

CHILDCARE DEMAND ANALYSIS

Whitehaven Strategic Housing Development



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Prepared by:

RPS

Prepared for:

Cosgrave Developments Unlimited Company

Dublin | Cork | Galway | Sligo
rpsgroup.com

RPS Group Limited, registered in Ireland No. 91911
RPS Consulting Engineers Limited, registered in Ireland No. 161581
RPS Planning & Environment Limited, registered in Ireland No. 160191
RPS Engineering Services Limited, registered in Ireland No. 99795
The Registered office of each of the above companies is West Pier
Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 N6T7



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1 INTRODUCTION

Cosgrave Developments Unlimited Company (the Applicant) is seeking planning permission for a residential development on lands at Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9. RPS Group Ltd has been commissioned by the Applicant to prepare this Childcare Demand Analysis (report) to accompany an application for a proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) consisting of 255 no. residential units.

This report has been prepared to provide an overview of the relevant policy context, to describe existing childcare provision in the vicinity of the proposed development and to consider the sufficiency of the childcare facility proposed. This report is presented in the following sections:

- **Section 1** – Introduction
- **Section 2** – Site Context & Proposed Development
- **Section 3** – Planning Policy Context
- **Section 4** – Demographic Trends & Childcare Facilities
- **Section 5** – Analysis & Estimate of Demand
- **Section 6** – Conclusion.

2 SITE CONTEXT & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The subject site extends to c. 1.5 ha and is located on Northwood Avenue within the administrative area of Fingal County Council. Northwood Avenue is a spine road through Northwood linking the Ballymun Road (R108) with the Swords Road (R132). The subject site is located towards the western end of Northwood Avenue at the transition along this route to a more urbanised setting, situated to the northwest of Santry Park. The surrounding lands have been subject to significant land use change over the last 15 years. The Applicant has developed Gulliver's Retail Park, Gulliver's Local Centre and part of Swift Square Office Park in the immediate vicinity of the subject site to the west. Immediately to the east of the subject site is the Sports Surgery Clinic. Adjacent residential development delivered by the Applicant includes Bridgefield, Pappan Grove and Cedarview. Blackwood Square, a residential apartment development, also being delivered by the Applicant, is located to the west and is currently under construction. Opposite the subject site on the south side of Northwood Avenue are Lymewood Mews and Carrington Park apartments. Other sites along Northwood Avenue further to the west are under currently construction and include residential development. The location of the subject site and its surrounding context is illustrated in **Figure 2-1**.

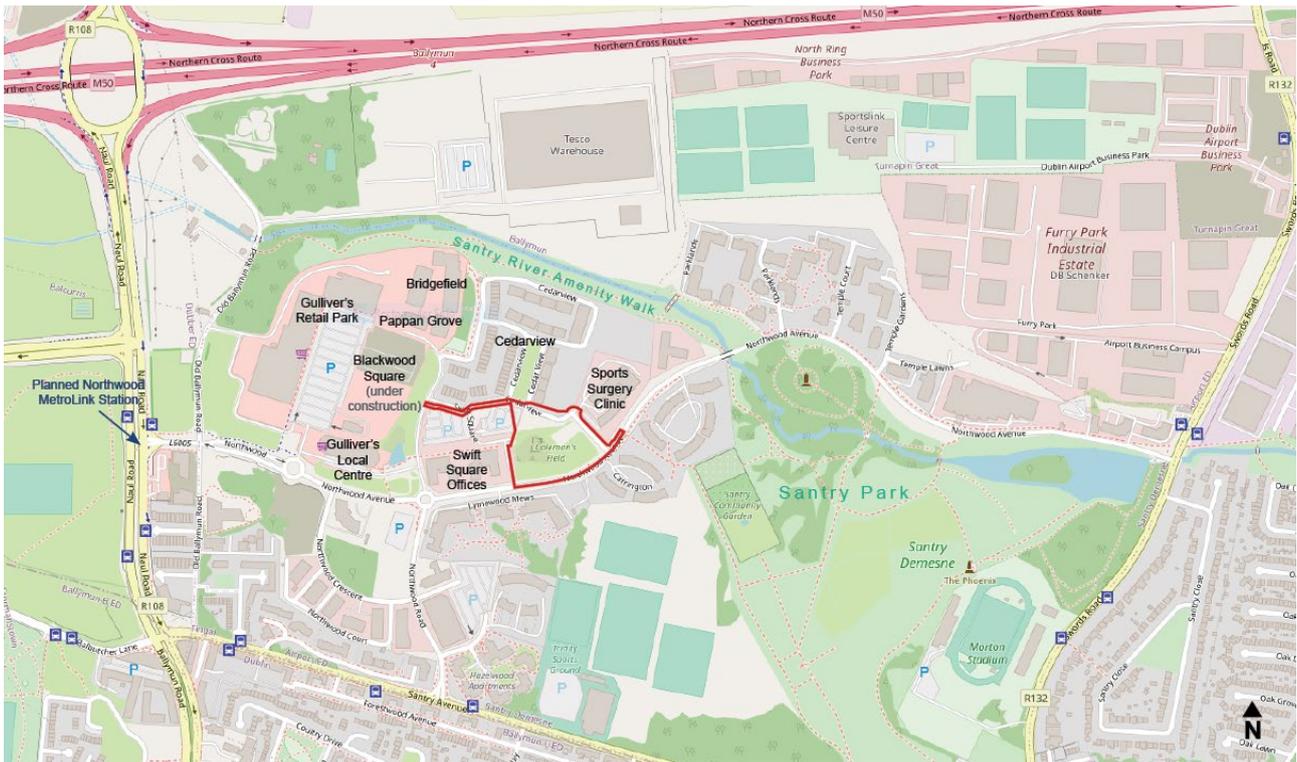


Figure 2-1: Site Location (indicative subject lands outlined in red)¹

A detailed development description is set out in the *Planning Report and Statement of Consistency* prepared by RPS accompanying this planning application. For the purposes of this analysis the proposed development will consist of 255 no. apartments comprising 11 no. 1-bedroom apartments, 229 no. 2-bedroom apartments and 15 no. 3-bedroom apartments. A childcare facility (c. 398 sq.m) and associated outdoor play area (c. 189 sq.m) is also proposed as part of this development.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

For the purpose of this report, RPS has reviewed national-level planning policy providing key elements of national guidance regarding childcare facilities along with regional and local level planning policy including the *Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023*.

3.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF 2040) is the primary articulation of spatial, planning and land use policy within Ireland and provides an overarching framework for all other policies. The NPF 2040 recognises the changing demographic of household size throughout the country stating:

“7 out of 10 households in the State consist of three people or less, with an average household size of 2.75 people. This is expected to decline to around 2.5 people per household by 2040.” (page 95)

The NPF 2040 also recognises the importance of appropriate childcare provision for future growth and acknowledges that childcare is reaching full capacity in Ireland noting that:

“The continued provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, parks and sportsgrounds, remains necessary and will need to be maintained at similar levels for the foreseeable future thereafter.” (page 88)

“Childcare provision in Ireland is reaching capacity and new planning approaches and sustained investment will be required, particularly in areas of disadvantage and population

¹ Source: Open Street Map and RPS Group annotation

growth, to increase capacity and enable existing services to meet regulatory and quality requirements". (page 89)

National Policy Objective 31 (page 90) aims to:

"Prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth within investment in:

.....A childcare/ ECCE planning function, for monitoring, analysis and forecasting of investment needs, including identification of regional priorities"

With regard to the provision of childcare facilities, the NPF 2040 highlights the importance of sustainable and improved planning in order to provide quality childcare that will meet regulatory and quality environments for future population growth.

3.2 Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) & Circular Letter PL3/2016

The *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (the Childcare Guidelines) seek to ensure high quality childcare services that are easily accessible, affordable and appropriate for all are provided as part of future development proposals. With regard to childcare facilities within residential developments the Childcare Guidelines state: *"a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate".* They continue by clarifying that *"these are a guideline standard and will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site".* (page 9)

In this regard, Appendix 2 of the guideline's states that the benchmark provision of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings is recommended and that this threshold for provision should be established *"having had regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas".* The guidelines state that modification to this indicative standard should have regard to the make-up of the proposed residential area and the results of any childcare analysis undertaken as part of a county childcare strategy.

Circular Letter PL3/2016 issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government outlines Government's policy with respect to increasing access to childcare and until new Childcare Guidelines are issued requesting planning authorities to expediate planning consultations, applications and referrals relating to the provision of childcare facilities. The Circular Letter advises that the *Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006* set out a range of childcare related standards for these facilities and that An Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is responsible for inspecting services and enforcing compliance with these Regulations. Planning authorities are therefore requested to exclude matters relating to Appendix 1 set out in the Childcare Guidelines including minimum floor area requirements per child from their considerations.

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

The *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)* aim to ensure the sustainable delivery of residential development throughout the country. With regard to childcare facilities, these guidelines note the recommendation of *"the provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units"* (page 26) as specified by the Childcare Guidelines and continues stating that:

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

Having regard for the above, it is highlighted that the guidelines acknowledge the need to consider the availability of existing childcare facilities in an area as there may be appropriate provision to accommodate the demand generated by new residential schemes without over providing childcare services.

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

The *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2020* (the Apartment Standards) acknowledges the standard of childcare facilities recommended in the Childcare Guidelines as “one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units” (page 21). However, the Apartment Standards re-iterate the Childcare Guidelines with respect to each site being considered on its individual merit stating that:

“... the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms.” (page 21)

It is highlighted that these guidelines acknowledge the need to consider unit mix and the quantum of family size units when planning the level of childcare facilities required for residential schemes.

3.5 Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

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

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

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

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

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

3.6 Policy Summary

The importance in providing childcare facilities in order to facilitate the future growth, is highlighted in the NPF 2040 and national guidelines. The need is acknowledged in all policies and guidance that provision of such facilities should be established with regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities within the surrounding area and demographic trends.

4 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS & FACILITIES

Population figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Census of Population recorded in 2016, the *Module on Childcare Quarter 3 2016 of the National Household Quarterly Survey*² as reported in July 2017 and the *Annual Early Years Sector Profile Report 2018/2019* were used to create a profile of the study area including population statistics and childcare figures. An Pobal and TUSLA (the Child and Family Agency) websites provide information on existing childcare facilities and have been used to inform this analysis. An Bord Pleanála and Fingal County Council online planning search facilities have also provided information on both existing and permitted childcare facilities within and near the study area.

² https://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170706100048_QNHS_Childcare_Quarter_3_2016_full.pdf

4.1 Study Area

In order to assess the demographic trends and the level of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the subject site, an area within 3km of the subject site was selected as a fair represent of the study area. Population figures from the Census of Population 2016 were used to create an area profile for the study area. These were examined at Electoral Division (ED) level.

The subject site falls within the Airport ED (CSO Area Code: 04001), other EDs within the study area include

- Turnapin
- Kilmore A
- Ballymun A
- Ballymun B
- Ballymun C
- Ballymun D
- Ballymun E
- Ballymun F
- Ballygall C
- Whitehall A
- Whitehall B
- Whitehall C

The study area is illustrated below in **Figure 4-1**.

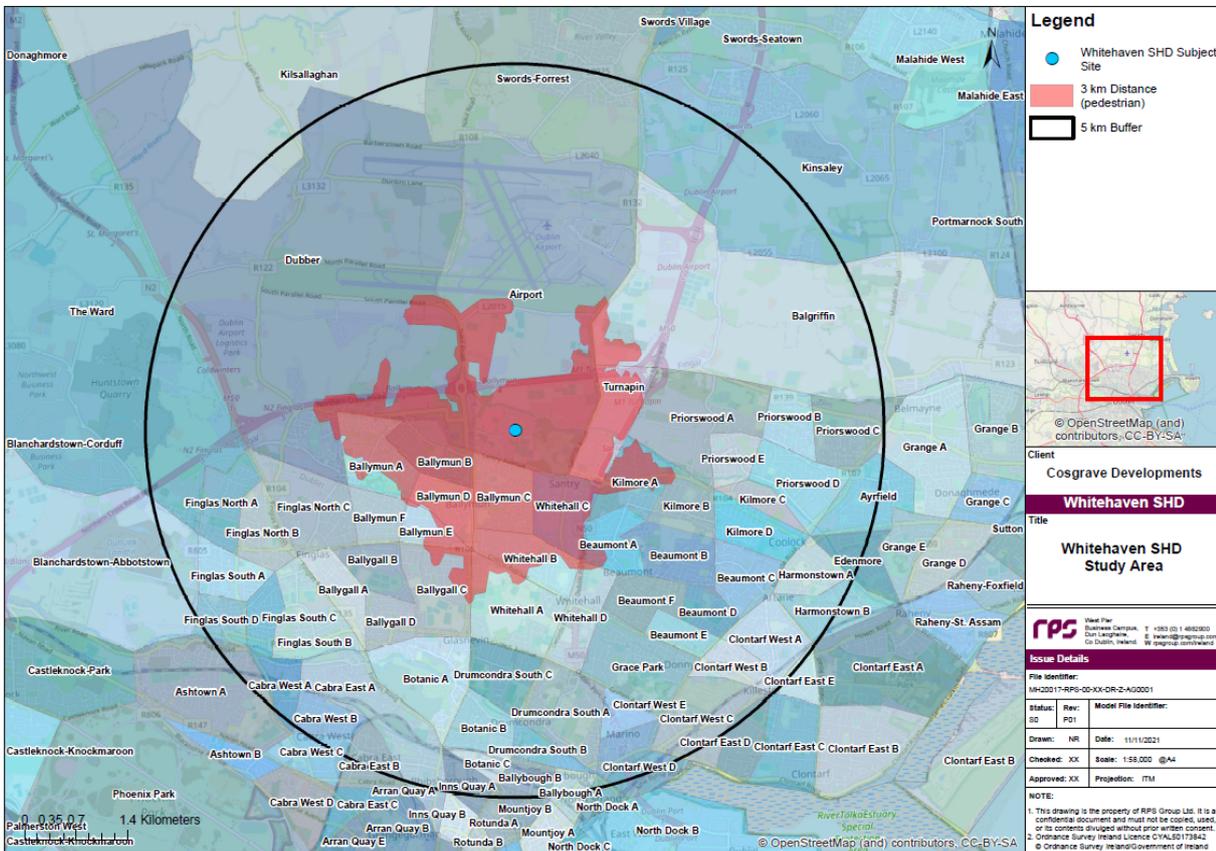


Figure 4-1: Study Area (3km pedestrian isochrone).

Source: Open Street Map, RPS Annotation

4.2 Demographic Profile

Table 4-1 shows the 0-4 year old demographic profile of the State, Fingal and the study area in 2016.

Table 4-1: 0-4 year old population in the State, Fingal and the Study Area, 2016

Location	Total Pop	0 yrs	1 yrs	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	Total 0-4 yrs	Total 0-4 yrs (%)
State	4,761,865	62,257	64,029	66,318	68,076	70,835	331,515	7.1%

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Location	Total Pop	0 yrs	1 yrs	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	Total 0-4 yrs	Total 0-4 yrs (%)
Fingal	296,020	4,455	4,768	5,056	5,132	5,488	24,899	8.4%
Study Area	44,822	533	518	586	560	579	2,776	6.2%
Airport	5,018	81	74	79	63	74	371	7.4%
Turnapin	1,700	18	17	12	16	27	90	5.3%
Kilmore A	3,660	54	46	59	50	66	275	7.5%
Ballymun A	4,765	77	83	96	101	84	441	9.3%
Ballymun B	4,379	45	63	61	45	44	258	5.9%
Ballymun C	6,112	66	58	81	88	67	360	5.9%
Ballymun D	2,458	33	24	39	40	44	180	7.3%
Ballymun E	1,562	13	16	17	16	11	73	4.7%
Ballymun F	2,350	20	19	27	20	22	108	4.6%
Ballygall C	3,251	34	27	36	36	41	174	5.4%
Whitehall A	3,286	20	30	27	33	23	133	4.0%
Whitehall B	4,128	55	43	34	39	54	225	5.5%
Whitehall C	2,153	17	18	18	53	13	22	4.1%

Source: CSO.ie

Based on 2016 data, there was a 0-4 age cohort population of 2,776 no. children (6.2%) within the study area which is lower than both the State average (7.1%) and Fingal's average (8.4%), the State has a total of 331,515 no. 0-4 year olds and Fingal has a total of 24,899 no. 0-4 year olds.

Table 4-2 shows the total population of the State, Fingal and the study area in 2016 and also females between the ages of 24-55 and 45+ in the State, Fingal and the study area.

Table 4-2: Demographic Profile of the State, Fingal and the Study Area, 2016.

Location	Total Pop	Females 25-44	Females 25-44 (%)	Females 45+	Females 45+ (%)
State	4,761,865	719,3653	15.1%	912,141	19%
Fingal	296,020	51,781	17.5%	47,099	16%
Study Area	28,902	4,656	16.1%	6,222	22%
Airport	5,018	1,225	24.4%	576	11%
Turnapin	1,700	463	27.2%	661	38.9%
Kilmore A	3,660	564	15.4%	651	17.8%
Ballymun A	4,765	997	20.9%	572	12.0%
Ballymun B	4,379	694	15.8%	734	17%
Ballymun C	6,112	932	15.2%	1,087	18%
Ballymun D	2,458	438	17.8%	380	15%
Ballymun E	1,562	173	11.1%	463	29.6%
Ballymun F	2,350	269	11.4%	653	27.8%
Ballygall C	3,251	403	12.4%	984	30%
Whitehall A	3,286	339	10.3%	1,554	47%
Whitehall B	4,128	625	15.1%	907	22%
Whitehall C	2,153	585	27.2%	946	43.9%

Source CSO.ie

It is most likely for females to have children between the ages of 25-44. Within the State 25-44 year old females comprise 15.1% of the total population, Fingal has a slightly higher 25-44 year old female population comprising 17.5% of the total population and similarly 25-44 year old females comprise 16.1% of the total population in the study area, slightly lower than both the State and Fingal's average.

4.3 Childcare Patterns

The *Module on Childcare Quarter 3 2016 of the National Household Quarterly Survey* as reported in July 2017 provides detail on the types of childcare being used in Ireland. Nationally, the most commonly used non-parental childcare type for pre-school children is a 'creche/Montessori/playgroup/after-school facility', with 19% of preschool children availing of this type of childcare in 2016, remaining static since 2007. In the Dublin Region 25% of pre-school children used a 'creche/ Montessori/playgroup/After-school facility'. However, the most common form of childcare for those of pre-school age was by a parent or partner at 62% within the Dublin Region.

Based on the population of the study area between 0-4 years of 2,776 and the application of these findings this trend would translate to a requirement for 694 no. (25%) childcare spaces.

The Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) was first introduced in January 2010 for children who turn 3 years old. The programme seeks to provide children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school. The number of children benefiting from the ECCE programme increased since its introduction with 52,600 no. children enrolled in 2010 and 73,964 no. children enrolled in 2016 and 100,000 in 2018. This is largely due to children being permitted to avail of the programme for 2 years rather than 1 year since 2016. **Table 4-2** below illustrates the level of the preschool population within the 0-2 and 3-4 years age categories in the State and study area.

Table 4-2: Total 0-2 years and 3-4 years Profile of the State, Fingal and the Study Area, 2016

ED Area	Population	0-2 years	%	3-4 years	%
State	4,761,865	192,604	4.0%	138,911	2.9%
Fingal	296,020	14,279	4.8%	10,620	3.6%
Study Area	28,902	1,010	3.5%	691	2.4%
Airport	5,018	234	4.7%	137	2.7%
Turnapin	1,700	47	3%	43	3%
Ballymun A	4,765	256	5%	185	4%
Ballymun B	4,379	169	3.9%	89	2.0%
Ballymun C	6,112	205	3.4%	155	2.5%
Ballymun D	2,458	96	3.9%	84	3.4%
Ballymun E	1,562	46	3%	27	2%
Ballymun F	2,350	66	3%	42	2%
Ballygall C	3,251	97	3.0%	77	2.4%
Whitehall A	3,286	77	2.3%	56	1.7%
Whitehall B	4,128	132	3.2%	93	2.3%
Whitehall C	2,153	53	2%	35	2%

Source: CSO.ie

4.4 Existing Childcare Facilities

The Fingal Childcare Committee was consulted and the Pobal online portal and TUSLA listing of early years services were reviewed in order to appraise existing childcare service providers in the study area.

The *Annual Early Years Sector Profile Report 2018/2019* published by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is the most recent of these reports providing data on childcare capacity and vacancy. It reports that in Fingal 11,142 no. children were enrolled in childcare services with a total of 536 no. vacant places which equates to a vacancy rate of 5%. This 5% vacancy rate shows there is a limited amount of capacity to cater for additional enrolments. This data pre-dates the Covid-19 pandemic, therefore the long term impacts that the pandemic may have on childcare patterns and provisions are not clear at this point.

Figure 4-2 below illustrates the location of existing childcare services as per An Pobal mapping within 1km and 3km of the subject site as per An Pobal website.

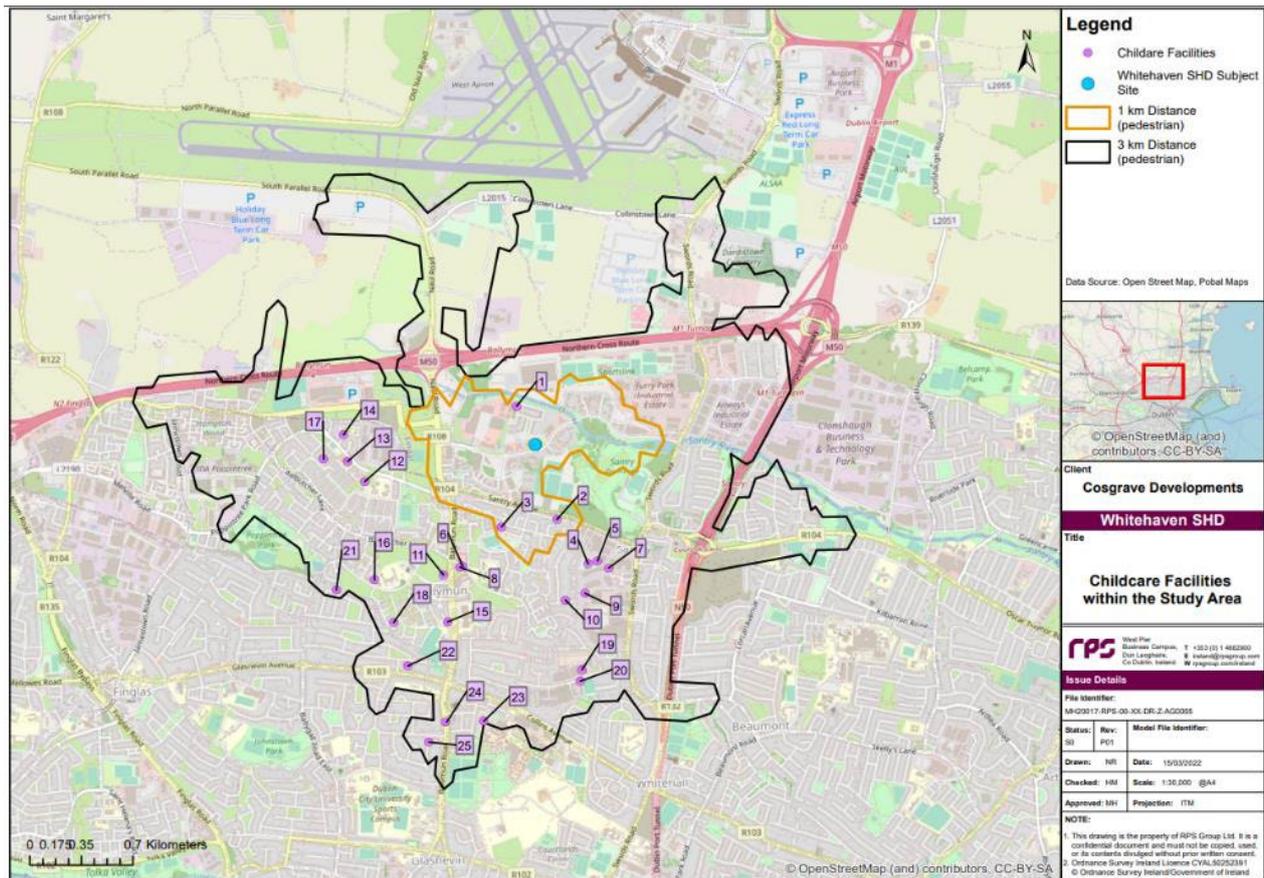


Figure 4-2: Location of Childcare Facilities

A list of childcare providers within the study area and the service provided based on information provided on the An Pobal and Tusla websites and the Fingal Childcare Committee is set out in **Table 4-3**.

Table 4-3: Childcare Facilities

No.	Name	Address	Service	Age Profile	Capacity
Facilities within 1km					
1.	Little Harvard SY	Block A4, Bridgefield, Northwood, Santry	Full Day, Part time, Sessional	0-6 years old	80
2.	The Playhouse Preschool	Santry Community Resource Centre, Domville Court, Whitehall, Dublin 9	Sessional	0-6 years old	44
3.	Naíonra Glór na nGael	Sli Sheanntraith, Baile Munna, D09HF58	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional	2-6 years old	32
Total					156
Facilities within 2-3km					
4.	Little Rainbows Santry	The Ashes, Santry Place, D09F620	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional	1-6 years old	84
5.	Ballymun East Community Centre Ltd.	Ballymun East Community Centre, Woodhazel Close	Full Day, Part time and Sessional Day Care	2-6 years old	111
6.	The Nest Santry	Unit 10C, Santry Hall Industrial Estate, Santry, Dublin 9	Full time, Part time and Sessional Day Care	0-6 years	86

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No.	Name	Address	Service	Age Profile	Capacity
7.	Aisling Project	Ballymun East Child & Youth Centre, Woodhazel Close	After School Service	6-16+ years old	90
8.	Happyways Creche	Greenfield Community Centre, Shanliss Ave, Dublin 9	Sessional	0-6 years old	16
9.	Sunshine Creche & Montessori Ltd	Unit 2D , Santry Hall Industrial Estate, Santry, Dublin 9.	Full day, Part time and Sessional	1-5 years old	40
10	Axis Creche	Axis Art Centre and Theatre, 9 Main Street, Santry, Dublin 9.	Full Day Care	0-6 years old	34
11.	Happyway Creche and Pre School	11 Shanliss Walk, Santry, Dublin 9.	Full time, Part time	1-6 years old	13
12.	Pop Up Preschool	St Joseph's Junior School, Balcurris Road, Ballymun	Sessional Day Care	2-6 years old	22
13.	Poppintree Early Education Centre Ltd	Poppintree Early Education Centre, Balbutcher Lane	Sessional Day Care	0-6 years old	50
14.	St. Margaret's Preschool	St. Margaret's Road, Ballymun,	Part time	2-6 years old	26
15	Naionra an T-Seachtar Laoch	Scoil an t-Seachtar Laoch, Bothar Baile Munna 11	Sessional	2-5 years old	40
16.	Tír na nÓg Early Childhood Care & Education Centre	Ballymun Day Nursery, Sillogue Road, Ballymun, Dublin 11	Full day, Part time and Sessional	2-6 years old	60
17.	Aisling Project Poppintree	Poppintree Sport and Community Centre, Balbutcher Lane North, Ballymun	After School Service	6-16+ years old	30
18.	Our Lady's Nursery Ballymun	121 Sillogue Gardens, Ballymun, Dublin 11.	Full day	0-6 years old	88
19.	Pinocchio's Little Treasures	1 Shanliss Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9.	Full Day Care	6mths-6 years old	33
20.	Cocoon Childcare - Santry	Shanowen Road, Collins Avenue, Dublin 9,	Full day, Part time and Sessional	0-6 years old	94
21.	Pinewood Montessori School	55 Pinewood Crescent, Glasnevin, Dublin 11	Sessional	2-6 years old	16
22.	Mother of Divine Grace Community Playgroup	Riversdale Sports Club, Glasnevin Ave, Dublin 11.	Sessional Day Care	2-6 years old	40
23.	Magic Days Creche & Montessori School	DCU Campus, Car Park 2, Glasnevin	Full day, Part Time, Sessional	0-6 years old	55
24.	Kalina's Afterschool	177th Scout Hall, Ballymun Road.		4-12 years old	25
25.	Little Learners	Westfield House, Ballymun, Dublin 9.	Full Day	3-6 years old	44
<i>Total</i>					<i>1,097</i>
Overall Total					1,253

Source: Pobal, Tusla.ie

Table 4-3 and **Figure 4-2** show there are 25 no. childcare facilities within 1km and 2-3km of the subject site.

There are 3 no. facilities within 1km with capacity to cater for 156 no. childcare places. Overall, there are 1,253 no. childcare places within the study area.

4.5 Permitted Childcare Facilities

A desktop review of the planning history for the Northwood area in the vicinity of the proposed development was undertaken using the Fingal County Council online planning search facility. Recent planning permission for permitted childcare facilities within Northwood are noted below:

- **Reg. Ref. F18A/0421 & Reg. Ref. F18A/0438:**

Planning permission was granted for a two-stage phased Master Plan (Reg. Ref F18A/0421). Residential development permitted under the first phase of development included the provision of a childcare facility, accommodating 54 no. childcare spaces. Planning permission was granted for second phase of development of the Master Plan (Reg. Ref F18A/0438). During the second phase of development the childcare facility was relocated to lands near the eastern boundary which improved accessibility and provided more efficient car parking and a dedicated set down area. This site is located directly south of Gulliver’s Retail Park on the junction of Northwood Avenue and Domville Wood (the Old Ballymun Road).

- **Reg. Ref. F19A/0401 & Reg. Ref. F19A/0419:**

Planning permission was granted for a two-stage Master Plan (Reg. Ref F19A/0401 & F19A/0419) for a mixed residential and commercial scheme on an overall site of c.1.5 ha. In a response to Further Information, a childcare facility accommodating 50 no. childcare places was proposed and subsequently permitted for within the development.

- **ABP Reg. Ref 306075 & ABP Reg. Ref. 309416**

Planning permission was granted for a SHD at lands off Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9, referred to as Blackwood Square. The development consists of 331 no. apartment units and a creche providing 62 no. childcare places in accordance with the permitted amendment application (ABP Reg. Ref. 309416).

These planning permissions will provide an additional 166 no. childcare places. **Table 4-4** summarises the total overall childcare places in the area from both existing and permitted facilities.

Table 4-4: Summary Table of Childcare Places within the Study Area

Location	Existing Childcare Places	Permitted Childcare Places	Total Childcare Places
Within 1km of subject site:	156 no. childcare spaces	166 no. childcare spaces	322 no. childcare spaces
Remainder of Study Area:	1,097 no. childcare places	Not included.	1,097 no. childcare spaces
Total:	1,253 no. childcare places		1,419 no. childcare spaces

Source: Tusla.ie, Pobal, Fingal County Council

In the study area there is a total of approximately 1,253 no. existing childcare places provided within 25 no. childcare providers and 3 no. permitted childcare facilities with approximately 166 no. childcare places. Overall combining existing and permitted childcare facilitates there is a total of approximately 1,419 no. childcare places in the study area.

5 ANALYSIS & ESTIMATE OF DEMAND

In order to ascertain the projected demand for the childcare places an analytical approach has been used, which includes the following factors, in addition to the policy context outlined above:

- Site location and access;
- Housing mix proposed;
- Level of current childcare facilities in the vicinity;
- Demographic profile; and
- Estimate of demand.

5.1 Site Location and Access

The proposed development is well served with residential amenity and infrastructure and is convenient to existing and proposed public transport links. The central location and existing/ planned transport linkages facilitate ease of accessing existing childcare facilities.

5.2 Housing Mix Proposed

The mix of housing types and sizes proposed will influence the future resident population. Larger units with more bedrooms are more likely to be occupied by households with children. The proposed development includes:

- 11 no. 1-bedroom units,
- 229 no. 2-bedroom units,
- 15 no. 3-bedroom units.

5.3 Level of Current Childcare Facilities in the Vicinity

As set out in **Table 4-3**, there are 25 no. existing childcare facilities in the study area providing a total of 1,263 no. childcare spaces.

5.4 Level of Permitted Childcare Facilities in the Vicinity

As set out in **Section 4.5**, there are 3 no. permitted facilities within the study area providing a total of 166 no. childcare places.

In total combining current facilities and permitted facilities as set out in **Table 4-4**, there are a total of 1,419 no. childcare places.

5.5 Demographic Profile

As set out in **Section 4**, the demographic profile of Fingal varies somewhat from the national average with 0-4 year olds comprising 8.4% of the Fingal's total population and 7.1% of the national population. In 2016 the national average household size was 2.75. According to the NPF 2040 the average household size is expected to decline to 2.5 people by 2040. The decline in average household size suggest that family sizes are becoming small, therefore there will be a decline in the number of childcare places required. In calculating the demand likely to be generated by the proposed development and the future demand for childcare places the 2016 figures have been used in order to provide a robust analysis.

As evidenced by the *Module of Childcare Quarter 3 2016 of the National Household Quarterly Survey*³ (CSO) as reported in July 2017 not all preschool children will attend childcare facilities and it is considered that there will always be a significant portion of children who do not attend or attend occasionally. Table 3 of this module reported that 25% of preschool children in the Dublin region attended Creche/ Montessori/ Playgroup/ After-school facilities. The introduction of the National Childcare Schemes for those aged 3+ may have led to some increase, but still not all children are expected to attend childcare facilities.

5.6 Estimate of Demand

The Childcare Guidelines, Residential Guidelines, Apartment Standards and local planning policy recognise the need to assess proposals based on their locational merits. In this regard the Apartment Standards state:

“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

³ https://pdf.cso.ie/www/pdf/20170706100048_QNHS_Childcare_Quarter_3_2016_full.pdf

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”.

With regard to the proposed development, the threshold for provision of facilities should be established having regard to:

- Scale and unit mix of the proposed development;
- Existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities; and
- Emerging demographic profile of the area.

5.6.1 Scale and Unit Mix of the Proposed Development

There is a total of 255 no. units comprised of 11 no. 1-bed units, 229 no. 2-bed units and 15 no. 3-bed units. A rigid application of the Childcare Guidelines would generate a need for childcare places as set out below:

255 no. units / 75 dwellings = 3 X 20 (minimum required places) = 60 no. childcare places.

Noting that there are 15 no. 3-bed units and excluding 50% of the 2-bedroom units (115), the proposed development would generate a need for childcare places based on 130 no. dwellings translating to:

130 no. units / 75 dwellings = 2 X 20 (minimum required places) = 40 no. childcare places.

5.6.2 Existing Geographical Distribution of Childcare Facilities

As set out in **Section 5.4**, in total combining current facilities and permitted facilities, there are a total of 1,419 no. childcare places.

5.6.3 Emerging Demographic Profile of the Area

Based on the *Module of Childcare Quarter 3 2016 of the National Household Quarterly Survey (2016)* which recorded that 25% of preschool children attended a childcare facility in the Dublin Region and that all preschool children over 3 years can avail of 2 years of National Childcare Schemes such as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme it is assumed for robustness that:

- 25% of those aged 0-2 years will attend a childcare facility; and
- 100% of those aged 3-4 years will attend a childcare facility in order to avail of national childcare schemes.

Based on the 2016 national average household size of 2.75 providing an anticipated population of the proposed development is 701 no. people and applying these childcare attendance assumptions the demand for childcare spaces within the proposed development is set out in **Table 5-1** below.

Table 5-1: Total Childcare Places Required by the Proposed Development.

Cohort	Population 0-4 Years	% requiring childcare		No. of Required Places
0-2 years	$701^1 \times 3.7\%^2 = 26$	$26 \times 25\%^3$	=	7
3-4 years	$701^1 \times 2.5\%^2 = 18$	$18 \times 100\%^4$	=	18
Total				25

Source: CSO.ie

1. Units (255) * average household size (2.75)
2. % of population is that age cohort based on state 2016 figures presented in **Table 4-2**.
3. % of preschool within attended Creche/ Montessori/ Playgroup/ After-school facilities in the Dublin region.
4. Assume all (100%) within the 3-4 year cohort attend to avail of national childcare schemes.

In consideration of the specific determinants associated with this development such as unit mix, level of childcare provision in the area and trends in childcare facility attendance it is considered appropriate to provide a facility to accommodate at least 25 no. childcare places and a maximum of 40 no. childcare places.

6 CONCLUSION

RPS have prepared this report on behalf of Cosgrave Developments Unlimited Company to accompany a SHD application for the development of 255 no. residential units on lands at Northwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9. The proposed development comprises 11 no. 1-bedroom units, 229 no. 2-bedroom units and 15 no. 3-bedroom units. This report provides an overview of the proposed development and highlights the relevant planning policies and objectives relating to the provision of childcare facilities as outlined in policy documents.

Considering existing and permitted childcare facilities within a 1km and 3km radius of the subject site alongside policy documents, CSO data and consultation via email with Fingal Childcare Committee, it is concluded that the demand for services in the area is high and new services are welcomed.

Within the study area, a 3km radius from the subject site, there are 25 no. existing services providing 1,253 no. childcare places and 3 no. permitted services providing 166 no. childcare places. In total there are 1,419 no. childcare places in the study area.

The Quarterly National Household Survey Q3 2016 Module on Childcare stated that 25% of those of preschool age used a creche/ Montessori/ playground/ afterschool service in comparison to 62% of this age group who used a parent/ partner as their childcare in the Dublin Region.

Based on the demand analysis the following apply:

- A rigid application of the Childcare Guidelines excluding one bed units would necessitate the provision of a childcare facility with 60 no. childcare places.
- Applying the Childcare Guidelines excluding one bed units and 50% of two bed units would necessitate the provision of a childcare facility with 40 no. childcare places.
- An analysis of projected childcare demand allowing for mix of units proposed, household size, childcare practises and the ECCE Programme found that demand for 0-4 years childcare places would generate a demand for a minimum 25 no. spaces.

Based on existing and permitted childcare facilities in the study area, population demographics, relevant policy and guidelines, it is considered appropriate to provide a facility to accommodate at least 25 no. childcare places and a maximum of 40 no. childcare places as part of the proposed development.

It is noted that the childcare facility proposed extends to 398 sq.m together with an additional 189 sq.m of outdoor space. While the capacity of facilities will vary depending on their layout having regard to the *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016*, and particularly the *Tusla (2018) Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF)*, it is assumed based on the recent facility permitted at Blackwood Square (ABP-309416-21) that the proposed facility at Whitehaven will cater for a c. 70-75 no. childcare places. This facility could therefore cater for the proposed development and demand generated for future development within adjoining sites.