

Proposed Variation No. 5
North Blackpool Local Area Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

5th July 2011



Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

City Development Plan Variation No. 5

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

Introduction

The purpose of carrying out this screening statement is to consider whether the proposed variation to the City Development Plan 2009 - 2015 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*”.

Where a planning authority considers that there are significant effects on the environment and that there is a prima facie case for SEA, it should proceed to the scoping stage of the SEA. If the planning authority is uncertain as to the need for SEA the designated environmental authorities as set out in section 13A (4) of the Regulations should be formally consulted during the screening process.

Proposed Variation

Cork City Council intends to make a variation to the Cork City Development Plan, 2004, under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act, 2004. The proposed variation (copy attached) relates to material changes to Map 6: North Central Suburbs, (Volume 2), Cork City Development Plan 2009 - 2015, as follows:

Material Amendment 1:

Amend Map 6 by rezoning approximately 0.3 hectares currently zoned ‘Residential, Local Services and Institutions’ to ‘Business & Technology’ at the former Kilbarry (Blackpool) Rail Station.

Material Amendment 2:

Amend Map 6 by rezoning approximately 0.6 hectares currently zoned ‘Business & Technology’ to ‘Residential, Local Services & Institutions’ within the Dulux complex.

Material Amendment 3:

Amend Map 6 by rezoning approximately 0.15 hectares currently zoned ‘Public Open Space’ to ‘Residential, Local Services & Institutions’ within the Dulux complex.

Material Amendment 4:

Amend Map 6 by rezoning approximately 1.5 hectares currently zoned 'Business & Technology' to 'Public Open Space' within the Dulux complex.

Material Amendment 5:

Amend Map 6 by rezoning approximately 0.15 hectares currently zoned 'Mixed - Use' to 'Public Open Space' within the former Sunbeam Industrial complex.

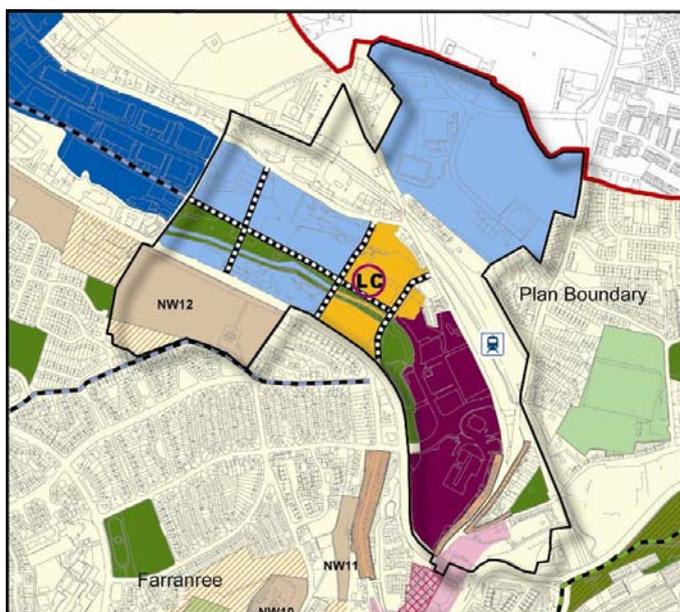
Material Amendment 6:

Amend Map 6 by rezoning approximately 3.7 hectares currently zoned 'Mixed - Use' to 'District Centre' within the former Sunbeam Industrial complex.

Figure 1: Material Amendments sites



Figure 2: Zoning, City Development Plan 2009-2015



Background to Variation

Cork City Council has prepared a Local Area Plan, under Section 18 of the *Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2010*, for the 'North Blackpool' area of the City. The purpose of the plan is to set out an integrated land use, transportation and urban design framework to facilitate the sustainable redevelopment of the area, centred on a high quality public transport hub at the proposed Kilbarry / Blackpool commuter rail station.

Included in the North Blackpool plan are a number of policy proposals that would constitute material amendments to the *Cork City Development Plan 2009 - 2015*, if adopted. In order to incorporate the proposed changes into the City Development Plan, a formal Variation pursuant to Section 13 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2010 is being undertaken.

Screening Report

This section assesses the likelihood of significant effects to the environment as a result of implementing the proposed variation to the Cork City Development Plan 2009 - 2015 taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004.

1. The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to

(a) the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.

The North Blackpool Local Area Plan provides detailed planning guidance on a 60 hectare area in the North Central Sector of the city. The proposed amendment relates to a total of 6.5 hectares within the Dulux complex, the former Sunbeam site and the former Kilbarry rail station site. The Plan area focuses on the future use / potential of the above listed areas. The local area plan will set a framework for which all proposed developments within the site boundary must have cognisance of.

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy,

The North Blackpool plan is influenced by rather than being an influence on other plans within the city and wider area. The plan amplifies local planning guidance for a relatively small area of the City and so will inform planning applications likely to come forward in the plan 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.

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,

The variation has been prepared under the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2010, with a view to promoting sustainable development centred on a high quality public transport hub at the proposed Kilbarry / Blackpool commuter rail station.

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme,

There are no significant environmental problems to the plan or programme resulting from the variation.

Flood risk: On examination of the Lee CFRAMS Maps, it is evident that the vast majority of the subject sites are at low risk of flooding. However, the Millfield Industrial Estate and Dulux complex, (site 6) is subject to localised flooding related to an existing culvert which reduces the capacity of the waterway and requires regular maintenance. Recent planning permissions mitigates future flooding potential by way of the removal of the culvert, the regrading, widening and landscaping of the river channel which will reduce future flood risk. Furthermore, an assessment of surface water discharge from all the subject sites will be undertaken as part of the design process of the scheme.

Built Heritage: There is one Recorded Monument & Place (RMP) within the plan area. This flax mill, (CO 074-115) is no longer extant, but features may survive below ground level. It is proposed to incorporate the line of the mill-race and other features such as weirs and mill pond into a new public open space.

Traffic: if the subject lands are developed as outlined in the plan, traffic volumes in the area will inevitably increase. A network of access roads is proposed to facilitate the redevelopment of the area between the District Centre and Fitz's Boreen, to be laid out progressively, if and when development occurs. This network will result in environmental benefits to existing residential communities.

Furthermore, new development will contribute to the creation of safe and convenient access to the area and the opportunity to connect to public transport services. The planned rail service

and the development of walkways / cycle-ways will encourage modal change. It is considered that the increase in traffic is not considered likely to result in significant environmental effects.

(e) the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

There is no relevance of the proposed variation in relation to the implementation of European Legislation.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

Notwithstanding the low risk of flooding, surface water discharge from the site shall be managed in accordance by appropriate attenuation measures such as sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), in order to mitigate potential flooding/stormwater issues downstream.

It is considered that the variation will not have any significant effects. However, this SEA screening report does not purport to address local effects, as potential impacts on the local environment will be addressed in the Planning Application process and, if appropriate, through an Environmental Impact Assessment where necessary.

(b) the cumulative nature of the effects,

It is considered that there will not be any cumulative effects resulting from the variation.

(c) the transboundary nature of the effects,

The northern and western perimeter of the study area forms the administrative boundary of Cork City and Cork County Councils. It is considered that there will be no detrimental trans-boundary impacts.

(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),

It is considered that the variation will not create any direct risks to human health or the environment.

(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),

The proposed material amendments relates to an area of approximately 6.5 hectares. The proposed variation will not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding residential area, but seeks to consolidate and protect the residential amenity of existing communities, through the creation of a new residential quarter and the consolidation of existing residential estates. The absolute number of persons who will be affected by the variation in the City areas is not known at this time. However, the current population of the plan area is estimated at 550 persons and the development potential of the plan area is estimated at a 1250 persons.

(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,

It is not envisaged that the plan will lead to any significant effects on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage within the plan area. The plan seeks to protect and enhance the existing 'natural' or 'green' assets of the area. Any potentially adverse impacts will be mitigated through the development management process following adherence to the over-riding policies and objectives contained in the City Development Plan.

(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

The variation will not affect environmental quality standards or limit values

(iii) intensive land-use,

The proposed re-zonings, in particular, the re-zoning of 3.7 hectares of 'mixed - use' to 'district centre' does not represent an intensification of land use, as the district centre zoning results in little change to land use options, in permitting (in principle only), largescale retail developments, while imposing restrictions on office floorspace. Any 'intensification' of use would be carefully assessed in light of traffic impacts on the road network.

(f) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised National, European Union or International protection status.

The site is not subject of any recognised National, European Union or International protection status, and therefore the variation is unlikely to have any effect on any such designated areas or landscapes.

Conclusion

The changes proposed in the variation are set within the context of a development framework already established by the adopted Cork City Development Plan 2009 - 2015.

The impact of the implementation of the variation in terms of the environment and sustainable development is likely to be positive from a strategic perspective. Therefore, it does not appear that there is a need for a SEA in this instance as the proposed variation is unlikely to result in development which would have significant effects on the environment.

It is therefore recommended that Cork City Council does not proceed to SEA scoping in this case.

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