

Volume 2

Environmental Reports on Proposed Variation No 2 to the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (as varied)

Planning Policy Unit

25th October 2019

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STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SCREENING DETERMINATION

FOR

PROPOSED VARIATION NO. 2 (Retail Outlet Centres)

TO THE

CORK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014, as varied.

Amend Paragraph 7.10.5 Retail Outlet Centres (previously amended as part of Variation No. 1 of the County Development Plan 2014) to provide strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre in the N25 Corridor sub catchment of the County Metropolitan Strategic Planning Area and include new paragraph 7.10.6 'Innovation in the County's Retail Offer'

Planning Policy Unit
25th October 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Cork County Council (the Council) proposes to vary the Cork County Development Plan 2014 – 2020. The decision to vary the County Development Plan has resulted in the need to consider whether or not it could result in significant effects on the environment and therefore whether or not a SEA process is required as set out under EU Directive 2001/42/EC, (hereafter known as the SEA Directive).

The Council must decide whether the proposed Variation would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and in doing so must take account of the relevant criteria set out in the SEA Directive as transposed into Irish Legislation in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 201 of 2011. This screening determination has been prepared in accordance with Article 13 K (4) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

Before giving notice pursuant to Section 13(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the Council, in consultation with the statutory authorities, must make a determination as to whether a SEA is required, taking account of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and any submissions or observation received from the prescribed environmental authorities.

1.1 Background and Purpose of this Variation

In 2019 Cork County Council appointed consultants to carry out a Study on the Requirement for Retail Outlet Centre(s) in County Cork.

This study is a high level strategic assessment of whether or not there is sufficient headroom to support the provision of a retail outlet centre in the Metropolitan Cork Area and if so to identify at a strategic level the sub catchment within Metropolitan Cork that is most suitable to accommodate such a facility. As part of this strategic assessment a number of sample potential sites were modelled in order to facilitate the carrying out of the strategic multi-criteria transport and retail assessment necessary to investigate the need and appropriateness of such a development in Metropolitan Cork.

The study has identified that there is scope and retail potential capacity to accommodate a retail outlet centre in Metropolitan Cork. Having assessed a number of potential locations within a number of sub catchments against a range of considerations including retail impact, tourism synergy, traffic, access and public transport it was concluded that the most appropriate location for a Retail Outlet Centre in Metropolitan Cork is the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).

The purpose of this proposed Variation of the Cork County Development Plan, 2014 is chiefly to:

Amend Paragraph 7.10.5 Retail Outlet Centres (previously amended as part of Variation No. 1 of the County Development Plan 2014) to provide strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre in Metropolitan Cork NE-2 sub catchment (N25).

The proposed Variation to the Cork County Development Plan 2014 includes changes to the text of Chapter 7 (paragraph 7.10.5) as well as a new objective in relation to Retail Outlet Centres. The full text of proposed variation to the Cork County Development Plan 2014 is set out in Appendix A and should be read in conjunction with the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied.

The likely significant environmental effects or potential impacts of the proposed variation are screened and assessed in Section 2.

1.2 Form and Content of the Variation

The text proposed in the variation is in addition to existing policy guidance on Retail Outlet Centres already contained in the plan as set out under Variation Number 1 of the 2014 Cork County Development Plan.

The proposed variation outlines the Council's vision with regard to retail outlet centres and updates the existing text in the plan to clarify that a study on the Requirement for a Retail Outlet Centre in the Cork Metropolitan Area has been concluded.

The proposed text outlines that on the basis of the study the Council are satisfied that there is capacity for a retail outlet centre in the Cork Metropolitan Area and that the Council are satisfied that such a proposal should not have an adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of other retail centres. It outlines briefly a short rationale for this conclusion.

The text also recognises that the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre can be a significant benefit to the metropolitan economy and an important contributor to the life, vitality and attractiveness of Metropolitan Cork.

It outlines that a sub catchment analysis against a range of considerations including retail impact, tourism synergy, traffic, access and public transport concluded that the most appropriate location for a Retail Outlet Centre in Metropolitan Cork is the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).

The variation also proposes a new objective TCR 10-2 Retail Outlet Centre supporting the provision of a 'Retail Outlet Centre' in the County Metropolitan Strategic Planning Area NE-2 sub catchment (N25) as well as additional text supporting innovation in the County's retail offer.

2.0 SEA SCREENING

Assessment on Terms of Schedule 2A - Criteria to be used to determine whether SEA is required.

This SEA screening process for environmental effects includes those that may arise cumulatively – such as those potentially arising as a result of interactions with the County Development Plan and other plans and programmes. This examination takes account relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A ‘Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment’ of the SEA Regulations, as amended, and is updated to take account of any submissions or observations received from the environmental authorities.

The following pages contain a reproduction of Schedule 2A “Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment” of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The evaluation was based on current available information on the expected content of the proposed Variation.

It is only significant environmental effects arising from changes to the Plan which are considered.

Consideration was also given to the fact that:

- 1) The text proposed in the variation is in addition to existing policy guidance on Retail Outlet Centres already contained in the plan as set out under Variation Number 1 of the 2014 Cork County Development Plan.
- 2) The existing Cork County Development Plan, 2014 and Variation Number 1 has undergone full Strategic Environmental Assessment already.
- 3) No individual sites are identified in the proposed variation and no change has been proposed to the zoning framework for the County as set out in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans, 2017, as amended.

Schedule 2A:

<p>1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to</p> <p><i>The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</i></p> <p>The variation proposes a new objective TCR 10-2 Retail Outlet Centre supporting the provision of a 'Retail Outlet Centre' in the County Metropolitan Strategic Planning Area which follows on from a commitment established in Variation No. 1 of the 2014 Cork County Development Plan to carry out an evidence based assessment to determine need for same.</p> <p>The variation text confirms that a study has been carried out determining that that there is retail potential capacity for a retail outlet centre in the Cork Metropolitan Area and that such a proposal should not have an adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of other retail centres.</p> <p>While the text of the proposed variation suggests that the N25 catchment is the most appropriate location based on the conclusions of the study no specific location/individual sites are identified.</p> <p>The zoning framework for the County is set out in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans which have also been subject to Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment. All development will be subject to EIA/AA screening process. Environmental Impact Statements and Natura Impact Statements will be requested, as appropriate, to inform the assessment of the Planning Authority.</p>
<p><i>The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</i></p> <p>The Cork County Development Plan sets out at a Strategic Level the policies and objectives which the Local Area Plans and individual projects must comply with. The Variation will not influence other plans within the County Cork Settlement Hierarchy.</p>
<p><i>The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,</i></p> <p>The Cork County Development Plan has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment. This Variation proposes no change to the existing policies and objectives of the plan.</p> <p>The zoning framework for the County is set out in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans which have also been subject to Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment. Furthermore all development will be subject to EIA/AA screening process. Environmental Impact Statements and Natura Impact Statements will be requested, as appropriate, to inform the assessment of the Planning Authority.</p>
<p><i>Environmental problems relevant to the plan,</i></p> <p>The variation text confirms that a study has been carried out determining that that there is retail potential capacity for a retail outlet centre in the Cork Metropolitan Area and that such a proposal should not have an adverse impact upon the vitality and viability of other retail centres.</p> <p>While the text of the proposed variation suggests that the N25 catchment is the most appropriate location based on the conclusions of the study no specific location/individual sites are identified.</p>

It is not expected that there will be any environmental problems arising from the proposed Variation. Any future plans that include project or location specific measures will be subject, as appropriate to the usual SEA and AA processes as required.

The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).

The Cork County Development Plan, 2014 provides the primary framework for the implementation of EU legislation on the environment. The proposed Variation makes no changes to existing environmental safeguards contained in the Plan. Therefore, there are no legislative issues arising from the proposed Variation.

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

The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

This Variation does not propose any changes to the land-use zoning objectives for the settlement network of the County, which are contained in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans 2017, as amended. As the Variation is not proposing any specific projects or location specific measures, it is not anticipated that it will, on its own, have significant effects. It is considered that the proposed Variation will not give rise to any environmental effects.

The cumulative nature of the effects,

The proposed variation supports the principle of locating a retail outlet centre within Metropolitan Cork area where it can provide synergies with existing urban areas and avail of existing and planned public transport.

This Variation does not propose any changes to the land-use zoning objectives for the settlement network of the County, which are contained in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans 2017, as amended. The Municipal District Local Area Plans were subject to separate Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment processes. It is considered that the proposed Variation will not give rise to any environmental effects.

The transboundary nature of the effects,

It is not considered the proposed Variation will give rise to any transboundary effects.

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

It is considered that the proposed Variation will not give rise to any risks to human health or the environment.

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

The proposed variation supports the principle of locating a retail outlet centre within Metropolitan Cork area where it can provide synergies with existing urban areas and avail of existing and planned public transport. This proposed Variation does not propose any changes to the land use zoning objectives set out in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans 2017 which were subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment.

The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,

The current Cork County Development Plan recognises the importance of protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the County. It is considered that this Variation will not adversely affect the natural and cultural heritage assets of the County. Any future proposals for development will have to comply with planning policy to ensure that the natural and cultural heritage of an area will not be adversely affected.

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

It is considered that this proposed Variation will not result in any environmental quality standards being exceeded or the values and vulnerability of any affected areas being limited.

(c) intensive land-use,

The proposed Variation does not propose any changes to the land use zoning objectives in the 2017 Municipal District Local Area Plans which were subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment. Any future development will be required to comply with relevant environmental and planning policy.

The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

The county is designated under various environmental designations at European and National level including Natura 2000 sites and landscape designations listed under the County Development Plan. The county has a significant archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage value. The proposed variation is unlikely to have any direct impacts on any protected designations. Any future development will be required to comply with relevant environmental and planning policy.

3.0 Statutory Consultation

The SEA screening report was issued to the prescribed environmental authorities including, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Minister for the Housing Planning and Local Government, the Minister for Communications Climate Action and Environment, the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht pursuant to Article 13K (3)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

The notice stated:

- I. the planning authority proposes to make Variation No.2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 'Retail Outlet Centres' in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- II. that the planning authority must determine whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that, in so doing, it must take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A, and
- III. that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment may be made to the authority within a specified period which shall be not less than 3 weeks from the date of the notice.

The Council must determine whether or not the implementation of the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of the relevant criteria as set out under Schedule 2A and any submissions/observations received from the prescribed environmental authorities.

3.1 Responses received from the Statutory Environmental Authorities

Environmental Protection Agency

The submission notes Cork County Council's preliminary conclusion regarding the need for a SEA of the proposed variation. The submission makes specific comments on the variation:

- That Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations should be used to determine whether the Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- That the Council should ensure that the Variation is consistent with the need for proper planning and sustainable development.
- Adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the Variation.

- The Council should take into account the need to align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as incorporating any relevant recommendations in sectoral, regional and local climate adaptation plans.
- The Council should also ensure that the Variation is consistent with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes.

The submission outlines various guidance documents and tools available to the council in setting out its determination. It also lists the environmental authorities to give notice to and states that a copy of the decision should be made available for public inspection.

The Environmental Protection Agency submission is noted and has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this Proposed Variation.

Minister for Housing Planning and Local Government

No comments on the Proposed Variation.

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine

No comments on the Proposed Variation.

4.0 Screening Determination

The County Council, due to the reasons set out in Section 2 of this report and after considering submissions received under Article 13K (3) (b) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), has determined that in accordance with Article 13K (4) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), that the proposed variation No 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 will not result in any significant effects on the environment, therefore, an SEA is not required.

The County Council has also made a determination outlined in detail in Appendix A of this report, that given the nature of the proposed Variation, no Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is required on foot of the proposed Variation No. 2 of the County Development Plan 2014.

APPENDIX A: Determination on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Introduction:

This Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) process is required under Ministerial Guidelines “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities” as part of the plan-making process (including the Variation to or amendment of a Development Plan or Local Area Plan). The SEA process is acknowledged as a good practice framework for scoping and considering a range of planning and environmental issues, including flooding in the plan-making process.

Purpose of the Variation:

The purpose of the proposed Variation No. 2 to the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (full text is set out in Volume 1) is to:

Amend Paragraph 7.10.5 Retail Outlet Centres (previously amended as part of Variation No. 1 of the County Development Plan 2014) to provide strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre in the N25 Corridor sub catchment of the County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area and include new paragraph 7.10.6 ‘Innovation in the County’s Retail Offer’.

Assessment:

The existing Cork County Development Plan, 2014 and Variation Number 1 has undergone a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The text proposed in the variation is in addition to existing policy guidance on Retail Outlet Centres already contained in the plan as set out under Variation Number 1 of the 2014 Cork County Development Plan.

No individual sites are identified in the proposed variation and no change has been proposed to the zoning framework for the County as set out in the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans, 2017, as amended. The proposed text changes to Chapter 7 will not give rise to any impacts on flood risk or surface water implications across the County.

Recommendation:

Given the nature of the proposed Variation, it is determined that no Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is required on foot of the proposed Variation No. 2 of the County Development Plan 2014.

**Proposed Variation Number 2 (Retail Outlet Centre)
to the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied.**

Habitats Directive Screening Assessment Report

25th October 2019

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1 Introduction

In accordance with requirements of Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Part X of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 (and subsequent amendments), the impacts of all statutory land use plans and proposed amendments to these on certain sites that are designated for the protection of nature (known as Natura 2000 sites or European sites¹), must be assessed as an integral part of the process of drafting of the plan or amendment. This is to determine whether or not the implementation of plan or amendment could have negative consequences for the habitats or plant and animal species for which these sites are designated. This assessment process is called a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) and must be carried out at all stages of the plan making process.

Habitats Directive Article 6(3)

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the 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.

Habitats Directive Assessment is an iterative process which is intended to run parallel to and inform the plan making process. It involves analysis and review of draft policies as they emerge during each stage of plan making, to ensure that their implementation will not impact on sites designated for nature conservation, nor on the habitats or species for which they are designated. Within this process, regard is had to the potential for policies to contribute to impacts which on their own may be acceptable, but which could be significant when considered in combination with the impacts arising from the implementation of other plans or policies.

The process may result in the development of new policy areas and/or the modification or removal of certain policies to be presented in the final plan. The results of this analysis and review are presented in reports which are produced for each stage of the plan making process. At the end of the process, a Final Natura Impact Report and Habitats Directive Conclusion Statement will be produced which will contain a statement relating as to the likely consequences of the plan on the Natura 2000 network and a summary of how ecological considerations in relation to Natura 2000 sites have been integrated into the plan. There are two main stages to the assessment process which are as follows:

Stage One: Screening

The process which identifies what might be likely impacts arising from a plan on a Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. No further assessment is required if no significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites are identified during the screening stage. The screening assessment is normally set out in a Habitats Directive Screening Report.

¹ Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas designated under the Birds Directive. Special Areas of Conservation are sites that are protected because they support particular habitats and/or plant and animal species that have been identified to be threatened at EU community level. Special Protection Areas are sites that are protected for the conservation of species of birds that are in danger of extinction, or are rare or vulnerable. Special Protection Areas may also be sites that are particularly important for migratory birds. Such sites include internationally important wetlands.

Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Proposed Variation Number 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

Where the possibility of significant impacts has not been discounted by the screening process, a more detailed assessment is required. This is called an **Appropriate Assessment** and involves the compilation of a **Natura Impact Report** by the Planning Authority which is a report of scientific evidence and data relating to European sites for which significant negative impacts have not been previously screened out. This is used to identify and classify any implications of the plan for these sites in view of their conservation objectives. The appropriate assessment must include a determination as to whether or not the plan or its proposed amendments would adversely affect the integrity of any European site or sites. The plan may be adopted if adverse effects on the integrity of European sites can be ruled out during the appropriate assessment process. The plan may not be adopted on foot of an Appropriate Assessment, if it is found that it will give rise to adverse impacts on one or more European sites, or if uncertainty remains in relation to potential impacts on one or more European sites following appropriate assessment.

Article 6(4) of the Directive sets out procedures to allow the adoption and implementation of plans despite a finding of adverse effects on one or more European sites. In order for such a plan or project to proceed, it must be demonstrated that

- that there are no alternatives;
- there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for which the plan must proceed; and
- that measures have been put in place that compensate for losses/impacts which will be incurred.

Habitats Directive Article 6(4)

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the 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, the Member State 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.

Two further assessment stages are required, if it is determined that a plan must proceed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, despite a finding that it will have adverse effects on the integrity of one or more European sites. These procedures can only be invoked where it has been shown that there are no alternative ways to implement the plan which avoid adverse effects on the integrity of one or more European sites. These are set out below.

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions

In circumstances where the potential for a plan to give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of a European site or sites has not been ruled out during the appropriate assessment process, it can only be considered for authorization where it is demonstrated that there are no alternative solutions. Stage three of a Habitats Directive Assessment involves the assessment of alternative solutions.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

In circumstances where it has been demonstrated that a plan must proceed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, and where it has been shown that there are no alternatives, compensatory measures must be put in place in advance of the implementation of the plan/project which ensure the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. Compensatory measures must compensate for the expected impact on the site. The fourth stage of the habitats directive assessment process involves the assessment of the proposed compensatory measures.

Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Proposed Variation Number 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied

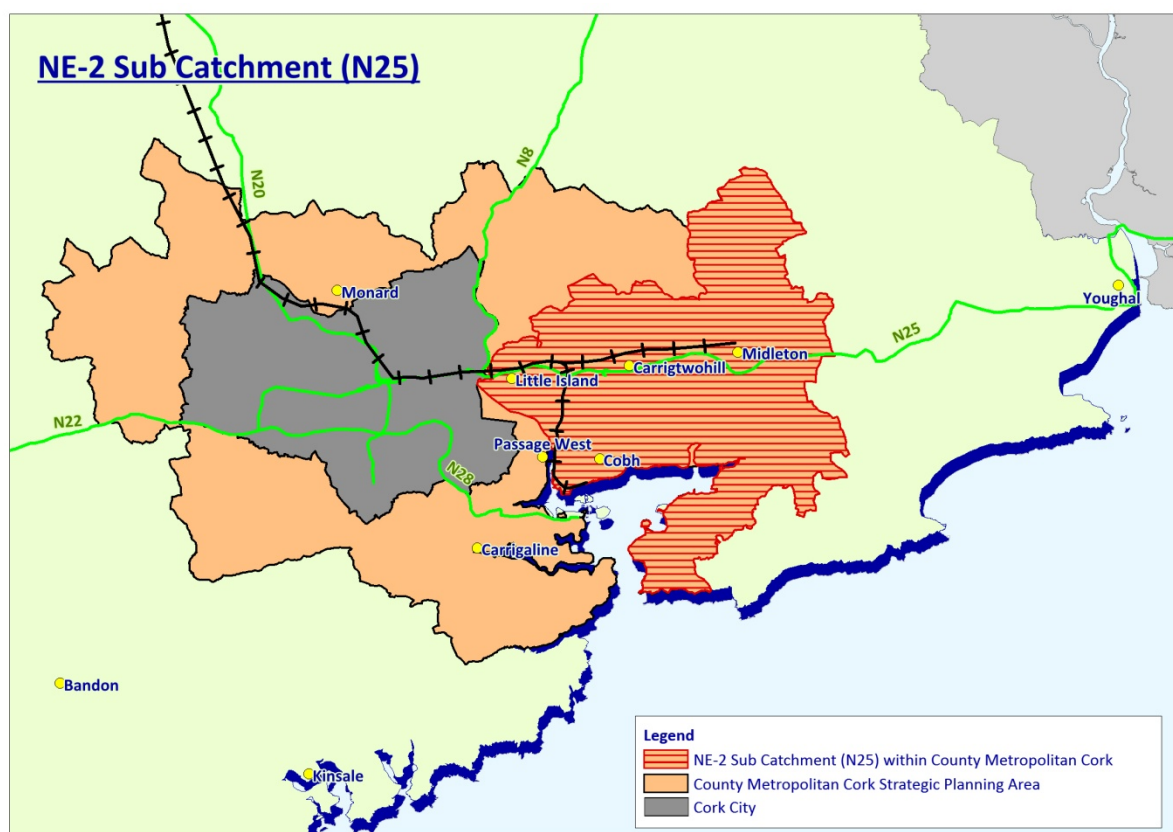
This document represents the first phase of the Habitats Directive Assessment process, being the assessment of impacts of the proposed variation to the Cork County Development Plan on European sites.

Section 13 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) obliges the County Council to make the proposed variation to the Cork County Development Plan available for inspection by the public for a period of at least 4 weeks so that written submissions or observations regarding the proposed amendments can be made to the Council. **This period will commence on Friday 25th October 2019.** In order to be taken into consideration by the County Council, written submissions or observations must be received within that period.

2 Proposed Variation Number 2 to the Cork County Development Plan 2014

The purpose of this proposed variation is primarily to amend paragraph 7.10.5 Retail Outlet Centres (previously amended as part of Variation No. 1 of the County Development Plan 2014) to provide strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre in the N25 Corridor sub catchment of the County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area.

In particular the variation proposes a new objective (TCR 10-2 Retail Outlet Centre) supporting the provision of a 'Retail Outlet Centre' in the County Metropolitan Strategic Planning Area (NE-2 sub catchment (N25)).



Map 1 - Map of NE-2 Sub Catchment (N25) as per proposed variation

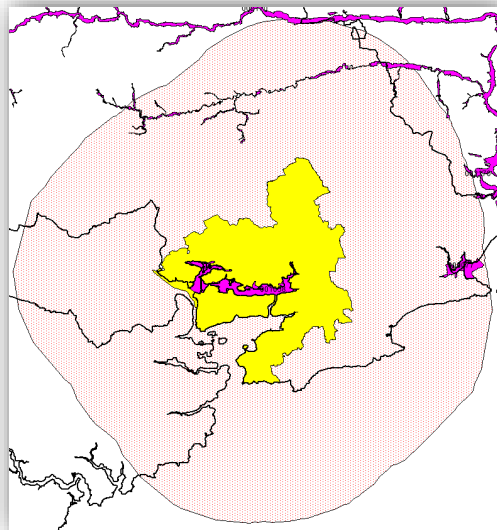
The NE-2 sub catchment (N25) is approximately 240 square kilometres in area and is located within County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area. It extends along the N25 national route and the rail corridor for approximately 16km from Little Island to a point 5km east of Midleton. It extends approximately 12km in a northerly/southern direction from this road/rail corridor. Settlements of note within this part of Metropolitan Cork include Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh and it is within these settlements where the bulk of future growth is planned for this part of Metropolitan Cork.

The NE-2 sub catchment (N25) is located within the Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay EPA water catchment while slightly further north is the Blackwater EPA water catchment. A number of EPA water sub catchments are also located within these larger sub catchments which will be considered later in this screening (Table 3.1)

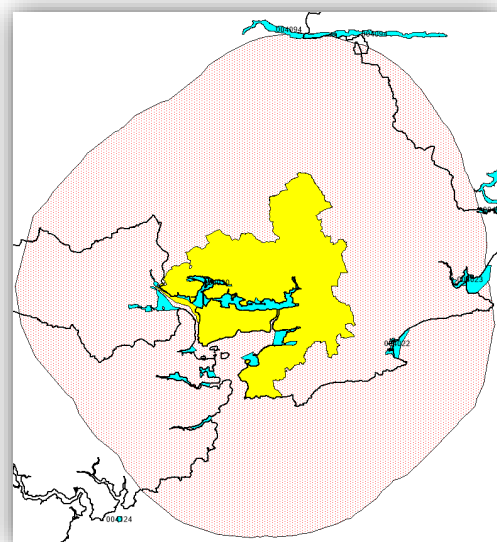
3 Identification of Natura 2000 Sites Required to be Screened

In accordance with recommended best practice this screening has identified all Natura sites within a 15km buffer of the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).

The two maps which follow identify all Natura 2000 sites within the N25 sub catchment (as identified in yellow) as well as all other sites occurring within a 15km buffer. These are the sites which are subject to Habitats Directive Assessment for the proposed variation.



Map 2 – Map showing NE-2 sub catchment (N25) (yellow) including SACs (15km buffer)



Map 3 – Map showing NE-2 sub catchment (N25) (yellow) including SPAs (15km buffer).

The following table outlines all the sites which are subject to Habitats Directive Screening Assessment for the proposed variation.

Table 3.1 Natura 2000 Sites within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) and all other sites occurring within a 15km buffer			
Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Location relative to NE-2 sub catchment (N25)
0077	Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries [1130] • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] 	<p>Located approximately 14km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Entirely within Womanagh Subcatchment a small portion of which is within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).</p> <p>There is potential for this Natura site to be hydrologically connected to sites which could be developed in accordance with this proposed variation.</p>
1058	Great Island Channel SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] 	<p>Located within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Directly abuts 3 different subcatchments (Farrannamanagh, Owenacurra and Tibbotstown)</p> <p>There is potential for this Natura site to be hydrologically connected to sites which could be developed in accordance with this proposed variation.</p>
2170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries [1130] • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] 	<p>Located approximately 5-11km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Located within the Blackwater catchment.</p>

Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Proposed Variation Number 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied

Table 3.1 Natura 2000 Sites within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) and all other sites occurring within a 15km buffer			
Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Location relative to NE-2 sub catchment (N25)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] • Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] • 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] • <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [91J0] <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] • <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] • <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] • <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] • <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099] • <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaiite Shad) [1103] • <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] • <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] • <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> (Killarney Fern) [1421] 	There is no physical or hydrological connection to the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).
4022	Ballycotton Bay SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] 	Located approximately 4km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)

Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Proposed Variation Number 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied

Table 3.1 Natura 2000 Sites within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) and all other sites occurring within a 15km buffer			
Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Location relative to NE-2 sub catchment (N25)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] • Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Located within Farrannamanagh subcatchment a significant portion of which is within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).</p> <p>There is potential for this Natura site to be hydrologically connected to sites which could be developed in accordance with this proposed variation.</p>
4023	Ballymacoda Bay SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] • Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] • Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Located approximately 14km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Located within Tourig Subcatchment</p> <p>There is no physical or hydrological connection to the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).</p>

Habitats Directive Assessment Report for Proposed Variation Number 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied

Table 3.1 Natura 2000 Sites within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) and all other sites occurring within a 15km buffer			
Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Location relative to NE-2 sub catchment (N25)
4028	Blackwater Estuary SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Located approximately 15km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Located within Tourig Subcatchment</p> <p>There is no physical or hydrological connection to the NE-2 sub catchment (N25).</p>
4030	Cork Harbour SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] • Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] • Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] • Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] 	<p>Located extensively within and up to 5km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Located within and abutting the following Subcatchments Owenacurra, Tibbotstown, Glashaboy, Kiln, Glasheen, Owenboy and Farranamanagh.</p> <p>There is potential for this Natura site to be hydrologically connected to sites which could be developed in accordance with this proposed variation.</p>

Table 3.1 Natura 2000 Sites within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) and all other sites occurring within a 15km buffer			
Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Location relative to NE-2 sub catchment (N25)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] • Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	
4094	River Blackwater Callows SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Located approximately 15km distance from NE-2 sub catchment (N25)</p> <p>Located within the Blackwater catchment.</p> <p>There is no potential for this Natura site to be hydrologically connected to sites which could be developed in accordance with this proposed variation.</p>

4 Screening Assessment

4.1 Proposed Variation Number 2 to the Cork County Development Plan 2014

The proposed variation provides strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) of the County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area. It does not identify any individual sites for consideration for such purposes.

On the basis of the overview carried out in the previous section (table 3.1) it is possible to screen out potential for development arising from the proposed variation to give rise to significant negative effects on four of the eight sites located within a 15km buffer of the NE-2 sub catchment. These sites are:

- 2170 Blackwater River SAC
- 4023 Ballymacoda Bay SPA
- 4028 Blackwater Estuary SPA
- 4094 River Blackwater Callows SPA

This conclusion is reached on the basis that:

- the sites are neither physically nor hydrologically connected to the NE-2 sub catchment; and
- each of the sites is located at a significant distance from the NE-2 sub catchment, therefore no disturbance related impacts to qualifying interest species are considered to be likely to arise;

There is therefore no potential pathway for impact linking any potential proposed development site to these sites.

Details of the four remaining Natura sites which have physical and or hydrologically connectivity to the NE-2 sub catchment are presented below.

Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC Site Code 0077– Site Details

This is a coastal site which extends north-east from Ballymacoda towards Youghal. It comprises the estuary of the Womanagh River and supports coastal habitats including dunes, intertidal mud flats, rocky shore line, saltmarsh and wet grassland. This site is not located within the N25 sub-catchment, but does have a hydrological connection to parts of the catchment via the Womanagh River. The qualifying interests of this site are:

- Estuaries [1130]
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]
- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330]
- Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410]

The Conservation Objectives for this site were published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2014 (Ver 1). The objectives are set out below as are a summary of the attributes and targets which are required to be met to achieve the objectives.

Conservation Objectives – Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore)

Qualifying Feature	Conservation Objective	Targets
Estuaries	Maintain favourable conservation condition.	<p>Habitat Area: The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Community Distribution: Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Sandy mud with <i>Hediste diversicolor</i> and <i>Tubificoides benedii</i> community; Sand with polychaetes and bivalves community complex.</p>
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	Maintain favourable conservation condition.	<p>Habitat Area: The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Community Distribution: Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Sandy mud with <i>Hediste diversicolor</i> and <i>Tubificoides benedii</i> community; Sand with polychaetes and bivalves community complex.</p>
Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]	Restore favourable conservation condition.	<p>Habitat Area: Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Habitat Distribution: No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Physical Structure – sediment supply: Maintain natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions.</p> <p>Physical Structure – creeks and pans Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Physical Structure-flooding regime Maintain natural tidal regime.</p>

		<p>Vegetation Structure-zonation Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Vegetation Structure – vegetation height Maintain structural variation within sward.</p> <p>Vegetation Structure – vegetation cover Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated.</p> <p>Vegetation Composition – typical species and sub communities Maintain the presence of species-poor communities listed in SMP (McCorry and Ryle, 2009)</p> <p>Vegetation structure – negative indicator species No significant expansion of common cordgrass (<i>Spartina anglica</i>), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.</p>
Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]	Maintain favourable conservation condition.	<p>Habitat Area: Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Habitat Distribution: No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Physical Structure – sediment supply: Maintain natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions.</p> <p>Physical Structure – creeks and pans Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Physical Structure-flooding regime Maintain natural tidal regime.</p>

		<p>Vegetation Structure-zonation Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Vegetation Structure – vegetation height Maintain structural variation within sward.</p> <p>Vegetation Structure – vegetation cover Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated.</p> <p>Vegetation Composition – typical species and sub communities Maintain the presence of species-poor communities listed in SMP (McCorry and Ryle, 2009)</p> <p>Vegetation structure – negative indicator species No significant expansion of common corkgrass (<i>Spartina anglica</i>), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.</p>
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Activities which could result in

- direct habitat loss within the SAC;
- alteration of natural hydrological patterns within the estuary;
- change in nutrient or water quality status of this estuary; or
- spread of invasive species within the estuary

could have the potential to interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objectives which have been established for this site.

Great Island Channel SAC Site Code 1058 - Site Details

The Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation is a large Special Area of Conservation which extends through the North Channel of Cork Harbour, including intertidal and other estuarine habitats from Glounthane in the west, to Middleton and Ballynacorra in the east. It includes the estuaries of the Owenacurra and Dungourney Rivers. This Natura site lies within the N25 Sub-catchment. The site is designated for the occurrence of two habitats which are listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive:

- 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

The Conservation Objectives for this site were published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2014 (Ver 1). The objectives are set out below as are a summary of the attributes and targets which are required to be met to achieve the objectives.

Conservation Objectives for the Great Island Channel SAC

Qualifying Feature	Conservation Objective	Targets
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Great Island Channel SAC.	<p>Habitat Area The permanent habitat is stable or increasing subject to natural processes (723ha).</p> <p>Community Distribution Conserve the following community type in a natural condition: <i>Mixed sediment to sandy mud with polychaetes and oligochaetes community complex</i>.</p>
Atlantic Salt Meadows	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic sal meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) in Great Island Channel SAC	<p>Habitat Area: Stable or increasing subject to natural processes including erosion and succession – Bawnard 0.29ha; Carrigtwohill 1.01ha.</p> <p>Habitat Distribution: No decline or change in habitat distribution subject to natural processes.</p> <p>Physical Structure: sediment supply: Maintain natural circulation of sediments and organic matter</p> <p>Physical structure: creeks and pans: Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Physical structure: flooding regime: Maintain natural tidal regime.</p> <p>Vegetation structure: zonation: Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.</p> <p>Vegetation structure: height: Maintain structural variation in sward.</p> <p>Vegetation structure: vegetation cover: Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated.</p> <p>Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities: Maintain range of sub-communities with typical species listed in SMP.</p>

Qualifying Feature	Conservation Objective	Targets
		Vegetation structure: negative indicator species: <i>Spartina anglica</i> No significant expansion of common cordgrass with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.

Activities which could result in

- direct habitat loss within the SAC;
- alteration of natural hydrological patterns within the estuary;
- change in nutrient or water quality status of this estuary; or
- spread of invasive species within the estuary

could have the potential to interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objectives which have been established for this site.

Ballycotton Bay SPA Site Code4022 – Site Details

The site comprises of two sheltered inlets which receive the flows from several small rivers. The southern inlet had formerly been lagoonal, but breaching of the shingle barrier has resulted in the area reverting to an estuarine system. The sheltered conditions of the inlets provide the main feeding habitat for overwintering birds. The site has hydrological connectivity to the N25 Sub-catchment via The qualifying interests of this site are:

Qualifying Interests

- A052 Teal (*Anas crecca*)
- A137 Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)
- A140 Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)
- A141 Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)
- A142 Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)
- A156 Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
- A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)
- A160 Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)
- A169 Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)
- A182 Common Gull (*Larus canus*)
- A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)
- A999 Wetland and Waterbirds

The Conservation Objectives for this site were published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2014 (Ver 1). The objectives are set out below as are a summary of the attributes and targets which are required to be met to achieve the objectives.

Conservation Objectives for the Ballycotton Bay SPA

Qualifying Feature(s)	Conservation Objective	Targets
Teal Ringed Plover Golden Plover Grey Plover Lapwing Black-tailed Godwit Bar-tailed Godwit Curlew Turnstone Common Gull Lesser Black-backed Gull	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of these species in Cork Harbour SPA.	<p>Population Trend: Long term population trends for these species are stable or increasing. (Water bird population trends are presented in part four of the Cork Harbour Conservation Objectives supporting document (November, 2014).</p> <p>Distribution: No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by these species other than occurring from natural patterns of variation. Waterbird distribution from the 2010/2011 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the Cork Harbour Conservation Objectives supporting document</p>
Wetlands	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitats in Cork Harbour SPA, as a resource for the regularly – occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.	<p>Habitats Area: The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 281hectares, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.</p>

Activities resulting in

- the loss of the availability or decline in quality of feeding, roosting habitat or reduction in food availability for waterbirds;
- the loss of availability or decline in quality of breeding, feeding and roosting sites or a reduction in food availability for Common Tern; and/or
- significant disturbance to waterbirds

could interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objectives which have been set for qualifying features for which this site has been designated.

Cork Harbour SPA Site Code 4030 – Site Details

The **Cork Harbour SPA** is an estuarine complex which is primarily comprised of intertidal habitats, mainly mudflats as well as some other coastal and marine habitats. These habitats support very high numbers of wintering waterfowl. The Harbour regularly supports in excess of 20,000 wintering birds, making it an internationally important site and the fifth most important wintering waterfowl site in the country. The boundary of this Natura 2000 site overlaps with N25 Sub catchment. The qualifying interests for this SPA are set out below, as are the Conservation Objectives which apply to the site.

Qualifying Interests

- A004 Little Grebe
- A005 Great Crested Grebe
- A017 Cormorant
- A028 Grey Heron
- A048 Shelduck
- A050 Wigeon
- A052 Teal
- A054 Pintail
- A056 Shoveler
- A069 Red-breasted
- A130 Oystercatcher
- A140 Golden Plover
- A141 Grey Plover
- A142 Lapwing
- A149 Dunlin
- A156 Black-tailed Godwit
- A157 Bar-tailed Godwit
- A160 Curlew
- A162 Redshank
- A179 Black-headed Gull
- A183 Common Gull
- A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull
- A193 Common Tern
- A999 Wetland and Waterbirds

Conservation Objectives Cork Harbour SPA

Qualifying Feature(s)	Conservation Objective	Targets
Little Grebe; Great Crested Grebe; Cormorant; Grey Heron; Shelduck; Wigeon; Teal; Pintail; Shoveler; Red-breasted Merganser; Oystercatcher; Golden Plover; Grey Plover; Lapwing; Dunlin; Black-tailed Godwit; Bar-tailed Godwit; Curlew; Redshank; Black-headed Gull; Common Gull and; Lesser Black-backed Gull	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of these species in Cork Harbour SPA.	<p>Population Trend: Long term population trends for these species are stable or increasing. (Water bird population trends are presented in part four of the Cork Harbour Conservation Objectives supporting document (November, 2014).</p> <p>Distribution: No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by these species other than occurring from natural patterns of variation. Waterbird distribution from the 2010/2011 waterbird survey programme is discussed in part five of the Cork Harbour Conservation Objectives supporting document</p>

Qualifying Feature(s)	Conservation Objective	Targets
Common Tern	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Tern in Cork Harbour SPA.	<p>Breeding population abundance: No significant decline in apparently occupies nests (AONs). Measures based on standard tern survey methods (see Walsh et al., 1995). In 2012 the total population of common terns that nested within the wider Cork Harbour was between 85 and 95 pairs, a proportion of which now breeds outside the SPA (RPS, 2014).</p> <p>Productivity rate: No significant decline in fledged young per breeding pair. Measure based on standard tern survey methods (see Walsh et al., 1995). The Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) (JNCC, 2014) provides population data for this species.</p> <p>Distribution: breeding colonies: No significant decline in location, number and area (hectares) of breeding colonies. The Common Tern harbour colony now largely breeds on artificial structures in at least two locations.</p> <p>Prey biomass available: No significant decline in availability of key prey items (Small fish, crustaceans, insects and occasionally squid. Key habitats: common tern forage in/over shallow coastal waters, bays, inlets, shoals, tidal-tips, drift lines, beaches, saltmarsh creeks, lakes, ponds or rivers. Foraging range max 37km, mean max. 33.81km, mean 8.67km.</p> <p>Barriers to connectivity: No significant increase. Seabirds species can make extensive use of marine waters adjacent to their breeding colonies. Foraging range: max. 37km, mean max 33.81km , mean 8.67km (BirdLife International Seabird Database 2014).</p> <p>Disturbance at the level of impact breeding site: Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding common tern population. In the Cork Harbour area, this species largely breeds on artificial structures (see Wilson et al., 2000 and RPS, 2014).</p>

Qualifying Feature(s)	Conservation Objective	Targets
Wetlands	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitats in Cork Harbour SPA, as a resource for the regularly – occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.	Habitats Area: The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 2,587 hectares, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation. The wetland habitat area was estimated as 2,587ha using OSI data and relevant orthophotographs. For further information see part three of the conservation objectives supporting documents.

Activities resulting in

- the loss of the availability or decline in quality of feeding, roosting habitat or reduction in food availability for waterbirds;
- the loss of availability or decline in quality of breeding, feeding and roosting sites or a reduction in food availability for Common Tern; and/or
- significant disturbance to waterbirds

could interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objectives which have been set for qualifying features for which this site has been designated.

Each of these Natura sites could have the potential to be vulnerable to negative effects arising from new development which could arise from this proposal in the absence of care being taken in identifying suitable locations relative to flood risk areas, proximity to Natura sites, or ensuring that appropriate water and waste water infrastructure is in place.

However, there are policies and objectives in the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (which itself has been the subject of Habitats Directive Assessment) which are designed to ensure appropriate siting of new development taking account of nature conservation sensitivities, that there is sufficient capacity to manage waste water, that development in flood plains is avoided, and that water quality is protected.

These objectives are set out in Table 4.2, and will guide all future development in the county, including development which may arise from this proposed variation. These are set out as follows:

Table 4.2 - Relevant objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 relating to the protection of Natura Sites

WS 2-1: Water Infrastructure – General

a) Prioritise the provision of water services infrastructure in:

- the Gateway, Hub and Main Towns to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth while ensuring appropriate protection of the environment.

- all settlements where services are not meeting current needs, are failing to meet existing license conditions, and where these deficiencies are

- interfering with Councils ability to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive; or
- having negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites; and

b) Development may only proceed where appropriate wastewater treatment is available which meets the requirements of environmental legislation, the Water Framework Directive and the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

WS 3-1: Wastewater Disposal

a) Ensure implementation of the South Western River Basin Management Plans and their associated programmes of measures.

b) Require that development in all main settlements connect to public waste water treatment facilities subject to sufficient capacity being available which does not interfere with Council's ability to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive. In settlements where no public waste water system is either available or proposed, or where design, capacity or licensing issues have been identified in existing plants, new developments will be unable to proceed until adequate waste water infrastructure is provided.

c) Ensure that proposals for development incorporating smaller treatment systems align with the Guidance manual on treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels published by the EPA or other appropriate guidance.

d) Any new developments in the County disposing of effluent to ground will be required to comply with the groundwater protection plan and the Waste Water Discharge Regulations.

WS 5-3: Surface Water Management

Manage surface water catchments and the use and development of lands adjoining streams, watercourses and rivers in such a way as to minimise damage to property by instances of flooding and with regard to any conservation objectives of European sites within the relevant catchments and floodplains.

Table 4.2 - Relevant objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 relating to the protection of Natura Sites

WS 6-2: Development in Flood Risk Areas

Ensure that all proposals for development falling within flood zones 'A' or 'B' are consistent with the Ministerial Guidelines – 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management. In order to achieve this, proposals for development identified as being at risk from flooding will need to be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment prepared in line with Paragraph 11.6.16 of this plan.

Where the planning authority is satisfied that it can be satisfactorily shown in the site-specific flood risk assessment required under objective WS 6-1 that the proposed development, and its infrastructure, will avoid significant risks of flooding in line with the principles set out in the Ministerial Guidelines, then, subject to other relevant proper planning considerations, permission may be granted for the development.

Where the site specific flood risk assessment required under WS 6-1 shows that there are significant residual flood risks to the proposed development or its occupiers, conflicting with the approach recommended in the Ministerial Guidelines, it is an objective of this plan to, normally, avoid development vulnerable to flooding unless all of the following are satisfied:

- The development is within an urban settlement, targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines, and statutory plans.
- The development of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:
 - Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;
 - Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;
 - Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;
 - Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and
 - There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.

The development is assessed not to have the potential to give rise to negative or adverse impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

HE 2-1: Site Designated for Nature Conservation

Provide protection to all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation under National and European legislation and International Agreements, and to maintain or develop linkages between these. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Ramsar Sites.

Table 4.2 - Relevant objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 relating to the protection of Natura Sites

HE 2-2: Protected Plant and Animal Species

Provide protection to species listed in the Flora Protection Order 1990, on Annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives, and to animal species protected under the Wildlife Acts in accordance with relevant legal requirements. These species are listed in Volume 2, Chapter 4 of the plan.

HE 2-4: Protection of Wetlands

Ensure that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation. This includes lakes and ponds, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats.

Screening Conclusion

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the objective information provided in this report, it is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans/projects are not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (Natura 2000 site). It is therefore considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), is not required.

Reasons for Conclusion

The proposed variation provides strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre within the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) of the County Metropolitan Strategic Planning Area. It does not identify any individual sites for consideration for such purposes.

Four Natura sites have been identified with a hydrological connection to the NE-2 sub catchment (N25) via their river catchments, and two of these sites are located directly within the N25 Sub-catchment. However, having regard to existing policies and objectives within the current Cork County Development Plan 2014 (which itself has been the subject of Habitats Directive Assessment), the Planning Authority is satisfied that the potential risk to Natura sites can be screened out on the basis that consent would not be given to a Retail Outlet Centre which would negatively impact such sites.

No potential for the proposed variation to cause or contribute to negative impacts on any Natura 2000 site within the County have been identified, and accordingly it is considered that the variation does not need to be subject to Appropriate Assessment.

5 Finding of No Significant Effects Report

Name of Proposed Variation	Proposed Variation Number 2 (Retail Outlet Centre) to the Cork County Development Plan 2014, as varied.
Name and location of Natura 2000 sites identified for screening	Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC Great Island Channel SAC Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC Ballymacoda Bay SPA Blackwater Estuary SPA
Description of the proposed variation	A proposed variation to the Cork County Development Plan to provide strategic planning policy support for the provision of a Retail Outlet Centre in Metropolitan Cork within the NE-2 sub catchment.
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites listed above?	No
The assessment of significance of effects	
Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 Site.	<p>Four Natura 2000 sites have been identified which have direct physical and/or hydrological connectivity within the N25 sub – catchment, which is the subject of this variation. However, no location for development of a Retail Centre within this area has as yet been identified for development.</p> <p>There are policies and objectives in the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (which itself has been the subject of Habitats Directive Assessment) which are designed to ensure appropriate siting of new development in the county, taking account of nature conservation sensitivities, capacity to manage waste water, flood plains avoidance and protection of water quality. Subject to adherence to these policies at the project stage, it is considered that there is no potential for development arising from this variation to give to significant negative effects on any Natura 2000 site when considered either alone or in combination with other development within this catchment, which will also be subject to the same principles.</p>
Explain why these effects are not considered significant.	No potential for negative effects identified.
List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or email address	This screening document will be available for public view and will be referred to statutory consultees including the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht during the public consultation phase.

Response to consultation	None to date		
Data collected to carry out the assessment			
Who carried out the assessment	Sources of data	Level of assessment completed	Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed
Muiris Quinn (in consultation with Ecology Office)	NPWS Site Data	Screening	This report