

CORK CITY COUNCIL
CORK CITY COUNCIL – LISHEENS BALLINCOLLIG ACQUISITION ORDER NO.4
OF 2022

Statement of Evidence

Department of Education Contributors:-

Murty Hanly, A/Principal Officer, Forward Planning & Site Acquisitions Section, Planning and Building Unit, Department of Education.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the statement from Frank Lewis, Senior Architect, Professional and Technical Section, Planning and Building Unit, Department of Education and that of Ronan MacKernan Senior Executive Planner, Cork City Council for its full meaning and effect.

1.0 Background to proposed School Campus

Ballincollig is a satellite town of Cork City. It is located approximately 9km west of Cork City beside the River Lee on the R608 regional road.

Ballincollig is identified as a Key Growth Area in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028, with a projected growth in population from 18,159 to 28,679 over the Plan period.

The two schools proposed to be accommodated on the subject lands are Gaelscoil an Chaisleain [primary] and Le Chéile Secondary School [post primary]. Both of these schools are currently located in rented accommodation in the town in suboptimal accommodation. This accommodation consists of rented temporary buildings with limited access to general purpose rooms, specialist rooms and sports facilities, which are largely dependent on third parties. The rental status of these schools means there is a degree of uncertainty around their continued occupation of the properties. Expansion of both schools is hindered by their current locations.

Existing Schools for Proposed Development on School Campus:

Gaelscoil an Chaisleáin:

The requirement to establish a new primary school in Ballincollig was identified in 2015 and a site identification and assessment exercise has been ongoing since then with the assistance of Cork City & Cork County Councils.

Gaelscoil an Chaisleáin was established in 2017 in interim accommodation and is currently accommodated within the grounds of Ballincollig Rugby Football Club. Additional temporary accommodation was provided to the school for 2020/21 school year. This accommodation was further expanded to meet the requirements of the school up to the end of the 2023/24 school year, but no longer.

The initial requirement in 2015 was for an 8 classroom primary school, expandable to 16 classrooms.

This requirement was expanded to allow for a 2 classroom base Special Education Needs (SEN) facility and to allow for future expansion up to 24 classrooms to allow for school demand from potential future residential development identified in the 2022-2028 Cork City Council Development Plan.

The initial site identification and assessment exercise for the primary school was carried out by Cork County Council.

Le Chéile Secondary School

In 2018 the then Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton, T.D. announced plans for the establishment of 42 new schools over the following 4 years (2019 to 2022). This announcement followed nationwide demographic exercises carried out by the Department into the current and future need for primary and post-primary school places across the country.

The demographic analysis carried out in 2018 concluded that there was, at that time, a net requirement for 723 additional school places at post primary school level in the Ballincollig School Planning Area which could not be accommodated in existing schools or through temporary accommodation / expansion of existing schools. Therefore, it recommended a new 1,000 pupil school be opened in 2021. The above analysis took into account planned new residential developments in Ballincollig area.

A review of this demographic demand was carried out in 2020 and the requirement for a new post primary school was reconfirmed. Demographic analyses carried out in 2021 and 2022 continued to project a demand for additional post primary school places in Ballincollig.

Le Chéile Secondary School was established following a patronage competition and opened in interim accommodation at Ballincollig GAA Club, Powder Mills, Ballincollig in September 2021. There will be a requirement to relocate the school after the 2023/24 school year.

A permanent site to accommodate a 1,000 pupil post primary school is urgently required.

Proposed new School Campus:

Table 1 – Details of the two existing schools for 2022/23

* LTPE: Long Term Projected Enrolment

Roll No.	School	School Patron	Language of Tuition	Total enrolment	Current LTPE*
20500I	Gaelscoil an Chaisleain	An Foras Pátrúnachta	Irish	148	8 classrooms (184 pupils) SEN* facility (12 pupils)
68385G	Le Chéile Sec School	Le Chéile Schools Trust	English	64	1,000 pupils SEN facility (24 pupils)
<i>Provision for future primary capacity</i>					<i>16 classrooms (368 pupils)</i>
<i>Total projected pupil population on the school campus site</i>					<i>1,588 pupils</i>

Among the key issues in support of the relocation are the following:

- 1- The schools are in rental accommodation and create uncertainty for future planning;
- 2- The sharing of facilities and services with other non-educational groups is unsatisfactory;
- 3- The existing accommodation is suboptimal;
- 4- The severe limitations on expansion of the existing schools;
- 5- The benefits; educational, social and otherwise, of a campus given the characteristics of the two schools

Future Requirements

As stated, the objective is to relocate two existing schools in Ballincollig, which are currently located in temporary accommodation to purpose built school facilities located on a campus. The two schools are Gaelscoil an Chaisleain – an all-Irish primary school and Le Chéile Secondary School. The Two School Campus Project will provide additional capacity.

Gaelscoil an Chaisleain had an enrolment of 148 pupils in 2022/23 and will have the capacity to increase to over 184 pupils with an 8 main classroom school. Due to the structure of education provision at primary level, the size of schools are referred to in terms of 8 classroom streams which accounts for junior and senior infants and first through to sixth classes.

The provision of 1,000 pupil post-primary facility on the campus will cater for the current enrolment of Le Chéile Secondary School with room to expand to a Long Term Projected Enrolment (LTPE) of 1,000 pupils.

There is an increasing demand for school places in the Ballincollig School Planning Area (SPA). The most recent demographic review of SPAs across the Country projected an increase in demand at both primary and post primary level in Ballincollig. This is one of the few areas in the Country with an increasing demand at primary level.

In addition to this, the current Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 has identified Ballincollig as a Key Growth Area with a projected increase in population of over 10,000 people within the Plan period. Based on currently available Census figures the projected child yield from this level of population increase is c. 1,200 at primary level and 750 at post primary level. This reinforces the need to plan for additional school places in Ballincollig in order to accommodate this projected population increase.

Therefore, this proposed new school campus will be master planned to accommodate for up to 24 primary school classes (552 pupils) and 1,000 post primary school pupils (this is to cater for the projected demand of circa 400 post primary school places based on current demographic trends and the additional 750 places due to the projected increase in population over the development plan period).

Additional facilities for children with additional needs will also be provided for in the form of a 2 classroom base primary Special Educational Needs (SEN) facility and a 4 classroom base post primary Special Educational Needs (SEN) facility, accommodating 36 pupils in total.

The Two School Campus Project will enhance the diversity of educational provision available to the community in Ballincollig and surrounding areas.

The campus arrangement in the newly built two school campus will give students access to the broadest range of learning opportunities, teacher skills and accommodate facilities for specialist areas of the curriculum at both primary and post-primary levels. The size of schools should also

allow students adequate opportunities for team and group experiences in various areas of the curriculum.

2.0 Site Selection for the School Campus:

When the requirement for a site for a Post Primary school was identified in 2018 the site search was altered to include enough land to accommodate the two schools. The issue of site acquisition remained under active review by the Department in collaboration with the Cork County Council and the delays experienced in acquiring a site had become urgent in 2019/2020.

Following [the boundary extension and the increase in the administrative area of Cork City Council to include Ballincollig on the 31 May 2019] discussions were held between the Department and Cork City Council officials regarding the urgent need for a site to accommodate a new school campus.

In addition to this, the Department engaged the professional services of a Site Acquisitions Manager consultancy team to identify and assess potential site options for the proposed school campus in the Ballincollig area.

This consultancy team consisted of a Property Manager, Real Estate Agent, Planning Consultant and Engineering Consultant and potential site options were assessed for suitability under the following headings:

- Zoning;
- Viability;
- Access/egress;
- Costs of infrastructural works;
- Obtaining vacant possession;
- Economic valuation.

The preferred site option identified through this process was the subject site, described below:

“A 15 acre plot of land within the townland of Lisheens, between the R608 and the N22 (within Folio CK19183)”

The land in question is zoned ZO_12 Education within the Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The development of the proposed school campus on these lands meets a community need in the area, the land is suitable and sufficient for a two school campus and is consistent with the statutory plans for the development of the area.

This site is the subject of this Compulsory Purchase Order process.

A 15 acre plot of land within the townland of Lisheens, between the R608 and the N22 (within Folio CK19183) had been identified and assessed by Council officials & this Department to be suitable for the development of the required school campus.

This site has direct access to public roads and services and it is ideally located to serve the large residential areas (both existing and planned) in the West of Ballincollig.

Summary:

The issue of site selection included analysis of information available on current enrolments and demographic projections for future enrolment requirements in the Ballincollig area. Issues raised in the ongoing review of site suitability included:

- Zoning;
- Viability;
- Access/egress;
- Costs of infrastructural works;
- Obtaining vacant possession;
- Economic valuation.

Following a review by the Department and Cork City Council of the options available and the requirements for a school campus it has been concluded that the 15 acre subject site of this CPO is suitable for the intended purpose of the development of the two schools in terms, inter alia, of zoning, location, size, topography and access.

As a result of the unexpected death of the owner Merle Tanner ob 02/07/2019 and the delay in the extraction of a Grant of Probate in her Estate (now in excess of three years after her death] and the inability to agree voluntary acquisition of the lands in question it has been decided to progress the acquisition by way of compulsory purchase subject to approval with or without modification by An Bord Pleanála.

The subject site will ensure the two schools, essential to the provision of a diversity of education options to the community in the Ballincollig area, will continue to function, have appropriate school facilities and scope to expand to meet any growth in enrolment.

The site is zoned for Education purposes and is deemed by Cork City Council as suitable for location of schools. It is in close proximity to the town centre and leisure/recreational facilities.

The overall land requirement identified amounting to 15 acres in total forms a site of sufficient scale to allow the Department of Education to develop the School Campus to accommodate the schools' required new facilities.

An attempt was made to acquire this land by negotiation with the representatives for the registered landowner, however, because no Grant of Probate has been extracted to her estate [due to title issues] it was not possible to conclude these negotiations.

School building projects for both Gaelscoil an Chaisleain and Le Chéile Secondary School are included in the Department of Education's Capital programme. Once agreement has been reached on the acquisition of a site(s) these projects will progress to Architectural Design & Planning.

The Department of Education issued a request to Cork City Council to use their powers of compulsory purchase, indemnifying them of all costs, in order to facilitate the development of the required schools in accordance with the objectives of the current Development Plan.

The acquisition by compulsory purchase resolves all issues in relation to obtaining clean marketable title and vacant possession by the Council with the intention, subject to compliance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2001, to convey those lands to the Department for the purposes of the development of the schools in question which the Department will be obliged to carry out

The Council commenced the CPO process in August 2022.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Pursuant to the provisions of Part XIX of the PDA, other relevant legislation and related guidance documents, Cork City Council and the Department of Education have worked collaboratively to assess sites in the Ballincollig Area.

The site subject to this CPO facilitates the orderly development of the land itself, adjoining lands zoned for development [in particular residential] and complements adjoining land uses and zonings.

The site is a regular shaped site with good access and available services. It is in close proximity to the town centre; leisure/recreational facilities and residential areas.

In my opinion the lands, the subject matter of the CPO herein are suitable and sufficient for the purposes of meeting, and their acquisition is necessary to meet, the educational and community needs of Ballincollig and its surrounding area, both present and future.

Please also refer to the Statements of Evidence from Frank Lewis, Senior Architect, Department of Education and Ronan MacKernan Senior Executive Planner Cork City Council.

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