 5,980 persons in 2016. This amounts to an increase of 328 persons (5.8%) from 2011. Greystones population, the nearest ED within which the subject site is located increased by 1.5% in the intercensal period.

**Table 2: Population in Delgany and Greystones ED Census 2011 and 2016**

ED Name	CSO 2011 Population	CSO 2016 Population	Change 2011 – 2016	% Change 2011 – 2016
Delgany	5,652	5,980	328	5.8%
Greystones	7,151	7,258	107	1.5%
Study Area	12,803	13,238	435	3.3%

Source: CSO

### 5.2 Childcare Demand

Based on 2016 CSO data, there were 843 children of pre-school age population within the catchment area, which represents total of 6.3% of the study area in 2016. This percentage is marginally higher across Wicklow County, which stands at 7%. The number of pre-school aged children in Greystones was 3% of the study area population in 2016. Overall, the number of pre-school aged children in the area decreased by 1,301 in the intercensal period.

**Table 3: Delgany and Greystones ED Pre-School Age Population Census 2011 and 2016**

ED Name	CSO 2011 0-4 Years old	% Total Study Area Population	CSO 2016 0-4 Years old	% Total Study Area Population	Change 2011-2016
Delgany	524	4%	434	3.3%	-90
Greystones	446	3.5%	409	3%	-37
Total	970	7.5%	843	6.3%	- 127
Wicklow	11,474	8.4%	10,173	7%	-1,301

Source: CSO

### 5.3 Demand Generated by the Proposed Development

The population of these two electoral areas is 13,238 combined and of this, 843 persons are aged between 0 and 4-years old making this to be 6.3% of the total population in the study area. The census 2016 indicates that 843 children are eligible for childcare under school going age i.e. 0-4 years inclusive. There is in existence 13 childcare providers identified within 2km of the study area providing approximately 399 childcare spaces.

The provision of 586 units within the development is in excess of the 75 units which results in the consideration of a requirement for a childcare facility under the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001). However, the Apartment Guidelines (2020) indicates that one-bedroom units may be discounted for the purposes of assessing the requirement for childcare facilities. As there are 65 one-bedroom apartments to be delivered on site, it is necessary to deduct the total number of one-bedroom apartments, as they do not accommodate children. This leaves a total 521 units which may give rise to a childcare requirement.

The 2016 Census Report data has determined that the average family contains 1.38 children (persons aged 18 and under) of which 30% are children aged between 0-4 years old. The proposed development would therefore, theoretically in accordance with the 2016 Census rates of population, yield 216 number of children between the 0 and 4 years of age, that is within the creche requirement age.

However, for the purposes of this assessment it is necessary to adopt the provisions of the Childcare Guidelines to effectively form the worst-case scenario. They indicate that 20 spaces are required for every 75 dwelling units, or a rate of 0.26 per unit. This would equate to **135** childcare spaces ( $0.26 * 521$  units (excluding the 1-bedroom apartments)).

### 5.4 Justification of the Proposed Childcare Facility

With 13 childcare facilities and the limited childcare capacity available in the vicinity, this is not deemed as an adequate provision of locally operational childcare to absorb the potential demand for childcare spaces generated by the development. Therefore, the development would be considered being of a scale that would necessitate the construction of a childcare facility onsite to cater for the expected population of the development and Greystones as a whole.

A creche (734 sqm) is designed as part of the proposed development. It is proposed to be located immediately to the south of the site entrance. The creche will serve the subject site and wider area. It is adjacent to the zoned active open space and public open space, providing close outdoor play areas in addition to the provided creche open space area 21 no. parking spaces are proposed to serve the creche. It can be used as overspill parking for other uses in the vicinity when the creche is not in operation, specifically the proposed community facility and playing field and the existing Redford cemetery across the road on the R761.

In addition, the location was selected as the most accessible point of the site. In the event that there is spare capacity available at the proposed creche, its location at the entrance will be beneficial to non-residents.

Wicklow County Childcare Committee were also consulted in the course of this assessment regarding the provision and available vacancies in the existing childcare network, they supported the provision of a childcare facility onsite to assist with alleviating the strong existing demand on childcare facilities in north Wicklow.

Based on the analysis conducted the size of the proposed creche is justified based on the Childcare Guidelines methodology applied in this report.

## 6 Conclusion

The research undertaken identifies 13 part time and sessional childcare facilities located within 2km distance from the proposed development site. The survey conducted of available capacity indicated limited vacancies to accommodate the demand generated by the development.

It is estimated based on the Childcare Guidelines that the proposed development of 586 units will generate, demand for 135 pre-school places (aged 0-4 years).

Having regard to the analysis of the existing childcare network capacity and demographic data in the study area, it is considered necessary to include an onsite creche to cater for the pre-school aged population generated by the proposed development. The proposed creche development of 734sqm will accommodate **135** children catering for the development and Greystones as a whole.



