



SCHOOLS, CHILDCARE & SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

In respect of
LANDS AT DRUMLARK, CAVAN TOWN,

Prepared by
GENESIS PLANNING CONSULTANTS

On behalf of
**DRUMLARK INVESTMENTS
LIMITED**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE NO
1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Overview	5
1.2 Methodology	5
1.3 Categories	5
1.4 Report structure	6
1.5 The proposed development	6
2 AREA CONTEXT	7
2.1 Study area	7
3 POLICY CONTEXT	8
3.1 Overview	8
3.2 Action Plan for Education 2018	8
3.3 Design Standards for New Apartments	8
3.4 Sustainable Residential Development	9
3.5 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System	9
3.6 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities	9-10
3.7 Cavan County Development Plan	10
3.8 Circular PL3/2016	10
3.9 Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning & Childcare Settings	10
4 APPROACH & METHODOLOGY	11
5 CHILDCARE & SCHOOL SUPPLY	12
5.1 Overview	12
5.2 Existing Provision	12-14
5.3 Demographics and school place projections	15
5.4 School demand generated by the proposed development	17-18
6 CHILDCARE DEMAND	19
6.1 Demographics and childcare facilities	19-20
6.2 Childcare demand generated by the proposed development	21
7 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT	23
8 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS	25

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This schools, childcare and social infrastructure assessment has been prepared by Genesis Planning Consultants on behalf of Drumlark Investments Limited. This report provides a detailed review of the strategic, statutory and policy context supporting the development proposal with an emphasis on existing education and childcare facilities located in the area.

1.1.2 The purpose of this report is in response to chapter 4 of the guidelines 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (2009) and relevant planning policies which require an assessment of existing schools capacity in tandem with such residential developments.

1.1.3 Also this report outlines the existing range of educational services on offer in the study area and offers insights into the future capacity of the existing education and also sets out how the proposal is consistent with the guidelines 'Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities.'

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 The capacity assessment was based on the following steps. Specifically a set of inventories of local education facilities was created. These facilities and services have been identified on a map relating to the area within a 6km radius from the site. In summary the report seeks to:

- establish the resident population's profile;
- provide an assessment of existing educational and childcare infrastructure within the study areas;
- comment on future requirements.

1.2.2 The assessment uses policy recommendations on school provision, data and statistics from the Central Statistics Office and Higher Education Authority (HEA) to establish a comprehensive picture of infrastructure in the area and how that aligns with the populations and demand side considerations.

1.3 Categories

1.3.1 Educational and childcare infrastructure must take account of a wide range of services and facilities that cater to various cohorts of society. The demand and supply side of service provision is therefore analysed across three tiers:

- Preschool / Creche
- Primary School
- Post Primary Schools

1.4 Report Structure

1.4.1 The report addresses the various relevant aspects of this school and childcare capacity assessment in the sections outlined below:

- Section 2 looks at the site location and placement within the wider context;
- Section 3 reviews the changing demographic profile in the area;
- Section 4 reviews the current planning policy requirements;
- Section 5 sets out the current position with respect to education infrastructure provision across the study area and establishes a needs profile with respect to various tiers of education service provision;
- Section 6 provides an overview of the analysis and determines school capacity for development in the area.
- Section 7 provides an overview of social infrastructure in the area.

1.5 The Proposed Development

1.5.1 The development will consist of a residential development of 145 residential units, a childcare facility together with all associated and ancillary infrastructure and open space provisions. The residential aspect of development will comprise in summary:

- A total of 145no. residential units which will consist of the following unit mix:
 - 15no. 1 bed units
 - 64no. 2 bed units
 - 55no. 3 bed units
 - 11no. 4 bed units



Figure 1 Site layout as proposed for reference

2 AREA CONTEXT

2.1 The Study Area

- 2.1.1 In terms of demographic context Cavan Town has a population of 11,741 as per census 2022 and is an economic hub for the region. There are a large number of multi-national companies across a range of sectors and in conjunction with the economic growth of the town there has been a steady increase in the local population.
- 2.1.2 As will be shown in section five of this report Cavan Town already has a wide variety of schools and childcare services which are readily accessible given the extensive local road networks.
- 2.1.3 For the purposes of this study in terms of childcare assessment both Cavan Town Rural and Cavan Town Urban Electoral Districts are examined, as the subject site is located in the Cavan Town Rural ED but as will be set out in section four the majority of local childcare facilities proximate to the subject site are located in both these ED's and therefore most relevant to gain an understanding of existing childcare capacity in the area.

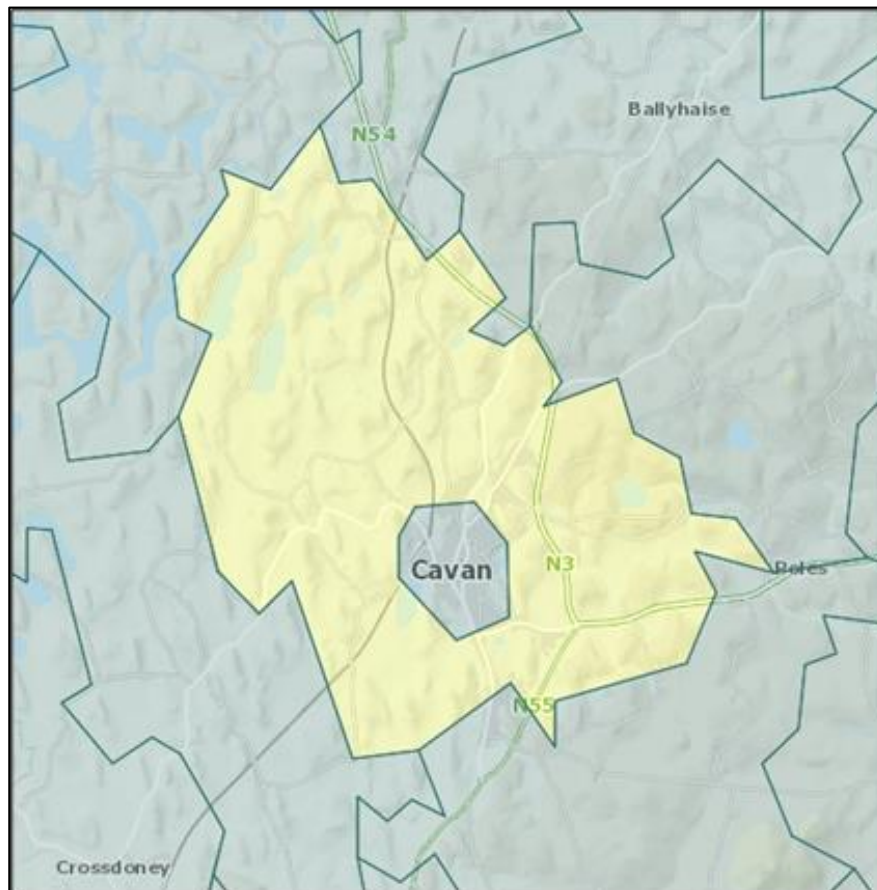


Figure 2 Electoral areas from CSO SAPS database used for the study

- 2.1.4 Also in respect of an analysis of school capacity in the area the methodology used was based on the Department of Education and Skills (DES) forecasts for the area, in that a wholistic approach was adopted to identify all available schools in the Cavan Town area, and then reliance placed on the DES forecasts to ensure there is adequate capacity in the area from existing schools to cater for the proposal.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 For the purpose of this report a review has been carried out of national-level planning policy relating to childcare and schools, along with the relevant Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan. The key points relating to this study as derived from each policy is outlined below.

3.2 Department of Education and Skills: Action Plan for Education 2018

3.2.1 Goal 4 of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) 2018 'Action Plan for Education' seeks to *'build stronger bridges between education and the wider community'*. A fundamental part of this goal is the provision of increased choices in school type, affording parents of children with greater options. Action 66 aims to *'make progress towards increasing the diversity of school type, in order to offer parents more choice'*. As an indicator of whether this action has been achieved a target of 400 multi-non-denominational schools by 2030 is set.

3.2.2 Goal 5 seeks to 'improve national planning and support services' and one of the methods through which this can be achieved is via the delivery of appropriate infrastructure for learning environments. Action 105: *'Support infrastructural development within the school's sector, through the rollout of the 2016-2021 Construction Programme'*. Indicators for this action will require the meeting of demographic demand through the provision of additional permanent primary and post-primary school places. This sees targets of 9,000 additional primary school places and a further 8,000 additional permanent post-primary school places. Furthermore, new/replacement primary and post-primary schools will be built.

3.3 Design Standards for New Apartments (DSNA) – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2020-2023)

3.3.1 Section 4.7 of the Guidelines references the provision of childcare facilities in new apartment developments. It states the following:

'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.'

3.3.2 We note this provides an element of flexibility in the provision of childcare facilities as it requires that the inclusion of such a facility is justified in terms of the sufficient demographic or/and geographical context. It also stipulates that one-bedroom apartments do not need to be included in any count that estimates the number of children in a development.

3.4 Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009)

3.4.1 Under the chapter entitled ‘planning for sustainable neighbourhoods’ the provision of certain key community facilities is discussed, with both schools and childcare forming essential elements. As new residential developments can lead to a demand for school places, it is vital that the *‘timely provision of new school buildings’* is planned for.

3.4.2 Furthermore it is stated that:

‘no substantial residential development should proceed without an assessment of existing school capacity or the provision of new school facilities in tandem with the development.’

3.4.3 Regarding childcare facilities, the guidelines note that when assessing development applications, particularly for larger developments, it is recommended that there is a *‘provision of one childcare facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units’*. It continues to state that the provision of such should have regard to the *‘existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas’*.

3.5 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice (2008)

3.5.1 The Code of Practice stipulates the methodology for forecasting future education demand. Identification of future primary school demands should be based upon:

- The anticipated increase in overall population for the city/county plan area over the next nine years (as set out in relevant development or local area plans);
- The current school-going population based on school returns;
- The increase in school going population, assuming that an average of 12% of the population are expected to present for primary educations; and
- The number of classrooms required in total derived from the above.

3.6 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

3.6.1 The guidelines instruct Local Authorities to set out objectives in Development Plans that relate to the provision of childcare facilities. A focus should be placed on promoting childcare facilities, as part of the development of sustainable communities, in locations such as: residential areas; places of employment; educational establishments; city, town, neighbourhood and district centres; and locations convenient to public transport nodes.

3.6.2 Additionally, the guidelines state the following in relation to new housing developments:

‘Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless 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. For new housing areas, an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas. Authorities could consider requiring the provision of larger units catering for up to 30/40 children in areas of major residential development on the basis that such a large facility might be able to offer a variety of services – sessional/drop in/after-school, etc.’

3.6.3 Section 3.3.1 elaborates further by stating that *‘a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate’* for

new residential developments. However it clarifies that this *'will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual site'*.

3.7 Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028

3.7.1 The current Cavan County Development Plan covers the period between 2022 and 2028. It stipulates several requirements for development to ensure balanced and sustainable communities. Policies of particular relevance are noted below.

- *CCF 01: Provide childcare facilities in appropriate locations as set out in accordance with the provision of the DoEHLG Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 and seek to apply Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings (2019) from the National Disability Authority and Department Children and Youth Affairs and Early Childhood Ireland.*
- *CCF 02: Provide at least one childcare facility to cater for 20 places in developments of 75 houses, including local authority and social housing schemes in accordance with DoEHLG Guidelines.*
- *CCF 03: Development of childcare facilities at the following locations will normally be encouraged:*
 - *Areas of concentrated employment and business parks*
 - *Neighbourhood centres*
 - *Schools or major educational facilities*
 - *Within existing town, villages and rural nodes*
 - *Within new and existing residential developments*
 - *Large retail developments*
 - *Adjacent to public transport nodes*

3.8 Circular PL3/2016

3.8.1 In March 2016 the Government issued a circular in relation to childcare facilities under the early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. In accordance with the stated aspiration to increase access to childcare nationally the circular requests that local planning authorities:

- Expedite all pre-planning application consultation requests from childcare facility providers in relation to proposals to extend opening hours, to increase capacity or to provide new facilities.
- Expedite, insofar as is possible, consideration of all planning applications or Section 5 declaration submissions in respect of childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of required capacity as appropriate.

3.9 Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Childcare Settings (2019)

3.9.1 On 10th June 2019, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone, launched the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings. These guidelines are an important step in making all Early Learning and Care services accessible to all children. This publication offers guidance on the refurbishment, renovation and building of centres for Early Learning and Care in Ireland. The guidelines apply to both new-build and retrofit projects and provide a flexible Universal Design framework to ensure that settings are accessible, understandable and easy to use for all children, staff, families and visitors.

3.9.2 In summary The Universal Design ELC setting comprises four quality features:

- Site Location, Approach, Entry and Site Layout
- Entering and Moving about the ELC setting
- Key Internal and External Spaces
- Elements and Systems

4 APPROACH

- 4.1 Having regard to the planning policy outlined in the previous section it is evident that an assessment of the existing school and childcare facilities in the study area is required. A baseline is required which would then allow future demand estimations to be made based on demographic change and the associated impact of the proposed development
- 4.2 Nonetheless for completeness and to demonstrate how the proposal is adequately catered for in terms of schools and childcare provision our approach identifies existing school and childcare facilities in the study area.
- 4.2 Therefore, a methodology for the assessment of school and childcare facilities has been developed in accordance with the directions provided in the aforementioned planning policies, and involves the following steps:
- Determining the extent and provision of existing school and childcare facilities within the wider study area;
 - Undertaking a study of the current and potential future demographic make-up of the study area's population;
 - Estimating the level of demand for childcare facilities that may arise from the development proposal;
 - Reliance placed on the Department of Education and Skills forecasts for the area which identify the Cavan Town area as having adequate primary and post primary school places available going forward.
- 4.3 The following sections will utilise this methodology as a structural framework with the currently existing supply of facilities first established, followed by a demographic analysis. The demographic analysis will provide valuable insight into the characteristics of the study area's population, before finally determining the potential demand created by the proposed development and reaching conclusions on how the proposal will be accommodated with existing schools and childcare provision in the area.

5 CHILDCARE & SCHOOL SUPPLY

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 In order to establish a baseline of the existing capacity in the study area it was necessary to first identify each of the existing school and childcare facilities. This was undertaken through a comprehensive desktop research exercise which used publicly available information and sources. For the purposes of this study Pobla is considered to provide the most appropriate source of information on childcare facilities as it works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion and development.

5.2 Existing Provision

5.2.1 While the various policies referenced make certain provisions for determining the requirements for childcare facilities in neighbourhoods, there is no reference to the most appropriate distances families should travel, or the quantum of facilities that are appropriate in a given area. Therefore, for the purpose of this study it was deemed appropriate identify all facilities within a 6km radius and then specifically to audit all facilities within a 3km catchment of the subject site.

Childcare Facilities

5.2.2 Figure 3 below provides the locations of all 14 childcare facilities, registered with Pobla, within both the 6km and 3km catchment areas respectively. For reference the purple and green symbols correspond to each childcare facility.

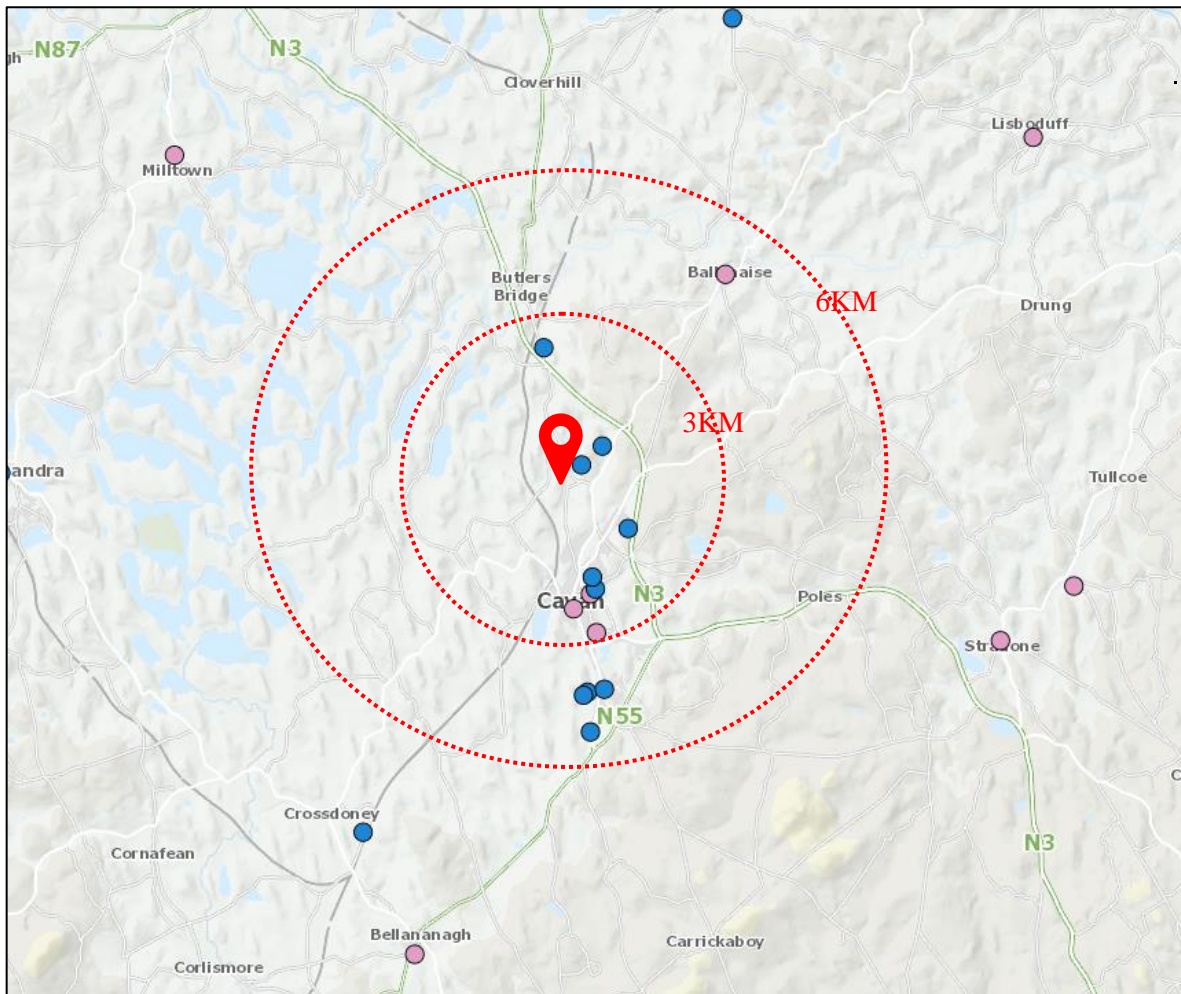


Figure 3 Existing childcare facilities (source: pobal.ie)

Primary Schools

- 5.2.3 The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provide details on enrolment figures for all primary schools on an annual basis. DES have also created their own units of analysis, 'School Planning Areas' (SPA), through which they compile data on schools and decision-making is based off.
- 5.2.4 On referencing the 6km buffer zone DES records show a total 12no. existing primary schools in the Cavan Town area.
- 5.2.5 Of note no additional schools are to be delivered under the school building programme, and this indicates the DES is satisfied there is adequate capacity in the Cavan Town area going forward in terms of primary school provision.

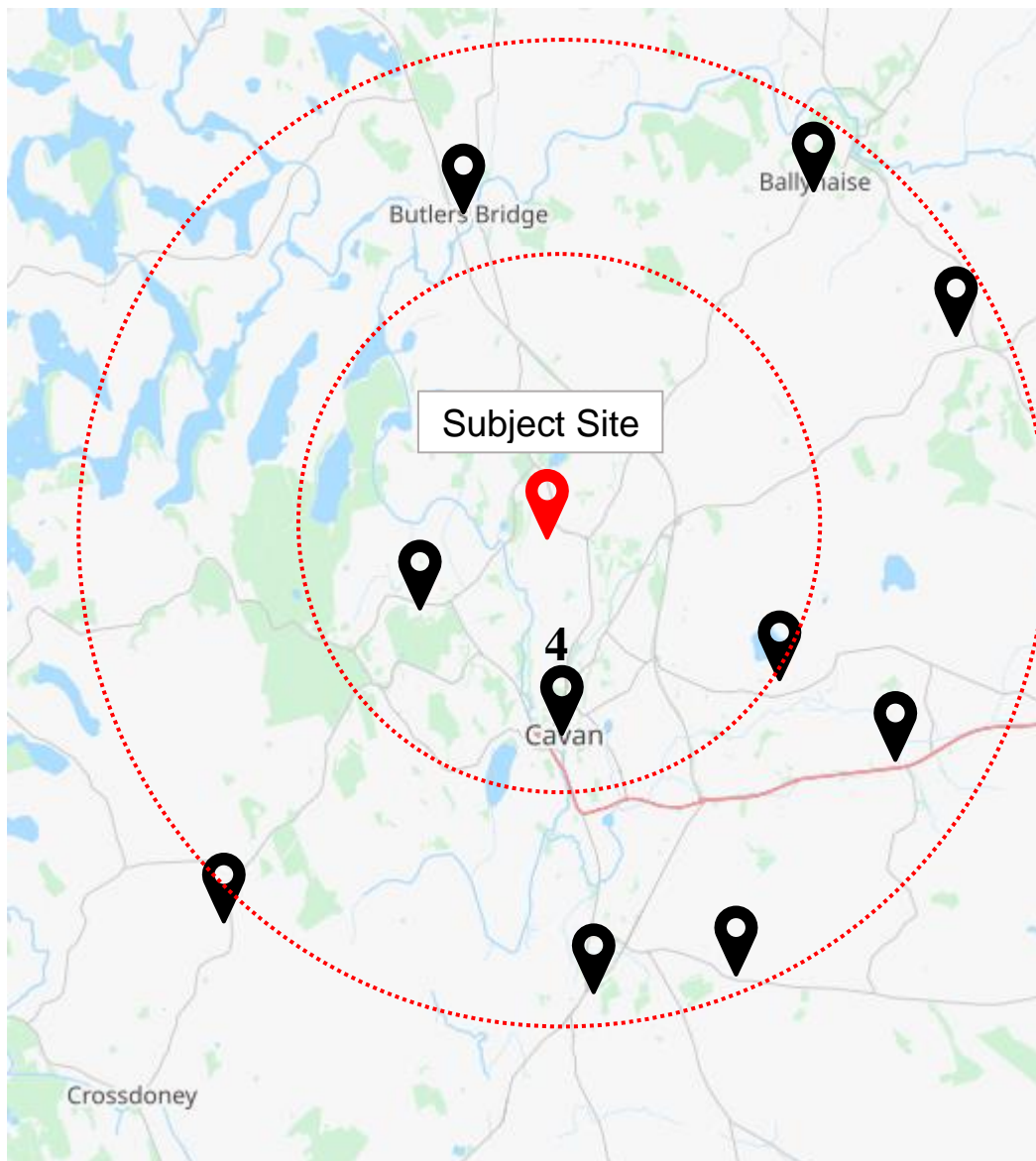


Figure 4 Existing primary schools in the Cavan Town area (source www.education.ie)

Post-primary Schools

5.2.6 In terms of post-primary schools, or secondary schools, in the study area DES records a total of 6no. facilities in the wider area within 15km buffer. These schools are a mix of national and grammar schools and cater for all genders. Again of note no additional schools are to be delivered under the school building programme, and this indicates the DES is satisfied there is adequate capacity in the Cavan Town area going forward in terms of secondary school provision and relevant population forecasts for the area.

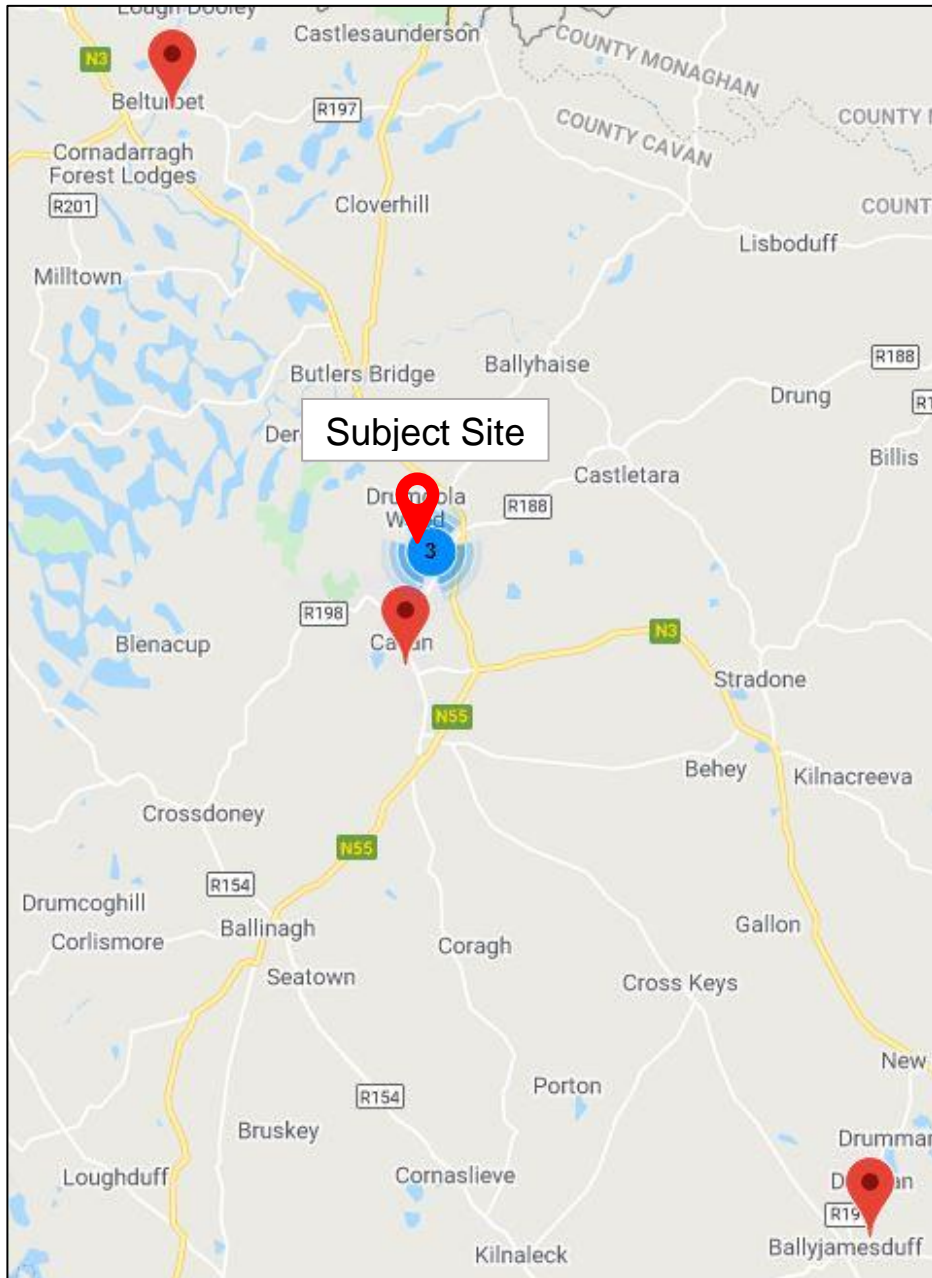


Figure 5 Existing secondary schools in the Cavan Town area (source www.education.ie)

Third Level Education Provision

5.2.8 The Cavan Town Institute of Technology is located approximately 1.5 km south of the site and provides a broad range of third level courses.

5.3 Demographics and school place projections

5.3.1 Of relevance we also highlight the Department of Education & Skill projections under the publication ‘Regional Projections of full-time enrolments Primary and Second Level, 2021–2036’, which provides several scenarios for the estimated future enrolment figures based on the study of present trends.

5.3.2 In summary the Department’s report builds on the state projections of enrolments published in November 2021. The report is therefore considered to contain the most accurate and up-to-date projections for future primary and post-primary school demand.

5.3.3 In relation to specifics the report details that in 2021/2022 there were 47,700 enrolments in primary schools in the Border Region and there is a projected decrease by 2036/2037 to 39,219; which represents a decrease of -17.77%.

Year	NUTS3 Regions								Total	
	Dublin	Mid-East	Midlands	Mid-West	South-East	South-West	Border	West		
2020/21	143,672	92,529	37,780	55,229	52,048	79,733	47,700	52,720	561,411	<i>actual enrolments</i>
2021/22	144,384	90,262	37,794	53,818	49,489	78,460	46,834	51,451	552,491	
2022/23	142,936	88,291	37,154	52,710	48,389	76,620	45,620	50,473	542,192	
2023/24	141,329	86,051	36,479	51,567	47,051	74,520	44,368	49,318	530,683	
2024/25	139,424	84,204	35,897	50,350	45,779	72,521	43,207	48,142	519,526	
2025/26	136,942	82,150	35,192	49,076	44,362	70,117	41,847	46,641	506,325	
2026/27	133,803	80,126	34,400	47,768	42,823	67,754	40,477	45,028	492,180	
2027/28	130,605	78,279	33,619	46,407	41,355	65,392	39,315	43,576	478,548	
2028/29	127,654	77,089	33,218	45,218	40,237	63,354	38,310	42,294	467,373	
2029/30	124,294	76,376	32,991	44,275	39,416	61,739	37,703	41,177	457,970	
2030/31	121,028	76,113	32,913	43,533	38,806	60,403	37,312	40,237	450,345	
2031/32	117,847	76,233	32,960	42,981	38,372	59,303	37,079	39,449	444,224	
2032/33	115,146	76,912	33,215	42,714	38,198	58,600	37,092	38,904	440,781	
2033/34	113,160	78,216	33,703	42,779	38,314	58,346	37,387	38,647	440,551	
2034/35	111,554	79,931	34,339	43,054	38,626	58,394	37,877	38,593	442,368	
2035/36	110,223	81,916	35,066	43,468	39,062	58,636	38,497	38,677	445,545	
2036/37	109,180	84,107	35,864	44,000	39,591	59,046	39,219	38,875	449,881	

Figure 6 Extract of Table 4 of the DES Forecast publication ‘Regional projections of full time enrolments’

5.3.4 Using three migration assumptions and two fertility assumptions the DES created six scenarios to model projected enrolments over that period. Of note the DES state that 2021 will prove to be the year when 'peak' primary school enrolments occur, totalling 561,411 pupils and gradually reducing after this, as per the figures below.

Figure A.1 Projected enrolment at primary level, 2021 – 2040

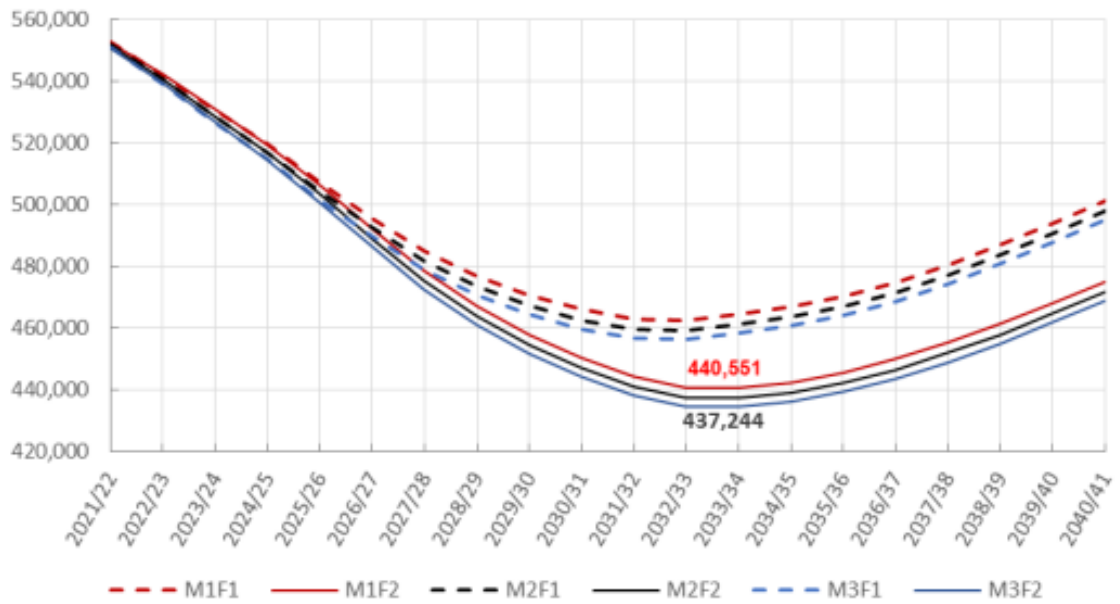


Figure 7 Projected primary school enrolment to 2036 (Source: DES)

5.3.5 Also it is noted post-primary school peak enrolments will not be reached until 2024, and it is anticipated that post-primary school enrolments will decrease annually thereafter under the M1F2 and M2F2 scenarios until 2042.

Figure A.2 Projected enrolment at post-primary level, 2021 – 2040

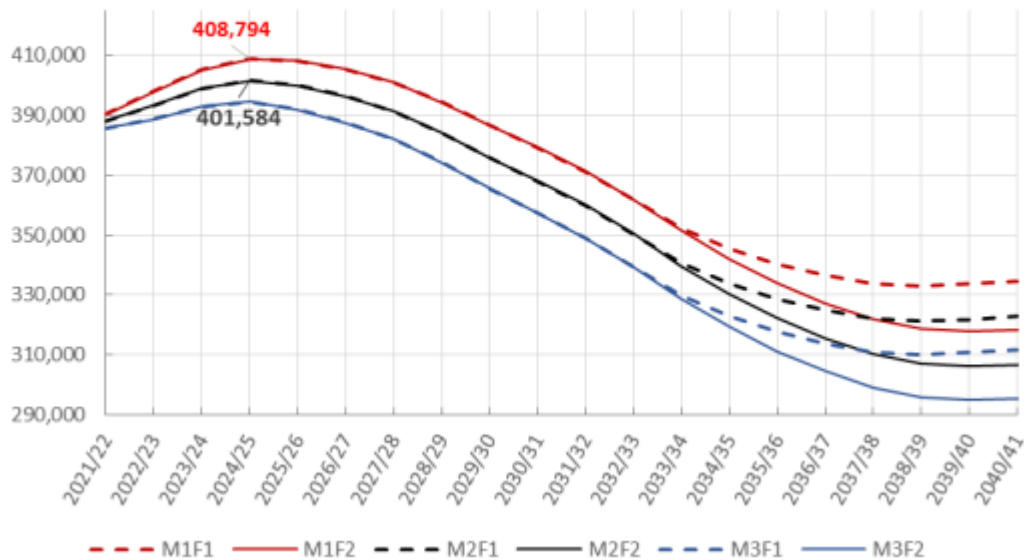


Figure 8 Projected secondary school enrolment to 2041 (Source: DES)

5.3.6 In summary on referencing the above projections and with enrolments figures peaking in 2021 for primary school children, and 2024 for secondary school pupils, the requirement for additional school facilities will be reduced in the near future.

5.3.7 We submit this is evident therefore in the analysis by DES of existing schools in the Cavan area in that no additional schools are to be delivered under the school building programme, and this indicates the DES is satisfied there is adequate capacity in the Cavan Town area going forward to cater for the proposed development in terms of both primary and post primary school provision.

5.4 School demand generated by the proposed development

5.4.1 The proposed development will comprise 145no. units of which there will be 15no. 1 bed apartment units, 64no. 2 bed units, 55no. 3 bed units and 11no. 4 bed units.

5.4.2 The average household size recorded by the 2022 census was 2.74no. persons per unit, which generates a total indicative population of 398 no. persons when applied to the entire development. Therefore for those units that can accommodate families (130 units) an indicative total population of 356 no. persons is estimated.

5.4.3 Also the average number of children per family recorded in the state in the census was 1.38 children. Applying this 1.38 children per family to the proposal generates an indicated population of 180 children (between the ages of 0-18 years) when applied to the number of units that can accommodate families within the proposed development.

5.4.4 In terms of school-going age children (5-18 years) the CSO stats detail circa 70% of children

fall into this bracket, which equates to an estimated 126 no. school age children when the proposal is fully occupied. This figure is broadly split between primary and secondary schoolchildren. Also it is to be noted that this demand would not be generated immediately from the development, as the development is to be delivered in phases and thereafter children emanating from the development would be of various ages and not all born or requiring school care at the same time.

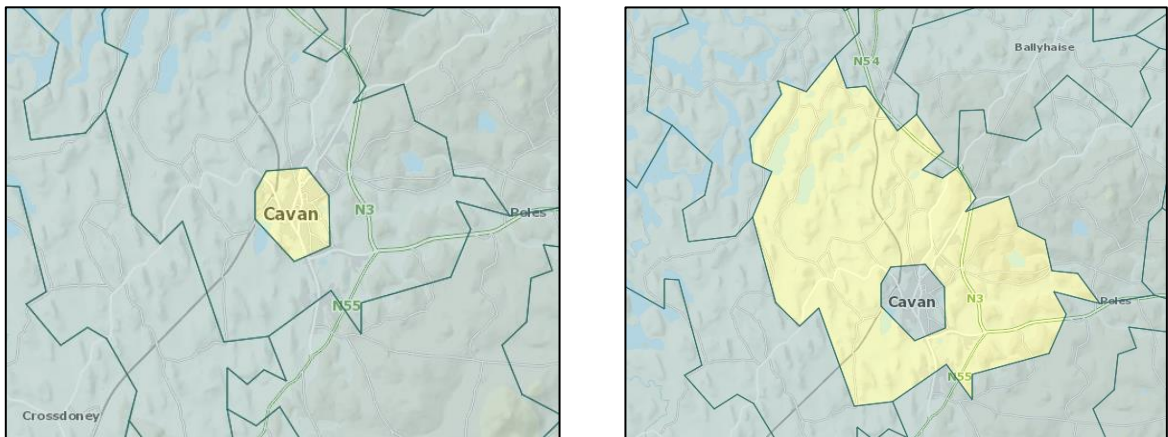
5.4 **Summary**

- 5.4.1 With regard to the information set out in this section above, it is considered that the demand for primary and post primary school places generated by the proposed development (estimated 126no. places when fully complete) will likely be absorbed by the surrounding schools in the area.
- 5.4.2 Having examined the current remaining capacity in both primary and post primary to cater for an estimated 126no. children should not cause additional demand that cannot be catered for. Furthermore given the time it will take to secure permission, construct and occupy the proposed development this would allow the DoE and the Planning Authority to manage any significant additional demand for school places in the Cavan Town area through the development planning process.

6 CHILDCARE DEMAND

6.1 Demographics and childcare facilities

- 6.1.1 For the purposes of this study Cavan Town rural Electoral District and Cavan Town Urban Electoral District are both examined, as the subject site is located in the Cavan Town Urban ED but as set out previously the majority of local childcare facilities proximate to the subject site are located in these ED's and therefore most relevant to gain an understanding of existing childcare capacity in the area.
- 6.1.2 Specifically, this study will use available statistics on these two ED's based on census 2022 data to estimate demand for childcare facilities in the area against existing childcare provision in these areas.



Figures 5 & 6 Electoral areas from CSO SAPS database for Cavan Urban and Rural ED

- 6.1.3 In terms of demographics, the Cavan Town Rural ED has a population of 8714 of which 685 are aged between 0-4 (preschool age).
- 6.1.4 The most recent Quarterly National Household Survey¹ (2023 Q3 update) identifies that the percentage of pre-school children that are minded by a parent is 28% with 33% of pre-school children availing of non-parental childcare that includes services such as crèches/Montessori/playgroup or afterschool facilities. On analysis it is found this equates to 227 children attending childcare facilities in the Cavan Town Rural ED.
- 6.1.5 According to our research² and available data, there are a total of 14 registered childcare facilities in the Cavan Town Urban ED offering various services. On the basis of available data for 12 of these facilities and based on the most recent available reports by Tusla we note these facilities can cater for circa 751 child places.
- 6.1.6 Also as can be noted from the above map the ED of Cavan Town Rural extends to lands surrounding Cavan Town Centre but has also been included to demonstrate accessibility to childcare in the surrounding area. This selection of childcare facilities takes account of journey to work patterns and what is considered to be a realistic option for childcare for future residents of the proposed development at Drumlark.
- 6.1.7 Specifically Cavan Urban ED has a total population of 3,868 of which 234 persons are aged between 0-4 years. Based on the findings of the Quarterly National Household Survey 33% of these children will potentially use a formal crèches/Montessori/playgroup or afterschool facility.

¹ Census 2022 Q3 update

² www.pobal.ie

6.1.8 On referencing the map database published by Pobal there are a total of nine registered childcare facilities in this ED area and on referencing the most recent available reports by Tusla and from direct contact with other providers the data indicates a total capacity of 751 childcare places in the Cavan Town Rural ED.

6.1.9 Furthermore at a more local level childcare facilities within 3km of the site fall within parts of both the Cavan Town ED and Cavan Town Rural ED. As part of our research available details of facilities within this 3km radius were provided by Cavan County Childcare Committee as below.

Childcare facility	Max capacity	Type of childcare provided		
		Full time	Part-time	Sessional
Playaways Creche	53	x	x	x
Small Steps Childcare	59	x	x	x
StickyFingers Montessori	41	x	x	x
The Childrens House	72	x	x	x
Kavan Kids Kreche	N/A	x	x	x
ABC Childcare	69	x	x	x
Tullacmongan	43			x
Kings and Queens	45	x	x	x
Little Friends Montessori	132			x
Mini Me's	29	x		
Stepping Stones	74		x	
Krafty Kidz St Clares	67	x		x
Lakeview Afterschool	N/A			
Playaway Creche	67	x	x	x
Total capacity	751			

Table 1 Childcare facilities within 3km of the subject site

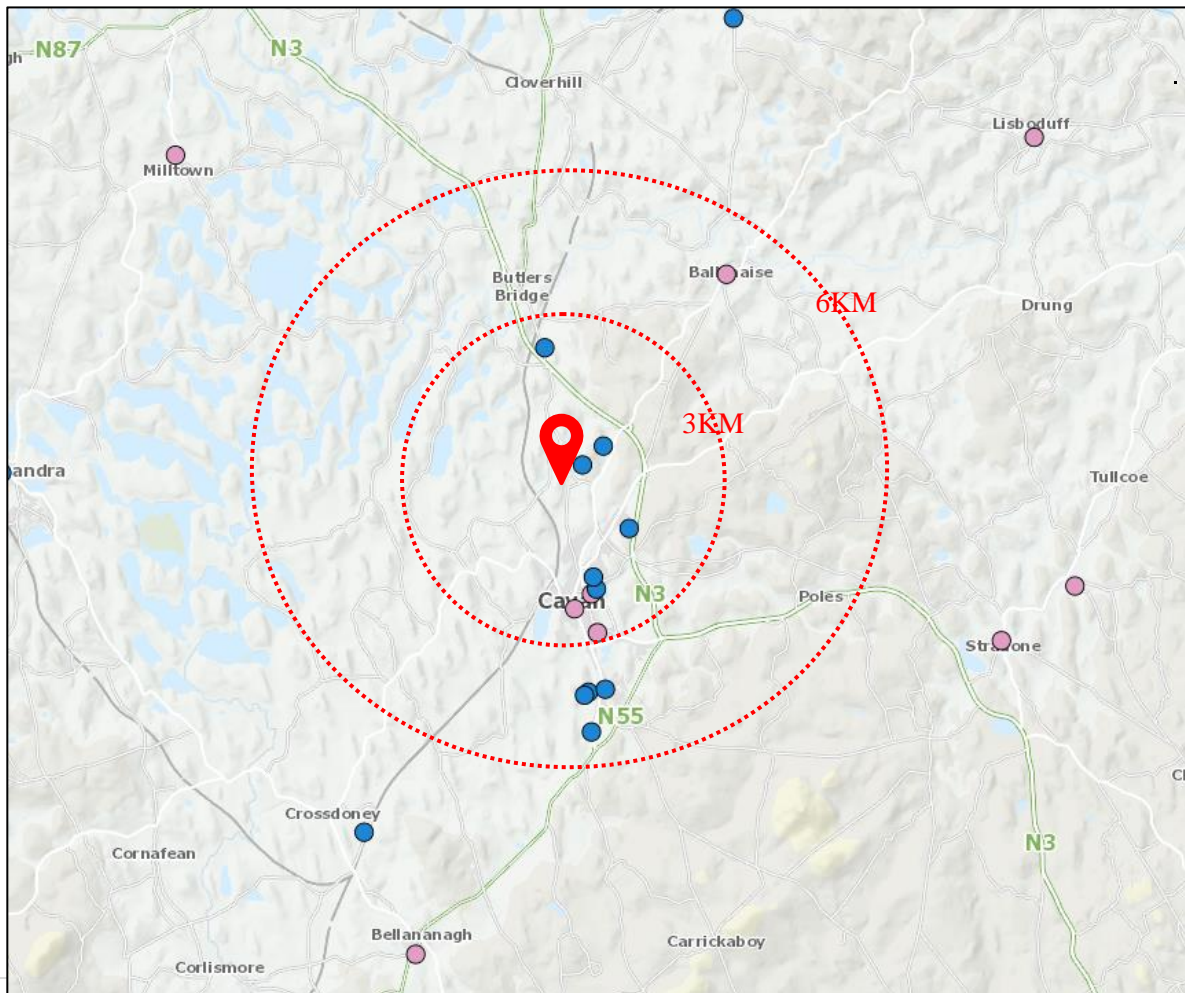


Figure 7 Existing childcare facilities (source: pobal.ie)

6.1.10 Specifically, on review of the above it is found the existing childcare facilities within a 3km radius of the site have capacity for a total of 751 child places, against what the demographics and census data for the area indicate as a total demand of 242 places for this radius (ie. The relevant demographic data for both Cavan Town Urban and Cavan Town Rural ED's as per census data and childcare being availed of by 33% of survey respondents).

6.1.11 On this basis it is submitted that there is sufficient capacity in the area for existing childcare demand based on the take-up rates of childcare places as recorded in the quarterly household survey.

6.2 Childcare demand generated by the proposed development

6.2.1 The proposed development will consist of 145 residential units, of which there are 15no. 1 bedroom units and the remainder being a mixture between 2-4 bedroom units.

6.2.2 Having regard to the dwelling mix proposed the majority of the development is likely to accommodate families and as a result is likely to generate additional childcare demand.

6.2.3 Of relevance we highlight that the Apartment Guidelines state that:

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

6.2.4 According to the 2022 census single person households now account for 23% of all households. Applying this ratio to the proposed development, it is therefore assumed that of the 145 residential units proposed 111 units will be occupied by 2 or more persons.

6.2.5 Based on the assumption that 111 no. residential units will be occupied by families and assuming the average family contains 1.34 children (census 2022) (i.e. persons aged between 18 and under) of which 30 per cent are children between 0-4 years old, then the proposed development will potentially yield a potential population of 149 children of which approximately 45no. (30%) would be of pre-school going age i.e. aged between 0-4.

6.2.6 On applying the most recent Quarterly National Household Survey module on childcare (31st August 2023 update) we note it identifies:

- There were 1,012,287 children aged under 15 in the State in April 2022. This was an increase of 5,735 since 2016. Of these, almost one in three (331,783) were in some form of childcare. Just over four in 10 were in a crèche or similar facility (42%), while more than one in four were cared for by an unpaid relative or family member (28%).
- Of those in childcare, almost two-thirds attended on a part-time basis (up to 20 hours per week) while almost one in six attended for 31 hours or more each week.
- A crèche or similar facility was the most common childcare type among pre-school aged children (aged 0-4 years), at 56%. Almost one in three of those in childcare in this age group were there for 11-20 hours a week. Three quarters of these were either in a crèche (60%) or were cared for by an unpaid relative (15%).
- Children of secondary school age (13-14) were most likely to be taken care of by an unpaid relative (64%). Fewer than half of those in this age group attending childcare (46%) did so for 1-10 hours.

- 6.2.7 Therefore presuming that only 33% of pre-school children (45no.) will use a formal childcare service such as a crèche/Montessori/playgroup/after-school facility this would result in a demand of just 15no. childcare places.
- 6.2.8 However this figure of just 15no. childcare places this does not take into consideration the use of a crèche/montessori/playgroup/after-school facility by primary school children.
- 6.2.9 Also the Childcare Facilities Guidelines outline the preferred location for childcare facilities and the level of provision recommended is at a rate of 20 places per 75 dwellings. Appendix 2 of the Guidelines states that:
- 'planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas and other areas of residential development unless there are significant reasons to the contrary. For housing, a benchmark provision of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings is recommended'*. The Guidelines elaborate on the level of provision that may be required stating,
- 'the threshold for provision should be established having had regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.'*
- 6.2.10 Further section 3.3 of the Guidelines outlines specific locations where childcare facilities would be preferable. The proximity to public transport is also stated as a deciding factor to encourage sustainable modes of transport. We further note both new residential areas and employment areas are listed as suitable locations for childcare facilities.
- 6.2.11 Also, having regard to the extension of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme in 2016, which provides free childcare from age three until children go to primary school, and the roll out of the National Childcare Scheme from October 2019, the Government encourages an increase in capacity to facilitate the expansion that will be required to cater for the predicted demand for this service.
- 6.2.12 It is therefore submitted that the location of a childcare facility within the proposed development will be adequately sized if it provides for a total of 15no. places. This is calculated on the following summary basis.

Unit mix proposed

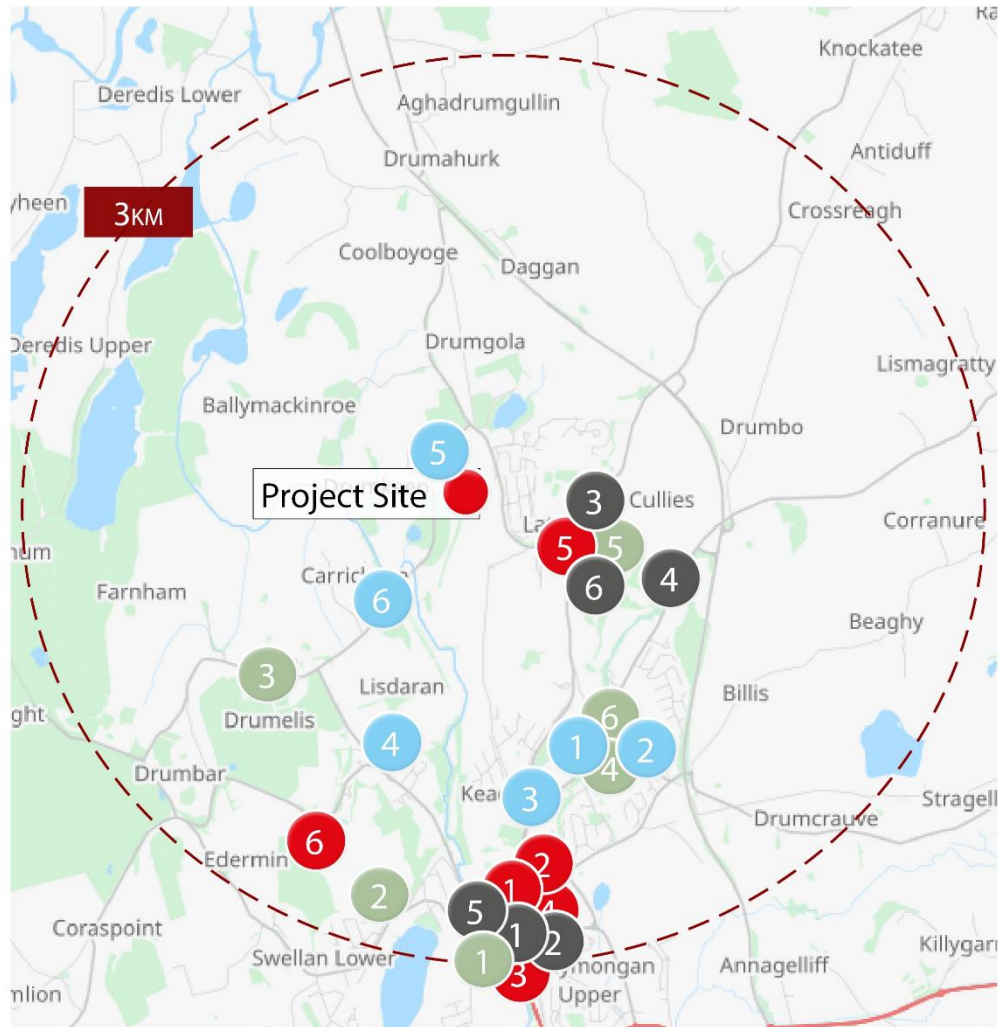
- 1 bed units (15no.) should be discounted from the calculation;
-2 bed units (64no.) should be provided for at a rate of 50% which equates to 32;
-3bed units (55no.) should be provided for at a rate of 50% which equates to 28;
-4bed units (11no.) should be provided for at a rate of 50% which equates to 6no.
- 6.2.13 In summary 66 units require provision of childcare. On the basis that 20 child places are required per 75no. dwellings then it considered an appropriate design response for a total of 20no. child places to be provided within the creche, as a minimum.
- 6.2.14 In terms of the design response based on the average requirement of 3sq.m. per child the proposed creche can readily accommodate 47no. childcare spaces, which is considered adequate to meet the requirement generated by the proposed development, along with additional headroom if required.

7 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Policy SI 01 of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out a requirement for proposals to demonstrate how residential developments are catered for in terms of social and community infrastructure:

'SI 01 Work collaboratively with relevant service providers and stakeholders to facilitate the provision of community services and social infrastructure, where appropriate, in order to meet the needs of new and existing communities.'

- 7.2 It is generally recognised that proposals for large-scale residential development should be accompanied by proposals for associated community infrastructure and /or an assessment of existing community infrastructure which demonstrates that there is sufficient existing infrastructure to meet the expected demand generated by a new development.
- 7.3 Social infrastructure assessments are instrumental in assessing and enhancing the well-being of communities. By evaluating the accessibility and quality of schools, healthcare, and recreational spaces can address deficiencies, fostering environments that contribute to residents' physical and mental health.
- 7.4 Social infrastructure audits emerge as a pivotal element in contemporary urban planning, recognising the significance of intangible community assets. This process goes beyond traditional physical components, focusing on elements like schools, healthcare facilities, parks, and cultural hubs that shape the social fabric of communities.
- 7.5 Set out below is a map detailing how the site is well provided for in terms of social and community infrastructure within a 3km radius.
- 7.6 As can be noted the proposed development will be located in a well-provided for neighbourhood and within a short distance of a wide range of services for future residents.
- 7.7 In this context the development will provide a range of residential types which create a sustainable community and support the existing services in the area.



Health Care

- 1 Drumalee Primary Care Centre
- 2 Collins Medical Practice
- 3 John O'Sullivan Care Home
- 4 Cavan Hospital
- 5 St Christophers Hospice
- 6 Cavan Physiotherapy Clinic

Religious Facilities

- 1 St Patricks Cathedral
- 2 Urney Church of Ireland
- 3 Cavan Islamic Cultural Society
- 4 St Clares Chapel
- 5 Kilmore Diocesan Pastoral Centre
- 6 RCCG Hosanna House Cavan

Sports & Recreation Facilities

- 1 Cavan Gaels GAA
- 2 Cavan Town Rugby Club
- 3 Cavan Town Golf Club
- 4 Drumalee GAA Club
- 5 St Patricks Handball
- 6 Cavan Town Swimming Pool

Other Facilities

- 1 Cavan Town Hall
- 2 Cavan County Council
- 3 Cavan Equestrian Centre
- 4 Breffni College
- 5 Cavan Post Office
- 6 Gaelscoil Bhrefne

- 7.8 Overall Health care, Sports and Recreation, Community, education, and other facilities are all well-represented within the area and cater for the existing and proposed new residential community.
- 7.9 The proposed development also includes passive and active open spaces as well as pedestrian links throughout the site and the inclusion of a creche.
- 7.10 Having regard to the above we submit that the Cavan Town area provides a wide-range of existing social and community infrastructure to support the development and this is an ideal location for the residential scheme.

8 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This study of schools, childcare and social infrastructure has been prepared to satisfy relevant policy requirements and demonstrate how the proposed development can be catered for.
- 8.2 A desktop analysis of available data sources has been undertaken in order to understand both the demographic profile of the area to ensure there is adequate capacity for both schools and childcare provision as part of this planning application.
- 8.3 In this regard it is critical to have a clear understanding of the ability of education facilities to support the wider community, both now and in the future. We submit this study demonstrates that:
- The needs of the current population in the catchment area are adequately supported by the school infrastructure presently in existence.
 - The Department of Education and Skills do not identify any need for additional schools to be provided in the Cavan Town area.
- 8.4 The key conclusions from this study are:
- **Childcare/creche provision:** A creche is included for in the proposed development; this will cater for the residential scheme and also incorporate headroom in child places for the local area to avail of, if required.
 - **Primary and post primary School Provision:** the analysis by DES of existing schools in the Cavan Town area has determined that no additional schools are to be delivered under the school building programme; this indicates the DES is satisfied there is adequate capacity in the Cavan Town area going forward to cater for the proposed development in terms of both primary and post primary school provision.
 - In terms of Health care, Sports and Recreation, Community, education, and other facilities it is considered that Cavan provides a wide-ranging array of social infrastructure. Being a suburban site this is an ideal location for the residential scheme, which will also provide a creche for future residents.
- 8.5 It is therefore concluded the proposed development will be adequately catered for in terms of schools, childcare and social infrastructure provision.
- 8.6 To conclude as this suburban area matures, and as population density in the audit area grows in accordance with strategic planning policy, it will become more important for services to be clustered and accessible. The proposed development provides critical mass in terms of residential development that will support local businesses and community facilities in the immediate area.



Ronan Woods
Director