

Senior Executive Officer,
Planning Department,
Meath County Council,
Buvinda House,
Dublin Road,
Navan,
Co. Meath,
C15 Y291

24th June 2021

Our Ref. 20003

Re: Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 – Material Amendments

Formal submission

Dear Sir / Madam,

We, Marston Planning Consultancy, 23 Grange Park, Foxrock, Dublin 18 are instructed by our clients **Tattersalls Ireland, Ratoath, Co. Meath** who operate their equine sales business from a large landholding to the south of Ratoath and within the development boundary of Ratoath under the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Material Amendments. Their land and property is located to the west of the Fairyhouse racecourse on the western side of the R155. The business across Ireland and the UK operates as the leading bloodstock auctioneer in Europe, selling 10,000 horses a year.

This submission is presented to Meath County Council **in advance of 4pm on the 29th June 2021** in response to the publication of Material Amendments to the Draft Development Plan and is made in accordance with the requirements set out on page 5, Volume 1 of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Material Amendments.

The premise of this submission to Meath County Council is to ensure that changes put forward under the Material Amendments relating to the southern part of Ratoath do not in any way compromise the ability of our clients business, that generates in excess of €50M in turnover annually, to continue to function in a profitable, sustainable and efficient manner.

We can confirm that our clients has previously formally engaged in the Development Plan public participation process at the Draft Development Plan stage. A submission was made by Marston Planning Consultancy and was dated the 4th March 2020 on behalf of Tattersall's Ireland to the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2020. The previous submission is referenced as MH-C5-372 on page 38 of Volume 1, Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 - Material Amendments. Our client welcomes the preparation of the Material Amendments and as a long established equine business proximate to Ratoath, they welcome the opportunity to make a further submission in relation to the Material Amendments of the Draft Development Plan. In addition our clients would respectfully request that the Planning Authority take full consideration of the previous submission made on our client's behalf.

To ensure clarity, this submission sets out commentary in relation to proposed Material Amendments using the reference numbers set out by Meath County Council in Volumes 1-3 of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021 -2027 Material Amendments.

VOLUME 1 - MATERIAL AMENDMENT – CHAPTER 4 ECONOMIC STRATEGY – PAGE 37 AND 38 – PROPOSED AMENDMENT CHAPTER 4.5 – SECTION 4.7.4.2

It is noted that page 37 and 38 of Volume 1 of the Material Amendments sets out the following proposed material amendment relating to **Objective ED OBJ 58** which is part of section 4.7.4.2 of the Draft Meath County Development Plan:

Amendment No.:	Proposed Amendment Chapter 4.5
Submission/ NOM/ (FTF) NOM Numbers	MH-C5-372 Marston Planning on behalf of Tattersalls Ireland
Chapter/Section	Section 4.7.4.2

Proposed Material Amendment
Objective ED OBJ 58 to be amended in Section 4.7.4.2 Ratoath as follows: "To support the development of an equestrian hub at Ratoath within the Strategic Employment Site that maximises the internationally recognised equine facilities at Tattersalls and Fairyhouse and ensures the County continues to be a leader in the Irish and International sport horse industry, including breeding, racing, competing, and training as well as facilitating the diversification of these businesses to enable their continued expansion and employment generation. "

Commentary on Proposed Amendment Chapter 4.5 – Section 4.7.4.2:

In the first instance our client welcomes the principle of the rewording of **Objective ED OBJ 58**. We note this objective was amended in response to the submission made by Marston Planning Consultancy on behalf Tattersalls Ireland. This is welcomed as a recognition by Meath County Council of our client's contribution as an equine and economic asset of local, national and international importance and the potential the business provides for future employment opportunities.

EXTENSION OF WHITE LANDS TO EAST AND INCLUSION OF TATTERSALLS WITHIN THE MASTER PLAN AREA

While our client does not intend to make a particular comment in relation to the amendment of zoning from rural area to White Lands as requested by the adjoining land owner to their operations, our client would take this opportunity to once again reiterate their concerns in relation to the fact that the Material Amendments of the Draft County Development Plan has identified additional lands for development to the north of the D1 zoned lands.

We note that the White Lands (WL) has the objective *"To protect strategic lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly expansion of a strategic urban centre"*. In addition the lands which are the subject of Proposed Amendment No. 6 provide for a section of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road to the R155 just north of our clients lands. Our clients wish to place on record their concerns over the potential for this relief road to extend further and result in the realignment of the R155 in the future. It is imperative that this should not be at the detriment of our clients.

The White Lands objective is more readily defined under the Ratoath Written Statement as set out under Volume 2 of the County Development Plan. This states:

"To support the provision of appropriate and sustainable employment, visitor and tourist facilities on lands zoned as White Land in accordance with an approved Master Plan which shall be agreed with the Executive of the Planning Authority and shall accompany any planning application on the lands subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure. Any planning application made for development on these lands shall be accompanied by a Master Plan detailing development proposal for the full extent of the lands. This shall include details of the overall site and building layout for the lands, building height and design principles, landscaping, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements"

Our client continues to have concerns that the sub-division of the White Lands zoning from the wider Strategic Employment Site that covers the racecourse and Tattersalls from the White Lands zoning has the potential to deflect on the ability of them to expand and further develop in the future. This concern has increased as a result of the extension of the WL lands to the east under the Material Amendments.

The premise of the White Lands zoning would appear on generating equine based employment. This has the potential to positively impact upon the function of Tattersalls if undertaken in the suggested manner but could also be at the detriment to it if the area were to become a more generic business based office development that would move the focus away from equine based development in this area.

The filling in of the space between Tattersalls and the Racecourse and that of the town of Ratoath must, in our considered opinion, be carefully considered from a planning and sustainable development perspective. Development should benefit the function of Ratoath as a large and self-sustaining settlement in County Meath.

We therefore welcome the verbal inclusion of our client's tourism zoned lands within the Master Plan 1 Area under Proposed Ratoath Amendment No. 1 under RATH OBJ 2 (Master Plan 1) of the Material Amendments of the Plan. This we note is as a response of a submission by the Office of the Planning Regulator but also reflects a number of our clients concerns raised in our original submission.

We submit that any Master Planning of the White Lands and Tourism zoning should be done with the input of both Tattersalls and Fairyhouse racecourse given the potential for a symbiosis of uses but also due to the potential for certain activities to impact negatively upon the functioning of both. This is not in our view expressly set out in the Material Amendments. It should be included in the finalised Development Plan. We suggest the following amendment in bold to Proposed Ratoath Amendment No. 1:

*"To support the provision of appropriate and sustainable employment, visitor and tourist facilities on lands zoned as Tourism and White Land in accordance with an approved Master Plan which shall be agreed **between all landowners and** with the Executive of the Planning Authority and shall accompany any planning application on the lands subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure. Any planning application made for development on these lands shall be accompanied by a Master Plan detailing development proposal for the full extent of the lands. This shall include details of the overall site and building layout for the lands, building height and design principles, landscaping, mix of uses for the site, traffic impact assessment and management proposals and service arrangements."*

If the above is not amended as requested, we would request, given the inclusion of the Tattersalls lands within the Master Plan area, that the Council insert an objective into the Ratoath part of Volume 2 of the County Development Plan that outlines that any development within the WL lands should not detract from the functioning and long term potential future expansion of Tattersalls.

The inclusion of Tattersalls within the Master Plan area, as well as the requested amendment above, will enable them to protect their day to day operations and long term future viability at this location

The Tattersalls business and wider site owned by our client is primarily an equine based business as is recognised within the rural Development Strategy of the Plan and also attracts over 25,000 visitors to the sales complex each year for the International Horse Trials and other events. Our clients, whilst welcoming the importance of the contribution that their equine business makes at a local, national and international level within the forthcoming final Meath County Development Plan 2022-2028 would question the correctness of the zoning (D1) allocated to their lands and the ancillary nature of the tourism aspect of their business. This D1 zoning covers the Tattersalls buildings and associated landholding; as well as the adjacent Fairyhouse racecourse to the east. It should be noted that whilst the nature of Tattersalls business is the sale of equine bloodstock there is no other operational or functional linkage with the racecourse at Fairyhouse beyond the equine basis of their business. It is also important to note that the International Horse Trials plus other events (which are dominantly but not exclusively equestrian), currently attracts over 25,000 visitors to the sales complex each year, and for absolute clarification these events are in addition to the bloodstock sales held on the site.

We respectfully submit that it is imperative that the Tattersalls zoned lands remain within the Master plan area to enable our clients to both expand and develop its business in a manner that is appropriate that generates local employment and spin-off economic activity.

Conclusions

We have reviewed the content of the Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Material Amendments as well as the Chief Executives report relating to the submissions made to the Draft Development Plan dated 13th August 2020 and set out under this submission commentary in relation to further considerations relating to the zoning, specific objectives, policies and objectives for Ratoath and particularly those relating to the Tattersalls site; WL zoned lands and the purpose of the Strategic Employment Site within Ratoath.

This submission is made in the interests of the sustainable development of Ratoath to ensure the day to day operations and long term viability of Tattersalls on the edge of the town, albeit 1km outside as it brings significant spin-off and direct economic benefits to the town.

Our clients' have a long established existence in Ratoath and they welcome the recognition of the Strategic Employment Site but there is a need to avoid conflicting policies and statements in relation to this Zone within the Material Amendments as set out under this submission.

Our clients concerns relating to the potential development of the proposed WL zoned lands is that it has the potential, if developed in an inappropriate manner or put forward independently of the Tattersalls site, to preclude their ability to expand, develop and diversify their business further if required during the lifetime of the Plan.

This should be an objective of the zoning and future development of these lands. Our clients would have concerns that any master plan development, if developed incorrectly, without their input and for significant levels of housing outside the existing development boundary of the town, could be prejudicial to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Framework and RSES, given existing and undeveloped zoning of lands closer to the town centre.

The primary aim of the Plan should be to protect existing land uses such as Tattersalls and ensure that any rezoning and future development occurs in a manner that protects and enables the future expansion of their and other businesses. It is respectfully submitted that this submission is based on ensuring both the proper planning and sustainable development of Ratoath and our client's lands.

We would be obliged if you will acknowledge receipt of this submission in due course and we would be happy to furnish any further information that you may require to deal with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Anthony Marston' in a cursive script.

Anthony Marston (MIPI, MRTPI)
Marston Planning Consultancy