

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COBH AND EAST CORK MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CORK ON TUESDAY 24TH JULY, 2018

Chairing: Cllr. N. Collins
Present: Cllrs. G. Keohane, P. O’Sullivan, A. Barry, D. O’Cadhla (all Cobh); S. McCarthy, M. Hegarty, M. Linehan-Foley (all East Cork)

Officials: R. Palmer, Senior Executive Planner; Donald Cronin, Senior Executive Engineer; Sharon McDonnell, Asst. Planner; S. O’Callaghan, Senior Executive Officer; P. Lynch, Municipal District Officer; C. McDonnell, Cobh Municipal District

In Attendance: John O’Callaghan, Atkins Consulting Engineers
John O’Mahony, O’Mahony Pike Architects

An apology for their inability to attend was received from Cllrs. D. Twomey, M. Ahern, C. Rasmussen, S. Sheppard and K. McCarthy

1: Water Rock Urban Expansion Area Infrastructure Works

R. Palmer advised the members that Cork County Council had applied for LIHAF funding for a number of projects in the Metropolitan Cork Area and that approval had been given for 3 sites – Carrigaline, Glanmire and Water Rock. He stated that the LIHAF scheme provided 75% funding for projects with the balance to be raised by the Council. In relation to Water Rock, the Council had put forward 3 projects for LIHAF funding. These were the design and construction of a road linking Water Rock road to the Midleton Northern Relief Road; the installation of a storm water drainage system; and an upgrade to the Knockgriffin Junction in Midleton. Cork County Council had engaged Atkins to prepare for Part 8s for these 3 projects, plus 4 additional projects in the area. They had also engaged O’Mahony Pike Architects to look at preparing an Urban Design Framework for housing in this area.

John O’Callaghan (ATKINS) made a presentation to the members in relation to the 7 projects being considered for Part 8. He stated that the proposals would facilitate the construction of 2,500 houses. The proposed projects were:

1. Corridor Link Road – linking Water Rock Road and the Northern Relief Road. The objective is to provide alternative access to Water Rock road and to facilitate housing in adjoining lands covering 6 landowners. The proposal is for a 7m wide carriageway with footpaths and cycle paths on both sides.
2. Surface Water Drainage – to accommodate the design flows to be generated by the proposed infrastructure. The proposal is to provide a collection and attenuation system to accommodate water run-off from the proposed infrastructure and housing. These proposals had been drawn up in consultation with those dealing with the Midleton Flood Relief Scheme
3. Upgrade to Knockgriffin Junction – presently there are regular long queues at this junction from the N25 junction. The proposal is to turn the left only turn coming from the N25 into a left and straight ahead, with a merge lane to the east of the junction to

allow traffic to merge. In addition, the right hand turn from the eastern side would be prohibited and the traffic light phasing would be altered to optimise the layout.

4. Traffic Management Measures for Water Rock Road to prevent additional traffic movements at the junction with the N25 as required by TII. Under the proposal vehicular access on Water Rock Road would be blocked at the level crossing although pedestrians and cyclists could still access the road.
5. New Road over Rail Bridge to provide access to commercially zoned lands to the south of the rail line and to facilitate a future removal of the level crossing at the Dawn Meats site. Allowance was being made to facilitate a second track if required as well as possible future electrification of the rail line.
6. New Railway Station along Cork Midleton rail line to serve the future housing development of this site. The station would serve the proposed housing lands as well as the commercial zone and would be close to the proposed primary and secondary schools. The station would prioritise cyclist and pedestrians with no car parking spaces provided, apart from disabled bays.
7. Upgrade/realignment of Water Rock Road – to provide access to development lands to the west of the road with safe provision for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposal is for a 6.5m wide carriageway with a cycle path and footpaths on both sides.

He stated that it was hoped to go to Part 8 on the proposal in September with construction to commence in summer 2019

John O'Mahony (O'Mahony Pike Architects) made a presentation in relation to the proposed Urban Design Framework for the development of the lands in this area for housing. He outlined possible design concepts and layout to achieve the level of density that An Bord Pleanála would require while still making the area an attractive place to live. He stated that development of the site would allow public access through green areas and connecting pathways to maximise the benefits for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposals included provision for a Greenway through the site.

In response to the presentations, the following contributions were made by Councillors:-

- Cllr. Michael Hegarty stated that the members had been provided with a lot of information at the meeting and that it was unfortunate that they had not been given access to handouts either before or at the meeting. He stated that he had concerns with some aspects of the proposals. He asked for details of the cost of the proposed link road. He asked if gas and broadband services would be included in the infrastructure. He asked for further detail in relation to the underground drainage collection system including details of its capacity. He had concerns in relation to blocking the right hand turn from Midleton onto the Northern Relief Road at Knockgriffin and noted that the proposal also seemed to prevent vehicles exiting Abernathy's garage turning right back towards Midleton town centre. He outlined concerns in relation to the access onto the N25 from the Gaelscoil site and stated that the proposals did not appear to address this. He stated that he felt that the access road to the proposed schools should be included in the Part 8. He had concerns in relation to the capacity of the existing foul sewer and its ability to deal with the additional usage. He had concerns in relation to the proposal to close Water Rock road at the level crossing and asked about the impact of this on the existing businesses, including the golf course, on that road.
- Cllr. Susan McCarthy stated that she agreed with many of the points raised by Cllr. Hegarty. She had a major issue with the proposal for the Knockgriffin junction,

particularly the proposal to introduce a merge lane to the east of the junction. She stated that at present there were difficulties for customers exiting the garage at this location and the merge lane would make this worse. She asked for greater clarity in relation to the proposed road over the rail bridge. She outlined the fact that there were previous problems with flooding at Water Rock and stated that she hoped that the capacity of the sewer would be sufficient. She asked if the Greenway through the site would tie in with the proposed Midleton to Youghal Greenway.. She asked if the proposed closure of Water Rock road would be only for the duration of the works or if it would be permanent.

- Cllr. Anthony Barry stated that he was unhappy with the lack of any advance information for members given the complexity of the information being provided to them. He stated that 14 landowners were involved in this area and asked if one or two could hold up the entire project. He had concerns in relation to the storm water issue and the capacity of the underwater collection system and asked who would maintain the system. He stated that he had concerns generally with car speeds within housing areas and stated that there needed to be steps taken to minimise speeds. He asked if Councillors could be given access to any modelling done of the changes to the Knockgriffin junction as he shared the concerns raised by other members. He agreed with Cllr. Hegarty that the junction from the Gaelscoil onto the N25 was unsuitable at present. He outlined concerns with the median crossing at Water Rock which he said was particularly dangerous at peak traffic times. He asked if the N25 would be upgraded to meet the additional need if this development went ahead. He stated that he had concerns with high density and was not convinced that there was a demand for apartments in Ireland. He was not happy with the lack of provision of serviced sites in the proposal to facilitate people who wanted to design and build their own houses.

In reply to the contributions made, Ross Palmer stated that a large number of issues had been raised by the members and that he would try to answer as many queries as possible. He stated that the Council had commissioned a transport assessment in relation to the proposals and that this report was due to be delivered in mid-August. This assessment would include modelling for the Knockgriffin junction as well as the Water rock Road, Carrigane Road and the access onto the N25. The assessment would look at the impact of 520 houses which was the first stage of the proposal. It would then look at the impact of every additional 500 houses until the target of 2,500 houses was reached. He stated that the Council had met with TII in relation to the N25 upgrade and had been advised that if the go-ahead was given to the upgrade, it would be delivered within 7 to 8 years. As the proposed development of Water Rock was scheduled to take up to 20 years, the upgraded road would be in place in plenty of time.

He stated that the Council had received a submission in relation to the access to the proposed secondary school. There was no requirement for the road to be included in the Part 8 as the school was not planned for the near future. The Department of Education was currently assessing the need for a new primary school at present.

He confirmed that the Council had considered the issue of flooding and drainage in their plans. They were engaging with the designers of the proposed Midleton Flood Relief Scheme in relation to the proposals. A full examination of the site had been carried out and the Council was satisfied that their designs were the best available. He stated that any run-off from roads could be dealt with in the Owenacurra River.

He stated that he was aware of the demand for serviced sites and he would look at how this could be incorporated into the proposals. He stated that the council is required to comply with density guidelines. There was a need to ensure that the development resulted in a safe and attractive place to live.

John O'Callaghan stated that the estimated cost of the link road was €3.5million. He confirmed that the proposal would include provision for gas and broadband services. Cork County Council would be responsible for maintenance of the attenuation system once it was in place. He stated that modelling had been carried out in relation to the issue of flooding of the water rock stream and that studies in this regard were being undertaken at present.

Cllr. Hegarty asked when the traffic assessment would be ready. He stated that he still had concerns in relation to the underground system. He repeated his view that the access road for the proposed secondary school should be part of the Part 8 application.

Cllr. Barry stated that he agreed with Cllr. Hegarty in relation to the school access road. He asked if residents would have to pay for the maintenance of the planting being proposed in the sketches provided by O'Mahony Pike.

Ross Palmer stated that he was willing to talk to Cllr. Hegarty after the meeting in relation to the issue of the access road. He stated that the Council laws looking at the Development Contribution Scheme in relation to the funding for green areas. He stated that maintenance of the green areas would be managed in the same way as was done in Ballincollig and other large green areas across the County. He stated that 70-80% of the work had been done in relation to the project and that they were working on the balance. He stated that he was willing to have a further meeting with the members prior to starting the Part 8 process.

Cllr. Hegarty stated that he wished to have It recorded that members were looking for a further joint meeting to discuss the proposals.

This concluded the business of the meeting:

CATHOIRLEACH

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OFFICER