

School Demand Report

For Development at Ballymacaula, Circular Road,
Drumbiggle, Ennis, Co. Clare

on behalf of Glenveagh Homes Ltd.

August 2022



McCutcheon Halley
CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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1. Introduction

McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants have been appointed by Glenveagh Homes Ltd. to prepare a School Demand Report which considers the existing primary and post-primary facilities in Ennis, Co. Clare. The report will inform the proposed. The construction of 289 no. residential units comprising a mixture of 12 no. 1 bed apartments, 78 no. 2 bed townhouse/duplex units, 165 no. 3 bed dwelling houses, and 34 no. dwelling houses which will have an option of a 3- or 4-bedroom house-type. A 400.7m² creche/childcare facility. The provision of landscaping, open space, and amenity areas, including play/exercise equipment, a linear amenity walkway, informal play areas and local play areas. The provision 2 no. pedestrian connections to the existing public footpath along the N85, 2 no. pedestrian connections into Ballymacaula View Estate, improvements/upgrades to the pedestrian footpaths along Circular Road including an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing and pedestrian footpath provision along part of the Drumbiggle and Cahercalla Roads. All associated infrastructure and services including 1 no. vehicular access point onto Circular Road, car parking and bin storage, lighting, 2 no. ESB substations, drainage and 1 pumping station, boundary treatments at Ballymacaula, Drumbiggle, Circular Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

This report provides details on the current and future capacity of existing and proposed schools in the area along with the demand for places likely to be generated by the proposed development.

In undertaking a review of the required school provision for the proposed development, this report will:

- Consider the current policy context for future school provision in the area;
- Determine an appropriate study area based on sustainable modes of transport;
- Consider demographic trends in the school area population;
- Assess the capacity of existing schools within the study area;
- Estimate the current student yield.



Figure 1: Site Context (Site Outlined in Red)

A number of sources were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- www.education.ie and www.schooldays.ie were consulted to locate existing schools, enrolment figures and the number of classrooms.
- Projections of Full-Time Enrolment, Primary and Second Level, 2018 – 2036 report by the Department of Education and Skills, July 2018
- Census 2016 SAPMAP data;
- Various school websites; and
- Survey of existing schools undertaken by McCutcheon Halley Planning.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Clare County Development Plan 2017

The Clare County Development Plan 2017 provides several policy objectives for the provision of educational facilities in Clare County. It states within the development plan that County Clare is currently *'well served in relation to primary and secondary school facilities'*.

Objective CDP5.17: Primary and Secondary Educational Facilities states that it is an objective to:

- *To facilitate the provision of schools by zoning suitable lands in settlement plans and local area plans capable of meeting the demands of the projected populations;*

- *To ensure that land developed for educational purposes is located as close as possible to the area experiencing population growth that it is intended to serve;*
- *To assess and ensure the adequacy of school capacity when dealing with planning applications for large residential developments;*
- *To require the provision of cycle lanes, pedestrian footpaths and crossings serving primary and secondary school facilities.*

The Plan notes there are areas where new school facilities will be required due to natural growth in the population and the need for additional facilities has been identified and suitable land will be zoned to accommodate educational development.

2.2 Clare County Draft Development Plan 2022-2028

The Clare County Draft Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out an objective under CDP10.16;

- *To facilitate the provision of schools by zoning suitable lands in settlement plans and local area plans capable of meeting demands of the projected populations and in line with 2008 Code of Practice- The Provisions of Schools and the Planning System*
- *To ensure that land developed for educational purposes is located as close as possible to the area experiencing growth that it is intended to serve, are along public transport corridors where available and in close proximity to complementary services/facilities to allow for shared use*
- *To require the provision of cycle lanes, pedestrian footpaths and crossings and to promote the idea of 'walking school bus' serving primary and secondary schools' facilities to support safe and convenient active travel modes'.*
- *to assess and ensure the adequacy of school capacity when dealing with planning applications for large residential developments*

2.3 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice

The Guidelines by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2008) for the provision of Schools outlines the following core objectives for the effective integration of schools and development planning systems:

Schools provision should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities;

The provision of any new schools (both primary and post-primary) should be driven by and emerge from an integrated approach between the planning functions of planning authorities and the Department of Education and Science; and

Local authorities, as planning authorities, will support and assist the Department in ensuring the timely provision of school sites.

3. The Study Area

The study area consists of the Ennis Rural ED and Ennis Urban 1-4 EDs, as defined in Census 2016. The combined Eds have a Census 2016 population of 22,671. The site is located in the Ennis Rural ED (as shown in Figure 2 below) which is the most populous ED area with a Census 2016 population of 17,709.

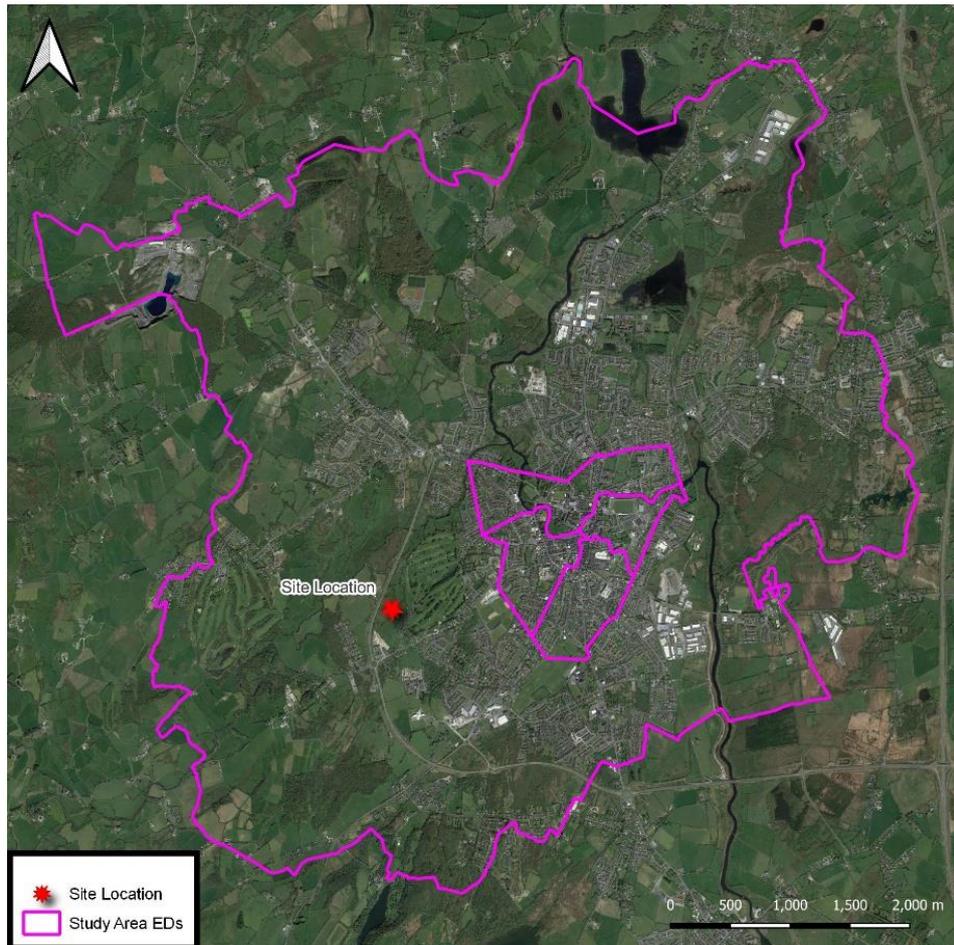


Figure 2: Subject site within the Ennis Rural ED area

The study area for the proposed development has been determined by applying a 2 km radius or equivalent 10-20 minute travel time to ensure that schools can be accessed via a number of travel alternatives including walking, cycling and driving. Public transport is not considered given the relatively short distances from the subject site to the various schools.

The study area comprises of 5 no. EDs, Ennis Rural and Ennis Urban 1-4 as defined by Census 2016. Table 3.1 outlines the pre-school and school age population breakdown for the study area.

| Study Area | Age 0-4 | Age 5-11 | Age 12-18 |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| Ennis Rural ED | 1,349 | 1,997 | 1,767 |
| Ennis Urban 1 ED | 67 | 124 | 131 |
| Ennis Urban 2 ED | 105 | 161 | 151 |
| Ennis Urban 3 ED | 9 | 13 | 15 |
| Ennis Urban 4 ED | 55 | 88 | 79 |
| Total Population | 22,671 | 22,671 | 22,671 |
| % of Population | 7% | 10.5% | 9.5% |

Table 3.1: Demographic Breakdown of Pre-school and School Age Population within the Study Area, Census 2016

There are 10 no. primary schools and 4 no. post-primary schools located within the study area, these are outlined in figure 3 overleaf.



Figure 3: Location of the Schools (site outlined in red)

Table 3.2: Distance of Primary Schools to the Subject Site (travel times in minutes)

The 10 no. primary and 4 no. post-primary schools located in the study area are all within a 10-20 minute travel time or 2km radius of the proposed development. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 below identify the distance from the subject

| No. | Primary School | Distance from Site | Walk | Cycle | Drive |
|-----|--|--------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| A | Ennis National School | 2km | 23 mins | 8 mins | 4 mins |
| B | Holy Family Senior National School | 2km | 27 mins | 9 mins | 5 mins |
| C | Scoil Christ Ri | 1.7km | 21 mins | 6 mins | 3 mins |
| D | Bunscoil na mBraithre | 2.7km | 34 mins | 11 mins | 5 mins |
| E | Holy Family Junior School | 2.4km | 28 mins | 10 mins | 6 mins |
| F | St. Annes Special School | 3.5km | 44 mins | 13 mins | 7 mins |
| G | Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg | 3.6km | 44 mins | 12 mins | 5 mins |
| H | St. Clare's School | 3.5km | 44 mins | 13 mins | 6 mins |
| I | An Daingin National School | 4.3km | 54 mins | 16 mins | 7 mins |
| J | Ennis Educate Together National School | 6.4km | 47 mins | 14 mins | 9 mins |

site to the schools and indicate the various walking, cycling and driving times required to access these schools.

| No. | Post-Primary School | Distance from Site | Walk | Cycle | Drive |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. | St. Flannan's College | 2.2km | 27 mins | 10 mins | 4 mins |
| 2. | Ennis Community College | 1.9km | 24 mins | 7 mins | 3 mins |
| 3. | Gaelcholaiste an Chlair | 1.8km | 24 mins | 7 mins | 3 mins |
| 4. | Rice College | 2.6km | 32 mins | 10 mins | 5 mins |

Table 3.3: Distance of Post-Primary Schools to the Subject Site (travel times in minutes)

4. Future Demographic Trends in School Age Population

In July 2018, the Department of Education and Skills published a report detailing future demographic trends that will impact the primary and post-primary student numbers. The 'Projections of Full-Time Enrolment -Primary and Second Level, 2018 – 2036' report assessed demographic trends which will impact the future population growth of school age children including fertility rates, births, and net migration.

Based on their research the Department of Education and Skills has determined that the peak number of primary school age children was anticipated in 2018 and that this population will begin to decline from 2019.

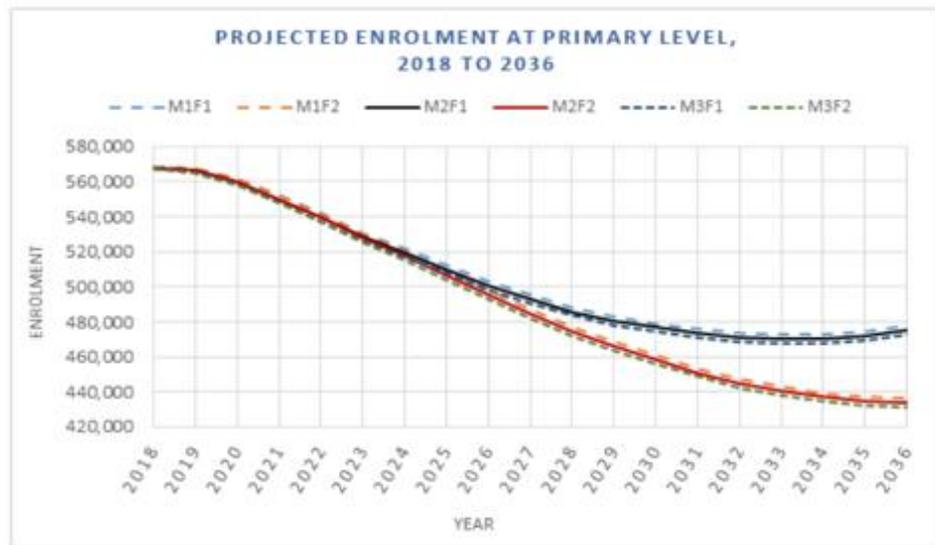


Figure 5: Projections of Enrolment at Primary Level

The report indicates that the Department considers the M2F1, black line, to be the most probable scenario. Based on their projected primary student population, this would suggest that the number of primary students would peak in 2018 at 567,819 and then continuously decline to 474,968 by 2036. This represents a 16% contraction of the primary school age population over an 18-year period.

The post-primary student projections are a continuation of the primary school population projection with the peak of post-primary enrolments anticipated in 2024.

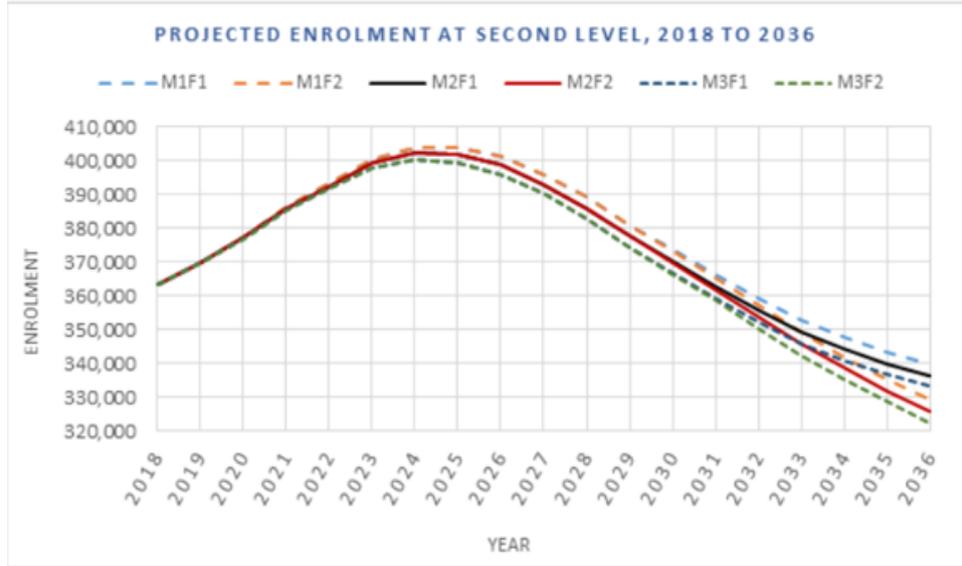


Figure 6: Projections of Enrolment at Post-Primary Level

As with the primary level projections, the M2F1 scenario is considered the most likely by the Department with the post-primary school population peaking at 402,176 in 2024. Enrolment would begin to decrease from 2025 to a level of circa 336,500 by 2036, a contraction of 16% during this time period.

5. Existing Schools

5.1 Existing Primary Schools

Enrolment figures for the 2021/22 academic year, published by the Department of Education and Skills, have been used for this assessment.

An estimation of the capacity of each primary school can be calculated by applying a Pupil to Teacher Ratio (PTR) to the number of classrooms in each school. The Department of Education and Skills recommends a PTR of 1:26. The number of classrooms was multiplied by 26 to determine the capacity of the school. The available capacity in each school was determined by subtracting the capacity of the school from the enrolment figures. Where the school declined to make updated information available, the same capacity as for the 2020/21 academic year was retained.

| Primary Schools | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| NO. | School Name | Enrolment 2020/21 | No. of Classrooms | Estimated Capacity based on PTR of 1:26 | Enrolment 2021/22 | Available/Potential Capacity 2021/22 |
| A | Ennis National School | 631 | 27 | 702 | 599 | 103 |
| B | Holy Family Senior National School | 307 | 12.5 | 325 | 307 | 18 |
| C | Scoil Chríost Rí | 231 | 12 | 312 | 231 | 0 |
| D | Bunscoil na mBraithre | 655 | 25 | 650 | 655 | 0 |
| E | Holy Family Junior School | 153 | 12.5 | 325 | 153 | 172 |
| F | St Anne's Special School | 112 | 18 | 468 | 408 | 128 |
| G | Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg | 471 | 18 | 468 | 481 | 0 |
| H | St. Clare's Special School* | 63 | 16 | 416 | 63 | 353 |
| I | An Daingin National School | 17 | 2 | 52 | 17 | 35 |
| J | Ennis Educate Together National School | 80 | 4 | 104 | 80 | 24 |
| | Total | 2720 | - | 3,822 | 2694 | 833 |

Table 5.1: Existing Primary School Capacity and Enrolment

*St. Anne's Special School and St. Clare's Special School require additional facilities for their students that are not based on enrolment numbers. For this survey, the

calculations were conducted the same across all schools and does not account for primary school designations.

The total enrolment of primary school children in the 10 no. existing schools was 2,720 in the 2020/21 academic year. Based on the study undertaken, the available capacity within these schools for the 2020/21 academic year was circa 1,024 pupils.

Following contact by phone and email with the schools the capacity was updated for the 2021/22 school year. Based on the study undertaken, the 10 no. existing schools have a total enrolment of 2,694 primary school children in 2021/2022. The available total capacity at all schools is estimated to remain at 3,744 pupils based on PTR calculations. This displays that there is availability for 833 new pupils in order for all schools within this area to reach maximum capacity. Additional future capacity is anticipated in Ennis Educate Together National School as well as Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg, as there is a current proposal to increase classroom capacity to 16 no. of classrooms at Ennis Education together National School and a proposal for an additional 7 no. new classrooms at Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg.

As indicated earlier in this report, the Department of Education and Skills has outlined that the primary population will decline from 2018. When the rate of decline of 16% published in their report has been applied to the schools within the study area, based on the 2021/22 enrolment no. of 2,694, the local school enrolment decreases to an estimated 2,263 students by 2036 (average decrease per year of approximately 54 pupils). This increases the available capacity from 661 spaces in 2021/2022 to approximately 941 no. ($54 \times 2 + 833$) within the local school network by the time the proposed development will be completed.

5.2 Existing Post-Primary Schools

Estimation of capacity for post primary schools is more complex due to the range of courses available at this level. To determine the available capacity in these schools, a survey of the schools was undertaken. The available capacity figures are based on the responses from the individual schools contacted August, 2022.

| No. | Post-Primary School | Enrolment 2021/2022 | Available Capacity | Estimated Capacity of the School |
|--------------|---|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | St. Flannan's College | 532 | 218 | 750 |
| 2. | Ennis Community College/ Gaelcholaiste an Chlair | 1184 | 0 | 1163 |
| 3. | Rice College | 702 | 0 | 702 |
| Total | 2,418 | 2,418 | 218 | 2,615 |

Table 5.2: Existing Post-Primary School Capacity and Enrolment

There are 218 places available in the existing secondary schools within the study area. As indicated earlier in this report, the post-primary student population is projected to increase up to 2024 before beginning to decline. This will potentially create a short term need for additional secondary school student places within the study area.

5.3 Future Demand as a Result of the Proposed Development

The future demand for school places as a result of the proposed development will be assessed here. The development consists of 285 no. units, a creche and all ancillary site development works. The breakdown of unit types is outlined in table 5.3. The 1-bedroom units will be discounted as these are determined to be unsuitable as family dwellings.

| Unit Size | Total |
|--------------|------------|
| 2-bed | 66 |
| 3-bed | 195 |
| Total | 261 |

Table 5.3: Housing Mix

5.3.1 Assumptions

- All 1-bedroom units will be omitted for the school assessment (consistent with the accepted approach to the delivery of creches);
- Average Persons per Household (PPH) of 2.3 has been applied, this represents an average within the settlement of Ennis;
- The Primary School Age Cohort considers 5-11 year olds. This is 10.5% of the study area population;
- The Post Primary Age Cohort considers 12-18 year olds which is 9.5% of the study area population.

The Forward Planning Unit of the Department of Education and Skills recommends that the estimated student population is determined using the following percentages:

- Primary School: 12%;
- Post-Primary School: 8.5%.

As noted above the primary school cohort within the study area is slightly below this and the post-primary cohort is higher.

5.4 Primary Student Population Estimate

Based on the assumptions outlined, an estimate of the school demand to be generated from the proposed scheme is outlined as follows:

Table 5.4: Primary Student Population Estimate

| Total 2+ Bedroom Units | Avg PPH | % Population | No. Students |
|------------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| 261 | 2.3 | 12% | 72 |
| Total | 600 | | 72 |

It is estimated there will be circa 72 new students generated over the 5-year timeframe of the permission. It should be acknowledged that the 72 students anticipated will not necessarily appear on first occupancy and it will likely take several years before the mature student yield is met.

The existing primary schools within the catchment area currently have capacity to accommodate 833 no. additional students and based on population trends, there will be additional capacity available in the future. Even if the primary population does not decline at the rate anticipated by the Department of Education, there is adequate capacity within these schools to cater for the initial stages of the proposed development.

5.5 Post-Primary Student Population Estimate

Based on the assumptions outlined, an estimate of the school demand to be generated from the proposed scheme is outlined as follows:

Table 5.5: Post-Primary Student Population Estimate

| Total 2+ Bedroom Units | Avg PPH | % Population | No. Students |
|------------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| 261 | 2.3 | 8.5% | 51 |
| Total | 600 | | 51 |

It is estimated there will be circa 51 new students generated every year over the 5-year timeframe of the permission. It should be acknowledged that the 51 students anticipated will not necessarily appear in early occupancy and it will likely take several years before the mature student yield is met.

The existing post-primary schools within the catchment area currently have capacity to accommodate 218 no. additional students and based on population trends, there will be additional capacity available in the future. Even if the post-primary population does not decline at the rate anticipated by the Department of Education, there is adequate capacity within these schools to cater for the initial stages of the proposed development.

6. Conclusion

This School Demand Report relates to a proposed SHD development of 285 no. units at Ballymacaula, Drumbiggle, Circular Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

As demonstrated in the assessment, there is capacity within the existing primary schools to accommodate the proposed development. The proposed development is likely to generate 72 no. primary school age students. According to the Department of Education report discussed in this assessment, the primary school age cohort peaked in 2018 and is now in decline. This, along with the availability of school places within the study area indicates that existing primary schools can accommodate the projected growth.

The Department of Education report indicates that the post-primary student age cohort will peak in 2024 before beginning to decline. The initial phase of development will coincide with this anticipated peak in post-primary enrolment. This assessment found that 51 no. post-primary age students will be generated over the 5-year lifetime of the permission. There is currently capacity in the existing post-primary schools within the study area and this demand will begin to decrease in 2024.

Therefore, it is considered that the school demand generated by the proposed development can be accommodated within existing primary and post-primary schools in the short to medium term.