



Press Release 12 December 2018

Minister Creed visits Haulbowline Island to Mark the Conclusion of the East Tip Remediation Works

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., joined by Mayor of the County of Cork Cllr Patrick Gerard Murphy and Chief Executive of Cork County Council Tim Lucey, has visited Haulbowline Island to mark the substantial completion of the remediation of the former East Tip.

Haulbowline Island, in the heart of Cork Harbour, is home to the headquarters of the Irish Naval Service and was formerly the location of Ireland's only steelworks, Irish Steel (later Ispat) from 1939 until its closure in 2001. Around 650,000 cubic metres of by-products and waste from the steel production was deposited over a 40-year period on the 9ha (22 acres) shallow sand spit, extending eastwards from the Naval dockyard.

The Government approved a proposal to enable the clean-up of the East Tip on Haulbowline Island in 2011. The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine was appointed to lead on the project on behalf of Government and commissioned Cork County Council to act as agents for the supervision and execution of the remediation works. Over the course of the intervening period the Council and the Department have overseen a series of works, starting out with upgrades to the bridge and road infrastructure to facilitate construction traffic, and the extensive works on the former East Tip site itself commenced in October 2017. The land on the East Tip has now been remediated with 47,000 tonnes of rock armour material brought onto the site to protect the shoreline and a further 180,000 tonnes of subsoil and 37,000 tonnes of topsoil brought onto the site to bring the history of exposed waste on the site to a close. Featuring playing pitches, walkways and cycle ways, the site has also been landscaped with over 200 trees, woodland mix planting, native mix planting and wildflower areas. A number of seating areas are located at strategic points to capture the key viewing points, while bird screens offer ideal wildlife observations.

Commenting on the transformation, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD referred to the environmental benefits of the project: “The comprehensive remediation works which have taken place here at Haulbowline Island have transformed a site which previously was a blight on the environment of Cork Harbour, renewing this part of the island. The benefits of these works will resonate with the near neighbours and surrounding areas of Haulbowline Island for generations to come. I have followed the progress of the works with great interest since my site visit last December and am very pleased to be back again to see the impressive results. I would like to pay tribute to the principal contractor PJ Hegarty & Sons Ltd., the officials in my Department involved and the Cork County Council project team, for delivering such a large, complex project in such a modest timeframe.”

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Patrick Gerard Murphy noted the significance of the project and how the result will benefit residents and visitors alike, “Haulbowline Island is hugely important from both a local and national perspective. We have come a long way with this and ultimately, the Council want to see this site fulfil its potential to become a fantastic park for the people of Cork which will also offer another jewel in the crown for Cork tourism.”

Chief Executive of Cork County Council, Tim Lucey highlighted how the Council have been committed to ensuring that the remedial solution and amenity development was completed in accordance with current relevant national and international best practice and guidance, “This project has been many years of waiting and a tremendous amount of work but the result is clear to see. In the future, Haulbowline Island Recreational Park will be an enormous benefit to local communities and will join the ever increasing number of amenities within Cork Harbour.”

Cork County Council is actively taking steps to secure the future of the site to operate as Haulbowline Island Recreational Park with a view to being opened in 2019, pending approval of any necessary consents and outstanding works.

Notes for Editors

The Government approved a proposal to enable the clean-up of the East Tip on Haulbowline Island in 2011. Cork County Council is acting as agent of the Minister in the remediation of the site. Key milestones of the remediation project were the planning application for works on the East Tip, lodged with An Bord Pleanála in October 2013 and the waste licence application, submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency in November 2013. The approval of both planning and waste licence applications, which involved complex and detailed preparatory work, cleared the way for the completion of the project in the East Tip. Enabling works included improving the roadway leading onto Haulbowline Island and strengthening the bridge connecting it with Ringaskiddy to allow the removal of heavy scrap metal and the hauling capping materials for the East Tip.

Haulbowline Island is located within Cork Harbour, between Cobh to the north and Ringaskiddy to the south. The East Tip contains approximately 650,000m³ of steelworks waste that was deposited on a sand spit over a 40 year period. Access to the Island by road is from Ringaskiddy via bridges which traverse Rocky Island.

ENDS

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