



*Ag cur chun cinn ár Réigiún
Promoting our Region*

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20th July, 2014

A chara,

VARIATION NO. 1 KILKENNY CITY & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020.

Further to your correspondence of 15TH July, 2015, the Southern Regional Assembly sets out below its observations on Variation No. 1 to the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020, in accordance with Section 27(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Purpose of proposed variation:-

The Regional Assembly notes that the Variation relates to Objective 3C of the Development Plan which is 'to prepare a masterplan and urban design framework for the Smithwick's site and Bateman Quay during the lifetime of the Development Plan'. It is proposed in the variation to incorporate 9no. new development objectives for the masterplan area to ensure a statutory basis for high level principles which are required to underpin the future development of the former Smithwick's Brewery site, Bateman Quay/Market Yard and surrounding area which will consolidate the city centre and contribute towards its vitality and viability. It is also stated that the proposed variation intends to maximise the benefit accruing from current funding and resource opportunities.

The proposed variation consists of the following:-

- A proposed text setting out the proposed changes to the text of the Development Plan along with a map of the area concerned identifying the principal objectives.
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

- An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

Policy context and Observations of the Southern Regional Assembly

The above documents have been reviewed in conjunction with the South-East Regional Planning Guidelines and relevant national policy.

Proposed Variation

The proposed variation would provide for high level principles for the area covered by the Abbey Creative Quarter Masterplan which is also under preparation.

General Observations.

It is noted that the development context is a prominent brownfield site of approx. 5.5ha located in the historic city centre along the western banks of the River Nore, part of the River Barrow and River Nore cSAC (site code 002162) and the River Nore SPA (site code 004233).

There is also significant archaeology in the area subject to the variation and a number of Protected Structures in the area, which is located within two Architectural Conservation Areas(ACAs), the City Centre ACA and St. Canice's ACA.

The area was previously identified as a key redevelopment opportunity for the city and described as Site 2 in the Development Strategy in the City Centre Local Area Plan(LAP), now lapsed. With the closure of the Smithwick's Brewery in the last couple of years, the strategic nature of the Brewery site together with Bateman's Quay was recognised by the inclusion Objective 3C in the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2014 -2020 with the objective 'to prepare a master plan and urban design framework for the Smithwick's site and Bateman's Quay during the lifetime of the development plan.

The high level principles to be incorporated into the Development Plan by way of this variation would provide for wider objectives to develop a new quarter of the city centre which would include:-

- A linear park along the banks of the River Nore
- An urban park in the vicinity of St. Francis Abbey
- Provision for residential development
- Bus and coach parking facilities and 'park and walk' facilities.

It is noted that wider objectives of the variation for the area include priority for pedestrians and cyclists in the new urban streets and lanes of the masterplan area and objectives for a low carbon strategy and near low carbon buildings.

Given the rich archaeological and architectural heritage of the area, the Regional Assembly notes that the development in the masterplan area will be informed by an Archaeological Strategy and a Heritage Conservation Plan for the area.

The Regional Assembly considers that the proposed variation as described above would provide for a comprehensive approach to redevelopment of a strategic city centre site in Kilkenny, a designated 'Hub' in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Strategic Planning Area of the Southern Region.

The proposed variation to the Development Plan would incorporate objectives that demonstrate a strong commitment to urban design, heritage and conservation and low carbon development on a brownfield city centre site that has potential to contribute to city centre vitality, an improved tourism offering and the provision of green infrastructure and healthy cities.

The Regional Assembly considers that the proposed variation would assist in implementation of Strategic Goal A7 'Promoting tourism and attracting overseas and domestic visitors through promotion of diverse and well developed tourism sectors and highlighting the facilities for the business sector', and B5 for 'Promoting strategies to prioritise urban regeneration in order to improve and revitalise cities, towns and neighbourhoods and support local economies' as set out at Section 3.2 (Strategic Goals for the region) of the Regional Planning Guidelines and would also be consistent with Critical Enabling Investment Priority 4 'to foster urban regeneration and improved quality of life for all' as set out at Section 10, page 133. The proposed variation would also support the following Planning Policy Objectives (PPOs) relating to

sustainable transport (PPO 5.1), sustainable neighbourhoods (PPO5.8), climate change and energy efficiency (PPO 6.15), protection of built and natural heritage (PPOs 8.1 and 8.2) access to open space and natural amenities (PPOs 8.9, 8.18 and 8.21) and flood risk (PPOs 9.2 to 9.5).

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report

- The Regional Assembly notes the conclusion of the SEA that some variation provisions would be likely to result in significant positive effects such as contribution towards achieving sustainable mobility and protection of ecology, archaeological heritage and the status of waters. It is also noted that the SEA concludes that some variation provisions have the potential to result in significant negative environmental effects but that these effects can be mitigated by mitigation measures integrated into the variation.
- It is noted that in the context of flood risk, that the SEA finds that recommendations from the Flood Risk Assessment process have been integrated into both the Variation and the Abbey Creative Quarter Master Plan which relates to the variation. The SEA findings are that the approach to managing flood risk is consistent with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management'.

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening.

- The Regional Assembly notes the conclusion of the AA Screening that no further assessment is required in respect of the variation on the basis that the proposed variation has been formulated to ensure that uses, developments and effects arising from developments and permissions based upon the variation (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects) shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.

Conclusion

The Regional Assembly is satisfied that proposed Variation No. 1 to the Kilkenny City & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 is consistent with and would assist in the implementation the Strategic Goals identified above and Planning Policy Objectives contained in the South-East Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Blair', is written over the printed name.

Stephen Blair,

Director