An aerial photograph of a city, likely Cork, Ireland, showing a river, bridges, and various buildings. A large, semi-transparent number '2' is overlaid on the right side of the image, indicating the chapter number.

## CHAPTER 2

# Strategic Context

**Aim:** To facilitate the future development of Cork as a national gateway city within the integrated land use and transportation framework set out in the Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001–2020 (CASP).

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## National Spatial Strategy and Cork Area Strategic Plan

- 2.1** The *National Spatial Strategy 2002–2020* (NSS) identifies Cork as the National/International Gateway City for the South-West Region with Mallow supporting it as a Hub. Cork will be part of a national framework of 'gateways' and 'hubs' that will provide the necessary scale of infrastructure and services to increase the economic attractiveness of every region in the country. The role of the 'gateways' is to drive development across the urban and rural areas they influence and support more balanced patterns of national development. It is envisaged that the *National Spatial Strategy* will be adopted by local, regional and sectoral development authorities and agencies to guide how they prioritise development and planning decisions and how they direct investment.

The NSS states:

*"Cork will build on its substantial and established economic base to lever investment into the south-west region. It will do this with the support of its scale of population, its third level institutions and the substantial capacity for growth identified in the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP). Implementation of CASP is important to secure the objectives of the NSS."*

(NSS Section 4.7)

- 2.2** The Cork City region is well positioned to commence implementation of the NSS through the strategic planning framework for the Cork City Region provided by the *Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001–2020* (CASP). The plan, which was jointly commissioned by Cork City and County Councils, provides a vision and strategy for the development of the Cork City Region up to 2020. It builds on the achievements of the *Cork Land Use and Transportation Study* (LUTS) which covered the period 1978 to 2000. As the NSS states, the implementation of CASP will anchor Cork's capabilities as a metropolitan, business-friendly, public transport-based, socially balanced and attractive centre.
- 2.3** Cork City Council will pursue the implementation of the strategy and policies put forward in CASP in co-operation with Cork County Council, state and private sectors. The structures for the implementation of CASP will be as follows:
- **Policy Committee:** Inter-authority policy group comprising of elected representatives from Cork City Council and Cork County Council.
  - **Steering Committee:** Comprising of senior officials from the local authorities, the relevant Government Departments, State Agencies, infrastructure and transport providers and educational institutions.
  - **CASP Office:** Overseen by City and County Managers and headed by a Co-ordinator with responsibility for co-ordinating, supporting and monitoring implementation of the Plan.

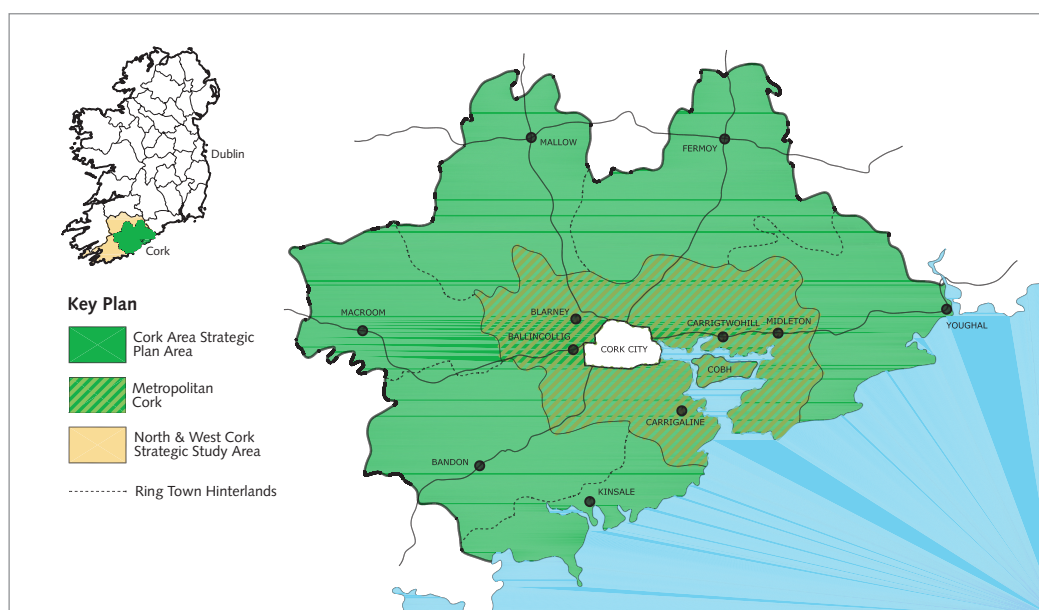
### Objectives

- Summarise the key elements of the CASP strategy, in particular those that set out the context for the future development of Cork City as a National Gateway City.
- Put forward the population and employment context and targets within which this Development Plan will operate.
- Identify Cork's strengths and opportunities that will contribute to its development as a Gateway City.
- Identify the locations that will be targeted as the key development opportunities in the City over the period of the Plan.

## The CASP Strategy: Key Concepts

- 2.4** CASP, although not a statutory plan, has been adopted by both the Cork City and County Councils and its main provisions are being given a statutory basis and further developed through the Cork City and County Development Plans.
- 2.5** CASP covers an area determined by a journey time of about forty-five minutes that has been defined as the Cork City Region. It includes Cork City, the satellite towns of Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Glanmire, Passage West, Tower, Carrigaline, Ballincollig and Blarney, the strategic employment areas of Little Island,

Ringaskiddy and Whitegate/Aghada and the ring towns of Bandon, Macroom, Fermoy, Mallow, Youghal and Kinsale including their rural hinterlands (see fig. 2.1).



**FIGURE 2.1**  
The CASP Study Area

CASP provides a framework for the integration of land use, transportation, social, economic and environmental elements for the Cork area to 2020. It takes account of the principles of the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP) which seeks to achieve economic and social cohesion, sustainable development and balanced competitiveness. It also takes account of the *National Development Plan* which identifies Cork as a Gateway City, the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *National Sustainable Development Strategy* for Ireland.

**2.6**

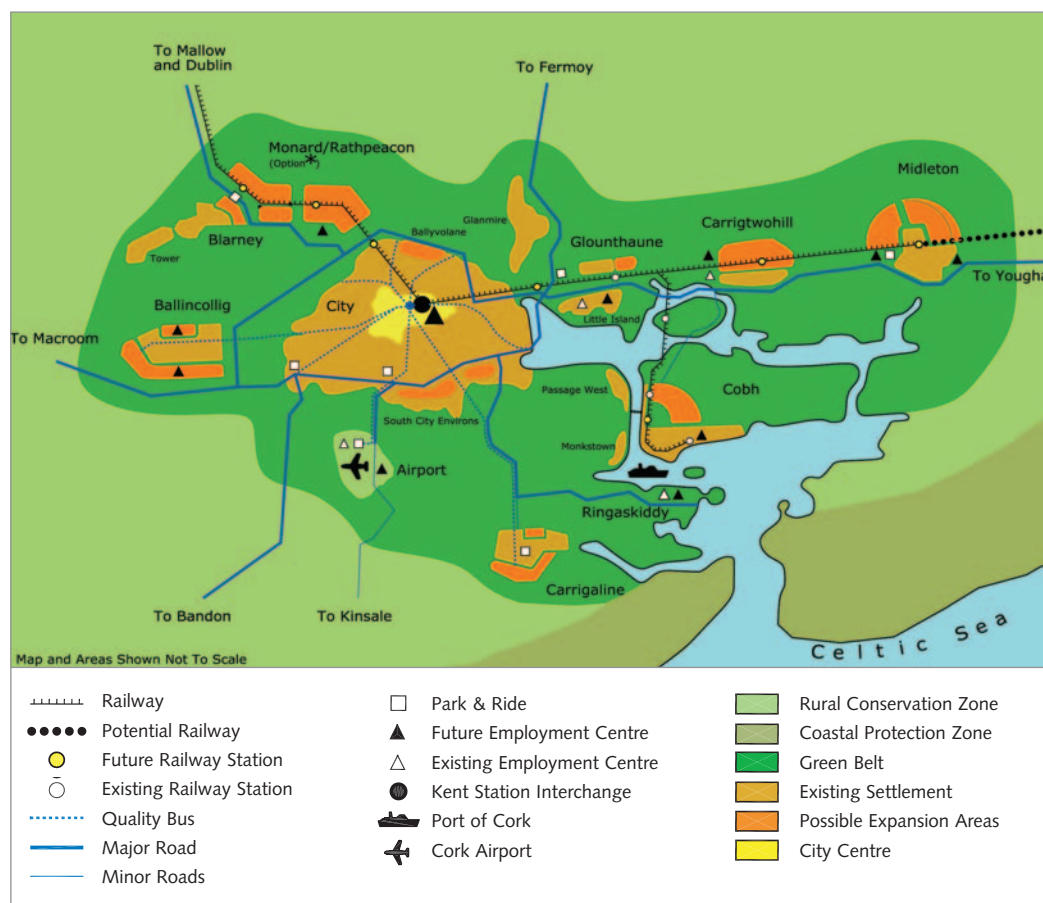
The CASP strategy seeks to move towards a more sustainable form of development for the Cork City region, promoting a strong sub-regional settlement pattern based on the promotion of urban renewal and an integrated land use/public transportation strategy. The settlement and transport proposals are summarised in Figure 2.2. The Strategy is underpinned by the following main concepts:

**2.7**

- **Revitalisation of Cork City:** The strategy recognises Cork City as the engine of the region but identifies the need for acceleration in investment and a significant increase in population and employment. It puts particular focus on the revitalisation of the City Centre as the main location for comparison-shopping, services and culture in the region.
- **Redefinition of Metropolitan Cork:** A key component of the strategy is the concept of Metropolitan Cork, which encompasses both the City and the satellite towns around it. It is envisaged as a unified entity having a single jobs and property market, an integrated transport system and the social, cultural and educational facilities of a modern European city.
- **Reinforcement of the Ring Towns:** The ring towns will become the focus for growth outside the metropolitan area and new housing provision will be balanced with the provision of new employment opportunities.
- **Infrastructure-led development:** CASP seeks to ensure that infrastructure (such as roads, public transport, water and sewerage) and community facilities are provided ahead of, or in tandem with, housing and other uses in all new development.
- **Creation of an integrated transport system:** The creation of an integrated transport system based on high quality public transport facilities and a well managed roads system is seen as central to improving accessibility and providing choice of transport access for all. This system will comprise a suburban rail network and a high quality bus network, both supported by Park & Ride facilities, as well as cycling and pedestrian facilities.
- **Creation and maintenance of a high quality environment:** The quality of the natural, social and cultural environment contributes greatly to overall quality of life of citizens and also helps to attract business to a region. CASP seeks to maintain and improve the natural, social and cultural environment.

FIGURE 2.2

Structure Diagram for Metropolitan Cork



## Population Growth

- 2.8** CASP predicts that the population of the Cork area will increase by 23% or 78,000 people by 2020, to give a total population of 423,150, to be delivered over 3 tranches. Provision is also made for faster growth in the initial tranche to cater for delivery of more growth to Cork under the *National Spatial Strategy*. The strategy also makes provision for a fourth tranche to occur post 2020 or sooner if growth is faster than anticipated.

TABLE 2.1

CASP  
Population  
Projections

Area	2000 (Estimate)	2002 (Census)	2020 (Projected)	Growth in population 2000– 2020	Growth in dwellings
City	123,810	123,062	135,820	12,010	11,090
Rest of Metropolitan Cork	127,700	134,293	180,710	53,010	32,870
Ring Towns Rural	93,590	92,033	106,620	13,030	12,310
Total	345,100	349,388	423,150	78,050	56,270

- 2.9** Table 2.1 shows the amount of growth envisaged for Cork City, the rest of Metropolitan Cork and the ring towns and rural areas. The bulk of the growth in population, 53,010 (63,200 if allowance is made for additional growth under the NSS), will be in Metropolitan Cork outside the City boundary, while it is projected that the City could accommodate an additional 12,010 to 14,760 people by 2020.

- 2.10** Achievement of these targets for the City will necessitate a reversal of the steady decline in population over recent decades, which resulted from a fall in household size within the City and growth in housing supply in locations outside the City. The 2002 *Census of Population* shows that the City's population has yet to show the recovery envisaged in CASP and indeed has fallen approximately 3% since 1996. A reversal of this trend and the realisation of the CASP population targets can be achieved through new housing development in the City Centre, Docklands and suburban locations and the successful implementation of policies to make the City a more attractive place to live and work.



City Sector	1996 Census	2002 Census	Change 1996–2002 (%)
City	127,187	123,062	<b>-3</b>
City Centre	10,657	11,949	<b>+12</b>
South East	24,148	24,328	<b>+1</b>
South Centre	20,827	19,318	<b>-7</b>
South West	20,204	18,931	<b>-6</b>
North West	26,955	24,981	<b>-8</b>
North East	24,398	23,555	<b>-3</b>

**TABLE 2.2**

*Population Change  
(Cork City Sectors)*

The success of the Urban Renewal schemes in arresting City Centre population decline has resulted in further increases in population in this sector between 1996 and 2002. Other sectors have continued the pattern of steady decline. Considerable opportunities exist for further increase in population in the City Centre and Docklands over the Plan period. Additional opportunities for population increase also exist in Mahon and in the North East sector at Old Whitechurch Road, where development proposals are at the planning stage, and in other infill sites in the suburbs.

**2.11**

## Employment Growth

Employment in the CASP study area is expected to grow by 30% or 46,370 (56,870 NSS) by 2020, of which 16,180 (19,380 NSS) jobs would be within the City (see Table 2.3). These population and employment projections are based on assumptions about economic growth set out in the *ESRI Medium Term Economic Review 1999–2005*. The outlook for the economy has recently worsened somewhat. However, the strategy runs over a 20 year period and allows for variation in growth rates with the assumption that the delivery of each tranche of development can be speeded up or slowed down to take account of prevailing economic conditions.

**2.12**

Area	2000 Jobs (Estimate)	2001 Jobs (Actual)	2020 Jobs (Projected)	Growth
City	65,380	72,193	81,560	16,180
Rest of Metropolitan Cork	54,580	-	78,750	26,170
Ring Towns Rural	37,040	-	41,060	4,020
<b>Total</b>	<b>155,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>201,370</b>	<b>46,370</b>

**TABLE 2.3**

*Future Employment:  
CASP Projections*

CASP estimated 2000 employment figures by assuming that employment in the study area grew by 30% between 1996 and 2000 in line with national trends. Actual employment growth is not available for the study area but growth in the City in 2001 was recorded in the *Employment and Land Use Survey* carried out by Cork City Council. It found a total of 72,193 people working in the City, up significantly from 1996 and at a higher level than CASP estimated. This reflects the rapid economic growth that occurred from the mid 1990s to 2001, particularly in services and modern industry which are well represented in the City. All City sectors showed employment increases during the period, with the City Centre and the South West showing the greatest proportional increases, while the North West experienced the slowest growth rate.

**2.13**

Sustaining and increasing the current level of employment to achieve CASP targets will depend on a positive economic climate and the successful development of new employment opportunities in the City, particularly in the City Centre/Docklands areas in the face of competition from edge and out of City locations.

**2.14**

## CASP Economic Strategy

CASP seeks to create a highly competitive quality location so as to facilitate the growth of an innovative and advanced (but balanced and robust) economy in the Cork Region. It argues that the local economy is well balanced, not being over reliant on any single sector and is thus well insulated from the kind of setbacks which occurred in the early 1980s. Key growth sectors for the future are:

**2.15**

- High technology processes and manufacturing.
- Services.
- Distribution.

- Transport and communications.
- Health and education.

**2.16** Key economic development themes that could underpin an economic development strategy are identified. These themes are detailed in *Chapter 3: Enterprise and Employment*. In summary, they highlight the type of modern industrial sectors that should be targeted; emphasise the need for the City to retain and develop its role as the driver of the area's economy; support the expansion of the third level education sector and highlight the need to grow knowledge based indigenous industry. Delivery of the strategy will be through the development of a range of employment locations throughout the study area with emphasis on locations that are accessible either through proximity to housing areas or availability of good public transport.

## The Strategy for the City

**2.17** The CASP strategy is underpinned by a vision of the City of Cork as the capital of a thriving region and the key driver in terms of its social, economic and cultural vitality. This is further supported by the NSS. The City's own growth must be robust and sustained if it is to drive the region's economy. CASP sees the future of the City as the centre for comparison shopping for the region as well as the main centre for cultural activities. Its economic future is seen as lying in the development of service industries, finance, banking, education, health, information and digital media.

**2.18** Measures to increase the attractiveness of the City as a place to live in, to invest in and to visit are needed if it is to fulfil these objectives. A package of such measures including land use policies, environmental improvements and infrastructure provision is outlined in this Plan.

## The City: Strengths and Opportunities

- 2.19** The City has a number of fundamental strengths and opportunities which will help in developing its role as an engine for the region and a gateway city.
- It has a well balanced economy, with modern manufacturing (especially pharmaceutical, health devices and ICT sectors) well represented in the areas around Cork, in addition to a well-developed services sector.
  - It has a strong commercial, social and cultural sector, which can develop further by building on its role as European Capital of Culture 2005.
  - The third level colleges and the NMRC are a major attraction for incoming investment as well as providing a high quality educational resource.
  - The overall quality of life and physical environment is good. Planned public realm improvements will greatly enhance the City Centre.



- The City does not suffer from the high levels of various forms of congestion (e.g. traffic, housing supply), which can constrain growth in other locations such as Dublin.
- The City has good air and port access and a good road infrastructure.
- The City is well served by suburban and metropolitan bus routes which can be enhanced to create a high quality public transport system to serve the city and region.
- The City is of a sufficient size to accommodate the range of facilities and infrastructure necessary to be an attractive alternative to Dublin as a place to live, work and invest in. It also has potential to considerably expand employment and population in a sustainable way.

### Key Development Opportunities

Although most land within the City has been developed, there are a number of locations which allow the development of new or expanded mixed use districts and provide opportunities to meet the population and employment targets set out in CASP. The emphasis in these areas is on meeting sustainable development objectives through the provision of:

**2.20**

- Mixed use development.
- Higher density development, where appropriate.
- Good public transport provision.
- Good quality environment and services.
- High quality urban design.



### City Centre

The City Centre has seen significant increases in employment since 1996, particularly in retailing, professional and personal services. This has occurred through intensification in use of existing buildings rather than through new construction. There is considerable opportunity for further expansion in the economy of the City Centre through development of a range of sites and buildings in the expanded core area identified in Chapter 9, particularly for retailing, office and residential uses. Development can take the form of a combination of new development on substantial sites, infill development as opportunities arise and the re-use of under-utilised buildings. Such new development can benefit from the existing infrastructure of the City Centre and will be facilitated by planned environmental improvements and upgrading of the public transport system. There is also potential for upgrading of the traditional housing and tourism areas adjoining the City Centre in areas such as Shandon and the South Parish.

**2.21**

### Docklands

The Docklands and the Kent Station area to the east of the City Centre are going through a process of change and rationalisation which creates opportunities for creation of a new urban quarter for the City over the coming decades. Recognising this, Cork City Council commissioned the *Cork Docklands Development Strategy* (2001), which sets out the Council's vision for the renewal of the area. The strategy identifies capacity in the area for large amounts of office, industrial, university, and residential uses as well as cultural and leisure facilities, new parks, and high quality public transport. It meets with sustainable development objectives as it presents an opportunity for high density mixed use development on brownfield sites close to the City Centre and will help Cork develop its role as a Gateway City.

**2.22**

### **Blackpool Valley/Kilbarry**

**2.23** There are significant opportunities in the Blackpool Valley/Kilbarry area for new development. The Blackpool bypass has improved access to the area as well as reducing through-traffic in residential areas. The CASP proposal of a railway station serving the area will further improve access. The 'Polefield' north of Blackpool Shopping Centre has potential for mixed use development with an opportunity to extend into the former Sunbeam Complex.

**2.24** There is potential for development of Kilbarry Industrial Estate for further modern industry and office-based industry, while there are opportunities for residential development at Old Whitechurch Road. There is also potential for renewal and infill in the historic village of Blackpool with residential and small-scale commercial opportunities.

### **Mahon Peninsula**

**2.25** Development of much of the remaining land in Mahon is likely to occur over the period of the Plan, with permission already in place for significant retail, business park, hotel and residential uses at the southern end of Mahon. There is further potential for residential and associated uses on the Ursuline lands in Blackrock and other nearby sites.