

Proposed Amendment to the

Macroom Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2011

Amendment No 1: Ballincollig

November 2013

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Introduction

Cork County Council proposes to amend the Macroom Electoral Area Local Area Plan under Section 20 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2010. The proposed amendment consists of the addition of new text and a new objective in order to facilitate the provision of a river walk and a park which would extend the existing amenity walk traversing the Lee Fields at Carrigrohane.

Figure 1 Site Location Map – A1 Greenbelt Carrigrohane Cork



Background

CASP Update 2008 states that continuity between Cork City and Cork County Recreation Strategies would address the role and function of Greenbelts to provide for the passive and active recreational needs of the urban populations in Cork City and Metropolitan / Ring Towns. CASP also states that consideration should be given to the development of regional parks close to the City in a number of locations including the extension of the Lee Fields to Ballincollig Regional Park to create a park of real regional significance.

The 2011 Macroom Electoral Area Local Area Plan also recognises the potential for connection that exists between the existing amenity walk at the Lee Fields and the Regional Park in Ballincollig, via a series of proposed walkways identified in the plan as U-01. These planned for connections extend from Carrigrohane to Coolroe at the western end of Ballincollig.

This proposed amendment seeks to facilitate the planned for connectivity as outlined above, by identifying a connection route between the existing amenity walk in Cork City (Lee Fields) and, ultimately, the Regional Park in Ballincollig.

Planning Considerations

The lands to which the proposed amendment relates are identified as part of the A1 Metropolitan Greenbelt in the 2009 County Development Plan. The County Development Plan states that it is an objective to preserve the character of the lands within the Metropolitan Greenbelt generally for use as agriculture, open space or recreation. Therefore, the recreational uses proposed on these lands are compatible with greenbelt policy.

The proposed amendment will facilitate the creation of an amenity network that will benefit the large populations of Cork City, Ballincollig and the wider region.

Environmental Considerations

Ecology Report

An *Ecological Appraisal Report* has been completed which assesses the current ecological status of the environs of the proposed greenway and associated park. This report appraises the predicted impacts from the construction of the greenway and sets out proposed mitigation and enhancement measures. No significant problematic issues are identified in this report. The recommendations of this report have been absorbed into the proposed amendment wording and will be adhered to during the construction and operational phases of the project.

Flood Risk

The site lies within a zone which has a high probability of flooding. Hence, in accordance with DOEHLG guidelines, only water-compatible development is considered appropriate at this location. Use of lands for amenity purposes, as proposed herein, is appropriate in this regard.

Having regard to flood risk, it is important that water quality is protected in general and in particular in the event of a flood event during the construction phase of the path.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment includes the addition of new text into the settlement plan for Ballincollig which relates to A1 Greenbelt lands in the 2009 County Development Plan. The greenbelt lands lie within the boundary of the Macroom Electoral Area.

The proposed amendment consists of;

- (a) A text change to paragraph 1.3.14.
- (b) The inclusion of a new objective under Open Space and Recreation.
- (c) The inclusion of a new map outlining the area of land within the greenbelt to which the new text and objective relate.

(a) Text change to paragraph 1.3.14:

Revised paragraph 1.3.14 - Macroom Electoral Area Local Area Plan – Ballincollig

Note: Amended wording is set out in *italics*.

The CASP update project recognises that the extension of the Lee Fields to the Ballincollig Regional Park would create a park of real regional significance. *Furthermore*, it is a policy of the Cork City Landscape Study 2008 to develop the Lee Fields *and other areas in the city* to 'create a network of natural heritage and recreation open space/amenity areas by promoting linkage and accessibility and by using walkways and cycleways to connect them where appropriate. ~~This link could extend to the Regional Park in Ballincollig and a series of proposed pedestrian walkways that were identified in the 2005 Local Area Plan have been retained in this plan to enable future connectivity with the Lee Fields.~~

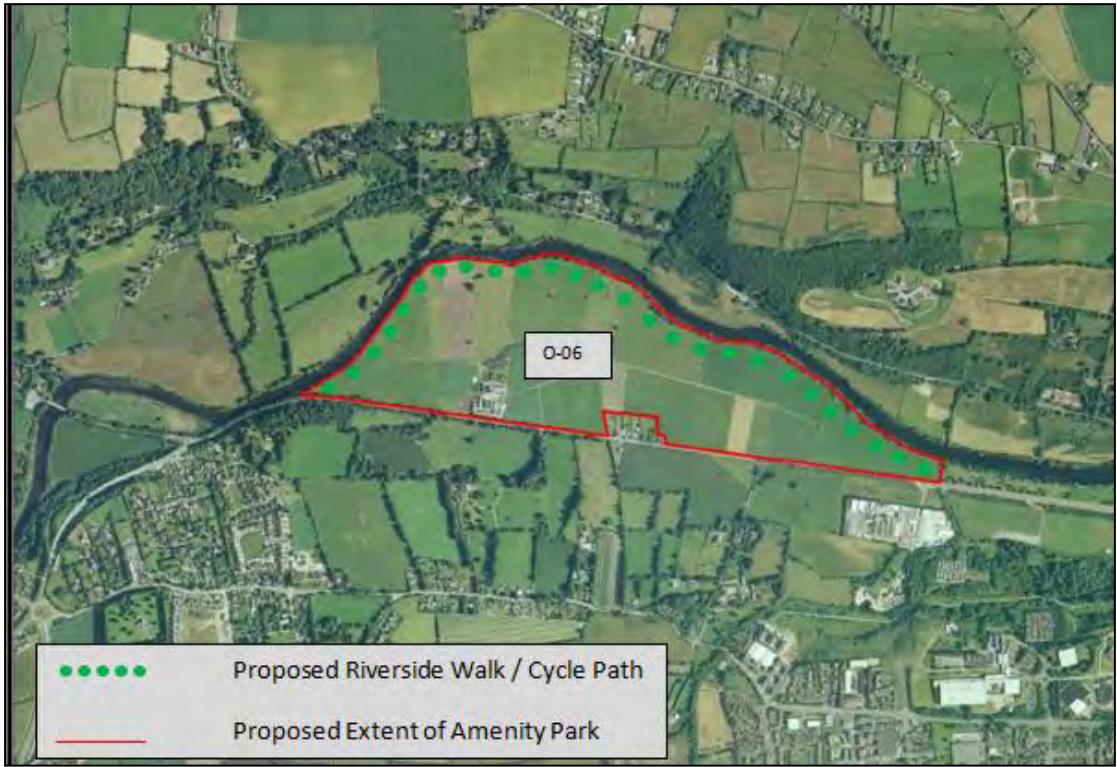
In support of the CASP update and the Cork City Landscape Study, a recreational park and a riverside amenity walkway will be provided on lands within the A1 Metropolitan Greenbelt at Carrigrohane. The proposed uses support the existing green belt policy which is 'to provide for the passive and active recreational needs of the urban populations both in the City and in Metropolitan and Ring Towns.' This park and walkway will link the existing Cork City Lee Fields linear park to the designated U-01 walk in this plan, which extends from Carrigrohane to the Regional Park and Coolroe at the western end of Ballincollig. This park will provide a significant area of active open space which will benefit the population of Cork City, Ballincollig and the wider region.

(b) New objective:

Objective No.	Open Space and Recreation Objective	Approx Area (Ha)
O-06	a) Provision of a riverside amenity walk / cycle path and an amenity park for public recreation.	56.45

	<p>b) The design, construction , landscaping and operation of the walk / cycle path and amenity park will be informed by the recommendations of the <i>Lee Valley Walk and Cycleway, Carrigrohane, Ecological Appraisal Report</i>.</p>	
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(c) New map:



Environmental Issues

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report have been undertaken in conjunction with the amendment.

The SEA screening report and AA screening report have already been referred to the relevant Government Departments and the Environmental Protection Agency for comment.

The comments received following this consultation have been absorbed into the proposed amendment.

The flood risk assessment, undertaken as part of the SEA screening report, concludes that no flooding risk exists due to the nature of the development.