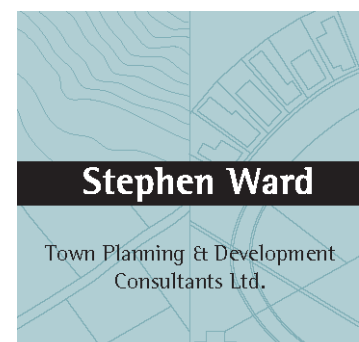


# School and Childcare Facility Assessment

Hill Street, Dundalk, Co.Louth



Prepared on behalf of  
Zirbac DLK Ltd



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This School and Childcare Facility Assessment is prepared in support of a proposed large scale residential development of 194no. apartments on Hill Street, Dundalk, Co.Louth.

A Childcare Assessment is required as per Section 13.12.1 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2017 (as amended). A childcare facility is proposed as part of the development to support the new community. This assessment considers the proposed facility in terms of the demand generated by the proposed development, relevant planning policy and the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Section 13.8.25 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2017 (as amended) states *“Any application for a development in excess of 200 residential units shall include a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the development and the demand for existing schools in the area to cater for this demand.”*

The applicant was advised in pre-planning consultation with the Louth County Council to include a School and Childcare Demand Assessment with the proposed Large Scale Residential Development planning application. This assessment will estimate the potential for the proposed LRD to generate demand for school places and consider this in terms of school enrolment figures.

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION

The application site is located in close proximity to Dundalk Town Centre fronting onto Hill Street/Dublin Road (R215), Dundalk, Co.Louth. The site is surrounded by existing residential neighbourhoods and in close proximity to a range of services and facilities, including childcare and schools.

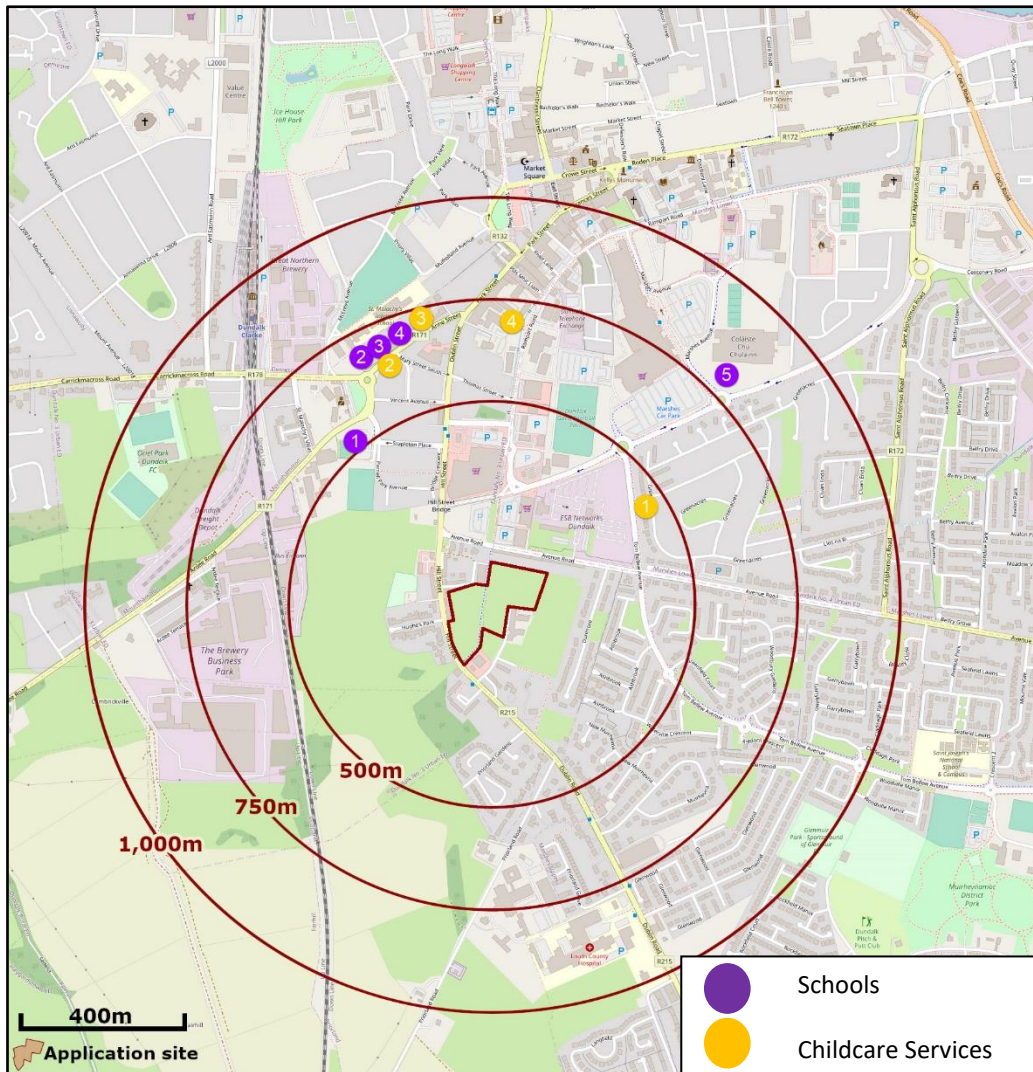


Figure 1: Site Location

### 3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development consists of 194no. apartments including 22no. duplex apartments. The mix of accommodation is detailed by table 1 below.

Table 1 – Mix of Units						
	One Bed	Two Bed 4 Person	Two Bed Duplex	Three Bed	Three Bed Duplex	Total
<b>Apartments</b>	32	122	11	18	11	194



As part of the proposed residential development a childcare facility has been provided at ground floor level of Block A with access to secure outside space for play. The creche measures 212sq.m with an enclosed outside space extending to 85sq.m that will be suitably screened and fitted with safe play surface. Please refer to BDP Landscape and Public Realm report under separate cover for details. The childcare facility is easily accessible by residents and has direct connectivity to the Dublin Road/Hill Street and existing riverside walk for service users.

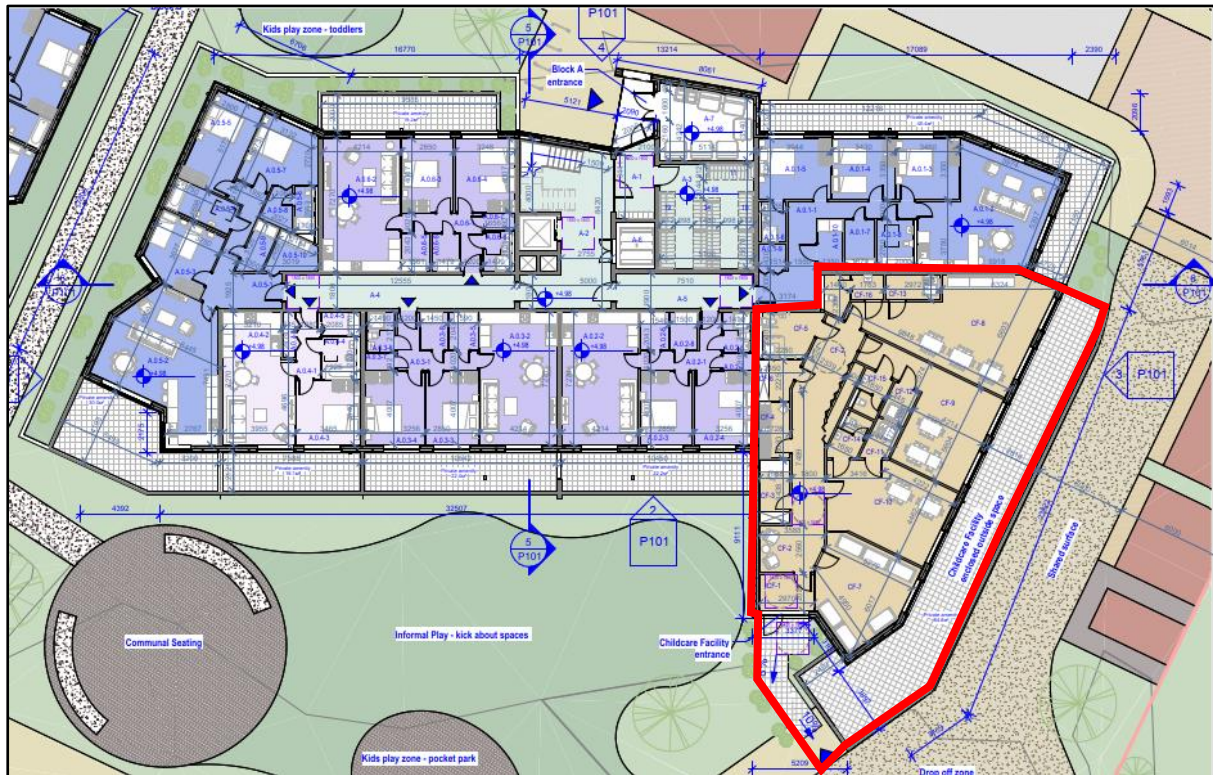


Figure 2: Extract from Douglas Wallace Drawing No. P100 – Block A Ground Floor Plan. Creche outlined in red

Using the required adult to child ratios and clear floor space standards as outlined by the Childcare Regulations, the childcare facility provides full time spaces for the following age groups-

- 0-1 years            6 spaces
- 1-2 years            10 spaces
- 2-3 years            12 spaces
- 3-6 years            16 spaces

Total                    44 spaces

Douglas Wallace architecture drawing no. P100 provides a full breakdown of care room sizes (extract below).

Room	Age Group	Size
CF-7	0-1 years	25sq.m
CF-10	1-2 years	28.5sq.m
CF-9	2-3 years	30sq.m
CF-8	3-6 years	42.4sq.m

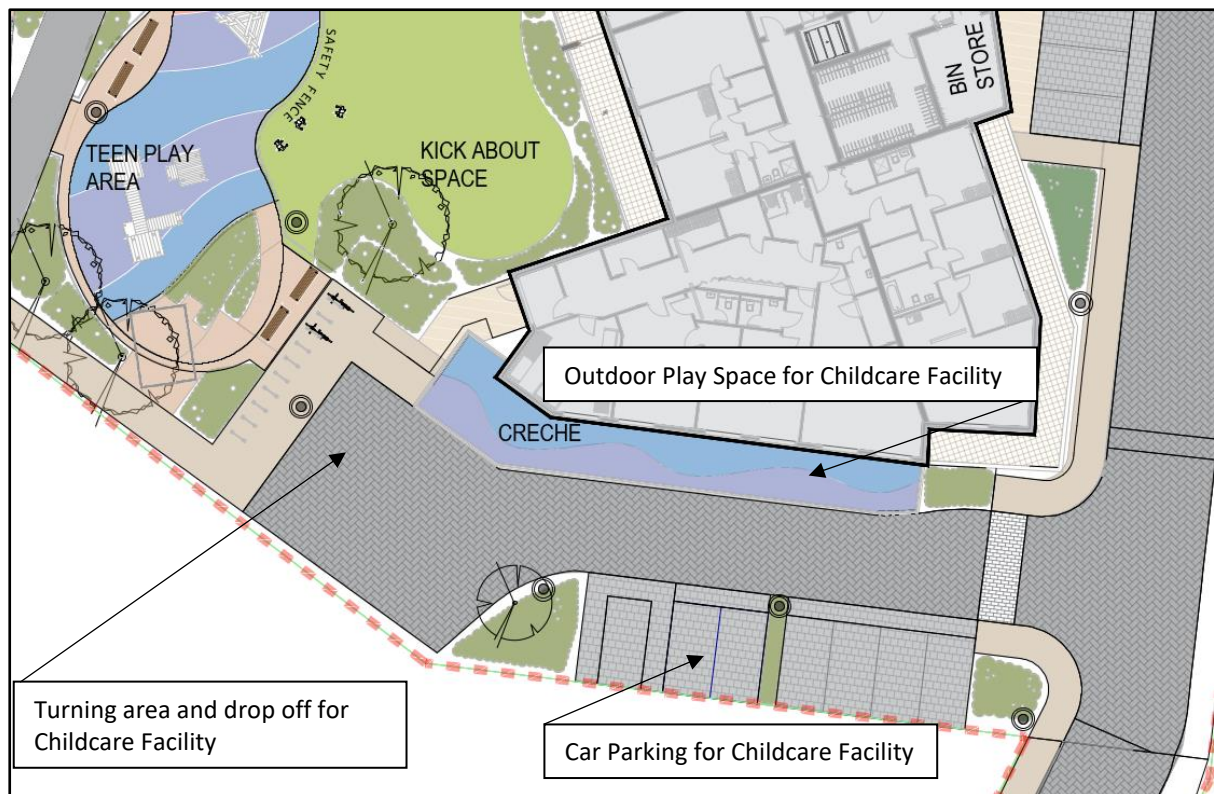


Figure 3: Extract from BDP Landscape Plan

#### 4.0 ESTIMATED DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The proposed development includes 194 no. housing units, comprising 172 no. multi-level apartment units (32 no. 1-bed units, 122 no. 2-bed units, and 18 no. 3-bed units), and 22 no. duplex apartment units (11 no. 2-bed units, and 11 no. 3-bed units).

Assuming all housing units are occupied, data from the 2022 Census suggests that c. 106 no. units will be occupied by families, of which c. 60 no. units will be occupied by families with children (Table 1). According to Census 2022 Data, there is a somewhat larger number of children per family in Dundalk than the state average (Table 2). Adjusting for this, **it is projected that a total of c. 100 no. children will live within the proposed development** (Table 3).

Using further 2022 Census data for Dundalk, c. 39 no. children are projected belong to families where all children are 15 years of age or over, c. 44 no. children will belong to families where all children are under 15, and c. 17 no. children will belong to families with children both over and under 15 years of age (Table 4).

Table 2 – Anticipated Household Compositions				
	1-Bed/Studio	2-Bed	3-Bed	Total
Non-family	21.2	58.6	7.6	87.3
Family	10.8	74.4	21.4	106.7
Family - Without children	8.0	32.0	6.3	46.4
Family - With children	2.8	42.4	15.1	60.3
With children - 1 child	1.8	27.5	6.3	35.6
With children - 2 children	0.7	11.7	6.1	18.5
With children - 3 children	0.2	2.5	2.1	4.8
With children - 4+ children	0.1	0.7	0.6	1.4
Total households	32.0	133.0	29.0	194.0

Data: CSO Table F3085

Table 3 – Average Number of Children per Family			
	Families with children	Total Children	Average No. children
State	884,867	1,163,222	1.31
Dundalk	10,575	14,981	1.42
Ratio (Dundalk Avg./State Avg.)			1.08

Data: CSO Table F3076 & SAP2022T4T1TOWN22

Table 4 – Projected Number of Children				
	Households	Children	Adjustment Factor	Children (Adjusted)
1 child in family unit	35.6	35.6	x 1.08	38.4
2 children in family unit	18.5	36.9	x 1.08	39.8
3 children in family unit	4.8	14.5	x 1.08	15.6
4+ children in family unit <sup>1</sup>	1.4	6.0	x 1.08	6.5
Total	60.3	93	-	100.3

Table 5– Projected Children by Age of Children in Family				
	All children 15 and over	All children under 15	Children both under and over 15	Total
1 child in family unit	22.5	15.9	-	38.4
2 children in family unit	13.0	19.7	7.1	39.8
3 children in family unit	2.9	6.9	5.9	15.6
4+ children in family unit	0.8	1.9	3.8	6.5
Total	39.1	44.4	16.8	100.3

Data: CSO Table SAP2022T4T2TOWN22

<sup>1</sup> Using 4.2949 as the average number of children in family with 4 or more children. This was estimated using CSO Data Tables F3076 (average number of children per family) and SAP2022T4T2CTY (number of children per family).

	All children 15 and over	All children under 15	Children both under and over 15	Total
Age 0-4	-	13.4	3.8	17.2
Age 5-9	-	15.4	4.4	19.8
Age 10-14	-	15.6	4.5	20.1
Age 15-19	39.1	-	4.1	43.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>100.3</b>

Data: CSO Table SAP2022T1T1ATOWN22

	Children	Children in Childcare	% Children in Childcare
Children age 0-4	2,778	1,053	37.9%
Children age 5-14	6,437	1,373	21.3%

Data: CSO Table SAP2022T1T5TOWN22

	Total Children	% Children in Childcare	Childcare Spaces Required
Age 0-4	17.2	37.9%	6.5
Age 5-9	19.8	21.3%	4.2
Age 10-14	20.1	21.3%	4.3
All children under 14	57.1	-	15.0

#### 4.1 CHILDCARE DEMAND

Further analysis suggests that these children will fall into the following narrow age brackets: Ages 0-4 (17 no.), Ages 5-9 (19 no.), Ages 10-14 (20 no.), and Ages 15-19 (43 no.) (all figures approximate, see Table 6). Considering the current usage of childcare in Dundalk (Table 7), this gives the following final childcare demand: Age 0-4 (7 no.), Age 5-9 (4 no.), Age 10-14 (4 no.) (all figures approximate, see Table 8). This is a **final total childcare demand of approximately 15 no. places.**

#### 4.2 SCHOOLS DEMAND

Using further 2022 Census data for Dundalk, c. 39 no. children are projected belong to families where all children are 15 years of age or over, c. 44 no. children will belong to families where all children are under 15, and c. 17 no. children will belong to families with children both over and under 15 years of age (Table 5).

Further analysis suggests that these children will fall into the following narrow age brackets (Table 6): Ages 0-4 (17 no.), Ages 5-9 (20 no.), Ages 10-14 (20 no.), and Ages 15-19 (43 no.). This is a total of 83no. children who will be of school age.



## 5.0 CHILDCARE FACILITIES POLICY CONTEXT

### 5.1 SECTION 28 GUIDELINES

Section 2.4 of the *2001 Childcare Facilities- Guidelines for Planning Authorities* recommend that in new housing areas at least one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. According to the Guidelines, appropriate locations for childcare facilities are as follows-

- (i) In new communities/larger new housing estates.
- (ii) The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as industrial estates, business parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working.
- (iii) In the vicinity of schools.
- (iv) Neighbourhood and town centres.
- (v) Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

By reference to Circular Letter PL 3-2016 issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government dated 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2016, it is noted the Department is considering revising the 2001 Childcare Guidelines. However there has been no updated since the 2001 edition.

The content of Circular Letter PL 3-2016 is reflected in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2023) which states at section 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.”*  
(emphasis added).

***The capacity for the proposed childcare facility has been based on one-bedroom apartments not generating a requirement for any childcare. Based on the remaining 162no. apartments the childcare facility provides 44no. childcare places.***

## 5.2 LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

The objective contained within the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities outlined above has been carried through at county and local level by the Louth County Plan 2021-2027 with Policy SC 35;

*To support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate and suitable locations and seek their provision concurrent with new residential development, all having regard to the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) and Childcare Regulations (2006) and any subsequent guidelines, in consultation with the Louth County Childcare Committee. Such facilities will be directed to settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy.”*

According to the Plan;

*“For new residential schemes, one childcare facility will be required to cater for 20 places in developments of 75 houses. Having regard to the guidelines, the Planning Authority will take account of existing childcare provision when considering the delivery of new facilities as part of residential development in order to avoid over provision.” (para.13.12.1)*

***The capacity of the proposed childcare facility has been calculated on the basis of two and three bedroom apartments, excluding all one-bedroom apartments. This results in a total of 162no. apartments that could potentially generate a demand for childcare. Using the ratio recommended by the Childcare Facilities Guidelines, 44no. childcare places would be required.***

## 6.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING CHILDCARE SERVICES

An audit of existing childcare facilities was undertaken by Stephen Ward Planning Consultants. The Assessment was undertaken in September 2023. It involved a desk-top review of the following sources: -

- Pobal Maps
  - <https://data.pobal.ie/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=b7f658af7c154f34ab2bd257e38a2d86>
- Louth County Childcare Providers List
  - <https://www.louthchildcarecommittee.ie>
- Tusla Regulatory Inspection Reports
  - [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Louth\\_July.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Louth_July.pdf)
- EPA Maps
  - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>
- Louth County Council Eplan
  - <https://www.eplanning.ie/LouthCC/searchtypes>

A total of four providers are currently operating in the study area of 1km from the application site offering a range of services that includes full day care, sessional, part-time and after school. **Overall, the combined capacity of these facilities is 149no. childcare places.**

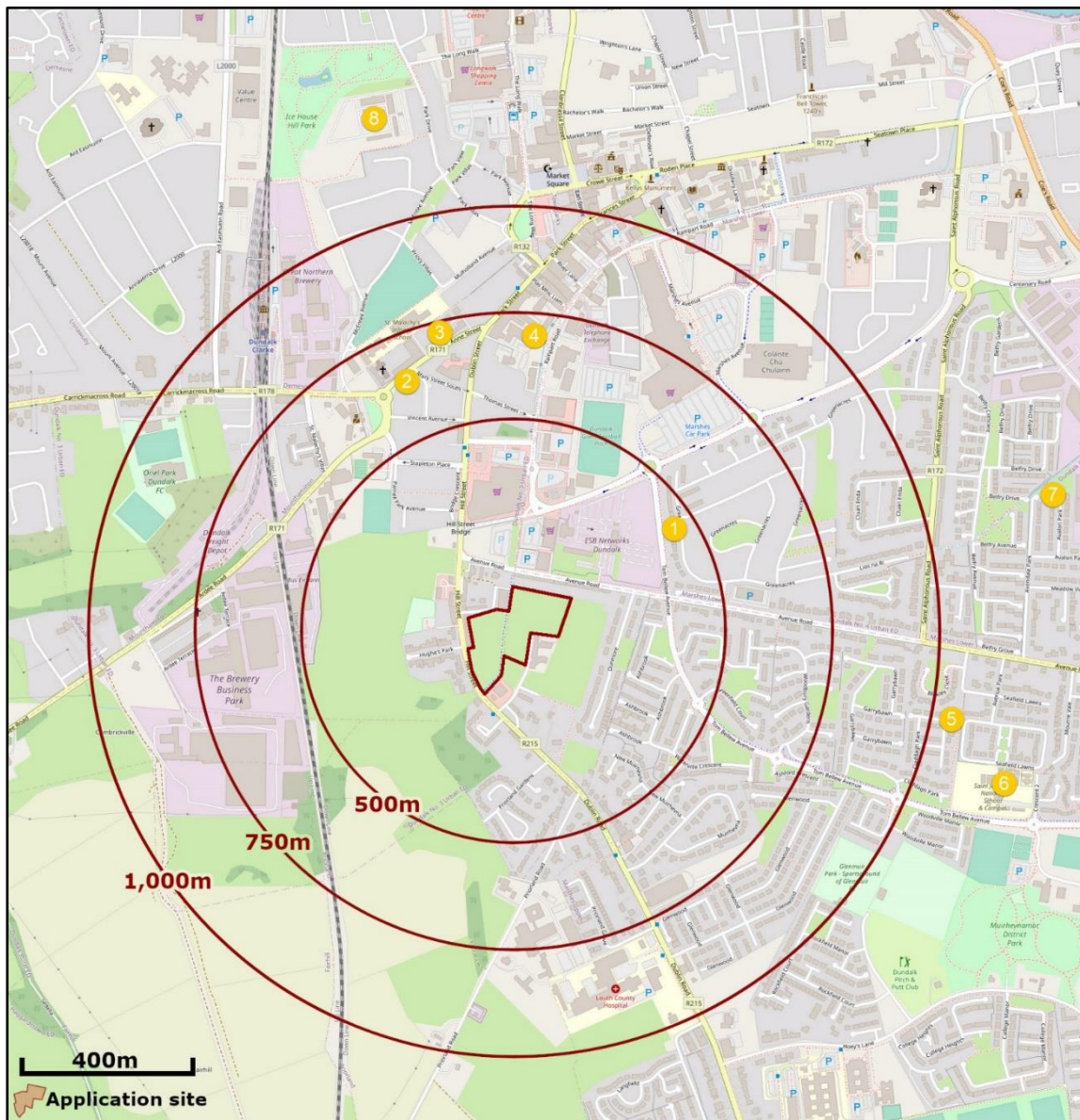


Figure 4: Childcare Providers

Table 9: Existing Childcare Providers						
Provider		Age Range (years old)	Capacity (no. of children)	Service Type		
				Full Day	Part Time	Sessional
1	Kidz Akademy	1-12	29	X	X	X
2	Stepping Stones	3-10	31	X	X	-
3	St. Malachys	3-6	40	-	X	-
4	Little Partners	1-6	49	X	-	-
5	Claddagh Treasures	2-6	51	X	X	-
6	Lios na nÓg Playgroup CLG	2-12	121	X	X	X
7	Little Buds Playschool	2.8-5	16	-	X	-
8	Under construction					

## 6.1 PLANNED FACILITIES

A planning search did not reveal any unbuilt purpose built childcare facilities in the study area. There is a childcare facility under construction within the Duiche Roden housing development, just over 1km north of the application site. This childcare facility was constructed as part of a new residential development of 133no. units.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION ON CHILDCARE DEMAND

The proposed childcare facility designed to facilitate 44no. full time childcare places meets with benchmark as recommended by the Childcare Facilities Guidelines and is more than sufficient to cater for the projected demand for the proposed development based on Census 2022 data and existing childcare use in Dundalk.

## 8.0 SCHOOLS POLICY CONTEXT

### 8.1 LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027 AND DRAFT DUNDALK LOCAL AREA PLAN

According to the Louth County Development Plan *“The Department of Education is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. Louth County Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Education under the 2012 nationally agreed Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the proactive identification and acquisition of school sites and in support of the Department’s schools building programme, into the future.”* (para.4.10)

The Department of Education has identified that the two Regional Growth Centres of Dundalk and Drogheda will require additional sites to be zoned over the Plan period to accommodate the following:

- Drogheda: One new primary school and one new post primary school; and
- Dundalk: Two new primary schools and one new post primary school.

The identification and reservation of appropriate school sites for Dundalk is outlined in the Draft Dundalk Local Area Plan 2024-2030 with potential sites identified in Table 5.4 as Mount Avenue and Haynestown. The Department of Education state in their submission on the draft LAP dated 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 that should the population projections outlined in the LAP be realised, there could be a potential future requirement for at least one and possibly two additional primary schools and an additional primary school to cater for the projected population. The submission did not suggest that there is any under provision currently in Dundalk. In addition, it is noted that the Department’s preference is to expand existing facilities within Dundalk should there be a requirement for additional school places resulting from planned population increase.



According to section 13.8.25 of the development plan;

*“Any application for a development in excess of 200 residential units shall include a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the development and the demand for existing schools in the area to cater for this demand.”*

***The proposed development of 194no dwellings falls just under the threshold outlined by the LCDP. Therefore this report has been prepared to identify potential demand for school places as a result of the development.***

## 8.1 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROJECTIONS

The Department of Education publication ‘Projections of full-time enrolment Primary and Second level 2023-2042’ outlines the projections for full-time enrolments in primary and secondary schools up to 2042. This is the first set of projects to be developed after the Covid-19 pandemic and since the start of the war in Ukraine. In May 2024 the Department report there were 18,266 Ukrainian pupils enrolled in Irish schools. Given the uncertainty around the impact of the situation in Ukraine on future migration, this report intended as interim and will be updated again at the end of 2024.

According to the Report, enrolment trends are not universal across all school planning areas or primary schools. It is acknowledged by the Report that new residential development or inward migration, for example, can create upward pressure on enrolments in certain areas, even as enrolments in other areas are declining.

## 5.1 PRIMARY SCHOOL

Section 4 of the Report projects that primary school enrolment will fall over the coming years reaching a low point by 2036 when it is projected there will be 80,000 less enrolments than in 2022. Enrolments will rising again slowly with 24,000 additional enrolments predicted over the seven years from 2036 to 2042.

The sharpest fall is predicted during the period 2024-2030, when the proposed development is to be constructed and occupied. In 2026 it is projected there will be some 6,540 fewer children entering junior infants than in September 2022.

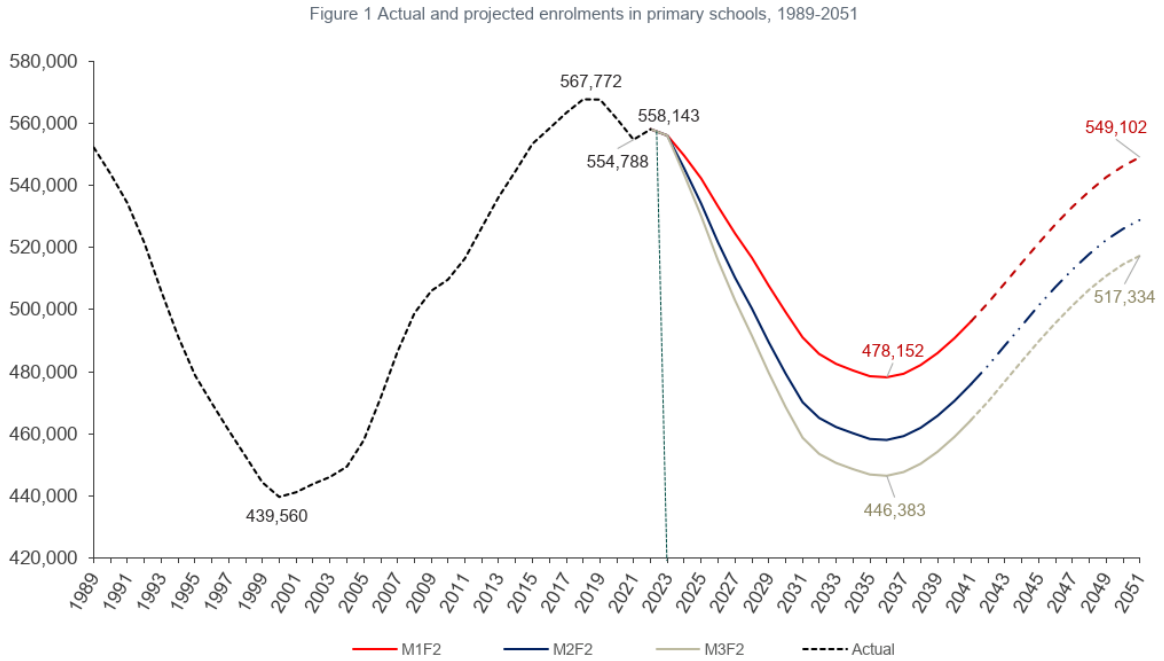


Figure 5: Actual and Projected enrolments in primary schools 1989-2051

## 5.2 POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL

Enrolments in post-primary school are project to continue rising over the short term peaking in 2025. Enrolments are projected to fall gradually towards 2033. As with the primary long term projection results illustrated above, the second level enrolment projection results also show a likely increase in future enrolments after the projection period.

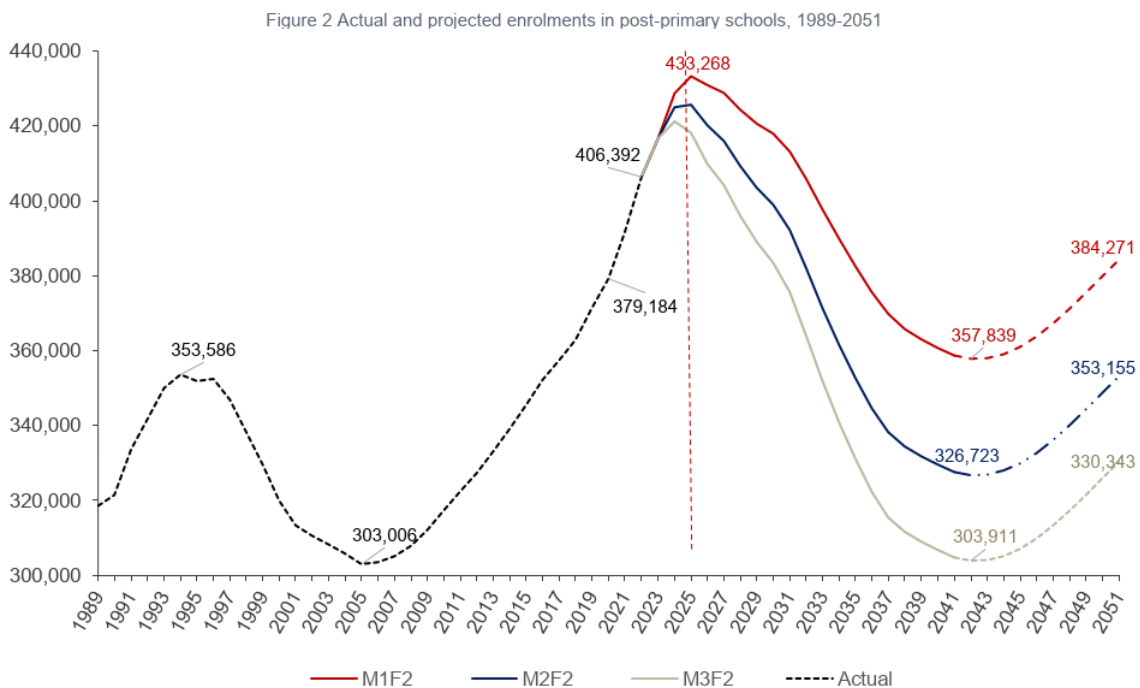


Figure 6: Actual and projected enrolments in post-primary schools 1989-2051

## 9.0 EXISTING SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

Information on school locations relative to the application site and existing school enrolments was based on the following sources

- Department of Education Online Records – <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/d73cb-building-works-for-the-construction-extension-and-refurbishment-of-schools/#major-projects>  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/find-a-school/>
- EPA Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

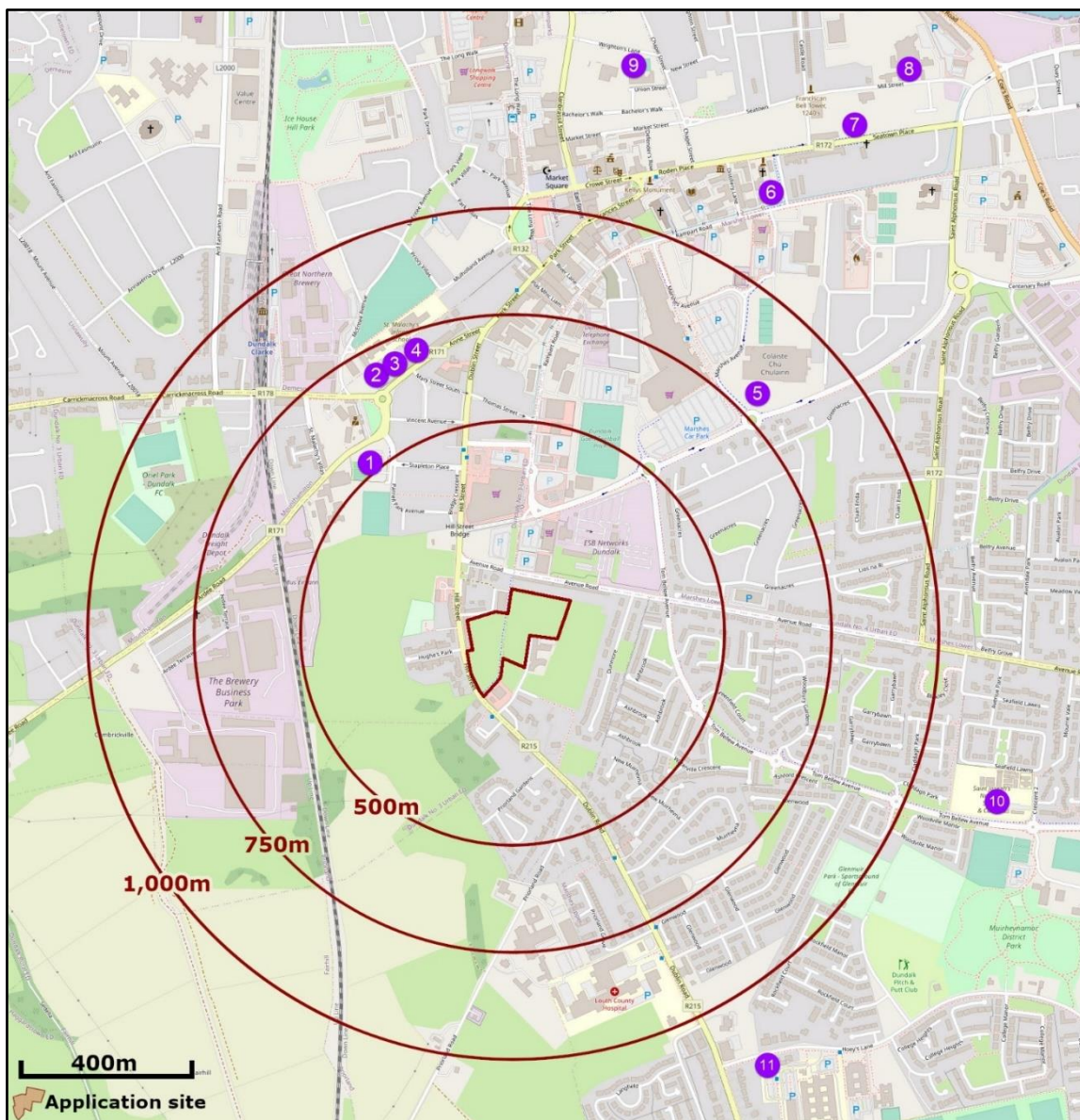


Figure 7: Primary and Post Primary School Locations

<b>Table 10: School Enrolment</b>					
<b>Map No.</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Roll Number</b>	<b>Enrolment Year</b>		
			2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022
2	St.Malachy's Girls	15259C	250	244	253
3	St.Malachy's Boys	18504E	236	228	221
4	St.Malachy's Infants	15260K	237	246	242
6	Dun Dealgan NS	14069P	91	98	94
8	Realt na Mara	20339E	468	450	450
9	CBS Primary	17195M	455	441	434
10	St.Joseph's N.S	19673J	575	565	578
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2,312</b>	<b>2,272</b>	<b>2,272</b>
<b>Map No.</b>	<b>Post Primary</b>	<b>Roll Number</b>	<b>Enrolment Year</b>		
1	Dundalk Grammar	63920A	574	579	574
7	St.Vincent's	63900R	905	919	931
5	Colaiste Chu Chulainn	76195U	857	814	702
11	O'Fiach College	71770D	289	271	257
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,583</b>	<b>2,464</b>

## 9.1 PLANNED PROJECTS

As part of this desk top study the following documents were reviewed-

- Current status of Large Scale projects being delivered under the School Building Programme (October 2024)
- Current status of Additional School Accommodation projects being delivered under the School Building Programme (November 2024) and projects completed 2011-2024

There are no Large Scale projects planned for Dundalk. Additional accommodation is being provided for in the following schools under the School Building Programme-

<b>Table 11: Planned School Projects</b>		
<b>School</b>	<b>Project Brief</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
St.Nicolas School, Dundalk	3 X 80M2 Classrooms (2 Prefab Replacement) & Wc For Assisted Users, 2 Sen & Ancillary & Prefab Removal	Complete 2023
De La Salle College, Dundalk	2x Special education classrooms: 2x Mainstream classrooms:en suite toilets & WC for assisted users: 1x Technical graphics room: 1x Prefab used for special education classroom	Design Stage
St Vincents Secondary School, Dundalk	3X Science Lab, 1X Prep Area,1 Xtech Room/Prep Area, 1 X Dcg Room, 1 X Multimedia Room 1X Set Room, 2X General Classroom, 5 Classroom Sen Base, Canteen, Gp Store & Servedy	Design Stage
St Josephs NS, Dundalk	3x Mainstream classrooms (2 prefab replacement):2x Special education classrooms:1x interim	Approved



## 10.0 CONCLUSION ON SCHOOL PLACES DEMAND

The proposed development is predicted to generate a school age population of 83no. Taking account of the existing enrolments and planned increased capacity together with the Departments projections, it is submitted that sufficient school places are available to cater for the projected demand from the proposed residential development.