

Proposed Variation No. 9
Model Farm Road
to the City Development Plan 2009-2015

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Screening Report

29th August 2012



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Introduction

The purpose of carrying out this screening statement is to consider whether the Proposed Variation No. 9 (Model Farm Road) of the City Development Plan requires a Strategic Environment Assessment under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004.

Section 13(K)(1) of the Regulations states that “*where a Planning Authority proposes to make a variation of a development plan under section 13 of the Act it shall, before giving notice under section 13(2) of the Act, consider whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A*”.

The Proposed Variation consists of the rezoning of (approximately 40,200sq.m.) 4.02 hectares of ‘Residential, Local Services & Institutional’ zoned land to ‘Business and Technology’, adjoining the Cork Business and Technology Park.

Background

The proposed variation seeks to rezone 4.02 hectares of ‘Residential’ zoned land to ‘Business and Technology’ within the current ownership of the Department of Agriculture, in order to facilitate the future expansion of the Cork Business and Technology Park.

Figure 1 Exiting Zoning of Cork City Development Plan 2009 - 2015

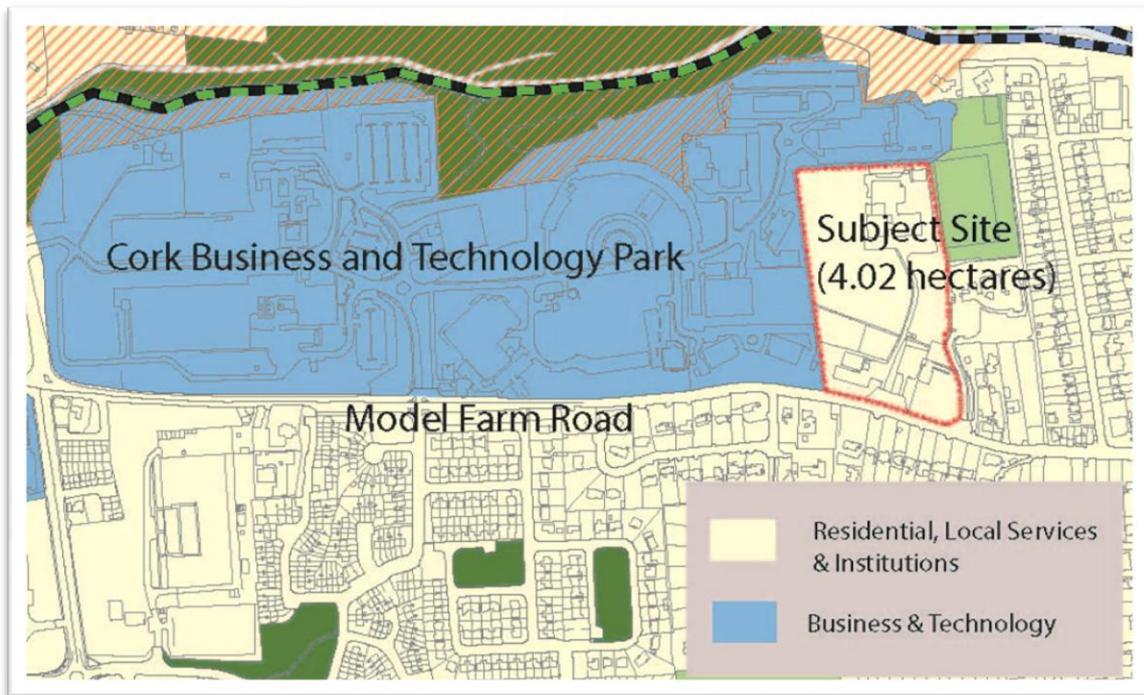
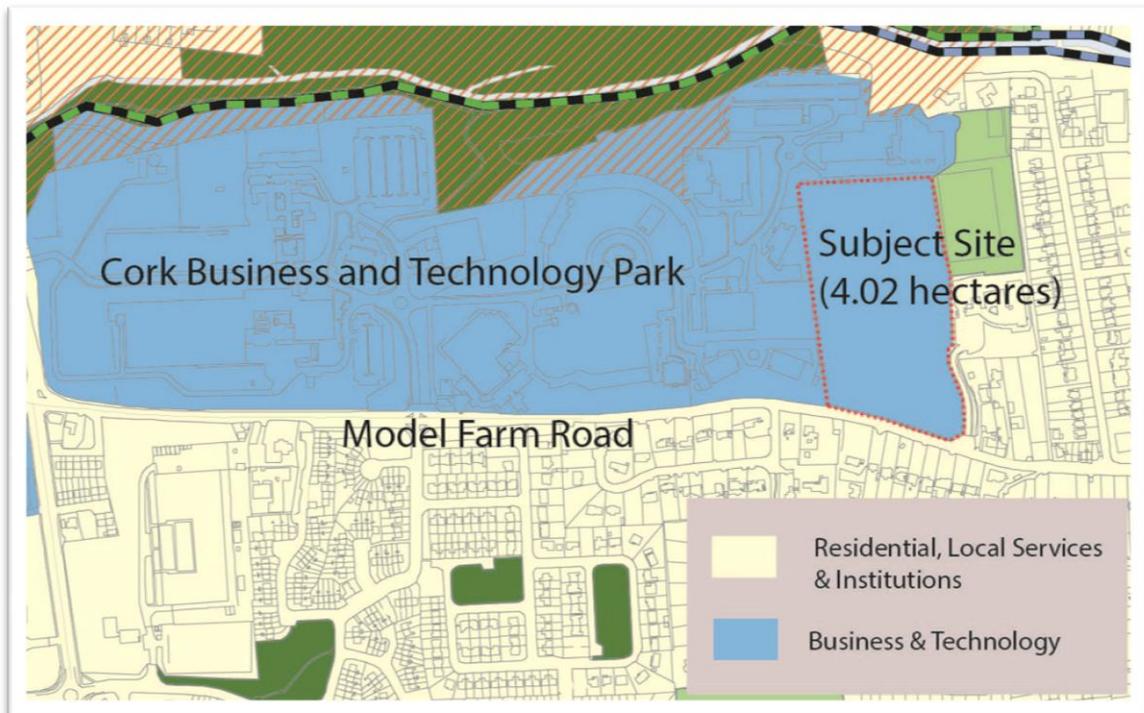


Figure 2 Proposed Amendments to Cork City Development Plan



**4.02 hectare site adjoining the Cork Business and Technology Park, Model Farm Road, rezoned from 'Residential' to 'Business and Technology'*

Schedule 2A Screening Assessment

The Proposed Variation has been screened under the following criteria set out under Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001 - 2011.

| 1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to | |
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| (a) | <p>The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</p> <p>The proposed variation to the Cork City Development Plan 2009 – 2015 does not set a framework for projects and other activities but facilitates the expansion of the Cork Business and Technology Park which conforms to the new zoning objective.</p> |
| (b) | <p>The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</p> <p>The City Development Plan sets out the context and framework for the area. The proposed variation does not propose any changes which conflict with the National Spatial Strategy, Cork Area Strategic Plan and the Regional Planning Guidelines.</p> |
| (c) | <p>The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,</p> <p>The proposed variation is being prepared in the context of a range of EU, national, regional and local guidance and plans in particular, CASP, the City Development Plan and the Bishopstown and Wilton Area Action Plan which have been prepared on the basis of promoting proper planning and sustainable development.</p> |
| (d) | <p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan,</p> <p>There are no strategically significant environmental problems identified in relation to the proposed variation. The overall strategy for the city (as per the City Development Plan) has already been considered under the SEA process and the proposed variation does not materially alter this strategy.</p> <p>A brief overview of environmental issues pertaining to the plan area is detailed below.</p> <p>Water Supply The Cork Strategic Water Study outlines the development of water supply infrastructure to meet anticipated water supply needs over the next 25 years. The River Lee is the main source of water for the city. The Lee Road Waterworks Treatment Plant caters for the volumes required to satisfy current and predicted future demand and as such the planned regeneration is not likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p> <p>Foul Drainage The Cork Main Drainage Scheme, operating since 2004, has improved the treatment of the City's wastewater effluent in excess of EU Wastewater Directive requirements. There is sufficient capacity to cater for the increased demand for foul drainage and as such the planned regeneration is not likely to result in significant environmental effects.</p> <p>Ground Water Vulnerability Ground water is not a source of drinking water supply. The study area is categorised as being 'high' in terms of its ground water vulnerability, (Geological Survey of Ireland). i.e. the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. This may require specific drainage design measures to prevent surface activity from polluting the underlying groundwater.</p> |

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| | <p>Flooding The River Lee catchment-based flood risk assessment and management study, (LeeCFRAMS) does not classify the subject lands as Flood Zone A or B and as such it is classified as Flood Zone C, having a low probability of flooding. There is no evidence of flooding in the area and as such development is considered appropriate.</p> <p>Cultural / Built Heritage There are no Recorded Monuments or Protected Structures within the plan area, and as such no significant impact on cultural heritage.</p> |
| (e) | <p>The relevance of the plan for implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection).</p> <p>The proposed variation is considered under the overarching policies of the Cork City Development Plan which includes policies relating to water supply, water quality, foul and surface water drainage, surface water quality, ground water and waste management, in compliance with EU legislation such as the Water Framework Directive and Groundwater Directive. The proposed variation will have no effect on the implementation of the European Union legislation.</p> |
| 2. The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected having regard, in particular, to | |
| (a) | <p>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,</p> <p>Any development proposals resulting from the proposed rezoning must accord with the Cork City Development Plan and its environmental protection policies as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure to service new development. It is considered that the proposed variation will not have significant environmental effects.</p> |
| (b) | <p>The cumulative nature of effects,</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the proposed variation will experience any unacceptable cumulative environmental effects.</p> |
| (c) | <p>The trans-boundary nature of the effects,</p> <p>The proposed variation will have no trans-boundary effects.</p> |
| (d) | <p>The risks to human health of the environment (e.g. due to accidents),</p> <p>It is considered that the variation will not create any direct risks to human health or the environment.</p> |
| (e) | <p>The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected),</p> <p>The site area of the proposed rezoning is 4.02 hectares. The proposed variation will not result in an increased population.</p> |
| (f) | <p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>(i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, There are no special natural characteristics on the subject site. It is not envisaged that the variation will lead to any significant effects on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage of the site.</p> <p>(ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, The variation will not affect environmental quality standards or limit values.</p> |

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| | <p>(iii) Intensive land-use. As the subject site is zoned '<i>Residential, Local Services and Institutional</i>' and is currently largely a greenfield site with just three existing low rise buildings, the proposed variation may lead to an intensification of land use as <i>Busienss and Technology</i> would be become open for consideration.</p> |
| (g) | <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised National, European Union or International protection status.</p> <p>The plan area is not subject of any recognised National, European Union or International protection status and is unlikely to have any effect on any such designated areas or landscapes.</p> |

Conclusion

It is considered that the likely impact of the proposed variation in terms of the environment and sustainable development is likely to be **neutral** from a strategic perspective. Therefore, it does not appear that there is a need for an SEA in this instance as the proposed variation is unlikely to result in development which would have significant negative effects on the environment. It is therefore recommended the City Council does not proceed to SEA scoping in this case.

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