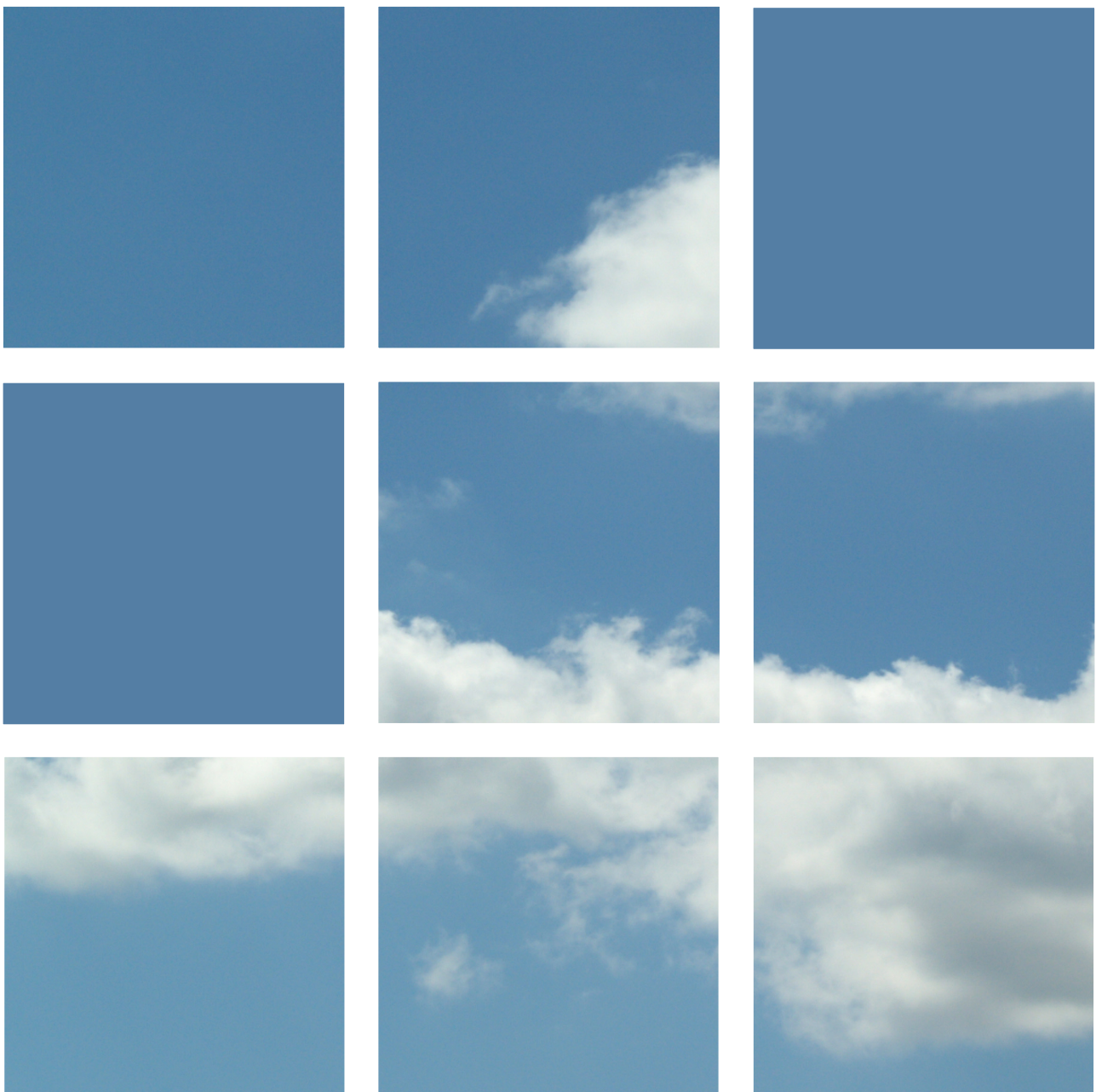




# Appropriate Assessment Screening of the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

December 2014



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report comprises information in support of screening for an Appropriate Assessment in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) of the draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DRAFT CORK CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2021

The draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 sets out a vision and an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the City for the six year period; and sets out guiding policies and objectives for the development of the city in terms of physical growth and renewal, economic, social and cultural activity and environmental protection and enhancement. The management and provision of growth in a balanced, comprehensive and spatially sustainable manner in line with regional and national planning requirements is the central aim of the draft City Development Plan.

Provision of educational, health, recreational, employment and transport facilities will be required in order to maintain the attractiveness of Cork City as a place for future development and as a place to live and do business.

## 1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as the Habitats Directive, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

Article 6(4) states:

*If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.*

These Articles mean that where the implementation of the draft Plan has potential to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, the relevant Local Authority (Cork City Council) must ensure that an appropriate assessment is carried out in view of that site's conservation objectives. The draft Plan can be approved by Cork City Council only if it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site(s) concerned, or in the case of a negative assessment and where there are no alternative solutions, the scheme can only be approved for reasons of overriding public interest.

### 1.3 STAGES OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Both EU and national guidance exists in relation to Member States fulfilling their requirements under the EU Habitats Directive, with particular reference to Article 6(3) and 6(4) of that Directive. The methodology followed in relation to this AA screening has had regard to the following guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. <http://www.npws.ie>
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, referred to as MN2000, European Commission 2000; <http://ec.europa.eu>
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, referred to as the EC Article 6 Guidance Document (EC2000); <http://ec.europa.eu>
- Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC . Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission. <http://ec.europa.eu>

In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and following the EC2000 and MN2000 Guidelines, this AA has been structured in a stage by stage approach as follows:

#### 1) Screening stage

- Description of the draft Plan;
- Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from the draft Plan;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified on site integrity;
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects; and
- Screening conclusion.

## **2 SCREENING**

### **2.1 DESCRIPTION OF DRAFT PLAN**

#### **2.1.1 The Vision for Cork City**

The vision for Cork City over the period of this Development Plan and beyond is to be a successful, sustainable regional capital and to achieve a high quality of life for its citizens and a robust local economy, by balancing the relationship between community, economic development and environmental quality. It will have a diverse innovative economy, will maintain its distinctive character and culture, will have a network of attractive neighbourhoods served by good quality transport and amenities and will be a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest in.

#### **2.1.2 Strategic Goals**

The vision for Cork City will be achieved through a series of seven interconnected strategic goals and related Development Plan Chapters, as outlined below:

##### **2.1.2.1 Goal 1 Increase population and households to create a compact sustainable city**

The South West Regional Planning Guidelines (SWRPG) sets an ambitious target for population growth in Cork City with a view to concentrating development and creating a compact, sustainable city. While the number of households in the city has been increasing steadily, household size has declined in line with national trends and much new development has occurred outside the city boundary, resulting in a falling population. This Plan will show that there is capacity within the city to meet the population target but acknowledges that this target will only be met by the implementation of a co-ordinated approach to the development of the greater city area, significant investment in infrastructure and an increase in the attractiveness of the city as a place to live in.

##### **2.1.2.2 Goal 2 Achieve a higher quality of life and make the city an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in**

The first step in reversing the decline in city population will be to improve its attractiveness as a living environment. A city that is attractive and provides a good quality of life and health for residents will also be attractive for workers, investors and visitors. The approach will centre on the 5 minute city concept focused on residential neighbourhoods served by a range of amenities, as well as an attractive city centre. This is addressed particularly in Chapters 6 Residential, and 7 Sustainable Neighbourhoods of the draft City Development Plan; while wider measures to increase the attractiveness of the city and improve quality of life are a cross cutting principle in the rest of the draft Plan. Promoting social inclusion is an integral part of this strategic goal and is also a cross cutting principle in the draft Plan.

##### **2.1.2.3 Goal 3 Support the revitalisation of the economy**

Supporting the creation of a diverse, connected, innovative economy in the city is a central goal of the draft Plan. Key to revitalisation of the city's economy is regeneration of the city centre and adjoining areas. This will increase employment opportunities and build on the city centre's role as the main retail, commercial and cultural centre for the region (see Chapter 13 of the draft Plan). The suburban areas also play a key role in the economy in particular the key development areas and district centres outlined in the Chapter 14 of the draft Plan. Overall economic strategy is addressed in Chapter 3 and Retail Strategy is addressed in Chapter 4 of the draft Plan.

#### **2.1.2.4 Goal 4 Promote sustainable modes of transport and integration of land use and transportation**

At the national level there is a mandate to reduce emissions caused by fossil-fuelled transport, to reduce use of the private car for commuting and to increase journeys by public transport, walking and cycling. These objectives are central to the land-use and transport strategies in this plan and as well as having the significant societal benefits of a better quality environment can also give health benefits and cost-savings to the individual citizen. Achieving national targets is a long term objective which will require a move to more sustainable land use planning and a significant upgrade to public transport in the greater city area. This draft Plan will set interim targets which are achievable in the shorter term. This strategic goal is particularly addressed in Chapter 5 Transportation of the draft Plan.

#### **2.1.2.5 Goal 5 Maintain and capitalise on Cork's unique form and character**

Cork's unique character derives from the combination of plan, topography, built fabric and the setting provided by the River Lee valley. The dramatic east west ridges create the visual setting for the city. The goal of the draft Plan is to protect and capitalise on the unique character of the city, both the character derived from the natural environment and the man-made character created by the built form, while providing opportunities for new development. New development will need to respect and reflect the dramatic topography as well as the landscape and ecology of the city. It must also respect the built heritage of the city, in particular areas of significant historic character such as the city centre, the historic north-south spine and the suburban villages. There are also opportunities for creation of new character areas in locations such as Docklands, Mahon and Blackpool and at the arrival points or gateways into the city. This strategic goal is addressed in Chapter 9 Built Heritage and Archaeology, Chapter 10 Landscape and Natural Heritage and Chapter 8 Arts, Cultural Heritage and Tourism of the draft Plan.

#### **2.1.2.6 Goal 6 Tackle climate change through reducing energy usage, reducing emissions and mitigating against flood risk**

A key aim of the draft Plan is to reduce emissions that lead to global warming through sustainable energy usage in transport and buildings. It also aims to mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change such as the increased risk of flooding, through the design, layout and location of appropriate land-uses. This is particularly addressed in Chapter 12 Environment and Infrastructure and Chapter 16 Development Management of the draft Plan.

#### **2.1.2.7 Goal 7 Protect and expand the green infrastructure of the city**

The draft Plan seeks to strengthen the green infrastructure of the city for recreational purposes, to promote biodiversity and to protect the landscape of the city. A diverse range of recreation and open spaces facilities, such as sports pitches, public parks, amenity spaces, indoor sports centres, and walking / cycling routes are vital to the health and wellbeing of Cork's residents, as well as those working and visiting the city. This green infrastructure also provides a key ingredient for making the city an attractive place to live, visit and do business in. The aim of the draft Plan is to ensure that people have access to an appropriate level of provision of the right quality. The draft Plan also seeks to provide linkages and green corridors between areas of open space to support bio-diversity. These issues are addressed in Chapter 11 Sport and Recreation and Chapter 10 Landscape and Natural Heritage of the draft Plan.

### **2.1.3 Core Strategy for the Development of Cork City**

#### **2.1.3.1 Selected Development Scenario**

The Core Strategy establishes a framework for the development of the city. It is derived from the strategic goals of the draft City Development Plan, and the population, economic, land-use and

transportation strategies of the South West Regional Planning Guidelines (SWRPG) 2010 and the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) Update 2008. The need to promote social inclusion, sustainable economic development, and access to sustainable transport are central to the strategy. A number of alternative development scenarios have been considered for the city as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process of the draft City Development Plan.

The Core Strategy includes the selected development scenario, which focuses development on selected Key Development/Regeneration Areas and Key Centres. The key development areas, which are mainly brownfield land, will be developed for a range of uses based on strategies in the draft City Development Plan or which have been developed in Local Areas Plans. They are becoming available for development because of the decline of low density uses such as traditional industries in the Docklands and elsewhere, and their replacement by more intensive employment and residential uses. These areas will accommodate the majority of growth and development within the city and they are selected based on their potential to accommodate growth and to be served by sustainable modes of transport. Other parts of the city will develop based on their capacity to absorb development without undue impact on existing character and residential amenities. In addition to these mixed use redevelopment areas, a housing regeneration area in the North West of the city will see significant redevelopment over the period of the draft Plan.

As well as having potential for development some of these key development areas are also major approaches to the city and, if developed to a high quality urban design standard, have the capacity to greatly improve the image of the city at the major city approaches by road and also by rail and air. Strategies for these areas will therefore place considerable emphasis on design quality.

The Key Centres complement the City Centre and consist of a series of District Centres around the city which traditionally were mainly retail centres but the strategy sees them evolving into mixed use urban centres, providing a range of services and employment to their local population. Objectives for the Key Centres are outlined in Chapter 14 of the draft Plan. The retail strategy for the city and the wider area is set out in Chapter 4 of the draft Plan and is based on providing for the needs of the expanded population envisaged in CASP and the RPGs, having had regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines.

The Core Strategy includes an integrated transport strategy with particular focus on public transport, walking and cycling, with particular emphasis on providing sustainable transport choices to serve the key development areas, and this is outlined in Chapter 5 of the draft Plan.

### **2.1.3.2 Development Strategy**

The areas which will be the main focus of new development in the city over the period of the draft Plan and beyond are outlined below. These areas are mainly brownfield sites which can be redeveloped to enable the city to provide for the needs of the existing and expanded population as well as facilitating the implementation of the CASP updated economic strategy. These areas will act as key development and employment nodes in the city. They will meet sustainable development objectives through the provision of:

- “ A mixture of residential and non-residential development;
- “ Economic activity and employment provision;
- “ Higher density development, where appropriate;
- “ Potential for high quality public transport provision;
- “ Good quality environment and services; and
- “ High quality urban design.



The strategy for each area is set out in the plan in Chapters 13 and 14 of the draft Plan. In most cases Local Area Plans or Regeneration plans have been prepared or are envisaged. The regeneration of the City Centre and the development of a new urban quarter in Docklands are the key development opportunities for the city. However, it is necessary to have a range of other development opportunities to allow choice in location and to facilitate a range of development types. In addition to these key development areas early opportunities for development are likely to come on stream on infill sites in other locations in the suburbs, some of which may already have planning permission.

### **City Centre**

A healthy City Centre is essential for the city region as a whole. There is considerable potential for further expansion in the economy of the City Centre through new developments in the retail core area and at the edge of the City Centre. A Cork City Centre Strategy (2013) has been prepared and this has informed Development Plan policy for the future development of the City Centre. The transition area to the east between the City Centre and Docklands has been identified as having particular potential for expansion of offices and other activities. The City Centre also has capacity for further expansion in residential and tourism functions, particularly in the Shandon and South Parish areas. The strategy is for the City Centre to continue as the economic, social, and cultural heart of the city, supported by further public realm improvements, protection and enhancement of its existing character and upgrade in access through investment in public transport, walking and cycling. This is described in more detail in Chapter 13 of the draft Plan.

### **Docklands**

The redevelopment of the North and South Docks as a major new mixed use quarter is the most significant sustainable development opportunity for the City Region. It has an attractive waterfront location adjoining the city centre which can be well served by public transport. The overall strategy for Docklands is set out in Chapter 13 of the draft Plan and the South Docks Local Area Plan 2008 (SDLAP) contains the detailed planning strategy for the South Docks area. The SDLAP runs until 2018 and will be reviewed during the draft City Development Plan period. The delivery of Docklands development is critical to the city achieving its population and employment targets, and to the implementation of the CASP update strategy as a whole. The provision of the appropriate transport and other infrastructure in a timely fashion is essential to facilitate the development of Docklands as envisaged. It is envisaged that the western end of Docklands adjoining the city centre has most potential for growth over the period of the draft Plan, while other areas may develop over a longer time period.

### **Mahon**

The Mahon area has seen significant new development since the last Development Plan with new residential developments in Jacobs Island and Eden, retail development at Mahon Point, and large scale office and technology developments in Loughmahon Technology Park. There is however potential for further development in the area through the development of remaining "greenfield" land and through the intensification of existing sites, in particular areas currently in use for industrial and technology sites. There is a need for a balance between residential and employment uses and upgraded public transport provision is also required. The detailed strategy for the area is contained in the Mahon Local Area Plan 2014 (see Chapter 14 of the draft Plan for further details).

### **Blackpool**

The Blackpool Valley, Kilbarry and the Old Whitechurch Road area, have opportunities for both brownfield and greenfield development for a range of uses. There is potential for mixed use development in Blackpool itself and in the Sunbeam Complex to the North, while there are opportunities for residential development at Old Whitechurch Road and technology/office based industry development at Kilbarry. The opening of the new Blackpool commuter rail station will improve

access to the area. The Strategy for the area is detailed in the North Blackpool Local Area Plan 2011 (see Chapter 14 of the draft Plan for further details).

### **North-West Regeneration**

A major housing regeneration initiative is underway in the north-west of the city focussed on the Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill areas as set out in the North-West Regeneration Masterplan 2011. When complete it will yield up to 600 residential units (a net increase of over 200 units), both social housing and private housing, and associated recreational and community facilities and services, as well as employment opportunities.

### **Tivoli**

The planned relocation of the Port of Cork container operations from Tivoli creates the potential to consider the future development of this area for alternative more intensive uses. It is envisaged that the development of this area will follow on after significant progress has been made in the development of the North and South Docks. A local area plan will be prepared to determine the appropriate mix of uses, extent and timing of development and access over the course of this development plan (see Chapter 14 of the draft Plan). The timing of the preparation of a local area plan will be linked to the programme for relocation and the likely timetable for lands to come available for redevelopment.

### **Tramore Road**

There is some potential for redevelopment of this area for a wider mix of uses which could help support the development of a high quality public transport route from the Northside through the City Centre to the airport. It currently houses low density employment uses and performs a suitable location for such uses in the city, however some land in the area may be surplus to requirements for such purposes and its potential for other uses, such as residential uses, will be examined over the period of the draft City Development Plan by a Local Area Plan or other suitable mechanism. The strategy for this area is considered in more detail in chapter 14 of the draft Plan.

### **Key Suburban Centres**

The key suburban centres are Mahon, Douglas and Wilton District Centres on the south side, and Blackpool and Ballyvolane District Centres on the north side, with potential for a further District Centre in Hollyhill. While retailing to serve the local market will be the primary function of these centres the objective is that these centres would over time evolve into mixed use urban centres with good public transport access and high quality urban design. Objectives for these centres are outlined in Chapters 4 and 14 and the draft Plan.

## **2.1.4 Environmental Management**

Chapter 12 outlines Cork City Council's policies and objectives for providing public infrastructure and managing environmental issues.

It should also be noted that Cork City is not directly responsible for the provision of many aspects of environmental infrastructure, but rather works in conjunction with Uisce Éireann, ESB Networks, Eirgrid, Cork County Council, and various regional authorities.

The strategic environmental infrastructure objectives (**Objective 12.1**) are as follows:

- a. Promote sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in response to climate change, including measures to reduce energy demand; to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions; and to address the necessity for adaptation to climate change, in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.
- b. Ensure sufficient infrastructure to serve population targets set out in the Core Strategy (Chapter 2).
- c. Maximise efficiencies in respect of infrastructure provided.
- d. Improve the environmental quality of the city's rivers and surface water bodies; maintain the quality of ground water, and generally protect existing and potential water resources in accordance with EU directives.
- e. To ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial needs for the lifetime of the Plan (subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive)
- f. To provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the city and to ensure that adequate and appropriate wastewater infrastructure is in place prior to the occupations of new development. 21
- g. To ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.
- h. Follow a waste hierarchy that starts with prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery (e.g. energy recovery) and finally disposal (including landfill).
- i. Restrict landuse or require appropriate design as necessary to reduce risk of hazard, including those arising from flooding and controlled substances in industrial processes.
- j. Improve air quality and maintain acceptable levels of light and noise pollution in the city in accordance with requirements set out in European Union, National and Regional policy.
- k. Ensure adequate ICT infrastructure to develop Cork as a Smart City+.
- l. Improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings and promote renewable energy use in the city's building stock and infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Council is committed to protecting its natural heritage, in particular designated areas and protected species, and so it is an objective of the Council to:

### **Objective 10.7 Designated Areas and Protected Species**

*To ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. When a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with*

*regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.*

In addition, the Council recognises that areas of nature conservation value are not confined to designated sites and to this end have included specific objectives (e.g. Objective 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.13) to ensure that not only are Natura 2000 Sites protected and enhanced, but that the ecological corridors connected to Natura 2000 Sites are also managed appropriately.

## 2.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT OF THE DRAFT CORK CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### 2.2.1 Water Quality

The Water Framework Directive requires the implementation of measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all waters (i.e. rivers, ground waters, estuaries and coasts) and ensure that all waters remain unpolluted. It specifically sets an objective of restoring all waters to 'good' status (as defined in the Directive) by 2021. In order to implement the Directive, Ireland has been divided into eight districts. Cork City and Harbour fall within the South Western River Basin District; a strategy for the area is set out in the *South Western River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015)*.

The status of the five rivers flowing through Cork's administrative area is set out in **Table 2.1**. Cork City also impacts on Cork Harbour, as any pollutant streams emanating in the city reach the Harbour via the River Lee.

**Table 2.1: Rivers Flowing Through Cork's Administrative Area**

Name	Current Status
Lee (Sunday's Well to Lough Mahon)	Poor
Lee (Western boundary to Sunday's Well)	Moderate
Tramore	Moderate
Curragheen	Poor
Bride	Moderate
Bride (west)	Moderate
Glasheen	n/a

The City Council is committed to improving the water quality of the rivers within and adjacent to the City's administrative area, and this is clearly recognised in the strategic environmental objectives, **Objective 12.1** . Improve the environmental quality of the city's rivers and surface water bodies;

maintain the quality of ground water, and generally protect existing and potential water resources in accordance with EU directives.<sup>1</sup>

Further, specific measures to ensure the ecological value of these waterways are protected and enhanced in a co-ordinated manner are included on **Objective 10.9 – Rivers and Waterway Corridors**, which states . To protect and maintain the integrity and maximise the potential of the natural heritage and biodiversity value of the River Lee and its associated watercourses;

To promote an integrated approach to the future development of the River Lee so that it includes all aspects of use e.g. recreation, maritime history and economic factors; and

Development proposals in river corridors will be considered favourably providing they, where practical:

-Dedicate a minimum of 10m from the waters edge in channelized rivers for amenity, biodiversity and walkway purposes;

-Dedicate a minimum of 15m from the top of the bank in non- channelized rivers for amenity, biodiversity and walkway purposes

-Preserve the biodiversity value of the site subject to Ecological Assessment by a suitably qualified Ecologist

-Do not involve landfilling, diverting, culverting or realignment of river and stream corridors;

-Do not have a negative effect on the distinctive character and appearance of the waterway corridor and the specific characteristics and landscape elements of the individual site and its context.

Groundwater in and around Cork City's administrative area has been deemed to have 'good' status per the terms of the Water Framework Directive. Maintaining this status will require guarding against over-abstraction and preventing contamination. Planning applications / abstraction proposals are currently assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Council is committed to protecting the groundwater in and around Cork City's administrative area, and to this end have committed to preparing a groundwater protection strategy:

**Objective 12.4** Cork City Council will prepare a groundwater protection strategy, which will include policies related to abstraction and to the disposal of post-geothermal reject water. +

## 2.2.2 Water supply

Cork City has two sources of drinking water. The Lee Road Waterworks, which extracts water from the River Lee, provides around 70% of the city's total water supply. It primarily serves the city centre

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<sup>1</sup>The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended); European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended); European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (as amended); South Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 or any updated version of this document; Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas; Groundwater Protection Schemes, Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 (as amended).

and northern suburbs. The eastern, western, and southern suburbs are served by the Cork Harbour and City Water Supply Scheme, which extracts water from the Inniscarra Reservoir. This scheme is jointly owned by the City and County Councils. The construction of a new treatment plant at Lee Road is currently underway, and two new interconnectors further connecting the two schemes will help ensure security of supply.

Water supply capacity will impose no constraints on development in Cork City. The two schemes have adequate capacity to serve metropolitan Cork through 2071 with regard to population forecasts, treatment capacity, abstraction limits, and a reduction in %unaccounted for water+ (i.e. primarily leakage).

There are no material issues in respect to drinking water quality, which is in accordance with EU drinking water regulations.

### 2.2.3 Wastewater Facilities

Cork City is served by two main sewerage schemes. Cork Main Drainage (completed 2004) serves as the primary scheme, while the older Tramore Valley scheme serves the south eastern portion of the city. The waste water treatment plant for Cork City is provided at Carrigrennan, to the east of the City. Based on current usage rates the plant has adequate capacity to serve the city region through to 2020 with regard to population forecasts. A detailed capacity analysis is underway (2013), and the existing treatment plant will be expanded on a modular basis during the lifetime of the Development Plan if required. It is anticipated that some capacity may be regained through addressing infiltration (i.e. the leakage of groundwater into foul or combined sewers) and inflow (storm water connection to foul sewers). Measures to address nutrient removal (tertiary treatment) and compliance with the Shellfish Water Directive are also under assessment (2013). There are no plans for the construction of any major infrastructure within the City administrative area through 2021.

### 2.2.4 Surface Water Management

The majority of development in Cork City currently uses traditional methods of handling rainwater. Runoff from impermeable surfaces (such as roofs, roads, and carparks) is collected and redirected to drainage systems. This approach can cause a number of problems. Drainage systems can become overloaded and contribute to flooding and/ or result in higher waste water treatment costs. Rivers can become polluted by contaminants (such as oil from carparks) contained in the runoff. A riversqability to recharge naturally is also affected.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (%SUDS+) is an alternative approach that helps alleviate these problems by mimicking natural drainage systems. During the lifetime of the draft Development Plan, Cork City will prepare a storm water management plan to include specific development standards for Cork City. In the interim, developments shall comply with criteria set out in *Irish SuDS: Guidance and Tools*.

The Council recognises the significance of storm water management and have identified a number of objectives specific to this:

**Objective 12.2:** Cork City Council will prepare a Storm Water Management Plan for the City.

**Objective 12.3:** Planning applications shall include proposals for managing stormwater in accordance with details set out at [www.irishsuds.com](http://www.irishsuds.com) (unless superseded by policies and standards set out in the adopted %Storm Water Management Plan per Objective 12.2) and shall minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving.

Climate change will result in rising sea levels and more frequent and more severe rainfall events and will significantly increase the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Cork City has experienced a number of flood events in recent years, and is at particular risk of flooding from the River Lee, its tributaries and Cork Harbour. As the risk to property is increasing, the need to incorporate flood risk assessment and management into the land-use planning process is becoming more apparent.

National policies in respect of flood risk are set out in The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009). In considering development proposals, the Guidelines advocate the Sequential approach, namely, to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding; and if this is not possible, to consider substituting the land-use to one less vulnerable to flooding; and only where avoidance and substitution is not possible to consider mitigation measures and management of the flood risks.

Secondly, proposals for vulnerable types of development in areas of moderate and high flood risk should be examined against the criteria set out in the Justification Test with Flood Risk Assessment, in order to demonstrate an overriding strategic planning need and that flood risk can be adequately managed without causing adverse impacts elsewhere.

The Council recognise the significance of flooding within and adjacent to the City and have identified a number of objectives specific to this:

**Objective 12.9:** Cork City Council shall have regard to ~~the~~ The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009+ in the preparation of land-use plans and determining planning applications.

**Objective 12.10:** To restrict development in identified flood risk areas, in particular, floodplains, except where the applicant satisfies the Justification Test as outlined in ~~the~~ The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009.

**Objective 12.11:** To protect, enhance and manage the City's floodplains, wetlands and coastal habitat areas that are subject to flooding as vital ~~green infrastructure~~ which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reduce the need to provide flood defence infrastructures.

#### **Lee Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study, (Lee CFRAMS)**

The Draft Catchment Flood Risk Management Plan was completed in December 2011. However, the ~~National~~ Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) . Designation of the Areas for Further Assessment+ Report, (March 2012) identifies Cork City as an Area for Further Assessment and as such Cork City is subject to further assessment through the CFRAM study. The target date for completion is September 2015.

In the interim, the content and recommendations of the Draft Lee CFRAMS will be integrated into the Draft City Development Plan and revised accordingly, when the updated study maps and recommendations are made available. The following objective is included in the draft Plan:

**Objective 12.8:** Cork City Council shall have regard to the recommendations of the Draft Lee Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plan and to incorporate the recommendations of the South West CFRMP / Lee CFRMP and the Lower Lee Flood Relief Scheme into the Cork City Development Plan when available.

## 2.2.5 Natural Heritage

Wildlife habitats occur throughout the city with many mammals, birds, invertebrates, trees and plants having adapted to live alongside humans in the urban environment.

The River Lee and its associated waterways support an immense variety of wildlife while also providing a corridor for the movement of species between the surrounding countryside and urban areas.

The built environment provides habitats for a variety of species of flowering plants, mosses, and lichens and various species of invertebrates, birds and bats. Other important wildlife areas in the urban environment include trees, parks, recreational and other green spaces, gardens, and graveyards, all of which play a significant role in supporting the local biodiversity.

The City Council is committed to protecting and conserving the biodiversity of Cork City with the inclusion of a number of objectives within the draft Plan, with the overall aim:

To protect, promote and conserve Cork City's natural heritage and biodiversity.

The overall Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Objectives include:

- To protect, enhance and conserve designated areas of natural heritage, biodiversity and protected species;
- To ensure that sites and species of natural heritage and biodiversity importance in non-designated areas are identified, conserved and managed appropriately;
- To protect and maintain the integrity and maximise the potential of the River Lee and its associated watercourses;
- To protect and enhance the city's trees and urban woodlands;
- To promote best practice guidelines for management, control and eradication of invasive alien species; and
- To acknowledge and adhere to all relevant biodiversity and natural heritage legislation.

### Cork City Biodiversity Action Plan (2009-2014)

The *National Bio-diversity Plan* (2002) underlines the principle that environmental concerns should be integrated into all relevant sectors stating that "environmental policy is now based on the internationally recognised principle of sustainability, the precautionary principle, the integration of environmental considerations into all areas, the polluter pays principle and the principle of shared responsibility for environmental protection by public bodies, private enterprise and the general public." This implies basing policies and decisions on ecological principles, which recognise the conservation, enhancement and sustainable use of biological diversity in Ireland and contribute to conservation and sustainable use of bio-diversity globally.

The *National Biodiversity Plan* sets out the strategy for conserving and enhancing Ireland's biodiversity through a series of actions. At a local level the plan highlights the key role that local Authorities can



play in promoting local natural heritage and requires each Local Authority to prepare a Biodiversity Plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The *Cork City Biodiversity Action Plan (2009-2014)*:

- Provides a framework for the conservation of biodiversity and coordinates new and existing conservation initiatives;
- Translates international and national biodiversity obligations into effective local actions;
- Assists sustainable planning and development and provides a framework that is complementary to the Local Development Plan and Local Heritage Plan;
- Aims to raise public awareness and stimulate involvement in the conservation of biodiversity; and
- Collects and collates information on local biodiversity.

The City Council is committed to protecting the biodiversity and natural heritage of the City and to this end have included specific objections to ensure that not only are Natura 2000 Sites protected and enhanced, but that the ecological corridors connected to Natura 2000 Sites are also managed appropriately (e.g. **Objectives 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.12, 10.13**).

### **2.3 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES**

This section of the screening process describes the Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the draft Plan boundary. A 15km buffer zone has been chosen as a precautionary measure, to ensure that all potentially affected Natura 2000 sites are included in the screening process. This is in line with, *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*, produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

**Table 2.2** lists the SACs and **Table 2.3** lists the SPAs that are within 15km of the Plan boundary, and **Figure 2.1** shows their locations in relation to the draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021.

The integrity of a Natura 2000 site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) is determined based on the conservation status of the qualifying features of the SAC or SPA. The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through a review of the Conservation Objectives available from the NPWS.

Table 2.2: SACs within 15km of the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>
001058	Great Island Channel SAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140];  Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i> ) [1330];	Good  Good	-	-
002170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	Estuaries [1130];  Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140];  Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220];  Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1310];  Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i> ) [1330];  Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410];  Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260];  Old sessile oak woods with	Good  Good  Good  Good  Good  Excellent  Poor	Freshwater pearl mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> ) [1029];  White-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ) [1092];  Sea lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> ) [1095];  Brook lamprey ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> ) [1096];  River lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) [1099];  Twaite shad ( <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> ) [1103];  Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) [1106];  Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355]; and  Killarney fern ( <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> ) [1421].	Good  Good  Excellent  Excellent  Good  Good  Good  Excellent  Good

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>
		<p><i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0];</p> <p>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]; and</p> <p><i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [91J0].</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Poor</p>		

<sup>1</sup> = Information on conservation status for each habitat and species within the SACs and SPAs was extracted from the Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms (in December 2013) on the NPWS website <http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/>. This information provides specific details on the conservation status of each habitat and species within the SAC and SPA rather than status of the habitats which is available in The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

**Table 2.3: SPAs within 15km of the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021**

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature Annex I species	Conservation Status
004030	Cork Harbour SPA	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation conditions of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <p>Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004];</p> <p>Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005];</p> <p>Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017];</p> <p>Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028];</p> <p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048];</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Excellent</p> <p>Excellent</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Excellent</p>

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature Annex I species	Conservation Status
		Wigeon ( <i>Anas penelope</i> ) [A050];	Excellent
		Teal ( <i>Anas crecca</i> ) [A052];	Excellent
		Pintail ( <i>Anas acuta</i> ) [A054];	Excellent
		Shoveler ( <i>Anas clypeata</i> ) [A056];	Excellent
		Red-breasted Merganser ( <i>Mergus serrator</i> ) [A069];	Excellent
		Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130];	Excellent
		Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140];	Good
		Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141];	Excellent
		Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> ) [A142];	Excellent
		Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149];	Excellent
		Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156];	Excellent
		Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157];	Good
		Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ) [A160];	Excellent
		Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162];	Excellent
		Black-headed Gull ( <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> ) [A179];	Excellent
		Common Gull ( <i>Larus canus</i> ) [A182];	Excellent
		Lesser Black-backed Gull ( <i>Larus fuscus</i> ) [A183];	Excellent
		Common Tern ( <i>Sterna hirundo</i> ) [A193]; and	Good
		Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999].	N/A

## 2.4 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

The following potential impacts on Natura 2000 Sites owing to the implementation of the draft Plan have been identified.

### 2.4.1 Direct loss of Habitats

The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area has the potential to result in the direct loss of habitats which support Qualifying Interests of Cork Harbour SPA, located on the eastern boundary of the Cork's administrative area, which would likely constitute a significant negative effect. As can be seen on the Land Use Zoning in the draft Plan, no zonings for new development are within the boundaries of Cork Harbour SPA.

### 2.4.2 Reduction in Water Quality

The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area has the potential to result in a reduction in the water quality of the receiving waters and Cork Harbour through an increase in the waste water discharged. A reduction in water quality could have a negative impact on protected species within Cork Harbour SPA.

The waste water treatment plant for Cork City is provided at Carrigrennan, to the east of the City. Based on current usage rates the plant has adequate capacity to serve the city region through to 2020 with regard to population forecasts. A detailed capacity analysis is underway (2013), and the existing treatment plant will be expanded on a modular basis during the lifetime of the Development Plan if required. It is anticipated that some capacity may be regained through addressing infiltration (i.e. the leakage of groundwater into foul or combined sewers) and inflow (storm water connection to foul sewers). Measures to address nutrient removal (tertiary treatment) and compliance with the Shellfish Water Directive are also under assessment (2013). There are no plans for the construction of any major infrastructure within the City administrative area through 2021.

The wastewaters discharged from the Cork City WwTP is licenced by the EPA under the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations, 2007. It is noted that in 2011 the Carrigrennan WwTP *failed to meet the overall requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001+*.

The status under the WFD of the five rivers flowing through Cork's administrative area is set out in **Table 2.1**. Cork City also impacts on Cork Harbour, as any pollutant streams emanating in the city reach the Harbour via the River Lee.

Additional hard surfaces also create the potential for an increase in surface water run-off into these rivers, with related negative impact on water quality.

Any construction activities have the potential to release suspended solids and chemical pollutants into these watercourses and Cork Harbour, which could impact negatively on water quality.

Any negative impact on the five rivers flowing through Cork's administrative area has the potential to impact on Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC.

### 2.4.3 Damage / Degradation of Habitats and Disturbance to Species

The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area has the potential to result in the disturbance to species listed as

Qualifying Interests of Cork Harbour SPA. Areas where land has been zoned are close to the Cork Harbour SPA. An increase in human population and associated infrastructure can lead to negative effects on habitats and species due to potential increases in public visitations to the Natura 2000 site and an increase in recreational pressures.

The quantification of this impact is extremely difficult; however, given the fact that any increase in site usage will be gradual over a period of time, it is unlikely to constitute a significant adverse effect. Site monitoring by the NPWS should identify any pressures from overuse and recommend appropriate measures.

#### 2.4.4 Reduction in Water Flows

Water supply capacity will impose no constraints on development in Cork City. The two schemes have adequate capacity to serve metropolitan Cork through 2071 with regard to population forecasts, treatment capacity, abstraction limits, and a reduction in %unaccounted for water+ (i.e. primarily leakage). The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area will not result in an increase in the water abstractions from the River Lee or Cork Harbour, and therefore, will not impact on the habitats and species for which Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC are designated.

#### 2.4.5 Spread of Alien Invasive Species

Construction works related to the construction of new residential and other developments for an increasing population within Cork City has the potential to result in the spread of alien invasive species (both flora and fauna) into Natura 2000 sites. This has the potential to impact negatively on the habitats and species for which Natura 2000 sites have been designated.

### 2.5 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

#### 2.5.1 Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts

**Tables 2.1** and **2.2** list the Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the draft Plan area. There are three sites in all, two SACs and one SPA.

It is the overall aim of the City Council to protect, promote and conserve Cork City's natural heritage and biodiversity. The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing sites designated or proposed for designation under European and national legislation, and have specific policies relating to their protection and maintenance, as appropriate (e.g. **Objective 10.7**). In particular, it is an objective of the Council to ensure that all plans and projects which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site(s) will be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening (**Objective 10.7**). Further, it is an objective of the Council to work with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance sites of biodiversity value (**Objective 10.8**).

Cork Harbour SPA is located on the eastern boundary of Cork's administrative area, which Great Island Channel SAC is located approximately 4 km to the east of Cork's administrative area. The significance of this SPA and SAC is fully recognised by the council and it is committed to protecting the SPA and SAC together with all other ecological corridors and areas of natural heritage within and adjacent to Cork's administrative area. There are no areas of the SPA zoned for developmental purposes, therefore, the draft Cork City Development Plan will not result in direct impacts on the SPA or SAC through land take or fragmentation of habitats.

Increased development and construction of residential and commercial units will lead to increased demand for potable water and increased pressure on existing and future waste water treatment systems. Water supply capacity will impose no constraints on development in Cork City. The two supply schemes have adequate capacity to serve metropolitan Cork through 2071 with regard to population forecasts, treatment capacity and abstraction limits.

The Council is committed to ensuring the implementation of the EU Urban Waste Water Directive and its transposition into Irish legislation. To this regard there are a number of objectives within the draft Plan which focus on wastewater and its appropriate treatment (**Objective 12.1**). The waste water treatment plant for Cork City is provided at Carrigrennan, to the east of the City. Based on current usage rates the plant has adequate capacity to serve the city region through 2020 with regard to population forecasts. Measures to address nutrient removal (tertiary treatment) and compliance with the Shellfish Water Directive are also under assessment (2013). There are no plans for the construction of any major infrastructure within the City administrative area through to 2021.

It is an objective of the Council (**Objective 12.1**) to provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the City, subject to complying with the Water Framework Directive, the South Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 or any updated version of this document, Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Habitats Directive.

Such wastewater objectives will ensure that sewage will be treated to an appropriate standard such that it will not impact on receiving waters, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

There are a number of other watercourses within and adjacent to the draft Plan area which drain into the River Lee and Cork Harbour. The Council is committed to protecting these watercourses and to this regard there are a number of objectives within the draft Plan which focus on maintaining and protecting the natural character, ecological value and water quality of these watercourses (e.g. **Objective 10.9**). Development proposals will be required to provide a buffer zone having a minimum of 10-15m each side of the waters edge. These watercourses will require an Ecological Assessment to be completed on all development proposals in their vicinity (**Objective 10.9**).

The management of surface and storm water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in the storm water network, rivers and streams. New development can exacerbate the problems of flooding by accelerating and increasing surface water run-off. The Council will require the application of Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments and have identified specific objectives in this regard (e.g. **Objective 12.2, 12.3, 12.8, 12.9, 12.10, 12.11**). Reducing the extent of hard surfacing and using permeable pavements will aid in minimising the risk of flooding and contamination, and protect the environmental and water resources.

Further, it is the aim of the Council to ensure that the EU Water Framework Directive is implemented. To this end the Council has a strategic environmental objective (**Objective 12.1**) to protect existing and potential water resources in accordance with:

- The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended);
- European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended);
- European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (as amended);
- South Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 or any updated version of this document;
- Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas;

- Groundwater Protection Schemes;
- Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 (as amended); and
- Any other protection plans for water supply sources or updates to the above regulations.

This objective is to ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity, which includes surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.

Such water quality objectives will ensure that the River Lee, its tributaries, Cork Harbour and the SPA and Great Island Channel SAC are protected, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

Invasive non native plant and animal species can represent a major threat to local, regional and national bio-diversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. The Council is committed (e.g. **Objective 10.12**) to controlling invasive species, which includes the implementation of measures to control and prevent the introduction and establishment of ecologically damaging alien invasive species. Preventative measures include ensuring that good site hygiene practices are employed for the movement of materials into, out of and around the site and ensuring that imported soil is free of seeds and rhizomes of key invasive plant species.

The Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC are a sufficient distance (13km) from the draft Plan area and has no connecting pathways (i.e. rivers or streams) to be impacted by the present or future development of the draft Cork City Development Plan area.

This AA has examined each objective within the draft Cork City Development Plan and has determined that there is no potential to impact on the Cork Harbour SPA or the Great Island Channel SAC, in fact, there are a number of objectives which would result in an overall positive impact on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna within and adjacent to the Plan area, including the identified Natura 2000 sites.

## 2.5.2 Cumulative and In Combination Impacts

This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts of the proposed draft Plan with other such Plans and projects on the Natura 2000 network. Other Plans and projects specific to the relevant Natura 2000 sites are the following:

- Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-West Region 2010-2022;
- South-Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015;
- Cork City Biodiversity Plan 2009-2014;
- Draft Cork County Development Plan 2015-2021;
- Cork Area Strategic Plan Update 2008;
- Draft Mahon Local Area Plan 2014-2020
- South Docks Local Area Plan 2008-2018;
- Blackpool Local Area Plan 2011-2017;



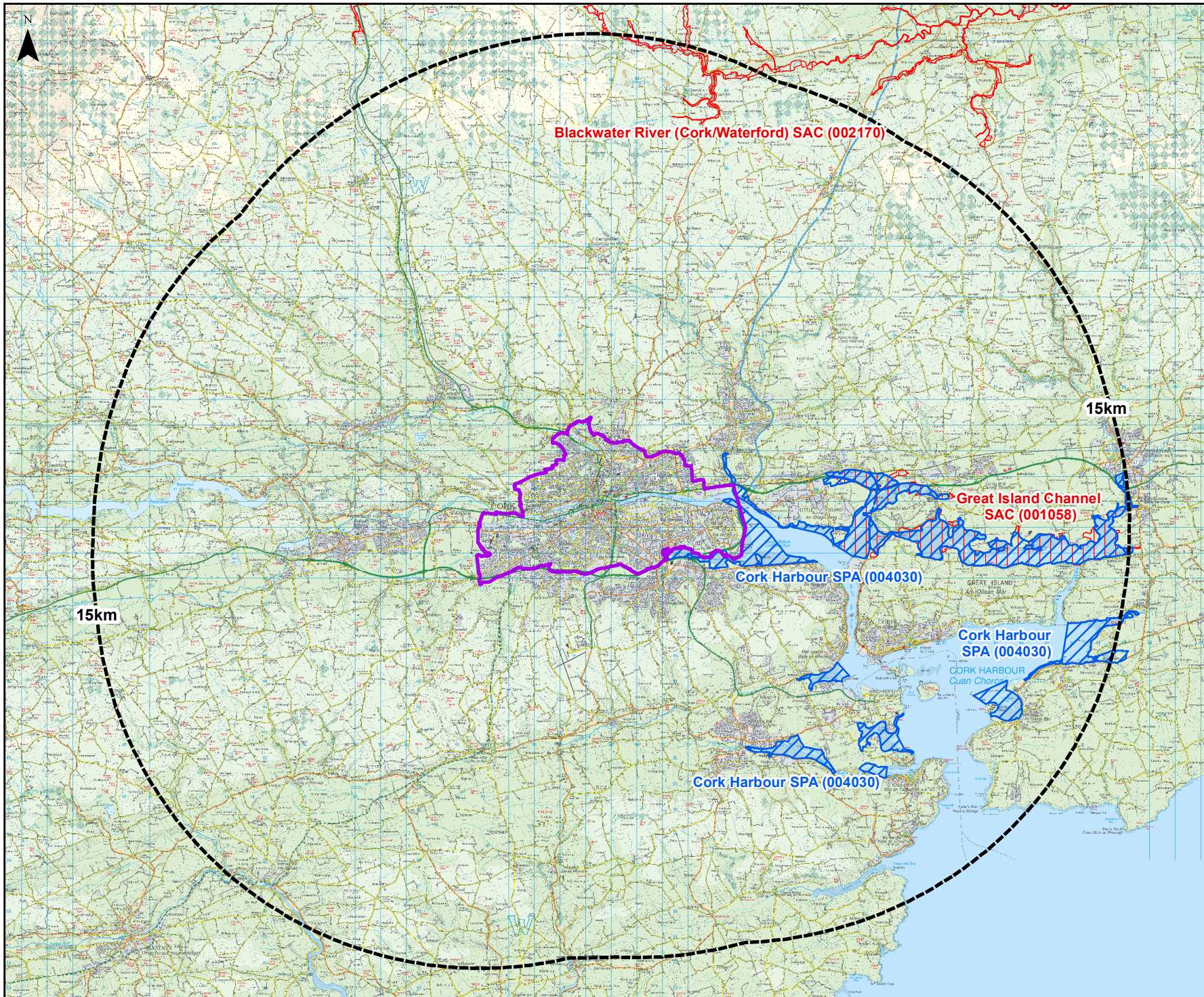
- Farranferris Local Area Plan 2009-2015;
- North-West Regeneration Masterplan 2011;
- Water Services Investment Programme;
- IPPC Programme;
- Local Authority Discharge;
- Groundwater Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Surface Water Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Draft Lee Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study;

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-West Region 2010-2022 provides the framework within which regional development plans are to be prepared. Chapter 6 of this document (Environment and Amenities Strategy) sets a policy (REAS-03) to state that all projects likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000/European sites will be subject to Habitats Directive assessment, and projects will only be approved if they comply with the Habitats Directive. There is also a policy (REAS-04) that is an objective to achieve regional water quality targets by implementing the River Basin Management Plans and ensure that development undertaken or permitted by local authorities; other public agencies or private operators, shall not contravene the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 SI 272 of 2009 and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwaters) Regulations 2010, SI 9 of 2010.





The County Development Plans and Local Area Plan identified all include numerous policies and objectives aimed at protecting the natural environment, including Natura 2000 sites. Explicit reference to Appropriate Assessment Screening for plans and projects are made in these plans, and the plans themselves have been subject to Appropriate Assessment, with findings of no significant adverse effects.

No other pathway has been identified by which any of the Plans and Programmes identified could have a significant in combination effect on any of the Natura 2000 sites identified. In fact, the in combination effect of the water related Plans and Programmes would have positive effects on water quality resulting in positive indirect impacts on Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC.

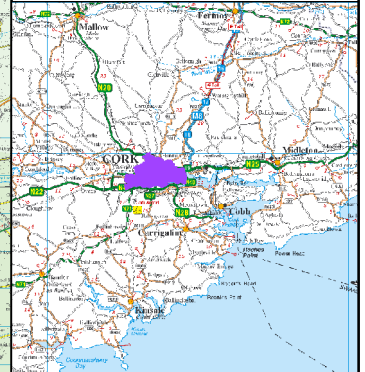




**Legend**

-  City Boundary
-  Buffer, 15km
-  Special Protection Area (SPA)
-  Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Data Source: national Parks & Wildlife Service ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie))



Client



**Cork City Council**

Project

**AA Screening of the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021**

Title

**Natura Sites Within 15km**

Figure 2.1



West Pier Business Campus,  
Dun Laoghaire,  
Co Dublin,  
Ireland.

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Issue Details

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Checked By: BD	File Ref: MDE1163arc0001D01
Approved By: BD	Drawing No. Rev:
Date: 03/12/2013	Arc001 D01

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### **3 SCREENING CONCLUSION AND STATEMENT**

The likely impacts that will arise from the draft Cork City Development Plan alone and in combination with other plans and programmes have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. No Natura 2000 site within 15km of the City area will be adversely affected. A Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix has been completed and is presented in Section 4 of this Screening Statement.

On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment of Natura 2000 sites, it is concluded that the proposed draft Cork City Development Plan will not have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

## 4 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX

Name of project or Plan	Draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021
Name and location of Natura 2000 site	Great Island Channel SAC; Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC; and Cork Harbour SPA.
Description of the project or Plan	<p><b>The Vision for Cork City</b></p> <p>The vision for Cork City over the period of this Development Plan and beyond is to be a successful, sustainable regional capital and to achieve a high quality of life for its citizens and a robust local economy, by balancing the relationship between community, economic development and environmental quality. It will have a diverse innovative economy, will maintain its distinctive character and culture, will have a network of attractive neighbourhoods served by good quality transport and amenities and will be a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest in.</p> <p><b>Strategic Goals</b></p> <p>The vision for Cork City will be achieved through a series of seven interconnected strategic goals and related Development Plan Chapters, as outlined below:</p> <p><b>Goal 1 Increase population and households to create a compact sustainable city</b></p> <p>The South West Regional Planning Guidelines (SWRPG) sets an ambitious target for population growth in Cork City with a view to concentrating development and creating a compact, sustainable city. While the number of households in the city has been increasing steadily, household size has declined in line with national trends and much new development has occurred outside the city boundary, resulting in a falling population. This Plan will show that there is capacity within the city to meet the population target but acknowledges that this target will only be met by the implementation of a co-ordinated approach to the development of the greater city area, significant investment in infrastructure and an increase in the attractiveness of the city as a place to live in.</p> <p><b>Goal 2 Achieve a higher quality of life and make the city an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in</b></p> <p>The first step in reversing the decline in city population will be to improve its attractiveness as a living environment. A city that is attractive and provides a good quality of life and health for residents will also be attractive for workers, investors and visitors. The approach will centre on the 15 minute city concept focused on residential neighbourhoods served by a range of amenities, as well as an attractive city centre. This is addressed particularly in Chapters 6 Residential, and 7 Sustainable Neighbourhoods of the draft City Development Plan; while wider measures to increase the attractiveness of the city and improve quality of life are a cross cutting principle in the rest of the draft Plan. Promoting social inclusion is an integral part of this strategic goal and is also a cross cutting principle in the draft Plan.</p>

	<p><b>Goal 3 Support the revitalisation of the economy</b></p> <p>Supporting the creation of a diverse, connected, innovative economy in the city is a central goal of the draft Plan. Key to revitalisation of the city's economy is regeneration of the city centre and adjoining areas. This will increase employment opportunities and build on the city centre's role as the main retail, commercial and cultural centre for the region (see Chapter 13 of the draft Plan). The suburban areas also play a key role in the economy in particular the key development areas and district centres outlined in the Chapter 14 of the draft Plan. Overall economic strategy is addressed in Chapter 3 and Retail Strategy is addressed in Chapter 4 of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Goal 4 Promote sustainable modes of transport and integration of land use and transportation</b></p> <p>At the national level there is a mandate to reduce emissions caused by fossil-fuelled transport, to reduce use of the private car for commuting and to increase journeys by public transport, walking and cycling. These objectives are central to the land-use and transport strategies in this plan and as well as having the significant societal benefits of a better quality environment can also give health benefits and cost-savings to the individual citizen. Achieving national targets is a long term objective which will require a move to more sustainable land use planning and a significant upgrade to public transport in the greater city area. This draft Plan will set interim targets which are achievable in the shorter term. This strategic goal is particularly addressed in Chapter 5 Transportation of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Goal 5 Maintain and capitalise on Cork's unique form and character</b></p> <p>Cork's unique character derives from the combination of plan, topography, built fabric and the setting provided by the River Lee valley. The dramatic east west ridges create the visual setting for the city. The goal of the draft Plan is to protect and capitalise on the unique character of the city, both the character derived from the natural environment and the man-made character created by the built form, while providing opportunities for new development. New development will need to respect and reflect the dramatic topography as well as the landscape and ecology of the city. It must also respect the built heritage of the city, in particular areas of significant historic character such as the city centre, the historic north-south spine and the suburban villages. There are also opportunities for creation of new character areas in locations such as Docklands, Mahon and Blackpool and at the arrival points or gateways into the city. This strategic goal is addressed in Chapter 9 Built Heritage and Archaeology, Chapter 10 Landscape and Natural Heritage and Chapter 8 Arts, Cultural Heritage and Tourism of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Goal 6 Tackle climate change through reducing energy usage, reducing emissions and mitigating against flood risk</b></p> <p>A key aim of the draft Plan is to reduce emissions that lead to global warming through sustainable energy usage in transport and buildings. It also aims to mitigate and adapt to</p>
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	<p>the challenges of climate change such as the increased risk of flooding, through the design, layout and location of appropriate land-uses. This is particularly addressed in Chapter 12 Environment and Infrastructure and Chapter 16 Development Management of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b><i>Goal 7 Protect and expand the green infrastructure of the city</i></b></p> <p>The draft Plan seeks to strengthen the green infrastructure of the city for recreational purposes, to promote biodiversity and to protect the landscape of the city. A diverse range of recreation and open spaces facilities, such as sports pitches, public parks, amenity spaces, indoor sports centres, and walking / cycling routes are vital to the health and wellbeing of Cork residents, as well as those working and visiting the city. This green infrastructure also provides a key ingredient for making the city an attractive place to live, visit and do business in. The aim of the draft Plan is to ensure that people have access to an appropriate level of provision of the right quality. The draft Plan also seeks to provide linkages and green corridors between areas of open space to support bio-diversity. These issues are addressed in Chapter 11 Sport and Recreation and Chapter 10 Landscape and Natural Heritage of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Core Strategy for the Development of Cork City</b></p> <p><b><i>Selected Development Scenario</i></b></p> <p>The Core Strategy establishes a framework for the development of the city. It is derived from the strategic goals of the draft City Development Plan, and the population, economic, land-use and transportation strategies of the South West Regional Planning Guidelines (SWRPG) 2010 and the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) Update 2008. The need to promote social inclusion, sustainable economic development, and access to sustainable transport are central to the strategy. A number of alternative development scenarios have been considered for the city as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process of the draft City Development Plan.</p> <p>The Core Strategy includes the selected development scenario, which focuses development on selected Key Development/Regeneration Areas and Key Centres. The key development areas, which are mainly brownfield land, will be developed for a range of uses based on strategies in the draft City Development Plan or which have been developed in Local Areas Plans. They are becoming available for development because of the decline of low density uses such as traditional industries in the Docklands and elsewhere, and their replacement by more intensive employment and residential uses. These areas will accommodate the majority of growth and development within the city and they are selected based on their potential to accommodate growth and to be served by sustainable modes of transport. Other parts of the city will develop based on their capacity to absorb development without undue impact on existing character and residential amenities. In addition to these mixed use redevelopment areas, a housing regeneration area in the North West of the city will see significant redevelopment over the period of the</p>
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	<p>draft Plan.</p> <p>As well as having potential for development some of these key development areas are also major approaches to the city and, if developed to a high quality urban design standard, have the capacity to greatly improve the image of the city at the major city approaches by road and also by rail and air. Strategies for these areas will therefore place considerable emphasis on design quality.</p> <p>The Key Centres complement the City Centre and consist of a series of District Centres around the city which traditionally were mainly retail centres but the strategy sees them evolving into mixed use urban centres, providing a range of services and employment to their local population. Objectives for the Key Centres are outlined in Chapter 14 of the draft Plan. The retail strategy for the city and the wider area is set out in Chapter 4 of the draft Plan and is based on providing for the needs of the expanded population envisaged in CASP and the RPGs, having had regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines.</p> <p>The Core Strategy includes an integrated transport strategy with particular focus on public transport, walking and cycling, with particular emphasis on providing sustainable transport choices to serve the key development areas, and this is outlined in Chapter 5 of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Development Strategy</b></p> <p>The areas which will be the main focus of new development in the city over the period of the draft Plan and beyond are outlined below. These areas are mainly brownfield sites which can be redeveloped to enable the city to provide for the needs of the existing and expanded population as well as facilitating the implementation of the CASP updated economic strategy. These areas will act as key development and employment nodes in the city. They will meet sustainable development objectives through the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“ A mixture of residential and non-residential development;</li> <li>“ Economic activity and employment provision;</li> <li>“ Higher density development, where appropriate;</li> <li>“ Potential for high quality public transport provision;</li> <li>“ Good quality environment and services; and</li> <li>“ High quality urban design.</li> </ul> <p>The strategy for each area is set out in the plan in Chapters 13 and 14 of the draft Plan. In most cases Local Area Plans or Regeneration plans have been prepared or are envisaged. The regeneration of the City Centre and the development of a new urban quarter in Docklands are the key development opportunities for the city. However, it is necessary to have a range of other development opportunities to allow choice in location and to facilitate a range of development types. In addition to these key development areas early opportunities for development are likely to come on stream on infill sites in other locations in</p>
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	<p>the suburbs, some of which may already have planning permission.</p> <p><b>City Centre</b></p> <p>A healthy City Centre is essential for the city region as a whole. There is considerable potential for further expansion in the economy of the City Centre through new developments in the retail core area and at the edge of the City Centre. A Cork City Centre Strategy (2013) has been prepared and this has informed Development Plan policy for the future development of the City Centre. The transition area to the east between the City Centre and Docklands has been identified as having particular potential for expansion of offices and other activities. The City Centre also has capacity for further expansion in residential and tourism functions, particularly in the Shandon and South Parish areas. The strategy is for the City Centre to continue as the economic, social, and cultural heart of the city, supported by further public realm improvements, protection and enhancement of its existing character and upgrade in access through investment in public transport, walking and cycling. This is described in more detail in Chapter 13 of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Docklands</b></p> <p>The redevelopment of the North and South Docks as a major new mixed use quarter is the most significant sustainable development opportunity for the City Region. It has an attractive waterfront location adjoining the city centre which can be well served by public transport. The overall strategy for Docklands is set out in Chapter 13 of the draft Plan and the South Docks Local Area Plan 2008 (SDLAP) contains the detailed planning strategy for the South Docks area. The SDLAP runs until 2018 and will be reviewed during the draft City Development Plan period. The delivery of Docklands development is critical to the city achieving its population and employment targets, and to the implementation of the CASP update strategy as a whole. The provision of the appropriate transport and other infrastructure in a timely fashion is essential to facilitate the development of Docklands as envisaged. It is envisaged that the western end of Docklands adjoining the city centre has most potential for growth over the period of the draft Plan, while other areas may develop over a longer time period.</p> <p><b>Mahon</b></p> <p>The Mahon area has seen significant new development since the last Development Plan with new residential developments in Jacobs Island and Eden, retail development at Mahon Point, and large scale office and technology developments in Loughmahon Technology Park. There is however potential for further development in the area through the development of remaining "greenfield" land and through the intensification of existing sites, in particular areas currently in use for industrial and technology sites. There is a need for a balance between residential and employment uses and upgraded public transport provision is also required. The detailed strategy for the area is contained in the Mahon Local Area Plan 2014 (see Chapter 14 of the</p>
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	<p>draft Plan for further details).</p> <p><b>Blackpool</b></p> <p>The Blackpool Valley, Kilbarry and the Old Whitechurch Road area, have opportunities for both brownfield and greenfield development for a range of uses. There is potential for mixed use development in Blackpool itself and in the Sunbeam Complex to the North, while there are opportunities for residential development at Old Whitechurch Road and technology/office based industry development at Kilbarry. The opening of the new Blackpool commuter rail station will improve access to the area. The Strategy for the area is detailed in the North Blackpool Local Area Plan 2011 (see Chapter 14 of the draft Plan for further details).</p> <p><b>North Regeneration</b></p> <p>A major housing regeneration initiative is underway in the north-west of the city focussed on the Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill areas as set out in the North-West Regeneration Masterplan 2011. When complete it will yield up to 600 residential units (a net increase of over 200 units), both social housing and private housing, and associated recreational and community facilities and services, as well as employment opportunities.</p> <p><b>Tivoli</b></p> <p>The planned relocation of the Port of Cork container operations from Tivoli creates the potential to consider the future development of this area for alternative more intensive uses. It is envisaged that the development of this area will follow on after significant progress has been made in the development of the North and South Docks. A local area plan will be prepared to determine the appropriate mix of uses, extent and timing of development and access over the course of this development plan (see Chapter 14 of the draft Plan). The timing of the preparation of a local area plan will be linked to the programme for relocation and the likely timetable for lands to come available for redevelopment.</p> <p><b>Tramore Road</b></p> <p>There is some potential for redevelopment of this area for a wider mix of uses which could help support the development of a high quality public transport route from the Northside through the City Centre to the airport. It currently houses low density employment uses and performs a suitable location for such uses in the city, however some land in the area may be surplus to requirements for such purposes and its potential for other uses, such as residential uses, will be examined over the period of the draft City Development Plan by a Local Area Plan or other suitable mechanism. The strategy for this area is considered in more detail in chapter 14 of the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Key Suburban Centres</b></p> <p>The key suburban centres are Mahon, Douglas and Wilton District Centres on the south side, and Blackpool and Ballyvolane District Centres on the north side, with potential for a further District Centre in Hollyhill. While retailing to serve the local market will be the primary function of these centres the objective is that these centres would over time</p>
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	<p>evolve into mixed use urban centres with good public transport access and high quality urban design. Objectives for these centres are outlined in Chapters 4 and 14 and the draft Plan.</p> <p><b>Environmental Management</b></p> <p>Chapter 12 outlines Cork City Council's policies and objectives for providing public infrastructure and managing environmental issues.</p> <p>It should also be noted that Cork City is not directly responsible for the provision of many aspects of environmental infrastructure, but rather works in conjunction with Uisce Éireann, ESB Networks, Eirgrid, Cork County Council, and various regional authorities.</p> <p>The strategic environmental infrastructure objectives are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promote sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in response to climate change, including measures to reduce energy demand; to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions; and to address the necessity for adaptation to climate change, in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.</li> <li>b. Ensure sufficient infrastructure to serve population targets set out in the Core Strategy (Chapter 2).</li> <li>c. Maximise efficiencies in respect of infrastructure provided.</li> <li>d. Improve the environmental quality of the city's rivers and surface water bodies; maintain the quality of ground water, and generally protect existing and potential water resources in accordance with EU directives.</li> <li>e. To ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial needs for the lifetime of the Plan (subject to compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive)</li> <li>f. To provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the city and to ensure that adequate and appropriate wastewater infrastructure is in place prior to the occupations of new development. 21</li> <li>g. To ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.</li> <li>h. Follow a waste hierarchy that starts with prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, other recovery (e.g. energy recovery) and finally disposal (including landfill).</li> <li>i. Restrict landuse or require appropriate design as necessary to reduce risk of hazard, including those arising from flooding and controlled substances in industrial processes.</li> <li>j. Improve air quality and maintain acceptable levels of light and noise pollution in the city in accordance with</li> </ol>
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	<p>requirements set out in European Union, National and Regional policy.</p> <p>k. Ensure adequate ICT infrastructure to develop Cork as a Smart City.</p> <p>l. Improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings and promote renewable energy use in the city's building stock and infrastructure.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council is committed to protecting its natural heritage, in particular designated areas and protected species, and so it is an objective of the Council to:</p> <p>Objective 10.7 Designated Areas and Protected Species</p> <p>To ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. When a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.</p> <p>In addition, the Council recognises that areas of nature conservation value are not confined to designated sites and to this end have included specific objectives (e.g. Objective 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.13) to ensure that not only are Natura 2000 Sites protected and enhanced, but that the ecological corridors connected to Natura 2000 Sites are also managed appropriately.</p>
Is the project or Plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No
Are there other projects or Plans that together with the project or Plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	<p>Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-West Region 2010-2022;</p> <p>South-Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015;</p> <p>Cork City Biodiversity Plan 2009-2014;</p> <p>Draft Cork County Development Plan 2015-2021;</p> <p>Cork Area Strategic Plan Update 2008;</p> <p>Draft Mahon Local Area Plan 2014-2020</p> <p>South Docks Local Area Plan 2008-2018;</p> <p>Blackpool Local Area Plan 2011-2017;</p> <p>Farranferris Local Area Plan 2009-2015;</p> <p>North-West Regeneration Masterplan 2011;</p> <p>Water Services Investment Programme;</p>

	IPPC Programme; Local Authority Discharge; Groundwater Pollution Reduction Programmes; Surface Water Pollution Reduction Programmes; and Draft Lee Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study.
<b>The Assessment of Significance of Effects</b>	
Describe how the project or Plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.	<p>The following potential impacts on Natura 2000 Sites owing to the implementation of the draft Plan have been identified.</p> <p><b>Direct loss of Habitats</b></p> <p>The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area has the potential to result in the direct loss of habitats which support Qualifying Interests of Cork Harbour SPA, located on the eastern boundary of the Cork's administrative area, which would likely constitute a significant negative effect. As can be seen on the Land Use Zoning in the draft Plan, no zonings for new development are within the boundaries of Cork Harbour SPA.</p> <p><b>Reduction in Water Quality</b></p> <p>The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area has the potential to result in a reduction in the water quality of the receiving waters and Cork Harbour through an increase in the waste water discharged. A reduction in water quality could have a negative impact on protected species within Cork Harbour SPA.</p> <p>The waste water treatment plant for Cork City is provided at Carrigrennan, to the east of the City. Based on current usage rates the plant has adequate capacity to serve the city region through to 2020 with regard to population forecasts. A detailed capacity analysis is underway (2013), and the existing treatment plant will be expanded on a modular basis during the lifetime of the Development Plan if required. It is anticipated that some capacity may be regained through addressing infiltration (i.e. the leakage of groundwater into foul or combined sewers) and inflow (storm water connection to foul sewers). Measures to address nutrient removal (tertiary treatment) and compliance with the Shellfish Water Directive are also under assessment (2013). There are no plans for the construction of any major infrastructure within the City administrative area through 2021.</p> <p>The wastewaters discharged from the Cork City WwTP is licenced by the EPA under the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations, 2007. It is noted that in 2011 the Carrigrennan WwTP failed to meet the overall requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001+.</p> <p>The status under the WFD of the five rivers flowing through Cork's administrative area is set out in Table 2.1. Cork City also impacts on Cork Harbour, as any pollutant streams emanating in the city reach the Harbour via the River Lee.</p>

	<p>Additional hard surfaces also create the potential for an increase in surface water run-off into these rivers, with related negative impact on water quality.</p> <p>Any construction activities have the potential to release suspended solids and chemical pollutants into these watercourses and Cork Harbour, which could impact negatively on water quality.</p> <p>Any negative impact on the five rivers flowing through Cork's administrative area has the potential to impact on Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC.</p> <p><b>Damage / Degradation of Habitats and Disturbance to Species</b></p> <p>The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area has the potential to result in the disturbance to species listed as Qualifying Interests of Cork Harbour SPA. Areas where land has been zoned are close to the Cork Harbour SPA. An increase in human population and associated infrastructure can lead to negative effects on habitats and species due to potential increases in public visitations to the Natura 2000 site and an increase in recreational pressures.</p> <p>The quantification of this impact is extremely difficult; however, given the fact that any increase in site usage will be gradual over a period of time, it is unlikely to constitute a significant adverse effect. Site monitoring by the NPWS should identify any pressures from overuse and recommend appropriate measures.</p> <p><b>Reduction in Water Flows</b></p> <p>Water supply capacity will impose no constraints on development in Cork City. The two schemes have adequate capacity to serve metropolitan Cork through 2071 with regard to population forecasts, treatment capacity, abstraction limits, and a reduction in unaccounted for water (i.e. primarily leakage). The construction of new residential and other developments to cater for an increasing population within Cork's administrative area will not result in an increase in the water abstractions from the River Lee or Cork Harbour, and therefore, will not impact on the habitats and species for which Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC are designated.</p> <p><b>Spread of Alien Invasive Species</b></p> <p>Construction works related to the construction of new residential and other developments for an increasing population within Cork City has the potential to result in the spread of alien invasive species (both flora and fauna) into Natura 2000 sites. This has the potential to impact negatively on the habitats and species for which Natura 2000 sites have been designated.</p>
<p>Explain why these effects are not considered significant.</p>	<p>It is the overall aim of the City Council to protect, promote and conserve Cork City's natural heritage and biodiversity. The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing sites designated or proposed for designation under European and national legislation, and have specific policies relating to their protection and maintenance, as appropriate (e.g.</p>

	<p><b>Objective 10.7).</b> In particular, it is an objective of the Council to ensure that all plans and projects which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site(s) will be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening (<b>Objective 10.7</b>). Further, it is an objective of the Council to work with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance sites of biodiversity value (<b>Objective 10.8</b>).</p> <p>Cork Harbour SPA is located on the eastern boundary of Cork's administrative area, which Great Island Channel SAC is located approximately 4 km to the east of Cork's administrative area. The significance of this SPA and SAC is fully recognised by the council and it is committed to protecting the SPA and SAC together with all other ecological corridors and areas of natural heritage within and adjacent to Cork's administrative area. There are no areas of the SPA zoned for developmental purposes, therefore, the draft Cork City Development Plan will not result in direct impacts on the SPA or SAC through land take or fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>Increased development and construction of residential and commercial units will lead to increased demand for potable water and increased pressure on existing and future waste water treatment systems. Water supply capacity will impose no constraints on development in Cork City. The two supply schemes have adequate capacity to serve metropolitan Cork through 2071 with regard to population forecasts, treatment capacity and abstraction limits.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ensuring the implementation of the EU Urban Waste Water Directive and its transposition into Irish legislation. To this regard there are a number of objectives within the draft Plan which focus on wastewater and its appropriate treatment (<b>Objective 12.1</b>). The waste water treatment plant for Cork City is provided at Carrigrennan, to the east of the City. Based on current usage rates the plant has adequate capacity to serve the city region through 2020 with regard to population forecasts. Measures to address nutrient removal (tertiary treatment) and compliance with the Shellfish Water Directive are also under assessment (2013). There are no plans for the construction of any major infrastructure within the City administrative area through 2021.</p> <p>It is an objective of the Council (<b>Objective 12.1</b>) to provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the City, subject to complying with the Water Framework Directive, the South Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 or any updated version of this document, Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>Such wastewater objectives will ensure that sewage will be treated to an appropriate standard such that it will not impact on receiving waters, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>There are a number of other watercourses within and</p>
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	<p>adjacent to the draft Plan area which drain into the River Lee and Cork Harbour. The Council is committed to protecting these watercourses and to this regard there are a number of objectives within the draft Plan which focus on maintaining and protecting the natural character, ecological value and water quality of these watercourses (e.g. <b>Objective 10.9</b>). Development proposals will be required to provide a buffer zone having a minimum of 10-15m each side of the waters edge. These watercourses will require an Ecological Assessment to be completed on all development proposals in their vicinity (<b>Objective 10.9</b>).</p> <p>The management of surface and storm water is important so as to avoid increased flood or pollution risk in the storm water network, rivers and streams. New development can exacerbate the problems of flooding by accelerating and increasing surface water run-off. The Council will require the application of Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments and have identified specific objectives in this regard (e.g. <b>Objective 12.2, 12.3, 12.8, 12.9, 12.10, 12.11</b>). Reducing the extent of hard surfacing and using permeable pavements will aid in minimising the risk of flooding and contamination, and protect the environmental and water resources.</p> <p>Further, it is the aim of the Council to ensure that the EU Water Framework Directive is implemented. To this end the Council has a strategic environmental objective (<b>Objective 12.1</b>) to protect existing and potential water resources in accordance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended);</li> <li>• European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended);</li> <li>• European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (as amended);</li> <li>• South Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 or any updated version of this document;</li> <li>• Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas;</li> <li>• Groundwater Protection Schemes;</li> <li>• Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 (as amended); and</li> <li>• Any other protection plans for water supply sources or updates to the above regulations.</li> </ul> <p>This objective is to ensure that development would not have an unacceptable impact on water quality and quantity, which includes surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.</p> <p>Such water quality objectives will ensure that the River Lee, its tributaries, Cork Harbour and the SPA and Great Island Channel SAC are protected, and therefore, will not result in</p>
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	<p>any indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Invasive non native plant and animal species can represent a major threat to local, regional and national bio-diversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. The Council is committed (e.g. <b>Objective 10.12</b>) to controlling invasive species, which includes the implementation of measures to control and prevent the introduction and establishment of ecologically damaging alien invasive species. Preventative measures include ensuring that good site hygiene practices are employed for the movement of materials into, out of and around the site and ensuring that imported soil is free of seeds and rhizomes of key invasive plant species.</p> <p>The Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC are a sufficient distance (13km) from the draft Plan area and has no connecting pathways (i.e. rivers or streams) to be impacted by the present or future development of the draft Cork City Development Plan area.</p> <p>This AA has examined each objective within the draft Cork City Development Plan and has determined that there is no potential to impact on the Cork Harbour SPA or the Great Island Channel SAC, in fact, there are a number of objectives which would result in an overall positive impact on Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna within and adjacent to the Plan area, including the identified Natura 2000 sites.</p>
List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address.	<p>Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA);</p> <p>Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, (DECLG);</p> <p>Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, (DAFM);</p> <p>Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, (DCENR); and</p> <p>Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, (DAHG)</p> <p>Cork County Council.</p> <p>A copy of the %Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Scoping Report, June 2013+was sent to the listed Environmental Authorities who were invited to make a written submission. One submission was received from the Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA).</p>
Response to consultation.	-
<b>Data Collected to Carry Out the Assessment</b>	
Who carried out the assessment?	RPS
Sources of data	NPWS database Information from Cork City Council
Level of assessment completed	Desktop
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?	Cork City Council
Overall Conclusion	Stage 1 Screening indicates that the draft Cork City Development Plan alone and in combination with other



	plans and programmes will not have a significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, a Stage 2 'Appropriate Assessment' under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC is not required.
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## **5 ADDENDUM**

### **5.1 SCREENING OF MATERIAL AMENDMENTS FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

The Chief Executive of Cork City Council is recommending that proposed amendments be made to the draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021. This addendum comprises a screening of the proposed amendments for Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) of the draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021..

### **5.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

The proposed amendments to the draft Cork City Development Plan were agreed by Cork City Council at its meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014. These amendments include the following:

- Introduction: minor changes to the text;
- Core Strategy: changes to objectives, including the development of a residential land management strategy; the preparation of documents including Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the North and South Docklands; and the development of a planning framework within the Tivoli LAP;
- Enterprise and Employment: minor changes to the text;
- Retail Strategy: minor changes to the text;
- Transportation: Changes to the text placing emphasis on a sustainable urban transport system, including the use of strategic transport corridors and the improvement of pedestrian networks; the preparation of a Cycle Network Plan for the Cork Metropolitan Area; the aim of identification of a preferred route for Bus Rapid Transit; the encouragement of the use of fuel efficient/ electric vehicles; and support of the use of Intelligent Transport Systems. There are also minor changes to text regarding car parking and Cork International Airport, and also the addition of text explaining Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning;
- Residential: minor changes to the text;
- Inclusive Neighbourhoods: minor changes to the text and the insertion of a new objective relating to the development of a strategy to provide housing for those with intellectual disabilities;
- Arts, Cultural Heritage and Tourism: minor changes to the text;
- Landscape and Natural Heritage: addition of text relating to the landscape of Farranferris Ridge; minor changes to text in the Natural Heritage section and the addition of wording on the protection of riparian habitats;
- Recreational Infrastructure: minor changes to the text relating to public open space, exploring the potential for the provision of a water slipway (subject to Appropriate Assessment); and the provision of play/ recreational facilities and allotments;
- Environmental Infrastructure and Management: the addition of text stating the need for upgrade of the Lee Road Treatment Plant; the inclusion of wording relating to electricity infrastructure within Cork City; the inclusion of wording on the safety zones of Cork Airport; and inclusion of wording relating to flood risk;
- City Centre and Docklands: changes to text relating to building use in the City Centre; the addition of objectives relating to the promotion of development of the Docklands, to include review of the local planning frameworks and Local Area Plans;
- Suburban Area Policies: minor changes to the text;

- Land-use Zoning Objectives: minor changes to the text; and
- Development Management: mainly minor changes to the text, but also the insertion of a paragraph on the provision of facilities for electric vehicle parking and text relating to fast food takeaways.

There are also several proposed amendments to the mapped objectives.

### 5.3 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

It is the overall aim of the City Council to protect, promote and conserve Cork City's natural heritage and biodiversity. The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing sites designated or proposed for designation under European and national legislation, and have specific policies relating to their protection and maintenance, as appropriate (e.g. **Objective 10.7**). In particular, it is an objective of the Council to ensure that all plans and projects which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site(s) will be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening (**Objective 10.7**).

The likely significant impacts that will arise from the proposed amendments to the draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 alone and in combination with other plans and programmes have been considered with regards to the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. The proposed amendments will not result in any significant negative impacts upon the Natura 2000 network.

### 5.4 CONCLUSION

The likely direct and indirect impacts that will arise from the proposed amendments to the draft Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 alone and in combination with other plans and programmes have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 network. No Natura 2000 site will be adversely affected by the proposed amendments to the Plan. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed amendments will not have a significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

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