

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <b>DAVID MULCAHY</b>  |
|   | <b>CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANT</b>  |
|   | <b>BA.(Mod), MRUP, MSc. Urban Design, MIPI, MRTPI</b>   |
|   | <b>67 The Old Mill Race, Athgarvan, Co. Kildare</b>   |
|   | <b>PH: 045 405030/086 350 44 71</b><br><b>E-mail: david@planningconsultant.ie</b><br><b>www.planningconsultant.ie</b> |

# SCHOOL DEMAND STATEMENT

**Project:** 128 Residential Units, 5 Commercial Units, café, creche & associated site works.

**Address:** Ballinacurra, Midleton, Co. Cork

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## 1.0 Introduction

This school demand statement is prepared to accompany a Large Scale Residential planning application for 128 dwellings and associated works at Ballinacurra, Midleton, Co. Cork

## 2.0 Proposed Development

The applicant seeks permission to provide 128 dwelling units and associated works at Ballinacurra, Midleton, Co. Cork. The residential units will consist of 103 dwelling houses and 25 apartments. 11 no. units will be one bed units.

### 3.0 Policy Context

#### 3.1 National Policy & Trends

Section 4.4 of The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages), 2009 states that:

*Within the development management process, it is recommended that planning applications for **200+ dwelling units** should be accompanied by a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the vicinity to cater for such demand – bold emphasis added.*

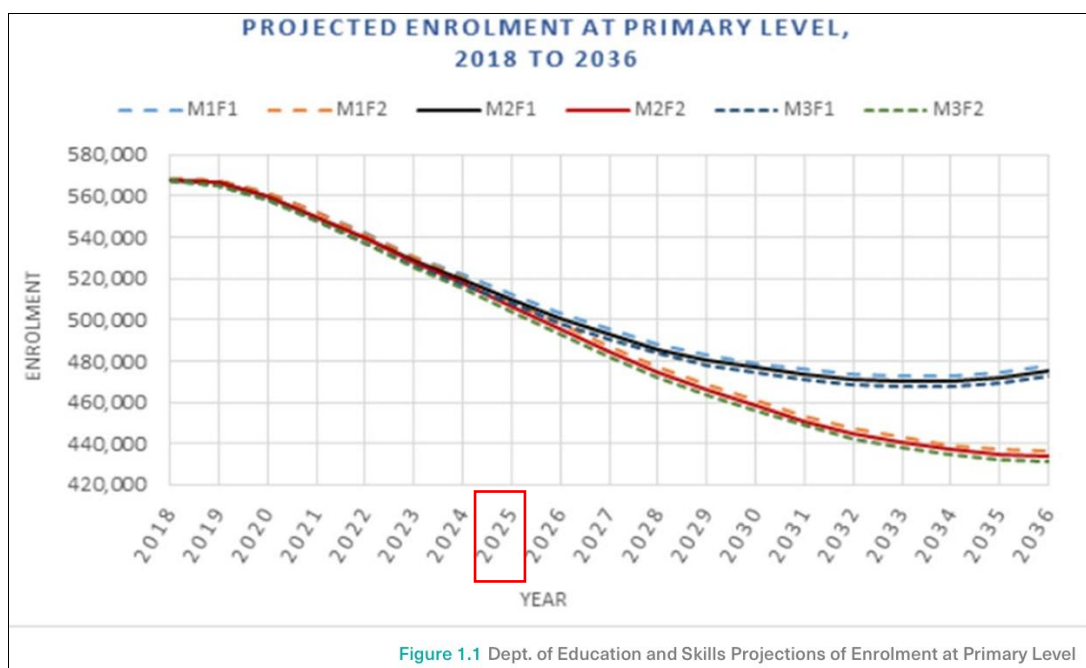
These guidelines were recently replaced by the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024 but the replacement guidelines no longer include any reference to schools – most likely because the provision of schools is the preserve of the Department of Education and cannot be facilitated via a private development.

Notwithstanding same, it is considered that the 200+ unit threshold is still a good barometer of when a school demand report is required and the current proposal is well below this threshold.

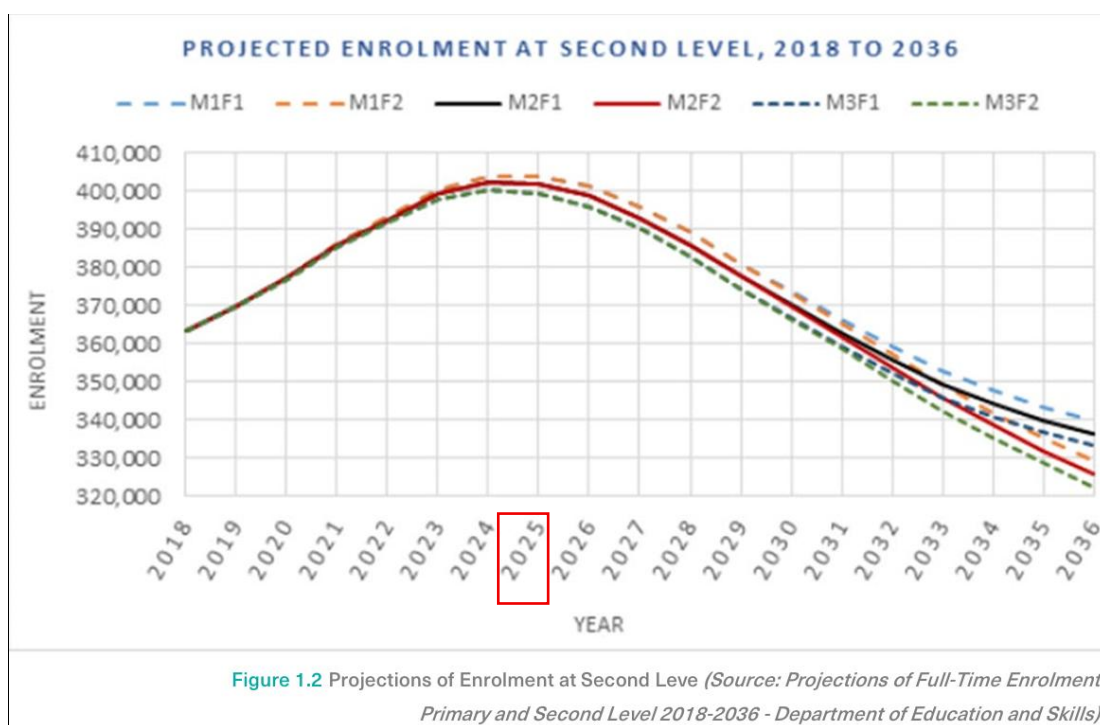
#### Demographic Trends

The Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science published a report 'Education Indicators for Ireland' in February 2022 which presents a comprehensive set of educational indicators for the education system in Ireland.

Part 1 of this report notes that primary school enrolments are on a downward trajectory, having peaked in 2018.



Based on the Department of Education's 2018-2036 projections, the secondary school enrolment figures are envisaged to peak in 2024/2025. Similar to trends for primary schools, a continuous decline in post primary enrolment is then expected until 2036.



### 3.2 Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

The following policies and objectives are relevant:

The Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 includes policy objectives specific to educational institutions in Cork County.

Objective SC 6-5 relates to the provision of educational facilities and states the following:

*Facilitate the provision of educational services in the community such as schools, crèches, and other educational and childcare facilities. Multiuse facilities which can accommodate both educational and childcare facilities are also encouraged.*

Section 6.4.4 of the development plan notes that although the East Cork Secondary Schools Crisis Report identified a school places deficit in East Cork, the Department's most current analysis indicated that above that which is currently being planned and delivered there is no requirement for additional school accommodation provision in the Midleton/Carrigtwohill or Youghal school planning areas.

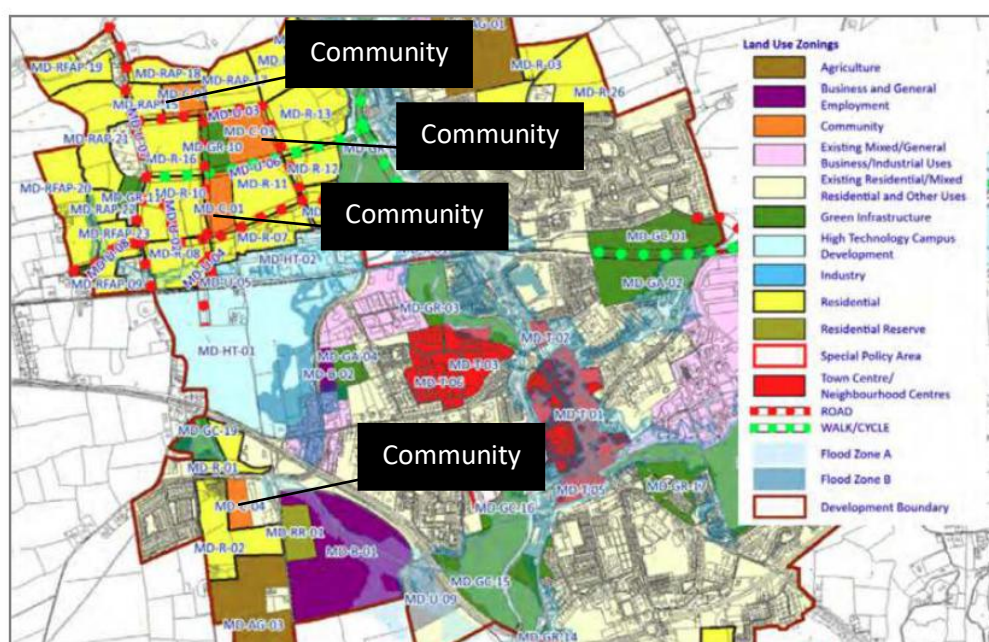
Volume 4 of the Cork County Development plan 2022-2028 provides detailed policies and zoning objectives to the main settlements in East Cork. Section 3.3 relates to Midleton.

Section 3.3.24 notes that the town is well served in terms of educational facilities with five primary schools and four secondary schools in the town. It notes that the Gaelscoil have built a new 24 class primary school in Baneshane. Section 3.3.25 notes that the Christians Brothers Secondary School built a new school on the grounds of their existing complex in recent years and that St. Mary's High School is seeking a new site to accommodate the school's expansion.

Section 3.3.28 highlights that demand from secondary school places in particular can come from the wider hinterland of the town. The Study Area for

this School Demand Report has been carefully identified to ensure the demand from the hinterland is taken into account.

The zoning map for Midleton identifies sites within the Water-Rock Urban Expansion Area, located to the north-west of Midleton, for the provision of two new primary schools and one new post-primary school. It also identifies a site for a school expansion adjacent to the existing Gaelscoil Mhainistir na Corann, located to the south-west of Midleton.



Extract Midleton Zoning Map in Volume 4 of CDP 2022-2028 showing Community zoned lands.

Objective SC 6-6 relates to the provision of educational facilities in large residential developments. It states the following:

- (a) *Provide new educational facilities in accordance with the guidance set out in Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas ...*
- (f) *Require that proposed new large scale residential developments, within existing residential or new residential areas, either as part of an individual development or a collective group of developments include an assessment of the demand for school places likely to be generated by*

*the development and proposals to address any identified increase in demand which may arise.*

Sections 3.3.23 to 3.3.28 note that Midleton has a good range of community facilities and is “well served” in terms of educational needs, with five primary schools and four post-primary schools in the town.

According to the CDP, one of the post-primary schools, St Mary's High School, are actively seeking a new site and are working with the Department of Education in seeking a new site in Midleton that is capable of accommodating the school's expansion plans.

### **3.3 Existing School Facilities**

There have been a number of recent Large Scale Residential applications in Midleton, including one at Castleredmond, Midleton, Co. Cork which is very close to the subject site. The School Demand Statement prepared for that application dated May 2023, provides up to date details on existing childcare provision in the town – **5 primary and 4 post primary schools in total.**

| School  | 2022/2023 Enrolment | Classrooms | Overall Capacity* | Available Capacity |
|---|---------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Midleton CBS                                      | 211                 | 11         | 286               | 75                 |
| St. Brigid's Presentation Catholic Primary School | 350                 | 24         | 624               | 274                |
| St. John's Baptist National School                | 202                 | 8          | 208               | 6                  |
| Gaelscoil Mainistir Na Corann                     | 543                 | 24         | 624               | 81                 |
| Midleton Educate Together                         | 600                 | 23         | 598               | 0                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>1,906</b>        | <b>90</b>  | <b>2,340</b>      | <b>434</b>         |
| *estimated based on PTR                           |                     |            |                   |                    |



| School Name                    | 2022/2023 Enrolment | Available Capacity |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| St. Mary's High School         | 780                 | 20                 |
| Midleton Christian Brothers    | 943                 | 0                  |
| St. Colman's Community College | 960                 | 0                  |
| Midleton College               | 488                 | 0                  |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>3,171</b>        | <b>20</b>          |



Source: Childcare Demand Report for Development at Castleredmond, Midleton, Co. Cork, 2023.

It is noted that the site at Castleredmond was identified for a school but the school demand report submitted with the application for 270 dwelling units concluded there was no need for a school. The Board granted permission and the issue of school capacity was not raised by the Board's Inspector as a concern (ABP-318403-23).

Also, in relation to the decision to grant permission for 125 dwelling units at Maplewood Ballinacurra the An Bord Pleanála Inspectors Report (ABP-317290-23) did not mention any concerns about school capacity in the town.

### **3.4 Proposed Childcare Facilities**

A review of the Cork County Council on-line planning search facility did not reveal any extant permissions for new schools or extension to existing schools within the town.

## **4.0 Analysis**

The development consists of 128 no. units, a creche, commercial units all ancillary site development works.

The 11 no. 1-bedroom units are discounted as these are determined to be unsuitable as family dwellings, as a result a total of 117 no. units are taken into account for the purposes of this future demand assessment.



Based on the national average household size of 2.74 in the 2022 Census, the proposed development will likely generate a population of **320 persons** (117 x 2.74).

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

- ☐ Primary School: 12%
- ☐ Post-Primary School: 8.5%

The proposed development will generate demand as follows:

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Primary School      | 38 |
| Post-primary school | 27 |

The existing primary schools within the catchment area currently have capacity to accommodate c.391 students (434 less 10% for assumed decrease in the existing capacity since the Castleredmond School Demand Statement was prepared in May 2023). It is therefore estimated that there is sufficient space for within the existing primary schools to cater for an additional 38 no. primary school students.

Based on the assessment of existing post primary schools, it is estimated that that there are 18 no. post primary school spaces in Midleton (20 less 10% for assumed decrease in the existing capacity since the Castleredmond School Demand Statement was prepared in May 2023). The estimated 27 no. post primary school spaces required by the proposed development exceeds the current existing capacity in the town.

However, it is important to highlight the following:

Demographic trends indicate that primary school demand has peaked since 2018 and is on a downward trend, while post primary school demand is expected to peak this year (2025) and thereafter follow a downward trend.

The proposed development will not generate an immediate school demand for the entire population. Many of those that will purchase and/or move into the homes are likely to be families either without children or with preschool aged children. It will take some time for the development to mature and for the children to age to primary and post primary school levels. It may be 5+ years before the development is complete, occupied, and generates the estimated primary school demand and could be 10+ years before the proposal generates the estimated post primary school demand.

Moreover, **Cork County Council have zoned lands for an additional 2 no. primary schools in the Midleton area.** These school sites provide the opportunity to provide new capacity to support additional population growth if required.

**A site has been zoned for an additional 1 post-primary school in the Midleton area as part of the Water Rock Masterplan Area.** Should the Department of Education proceed with the development of this school, there will be extra capacity to support additional population growth.

Moreover, there is an opportunity for St. Mary's High School to expand on their campus, which is a popular method for the Department of Education to meet additional school demand where there is a significant increase in population.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The most recent national planning guidelines addressing school demand assessment stated that such assessments are only necessary for housing developments of 200+ units. Although these residential guidelines have been replaced by the new compact settlement guidelines 2024, this threshold is still considered to be relevant in terms of a baseline figure. The current proposal seeks to provide 128 dwellings and is therefore well below this threshold.

Research by the Department of Education into demographic trends has found that the demand for primary schools has peaked and is decreasing while the demand for post-primary is expected to decrease post 2025.

The proposed development involves 128 dwelling units. When one bed units are excluded the development will generate an estimated population of 320 (when one bed units are excluded) and this will give rise to a demand for 38 primary school places and 27 post primary school places.

This report has determined that there is likely to be sufficient capacity to cater for primary school demand but not post primary school demand. In respect of the latter it is important to point out the following:

The proposed development will not generate an immediate school demand and it is reasonable to assume that it may be 5+ years before it generates the estimated primary school demand and 10+ years before the proposal generates the estimated post primary school demand.

Cork County Council have zoned lands for an additional 2 no. primary schools in the Middleton area. These school sites provide the opportunity to provide new capacity to support additional population growth if required.

Also a site has been zoned for an additional post-primary school in the Middleton area as part of the Water Rock Masterplan Area.

There is also an opportunity for St. Mary's High School to expand on their campus, which is a popular method for the Department of Education to meet additional school demand where there is a significant increase in population.

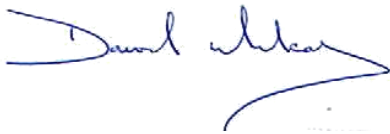
It is noted that the site at Castleredmond in Ballinacurra was identified for a school but the school demand report submitted with the application for 270 dwelling units concluded there was no need for a school. Moreover, the Board granted permission and the issue of school capacity was not raised by the Board's Inspector as a concern (ABP-318403-23).

Finally the subject site has not been identified in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-28 as a site where a school has to be accommodated. We submit that it is the responsibility of the Department of Education, in conjunction with

Cork County Council where necessary, to accommodate post primary school provision in the town of Midleton by way of expansion of existing schools or provision on new schools on lands referred to above.

In light of the above, we consider that the proposed development can proceed.

Signed:



David Mulcahy,  
**David Mulcahy Planning Consultants Ltd**  
**CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS**