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News

Council approves plan for Grangegorman site

Olivia KellyTue, Jul 26, 2011, 01:00

THE BLUEPRINT for a €486 million development of a new “urban quarter” and campus for the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) at Grangegorman has been approved by Dublin City Council.

Councillors last night voted to adopt the planning scheme which would allow the construction of buildings up to 50m in height on the 70-acre former psychiatric hospital site between the north city neighbourhoods of Phibsboro, Stoneybatter and Cabra.

Applications which adhere to the scheme can be granted directly by the council and cannot be subject to objections or appeals.

The linchpin of the site is a consolidated campus for 22 of the 27 DIT schools currently in 39 locations around the city. With a 20,000 strong student body, the new campus will cater for 10 per cent of all students in higher education in Ireland.

The site would also accommodate mental health facilities and a primary school run by Educate Together for 400 pupils, as well as a high proportion of open amenity and recreational space accessible to the local community.

Some 450 full-time construction jobs are to be created for a 10-year period during the development of the site. In addition, more than 1,100 full-time jobs are promised on completion of the works.

Plans for the site were first announced almost a decade ago. At the time it was thought much of the project could be funded by selling off DIT colleges but the downturn in property prices means more initial funding will come from the exchequer.

Government approval for the scheme was granted last September, and the new programme for government supports its development “as resources permit”.

The planning scheme could be subject to an appeal to An Bord Pleanála, a likely scenario as An Taisce and local residents’ organisations have raised concerns over tall buildings being constructed on the site. The planning scheme allows for the construction of three buildings of up to 50m.

However, once the scheme is finally approved, any planning applications which are granted by the council cannot be appealed to An Bord Pleanála.

Separately, councillors last night deferred their decision on whether to dissolve the Temple Bar Cultural Trust. A report commissioned by the council from Latitude consultants found that the work of the arts and culture promotional body could be undertaken by the city council with a saving of €800,000 a year.

Labour councillor Paddy Bourke proposed on behalf of the Labour group deferring consideration of the report until October to allow further discussions with the city manager over the implications of winding up the trust.

His motion was seconded by Sinn Féin, but was opposed by the Fine Gael councillors and some Independents.

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