



Chapter 06

Planning and Policy

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6. Planning and Policy

6.1 Introduction

This chapter of the EIAR sets out the planning policy context within which the Proposed Development is presented. This chapter addresses national, regional and local planning policy issues pertinent to the assessment of the Proposed Development and gives consideration to the supporting planning case.

A description and overview of the Proposed Development is provided in **Chapter 4, Description of the Proposed Development**.

6.2 National Planning Policy

6.2.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government published Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF) in February 2018 (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018). The NPF represents the overarching national planning policy document of direct relevance to the planning functions of regional and planning authorities, including An Bord Pleanála, and since the 16th of February 2018, it replaced the National Spatial Strategy (NSS).

The NPF, which provides the framework for future development and investment in Ireland, is fully supported by the Government’s investment strategy for public capital investment and investment by the State sector in general. It is the overall plan from which other, more detailed plans will take their lead, including city and county development plans and regional strategies, hence the title, National Planning ‘Framework’.

The goals of the NPF are expressed as National Strategic Outcomes and are illustrated in **Image 6.1**.



Image 6.1: National Strategic Outcomes

Section 3.4 of the NPF focuses on the Southern Region of Ireland. Cork Metropolitan Area lies within the South-West regional area of the Southern Region, and it is within this Area that the Proposed Development is located.

The NPF states that Cork and its Metropolitan Area needs to “*focus on more balanced and compact, connected growth. This means that housing development should be based on employment growth, higher densities, access to amenities and sustainable transport modes, in order to avoid long-distance commuting patterns and quality of life impacts*”. The NPF states that strategies will be developed deliver “*improved public spaces and enhanced public transport as well as safe and pleasant options for walking and cycling*”.

‘Key future growth enablers’ set out for Cork include:

- The development of a much-enhanced public transport system; and
- Improving sustainable transport links.

The Proposed Development is wholly compliant with these key growth enablers and will assist in meeting the objectives of the NPF, as:

- It will contribute to the wider growth of the Southern Region;
- It is located on an existing public transport corridor and will maximise the potential of this public transport service;
- It will link transportation and employment areas to pedestrian routes and a strategic cycleway network; and
- It will provide an enhanced public realm and amenity area.

In addition, the Proposed Development is in line with National Policy Objective 64 to “*Improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions*”.

6.2.2 National Development Plan 2021-2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (Government of Ireland, 2021) supersedes the previous iteration which was initially published in conjunction with the NPF in February 2018. The NDP is the national plan setting out investment priorities to guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions over the timeframe of the plan. The revised NDP was delivered amidst the Covid-19 and aligns the economic recovery with the NPF and Climate Action Plan. The priorities of the plan are stated as National Strategic Outcomes (NSO), refer to **Image 6.1**.

NSO 2 focuses on enhanced regional accessibility. With respect to transport, the NDP aims to implement measures to “*enhance intra-regional accessibility through improving transport links between key urban centres of population and their respective regions, as well as improving transport links between the regions themselves.*”

NSO 4 focuses on sustainable mobility and recognises that the implementation of an environmentally sustainable public transport system will meet the increase in travel demands and address urban congestion while contributing towards the “*national policy vision of a low-carbon economy. Furthermore, the provision of safe alternative active travel options such as segregated cycling and walking facilities can also help alleviate congestion and meet climate action objectives...*”.

NSO 7 focuses on enhanced amenity and heritage. Cultural heritage is recognised as a key component and contributor to the attractiveness and sustainability of cities. In addition, “*all elements of living space including streets, public spaces, built heritage and natural amenity areas, cultural and sporting opportunities and sustainable transport networks, all of which play a central part in defining the character and attractiveness of places*”.

The Proposed Development complements the NDP as it will provide additional sustainable travel options and encourage a significant modal shift in transport. In addition to providing segregated cycle and walking facilities the Proposed Development also assists in providing an enhanced public realm and amenity area which will add to the attractiveness of the area.

6.2.3 Climate Action Plan 2023

The Climate Action Plan was prepared by the Government of Ireland in 2019, with an updated version published in 2023 (DECC, 2023). The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is to identify actions to be put in place for each sector with the objective of reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and thereby achieving EU targets of economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. The Climate Action Plan 2023 sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050. The sectors identified as having a high carbon footprint include agriculture, electricity, buildings, industry, transport and waste management.

In relation to the transport sector the Climate Action Plan seeks to provide a good public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, improve the energy efficiency of vehicles, and adopt the 'Avoid-Shift-Improve' approach to reduce the need for travel and the use of encourage sustainable travel modes. Furthermore, the associated Climate Action Plan Annex of Actions highlight actions for government and local authority to adopt to achieve Ireland's emissions reduction targets, including an emphasis on actions related to active transport accessibility and prioritisation.

In relation to the transport sector, the Climate Action Plan calls for a significant cut in transport emissions by 2030 through measures including:

- 500,000 extra walking, cycling and public transport journeys per day by 2030;
- Increasing the proportion of kilometres driven by passenger electric cars to between 40 and 45% by 2030, in addition to a reduction of 10% in kilometres driven by the remaining internal combustion engine cars;
- Increased rollout of rural public transport through Connecting Ireland (42-50% reduction in emissions by 2030); and
- All replacements for bus and commuter rail vehicles and carriages to be low or zero carbon by 2030.

The Proposed Development supports the principles of the Climate Action Plan in so far as it will encourage people to choose alternative modes of transport (i.e., cycling and walking). Every shift, however small, from the private vehicle to public transport, cycling or walking is positive and is a gain in terms of climate action.

An appraisal of the Proposed Development under the heading of Climate is included in **Chapter 12, Climate**.

6.2.4 Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020

'Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future' (Department of Transport, 2009) is a policy framework which sets out how the vision of a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. The objective of the policy framework is to reduce the demand for private car travel: *"To support sustainable travel, future population and employment growth will have to predominantly take place in sustainable compact urban areas or rural areas, which discourage dispersed development and long commuting"*.

Five key goals which form the basis of the policy framework include the following:

1. Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and, in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport.
2. Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks.
3. Minimise the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car.

5. Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels.

Chapter 5 of the Smarter Travel Policy document identifies actions to deliver alternative ways of travelling. Of all travel modes, cycling and walking have the lowest environmental impact. The Policy recognises that to successfully promote cycling and walking as realistic alternatives to the private car, a safe and pleasant experience must be provided.

Action 7 of the Smarter Travel Policy document identifies the requirement to “*implement safe walking and cycling routes to and from schools and other educational institutions*” and Action 16 recognises the “*strong convergence between walking as a tourism asset and walking as recreational activity for local residents*”.

Over the years, Cork City Council and Cork County Council (CCC) have developed a number of plans and strategies to help achieve the national Smarter Travel Policy objectives. These include:

- The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040; and
- Cork Cycle Network Plan (CCNP) 2017.

The recently published National Planning Framework (NPF) 2040 envisages that Cork will become the fastest-growing city region in Ireland with a projected 50% to 60% increase of its population in the period up to 2040. The projected growth and increased demand for travel will also intensify Ireland’s current decarbonisation challenge, as transport accounts for approximately 20% of the country’s greenhouse gases. The CMATS is aligned with the Climate Action Plan 2023 and is committed to facilitating a shift toward sustainable and active modes. To address these challenges, the CMATS 2040 has been developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA) in collaboration with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Cork City Council and CCC (NTA, 2020). The CMATS is discussed further in Section 6.4.1.

The objective of the CCNP 2017 is to provide a clear plan for the future development of the cycling network within the Metropolitan Area, to encourage greater use of cycling for trips to work, school, recreation and leisure. Development of the CCNP has been driven by a need to respond to national targets for sustainable transport as set out in ‘Smarter Travel, A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020’. The CCNP 2017 is discussed further in Section 6.4.2.

The Proposed Development aligns with the Smarter Travel Policy document both at a national and local level. In developing the CMATS and the CCNP, cognisance was taken of the Smarter Travel Policy document to ensure increased uptake of alternative transport, including cycling and walking. The Proposed Development will encourage people to move from private vehicle use to alternative modes of transport (i.e., cycling and walking). The alternative transport modes of cycling and walking are more sustainable than private vehicle use and will also generate more health benefits.

6.2.5 Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities

The National Transport Authority (NTA) published ‘Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities’ (NTA, 2013) to assist local authorities with the implementation of workplace travel plans in the development plan process and the development management process.

The guidance suggests that the requirement for a workplace travel plan or a workplace travel plan ‘statement’ should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Consideration should be given to the location of the development, the scale of the development, the precise nature of the uses proposed and the anticipated impact on the surrounding area regarding trip volume and congestion. ‘Standard’ workplace travel plans should be required if an existing or Proposed Development has the potential to employ over 100 persons.

While the Proposed Development does not meet the requirement for the preparation of a ‘standard’ workplace travel plan, it aligns with the guidance by facilitating active travel of employees to their place of work at a number of businesses and industries within the Cork Metropolitan Area.

Separately, the Cork County Development Plan (CCDP) 2022-2028 (CCC, 2022) outlines the need for the preparation of a ‘Mobility Management Plan’ for new developments. Refer to Section 6.4.3 for further details.

6.2.6 Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities

‘Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012) sets out planning policy considerations relating to developments affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside the 50-60km/h zones for cities, towns and villages.

The guidelines aim to achieve and maintain a safe and efficient network of national roads within the broader context of sustainable development and transportation strategies. The following key principles informed these guidelines:

- Land-use and transportation policies are highly interdependent;
- Proper planning is central to ensuring road safety;
- Development should be plan-led;
- Development management is the key to plan implementation; and
- Planning Authorities and the National Roads Authority and other public transport bodies must work closely together.

The Proposed Development directly facilitates this by providing an accessible and active travel alternative for pedestrians and cyclists within the region.

6.3 Regional Planning Policy

6.3.1 Southern Regional Assembly: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) (Southern Regional Assembly, 2020) sets out a 12-year strategic development framework for the Southern Region and includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) to guide the future development of the Region’s three main cities and metropolitan areas – Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford. The RSES for the Southern Region came into effect on 31st January 2020.

The purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the NPF while facilitating choices that reflect the differing needs of the regions. The strategies are proposed in the context of a renewed focus on ‘regional parity’ in the NPF being promoted to address anti-competitive pressures on Dublin, by offering more sustainable choices and options for people, businesses and communities that can positively influence more sustainable patterns of living and working which benefit our entire society and make our economy more equitable and resilient.

The vision for the Southern Region is outlined in the RSES as follows:

- Nurture all our places to realise their full potential;
- Protect and enhance our environment;
- Successfully combat climate change;
- Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens;
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Make the Southern Region one of Europe’s most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions.

The Proposed Development aligns with the Southern Region’s RSES by providing sustainable travel alternatives for the residents and visitors of Little Island.

6.3.2 Southwest Regional Planning Guidelines

The Southwest Regional Planning Guidelines (Southwest Regional Authority, 2010) were implemented to fulfil the Southern Region’s obligations to prepare regional planning guidelines (RPGs) under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. The regional planning guidelines for the Southwest Region act as a

regional tier in the hierarchy of plans and policies and influence local area plans and local development plans.

A key component of the RPGs is to drive the sustainable growth and prosperity of the region. The RPGs contain statements and analysis of key economic objectives with a set of planning guidelines to be incorporated within the development plans of all local authorities within the region. The specific functional areas that have been identified within the RPGs are as follows:

- Greater Cork Area (including Cork Gateway and Mallow Hub);
- Tralee / Killarney linked hub;
- Northern area; and
- Western area.

Development priorities in these RPGs that relate specifically to the Greater Cork Area (including Little Island) include:

- Realignment and reinforcement of spatial planning and land use policies;
- Plan for an increase in the population and employment of the Cork Gateway;
- Refocusing of economic and investment strategy; and
- Front-loading of infrastructure investments for the Cork Docklands

There are also a number of infrastructural provisions and upgrades for the Cork Greater Area that have been prioritised that include:

- Upgrading of N25 Cork-Waterford;
- Dunkettle Interchange; and
- The N25 flyovers within Cork.

The Proposed Development satisfies the objectives listed within the Southwest Region RPGs as it constitutes an upgrade to the N25 infrastructure and provides sustainable means of transportation to people within the area of Little Island.

6.4 Local Planning and Transport Policy

The Proposed Development is located in Little Island, County Cork. CCC is committed to intensifying public transport delivery and usage to deliver growth and improve quality of life in Cork. The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 supports the Proposed Development as part of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040, which is the overall transport strategy for the Cork Metropolitan Area.

6.4.1 Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040

The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport strategy (CMATS) (NTA, 2020) has been published in the context of the NPF which envisages that Cork will become the fastest growing city region in Ireland in the coming years. Cork's population is estimated to result in a projected 50% to 60% increase in the period up to 2040. This projected population and associated economic growth will result in a significant increase in the demand for travel. This demand needs to be managed and planned for carefully to safeguard and enhance Cork's attractiveness to live, work, visit and invest in.

The Strategy will provide a coherent transport planning policy framework and implementation plan around which other agencies involved in land use planning, environmental protection, and delivery of other infrastructure such as housing and water can align their investment priorities. CMATS will inform the development of regional and local planning, and associated investment frameworks.

The Strategy aligns with the statutory Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), the Southern Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the statutory Development Plans of both Cork City Council and CCC.

The CMATS contains a number of guiding principles across a number of transport modes, to achieve the vision set out within the CMATS, including the following:

- **Principle 1:** ‘To support the future growth of the CMA through the provision of an efficient and safe transport network’;
- **Principle 2:** ‘To prioritise sustainable and active travel and reduce car dependency within the CMA’; and
- **Principle 3:** ‘To provide a high level of public transport connectivity to key destinations within high demand corridors’.

The CMATS aligns with the key goals set out in the Smarter Travel Policy (refer to Section 6.2.4) in its efforts to deliver viable and attractive alternatives to the private car in Cork.

The Proposed Development is relevant to a number of the proposals in the CMATS, including:

- *‘The routes outlined in the 2017 Network Plan (i.e., the Cork Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan 2017) have largely been retained and updated to include new primary routes. These include future high quality, segregated routes developed and integrated into the design and development of the Northern Distributor Road and Southern Distributor Road and a new link from Dunkettle to Little Island to enhance connectivity’*
- *‘Primary routes have been designated as such because they experience the highest level of demand. Primary routes are typically direct and provide medium-long radial connections to key destinations across the CMA. These routes are supplemented by secondary and feeder routes which may provide access to residential catchments. Some key primary cycle routes to be improved within the CMA include: Segregated routes along the City Docks waterfront areas including the EuroVelo Route 1 from Cork City Centre to Tivoli and Little Island’.*
- *‘The provision of additional road network infrastructure within the Urban Expansion Areas (UEAs) in Cork County is required to support the development of these areas. Local road network improvements in these areas will be designed to effectively accommodate all modes of transport. The over-arching objective of these roads is to reduce through traffic and to facilitate walking, cycling, public transport access and public realm improvements in town and village centres. Similarly, improvements to the road network at Little Island should be designed with the intention of prioritising walking and cycling access particularly between the railway station / bus services and employment destinations / residential areas’*
- *‘Local authorities should seek to translate the overarching outcomes and objectives through the use of area specific Local Transport (Implementation) Plans sometimes referred to as Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) at city or Metropolitan town centre level. These Plans should set ambitious and realistic targets to prioritise active and sustainable transport mode shares that reduce local private motor trips over the short, medium and long term. Cork County Council are currently progressing a LTIP at Little Island and envisage future LTPs for Carrigaline, Ringaskiddy, Middleton and other urban settlements’.*

CMATs identifies two new crossings of the N25 which are identified as primary cycle routes. The first of these crosses the N25 to the east of the Proposed Development and forms part of the Dunkettle Scheme which is currently under construction. The other primary crossing identified is to the east of Junction 2 Little Island Interchange, close to the location of the proposed crossing which is the subject of this assessment. Therefore, the Proposed Development directly aligns with the CMATs proposal.

6.4.2 Cork Cycle Network Plan

The Cork Cycle Network Plan (CCNP) (CCC & Cork City Council, 2017) has been prepared for the Cork Metropolitan Area. The objective of the CCNP is to provide a clear plan for the future development of the cycling network within the Cork Metropolitan Area to encourage greater use of cycling for trips to work, school, recreation and leisure.

Development of the CCNP has been driven by a need to respond to national targets for sustainable transport as set out in Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 (Department of Transport, 2009).

The CCNP identified the modal share for cycling within the Cork Metropolitan Area as 1.7% in 2017 (compared to the national modal share of 2.3%) and set a target for this to increase to 10% in 2020.

It can therefore be seen that the take-up of cycling within the Cork Metropolitan Area is relatively low and as such there is a need to provide strategic direction to influence modal shift. The purpose of the CCNP is limited purely to recommendations for cycling infrastructure and development of an integrated and coherent cycling network. It does not provide recommendations in relation to additional behaviour change and spatial planning measures which also need to be considered if modal shift is to be achieved.

The area of Little Island is currently limited in cycling infrastructure. However, the CCNP has detailed that the areas of Glanmire, Glounthane and Little Island are proposed areas for new cycle infrastructure. Little Island is currently dominated by commercial land use and is located to the east of Cork City. There is a general lack of access routes with the N25 acting as a boundary to the north and the southern, eastern and western boundaries of Little Island being confined by Cork Harbour. At present, the Little Island area is predominantly accessed via the Dunkettle interchange at its westernmost extent, the Little Island Interchange and associated footways, slip lanes on and off the N25 and an overbridge which connects it with the L3004 Glounthaune Road, north of the N25. The only route from which it can currently be accessed by vulnerable road users is via this overbridge to and from the L3004 Glounthaune Road.

There are currently relatively few cycling facilities going to or from Little Island. Dedicated cycling facilities currently exist along the Dunkettle Q-link Road to Little Island. However, these facilities lack continuity at junctions and major crossing points.

Glounthaune is a mainly residential settlement located to the northeast of Little Island on the north side of the N25 national route 10km from Cork City. Glounthaune is primarily accessible from the L3004 Glounthaune Road, with a single, isolated junction connecting the two. The village is also connected to Glanmire via a narrow residential, local road. Cycling access to Glounthaune from the Little Island area has recently been improved as a result of the opening of the inter-urban cycle route I-U1 which was identified within the CCNP.

The CCNP is inclusive to detailed maps that illustrate the proposed cycling network for the Little Island area. Little Island will have three main primary routes, which will run in north-south and east-west directions respectively with three secondary routes interlinking with these. A new bridge primary route to the east of Junction 2 Little Island Interchange, close to the location of the Proposed Development, has been detailed in the CCNP, while a new link to the west of Little Island will span across the N25 to connect into two interurban routes extending to Glanmire and the future Glanmire masterplan site, as well as an inter-urban route which connects directly with the City Centre to the west and Carraigtwohill and Middleton to the east. It is an objective of the CCNP to identify a high-quality direct cycle link between the Tivoli area of Cork City and Little Island. No specific route has been identified within the CCNP. It remains an objective of the CCNP to make provision for such a link.

The Proposed Development supports both the CMATS and the CCNP. Overall, the implementation of the CMATS and the construction of a new pedestrian and cyclist bridge is seen as a positive measure which will encourage a modal shift from other forms of transport.

6.4.3 Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Cork County Development Plan (CCDP) 2022-2028 (CCC, 2022) has been prepared in accordance with the steps set out in the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. The CCDP 2022-2028 came into effect on 6th June 2022. It is expected to remain in force (subject to any interim variations that the Council may make) until 2028. The CCDP is a six-year development plan for the County that attempts to set out, as concisely as possible CCC's planning policy to 2028. The CCDP also sets out the overall planning and sustainable development strategy for the county which must be consistent with the NPF and the Southern Region RSES and Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) 2020.

The CCDP 2022-2028 differs from the previous County Development Plan in two key areas:

- The Plan relates to the new administrative boundary of the county, post the extension of the City boundary.
- The CCDP 2022 from 6th June 2022 replaced:

- The Cork County Development Plan, 2014;
- The 8 Municipal District Local Area Plans adopted in 2017; and
- The 9 Town Development Plans of former Town Council Towns.

The core strategy of the CCDP outlines strategic priorities for the Cork Metropolitan area to ensure it can fulfil its strategic function as a driver for growth in the Southwest Region. Some strategic priority areas as they relate to the Proposed Development include:

- Promote Metropolitan Cork development as an integrated planning unit to function as a single market area for homes and jobs where there is equality of access for all, through an integrated transport system, to the educational and cultural facilities worthy of a modern and vibrant European City;
- Provide an enhanced public transport network linking the City, its environs, the Metropolitan towns and the major centres of employment; and
- Develop the Cork City Environs so that they complement the City. In the South Environs, priority should be given to consolidating the rapid growth that has occurred in recent years by the provision of services, social infrastructure and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the population. The North Environs will play a major role in the rebalancing of the City in terms of future population and employment growth.

The CCDP 2022-2028 also outlines the need for the preparation of a Mobility Management Plan (MMP) for new developments. A MMP will be prepared for the Proposed Development by the contractor to encourage access to the site by its workforce using sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Refer to the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in **Appendix 5.1 in Volume 4** of this EIAR for further details.

6.4.4 Cork 2050: Cork's Submission to the NPF (2017)

Cork 2050: Cork's Submission to the NPF (Cork 2050) (CCC and Cork City Council, 2017) is a joint submission by Cork County and City Councils to the NPF as part of the consultation process for a new framework. Cork 2050 establishes a strategic vision for the growth of the 'whole of Cork' which is focused on future sustainable development. Cork 2050 further prioritises strategic infrastructural investment in Cork across key sectors including transport, health and environment.

The submission outlines the region's approach to maximising the potential of Cork by building on strengths and addressing issues that limit opportunities. A key component of the submission outlines the capacity of Cork to relieve pressure on Dublin and drive the growth in the Southern Region to support a stronger national economy. Cork 2050 states the region is the best location nationally capable of:

- Achieving a critical mass of population within the Metropolitan Area (Cork City, County Towns, Rural Areas and Islands) with in excess of 500,000 people by 2050;
- Creating up to 120,000 jobs over the next 33 years;
- Supporting high-capacity public transport corridors of a scale that underpins high levels of sustainable economic and population growth; and
- Facilitating growth through significant infrastructure capacity and supplemented by committed upgrades and a programme of investment up to 2050.

The submission identifies an East-West Metropolitan Growth Corridor which incorporates Little Island. The Little Island train station and the N25 are noted as being part of the strategic transport corridor which is vital for the future growth of the region. Principle actions which are specific to transport and relating to Little Island within Cork 2050 include:

- Deliver public transport corridors across Metropolitan Cork in the form of BRT / LRT and rail;
- Increase population densities along public transport corridors at certain locations to achieve averages of between 3,500 - 4,500 persons per sq. km within a 1km zone;
- Support expansion of towns along public transport corridors in Metropolitan Cork;

- Invest in local infrastructure (water services, roads, cycling etc.) and the public realm of Cork City, county towns and villages, focussing on improving health and wellbeing; and
- Develop key roads infrastructure, particularly the Dunkettle Interchange, M20, M28 and Northern Ring Road and in strategic transport corridors.

The Proposed Development directly supports Cork 2050 by delivering on the targets to develop sustainable infrastructure within an area identified as a key Growth Corridor. In providing alternative means of sustainable transport to Little Island from the region, the Proposed Development provides an active transport route that satisfies the objective of Cork 2050.

6.4.5 Little Island Transportation Study – Final Strategy Development Report

CCC commissioned the Little Island Transportation Study (LITS) (CCC, 2018) to identify existing transportation issues within Little Island and to explore potential solutions. A further driver for the study was to ensure that an integrated and balanced approach to transportation engineering was in place for Little Island to fulfil its strategic function as an employment location, logistics hub and residential community.

The LITS aims to determine what transport infrastructure improvements and policy measures are required to alleviate severe peak hour traffic congestion. An increase in active travel and public transport use are promoted as measures which will improve the environment for general traffic, cyclists, pedestrians and public transport vehicles.

A public questionnaire was conducted which noted that better quality walking and cycling links from the Little Island train station to Little Island was the top reason to encourage people to use the train to travel to Little Island. Additionally, 77% of respondents rated the general traffic conditions in Little Island as very poor, with 35% and 67% stating that pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, respectively, was very poor. The LITS determined that pedestrian volume was highest in the PM peak at the N25 overbridge, with 249 pedestrians travelling towards Little Island train station.

The Proposed Development will satisfy the objectives of the LITS by providing a necessary upgrade to the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure within Little Island. In turn, this will reduce vehicle movements in Little Island by creating a link between the train station and the surrounding environs.

6.4.6 Little Island Transportation Study – Strategy Design Report

The Little Island Transportation Study – Strategy Design Report (SDR) (CCC, 2019) provides additional detail in relation to the design of the proposed infrastructure and policy measures to be implemented in Little Island over a 20-year period to ensure sustainable growth. The SDR should be read in conjunction with the LITS (refer to Section 6.4.6) as it focuses on the key elements of the transport strategy developed for Little Island.

To inform the report, the following details were assessed and incorporated:

- National, regional and local planning and policy documents guiding the development of Little Island;
- Current traffic conditions in Little Island including key issues identified during site visits and public consultation;
- The evaluation framework utilised to assess various LITS strategies including the development of a study vision and goals;
- The development of the Little Island Traffic Model (LITM) used to test various transport strategies; and
- The assessment of test strategies through the identified evaluation framework; and
- The identification of the emerging preferred LITS Strategy.

Following the assessment of the above details, the SDR categorised the implementation of required measures into three delivery streams:

- Short-term (2018-2023) strategy measures;

- Medium-term (2023-2030) strategy measures; and
- Long-term (2030-2040) strategy measures.

The SDR recommended that the transport strategy proposals aimed at increasing the mode share for sustainable modes are frontloaded in the implementation plan. As a result, the following Short Term Strategy Measure was incorporated within the report:

The mobility hub at the Little Island Train Station, incorporating the pedestrian/cycle footbridge should be prioritised within the first five years of the strategy. It is recommended that a masterplan for the mobility hub, including the pedestrian/cycle footbridge, is commenced on completion of the Little Island Transportation Study, and that it is delivered prior to the delivery of the N25 Interchange to Ballytrasna Park Junction bus priority scheme.

Therefore, the Proposed Development is directly referenced as a required Strategy Measure within the SDR to enhance pedestrian and cyclist access within Little Island.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the Proposed Development is congruent with current national, regional and local transport and planning policy as set out in the various relevant documents presented above.

In recent years, there has been a major shift towards sustainable transport across Ireland at a national, regional and local scale. The Proposed Development, through the provision of additional cycling and walking facilities in Little Island, aligns with the goals of the various planning and policy documents that promote this shift.

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