



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-304689-19

Case Reference / Description	262 no. residential units (44 no. apartments and 218 no. houses), crèche and associated site works. Lands at Rathevan, Kilminchy, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.		
Case Type	Section 5 Pre-Application Consultation Request		
Date:	22, July, 2019	Start Time	1.30pm
Location	Offices of Laois County Council	End Time	3.00pm
Chairperson	Tom Rabbette	Executive Officer	Aoife Duffy

Representing An Bord Pleanála:

Tom Rabbette, Assistant Director of Planning
Erika Casey, Senior Planning Inspector
Aoife Duffy, Executive Officer

Representing the Planning Authority:

Angela McEvoy, Senior Planner
Donal Kiely, Senior Executive Planner
Donnacha Reynolds, Executive Engineer
Farhan Nasim, Senior Executive Engineer
Gavin Cobble, Executive Engineer - Water Services
Trevor Hennessy, Senior Executive Engineer - Housing
Stephen Craig Assistant Engineer - Environment

Representing the Prospective Applicant

Brian Maher, Planning Consultant
Bryan Meredith, Planning Consultant
Catherine Kelly, Applicant
Celine Cole, Design Consultant

Euan O' Donnell, Landscape Architect Consultant
Jason Redmond, Engineering Consultant
Josh McGuire, Design Consultant
Michael Kelly, Applicant

Introduction

The representatives of An Bord Pleanála (ABP) welcomed the prospective applicant, Planning Authority (PA) and introductions were made. The procedural matters relating to the meeting were as follows:

- The written record will be placed on the pre-application consultation file and will be made public, along with that file, should an application arise following the conclusion of this consultation process.
- ABP received a submission from the PA on 26th June, 2019 providing the records of consultations held pursuant to section 247 and its written opinion of considerations related to proper planning and sustainable development that may have a bearing on ABP's decision.
- The consultation meeting will not involve a merits-based assessment of the proposed development.
- The meeting will focus on key site-specific issues at strategic overview level, and whether the documents submitted require further consideration and/or amendment in order to constitute a reasonable basis for an application.
- Key considerations will be examined in the context of the statutory development plan for the area and section 28 Ministerial Guidelines where relevant.
- A reminder that neither the holding of a consultation or the forming of an opinion shall prejudice ABP or the PA concerned in relation to any other of their respective functions under the Planning Acts or any other enactments and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

The ABP representatives acknowledged the letter dated 28th May, 2019 formally requesting pre-application consultations with ABP. Prospective applicant advised of the need to comply with definition of SHD as set out in the Act of 2016, in relation to thresholds of development. It was also noted that the Inspector dealing with the pre-application consultation request would be different to who would deal with the application when it was submitted. Recording of the meeting is prohibited.

Agenda

1. **Principal of development having regard to the planning history of the site.**
2. **Development strategy with particular regard to overall site layout and architectural approach; housing mix; house typologies, finishes and materials; creation of character areas; connections and permeability; the need to create strong urban edges and appropriate public realm; road hierarchy and compliance with DMURS; landscape strategy.**
3. **Crèche.**
4. **Any other matters.**

1. Principal of Development having regard to the planning history of the site.

ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:

- Planning history on the site and reasons for the previous refusal.
- Sequential approach to development in the town.
- Bus routes connections and Planning Authority comments regarding timescale for delivery.
- Rationale for applying for a 10-year permission.

PA comments:

- There are unfinished estates Portlaoise, however, the majority are now resolved.
- Have conducted vacant site research, would have a good idea what would be currently available in Portlaoise. Note that some of these sites are now being actively progressed for development.
- Would be in support of the proposal and the 10-year permission. Consider the development would align with the objectives of the LAP and core strategy.
- Are working with the NTA on bus connections.

Prospective Applicants response:

- Note that since the previous decision, significant de-zoning has occurred in Portlaoise.
- Consider that the lands have good connections to existing estates, schools, shops and other infrastructure and are a logical progression of the built footprint.
- The applicant has a track record of delivering housing and has built a number of high quality estates in the town.
- Expect a growth in the population of Laois by 2023. Further clarity will be provided in the RSES.
- Can provide a rationale for the 10-year permission, the applicant would have a long standing history with supplying housing and feel that the demand would be met by providing housing this way.
- Will put forward a strong rationale and justification at application stage.

Final ABP Comments:

- Ensure that a strong rationale and justification is given as there may be concerns regarding a 10-year permission in the context of the intent of the SHD legislation.
- Ensure all the information is up to date and accurate in terms of planning history and population projections and a clear rationale put forward regarding the appropriateness of the lands for development in terms of the sequential approach.

2. Development strategy with particular regard to overall site layout and architectural approach; housing mix; house typologies, finishes and materials; creation of character areas; connections and permeability; the need to create strong urban edges and appropriate public realm; road hierarchy and compliance with DMURS; landscape strategy.

ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:

- Justification for the development strategy, site layout and architectural approach.

- Rationale should be provided regarding extent of 3 and 4 bed houses and that there is scope to re-examine at the housing mix.
- Would have concerns that the proposed roundabout would not be in compliance with DMURS principles and may need to be reviewed.

Prospective Applicants response:

- Are trying to maintain a maximum level of density and achieve a good housing mix having regard to the housing market in the town.
- Have tried to achieve maximum connectivity with open space actively overlooked. Character areas provided.
- Density is 35 units per ha excluding the main distributor road.
- Agree that there may be an opportunity to redesign roundabout junction. Remainder of development designed in accordance with DMURS.

PA comments:

- Cognisant of rural one-off housing and the need to provide viable alternatives in the town. Noted that a number of apartment schemes have been granted in the town centre.
- Would like to see a mix of housing however, would generally be in favour of the proposal.
- Would welcome 1 and 2 bed houses.
- Noted that the roundabout was designed prior to DMURS and was provided to tie in with the northern orbital route. However, agreed there maybe scope to redesign and would discuss further with the applicant.

Final ABP Comments:

- A diagram indicating how net density was calculated should be included with the application.
- Put forward a justification regarding housing mix (if maintained as proposed) or re-examine having regard to, inter alia, market trends and changing demographic demands.
- Review the treatment of the road and the roundabout, there may be concerns with regard to road layout and connections. A more appropriate treatment to the central boulevard should be considered.
- Be cognisant of DMURS principles.
- Consider greater innovation in housing design. More double fronted units are required to create better streetscapes and avoid blank facades.
- Open spaces need to be overlooked with no blank walls.
- Consider use of materials and render may not be appropriate given other precedents in the vicinity.
- There may be scope to introduce a stronger streetscape, enhanced public realm and improved passive surveillance.
- If the hedgerows are to be retained demonstrate how they will be maintained.
- Landscape strategy needs further consideration.
- Consider location of the crèche and whether a more appropriate commercial node could be developed.
- Pedestrian and cyclist connections need further consideration.
- Clear diagram regarding boundary treatment to be provided.

- Consider further how development integrates with Rosssdaragh Hill, particularly due to level difference.
- Consult further with the Planning Authority.

3. Crèche

ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on

- Provide a justification for the size and capacity of the crèche.

Prospective Applicants response:

- There would be plenty of schools within the vicinity in Portlaoise.
- Have had discussions with the Laois Childcare Committee.
- Will provide a detailed rationale at application stage.

PA comments:

- Would have concerns with the size, and what phase that it will be developed, the prospective applicant should consult with the Laois Childcare Committee.

Final ABP Comments:

- Provide a rationale, look at demographic information.
- Contact the relevant parties and Childcare Committee.

4. Any other Matters

ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on

- Surface water drainage issues.
- Drainage and correspondence with Irish Water.
- Status of the Red Lough.
- Part V agreement with Laois Co. Co.

Prospective Applicants response:

- Have provided an audit and have followed the guidelines.
- Irish Water are satisfied with the proposal and don't have any concerns.
- There has been no history of flooding in the area.

PA comments:

- Have no objections to the proposal.

Final ABP Comments:

- Submit a building life cycle report for the apartments.
- Consider EIAR screening.
- Consult further with Planning Authority.

Conclusions

The representatives of ABP emphasised the following:

- There should be no delay in making the planning application once the public notice has been published
- Sample notices, application form and procedures are available on the ABP website
- Irish Water would like prospective applicants to contact Irish Water at cdsdesignqa@water.ie **between the Pre-Application Consultation and Application stages**, to confirm details of their proposed development and their proposed design.
- The email address to which applicants should send their **applications** to Irish Water as a prescribed body is spatialplanning@water.ie

Tom Rabbette
Assistant Director of Planning
August, 2019