

## **Joint Meeting of Kilkenny County & Borough Council**

**held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at 3.00p.m.**

**Chair:** Cllr. P. Dunphy and M. Brett

**Councillors:** Cllrs. P. Millea, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, C. Connery, J. Coonan, M. Fitzpatrick, P. Cuddihy, M. Noonan, A. McGuinness, M. Doran, W. Ireland, T. Maher, P. Crowley, T. Prendergast, M. O' Brien, S. Treacy, C. Long, T. Breathnach, A.M. Irish, E. Aylward, F. Doherty, J. Malone, J. Leahy, J. Reidy.

**Officials:** J. Crockett, J. Mulholland, J. McCormack, B. Mernagh, D. McDonnell, D. Malone, E. Graham, D. Ledwidge and A.M. Walsh

Cllr. P. Dunphy welcomed members to the Joint Meeting of Kilkenny Borough Council and Kilkenny County Council. There are 3 major items to be discussed and decisions to be made by both local authorities.

**(i) Diageo Site, Irishtown, Kilkenny.**

Mr. Crockett, County Manager referred to his report circulated in advance of the meeting. He outlined that a decision was made in 2012 by both local authorities to purchase the 12 acres site from Diageo/Smithwicks due to its strategic importance within the City and County. Under the terms of the agreement Diageo is to clear the site.

However, following detailed examination it is now proposed to retain some of the buildings for future use. T. Reddy Architects and Nolan Construction Consultants were engaged to provide a detailed report on the structure of the buildings and to provide a cost assessment on remediation.

County Manager welcomed Mr. T. Reddy and Mr. Mark Kennedy to the meeting and advised that the architects will give a powerpoint presentation on the buildings on site.

Mr. Reddy commenced by welcoming this opportunity to address development along the River Nore and spoke about the tradition of 3<sup>rd</sup> level Education in Kilkenny. Kilkenny has an international identity and is an attractive place to work in and be in a vibrant city centre. Kilkenny is 9<sup>th</sup> in the IDA preference list and this site now affords great opportunities to develop the city centre. He outlined the structures of the Brewhouse and the Maturation Building and retaining these as our industrial heritage. Possible uses for these buildings would be by 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutes, Google etc – Knowledge based industry. These buildings could be refurbished grey box standard or posh garage standard and companies could then fit them out.

Mr. Mark Kennedy outlined the works required to create an “advanced grey box”. The buildings are of robust concrete, very useable space with very good floor to ceiling heights. There is the possibility of increasing the floor area through the introduction of mezzanine floors. All windows will need to be replaced. 60% of the façade needs to be rebuilt. There are flexible uses for these buildings. The cost of the first phase remediation of the 2 buildings is estimated to be € 550,000. The cost of refurbishment to an advanced grey box standard is estimated to be €2.8m. Mr Reddy advised that if these buildings were available – opportunities would be available in Kilkenny to attract companies and would create a new space with courtyard between the buildings in this area of Kilkenny.

County Manager referred to point 6 in his report and recommended that the members would agree to retain the four buildings i.e. Mayfair Offices, Hopstore, Brewhouse and Maturation buildings.

He advised that the Mayfair building with associated car parking will be used by the local authority to replace Johns Green. Plans for the Hopstore will be brought to members at a later stage. It is proposed to sell surplus buildings in Dean Street and Wolfe Tone Street to fund the first stage remediation costs of the buildings.

He advised that IDA and the Institutes of Technology have visited the site. TSSG are seeking to expand and needs larger space. Funding will be sought from Government agencies to refurbish the buildings.

Contributions were received from Cllr. P. Cuddihy, J. Leahy, M. Doran, F. Doherty, M. Noonan, J. Coonan, M. O’ Brien, M. Shortall, J. Reidy, T. Maher, P. Crowley, C. Connery, S. Treacy, T. Breathnach, T. Prendergast and M. Brett.

Members thanked Tony Reddy and Mark Kennedy for their presentation and outline of the buildings.

Members were in favour of the development of this historic area of Kilkenny. This is a very exciting but challenging project.

The following issues were raised by members.

- Important to use the river as an amenity, – Project “Unlocking the Nore”, use by IWSA.
- Re-use of buildings if possible to maintain the heritage and importance of the site.
- IPPC Licence – Clarify the terms and requirements on Diageo.
- Use of the Bottling Store- Why is this not being retained as it has great potential.
- Important to have all technical advice in remediating buildings – Safer option to demolish now?
- Opportunities for creating sustainable energy zones to produce energy for Kilkenny City.
- Investigate European Regional Development Funds
- Smarter Travel Programme – Linkage with the river and other parts of the city.
- Welcome the use of Mayfair for public offices

- Important to engage with IDA to attract suitable companies.
- Provision of Arts Faculty
- Investigate opportunities of medical college/outreach centres linked to UCD and TUI.
- Use as a creative/arts area
- Retention of internal characteristics of the Brewhouse.

County Manager responded to the queries raised by the members and thanked them for their considered views. He advised there is a demand in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level sector for additional space in Kilkenny. All avenues will be explored for funding including European Funding. This is a development for the future of Kilkenny over the next 8 to 10 years and it is recommended that the buildings be retained.

**(A)** It was proposed by Cllr. J. Reidy, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy and agreed: - “That Kilkenny Borough Council should proceed with the first stage remediation of the Brewhouse and Maturation Buildings at an estimated cost of €600,000. The project to be funded through the sales of surplus Council property at Dean Street and Wolfe Tone Street. That Kilkenny Borough Council should seek external funding either by way of grant aid or private partnership to carry out works to grey box standard to total value of €3m. That fitting out costs to be borne by incoming companies”.

**(B)** Proposed Cllr. P. Cuddihy, Seconded by Cllr. M. Doran: - “That Kilkenny County Council should proceed with the first stage remediation of the Brewhouse and Maturation Buildings at an estimated cost of €600,000. The project to be funded through the sales of surplus Council property at Dean Street and Wolfe Tone Street. That Kilkenny County Council should seek external funding either by way of grant aid or private partnership to carry out works to grey box standard to total value of €3m. That fitting out costs to be borne by incoming companies”.

**(ii) Part 8- County Library, John Street, Kilkenny**

Mr. J. Mulholland referred to Part 8 report circulated to members on the proposed City and County Library at John Street, Kilkenny. He outlined that following a submission, the design of the building has been amended, so as to preserve the wall in place in its existing line and location and the first floor was re-designed so as to bridge over the wall considered to be on the line of an old town wall or a town ditch. The solution has been discussed and agreed with the Department of Arts, Gaeltacht and Heritage. The resultant change to the development on public display is a re-arrangement of the ground floor and first floor plans, relocation of Arts office to the rear of the buildings and greater visibility of the library from John Street. Mr. James Crowley, Bucholz & McEvoy Architects gave a powerpoint presentation outlining the changes to the original design of the library. He outlined details of the bridge on the first floor in order to retain the wall and make it a feature within the building. It was noted that the bridge would be smaller than indicated.

Contributions were received from Cllr. P. Cuddihy, M. Fitzpatrick, M. O' Brien, F. Doherty, C. Long, J. Coonan, J. Brennan, J. Reidy and C. Connery.

Issues raised by members are as follows:-

- Preserving the wall-ongoing monitoring/protection during construction.
- How will wall be displayed to public
- Funding for the library
- Increasing the book fund
- Retaining the Loughboy library

Cllr. C. Long and J. Reidy expressed their opposition to the use of wood in the design of the building.

Mr. Mulholland replied to all issues raised and advised that the total cost of the library is estimated to be €2.4m, a grant of €1.8m has been secured and the balance is included in the Capital Budget for funding through development levies. It is proposed to proceed to tender for the deconstruction of the sheds when Part 8 has been approved by members.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. P. Cuddihy that: -"The proposed City and County Library at John Street, Kilkenny proceed".

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Coonan, Seconded by Cllr. M. Noonan and agreed: - "That we the members of Kilkenny Borough Council approve the report which has been prepared to comply with Section 179, Part XI of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2011 and the provisions of Part 8 of the Planning & Development regulations for the construction of City & County Library at John Street, Kilkenny.

**(iii) Part 8 New Museum – St. Mary's Church, Kilkenny**

Mr. Crockett County Manager advised that the purchase of St. Mary's Church had been approved by both local authorities. This building is part of the medieval mile project and it is proposed to have a museum in the building.

Mr. Niall McCullagh McCullagh Mulvey Architects gave a power point presentation outlining the building, rooms on each floor, proposed re-design of the building and the new staircase in the tower.

He outlined the relationship that this church held with Kilkenny Castle and gave details of archaeology already carried out on site. The proposed restoration will include restoring the walls, maintaining all the old features, a new room will be added for Kilkenny artefacts. The museum will house an exhibition of high crosses. All the survey work on the building been done carefully.

Contributions were received from Cllr. J. Reidy, P. Cuddihy, J. Coonan, M. O' Brien, M. Noonan, T. Maher and M. Brett.

Members welcomed this development of this old historic building in the centre of Kilkenny. It will be a huge tourist attraction for the city. The issues raised by members are as follows:-

- Current artefacts contained in the monuments room are of national significance.
- Use of adjoining derelict site on Kieran Street.
- Continued engagement with the public on this project.
- Opportunity to display the civic history of Kilkenny
- Restoration of monuments in graveyard.
- Utilise the restoring of building as a training course for craftsmen.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. O' Brien and seconded by Cllr. T. Maher and agreed: - "That Kilkenny County Council supports the renovation and restoration of St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Lane, Kilkenny.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Reidy, Seconded by Cllr. M. Noonan and agreed: - "That we the members of Kilkenny Borough Council approve the report which has been prepared to comply with Section 179, Part XI of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2011 and the provisions of Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations for the renovation and restoration of St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Lane, Kilkenny.

Cllr. M. Brett thanked all the members for their contributions and consideration on these 3 major projects for Kilkenny City. He said it is a very significant day that such significant projects can now proceed for the future development and growth of Kilkenny.

Cllr. P. Dunphy thanked members for the time given by members in discussions, these major projects and as funding is now available progress can now be made.

Mr. Crockett thanked all the members and he further advised that Diageo is now ready to lodge the planning application for the visitors centre.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach