



NORTHWEST REGENERATION OPPORTUNITY

Submission to Cork City Development Plan Review 2020



on behalf of BMOR & Adjacent Stakeholders

Contents

- 01** Executive Summary
- 02** Introduction
- 03** Planning Policy Context
- 04** Northwest Regeneration Opportunity
 - Housing
 - Recreation
 - Retail
 - Employment
- 05** Connectivity & Access
- 06** Landscape and Visual
- 07** Masterplan

NORTHWEST REGENERATION OPPORTUNITY





Section 1

Executive Summary

1







Section 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are now entering a critical era for the development of Cork City. The recent boundary extension has removed the many transboundary issues which have previously prevented the development and delivery of planning policies and objectives for the City's environs.

The boundary extension presents the City Council with an opportunity to implement its real vision in the planning and realisation of a sustainable and balanced metropolitan area, which is *"significantly scaled, while also more compact and attractive"*¹. The challenge is to realise the growth potential of individual places within the enlarged city, while maintaining their unique and attractive characteristics and ensuring that development policies are complementary and balanced.

Development in the northwest of the city has traditionally been constrained by topography, its peripheral location and the often differing priorities of two local authorities all inhibiting the development of coherent policies. The Council's socio-economic profile indicates that the area has disproportionately high concentrations of areas classified as 'extremely' and 'very disadvantaged'. Allied to this are the notably high levels of unemployment and social rented housing tenure. To counterbalance this Hollyhill, home to Apple's European Headquarters, Hollymount Industrial Estate and Churchfield Industrial Estate, is recognised as one of the main strategic employment areas in the city. It benefits from a number of recreational facilities and is well served by public transport. The area is notable also for its large young population, which coupled with improved educational outcomes will result in the northwest suburb representing, in the medium term, a significant labour pool to fuel future economic development.

The City Development Plan review process, is timely, following as it does the recent Cork City boundary extension, and affords this newly expanded city area an opportunity to address a number of legacy issues. In so doing the area can assist in the delivery of the wider Cork City strategic objectives that remain unrealised.

The submission suggests ways in which the imbalances that have evolved in this community can be arrested and reversed. The foundations of the suggested Masterplan are based on the NPF principle that *"housing development should be based on employment growth, higher densities, access to amenities and sustainable transport modes"*. The plan proposes to deliver sustainable mixed tenure housing, new and improved services in the form of a district centre and a range of employment uses, all supported by high quality public realm and amenities in the long awaited regional park. The fragmented nature, low permeability and poor connectivity between housing, jobs and amenities in the area is specifically addressed in the masterplan. A proposed new multi model access road will serve to improve access to existing and proposed uses, unlock land for development and improve connectivity and permeability.

The masterplan aims to support the development of this suburb to realise its full potential as a vibrant and identifiable neighbourhood, which is a desirable place to live and work. Critically, it is the development of evolving areas such as the northwest suburb which will, to a large extent, determine whether the expanded Cork City succeeds or fails as an entity.



¹ Section 3.4 National Planning Framework



CONTEXT

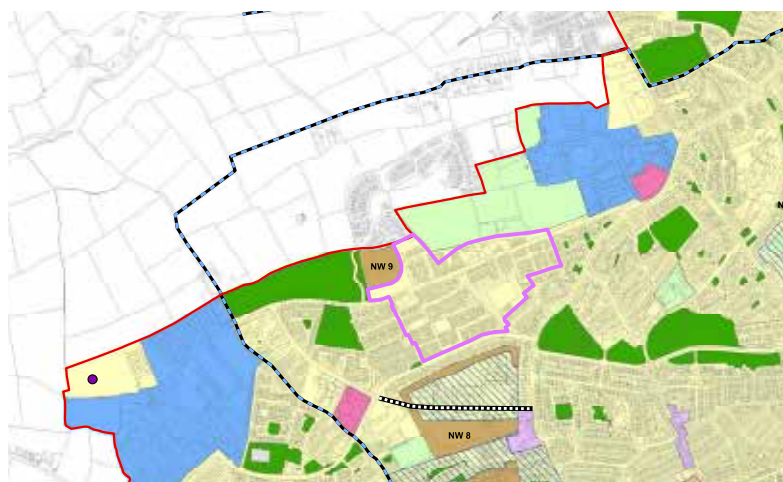
The subject lands are located to the north west of Cork City, in an area which has recently become part of Cork City Councils' administrative area, having previously been part of the functional area of Cork County Council.

The lands are bound by Nash's Boreen to the north, and Upper Fairhill road to the west. Churchfield Business Park, Castlevue AFC, and the Meadow Avenue residential estate bound the lands to their south. Kilmore Road Lower and O'Neill Park also form part of the southern boundary of the subject area.

The land use in the area is predominantly residential, with some employment uses, and an area of greenbelt to the north-west.



Extract from Cobh Municipal District LAP 2017



Extract from Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021, Map 9



Aerial view, showing the subject lands in context

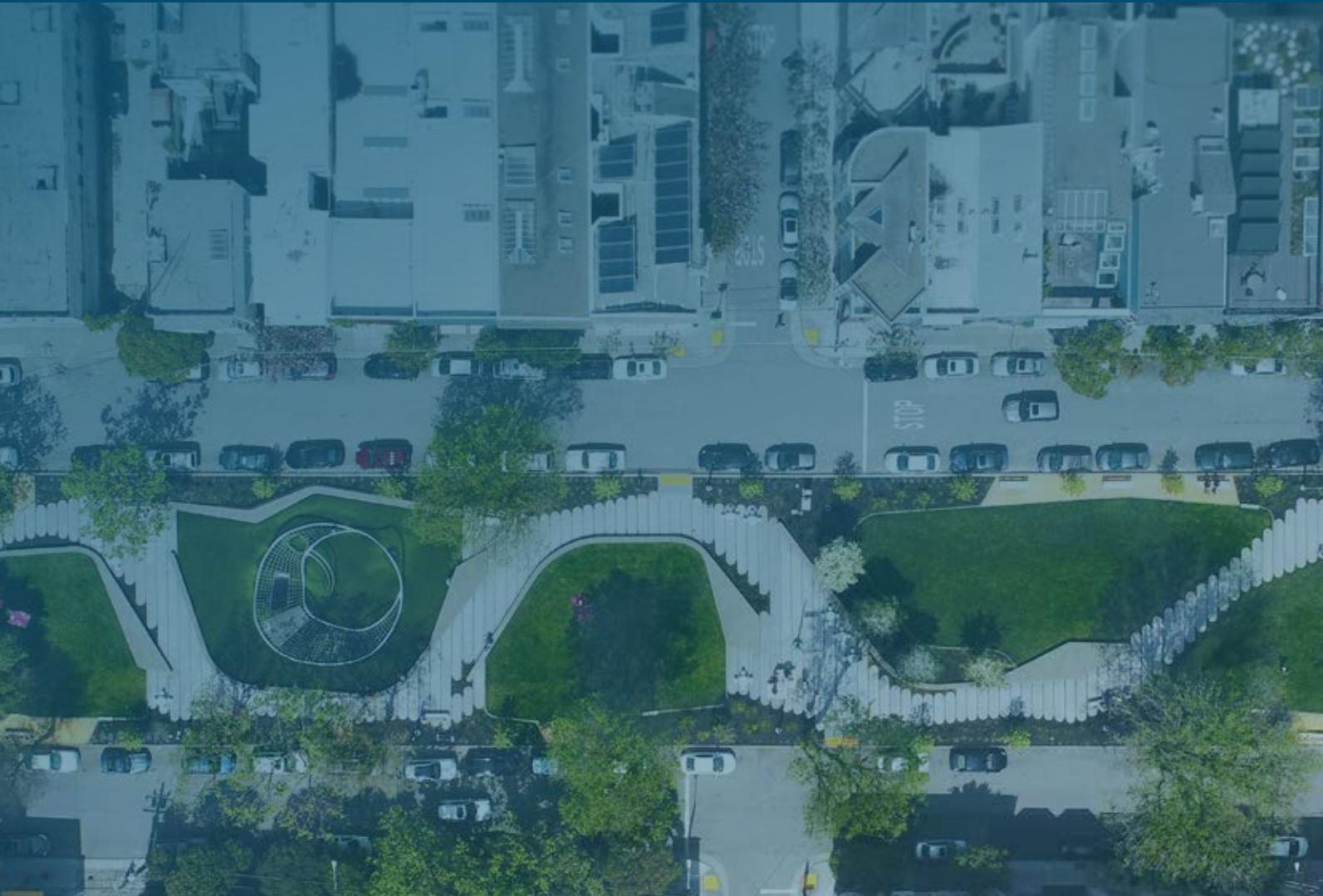


Section 2

Introduction

2

- 2.1** Submission Purpose
- 2.2** Development Context







Section 2

INTRODUCTION

This strategic-level submission is made in relation to the future proper planning and sustainable development of lands in Hollyhill/Clogheen located to the north-west of Cork City. It has been prepared by BMOR Development Limited on behalf of a consortia of different landowners within the subject lands in Hollyhill/Clogheen in response to Cork City Council's invitation for submissions to the Stage 1 (Pre-plan Consultation) process for the Review of the Cork City Development Plan 2015. For reference, the broad extent of land in the study area is outlined in Section 1.2.



2.1 Submission Purpose

Our clients welcome the review of the Cork City Development Plan 2015. The forthcoming City Development Plan represents an opportune time to reevaluate the strategic growth of Cork City and its suburbs, particularly in the context of the Cork City Boundary Extension which took effect in June 2019. Since the adoption of the Boundary extension, the subject lands, which previously straddled the administrative boundary with Cork County Council, have been transferred wholly into the administrative area of Cork City Council.

The review of the Cork City Development Plan represents an opportunity to revisit the future growth and strategic role of this previously peripheral and fragmented area within the Knocknaheeny / Hollyhill / Churchfield Rapid area, to reflect the lands' new strategic role within the Northwest City Suburb Quadrant. This masterplan proposes the sustainable mixed-use development of this area as a new city neighbourhood, underpinned by key infrastructure; specifically, a new district centre, regional park and link road, to unlock the potential of the northwest suburb quadrant to contribute towards the significantly increased population and housing 2031 targets for Cork City and to optimize the site's development potential to benefit the wider north-western suburban quarter of the city as a place to live and work.

The purpose of this submission is to assist the Council in formulating strategic development options for the future development of this area which will feed into the preparation of the Draft City Development Plan 2022-2028.

2.2 Development Context

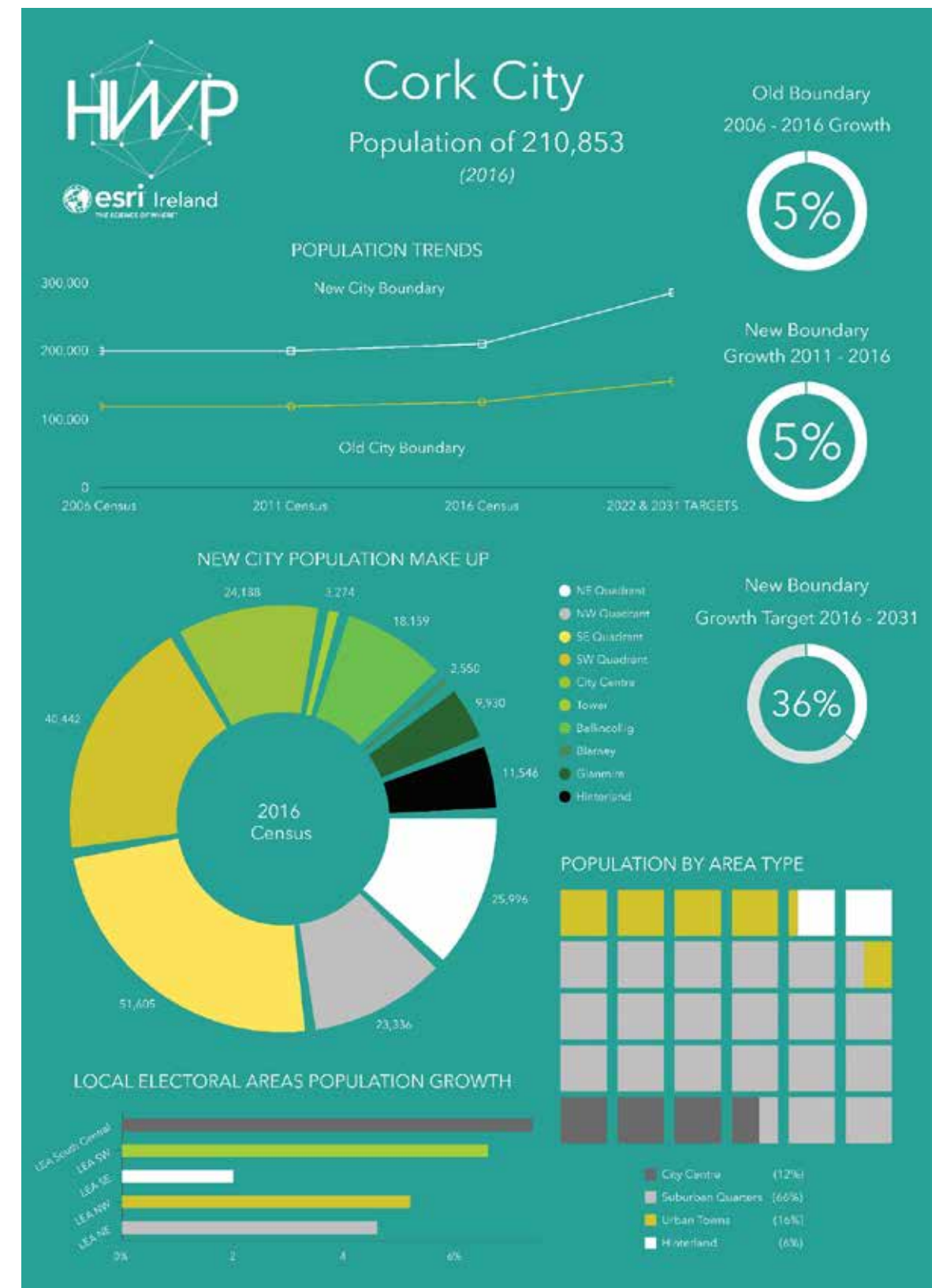
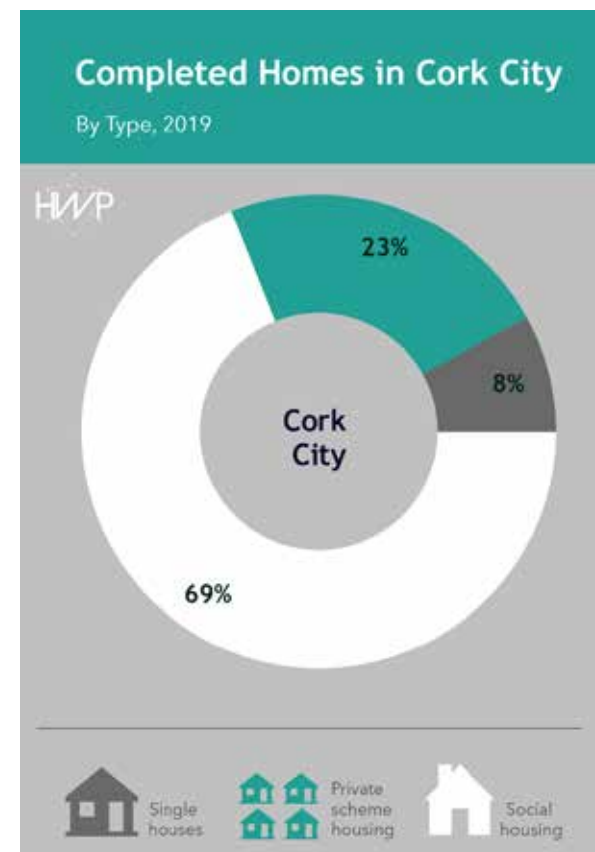
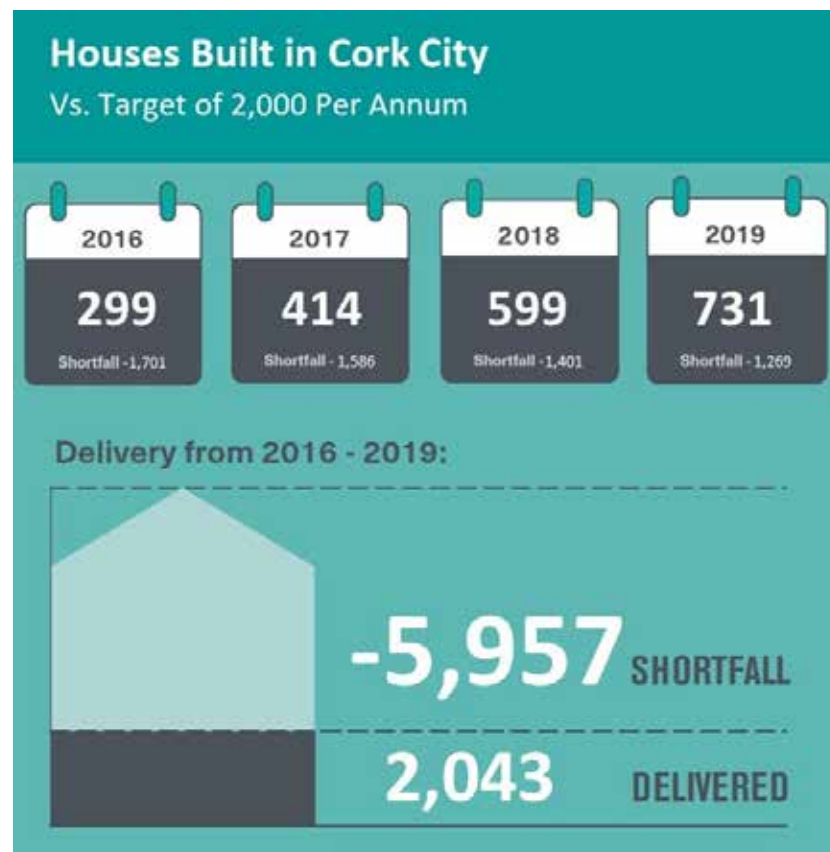
2.2.1 City Overview

POPULATION AND HOUSING REQUIREMENT

The National Planning Framework (NPF) outlines ambitious plans for the growth of Cork City and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), have defined the unprecedented population and housing targets required to realise these ambitions. MASP has set a 2031 population target of 286,178 for Cork City, an increase of over 75,000 or 36% on the 2016 Census Population of 210,853.

Section 3.2 of the Cork City Issues Paper indicates that in order to meet its 2031 population and housing targets, Cork City will have to deliver an average of 2,000 residential units annually in the period from 2016 to 2031. Since 2016 just 2,043 residential units have been delivered in Cork City, which is the equivalent of a single year's target. This poor delivery rate has resulted in a short fall of 5,957 units in the period from 2016 to 2019.

The following figures highlight the performance of Cork City in terms of housing delivery and population growth. Based on the targets identified in previous City Development Plans Cork City has performed very poorly in terms of population growth in the recent past with just 21% of its 2022 target population growth achieved within the old City Boundary and 33% achieved within the new boundary.



It is clear that Cork City will miss its 2022 population targets by a considerable distance and is already well behind in the delivery of its 2031 housing target. This has a knock on effect. After 4 years just 2,043 of the 2031 target of 30,000 residential units have been delivered, with 27,957 units remaining to be delivered in the 11 year period from 2020 to 2031. Addressing the existing shortfall between 2020 and 2031 means the annual figure of 2,000 residential units referenced in the Council's Issues Paper becomes a yearly requirement of 2,541.

Within this, there is also the very important question of what type of units are being delivered. The Issues Paper and Cork City Socio - Economic Profile provide valuable data in relation to the tenure of the existing housing stock. An analysis of housing delivery in 2019 indicates that 69% of the 731 residential units delivered in Cork City were social houses. The news that Cork City Council exceeded its 2019 social housing target by 20%¹ is a very welcome and warranted response in the midst of the current housing crisis. However, the fact that just 23% of the 731 houses delivered in 2019 were private scheme units highlights the need for an increased emphasis on the delivery of private housing, in addition to the continued achievement of social housing targets.

Based on current targets and Government policy Cork City Council is likely to deliver approximately 500 social houses (new build) annually and therefore, there will be a requirement for approximately 2,000 private houses annually to comply with national and regional targets. This can only be achieved through an increased emphasis on the delivery of housing schemes in appropriate locations.

¹ 2019 Social Housing Delivery Report



2.2.2 Area Summary

The subject lands, which are approximately 86 hectares in area, are located in the northwest of Cork City. The lands are bounded to the north by Nash's Boreen and by Kilmore Road Lower to the south. The Meadow Avenue Estate shares a section of the southern boundary of the site, with the Churchfield Industrial Estate located to the east. There are a number of established businesses in the Industrial Estate, adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the subject land which are engaged in the waste industry and operate waste storage facilities. The site is bounded on to the south and east by existing residential estates, including the Northwest Regeneration Masterplan area to the south. Apple's European Headquarters, employing 5,500 working, is located immediately to the south-west, also accessed from the Kilmore Road. The lands c. 440m to the north of the site are zoned as Metropolitan Greenbelt A1, with existing housing to the north being predominantly one-off rural houses.

The current retail offering comprises a neighbourhood centre at Mount Agnes Road, Fairhill, immediately to the south-east of the site and another at Hollyhill, c. 350m to the south. A Retail Capacity Study for the wider Knocknaheeny/Hollyhill area in 2016, undertaken by Cork City Council's City Northwest Quarter Regeneration Team, confirmed that improved retail provision should be a regeneration priority for the area. The Cork City Northwest Regeneration Plan 2011 recognised a need to consider the expansion of retail services locally to meet population growth, with a pronounced need to avoid displacement and fragmentation of the retail offer in the area. The Plan identifies some high-level weaknesses in the current approach to retail provision in the area which needs to be addressed, including design and public realm improvements to facilitate the regeneration of the area.

While Hollyhill currently operates as a neighbourhood centre, based on the above it was identified in the 2015 City Development plan as having the potential to develop into a district centre, to serve the northwest suburb quarter primarily based on improved convenience goods floorspace, lower order comparison goods, retail services, and social and community facilities. The nearest district centre is currently Blackpool, c. 2.5km from the site.

The subject lands benefits from proximity to a number of sporting and recreational facilities; in the form of St Vincent's GAA Club, O'Neill Park, Castlevue AFC grounds, LeirureWorld Churchfield, Kilmore Park and Nash's Boreen amenity walk. Alongside this, there are a number of schools in the vicinity, St Mary's on the Hill (Mhuire Ar Chnoc Haoine), Scoil Íosagáin, Scoil Aiséirí Chríost and Scoil Padre Pio primary schools and North Presentation Catholic Secondary, Terence McSwiney Community College. In addition, the site is close to St Mary's Primary Care Centre.

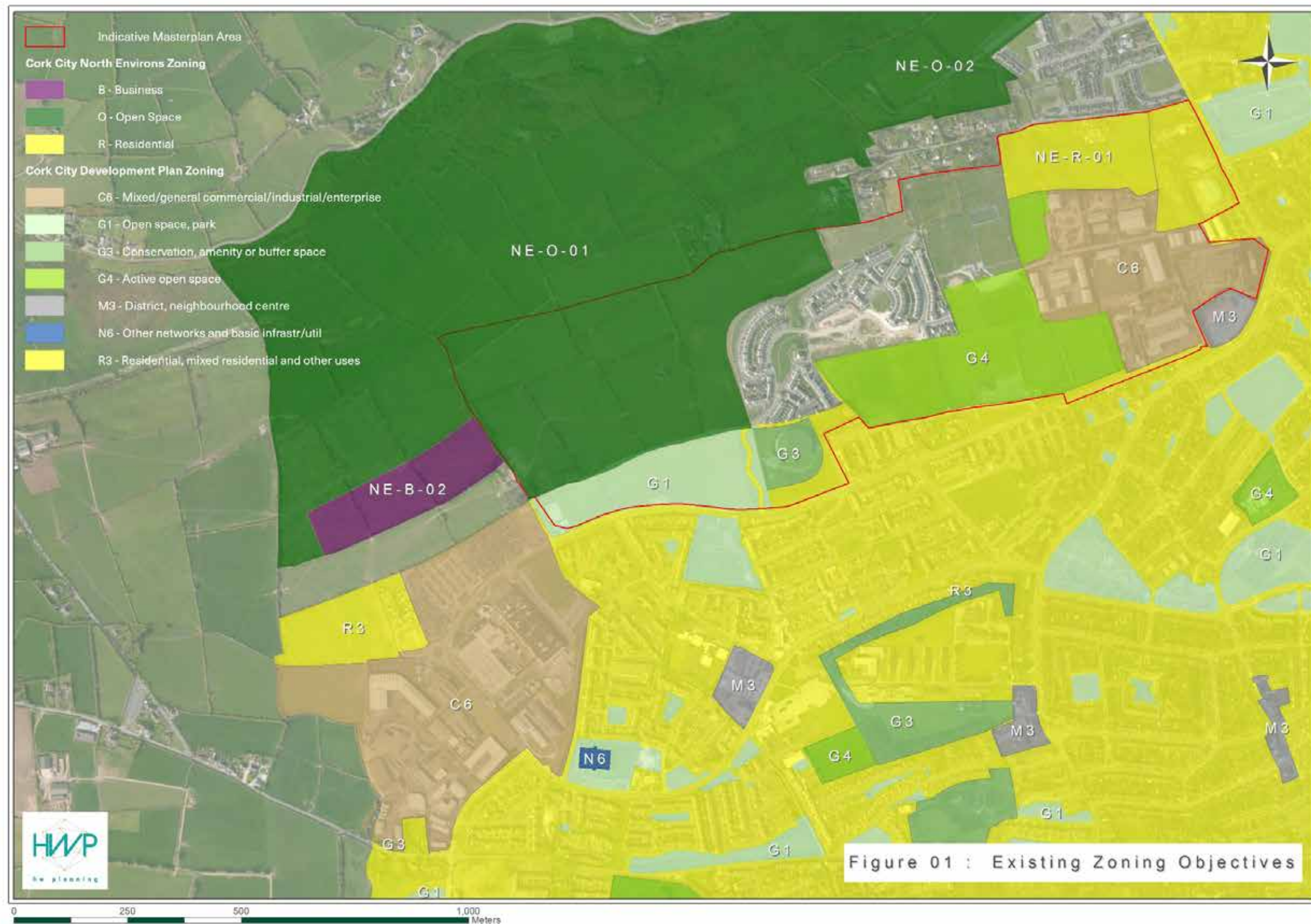
The zoning of the subject lands reflects their disparate administrative backgrounds, with the former Cork City North Environs area, formerly within the County Council's area, falling predominantly within a much larger NE-O_01 'Open Space' for public recreation area (111 hectares). The portion of the lands historically within the Cork City Development Plan 2016 comprises smaller parcels with greater diversity in zoned use, including residential, light

industrial use, public open space, sports grounds and a landscape preservation zone around the landmark feature of the water tower. The current juxtaposing of mixed uses, that aren't always compatible, has resulted in an area where the connectivity between uses is poor and where increased permeability is required. The extensive open space zoning also presents challenges, in terms of its usability and security. The masterplan reconfigures this area of open space into smaller, more focused recreational areas made more secure by passive supervision of adjoining buildings.

The proposed route of the Northern Distributer Road in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) traversed these lands, however, the final route is now to the north of the site. The proposed link road, as outlined in the masterplan, would tie in with and complement the Northern Distributer Road by providing direct access to the Apple campus when it is constructed.

The appropriate development of these lands has been hindered historically by their peripheral boundary location, where the contrasting zoning policies of the two authorities have inhibited the adoption of a joined-up approach to the development of these lands. This legacy issue has now been removed, opening up an opportunity to develop these lands in a coherent-manner.







Section 3

Planning Policy Context

3

- 3.1** Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)
- 3.2** Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)
- 3.3** Cork City Development Plan 2015
- 3.4** Cork County Development Plan 2014
- 3.5** Cobh Municipal District Plan 2017 (LAP)
- 3.6** Cork City Northwest Regeneration Plan 2011



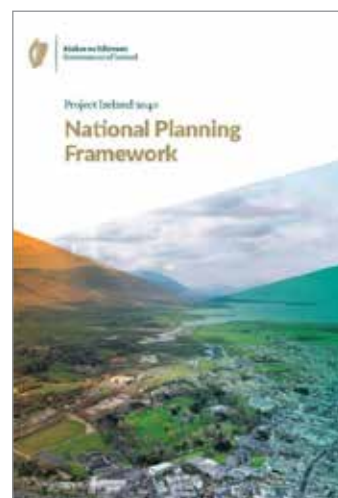




Section 3

Planning Policy Context

This section presents a short summary of relevant current planning policy as it currently relates to the subject site.



1 million



by 2040

>= 50% Growth



Cork, Limerick, Galway & Waterford by 2040

2 - 3 times



Cork City & Suburbs Growth Rate compared to national average

3.1 Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in 2018 and sets out the targets, ambitions and national objectives for the development of the state up to 2040. The NPF's objectives are based around the following areas

- Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth
- Compact, Smart, Sustainable Growth
- New approach to Land Zoning
- Amenities and services catch-up

The NPF notes that the rate of population growth in Cork City and suburbs was just over half of the national average between 1996 and 2016. The NPF sets ambitious targets for Cork City and suburban area with population growth of 105,000 – 125,000 and a minimum population of 314,000 by 2040. This will require a population growth rate of 50 – 60%.

In terms of Cork, the NPF has set ambitious targets and vision and indicates that

- Cork has positioned itself as an emerging medium-sized European centre of growth and innovation.
- Building on this potential is critical to further enhancing Ireland's metropolitan profile.
- Ambitious vision for Cork – growth of at least 50% by 2040
- Unprecedented growth rate, to create viable alternative to Dublin

The NPF acknowledges that “the location of housing has taken on a dispersed and fragmented character which has led to people living further away from their jobs (Section 6.6).

National Policy Objective 6 emphasizes the need for rejuvenating urban areas that can accommodate a range of functional roles:

“Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.”

National Policy Objective 7 focuses on the need for “more self-contained settlements of all sizes, supporting a continuation of balanced population and employment growth.”

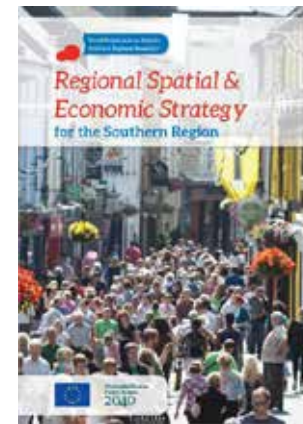
National Policy Objective 11 notes that “In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.”

National Policy Objective 31 aims to: “Prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with investment in programmes for life-long learning, especially in areas of higher education and further education and training where skills gaps are identified.”



3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

The RSES 'aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) of the ten local authorities in the Region'.



The RSES indicates that

- An innovative approach is taken to securing long-term transformational and rejuvenation-focused city growth through Metropolitan Strategic Area Plans (MASPs) for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas and the identification of Key Towns. The principles of compact growth and unlocking the potential of centrally located sites will be key deliverables of the MASPs. Developing underutilised land to boost population and economic outputs of city centre areas and our strong network of towns is pursued. In turn these areas will act as economic drivers for their wider regions. Developing their combined strengths will create an effective complement to the economic strength of Dublin.

Section 3.2 of RSES defines the 'Guiding Principles for the Cork MASP and three of which are defined as

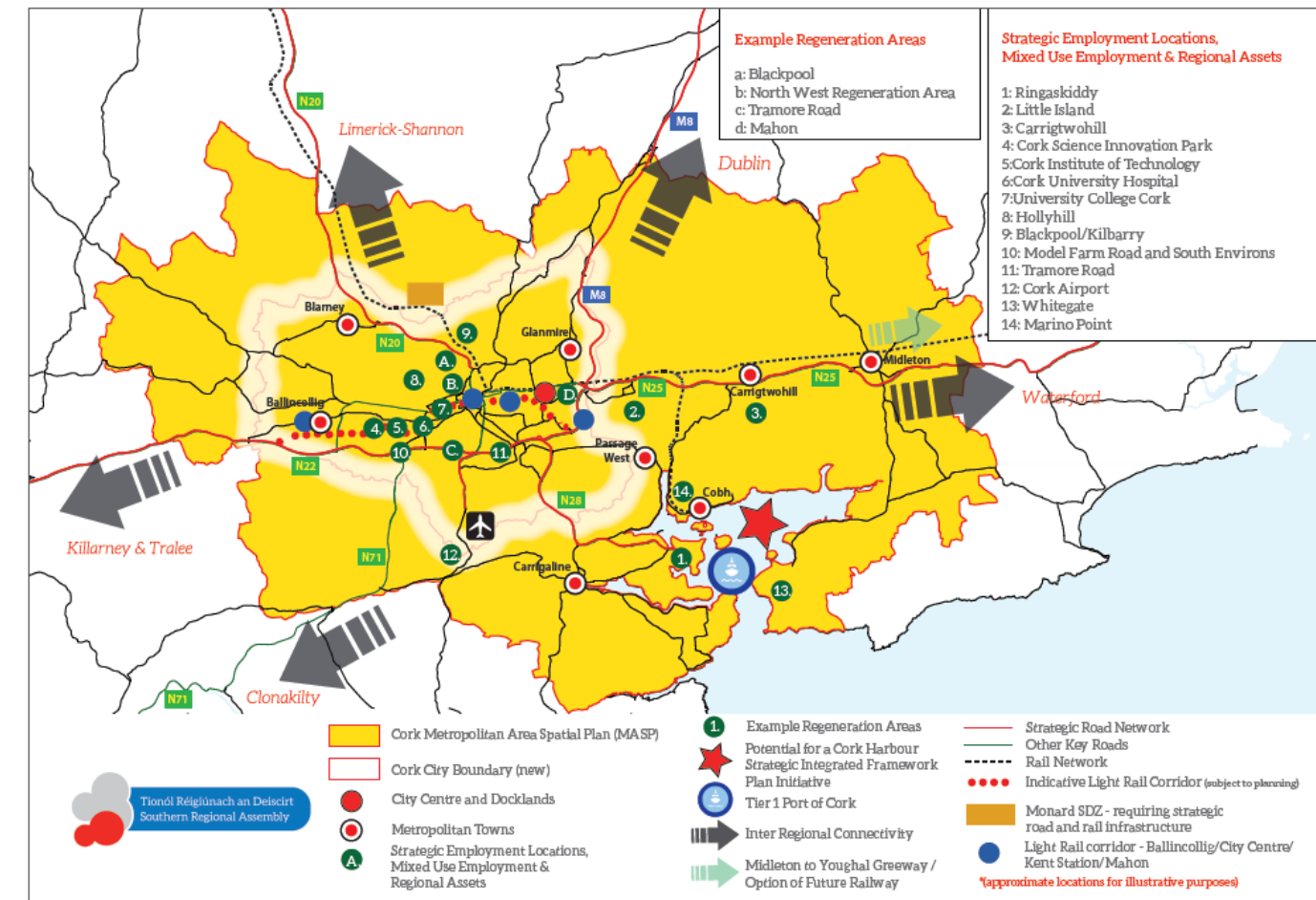
- 'Integrated transport and land use: Target growth along high quality public transport corridors and nodes linked to the delivery of key public transport projects under the development of a Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy including an enhanced public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure, light rail corridor, suburban rail corridor and strategic bus network corridors, all interconnecting with the city centre and connecting with strategic employment locations in the metropolitan area.
- Accelerate housing delivery: Activate strategic residential development areas and support the steady supply of sites to accelerate housing supply and the adoption of performance-based design standards as supported by NPF National Policy Objective 13 to achieve higher densities in the urban built up areas, supported by better services and public transport.
- Employment density in the right places: Re-intensify employment within the city and suburbs, activate strategic employment opportunities to complement existing employment hubs in the city and metropolitan area. Recognise the variety of established manufacturing operations/hubs and FDI investments around the city in the metropolitan area and seek to improve sustainable connectivity to these locations.'

The RSES places a significant emphasis on quality placemaking and the creation of new sustainable neighborhoods. RPO 176 '10 minute City and Town Concepts' aims to.

"attain sustainable compact settlements whereby, a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes or are accessible by high quality public transport services by connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services".

The RSES recognizes Hollyhill, based on the presence of Apple, as a Strategic Employment Location, where significant growth potential exists for jobs and employment.

The North West Regeneration Masterplan is also noted in the RSES as a strategic residential and regeneration initiative, where investment should be prioritized in retrofitting infrastructure and services.



Cork MASP Policy Objective 16

Retail

a. Support the role of Metropolitan Cork as a Level 1 location for retail provision and the retail hierarchy for as identified in the Metropolitan Cork Joint Retail Strategy 2013 which identifies:

- Level 1:** Metropolitan Cork: Cork City Centre
- Level 2:** Large Metropolitan Towns: Ballincollig, Carrigaline, Cobh and Midleton.
- Level 2:** District Centres: Blackpool, Douglas, Wilton, Mahon Point, Ballyvolane, Cork Docklands, Hollyhill.
- Level 3:** Smaller Metropolitan Towns: Carrigtwohill, Glanmire, Passage West, Blarney, Monard.

b. Support the role of the Metropolitan Cork Joint Retail Strategy and seek further preparation of joint retail strategies for Metropolitan Cork between Cork City Council and Cork County Council in accordance with Section 28 Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).

- Level 4:** Neighbourhood Centres and Large Village Centres.
- Level 5:** Local centres, corner shops and smaller villages.



Cork MASP Policy Objective 1 states the following overall objectives for the Cork MASP area;

The Cork MASP allows flexibility to respond to changes in planning policy, infrastructure requirements and prioritises that will arise in the area which will be added to Cork City as a result of the boundary extension.

Support communities in Metropolitan Towns..... seek vibrant metropolitan communities with a high quality of life, mixed uses and services and seek the infrastructure led sustainable compact growth of metropolitan settlements.

Regarding the role of retail, Cork MASP Policy Objective 16 outlines the retail hierarchy as shown, recognizing Hollyhill as a Level 2 district centre in the retail hierarchy.

3.3 Cork City Development Plan 2015



The Development Plan estimates there is a capacity for 19,850 housing units in the city as a whole. The majority of this capacity is allocated to the Docklands and Mahon (9,327 units combined). Blackpool and the North West Regeneration Area are allocated a capacity of 1,506 units.

Section 2.29 recognises the potential for a further District Centre at Hollyhill, which currently operates as a Neighbourhood Centre. It is considered that it has the potential to develop into a District Centre, to serve the north-west sector of the city. The centre will be characterised by improved convenience goods floorspace, lower order comparison goods, retail services, and social and community facilities.

Area	Zoned land for development (ha)	Residential zoned land (ha)	Estimated capacity (housing units)	Residential and Other Use Zoning (ha)	Estimated Capacity (housing units)	Total Units
City Centre	8.90	4.50	474	4.4	429	903
Docklands	81.10	5.70	839	75.40	7,388	8,227
Mahon	20.17	13.08	916	7.09	184	1,100
Blackpool	30.30	23.30	1,013	7.0	287	1,300
North West Regeneration Area	18.10	18.10	206	0	0	206
Rest of City	74.30	66.50	2,975	7.80	139	3,114
Total identified zoned sites	232.87	131.18	6,423	94.60	8,427	14,850
Tivoli LAP area	60	-	-	-	-	3,000
Windfall sites						2,000
Total residential yield	-	-	-	-	-	19,850

The Development Plan sets a target of 16,000 additional jobs for the city over the period from 2011 - 2021. To achieve this it envisages redevelopment on brownfield sites in the City Centre and Docklands and intensification of existing employment lands in locations such as Mahon and Blackpool. In addition, the North-West Regeneration Area is identified as an area where a major housing initiative is underway, with associated employment opportunities, as outlined in the North-West Regeneration Masterplan 2011. However, only 3,000 of the envisaged 16,000 new jobs growth in the city would be in the Northside.

Section 3.14 of the Development Plan notes that since the economic downturn the five wards with the highest unemployment rates (averaging 41%) are located on the north side of the city in areas with concentrations of social housing. It states that many of these unemployed will not have the skill levels to benefit from the expansion of high tech businesses.

To address this Objective 3.4 Skills and Human Capital states that:

"Cork City Council will work with other stakeholders in the education and training sectors and through the Local Enterprise Office to develop skills within the Cork area to match the needs of existing and future businesses. It will work with other agencies to provide support services for the unemployed and to help maintain and expand businesses in areas of high unemployment"

The subject lands are currently zoned as follows:

- **Public Open Space** - with an objective to "protect, retain and provide for recreational uses, open space and amenities...";
- **Sports Grounds** - "To promote the provision and management of high quality sporting facilities";
- **Business and Technology** - "To provide for high technology related office based industry".
- **Residential, Local Services and Institutional Uses** - "To protect and provide for residential uses, local services, institutional uses, and civic uses, having regard to employment policies outlined in Chapter 3."
- NW9 zoning identifies the Knocknaheeny Water Tower as a Landscape Preservation Zone, with landscape assets categorised as a landmark. No site specific objectives are listed for this landmark.

3.4 Cork County Development Plan 2014

Objective CS 3-1 of the Plan relates to City Environs (North and South) with the strategic aim of:

"Growth in population and employment so that the Cork Gateway can compete effectively for investment and jobs. Develop to complement & consolidate the development of the city as a whole and providing enhanced potential to rebalance the City through new development in the north. "



3.5 Cobh Municipal District Plan 2017 (LAP)

The vision for the Cork City North Environs as outlined in Section 3.4.1 of the LAP is to

"re-invigorate the northern suburbs of the city, within the County area, as a significant location for future residential development. This will require a planned major mixed use development at Ballyvolane coordinated with substantial infrastructure investment, the provision of enhanced community and recreational facilities and public transport accessibility, with the aim of rebalancing the provision of services more equitably throughout the city".

The specific zoning that applies to the subject lands includes:

NE-O-01 - "Open space for public recreation including the provision of playing pitches, amenity walks, pitch and putt course, children's playground, open parkland, areas of urban forestry and built leisure facilities, subject to appropriate scaling and siting."

NE-R-01 – "Medium A density residential development."

3.6 Cork City Northwest Regeneration Plan 2011

The Regeneration Plan recognises a need to consider the expansion of retail services locally to meet population growth, with a pronounced need to avoid displacement and fragmentation of the retail offer in the area. The consolidation of existing retail centres, with an emphasis on improvements to Hollyhill Neighbourhood Centre is identified as the preferred strategy. The Plan identifies some high level weaknesses which need to be addressed as part of an improved approach and underlines that the centres development should be coupled with significant design improvements to the public realm to facilitate the regeneration of the area.



Implementation Strategy. Phase 1 and 2 summary