

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD ON MONDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2021 at 12 NOON IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor Catherine Slattery, Cathaoirleach

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Collins, Costelloe, Hartigan, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O’Dea, O’Hanlon, O’Sullivan, Secas, Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C) and Talukder.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Support Services (Mr. S. Coughlan), Director, National and Regional Shared Services Centres (Mr. K. Lehane), A/Director, Economic Development and Enterprise (Mr. V. Murray), Chief Executive Officer, Limerick Twenty Thirty (Mr. D. Conway), Meetings Administrator (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services (Ms. L. Flannery); Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. S. Carroll).

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Elected Members, Officials, Media and Members of the Public to the Special Meeting.

Circulated, Report of the A/Director, Economic Development and Enterprise, dated 4th November, 2021, setting out proposals for the disposal of the Opera Site to Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC.

The CEO, Limerick Twenty Thirty, outlined details of the works on the Opera site to date, stating that the original planning application had been lodged in March 2019 and planning granted by An Bord Pleanála in February 2020. He confirmed that 2020 demolition and enabling works had commenced on site in October 2020 and that sixteen of the eighteen historic buildings would be retained, and that the Georgian buildings would be refurbished. He also confirmed that demolition and enabling works were scheduled for completion in March 2022 and that basement construction works would commence in April 2022, with up to 3,000 people expected to be employed on the project.

The A/Director, Economic Development and Enterprise gave an overview of the Section 183 procedure in relation to the proposed disposal. He confirmed that it was proposed that the Opera Site would be transferred to Limerick Twenty Thirty, who would then deal with the leasing agreements, contracts, wayleaves and servicing of common areas, as this was seen as the most efficient method of managing the multiple leases and agreements across the site. The Library,

Revenue and Granary Buildings would be subsequently transferred back to Limerick City and County Council on a long-term (999-year) lease and he outlined how it was a condition of the planning permission that a Management Company would be set up as part of the development.

He also outlined the governance structure of Limerick Twenty Thirty, which was a wholly owned entity of Limerick City and County Council. This comprised of four Elected Members sitting on the Board, along with three members of the Council Executive, as well as five independent Board Members, including a Chairperson. They confirmed that Limerick Twenty is also required to comply with all Public Spending Codes & Procurement Guidelines.

The Elected Members welcomed the proposed development and the fact that it was one of the largest projects being developed outside of Dublin in recent times. They welcomed the news that work had commenced and noted the visible progress being made already on the site, and agreed that it would be a transformational project for Limerick.

They raised the following queries:

- How many residential units were proposed for the site?
- Would the Sarsfield Bar and adjoining buildings be acquired?
- Would electric car charging points be included in the project?
- What proposals were in place for residential parking on site
- What was the expenditure incurred on the project to date?
- Will there be a demand for office accommodation in the city centre in the future?
- How will security be managed in relation to the project?
- How many leases in total would there be as part of the development?

The A/Director, Economic Development and Enterprise and the CEO, Limerick Twenty Thirty responded to the queries as follows:

- There were 16 residential units planned as part of the development as it was primarily a commercial type development for the city centre;
- The Sarsfield Bar and adjoining buildings were not acquired but it was anticipated that improvement works would be carried out on these buildings as well, as the Opera development progressed;
- There was provision for parking, and electric vehicle (EV) charging points would also be provided as part of the development;
- They were satisfied that there was demand for additional high quality office accommodation space in the city centre and they referred to the fact that the IDA had attracted new investment into the region, and that these companies would require office space;
- It was proposed that the Management Company would arrange a contract with a Security Company to manage security across the development;
- They estimated at least 30 – 40 leases as part of the development.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Support Services set out the details of the costs and funding for the project. He confirmed that expenditure of approximately €14.9m had been incurred to date, which related to development, planning, enabling and demolition works. He also confirmed that loan funding secured to date from the European Investment Bank (EIB) was in the amount of €25m.

The Disposal was noted by the Members.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Dated: _____