



An Roinn Iompair  
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt

Department of Transport,  
Tourism and Sport

Príomh Oifig  
44 Sráid Chill Dara, Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire.

Head Office  
44 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Lo-Call 1890-443311 +353-1-670 7444  
+353-1-670 9633 www.dttas.ie

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Mr Kieran Doherty

Executive Officer

Strategic Infrastructure Development & Local Authority Projects Section

An Bord Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

### **Galway Harbour Company – Galway Harbour Extension**

Dear Mr Doherty,

I refer to the application by Galway Harbour Company for permission for the development of an extension to Galway harbour at Renmore and Townparks Townlands and on lands reclaimed from the foreshore and the sea in Galway Bay to the south of the existing Galway Enterprise Park.

As you are aware Galway Harbour Company is one of the nine State commercial port companies established and operating pursuant to the Harbours Acts 1996 – 2009. Government policy in respect of our commercial ports sector is outlined in *National Ports Policy*, which was approved by Government and launched by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport on 26 March 2013.

The core objective of *National Ports Policy* is to facilitate a competitive and effective market for maritime transport services. The policy framework provides for a tiered categorisation of the sector into –

- Ports of National Significance (Tier 1)
- Ports of National Significance (Tier 2); and
- Ports of Regional Significance.

Galway Harbour Company is a designated Port of Regional Significance. These ports are identified as serving an important regional purpose and/or specialised trades or maritime

tourism. The policy proposes that the Ports of Regional Significance should transfer to more suitable local authority led governance structures to ensure that the maximum potential for the regional hinterland of each such port is best achieved. In the case of Galway Harbour Company it is therefore proposed to transfer the shareholding currently vested in the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to the ownership of Galway City Council. This Department is currently developing the primary legislation required to give effect to this Government decision.

*National Ports Policy* (section 2.7.3) refers to Galway harbour's importance as a strategic regional hub for petroleum importation, storage and distribution and endorses the development proposals in respect of the inner harbour as referred to in the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* and the *Galway City Development Plan 2011-2017*, for marine tourism and leisure facilities as well as for urban redevelopment and regeneration. *National Ports Policy* also notes and endorses the conclusion of the *Report on Irish Ports' Offshore Renewable Energy Services* which identified Galway Harbour Company as having important potential in terms of servicing future demand in the emerging ocean energy sector.

More generally *National Ports Policy* also refers to a number of emerging trends within maritime transport which highlight the importance in ensuring that Ireland is served by adequate and efficient port capacity into the future.

Should the Board wish to discuss any aspect of *National Ports Policy* this Department is available to meet if considered appropriate or required. A copy of *National Ports Policy* is also available on the Department's website <http://www.dttas.ie/maritime/maritimetrans> .

Yours sincerely,



**Mary Lally**

**Principal Officer**