

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
ORAL HEARING SUBMISSION	
13:12	22 Case no. NA04.310286
28 SEP 2022 (Ballycoskery level crossing 212)	
LTR DATED _____	FROM _____
LDG- _____	
ABP- _____	

My name is Maurice O'Riordan. I am a senior citizen and have served on the boards of several public and private enterprises over many years, most recently on Cork County Council's Age Action Group.

I welcome this opportunity to address the Board and to put forward some further consideration that have come light since my original submission made on 7 June 2021. As the Board will already be aware of its contents I do not intend to repeat them here save by way of summarizing them. I believe that is necessary to contextualize some further observations that I intend to make.

The *nux* of my comments focused on development that would enable the integration of older people into the community so that they can live as independently as possible for as long as possible in their local community. We are fortunate that many of the older people in our community in Ballyhea are at present able to achieve this goal and make a valuable contribution to the community.

That being the objective of Cork Age Action, it goes without saying that any large scale structural development should be developed in close cooperation and consultation with older people so as to hear their needs and accommodate them as reasonably as possible. I would point to the Age Action Initiative in the town of Charleville as an example of this kind of collaborative approach to genuinely community based development.

Age Friendly Ireland has, as objectives:

"Amending planning guidelines in order to incorporate Age Friendly design and facilitate appropriate placement of older person accommodation and supports so that older people have walkable access to public and other essential services.

Ensuring that City and County Development plans and Local Area Plans incorporate Age Friendly concepts and principles".

(cf. <https://agefriendlyireland.ie/category/outdoor-spaces-buildings/how-weve-responded-outdoor-spaces-buildings/>).

Cork County Council “..has committed itself to establishing a county where older people can live full active and healthy lives by signing up to Ireland’s Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme an initiative run by the World Health Organization to encourage an age friendly society” (*Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028*, vol. 1, no. 6.6.5 p.136).

It is difficult to see how the proposed development at Ballycoskery implements those principles and even more difficult to see how the inclusivity statements in volume I (6.1.6 p.130; 6.2.1; 6.6.1; 6.6.9; 6.6.18; 6.6.20; etc.) of the current County Development Plan on age friendly development have not been materially contravened by it.

In my submission of 7 June 2021, regrettably, I had to mention that in advancing the proposed development at Ballycoskery (level crossing 212) CIE has never made contact with the local representatives of the Age Action Group and has never taken into serious account the negative impact on the lives and mobility of older people likely to derive from the proposed development at Ballycoskery.

Since my submission of 7 June 2021 Cork County Council (i.e. the Planning Policy Unit) proposed an amendment to the Draft County Development Plan providing explicitly for a bridge at Ballycoskery. The proposal was effectively to align the County Development Plan with CIE’s application. I should have thought CIE’s application should align with the County Development Plan in the normal course of events.

The very late proposed amendment drew multiple responses from the public. Many of these contributions to the democratic process highlighted the fact that Cork Council had made this proposal without any reference to anyone in Ballyhea Village. The Planning Policy Unit consulted with no one. It never afforded the local community an opportunity to see what they were proposing and discuss how it might affect their lives. Needless to say, the senior citizens of Ballyhea had no input at all into the proposed amendment.

The CEO of Cork County Council in his report on the submissions made to the amendments to the draft County Development Plan stated that no consultation was made by the County Council (Planning Policy Unit) since it relied on the consultation conducted by CIE.

I believe that this is less than a completely satisfactory procedure. Among other things, it does not take into account that CIE’s consultation (in so far as it was conducted) was conducted by a Railway Authority with regard to a railway development. While it is possible that this development might impinge in some respects on a Roads Authority (i.e. Cork County Council) I do not think this is

sufficient reason to refuse to hold a proper public consultation focused specifically on a road development. I take it that the Board will agree that the road development and the *proposed* railway development are two completely different developments and will have two differing specific focuses. It seems to me that admission of a consultation for one development to justify a completely different type of development could be a potentially disruptive precedent for the legitimate planning process that needs to be vindicated more vigorously now more than ever.

The concerns expressed here that relate as much to the roads process as they do to the current railway order process currently underway, but in light of the recent rejection of the proposed amendment to the County Development Plan it appears that this rail proposal is misaligned with the larger planning framework of that Plan and I am left asking the Board if this proposal is not supported by the Plan, is it a material contravention of it?

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my recommendation of 7 June 2021 and again to ask An Bord Pleanála to reject CIE's proposal for Ballycoskery (Ballyhea Village).

Go raibh maith agaibh.