

Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021

Proposed Variation No.4 Vacant Sites

under section 13 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015

25th October 2016



Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

Proposed Variation No. 4 Vacant Sites to the Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021

Context

The commencement of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 on 1st September 2015 introduced a new statutory obligation for all Planning Authorities in the State to establish a register of vacant sites and to make provision for a vacant site levy. Part IV (section 28) of the Act is an amendment of section 10(2) of the Act of 2000 (as amended by section 7(b) of the Act of 2010) by substituting paragraph (h) with the following:

“(h) the development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent-

- (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,*
- (ii) urban blight and decay,*
- (iii) anti-social behaviour, or*
- (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.”*

Accordingly, Cork City Council is required to include the objective for the development and renewal of identified areas in need of **residential** or **regeneration** development as part of the Core Strategy of the City Development Plan. Chapter 2 of the Plan contains the Core Strategy for the future development for Cork City. In this chapter, the Development Strategy outlines the high level objectives for the future development of the city as well as the identification of significant development areas.

It is considered appropriate to include the new objectives for the regeneration and renewal of land and the active land management of vacant sites within the Development Strategy section, after the text relating to the key development areas of the city. The new text will explain the legislative context of the vacant sites register (Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015), the objective of regeneration and renewal of land and the identifying vacant sites which will involve engagement with property owners to bring these sites back into use. The legislation stipulates that only sites/structures on either “residential” or “regeneration” land are eligible to be placed on the vacant sites register, where the vacant sites levy will apply.

In accordance with the legislation, the City Council will establish a vacant sites register for sites in excess of 0.05 hectares, (500sq.m.) in designated areas, and in accordance with the Act, will be effective from 01 January 2017. Where a site is on the register for a period of 12

months, the City Council may apply a levy at a rate of 3% of the market valuation of the vacant site.

Application of the new objective on existing land uses zonings

“Residential Land”

Section 3 of the 2015 Act, defines “residential land” as

“...land included by a planning authority in its development plan or local area plan.....with the objective of zoning solely or primarily for residential purposes, and includes any structures on such land”.

Having regard to the existing land-use zonings which are primarily for residential, “Residential land” applies to the following land use zonings.

ZO 3 Inner City Residential Neighbourhoods

Objective: To reinforce the residential character of inner city residential neighbourhoods, while supporting the provision and retention of local services, and civic and institutional functions.

ZO 4 Residential, Local Services and Institutional Uses

Objective: To protect and provide for residential uses, local services, institutional uses, and civic uses, having regard to employment policies outlined in Chapter 3.

ZO 20 Mixed Use Zoning Jacob's Island

Objective: To provide for mixed use development to accommodate up to 15,000 sq. m. business and technology offices and residential uses.

ZO 21 Business, Technology and Residential

Objective: To provide for Business, Technology and Residential uses to ensure the creation of a vibrant urban area, working in tandem with the principles of sustainable development, transportation and self-sufficiency.

In respect of “residential land” the Planning Authority must also determine whether or not there is a housing need in an area by reference to the following criteria:

- The Housing Strategy and Core Strategy of the City Council.
Commencement Notices were received for 121 units in Q1 + Q2 of 2016 for Cork City, the annual housing figure would need to be 1,821 to meet the needs identified in the Joint Housing Strategy and Core Strategy for the city.

- House prices and rental costs in the area.
Cork City has experienced rising house prices and rental rates over past 2 years, house prices are up 36% and rental prices up 18% in this period reflecting the severe shortage in supply.
- No. of households on social housing list for that area and the rate of change.
There are 4,846 people currently on the social housing list.
- No. of habitable houses for sale/rent is <5% of the total houses in the area.
The 2016 Census Data found 51,608 habitable units in Cork City. In September 2016 there were with 120 units listed for sale within the city. This account for 0.2% of the overall housing stock for the city.

It is clear from the above that there is a very significant housing need in Cork City and that the introduction of a vacant sites levy is justified based on the criteria set out in the Act.

“Regeneration Land”

Section 3 of the 2015 Act, defines “*regeneration land*” as

“...land identified by a planning authority in its development plan or local area plan.....with the objective of development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration, and includes any structures on such land”.

At present, the City Plan has no specific “regeneration” land-use zoning or “regeneration” objective. However regeneration and renewal is a central tenet of the development plan goals and of many individual objectives. Furthermore many existing land-use zonings have an urban regeneration intent as part of the overall objective. It is proposed to include a new general regeneration objective as part of the Development Strategy in Chapter 2 of the Plan.

This will also include categorisation of 9no. land-use zonings and the Tivoli Local Area Plan lands (a mapped objective) as ‘regeneration’ land, including city centre and docklands zonings and other mixed-use zonings. This will allow vacant sites in these areas to be considered for inclusion on the Register.

“Regeneration land” can apply to the following land use zonings and mapped objective area.

ZO 1 City Centre Retail Area (CCRA)

OBJECTIVE: To provide for the protection, upgrading and expansion of retailing, in particular higher order comparison retailing, as well as a range of other supporting uses in the City Centre retail area.

ZO 2 City Centre Commercial Core Area (CCA)

OBJECTIVE: To support the retention and expansion of a wide range of commercial, cultural, leisure and residential uses in the commercial core area (apart from comparison retail uses).

ZO 5 Light Industry and related Uses

OBJECTIVE: To provide for light industry (and related uses).

ZO 7 Business & Technology

OBJECTIVE: To provide for high technology related office based development.

ZO11 Retail Warehousing

OBJECTIVE: To provide for retail warehousing development.

ZO 16 Mixed Use Development

OBJECTIVE: To promote the development of mixed uses to ensure the creation of a vibrant urban area, working in tandem with the principles of sustainable development, transportation and self-sufficiency.

ZO 8 District Centres

OBJECTIVE: To provide for and/or improve district centres as mixed use centres, with a primary retail function which also act as a focus for a range of services.

ZO 9 Neighbourhood Centres

OBJECTIVE: To protect, provide for and/or improve the retail function of neighbourhood centres and provide a focus for local services.

ZO 10 Local Centres

OBJECTIVE: To protect, provide for and/or improve the retail function of local centres and provide a focus for local centres.

Objective 14.4 - Local Area Plan for Tivoli Docks

To prepare a local area plan for the redevelopment of Tivoli Docks.

Proposed Variation

The proposed variation consists of the following material amendments:

(a) To insert new text to Chapter 2 Core Strategy of Volume 1 - Written Statement as follows:

Promoting regeneration and redevelopment of vacant land

2.30 Part of the development and regeneration strategy of the Plan is to engage in the active land management of vacant sites. This will promote and facilitate the rejuvenation of regeneration areas, increase housing supply and create more opportunity for employment. The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 introduced the vacant site levy initiative as a site

activation measure to ensure that vacant and underutilised land in urban areas is brought into beneficial use, while also ensuring a more effective return on State investment in enabling infrastructure and helping to counter unsustainable urban sprawl. Action under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 will be complemented by action taken to tackle dereliction under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

Vacant Sites Register

The City Council will establish a vacant sites register for sites in excess of 0.05 hectares, (500sq.m.) in designated areas, effective from 01 January 2017. Where a site is on the register for a period of 12 months, the City Council may apply a levy at a rate of 3% of the market valuation of the vacant site.

The levy may be applied to all identified 'Regeneration' land and 'Residential' land in existing land use zonings of the City Plan.

"Residential" land is identified and applied to the following zonings:

- Inner City Residential Neighbourhoods (*ZO3 Land-use zoning objective*)
- Residential, Local Services and Institutional Uses (*ZO 4*)
- Mixed Use Zoning Jacob's Island (*ZO 20*)

Regeneration of land and buildings in need of development and renewal throughout the city is a central objective of this Plan. In addition 'Regeneration land' as defined under the 2015 Act is applied to the zoning objectives listed below

Objective 2.2: Regeneration and Renewal

Cork City Council will seek to develop and improve areas in need of development and renewal. In particular, the areas covered by the following zoning objectives are areas where the objective for regeneration and renewal will apply and are considered to constitute regeneration land.

"Regeneration Land" is identified and applied to the following land-use zonings:

- City Centre Retail Area, (*ZO 1 Land-use zoning objective*)
- City Centre Commercial Core Area, (*ZO 2*)
- Mixed Use Development, (*ZO 16*)
- Light Industry and related Uses, (*ZO 5*)
- Business & Technology, (*ZO 7*)
- Retail Warehousing, (*ZO 11*)
- District Centres, (*ZO 8*)
- Neighbourhood Centres, (*ZO 9*)
- Local Centres, (*ZO 10*)

- Tivoli Local Area Plan lands (*Objective 14.4 of Chapter 14*)

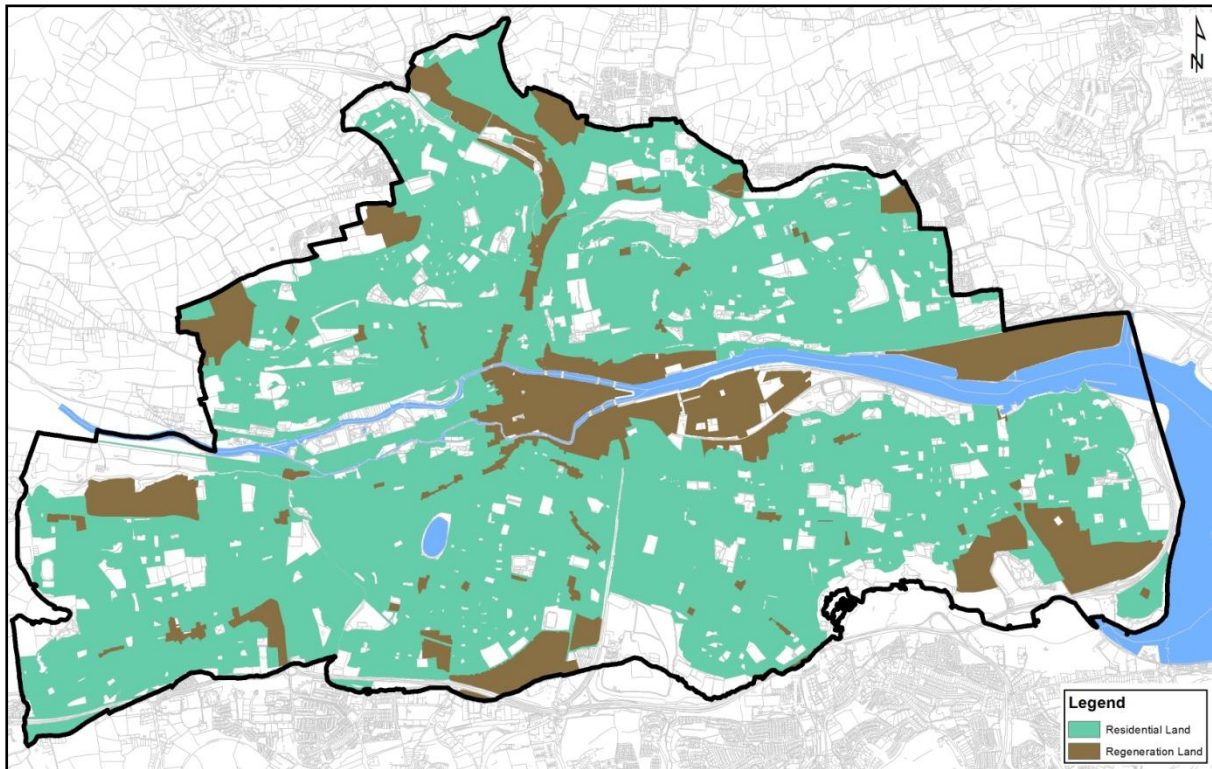
Please refer to the specifics of each land uses zoning objective in Chapter 15 of the City Development Plan which should be read in association with the objective of active land management of vacant sites.

Objective 2.3 Active land management of vacant sites

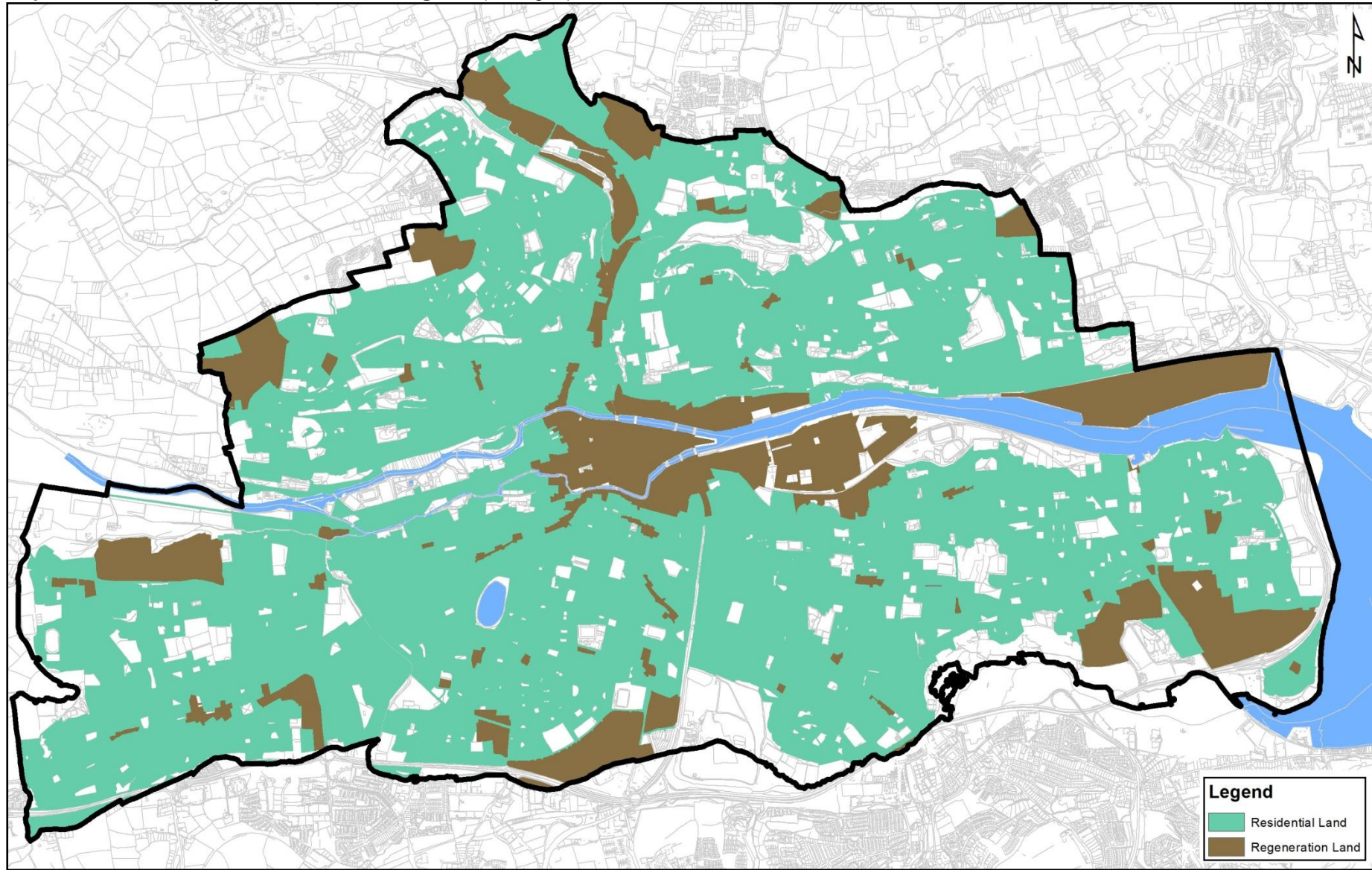
Cork City Council will implement an Active Land Management Strategy in relation to vacant land in the City. A Vacant Sites Register will be established and maintained which will enable the City Council to pursue the efficient and sustainable use of the City's finite land resources

(b) to insert Map 19 to Volume 2 - Mapped Objectives

Map 19 Lands subject to Vacant Sites register



Map No. 19 Lands subject to Vacant Sites register (Enlarged)



Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed text and map amendments set out above accords with the obligations of the Planning Authority under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015; will promote and facilitate urban regeneration, tackle housing supply issues and accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



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