

# Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

## Proposed Local Area Plan Farranferris

### **Introduction**

#### Screening Report

The purpose of carrying out this screening statement is to consider whether a proposed Local Area Plan for Farranferris should require a Strategic Environment Assessment under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004.

#### Determination of need for environmental assessment of local area plan

Section 14(A)(1) of the Regulations states *“This article applies to a local area plan or an amendment to a local area plan for an area the population of which is less than 10,000 persons”*

Section 14 (A) (2) *“Where a Planning Authority proposes to prepare or amend a local area plan referred to in sub-article (1), the planning authority shall, prior to giving notice under Section 20 (3) of the Act, consider whether or not implementation of the local area plan or amended plan 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 Local Area Plan**

#### Summary

Cork City Council has prepared a Local Area Plan for the Farranferris area of the city to guide development and change over the next six years. This has been done with an aim to improve the overall plan area and to address in particular the future development potential of Farranferris College and its associated lands.

### **SCREENING REPORT**

This section assesses the likelihood of significant effects to the environment as a result of implementing the local area plan for Farranferris taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004.

#### **I. 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 Farranferris Local Area Plan provides detailed planning guidance on a limited geographical area in the North West Sector of the city. The Plan area focuses on the future use of Farranferris College and the possible redevelopment of its associated lands. The plan aims to promote the social, economic, cultural and physical development of the plan area to achieve an integrated, vibrant and sustainable living, working and recreational environment. The 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 Farranferris 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 Northside of Cork City and so will inform planning applications likely to come forward in the plan area.

The Farranferris plan falls within and is cognisant of the greater strategic planning hierarchy available at a national (National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy) and regional (Regional Planning Guidelines) level and is framed in the context of the Cork City Development Plan..

**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 local area plan has been prepared under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002 (as amended) with a view to promoting sustainable development.

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

#### Landscape Character

The site area is situated in an elevated ridge landscape. The area is designated a Ridge Protection Zone in the City Development Plan. It is proposed to preserve specific areas of the plan from development in order to protect the inherent landscape assets of the plan area. Added to this development within the main curtilage of the college building will be strictly controlled and the landscaped gardens and other on site features within the Farranferris site will be given adequate protection. A landscaping management plan will need to be undertaken for the site. A Tree Preservation Order will be considered for important tree species on site.

#### Conservation & Heritage

There are two registered Protected Structures within the plan area including Farranferris College itself. The main building and landscaped gardens define the historic cartilage of the building and contribute to the sites unique character and appearance. These gardens are to be preserved as existing and all external modifications to the building and internal changes to the layout will require to be

carried out in line with statutory requirements and to the highest conservation best practice.

Coupled with this other buildings of architectural/historical merit have been identified in the plan area and will be given appropriate protection as per the 2000 Planning and Development Act.

#### Traffic

The sole vehicular access and pedestrian access to the Farranferris site is taken from the existing avenue where there is an obvious need to improve access into and through the site in order to:

- make Farranferris College and lands more accessible to the surrounding community;
- improve linkages and permeability throughout the study area;
- release the development potential of certain areas of the Farranferris site.

Development on the Farranferris site will be subject to the completion of a full Traffic Impact Assessment and trip generation will be prioritised by foot, bicycle and public transport in the plan area.

- 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 plan 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,**

It is considered that the local area plan 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 local area plan.

- c) the transboundary nature of the effects,**

The local area plan falls within the administrative boundary of Cork City Council and addresses key local issues. As a consequence the plan does not give rise to transboundary effects.

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

It is considered that the local area plan 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 subject lands are located in the ward of Farranferris C. Wards which are located directly adjacent to Farranferris C and which provide an immediate population catchment are as follows: Fairhill A, Fairhill B, Farranferris A, Farranferris B, Farranferris C. The total population of this catchment area is 4,686. The absolute number of persons who will be affected by the local area plan is likely to be larger than this but indeterminable at this time.

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

**a) 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 of the site. On the contrary the plan seeks to provide adequate protection to those natural and cultural heritage assets existing in the plan area.

**b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,**

The local area plan will not affect environmental quality standards or limit values

**c) intensive land-use,**

As the local area plan will introduce new zonings and land uses at this location which is currently educational & sports grounds in its use, the proposed local area plan may lead to an intensification of landuses such as residential, community and local services which would become open for consideration. An intensification of use would be carefully considered in light of the impacts on traffic and the capacity of the existing road network in the area.

**g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.**

The lands subject of the local area plan are not subject of any recognised national, European Union or international protection status, and therefore the plan is unlikely to have any effect on any such designated areas or landscapes.

## Conclusion

The changes proposed in the local area plan are set within the context of a development framework already established by the Cork City Development Plan, 2004.

The impact of the implementation of the plan 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 local area plan is unlikely to result in development which would have significant effects on the environment.

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