



**Submission to Fingal County Council
Draft Dublin Airport Local Area Plan 2020-2026**

Executive Summary

Ireland's ability to grow living standards and remain competitive depends on having a world-class airport in its' capital. Dublin Airport's infrastructure is critical, not just for Dublin, but for all of Ireland's citizens, businesses, visitors, and investors.

Fingal County Council's recently published Draft Dublin Airport Local Area Plan 2020-2026 sets out the updated Local Area Plan (LAP) and builds on the adoption of the previous area plan from 2006. Since 2006, there have been substantial changes to both environmental and aviation policy which must be taken into account in future planning and this is reflected in the new report.

Dublin Chamber supports the current capacity-enhancing infrastructure projects planned for Dublin Airport and believes that these enhancements, such as the second run way and MetroLink, are vital in pursuit of the overall goal of delivering a world-class airport.

Dublin Chamber supports the sustainable growth of Dublin Airport and echoes the sentiments outlined in the LAP in its support of; Facilitating airport growth in recognition of its importance as a national resource; Ensuring that the core operational transport function as an airport is protected; and Undertaking development in accordance with supporting government policy.

Ireland's International Connectivity

The significance of Dublin Airport as a key national economic resource has grown considerably over the past 14 years. CSO figures indicate that Dublin Airport's market share of passengers increased from 73% in 2005 to 84.9% in 2019.¹ In 2017 Dublin Airport was the 11th largest airport in the EU and the fastest growing of Europe's 20 largest airports.² International connectivity is crucial for Ireland's overall competitiveness. Brexit poses both new challenges and opportunities for Ireland and in order to address those challenges Ireland needs to diversify its markets and establish new trade routes. Investment in Ireland's ports and airports is an essential element in achieving this. In the last quarter overseas trips to Ireland increased by 5.5% with 95% of those trips being by air.³

If Ireland fails to maintain its international connectivity, Government risks damaging Ireland's attractiveness as a hub for FDI or to potential employees considering relocating. Between January and March this year over 70% of overseas trips into Ireland were for the purposes of

¹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/as/aviationstatisticsquarter12019/>

² <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/consultation/dublin-airport-strategic-issues-paper/chapter/2-strategic-significance-dublin-airport>

³ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/tt/tourismandtravelquarter12019/>

business or tourism.⁴ The National Planning Framework (NPF) argues that in the event of Brexit, Ireland's direct linkages with other EU countries may become significantly more important. Ireland's airports needs to facilitate faster transit times and enhanced routes. Investment in these areas are crucial in terms of improving Ireland's overall resilience.

Dublin Airport Growth

Dublin Airport is currently going through a key period of growth and expansion. In recognition of the national strategic importance of the airport, the LAP must take into account the airport's need to enhance capacity, develop new flight routes, and grow passenger numbers. Echoing this, one of the key National Strategic Outcomes identified in the NPF is the importance of high-quality international connectivity. The NPF identified Dublin Airport as a strategic investment priority to achieve this.⁵

Airports need to be able to adapt to the changing needs of the industry, this is why the development of a second runway has been mandated by the Government's National Aviation Policy (NAP). The new North Runway is expected to deliver a 31% increase in connectivity by 2034.⁶ This enhanced connectivity and capacity will ensure Dublin Airport's position as a leading European airport, a gateway to North America, and a key driver of Ireland's sustainable economic growth. Dublin Chamber recognises that the draft LAP acknowledges the importance of developing the area in line with supporting Government policy.

The LAP recognises the importance of the North Runway as a major piece of national infrastructure. The LAP must support the objective of completing the necessary capital projects to support the enhanced capacity that will be offered by the new runway. These projects are essential in achieving the projected necessary capacity of 40m passengers per annum. Dublin Airport's capital programme includes necessary works on life expired assets, works to maintain international standards (such as security) and, crucially capacity enhancing measures such as improved parking and docking facilities for aircraft.

Investment in airport infrastructure requires long-term planning to ensure the necessary facilities are in place to safeguard future passenger growth as well as anticipating future aviation demands. Such long-term planning is reflected in the draft LAP's recognition of the airport's need to develop its infrastructure in order to ensure the enhanced capacity of the airport.

Sustainable Travel

The Government 'Climate Action Plan' and 'Fingal County Council's Climate Change Action Plan' are both ambitious documents that aim to tackle climate change, reduce emissions, and ultimately improve our environment as Ireland moves towards a low carbon economy. The LAP stresses the importance of sustainable transport in the vicinity of the airport and how significant improvements must be made in terms of transport mode split towards sustainable transport options.

As the airport capacity is expanding and passenger numbers are growing, the Chamber recognises the need for significantly enhanced transport options to and from the airport. The Chamber notes that the Airport is currently heavily dependent on the M1 and M50. Public transport is limited and for years there has been calls for a rail line to connect the Airport to

⁴ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/tt/tourismandtravelquarter12019/>

⁵ https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/project_ireland_2040_npf_7mb.pdf

⁶ <https://www.dublinairport.com/north-runway/benefits>

the city. Dublin Chamber is supportive of both the MetroLink and BusConnects projects, recognising the enhanced service that it will provide for those travelling to the airport. The inclusion of these projects in the LAP report is welcome due to their potential impact in enhancing accessibility and providing sustainable transport to the airport.

Conclusion

In summary;

- Dublin Airport is a crucial piece of infrastructure for national and regional development and the NPF has identified the development of an additional runway and terminal facilities as a key action point.
- As an island economy, the effectiveness of our international connections and transport routes to the EU and wider global context is vital to ensuring our continued competitiveness.
- The Government identified Dublin Airport in the National Planning Framework as a strategic investment priority to achieve high-quality international connectivity.
- Sustainable public transport projects that will better connect the city to the airport while also reducing carbon emissions must be supported, such as BusConnects and MetroLink.
- Failure to support the expansion of the airport will have significant implications for passengers, staff, airlines, and tourism, but will also impact on the local economy.