

Minutes of Special Joint Meeting held on Monday 7th October, 2013 at 2.00p.m.

- Chair:** Cllrs. P. Dunphy and M. Brett
- Cllrs.** M. O' Brien, T. Prendergast, M. Shortall, T. Breathnach, J. Brennan, D. Fitzgerald, M. H. Cavanagh, C. Connery, A. McGuinness, P. Millea, M. Doran, J. Coonan, C. Long, E. Aylward, S. Treacy, M. Noonan, A.M. Irish, F. Doherty, J. Malone, J. Reidy, S. O' hArgain, J. Leahy, J. Moran, K. Funchion.
- Official:** J. Crockett, J. Mulholland, J. McCormack, P. O' Neill, D. McDonnell, D. Malone, N. Louw, J. O' Reilly, B. Tyrrell, A. Hayes and K. Fitzgerald.
- Apologies:** Cllrs. M. Fitzpatrick, B. Ireland and T. Maher.

Cllr. P. Dunphy opened the meeting and welcomed all the members to the Special Joint Meeting to discuss the draft master plan for the Diageo Site.

County Manager, Joe Crockett welcomed all to the meeting on this exciting day to discuss the future development of Kilkenny. He outlined to the meeting that Kilkenny City is designated in the National Spatial Strategy. Both local authorities agreed to purchase the Diageo Site in May 2012 and in July, 2013 approved the first stage remediation of buildings and to seek funding to carry out works. This is a large site with a number of buildings being retained. County Manager welcomed Reddy Architects to give a presentation on the draft master plan for the Abbey Creative Quarter. He apologised on behalf of Mr. Tony Reddy who is unable to attend the meeting today due to personal reasons. He advised that all issues are open for discussion and for members to consider.

Mr. Rob Keane and Mr. Mark Kennedy gave a power point presentation to the members. The presentation included an overview on the history of the site location within the medieval heart of the city, and an outline on how the Urban Framework Plan was used for the design and delivery of buildings, parks, and open spaces along the river. They outlined that consideration was given to the urban grain of the city, urban space of the medieval city, positioning of streets, design of buildings and sustainability within the site. The master plan has been prepared with reference to the County Development Plan and National Policies. The unused lands must be linked with the city. The area must be attractive to new industries both nationally and internationally.

The presentation outlined the protected structures on the site, details of the historic burgage, plot lines and analysis of flood levels.

The objectives of the master plan include

- Linkage with the Linear Park

- Protect views from the site and from other areas of the city
- Develop new tourist routes.

The proposals contained in the master plan

- Buildings to be retained
- Opportunities for pedestrian/cyclist routes, creating an avenue along the river nore.
- Creation of squares within the site, courtyard spaces, open up historic buildings, create archways from existing streets
- Development of Car park, bus park

The sketch options displayed showed curved streets in keeping with the city, significance of River Nore to the site, siting of new buildings on the burgage plots and significant green space. The master plan displays the final layout of the roads/streets, buildings, open spaces, linkages to the existing city. It was suggested that the building referred to as Tea House Square would be developed first, this will unlock the site for future development.

A number of slides presented showed artists impression of a completely developed quarter from various points within the site and outside of the site.

County Manager thanked them for their presentation and stated that this is a 20 year vision for the site. He advised that the PowerPoint presentation would be e-mailed to all members for further considerations. No decision would be required today as it is envisaged a number of meetings would be required to discuss the master plan. A preliminary study on the lands was prepared in April 2008 when Diageo were planning to develop these lands. A copy of this study was also circulated to all members.

He advised that the members have also decided on 3rd level – Research and Enterprise campus being included in this site. Application has been made to the Government for funding for €3 million to carry out works to grey box standard. At this stage the local authorities should progress the provision of the infrastructure, i.e. roads, water/waste water and development of the open space. Kilkenny County Council will facilitate works and apply for funding from the various departments. Member's approval will be required to proceed.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. M. O' Brien, M. H. Cavanagh, J. Reidy, F. Doherty, T. Breathnach, M. Noonan, A. McGuinness, J. Brennan, C. Connery, J. Coonan, S. Treacy, S. O hArgain, C. Long, P. Millea, T. Prendergast, D. Fitzgerald.

Members welcomed the presentation and thanked Mr. Keane and Mr. Kennedy for their vision/contribution to this master plan. Council staff are also to be complimented for their work/input into the masterplan. Members were in agreement that this is a significant development for the future of many generations in Kilkenny. It is a major decision for the elected members. It is a fantastic opportunity for Kilkenny to lead the way in an innovative design of a brown field site within a vibrant city. Job creation/investment is critical to the success of this project over the future years.

Specific queries were raised in relation to the following:-

- Provision of additional bridge – Central Access Scheme, linkage of site to city, access for cars/service deliveries etc- deficiency in existing bridges , flooding issues, connecting to motorways.
- Creation of jobs, inward investment by national/international companies, university/technology campus for the South East, opportunities for additional tourist routes.
- Design of buildings in the medieval city, height of buildings, connectivity of buildings within the site and integration of site to the existing businesses within the city.
- Provision of open spaces, development of land adjoining the river, linkage into the Linear Park, Skate Park, integration of the Watergate Theatre.
- Protect views of historic buildings within the city, opportunity to open up views to other buildings.
- Sustainable energy proposals for site.
- Need for public engagement/consultation over a prolonged period.
- Request for scale model of proposed development.
- Inclusion of public art pieces to recognise the tradition of brewing in this area, street names should reflect the history and use of this area.
- Residential buildings – encourage city centre living in quality accommodation
- Retail strategy – City mart site to be phase 2 in retail development

County Manager responded in detail to all members queries. He advised that the draft master plan is the first draft for the proposed development. There will be a number of meetings with the members and extensive public consultation before a final plan is agreed.

The development of the city cannot be advanced in the absence of an additional bridge. This area will be linked to the infrastructure of the central access scheme.

There have been a number of enquiries, visits to the site from businesses. The target is to create 1,000 jobs within the first 5 years and further creation of additional jobs in the following five years. The development of the entire site will be over the next 20 years. The city will be regenerated, the economy will grow, existing businesses and tourism will benefit from this new development.

It is proposed to proceed to develop the main route throughout the site linking into the Central Access Scheme, to prepare design for the opening up of the Riverside, and to upgrade the water/waste water services. Funding will be sought for these projects now. The overall development will facilitate opportunities for additional/new enterprises/businesses to move to Kilkenny, allow development of an educational/technology/ research campus and open up lands to develop residential and social uses for the public. It is an investment in the city centre. Instead of on the ring road.

The buildings will be stepped back from the river. It is anticipated that the buildings will be only 4 to 5 stories similar to the heights of the existing tanks on site. Views of historic buildings will be open up and protected.

The development of a visitor centre is a welcome major investment by Diageo for the City. This development will incorporate elements of the history of the Diageo site. Kilkenny does not have the ability to take on another major retail development at this stage. Development of the mart site will be deferred for a number of years. The final users of this site will complement the existing retail sector not replace it.

County Manager agreed to have a model prepared at a later stage when the proposals are more firm and agreement has been reached on a final layout for the site.

It was proposed by Cllr. T. Breathnach, Seconded by Cllr. M. Noonan: -“That approval is hereby given to progress design on proposals for the open space adjoining the River and linking areas to the Linear Park through international competition and to seek funding for the work”. This was agreed by all members.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Coonan, Seconded by Cllr. S. O’ hArgain “That approval is hereby given to commence design of the internal road infrastructure linking into the Central Access Scheme and to seek funding for these works”. This was agreed by all members.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Coonan, Seconded by Cllr. S. O’ hArgain and agreed by all: - “That approval is hereby given to progress the detailed design of this site”.

Cllr. P. Dunphy thanked the management team, Council staff and Reddy Architects for all their work in preparing the draft master plan. It is a priority of the elected members to facilitate the development of the city, to create jobs for the city and county and to stimulate the economy. He thanked the members for their support of the project and for their contributions today.

Cllr. M. Brett thanked all involved in bringing the plan to this stage. He also thanked Diageo for their contribution to the city and the workers for their significant contribution to the tradition of brewing in Kilkenny. We need to do what is right for the city for future generations and to maintain the heritage of the city. This plan will revitalise the city and county and will create additional employment into the future.

The meeting concluded at 4.00p.m.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

