



## **Childcare Needs Assessment**

Ardarostig, Bishopstown, Co. Cork

**Ardstone Homes**

April 2021

**Connecting people.**  
**Connecting places.**

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# Introduction

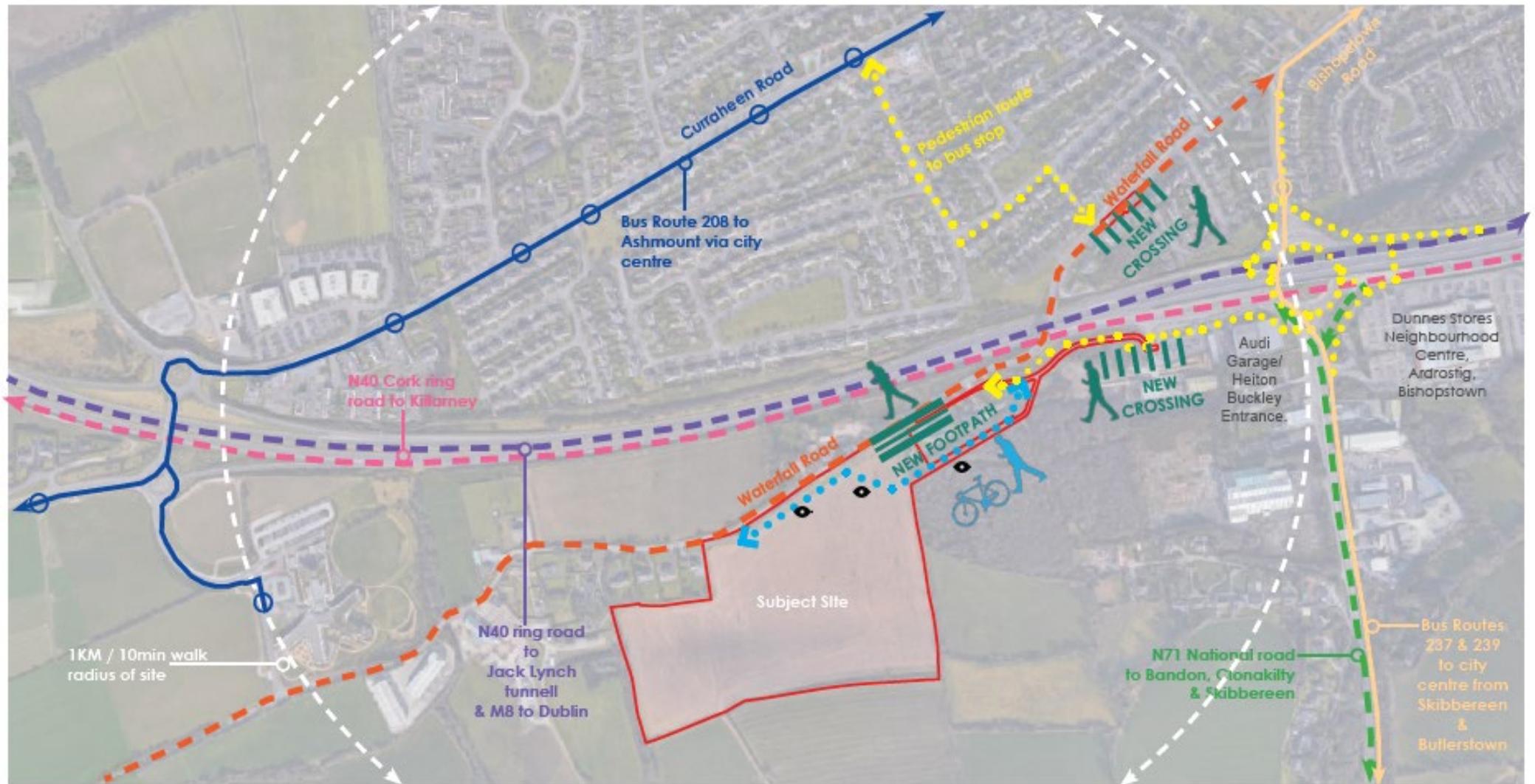
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This Childcare Needs Assessment has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the development of 276 residential units at Ardarostig, Bishopstown, Co. Cork. Specifically, it examines the demand for childcare places to be generated by the proposal and the extent to which this can or will be catered for on or off-site. The report should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Community and Social Infrastructure Audit prepared by HW Planning.

The subject site is located in the townland of Ardarostig to the south of the Waterfall Road, approximately 5 kilometres southeast of Cork City Centre. It is zoned for residential development in an area that can be described as 'edge of city'. It is an area which has been the subject of significant change over recent years through the development of the N40 South Ring Road, Marymount Hospice, various residential and commercial developments. It is an area where further residential development is planned and anticipated in the future having regard to the identification of adjoining lands as Strategic Land Reserve.



Figure 1: Site Location



Aerial photo of site and surrounding urban context



Figure 2: Site Connectivity

# Planning Policy Context

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## 2.1 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

The national Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

Appendix 2 of the guidelines establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. One facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The guidance acknowledges that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement.

The guidelines emphasize that the results of any childcare needs analysis carried out as part of a county childcare strategy should also be considered.

Appendix 2 also states that the threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.

## 2.2 Circular PL 3/2016

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”.*

## 2.3 Universal Design Guidelines 2019

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.

- 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

## 2.4 Cork County Development Plan 2014

The Local Planning Policy context is currently in a transitional stage following the boundary extension of May 2019. As a new City Development Plan has yet to be made, the zoning and policy objectives for the site continue to be governed by the Cork County Development Plan 2014.

Objective SC3-1: Childcare Facilities of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (CDP) relates to the provision of childcare facilities. It states that Cork County Council will:

“Support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations and seek their provision concurrent with development, having regard to population targets for the area and in accordance with the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities and the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006”.

Paragraph 5.3.2 addresses the issue of providing childcare facilities in tandem with new residential developments, stating:

*“The Council will take account of existing childcare provision when considering new childcare/creche facilities provision as part of residential development in order to avoid overprovision of these facilities”.*

## 2.5 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2020)

We note section 4.7 of the 2020 Apartment Guidelines which states that:

*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.*

# Assessment

## 3.1 Proposed Development

The proposed scheme will consist of:

- 137 no. houses.
- 99 no. apartments.
- 40 no. apartment/duplexes.

Of these, 119 units are 1 or 2 bed representing 43% of the total number of units on site<sup>1</sup>. The proposed housing mix is consistent with all national and local planning policies relating to housing mix in residential developments (as outlined in the accompanying Statement of Consistency). It is envisaged that the primary market for the proposed units at Ardarostig will be first time buyers and younger couples seeking to settle in the Cork area.

## 3.2 Demographic Profile

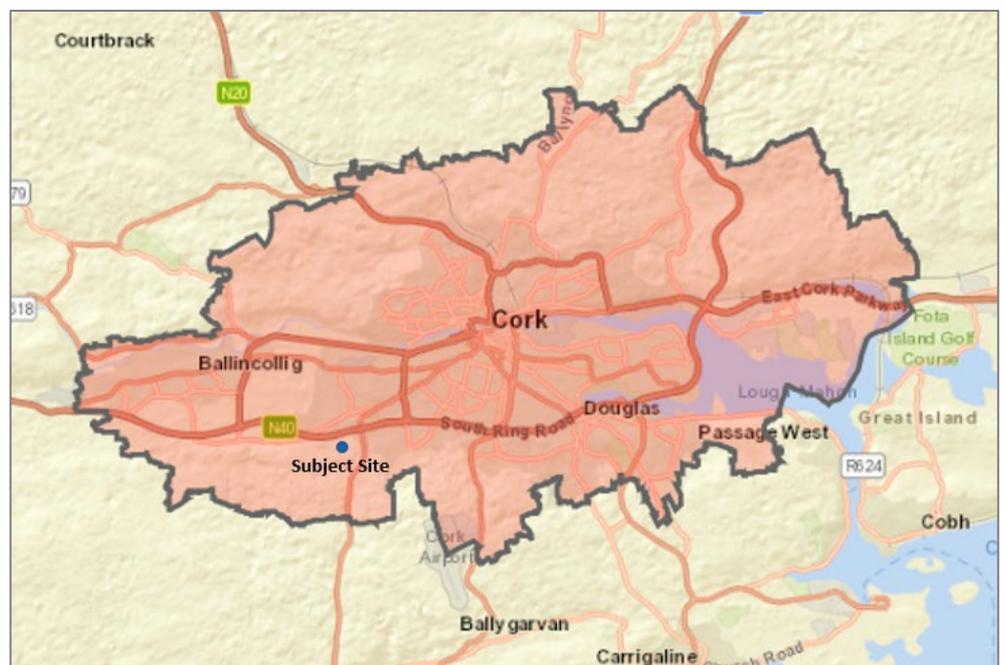


Figure 2: Defined Cork City and Suburbs Area, CSO

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Schedule of Accommodation as prepared by John Fleming Architects.

Based on the CSO Census of Population 2016, the average household size in Cork City and the suburbs<sup>2</sup>, which includes the subject site, is 2.6 persons.

In 2016, 6% of the resident population of 208,669 people in the defined 'Cork City and Suburbs' were of pre-school age<sup>3</sup>.

### 3.3 Childcare Distribution

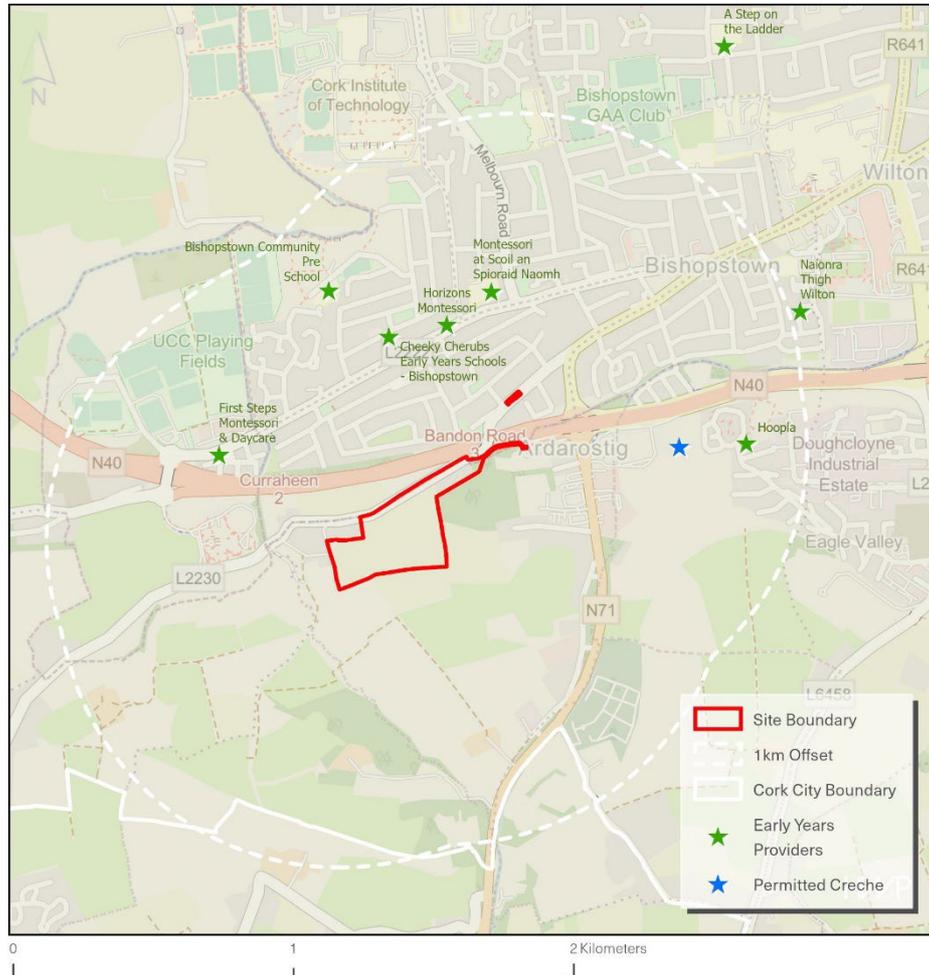


Figure 3: Distribution of Childcare Facilities (as sourced from Pobal database 2021)

There are 7 existing childcare facilities in the general vicinity<sup>4</sup> of the subject site. Tusla pre-school inspection reports were unavailable for a number of these facilities, and as a result, the extent of available capacity was not determined.

Appendix 2 of the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities establishes a standard that where 75 dwellings are constructed, one childcare facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered reasonable. On this basis, the need to provide for 40 childcare places would be triggered by reaching a threshold of 150 units, 60 places by a threshold of 225 units, 80 places by a threshold of 300 units etc.

<sup>2</sup> As defined by the CSO Census of population.

<sup>3</sup> 12,616 persons between the ages of 0-4 years.

<sup>4</sup> Within a radius of c. 1 km.

In accordance with section 4.7 of the 2018 Apartment Guidelines childcare provision is being made in full for the 157 no. 3 and 4 bedroom units in the proposed scheme. The minimum requirement for this number of dwellings would be a 42 space creche.

The proposal to provide for a 60-place childcare facility is therefore in excess of and fully compliant with this standard. This will be 271 m<sup>2</sup> in area and will be located in a purpose built structure with 466.4m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor play area. Suitable provision is made for supporting drop-off facilities, staff and visitor parking in accordance with guidelines.

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# Summary

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This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the adopted policies of Cork County Council and the National Childcare Guidelines.

A review of public records indicates the presence of a number of childcare facilities in close proximity to the subject site. Notwithstanding this, and the presence of a significant number of 1-2 bed units in the proposed development, provision has been made on site for a 60-child place creche in full accordance with established standards.

The geography of Ardarostig confirms that it is an emerging development area. If the identified lands within the Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) are developed in the future, then appropriate consideration will also need to be given to provision of social infrastructure to support same.