

## **In the matter of the Compulsory Purchase Order**

**Cork City Council – Lisheens Ballincollig Acquisition Order No.4 Of 2022**

### **In the matter of an Oral Hearing before An Bord Pleanála**

#### **Brief of evidence of Frank Lewis,**

My name is Frank Lewis and I am a Senior Architect in the Professional & Technical Section, of the Planning & Building Unit in the Department of Education.

I have been asked to advise in relation to the lands and premises the subject of the above referred to Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) which are being acquired by the Council to make same available to the Department of Education for the provision of two schools. In particular I have been asked to give my professional opinion as to the need for the lands being acquired for the provision of the two schools which it is intended to construct on the lands in question.

The Department of Education has published two technical guidance documents (TGD) relating to the identification and suitability assessment of sites for schools. They are:

TGD-025: Identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Primary Schools 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, January 2012 (Rev 1, September 2019); and

TGD-027: Identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Post Primary Schools 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, January 2012 (Rev 1, September 2019).

As Ireland experienced significant demographic and settlement adjustments in spatial planning terms during the implementation of successive national development plans (1994-1999) (2000-2006) (Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All: 2007-2013); the latter two being implemented under the *National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020*; and currently *Project Ireland 2040* being implemented under the *National Planning Framework (NPF)*. This saw a reversal of the normal outward migration particularly in the early and mid-stages of the NSS. Demand for school places was immediate, and the projections for an increasing population determined the need to identify many new school sites as a priority very quickly.

It was determined that a “multi-agency” approach was required to adequately provide school sites and school places in a timely way. This was formalised, managed and implemented through *The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Education & Skills and the County & City Managers’ Association (CCMA) on acquisition of sites for school planning purposes* (2012).

As part of this implementation strategy it was considered necessary to codify practice and standards in relation to school design and operation. The introduction of the DES technical guidance documents was a significant part of that.

**Assumptions and Methodology for implementing the MoU and TGDs for Identification and Suitability Assessment of Schools sites:**

The guidance documents were developed based on a sample set of schools planned and constructed in the preceding years. The guidance establishes that each school is a combination of several elements apart from the school building. In the TGD guidance each element is identified including the site footprint that it generates. When all the elements are identified and quantified a % is added to facilitate the separation areas between the elements and neighbouring properties. This is how the overall site area is determined.

The school site elements represented within the guidance documents is a combination of

- (i) Department of Education required school facilities and amenity outputs (school brief), and
- (ii) Site specific development issues determined through the planning process in each case.

**Content of a new school building project, or a new shared education campus:**

Following the completion of the statutory plan Cork City Development Plan 2022 -2028 Forward Planning & Site Acquisition Section of the Department of Education has reconfirmed the enrolment demand for school places in the Ballincollig area. It has been determined that the following additional school accommodation will be required for approximately 1,600 pupils across the primary and post-primary schools sectors. Reference in this regard should be had to the evidence of Murty Hanly also of the Department of Education.

The identified solution is for a shared education campus consisting of two new school buildings to accommodate the projected enrolment through growing the two existing schools in town and providing them both with new and permanent school accommodation on part of the lands known as the Tanner property at Lisheen, Ballincollig.

The proposed use of the land and the development to be carried on same once acquired by the Council and made available to the Department shall consist of:

1 x primary school with 24 mainstream classrooms, special education needs class-bases, ancillary accommodation, outdoor school amenities and school specific site infrastructure. The gross internal floor area (GIFA) of the new primary school will be in the order of 4,500 m<sup>2</sup>.

Refer to Appendix 2: Schedule of Overall Accommodation (Primary); and

1 x post-primary school with a long-term projected enrolment (LTPE) of 1,000 pupils. It shall incorporate mainstream and specialist teaching classrooms and spaces, special education needs accommodation, a general purpose area for assembly and dining, a Physical Education Hall and fitness suite, ancillary accommodation, outdoor school amenities and play areas including a turf practice pitch where the site area allows. The gross internal floor area (GIFA) of the new primary school will be in the order of 10,500 m<sup>2</sup>.

Refer to Appendix 3: Schedule of Overall Accommodation (Post-Primary).

Refer to Appendix 1: (Indicative Site Layout plan for a Shared Education Campus [SEC]):

The **indicative site layout plan** demonstrates a measured and to scale possible campus layout. It incorporates all the elements of both schools and their outdoor facilities and infrastructure, and is considered to be representative of a typical school project following design development and consultation with the Planning Authorities regarding statutory, engineering and environmental considerations of a planning application. These design assumptions are based on my considered experience in school capital programme delivery over 26 years.

It is considered that a full GAA turf pitch will be difficult to achieve on the site. This is due to a combination of the location, size and configuration of the site boundaries and the likely constraints imposed by adjacent properties and infrastructure. It is possible however to provide a smaller practice pitch, or even a soccer or rugby pitch for each school.

I consider that on balance the level of accommodation, amenity and facility that will be provided for the pupils of Ballincollig as a shared education campus at the Tanner Site, Lisheens, is the best currently available. I confirm that, in my opinion the lands being acquired are necessary for the development proposed on same and that the land acquisition is not for any more land than that reasonably required for the development in question.

Frank Lewis

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