



Submission into Indecon Strategic Review of Dublin Port and its Future September 2008

Overview

The Dublin Chamber of Commerce has a vision for the Greater Dublin Area as a world-class, competitive, knowledge region with a modern, developed infrastructure base. To realise this vision, access to markets and creating a clean, green, safe and pedestrian-friendly environment in the City Region are of equal importance. Thus a coherent strategy must be put in place that coordinates the needs of the Dublin Bay area, ports policy and the transportation of goods in the region.

The issue of capacity and the future of Dublin Port have been debated for decades, without resolution from Government. It is of critical importance that this impasse regarding long term planning and investment in Dublin Port's infrastructure, the goods transportation needs of the Eastern region and future development in Dublin, is resolved.

In advance of the 2007 General Election, Dublin Chamber called on Government to "make a decision on the future of Dublin Port - either develop it significantly or move it elsewhere".¹ This call followed on from a letter to the Taoiseach earlier in the year outlining our deep concern that a decision on the future of the Port and Bay Area appeared to be falling between a number of national and local government bodies. We believe this has inhibited the creation of a long term master plan for Dublin Port, resulting in a lack of certainty and clarity for all stakeholders.

We highlighted to the Taoiseach our awareness of the existing competing visions for the development of the area and requested that the Department of the Taoiseach take the lead role in ensuring a comprehensive technical and economic review of all options. We wish to see the preparation of a 30-year vision for the Port and Bay Area, and short term action plans to address existing capacity constraints.

We support this Strategic Review of Dublin Port and its Future and hope that it offers recommendations to resolve the complex issues surrounding Dublin Port and Bay Area in an informed, transparent and objective fashion. We express our serious hope that when the findings are published in March 2009, we will finally see in a comprehensive long term plan for the Port needs of the region being offered - and that Government will act to implement the recommendations. We expect that this review will provide a comprehensive assessment of the technical issues that would arise if the option of partial or full relocation of the Port is to be selected - including full hydrographical studies, a review of market structures and legal frameworks -, and also that it offers a robust economic analysis of all the proposals for the future of Port lands and the relative benefits - both positive and negative - of redevelopment to accommodate competing land use.²

¹ Dublin Chamber of Commerce 'Dublin Business Priorities: General Election 2007'

² See options listed in Dublin City Council's 2007 study An Integrated Economic, Cultural and Social Vision for Sustainable Development.

Overall, Dublin Chamber wants the recommendations of this report to guarantee effective competition in the Greater Dublin Area. We also want this to be the final study on this issue. We expect the Minister for Transport and the Marine to take quick and informed decisions once he has the findings of this study to hand.

Transportation of Goods and Persons

The existing focus of national transportation policy which is more on the transporting of people, rather than the movement of goods, needs to be amended. If we are to remain internationally competitive into the future, then a balance must be struck at national policy level between the needs of movers of goods and the movement of people.

Ease of access to overseas markets and the efficient importation of goods are central to the development of the Dublin City Region and the wider economy of the island. We support the comprehensive all-island approach being undertaken by Indecon, as the topic of Dublin Port and its future must be addressed in light of the existing transport network on the island. The Indecon report should include an assessment of the transport and traffic requirements of the Greater Dublin Area. This should include all existing relevant proposals, including the feasibility studies by the National Roads Authority on the Dublin Outer Orbital Route and the Eastern By-Pass. As significant lands have been reserved for this project for almost a decade, and as the Eastern By-Pass could act as a potential flood barrier, we need an informed and transparent debate about the future of this piece of infrastructure.

We also believe that a comprehensive analysis of the flows of goods around the Eastern coast of the island should also be undertaken in considering the development of Dublin Port, Bremore Port, Drogheda Port and Greenore Port. To understand what location would be best to develop Port infrastructure, it is critical that we understand how the country's regional and national road infrastructure influences the movement of goods in the Dublin City Region and wider Eastern corridor.

Tourism

Another facet of the Port's development that merits more joined up thinking is the development of cruise liner facilities. While many cruise liners visit every year, we are not developing this business in an aggressive enough manner. The Dublin Chamber suggests that Government should seek to develop an **Irish Sea Cruise Package** that has the potential to increase tourism numbers in proportion to the growth in the cruise line business.