



**Submission by Cork Urban Enterprises clg  
and the following enterprises**

**Murphy Food Co. Ltd.; Long Insulation Ltd.;  
Mulcahys Chicken Inn Ltd.; Finalbend Ltd.; Bedwise;  
Stalwart Security Ltd.; Digital Funnell; O'Regan  
Sports Injury Clinic; Churchfield Trust clg; Sheehan  
Tax Consultants; PLATO Cork.; Ortus Ltd.; Finn  
Social Media; Family Business Ireland; and SBAI**

**based at the**

**Northside for Business Campus  
Spring Lane, Ballyvolane, Cork**

**to**

**Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028**

**28 April 2022**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This submission is being made by Cork URBAN Enterprises clg on its own behalf and on behalf of its tenants (listed on the cover page of this submission) in the Northside for Business Campus at Ballyvolane to Cork City Council in relation to the Material Amendments to the Draft Cork City Development Plan that was for Public Consultation on 1 April 2022.

Cork URBAN Enterprises clg welcomes the opportunity to make this submission and would be very happy to meet with the Elected Members or officials of Cork City Council if clarification is required on any part of this document.

Any correspondence in relation to this submission should be directed to Mr. JJ O'Connell, ~~Executive Director, Northside for Business Campus, Spring Lane,~~

~~Ballyvolane, Cork City Council (021 492 2222)~~

The next section sets out the submission which requests that the western portion of Ellis's Yard in Ballyvolane reverts to the Light Industry and Related Uses Zoning as per the published Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-28. It also sets out the rationale for this request. Section 3 describes the background to the Northside for Business Campus, while Section 4 outlines its potential contribution to the sustainable development of Cork.

## **2. REQUESTED ALTERATION TO MATERIAL AMENDMENT**

In the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-28, as approved by the Elected Members on 15 March 2022, it is proposed in Volume 2 Map 04 that all of Ellis's Yard should be zoned for "ZO 1 Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods". The purpose of this change in zoning is to cater for Traveller accommodation and specific needs, including to provide for livestock, stabling and paddocks.

For the reasons set out below, this submission requests that the Elected Members of Cork City Council set aside this material amendment and revert to the situation as set out in the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028, as published in July 2021, where a portion of Ellis's Yard is zoned for "ZO 10 Light Industry and Related Uses".

In spite of many challenges, the Northside for Business Campus demonstrates, by way of best practice, what can be tangibly achieved in terms of positive outcomes for jobs, investment and opportunities for the local community. Our request is straightforward - to let the foundation that is being built and the success achieved to date to continue. Cork City Council's full support has been central to all that has happened to date on this campus, especially in terms of land, loans at favourable terms and soft supports. This is warmly appreciated and fully acknowledged.

The reasons set out below set out the rationale for the request made in this submission:

- a) The rezoning of the western portion of Ellis's Yard, as proposed in the Material Amendments, will significantly impact both the operation and development potential of the Northside for Business Campus. There is currently an absence of light industry/enterprise space on the northside of Cork. The Northside For Business Campus is at 100% capacity. In 2021, Cork URBAN Enterprises clg successfully applied to Enterprise Ireland (with Cork City Council) for feasibility funding to explore the development of the portion of Ellis's Yard then zoned for Light Industry and Related Uses (see Figures 1 and 2 below).

Local enterprises are the bedrock of local economies and employment. However, they face challenges in a business environment dominated by market shocks – Covid 19, Brexit, inflation and the fallout from instability in Eastern Europe. In addition, local enterprises also must navigate the disruption to their operating models caused by fast-developing technologies. An expanded Northside for Business Campus is ideally placed to support local enterprises address these risks to their businesses.

- b) The development of the Northside for Business Campus is a great success and is a significant catalyst for sustainable economic growth, sustainable job creation and a positive social impact in the area. The development of enterprise and social/community enterprise is an over-arching objective of the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-28 – Strategic Objective 6. The removal of the Light Industry and Related Uses Zoning from Ellis's yard light

industry zoning does not align with this Strategic Objective, especially given the shortage of light industry/enterprise space highlighted in a) above.

The new South West Regional Enterprise Plan (published on 26 April 2022) proposes *“the establishment of a new centre of excellence in Cork’s historic Shandon area supporting Irish start-ups and scaling enterprises in emerging sectors”*.<sup>1</sup> The plan states that this initiative builds on the success of the Northside for Business Campus. It is not logical that Cork City Council, the Joint Action Leader for this important initiative, should seek to actively downgrade a recognised successful entity, with a nationally recognised proven track record, in what the plan describes as a *“less served region of Cork City”*. It is not sustainable policy to invest public- funds in establishing a new enterprise entity whilst damaging another long-standing enterprise entity that has also been the recipient of substantial public funding (and soft supports) over the past 25 years.

- c) Economic impact - the new Campus is now host to 15 enterprises employing 81 fulltime and 16 part-time staff. Some €2,700,000 of funds has been invested in developing the site over the past four years. €700,000 of public sector investment has been matched by c. €2 million invested by the enterprises on site. There were just three employees on site when the campus was reinvigorated in 2016.
- d) The rezoning will simply stop the expansion of the Northside For Business Campus. The plans to expand the enterprise eco-system, double employment to over 150 jobs and to support thirty enterprises, in what is currently one of the worst economic blackspots in Ireland, will be nullified.
- e) The safety and security of the Northside For Business Campus is a matter of utmost importance to Cork URBAN Enterprises clg and to its tenants. The immediate proximity of Ellis’s Yard to the eastern boarder of the Northside For Business Campus is from time to time a source of great concern to those working in and visiting the site. Vandalism, criminal behaviour, threatening behaviour, animal welfare concerns, wholesale dumping of rubbish and

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<sup>1</sup> Action 2.7 page 25

general disregard for others is an ongoing concern, which has been documented and reported to the relevant authorities.

The most recent significant event took place in late 2021 when all of the fence panelling on the eastern boundary was stolen (for the second time in three years). Whilst the level of unsocial activity has decreased as the campus has grown, it remains a constant concern to all who populate the campus. The development of the site without significant additional management and supervision will seriously and adversely impact development activity and job creation.

- f) The proposal to remove the Light Industry and Related Uses zoning from Ellis's Yard appears to be on foot of three submissions to the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-28 by Martha Halbert, Cork Environmental Forum and the Traveller Visibility Group (Cork) respectively.<sup>2</sup> The Chief Executive's Response and Recommendation to these submissions is simply to agree that the whole of Ellis's Yard will be identified for Traveller accommodation. There appears to be no consideration of the wider implications of this recommendation (as detailed in a) to e) above) on the proper and sustainable development of Cork. Thus the recommendation appears an arbitrary response to the submissions and cannot be construed to be within the letter or the spirit of Section 12 (11) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) which sets out the criteria that Elected Members must adhere to in making development plans. A principal purpose of Chief Executive's Report is to enable the Elected Members to make an informed decision.
- g) In the event that the Light Industry and Related Uses zoning is retained on the western portion of Ellis's Yard, there is still ample room to accommodate all of the facilities envisaged in a redevelopment of the Traveller accommodation at Spring Lane.

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<sup>2</sup> Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Plan Consultation Vol. 1 pages 216-218

### 3. **BACKGROUND/CONTEXT**

Cork Urban Enterprise CLG was established in 1997 to promote enterprise development, social integration and environmental improvement of the northern suburbs of Cork City within the area designated under the European Union's URBAN Operational Programme. The development of the Ballyvolane Business Park was one of four URBAN projects funded in Cork City. Its objective was the provision of facilities for emerging enterprises in an area severely lacking this type of economic infrastructure.

The company oversaw the establishment of a 17,000 square foot Enterprise Centre on the north side of Cork City. The centre provides for 15 enterprises, and social enterprises. It is also the administration centre for three national enterprise support programmes.

In 2012, Cork City Council established the Northside Development Steering Group to address three areas, Enterprise, Education and Health. The enterprise committee, now known as **Northside for Business** comprised stakeholders from Cork City Council, LEO Cork City, RAPID, Revenue Ireland, PLATO Ireland and Cork Chamber of Commerce.

In 2017, the Ballyvolane Business Park was formally renamed the **Northside for Business Campus**. The intention and strategy is that the Campus be the most significant and influential catalyst for enterprise and social enterprise development on the north side of Cork City in a generation. Over the past four years, €2.7m of public and private funds have been invested in the campus. Some €700k of the funds were invested under Enterprise Ireland's Regional Economic Development Fund programme. These funds have transformed the campus into a modern purpose-built facility and a significant hub for enterprise development and, also, social and community enterprise development.

In 2020, following the expansion of Cork City Council's functional area, Cork URBAN Enterprises clg was given responsibility by Cork City Council for a second site incorporating four food production companies in Ballincollig.

Presently, more than 100 people are employed across the two campus sites.

#### 4. DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The opportunity to research the feasibility of developing the proportion of the adjacent site at Ellis's Yard, which is currently zoned for Light Industry and Related Uses in the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-28, is the first step in seeking to replicate the current achievements of the Northside For Business Campus and to create, for the first time, a large sme enterprise hub and vibrant self-sustaining enterprise eco-system on the northside of Cork city. This proposed enterprise hub would complement and not duplicate the centre of excellence proposed for Shandon (see 2 b) above).

The potential economic impact of this project is quite significant and particularly so due to the nature of socio-economic disadvantage in the surrounding area. There are 79 unemployment *blackspots* in Ireland and 5 of these are located on the Northside of Cork City.<sup>3</sup> These are Mayfield, The Glen, Knocknaheeny, Fair Hill and Farranferris. All have adult unemployment rates of circa 30% and youth unemployment (under 25) of up to 40%. The Northside for Business Campus is located in Mayfield, two minutes from The Glen, five minutes from Farranferris and seven minutes from Knocknaheeny.

From the outset, the whole thrust of the Northside for Business initiative is to improve and enhance the welfare and wellbeing of the local community by improving the infrastructure and creating supported spaces on the northside of the city where enterprise and social enterprises can seed and grow.

In Fig 1 below, the red outline shows the proposed enlarged Northside for Business Campus site; the existing Northside For Business campus is outlined in orange; and feasibility site is outlined in red.

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<sup>3</sup> CSO Live Register Report - Unemployment *Blackspots*



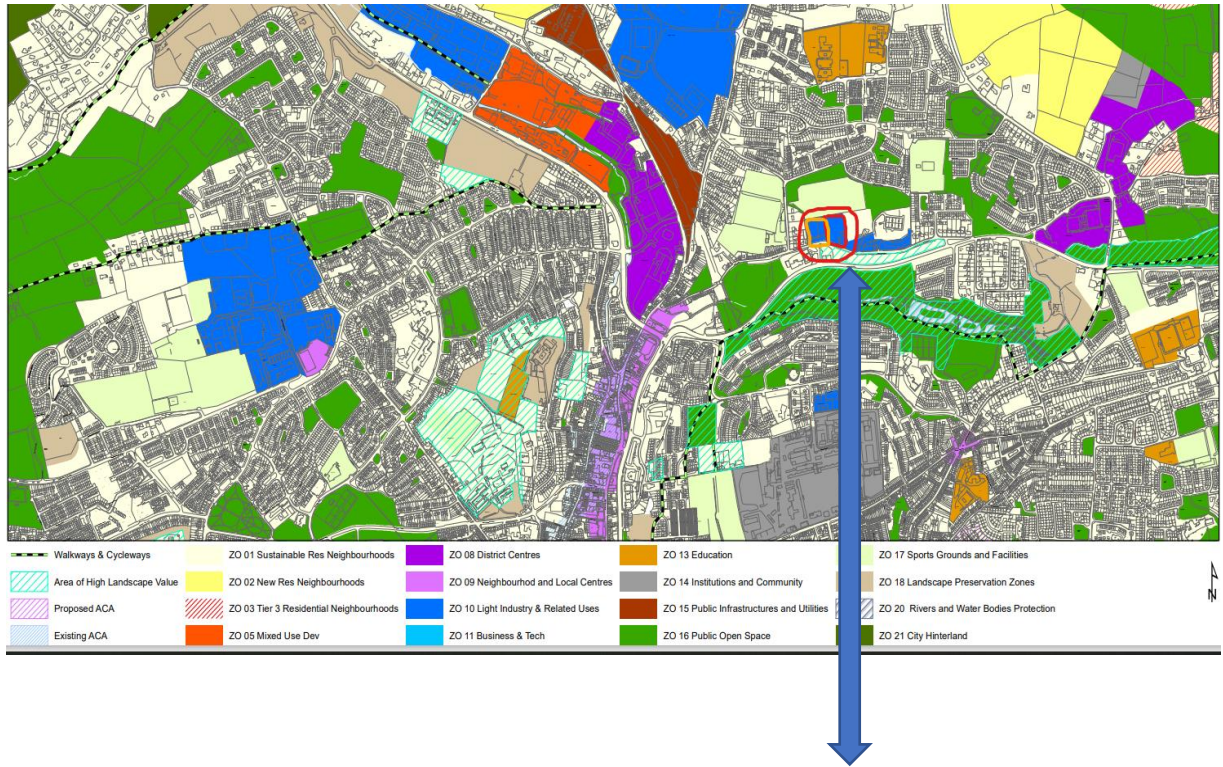


Fig 2 above shows the existing structure on the left. The proposed community enterprise building which received planning permission is shown on the right, in the area proposed to lose its zoning for Light Industry and Related Uses.



The figures below set out the transformation of the campus since 2016 and detail the challenging behaviours that tenants, workers and visitors have faced as detailed in 2 e) above.



Fig 3 – Northside for Business Campus building – Front façade 2022



Fig 4 – Ballyvolane Enterprise Centre – Front façade 2016



Fig 5 – Criminal Destruction of eastern boundary fence with Ellis’s Yard



Fig 6 Garda Checkpoint/ Armed Response Unit outside of Northside For Business Campus following a serious incident





Fig 7 – Northside For Business Campus Eastern boundary fence intact.



Fig 8 – Northside For Business Campus Eastern boundary after theft of panelling



Fig 9 – Rocks collected from Northside For Business Campus carpark following a barrage from Ellis’s Yard site



Fig 10 – Size comparison with coffee cup - rocks were of considerable size.