

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COBH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CORK ON FRIDAY 20TH JULY, 2018

Present: Cllrs. G. Keohane, P. O'Sullivan, S. Sheppard, A. Barry, K. McCarthy, D. O'Cadhla & C. Rasmussen.

Officials Present:

N. Sheridan, Senior Planner
P. Lynch, Cobh Municipal District
A. Walsh, Cobh Municipal District

1: Strategic Housing Development at Ballyleary, Cobh

N. Sheridan stated that an application had been lodged with An Bord Pleanála for 311 residential units on this site, which also included ancillary development to include a crèche, play areas and additional vehicular accesses. The application is available for inspection by the public, who may make submissions up to 31st July to the Board, the Chief Executives report, to include observations and comments from the members is due by 21st August. Several pre-planning meetings had been held in relation to this proposed development; at the first of these the Board recommended increasing the density from 210 residential units to the current 311. Several issues were identified by the Board as requiring further clarification including the Infrastructure and Connectivity. The developer had proposed that traffic lights could be installed at the junction near the Cross River Ferry and that a proposed train station at Ballynoe should alleviate some of the traffic on the Tay Road, however these proposed solutions had been submitted prior to obtaining full agreement with Planners and Engineers from Cork County Council. Several pinch points had been identified by Cork County Council in relation to providing pedestrian and cycling access to the town of Cobh, no solution to these had yet been found, however the developer would be widening the small access road immediately to the east of the site for the full length of the lands within the developer's control

Cllr. Rasmussen raised several concerns in relation to the development: the road network immediately adjacent to the site was particularly poor and the developers' proposal to develop a link road across the site to bypass a dangerous junction onto the Tay Road was only moving the problem of traffic congestion, not solving it. Also the proposed traffic lights at the Ferry would cause chaos as the traffic at peak times was already backing up on that road, past the junction where it was proposed to place the lights. Cllr. Rasmussen and other members also queried when any upgrade to the road network would take place, as the development was scheduled to take place in phases over approx. 10 years. Cllr. Rasmussen also raised concern about the lack of plans for future school building, stating that already there were not enough school places for the current population.

Cllr. Sheppard also raised questions about the road network immediately adjacent to the site as several local residents had had one-off houses refused planning permission in the area due to the sub-standard nature of the road network in the area, the same road network that was now expected to serve over 300 units. Cllr. Sheppard also queried the increased density of this site following meetings with the Board and the requirement for same. She also raised the

issue of access in general to the Great Island, as it was the only road onto the Great Island, was not even classed as a National Route and plans to upgrade the Fota road had been ongoing for some years, with no solution in sight. Cllr. Sheppard stressed and other members agreed, that the members were not opposed to further development in Cobh but that the infrastructure had to be capable of absorbing it and the members had to have regard to the quality of life for existing residents and the impact this and other development would have on them.

Cllr. K. McCarthy stated that many residents from the Rushbrooke Links area were already using the Tay Road and Cow Cross junction to access the R624 as this was a better option than going past the ferry, as far as he was concerned any attempts to encourage traffic to use this route as an alternative were doomed to failure. He also pointed out that an estate between this site and Cooline is now being developed and it had been proposed that a new road would be developed to link this area to the Tay Road and that never went ahead. Cllr. McCarthy queried whether the Board can still grant permission even though the connectivity and transport issues have not yet been agreed with the Local Authority.

Cllr. P. O'Sullivan queried the purpose of the meeting and whether it was compulsory. N. Sheridan replied that the legislation required that that the members be briefed and their views recorded. Cllr. O'Sullivan asked whether there was an overall traffic management plan for the Great Island, as had been developed for Little Island. N. Sheridan replied that as far as he was aware a Draft Plan had been developed. P. Lynch stated that only traffic plans he was aware of related to Little Island and Cobh town centre, not the Great Island as a whole. Cllr. O'Sullivan also asked whether this was the final meeting in relation to this development or would the members get a chance to scrutinise further aspects of this development? N. Sheridan anticipates that Special Contributions may be levied and that other aspects of the development may require Part 8 approval, which would then come before the members.

Cllr. O'Cadhla sought clarification on whether the residents in the area would have a forum in which to express their concerns. N. Sheridan stated that it was at the discretion of the Board to allow an oral hearing but that this was generally the exception not the rule. Cllr. Rasmussen stated the residents will request Oral hearing in their submission. Cllr. O'Cadhla noted that the developer had agreed to fund local road improvements and queried whether this option had been explored and quantified. He stated that the lack of infrastructure was crippling development in Cobh and that the issue of access needs to be addressed.

Cllr. A. Barry raised concerns about the proposed pedestrian connectivity through the Councils lands to the northwest of the site. P. Lynch confirmed that a temporary road existed through those lands to the Temporary Waste Water treatment plant there, but that this did not connect to this site and that plans had not yet been finalised for the amenity facilities on the Council lands. Cllr. Barry confirmed with N. Sheridan that the Board was not bound by decisions made by the members at this meeting or indeed bound by the Local Area Plan for the area, it was completely independent and would make its decision regardless of what was discussed at this meeting.

It was agreed that the following points should be included in the Chief Executives Report:

1. The lack of infrastructure and the timeline for completion
2. That this development should not go ahead until such time as the infrastructure has been put in place
3. The lack of pedestrian connectivity to Cobh Town

The members also requested that they be given a copy of the CEO's report.

This concluded the business of the meeting:

CATHOIRLEACH

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OFFICER