

APPENDIX B

County Donegal Development Plan

2006-2012 (as varied)

CHILDCARE STRATEGY



1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Childcare- Government Policy and Initiatives

1.2 The Department of Health and Children, through the Office for the Minister for Children, holds responsibility for the formulation of childcare policy. The Department's brief also includes the last year of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000 – 2006 and the new National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 – 2010 (NCIP).

1.3 Under this umbrella the Department of the Environment issued 'Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' in July 2001 to direct Planning Authorities in Circular PD 5/01 to review or vary their Development Plan to give full effect to the recommendations and policies contained in the Guidelines. A Childcare Strategy was adopted as a variation of the County Donegal Development Plan 2000 (as varied) on 14th October 2002, to guide the physical development of childcare facilities.

1.4 Donegal County Childcare Committee was established in 2001, under the National Development Plans, Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000-2006. It is the committee's role to oversee the development and provision of adequate and appropriate childcare services throughout the County, and to administer and endorse grants to community and private childcare services under the new National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 – 2010 (NCIP).

1.5 The objectives and policies of the previous Childcare Strategy were implemented via the development management process particularly in regard to standards and requirements, throughout all processes from pre-planning to adjudication at applications. These were implemented very much in a development led way either as developers came on board or as a result of the aggregate housing threshold reaching 75 units.

1.6 A notable discrepancy in the previous childcare strategy was the projected population statistics (as detailed in section 4.0 of this report), which were then used to predict the number of childcare facilities required. Accurate up-to-date statistics are again unavailable and population projection statistics have been generated as detailed in section 4.7 of this report.

1.7 In general, the goals, aims and objectives of this strategy have remained as per the previous strategy, however some additional points have been included in the Development Management Advice and Guidelines, Section 10.1.3. This is primarily to ensure that the most appropriate childcare is provided to meet defined need in a proper and accountable manner.

1.8 This childcare strategy promotes the adequate provision of qualitative childcare in the County via objectives and policies as set out in section 7.0 and 8.0 of this document. Donegal County Council will facilitate and promote the development of childcare facilities; it shall not physically provide these facilities.

1.9 The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) is coming to a close in 2006.

1.10 The Childcare Investment Strategy (2006-2010) is coming on stream immediately and Donegal County Childcare Committee shall be responsible for administering this programme in the County.

2.0 INTERPRETATION

2.1 Childcare

The definition of childcare, outlined by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is:

“Childcare” refers to day care facilities and services for pre-school children and school going children out of school hours. It includes services offering care, education and socialisation opportunities for children to the benefit of children, parents, employers and the wider community. Thus services such as naíonraí, day care services, crèches, play groups, childminding and after-school groups are included, but schools (primary, secondary and special) and residential centres for children are excluded.

2.2 Childminding

The Guidelines for local authorities do not cover ‘child minding’, defined as the provision of childcare for no more than 6 children (including the child minders own children) in the child minders own home, as they relate solely to the land use planning aspects of childcare provision. However as childminders play an important role in the childcare provision in a local area, they should be considered in the context of need for future childcare developments.

3.0 EXISTING CHILDCARE FACILITIES

3.1 The Donegal County Childcare Committee Limited manages the updated list of childcare facilities across Co. Donegal. As of September 2005, there were 177 centre-based childcare facilities in Co. Donegal; 156 sessional facilities and 21 facilities providing full day care services. This is an increase of 44 childcare facilities since the 1999 POBOL survey of childcare facilities, an increase of 48 sessional and 5 full day care.

3.2 At the end of 2004, there were 1600 part-time childcare spaces in County Donegal and 390 full-day places across the County. In 2006, the Donegal County Childcare Committee will be conducting a detailed Census on the centre-based childcare facilities across the County, including the number of children attending childcare facilities and ages of participants. The last POBOL survey in 1999, is now out-of-date in providing an accurate reflection of the childcare need across the County.

3.3 According to Donegal County Childcare Committee data from the end of 2004, there were 1,990 childcare spaces available in childcare facilities across Co. Donegal. The vast majority of childcare spaces are in sessional facilities for 3 to 5 year olds, comprising of 80% (1,600 childcare spaces) of all centre-based childcare in the County. The remaining 20% (390 childcare spaces) of centre-based childcare spaces are full-day care spaces for babies, toddlers and afterschool spaces.

3.4 The majority of sessional crèche facilities are community run whilst the majority of full day care crèches are private; see attached maps number 1-4, appendix 3. These maps also illustrate the geographical spread of childcare facilities throughout the County, with concentration in larger towns and urban centres.

3.5 Since 1999, County Donegal has experienced an increase of 44 new centre-based childcare facilities—an increase of 25% since the start of the Equal Opportunities

Childcare Programme. This increase in services is attributed to the EOCP capital and staff funding successfully awarded to both private and community-based childcare facilities across the County.

- 3.6** According to the POBOL data, over €12,000,000 was awarded to the County through the EOCP for existing childcare services already in operation and facilities that have yet to be built. There are still an additional two dozen or more new and expanding childcare facilities awaiting response on childcare funding for new services.
- 3.7** Even with 44 new childcare facilities in the County, the geographic spread of childcare facilities across the County has not significantly changed, with larger urban centres, such as Letterkenny having a high concentration of childcare facilities. According to Donegal County Childcare Committee research conducted in 2003/2004, on the needs and preferences of parents for childcare, *Empowering Parents, Enriching Children*, many areas across the County prefer home-based childcare over centre-based facilities. This preference continues to be reflected in the geographic spread of the centre-based services, see attached map, appendix 3.
- 3.8** The majority of childcare provision in Co. Donegal is pre-school sessional services, such as the playgroup, pre-school and Montessori services for 3 to 5 year olds. School age childcare and childcare for babies and toddlers is not as developed across the County, despite the significant number of children in the 0-4 (10,427) and 5-14 (21,828) age groups, some 23% of the total County population.
- 3.9** Although childminding is not included in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities, childminders play an important role in the childcare need in a local area. Applicants for potential childcare developments need to be aware of the childminders in the locality to fully assess childcare need (more than simply statistics of children in an area). The childminding sector still provides the majority of childcare in County Donegal, by meeting parents' needs and preferences for affordable, flexible childcare.

4.0 DEMOGRAPHY/POPULATION OF CO. DONEGAL

4.1 Child age group 0-19

- 4.2** Although County Donegal continues to be one of the youngest counties in Ireland, with over 32,000 children under 15 years of age, the period between 1996 and 2002 witnessed a decline in child numbers in all electoral areas except the Letterkenny electoral area which saw a small rise from 8669 in 1996 to 8990 in 2002, see table 1. Within this age group however, each EA saw a rise in the numbers of children within the 0-4 age group, and a fall in the numbers within the 5-14 age group. All but the Letterkenny electoral area saw a fall in the 15-19 age group who witnessed a 2% rise, see table 2.
- 4.3** The actual statistics from the 2002 census are at variance to the projected statistics (to 2001) detailed in the childcare strategy of the previous plan. The projected statistics correctly predicted overall child numbers lower than the 1996 census for all electoral areas but Letterkenny, however the overall numbers were projected to be 41,867 in 2001 from 45,941 in the 1996 census (a decline of 9%) whereas census figures for 2002 showed a child population of 43,769 (a decline of 5%).

- 4.4** In addition, the projected statistics indicated a decline of children aged 0-4 in all electoral areas but Letterkenny by 2001, whereas 2002 census show a growth in this age bracket across all electoral areas.
- 4.5** There are some 130 asylum seeker families in Letterkenny who have largely moved in after the 2002 census, with approximately 200 asylum seeker children in Letterkenny comprising 11% of the total number of children aged 0-14 in the town. Immigration from a number of new EU states has impacted on the demographics of County Donegal. The Council will facilitate the development of childcare facilities for asylum seeker children (who may have specific linguistic / cultural needs) and encourage integration with other facilities throughout the County so that integration is a key consideration.
- 4.6** The Travelling community in Letterkenny have a crèche, however this does not meet the needs of all 162 travelling families within the County, nor the nomadic travelling families visiting the area frequently, who would require childcare on a drop-in basis. The Council will facilitate the development of childcare facilities for the travelling community and encourage integration within other facilities throughout the County.
- 4.7 Projected Child Population**
- 4.7.1** The 2002 census recorded the population of County Donegal as 137,575, an average annual percentage increase of almost 1% from the 1996 census, and a total child population (0-14) of 32,225.
- 4.7.2** The CSO Regional Population Projections 2006-2021, published in May 2005, predict that the Border counties will sustain an average annual population increase of 1.2% up to 2021. An analysis of annual birthrates between 1998-2004 (table 3, Appendix 2), have revealed an average annual birth rate growth of 2.25%. Given that this document deals specifically with children up to the age of 14, the continuing trend in birth rate increase of 2.25%/annum has emerged as the most appropriate methodology in arriving at child population projections in the 0-4 age-group. In the 5-14 and 15-19 age groups, the existing numbers have simply been transferred into the next age bracket (see table 4, Appendix 2).
- 4.7.3** Based on the aforementioned methodology solely (no external factors such as death rate/migration/immigration have been assumed), the following child population statistics are projected. The total child population within 0-14 age group will be 30,725 by 2010 compared to 32,225 in the 2002 census. Children aged 0-4 shall number around 10,600 by 2010 compared to 10,427 in the 2002 census, children aged 5-9 shall fall slightly from 10,358 in the 2002 census to a projected 9,698 in 2010, and children aged 10-14 shall also fall in number from 11,470 in 2002 to 10,427 by 2010 (see table 4, Appendix 2).
- 4.8 Male /Female Workforce and implications for Childcare facilities.**
While single-income families are still prevalent across Co. Donegal, there is a rise in women entering and remaining in the workforce. In Donegal in 2002 census, some 16,000 people aged 15 and over opted to stay at home; 95% of this stay-at-home contingent being women. While some of these people may not have children of childcare age, it is prudent to assume that a large proportion does. The aim of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme is to increase the available childcare in order to enable parents to re-enter or enter the workforce, education or begin training.

5.0 NEED AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE FACILITIES

- 5.1** With the announcement of the new National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 – 2010, it continues to be government policy to increase the number and improve the quality of childcare facilities. This new programme and the completion of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000 – 2006 under the Office for the Minister for Children (department of Health & Children) is working towards increasing childcare spaces and is supported by POBAL (formerly ADM Ltd) and locally by the Donegal County Childcare Committee Ltd.
- 5.2** In County Donegal the total number of children aged 0-14 was 32,225, or 23% of the total County population, in the 2002 census. According to Donegal County Childcare Committee data from the end of 2004, 1990 childcare spaces were available (not including childminders in their own home), revealing that just over 6% of children in the county avail of formal childcare services.
- 5.3** Donegal County Childcare Committee have pointed out that whilst population statistics and trends were used as a tool to predict future childcare facilities required in previous childcare strategy, the demand for childcare spaces is county-wide, with full-time spaces needs specifically in urban areas in proximity to centres of business and employment. It should be noted that while some crèche facilities may not be at full capacity in urban areas, the demand may still exist, as the existing spaces may not suit a family situation or may be too expensive.
- 5.4** Research commissioned by the Donegal County Childcare Committee in 2003 / 2004, *Empowering Parents, Enriching Children*, highlighted that the emphasis on childcare should be 'care' for the child, that childcare is required to fill a need for the child's development in addition to supporting parents in work, education and training, and that this is required in all areas both urban and rural throughout County Donegal.
- 5.5** Donegal County Childcare Committee, in their document 'Empowering parents, Enriching Children' found that parents desire flexible, affordable childcare services. As such, the community sector (i.e. services that run without profit by a volunteer management committee) is the preferred service among parents along with the home-based services (i.e. childminders) that provide flexible and affordable childcare options.
- 5.6** In all sections of the County, but in particular in rural areas, the childminding sector also provides childcare spaces that meet the needs of local families.
- 5.7** While it would seem logical that the demand for childcare spaces corresponds directly with the number of children in an area. The demand for childcare continues to increase, especially in urban areas but also in rural areas, not just to assist parents to avail of work, training and educational opportunities but to provide early learning opportunities for children. The Donegal County Childcare Committee works with groups to determine demand/need for facilities and to assist groups ways to gather information on need (e.g. surveys, open meetings for parents).
- 5.8** The quality of facilities must meet Pre-school Services Regulations, 1996. New Pre-school Services Regulations are imminent, and the facilities should also comply with the new regulations once they are implemented.

- 5.9** In the general area of childcare the role of childminding is likely to remain a key part and although not part of this strategy the high percentage share of children being cared for by childminders is a factor in estimating need or demand for other childcare facilities.

6.0 GOALS

- 6.1** To provide a land use planning policy framework that will facilitate, encourage and increase the provision of the best possible childcare facilities in a safe and friendly environment to primarily meet the development needs of children, but also the social and economic requirements of the wider population and to ensure the improvement of the quality of childcare services for the community.
- 6.2** To provide a land use planning policy that strategically considers the need for childcare and amenities for children, especially with job creation initiatives, economic-based developments and residential/housing developments in the County.

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- 7.1** To enable the provision of quality sustainable and adaptable childcare facilities in a variety of locations within reasonable proximity of the population to be served and taking account of the spatial distribution of the population in Donegal.
- 7.2** To identify appropriate locations for the provision of childcare facilities.
- 7.3** To promote equality and address disadvantage/ social exclusion in the provision of childcare facilities.
- 7.4** To promote consideration of alternative/ shared transport, sharing or re-use of existing facilities and mobile facilities to meet the needs of remote areas.
- 7.5** To consult and work with Donegal County Childcare Committee, local development partnerships / groups, Health Boards, and the County Development Board in the provision and monitoring of childcare facilities and in establishing baseline information systems.
- 7.6** To support the provision of childcare facilities using the Irish language in particular in the Gaeltacht.
- 7.7** To recognise childcare as an area of local employment creation and of importance to the social and economic progress of an area.

8.0 POLICIES

8.1 Location of childcare facilities

- 8.2** The Council will promote and support, where the need is identified, the provision of childcare facilities in all towns and villages, and in areas adjoining existing community facilities (eg. Rural schools and churches), with the development standards as set out in section 10.

In rural areas, other than in areas of Especially High Scenic Amenity (EHSAs), where it is demonstrated that existing needs cannot be reasonably met within the towns and villages, and adjoining existing community facilities, consideration will be given to small scale facilities, which are domestic in scale and form.

In areas of Especially High Scenic Amenity (EHSAs), childcare facilities may also be considered in the use / refurbishment of derelict / rundown / dilapidated buildings or new buildings / extensions to existing buildings/ building clusters where the development can be integrated satisfactorily in the landscape.

- 8.3** The Council will co-operate with Údarás na Gaeltachta and local development groups in Gaeltacht areas to facilitate provision of naionraí and facilities for older children as a key element of protecting the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht. Where significant amounts of social and / or affordable housing are being provided by the Council in Gaeltacht areas, facilitation of appropriate childcare facilities as part of the development will be considered. The DCCC also works in the Gaeltacht, along with Udaras na Gaeltachta to ensure the childcare needs in the Gaeltacht area are met.
- 8.4** In all areas, the provision of facilities within, adjacent to or in close proximity to schools, health centres and other community facilities will be encouraged in order to facilitate localised provision, accessibility and sustainable development.
- 8.5** In newer residential areas, district or neighbourhood centres may be identified in local area plans and the location of childcare and other age group facilities will be promoted in these areas.

9.0 NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES

- 9.1** The Guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government recommend 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. A benchmark provision of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings is recommended (A minimum of 20 childcare places). This provision shall be considered on aggregate, i.e. an area that has three 25- house developments would be liable to build and/or support the development of a childcare facility.
- 9.2** The Council shall consider a development charge for childcare facilities on all housing development where no childcare facilities can be provided on site, e.g. where sufficient childcare exists in the vicinity of the site. This charge would form the basis of a County Council Childcare Development Fund, which would be used to assist in establishing childcare facilities in appropriate locations.

- 9.3** All community/private potential providers and developers wishing to open childcare facilities shall liaise directly with Donegal County Childcare Committee to match potential childcare need (i.e. community groups, individuals) with potential childcare space (i.e. a facility provided by a developer).
- 9.4** The recommendation of one facility per 75 dwellings contained in the Childcare Guidelines (June 2001) will be used as an **indicative benchmark only** and modified in accord with the advice contained in Appendix 2 of the Guidelines (Having regard to the make up of the proposed residential area, i.e. an estimate of the mix of community the housing area seeks to accommodate and the result of any recognized childcare needs analysis). As a result of this assessment and collaboration with Donegal County Childcare Committee, the Council will consider whether specific childcare facilities are required as part of that development. Developers may be required to make another more appropriately located site available.
- These childcare provisions will also apply to social and affordable housing.
 - The Council will also consider short-term arrangements within existing housing area where longer-term facilities have not yet been provided.
- 9.5 Support for community sponsored childcare facilities**
Donegal County Council will continue to support community initiated childcare facilities in partnership with Donegal County Childcare Committee.

10.0 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

- 10.1** The erection of a new childcare facility or change of use of an existing building from its present use would normally constitute development requiring planning permission. If however, the existing use and proposed use fall within use class 8 then it would be regarded as exempted development subject to Article 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000 - 2005, Use Class 8 is defined as use;
- (a) as a health centre or clinic or for the provision of any medical or health services (but not the use of the house of a consultant or practitioner or any building attached to the house or within the curtilage thereof, for that purpose).
- (b) As a crèche.
- (c) As a day nursery.
- (d) As a day centre.
- 10.1.1** Development consisting of a house for childminding would also be exempted development subject to Article 10(5) Planning and Development Regulations 2000-2005. 'Childminding' is defined as '...the activity of minding no more than 6 children, including the children, if any, of the person minding, in the house of that person, for profit or gain.'
- 10.1.2** Donegal County Council will work with Donegal County Childcare Committee to develop a detailed development management guidance / PPG note (Planning Policy Guidance Note)' on 'Childcare Facilities and Planning Permission.' This would assist those considering the development of childcare provision.
- 10.1.3** The following criteria will be applied in the assessment of the suitability of childcare facilities:
- Have regard to the Child Care (pre-school Services) Regulations, 1996, in relation to the planning implications of these regulations.
 - Suitability of the site for the type and size of facility proposed.

- Appropriateness of the scale of the operation relative to the area within which it is proposed.
- Potential noise and nuisance generated by traffic or by outdoor play.
- Availability of outdoor play areas and details of management of same.
- Safe access and convenient parking for customers and staff. (The standards to be applied will be considered on the merits of each case. Provision for vehicles to enter and leave a facility in forward gear and/or a lay-by facility along the frontage of developments will be required in most cases).
- Local traffic conditions.
- Number of such facilities in the area and the effect of a proliferation of such uses on the overall character of an area.
- Intended hours of operation (in certain areas, 24 hour operations could be problematic).
- Visual Impact: The effect on the visual amenity and character of an area.
- Demonstrated need for the childcare provision in the area (e.g. through a survey, detailed business plan), regard / awareness of other local childcare facilities.
- Training in the Early Years / Childcare — this is for the applicant to demonstrate a knowledge of the sector and the issues emerging in the sector, including those that impact quality.
- Consultation with the Pre-school inspection team to ensure the plans meet the Pre-School Services Regulations 1996 (if applicable).
- Contact with the Donegal County Childcare Committee to ensure the proper steps to starting a childcare service are taken.

10.2.0 Specific Locations

Residential areas

10.2.1 In primarily residential areas the provision of childcare facilities can prove convenient for users but this must be balanced against retaining the essential residential character.

10.2.2 In **established residential areas** detached houses / sites or substantial semi-detached properties with space for off-street car parking and / or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and also space for an outdoor play area are likely to be more acceptable for the provision of child care facilities. This is especially the case if this involves use of only part of the house and the residential use remains.

10.2.3 The use of terraced properties or semi-detached properties on small plots is less likely to be acceptable for full day care facilities and will be assessed on their merits with regard to the development management principals outlined above. Sessional or after-school care, which is ancillary to the main residential use, may be more appropriate in this regard.

10.2.4 In **new housing areas** developers will be expected to plan for and include provision for childcare facilities. The level of this will depend on the particular circumstances but as a guide one childcare facility for a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate.

10.2.5 **Neighbourhood centres** within residential areas would normally be suitable for childcare facilities provided there is adequate open space either contained within the facility or a safe outdoor play area nearby that is easily accessible. In the latter case, if the play area is not in the applicant's control, details of the owners approval for use will be required. Applicants will also need to provide access and parking which may be in the

form of shared parking/drop-off points with other users and must demonstrate that this right exists. Planning permission may be conditional on these matters.

10.2.6 Premises or sites at the edge or interface of a residential and other areas **adjacent to primary traffic routes** may be acceptable for the provision of childcare facilities where there is safe pull-in and parking areas for customers and staff.

10.3.0 Industrial Areas/Employment Areas.

10.3.1 Childcare facilities may be suitable in **light industrial zones/technology and business parks** especially if they are ancillary to an existing industrial use. They are not suitable in general industrial estates/ mining areas where the hazards and potential dangers of the process carried on or plant and machinery could be injurious to the health and safety of children.

10.3.2 In industrial areas satisfactory access and parking will be required and the provision of or access to a safe outdoor play area.

10.3.3 In **commercial areas/premises**, in the core of town centres, which are heavily trafficked are unlikely to be suitable for childcare facilities due to the potential creation of a traffic obstruction and hazard. In locations where convenient parking and outdoor play space are available, they will be more acceptable.

10.3.4 Childcare facilities are normally appropriate in **educational establishments** such as Third level colleges and national and secondary level schools, which in particular can provide for after school care.

10.3.5 In all cases, childcare facilities must be located at the appropriate distances from establishments with hazardous substances in accord with Schedule 8 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2004.

10.3.6 The following standards will be applied in the consideration of all planning applications for full day-care facilities:

1. Minimum floor space per child: 2.32m², exclusive of kitchen, bathroom and hall, furniture or permanent fixtures. The Explanatory Guide to Childcare (Pre-school services) Regulations, 1996, recommends as follows:
Children aged 0-1 requires 3.70m² per child
Children aged 1-2 requires 2.80m² per child
Children aged 2-6 requires 2.32m² per child
These recommendations relate to clear floor space per child. Extraneous areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas are deemed to be separate.
2. Adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to play indoors and outdoors during the day are provided, having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their age and the amount of time they spend in the premises.
3. The care of babies should be confined to the ground floor only.
4. In relation to drop-in and Sessional services, for pre-school children, the Explanatory Guide to Childcare (Pre-school services) Regulations, 1996, recommends as follows:
 - Clear floor space per child, 2m², exclusive of kitchen, bathroom and hall, furniture or permanent fixtures.

5. In relation to drop-in services for children and after school care, the following indicative standard is suggested (but should be considered having regard to all relevant circumstances of the application, including the need for such services in the area and the likely number of hours each child will spend in the facility on an average day):
 - Clear floor space per child, 2m², exclusive of kitchen, bathroom and hall, furniture or permanent fixtures.
- 10.3.7** An initial assessment by the Pre-School Inspection Team on the proposed plans/premises is recommended to ensure that the ratios and quality of the environment (e.g. proper ventilation, windows) are met.
- 10.4.0 Consultation/Information required for Applications.**
- 10.4.1** It is advisable for an applicant to consult with Planning Section, the Building Control and Fire Officer of Donegal County Council, and the Health Board for the area, prior to submitting an application for a childcare facility. Applicants should also consult with the Donegal County Childcare Committee for support and guidance on the process and especially on strategically understanding the need for childcare in the area applied.
- 10.4.2** Donegal County Childcare Committee, in working with prospective childcare facilities, encourage applicants to create a Business Plan, as with any other business, in order to fully understand the viability of the business. Therefore, it is recommended the applicants submit the information as follows:
 1. Nature of the Facility
 - Full day care
 - Sessional
 - Drop In
 - After School Care
 2. Numbers of children being catered for.
 3. Parking provision for both customers and staff.
 4. Proposed hours of operation.
 5. Open space provision and measures for management of same.
- 10.4.3** The applicant should also be able to demonstrate need (through a survey or by outlining how the facility meets the planning criteria of one facility for 75 new homes).
- 10.4.4** The applicant, in research before applying for planning permission should outline any other childcare facilities in the locality and should consult the DCCC if they are not aware of any other childcare facilities in the area in which they plan to submit an application. This is to ensure there is a strategic development of childcare throughout the County and to avoid duplication.

11.0 REVIEW OF CHILDCARE STRATEGY

In 2006, the Donegal County Childcare Committee will be carrying out a 2006 Childcare Census on the number of childcare spaces, Early Years Practitioners (childcare workers) and breadth of childcare in the County. This additional up-to-date information would further inform future childcare strategy in County Donegal. In light of this information, it is an objective of Donegal County Council to consider another update of the Childcare Strategy following the forthcoming Childcare Census.

CHILDCARE FACILITIES: DEFINITIONS

Crèche/Nursery/Full day care

A **full day** childcare service for babies, toddlers and pre-school children (more than 3.5 hours per day). Many crèche and full daycare facilities provide an afterschool service for school-age children (6 to 14 years of age). Drop-in centres may also provide care for babies, toddlers and pre-school children for a full-day but on an ad hoc basis (e.g. available in a shopping centre)

Sessional Childcare

A structured service of 3.5 hours or less for pre-school age children (2 years 9 months to five years) to develop a child's transition to school. Sessional childcare includes pre-schools, playgroups and playschools. Pre-school services that use a specific educational philosophy, such as Montessori or High/Scope are also forms of sessional care.

Naíonra

A sessional preschool service provided through the medium of the Irish Language. There are a number of naíonra in Co. Donegal in the Gaeltacht areas and throughout the County.

Parent and Toddler Groups

A support service for both parent and toddler providing an opportunity for children to play and socialise while parents meet. Children attending a parent and toddler session tend to be under three years of age, accompanied by their parent or childminder.

School age Childcare/After School Care/Out of School care.

A childcare service for school-age children (aged 6 to 14), with a children-led structure that may include study, play, social activities, usually the two to three hours immediately following school.

Child minding/Home-based childcare

An individual that provides childcare in their own home, or in some cases in the children's home. Child minders registered with the HSE are minding over 3 children (over 6 children and they are classified as a crèche). Many child minders also provide, and are classified as full daycare service.

Childcare is also divided into community and private provision.

Community provision is run by a community group of volunteers (usually parents) on a non-for-profit basis. This can be full daycare, crèche, naíonra, afterschool provision, parent and toddler group. Community childcare tends to be more affordable, although in many areas childcare is one going rate.

Private provision

Private provision is a childcare business that works on a for-profit basis.

TABLE 1

Population of children in County Donegal by census year, age group and electoral area as detailed in section 4.2 of the document.

DONEGAL ELECTORAL AREA				
	0-4	5-14	15-19	Total
1996 (census statistics)	1,610	4,553	2,306	8,649
2002 (census statistics)	1,728	3,798	2,027	7,553
Projected for 2001 in current strategy	1,517	3,613	2,449	7,579
GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA				
	0-4	5-14	15-19	Total
1996 (census statistics)	1,462	4,006	2,077	7,545
2002 (census statistics)	1,538	3,562	1,788	6,888
Projected for 2001 in current childcare strategy	1,440	3,294	2,127	6,861
INISHOWEN ELECTORAL AREA				
	0-4	5-14	15-19	Total
1996 (census statistics)	2,244	5,763	3,068	11,075
2002 (census statistics)	2,592	5,272	2,852	10,716
Projected for 2001 in current childcare strategy	1,899	4,839	3,109	9,847
LETTERKENNY ELECTORAL AREA				
	0-4	5-14	15-19	Total
1996 (census statistics)	1,908	4,417	2,344	8,669
2002 (census statistics)	2,257	4,332	2,401	8,990
Projected for 2001 in current childcare strategy	2,076	4,307	2,290	8,673
MILFORD ELECTORAL AREA				
	0-4	5-14	15-19	Total
1996 (census statistics)	1,025	2,678	1,426	5,129
2002 (census statistics)	1,145	2,481	1,256	4,882
Projected for 2001 in current childcare strategy	831	2,231	1,442	4,504
STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA				
	0-4	5-14	15-19	Total
1996 (census statistics)	1,063	2,471	1,320	4,854
2002 (census statistics)	1,167	2,383	1,190	4,740
Projected for 2001 in current childcare strategy	929	2,175	1,299	4,403

TABLE 2

Electoral Area census population illustrating percentage change and actual change between 1996-2002 census as detailed in section 4.2 of the document.

DONEGAL ELECTORAL AREA				
	1996	2002	% change	No. change
0-4	1,610	1,728	+7%	+118
5-14	4,553	3,798	-17%	-755
15-19	2,306	2,027	-12%	-279
GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA				
	1996	2002	% change	No. change
0-4	1,462	1,538	+5%	+76
5-14	4,006	3,562	-11%	-444
15-19	2,007	1,788	-11%	-219
INISHOWEN ELECTORAL AREA				
	1996	2002	% change	No. change
0-4	2,244	2,592	+16%	+348
5-14	5,763	5,272	-9%	-491
15-19	3,068	2,852	-7%	-216
LETTERKENNY ELECTORAL AREA				
	1996	2002	% change	No. change
0-4	1,908	2,257	+18%	+349
5-14	4,417	4,332	-2%	+85
15-19	2,344	2,401	+2%	+57
MILFORD ELECTORAL AREA				
	1996	2002	% change	No. change
0-4	1,025	1,145	+12%	+120
5-14	2,678	2,481	-7%	-197
15-19	1,426	1,256	-12%	-170
STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA				
	1996	2002	% change	No. change
0-4	1,063	1,167	+10%	+104
5-14	2,471	2,383	-4%	-88
15-19	1,320	1,190	-10%	-130

TABLE 3

Illustrating Annual Birth Rate in Donegal from 1998-2004 and projected Annual Birth Rate (at 2.25%) from 2005-2010, as detailed in section 4.7.2.

Year	Number of births
1998	1,781 (actual)
1999	1,857 (actual)
2000	1,772 (actual)
2001	1,895 (actual)
2002	1,911 (actual)
2003	1,969 (actual)
2004	1,897 (actual)
2005	1,939 (projected)
2006	1,982 (projected)
2007	2,027 (projected)
2008	2,073 (projected)
2009	2,120 (projected)
2010	2,168 (projected)

TABLE 4

Table illustrating existing and projected child population statistics (Based on continuing average trend of 2.25% birth rate increase), as detailed in section 4.7.2.

Year	0-4	5-9	10-14	Total
2002 (2002 census)	10,427	10,358	11,470	32,225
2006 (projected)	7,787	10,427	10,358	30,483
2010 (projected)	8,388	7,787	10,427	30,725