

Proposed Variation No. 2 (Cork Docklands)

Part A: Volume 1: Written Statement updates relating to Chapter 10: Key Growth Areas and Neighbourhood Development Sites (2. City Docks). Consequential text amendments arise within Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 11: Placemaking and Managing Development and Chapter 12: Land Use Zoning Objectives.

Part B: Volume 2: Mapped Objective updates.

Part C: Introduction of a new Volume (4) which sets out design strategies, guidance and an Illustrative Framework Plan.

Variations undertaken using powers provided in Section 13 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)*

April 2025



**Strategic Planning and Heritage Section
Planning and Integrated Development Directorate**

Section 1 Purpose and Scope of the Variation

Introduction

Cork City Council propose to make a Variation to the Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028 (as varied) under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) on foot of detailed analysis and design work progressed for Cork Docklands to reconcile strategic design issues and provide an updated urban design framework as part of a Framework Plan process. This work will inform the design and implementation of public infrastructure projects and private development within the 147ha site and will support the progression of the Preliminary Business Case of the various strategic infrastructure bundles identified through the Framework Plan process.

The Variation also includes Supplementary Guidance to ensure the area is developed in a coherent manner and in a way that reinforces the site's identity, placemaking and architectural qualities.

Background

Volume 1, Chapter 10, Objective 10.17(a) of the Cork City Development Plan identified the need to undertake a Framework Masterplan during the existing Development Plan cycle to reconcile strategic design issues and provide an updated urban design framework for City Docks (Cork Docklands), a strategic 147ha regeneration site undergoing rapid transformation.

The site contains land to accommodate up to 10,000 residential units and 25,000 jobs, forming part of the City Development Plan's population and employment growth targets. The regeneration of this site proposes to be an exemplar in compact and sustainable urban living, supporting neighbourhood and catalyst uses to create an attractive, inclusive and safe neighbourhood. A new street network including new bridges will promote active and sustainable travel, connectivity and enhanced access to Kent Station multi-modal public transport interchange.

URDF Call 2 funding to the value of €353 million has been allocated for enabling infrastructure including extensive waterfront public realm, flood protection, strategic streets, new bridges, community infrastructure and a network of public open spaces. The revised National Development Plan 2021-2030 references Cork Docklands as a landmark urban regeneration and development project which promotes coordinated investment in the renewal and redevelopment of Cork City. The planned population growth will accommodate 20% of the City's future population uplift to 2040 (up to 25,000 people), building on its critical mass as Ireland's second City and creating more balanced regional growth within the Southern Region and the State.

The updated urban design layout was informed by guidance, strategies and policies at national and regional level, the indicative emerging preferred route for the Luas Cork, analysis of the anticipated neighbourhood needs, extensive stakeholder engagement and comparative case study analysis undertaken by a multi-disciplinary design team. The proposed Variation will support the progression of the Preliminary Business Case of the various strands of strategic infrastructure funded nationally under the National Development Plan. The proposed investment in enabling infrastructure will provide for large-scale strategic projects to promote economic vitality, liveability, environmental quality and act as a catalyst for ongoing sustainable regeneration. The various sub-projects have been structured into 5 cohesive project bundles which are set out in Volume 4 (Chapter 3: Strategic Infrastructure). The updated policy and design framework will support the ongoing phased delivery of public and private investment over the coming years.

Objectives 10.17b and 10.17c of the Cork City Plan Development Plan 2022-2028 also acknowledge the need for more detailed development and public realm guidance. This will be included by way of a new Volume (4).

Alignment with Higher Level Plans and SPPRs

The growth of Cork City is an intrinsic part of national and regional planning policy to create more balanced regional development. At a metropolitan scale, the regeneration of Cork Docklands represents a focus on large scale regeneration within the existing built-up area and a more compact urban form facilitated through well designed, higher density development and Transit-Orientated Development as envisaged by the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. The Draft Revised National Planning Framework references Cork Docklands as a case study of transformational regeneration funded through the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF).

The Illustrative Framework Plan represents a design-led approach to the regeneration of this strategic brownfield site. The design approach capitalises on significant state investment in public transportation in accordance with national and regional policy objectives relating to compact and sustainable growth. The site has the capacity to deliver up to 10,000 new homes, create up to 25,000 new jobs along with the provision of associated community, recreation and educational uses, all underpinned by exemplary urban design principles.

The proposed Variation provides further support for national and regional ambition for sustainable growth within Cork Docklands. The proposed Variation supports the delivery policy and guidance set out in the “*DHLGH: Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)*” and is in alignment with Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) set out at National level.

At a local level, the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out 9 Strategic Objectives to guide the future growth of the City based on the 15 Minute City principles. The regeneration of Cork Docklands continues the ambition of the Cork City Development Plan to create a compact, high density and sustainable new neighbourhood designed to contribute to delivering a 15-Minute City and accommodate 20% of the City’s future population growth to 2040 as envisaged by the core strategy.

The regeneration of Cork Docklands also supports the delivery of new Green and Blue Infrastructure, including an extensive new parkland at Marina Park already delivering a new green lung for the City in advance of planned residential development. This will be accompanied by a network of new connected public spaces north and south of the River Lee which will contribute to the amenity and biodiversity value of the area.

At a neighbourhood scale, the site’s regeneration will combine high quality public realm, community facilities and streets with a focus on quality of life and promoting public life. High quality public transport and walkable neighbourhoods will be a defining characteristic of the new neighbourhood. The Illustrative Framework Plan integrates dedicated public transport corridors for the emerging preferred route of Luas Cork and Bus Connects into the design response. In broader terms, the regeneration of Cork Docklands will be a key destination for future economic, arts, cultural, sport and educational uses.

Cork City has been selected to participate in the EU Mission for 100 climate neutral and smart cities by 2030, also known as the Mission Cities. The regeneration of Cork Docklands is positioned to be Cork’s landmark project, providing a distinct and rare opportunity to deliver this agenda at scale. The design proposals set out in this proposed Variation will aim to contribute to net zero targets for a climate neutral and sustainable economy.

Climate adaptation and mitigation is addressed through the integration of flood protection and adaptation measures. This includes the design of new public realm via a polder defence on the South quays, the designing in of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems within the

public open space network and the requirement for a site-specific finished floor level response for the built form within the design process.

Volume 4 contains design strategies, guidance and an accompanying Illustrative Framework Plan which has resolved strategic design issues in Cork Docklands. This will inform the design of future strategic infrastructure projects including those funded through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and other future funding streams, individual masterplans and any planning applications within the Cork Docklands boundary. Character Area Guidance has been developed to respect Cork's heritage assets and promote the use of exemplar design that responds to and reinforces existing patterns of urban form, landscape, heritage, archaeology and culture to create a distinctly Cork character.

Environmental Determinations (to be finalised)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report are included as separate documents.

Conclusion

For the reasons and considerations noted above, it is proposed to initiate the statutory public consultation for Variation No. 2 (Cork Docklands) of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

Next Steps

It is proposed to initiate the Variation process, which entails a 4-week public consultation process, followed by a Chief Executive's Report and Recommendation to the Elected Members of the City Council.



Kevin O' Connor,
Senior Planner,
30th April 2025

Section 2 Proposed Variation

The proposed Variation comprises of 3 elements:

Part A: The proposed Variation will consist of updates to **Chapter 10: Key Growth Areas and Neighbourhood Development Sites (2. City Docks)** as set out in Volume 1: Written Statement of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 (as varied). **Consequential text changes** arise within **Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 11: Placemaking and Managing Development** and **Chapter 12 Land Use Zoning Objectives**.

Part B: A series of mapping updates in Volume 2: Mapped Objectives. This includes zoning changes in Map 01 (City Centre/ Docklands Zoning Map), infrastructure updates in Map 02 (City Centre/ Docklands) and an updated drainage map in Chapter D.

Part C: Introduction of a new Volume 4 containing strategies and supporting guidance for certain strategic areas of the City, including Cork Docklands.

Each component is set out separately in the accompanying appendices. Appendix A sets out the Proposed Variation to Volume 1: Written Statement of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028. The existing text of **Volume 1: Written Statement** of the Development Plan is shown in normal font. Proposed deletions are indicated as red strike through text, for example ~~Strikethrough text~~. Proposed amendments/ additions are shown as green text, for example **green text**. On adoption all green text will revert to normal text and red strikethrough text will be deleted.

Appendix B sets out the mapping updates in **Volume 2: Mapped Objectives**.

Proposed changes to Map 01 (City Centre/ Docklands Zoning Map) are indicated on a site-by-site basis. These largely relate to amendments to the existing land-use zoning approach. Two changes are proposed to expand space to aid delivery of sports infrastructure for the future population and the adjoining education campuses. Additional quayside amenity areas are proposed on the South Docks to create public plazas at strategic locations along this significant linear stretch of Waterfront which can support events and add to the vitality of the area. On the North Quays amendments are proposed to the existing public open spaces (Horgan's Quay Park and the Shipyard Plaza) on foot of detailed design work to realign Horgan's Road and to provide adequate space for the northern landing of the Active Travel bridge. The realignment of Horgan's Street also provides an opportunity to create a new pocket park at Water Street offering additional green space and visual connection to the River Lee. The proposed zoning change at Horgan's Quay (west) is to facilitate the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure that is critical to Cork's transition to an integrated and sustainable transport network, including the Preferred Route for Luas Cork. Proposed changes at the ESB were developed in collaboration with the landowner and is critical to securing the protection of existing infrastructure and space for additional infrastructure on site.

It is proposed to replace Map 02 (City Centre/ Docklands) with a new an updated infrastructure map, including the line of the Preferred Route for Luas Cork.

An updated South Docks Drainage Strategy Map is also proposed within Chapter D.

Appendix C comprises of **Volume 4**, a new Volume containing design strategies, guidance and an accompanying Illustrative Framework Plan reflecting the ambitions for strategic infrastructure and the built form in Cork Docklands.



**Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí**

Planning and Integrated Development Directorate
Cork City Council, City Hall
Cork. T12 T997
Tel. 021-4924086
email.planningpolicy@corkcity.ie