



To Mr. E. Sheehy

The County Manager

Wicklow County Council

Thursday, 22 October 2009

Copies to County and Town Councillors and the Press

Dear Mr. Sheehy,

Re: The location of a car scrappage site between the River and the Murrough

Friends of the Murrough and Vartry River Protection Society acknowledge the need to find somewhere to recover and recycle metal and parts from scrap cars and acknowledge that the site currently used for this in Hempstown is not suitable.

Between the River and the Murrough is not a suitable site either and we are very concerned that this could slip through as the site notice is on a road now closed to the public and it has only just been spotted. Even the four families living adjacent to the site were not aware of the proposal before the weekend.

In the Wicklow Environs Development Plan we see that whilst the area has housed industrial works for decades much of this use had been abandoned and the land is now zoned for light industrial use - that is to say 'work that could be carried on or installed in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit'.

It also says that the design of any proposed development on the perimeter of the overall site must be of a scale, quality, and character that will not detract from the natural amenities of this area.

Clearly neither the photos we have seen of the Hempstown site nor details in the permit application fit this description. This is noisy dirty industry yet the Planning Department has determined that no planning permission is needed.

Although this proposal is the continuation of an industrial process, certain sections of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Regulations make it clear that proposals for car scrappage yards are not exempt development. A query has been raised with the planning department on this matter.

We have also reported unauthorised development on this site as a very high wall is currently being built, possibly in anticipation of the grant of a waste permit.

There are a number of reasons why we believe that this is not a good site for this business:

- Firstly it does not conform to the promises in the development plan.
- It is way too close to a protected river and there is huge potential for some of the numerous toxic chemicals found in scrap cars to escape from the concrete base into the river which is just 24 metres from the wall. Flooding across this site would also put the river at risk and has not been assessed.
- There is huge potential for fire on such a site. How would emergency services reach this site? What would be the impact on the river of chemicals to combat fire, which would escape from the site?
- The permit application does not meet the requirements or standards of the EU Directive on Waste or the End of Life Vehicle Regulations.
- It would be unreasonable to expect the four properties adjacent to the site to tolerate the inevitable noise levels from such a business.
- The noise and visual impact of the business will spoil the amenities of the area and in particular the traditional walkway along the east bank of the Broadlough .
- Noise travels upwards and it is highly likely that residents in Church Gate will be disturbed on an ongoing basis, even on Saturday mornings. Certainly visitors to Tinakilly house are likely to find it unpleasant to sit out in the gardens when the wind is in the wrong direction.
- It would give a very poor image of the town to tourists entering the town on the new Port Access Road or the railway. The value to the town of tourism will be far greater than the rates that might be achieved by the County Council.
- If the scrap metal is to be shipped from the port as proposed in the permit application the trucks travelling from the site to the port will be very disruptive for local residents in Leitrim Place.

We would appreciate it if you step in now to ensure that the Environmental Section of Wicklow County Council are most vigilant in assessing the permit application and demand the highest standards as required by the regulations.

We would also appreciate a very quick response to our Section 5 so that a proper planning application can be made to put the process back on track and that neighbours and the public may contribute their views and local knowledge.

It is highly unlikely that An Bord Pleanála would countenance such a breach of the local development plan and it might be better if the Council waste no more time but quickly engage in searching for a more appropriate site for this business and any other dirty industries that are looking for sites.

Yours truly,

Malcolm Spencer.

Redwoods, Killoughter, Ashford.

Chairman

Friends of the Murrrough

Matthew Weiss

Nuns Cross, Ashford

Vartry River Protection Society