

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
JOHN O'DOWD MLA

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Deborah, a chara,

COMMITTEE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE: FOLLOW-UP FROM MEETING ON 22 MAY 2024 - KINGS LANE, WARRENPOINT (STOPPING-UP ORDER)

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 May 2024, following my officials providing you with a briefing of the proposed Kings Lane, Warrenpoint (Stopping-Up Order).

Whilst I am not in a position to share the original communications with the Council, my officials have advised me that the proposed Stopping-Up at Kings Lane, Warrenpoint, is part of a planning condition, for pedestrian safety, due to the planning application for redevelopment in the immediate vicinity of Kings Lane.

As part of Its Planning Application consultation response (to Newry Mourne & Down District Council (NMADDC), Planning Office, the Applicant and Planners), my Department requested the Stopping-Up, condition. The condition was requested in the interest of pedestrian safety, primarily for reasons of road safety, reflecting the likely increase in pedestrian movements along Kings Lane. This condition is to ensure that the retail and residential access points would not enter directly onto the vehicular carriageway.

My officials proposed several alternative options, to facilitate the safety of pedestrians; namely, restricting the width of the development to facilitate the construction of a footway or, alternatively; the creation of an access through the front façade which would lead to a designated pedestrian footway, running parallel to the development. However, none of these options were acceptable to Council Planning. Council Planning would not allow any alterations to the façade of the existing building (Bennett's Bar and Walsh's Pharmacy), citing protection of the Town Character it provided, along the Main Street in Warrenpoint. This restriction also meant that the Developer was not allowed to widen the existing carriageway to provide adequate pedestrian protection.

Consequently, the only option available to my Department was to proceed with the Stopping-Up, at this location.

It should also be noted that, previous discussions had taken place between my Department and NMADDC, at the behest of NMADDC, concerning the pedestrianisation of Kings Lane. My officials had no objection to this proposal, however, this was never progressed by NMADDC.

Members also asked if any of those who objected to the Stopping-Up Order were residents or occupants of Kings Lane.

I can advise that there were 102 objections - 6 objections had no address or the address was illegible, 9 were by email with no address provided and of the 87 remaining no-one from Kings Lane objected – this includes the owner/occupiers of the apartments on Kings Lane as well as business owners/property owners on Kings Lane.

I hope this information is helpful.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John O'Dowd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOHN O'DOWD MLA
Minister for Infrastructure