

---

## Environmental Impact Assessment Report Development at Waterford Airport

### Volume 2 – Chapter 3 - Policy

---

Prepared for: Waterford City & County Council in Partnership with Waterford Regional Airport PLC



**Date:** July 2020

Core House, Pouladuff Road, Cork  
T12 D773, Ireland

**T:** +353 21 496 4133 **E:** [info@ftco.ie](mailto:info@ftco.ie)

**CORK | DUBLIN | CARLOW**

[www.fehilytimoney.ie](http://www.fehilytimoney.ie)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

3. POLICY .....	1
3.1 EU Directives and Policies.....	2
3.1.1 European Commission White Paper: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system (2011).....	2
3.1.2 Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines: Official Journal of the European Union (2014/C 99/03) .....	2
3.2 National Policies .....	2
3.2.1 National Aviation Policy for Ireland (August 2015) .....	2
3.2.2 Ireland’s Regional Airports Programme 2015-2019, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport .....	4
3.2.3 Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework .....	4
3.2.4 Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2018-2027 .....	5
3.2.5 Atlantic Gateways Corridor Overview Report.....	5
3.3 Regional and Local Policies .....	6
3.3.1 Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) .....	6
3.3.2 Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 (as extended) .....	7
3.3.3 Waterford Regional Airport & Business Park Masterplan 2011 .....	8
3.3.4 Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019.....	10
3.3.5 Waterford Planning Land Use and Transportation Study (PLUTS) 2004.....	10
3.4 Conclusion .....	10
3.5 References .....	10

---

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 3-1: Irish Planning System – An Overview Extract from the National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 .....	1
Figure 3-2: Zoning objectives for Waterford Regional Airport and Business Park .....	9



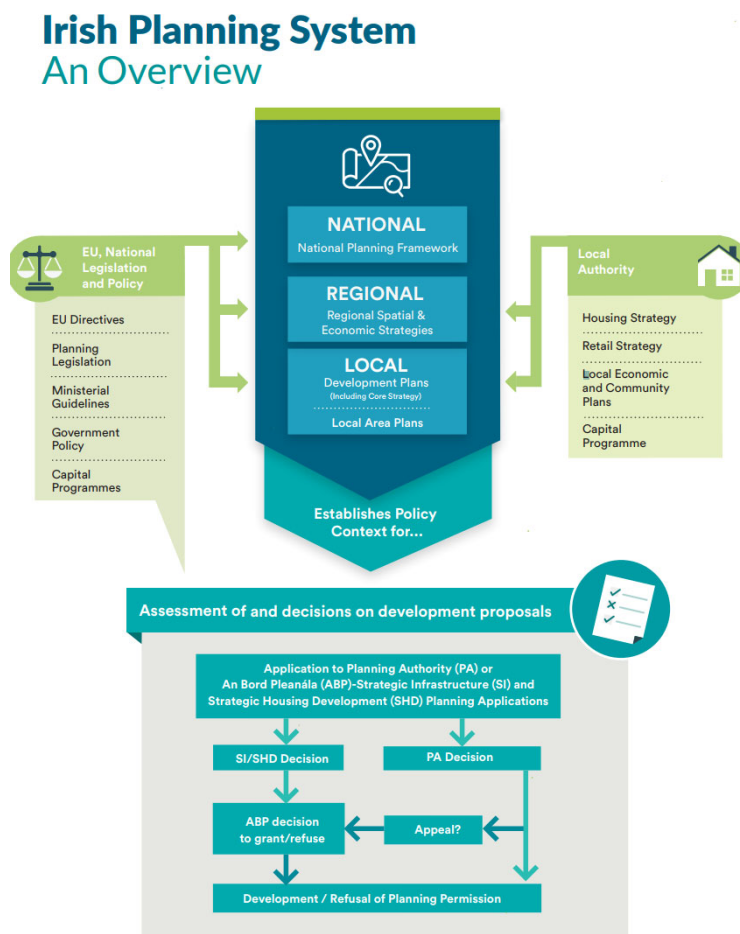
### 3. POLICY

This Chapter of the EIA outlines current EU, national, regional and local planning policy and legislation relating to the extension at Waterford Airport.

The Irish Planning Policy system is set within a hierarchical structure, as identified in Figure 3.1. National policy is informed by EU Directives, Planning Legislation, Ministerial Guidelines, Government Policy and Capital Programmes.

The National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 (NPF) acts as a coherent national framework and is supported by a robust tiering of regional and local level plans within an overall hierarchy. As detail is developed down through the hierarchy, further opportunity for focussed assessment is required to inform decision making at a local level.

This Chapter of the EIA is set out in the context of this hierarchy of the planning policy context within which the proposed airport development is set.



**Figure 3-1: Irish Planning System – An Overview Extract from the National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040**



Particular consideration is given in this chapter to tourism, economic and infrastructural policies and objectives.

### 3.1 EU Directives and Policies

#### 3.1.1 [European Commission White Paper: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system \(2011\)](#)

The European Transport Policy White Paper provides a comprehensive strategy for an improved, competitive transportation system within Europe. Under Section 2.2. An efficient core network for multimodal intercity travel, it is noted that:

*“Better modal choices will result from greater integration of the modal networks: airports, ports, railway, metro and bus stations, should increasingly be linked and transformed into multimodal connection platforms for passengers.”*

Section 2.3. A global level-playing field for long-distance travel and intercontinental freight states that:

*“Airport capacity needs to be optimised and, where necessary, increased to face growing demand for travel to and from third countries and areas of Europe otherwise poorly connected, which could result in a more than doubling of EU air transport activities by 2050.”*

#### 3.1.2 [Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines: Official Journal of the European Union \(2014/C 99/03\)](#)

The Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines document recognises the vital role of air transport in linking people and regions and enhancing the competitiveness of the European Union.

The document identifies in Section 1: State Aid Policy in the Aviation Sector that:

*“smaller airports display the greatest proportion of public ownership and most often rely on public support to finance their operations. The prices of these airports tend not to be determined with regard to market considerations and in particular sound ex ante profitability prospects, but essentially having regard to local or regional considerations. Under the current market conditions, the profitability prospects of commercially run airports also remain highly dependent on the level of throughput, with airports that have fewer than 1 million passengers per annum typically struggling to cover their operating costs. Consequently, the vast majority of regional airports are subsidised by public authorities on a regular basis.”*

### 3.2 National Policies

#### 3.2.1 [National Aviation Policy for Ireland \(August 2015\)](#)

A National Aviation Policy for Ireland (NAP) was published in August 2015 by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. The principle goals of the NAP are:



- To enhance Ireland's connectivity by ensuring safe, secure and competitive access responsive to the needs of business, tourism and consumers;
- To foster the growth of aviation enterprise in Ireland to support job creation and position Ireland as a recognised global leader in aviation; and
- To maximise the contribution of the aviation sector to Ireland's economic growth and development.

The NAP sets out that the economic sustainability of airports must be considered by high-level and regional-level economic and social policy goals and needs of the hinterlands served by the airports. The NAP notes that:

*"It is recognised that the regional airports, as currently supported by Exchequer funding, have an important role to play. The future of these airports – Donegal, Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK), Kerry and Waterford - will be impacted by EU Guidelines on State Aid to airports and airlines."*

Financial support is administered by the Department through three separate schemes:

- A Regional Airports Capital Expenditure Grant (CAPEX) Scheme;
- A Core Airport Management Operational Expenditure Subvention (OPEX) Scheme;
- A Public Service Obligation (PSO) Air Services Scheme.

All funding of regional airports by the State must comply with EU Guidelines on State Aid to airports and airlines.

In relation to the role of Regional Airports, including Waterford Airport, Section 4.2 of the NAP notes that:

*"Today, regional airports continue to be important because of a level of international connectivity that they bring to a region for tourism and business. Donegal, Waterford and Kerry airports are important to the area in which they are located. IWAK plays a more regional role in terms of access than other airports given its location in the North West. These airports should be given the opportunity to grow to a viable, self-sustaining position, particularly considering the contribution that they make to their regional and local economies."*

The NAP sets out an overall *Policy Position* and five *Actions* in relation to Regional Airports as follows:

#### **Policy Position**

*Ireland recognises the important role that regional airports play in their areas and in regional development.*

#### **Actions**

- 4.2.1 - Ireland will implement an EU approved Framework (Regional Airports Programme 2015 - 2019) of supports for regional airports.
- 4.2.2 - Exchequer support for operational expenditure at regional airports will be phased out over a maximum period of 10 years, in accordance with EU Guidelines.
- 4.2.3 - Exchequer support for capital expenditure will be limited to safety and security related expenditure.
- 4.2.4 - Clear business plans will be required from the airports seeking supports. In considering funding to regional airports, the Department will take account of the level of regional involvement, including investment by local authorities and/or business.



- 4.2.5 - From 2015, PSO contracts, for Donegal/Dublin and Kerry/Dublin air services will run for two years initially and, subject to a satisfactory review after 18 months, may be extended by a maximum of one year.

### 3.2.2 [Ireland's Regional Airports Programme 2015-2019, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport](#)

The document identifies the emerging role of regional airports at national scale in the 1980s to deliver social and economic benefits at a time when rail and road connections within the State were poor. This function has evolved overtime, with regional airports now playing an enhanced role for international connectivity, regional tourism and economic opportunities. Under Part 1 of the Regional Airports Programme, it is identified that the opportunity regarding connectivity as “a significant contributory factor underpinning Ireland’s economic recovery and sustainable development into the future”.

### 3.2.3 [Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework](#)

Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework (NPF) published in February 2018, sets out the high-level, strategic planning and development for the country over the next 20+ years, in order to ensure that development is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, in line with population growth.

The NPF identifies airports and ports to provide for high-quality, international connectivity as one of the 10 strategic investment priorities for the plan.

Under Section 3.4: Southern Region, with respect of the Waterford City and Metropolitan Area, it is noted that the area’s strategic geographic location is close to EU trading borders as served by its regional airport and port facilities.

With respect of Section 4.1: Why Urban Places Matter, it is stated that international connectivity is important with short travel times to an airport and a good choice of destinations as a critical factor. This aligns with National Policy Objective 5: “Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.”

Section 8.1: Ireland and the European Union recognises the increasing importance of connectivity to the EU in the event of a withdrawal of the UK from the EU:

*“It is likely, in the event of a withdrawal of the UK from the EU, that in transport and energy infrastructure terms for example, Ireland’s direct linkages with other EU countries by both air and sea and subsea energy connections may become significantly more important, given their advantages in terms of resilience and ease of movement across internal borders. As a result, ports and airports facilitating faster transit times between Ireland and the EU will need to be effectively connected into our land-based transport systems.”*

National Strategic Outcome 4 identifies the importance of global interconnectivity to enhance our economic and future prospects:

*“As an island, the effectiveness of our airport and port connections to our nearest neighbours in the UK, the EU and the wider global context is vital to our survival, our competitiveness and our future prospects. Co-operation and joint development of cross-border areas such as the Dublin-Belfast corridor, North West, and central border areas are key to open up the potential of the island economy, post Brexit.”*





Within the NPF, Waterford is identified as one of the four key cities that will lead development and urban and rural regeneration outside of Dublin, and provide balanced, concentrated growth across the State. This is acknowledged under Section 2.5: Building Stronger Regions: Accessible Centres of Scale which states:

*“the significant growth potential of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford separate from Dublin would be realised, while at the same time enhancing and enabling Dublin’s unique role as an international city of scale”.*

### 3.2.4 [Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2018-2027](#)

The National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP) came into effect in February 2018. In tandem with the National Planning Framework (NPF), this document seeks to drive Ireland’s long term economic, environmental and social progress over the next decade.

The key role of the NDP is to set out the updated configuration for public capital investment over the next 10 years in order to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes as set out within the NPF.

Section 1.3 The National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan, highlights the need for *“further supporting Ireland’s high-quality international connectivity which is crucial for overall international competitiveness and addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through investment in our ports and airports.”*

Under the major national infrastructure projects, selected for inclusion under the National Development Plan for appraisal and Delivery, high quality international connectivity, via the Regional Airports Programme is outlined.

National Strategic Outcome 3, Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, sets out for the full participation of rural communities in the strategic development of the State, as envisaged in the NPF. The NDP outlines a number of key rural initiatives, that set out to revitalise rural areas and to enhance economic growth. In particular, the recognition of investment in ports and airports is noted.

National Strategic Outcome 6, High-Quality International Connectivity, recognises that as an island, continued investment in our port and airport connections to the UK, the EU and the rest of the world is integral to underpinning international competitiveness. Under National Strategic Outcome 6, it is stated that significant investment in both ports and airports will provide for the safeguarding and enhancing of Irish interconnectivity, trade performance and foreign direct investment.

Under NSO 6, the Regional Airports Programme is described as providing financial support towards safety and security projects at the smaller regional airports.

### 3.2.5 [Atlantic Gateways Corridor Overview Report](#)

The Atlantic Gateways Corridor Overview Report set out the strategic objectives for the development between the Atlantic Gateway cities and their hinterlands. Of the four corridors identified, Waterford is identified in two of the corridor areas: Cork – Waterford and Waterford – Limerick/Shannon.



Under the Cork – Waterford corridor, it is recognised that:

*“The further development of Waterford Airport by way of better access, terminal/runway expansion and support facilities for passenger and improved infrastructure for the airport, making the South-East/N25 corridor more attractive to potential employers and add value to the employment potential of the area.”*

Under the Waterford – Limerick/Shannon corridor, Waterford Airport is recognised as a key international transport hub.

*“Upgrading of the N24 National Route as a major inter-urban corridor to reinforce the transport links between Waterford and Limerick cities and allowing for greater access from the corridor to the multi-modal transport interchanges (e.g. Limerick Junction Railway Interchange) and national access points located at Shannon Airport, Waterford Airport, Foynes and Belview”*

### 3.3 Regional and Local Policies

#### 3.3.1 Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES for the Southern Region came into effect on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2020 and aims to support the implementation of the NPF at a regional level. The RSES promotes the Southern Region as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, work and visit, a region of considerable opportunity for growth based on the quality of its cities, towns and rural areas, well developed physical and social infrastructure, a diverse modern economy and a pristine natural environment.

All airports have a mandate to promote the development of their region. National aviation policy supports the role of regional airports to assist and distribute tourism and FDI business throughout the regions and recognises the challenges they face when located close to larger State airports. It is important that our regional airports identify opportunities for attracting new business within their niche markets and that long-term viability is identified and supported, in partnership with relevant regional, tourism and industry bodies.

RSES strategy no. 6 aims to optimise the region’s high quality international connectivity through investment and increased capacity in ports and airports. Objective RPO 150 supports the continued exchequer assistance for regional airports under the Regional Airports Program and supports the role of Waterford Airport to develop its potential as a key tourism and business gateway.

Furthermore, the south east sub-region is projected to gain up to 89,000 persons by 2031, increasing the need for greater connections to and from the sub-region.

The RSES sets out the Draft Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP). It is an objective of the MASP to strengthen the role of the Waterford Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale. The MASP views Waterford Airport as an International Gateway to the region. The MASP states that the return of passenger services to Waterford Airport is key to the development of the Metropolitan Area and the major urban centres of the South-East.

Section 8.4 of the Waterford MASP sets out objectives for Waterford Airport. The MASP states the following with regard to the proposed runway extension:



*“Investment in a runway extension will enhance the international connectivity potential of Waterford for Business (including multi-national companies involved in export trade), support the development of TUSE Research and Development with international partners and provide for increased tourist traffic. The runway extension of 500m sought by Waterford Airport would significantly increase the capacity of the airport to cater for larger aircraft and more frequent flights.”*

Waterford MASP Policy Objective 16 states that it is an objective to support the further development of Waterford Airport and, in particular, the development of:

- An extension of the existing runway to accommodate larger aircraft;
- Measures to encourage additional operators offering services from the location; and
- The extension and development of aviation-related industries at the airport.

Furthermore, it is an objective of the Waterford MASP to support investment in infrastructure, including increased capacity of road, rail, ports and Waterford Airport to maximise the potential for tourism.

It is considered that the proposed Waterford Airport Runway Extension is a strategic objective of the Southern Region in strengthening connections and improving tourism and business. It is therefore considered that the proposed project is in line with regional policy.

### 3.3.2 Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 (as extended)

The Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 (WCDP), as extended, establishes the planning policy and objectives for the county jurisdiction. A review of the WCDP has been carried out to assess the relevant planning policy for the entire project.

Chapter 7: Infrastructure accounts for the provisioning of high-quality transportation infrastructure across the County. Section 7.11 Waterford Regional Airport identifies that:

*“The airport is a key gateway to Ireland’s south east and the availability of its convenient and increasingly frequent air services is making a growing contribution to the facilitation of both tourism and business activities in the region.”*

Objective INF 4 is the relevant policy objective with respect of Waterford Airport:

*“To assist the future expansion of services and routes at the Airport, the Council support the lengthening and widening of the runway, subject to compliance with proper planning and sustainable development and in compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.”*

Chapter 3: Core Strategy of the WCDP details the development objectives for the plan period in line with national and regional policy.

Chapter 6: Economic Development of the WCDP recognises the strategic importance of the airport in terms of strategic zoning. Section 6.6.4 described the critical role of Waterford Regional Airport for the development of Waterford and the South East through its accessibility, support of economic development and tourism. Of particular relevance to Waterford Airport, the following policy objective is noted:



Policy ECD 10: *“To ensure that the development of the strategic zoned lands at Butlerstown (Waterford Knowledge Campus), Coolnamuck (Bio-technology Park), Kilmeaden (Masterplan area), Dungarvan and Waterford Regional Airport are carried out in accordance with a Master Plan to be agreed with the Planning Authority. Any such Master Plan shall comply with the relevant policies and development management standards set out in Chapter 10 of this Plan and where required will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.”*

The Waterford County Development Plan recognises the strategic importance of Waterford Airport and supports the expansion of the runway and operations.

### 3.3.3 Waterford Regional Airport & Business Park Masterplan 2011

The Waterford Regional Airport & Business Park Masterplan is appended to the WCDP 2011-2017. The document sets out the planning objectives and strategies for the future of the regional airport in line with the objectives of the Development Plan, Regional Planning Guidelines and National Planning Policy.

With regards to the South East Region, Waterford Airport is regarded as a key component of the Region’s transport infrastructure and will play an integral component in the future development of both the County and the Gateway. It is noted within Section 1.1 Strategic Context, that increasing connectivity, and availability and convenience of air services will assist in attracting tourism and will assist in harnessing the investment potential of the area.

The Airport’s mission statement as per the Waterford Airport Going Further Draft Business Plan (2009) is:

*“To serve local and regional air transport needs in the South East, providing connectivity for citizens, business users and the inbound tourist market in a safe environment, to act as a local hub for air transport activity and to act as an energiser for business activity in the region.”*

Under Section 1.6.1: Waterford Regional Airport, it is noted that:

*“The Council supports the development objectives of Waterford Regional Airport plc for the future development of the airport which are to:*

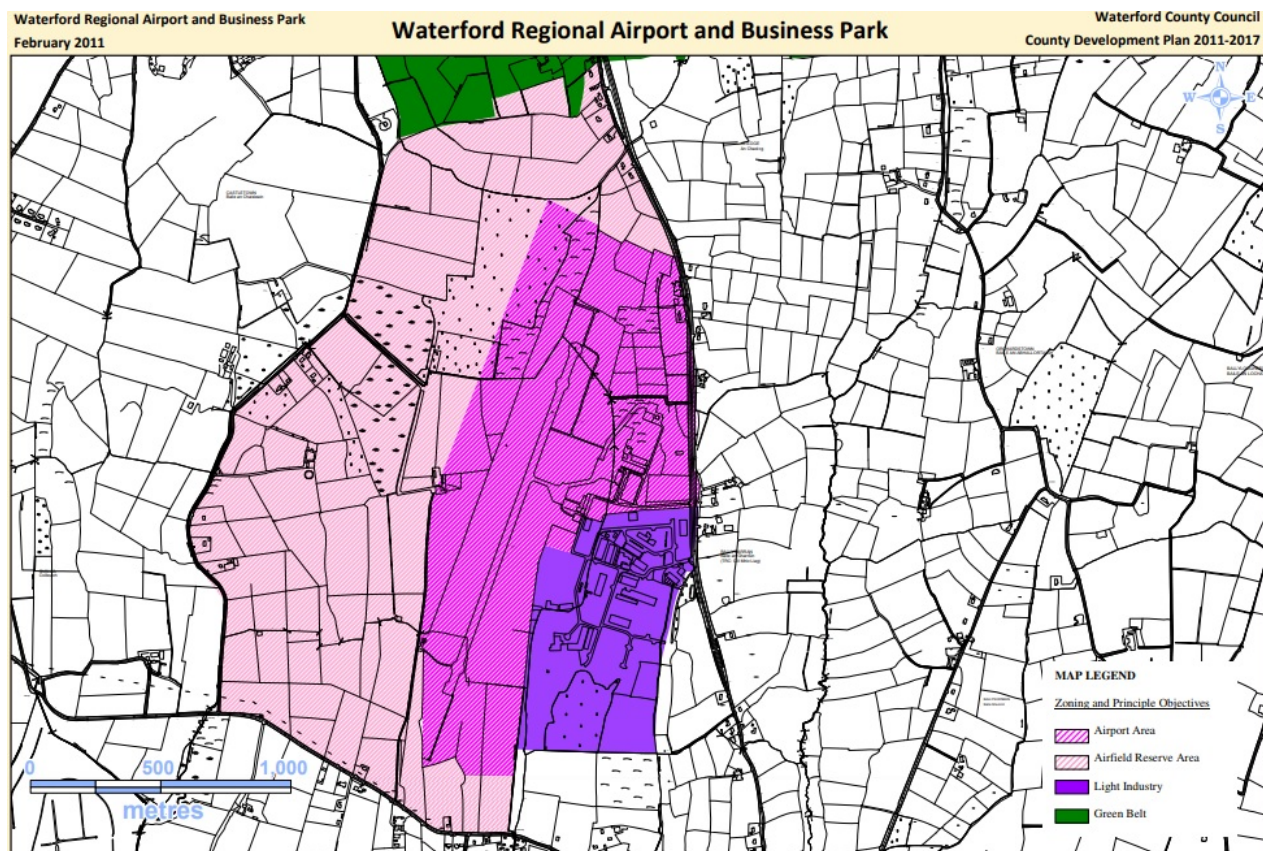
- *Increase the competitiveness of the South East Region and promote the balanced development of the Region in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy;*
- *Promote the accessibility and attractiveness of the Region for both business and inbound tourism;*
- *Improve transport infrastructure for South East Region; and*
- *Provide and promote cargo facilities to support industry and inward investment in the Region.”*

The following policies and objectives are noted in relation to the Council’s support of the proposal’s intent:

- Policy Airport 1: The Council will support and co-operate with the relevant authorities, government agencies, businesses and interest groups to improve access to the Airport and to facilitate the appropriate development at the Airport.
- Objective Airport 1: To assist the future expansion of services and routes at the Airport, the Council support the lengthening and widening of the runway.



Figure 3.2 provides the zoning objectives for Waterford Regional Airport and Business Park of which future development works within the area is to comply with in accordance with the Airport Control Zone and Development Standards as set out within the Development Plan.



**Figure 3-2: Zoning objectives for Waterford Regional Airport and Business Park**

The site is encompassed within zonings consisting of Airport area, airfield reserve area.

The zoning objective 'airport area' is defined as follows:

*"To provide for Airport related activities including passenger terminal buildings and services, airside retail, hotel, airport infrastructure, hangarage, storage, maintenance and ancillary facilities, park & ride, transport depot, training facilities, storage depot, warehouse, offices and light industrial/enterprise units."*

The zoning objective 'airfield reserve area' is defined as follows:

*"To allow for the future extension of the runway facilities and to provide for the possible future realignment of the R685 Road. This area should be reserved free from inappropriate development which may prejudice the future expansion of the Airport."*





### 3.3.4 Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019

The Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019, as extended, provides further planning policy and objectives for the proposal site and as such, a review of the City Development Plan has been carried out.

Under Section 1.4: The City: Strengths and Opportunities, it is recognised that Waterford City is capable of fulfilling its Gateway role for the region through means including through the use of Waterford Airport.

Under Section 3: Economic Development, the Plan sets out the generable objective to:

*“To promote and develop the regional role of Waterford Airport, Waterford Airport Business Park and the adjoining Pilot Training College. (OBJ 3.0.8)”*

Section 6.2.1: International and National Links identifies the South-East Regional Airport as one of the City’s primary links, of which its development and improvement, amongst other infrastructures, will aid in supporting Waterford’s Gateway status.

### 3.3.5 Waterford Planning Land Use and Transportation Study (PLUTS) 2004

The development strategies for Waterford City and County have been guided by the PLUTS since its publication in 2004. The document provides for the long-term planning objectives of the city and its environs up to 2020.

The PLUTS Study identifies the expansion and improvement of the South-East Regional Airport alongside the proposals for an extended runway, more operators and improved transport linkages.

## 3.4 Conclusion

The policy context of the project and the site have been set out in detail throughout the planning hierarchy. In summary, the proposed project is fully aligned with European, national, regional and local policy and will aim to deliver a development with supports and strengthens the area and greater region. The proposed runway extension and associated works are in compliance with and fully support county development plan objectives.

## 3.5 References

European Commission (2011), White Paper: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system. Available at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/strategies/2011\\_white\\_paper\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/strategies/2011_white_paper_en)

European Commission (2014) Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines: Official Journal of the European Union (2014/C 99/03)

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (2015), National Aviation Policy for Ireland. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4de76f-national-aviation-policy/>



Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (2015), Ireland's Regional Airports Programme 2015-2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4c47cc-irelands-regional-airports-programme-2015-2019/?referrer=/sites/default/files/publications/aviation/english/irelands-regional-airports-programme-2015-2019/irelands-regional-airports-programme-2015-2019.pdf/>

Government of Ireland (2018), Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework. Available at: <http://npf.ie/>

Government of Ireland (2018) The National Development Plan 2018 – 2027. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/07e507-national-development-plan-2018-2027/>

Department for the Environment, heritage and Local Government (2010) Atlantic Gateways Corridor Development Framework Overview Report. Available at: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/migrated-files/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/NationalSpatialStrategy/FileDownload%2C21610%2Cen.pdf>

Southern Regional Assembly (2020), Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. Available at: <https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Southern%20Regional%20Assembly%20RSES%202020%20FINAL%20Low%20Res.pdf>

Waterford City & County Council (2011) Waterford County Development Plan 2011 – 2017. Available at: <http://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/media/plans-strategies/development-plan/county/index.htm>

Waterford City & County Council (2013) Waterford City Development Plan 2013 – 2019. Available at: <http://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/media/plans-strategies/development-plan/city/index.htm>

Waterford City & County Council (2004) The Waterford Planning Land Use and Transportation Strategy.



**CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING,  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & PLANNING**

**[www.fehilytimoney.ie](http://www.fehilytimoney.ie)**

---

**CORK OFFICE**

Core House  
Pouladuff Road,  
Cork, T12 D773,  
Ireland  
**+353 21 496 4133**

**Dublin Office**

J5 Plaza,  
North Park Business Park,  
North Road, Dublin 11, D11 PXT0,  
Ireland  
**+353 1 658 3500**

**Carlow Office**

The Grain Store  
Singleton's Lane, Bagenalstown  
Co. Carlow, R21 XA66,  
Ireland  
**+353 59 972 3800**

