



Z6 Study update for Feb Council Meeting

Update on Review of Industrial Lands (Z6/Z7) in the City

Introduction:

Members may recall that at the making of the City Development Plan in 2016 an objective was included as follows:

CEE04:

“(i) To carry out a targeted survey of those industrial estates with likely redevelopment potential and to make recommendations on how that redevelopment potential might be best achieved.

(ii) To carry out a study on the potential of lands zoned for enterprise and employment space, the adequacy of such potential supply, and the issue of under-utilised/vacant lands.

On foot of this objective the Council has been undertaking a study of all of the lands zoned for industrial and employment uses (Z6 and Z7) in the current Dublin City Development Plan. The purpose of the study is to examine the most appropriate policy and zoning response following a detailed examination of the lands, having regard to the future needs of the city.

Whilst primarily led by this objective, the study is also mindful of the Council's requirements and obligations under the 2018 National Planning Framework and the soon to be completed Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Region.

Context:

The core strategy of the current Development Plan approved by Council in 2016 identifies a need to provide a minimum of 30,000 new housing units during the 6 year life of the Plan. The Core strategy also demonstrates there is sufficient suitably zoned and serviced land to provide for 50,000 units. This reflects the reality that not all residential serviced sites will come on stream at once; particularly when addressing complex brownfield lands. The Council has the responsibility of managing all land resources with a view to providing for a sustainable long term approach, as there is a limited supply of land likely to be available for development and there is a clear need for a balance between the need to provide for housing and to provide for growth in employment in the City region.

Development Plans are required to zone lands for future uses. In this regard the City Development Plan has a number of zoning objectives, including Z1, to provide for residential development. In more recent development plans, the Council has introduced new zoning objectives including Z10 and Z14, which provide for sustainable mixed use development.

Z10 allows for mixed use form of development to ensure local employment is provided for in combination with residential uses. Z14 provides for a similar sustainable mixed use approach at a larger scale in key growth areas of the City typically identified as Strategic Development and Regeneration Areas (SDRAs). As such, the analyses of Z6/Z7 Industrial Lands will require careful consideration of the most appropriate zoning for the future needs of the City, and the most effective mechanism for achieving the objective (LAPs, Guiding Principles etc.).

Over 600,000 people work in Dublin (City and County), with approximately 75% of these living within Dublin. Ensuring the vitality of Dublin City is dependent on providing affordable places to live and places to work within a reasonable distance of each other, to allow people a good quality of life and to ensure a sustainable pattern of development. In examining these lands, it is essential that the Council ensures that a sustainable mix of uses are retained across the City, and that areas of the City do not become mono-use in their entirety.

The City area contains many types of employment, some locally focussed and service based, some national and international from small start-ups to global firms. A balance is required to ensure that a strong mix of types of employment and essential local services are retained within the City. The mixed-use approach promoted in Z10 and Z14 objectives in the City Development Plan seeks to ensure that this balance is maintained in a sustainable manner. In examining the lands zoned Z6 and Z7, this “mix of use” philosophy plays an important part of the assessment and direction of the study.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that the future of the City is one of a vibrant, attractive, functional City, based on a sustainable policy framework that allows for mixed uses within the City so that people can live and work and avail of services within a reasonable distance of each other. Land within the City is a precious resource, and ensuring that the best use is made of these lands is a core function of the Council, both as a Planning Authority, and also as a landowner.

Project Progress:

In total there are approx. 90 sites across the City zoned Z6 and Z7, totalling 863 hectares of the 10,000 hectares that make up the City. These employment zonings are located in all five administrative areas of the City. The project team has now visited and examined each site recording the current level of use; the planning history of the site; adjoining land uses (existing and proposed) and identifying key issues including access, flood risk, drainage and planning history. Each of the sites has been photographed and mapped and a database of this information is being created. This documentation and research of each site is now nearing completion.

It is anticipated that a report on the completion of this work, and its implications will be prepared and presented to the Planning SPC at its scheduled February meeting.

Key Issues Emerging:

The Council has gained considerable experience in regeneration from recent Development Plans, other local plans and SDZ Schemes. Some of the land areas being examined in this study are very significant in scale, and a change to their use cannot be piecemeal. Changes for such large sites need to be framed around the Development Plan policies of place-making, creating/expanding amenities, examination of community needs, including schools provision; movement and connectivity and providing a good range of local services and ensuring quality employment locations proximate to where people live.

As this study moves forward each site will be categorised regarding the appropriateness of the zoning objective to the current use or if another use would be a better outcome for the City and the area. Five categories of Industrial lands have been identified, requiring different responses, some of which may involve a mix of zoning to reflect particular local circumstances.

Category 1: Small Scale Sites:

For these sites, due to their particularly small scale and the nature of surrounding uses, a change to more appropriate zoning policy would allow for the redevelopment of the site and address issues of poor street frontage and/or blight, provide new housing and/or new retail units and/or a denser level of employment use and local services. These will be considered for a future variation, following a more detailed assessment of the sites in question.

Category 2: Medium Scale Sites:

Other sites of a slightly larger scale, which contain a level of vibrancy and employment, but are operating at low volume of use and have the capacity to intensify, it is proposed to ensure that the site develops a mixed use character with a good level of employment use, but is allowed grow to accommodate residential as part of this and to allow for regeneration at a site level. A future variation to reflect this will be considered for some of these sites, with others considered as part of the next Development Plan.

Category 3: Economically Strategic Sites:

For some sites, due to their specific location close to the M50, and/or Dublin Port and Tunnel and the Airport, the nature of their use for logistics and distribution and their strategic importance to the economy; or due to their specific local context, the Z6/ Z7 zoning will remain the most appropriate zoning.

Category 4: Larger Sites needing Framework Plans:

For a number of sites, which on their own total over 270 hectares - 45% of the total Z6:- it is intended to progress a more detailed study. All of these locations are of a strategic and regional level of significance; and change has implications to the current Core Strategy of the City Development Plan. For these sites, the scale of the lands involved means that any change would need to be addressed within a more detailed planning framework- such as an SDRA, LAP or SDZ.

Category 5: Other Miscellaneous Sites:

For some sites, the zoning is no longer a good reflection of the current use, but any zoning change in the short term has no significant impact on the future use of the site or facilitate significant new development. For such sites, it is proposed that the zoning will be re-visited as part of the preparation of the next City Development Plan.

Next Steps

The next stage for this project is completion of the assessment and compilation of data in report form for the February Planning & Property Development SPC meeting.

It is proposed that work on the sites identified for a possible future variation will now commence. This will involve internal consultation and consultation with Elected Members in each area.

The Council will also now move forward utilising approved funding under the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government Urban Regeneration & Development Fund to commence a detailed study of the Z6 lands at Naas Road/Kylemore Road and also commence examination of other Z6 key sites.

The next step will also examine the implications of any proposed changes to the Core Strategy and related objectives and policies contained within the Development Plan, with the possibility of incorporating any required changes into a future variation or variation.

Richard Shakespeare
Assistant Chief Executive

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