

**Proposed Variation No. 4 (St. John's Well)
to the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021**

**Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Screening Report**

11th October 2017



**Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

Proposed Variation No. 4 (St. John's Well) to the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

Introduction

The purpose of carrying out this screening statement is to consider whether the proposed variation to the City Development Plan 2015 - 2021 requires a Strategic Environment Assessment under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 as amended.

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

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

Background to the Variation

There is an urgent need to increase housing supply in the Cork Metropolitan area. As such it is imperative that all suitable lands that may accommodate sustainable residential projects in the City be made available.

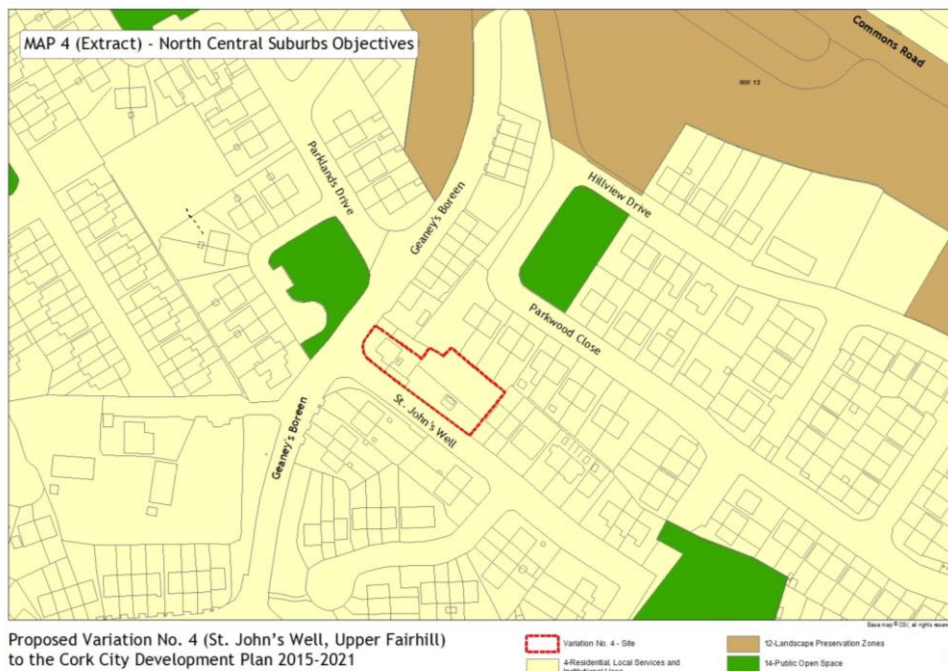
The proposed variation is considered appropriate and is in accordance with the **Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness**, namely, to accelerate the provision and delivery of social housing and to utilise vacant homes and sites and as such accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed variation (copy attached) relates to a material change in the Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021. It is proposed to include a site-specific objective to Chapter 6 Residential Strategy as follows:

“Objective 6.3a Social Housing at junction of St. John’s Well and Gearney’s Boreen.”
“To provide social housing on the City Council owned site at the junction of St. John’s Well/ Gearney’s Boreen.”

Referring to the specific site highlighted on the Zoning Map below.



Note. The proposed variation does not propose rezoning the site from “Residential, Local Services and Institutional Uses” but proposes the insertion of a site specific objective (“To provide social housing on the City Council owned site at the junction of St. John’s Well/ Gearney’s Boreen”) to facilitate the redevelopment of a 0.1hectare site, currently under-utilised and over-ride Objective 11.7(b) of the Plan set out below:

“There will be presumption against development on all open space in residential estates in the city, including any green area/public amenity area that formed part of an executed planning permission for development and was identified for the purposes of recreation/ amenity open space, and also including land which has been habitually used as public open space. Such lands shall be protected for recreation, open space and amenity purposes;”

Screening Report

This section assesses the likelihood of significant effects to the environment as a result of implementing the proposed variation to the Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021 taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004.

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

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

The proposed variation to the Cork City Council Development Plan 2015 - 2021 does not set a framework for projects and other activities, but facilitates future residential use to conform with the zoning objective in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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

The proposed variation does not propose any changes which conflict with the National Spatial Strategy, Cork Area Strategic Plan, the Regional Planning Guidelines or the Joint Housing Strategy for Cork Planning Authorities 2014.

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

The proposed variation has been prepared under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2014. The development of new residential development will provide for an appropriate and sustainable level of development on this underutilised site, (6 units on 0.1 hectares).

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

There are no significant environmental problems to the plan or programme resulting from the proposed variation. The subject site is not subject to flooding (Lee CFRAMS) and is categorised as suitable for development, but an assessment of surface water discharge from the site will be undertaken as part of the design process of any future scheme.

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

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

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

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

It is considered that the proposed variation will not have any significant effects. Residential development should result in environmental improvements to the area, such as the re-use of the vacant house and vacant lands to rear.

(b) the cumulative nature of the effects,

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

(c) the transboundary nature of the effects,

It is considered that there will be no transboundary effect resulting from the proposed variation.

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

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

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

The absolute number of persons who will be affected by the variation in the City areas is not known at this time. However, it is estimated that the said lands would have the capacity for up to 6 no. dwellings. With an average of 2.45 persons for dwelling, we can estimate that circa 15 no. persons could be accommodated in these lands.

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

(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,

Any adverse impacts will be mitigated through the development management process following adherence to the overriding policies and objectives contained in the City Development Plan.

(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

The variation will not affect environmental quality standards or limit values

(iii) intensive land-use,

The proposed variation does represent intensification of land-use, but at an appropriate and sustainable level as advocated in the National Guidelines i.e. at a density greater than 50 per hectare.

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

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

Conclusion

The changes proposed in the variation are set within the context of a development framework already established by the adopted Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021.

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

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

Thomas Watt
Senior Executive Planner

Appendix A

Flood Risk Assessment

Proposed Variation No. 3 (Mahon Industrial Estate) to the Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021.

The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, November 2009. DEHLG & OPW

The Guidelines advocate a *sequential approach* that is:

Avoid or choose lower risk flood zones for new development;

Substitute or ensure type of development is not especially vulnerable to adverse impacts of flooding;

Justify, ensure the development is strategic;

Mitigate, ensure flood risk is reduced to acceptable levels; i.e. prepare detailed proposals for surface water management

Proceed where justification test is passed.

The *sequential approach* requires that mitigation measures such as surface water management proposals are prepared as part of a decision to grant permission.

Flood Risk Assessment

(1) Identify flood zones and classify vulnerability

The Lee CFRAMS does not classify the subject lands as Flood Zone A or B and as such is classified as Flood Zone C, having a low probability of flooding. There is no evidence of flooding in the area. Development in the C Flood Zone is considered appropriate.

(2) Classify the vulnerability of types of development

Although residential dwellings are a highly vulnerable class of development and their location within Flood Zone C is considered appropriate. A Justification Test is not warranted.

Conclusion

The subject lands are classified with a low probability of flooding, namely, Flood Zone C (Lee CFRAMS / Lee CFRAMP) and as such development is considered appropriate. It is considered that in accordance with the sequential approach advocated by the Guidelines, that mitigation measures in the form of a surface water management plan be prepared as part of any decision to develop.



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