Ex: Limerick Leader

Docks

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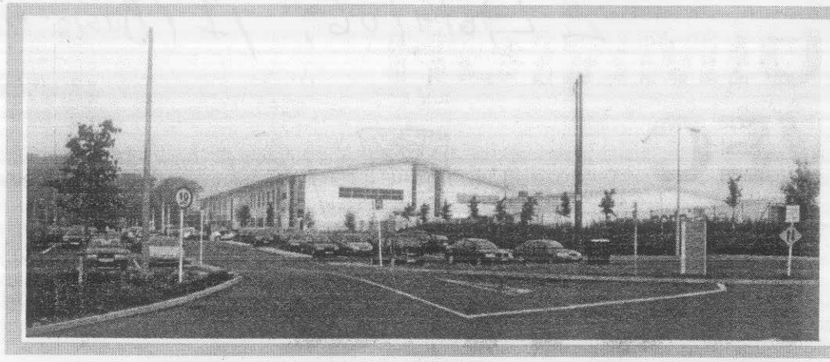

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16 SEPTEMBER 2006

Port firm agrees to talks on future of docks

By CLODAGH O'LEARY

CONTROVERSY about Shannon Foynes Port Company's plans for Limerick docklands appears to have calmed this week with the announcement of "full round" consultations with the ports users and city councillors opposed to a closure of the docks.

This week, SFPC announced their plans to appoint a sub-committee to draw up plans to proceed with their Limerick Docklands initiative.

The initiative identifies the site of Ted Russell Docks for an IFSC-style development with hi-tech jobs and landmark buildings.

And the Limerick Port Users will have the opportunity to put forward any specific proposals they have regarding the future of the port.

The group will comprise of chief executive Brian Byrne; chairman, Kieran MacSweeney, and two other directors.

And this Monday, a motion signed by six city councillors, including Mayor Joe Leddin, calling on the Council to support the Limerick Port Users group to maintain and improve Limerick port as a working dock was passed in Council chambers.

Councillors stated they were for the docks development as long as the port remained open.

Mr MacSweeney said that the initiative will be an all-inclusive process that they hope will ultimately arrive at the best possible outcome for all.

"We are fully satisfied with the outcome of Thursday's meeting and are now about to devise a format and structure with which to proceed with the Limerick Docklands initiative and in a way that involves full consultation with all stakeholders," he said.

"This is essential so that we can navigate the best way forward for Limerick Docklands and we will welcome any proposals from our stakeholders."

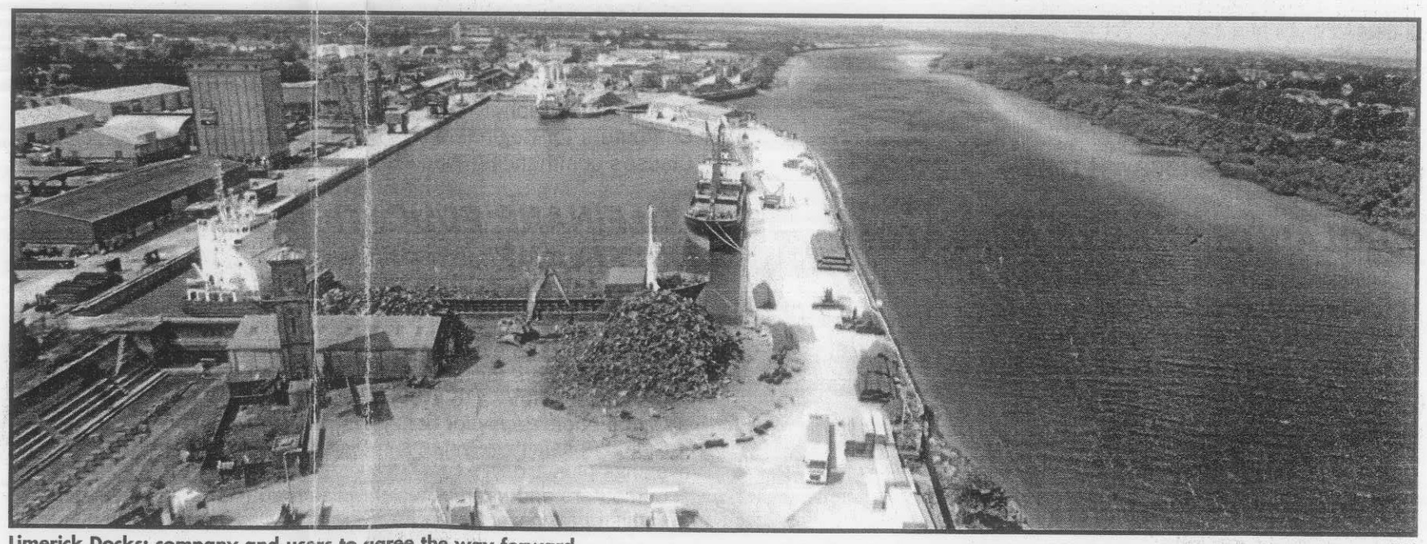
Mr Byrne endorsed the unanimous position of the full board, adding that the consultation stage about to be embarked on was crucial to the overall process regarding the initiative.

"We are very much looking forward to this process of consultation and see it as imperative as we move forward. The Limerick Docklands initiative is a very exciting project for Shannon Foynes Port Company and for Limerick and we are aware that it must proceed in an all-inclusive manner and will now devise a structure to achieve that," he said.

"We are, in particular, looking forward to whatever proposals stakeholders will make and will give everything due consideration so that at the end of this consultative process, we arrive at a well measured plan for the future of Limerick docklands," he said.

The plan proposes the sale of lands for development and the possible closure of Limerick Docks to fund the expansion of the port at Foynes.

One port user said: "We're not against development. We would welcome it. The question that has to be asked is why the port company has allowed the docks to become run down in the first place. If the development goes ahead and the port stays open, everyone's a winner."



Limerick Docks: company and users to agree the way forward (LL)