



The Secretary
Planning Department
Cork County Council Headquarters
County Hall
Carrigrohane Road
Cork
T12 R2NC

Date: 26 June 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference: Public Consultation on the new Cork County Council Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029

On behalf of daa plc, Cork Airport welcomes the new LECP and commends Cork County Council on its ambition to produce a growth strategy focused on the economic development of Cork County as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business.

As the State's second largest international airport with almost 50 international routes, Cork Airport is a key asset attracting business investment and tourism directly into not only the Cork Metropolitan Area, but also the County and the wider region. It is also a key service for the population and business community and a strategic employment zone, playing a significant role as a driver of State and regional growth as outlined by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

With almost 2.7m expected passengers in 2023, representing in excess of full recovery of pre-Covid passenger numbers, the Airport directly and indirectly supports approximately 12,180 jobs and contributes €904 million annually to the economy across the South of Ireland. With ambitions to grow annual passenger numbers (PAX) beyond 3m before 2026, it is an objective of the *Cork Airport Strategy* to support the sustainable development of the airport and seek investment in infrastructure and facilities that promote the role of Cork Airport as an international gateway, employment location and economic driver for the Region, including:

- Establishing multi-frequency hub connections with European flag carriers.
- Re-establishing UK regional connectivity replacing destination gaps and growing overall UK market.
- Delivering a Transatlantic long-haul route within the next 4 years.
- Maintaining strong and efficient regional marketing partnership with Tourism Ireland and Cork City and County Councils represented by the Pure Cork brand.
- Growing inbound tourism and business connections for the region.

The significance of the Airport as a key economic asset to the city, county and the region is emphasised in the (RSES) for the Southern Region, which contains numerous policy objectives supporting the future development of the airport and improving land-side connectivity both to and from the city centre. In particular, the '**Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Policy Objective 14**' seeks (amongst other things) to:

- Support the sustainable development and investment in infrastructure and facilities under the Cork Airport Masterplans and updates to the Cork Airport Special Local Area Plan (subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA/AA undertaken); and,
- Support the sustainable development of enhanced public transport connectivity to the airport including the provision of bus priority lanes on the N27 and an improvement in the alignment of the R600 south of the Airport.

The continued development of the Airport is supported by **Regional Policy Objective 150 ‘High Quality International Connectivity – Airports’**, which aims to deliver, at least in-part, on **National Strategic Outcome 6: High-Quality International Connectivity** contained within the National Planning Framework (Project Ireland 2040). **RPO 150** states:

It is an objective to achieve NSO: High Quality International Connectivity, the following airport development actions for the Region are identified subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes:

*a. Continued sustainable development and improvement of enterprise assets, access infrastructure, airport infrastructure and services at **Cork Airport** and Shannon International Airport by the relevant responsible commercial State-Owned Enterprises as key economic drivers, national tourism and national business gateways consistent with sectoral priorities defined through National Aviation Policy;*

b. Continued support for improved international connectivity through the role of our Region’s airport assets... (condensed and emphasis added)

Cork Airport is also acknowledged as a key site within the core strategy of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. Although within the Cork City Council administrative area, the Airport is recognised in the County Development Plan as *“an important strategic asset to the County and an important economic driver for the South West Region.”* Also recognised is the key role the Airport plays in terms of access to the region from Britain and other destinations in Europe in particular. The Development Plan supports the role of Cork Airport as a key tourism and business gateway to Cork and the wider Southern Region, the co-ordinated and sustainable development of which is to be promoted and supported in order to underpin this function.

In summary, the significance of the Airport as an important strategic asset to the City, County and the South West Region is recognised in national, regional and local planning policy as mentioned above. It is therefore the opinion of daa plc, on behalf of Cork Airport, that the Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals contained within the new Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029 for Cork County should reiterate this position of the Airport as an *‘important economic driver’*.

Specifically, daa request the role the Airport plays as a transport, enterprise and tourism asset for the County is reflected in the objectives of **High Level Goal 5** of the LECP – *‘A County that Supports Enterprise’*, with the inclusion of the below:

- *Harness the wider tourism, transport and employment opportunities presented by Cork International Airport as an important strategic asset in attracting economic investment to the County, collaborating with key stakeholders such as Cork City Council to identify its competitive advantages as a key tourism and business gateway.*

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely,



Gary Mackin
Statutory Planner
(planning@daa.ie)

Gateway to the South of Ireland

Oifig Chláraithe Aerfort Bhaile Átha Cliath, Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath. **Oifig Chláraithe** 9401 Éire
Registered Office Dublin Airport, Co. Dublin. **Registered Number** 9401 Ireland

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