

The Secretary
Planning Department
Cork City Council
City Hall
Anglesea Street
Cork
T12 T997

04 October 2021

HW Planning
5 Joyce House,
Barrack Square,
Ballincollig,
Cork.
P31 KP84

**Re: Submission to Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028
In relation to the future development of the Cork Showgrounds, Curraheen, Cork.**

www.hwplanning.ie
info@hwplanning.ie
+353 (0)21 487 3250

Directors:
Harold Walsh
Conor Frehill

Company Reg. No:
486211

Dear Sir/ Madam

This submission has been prepared on behalf of Munster Agricultural Society (MAS) in response to Cork City Council's invitation for submissions to the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022 -2028 (Draft DP). This submission is being made specifically in relation to the support of the future proper planning and sustainable development of the Cork Showgrounds at Curraheen in the City Development Plan 2022-2028.



Figure 1.1 Site Context Map

Since its relocation to the Curraheen site in 2012 the Munster Agricultural Society (MAS) has successfully operated the annual Cork Summer Show and various other outdoor events at this location with the exception of summer 2020 when it was cancelled and summer 2021 when it was held virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions and the first summer show in 2012 which was curtailed due to poor weather conditions.

The relocation of the original showgrounds at Ballintemple followed the compulsory purchase of the lands by Cork City to enable the re-development of the South Docks. The replacement location at Curraheen was identified in consultation with both the City and County Councils and special policy provision was made for it in the County Development Plan due to its location in the greenbelt.

The previous showgrounds facility in Ballintemple included a significant amount of indoor space and it has been the intention of the Munster Agricultural Society since relocating, to develop indoor facilities to complement their existing activities. However, having regard to the recent An Bord Pleanála decision to refuse permission for a multi-purpose exhibition facility (ABP Ref: 306532-20) MAS are now preparing an application for smaller, ancillary development to support the future development of the Cork Showgrounds.

The Curraheen lands which were previously within the greenbelt of the Cork County Council administrative area are now part of the hinterland of the expanded Cork City area. MAS are disappointed, therefore, that the specific policy support afforded to them in the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (CDP) and the Ballincollig Carrigaline Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017 (LAP), which is necessary to ensure their continued successful operation at this location, has not been reflected in the Draft DP.

Our clients have reviewed the Draft DP in the context of the future development of the Cork Showgrounds and they welcome the acknowledgement in the Section 10.347 and 10.348 that within the hinterland:

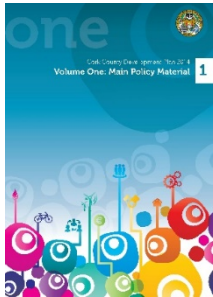
Rural-related business activities which have a demonstrated need for a rural location are also permissible.... Other uses open for consideration in this zone include renewable energy development (wind turbines, solar farms), tourism uses and facilities, garden centres and nurseries, cemeteries and community and cultural uses, subject to the other provisions of this Plan.

However, they query the absence of any reference to the Cork Showgrounds in the Cork City Green Blue Infrastructure Study, which supports the Draft DP. As a regionally important recreation, tourism, education and cultural heritage event location they consider this to be an omission, which has been reflected in the absence of any reference to the Cork Showgrounds in the Draft DP. Since its relocation following the compulsory purchase of its previous site, the MAS has relied on local authority policy support to re-establish itself in its new location. However, this support has been removed in the Draft DP. To safeguard the future development of the Cork Showgrounds, MAS request that similar specific policy objectives, as were included in the CDP and LAP be included in the City Development Plan 2022-2028 to enable the society to continue to successfully operate in the coming years.

SUBMISSION REQUEST

That the Council recognise the presence of long established commercial or institutional uses in hinterland areas which may have a requirement for expansion / intensification of existing uses. Such expansion proposals of an appropriate scale would only be considered in special circumstances, having regard to the overall function and open character of the hinterland and where development would be in accordance with normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations. During the lifetime of the plan consideration will be given to the development of ancillary facilities, located on the Munster Agricultural Society grounds, at Curraheen.

POLICY CONTEXT



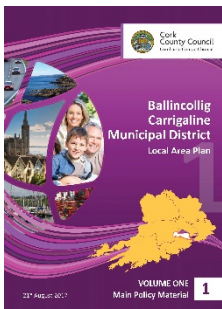
Cork County Development Plan 2014

Following the relocation of the MAS Showgrounds to Metropolitan greenbelt lands at Curraheen, the 2014 plan included specific policies intended to support the use at this location and allow for its expansion where appropriate. The County Development plan refers to the Munster Agricultural Society lands specifically in Objective RCI 5-7 which recognises that:

there may be development of a strategic and exceptional nature that may not be suitably located within zoned lands and that such development may be accommodated successfully in Greenbelt locations. In such circumstances, the impact on the specific functions and open character of the Greenbelt should be minimised. During the lifetime of the plan consideration will be given to the establishment of a Showgrounds, and ancillary facilities, located on the Munster Agricultural Society grounds, at Curraheen.

County Development Plan Objective RCI 5-6 recognises the presence of long established commercial or institutional uses in greenbelt areas and suggests that such uses may:

make proposals for expansion / intensification of existing uses. Such expansion proposals of an appropriate scale would only be considered in special circumstances, having regard to the overall function and open character of the Greenbelt and where development would be in accordance with normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations.



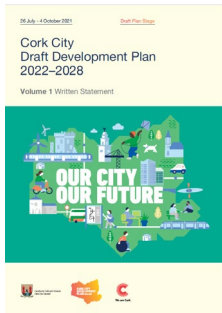
Ballincollig Carrigaline Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017

The subject lands are located within the Metropolitan Greenbelt as defined in the Ballincollig Carrigaline Municipal District Local Area Plan. The lands are not specifically zoned for development but the Local Area Plan refers specifically to the subject site and recognises that the Munster Agricultural Society has established a Showgrounds and ancillary facilities at Curraheen and recognises its potential future need for structures and ancillary facilities.

The Munster Agricultural Society has established a Showgrounds and ancillary at Curraheen and this use is supported under Chapter 4 of the current County Development Plan (CDP). The current CDP under Objectives RCI 5---6 and RCI 5---7, subject to normal planning considerations

recognise the requirements of long established commercial or institutional uses located entirely within the Metropolitan Greenbelt, as well as the needs of uses that are strategic and exceptional in nature that may not be suitably located within zoned lands. Requirements of such established uses can include operational matters and structures / ancillary facilities.

Draft Cork City Development Plan 2021 (Draft DP)



The Objectives for growth in hinterland areas are set out in Table 2.5 of the Draft DP as:

Additional development needs to be examined in the context of the local and environmental characteristics of the area. Balance any future development with the wider needs of Cork City to achieve compact growth and more sustainable transport patterns. Ensure environmental preservation and the retention and enhancement of urban and rural character. Cork Airport will be supported in its role as an international gateway for the City, wider Metropolitan Area and Southern Region from a transport, connectivity and economic viewpoint.

The subject site is included within the Curragheen Lowlands, identified in Figure 14.3 of the Draft Plan indicating 'City Scale Green and Blue Infrastructure Opportunities', in response to it being identified in the Cork City Green Blue Infrastructure Study¹ as an area where there is a deficiency of access to open space. The study outlines the following list as the services that Green and Blue Infrastructure provides:

- Biodiversity (Genetic resources, Pollination);
- Productive green environments (Genetic resources, Pollination);
- Air quality and noise regulation;
- Local climate regulation;
- Flood and water quality regulation;
- Recreation & tourism;
- Cultural heritage;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Aesthetic values;
- Sense of place; and
- Education.

On the basis of its regional role in the area of tourism, recreation, cultural heritage, sense of place and education we consider that the Cork Showgrounds should be included in the Green and Blue Infrastructure assets of Cork City.

REGIONAL IMPORTANCE

The MAS has been a voluntary organization since its initial establishment and it holds Charitable Status with both the Charity Regulator and the Revenue Commissioners. The Society currently has approximately 1,000 members and the Society's Constitution defines that the main object for which the Society is established is:

To encourage and promote Agriculture, Industrial, Education and Scientific Pursuits in all branches.

Throughout its history, MAS has made a significant contribution to the educational, cultural and recreational fabric of the Cork region. MAS have been a pioneer in attaining improvements in Irish agriculture and in agricultural education. In addition to promoting annual exhibitions of livestock, the Society invests in the general education of the rural community and especially of the younger generation. The Society continues to contribute and educate on areas of technological change and broader cultural change. The most prominent activity associated with the Society is the hosting of the annual Cork Summer Show, which is an important educational, cultural and recreational event for the agricultural community and the general public in the Cork region. The existing Showgrounds are in addition used by a wide range of local community and sporting organisations, which will continue and will be encouraged to expand in the future.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The current location of the Cork Showgrounds was selected following a detailed site selection process in consultation with Cork County Council. The relocated Showgrounds at Curraheen have limited indoor facilities comprising just one agricultural shed. All indoor requirements for the summer show in recent years have been facilitated by temporary marquis structures erected onsite for the event. In addition, there is a requirement to provide changing and ancillary facilities for outdoor sporting and recreational activities which currently take place at the Showgrounds.

In 2019 Munster Agricultural Society applied to Cork County Council for permission for the construction of a Multi-Purpose Sports Exhibition & Education facility (Planning Ref: 19/5372). Cork County Council granted permission for the proposed development by order dated 14th January 2020. The application was subsequently appealed to An Bord Pleanála (ABP 306532-20) who overturned the decision of the planning Authority on the grounds that it was an incompatible use and had potential to impact on the National Primary Road (N40).

Having regard to the ABP decision, MAS has revisited their plans for the site and are now preparing plans for modest ancillary structures to support the showground and recreational use of the site. It should be noted public transport improvements committed to in Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) and the BC-GW2 Greenway proposed in the Metropolitan Cork Cycle Network Plan will provide enhanced mobility in the area in the coming years.



CONCLUSION

We request therefore that the significance of the Cork Showgrounds be recognised in the Cork City Development Plan 2022 -2028 and that the City Council provide appropriate policy support to enable the society to continue to successfully operate in the coming years. Specifically, MAS request that provision be made for expansion, of an appropriate scale, to long-established commercial or institutional uses in hinterland areas in special circumstances, such as those that pertain to the Munster Agricultural Society grounds, at Curraheen.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry Walsh', written in a cursive style.

Harry Walsh
HW Planning