



CHAPTER 12

Environmental Appraisal

The Environmental Appraisal process is defined as a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of a proposed policy, plan, programme or initiative.

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Introduction

- 12.1** An Environmental Appraisal process has been undertaken for the Development Plan, having regard to the requirement under the *Planning and Development Act 2000* for planning authorities to include in their plans information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan. The appraisal process also has regard to the proposals contained in the *EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001*, which is to be brought into Irish legislation in 2004 and which will require all local authorities preparing plans to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessments and prepare environmental reports describing the potential effects on the environment.
- 12.2** The Environmental Appraisal process is defined as a “systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of a proposed policy, plan, programme or initiative in order to ensure that they are fully included and appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision making and on a par with economic and social considerations.” (Sadler and Verheem, 1996)
- 12.3** The process provides a tool or checklist to:
 - help ensure that the full scope of environmental considerations is dealt with in the Development Plan.
 - influence proposed decisions and subsequent actions in order to minimise negative environmental effects.

Environmental Appraisal Approach

- 12.4** The whole area of Strategic Environmental Appraisal is relatively new. To date, guidelines and methodologies on environmental appraisal approaches have not been fully developed. The approach used in developing the Environmental Appraisal for this Development Plan has largely been based on the requirements of the Directive and on the experience gained in terms of the Heritage Appraisal done for the 1998 *Cork City Development Plan Review* and the Heritage Council document *Heritage Appraisal of Development Plans: A Methodology for Planning Authorities*.
- 12.5** The appraisal process followed includes a number of key steps which are outlined below:
 - Step 1, 2 & 3:**
 - Defining the purpose and scope of the appraisal.
 - Setting agreed strategic environmental aims for the environment.
 - Setting agreed goals and strategic aims for the Development Plan.
 - Step 4:**
 - Scoping the policies in the Development Plan to ensure that the full range of environmental issues is covered.
 - Step 5:**
 - Appraising the overall goals and strategic aims in the Development Plan in terms of their impact on the environment.

Appraisal Process to Date

- 12.6** The appraisal process has focused on appraising the Plan’s overall goals and strategic aims, ie. the process identified in Step 5. The strategic environmental aims which have been identified and which are used to assess the Development Plan are as follows:
 - The encouragement of energy efficiency.
 - The protection of non renewable resources and a move towards the use of renewable resources.
 - The protection of the natural environment.
 - The protection and enhancement of the built environment including quality, character and distinctiveness.
 - The overall effect on human well being and health.

Following the public consultation process, a series of amendments were made to the Draft Development Plan. It was considered that none of the amendments made to the Plan's policies would significantly alter the Plan's overall impact on the environment. The policy appraisal matrix is set out below.

12.7

Ref	Policy Topic	Energy Efficiency	Non-renewable Resources	Environmental Protection	Environmental Quality, Character, Distinctiveness	Human Well Being
Overall Goals						
1.5	To promote and provide for the sustainable development of Cork City so as to fulfil its role as a National Gateway City.	✓	○	○	✓	✓
1.6	To promote social inclusion and to facilitate equality of access to employment, education, transport, social and cultural activities.	✓	✓	○	○	✓
1.7	To provide for a high quality natural and built environment and improved quality of life for those living, working in and visiting Cork City.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Aims						
1.8 (1)	To facilitate the future development of Cork City within the integrated land use and transportation framework set out in the <i>Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001–2020</i> (CASP).	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
1.8 (2)	To promote balanced and sustainable economic development and employment within the City, ensuring that a diverse range of economic sectors are developed and supported.	✗	○	○	✓	○
1.8 (3)	To develop an integrated transport strategy, linked to land use objectives, which facilitates access to a range of transport modes and provides real transport choice.	✓	✓	○	✓	✓
1.8 (4)	To facilitate access to a range of social and community facilities for citizens, in particular access to housing that suits different household and tenure needs.	✓	○	○	✓	✓
1.8 (5)	To minimise the adverse impacts of development on the environment through policies for the management of wastes and emissions and the promotion of energy conservation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.8 (6)	To promote a high quality built environment through measures to protect the built and archaeological heritage and to promote high quality urban design.	✓	○	✗	✓	✓
1.8 (7)	To protect the natural environment and provide high quality, accessible recreational facilities.	○	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.8 (8)	To promote the regeneration of the City Centre and Docklands and the renewal of inner city residential areas, allowing the City Centre to retain and expand its role as the commercial and cultural heart of the region.	✓	○	✓	✓	✓
1.8 (9)	To promote the sustainable development of suburban parts of the city for a range of residential, services and employment opportunities.	✓	○	✓	✓	✓
1.8 (10)	To ensure the orderly development of the City through the setting out of development control policies and standards.	✓	?	✓	✓	✓

TABLE 12.1
Policy Appraisal Matrix

✓ = positive

✗ = negative

○ = neutral

? = uncertain

Review and Monitoring

12.8 The review and monitoring of the environmental impact of the Development Plan will continue during the Plan period as more detailed guidance on the methodology of environmental appraisal becomes available. This will include:

- Detailed appraisal of the Development Plan Policies.
- Identifying measurable indicators of environmental change and agreeing the scope of monitoring.