

# SEA Screening Report

## Preparation of the Cherryhound Local Area Plan

### Fingal County Council

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fingal County Council intends to make a Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Cherryhound Area as delineated in the Fingal County Development Plan (2011-2017) in North Blanchardstown. The purpose of this Screening Report is to determine whether the LAP requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

#### 2.0 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the LAP is to guide the future growth and sustainable development of this area of Blanchardstown in accordance with the provisions of the Fingal Development Plan adopted this year.

In particular the purpose is to:

- Promote the development of the lands for general enterprise opportunities and employment generation.
- Programme the delivery of the support infrastructure to enable the development of phased mixed-use employment development
- Promote biodiversity in the provision of parks, recreational, open space and landscaping.
- Promote sustainable water drainage and management systems
- Promote a high standard of design for all uses including commercial and industrial users.
- Conserve and integrate the archaeological heritage.
- Reinvent the Quarry for possible future recreational/leisure use.

The level of development proposed is unlikely to be developed over the lifetime of this LAP, (which is 6 years unless extended, in year 5 of the LAP for a further 5 years, if deemed appropriate by a resolution of the Council). The LAP outlines the optimal sustainable development strategy for the area over a longer time period and can only be developed in tandem with the delivery of the necessary physical infrastructure.

### 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE LAP AREA

The lands the subject of the LAP comprise c. 240 ha (593 acres). They are located in the northern part of the Blanchardstown North Employment Catchment Area in proximity to the Cherryhound Intersection on the M2 Motorway with easy access to the national motorway network. The development of the lands is contingent on the delivery of the planned strategic Tyrrelstown to Cherryhound Link Road. Existing road frontages are to the M2, as well as to substandard local county/rural roads on sections of Bay Lane and the Ratoath Road.

The lands are currently largely in agricultural use for tillage and grazing with a large ESB stores and Distribution Station to the south. There are a number of stand alone individual houses. Neighbouring land uses include developed employment uses with a working population of c. 20,000 and the Blanchardstown Institute of Technology to the south and west. There are residential lands in the form of Tyrrelstown and Hollystown to the west. Lands to the north are in agricultural use.

The lands can be described as gently rolling in landscape terms with large fields enclosed by hedgerows. There are a number of tree groupings that are significant because of their visual impact and scarcity. The lands contain one recorded monument protected under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, although there are a limited number of features that may also be of archaeological interest.

The lands are suitable for development in a topographical sense.

### 4.0 FINGAL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2017

The lands are zoned 'GE' in the 2011-2017 Fingal County Development Plan, the objective of which is to " *Provide opportunities for general enterprise and employment* ". The area is stated to be subject to an LAP.

#### 4.1 Local Objectives

The Development Plan provides for the following Local Objectives on the subject lands:

- ❖ **No. 365-** Consider within the context of the LAP, the provision of a high quality mixed-use gateway development including hotel, office development and logistics uses.
- ❖ **No. 368-** Ensure a high level of landscaping and tree planting along the route of the N2/N3 Link Road at Killamonan/Cherryhound in order to soften the visual effect of the 'GE' lands around it.

- ❖ **No. 380** -Ensure that the LAP for these employment-generating lands at Killamonan/Cherryhound provide for the use of the south western portion of the lands as a high quality landscaped buffer area between industrial /commercial buildings and the residential areas. Roadside hedges and existing trees, which are located along the south-western edge of the subject area and woods in the south-western area, will be protected where practicable.
- ❖ **No. 381**- Provide for the extraction of aggregates at this location.
- ❖ **No. 395**- Require a high level of landscaping and tree planting along the boundaries of these 'GE' lands at Killamonan/Cherryhound in order to soften the visual effect of the industrial/commercial buildings.

The Development Plan provides for the following Local Objective on the adjoining lands to the east.

- ❖ **No.. 377** - Consider the long term use of these lands as part of the Cherryhound LAP process

## 5.0 MAPS

The following Maps are attached to this screening document:

**Map No 1** - Strategic Location Map

**Map No 2** - The LAP Area

**Map No.3** - Extract from Land Use Zoning Map 2011-2017 Development Plan

## 6.0 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Under SI No. 436 of 2004 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations) 2004 (Article 14A) where a planning authority proposes to make a Local Area Plan under Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Act, it shall consider whether or not the proposed Local Area Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and in doing so must take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Regulations. The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 amends the 2001 Regulations under 3 (k) by substituting the following (extract only) for Article 14B

"Where-

- (a) the population or the target population of the area of a local area plan is 5,000 or more, or
- (b) the area covered by the local area plan is greater than 50 square kilometres"

The effect of this substitution is that an SEA is required for all LAPs having a target population in excess of 5,000 persons.

The following Section sets out the required report pursuant to Article 14A of the Regulations.

## **7.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS**

Criteria as set out in Schedule 2(A) of SEA Regulations 2004

### **7.1 Characteristics of the Plan**

*(i) The degree to which the Plan sets the framework for the sustainable development of the area, including the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocated resources.*

The LAP will establish a more detailed planning framework for the lands deriving from the County Development Plan. It will determine land use, land use location, nature, size and operating conditions.

It will identify the existing character of the area and the context for development and then set out a development strategy, development management and implementation measures appropriate to the area. It will provide the means to guide public and private investment to achieve sustainable development. It will include policies and objectives that are designed to provide a positive framework to achieve that end. The LAP will be the subject of public consultation with the aim of achieving a document that has wide general support.

*(ii) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy*

The LAP will not influence other plans other than individual non-statutory Master Plans that may be proposed for individual parcels of land. The LAP forms the last level within a hierarchy of plans from the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 through to the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Dublin Area, then to the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017. Its policies and objectives are set within the context of the Development Plan in accordance with Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2009 for which a full SEA was prepared and published.

The LAP will also have regard to other planning, environmental and related legislation and policy including European Union Directives, Ministerial Directives and Guidelines.

*(iii) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.*

Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000-2009 sets out the contents to be included in Development Plans. Those contents are permeated with the objective to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Fingal County Development Plan 2011-17 adheres to the principles of sustainable development in accordance with the Act.

The LAP will comply with the principles, policies and objectives of the Development Plan and will in itself promote sustainable development.

*(iv) Environmental Problems relevant to the proposed LAP*

### **Services**

The LAP lands are not fully serviced and one of the main purposes of the LAP is to provide for the timely delivery of the necessary infrastructure to service the area. These services will include roads, cycleways, pedestrian routes, drainage systems, water supply and utility services. These will all be designed to high environmental standards. The critical piece of infrastructure is the planned Tyrrelstown to Cherryhound Strategic Road Link, which is under construction and anticipated to be open Spring 2013.

The Urban Waste Water Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) aims to protect the environment from adverse effects of wastewater discharges by ensuring wastewater is appropriately treated before it is discharged to the environment. Further improvements in the wider Dublin area will be required in relation to sewage treatment at the Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant and a new Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant to meet the likely demands that the on-going and full development of the area would bring.

### **Public Transport**

The current level of public transport services is limited in the form of bus transport to and from Tyrrelstown and Ratoath, however it is anticipated that bus services can be increased and routed appropriately to provide for the anticipated increase in the working population. This would encourage a better modal split in terms of public transport.

### **Flooding**

The area is not susceptible to flooding. Provided suitable sustainable urban drainage systems are installed in developments, no problem in this respect is anticipated.

## **Water Quality**

The proposed development lands at Cherryhound are located within the Tolka Water Management Unit (WMU). The lands to the south drain towards the Pinkeen Rivers that in turn are tributaries of the Tolka River. The Tolka WMU has been designated as 'poor status' by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive. It will be important that future development is scrutinised to ensure that the status of the sub-catchment is improved.

## **Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Designated Habitats**

The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government's (DoHLG) Circular Letter SEA 1/08 and the National Parks and Wildlife Services' (NPWS) Circular 1/08, both dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008, state that any draft land use plan, including an LAP, prepared under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006, must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites (being SACs, NHAs or SPAS). The LAP area does not lie within any such designated area and is remote from any such designated area. A Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment screening will nonetheless be carried out on the draft LAP.

An ecological survey of the lands was carried out earlier this year by Roger Goodwillie and Associates. The natural heritage in terms of flora and fauna are typical of pasture/land cultivated agricultural land. Anticipated species of note are likely to be bats and badgers and the presence of yellow hammers was noted. The retention of significant tree groupings and hedges is recommended in the report. The nature of the natural heritage will change with any development, but protection can be afforded to bats and badgers through appropriate design measures in retaining significant habitats as open space and preserving the tree groups and hedges.

## **Archaeological Heritage**

An archaeological survey was carried out earlier this year. It identified limited areas of interest aside from the one recorded monument. Again suitable measures can be taken in terms of locating open space and requiring appropriate further investigation by way of conditions attaching to planning permissions which can be applied to ensure impacts are not significant.. No built heritage items of significance were identified.

## **Landscape**

The landscape is a typical rural landscape of large enclosed fields with occasional groups of trees. It has no designated status in terms of outstanding beauty or views. It is impacted negatively by electricity pylons.

## Noise

The LAP area lies under the inner (to the north) and outer (to the south) Dublin Airport Noise Zones. The nature of the land uses zoned for the area, as well as normal noise insulation measures, should ensure that no significant problems arise.

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

These plans and legislation are considered under the Fingal County Development Plan. The LAP is set within the context of that Plan. The LAP will address the application of:-

- ❖ The Water Framework Directive
- ❖ The Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (as amended).

## 7.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:-

*(i) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.*

The implementation of the LAP will result in the conversion of lands mainly in agricultural use into urban forms of development, in particular employment-generating uses. Generally it is considered that the effects on the existing environment will be irreversible but acceptable within the context of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. As the change would occur on a planned basis within a hierarchy of plans, it is considered the changes will be positive. In addition, development management measures can be included in the LAP, which, together with the assessment of proposed developments on an individual basis as part of the planning application process, will ensure that any potential adverse effects are eliminated or mitigated.

*(ii) The cumulative nature of the effects*

There are potential cumulative effects resulting from future development in relation to biodiversity, water quality and groundwater. A broader range of plant species is likely to feature in landscaping with an increase in tree and shrub numbers and fauna, particularly bird species will be likely to be more diverse taking advantage of new varied habitats and landscaping. The application of the Water Framework Directive and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive together with appropriate policies and objectives in the LAP will ensure that cumulative effects are avoided or mitigated.

*(iii) The transboundary nature of the effects*

It is not considered that the implementation of the LAP will give rise to transboundary effects at national level with other Member states.

*(iv) The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to Accidents)*

There is potential risk to human health arising from aircraft noise however the population will be a working population employed indoors where appropriate noise insulation measures can be taken and enforced through appropriate conditions applying to planning permissions.

There is a Seveso site to the south west of the area where a consultation distance of 1000 metres applies. The very southern part of the LAP area lies within this limit, however it can be noted that this area is substantially developed and includes the large ESB Station and Stores. Any further development in this section of the LAP area will be the subject of consultation. The population that would be affected is likely to be small and at a low density. There is no residential population involved.

*(v) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effect (geographical area and size of population likely to be effected).*

The LAP area extends to 240 ha. It is sparsely populated in terms of residential population and has a working population largely confined to a limited area to the very south. The future development will be for employment generating uses as set out in the Fingal Development Plan. No additional residential population is envisaged. After providing for principal roads and open space and omitting lands recently developed, 128 ha are available for development. These lands could accommodate an extensive working population. On the basis of the density of the current working population of circa 20,000 in the North Blanchardstown area, an additional 9,000 persons could be expected. This figure could be higher depending on the nature of the employment and the density of development that is achieved. The new Regulations quoted in paragraph 6 above now set a population figure of 5,000 persons above which an SEA is mandatory. It is not clear whether this applies to a residential population or to other populations as well, it can be noted that the new population will be a working population exclusively (with the exception of hotel guests) but on the precautionary principle, it would be appropriate that it applies to the subject LAP and therefore an SEA is required.

*(vi) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be effected due to:*

**a) The Special Natural Characteristics or Cultural Heritage**



No special natural characteristics have been identified. There is one recorded monument within the LAP area and a number of other potential archaeological sites have been identified. It is not anticipated that the cultural heritage will be negatively affected by the implementation of the LAP, provided appropriate protective measures are incorporated into the LAP.

**b) Exceeded Environmental Quality Standards or Limit Values**

It is not anticipated that development carried out in the LAP area will result in the breach of environmental quality standards as established by EU and national regulations.

**c) Intensive Land Uses**

The uses permitted under the employment zoning of the area in the Fingal County Development Plan are not of a nature that would involve intensive land use. The intensity of use will be likely similar to that in adjoining employment areas.

*(vii) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, Community or international protection status.*

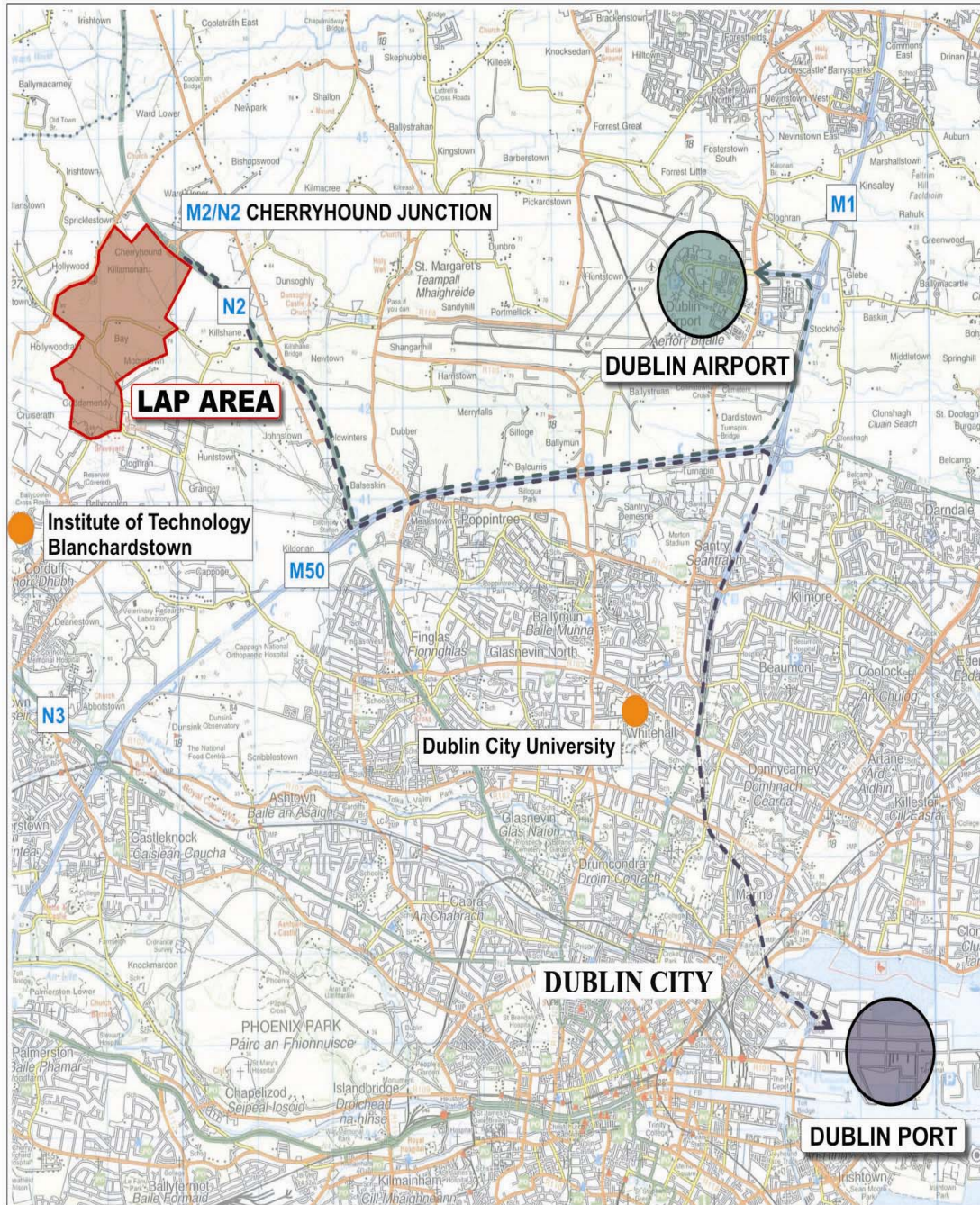
There are no designated sites in proximity to the subject area.

## **8.0 CONSULTATIONS**

The following prescribed environmental authorities have been consulted as part of the screening process.

- ❖ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- ❖ The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG)
- ❖ The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

(Responses were received from each of the environmental authorities to the effect that a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the proposed LAP be undertaken).



 <p><b>Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall</b> Fingal County Council</p>	<p>— CHERRYHOUND TO AIRPORT By Road 14km</p>	<p><b>CHERRYHOUND LAP</b></p> <p><b>Map No.1</b> Strategic Location Map</p>
	<p>— CHERRYHOUND TO PORT By Road 19km</p>	

