

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: FIN-C532-93

Údar: Arthur O'Hare

Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht:

Church St Balbriggan Proposed Rezoning from Residential to Town Centre

Comhairliúchán:

Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

MAP SHEET 4: Balbriggan

Caibidil: PART 3: Proposed Amendments to the Draft Developm... » MAP SHEET 4: Balbriggan

Select, where provided, the reference for the amendment on which you wish to comment , or for flood maps, the drawing ref number:

PA SH

4.1

'Material Alterations to the Draft Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029'.

Submission concerning Map Sheet 4: Balbriggan

Proposed Amendment:

PA SH 4.1 Balbriggan.

PA SH 4.1

"Amend zoning from RS-Residential to MC-Major Town Centre, excluding residential properties at 1-5 Hampton Place and 1-15 Hampton Green to the east, and lands to the north of and including No.5 Church Street, Balbriggan."

This rezoning was first proposed in a submission on behalf of the Irish Institute for Music and Song (IIMS) FIN-C 453-625 at the draft plan consultation stage.

The submission was reviewed as part of the Draft Plan preparation process and the Chief Executive reported on it. The conclusion reached was that the suggested rezoning "...*would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.*"

The relevant portion of page 478 of the Chief Executive's Report on Draft Public Consultation is reproduced below.

Chief Executive's Response:

The MC-Major Town Centre zoning objective seeks to, "protect, provide for and/or improve major town centre facilities". The TC-Town and District Centre Zoning seeks to enhance the special social character of the town and district centres and provide and/or improve urban facilities". The RS lands to the east of Church Street adjoins the strategic landbank of the consolidated Major Town centre zoning serving Balbriggan and within an established residential area. The lands adjoining the existing Millfield Shopping Centre comprise existing RS and undeveloped RA lands to the north and east of the existing Millfield Shopping Centre which is currently zoned MC.

Key strategic objective 6 of the Draft Plan seeks the provision of strong and dynamic town centres, which is advocated by the 'town centre first' approach through supportive policy and objectives as set out in Chapter 3 of the Draft Plan. This approach seeks to revitalise towns and village centres throughout the County, fostering vibrant places to work, shop and do business. It is essential that existing town centres, such as Balbriggan, are strengthened and consolidated before consideration could be given to additional town centre zonings. Having regard to the proposed location of the subjects lands within an established residential area and where Church Street forms a natural boundary with the existing MC zoning objective and acknowledging that the subject lands have the benefit of planning permission and established Millfield Shopping centre to serve adjoining residential lands, the proposed rezonings from PS/RA to MC/TC would result in an unwarranted weakening of the existing MC zoning of which it is Council[sic] to protect and enhance through the MC zoning objective and vision and the 'town centre first' approach and as such would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

At a meeting of the Council on 11th October to consider the Draft Development Plan, a motion was brought forward to rezone a block bounded to the West by Church Street, to the South by Hampton Street and to the East by Hampton Place as well as a contemporary residential development at Hampton Green from RS (Residential) to MC (Major Town Centre) .

The Chief Executive's recommendation was to amend the Draft Plan to rezone these lands from RS to MC, excluding residential properties at 1-5 Hampton Place and 1-15 Hampton Green to the East, and lands to the North of and including No 5 Church Street.

No planning or economic rationale is advanced to justify such a major departure from the position adopted in the Response to the original submission (as reproduced below in red), other than a statement that "*Considering the historical ongoing and intended commercial /cultural use of the lands it is considered that a change of underlying zoning from RS to MC would be appropriate and reasonable*". This is in direct contradiction to the aforementioned Response, viz.

" the proposed rezonings from PS/RA to MC/TC would result in an unwarranted weakening of the existing MC zoning of which it is Council[sic]to protect and enhance through the MC zoning objective and vision and the 'town centre first' approach and as such would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

No explanation is given to justify such a contradiction in approach, so that, that which was stated to be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development has now suddenly become acceptable. It is important that the public understand what happened between the original response and the response to the motion to rezone, so that the integrity of the Development Plan process can be seen to have been respected and thus ensure that the public can

have trust in the process.

An additional consideration is the question of what zoning is appropriate for the IIMS and why a change is being sought. The facilities at the Irish Institute for Music sit within the permitted activities for the existing RS zoning: the development and proposed activity and future employment projects formed part of the original planning application in 2019. This includes the the 400 seat hall on the grounds of Bedford House (RPS 49) now well under construction, the creation of a Café and Hotel accommodation, as well as the addition of an external lift at Bedford Hall, formerly Roscarrig, (RPS 50) and accommodation in Bedford House itself (Reg Ref F21A/002 and F19A/0643). Furthermore, as the IIMS is an educational establishment, it can seek permission for a wide range of educational projects, including Student Housing, which is permitted under the current RS zoning.

No other educational establishment in Balbriggan has found it necessary to seek MC zoning, all being zoned CI (community infrastructure).

While sustainability should be a key development principle going forward, this proposed Material Alteration does not consider the impact there will be on the sustainability of the existing Town Centre nor on the existing residential area . It is not sustainable to widen the existing MC zone because of the dilution of the existing Town Centre. There has been no consideration of the impact on the sustainability of the Bridge Street area nor of that of the block between High Street and Church Street.

It is not sufficient to advance a statement that *"it is considered that a change of underlying zoning from RS to MC would be appropriate and reasonable"*

This proposed re-zoning would have a impact on the traffic situation in Church Street and Hampton Street. Church Street is a narrow cul-de-sac with limited on-street parking and difficulty in turning for cars. Commercial vehicles are faced with even greater difficulty and some resolve their problem by reversing down this narrow street, representing a considerable danger to pedestrians, including those who use Church Street to access the walkway leading to Balbriggan train station. MC zoning would, undoubtedly, lead to an increase in traffic in the street with the additional risks associated with cars turning and commercial vehicles reversing along it. Hampton Street is very congested and is not capable of taking two vehicles travelling in opposite directions at once. It is a struggle to see how the road infrastructure would cope with increased development. Such increased traffic would have a severe impact on residential amenity in the area.

In sum, there is no apparent rationale for a change of zoning to MC since the plot is almost fully occupied and other education-related uses can be catered for under the present RS zoning.

Rezoning to MC would also open the door to a piecemeal development of the Church Street area and, thus, would not be conducive to the orderly development of Balbriggan. Additionally, it would be a further blow to the existing Bridge Street commercial area.

We ask, therefore, that this amendment PA SH 4.1 be removed in the interest of proper planning and of sustainable Town Centre development in Balbriggan.

Documents Attached: Níl