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News

DIT Grangegorman hearings open

Tim O'BrienThu, Nov 24, 2011, 00:00

TIM O'BRIEN

Dublin Institute of Technology will begin moving to the 30 hectare Grangegorman site in Dublin's north inner city as early as next year, if planning permission is approved, a Bord Pleanala hearing was told today.

Michael Hand chief executive of the Grangegorman Development Agency told the planning hearing there had been much said in the media about the recent decision of Government to postpone funding for the project.

But Mr Hand said exchequer funding for the redevelopment would amount to 20 percent of the development, and he quoted Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn to the effect that the "government is committed to the long term funding of this project". In the meantime he said there were "multiple" avenues of funding which could be tapped to relocate constituent colleges of DIT; establish a range of HSE healthcare facilities on site, and create a new urban quarter.

Mr Hand told inquiry inspector Ruairi Somers these avenues included the sale of existing DIT college premises; savings made by the DIT in relocating; philanthropy; and the sale of assets.

He said a new hospital was already under construction on the border of the site and was expected to open in 2012 while a number of existing buildings on site could be used by DIT colleges from early next year. While he said this was subject to the project receiving planning approval, he told Mr Somers there was no doubt "the project will move ahead if the application [for planning permission] is successful".

The proposed Grangegorman redevelopment involves relocating Dublin Institute of Technology which is currently based at 39 separate locations across the city, to a new campus on the 30 hectare site. It also involves redevelopment of HSE facilities for the elderly as well as childcare. Also included is a "new urban quarter" which would rejuvenate the entire area in Dublin's north inner city Fields and some "spectacular" views are to be maintained as are to be maintained while 11 listed buildings of character will also be preserved.

Mr Hand told the inquiry the site has a 200-year heritage of institutional use and is situated just 1.3km from O'Connell Street. The "quantum of development" envisaged was 380,000sq m of educational, healthcare and public facilities, he said.

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