

Water Rock Urban Expansion Area Infrastructure Works – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is this project about?

This project is for Water Rock Urban Expansion Area (UEA) **Infrastructure Works** only. This project is intended to deliver the infrastructure that will activate housing development in a sustainable and orderly way having regard to the requirement to expand Midleton and at the same time ensuring that the UEA is an accessible and attractive place to live and visit.

Why is the project needed?

Lands are zoned at UEA for a range of uses including; phased delivery of c.2500 residential units, two primary schools and one secondary school, parks, business uses and a railway stop. This creates a demand for new infrastructure and changes to existing infrastructure. This project includes interventions that will improve; safety, traffic conditions and connectivity for the wider community of Midleton.

Why is this project proposed for Water Rock?

Water Rock has been recognised by Cork County Council as a very important site for delivering sustainable population and economic growth in Midleton and in the Cork Metropolitan Area for many years. Most recently the East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan identifies the Water Rock UEA as the priority area for population growth in Midleton and to meet future housing needs. The UEA was chosen to form the basis of a major urban expansion of the town of Midleton because of its proximity to the Cork to Midleton railway line. The potential for housing development here was a key factor in the government's decision to fund the re-opening of this railway line in 2009.

What is the vision?

The vision is to implement the Infrastructure Works in a sustainable and orderly way to secure a basis for the future expansion of Midleton at Water Rock UEA, underpinning its population and economic base and to collaborate with key stakeholders to leverage other infrastructure projects such as; national roads, water services, railway, schools and flood relief that will facilitate the expansion and development of Midleton.

Is there funding for the project?

Yes. €5.5million funding has been awarded under the Local Housing Infrastructure Activation Fund (LIHAF) by the Department of Planning Housing and Local Government to Cork County Council in 2017 (following an application process). This funding award was to accelerate the delivery of required infrastructure in order to facilitate future planned development of zoned lands within the Water Rock UEA. The funding is for the first phase of the scheme (Projects 1-4).

What is Part 8 and how does it work?

Part 8 is the process used by Local Authorities to seek planning permission. The proposal is advertised and there is a period of 6 weeks for anyone who wishes to make a submission. All submissions will be addressed and a response will be prepared in the form of a Chief Executive's report. This will contain a recommendation to the Elected Members from the Chief Executive.

The Elected Members will then vote on whether the scheme should obtain permission with or without modifications or be rejected.

The Part 8 commences on **9th November 2018**, the closing date for submissions is **21st December 2018** and the planning permission approval is expected **4th February 2019**. Details of the Part 8 documents and an online submission service will be available on the website <https://www.corkcoco.ie/public-consultation-part-8s>

If the Part 8 is approved when will it all be delivered?

The project will be implemented in phases. Construction of the first phase could start late in 2019 for the projects where the required land is secured/acquired. Subject to planning, there is confidence that the scheme will be fully delivered over time given Government support and funding as well as firm commitment and planning to date from Cork County Council and the appointed Design Consultants.

If the Part 8 is rejected what will happen?

The reasons for rejection would be reviewed. A new Part 8 application may be prepared if there is a reasonable chance of success. Alternatively the funding may be at risk and the project may not proceed as planned.

How much will the overall project cost?

The estimated construction cost (excluding land acquisition) of proposed infrastructure works 1 to 7 is €11.9 million. This is based on the preliminary designs and may change as the project progresses. The construction of infrastructure works project 8 (the pumping station and rising main and associated costs) are being separately funded through Irish Water and it is intended that this infrastructure would be implemented by Irish Water (independently of any of the other infrastructure). The cost of this infrastructure item is to be confirmed.

The LIHAF funding will not cover all you have included in the Part 8?

The LIHAF funding is associated with funding strategic infrastructure for the first phase of the scheme, which, in combination with development contributions, will facilitate the development of later phases. It is anticipated that later phases will be funded predominantly through development contributions. Other sources of funding will also be investigated, in relation to the Rail Stop in particular.

Has flood risk and historic flooding at Water Rock been considered?

A flood risk assessment (FRA) for the Water Rock UEA Infrastructure Works has been undertaken. This includes detailed hydraulic modelling and analysis of the Water Rock Stream which were informed by historic flooding events. These infrastructure works have been designed such that they are not vulnerable to flooding, do not increase flood risk elsewhere and remain accessible to emergency services during an extreme flood event. Implementation of these works and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) within the UEA such as flow attenuation will act to slightly reduce the flows within the Water Rock stream during flood events.

The Midleton Flood Relief Scheme team consisting of Cork County Council, the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Arup Consulting Engineers are working separately on a Flood Relief Scheme project for Midleton. The Midleton Flood Relief Scheme team were consulted during the preparation of the FRA. Preliminary technical information from that project was used in the FRA.

What about traffic?

The infrastructure works include extensive measures which aim to encourage sustainable transport modes and discourage car use. These include the provision of a new railway stop in a location central to the UEA to facilitate commuting to employment centres along the Cork to Midleton railway corridor. It also includes the provision of off-road walking and cycling facilities and traffic management measures to reduce speeding to make sustainable modes of transport more attractive from an early stage in the development of the UEA.

Cork County Council have commissioned the Water Rock Strategic Transport Assessment for the Water Rock UEA. Based on the completion of extensive traffic modelling work for this assessment (using industry standard software and most current data) infrastructure projects 1, 3, 4 and 6 will allow the development of Phase 1 of the Water Rock UEA i.e. 1054 housing units, a new primary school and office, retail and leisure space without significant impacts on the local road network. As the Water Rock UEA develops beyond Phase 1 (c. 1054 houses) and other development takes place at Carrigtwohill and elsewhere, further upgrades will need to be progressed.

Why is it proposed to close the Water Rock Road to vehicular traffic at the level crossing?

This proposal is to ensure that the Water Rock UEA development does not result in additional traffic movements at the existing Water Rock Road / N25 junction as it is unsuitable for accommodating these additional movements.

I live on Water Rock Road. What routes will be available to me?

It is intended that the Services Corridor Link Road connecting the Water Rock Road and the Midleton Northern Relief Road will be completed prior to erecting the bollards proposed at the crossing. Pedestrian and cyclist movements at the level crossing will still be possible.

Residents living to the north of the closure will be able to use the Services Corridor Link Road as an alternative route between Midleton and the Water Rock Road. Residents living to the south of the closure will experience significantly less traffic on this part of the road. Access will be available from both the westbound and eastbound carriageways of the N25 to these properties. Residents travelling westbound on the N25 carriageway who do not wish to use the right turn lane into Water Rock Road will have other options e.g. they can continue to Carrigtwohill where they can exit the N25, cross the N25 on the flyover towards Carrigtwohill and re-emerge on the N25 eastbound lane from which they can access the Water Rock Road.

Subject to upgrade of the N25, the need for the closure at the Railway Crossing may be revisited in the future.

Have the environmental impacts of the project been examined?

Yes, detailed environmental/ecological studies have been undertaken which have informed an environmental impact assessment report screening document that is available on the website for review. In addition, an appropriate assessment screening report has been prepared. In both cases the local authority is satisfied that the proposed infrastructure works will not require an environmental impact assessment or an appropriate assessment.

What about the cultural heritage impacts of the project, have they been assessed?

An archaeological, architectural and built heritage impact assessment has been undertaken and is available on the website for review.

How will the land be acquired?

Formal negotiation on land acquisition will only begin when planning permission has been obtained. Engagement with landowners has already begun and will continue to reach a satisfactory agreement for all parties. If this is not possible an application for compulsory purchase will be made to An Bord Pleanála.

How does CPO work?

A Compulsory Purchase Order is a legal function that allows certain statutory bodies (including Local Authorities) which need to take land or property to do so without the consent of the owner so as to allow a public infrastructure project to go ahead for the common good. www.citizensinformation.ie contains helpful information in relation to the land acquisition and compulsory purchase order process, including landowner rights.

What services will be provided below the new roads?

It is proposed that services including electricity, gas, water mains, wastewater, telecoms will be provided below the new roads.

What about the future Water Rock housing development?

Future housing development at Water Rock will be subject to separate future planning processes. There will be an opportunity to make submissions or observations with respect to future housing development as part of those planning processes.

Where can I find out more?

Further information is available

<https://www.corkcoco.ie/public-consultation-part-8s>

How do I make a submission or observation?

Submissions or observations may be made via the online submission form on www.yourcouncil.ie or in writing to Senior Planner, Housing infrastructure Implementation Team, Cork County Council, County Hall, Cork

