



MARLET

CHILDCARE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT FORMER DOYLE'S NURSERY
& GARDEN CENTRE & BENONI, BRENNANSTOWN ROAD, CABINTEELY

February 2018

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Introduction

This report has been prepared in response to Item 2 of the specific information to be submitted with any application for permission as directed by An Bord Pleanála in their Pre-Application Consultation Opinion (Ref. No. ABP-300144-17). In this regard, the Bord requested the following:

2. Childcare demand analysis and the likely demand for childcare places resulting from the proposed development.

The following report has also had regard to the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Development Plan 2016 – 2022 (hereinafter Development Plan) and The Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001). The Report examines the existing level of childcare provision and options within proximity to a proposed development of 115 no. dwellings (26 houses and 89 apartments/duplexes) at Doyle's Nursery and Garden Centre and 'Benoni', Brennanstown Road, Cabinteely, Dublin.

The report assesses the vacancy rates within local childcare facilities and to determine if the demand for places generated by the proposed development can be accommodated within the existing childcare facility provision. This Report also examines proposed childcare facilities likely to be delivered in the short to medium term with consideration to the need to avoid over provision of services within the catchment area.

The report has also had regard to the opinion report of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council following the pre-application consultation held in respect of the subject site (DLR Ref. PAC/SHD/401/17 ABP Ref. ABP-300144/17).

The Draft Apartment Guidelines 2018 are also noted. These note that the childcare guidelines are to be revised with a view to ensuring that childcare facilities are of sufficient size and scale to be commercially viable. Commercial viability thresholds are at 80-100 children.

Background to report now submitted

As noted above, this report is submitted in response to Item 2 of the specific information requested by the Bord in their opinion which requested a report containing a 'childcare demand analysis and the likely demand for childcare places resulting from the proposed development'.

The report also notes the preceding report of the planning authority which included the following analysis:

'Regard is had to Section 7.1.3.6 of the County Development Plan (2016-2022) Policy SIC11: Childcare Facilities, which seeks to encourage the provision of affordable and appropriate facilities as an integral part of proposals for new developments and states that "In general at least one childcare facility should be provided for all new residential developments subject to demographic and geographic needs".'

At national level, the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2001) seeks to provide a childcare facility where a new residential development is proposed with 75+ dwellings. The Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2001) seeks a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings. This is a guideline standard and will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site.

The applicant has provided a Childcare Capacity Assessment as part of the application submission. The applicant is essentially seeking to omit a childcare facility from the development based on a consultation with local childcare operators in the area. From that consultation, it was concluded that both childcare operators and letting agents in the area stated that there is a lack of demand for a childcare facility that would accommodate 22 places.

The applicant has based the figure of 22 spaces on population calculations:

- *A development of 115 units would generate a projected population of 310 persons (at an occupancy rate of 2.7 persons per household).*
- *Further to this, the applicant states, that to provide a viable and efficient business, childcare operators would need to provide a facility for 80 or more places, and on that basis, a facility for 22 spaces would be unviable. Therefore no childcare facility will be provided on site.*
- *The applicant makes reference to a number of planning applications that have been granted or are under consideration that will be providing childcare facilities. It is noted that none are within walking distances of the site.*

Having examined the figures, it is considered that the applicant's calculation of 22 childcare spaces is incorrect and that the required amount of spaces would be 31 childcare spaces.

It is noted that the applicant has provided an extensive list of local childcare facilities, although sessions available are not provided. Further to this, the statement provided, does not provide detail of the operators (in terms of the sessions offered including after school places or full time care) that participate in the assessment.

There are concerns that the detail provided lacks robust supporting evidence identifying the type of care facilities in the area. The proposal therefore does not accord with the Policy SIC11: Childcare Facilities of the County Development Plan 2016-2022 and Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2001)'.

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown report concludes as follows:

There is no creche proposed as part of the development for a strategic housing site within the urban area. It is estimated that a facility providing 31 spaces would be required for a development of this scale. There are concerns that the detail provided lacks robust supporting evidence identifying the type of care facilities in the area. The proposal therefore does not accord with the Policy SIC11: Childcare Facilities of the County Development Plan 2016-2022 and Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2001).

This report therefore bases the potential demand for childcare on the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council figure of 31 children, rather than the figure of 22 spaces calculated by the applicant at pre-application consultation stage. This figure of 31 represents 10% of the potential calculated population of the development i.e. 10% pre-schoolers.

The requirement for a more robust research in relation to the provision or not of a creche was discussed at the Pre-Application Consultation meeting on the 4th December 2017.

The An Bord Pleanála Inspector instructed the applicant to discuss the issue with the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee. The Committee were contacted on the 1st February 2018 requesting details of childcare services and capacity available in the Cabinteely and surrounding areas. The Committee stated as follows:

'You will need to contact the services in the area to find out their current capacity as we would not have this information to hand. If you visit our website www.dlrccc.ie and go to childcare search, you will find 14 services in Cabinteely. Just to let you know our website is being updated currently, so you will find it quite slow to get into.

Also, under Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2001), the standard is 1 facility with a minimum of 20 childcare places for each 75 dwellings.'

Policy Context

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Development Plan 2016 – 2022 (hereinafter Development Plan) states that

“The Planning Authority will seek to facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations throughout the County and may require their provision in large residential, public community, commercial and retail developments in accordance with the provisions of the DoEHLG ‘Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2001) and the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No. 2) Regulations (2006) and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) (Amendment) Regulations (2006) (Department of Health and Children)”.

The Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) generally recommend that 1 no. childcare facility is required per 75 no. dwellings. However it is acknowledged that this is not always appropriate and the omission of a childcare facility may be allowable *“where 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”*. Essentially, the provision of a childcare facility for new schemes of 75 no. dwellings is a guideline and not an absolute requirement.

In considering this issue, it is further stated that *“in relation to new housing areas, 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** [emphasis added]”, (Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001, p.9).*

We would therefore caution against utilising an approach which requires a crèche facility for effectively every apartment scheme in the county. We note the decision of An Bord Pleanála to grant permission for a change of use of a permitted crèche to office space at a site in Sandyford Industrial Estate, not far from the subject appeal site (Reg. Ref. D15A/0032; ABP Ref. PL06D.224737 refers). This crèche had been lying vacant since its construction. The Inspector notes that *‘the very act of providing space for such use does not guarantee that it will be used for such’*. We would argue therefore that it is not the intention of the Childcare Guidelines to provide small scale inefficient crèches within every building or development regardless of the need and provision elsewhere.

This point is emphasised by *The Building Resource Manual Project Management Guidelines for the Construction, Refurbishment or Extension of Childcare Facilities* (page 5) states that:

“It is essential to be clear about the extent of the need for childcare in the area, both at present and in the future. Gathering accurate and real information about the area, will provide clear direction when the building project moves to more advanced stages. It will enable the management committee to ensure the facility built matches clearly with the current and future needs of the community”.

There are a number of reasons by which it may not be appropriate or necessary to provide a childcare facility within a new residential scheme of over 75 no. dwellings and it is respectfully submitted that there is a clear justification for the omission of a childcare facility in this case.

The Applicant gave due consideration to the provision of a childcare facility during the design phase of the subject scheme. It was found, following consultation with childcare operators that there was a lack of demand for the type of childcare facility which could reasonably be accommodated on the subject site. As planning has moved into an “evidence-based” era, the evidence to date does not present the demand for a viable childcare facility.

Demand for Childcare Places likely to be Generated by Proposed Scheme

The proposed development at Brennanstown Road provides for 115 no. dwelling units comprising 26 no. houses (18 no. 3 bed units, 2 no. 4 bed units and 6 no. 4/5 bed units) and 89 no. apartment units (13 no. 1 bed units, 54 no. 2 bed units, 40 no. 3 bed units, 2 no. 4 bed units and 6 no. 4/5 bed units).

A full schedule is shown below:

<i>SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION</i>						
UNIT TYPE	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 bed	4/5 Bed	Total
HOUSES						
A1 DETACHED			1			
A2 DETACHED					1	
A3 DETACHED			2			
A4 DETACHED					3	
B SEMI DET					2	
B1 SEMI DET			8			
C DETACHED				2		
F TERRACE			7			
HOUSES TOTAL			18	2	6	26
APARTMENTS						
D DUPLEX	4		4			
APARTMENTS E1 -E4	9	54	18			
APARTMENTS TOTAL	13	54	22			89
OVERALL TOTALS	13	54	40	2	6	115
AS %	11.3	47.0	34.8	1.7	5.2	
Nett Site Area			1.85 Ha.			
Gross Site Area incl Brennanstown Road			2.24 Ha			
Density on Nett area			62 per Ha			

The proposed scheme would have a projected population of 310 no. persons based on an occupancy rate of 2.7 persons per household. In 2016, approximately 7% of the population was of pre-school age (0 – 4). The application of this rate to the projected population of 310 no. persons gives a likely demand of 22 no. places. It is important to note that Census 2016 demonstrates that there has been a fall of 24,814 persons in the 0-4 age group primarily due to a fall in births since 2009 and as such, it is submitted that the demand for 22 no. spaces is likely to be an over estimate.

For the purposes of this assessment however, it has been assumed that there will be a demand for 31no. childcare spaces as instructed by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (based on a 10% population of pre-schoolers).

In order to provide a viable and efficient business, childcare operators providing full day care services generally require a minimum of 80 childcare places (accommodated typically in a c.500 sqm facility). A development of approximately 300 units (or 380 units including one beds) would generate a demand

for a facility of 500 sqm / 80 children. As such, it is clear that a standalone facility located within the subject site catering for just 30 children would not present a viability business opportunity and is unlikely to be pursued by an operator. Therefore, it is necessary to examine if sufficient childcare services are available in the local area in order to accommodate the demand generated by the proposed scheme.

Subject Study Area

A catchment area has been proposed to include both the subject Electoral District (ED) of Cabinteely-Loughlinstown and a number of bordering EDs in reflection of likely commuting patterns of future residents. The EDs examined are shown in Fig. 1 and are listed below:

- Cabinteely-Loughlinstown
- Foxrock-Carrickmines
- Foxrock-Beechpark
- Cabinteely-Pottery
- Cabinteely-Granitefield
- Cabinteely-Kilbogget
- Ballybrack

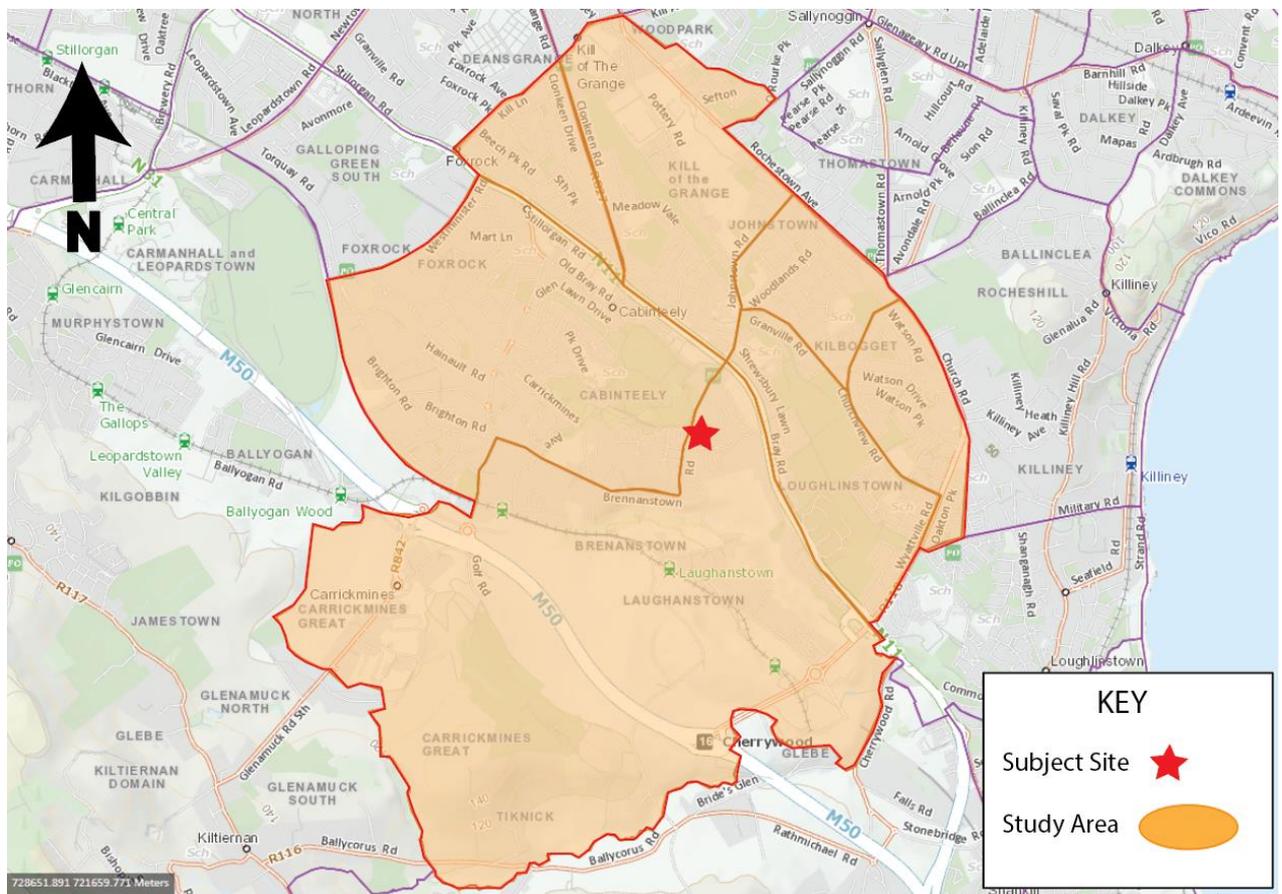


Fig. 1: Catchment Area

Existing Service Provision

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Development Plan 2016 – 2022 states that “County Development Plan policy in relation to childcare will be guided by recommendations arising from the 2009 Strategic Mapping Exercise and any subsequent Mapping Exercises the County Childcare Committee conduct. Recently Pobal has employed Census 2011 data to map childcare facilities within the County, enabling more objective analysis of gaps in provision and the targeting of areas where facilities may be needed in the future”. With regard to the period of time which has lapsed since the 2009 mapping exercise, the Applicant has undertaken an analysis of existing facilities in the local area as detailed in Fig. 1 above.

There are 26 no. childcare facilities operating within the catchment area as shown below in Fig. 2:

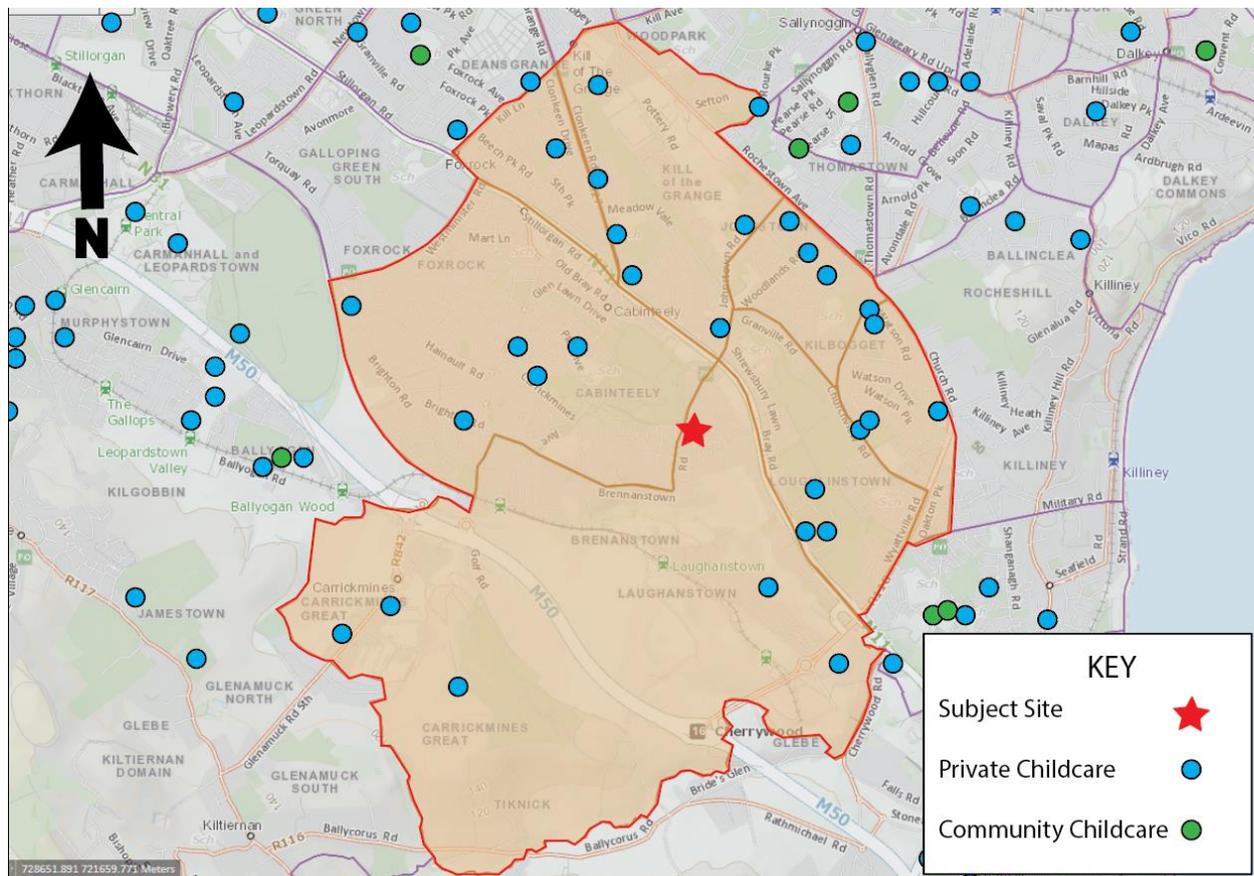


Fig. 2: Existing childcare service provision

An Bord Pleanála instructed the applicant to contact the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee (DLRCC) to ascertain capacity and vacancy rates. A request was made to the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee (DLRCCC) in order to obtain data regarding existing capacity and vacancy rates in the catchment area, however the DLRCCC indicated that they do not hold records in this regard. This should be noted for future similar requests for assessments.

As such, the Applicant undertook email consultations with local operators in February 2018 in order to understand local demand and capacity.

It is important to note that many operators organise their capacity numbers and staffing prior to the commencement of the school year in order to ensure that the optimum use is made from their facility according to demand i.e. additional demand for baby places would require increased staffing due to smaller staff-child ratios.

The below list of questions were put to local operators:

I am writing in relation to a proposed residential development on the Brennanstown Road in Cabinteely. Prior to submitting a planning application for this development we have been requested by An Bord Pleanala to examine the childcare services and capacity available in the Cabinteely and surrounding areas.

I was wondering would you have any information in relation to this? If available would I be able to get an indication of the below:

- 1. Max childcare number capacity possible within the facility.*
- 2. Current number/capacity take up within the facility*
- 3. Type of childcare services provided and age ranges provided for.*
- 4. Times of different childcare services provided daily.*
- 5. Capacity within different services/age groups and whether any current availability.*
- 6. Estimated capacity situation in 2019/2020.*

Finally, would you be interested in seeing another childcare facility in the area?

The below table demonstrates that there is expected to be capacity within existing services to cater for the demand generated by the proposed development. It is noted that the September 2018 date should be considered as a general indicator of availability as children are usually booked into a childcare facility one year in advance of beginning attendance and hence cannot be ascertained for the design year of the proposed development.

Of the 26 operators in the catchment, 23 were available for contact via email. Of the 23 premises that were contacted for childcare capacity and availability figures, 9 issued responses containing enrolment numbers broadly in line with the questions asked. This represents a return rate of 39%. Table 1 below presents the results of this survey.

When contacting the Giraffe facility in Cherrywood, a response was received from the Managing Director that provided details of the Cherrywood facility as well as 3 other Giraffe facilities in the catchment. Estimated capacity was also provided in relation to 5 more facilities in 3rd party ownership all located in the catchment. However regarding the non-Giraffe facilities, they advised that they have estimated capacity. The figures provided for 3rd party facilities are a guideline only and Giraffe should

not be quoted or these figures relied on. Therefore, figures for 12 facilities in the area are provided to include those given from the 3 additional Giraffe facilities.

It is important to note that following consultation with local operators, it is evident that although higher demand is being experienced by sessional morning services running the ECCE scheme, larger crèche operators are generally experiencing high vacancy rates. Considering that the proposed development will result in a demand for just 22 - 31 no. places, it is respectfully submitted that the provision of a purpose built facility is unwarranted and may result in an untenable building.

The below table demonstrates that there is expected to be capacity within existing services to cater for the demand generated by the proposed development.

It is submitted that there is ample capacity to facilitate the estimated demand of 22/31 no. places within existing services.

	Question Asked	1. Max childcare number capacity possible within the facility.	2. Current unoccupied rate /available numbers	3. Type of childcare services provided and age ranges provided for.	4. Times of different childcare services provided daily.	5. Capacity within different services/age groups and whether any current availability.	6. Estimated capacity situation in 2019/2020.	Would you be interested in seeing another childcare facility in the area?
1	Giraffe Central Park Leopardstown	88	26 (i.e. 30% taking 70% as yearly average occupancy rate)	6 months to school going age (5 years)	07:30 - 18:45 Full Time Sessional	Average occupancy of 60% in summer to circa 80% peak in April	60%-80% (Demand will move within age cohorts and is cyclical)	No: Cautioned against provision <500sqm due to unsustainable supply and 1100 childcare spaces over 4 Giraffe facilities & 5 3rd party facilities.
2	Giraffe South Dublin Business Park Leopardstown	135	40 (i.e. 30% taking 70% as yearly average occupancy rate)	6 months to school going age (5 years)	07:30 - 18:45 Full Time Sessional	Average occupancy of 60% in summer to circa 80% peak in April	60%-80% (Demand will move within age cohorts and is cyclical)	No: As per Giraffe Central Park
3	Giraffe Cherrywood	130	39 (i.e. 30% taking 70% as yearly average occupancy rate)	6 months to school going age (5 years)	07:30 - 18:45 Full Time Sessional	Average occupancy of 60% in summer to circa 80% peak in April	60%-80% (Demand will move within age cohorts and is cyclical)	No: As per Giraffe Central Park
4	Giraffe Belarmine/Aiken Village	160	48 (i.e. 30% taking 70% as yearly average occupancy rate)	6 months to school going age (5 years)	07:30 - 18:45 Full Time Sessional	Average occupancy of 60% in summer to circa 80% peak in April	60%-80% (Demand will move within age cohorts and is cyclical)	No: As per Giraffe Central Park
5	Lilliput Childcare	45	0	6 months to 12 years. Babies Toddlers Montessori After schoolers	07:30-18:30. Varying groups and times within this.	No Current availability	70	No
6	Ballybrack Killiney Montessori Preschool	77	9	ECCE/sessional, Part time care. 2.5-5.5 yrs.	08.00-09.00 breakfast, 09.00-12.30 sessional/ECCE, 13.15-16.15 sessional/ECCE 12.30-15:00 lunch	Availability in afternoon session	Full for 2019/2020	No: New facility opening.
7	Kids United Limited	78 children on the books. 55 capacity at one time.	0	1 to 5 years. Afterschool up to age of 9.	07:30 - 18:30 (Full Time) 13:00 - 18:30 (After School)	Waiting list in most rooms/groups for September 2018. Availability in the 1-3 age groups.	Expected to be similar as current	No response

8	Koala Childcare	50	5	6 months to 8 years	Full time (07.30-18:30) Part time sessional After school (13:00 - 18:30) Holiday care	4 available places in toddler room (1-2 years), 2 places in 2-3 years age group. The rest of rooms are full	Currently have waiting list for montessori. Younger age groups will be at least 80% filled by Sept 2018 for sept 2019.	Yes. But it depends on the size.
9	Poppets Childcare	22	0	Ages 2 to school going age (5)	08.00 - 14:00 (Mornings, during term time only).	No response.	Anticipate full capacity	No response.
10	Lilly Montessori	17	0	Pre school (3-5)	08.00 - 14:30	17 within ages 3-5	Anticipate full capacity	Yes
11	Little Star Preschool	22	4	Sessional Preschool Service for 2.5 to 6 years	09.30 to 13:00 (Tues to Fri)	No places available at present. Since Dec 2017 we are at capacity.	Places available for Sept 2018 and Sept 2019 intake at present.	No sure if there is room for another preschool service in the immediate area as there are a number of existing local preschools not on the list provided.
12	Once Upon a Time - Carrickmines	86	10	3 months to afterschool age	07.30 - 13:30 (mornings); 07.30 - 18:30 (full time).	Babies 12no., Wobbler 20no., Pre montessori 18no. Junior montessori 18no., Montessori 18no. *Only overall capacity given. Not availability	88%	Yes

Total Available Childcare Numbers in respondent facilities

181no.

Total Available Childcare Numbers as a % of Capacity % of respondents potential occupiers desiring a new facility

20.4%

25%

Table 1: February 2018 Capacity Survey. **Note:** The figures provided should not be relied upon as 100% accurate and in some cases were estimated by service providers.

There are approximately 181no. spaces available in the area based on the information provided. This represents 20% of the potential capacity.

The potential 22 – 31 childcare space demand can therefore be accommodated in the existing surrounding facilities.

In addition, only 25% of respondents desire an additional childcare facility in the area. While this may be regarded as a natural apprehension against competitor premises, the respondents are all potential occupiers of a facility and it is clear there is no pressing will for a new facility in the catchment.

The study results also excludes the 5 additional facilities noted by the Giraffe correspondence, as well as the 14 facilities contacted as part of the study who did not respond. Additional capacity is likely to be available at these locations to meet the demand resulting from the proposed development.

General Demand and Service Provision Details provided by Giraffe

The Giraffe correspondence provided relevant and significant information in relation to childcare service provision generally as well as capacity locally (emphasis added):

- Of the local 9 facilities where information was provided, an estimated 1100 childcare places are available.
- The email provided information of provision in the greater Foxrock, Cabinteely, Carrickmines, Leopardstown, and Sandyford areas.
- The 9 facilities included Giraffe Central Park Leopardstown, Giraffe South Dublin Business Park Leopardstown, Giraffe Cherrywood, Giraffe Belarmine/Aiken Village as well as the 5no. 3rd party facilities.
- These **1100 places will come available every 24 months**. i.e. high churn in childcare in this catchment.
- Current number/capacity take up: The moving average of occupancy is from 60% in summer to circa 80% peak in April each year (an occupancy rate of 70% was therefore taken for the purpose of the results table shown).
- Therefore of the **1100 estimated available spaces in the 9 facilities, approximately 440 spaces will be available in the summer months, and 220 available at peak during the year. Available capacity will fluctuate between these numbers during the year.**
- Demand will move within age cohorts and is cyclical.
- Giraffe advise that **any extra provision of childcare be cognisant of fragmentation of the market/service and an oversupply will leave existing provision unsustainable.**
- Estimated capacity situation in 2019/2020: As listed above and dictated by churn rate which is very consistent at circa 50%.

- Any new Childcare Centres should be designed to cater for a critical mass and **not built under 500 sq. metres** as this leads to further unsustainable supply and is a wasted resource.
- Giraffe stated there were further facilities in the surrounding area not in the list provided by Marlet where further capacity was currently available.
- It is important to note that commuting parents will not always use the crèche nearest their home and their choice will be dictated by quite a number of factors and will be heavily influenced by where they work and convenience of pick up by second parent, grandparent or guardian.
- The duration of a child's stay in a care setting is largely predicated on the primary care parent's employment and lifestyle choice. This is usually the mother. The factors influencing this can be the arrival of a second child and there being a preference by one of the parents to stay at home and be a full-time parent or to reduce their working hours with a knock-on effect on childcare requirements. This is also influenced during second pregnancies where the first child or older siblings are typically kept at home while on maternity leave. This can be a cost consideration or a life style choice. As we are often dealing with young parents at an early stage of establishing home or career there is a higher instance of families moving house or parents changing jobs.
- Given these circumstances the average length of stay for a child in crèche, attending full day care is circa **24 months**.
- The average length of stay is even less for those attending for the sessional ECCE free preschool scheme September to June.
- In looking at demand for childcare in any given area, it is important to carry out an analysis of the demographics and socio-economic profile of the residents of the greater catchment as their childcare requirements will vary.
- Attendances in the summer typically fall to 60% of year-round main. This is because the current occupancies include children attending under the ECCE free preschool scheme, for 38 weeks of the year. These children leave the crèche in June. Fee revenue from the free preschool scheme is considerably less than the normal full day care fees. Also there is an average of 25% to 35% of the overall crèche population moving to big school in any one year which is also a very large contributor to the churn rate.
- Note: Regarding the non-Giraffe estimated provision, they have estimated capacity. This is as a guideline only and Giraffe should not be quoted or these figures relied on.

Viable and Sustainable Childcare Facilities

As noted by the respondent from Giraffe childcare, any new Childcare Centres should be designed to cater for a critical mass and not be built under 500 sq. meters as this leads to further unsustainable supply and is a wasted resource.

A 500 sqm creche would accommodate approximately 80 children according to Ferreira Architects based on similar projects done elsewhere. Between 22 and 31 childcare places have been calculated for the proposed development.

As noted, childcare facilities need to be +500 sqm in order to ensure a sustainable and viable service. To provide a 500 sqm creche to cater for 22 – 31 children is simply not viable nor is it in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. It will also risk the fragmentation and reduce viability of existing and future planned purpose-built facilities in the surrounding area. A development of approximately 300 units (or 380 units including one beds) would generate a demand for a facility of 500 sqm / 80 children.

It should also be noted that as this is a suburban location, the large majority of end users will be travelling to employment centres elsewhere and will thus use childcare facilities located proximate to same as noted in the Giraffe childcare correspondence.

A small facility of 200sqm -300 sqm would need to be provided to cater for a potential maximum demand of 22 – 31 children. Such a facility would likely be unable to find an end user and will thus become unviable and lie vacant. As noted above there are approximately 181 available places in the 9 respondent facilities (including 4 Giraffe facilities) which can accommodate the relatively insubstantial demand.

It is therefore imperative that potential required childcare places are accommodated elsewhere in existing or already planned future facilities.

Emerging Planning Policy: Draft Updated Apartment Guidelines

The recently published Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities DRAFT UPDATE 2017 include specific guidance on childcare provision. This gives an indication of revised approach currently evolving in relation to childcare facilities particularly in the context of the current guidelines approaching 20 years since publication. Section 4.7 of the Draft Guidelines state as follows:

'4.7 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 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.'

The majority of units proposed are 1 and 2 bedrooms (58%) and therefore this emerging policy stance should be considered by An Bord Pleanála.

Future Provision

The Applicant has also had consideration to any other significant residential development proposed in the locality and notes that larger residential schemes proposed under the adjacent Cherrywood SDZ will generally include for the provision of a childcare facility which will also likely contribute to the overall quantum of childcare places available.

In addition, a number of planning applications for childcare are under consideration or have been recently granted including:

- D17A/0757 – Ballyogan Road
- D17A/0426 – Shankill Shopping Centre
- DZ17A/0700 – Cherrywood
- D17A/0689 – Clonskeagh
- D17A/0348 – Glenageary

The Ballybrack facility stated they are opening a new facility locally in September 2018 that will cater for 14 full time spaces, 44 sessional as well as after school care which will be open 8am – 6pm daily.

Conclusion

This report identifies that a demand of c.22 - 31 no. childcare places is likely to be generated by the proposed development. Following an assessment of existing facilities in the local area, it is clear that a significant vacancy rate exists within full time, purpose built facilities with higher demand being experienced only by sessional services providing the ECCE scheme. Therefore, there is no compelling case for an additional childcare facility on the site and the provision of such a facility may adversely affect existing childcare facilities in the area.