

Galway City Council

Social and Affordable Housing Land Acquisition Programme 2021

Report to Housing SPC 26th February 2021

Land Acquisition for Social and Affordable Housing

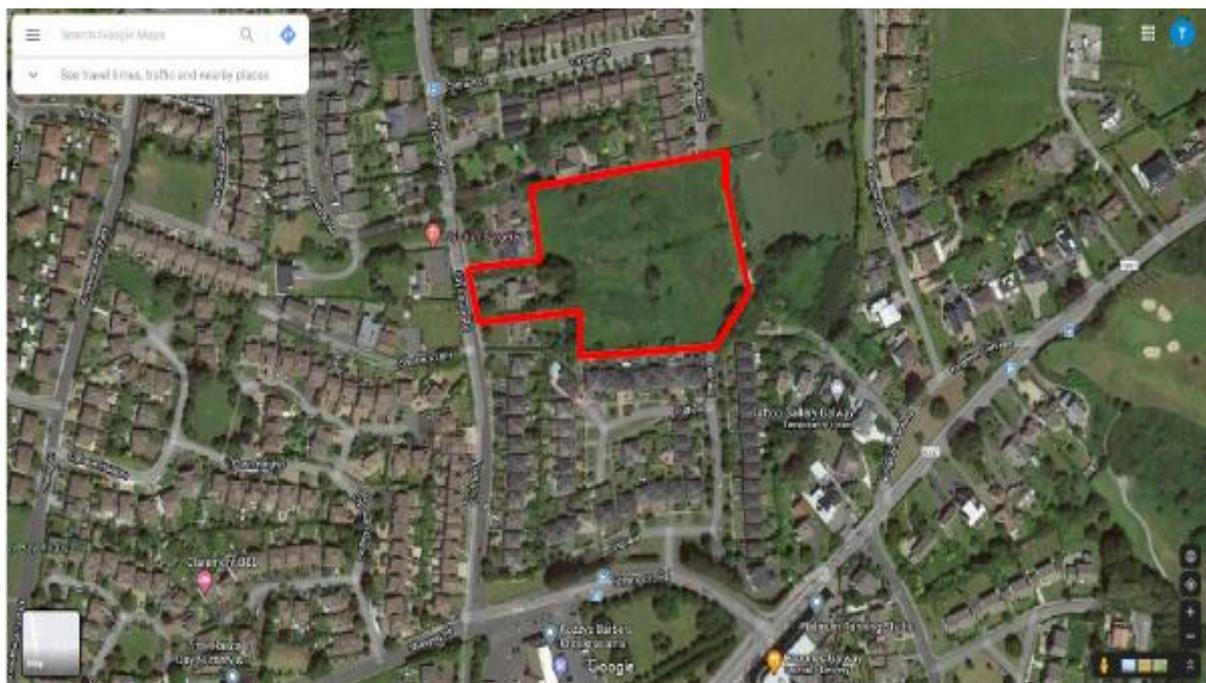
In September 2020, the elected members of Galway City Council approved borrowing of up to €15m from the Housing Finance Agency towards the cost of acquiring lands in the city for future social and affordable housing.

The Housing Department have recently completed the acquisition of lands for future development of social and affordable housing at a number of locations. A number of other sites are under active consideration. Applications have been submitted to the Department of Housing for approval to seek Housing Finance Agency loans to fund the cost of purchase. Once appropriate housing schemes are approved for development on the lands, the loans can be recouped from the Department of Housing.

The Housing Department are examining the acquisition of lands at a number of locations in order to ensure a sufficient supply of suitably zoned lands to meet housing demand in the short-medium term. A particular emphasis on future land acquisition will be on ensuring suitable locations for social and affordable housing mixed tenure sites.

Clybaun Road

A parcel of land off Clybaun Road, Knocknacarra has been acquired. The area of the plot is 1.42 Ha (3.5 acres). Its location is identified on the insert drawing below.



The acquisition has significant merit. The locality is very well served with amenities. Shopping, high frequency bus routes, doctor's surgeries, hotel, pub and restaurants, the parish church and other services are all within walking distance. The site lends itself to a potential mix of elderly, disability and standard social and affordable housing units. The lands have a planning zoning of Residential. The potential outturn could be in the region of 50 residential units. The lands are well served by all utilities and there would not be any issues or abnormal costs incurred in that area. An independent valuation was received in respect of the site. The valuation confirmed a market value of €2,550,000 for the lands. The site was acquired for €2,550,000.

School Road, Castlegar

A parcel of land off School Road, Castlegar has been acquired. The area of the plot is 1.74 Ha (4.3 acres). The lands are zoned Residential with a potential outturn in the region of 70 residential units. The lands are well served by all utilities and there would not be any abnormal costs incurred in that area. An application for Serviced Sites Funding would be appropriate for this site for the development of Affordable Housing in the main and upgrade to road infrastructure of the kind required in this instance is an eligible funding category under SSF.



The acquisition has significant merit. It is ideally located to provide a scheme with a mix of social and affordable housing. There is currently a reasonable provision of amenities in the area which will increase on delivery of this and adjacent schemes. An independent valuation was received in respect of the site. The valuation confirmed a market value of €2,500,000 for the lands. The site was acquired for €2,500,000.

Quarry House Lands, Merlin

In 2018, the Council acquired 5.2 acres of lands at Merlin Lane. The 'Quarry House' lands comprise an area of 0.56 Ha. (1.38 acres). The addition of these lands will further strengthen the strategic potential of the overall connected land bank created. The acquisition of this site will add to the quality of development which could be delivered for the area, the location and residential zoning give additional flexibility allowing for optimal land use to deal with access, topographical and ecological issues.



The constrained access off the Doughiska Road to the Council's existing land bank is greatly enhanced by the acquisition. A transport assessment is currently being carried out to resolve the access to existing lands at this location and the addition of these lands to the south of the current narrow access roadway is extremely beneficial.

The zoning on the lands is Residential, this allows for a greater density of development than on the other parcels. The potential return would be an additional 30 units approximately. The site contains a listed building, the old Quarry House, which would have to be retained and protected as part of any new development. This would add to the cost of development but should not hinder the capacity of the site. The lands also have the benefit of proximity to Water Services infrastructure. An independent valuation was received in respect of the site confirming a market value of €600,000 for the lands. The site was acquired for €600,000.

