



## Dublin Chamber of Commerce submission on the Masterplan for Dublin Port 2011 – 2040

Dublin Chamber warmly welcomes the formation of a Masterplan for Dublin Port, as it will help to ensure that the future development of the Port occurs in a timely fashion and that it remains at the heart of national, regional and local planning policy. It is critical that future development plans and infrastructure investment programmes provide for the movement of both goods and people if Dublin and Ireland are to remain competitive.

As a small island economy, export led growth will be central to Ireland's economic recovery, and in that context having accessible, well-connected Port facilities is a national imperative. Dublin Port is a reliable gateway to international markets and the primary access point for importing finished goods and raw materials to the domestic market.

Evidently the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) plays the leading role in driving the Irish economy:

- This point has been made by the National Competitiveness Council in its April 2009 report '*Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness*', which stated that **"it is critical that both national and regional policies support the development of Dublin and of our other main cities and that nationally we work to ensure that the development of our cities is fully understood as being in the national interest."**
- The population of the region has also been growing, reflecting its' increasing contribution to economic growth. This pattern is expected to continue. Indeed, the CSO's December 2008 'Regional Population Projections 2011-2026' highlight that **the proportion of the population living in the GDA is expected to rise from 39.3% to 42.3% over the period.** This will make increasing demands of Dublin Port.
- The Dublin Port Company *Issues Paper* points out that **"50 per cent of all goods arriving in Dublin Port remain within the M50 area, while 75 per cent of all goods arriving at the Port remain within 80 km of the Port...Dublin and the Mid-East region accounted for 48.3 per cent of gross value added in the Irish economy in 2007. Manufacturing and employment density are higher in the Dublin area than elsewhere, and Dublin Port is ideally located to serve this market in a very efficient and effective manner."**

As a result, Dublin Chamber believes that it is critical for the development of the GDA that Dublin Port has the necessary capacity and supporting infrastructure to sustain economic growth, living standards and service the import and export needs of Ireland's largest city region over the coming three decades.

It is vital that Dublin Port develops in a way that facilitates its operation in an efficient and cost effective manner. Dublin Chamber fully supports Dublin Port assertion that "the key role that all of the ports, and Dublin Port in particular, play in Ireland's trade activities and indeed in the overall economy will have to be recognised and facilitated."

In conclusion, 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. Ease of access to overseas markets and the efficient importation of goods are central to the development of the region and the wider economy. So we are delighted to welcome this first step in creating coherent strategy for the future development of Dublin Port.

## **Dublin Chamber responses to some of the questions posed by Dublin Port in the Issues Paper:**

*How best can Dublin Port keep its stakeholders aware of progress of the Masterplan?*

This can be achieved by providing comprehensive information online and active, regular engagement (for example briefings) with industry bodies such as the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. Dublin Chamber will effectively communicate information about the material developments unfolding to our 1,300 members.

*Many consider Dublin City to be a port city. Do you agree? If so, what can be done to enhance the connection between the City and the Port?*

We believe that Dublin city and Dublin Port are intrinsically linked - economically, socially and historically. More integrated national, regional and local planning, that recognises the role the GDA plays as the engine of growth of the Irish economy, is needed. In particular, there is a need for an integrated traffic management for the Port and docklands area.

*Is Dublin Port a part of the defining character of Dublin City given the role of the Port in developing the city and its amenities?*

Dublin Chamber believes it is, but recognises that further work is needed to integrate it more innovatively with the city. This can be ensured by the inclusion of public amenities in the safe, non-secure areas of the port (such as an interpretive centre, a museum, event centre and marine related training facilities). Perimeters should be hard and soft landscaped to create acceptable visual sightlines and provide walkways, picnic and seating areas.

*Dublin Port Company takes its Corporate Social Responsibilities seriously. What further measures should be taken to integrate further the activities and operations of Dublin Port with the citizens of Dublin?...and, How can a busy port, with key safety and security objectives, accommodate increased public and visitor access to the Port?*

Dublin Chamber welcomes the recognition by Dublin Port that "Ports, by their nature, can be unattractive places" and the subsequent intention to consider developing a number of environmental enhancement options including: "A new public foot/cycle path along the length of the north shore of the port estate; Additional grassland areas to be provided on the north and south shore of the port estate; Landscaping proposals on the East Wall Road of the Port; Development of a viewing platform area on the south east point of the Port at the start of the Great South Wall". We believe that delivering some of these environmental enhancements will integrate Dublin Port more with the citizens of Dublin.

*Is Dublin Port best located to serve the merchandise trade needs of the Dublin region and Ireland overall?*

Dublin Chamber believes that the Dublin Port is in the optimal location to serve the import and export needs of the GDA's business community. With excellent road and rail transport links with the rest of the island, the Port is well connected and attractively located.

Dublin Chamber has long supported the recommendation of the Indecon report, 'Dublin Port National Development Plan Study', that nothing should be done at a policy level to hinder the expansion of Dublin Port, and its conclusion that **"the closure of Dublin Port is not justified on economic grounds as the benefits of alternative land use is less than envisaged and that these and other benefits would not justify the cost involved"**.

*Do you consider Dublin Port to be a key part of national economic infrastructure?*

Dublin Chamber believes that Dublin Port is a key part of national economic infrastructure. Its operational reliability during adverse weather conditions, and the role it plays as gateway to international markets should be better valued. With the Irish economy increasingly reliant on a strong export sector, Dublin Port's facilities have never been more in demand or valuable to Ireland.

*Dublin Port Company estimates that total tonnage through the Port in 2040 will be of the order of 60 million tonnes. Is that estimate too high, too low or reasonable?*

In terms of the growth assumptions outlined in the Issues Paper, Dublin Chamber believes these are reasonable. We welcome the responsive position the Port intends to take to infrastructure development: **"If we are wrong in our assumed 2.5 per cent average annual growth rate, nothing is lost. If growth is less, then the various developments we plan to meet the 60m tonnes target will be deferred until demand increases."**

*Do you agree that Dublin Port needs to plan to handle this increased capacity by 2040?*

Dublin Chamber believes that there is a need to plan for increased capacity at Dublin Port. Facilities were under pressure before the downturn in the economy (as outlined in our communications to the then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern T.D. in 2007), and we believe that it is prudent to begin to plan for a return to improved economic conditions. 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 so that there is certainty and clarity for all stakeholders.

*What size ships should Dublin Port be able to cater for? Will we need deeper berths? Are existing berths long enough?*

Dublin Chamber supports continued infrastructural developments at Dublin Port as necessary to respond to new demands such as larger and longer ships. All development proposals for new berthage and landside expansion must not only be able to accommodate industry standards, but also be future-proofed.

*How important is it that Dublin Port encourages and facilitates cruise ships?*

Cruise tourism is valuable to the Dublin economy. Dublin Chamber encourages the Port to continue to work with stakeholders to ensure a joined up approach in relation to the development of modern, comfortable and appropriately located cruise liner facilities.

*At what stage might demand for access to the Port from the south support completion of the Eastern Bypass?*

Dublin Chamber warmly welcomes the decision that the MasterPlan will be future proofed so that it is compatible with major future developments in the area, such as the Eastern Bypass. As significant lands have been reserved for this project for over a decade, and as the Eastern By-Pass could act as a potential flood barrier, we have long supported the development of this piece of infrastructure. Dublin Chamber believes that the missing piece of the city region's road network is the building of a complete access route around the city (connecting the North shores to the South shores).