

Submission to Draft Stage of Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan **2021-2027**

On behalf of: Califa Ltd, Herronville Dublin Road, Kilkenny

Site Location: Lacken, Dublin road, Kilkenny

Townland: Leggettsrath West

Change in zoning requested: General Business or Mixed Use

The site is located on the Dublin Road and has a number of existing uses:

- Airtricity Utilities Services depot for public lighting.
- City Direct Bus Service Depot
- Druids Veterinary Clinic
- Perfecto Print
- Kilkenny Crane Hire
- Residential house & garden

The existing zoning on the site is Phase 1 residential and the draft plan proposes to continue this as existing residential.

It is proposed that a portion of the site be rezoned 'general business' or 'mixed use' to reflect the current use and allow for a limited expansion of similar businesses and facilities in the future.

Justification for rezoning

The current business activities are supporting over 50 jobs and the site provides a convenient location for the city bus service depot. The rezoning proposed would allow for any expansion of these businesses, some of which dependent on the location (such as the veterinary clinic serving pet owners in the City, the printers serving businesses, etc.) The rezoning of the site should be viewed in the context of supporting local businesses.

The lack of clarity on the future development of St Canice's Hospital immediately opposite the site means that it is as yet unclear how best to proceed in a cohesive and sustainable manner with an entirely residential development without knowledge of the wider area plan and what facilities may or may not be provided in the immediate vicinity.

The location is within 500m of the McDonagh train station and it should be noted that creating employment in the vicinity of the railway station will promote use of the train to travel to Kilkenny for employment from surrounding areas, contributing positively to commercial activity in Kilkenny. It should be noted that experience closer to Dublin shows that siting housing close to rail links, while promoting public transport, can leave town centres devoid of activity in the day time (– e.g. Naas) as the city becomes a convenient dormitory town for larger centres. This should be avoided by providing employment near the centre with good public transport links.

Lacken Architectural Conservation Area

It is acknowledged that part of the subject site sits within the Lacken ACA. It is submitted that this designation should not be a barrier to rezoning. The change of zoning would enable the preservation of the heritage assets onsite and future uses of the house and garden would be sympathetic to the surrounding area. It is noted that dwellings are a feature of both General Business & Mixed use zonings.

Mobility Objectives

A recent cycle study developed by the Council and widely welcomed by councillors expressed a need to develop a "Park & Pedal" facility to promote cycle access to the city centre. This site would be an ideal location for such a facility and with the bus service on site, a full park & ride facility could also be developed. The development of such a facility would be in line with the ambitions outlined in the draft plan to promote a modal shift in a city aiming for compact growth.

To develop such facility on these lands it is noted that the most appropriate zonings are Mixed Use, which features Park & ride and General Business featuring car parks.

The owner of the site has already had exploratory discussions with one of the country's new E-bike rental services with a view to trialling such a scheme in Kilkenny from this site.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Wilsdon

MD, Califa Ltd.

