Inspector's Report

ACP-323703-25

Development	Sligo County Council Compulsory Purchase (No.01) Order 2025; Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project.
Location	Lands at Numbers 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street, Sligo. CPO lands are bounded by Holborn Street, Connaughton Toad, Lake Isle Road and Stephen Street, Sligo.
Planning Authority	Sligo County Council
Applicant	Sligo County Council
Type of Application	Compulsory Purchase Order
Objectors	Martin O'Connor, Jim Wallace and Martina Finn
Date of Site Inspection	15th January 2026
Date of Oral Hearing	18th September 2026
Inspector	John Duffy

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1.0 Introduction

Overview / Description of Project

1.1. This report refers to a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) made by Sligo County Council (SCC) to advance the Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project.

1.2. The Project involves the transformation, strategic regeneration and redevelopment of these well located town centre brownfield lands. The vision for the area is for it to be a new cultural, innovation and learning hub/quarter located within the heart of Sligo town, accommodating a new central library, a new county museum, enterprise and office space and residential units promoting sustainable town centre living and working uses. The repurposing of the existing library building, a Protected Structure, would deliver a new enlarged museum on the lands.

1.3. To facilitate the proposed project, SCC are seeking the compulsory and permanent acquisition of the subject lands comprising house numbers 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street, and a privately run car park located to the rear of these houses, as reflected in the site plan provided with the application.

1.4. The Commission has received three objections, from landowners, in respect of the CPO. This report considers the issues raised in the objections, as submitted to the Commission and, more generally, the application to acquire the lands for the stated purpose.

Statutory Basis and Procedural Matter

1.5. SCC has submitted the request for confirmation of the CPO pursuant to the legislative powers conferred on it. The CPO is made under Section 76 and the Third Schedule to the Housing Act 1966, as extended by Section 10 of the Local Government (No. 2) Act, 1960 (as substituted by Section 86 of the Housing Act 1966) and amended and extended by Section 6 and the Second Schedule of the Roads Act 1993 and as amended by the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2023.

1.6. The CPO was signed and has the seal of SCC affixed on the 8th day of September 2025. It was advertised in the Sligo Champion newspaper on the 10th of September 2025. Formal notices were issued by SCC to landowners on the 5th of September

2025. The application was lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 22nd of September 2025.

1.7. On the 12th of November 2025, the Commission wrote to SCC advising that the statement in the newspaper notice of the 10th of September 2025 referring to the need to hold an oral hearing into the matter, was no longer correct, on the basis that the Commission has absolute discretion to hold an oral hearing, having regard to Section 218 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Accordingly, SCC was requested by the Commission to publish an addendum notice in the same newspaper to retract the incorrect information and to submit the addendum notice when published. A copy of the addendum notice as published in the Sligo Champion newspaper on 26th November 2025 was received by the Commission on the 28th of November 2025.

2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1. The CPO lands are located within a central block of Sligo town bounded by Holborn Street to the west, Connaughton Road (R286) to the north, Stephen Street to the south and Lake Isle Road to the east. The entire block measures 1.13ha and the CPO lands (located centrally within the block) measure 0.191ha. The CPO lands comprise a terrace of 6 no. houses fronting on to Holborn Street (House numbers 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67) along with an existing surface car park with approximately 41 spaces to the rear of the aforementioned houses.

2.2. The surface car park is privately owned, occupies the bulk of the CPO lands, and is available for public use at an hourly or daily rate. Car park access is through a narrow archway at No. 15 Holborn Street, while the exit is from a second narrow archway at No. 12 Holborn Street. At the site inspection, it appeared that the aforementioned buildings have been vacant for some time.

2.3. The CPO lands are bounded by a c.1m high stone wall to the south, beyond which stands the existing public library and museum site. Adjoining lands to the east are used for car parking for a bank and offices. To the north there is a public car park separated from the subject site by a 2m high palisade fence.

3.0 **The CPO Application**

3.1. SCC applied to An Coimisiún Pleanála for consent to compulsorily acquire the 6 no. houses and car park on the 22nd September 2025.The application documentation received by the Commission from SCC, relating to the statutory CPO procedure, includes the following:

- Copy of Report from Senior Engineer / Acting Senior Executive Engineer relating to the CPO (No. 1 Order) to the Director of Services (DOS) dated 28th March 2025. The Report is countersigned and 'Approved' by the DOS on 16th April 2025.
- Copy of Report relating to the CPO (No. 1 Order) from the Senior Planner dated March 2025.
- Copy of Memorandum from Acting DOS to the Chief Executive (CE) in relation to this CPO and the Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project dated 15th August 2025 and counter-signed as 'Agreed.'
- CE Order signed and dated 15th August 2025 relating to the Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project (SCC Compulsory Purchase (No.01) Order 2025).
- SCC Compulsory Purchase (No. 1) Order 2025: Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project (Signed, sealed and dated 8th September 2025).
- Copy of Formal Notice as published in the Sligo Champion newspaper on 10th of September 2025.
- Copies of the Notices dated 5th September 2025 served in connection with the CPO on the affected owners/occupiers, namely Martin O'Connor, Jim Wallace and Martina Finn.
- A copy of the Certificate of posting the CPO Notices (An Post, Registered Post, dated 8th of September 2025).
- As detailed in Section 1.7 above, a copy of the addendum notice as published in the Sligo Champion newspaper on 26th November 2025 was received by the Commission on the 28th of November 2025.

4.0 **Planning History**

Reg. Ref. PL15/65 – Permission granted in February 2017 for retention of renovations/alterations to existing dwellings, provision of access and egress to rear

car park, retention of use of land as a car park and pedestrian access at Numbers 67, 15, 13, 14, 12 and 10 Holborn Street, Sligo.

Relevant condition: Condition 2 states that the permission shall expire five years after the date of the final grant of permission, with the use of the car park to be discontinued and the land and access/egress points to the car park to be restored to their previous condition unless permitted by a new planning permission.

Reg. Ref. PL03/70142 – Permission granted in March 2024 for construction of a three-storey retail/commercial building at No. 16 Holborn Street located at the junction of Holborn Street and Connaughton Road, Sligo.

5.0 Policy Context and Legislative Provisions

Local Policy

5.1. Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030

The SCDP 2024-2030 is the relevant operative Development Plan for the area.

At the May Council meeting, held on Monday 11 May 2026, the Elected Members of Sligo County Council resolved to make a Variation to Sligo County Development Plan.

The Variation aligns the Plan with Ministerial Guidelines issued in 2025 in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), i.e. the "National Planning Framework (NPF) Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (HGR Guidelines).

Variation No. 1 became operational on the day of adoption, 11 May 2026. The Variation consists of four parts.

Parts I, II and III seek to give effect to the HGR Guidelines by updating the housing target and amending the Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) policies of the Development Plan. Part IV addresses the zoning of two sites for which rezoning determinations have been made by Sligo County Council after public consultation on the Draft Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) Map 2026.

The lands subject to the CPO application

The site is subject to a mix of two zoning objectives. Part of the site is zoned TC1-Town Centre uses with the objective 'To protect the historic character of Sligo's old town core through conservation, regeneration and public realm improvements and promote civic, retail and compatible uses that preserve the town core's identity and attractiveness.' The second zoning applicable to the site is TC2 -Town centre uses with the objective 'To consolidate the existing fabric of central areas outside the town core (TC1 Zone) by densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments, ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses and urban streets, while delivering a quality urban environment. This zoning objective emphasises compact growth and priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.'

There are two Protected structures on the northern side of Stephen Street and south of the car park which is proposed for acquisition by the Local Authority. These Protected Structures accommodate the Sligo County Museum (RPS No. 155 SE) and the Sligo County Library (154 SE).

The land-use Zoning Matrix is set out in Section 10.5.4 and it is evident that a wide range of uses are normally permitted and open for consideration in TC1 and TC2 town centre locations including 'community facility,' 'conference centre,' offices, 'Recreation – cultural facilities' and 'Recreation-leisure facilities.'

Table 3.1 (Volume 1) provides a Settlement Strategy summary for County Sligo. Sligo town is designated as a Regional Growth Centre in the Settlement Hierarchy and the Strategy is set out as follows: *Facilitate strong housing and population growth in accordance with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, implement Regional Growth Centre RPOs and other major projects, promote urban regeneration and economic development.*

Section 4.3 'Strategic growth areas' of Volume 1 identifies the site as a town centre regeneration area with strong heritage, urban design and public realm elements and as the future 'City Campus' located on lands between Stephen Street, Holborn Street, Connaughton Road and Lake Isle Road.

Under SO-RGC-7 it is a strategic objective of SCC to, in conjunction with ATU Sligo, to prepare and implement a masterplan for the City Campus site – Sligo's Cultural and Learning Hub involving the regeneration of this block of the town incorporating new

County Library and museum facilities, enterprise space, residential units and high-quality public realm.

Section 5.3.1 relating to 'Sligo Town: accelerated compact growth' states the following: *The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) has been essential and, along with other funding streams, will continue to be one of the most important resources for enhancing Sligo Town's attractiveness for living and investing.*

In this Section it is noted that one of the elements of the Strategy for Sligo Town is to '*Ensure that at least 40% of new development occurs within Sligo Town's existing built-up area, through regeneration and consolidation on infill and brownfield sites.'*

Section 11.2.1 relates to 'Compact growth designations' and the subject site (REG-12) is one of 14 sites identified to deliver regenerative, compact development as it is fully serviced and located in the town centre. The following is stated in relation to these 14 sites, including the subject site: *However, activating these lands will be a significant challenge, requiring the displacement of existing uses, site assembly in some cases and the preparation of masterplans for the larger sites. Because there is no certainty regarding the potential housing yield of any redevelopment on these sites, they have not been included in the Core Strategy housing allocation.*

Figure 11A identifies several compact growth designations in Sligo Town and Environs including the subject lands.

Urban Regeneration Policies and Objectives (Chapter 10)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-UR-1 Promote the regeneration of the County's town and village centres by directing new development to infill sites, brownfield or underutilised lands before considering edge-of-town sites.

P-UR-2 Prioritise urban regeneration projects which will result in both social and economic benefits to towns and villages in County Sligo.

P-UR-3 Continue to seek funding from relevant agencies and Government sources including the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds (RRDF/URDF) for town and village renewal projects in the county.

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

O-UR-1 Identify, if necessary, further areas in need of regeneration in Sligo Town as part of the process of preparation/review of Sligo and Environs Urban Area Plan (in addition to the Regeneration Sites designated in this Plan – refer to Chapter 11 Sligo Town)

O-UR-2 Actively pursue the reduction of vacant/derelict residential structures and sites within the town centres of Sligo, Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry.

Section 27.4 relates to 'Arts and cultural facilities' and states the following:

Sligo County Council supports and promotes opportunities for everyone to participate in the cultural life of the county by facilitating the provision of well-managed, sustainable cultural infrastructure, suitable for all ages, and by adopting a flexible approach to the incorporation of cultural facilities in the development or refurbishment of community facilities.

When preparing schemes for urban regeneration or for town centre revitalisation, the Council will harness the potential of culture and creativity to contribute to reimagining those places, thus making them more attractive.

Proposed Sligo Town and Environs Urban Area Plan

Pre-draft consultation on a proposed Sligo Town and Environs Urban Area Plan took place from 9th July 2025 until 22nd August 2025. An Issues Paper was published on Sligo County Council's online consultation platform and on the Council's website. The Plan will be made according to the statutory procedure set out in Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (as amended). A draft Plan is envisaged to be published for consultation before the end of 2026.

National Policy

5.2. National Planning Framework (NPF) – First Revision (April 2025)

The Revised NPF cites Sligo town as a case study for urban regeneration and development and notes that the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) supports projects that will secure sustainable compact growth and effective regional development and assist in tackling legacy issues of underdevelopment. To deliver these goals the URDF is funding a number of public realm and public infrastructure

projects in the centre of Sligo to regenerate and rejuvenate the town centre and strategic underutilised sites including the lands earmarked for the City Campus – Cultural and Learning Hub.

Compact Growth is the first of 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) listed in the revised NPF and the following sets out the vision for this NSO:

Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.

Relevant National Policy Objectives include:

National Policy Objective 14: Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity, enhanced levels of amenity and design and placemaking quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area to ensure progress toward national achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

National Policy Objective 15: Apply a tailored approach to urban development, linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds, with a particular focus on: Dublin; The four Cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford; Strengthening Ireland's overall urban structure, particularly in the Northern and Western and Midland Regions, to include the regional centres of Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West, Athlone in the Midlands and cross-border networks focused on the Letterkenny-Derry North-West City Region and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry on the Dublin-Belfast corridor; Encouraging population growth in strong employment and service centres of all sizes, supported by employment growth; Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities; Addressing the legacy of rapid

unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities and services catch-up, jobs and/or improved sustainable transport links to the cities, together with a slower rate of population growth in recently expanded commuter settlements of all sizes; In more self-contained settlements of all sizes, supporting a continuation of balanced population and employment growth.

National Policy Objective 20: In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.

5.3. Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030: An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness

This Plan aims to build on the recent progress to further accelerate the delivery of new homes, to deliver 300,000 by the end of 2030. Reaching the housing 300,000 target will only be achieved through the individual and collective effort of the key delivery partners. Local authorities, together with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), the Land Development Agency (LDA) and the construction sector, will be critical to delivering and enabling the delivery of the quantum of homes needed over the lifetime of the plan. The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Activation Programme is noted as an important mechanism within the Plan. Launched in April 2023, the CPO Activation Programme supports local authorities to use their powers to compulsorily purchase vacant and derelict properties, especially when voluntary engagement with owners has failed.

Regional Policy

5.4. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (Northern and Western Regional Assembly)

The RSES incorporates the Sligo Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan. Relevant policies include:

RPO 3.7.39: Ensure that at least 40% of new residential and employment-related development in the Regional Growth Centre occurs within Sligo's existing built-up urban area, through regeneration and consolidation on infill and brownfield sites.

RPO 3.7.47: Promote Local Heritage and Culture to deliver high-quality cultural and tourism products of Regional and National significance.

RPO 3.7.48: Upgrade the town centre environment through focused interventions in O'Connell Street, Stephen Street and car park, Rockwood Parade, Market Cross, Old Market Street and Quay Street car park, followed by gradual improvements of streets adjoining the centre.

RPO 3.7.56: Support the development of a major tourist attraction in Sligo Town, as well as further expansion in the tourism functions of villages Strandhill and Rosses Point.

Other relevant policy

5.5. Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns seeks to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the community. It helps communities to develop and implement plans to rejuvenate their towns.

Legislative provisions

5.6. Housing Act 1966 Compulsory Purchase Order (section 76 and Third Schedule) as amended

The process of acquisition of is set out within the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, whereby the functions of such acquisitions are a matter for the Commission.

Under Section 213(2)(a) of Part XIV of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), a local authority may, for the purposes of performing any of its functions (whether conferred by or under this Act, or any other enactment passed before or after the passing of this Act), including giving effect to or facilitating the implementation of its development plan, acquire land, permanently or temporarily, by agreement or compulsorily.

Compulsory Purchase Orders are made pursuant to the powers conferred on the local authority by section 76 of the Housing Act, 1966, and the Third Schedule thereto, as extended by section 10 of the Local Government (No. 2) Act, 1960, (as substituted by section 86 of the Housing Act 1966), as amended by section 6 and the Second

Schedule to the Roads Act, 1993, and as amended by the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Orders are served on owners, lessees and occupiers in accordance with Article 4(b) of the Third Schedule to the Housing Act, 1966.

6.0 The Objections

6.1. The Commission has received 3 no. objections from landowners, in relation to the CPO and these are summarised below.

Martin O'Connor of Calry, Co. Sligo.

- Objects to the CPO of the 6 houses.
- This objector states he had entered into negotiations with SCC on behalf of the objectors to sell the brownfield site to the rear of the houses.
- It was intended that the owners (Martin O'Connor, Martina Finn and Jim Wallace) would refurbish all 6 properties following completion of the sale of the rear brownfield site.
- This objector currently operates the public car park on the subject lands which provides a much needed service to retailers, offices and shoppers. It also generates an income for the objector and his family.
- The closing of the car park would result in unemployment for this objector.
- The refurbishment of one of the houses has already commenced.
- The two other property owners have agreed to give this objector the contract of refurbishing the other properties.

Jim Wallace of Holborn Street, Sligo

- Objects to the CPO of the 6 houses.
- The landowners had agreed to sell the brownfield site to the rear and had agreed a purchase price.
- It was also agreed that the owners would refurbish the houses and that remains their intention.

Martina Finn of Holborn Street, Sligo

At the oral hearing it was confirmed by the Objectors' representative that they were also representing Martina Finn. See section 7 below relating to the oral hearing held in relation to this CPO case.

Copy of submission to be used at the Oral Hearing

In advance of the Oral Hearing, the Objectors' representative furnished a copy of a submission to be used at the hearing and this was received on 11th September 2026. This is summarised as follows:

1. No. 13 Holborn Street is jointly owned by Martin O'Connor and Martina Finn. Martina Finn also owns part of the rear car park.

2. Martin O'Connor will be effectively unemployed if the CPO is confirmed. Martin O'Connor and Jim Wallace are running a car park business from the lands and have reluctantly agreed to sell it to SCC.

3. Contracts issued approximately 18 months ago to the solicitors for SCC in relation to the sale of the car park. However the CPO now relates to both the car park and 6 houses.

4. No. 67 Holborn Street is leased (as per the copy of lease enclosed).

5. Renovations to No. 10 will be completed shortly.

6. Jim Wallace and Martin O'Connor have a plan to renovate the remaining properties as per report from Martin McGloin (Castlegal Architectural Services).

7. Negotiations were held with SCC and the Objectors understood that the car park only would be sold and subject to CPO and not the houses.

The following attachments were also submitted with the aforementioned submission:

- Copies of objections previously made in relation to the CPO by Martin O'Connor and Jim Wallace dated 16th October 2025.
- Objectors consent to being represented by their agent at the Oral Hearing.
- Copy of lease as it related to No. 67 Holborn Street.

7.0 **Oral Hearing**

7.1. An Oral Hearing was held on 18th September 2026. One objector (Martin O'Connor) was present however all three objectors were represented by Dermot McDermott Solicitors. A number of representatives of SCC were also in attendance.

7.2. As the presiding Inspector, I commenced proceedings with an opening statement. Participants were informed that the purpose of the Oral Hearing was an information gathering exercise to assist in the consideration of the merits of the case and in drafting the report and recommendation to the Commission in relation to the compulsory acquisition case. It was explained that the purpose of the Hearing was to deal with the compulsory acquisition process only. i.e., the merits, or otherwise, of the proposed acquisition of the lands by the Local Authority. Participants were also reminded that An Coimisiún Pleanála has no role or jurisdiction in the determination of compensation.

7.3. Prior to submissions being made by SCC and the objectors / landowners, as the presiding Inspector, I requested a number of items from the local authority. These included the folio details / map of the lands, the Project Brief referred to in previously submitted file documentation and a copy of the Masterplan map relating to the lands. This documentation was e-mailed to the Commission during the course of the hearing and the local authority furnished copies to the objectors' representative.

7.4. I also requested that a copy of the report by Castlegal Architectural Services in respect of the houses referred to in a previous submission made by the Objector's agent be provided and this was duly submitted. A copy of a map indicating the area of the lands in the ownership of Martin O'Connor and Martina Finn was also provided.

7.5. During the Oral Hearing the Objector/Objectors' representative elaborated on their grounds of objection. I note that no new grounds of objection were raised.

7.6. The proceedings of the Oral Hearing are summarised in Appendix A of this report and referenced, where necessary, in the assessment below in Section 8.

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. <u>Overview</u>

8.1.1. The proposed CPO relates to the Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project also known as Sligo's Cultural and Learning Hub involves the strategic regeneration and redevelopment of underutilised brownfield lands within Sligo town centre.

8.1.2. The CPO lands form an urban block within the town core and SCC is seeking to acquire a terrace of 6 houses fronting onto Holborn Street (House Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67) along with an existing privately owned surface car park (approximately 41 spaces) located to the rear of these buildings. The lands which are the subject of this CPO are indicated on the CPO Map (Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project_SCCRP 100) submitted with the application by SCC and also on the folio map (Map Folio Number SL31724F) provided during the Oral Hearing by SCC. It is noted that Folio Number SL31724F includes all of the CPO lands with the exception of No. 13 Holborn Street and an associated area to the rear of that property which presently forms part of that property.

8.1.3. The Schedule attached to the notices served on the landowners refer to the plot of land indicated on the CPO Map (Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project_SCCRP 100). The Schedule of each Notice served in connection with the CPO indicates the owners/reputed owners of the lands and these are listed as Jim Wallace, Martin O'Connor and Martina Finn. Objections have been received by the Commission from these owners and all are represented by Dermot McDermott Solicitors.

8.1.4. If confirmed, the CPO will authorise SCC to compulsorily acquire, permanently the lands within the red line boundary indicated on the CPO Map (Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project_SCCRP 100) for the purposes of the Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project.

8.1.5. My assessment of the proposed CPO considers the issues to be raised in the objections submitted to the Commission and as expanded upon in the Oral Hearing, and also the general principles to be applied in assessing CPOs of this nature. Accordingly, for the Commission to confirm the CPO, it must be satisfied that the following criteria have been met:

- There is a community need that is to be met by the acquisition of the lands in question.

- The project proposed and the associated acquisition of lands is suitable to meet the community need.
- The works to be carried out should accord with, or at least not be in material contravention of, the policy and objectives contained in the **statutory development plan** relating to the area.
- Any **alternatives** proposed to meet the community need have been considered but are not demonstrably preferable.
- The extent of land-take should have due regard to the issue of **proportionality**.

Set out below is my assessment of the proposed CPO in the context of the above tests.

8.2. **Community Need**

8.2.1. The community need for the compulsory acquisition of the lands was set out by Sligo County Council in the documentation submitted with the CPO application. In particular, the reports of the Senior Planner and the Senior Engineer / Acting Senior Executive Engineer outline that The City Campus – Sligo's Cultural and Learning Hub involves the regeneration and redevelopment of an underutilised block of land within the centre of the town. The project also includes for the refurbishment and re-purposing of two protected structures owned by SCC and currently occupied by the existing County Library and the County Museum.

8.2.2. The Project Brief outlines the vision for this regeneration project noting that it would become a new cultural quarter accommodating a new central library and a new enlarged county museum. It is envisaged that the new library will combine the library, learning and business support resources in a modern interactive facility that meets the needs of the public, the business community and serve as a satellite campus in the town centre for Atlantic Technological University (ATU).

8.2.3. It is proposed that the existing library building would be repurposed to create a modern museum, thereby securing a permanent use for that protected structure. It is proposed that the county museum would act as a new flagship tourism attraction and showcase Sligo's cultural heritage within the town centre. Other key uses on the lands includes

residential and commercial uses. SCC considers that the regeneration project would be a key component in transforming Sligo in the manner envisaged by both the NPF and RSES.

8.2.4. The local authority contend that the strategically located CPO lands are under-utilised. Having inspected this town centre site, I concur with this view. The use of the majority of the proposed CPO lands as a car park is not an optimal use of these town centre lands. In terms of the 6 no. houses, the Council has indicated their intention to refurbish these properties and has confirmed they would not be demolished. I note the landowners intention to also refurbish the houses, with some works finished, on-going and proposed. I concur that regeneration at the subject location would be appropriate and very desirable.

8.2.5. To conclude, having reviewed the information submitted and that presented and elicited at the Orla Hearing, I am satisfied that there is a need for the local authority to address this area of Sligo town centre in accordance with the vision as outlined in objective SO-RGC-7 of the current SCDP. I am therefore satisfied that SCC has demonstrated a clear and pressing community need that would be met by the project and would be facilitated by the acquisition of rights over the lands in question, should the Commission consider it appropriate to confirm the CPO.

8.3. Suitability of the lands

8.3.1. The land subject to this application for compulsory acquisition are zoned under 'Town Centre' i.e. 'TC1' and 'TC2' as outlined in section 5.1 above. Section 10.5.4 of the SCDP (2024-2030) outlines the land-use Zoning Matrix and land-use acceptability. Section 10.5.3 sets out Land-use Objectives. The 'TC' zoning objectives support, inter alia, regeneration, conservation, public realm improvements and the provision of a range of a mix of uses including cultural, civic, recreational, commercial and residential uses. Section 4.3 of the Plan also designates the site as a 'strategic growth area' and as a town centre regeneration area.

8.3.2. From my site visit, I noted that the lands to the rear and accessed from Holborn Street were in use as a private car park. The 6 no. houses on Holborn Street fronting the car park were in an unkempt state, however I would not describe them as being in a

derelict condition. Section 5.1 of this report outlines objectives and policies in the SCDP supportive of the regeneration of the CPO lands

8.3.3. I would draw the Commission's attention to the fact that the Objectors to this CPO have not disputed the need for the regeneration of the subject town centre lands, and as noted by one of the landowner's at the Oral Hearing, there was long-standing recognition that the Council was interested in acquiring the lands for regeneration purposes.

8.3.4. I consider that the intention of the local authority to facilitate regeneration of the subject lands within the town centre and provision of uses as outlined in the submitted Project Brief and detailed in the reports on file, including cultural, community and civic uses combined with residential and commercial uses, along with public realm enhancements and interventions would generally accord with the applicable zoning objectives pertaining to the overall and is supported by a number of objectives and policies contained within the SCDP 2024-2030.

8.4. **Compliance with Planning Policy**

Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030

8.4.1. As outlined in Section 5.1 above, the current SCDP includes a number of provisions to support the City Campus project and the regeneration of the subject town centre lands. Objective SO-RGC-7 specifically relates to the preparation and implementation of a masterplan (in conjunction with ATU) for the 'City Campus' site incorporating the new county library and museum facilities, enterprise space, residential units and high quality public realm. The site is also designated under Section 4.3 'Strategic growth areas' (Volume 1) as a regeneration area with strong heritage, urban design and public realm elements as the future 'City Campus.' Furthermore, the site is earmarked as a 'Compact growth destination' by Figure 11A and also in Section 11.2.1 (Volume 2) of the Plan, with the site, referenced 'REG-12,' as one of 14 sites to deliver regenerative, compact development as it is fully serviced and located in the town centre.

8.4.2. Chapter 10 'Urban development principles' in Volume 2 of the SCDP notes that SCC promotes the consolidation and regeneration of town centres and that the policy framework within that chapter guides sustainable development through, inter alia,

urban regeneration and heritage-led regeneration including the maintenance of historic streetscapes. There are a suite of urban regeneration policies and objectives in Chapter 10 in addition to broader policies relating to regeneration and these are set out in Section 5.1 of this report (above).

8.4.3. Having regard to the foregoing, I am satisfied that the 'City Campus' project, which would be facilitated by the proposed CPO, should it be confirmed by the Commission, would be supported by and would accord with the provisions of the SCDP 2024-2030, and that the acquisition of the lands would not materially contravene any specific objectives or policies of the Development Plan.

8.5. Consideration of Alternatives

8.5.1. The objective of the Local Authority is to secure the regeneration of the subject lands in order to facilitate the delivery of the 'City Campus' project. As noted at the Oral Hearing, a masterplan for the lands is presently in preparation and anticipated to be published as part of the Sligo Town and Environs Urban Area Plan before the end of 2026.

8.5.2. In the documentation provided by the Local Authority to support the CPO application, the Council state that the likely alternative to the acquisition of the lands is an absence of development and a failure to meet the community need for the regeneration of this area located within the urban core of Sligo. At the Oral Hearing, the Council advised that while alternative sites for a library were examined, it was ultimately decided to retain it at the subject lands.

8.5.3. Having regard to the Local Authority's long-standing aim to secure the regeneration of this town centre block, which is fully supported by several Development Plan provisions as well as national and regional policies, and given the current character of the lands, the consideration of an alternative location for the project is not required in this instance.

8.5.4. It became clear at the Oral Hearing that there is no objection to the sale of the private car park to the Local Authority. The car park lands form the bulk of the proposed CPO lands. The Objectors main ground of objection is that they wish to retain ownership of

their houses. During the Oral Hearing, the Local Authority acknowledged that the compulsory acquisition of the 6 no. houses on Holborn Street are not critical to the core elements of the 'City Campus' project. As such, the exclusion of the 6 no. houses from the proposed CPO is also an alternative to including the full extent of the lands as set out in the CPO map provided with the application.

8.5.5. I conclude that the Local Authority has demonstrated within the application documentation and through the Oral Hearing process that it has considered all possible alternatives.

8.6. Proportionality and Necessity for the Level of Acquisition Proposed

8.6.1. As previously established, this CPO application pertains to lands within an urban block in Sligo town centre and comprises houses at Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street and the rear car park used by the public. As clarified during the Oral Hearing there is no objection to the compulsory acquisition of the car park. The main thrust of the Local Authority's case for the CPO is that the subject site effectively separates two significant publicly owned land parcels. This is the case and the private car park, located near the centre of the overall block, is preventing the unification of the southern part of the block with the northern section of the overall block. Given that there is no objection to the compulsory acquisition of the car park and having regard to the foregoing, I recommend that the Commission grant consent for the CPO as it relates to the car park.

8.6.2. The objections lodged pertain to the compulsory acquisition of the 6 no. houses on Holborn Street. The Objectors wish to retain these houses in their ownership and have set out plans to commence and/or continue their refurbishment in the coming months. The situation relating to each house was outlined during the Oral Hearing. Mr. O'Connor stated that No. 67 is presently occupied and is rented. No. 10 was being refurbished and would be rented out from 1st November 2026. Refurbishment works are scheduled to commence on No.15 imminently and finish by year-end. The remaining houses are to be refurbished, commencing shortly, and all of the houses will be painted in the short-term. Mr. O'Connor provided correspondence during the Hearing from an architectural services company outlining the above.

8.6.3. As set out above, Sligo County Council has demonstrated that the CPO is appropriate in terms of the common good, that it complies with the relevant statutory development plan and the consideration of alternatives. The matter of proportionality is a critical one and the question arises whether the compulsory acquisition of the houses would have an excessive or disproportionate effect on the interests of the affected persons (the objectors / landowners).

8.6.4. Based on the Oral Hearing and the information provided by the landowners which is on file, it is apparent that a number of the houses, if not all, would likely be put on the rental market. I note that No. 67 is already rented out and No.10 will be rented from the start of November, according to Mr. O'Connor. The Local Authority at the Oral Hearing considered that a number of the dwellings have been in derelict condition and suggested that the resources available to it would ensure a higher quality of refurbishment to take place. The Council advised that the houses would be used as part of its public housing stock if consent for their acquisition was granted.

8.6.5. The comments of the Local Authority during the Oral Hearing indicated to me that a prominent reason for the inclusion of the houses in the CPO is because they are presently or in the past deemed to be in a derelict condition for an extended period and it is an attempt to address the matter and to achieve new housing stock in the area. I note that the houses have never been on the Derelict Sites Register and in my view there is no evidence provided which suggests they are in derelict condition. It is clear that efforts are underway to refurbish all six properties, as outlined above. The landowners would derive an income from the houses once refurbished and rented out. While I note the Local Authority has indicated that the proposed future development on the subject site would potentially adversely impact on the subject houses, I note that the masterplan for the 'City Campus' Project has not yet been published and potential impacts are unclear on the subject houses and other existing buildings within the entire block. Having regard to the foregoing and the fact that the Local Authority has confirmed at the Oral Hearing that the acquisition of the houses are not critical to the core elements of the 'City Campus' project, and therefore would not prejudice its delivery, I am of the opinion that the acquisition of Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street would have a disproportionate impact on the landowners.

8.6.6. Therefore, in conclusion, I am of the view that the effects of the compulsory acquisition on the rights of affected landowners, in terms of the subject car park as denoted in the CPO map, is proportionate to the objective being pursued. In my opinion the effects of the compulsory acquisition on the rights of affected landowners, in terms of Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street as denoted in the CPO map, would have a disproportionate to the objective being pursued.

8.6.7. I therefore recommend to the Commission, that in the interest of proportionality, Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street should be excluded from the confirmation of the CPO, while the subject car park also within the red line boundary on the CPO map, be included in the order to consent this Compulsorily Purchase Order as its acquisition is proportionate to the objective being pursued by the Local Authority.

8.7. **Other issue**

8.7.1. During the Oral Hearing, the Local Authority noted possible mapping discrepancies in the Folio map pertaining to the site and possible title issues in terms of property ownership. I note that such matters are not for the consideration of the Commission.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1. Having regard to the foregoing, I am satisfied that the process and procedures undertaken by Sligo County Council have been fair and reasonable, that the Local Authority has demonstrated the need for the land to be acquired is necessary and suitable to provide for the regeneration of this Town Centre area.

9.2. However, the landowners have outlined that they wish to refurbish / continue to refurbish the properties at Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street and request that they be excluded from the compulsory purchase order.

9.3. I note from my site visit that the town centre area subject to this compulsory purchase order is suitable for regeneration. I am further satisfied that the proposed acquisition of lands would be consistent with the policies and objectives of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030, including Strategic Objective SO-RGC-7 which specifically relates to the regeneration of the subject lands, and more general provisions relating to urban regeneration, including policies P-UR-1 and P-UR-2, which respectively seek to direct new development to brownfield and underutilised lands and

prioritise urban regeneration projects resulting in social and economic benefits for towns and villages in Sligo.

9.4. However, I consider that to include all of the lands identified by the Local Authority in the application made to the Commission on the 22nd of September 2025, and as indicated on the CPO Map ('Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project_SCCRP 100') would have a disproportionate impact on the landowners and the objective being pursued. Accordingly, I am satisfied that a grant of consent to compulsorily acquire the lands are justified by the exigencies of the common good, with the exception of the properties at Nos. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street, Sligo.

10.0 Recommendation

I consider it reasonable that the Local Authority seeks to compulsorily acquire the land, with the omission of properties at Numbers 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street, Sligo as indicated on the CPO Map 'Sligo City Campus Regeneration Project_SCCRP 100,' as provided by section 76 of the Housing Act, 1966 and the Third Schedule thereto (as amended by the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended).

I recommend that the Commission grant consent to Sligo County Council to compulsorily acquire the lands accommodating the privately run car park, accessed from Holborn Street, as per the application made to An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 22nd of September 2025.

11.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having considered the objections made to the compulsory purchase order, the submissions on file and observations made to the Oral Hearing held on 18th September 2026, the purpose of the compulsory purchase order to acquire lands identified for regeneration to facilitate the 'City Campus' project, and also having regard to

(i) the constitutional and European Human Rights Convention protection afforded to property rights,

(ii) the strategic importance of the scheme, in the context of the transformation and regeneration of underutilised town centre lands to provide for cultural, educational,

commercial and residential uses, thereby facilitating a new focal point for civic, cultural and economic activity in Sligo town,

(iii) the identified community need, public interest served and overall benefits of the proposal,

(iv) the suitability of the lands for the 'City Campus' project,

(v) the policies and objectives of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030, including Strategic Objective SO-RGC-7 which specifically relates to the regeneration of the subject lands, and

(vi) the report and recommendation of the Inspector,

it is considered that subject to the modifications to the Order as set out below, the acquisition of the privately run car park accessed from Holborn Street by the Local Authority is necessary in order to facilitate the regeneration of this area in accordance with the provisions of the Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030, as set out in the compulsory purchase order and on the CPO Map, which is a legitimate objective being pursued in the public interest, and that the CPO and its effects on the property rights of affected landowners are proportionate to that objective and justified by the exigencies of the common good.

The acquisition of the privately run car park is therefore confirmed for the reasons above.

The Local Authority has confirmed that the acquisition of the properties at Numbers 10, 12, 13, 14,15 and 67 Holborn Street are not critical to the core elements of the 'City Campus' project, and therefore would not prejudice its delivery. In this context, it is concluded that the acquisition of properties at Numbers 10, 12,13,14,15 and 67 Holborn Street would have a disproportionate impact on the landowners and would be disproportionate to the objective being pursued.

The compulsory acquisition of properties at Numbers 10,12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street, Sligo is therefore not confirmed for the reasons above.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought

to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

John Duffy
Planning Inspector

29th October 2026

Appendix 1: Proceedings of the Oral Hearing

1. Background

An Oral Hearing (OH) was held on 18th September 2026 in relation to the proposed compulsory purchase of lands at Numbers 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 67 Holborn Street, Sligo. It was held remotely at the offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála using Microsoft Teams Software. An agenda was posted out to relevant parties in advance of the OH and a copy of this is available on file.

2. Attendance

The following were in attendance and / or made submissions at the Oral Hearing:

<u>On behalf of Sligo County Council (SCC)</u>

- Bryan Armstrong – Legal Representative (Hegarty and Armstrong Solicitors)
- Michael Carty – Senior Engineer
- Frank Moylan – Senior Planner
- Kealan Donagher – Acting Senior Executive Engineer
- Sarah Duffy – Senior Staff Officer

<u>On behalf of the Objectors (landowners)</u>

- Dermot Mc Dermott (Solicitor)
- Martin O'Connor (Objector)

3. Opening of Oral Hearing

The Inspector opened the hearing at approximately 10.03 am.

4. Clarity sought by Inspector

Following some introductory remarks, and prior to requesting the Local Authority to make its formal submission, the Inspector referred to the map of the lands provided by SCC, in which the lands are presented as one lot, although they are in the ownership of a number of landowners. The Inspector noted that the extent of each landowners' site is unclear and that folio details and a schedule of each lot delineating the property boundaries on a map would be required, in addition to clarity on whether there are wayleaves across the lands.

Mr. Armstrong had in his possession a copy of the Táilte Éireann map covering the majority of the site which is registered (Folio SL31724F refers). He confirmed that a part of the site is not registered. He noted that there is a degree of confusion about the ownership, that there appears to be a mapping discrepancy and that 5 of the 6 houses are on the same folio. The Local Authority proceeded to send the map by way of e-mail to the Commission and also furnished a copy of the map to the Objectors.

The Inspector also noted that the configuration of the red line boundary includes a triangular section at the northern boundary which appears unusual, and also it appears that a part of the car park may be omitted with reference to the north-western part of the site. In response, Mr. Armstrong noted that the triangular area is thought to be the mapping discrepancy. The area to the north west is a plot to the rear of the public house, to be left with that property.

The Inspector requested that the Project Brief referred to in the documentation on file be submitted to the Commission and Objectors. This was duly furnished to the Commission by e-mail and included the Masterplan map.

Turning to the Objectors, the Inspector sought a copy of the Engineer's Report mentioned in correspondence dated 11th September 2026 in support of refurbishment of the houses.

5. Submission by SCC

Mr. Armstrong

- Commences by describing the location of the lands relative to their boundaries and states that the area to the rear of the houses likely previously comprised their gardens or allotments. Use of backland area now is as a private car park accessed through two archways beneath the houses on Holborn Street. A temporary planning permission for the car park use expired in 2022 and has not been renewed.
- The houses are disused to different extents. It appears that House No. 10 has been restored and is occupied.
- A triangular area to the north of the site appears to be a Land Registry mapping discrepancy and it is considered that the objector would not claim ownership of that area. It appears to be part of the County Council car park.

- The site of House No.13 and the historical allotment to the rear of this dwelling is not on the Land Registry map. It is the Council's understanding that this belongs to Martin O'Connor and Martina Finn. The objection indicates that property is subject to a mortgage in favour of another party who is abroad.
- The purpose of the acquisition is for the City Campus Project and the current focus is on the library development which is mainly located in the existing building to the south, an old 19th century church building acquired by the Council in the 1950s and put to its current use. While the Council examined alternative sites for a library it was deemed appropriate to keep the library in its current location and expand on the existing building.
- It is acknowledged that the 6 no. houses are not critical to the core elements of the project but they will be significantly affected by it and for that reason and because they have been in a disused condition for a lengthy period, the Council wants to see that situation changed and intend to restore them and use them as part of its housing stock.

Mr. Carty

- Commences by briefly reviewing the Engineer's March 2025 report submitted with the documentation for the project which supports the CPO.
- The site context is described. The overall vision for the City Campus Project is to transform a strategically important but under-utilised area of the town centre into a vibrant cultural, educational, commercial and residential destination. The project seeks to regenerate land that has been vacant, derelict and under investment and to create a new focal point for civic, cultural and economic activity within the town. Key elements comprise a new library, a new county museum, enterprise space, residential development and public realm elements.
- The overall block extends to c.1.13ha. Presently the local authority has control of 35% of the block. If consent is granted for the CPO, this would increase to c.50% and would facilitate the local authority in being in a position to coordinate regeneration of the entire area.
- The Council has been successful in securing URDF funding in the amount of €28m for the City Campus Project. Ther have been public realm interventions and improvements within the immediate areas of the sites.

- The CPO site effectively separates the two significant land parcels already in public ownership and is a key physical link required to comprehensively develop the wider block. Most of the buildings fronting onto Holborn Street have remained vacant and are in a derelict condition despite the town centre location. Without acquisition of these lands comprehensive regeneration of the block would be seriously constrained and unlikely to proceed.
- Efforts were made by the Council to secure the land by agreement but negotiations proved inconclusive. As such compulsory acquisition was necessary to secure the key lands required to progress the project.

Mr. Moylan

- The NPF is relevant, particularly National Strategic Outcome (NSO) relating to Compact Growth, and the Council is committed to more efficient use of land through active land management and a proactive approach to unlocking the development potential of brownfield sites in the urban core.
- Sligo is identified by the NPF as a key regional growth centre capable of leading the development of the surrounding region. The City Campus Project is one of the projects that SCC is progressing in response to ambitious targets for growth for Sligo.
- The RSES recognises that Sligo fulfils a city-like role to a greater extent than elsewhere and is a regional driver that has potential to grow. The RSES incorporates the Sligo Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan which includes several strategic objectives of relevance to this Project.
- The SCDP zones the site as TC1. Figure 11A of the Plan identifies the City Campus block as one of 14 regeneration sites.
- The City Campus is identified as a CDP objective under SO-RGC-7.
- In terms of funding, the Government has allocated URDF funding in the amount of €28m to the City Campus Project and an additional €20m+ for the implementation of a public realm plan. Public realm interventions and enhancements are both underway and completed in the immediate area.
- Regarding the City Campus Project, a preliminary business case was submitted to the Department in 2022 and two further steps were approved in terms of its implementation, namely the buying of essential lands (the lands subject of this

CPO) and the preparation of a Masterplan expected to be on public display before year end.

- The First Edition of the NPF specifically references the positive influence the URDF has had in Sligo with the City Campus referred to.
- Existing library and museum are out-dated. Both a protected structures in a poor state of repair, and re-using the library as the museum secures its future.
- The CPO lands are located between two Council owned land parcels and their central position means that their acquisition is critical to achieving a coherent redevelopment of the block. The alternative to acquisition of the lands is likely to be an absence of development and a failure to meet the community need for regeneration of this area within the urban core of Sligo.
- The proposal accords with national, regional and local policies on compact growth, brownfield regeneration and town centre renewal. It is directly linked with a specific SCDP objective and to an established Government funded regeneration programme.

6. Submission by Objectors

Mr. McDermott

- Mr. McDermott states that he is representing all three objectors and refers to his letter of 9th September.
- At the outset, the objectors had no objection to the acquisition by the Council of the car park, however they are objecting to the acquisition of the houses.
- The houses are not derelict. They are not on the Derelict Site Register (DSR), nor has any notification issued in respect of this matter.
- The report from Martin McGloin (of Castlegal Architectural Services) indicates a plan to 'do-up' the houses; one house is completed and rented out and work is on-going in another house.
- Mr. Armstrong has accepted that acquisition of the houses are not critical to the core element of the project and that is the objectors position. The car park only is required.
- Noted that there is no CPO for the remaining houses on the street.
- To conclude, the Objectors do not want the houses included in the CPO. There is no objection to the CPO as it relates to the car park.

7. Questioning between Parties and by the Inspector

SCC to Objector

- Mr. Armstrong asks about the redevelopment of the houses, how long they have been disused. Mr. O' Connor states they are derelict since 2007/2008. There was an overall plan for the entire block which was submitted in the context of a pre-planning consultation in 2008. The houses were no longer rented out. It was thought that the whole area was to be redeveloped. Mr. O'Connor states the houses are not derelict; they have roofs and are not in disrepair. One house is rented and one is being refurbished. Works on a third house are about to commence.
- Mr Armstrong asks Mr. O'Connor has he considered letting the houses go and forming a development proposal elsewhere. Mr. O'Connor states that the objectors are not interested in that proposition and want to hold onto the town centre houses.
- Mr. Armstrong asks Mr. O'Connor whether he understands that if a substantial library building is constructed behind the houses, that they would be affected by it. Mr. O'Connor states that if this the case, the entire street would be affected by construction of a new library building.
- Mr. O'Connor states that contracts were issued in respect of the sale of the car park and that the objectors were and are still fully committed to refurbishing the houses.
- Mr. Armstrong noted that the redevelopment of No. 13 may be complicated due to particular circumstances, however Mr O'Connor did not concur with that view and noted his commitment to refurbishing that property.
- Mr. Armstrong noted that Mr. O'Connor had stated that he would be unemployed if the CPO was confirmed due to his employment at the car park but noted that Mr. O'Connor was also involved in farming. Mr. O'Connor confirmed this and noted that it was always the case that the Council were interested in acquiring the land.

Objectors to SCC

- Mr. O'Connor asked why the remainder of the houses and the public house on Holborn Street are not included in the CPO process, given that the local authority has indicated the library development would potentially impact on the houses which are the subject of the CPO. In response Mr. Carty considered that depending on

what emerges from the Masterplan the impact of the proposed development on other houses is minimal and could indeed be advantageous.

- The Inspector sought clarity and asked whether the proposal may disproportionally affect the houses which are the subject of the CPO. In response Mr. Carty noted that the CPO includes the houses, given that they have been in a derelict condition for an extended period of time when there is a housing need, and as such their inclusion is an attempt to address dereliction and try to achieve new housing stock in the area, which has been subject to public realm enhancement measures. Therefore the opportunity to improve the houses forms part of the overall City Campus Masterplan Project.
- The Inspector asked whether the 6 houses were included in the CPO because they were deemed to be derelict. In response Mr. Carty noted that the centre block is identified as an area for regeneration and inclusion of the lands in the CPO affords the Council additional master planning opportunities and the chance to address dereliction as part of the overall redevelopment of the block.
- Mr. Mc Dermott raised the issue of dereliction and asked the Council whether it had ever inspected the houses with a view to placing them on the DSR. In response Mr. Moylan stated he did not recall any inspection being undertaken in that regard. Mr. McDermott asked whether, in Mr. Moylan's opinion, the houses are deemed to be derelict. Mr. Moylan considered the houses to be derelict as several are boarded up and that when viewed from the rear they are all in a very poor state of repair and cumulatively detract from the streetscape. There is significant take-up of the Vacant property refurbishment grants in Sligo but this has not occurred in this case. Mr Moylan stated that he would not be satisfied that the properties are refurbished to a standard he would be happy with.
- Mr. McDermott queried whether the exclusion of the houses would or would not prevent the progression of the overall project. In response, Mr. Moylan noted that Mr. Armstrong had answered that question earlier on in the proceedings.

Inspector to Objectors

- The Inspector sought ownership details of each house and the car park. In response Mr. McDermott advised that No. 13 and a section of the car park is jointly owned by Martin O'Connor and Martina Finn. Other than the foregoing, all other

houses and the remaining part of the car park is owned by Jim Wallace. In this regard the Objector submitted a map showing the area owned by Martin O'Connor and Martina Finn.

- The Inspector asked which houses were presently occupied and when were the remaining houses last occupied. Mr. O'Connor stated that No. 67 is presently occupied and is rented. No. 10 is under refurbishment presently and will be rented out from 1st November. Refurbishment works are starting on No. 15 and it is hoped to be completed by Christmas. This was last occupied in 2008/2008. Nos. 12 and 14 were last occupied around 2010. Plans are to refurbish the houses and paint the front façade straightaway.

Inspector to SCC

- The Inspector asked whether it was the case, as indicated on file documentation, that the Council initially intended to seek acquisition of the car park only and not the houses, and if so to explain the rationale around this. Mr. Carty advised that negotiations took place over an extended period with Mr. O'Connor and did not ultimately bear fruit. Given the long standing derelict nature of the houses, it was decided to include them in the CPO and bring the properties back into use for public housing.
- The Inspector asked if the CPO is confirmed whether the houses would be used for public / social housing, and if any demolition works are proposed. Mr. Carty noted the houses are within a historic part of Sligo town and refurbishment would be to restore them as houses and enhance and reinstate the streetscape in doing so. Mr. Moylan confirmed this approach and noted that no demolition works are proposed.
- The Inspector, referring to Objective SO-RGC-7 which relates to SCC working with ATU Sligo in the context of the Project, asked Mr. Moylan what involvement ATU has in the Project and what is envisaged in that regard. In response Mr. Moylan noted that ATU were on board when SCC were making the application for funding was submitted. The idea related to provision of a satellite campus in which the library would be both a public library and an educational facility part of ATU. SCC are still working with ATU on that basis. The present ATU campus is remote from

Sligo town and there is a considerable benefit adding a satellite campus in the town centre area.

- The Inspector sought information regarding the Masterplan for the site and the status of the process. In response Mr. Moylan stated that consultants have been procured to prepare a Masterplan for the block. A Sligo Urban Area Plan is in preparation presently and it is the Council's intention to have the Masterplan as a constituent part of the Urban Area Plan. It is hoped to have the Masterplan on public display before the year end.
- The Inspector queried whether it is intended that a Part 8 application be made in respect of the lands. Mr. Moylan stated that one or more than one Part 8 may be prepared in respect of the different components of the Masterplan.

8. Closing Statements

Objectors

Mr. O'Connor

- Mr. O'Connor commits to refurbish the houses and to have them all habitable within the next 15 months.

SCC

Mr. Armstrong

- Refers to four factors which must be met by the acquisition of the property. These include community need, which is considered to be met.
- In terms of the consideration of alternatives, the only alternative is to develop another site for the library and that was considered.
- The works accord with the provisions of the SCDP.
- There is no objection to acquisition to the car park.
- It is acknowledged that the houses are not critical to the project however that does not mean that the acquisition by the local authority of the houses would not be the best option for the project. The houses have been disused for the better part of 20 years; it is acknowledged that they are not on the DSR.

- The houses will be affected to a greater or lesser extent by the project. It is submitted that the local authority with its superior resources will be in a position to bring better design and construction to the houses.
- There is a perceived title issue in terms of ownership of the property. There is a complicated issue which Mr. Ms Dermott is aware of, and that complication prevented acquisition by agreement. To deal with this matter, the benefit of a CPO is required. Neither title issues nor compensation are matters for consideration by the Commission.

9. Closing of Oral Hearing

The Inspector makes some brief final comments and thanks everyone for their participation. The Oral Hearing is subsequently closed.