

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Final Report
For the 3rd Variation to the Tralee Town Development Plan
2009-2015**



**Environmental Assessment Unit
Kerry County Council
Nollaig 2016**

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1.0 Introduction

Kerry County Council (the Planning Authority) varied the Tralee Town Development Plan 2009-2015 at the December 2016 Council meeting, in order to include the population allocation and housing land requirement for Tralee as contained in the Core Strategy of the Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021. This required a review of all residentially zoned lands and ultimately a significant reduction in the total area of lands zoned for such use. In order to achieve this, the Planning Authority made a variation to the Plan under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

Article 13K of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 outlines the process by which determination of the need for environmental assessment of variations to development plans are made. The preliminary SEA screening assessment carried out on the proposed variation (July 2016) was also informed by a screening exercise of the proposed variation against the Environmental Protection Objectives contained in the Environmental Report prepared as part of the Town Development Plan 2009-2015 review. A further screening exercise was carried out on the proposed material alterations dated September 2016.

This report constitutes a final screening report of the material alterations to the variation following the consultation period on whether or not significant effects on the environment are likely.

2.0 Purpose and outline of the material alterations

The material alterations proposed involved the retention of the unformulated zoning on lands at Tralee-West, Lohercannon area, (It was proposed to zone them agricultural in Variation no. 3. See map 1 below. Secondly it involved a zoning change from proposed agricultural to residential on land at Blennerville as shown on map 1 below. These lands were originally zoned Housing phase 1 medium density in the Town Development Plan. The residential zoning reflects the existing use on site which includes a domestic house and garden.

3.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

3.1 Preliminary determination and recommendation under Article 13K of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended.

The initial 'SEA Screening Report' associated with this variation and proposed material alterations to proposed variation no. 3, concluded that significant environmental implications were not likely to arise as a result of the proposed variation and proposed material alterations and that a SEA was not required.

3.2 Consultation with Environmental Authorities/Public Consultation

The SEA Screening Report on the proposed material alterations (together with the Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report) was forwarded to the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13A (4) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended and submissions and observations were invited.

A public consultation phase was also undertaken as part of this process. In accordance with Section 13(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) notice of the proposed material alterations were published in the local newspaper, 'The Kerry's Eye' inviting observations and submissions. Copies of variation no. 3 were put on display from 6th October 2016 to 4th November 2016.

Four submissions were received from the following:

- I. Dublin Airport Authority
- II. Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- III. Environmental Protection Agency
- IV. Department of Education and Skills

The submissions received are detailed and responded to in the Chief Executive's Report. The responses received have noted no observations on the proposed material alterations.

No further amendments are proposed following the consultation period to the material alterations as initially outlined.

3.3 Consideration of whether or not material alterations to proposed variation no.3 of the Tralee Town Development Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The submissions / observations received do not suggest that an SEA is warranted in this instance.

The lands under consideration here as part of the material alterations were initially zoned either *unformulated* or for *housing* in the original Town Plan and were further assessed and designated as part of the core strategy, (Variation no.1 of the Town Plan). That variation was subject to an SEA screening assessment.

The material alterations proposed will not result in additional lands being made available for development, rather the alterations simply revert back to the original zoning situation under the Tralee Town Development Plan before variation no. 3 was proposed. The zonings will not contravene the Core Strategy as set out in the Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021 given that the lands at Lohercannon are to be *unformulated* and do not presently allow for the development of same prior to the preparation and adoption of a Local Area Plan while the lands at Blennerville recognise the existing land use on the site- which is currently *residential*.

Any future planning application that may arise on these lands will have to adhere to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, including safeguards built into the Tralee Town Development Plan in relation to waste water and other environmental considerations.

No environmental effects were found as a consequence of the implementation of this variation and material alterations. Further the Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report prepared for variation no. 3 has concluded that the plan individually and in combination with other plans and projects shall not adversely affect the integrity of a European Site.

The Elected Members have not made any further modifications to the material alterations therefore a revised screening exercise is not required in this instance. (The original screening exercise is found in the SEA Screening report dated June 2016)

3.4 Overall Conclusion

The variation supports sustainable principles already contained in the Tralee Town Development Plan 2009-2015.

Following careful review and consideration of the issues concerning the variation, it is concluded that the variation which includes the material alterations made to it will not result in a significant adverse environmental effect and would not therefore require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

This conclusion has been based on consideration of the following factors:

- The variation as presented, which relates to an amendment to the core strategy, - specifically to the insertion of a new population projection and housing land requirement for the town in line with the Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021 and to the inclusion of policies in relation to the promotion of the regeneration of the town's core which is required to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the future growth of Tralee town.
- The variation relates to existing zoned lands in the town plan. Additional new lands are not proposed to be zoned for residential development rather this variation will see a very significant reduction (from 214.19ha to 75.16ha) in the overall area of lands zoned for residential use. Lands that were originally zoned for housing use in the Town Plan and are not now required for such a purpose will now be zoned a mix of uses such as agricultural, neighbourhood centres, open space, educational/ community/institutional and residential to reflect established uses on the ground or potential suitable use having regard to the established pattern of development in the area. All of these lands, the subject of this variation have previously been assessed under proper planning and sustainable development criteria during the initial town plan preparation stage.
- This variation will ensure sustainable urban development as a consequence of zoning suitable vacant and underutilised sites that are within closer proximity to the town centre and existing services rather

- than facilitating edge of town development and as a consequence; reduce the potential for unsustainable travel patterns while facilitating an efficient return on public and private investments in enabling infrastructures.
- Further when considering what lands to zone for residential development, it is noted that this variation has paid particular attention to lands identified at risk to flooding (in the draft CFRAM maps) and has omitted them from proposed residential use which is considered a flood vulnerable use.
 - The existing safeguarding policies on environmental protection set out in the Tralee Town Development Plan 2009-2015.

In considering the above, the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended and the submissions or observations received in response to the notice issued under sub-article (3) of the said regulations, were taken into account.

4.0 Recommendation

Significant effects on the environment are not considered likely from the implementation of variation no. 3 to the Tralee Town Development Plan 2009-2015. The reasons are detailed in this screening report. A SEA is not required.


5.0 Determination under Article 13 K

It is recommended that the following determination be made by the Planning Authority:-

Having had regard to the requirements of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended and having consulted with the Environmental Authorities and considered their submissions, it is the determination of the Planning Authority under Article 13K(4) of the Regulations that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required in respect of variation no. 3 to the Tralee Town Development Plan 2015-2021.

Signed: 
Michelle O'Connor
Planner Officer

Date: 13/12/2016

Approved: 
Michael Scannell,
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Date: 14/12/2016

