

Amendments 2.97 and 2.98 Lands at Lee Road

To the planners and Councillors of Cork City Council,

Having considered the planned rezoning of lands at the Lee Road, I would have initially considered some of the Green Belt objections but now submit the following observations.

The number one priority of our time is to catch up with the need for adequate housing. That doesn't mean that other issues are not valid, but the priority has to be one of housing in Cork City. People need somewhere to live close to the city as opposed to far from services. Those of us who already do are the lucky ones. The next generation not so much.

As it stands, an average working professional couple cannot afford to buy their own home near Cork City, being pushed farther and farther out into commuting belts. While some may be concerned about green belts and biodiversity, we are failing the next generation in our society. We cannot fail to plan for a growing vibrant Cork City, and housing is a core part of that.

The proposed rezoning and residential housing project on the Lee Road site I feel displays foresight and confidence on the part of Cork City Council regarding providing this much needed housing for Cork City.

I know the objections that will be expressed will be around wildlife, urban sprawl, and the impact on the beauty of the area, and these are all valid for those who may already be living there. The Lee Road is a very desirable place to live due to its proximity to every type of recreational facility, employment opportunity, health service, shopping, and excellent education and training institutions. And this is the very reason the rezoning will unlock these benefits for more families in Cork City.

I know there may also be traffic concerns, but to me, that is short-sighted. If that argument is followed, the residents who cannot live there if the rezoning and development doesn't go ahead simply have to live somewhere else. They will end up living farther out, adding even more congestion to the inbound Cork traffic. Rezoning land near to the city just makes sense for traffic, climate change and convenience. People have to live somewhere and sites near the city make sense.

If the rezoning was proposing to build on a regularly used amenity (like Fitzgeralds Park), then it would be a harder argument. But my understanding of this particular site is that it is privately owned, can't even be really seen from anywhere and thus doesn't offer any actual amenity to Cork today anyway.

I had initial concerns regarding visibility of the development for inbound traffic to Cork on the Carrigrohane Road, but on looking at the submission, I can see that, to be fair, this has been thought through, and the southern aspect is remaining as the mature beautiful landscape it is, with the northern part of the site taking the development. This to me is clever planning.

With the former psychiatric hospital immediately to the east, where hundreds of new homes are due to be built in addition to the existing high density residential development, I feel this just connects the dots in terms of housing for this area.

I feel that the proposed development is of a high quality and would be of great benefit and likely attract a mix of young professionals and academics from the relatively close UCC (which is within easy cycling range), and like in any natural village population, the development also would be home to families living in social and affordable accommodation. Surely this is exactly the kind of development we need in these times.

To conclude, I am hopeful that the Lee Road rezoning does go through and adds to the much needed housing stock Cork city needs and deserves.

I find the development plan makes sense for the area, for Cork and for all the families and people that will benefit

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