

CLEEVES RIVERSIDE QUARTER DEVELOPMENT

**Childcare Assessment**

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Limerick City & County Council, in partnership  
with  
Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC



May 2026



CHARTERED TOWN PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT CONSULTANTS

### Document Control Sheet

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Title:       | Childcare Assessment   |
| Project:     | 20035 Cleeves Riverside Project/SIA  |
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report responds to a request for further information issued by An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) with respect to Childcare Provision. Clarification was sought with respect to two specific areas including:

*Item 1 - Section 1 1.5.1 Childcare Facilities of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out criteria for the Planning Authority to consider while assessing an application for childcare facilities. The planning application has not provided the details required. The applicant is requested to clarify the type of childcare service proposed, whether sessional, full day care, pre-school, afterschool etc., number of children/staff and hours of operation, whether there are adequate sleeping/rest facilities and adequate availability of indoor and outdoor play space. Submit a site layout plan at a scale of 1:500 and a floor plan at 1:200 indicating compliance with Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 and with Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities,*

*Item 2 - The applicant is also required to clarify the number of such facilities in the area including a map highlighting the locations of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the subject site and demonstrate the need for an additional facility at that location. In addition, the applicant shall engage with Limerick Childcare Committee and submit documentation to demonstrate requirement for a childcare facility at this location.*

It is proposed to address each of these items in turn.

In advance, please note that the Planning Compliance Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report referred to a proposed creche facility comprising 381sqm accommodating 34 no. children. The number of children stated to be accommodated within the creche is an error as the creche has an actual capacity for 36 no. children. The size of the creche facility however is consistent throughout all documentation, at 381sqm. The number of children does not impact car parking or the traffic assessment as both are dependent on floor area rather than number of children.

## 2.0 CONSULTATION WITH LIMERICK CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

Following consultation with the Limerick Childcare Committee, the internal space of the creche facility has been amended to include public access to a WC facility and provision for two additional WC's exclusively for staff. The buggy store area has also been relocated as per recommendations from the Committee. The revised floor plan is detailed on CRQMP-FCBS-04-00-DR-AA-0231.

## 3.0 RESPONSE TO ITEM 1

In response to Item 1, it is understood that Section 11.5.1 of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (LDP) and the requirements contained therein, are to facilitate assessment of individual planning applications for childcare facilities and that such information is not necessarily required where a new childcare facility is proposed as part of a new residential development, in compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The LDP states that:

*Where a new childcare facility is proposed as part of a new residential or commercial development, the facility shall be constructed in tandem with the overall scheme and shall be completed prior to residents moving in. In assessing individual planning applications for childcare facilities, the Planning Authority will have regard to the following.....(Underline Our Emphasis)*

Irrespective, it is proposed to address each item as listed in the LDP hereunder:

**2.1 Type of service provided, whether sessional, full day care, pre-school, afterschool etc., number of children/staff and hours of operation**

The need for a childcare facility within the development proposal was based on the recommendations contained within the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001) and the provision of in excess of 75 no. residential units on site. Specifically, the development provides 205 no. apartments and 29 no. townhouses as follows:

| Unit Mix                         | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Studio                           | 6      | 2.5%       |
| 1 bed apartment                  | 97     | 41.4%      |
| 2 bed apartment (3 person)       | 98     | 41.8%      |
| 2 bed apartment (4 person)       | 4      | 1.7%       |
| 3 bed townhouses & Triplex Units | 29     | 12.3%      |

**Table 1.0** Mix of Proposed Development Units

The ‘Design Standards for Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2025’ advises that two and three bedroom units only should be considered as contributing to a requirement for childcare. In this regard, the total number of units in the scheme which are included in this estimation amounts to 131 no. units. The provision of studio units and one bed apartments were discounted when calculating the overall childcare requirement. With a minimum of one childcare facility with 20 places for each 75 dwellings specified in the Guidelines, the proposed development generates a need for a creche facility with a minimum of 34 no. child spaces.

The creche is a full day care service with the design of the creche accommodating 36 no.childcare spaces. The allocated spaces were determined by applying the Universal Design Early Learning Care Guideline split of child spaces by age, as detailed in Table 2.0.

| Age                   | Operator Suggested Spit in Guidelines | Space required per age | Rounded up Figure |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 0 - 1                 | 19%                                   | 6.69                   | 7                 |
| 1 - 2                 | 21%                                   | 7.43                   | 8                 |
| 2 - 3                 | 26%                                   | 8.92                   | 9                 |
| 3 - 5                 | 34%                                   | 11.89                  | 12                |
| Child Spaces Required |                                       | 34.9                   | 36                |

**Table 2.0** Breakdown of Children by Age

Staff numbers were calculated to align with 'Schedule 6 of the Child Care Act 1991 Regulations Amended 2016' for a full day care service or part-time day care service, which results in 7 staff overall with an assumption that some move between age groups. When these are rounded up to account for static staff, there is a requirement for 9 no. staff. In response to concerns from the Limerick Childcare Committee, an additional staff member for the kitchen has not been included in 'staff' numbers. Provision however could be made for an additional staff member. Such provision would not have any indirect effects, as 4 no. bicycle spaces has been provided in excess of the requirement of 1 space per 3 staff and car parking provision is based on the area of the creche and not the number of children or staff.

| Age | 1 staff per X children | No. of children | Staff no.          | Rounded up if staff are static within age group. |
|-----|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 0-1 | 3                      | 7               | 2.333333333        | 3  |
| 1-2 | 5                      | 8               | 1.6                | 2  |
| 2-3 | 6                      | 9               | 1.5                | 2  |
| 3-6 | 8                      | 12              | 1.5                | 2  |
|     |                        |                 | <b>6.933333333</b> | <b>9</b>   |

**Table 3.0** Calculation of Staff Numbers

The creche shall operate between 8.00am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

**2.2 Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed**

The subject site is zoned for city centre use, with a mix of uses promoted as part of the development proposal. Phase II Cleeves largely comprises residential use with significant public realm enhancement works. The 381sqm creche facility has been designed as an integral part of the development proposal.

The creche is located at the heart of the scheme, with a strong relationship to the public open space yet set back from any vehicle access and away from the main road. It benefits from its own front door, lots of storage, and adjacent bike and car parking.

A floor area figure of a minimum 2.32sqm is generally applied per child space as per the Childcare Guidelines. This can increase to 3.7sqm per childcare space for smaller children as per Appendix 1 of the Childcare Guidelines. A minimum facility of 83.52 sqm is therefore required as a minimum or where the higher figure is applied for all childcare facilities this extends up to a facility of up to 133sqm. However, extraneous areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas are deemed to be separate and these requirements significantly increase floor area. Therefore, a childcare facility of 381sqm is proposed as part of the development.

It is important to note that the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings - Sample Creche and Schedule 6 of the Child Care Act 1991 Regulations Amended 2016 were used to inform layouts and sizing. A summary of the creche facility proposal, including its layout with number of children per room is detailed in Figure 1.0.



Figure 1.0 Layout of Proposed Creche

## **2.2 Adequate sleeping/rest facilities**

As can be seen in Figure 1.0 dedicated sleeping facilities have been provided in rooms catering for 0 – 1 age group and 1 – 2 age group.

## **2.3 Adequate availability of indoor and outdoor play space**

The indoor space has been sized in accordance with the requirements of the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings - Sample Creche and Schedule 6 of the Child Care Act 1991 Regulations Amended 2016.

The creche has 148 sqm of secure, external space with all four age group rooms benefitting from direct access to the playspace

## **2.4 Convenience to public transport nodes**

The proposed development is located in the heart of Limerick city centre and is intended to primarily serve its future residents, who will walk to drop their children to the creche.

The Cleeves site is well connected to the surrounding neighbourhood, Limerick city centre and employment zones via local roads, footpaths, and cycle lane infrastructure. It benefits from five designated bus stops within a 10-minute walk ensuring coverage in both city-bound and outbound directions. Regional bus services at Arthur's Quay are accessible within a 12-minute walk, and Colbert Train Station – providing direct intercity connections to Dublin, Galway, and Waterford – is a 15-minute walk away. Cycle connectivity is supported by existing and planned infrastructure across Shannon Bridge, ensuring a permanent cycle link to the city centre.

The proposed crèche is situated neighbouring Salesian Primary School providing locational advantage in terms of linked trip potential, allowing for combined drop-off arrangements for parents/guardians. Further, the presence of a significant staff cohort within the school (30+), together with nearby educational facilities such as Ardscoil Rís, supports the case for localised childcare provision.

## **2.5 Safe access and convenient off-street car parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and staff**

The creche is located at the heart of the scheme, with a strong relationship to the public open space yet set back from any vehicle access and away from the main road. In accordance with the requirements of the LDP, drop off facilities are provided in front of the creche along with 4 no. parking spaces. A total of 4 no. dedicated bicycle parking spaces are provided for employees with visitor bicycle spaces accommodated in the visitor bicycle spaces for the apartments.

## 2.6 Local traffic conditions

A Traffic & Transport Assessment accompanies the development proposal and considers local traffic in the area in the context of the development proposal.

## 2.7 Number of such facilities in the area. In this regard, the applicant shall submit a map showing locations of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the subject site and demonstrate the need for an additional facility at that location

There is no formal guidance available on an appropriate study area to focus the assessment of establishing the demand and capacity of local childcare facilities and professional judgement has been applied. This assessment has been limited to a 2km radius, in close proximity to the subject site. A 2 km radius was chosen as a conservative approach to reviewing childcare capacity, it is also considered to be a reasonable distance for parents and children to travel by foot / cycling to reach childcare facilities from the proposed development site.

A total of 26 no. operational childcare facilities were identified within an approximate 2km radius of the subject site (equivalent to approx. 15 -minutes' drive time), as shown in Figure 2.0. The facilities identified with a green circle are those childcare facilities within a 2km radius of the site. Specifically, there are 11 no. childcare facilities within a 15minute walking distance (purple shaded area in Figure 2.0) radius of the subject site. This number increased to 14 no. facilities if one considers the 1km catchment area (black circle outline).

Current capacity of these facilities was determined using the latest TUSLA Register of Services available for Limerick from May 2026, which suggests that 1,619 no. childcare places are on offer in these existing facilities. As part of this assessment, each childcare facility was contacted individually via telephone / email survey to establish the available capacity for the next enrolment year. We note that 8 no. facilities out of 26 no. in total did not respond to the email or telephone survey and in such case, this assessment assumes that there is no capacity available in order to provide for a conservative analysis. As such, out of the 1,619 no. maximum capacity childcare spaces, there are 8 no spaces available at one facility, Moons & Stars Northside RFC for the 2026 / 2027 enrolment year.

| No. | Facility Name                                       | Type      | Max Capacity | Available Capacity 2025 / 2026 |
|-----|---|-----------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.  | ADAPT Child and Youth Service                       | Community | 56           | Special Service                |
| 2.  | Clanmaurice Preschool                               | Private   | 22           | No Response                    |
| 3.  | Corpus Christi Pre School Moyross                   | Community | 22           | Full                           |
| 4.  | Moyross Integrated Childcare Services               | Community | 100          | No Response                    |
| 5.  | Moons & Stars Northside FRC                         | Community | 110          | 8                              |
| 6.  | Our Lady of Lourdes Childworld Creche               | Community | 80           | No Response                    |
| 7.  | Elm Tree Afterschool Care                           | Private   | 18           | Full                           |
| 8.  | Limerick Social Service Council Early Years Service | Community | 61           | Full                           |
| 9.  | Nursery Times                                       | Private   | 72           | Full                           |
| 10. | OneWorld Preschool                                  | Private   | 44           | No Response                    |
| 11. | Kids Inc Afterschool                                | Private   | 48           | No Response                    |

|       |                                      |           |       |             |
|-------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| 12.   | Learning for Life Montessori         | Private   | 30    | Full        |
| 13.   | Little Graduates                     | Private   | 22    | No Response |
| 14.   | Poppin's Pre-School                  | Private   | 105   | Full        |
| 15.   | Presentation Preschool               | Community | 40    | Full        |
| 16.   | Rainbow Childcare Academy            | Private   | 64    | Full        |
| 17.   | St. John's Pre School                | Community | 60    | Full        |
| 18.   | Thumbelina's Creche                  | Private   | 46    | Full        |
| 19.   | Busy Kids Creche                     | Private   | 287   | Full        |
| 20.   | Future Heroes Childcare              | Private   | 44    | Full        |
| 21.   | Childworld Creche                    | Private   | 80    | No Response |
| 22.   | Our Lady Queen of Peace Pre School   | Community | 44    | Full        |
| 23.   | Riocht na Si                         | Community | 22    | Full        |
| 24.   | St. Mary's Pre School                | Community | 20    | Full        |
| 25.   | Riverside Early Childhood Centre     | Community | 97    | Full        |
| 26.   | Distillery View Childcare Initiative | Community | 25    | No Response |
| Total |                                      |           | 1,619 |             |

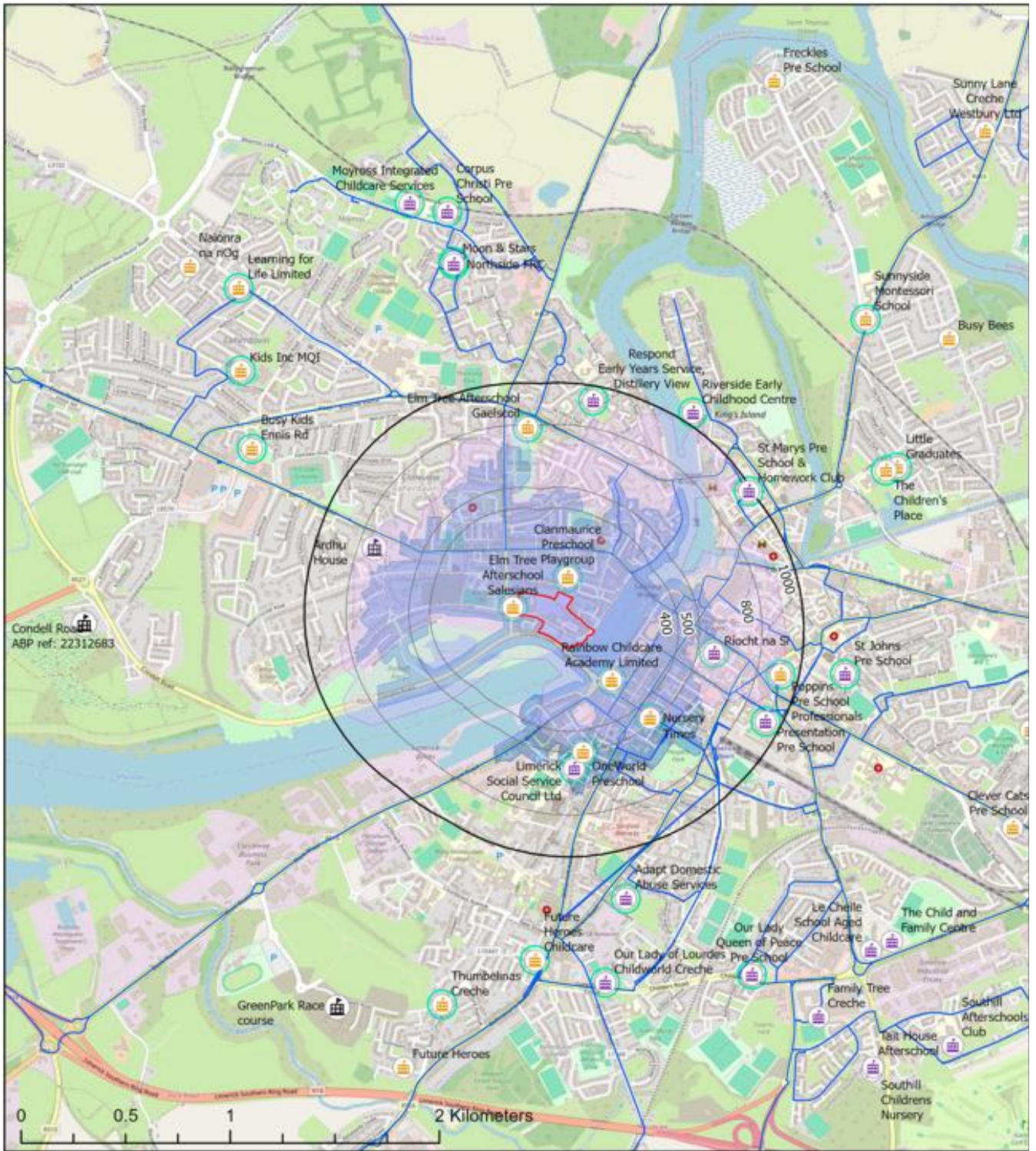
**Table 4.0** Childcare Spaces within 2km of Site (identified with green circle on map)

An examination of the Limerick City & County Online Planning Register indicates that the pipeline consists of 4 no. planning applications in the study area for childcare facilities which were granted planning permission in the last 5 years.

| No | Planning Ref. | Location                               | No. Residential Units | Childcare Provision                      |
|----|---------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| 1. | 21/31158      | Former Greenpark Racecourse, Dock Road | 371                   | 550sqm with capacity for 65 no. children |
| 2. | 23/557        | Ardhu House, Ennis Road                | 167                   | 193sqm with capacity for 33 no. children |
| 3. | ABP 31268-22  | Lands West of Condell Road, Clonmacken | 165                   | 438sqm with capacity for 48 no. children |
| 4. | 25/60780      | Former Limerick Gasworks Site          | 285                   | 203sqm with capacity for 40 no. children |

The permitted but not yet operational facilities will potentially create an additional capacity of 186 no. childcare spaces, to be primarily occupied by the associated residential developments. Depending on actual demand arising there may be some capacity to cater for the children of the surrounding areas.

In addition to the above assessment, which indicates no capacity in childcare provision within 2km of the site, the Limerick Childcare Committee also confirms the position as detailed in correspondence received and detailed in Appendix 1.0 of this report.



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**Childcare Facilities**

- Community
- Private
- Site Boundary

- 1km from site boundary
- 15min walktime Cutoff Range: 0 - 15
- BusEireann network
- Childcare within 2km of site



**Figure 1.0** Map of Childcare Facilities in the Area

**2.8 Applications for childcare facilities in existing residential areas will be treated on their merits, having regard to the likely effect on the amenities of adjoining properties and compliance with the above criteria**

This criterion is not applicable to the development proposal, as the proposed creche is integrated into a new mixed use Quarter in the city.

**2.9 Detached houses or substantial semi detached properties are most suitable for the provision of full day care facilities. Properties with childcare should include a residential component within the dwelling and preferably should be occupied by the operator or a staff member of the childcare facility**

This criterion is not applicable to the development proposal, as the proposed creche is integrated into a new mixed use Quarter in the city.

**2.10 For new residential developments, the most suitable facility for the provision of full day care should be a purpose built, ground floor, standalone property;**

The proposed creche facility has been successfully integrated as a ground floor unit within a proposed apartment block, with its own door access at ground level and dedicated private open space. The provision of a standalone property to accommodate a creche facility would not be viable on city centre zoned land and would militate against the principles of compact growth promoted in the LDP.

**2.11 In assessing applications for new childcare facilities, the Planning Authority will consult with the Limerick Childcare Committee to assess the need for the type of facility proposed at the intended location**

The applicant contacted Limerick Childcare Committee and the correspondence is detailed in Appendix 1.0 of this report.

#### **4.0 RESPONSE TO ITEM 2**

Section 2.7 of this report has already clarified the number of such facilities in the area and has provided a map highlighting the locations of childcare facilities within the vicinity of the subject site. There are 21 no. operating childcare facilities within 2km of the subject site, with capacity for 1,327 children. However, none of these facilities have available space for the 2026/27 academic year. There is demonstrable need for additional childcare facilities / spaces in the area.

The applicant has engaged with the Limerick Childcare Committee and attaches documentation which demonstrates a requirement for a childcare facility at this location (Appendix 1.0).

The Commission will note that the Childcare Committee also commented on the layout and design of the proposed creche facility. As already detailed in Section 2.0 of this report the internal space of the creche facility has been amended to include public access to a WC facility and provision for two additional WC's exclusively for staff. The buggy store area has also been relocated as per recommendations from the Committee. The revised floor plan is detailed on CRQMP-FCBS-04-00-DR-AA-0231.

Please see below a response to each of the issues raised by the Childcare Committee.

- 4.1 The service is quite small with provision for only 36 children and may not be financially viable this would be. The estimate of 7 childcare staff appears too low - it would likely require 8-9 depending on whether the preschool was full or part time. It also does not include any other staff such as a manager or kitchen staff.

The number of children required to be serviced by a creche was determined based on the recommendations contained within the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), as already detailed in Section 2.1 of this report.

The issue regarding the number of staff has also been previously addressed in Section 2.1 of this report, with the revised proposal now providing for 9 no. staff with the potential for a tenth kitchen staff member.

- 4.2 There would need to be a provision for more staff toilets - there are only 2 on the plan, one would be needed exclusively for kitchen staff which only leaves 1 other for 10 staff and the recommendation is 1 – 8 for staff toilets. There is also no provision for a public toilet for families using the service to have use of.

The WC provision was based on a pro-rating of the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings, which has an example layout with 6 WCs for a 47-child facility. The proposed layout provides for 1no. WC/shower room, 3no. WCs and 2no. nappy change rooms for 36 children. The arrangement of WCs has been adapted to provide public access to a WC from reception and two additional WCs exclusively for staff.

- 4.3 There may also be a requirement for a children's toilet & washbasin in the room for 1–2-year-olds as they could be toilet trained.

This is anticipated to be included within the nappy change areas in both the 0-1 and 1-2 areas.

- 4.4 The reception area is a little unclear as it is marked as reception/office but no clear office design and the buggy store area has a door in the internal corridor of the service. It would be better if the door for this storage could be in the reception area so that there was no need to push a buggy through an internal door before storing, for safety and hygiene reasons.

The issue regarding the buggy area has been addressed in the revised internal design submitted and detailed in Figure 1.0.

- 4.5 There appears to be insufficient car parking spaces and the design does not allow for easy drop off or pick up by car.

The LDP states a maximum of 1 space per 80sqm plus a set down is required for a creche within the defined Zone 1 parking area (which encompasses much of the city centre). The creche comprising 381sqm is only permitted to have a maximum of 4.7 spaces. Mindful of the city centre location, some 4 no. parking spaces comprising 1 no. accessible parking space, 2 no. Parent and Child spaces and 1 no. standard parking space have been provided in addition to the set down area. It should be noted that there are also 4 no. dedicated cycle parking spaces provided.

Please also note that there is a proposed lift connecting the North Circular Road with the Salesians area and the proposed creche. Situated in between the two proposed blocks of triplex units, fronting onto North Circular Road, the lift provides universal access to the creche, accommodating parents/guardians with buggies and those with reduced mobility.

**APPENDIX 1.0                    CORRESPONDENCE WITH LIMERICK CHILDCARE COMMITTEE**

**From:** Anne Delaney (Limerick Childcare)  
**Sent:** 30 April 2026 15:59  
**To:** Rosaleen O'Connor | HRA PLANNING  
**Subject:** RE: Cleeves Riverside Quarter - Childcare Facility Requirement

Hi Rosaleen

Please find attached a provisioning report which we have compiled for the Cleeves Riverside Quarter catchment area based on current information available to us.

The report concludes that current provision of childcare is below the EU recommendation and that any development will result in increased demand for childcare.

We also looked over the proposed design for the childcare service and wish to highlight the following:

- The service is quite small with provision for only 36 children and may not be financially viable this would be. The estimate of 7 childcare staff appears too low - it would likely require 8-9 depending on whether the preschool was full or part time. It also does not include any other staff such as a manager or kitchen staff.
- There would need to be a provision for more staff toilets - there are only 2 on the plan, one would be needed exclusively for kitchen staff which only leaves 1 other for 10 staff and the recommendation is 1 – 8 for staff toilets. There is also no provision for a public toilet for families using the service to have use of.
- There may also be a requirement for a children's toilet & washbasin in the room for 1–2-year-olds as they could be toilet trained.
- The reception area is a little unclear as it is marked as reception/office but no clear office design and the buggy store area has a door in the internal corridor of the service. It would be better if the door for this storage could be in the reception area so that there was no need to push a buggy through an internal door before storing, for safety and hygiene reasons.
- There appears to be insufficient car parking spaces and the design does not allow for easy drop off or pick up by car.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind Regards  
Anne

*Anne Delaney  
Manager  
Limerick Childcare Committee  
Croom Mills, Croom  
Co. Limerick  
061 600918/086 6031945*

**Childcare Provisioning Report for Cleeves Riverside Quarter  
Limerick City, April 2026**

| DED Name                                   | Childcare Service Ref | Childcare Places by Age |               |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
|  |                       | u3yrs                   | 3-5yrs        |
| Castle A                                   | 1                     | 0                       | 0             |
| Castle C                                   | 2                     | 0                       | 22            |
| Castle C                                   | 3                     | 0                       | 0             |
| Castle C                                   | 4                     | 0                       | 0             |
| Castle D                                   | 5                     | 0                       | 0             |
|  | <b>Total</b>          | <b>0</b>                | <b>22</b>     |
| <b>Population of these DEDs (CSO 2022)</b> |                       |                         |               |
| Castle A                                   |                       | 41                      | 23            |
| Castle B                                   |                       | 4                       | 16            |
| Castle C                                   |                       | 10                      | 40            |
| Castle D                                   |                       | 13                      | 37            |
| Farranshone                                |                       | 11                      | 34            |
| Coolraine                                  |                       | 23                      | 56            |
| Dock A                                     |                       | 37                      | 138           |
| Shannon A                                  |                       | 10                      | 40            |
|  | <b>Total</b>          | <b>149</b>              | <b>384</b>    |
| <b>DED Population Total Coverage %</b>     |                       | <b>u3yrs</b>            | <b>3-5yrs</b> |
|  |                       | <b>0</b>                | <b>5.73</b>   |

EU recommendation states provision should be:

- 35% for u3yrs; and
- 95% from 3yrs up to School Age

The conclusion from this report is that provision of childcare in all categories is less than the EU recommendation.

*Notes:*

*Data provided is based on most recent information that Limerick CC has access to, including population statistics from 2022.*