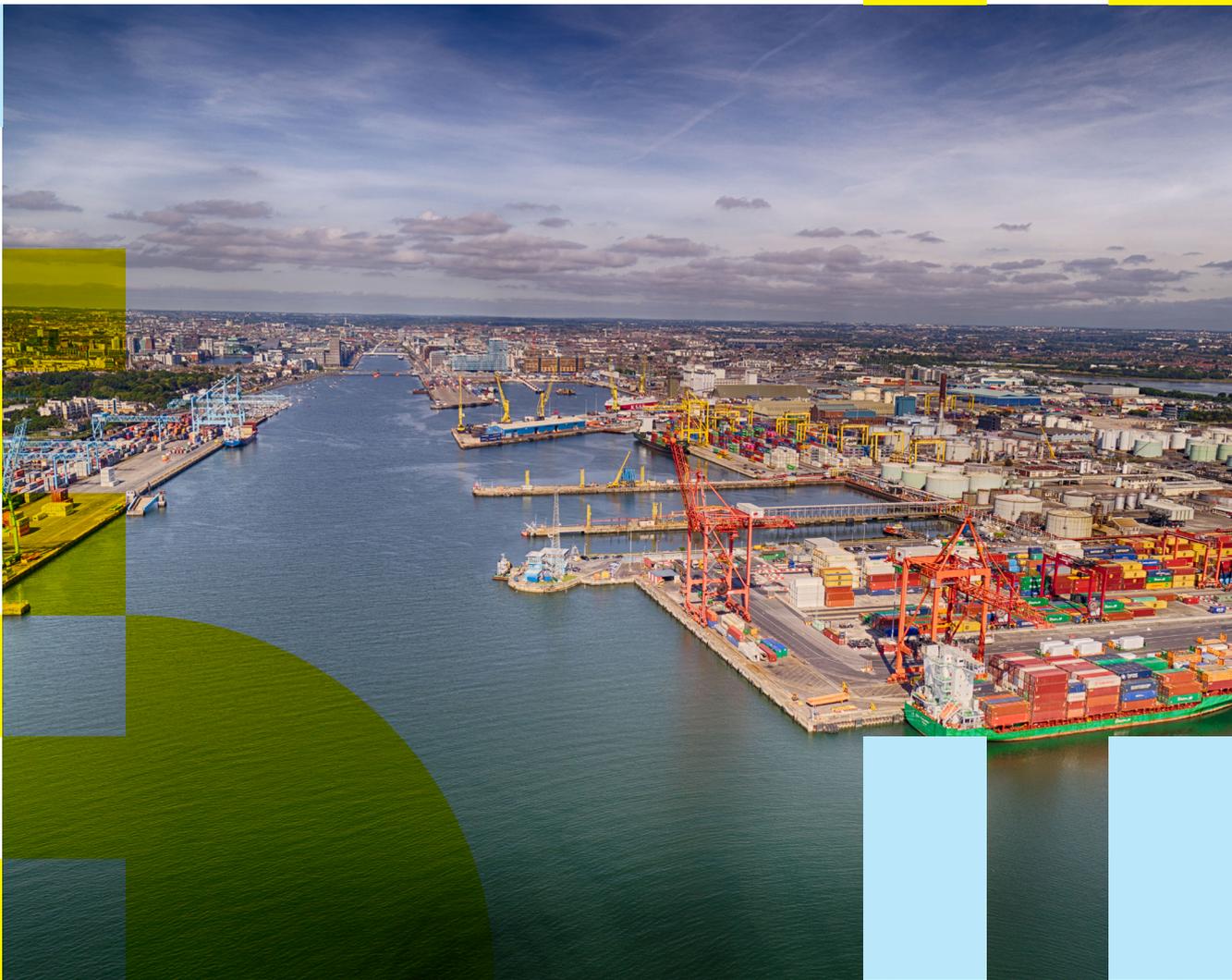


Environmental Impact Assessment Report

## Chapter 2

### Need for the 3FM Project

Volume 2 Part 1



## 2 NEED FOR THE 3FM PROJECT

### 2.1 Introduction

The 3FM Project is the third and final project to be brought forward from the Dublin Port Masterplan 2012 (reviewed 2018). Dublin Port Company (DPC) has already secured planning permission for two existing Masterplan Projects – the Alexandra Basin Redevelopment (ABR) Project in 2014, and the Masterplan 2 (MP2) Project in 2020.

- The 3FM Project concerns the development of required additional port capacity in the south port area on the Poolbeg Peninsula.
- The project will provide the additional infrastructure for freight required in the unitised modes (Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo).
- The 3FM Project will provide close to 20% of the capacity that will be needed by 2040 on the under-developed almost one-fifth of Dublin Port's lands located on the Poolbeg Peninsula. A range of different assessments and reports have identified that the additional capacity provided by this project is required to ensure that capacity constraints do not arise in the period to 2040.
- The 3FM Project will also complete the development of Dublin Port's overall road network to significantly remove port traffic from public roads in the vicinity of Dublin Port, particularly the Tom Clarke Bridge. The project will fulfil a number of national strategic objectives including connecting the south port area with the Dublin Tunnel and the M50/M1 through the construction of a new bridge across the River Liffey as a core part of the Southern Port Access Route (SPAR).
- The 3FM Project will complete a series of public realm and active travel projects on the Poolbeg Peninsula which mirror similar developments on the north side of the port to meet Masterplan 2040's objective to integrate Dublin Port with Dublin City.
- Sustainability is at the heart of the 3FM Project, not just in the proposed development of brownfield sites, but also in the context of the provision of additional public realm and active travel facilities, future provisioning for Luas connectivity to the Poolbeg Peninsula, and providing rail connectivity from the South Port Area to the National Rail Network through dedicated low carbon shunting services. The 3FM Project has also been proposed with key regard for biodiversity and the natural environment. Reduction in embodied carbon in the construction of the project will be achieved using low carbon concrete products (with 50% ground granulated blast-furnace slag (GGBS) cement) and steel products that use recycled steel.
- The 3FM Project is being proposed for a 15 year planning consent in the context of the complexity of developing a large scale project of this nature in a working port with different phases of the proposed project proceeding in a manner that does not interrupt the functioning of the Port for commercial, passenger and leisure purposes. DPC's experience in the previous Masterplan SID projects has demonstrated that a permitting period of this duration is required.

In terms of existing Dublin Port Masterplan projects, on the north side of Dublin Port:

- The ABR Project<sup>1</sup> is largely completed and works on the final stages are underway.
- The MP2 Project<sup>2</sup> has commenced.
- The project to redevelop the port's internal road system has been largely completed and work is underway to complete a network of cycle and pedestrian routes throughout and on the periphery of the port<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to the overall port estate of 260 hectares, DPC is developing Dublin Inland Port. This is a 44 hectare estate located 14km from Dublin Port, and comprises two separate but adjacent sites, Sites A & B, each 22 hectares in extent. Development of Site A has been granted full planning permission by Fingal County Council and is now substantially progressed, with two of its large component sites in use for storage of empty containers. The overall envisaged development comprises empty storage depots, haulier facilities and warehousing facilities earmarked for existing operators in Dublin Port who will be reallocated from Dublin Port to Dublin Inland Port as DPC implements the Franchise Policy, 2014 in order to deliver its Masterplan 2040 targets. DPC envisages developing Site B of Dublin Inland Port to provide capacity to support operation of the Port's three container terminals.

## 2.2 Project Rationale

### 2.2.1 Core Principles Underpinning the 3FM Project

The 3FM Project is advanced on the basis of a number of key principles that are central to understanding the need and rationale for the 3FM Project.

#### 2.2.1.1 Port capacity must remain ahead of demand

To prevent wider constraints in the national economy, the capacity of Dublin Port must remain ahead of demand. The Issues Paper on the Review of National Ports Policy 2013 (Department of Transport, October 2023) noted that;

*“Failure to proceed with investment in capacity, infrastructure, equipment and hinterland connectivity poses serious risks to the future success of Ireland's ports and national economy” (page 18).*

The Port Capacity Study (IMDO 2023) suggests that any failure to maintain sufficient port capacity could have a major negative impact on the national economy, starving it of the materials needed to continue strong growth. The Study further expressly states that Ireland should have sufficient port capacity for all cargo modes if planned developments are put in place in time.

The 3FM Project is just such a planned development. The 3FM Project has been recognised as a central element of the plans for the maximisation of the capacity at the port since the publication of the Dublin Port

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<sup>1</sup> ABR Project - [PA0034](#)

<sup>2</sup> MP2 Project - [304888](#)

<sup>3</sup> Roads Project – [Masterplan 2040](#), Figure 6, Page 47

Masterplan in 2012. Key elements of the project, including the Southern Port Access Road, are also specifically referenced in the Project 2040/ National Planning Framework.

Long-term port demand forecasting is not an absolute science, given that it is inherently linked to forecasting national economic performance and population growth. There are also inevitable uncertainties in projecting the port's throughput capacity far into the future as there will be changes that cannot be accurately projected in the respective demands for Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo capacity. Likewise, the proportion of Ro-Ro units that are containers could change in the years ahead. Dublin Port Company must by necessity plan on the side of caution when making port demand and capacity projections, particularly given the very extended timescales of delivering large port infrastructure projects. Whilst correctly acknowledging the limitations of long-term port demand forecasting, Dublin Port Company is confident that its projections are realistic. However, even if those projections transpire to have been somewhat optimistic, the proposed port infrastructure will still have to be delivered, albeit within a slightly longer timeframe than currently envisaged. On the other hand, the consequence of taking an unnecessarily conservative approach to demand projection could be a national port capacity shortage with significant economic consequences. Any national port capacity shortage could not be remedied quickly, given the very long design/ planning/ permitting/ construction period for delivering major port infrastructure. e.g. If granted planning permission and then constructed, the 3FM Project will have taken 20 years from the original commencement of planning and design work to project completion.

### **2.2.1.2 Assessment of demand and capacity should be soundly based and take account of the highest growth scenario;**

Given the significant economic consequences of the potential under-provision of port capacity identified above, it is important that an assessment of port demand and capacity should be soundly based upon a range of different approaches and, as a Report by Indecon Consultants ( Analysis of Relationships between Projected Volumes and Capacity at Dublin Port, Indecon Consultants, August 2023, see Appendix 2-2) indicates, should take account of the highest growth scenario which has been reasonably assessed. Thus, the capacity assessments upon which the design of the 3FM Project has been based have been calculated using a range of different assessments.

#### **Masterplan 2040**

While determining future capacity requires a range of different assumptions to be made, the analysis of port volumes from 1980 does provide a reasonable basis for examining future growth. The detail of this analysis is set out below.

#### **IMDO Estimates (2023)**

The Port Capacity Study was prepared by Arup/EY for the Irish Marine Development Office (IMDO) in June 2023. To determine the capacity of Irish ports to handle forecasted demand to 2040, a demand forecast model was developed to assess the likely throughput of trade goods over the period. The Port Capacity Study states;

*“Whilst the demand forecast model focuses on how GDP drives trade, the reverse is also likely to be true. This means that any failure to maintain sufficient port capacity could have a major negative impact on the economy, starving it of the materials it needs to continue strong growth. The same is true for exports, as failure*

*to export would lead to reductions in foreign earnings and loss of trading opportunities for Irish exporters.” (Port Capacity Study, Arup, June 2023, Chapter 8-5)*

The Port Capacity Study specifically addresses unitised modes in Dublin Port.

On Ro-Ro, the Study noted that demand in Dublin is likely to increase over time, with Dublin Port requiring approximately two million units per year in Ro-Ro freight capacity. On Lo-Lo, the Study noted that Dublin Port has the greatest Lo-Lo throughput nationally and that this is unlikely to change, which requires Dublin Port to increase its Lo-Lo capacity by 2027. The Study specifically notes that DPC is planning for such an increase, a core part of which is the 3FM Project. The Executive Summary of the Port Capacity Study is attached at Appendix 2-1 to the EIAR.

### ***Indecon Economic Consultants (2023)***

In September 2023, Indecon carried out an analysis of the relationships between project volumes and capacity at Dublin Port. Its analysis indicated that port volumes are likely to continue to expand in line with the projected growth in the Irish economy in the medium term, as predicted by the Department of Finance.

The Indecon Report noted the overall imperative for Dublin Port to remain agile in responding to the trading needs of the Irish economy and recognised the importance for DPC of planning for a high growth scenario so that capacity is available before demand must be met. The Report notes that there would be very significant economic costs arising if the Port is unable to meet customer demand.

On unitised trade, the Report noted that Dublin Port is likely to operate at close to capacity for both Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo. The position in respect of Lo-Lo volumes was identified as being particularly acute, with the port operating at peak capacity for the current decade (ie, 2021 – 2030), with enhancements (including 3FM) required to ensure sufficient Lo-Lo capacity at the port for 2040.

The Indecon Report also commented on the loss of land available to DPC for freight handling as a consequence of land being allocated to certain State authorities for various customs and border checks consequent on the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union. This reduction in land availability directly impacts on trade flows, causing projected Ro-Ro capacity to be reduced by approximately 140,000 units per year.

The Indecon Report is attached at Appendix 2-2 to the EIAR.

### ***Port Policy Issues Paper (2023)***

The Ports Policy Issues Paper references the IMDO Study when analysing Port Capacity and specifically notes that a failure to proceed with currently proposed port infrastructure projects will pose serious risks to Ireland’s national economy.

The Ports Policy Issues Paper is attached at Appendix 2-3 to the EIAR.

### 2.2.1.3 Sustainability at the heart of 3FM

The rationale for the 3FM Project, and in particular the criteria that have informed the nature of the development proposals, are expressly predicated upon a number of key sustainability considerations, including:

- To seek to use brownfield lands in order to minimise the impact of port development on the natural environment. The 3FM Project involves the exclusive use of brownfield lands solely making use of existing industrial and port lands.
- No large-scale infill. In the Dublin Port Masterplan, DPC gave a commitment not to undertake additional significant infill within the Dublin Harbour area. The 3FM Project respects this commitment and has been designed to minimise the extent of infill required to give effect to the proposals. This is evident in Area N, where the additional berth capacity is provided by way of an open pile structure, which has been selected to minimise the impact on marine life and benthic resources.
- Detached from residential amenity. The core elements of the 3FM Project have been designed in a manner to reduce the impact on local residential communities, whether from the perspective of potential noise, visual amenities or emissions. This can be seen in the revised Project Scope which led to Area O being changed from a storage area where containers would be stacked three units high, to a much less visually obtrusive Ro-Ro Freight Terminal where containers will not be stacked at all. Similarly, the design of the Southern Port Access Route (SPAR) was configured in a way that minimises the potential impact on residents of York Road, and Area K was reconfigured to reduce any adverse impact on residents of Coast Guard Cottages
- Supportive of other sustainability initiatives – the project has also been configured to make a significant contribution to four other important sustainability initiatives:
  - DCC District Heating – the design of the project was configured to make land available within the original project site for DCC to develop a District Heating facility connected to the Dublin Waste to Energy Plant. This facility will form a separate planning application by DCC.
  - Codling Wind Park (CWP) Project – the configuration of the 3FM Project made provision for land owned by DPC to be made available to CWP for the construction of a substation for Offshore Renewable Energy which it is proposed will be brought on shore from a wind farm in the Irish Sea. This substation will form a separate application from CWP and is not part of 3FM.
  - Active Travel – the 3FM Project also makes provision for the development of new Active Travel routes, both within the context of the current application by DPC, but also through the provision of funding to DCC to construct additional routes. This will aid sustainable travel and recreation adjacent to the subject site.
  - Public Park and Nature Reserve – the 3FM Project has been configured to accord with relevant zoning objectives to provide a new public park and an extension to the Irishtown Nature Reserve.
- Sustainable design and use of the SPAR. – the SPAR will make a significant positive contribution to sustainability in a number of different respects. First it will aid in the reduction of emissions from

commercial port traffic and other traffic by facilitating the free-flowing movement of HGV traffic from the Poolbeg Peninsula away from private roads and residential areas. This will reduce congestion and associated idling time on the R131 and East Wall Road, leading to decreased fuel consumption and emissions. The SPAR bridge has been designed so that it can be modified in the future to facilitate the potential extension of the LUAS from The Point to Poolbeg, should the NTA choose such a future routing. In addition, electric or other low carbon shunting vehicles will be used to interconnect, via the SPAR, between freight terminals in the southern Port Estate and the potential rail freight hub which may be developed by Iarnród Éireann in the vicinity of the North Port estate. Thus, the SPAR Bridge has been designed as a multi-modal transport bridge, rather than a conventional road bridge and will obviate the necessity to construct other footbridges/cycleways, a possible future LUAS bridge, and a rail interconnection bridge.

- The 3FM Project has also been designed and configured to comply with relevant Climate Action and Circular Economy obligations – details of the way the Project addresses both issues are set out in a separate chapter of the EIA/CHAPTER 2.

#### **2.2.1.4 Maintain a working port during the construction works.**

It is a key aspect to the configuration and rationale for the 3FM Project that the proposed works are carried out in a working port which needs to continue to service the national economy throughout the construction process. The construction phasing of the 3FM Project has been designed to ensure that works do not impede the effective and safe operation of the Port during the construction period. This is a significant factor in the decision to seek a planning consent of 15 years.

### **2.2.2 Masterplan 2040 - Throughput Capacity Objectives**

The throughput capacities in Masterplan 2040 are based on the objective, data-based projection that cargo volumes will continue to grow to 2040, as they have done over many decades.

The core assumption in Masterplan 2040 is that the average annual rate of growth over the 30 years from 2010 to 2040 will be 3.3%, bringing Dublin Port's throughput to 77.2 million gross tonnes.<sup>4</sup> This averaged annual rate of 3.3% compares to rates of growth over the two preceding 30-year periods period between 1950-1980 and 1980-2010 of 3.2% and 4.7% respectively (Table 2.1).

DPC has adjusted its 2040 capacity forecast downwards compared to the Masterplan, due to the projected permanent loss of port lands to State Services as a consequence of Brexit – the loss of these lands has reduced Ro-Ro capacity to an extent that necessitates the additional Ro-Ro facilities being provided as part of the 3FM Project. Taking account of this impact, DPC estimates that the port capacity at 2040 will now be 73.8m gross tonnes – assuming all components of the Masterplan are delivered.

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<sup>4</sup> Overall port volumes are measured in gross tonnes. This allows the volumes in the different unitised and non-unitised cargo modes to be aggregated into a single statistic.

Table 2.1 Dublin Port's, historical and projected growth rates over 30-year periods (1950 to 2040) and growth over 20 periods (1980 to 2040)

Up to Year	30 year average annual growth rate
1980	3.2%
2010	4.7%
2040	3.3%

Year	Gross tonnes	Growth over previous 20 years
1980	7.9m	x 2.3
2000	21.0m	x 2.6
2020	36.9m	x 1.8
2040	77.2m	x 2.1

As outlined previously, it takes in the order of twenty years to bring major port infrastructure from the concept stage to completion and Table 2.1 shows that cargo volumes in each of the twenty-year periods to 2020 have roughly doubled. The Masterplan assumption of 3.3% growth per annum implies that volumes will double again in the twenty years to 2040.

The main driver for past growth in Dublin Port's cargo volumes has been population increase and economic growth. Between 1950 and 1980, the population increased from 3.0 million to 3.4 million. In the thirty years to 2010, it increased further to 4.6 million.

By 2020, it had reached 5.0 million and the CSO predicts that there will be substantial increases to 2040 and beyond (Table 2.2).

It is important to note that the Masterplan 2040 capacity objectives, as originally published and when the Masterplan was reviewed in 2018, have been adjusted to take account of the subsequent allocation of North Port lands to State authorities for Brexit-related border and customs checks.

The impact of the loss of these lands for port purposes has led to an estimated reduction in 2040 capacity of 3.38m tonnes to produce a revised 2040 throughput of 73.78m tonnes<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> This equates to the Masterplan 2040 target of 77.16m tonnes, but reduced by 3.38m tonnes to allow for the assumed permanent loss of seven hectares of freight yards to State Brexit facilities. There are currently 14 hectares of land in use for such facilities, and it has been assumed that 50% of these lands will ultimately be returned for use as transit freight storage yards.

Table 2.2 Population estimates 1950 to 2020 and population projections from 2031 to 2051 ('000), (CSO, 2020)

Year	Estimate	Projection	
		Minimum	Maximum
1950	2,969	-	-
1960	2,832	-	-
1970	2,950	-	-
1980	3,401	-	-
1990	3,506	-	-
2000	3,790	-	-
2010	4,555	-	-
2020	4,977	-	-
2031	-	5,221	5,615
2041	-	5,433	6,177
2051	-	5,578	6,693

For its part, the National Planning Framework assumes that the population will increase to 5.7 million by 2040.<sup>6</sup>

As a consequence of the high level of persistent underlying growth, major economic disruptions such as the 2008 collapse or the more recent impacts of Brexit, Covid-19, and economic instability post Russia's invasion of Ukraine, manifest themselves as aberrations on the long-term growth curve (Figure 2.1). The primary long-term impact of Brexit on Dublin Port has been the loss of port lands which have been allocated to the State authorities for customs and border checks – representing a permanent loss of capacity.

<sup>6</sup> [NPF](#), Page 24

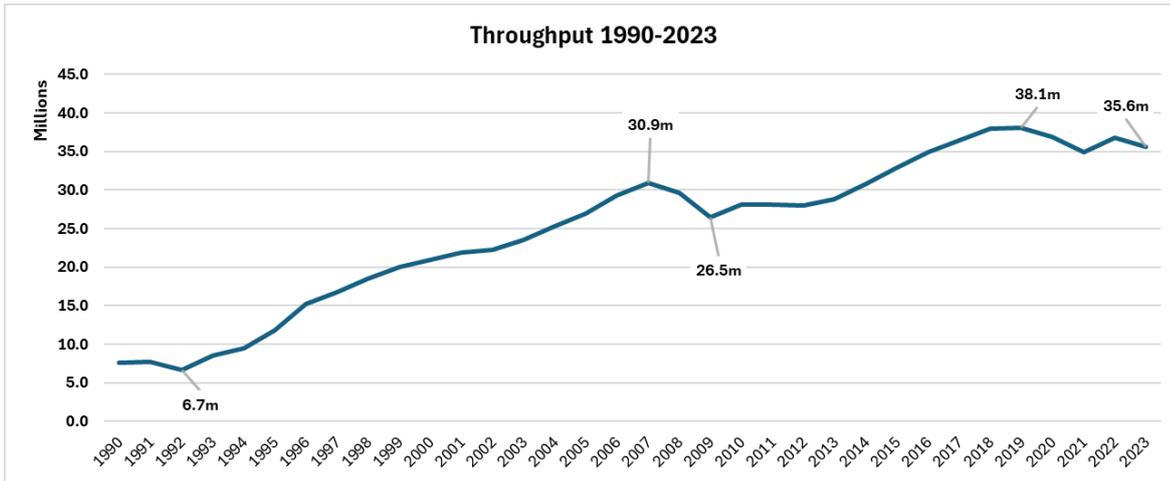


Figure 2.1 Trends in Dublin Port’s cargo volumes (m Tonnes), 1990 to 2023

DPC’s approach in Masterplan 2040 is to maximise the throughput on Dublin Port’s fixed brownfield land area before seeking to develop additional port capacity at another east coast location. DPC has published the detailed thinking behind this approach in the Dublin Port Post 2040 Dialogue.<sup>7</sup>

This analysis beyond 2040 reinforces the need to complete the development of Dublin Port as envisaged in Masterplan 2040 by now bringing forward the 3FM Project.

The 3FM Project is specifically focussed on providing capacity to cater for the utilised modes of Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo freight, where the average annual growth in the number of units (trailers and containers) over the 30 years to 2040 is assumed to be 4.1% and 3.0% respectively (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Masterplan 2040 volume growth assumptions by cargo mode to 2040

	2010	2040		AAGR
	'000 gross tonnes	'000' gross tonnes		Revised
	Actual	Original	Revised	
Ro-Ro	16,403	41,920	54,287	4.1%
Lo-Lo	6,317	10,480	15,270	3.0%
Bulk Liquid	4,009	4,000	4,000	0.0%
Bulk Solid	2,054	3,500	3,500	1.8%
Break Bulk	96	100	100	0.1%
<b>Total tonnes</b>	<b>28,879</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>77,157</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
Ro-Ro ('000 units)	701	1,737	2,249	4.0%
Lo-Lo ('000 units)	377	635	926	3.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>3,174</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
Lo-Lo ('000 TEU)	641	1,080	1,574	3.0%

<sup>7</sup> Notably in [Paper 5 - The Conundrum of Planning for Long-Term Growth](#) – and in [Paper 7 - Options for the Greenfield Development of Additional East Coast Port Capacity](#).

Whereas overall port volumes are measured in gross tonnes, given that the 3FM Project is designed to provide capacity for trailers and containers in the unitised modes of Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo, it is more relevant to consider the annual capacity to be provided by the project in terms of units (for both Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo) and, at times, TEU (for Lo-Lo).<sup>8</sup>

Masterplan 2040 assumes that, by 2040, the number of trailers and containers that will pass through Dublin Port in the Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo modes will be 3.2 million. Adjusting for the loss of 7 ha of land to Brexit facilities in the North Port, this figure reduces to 3.0 million.

The 3FM Project is proposed to provide annual capacity for 684,000 units, or 22% of all units, by constructing two terminals:

- Ro-Ro: 360,000 units; and
- Lo-Lo: 324,000 units.

### 2.2.3 3FM Project - Unitised Throughput Capacities

The 3FM Project envisages the development of eleven parcels of Dublin Port lands on the Poolbeg Peninsula (Appendix 2-2) to, firstly, provide a total annual capacity for 684,000 unit loads (trailers and containers) and, secondly, to provide infrastructure and facilities to support the objective to re-integrate Dublin Port with Dublin City:

- Four parcels - identified as Area K, Area L, Area N and Area O – to be developed to provide additional port capacity.
- Seven areas totalling 9.6 hectares to provide public spaces to meet the Masterplan objective to integrate Dublin Port with Dublin City and to provide space for district heating<sup>9</sup> and the on-shore substation of a major ORE project<sup>10</sup>.

The total extent of the land area to be developed in the 3FM Project is 41.5 hectares as summarised in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Summary of 3FM Project land areas

Land Type	Area (ha)
Port operations	31.9
Public spaces and non-port users	9.6
<b>Total land area</b>	<b>41.5</b>

<sup>8</sup> **Containers** come in standard lengths of 20', 40' and 45'. The TEU – or twenty foot equivalent unit – provides a common unit to allow measures of capacity to be aggregated when considering storage volumes in container terminals or the carrying capacities of container ships. The conversion factor between units and TEU used in Dublin Port is 1.7.

**Trailers**, on the other hand, are, for the most part, 13.6 metres long (equivalent to 45').

<sup>9</sup> Separate planning application by Dublin City Council

<sup>10</sup> Separate planning application by ORE project developer

The 31.9 hectares to be developed or redeveloped to provide port capacity are split into two components as shown in Table 2.5:

- Ro-Ro terminal of 18.2 hectares with an annual capacity of 360,000 units; and
- Lo-Lo terminal of 13.7 hectares with an annual capacity of 324,000 units

**Table 2.5 Summary of land areas and berth lengths in the 3FM Project for port operations**

<b>Ro-Ro Terminal</b>	
Area K	12.9 hectares
Area O	5.3 hectares
Land area	18.2 hectares
<i>Berth length</i>	<i>500 metres</i>
<b>Lo-Lo Terminal</b>	
Area N	9.1 hectares
Area L	4.6 hectares
Land area	13.7 hectares
<i>Berth length</i>	<i>650 metres</i>

Table 2.6 shows the expected increase in unitised freight capacity and ship numbers as a result of the 3FM Project from 2023 to 2040.

**Table 2.6 Expected increase in unitised freight capacity and ship numbers in Area K and Area N as a result of the 3FM Project**

	<b>Area K</b>		<b>Area N</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2040</b>
Berthage	710m	500m	-	650m
Berth Usage (cargo per 100 metre pa)	34,930 teu	72,000 units	-	84,615 teu
Land Area	14.9 ha	12.9 ha	-	9.1 ha
Land Usage (cargo per hectare)	16,650 teu	20,000 units	-	40,000 teu
Land Capacity (cargo pa)	248,000 teu (actual)	258,000 units	-	364,000 teu
Capacity Utilisation	76%	100%	-	100%
Average cargo per week	4,769 teu	4,960 units	-	7,000 teu
Ships per week	6	8	0	10

Area K currently operates as a Lo-Lo Terminal. In 2023 six Lo-Lo ships per week utilised the berths (Berth 41-45). Under the 3FM Project, the Lo-Lo activities in the South Port Estate will be transferred to a new Lo-Lo Terminal at Area N. By 2040, ten Lo-Lo ships per week are expected to utilise the new berths at Area N.

Area K will be refunctioned as a Ro-Ro Terminal under the 3FM Project. The effective berth length will be reduced to 500m from 710m as a result of Berth 41 being transferred to the proposed Maritime Village and to make space for new Ro-Ro ramps. By 2040, eight unaccompanied Ro-Ro ships per week are expected to utilise the berths at Area K.

Area L is currently utilised for bulk cargo (Berth 46 and 47). Under the 3FM Project, a significant portion of this site will be refunctioned as a Lo-Lo Container Storage Yard. This will result in a reduction in the number of bulk cargo ships utilising the site. In 2023, an average of three ships per week utilised these berths. By 2040, it is expected that an average of one ship per week will utilise the berths as a result of the refunctioning from bulk cargo to container storage.

The net change will result in circa ten additional ships per week utilising the berths at the South Port.

The 9.6 hectares for public spaces and non-port uses include lands for public areas (4.1 hectares), an extension to the Irishtown Nature Park (1.1 hectares), Dublin City Council district heating centre (0.6 hectares), on-shore substation site for ORE project (2.0 hectares), and an expansion of the existing area occupied by rowing and sailing clubs to create a Maritime Village of 1.8 hectares (Table 2.7). The latter will also have 2.7 hectares of marine berthing areas.

**Table 2.7 Summary of land and maritime areas in the 3FM Project area for non-port operations**

Areas	Size
Sailing and rowing campus (Maritime Village) including berths	1.8 hectares
Port Park, Coastal Park and Wildflower Meadow	4.1 hectares
Extension to Irishtown Nature Park	1.1 hectares
<b>Public realm and community gain</b>	<b>7.0 hectares</b>
DCC District Heating area	0.6 hectares
Sub-station for ORE project	2.0 hectares
<b>Total area for non-port operations</b>	<b>9.6 hectares</b>

For the proposed new Ro-Ro terminals, Area K and Area O are 18.2 hectares in extent. Table 2.8 below shows the annual throughput which DPC could reasonably be expected to achieve from Area K and Area O as 360,000 units per annum.

**Table 2.8 Capacity of Area K and Area O for Ro-Ro**

Area	Annual capacities	#	Units p.a.
Berths	200,000 units per berth	2	400,000
Terminal areas	20,000 units per hectare	18.2	360,000

To put this Ro-Ro capacity into context, the Ro-Ro throughput of Rosslare Europort and Port of Cork in 2023 were 197,583 units and 6,792 units respectively.

The key point is that land capacity at Area K and Area O is the first constraint that would be hit before berth capacity becomes an issue.

In the case of Area N and Area L (13.7 hectares), although these are separated from each other, it is intended under the 3FM Project that they would provide land capacity for the new 650m container berth to be developed at Area N. Table 2.9 below compares the capacity of this berth to the land throughput capacity of Area N and Area L combined.

**Table 2.9 Capacity of Area N and Area L for Lo-Lo**

Area	Annual capacities	#	TEU p.a.	Units p.a.
Berths	100,000 TEU per 100 metres of berth	650 metres	650,000	382,000
Terminal areas	40,000 TEU per hectare	13.7 hectares	550,000	324,000

As in the case of the proposed Ro-Ro terminal, the limiting capacity constraint for the proposed Lo-Lo terminal is the land area available.

Area N on its own could not provide the land capacity necessary to service the capacity which the 650m berthage would provide, and, as a consequence, Area L is proposed as a transit container storage area to support Area N.

The configuration presented for the 3FM Project has significantly evolved since the project was first presented, consequent on community and stakeholder consultation and internal design modification. Most notably, the proposed use of Area O, which had originally been identified for use as a Lo-Lo transit container storage yard with stacked containers, has now been changed following engagement with the surrounding communities to a much less visually obtrusive yard for parking Ro-Ro trailers. Following a detailed public consultation process, and in the context of a consideration of alternatives, DPC recognised that the use of Area O for a transit single height Ro-Ro yard represents a more effective utilisation of the lands. To give effect to this change, Area L, which had been identified in the DPC Masterplan as land suitable for intensive cargo handling activities in the period to 2040, is now being brought forward for development as part of the 3FM Project application. A full detail of the evolution of the project and the change of Scope is set out in the Alternatives Chapter of the EIAR.

## 2.2.4 Maximising the Utilisation of Port Infrastructure and Landside Access Connections

The physical infrastructure to be provided by the 3FM Project and by other masterplan projects will only provide the capacity required by Masterplan 2040 if it can operate without capacity constraints being reached. This requires complementary measures in three areas:

- Land utilisation in Dublin Port
- Landside access
- Inland port facilities

### 2.2.4.1 Land utilisation

As stated earlier, DPC’s approach to the development of Dublin Port is founded upon a commitment to proper planning and sustainable development. This extends to the view that the utilisation of existing brownfield port lands should be maximised before additional port capacity is developed at a greenfield location elsewhere on the east coast of Ireland. The Poolbeg Peninsula already contains Ireland’s greatest concentration of major utility operations. The current adjacencies to the proposed 3FM Project include one of the largest sewage works in Europe, the largest incinerator in Ireland, two power stations, and the National Oil Reserve tank farms. There are also proposed projects to locate major battery storage facilities, the main on-shore sub-station for the Codling ORE Project, and a large district heating plant for Dublin City Council.

The footprint of Dublin Port is fixed by the commitment in Masterplan 2040 not to expand the 260ha land area of the port by any further infill into Dublin Bay. Taken together with the port capacity target of 73.78<sup>11</sup> million gross tonnes per annum by 2040, this sets an objective to attain a throughput of 290,000 gross tonnes per hectare per annum. This is twice the land utilisation achieved in 2019.

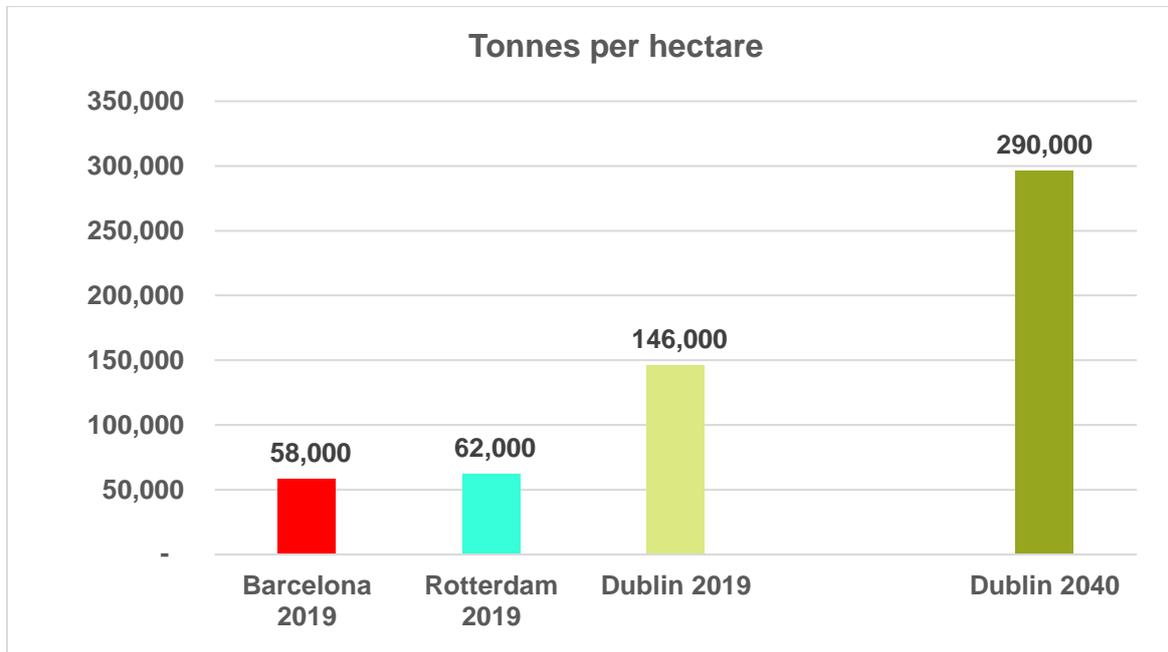


Figure 2.2 Port land utilisation comparisons

To put this into perspective, Figure 2.2 shows the land utilisation achieved in the multi-modal ports of Barcelona (58,000) and in Rotterdam (62,000) in 2019.

Whereas a doubling in land utilisation to 290,000 gross tonnes per hectare per annum over a period of 20 years is an ambitious target, there are impressive benchmarks in ports elsewhere which suggest that what is proposed is feasible. For example:

- The Port of Dover attained a land utilisation of 1.2 million gross tonnes per hectare in 2019 due to the very high proportion of Ro-Ro freight that was accompanied.
- In Valparaiso in Chile, TPS attained 1.0 million gross tonnes per hectare in 2019 in its container terminal.

These various comparisons – with Barcelona, Rotterdam, Dover and Valparaiso – show, on the one hand, that DPC’s land utilisation targets are ambitious but, on the other, that they are attainable.

Given that the land area of Dublin Port is fixed, the faster cargo moves through the port, the greater its capacity. If Dublin Port’s ambitious land utilisation targets are to be achieved, then the dwell times of trailers and containers need to be reduced. This reduction will be driven by changes in operation of logistics chains and a

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<sup>11</sup> This equates to the Masterplan 2040 target of 77.16m Tonnes, but reduced by 3.38m Tonnes to allow for the assumed permanent loss of 7 hectares of freight yards to state Brexit facilities.

gradual shift to 24/7 operation. We also anticipate further development of inland ports, primarily by the private sector.

DPC recognises that the intensification of land utilisation identified above can only be achieved in circumstances where the developments required to achieve these targets accord with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. The 3FM Project Planning Application is supported by detailed environmental assessments of the impacts of the proposed development to address how impacts can be avoided or effectively mitigated.

In general, terminals in Dublin Port have historically provided too much free or low-cost storage for trailers and containers. This is an inefficiency which supply chain operators benefit from without cost to them.

However, since DPC published the Franchise Policy in 2014 and, following the initial developments at Dublin Inland Port, DPC has begun to introduce more stringent regimes in certain terminals in Dublin Port, with implementation of a significant reduction in free periods for containers and trailers in 2020. Dublin Port recognises the critical importance of ensuring that port lands are being fully utilised by encouraging the faster movement of unitised product through the port. Reducing dwell times will remain an important aspect of this initiative and already two Lo-Lo operators in the Port have implemented strict dwell time controls with free periods for import trailers reduced down to four days. The ambition is to reduce these dwell times further for all unitised operations in the port from four days, then to three, and eventually to two days. Cargo that remains past these periods will face a significant escalation of charges.

Over the coming years, DPC will continue to use economic measures to change the behaviour of supply chain operators to increase the effective capacity of Dublin Port's unitised terminals. This approach has worked elsewhere, is beginning to work in Dublin Port and will, in time, allow the land utilisation targets of the Franchise Policy to be achieved or exceeded:

- Ro-Ro: 20,000 unaccompanied units per hectare per annum; and
- Lo-Lo: 40,000 TEU per hectare per annum.

One of the direct consequences of Brexit has been a reduction in the percentage of accompanied Ro-Ro trailers and an increase in the percentage of unaccompanied ones, putting increasing pressure on freight transit yard areas.

#### **2.2.4.2 Landside access**

There are four potential capacity limits for any port:

- Channel;
- Berths;
- Land area; and
- Access.

In the case of berths and land area, the development options in Masterplan 2040 are sufficient to meet the target capacity required by 2040 of 73.78 million gross tonnes per annum, 90% of which is accounted for by the 3.0 million trailers and containers in the unitised modes of Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo.

The final factor which could limit Dublin Port's throughput capacity is land access. Dublin Port is rail-connected, but at present 99% of all freight moves in and out of the port by HGV.

In 2022, Dublin Port, undertook an extensive Origin-Destination survey of freight movements to and from the port. This involved surveying c. 35% of all HGVs and was an update on previous surveys conducted in 2001 and 2011 (Figure 2.3).

Key findings were:

- 73% of the port's HGVs have an origin or destination within 90km of Dublin Port; and
- 61% of the HGVs have an origin or destination within 40km of Dublin Port.

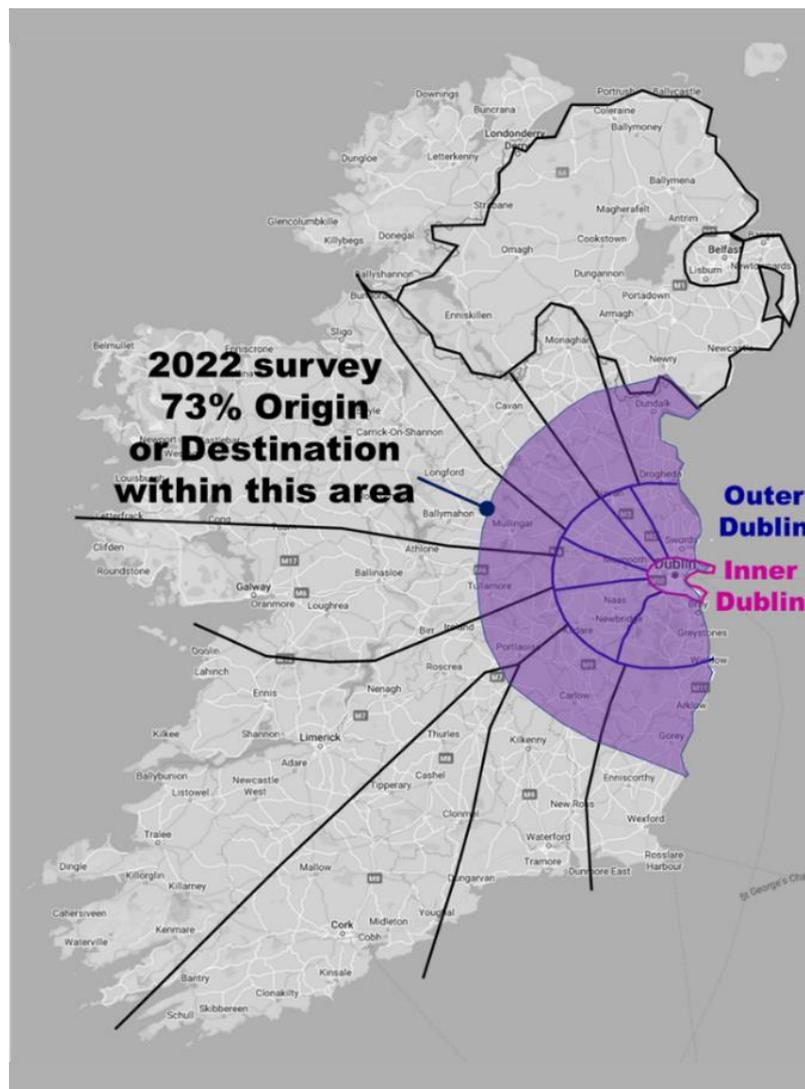


Figure 2.3 Percentage of Dublin Port HGVs having an origin or destination within 90km of the port

Dublin Port remains committed to investment that facilitates increased rail freight, but given the origin/destination concentration of freight in the Greater Dublin and Leinster area, the impact of rail freight on total port tonnage is likely to remain relatively low.

Dublin Port Tunnel provides the single access point for Dublin Port to the national motorway network and the port throughput capacity that Masterplan 2040 is designed to deliver must be matched by the landside

access capacity both in the tunnel itself and on the motorway network. The level of detail in the 2022 Origin-Destination survey enabled DPC to estimate how port related HGV traffic develops across the M50 as it heads to and from the Dublin Port Tunnel. Using the data, and TII's 2022 published network data for the M50, it was estimated that, across the length of the M50 from Junction 17 (M11) to Junction 3 (M1), HGV traffic to and from the port makes up 1.7% of total vehicle numbers. To put this in some context, vehicle numbers of all types on the M50 reach c. 150,000 per day at the busiest point on the network.

### **2.2.4.3 Inland Terminals**

DPC's dwell time and digitalisation initiatives will create a demand within supply chains for inland terminals to which cargo can be moved from Dublin Port.

In parallel with progressing with the 3FM Project, DPC is proceeding with the project to develop the second site of 22 hectares at Dublin Inland Port to provide capacity for the storage of laden containers and trailers.

In addition to this, DPC anticipates private sector operators responding to the new realities in Dublin Port and to DPC's lead by developing other inland terminal facilities. Separately, Irish Rail has signalled the potential future development of inland intermodal freight terminals in its Rail Freight 2040 Strategy. Further detail on the consideration of strategic transport connectivity scenarios, including rail freight is set out in Chapter 4 of this EIAR (4.3.3)

## **2.2.5 National Port Capacity Context**

The development of Dublin Port under Masterplan 2040 seeks to ensure that sufficient port capacity continues to be available over the next 20 years to cater for growth in unitised trade. Because of Dublin Port's large share of the country's unitised traffic, this is of national importance.

Dublin Port is the country's largest port for both Ro-Ro and for Lo-Lo and, when the volumes in the two modes are combined, Dublin consistently accounts for between 70% and 80% of all trailers and containers passing through Irish ports

Before Brexit, Dublin's share grew to 84% of this traffic and even post-Brexit Dublin's share remains very high at 79%.

Dublin Port's large share of unitised volumes arises for the same reasons of geography that cause Dublin Airport to account for such a large share of national air passenger travel.

In addition to having a consistently high share of all unities freight, Dublin Port’s volumes have shown consistent high levels of growth for many years (

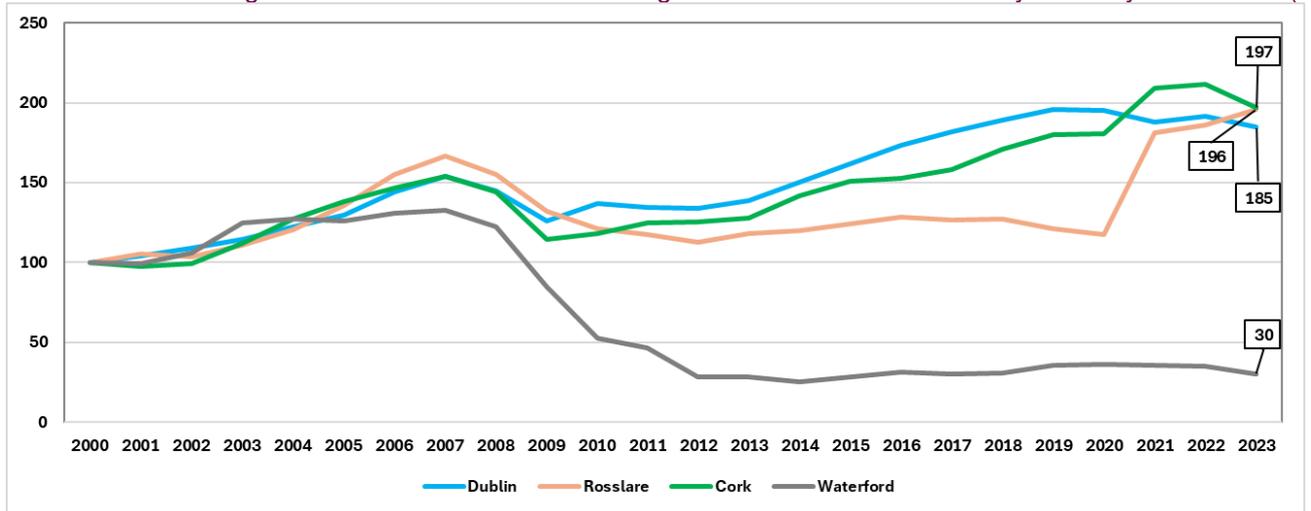


Figure 2.4).

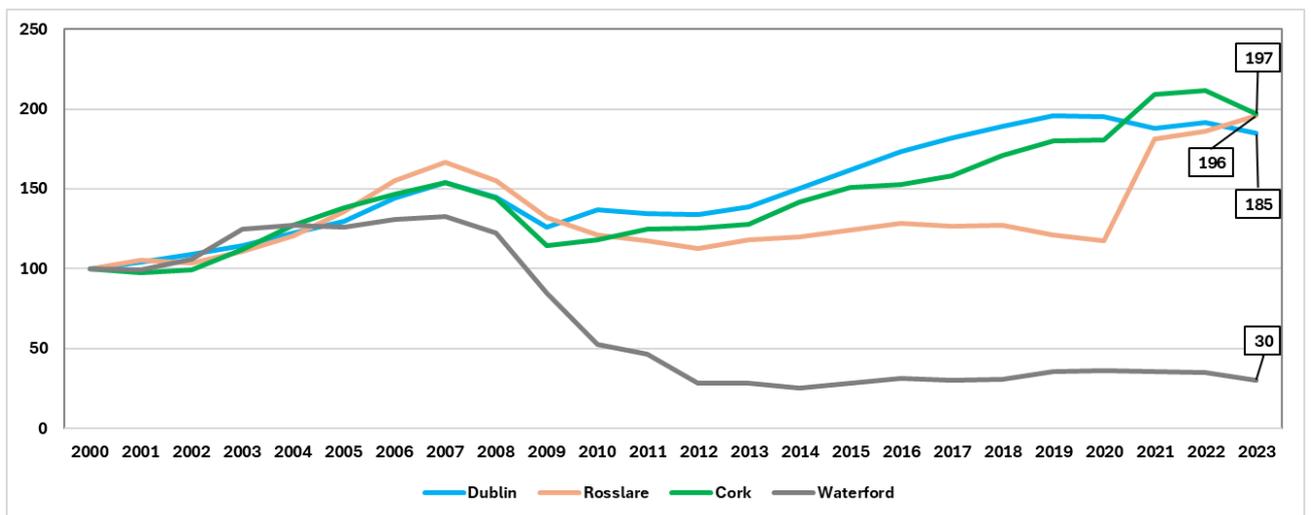


Figure 2.4 Trends in unities volumes, 2000 to 2023

Whereas the rationale for the 3FM Project is based on the projected capacity requirements in Dublin Port by 2040, the national importance of the project is recognised in the Ports Policy Issue Paper which notes that national capacity will not be assured unless all currently planned projects are delivered. This includes the 3FM Project.

Against this background, a failure by DPC to bring the 3FM Project forward would exacerbate an already evident risk of a national port capacity shortage between now and 2040.

## 2.2.6 Timescale to Deliver the 3FM Project

Based on DPC’s recent experience with constructing large infrastructure projects in Dublin Port, it is prudent to plan on it taking three years from the date of application for planning permission to the start of construction works.

In this scenario, the target commencement date for construction of 3FM would be 2027, with a completion date in 2040.

A 15-year planning permission is required, similar to the duration granted in respect of the MP2 Project. This is because of the scale and complexity of the 3FM Project and the need to ensure that Dublin Port continues to operate effectively during its construction - requiring works to be delivered in distinct phases. The delivery of large projects via a series of sub-projects is the approach specified in Masterplan 2040. A critical issue is the need to avoid significant temporary disruption in port capacity during construction of 3FM – as any such loss, even if only for a few years, could have major economic consequence.

Chapter 5 'Project Description' of the EIA/IAI and its associated Appendices contain detailed information on the overall delivery programme for the project and an indicative construction sequencing programme. Key drivers of the lengthy programme are :

- Need to create a new jetty for National Oil Reserves Agency/ ESB plus a Turning Circle in the Liffey Channel before elements of the new Lo-Lo Container Terminal at Area N can be constructed.
- Very extended construction period to deliver that new Area N Container Terminal – due to the size of this 9.1 hectare open pile structure. An open pile structure has been selected to minimise the impact on marine life and benthic resources. The scale and complexity of this construction requires over seven years alone to deliver.
- Need to complete Area N, so as to then be able to relocate container handling operations from the existing MTL Terminal to this new area, before work can then begin on the southern viaduct section of the SPAR, the Maritime Village, and development of Area K.
- Need to deliver Maritime Village construction over a number of phases.
- The proposed Ro-Ro Terminal Yard at Area O and the proposed Lo-Lo Terminal Yard at Area L will be used for landside and marine construction logistics for up to the first 10 years of the 3FM project duration. They can only then be developed for their final 3FM use.
- Allowance for necessary time to secure additional related consents such as Dumping at Sea Permit – based on experience from Dublin Port's previously granted SID permissions for the ABR and MP2 projects.

The consequence of the above is that the indicative project delivery programme shows significant works to be completed after Year 10 – including elements of the SPAR, Maritime Village, Area K, Area O, Area L, and Port Park.

The environmental appraisals presented in this EIA/IAI have taken into account the environmental implications of a 15-year permission and conclude that there is no environmental impediment to the granting of a 15-year permission. A summary is presented below:

- The 3FM Project is the third and final Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) project at Dublin Port from the Dublin Port Masterplan 2040, reviewed 2018. The environmental appraisals have been undertaken within the context of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) prepared for the Dublin Port Masterplan which is based on an assessment of incremental time periods from 2018 to 2040.

- In particular, the traffic and transportation appraisal considers a combination of port traffic growth and construction traffic volumes over a 15-year period. These combined traffic volumes have been used in the environmental appraisals for noise, air quality and human health.
- The 3FM Project is focussed on the redevelopment of brown-field sites within the existing Dublin Port Estate. There are no terrestrial habitats, flora & fauna of conservation value within the application boundary of the site. Prolonged construction activities over a 15-year period will therefore have no impact on terrestrial biodiversity, flora & fauna as no natural changes are expected within that period of time.
- The 3FM Project has been engineered to ensure that any potential impact on the surrounding Natura 2000 sites is at a de minimis level. The construction period of 15-years has been assessed in the biodiversity, flora & fauna appraisals.

## 2.2.7 Conclusions

1. Masterplan 2040 sets the objective for Dublin Port Company (DPC) to provide the cargo handling capacity required in Dublin Port by 2040. The 3FM Project will provide the final tranche of capacity (20%) needed for the volumes of Ro-Ro and Lo-Lo freight to meet this objective.
2. The project would also contribute to the second objective of Masterplan 2040 – to integrate Dublin Port with Dublin City – in three ways:
  - Creating large new areas in the public realm on the Poolbeg Peninsula.
  - Creating active travel corridors through the Poolbeg Peninsula and connecting these across the River Liffey to link into active travel networks on the north side of Dublin Port.
  - Removing all port-related HGV traffic from public roads in the vicinity of Dublin Port on both sides of the River Liffey.
3. The project would also provide certainty that DPC can deliver the port capacity needed in Dublin Port – the largest port in the national port system – within the shared timeframes of Masterplan 2040 and the National Planning Framework.
4. The need for the 3FM Project has been identified in assessments carried out by DPC, but also echoed in a range of national assessments and reports commissioned to review national port capacity. A failure to proceed with the 3FM Project will adversely impact on national port capacity for unitised freight and will frustrate a range of different objectives set out in EU, national, regional and local policies.

## 2.3 Spatial Planning Policy

### 2.3.1 Introduction

This section of the EIA/CHAPTER 2 considers EU, national, regional and local land use and transport planning and development policy guiding and regulating the development of Dublin Port. The relevant planning policies are set out for each level within the planning hierarchy in the sections that follow.

### 2.3.2 Relevant European Planning and Development Policy

#### 2.3.2.1 Trans-European Network – Transport (TEN-T)

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) is comprised of critical transport infrastructure across the European Union. It includes telematic applications as well as measures promoting the efficient management and use of such infrastructure and permitting the establishment and operation of sustainable and efficient transport services.

The infrastructure of the TEN-T network consists of the infrastructure for railway transport, inland waterway transport, road transport, maritime transport, air transport and multimodal transport and relates to railway lines, roads, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airports and railroad terminals. The components of the TEN-T network and infrastructure requirements across the network are set out in Regulation (EU) 1315/2013<sup>12</sup>, known as the “TEN-T Regulation”. A proposal for a revision of the TEN-T policy was tabled in December 2021, aiming to create better alignment with the European Green Deal, and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. An amended proposal was made in July 2022 by the European Commission in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, proposing the extension of four corridors to Ukraine and Moldova to accelerate change toward a standard European railway gauge, promoting European integration.

The network is made up of the Comprehensive Network and a sub-set of infrastructure designated as the Core Network. The Core Network is the most strategically critical part of the system. Transport infrastructure in the Core Network is required to be completed to the standard set out in the TEN-T Regulation by 2030 at the latest. The Comprehensive Network is a wider chain of infrastructure which the TEN-T Regulation requires to be completed by 2050.

Dublin Port is a Core Port of the TEN-T network and is a designated node on the Atlantic and North Sea-Mediterranean Core Network Corridors as shown in Figure 2.5.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02013R1315-20190306>

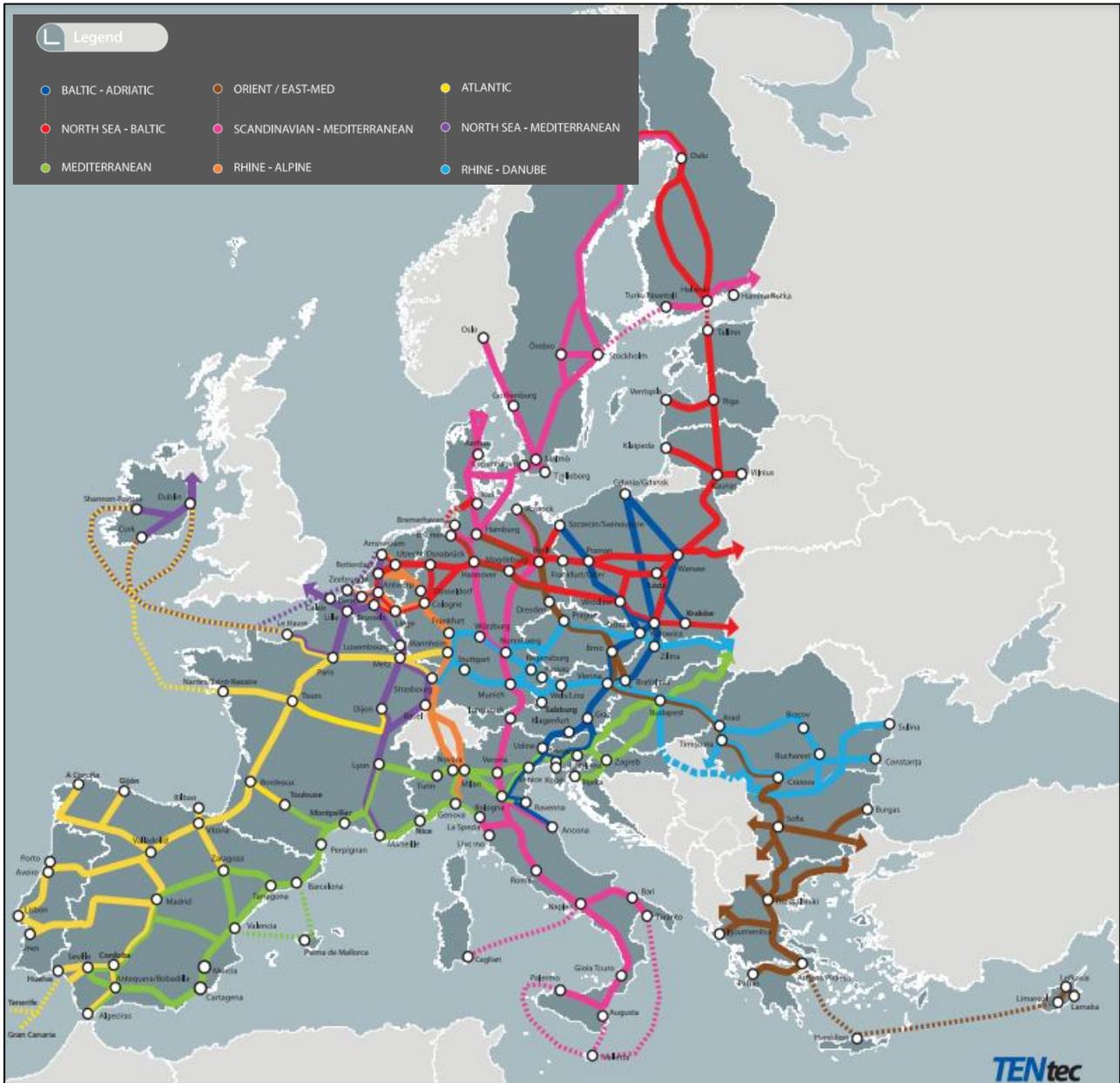


Figure 2.5 TEN-T Network Diagram<sup>13</sup>

The TEN-T programme envisages coordinated improvements to European transport infrastructure thereby creating integrated and intermodal long-distance, high-speed corridors. ‘Motorways of the Sea’ are considered the maritime pillar of the TEN-T network and contribute towards realising a European maritime transport space without barriers, connecting Core Network Corridors by integrating the maritime leg and also facilitating maritime freight transport with neighbouring countries. Dublin Port is a designated node on the Atlantic (shaded yellow on Figure 2.5) and North Sea-Mediterranean (shaded purple on Figure 2.5) Core Network Corridors.

<sup>13</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/site/maps\\_upload/SchematicA0\\_EUcorridor\\_map.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/site/maps_upload/SchematicA0_EUcorridor_map.pdf)

### **2.3.2.2 White Paper: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system**

This White Paper<sup>14</sup> from the European Commission builds upon a 2001 White Paper on Transport, examining how the EU might achieve its greenhouse gas emissions reductions, specifically focusing on transport. It was adopted in 2011, in the context of the European Union’s 2020 Growth Strategy. The vision described spans a 40-year period, up to 2050, with interim goals for 2020 and 2030. The Paper aims to reduce transport emissions by 60% by 2050, while growing the sector, stating that “*curbing mobility is not an option*” (page 5) given the interconnected and globalised nature of the EU economy and single market. A strong emphasis is placed on moving vast quantities of goods and passengers at once, avoiding individual transport methods until the final miles of the journey. Infrastructure investment is a prominent feature, highlighting that investment cannot be delayed owing to the significant time lag between commencement and delivery, in addition to lengthy service lives of stock such as trains and ships. Ports are highlighted as being a crucial agent in decarbonisation of freight, enabling more efficient waterborne transport, serving as important entry points into the European market.

### **2.3.2.3 European Green Deal**

In December 2019<sup>15</sup>, the European Commission presented the European Green Deal<sup>16</sup> (EGD), a policy package that aims to improve the sustainability of the EU’s economy, by turning environmental challenges into opportunities across several policy areas. EU leaders agreed that the EU should achieve carbon-neutrality by 2050. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions would be achieved through changes to a range of existing policies and directives in sectors including energy supply, industry and the economy, consumption, large-scale infrastructure, agriculture, food, transport, construction, taxation and social benefits.

In December 2020, as an intermediate step towards the 2050 goal, EU leaders agreed to more than (55%) halve (compared to 1990 levels) the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2030<sup>17</sup>.

In June 2021, the Council adopted the European climate law<sup>18</sup> – a key element of the EGD. With it, EU countries are legally obliged to reach both the 2030 and 2050 climate goals. The climate law sets the framework for actions to be taken by the EU and the member states to progressively reduce emissions and ultimately reach climate neutrality in the EU by 2050. At this time the Council also endorsed the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change presented by the Commission. The strategy outlines a long-term vision for the EU to become a climate-resilient society that is fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change by 2050.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0144:FIN:en:PDF>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/climate-change/>

<sup>16</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/document/daef3e5c-a456-4fbb-a067-8f1cbe8d9c78\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/document/daef3e5c-a456-4fbb-a067-8f1cbe8d9c78_en)

<sup>17</sup> [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal/2030-climate-target-plan\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal/2030-climate-target-plan_en)

<sup>18</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-27-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

Within the EGD is a proposal to revise the Combined Transport Directive (TEN-T) to allow for better utilisation, including rail and waterborne transport, short-sea-shipping (transportation by sea between EU/EEA/Candidate countries' ports). The EGD includes a target to reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2050. The Commission intends to adopt a comprehensive strategy to meet this target and ensure that the EU transport sector is fit for a clean, digital and modern economy. The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy<sup>19</sup> will give certainty of direction and show a roadmap towards the mobility of the future. Objectives include:

- Increasing the uptake of zero-emission vehicles
- Making sustainable alternative solutions available to the public and businesses
- Supporting digitalisation and automation
- Improving connectivity and access.

The Strategy will build on the EGD, the 2030 Climate Target Plan and the evaluation of the 2011 White Paper - Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system.

#### **2.3.2.4 Marine Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU)**

In 2014 the adoption of Directive 2014/89/EU<sup>20</sup> established an EU-wide framework for maritime spatial planning. The directive details the main goals and minimum requirements for Member States as follows:

- Balanced and sustainable territorial development of marine waters and coastal zones;
- Optimised development of maritime activities and business climate;
- Management of ecosystems and biodiversity conservation;
- Better adaptation to risks; and
- Resource-efficient and integrated coastal and maritime development.

Marine spatial planning may be defined as—

“... a process by which the relevant Member State's authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives” (Directive 2014/89/EU, Article 3, Paragraph 2).

Ireland transposed the Directive through the European Union (Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning) Regulations 2016. The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage formally established the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

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<sup>19</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:5e601657-3b06-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:5e601657-3b06-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>20</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0089>

As a result of this directive, several legislative changes have been made with regards to marine spatial planning in Ireland. The Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 was introduced, updating the Irish planning system to facilitate increasing development demand in the maritime environment. This Act introduces statutory bodies, including the Marine Area Regulatory Authority (MARA).

### 2.3.3 Relevant National Planning and Development Policy

Figure 2.6 illustrates an overview of the hierarchy of plans within the Irish planning system and the importance of policy in the assessment of planning applications.



Figure 2.6 Hierarchy of Plans within the Irish Planning System<sup>21</sup>

#### 2.3.3.1 Project Ireland 2040

By 2040, there is projected to be approximately one million additional people living in Ireland<sup>22</sup>. This population growth will require new jobs, new homes, heightened cultural, and social amenities, enhanced regional connectivity and improved environmental sustainability. Project Ireland 2040 sets out to deliver these.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Planning-Leaflet-1-Introducing-the-Planning-System.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Based on Prospects for Irish Regions and Counties: Scenarios and Implications, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), December 2017, [https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RS70\\_0.pdf](https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RS70_0.pdf)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) combine to form Project Ireland 2040, which is accompanied by the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), a maritime equivalent to the NPF. The NPF sets out Government's vision and strategy for the development of Ireland to 2040. The NMPF delivers a clear policy context for managing Ireland's territorial waters. While the NDP provides the enabling investment and capital expenditure projections to implement these strategies. In combination, these plans form Project Ireland 2040, which when executed will bring about improvements and growth to support a growing country.

### ***National Planning Framework***

The NPF<sup>23</sup>, published in July 2018, is the primary articulation of spatial, planning and land use policy in Ireland. It is the uppermost policy in the Irish planning hierarchy, from which subsequent policies and frameworks are derived. The framework recognises the vital role ports play in supporting the Irish economy stating:

"As an island nation, we depend on the quality and efficiency of our ports to a far greater extent than many of our trading partners. To maintain economic growth, we must be capable of delivering additional port capacity in a timely and predictable manner". (page 102)

The framework recognises National Ports Policy stating:

"National ports policy requires Tier 1 and Tier 2 ports, or ports of national and regional significance, to lead the response in meeting Ireland's future port capacity requirements. There are major redevelopment projects taking place at our Tier 1 ports (i.e. Dublin, Cork and Shannon-Foynes) at present. These developments will result in a greater concentration of traffic through these ports, with implications for shore-based and marine-based infrastructure.

The long-term international trend in ports and shipping is toward increased consolidation of resources in order to achieve optimum efficiencies of scale. This has knock-on effects in terms of vessel size, the depths of water required at ports and the type and scale of port hinterland transport connections.

Tier 1 ports are located within close proximity to Dublin, Cork and Limerick and the role of these ports will be considered and addressed in tandem with long-term infrastructural requirements as part of the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and concurrent and subsequent metropolitan area or city/ county development plan processes". (pages 102-103)

The NPF provides a set of growth enablers, National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) and National Policy Objectives (NPO) with which regional and local planning policy must align.

NPO 40 states:

"Ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ports, ports of regional significance and smaller harbours are addressed as part of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, metropolitan area and city/county development plans, to ensure the effective growth and sustainable development of the city regions and regional and rural areas". (page 103)

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf>

NSO 6 outlines “High-Quality International Connectivity”. The framework notes that, nationally, infrastructure objectives have been identified to improve land transport connections to the major ports. Infrastructure requirements pertaining to Dublin Port are identified as:

“Facilitating the growth of Dublin Port through greater efficiency, limited expansion into Dublin Harbour and improved road access, particularly to/from the southern port area”. (page 37 & 145)

Considering the wide scope of the 3FM Project, other policy areas of importance warranting enhanced consideration include provisions for improved connectivity and infrastructure, promoting active travel and improving social and cultural facilities and opportunities, all of which combine to see communities supported and bettered.

NPO 27 states:

“Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.” (page 82)

Similarly, it is identified within the NPF that the “expansion and improvement of the bus, DART and Luas/Metro” in Dublin is “critical to Ireland’s competitiveness” (page 36).

National Strategic Investment Priorities are derived from the NSOs, within which are significant crossovers with the aims of the 3FM Project, including environmentally sustainable public transport, airports, ports, culture, heritage and sport.

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage announced on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 that the process to undertake the first revision of the NPF has commenced<sup>24</sup>. A Roadmap will be published outlining the process and timeline for this revision. The revision will be informed by Census 2022 and will attempt to address issues arising due to prevailing social and economic trends. This process was subsequently deferred by Government on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to allow for better data to be garnered from Census 2022<sup>25</sup>.

The Draft First Revision to the National Planning Framework (Draft NPF) was published for public consultation on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The Draft NPF continues to recognise and support the National Ports Policy and acknowledges the importance of Ireland’s ports. Much of the current NPF has been carried forward to the Draft NPF, and includes NSO 4 (NSO 6 in the current NPF), NPO 51 (NPO 40 in the current NPF) and key future growth enablers for Dublin.

The Draft NPF also continues to promote modal shift, active travel and improving social facilities.

Submissions regarding the Draft NPF are being accepted between 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and 17:00 on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Submissions will inform the revised NPF.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/aac78-minister-obrien-outlines-revision-process-for-national-planning-framework/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/b7288-statement-from-department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/#timeline>

## ***National Marine Planning Framework***

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in Ireland is underpinned at the highest level by the European Marine Spatial Planning Directive (Directive 2014/89/EU) (MSPD). Ireland's first marine spatial plan, National Marine Planning Framework<sup>26</sup> (NMPF), published in June 2021, serves as a parallel to the NPF, and enables the Government to set a clear direction for managing Irish seas, clarify objectives and priorities and direct decision makers, users and stakeholders towards strategic, plan-led, and efficient use of marine resources. The NMPF has been prepared with an ecosystem-based approach and has been informed by best available knowledge.

With respect to Key Issues for Marine Planning the NMPF states that:

“Ports and shipping are the country’s trading lifeline. Safeguarding access to ports, harbours and navigation channels is vital to the national economy. The safety and security of shipping and ports must be taken into consideration when considering all other applications for activity or development in the vicinity of ports or shipping channels. Consideration within proposals of features of importance in areas of shipping as well as within port and harbour jurisdictions can be enhanced through reference to the most up to date nautical charts.

Brexit has brought into renewed focus the importance of Ireland’s ports as nodes in the logistics chain and in keeping Ireland connected internationally. As the economy grows, the ability of our ports to respond by adding capacity and adjusting to new environmental and technological demands is imperative to ensure the sustainability of our economic success. Marine development should not be permitted where it would restrict access to, or future expansion of, commercial ports or the development of new ports, which may be needed in the future.” (page 154)

The NMPF recognises that all Tier 1 ports are currently engaged in significant phases of infrastructure investment in relation to their masterplans. The framework states:

“Dredging is essential to maintain channels and deepen berths especially as the sector is moving to ever-larger ships with greater capacity. Dredged material may be disposed of at marine sites licensed by the EPA or, if possible, used for alternative purposes such as land reclamation or beach nourishment to minimise disposal at sea. Locations of disposal sites may change over time for a variety of reasons, for example the exhaustion of site capacity, monitoring requirements, or the need for new sites in additional locations. Designated areas are required to dispose dredged material to ensure that ports subject to silting can be kept operational and maintain their depths, in particular when urgent dredging is required after storm activity. Identification of new dredge disposal sites should be supported by robust feasibility and site selection, and should include a review of existing sites in the context of climate adaptation.” (page 155)

In terms of growth the NMPF states:

“Freight volumes are expected to continue to increase over the coming decades, while vessel sizes are also predicted to grow and vessel types set to further diversify. In this context accessibility, capacity and navigational safety will be significant challenges for all players and port development will trend seawards. Allocation of sufficient space for future growth, the strategic identification of long-term port locations and

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/139100/f0984c45-5d63-4378-ab65-d7e8c3c34016.pdf#page=null>

development of existing ports all need to be factored into long-term economic and spatial planning (terrestrial and marine).” (page 155)

With respect to interactions with other activities the NMPF notes that all marine sectors rely on ports and shipping activities. It observes *inter alia* that integration and alignment is needed between terrestrial and marine planning processes to ensure that ports link with public transport to encourage sustainable travel, where it is financially viable to do so, and terrestrial planning should co-ordinate with and support ports with the necessary transport links and suitable road networks. (page 156)

Ports, Harbours and Shipping objectives include:

- “Safeguard the operation of ports as key actors in the economic wellbeing of the State through the provision of safe and sustainable maritime transport.
- Facilitate a competitive and effective market for maritime transport services.
- Sustainable development of the ports sector and full realisation of the National Ports Policy with a view to providing adequate capacity to meet present and future demand, and to adapt to the consequences of climate change.
- Ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ports, ports of regional significance, and smaller harbours are appropriately addressed in regional and local marine planning policy”. (page 150)

Planning Policies for Ports, Harbours and Shipping include:

- “1 To provide for shipping activity and freedom of navigation the following factors will be taken into account when reaching decisions regarding development and use:
  - The extent to which the locational decision interferes with existing or planned routes used by shipping, access to ports and harbours and navigational safety. This includes commercial anchorages and approaches to ports as well as key littoral and offshore routes;
  - A mandatory Navigation Risk Assessment;
  - Where interference is likely: whether reasonable alternatives can be identified; and
  - Where there are no reasonable alternatives: whether mitigation through measures adopted in accordance with the principles and procedures established by the International Maritime Organisation can be achieved at no significant cost to the shipping or ports sector.
- 2 Proposals that may have a significant impact upon current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:
  - a. avoid,
  - b. minimise, or
  - c. mitigate significant adverse impacts, and

- d. if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding.
- 3 Proposals that may have a significant impact upon current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities must demonstrate consideration of the National Ports Policy, the National Planning Framework, and relevant provisions related to the TEN-T network.
- 4 Proposals within ports limits, beside or in the vicinity of ports, and / or that impact upon the main routes of significance to a port, must demonstrate within applications that they have:
- been informed by consultation at pre-application stage or earlier with the relevant port authority;
  - have carried out a navigational risk assessment including an analysis of maritime traffic in the area; and have consulted Department of Transport, MSO and Commissioners of Irish Lights. Applicants must continue to engage parties identified in pre-application processes as appropriate during the decision-making process.”
- 5 Proposals for capital dredging will be supported where it is necessary to safeguard national port capacity and Ireland’s international connectivity, and where required compliance assessments associated with authorisations have been carried out and incorporated into subsequent competent authority decision(s).
- 6 In areas of authorised dredging activity, including those subject to navigational dredging, proposals for other activities will not be supported unless they are compatible with the dredging activity.
- 7 Proposals for maintenance dredging activity will be supported where:
- relevant decisions by competent authorities incorporate the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes, as well as necessary compliance assessments associated with authorisations, including in relation to the planning process;
  - there will be no significant adverse impact on marine activities or uses or the maritime area. Any potential adverse impact will be, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated;
  - dredged waste is managed in accordance with internationally agreed hierarchy of waste management options for sea disposal;
  - if disposing of dredged material at sea, existing registered disposal sites are used, in preference to new disposal sites; and
  - where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF.
- 8 Proposals that cause significant adverse impacts on licensed disposal areas should not be supported. Proposals that cannot avoid such impact must, in order of preference"
- a) minimise,  
b) mitigate, or

- c) if it is not possible to mitigate the significant adverse impacts, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding.
- 9 Proposals for the management of dredged material must demonstrate that they have been assessed against the waste hierarchy (see Glossary).
- 10 Proposals identifying new dredge disposal sites which are subject to best practice and guidance from previous studies should be supported where:
- competent authority decisions incorporate necessary compliance assessments associated with authorisations; and
  - they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF.

Proposals must include an adequate characterisation study, be assessed against the waste hierarchy and must be informed by consultation with all relevant stakeholders.” (page 150 & 151)

The NMPF seeks to ensure that all activities and required infrastructure and maintenance efforts are supported and uninterrupted by other maritime development, owing to the national strategic importance of Irish ports, especially Dublin Port, given that it accounts for almost 50% of all trade in the State.

### ***National Development Plan***

The implementation of the NPF will be fully supported by the Government’s investment strategy for public capital investment. The National Development Plan 2021-2030<sup>27</sup> (NDP) identifies the strategic priorities for public capital investment in order to underpin the implementation of the NPF and NMPF.

The NDP identifies strategic priorities for public capital investment in order to underpin the implementation of the NPF and NMPF.

The NDP highlights several road projects that were proposed under previous NDP that are subject to further approvals, which explicitly includes “*M50 – Dublin Port South Access Road*”.

NSO 6 “*High-Quality International Connectivity*” seeks to target continued investment in port and airport connections to the UK, EU and the rest of the world. Given that Ireland is an island, this is considered by the NDP to be integral to underpinning Ireland’s international competitiveness. The NDP notes that major capital infrastructure programmes are currently ongoing in Tier 1 Ports, namely Dublin, Cork and Shannon Foynes. These will enhance national and international connectivity, provide for future increases in trade and national port capacity requirements by facilitating more vessels, larger sized vessels and increased tonnage and throughput. The NDP adds that none of these projects receive exchequer funding. However, strengthening access routes to Ireland’s ports through investment to upgrade and enhance the transport network to improve journey times is and remains a government priority.

The NDP outlines the importance of investing in cultural projects, with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Art, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media leveraging its sectoral remit to improve citizen wellbeing. This is an underpinning principle of improving communities and social cohesion.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/200358/a36dd274-736c-4d04-8879-b158e8b95029.pdf#page=null>

### 2.3.3.2 National Ports Policy

The National Ports Policy<sup>28</sup> is the statement of domestic policy underpinning the development and operation of Ireland's ports. Ports are divided into Ports of National Significance (Tier 1), Ports of National Significance (Tier 2) and Ports of Regional Significance.

Within the National Ports Policy, Dublin Port is a Port of National Significance (Tier 1), where Tier 1 ports are responsible for 15% to 20% of overall tonnage moved through Irish ports annually (of which Dublin Port handles 44%), and which have clear potential to lead the development of future port capacity in the medium and long term.

Referring specifically to the Dublin Port Masterplan, which includes the 3FM Project, the policy confirms that: "The Government endorses the core principles underpinning the company's Masterplan and the continued commercial development of Dublin Port Company is a key strategic objective of National Ports Policy". (page 25)

The policy highlights that the relationship and interaction between the commercial ports sector and the planning and development system is extremely important in ensuring continued sustainable development of the ports sector. It continues that:

"The provision of adequate and efficient capacity into the future is a crucial Government strategic objective". (page 43)

To this end the policy states:

"Therefore, Government expects the Ports of National Significance (Tier 1) to lead the response of the State commercial ports sector to future national port capacity requirements.....It is the Government's position that those ports considered to be of national significance must be capable of the type of port capacity required to ensure continued access to both regional and global markets for our trading economy". (page 44)

With respect to the planning policy hierarchy the policy confirms:

"National and Regional Planning Guidelines should also recognise the importance of the three categories of ports and allow for their continued development. To this end, the Department contributes as necessary to the development of Regional Planning Guidelines in order to ensure that the goals of National Ports Policy are recognised in the planning hierarchy". (page 45)

To this end, the Department contributes as necessary to the development of Regional Planning Guidelines in order to ensure that the goals of the National Ports Policy are recognised in the planning hierarchy, highlighting the important role that ports play both regionally and nationally.

### 2.3.3.3 Review of National Ports Policy 2013 – Issues Paper

On 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the first phase of public consultation was announced for the Review of the National Ports Policy. The consultation was based on an issues paper<sup>29</sup> that was published alongside the

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/11557/277d22d364fe4c13be390493282c0557.PDF#page=null>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/274074/fba467e2-4371-46bf-982a-88b581a8772d.pdf#page=null>

commencement of the public consultation period. The public consultation period ended on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, and the results will inform a revised National Ports Policy, which is estimated to be issued as a draft in Q4 2024 for consultation, followed by final adoption in Q1 2025.

The issues paper that guided the consultation covers many different aspects worth considering when drafting a revised National Ports Policy including the challenges posed by events such as Brexit, COVID-19, and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Other challenges and opportunities noted for consideration include:

- Climate Change;
- Development of Offshore Renewable Energy;
- Integrated Logistics Chain;
- Transition to the Circular Economy;
- Port Capacity;
- Ports Funding;
- Technical Innovation;
- Upskilling and Diversifying the Maritime Labour Force;
- Governance;
- Accessibility;
- Enhancing Ireland's Maritime Connectivity; and
- Port Marine Code.

#### **2.3.3.4 Irish Ports Capacity Study**

The Irish Ports Capacity Study<sup>30</sup> assesses the capacity within the national context, as is required per the National Ports Policy (see Section 2.3.3.2). The study considers demand, capacity, connections and risks associated with the Tier 1 ports, Tier 2 ports, identified ports of regional significance and relevant ports in Northern Ireland.

The analysis takes into account estimated demand and capacity of the identified ports and considers whether there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of Ireland's industry and commercial activities. The study concludes with the following main recommendations:

- A standardised form of reporting by all Irish ports for capacity indicators to ensure uniformity and clarity;

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<sup>30</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/274073/b39b9cbc-d9f5-4ec5-aa13-01b90e105090.pdf>

- Re-assessment of capacity at regular intervals to account for shifting economic and consumption growth;
- Implementation of digital port operating systems and port clearance document control systems, where not already in use. Ideally, these systems will be compatible;
- Investigation into the impact of efficiency measures and pricing structures on the capacity of Dublin Port; and
- Investigation of the development of liquid bulk demand to determine high and low growth scenarios.

### **2.3.3.5 Climate Action Plan 2024**

The Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) is the third revision to the series of national climate action plans. CAP24 builds upon previous iterations and details a roadmap to reduce Ireland's emissions by half by 2030 and to net-zero no later than 2050. Measures such as carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings are included to aid in achieving Ireland's emissions targets. CAP24 underpins many other policy documents, ensuring that emissions reductions are encompassed throughout, such as the identification of the role of enhanced spatial and land use planning as a means to reduce emissions through well-connected consolidation of activities.

CAP24 was issued for public consultation on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024, which closed for public comment on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Following this consultation, CAP24 was approved by Government on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024, superseding the Climate Action Plan 2023.

Under CAP24, a key element relates to emission reductions in the transport sector. It is noted that the transport sector must reduce its emissions to remain within the stipulated carbon budget of 54 MtCO<sub>2</sub>eq. (2021 to 2025) (page 233). Among the key actions identified are enhanced rail connectivity to ports and the improvement of public transport and active travel infrastructure.

### **2.3.3.6 Ireland's Road Haulage Strategy 2022–2031**

This strategy focuses on generating efficiencies and improving standards, while helping to create secure employment and assisting the sector to move to a low-carbon future. This strategy sets out the measures and supporting policies which are needed to deliver on these objectives, in particular for decarbonisation and in developing the skills base to ensure the long-term viability of the industry.

### **2.3.3.7 National Sustainable Mobility Policy**

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy<sup>31</sup> (NSMP) is the national policy setting out a strategic framework for both active travel and public transport, which supports Ireland's commitment to reducing carbon emissions by 51% by 2030. The policy sets out support for safe and sustainable travel modes, by shifting to a people-based-focus.

There are ten goals within the NSMP that direct certain objectives and actions;

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/220939/15aab892-f189-4ab6-8448-0c886176faac.pdf#page=null>

1. “Improve mobility safety
2. Decarbonise public transport
3. Expand availability of sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas
4. Expand availability of sustainable mobility in regional and rural areas
5. Encourage more people to choose sustainable mobility over the private car
6. Take a whole journey approach to mobility, promoting inclusive access for all
7. Design infrastructure according to Universal Design Principles and the Hierarchy of Road Users model
8. Promote sustainable mobility through research and citizen engagement
9. Better integrate land use and transport planning at all levels
10. Promote smart and integrated mobility through innovative technologies and development of appropriate regulation”. (page 25)

### **2.3.3.8 National Cycle Network Plan**

This plan sets out an inter-urban cycle network (incorporating the regional and national greenways network, as appropriate), with a view to enabling greater levels of cycling and walking amongst leisure users, tourists, and commuters. The National Cycle Network represents a step-change in active travel infrastructure in Ireland. The provides a phased programme that will see the delivery of approximately 3,500km of cycle facilities by 2040.

### **2.3.3.9 Draft All-Island Strategic Rail Review**

The All-Island Strategic Rail Review<sup>32</sup> (the Review) is a joint project between the Department of Transport in the Republic of Ireland and the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The purpose of the report is to inform all future development of the railway network on the island in a cohesive manner between now and 2050. The Review was initially launched in 2021, however the publishing of the draft report was subject to delays owing to the absence of the Northern Irish Executive. The draft report was published for public consultation on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

The draft Review notes that current modal share for rail in terms of freight total tonne kilometres is just 1%. It is considered that the Island of Ireland could support up to 10% modal share by rail for freight, when looking to other European states with comparable conditions. The draft Review states:

“Future rail freight services within the island of Ireland are likely to be most viable where there is a sufficient critical mass of cargo movements (in terms of tonnes-lifted). In general, this means rail freight is likely to be

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/265178/a839ee26-16c4-407d-bd5b-327ce0e067f5.pdf>

competitive on corridors that support at least one million tonnes per annum of road freight covering distances above 100km. This suggests the greatest potential for intermodal rail freight will focus on routes between Dublin and the largest cities on the island of Ireland, while the greatest potential for outbound flows is from the North West to the South Coast ports.” (page 64)

With respect to Dublin Port the draft states:

“Dublin Port will play a key role in helping grow rail freight in Ireland. The 2040 Dublin Port Masterplan plans for growth through consolidating the existing estate and expanding on the Poolbeg peninsula. Rail connectivity to the current port area is poor – part of the railway runs on and across busy roads, creating significant conflicts with road traffic – and there is currently no rail connectivity to Poolbeg. These challenges will need to be addressed to realise the objective of growing rail freight in Ireland to reduce road congestion and decarbonise the transport system.” (page 64)

The draft Review contains 30 no. recommendations, of which 4 no. relate directly to freight rail:

21. Develop a sustainable solution for first-mile-last-mile rail access for Dublin Port. Without this connection, there are limited options for growing rail freight.

22. Reduce Track Access Charges for freight services. These charges are very high compared to other European railways but could be reduced through support/government subsidy to stimulate demand for rail freight.

23. Strengthen rail connectivity to the island’s busiest ports where links are feasible and improve access to ports that currently are underserved by rail freight, including Foynes for Limerick, Waterford, Marino Point for Cork, and Rosslare Europort (in the longer term, when LoLo operations are feasible here, or, in the shorter term following analysis of the feasibility of RoRo rail freight).

24. Develop a network of inland terminals close to major cities on the rail network especially where there is good access to major roads/motorways, limited impact on communities and passenger traffic, and good access to industrial clusters. Potential locations for new terminals include the Upper Bann area for Northern Ireland, Limerick Junction, a location north of Cork, Athenry for Galway, Sligo, and west of Dublin.” (page 65)

Key upgrades identified in relation to the rail network suitable for freight is shown in Figure 2.7.



Figure 2.7 Rail Freight Interventions (Figure 17 in the Draft Review)

### 2.3.3.10 Planning Policy Statements

#### Planning Policy Statement

The Planning Policy Statement<sup>33</sup> (PPS) outlines the principles on which the Irish planning system operates. It was published in 2015 by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Ten key principles are highlighted which can be summarised to the following:

1. “Planning must be plan-led and evidence based
2. Planning must proactively drive and support sustainable development
3. Planning is about creating communities and further developing existing communities in a sustainable manner

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Planning-Policy-Statement-2015.pdf>

4. Planning must support the transition to a low carbon future and adapt to a changing climate
5. Planning must ensure that development facilitates and encourages greater use of public transport as well as making walking and cycling more attractive for people
6. Planning will encourage the most efficient and effective use of previously developed (brownfield) land
7. Planning will enhance a sense of place
8. Planning will conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage
9. Planning will support the protection and enhancement of environmental quality
10. Above all, planning will be conducted in a manner that affords a high level of confidence” (page 2)
11. Derived from the ten key principles, are four key priorities that guide planning legislation moving forward from publication. These priorities are:
  1. Maintaining High Standards of Public Confidence
  2. Planning and Economic Recovery
  3. Enhancing Service Delivery
  4. Quality in Planning Outcomes

### ***Marine Planning Policy Statement***

The Marine Planning Policy Statement<sup>34</sup> (MPPS) underpins the Marine Planning system in Ireland. It was published in November 2019 and accompanies the Planning Policy Statement (PPS) which relates to the terrestrial planning system. The MPPS sets out an outline for an Irish marine planning system that will adequately protect the marine environment, enable appropriate development in marine areas and meet EU obligations in relation to marine planning. Additionally, it describes the need for a planning enforcement system at a marine level. Arising directly from the MPPS is legislation such as the Marine Area Planning Act 2021, which addresses the objectives set out in the MPPS.

## **2.3.4 Relevant Regional Planning and Development Policy**

### **2.3.4.1 Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region**

The Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy<sup>35</sup> (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region including the Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP) for Dublin was published in June 2019 and finalised in January 2020. The RSES is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the region to 2031 and beyond.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/127148/08e48ce8-f563-4c82-aac0-bcc87b758611.pdf#page=null>

<sup>35</sup> <https://emra.ie/final-rses/>

A key challenge facing the Eastern and Midland Region, along with all other regions, is the transition to a low carbon society. For the RSES this means five primary areas of transition which are at the core of the Strategy:

“• sustainable development patterns which promote compact growth, reduce transport demand and encourage low carbon transport modes;

- sustainable transport systems (people and freight);
- carbon storing and sequestering land uses;
- energy efficient buildings and industry; and
- renewable energy”.(page 23)

The RSES provides for the following individual strategies:

**Spatial Strategy** – to manage future growth and ensure the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, study, visit and invest in.

**Economic Strategy** – that builds on our strengths to sustain a strong economy and support the creation of quality jobs that ensure a good living standard for all.

**Metropolitan Plan** – to ensure a supply of strategic development areas for the sustainable growth and continued success and competitiveness of the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

**Investment Framework** – to prioritise the delivery of key enabling infrastructure and services by government and state agencies.

**Climate Action Strategy** – to accelerate climate action, ensure a clean and healthy environment and to promote sustainable transport and strategic green infrastructure.

The RSES, prepared in accordance with the NPF, sets the context for each local authority within the Region to develop county and city development plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align. It is guided by a vision statement that reads: *“To create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.”* (page 6)

The RSES provides the basis for the integration of land use and transport planning in the Region, informing the preparation and implementation of plans, programmes and projects at all levels. To achieve this the EMRA, in conjunction with local authorities, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other agencies, will seek to apply guiding principles in statutory land use plans, taking into consideration the requirements of both urban and rural areas across the Region.

Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) relating to integration of transport and land use planning include:

“8.1: The integration of transport and land use planning in the Region shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the transport strategy of the RSES.

8.2: The capacity and safety of the Region’s strategic land transport networks will be managed and enhanced, including through the management of travel demand in order to ensure their optimal use.

8.3: That future development is planned and designed in a manner which maximises the efficiency and protects the strategic capacity of the metropolitan area transport network, both existing and planned and to protect and maintain regional accessibility.

8.4: Land use plans within the GDA shall demonstrate a consistency with the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area and plans with or outside of the GDA shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the RSES". (page 188)

RPO 8.5 relating to a regional strategy for freight transport states:

"To support the preparation of a regional strategy for freight transport in collaboration with the relevant transport agencies and the other Assemblies". (page 188)

With respect to the profile of the region the RSES notes that the Dublin region is the main global gateway to Ireland, with Dublin Airport one of the fastest growing in Europe and continued growth both in the import and export of goods through Dublin Port. In this regard the RSES identifies three strategic connections in the region which include the Eastern Corridor, strategic connections to the Northern and Western Region, and strategic connections to the Southern Region.

The RSES defines the Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor, which is contained within the Eastern Corridor, as the largest economic agglomeration in Ireland, with the cities and towns along the corridor home to a population of around two million. The corridor connects the large towns of Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry by high-capacity national road and rail links, the three major airports of Dublin Airport, Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport, together with Belfast Harbour and Dublin Port. The RSES supports the development of the Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor through targeted investment in transport infrastructure and services complementing and maintaining its function as part of the EU TEN-T core network. Directly relevant to Dublin Port and its growth is the identification of the M50 Dublin Port South Access Road as one of the Strategic Road Network projects (RPO 8.10) which will be appraised and delivered subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process (page 185).

The RSES states that the Dublin City and Metropolitan Area accounts for about half of the Region's population or a quarter of the national population, as well as being the largest economic contributor in the state. As Ireland's only international city of scale, Dublin acts as the global gateway to Ireland and its influence extends well beyond its administrative boundaries. Growth Enablers for Dublin City and Metropolitan Area include:

"Protect and improve access to the global gateways of Dublin Airport and Dublin Port for the Region and to serve the Nation, and safeguard and improve regional accessibility and service by rail, road and communication, with a key focus on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor." (page 34)

Furthermore, with regard to road projects and Dublin Port, the RSES supports the creation of an M50 Dublin Port South Access Road, which is included in Table 8.4 of the RSES with respect to RPO 8.10:

"The RSES supports appraisal and or delivery of the road projects set out in Table 8.4 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process." (page 191)

While not explicitly included within the supporting Table (8.4), the RSES states:

"In addition, long term protection shall remain for the Eastern Bypass and the Leinster Outer Orbital Route." (page 192)

To achieve the vision the MASP identifies a number of Guiding Principles for the sustainable development of the Dublin Metropolitan Area. With respect to Dublin Port these include:

“Dublin as a Global Gateway – In recognition of the international role of Dublin, to support and facilitate the continued growth of Dublin Airport and Dublin Port, to protect and improve existing access and support related access improvements.” (page 95)

The NPF includes High-Quality International Connectivity as an NSO and recognises the crucial role that the provision of high-quality international connectivity has for overall international competitiveness and addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through investment in our ports and airports, in line with sectoral priorities already defined through National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy and signature projects such as the second runway for Dublin Airport and major redevelopment at Dublin Port including proposals for a Southern Port Access Route (SPAR).

The RSES recognises that Ireland’s port and shipping services play an important role as enablers of economic growth, noting that the Region is home to the largest seaport in the country, Dublin Port. The RSES states that given the nature and function of ports, combined with the location interfacing with the marine environment, there is potential for environmental conflict with the existing ecosystem. It continues that this sensitivity is further increased by the proximity of most of the Region’s ports to designated sites.

In order to minimise potential impacts on EU protected habitats, the RSES advocates, brownfield port developments which maximise the capacity of existing port sites should be prioritised over greenfield developments.

It continues that the approach to port development in the Region shall adhere to the European Commission guidelines on the Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives in Estuaries and Coastal Zones. As required by National Ports Policy (2013), a National Ports Capacity study has been commissioned which will assess the capacity of the national port network.

In terms of port facilities, the RSES acknowledges that the National Ports Policy and the national hierarchy or tiering of ports recognises the long-term international trend in ports and shipping towards increased consolidation of resources in order to achieve optimum efficiencies of scale. It notes that this has knock-on effects in terms of vessel size, the depths of water required at ports and the type and scale of port hinterland transport connections. As set out under Section 3.3 National Ports Policy seeks to ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 Ports, ports of regional significance and smaller harbours are addressed to ensure their effective growth and sustainable development at a national and regional level, this is acknowledged in the RSES.

With specific regard to Dublin Port, the RSES notes that it is the largest port in the Country handling almost 50% of all trade in Ireland has seen its trade volumes grow by 35.7% over the previous five years. Dublin Port is recognised in this RSES as a critical national facility; a key economic driver for the Region, the nation and an integral part of Dublin City, in line with the Dublin Port Masterplan 2040, as reviewed in 2018.

Regional Policy Objectives guiding the development of ports and specifically Dublin Port within the RSES state:

“RPO 8.21: The EMRA will support the role of Dublin Port as a Port of National Significance (Tier 1 Port) and its continued commercial development, including limited expansion and improved road access, including the Southern Port Access Route.

RPO 8.23: The EMRA supports the protection of the marine related functions of ports in the Region in order to ensure the future role of ports as strategic marine related assets is protected from inappropriate uses, whilst supporting complimentary economic uses including the potential for facilitating offshore renewable energy development at ports.

RPO 8.24: The EMRA supports the undertaking of feasibility studies to determine the carrying capacity of ports in relation to potential for likely significant effects on associated European sites including SPAs and SACs.” (page 190)

Strategic Greenways proposed and/or under development in the metropolitan area include:

“East Coast Route from Sutton to Sandymount with potential to link into a Dublin Port Greenway, to extend north to link into the Fingal Coastal Way and to develop a wider East Coast Trail from Rosslare to Northern Ireland.” (page 103)

Other RPOs of relevance include:

“RPO 5.3: Future development in the Dublin Metropolitan Area shall be planned and designed in a manner that facilitates sustainable travel patterns, with a particular focus on increasing the share of active modes (walking and cycling) and public transport use and creating a safe attractive street environment for pedestrians and cyclists.”

“RPO 6.16: Support working with relevant landowners and recreational/ tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and coastal areas to ensure maintenance of the existing network.”

“RPO 7.20: Promote the development of improved visitor experiences, nature conservation and sustainable development activities within the Dublin Bay Biosphere in cooperation with the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Partnership.” (page 156)

“RPO 7.25: Support local authorities and state agencies in the delivery of sustainable strategic greenways, blueways, and peatways projects in the Region under the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.”

#### **2.3.4.2 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, 2022 to 2042**

The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, 2022 to 2042<sup>36</sup>, prepared by the NTA sets out how transport will be developed across the Greater Dublin Region (covering Dublin, Meath, Wicklow and Kildare) up to 2042 (GDA Transport Strategy).

The strategy has been developed to be consistent with the spatial planning policies and objectives set out in the RSES. These objectives in turn are consistent with the NPF and the NDP as set out in Project Ireland

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<sup>36</sup> [Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy - National Transport](#)

2040. This strategy is also based on national policies on sustainability as set out in climate action and low carbon legislation, and in climate action plans.

The strategy highlights that Dublin Airport and Dublin Port are two of the most important economic assets in the state. It acknowledges that it is the responsibility of the NTA, through this strategy, to ensure that the landside transport network meets the requirements of these international gateways. In relation to Dublin Port, while the volumes of passenger trips generated are significantly lower than those generated by the Airport, they are of primary economic importance. The location of the port is also a factor which places additional emphasis on the need to cater appropriately for goods vehicles. This strategy incorporates additional road access for the South Port, protection of the national road network, public transport, HGV management and demand management measures across the city-region which will facilitate more efficient operations of Dublin Port, in tandem with the requirements of the wider city. Additionally, there is a requirement for Dublin Port to be fully integrated into the regional transport system in order to facilitate passengers who wish to travel by ferry without the use of a private car. Measure INT2 - International Gateways states:

“It is the intention of the NTA, in conjunction with public transport operators, TII, and the local authorities, to serve the international gateways with the landside transport infrastructure and services which will facilitate their sustainable operation.

Throughout the lifetime of the strategy, the NTA will continue to work with Dublin Port Company, other port and harbour operators and DAA in respect of Dublin Airport, in monitoring, assessing and delivering these transport requirements.” (page 75)

The strategy indicates that there is a clear need to minimise impacts of increased congestion on the national road network and keep these vital national transport arteries operating satisfactorily at all times in so far as practicable. To facilitate the delivery of the NPF objectives NSO2 (Enhanced Regional Accessibility) and NSO6 (High-Quality International Connectivity) within the GDA, improving the resilience and safety of the national road network in order to maintain its reliability and functionality will be critical. The approach by the Strategy is to extend the life and optimise the use of the existing network and, where appropriate, minimise the need to build new infrastructure. Measure ROAD2 – National Roads Requirements states:

- “1. The primary function of national roads is to cater for strategic traffic and this function must be protected;
2. Strategic traffic, in the context of national roads, is primarily comprised of inter-urban and interregional traffic. This includes vehicles involved in the transportation of goods and products, especially those travelling to and from the main ports and airports, both freight and passenger related. It also includes buses, other public service vehicles and cars which contribute to national and regional economic development;
3. Within the GDA, the asset value, reliability and functionality of the national road network will be protected and maintained;
4. Secondary local functions should not be encouraged, or planned for, on national roads in the GDA;
5. National roads are not to be developed or planned, to support the continued urban expansion through the zoning of residential land uses adjacent to or within national road corridors;
6. Secondary local function traffic on national roads can be accommodated insofar as it does not impact on the primary function, which is to cater for strategic traffic;

7. If secondary functions impact on the primary function of national roads, then demand management measures should be considered to mitigate this impact;

8. Network resilience will be delivered by enhancing Motorway Operation Services within the GDA, as appropriate; and

9. The primary functions of the Dublin Tunnel will be maintained and protected. These functions are to facilitate the movement of goods vehicles between Dublin Port and the national road network and to facilitate access to the City Centre for public transport service vehicles, whilst also facilitating the ‘strategic’ movement of goods to and from Dublin City Centre, subject to appropriate vehicle size and time restrictions. It is also essential that the structural integrity of the Tunnel from incompatible over ground development is ensured.” (page 170/171)

The GDA Transport Strategy includes details regarding land that had been reserved for use to facilitate the Eastern Bypass, a tunnel connection between the Dublin Port Tunnel and Sandyford, which would complete a full orbital motorway around Dublin City. It has been determined by the NTA that this project will no longer be progressed as part of the GDA Transport Strategy, in light of the Government’s most recent transport policies. It is stated that the lands previously reserved for this project within the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Poolbeg Strategic Development Zone may be released for alternative development. A portion of the reserved lands in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown is recommended to remain reserved pending further assessment for possible use for alternative transport corridors.

On the foot of this, measure ROAD4 states:

“The NTA will collaborate with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in undertaking an assessment of the potential for the southern section of the former Eastern Bypass corridor reservation – as provided for in the County Development Plan – to accommodate a sustainable transport link. Pending completion of this assessment the existing reservation should be retained.” (page 173)

The strategy notes that one of the key issues relating to the port is the difficulty in accessing the South Port estate from the national road network, in particular the connection to the Dublin Tunnel. The strategy proposes to address this by means of the delivery of the Southern Port Access Route, a new public road extending from the national road network at the M50 Port Tunnel to serve the South Port lands and adjoining areas. Measure ROAD5 – Southern Port Access Route states:

“A new public road which links from the national road network at the Dublin Tunnel to serve the south port lands and adjoining areas will be delivered. A reservation for such development should be included in the Dublin City Development Plan.” (page 173)

In relation to the Dublin Tunnel, it is intended that a route on the existing road network will be identified and designated which will provide surface connectivity for HGV traffic from the M50/M1 Junction to Dublin Port and its surrounding area in the event of a prolonged closure of the Dublin Tunnel. Measure ROAD7 – Dublin Tunnel Emergency Diversion Route provides:

It is intended that a route on the existing road network will be identified and designated which will provide surface connectivity for HGV traffic from the M50/M1 Junction to Dublin Port and its surrounding area in the event of an emergency or prolonged closure of the Dublin Tunnel. (page 175)

In line with RPO 8.5 of the RSES the NTA supports the development of a strategy for freight transport in recognition of the need to reduce the carbon-intensity of freight movements and be cognisant of the inter-regional nature of freight movements, driven in particular by the scale and strategic importance of Dublin Port and Dublin Airport, along with the high concentration of logistics and industrial activity within the GDA.

It is a key objective of the NPF under NSO 4 - High Quality International Connectivity and the RSES to safeguard and improve access to Dublin Port and Dublin Airport, as two primary national gateways. Measure FREIGHT2 - Strategy for Sustainable Freight Distribution states:

“It is the intention of the NTA, in collaboration with other authorities, including TII and Irish Rail, and stakeholders to prepare a Strategy for Sustainable Freight Distribution for the Greater Dublin Area – to inter alia, support the decarbonisation of the freight sector, to seek to further integrate smart technologies in logistics management and to reinforce the important role that the strategic road and rail network play in the efficient movement of freight.” (page 198)

In this regard, the Sustainable Freight Distribution Framework: Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Sprint Report was since been published (July 2021). This framework was created to guide the process of producing the Sustainable Freight Distribution for the Greater Dublin Area, which itself was published in November 2022 (see Section 2.3.4.3).

Underpinning the GDA Transport Strategy’s measures relating to freight, delivery and servicing, there is an associated requirement by planning authorities in the GDA for the clear identification in development plans, of appropriate locations for freight intensive developments, and the implementation of Distribution and Servicing Plans for such developments as part of the planning process. Measure FREIGHT3 – Planning Policy and Freight states:

“It is recommended that local authorities in the GDA, with the input of the NTA and TII, identify appropriate locations for freight-intensive developments in their Development Plans.” (page 199)

The strategy advises that HGV management proposals may include following in plans:

“Ensure that the Dublin Tunnel continues to perform its primary function of providing access to Dublin Port for freight traffic.

Provision for appropriate Mobility management planning at key freight intensive locations such as Dublin Port, Dublin Airport and Dublin City Centre.” (page 199/200)

With respect to move of freight by rail Measure FREIGHT5 – Rail Freight commits to supporting the implementation of the outcomes of the Rail Freight 2040 Strategy.

Analysis undertaken in the strategy indicates that this demand generated within the Poolbeg Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) and environs may be catered for by bus, cycling and walking up to 2042, however, depending on the scale and phasing of development, it may be necessary to consider delivering the Luas to this area during the later periods of the Transport Strategy. The alignment and locations to be served between the existing Red Line and Poolbeg have yet to be determined and will be subject to detailed design and planning work. Work undertaken to date in the regard will form a key input into this assessment. Measure LRT6 – Luas Poolbeg states:

“Subject to the assessment of forecast travel demand arising out of development patterns in the SDZ and its environs, it is intended to extend the Red line to Poolbeg” (page 150)

The strategy places clear emphasis on the need to improve and promote active travel infrastructure, in line with the principle of ‘Avoid-Shift-Improve’. In line with this approach Measure PLAN16 – Reallocation of Road Space states:

“The NTA, in conjunction with the local authorities, will seek the reallocation of road space in appropriate locations in Dublin City Centre, Metropolitan towns and villages, and towns and villages across the GDA in accordance with the road user hierarchy, in order to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use and prioritise the placemaking functions of the urban street network.” (page 68)

The design of any reallocation is advocated to be aligned with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the Cycle Design Manual. The NTA also highlights the importance of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (see Section 2.3.4.4).

### **2.3.4.3 Sustainable Freight Distribution Framework: Greater Dublin Area (GDA)**

The Sustainable Freight Distribution Framework: Greater Dublin Area<sup>37</sup> (SFDF) was published by the NTA in November 2022 and sets out an approach to develop a strategy for *“the efficient, safe and sustainable movement of goods based around the following key themes; Stakeholder Engagement, Freight Data, Infrastructure, Technology & Decarbonisation and, Operational & Planning Considerations”*.

The framework outlines a clear approach for the development of a strategy in the future, which aligns with:

- “An Enhanced Natural and Built Environment;
- Connect Communities and Better Quality of Life;
- A Strong Sustainable Economy; and
- An Inclusive Transport System.” (page 56)
- It is intended that a Sustainable Freight Strategy will be developed on foot of the SFDF.

### **2.3.4.4 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan**

The Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan<sup>38</sup> complements the GDA Transport Strategy and was published in 2013 (Figure 2.8). The network forms a key component of the overall transport network for the region. Covering the full Greater Dublin region, it sets out a comprehensive cycle network for development during the period of the GDA Transport Strategy. The proposed network has comprehensive cycling infrastructure covering key routes throughout the city centre. Some secondary routes pass through Port lands, or adjacent streets. The plan is currently undergoing a revision process, and a draft publication has been produced for

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<sup>37</sup> [https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Sustainable-Freight-Distribution-Framework\\_Final-Report..pdf](https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Sustainable-Freight-Distribution-Framework_Final-Report..pdf)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/greater-dublin-area-cycle-network-plan/>

consultation purposes<sup>39</sup>. Consultation feedback informed updates to the draft plan, which is currently being considered by the Minister for Transport.



Figure 2.8 Extract from GDA Cycle Network Plan Map 1<sup>40</sup> (2013)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/gda/supporting-documents/>

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/English\\_04b\\_Proposed\\_Network\\_Dublin.pdf](https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/English_04b_Proposed_Network_Dublin.pdf)



Figure 2.9: Extract Draft GDA Cycle Network Plan Map Set 141 (2021)

Notable points contained within both the current and draft GDA Cycle Network Plans (Figure 2.9) include provision of cycling infrastructure across the Liffey at the Tom Clarke/East Link bridge, and improvement of the active travel network in the southern port lands.

## 2.3.5 Relevant Local Planning and Development Policy

### 2.3.5.1 Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028

The Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028<sup>42</sup> (the Development Plan) is the primary statutory land-use planning policy document guiding development within Dublin City. Dublin Port is wholly situated within the boundaries of Dublin City. The Development Plan is emphatically supportive of the role that Dublin Port plays in the city and the country.

Chapter 4 – Shape and Structure of the City under Section 4.5.1 (Approach to the Inner City and Docklands) of the Development Plan recognises and outlines general support for the activities of Dublin Port:

“Dublin City Council fully supports and recognises the important national and regional role of Dublin Port in the economic life of the region and the consequent need in economic competitiveness and employment terms to facilitate port activities. Dublin Port will have a significant role to play in the future development and growth of the city and it is considered prudent to plan the structure of this part of the city, including the proposed public

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Draft-2021-GDA-Cycle-Network-Plan-Map-Set-1.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2023-02/Final%20Vol%201%20Written%20Statement.pdf>

transport network, to fully integrate with the developing city structure and character, while having regard to the Dublin Port Company Masterplan 2012-2040.” (page 113)

The Development Plan states that is the policy of Dublin City Council:

“SC7: To support and recognise the important national and regional role of Dublin Port in the economic life of the city and region and to facilitate port activities and development, having regard to the Dublin Port Masterplan 2040.” (page 115)

In Chapter 6 which sets out policy for the City Economic and Enterprise, the Development Plan acknowledges that “Dublin Port continues to modernise and consolidate its operations with the company making considerable infrastructural investment at the port to facilitate larger vessels and provide for increased capacity” (page178) and “is a major transport and logistics hub with Dublin Port providing a direct trading route to the UK and Continental Europe” (page189).

The Development Plan acknowledges that as Ireland is an export-driven economy on the periphery of Europe the transport and logistics sector is a significant and growing sector in Dublin, noting that logistics and storage is expected to be the fastest growing employment sector in Dublin over the coming decade. In this regard, Dublin Port is accepted as being a particularly important element of the city’s transportation and logistics infrastructure and continues to play a significant role in the economy of the city, handling almost half of all trade in the Republic of Ireland and is a key strategic access point for Ireland and the Dublin area.

The Development Plan notes the Dublin Port Company Masterplan and important role that Dublin Port will continue to play in the future development and growth of the city. The Development Plan acknowledges the Masterplan and one of its overall objectives to reintegrate the Port with the city and to create a unique fusion between the working port and the living city through the creation of high quality spaces. This is confirmed by Policy CEE35 which states:

“To recognise that Dublin Port is a key economic resource and to have regard to the policies and objectives of the Dublin Port Masterplan 2040 including the reintegration of the Port with the City.” (page 199)

Delivery of social, economic and environmental sustainability is the effective integration of land use and transportation. This is supported in Chapter 8 – Sustainable Movement and Transport where Policy SMT3 Integrated Transport Network states:

“To support and promote the sustainability principles set out in National and Regional documents to ensure the creation of an integrated transport network that services the needs of communities and businesses of Dublin City and the region.” (page 239)

In addition to supporting economic port activities, accessibility to the port is highlighted in the Development Plan Dublin City Council recognises the important role that the Port Tunnel plays in reducing HGV traffic elsewhere in the city. The provision of the Southern Port Access Route (SPAR) connecting the national road network at the Dublin Port Tunnel to the southern port lands is a policy goal of Dublin City Council:

“SMT30: To protect national road projects as per the NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042 and in consultation with TII, NTA and other relevant stakeholders including the Dublin Port Authority Company to support the delivery of the Southern Port Access Route to Poolbeg, as a public road. The indicative alignment of this road link is shown on Map J.” (page 259)

Other relevant policy points contained within the Development Plan include:

“SC4: To promote and support a variety of recreational and cultural events in the city’s civic spaces; as well as the development of new and the retention and enhancement of existing civic and cultural spaces.” (page 114)

“GI36: To develop sustainable estuarine and coastal recreational and tourism amenities which enhance appreciation of coastal natural assets in a manner that ensures that any adverse environmental effects are avoided, remediated or mitigated.” (page 330)

### Green Infrastructure and Recreation

The Development Plan identifies natural assets as an “essential resource for conserving biodiversity and for creating a healthy, low carbon, resilient and connected city” (page 302). Spaces that are considered natural assets include parks, open space, the coastline and riversides. Historically within the Dublin City Council administrative area, there has been a lack of green space owing to a long past of urbanism and development. As a result, the Development Plan ensures that existing open space and natural assets are protected, and supported to improve and expand where appropriate, in addition to requiring more green infrastructure in new developments.

Dublin City Council has identified a strategic approach to managing green space, pursuing a network-based approach where possible, which “can secure a spectrum of environmental, social, and economic benefits for the city thereby, contributing to urban sustainability, climate resilience and providing a good quality of life for people” (page 305). The existing green and blue network in Dublin City is show in Figure 2.10.

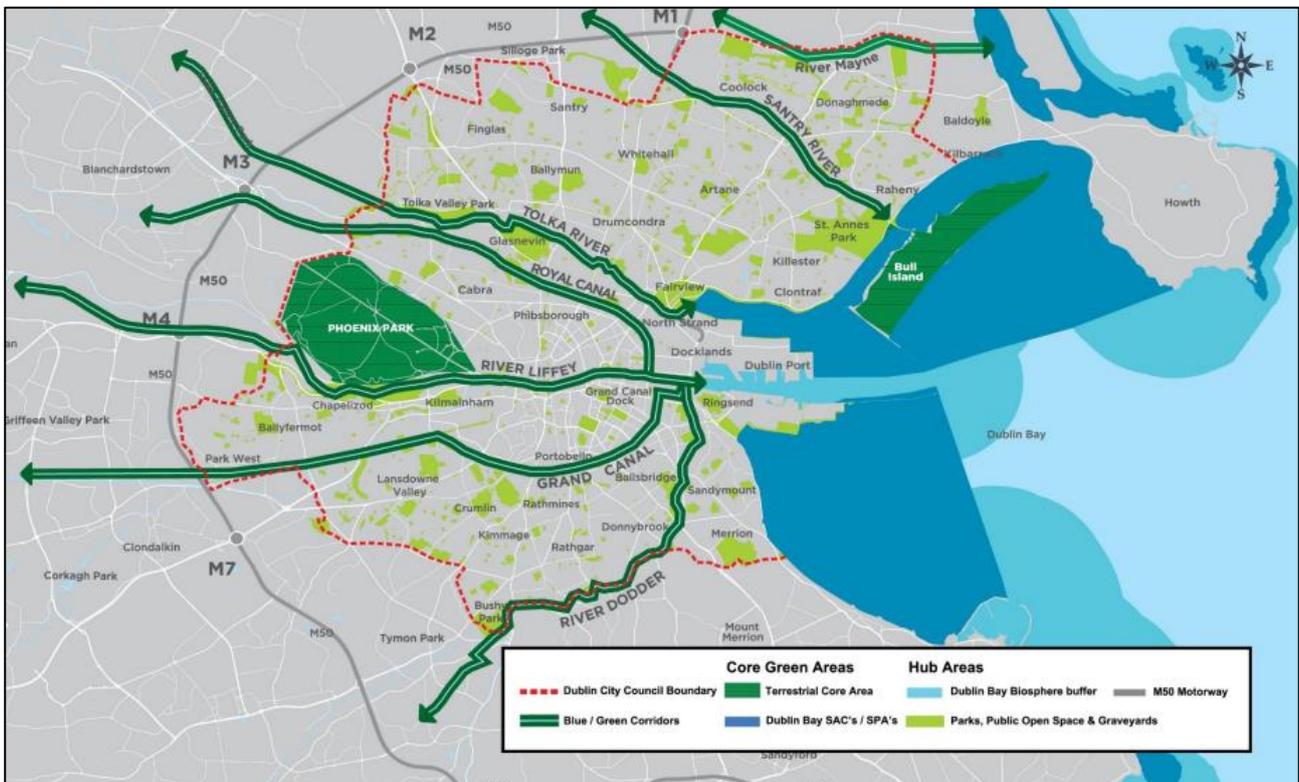


Figure 2.10: Dublin City Council Development Plan Green and Blue Infrastructure Map (page 308)

Relevant objectives and policies pertaining to open space and natural assets include:

- “GI2: To develop an interconnected green infrastructure network of strategic natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features including green spaces, rivers, canals, the coastal and marine area and other physical features including streets and civic spaces that supports ecological, wildlife, and social connectivity.
- GI3: To ensure delivery of multifunctional green and civic spaces that meet community needs, support biodiversity, promote active and passive recreation, flood and surface water management and local habitat improvements. The multi-functionality of spaces will be balanced against the need to protect and enhance local habitat and the recreational and functional requirements of parks.” (pages 309-310).

### Strategic Development Regeneration Area

Chapter 13 – Strategic Development Regeneration Areas provides policy and objectives to target specific areas within the city for regeneration designated as Strategic Development Regeneration Area (SDRA). SDRA 6 Docklands is approximately 520ha and covers a visually and culturally significant area of the city (Figure 2.11). The SDRA covers southern port lands also. Within the SDRA, are two separate Strategic Development Zones (SDZ) – North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock (Section 2.3.5.2) and Poolbeg West (Section 2.3.5.3).

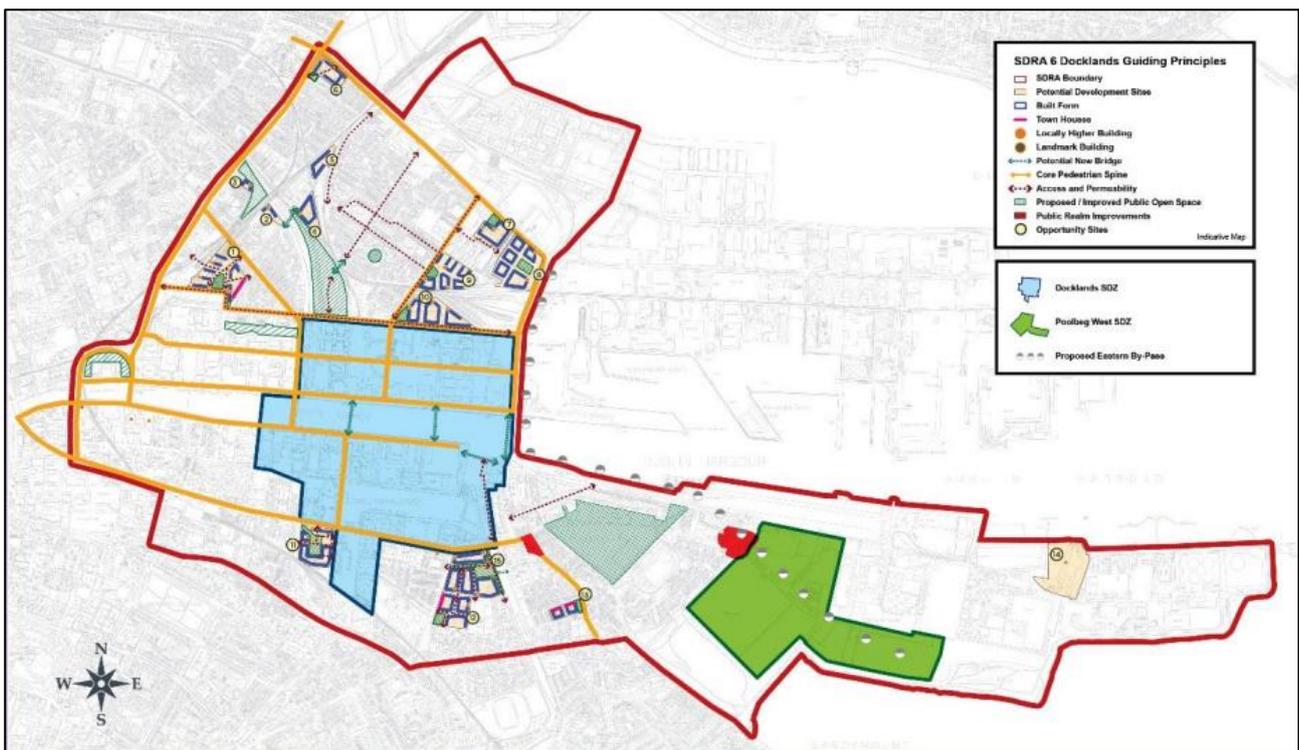


Figure 2.11: SDRA 6 Docklands, from Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028

SDZs are governed by Planning Schemes with respect to planning decisions, which supersede the Development Plan. Areas within the Docklands SDRA that are not covered by the SDZs are instead directed by guiding principles set out in the Development Plan, including the following principles, relevant to the proposed development:

#### Employment & Economic Development

- “To promote the Docklands as a location for sustainable businesses and supporting services and to support the marine economy...

- To encourage local employment, where the appropriate skills are available, on all construction projects, and to promote a local schools job placement programme...
- To recognise the significance of Dublin Port Company's non-statutory 2040 Masterplan, and related updates/reviews, as an important guiding document for the future of port lands." (page 447)

#### Green Infrastructure

- "Support the implementation of the projects identified in the North East Inner City Greening Strategy that pertain to the Docklands area.
- Provide for new streets as set out in the framework plan, accommodating an improved pedestrian environment, cycleways and green infrastructure/SuDS interventions.
- Promote greening initiatives in association with sustainable transport connections both to, and through the port area, improving connectivity to key destinations.
- To promote the provision of public open space at locations within key development sites that are visible, accessible and inviting to the wider public.
- Support green infrastructure/connectivity initiatives contained in the Ringsend and Irishtown LEIP and improve connectivity to Poolbeg West SDZ.
- Provide for the creation of connected recreational and amenity spaces in Poolbeg that strengthen the biodiversity and ecology of the area, with a particular focus on Sean Moore Park and Irishtown Nature Park.
- To promote and facilitate the delivery of the Port Greenway and to enhance the amenity of East Wall Road through tree planting, improved pedestrian facilities, and potential expansion of quality public realm.
- To support and promote that expansion of water-based activities including slipways, pontoons and marinas." (page 449)

#### Movement & Transport

- "To enhance public realm to accommodate increased pedestrian movement...
- Facilitate the delivery of the sustainable transport initiatives identified, including new pedestrian and cycle bridges at specified locations in accordance with SMTO23 including:
  - i) Bridge from North Wall Quay at Point Depot (Point Bridge) and the widening of Tom Clarke Bridge, improve pedestrian and cycling facilities at the crossing point as well as accommodating additional public transport routes in conjunction with the Dodder Bridge.
- To facilitate delivery of cycle routes identified in the NTA GDA Cycle Strategy.

- To support the extension of LUAS light rail, a DART Interconnector and improvements to Irish Rail's network including Dart+ projects.
- To include an objective for the reservation for a public road linking the national road network at the Dublin Tunnel to serve the southern port lands and adjoining areas (Southern Port Access Route) in accordance with the NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042.
- To improve sustainable transport connectivity both to and through the area of Dublin Port.
- To provide for a Luas stop and line on the south east side of the Sean Moore Road." (page 449-450)

### ***Transport & Movement***

The Development Plan provides for new street/road infrastructure and improvements to existing streets/roads which will be required over the period of the plan. These are required to improve the efficiency and safety of the street/road network or to open up areas for development. The Plan highlights that new bridge infrastructure will also facilitate the continued development of the city such as the Dodder Public Transport Bridge, which is linked to development of the Poolbeg West Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) and pedestrian/cycle bridges, which will improve connectivity between the north and south docklands areas.

The Plan states that the Port Tunnel is a road traffic tunnel which forms part of the M50 motorway and serves as a key route for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) travelling to and from Dublin Port. Dublin City Council, working together with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, recognises the need to safeguard the structural integrity of the existing Port Tunnel from developments. Other road projects in addition to SMT30 are listed under SMT027 and include Sean Moore Road, bridge from North Wall Quay at Point Depot (Point Bridge) and the widening of Tom Clarke Bridge, as indicated on Map E and F.

The Development Plan places significant emphasis on the need to encourage modal shift to sustainable transport means, in conjunction with avoiding unnecessary journeys. This transition is supported by policies and objectives such as:

"SMT1 Modal Shift and Compact Growth

"To continue to promote modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable forms of transport such as active mobility and public transport, and to work with the National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other transport agencies in progressing an integrated set of transport objectives to achieve compact growth." (page 236)

"SMT01: Transition to More Sustainable Travel Modes

To achieve and monitor a transition to more sustainable travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport over the lifetime of the development plan, in line with the city mode share targets of 26% walking/cycling/micro mobility; 57% public transport (bus/rail/Luas); and 17% private (car/van/HGV/motorcycle)." (page 236)

"SMT16 Walking, Cycling and Active Travel

To prioritise the development of safe and connected walking and cycling facilities and prioritise a shift to active travel for people of all ages and abilities, in line with the city's mode share targets." (page 237)

#### “SMT17 Active Travel Initiatives

To promote and help develop community-based coordinated initiatives at local level that encourage active travel and modal switch to sustainable transport modes, and to target underrepresented cohorts/groups in such initiatives.” (page 237)

#### “SMT19: The Pedestrian Environment

To continue to maintain and improve the pedestrian environment and strengthen permeability by promoting the development of a network of pedestrian routes including laneway connections which link residential areas with recreational, educational and employment destinations to create a pedestrian environment that is safe, accessible to all in accordance with best accessibility practice.” (page 248)

#### “SMT08 Cycling Infrastructure and Routes

To improve existing cycleways and bicycle priority measures and cycle parking infrastructure throughout the city and villages, and to create protected cycle lanes, where feasible. Routes within the network will be planned in conjunction with green infrastructure objectives and the NTA’s Cycle Network Plan for the Greater Dublin Area, and the National Cycle Manual, having regard to policies GI2, GI6 and GI8 and objective GI02.” (page 248)

#### “SMT09 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan

To support the development of a connected cycling network in the City through the implementation of the NTA’s Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, subject to environmental assessment and route feasibility” (page 248)

Part of the shift of course requires investment in and support of public transport projects. A close working relationship is needed between Dublin City Council and various state agencies to deliver public transport projects. The Development Plan sets out the following policy points in relation to public transport:

#### “SMT22: Key Sustainable Transport Projects

To support the expeditious delivery of key sustainable transport projects so as to provide an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport modes, serving the existing and future needs of the city and region and to support the integration of existing public transport infrastructure with other transport modes. In particular the following projects subject to environmental requirements and appropriate planning consents being obtained:

- DART +
- Metrolink from Charlemount to Swords
- BusConnects Core Bus Corridor projects
- Delivery of Luas to Finglas
- Progress and delivery of Luas to Poolbeg and Lucan

#### SMT23: The Rail Network and Freight Transport

- (i) To work with Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail, the NTA, TII and other operators to progress a coordinated approach to improving the rail network, integrated with other public transport modes to ensure maximum public benefit and promoting sustainable transport and improved connectivity.
- (ii) To facilitate and support the needs of freight transport in accordance with the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042 and enhance the capacity on existing rail lines and services to provide improved facilities promoting the principles of sustainable transport to cater for the movement of freight by rail.
- (iii) To support the outcomes of the Iarnród Éireann/Irish Rail Rail Freight 2040 Strategy.” (page 253)

Sustainable transport methods are a priority within the Development Plan however the logistical importance of road infrastructure is featured also. The Port Tunnel plays a significant role as a key route for HGVs travelling to and from Dublin Port. Dublin City Council supports in principle the provision of the SPAR, as highlighted in SMT30:

“To protect national road projects as per the NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042 and in consultation with TII, NTA and other relevant stakeholders including the Dublin Port Authority Company to support the delivery of the Southern Port Access Route to Poolbeg, as a public road. The indicative alignment of this road link is shown on Map J.” (page 259)

Figure 2.12 shows an indicative alignment for both the SPAR and for the Luas Poolbeg extension.

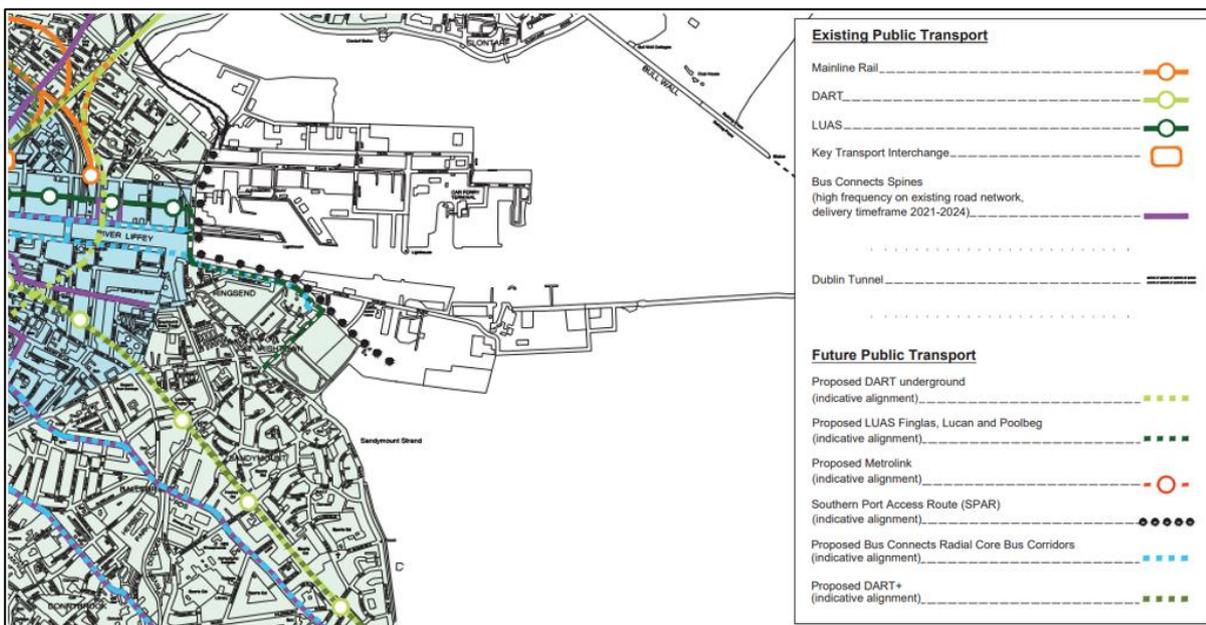


Figure 2.12 Extract from Map J, Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028<sup>43</sup>

### Land Use Zoning

Map F of the Development Plan indicates the land use zoning objectives pertaining to the development site and include Z7 – Employment (Heavy), Z9 – Amenity/Open Space Lands/Green Network and Z14 - Strategic

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2022-12/MapsetJ.pdf>

Development and Regeneration Areas (SDRAs). The Development Plan also lists uses that are permissible and non-permissible within each zone. There will be a presumption against uses not listed under the permissible or open for consideration categories in zones Z1, Z2, Z6, Z8, Z9, Z11, Z12 and Z15. Other uses will be dealt with in accordance with the overall policies and objectives in this plan.

The Development Plan clarifies that certain small areas of land within the city are unzoned or not covered by a specific zoning objective. These lands are illustrated in white on the zoning maps accompanying the plan and usually correspond with the location of the city's roads, bridges, train lines, or other key infrastructure installations. Development proposals in respect of these unzoned lands will be considered in accordance with the policies and objectives of the plan. Regard will also be had to their compatibility with adjacent land-uses and zonings.

#### Z7 – Employment (Heavy)

Land shaded in purple  on Map F (shown in Figure 2.13) are related to the land uses zoning Z7 – Employment (Heavy). The zoning objective for Z7 is “*To provide for the protection and creation of industrial uses, and facilitate opportunities for employment creation including Port Related Activities*” (page 537).

With respect to lands zoned Z7 Employment (Heavy), the Development Plan states:

“The majority of these lands are located in the Port area. The primary uses in these areas are those that can result in a standard of amenity that would not be acceptable in other areas. They can sometimes lead to disamenities which would need to be managed through the planning process to safeguard residential amenity when necessary. Activities include industry (other than light industry), manufacturing repairs, open storage, waste material treatment, utility operations, and transport operation services”. (page 537)

Land uses which are permitted in principle include:

“Café/tearoom, chemical processing and storage, childcare facility, civic and amenity/recycling centre, cruise shipping and marine services (in port area and ancillary services), data centre, delicatessen, enterprise centre, garage (motor repair/service), general industrial uses, heavy vehicle park, household fuel depot, industry (light), office, open space, outdoor poster advertising, park and ride facility, petrol station, port-related industries and facilities, public service installation, science and technology-based industry, scrap yard, shop (local), storage depot (open), transfer station, transport depot, warehousing.” (page 538)

- Land uses which are open for consideration include:

“Advertisement and advertising structures, amusement/leisure complex, betting office, boarding kennel, buildings for the health, safety and welfare of the public, car park, car trading, community facility, crematorium, cultural/recreational building and uses, creative and artistic enterprises and uses, media-associated uses, public house, restaurant, shop (factory shop), take-away, training centre.” (page 538)

- Z9 – Amenity/Open Space Lands/Green Network

Land shaded in green  on Map F (shown in Figure 2.13) are related to the land uses zoning Z9 – Amenity/Open Space Lands/Green Network. The zoning objective for Z9 is “*To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity, open space and ecosystem services.*” (page 539).

With respect to lands zoned Z9 – Amenity/Open Space Lands/Green Network, the Development Plan states:

“Z9 lands are multi-functional and central to healthy place-making, providing for amenity open space together with a range of ecosystem services. They include all amenity, open space and park lands, which can be divided into three broad categories of green infrastructure as follows: public open space; private open space; and, sports facilities.

The provision of public open space is essential to the development of a strategic green infrastructure network...

The role of Z9 lands in providing ecosystem services, such as improved biodiversity and ecological connectivity, nature-based surface water management, flood attenuation, river corridor restoration and climatic resilience, is also increasingly being recognised.” (pages 539 and 540)

Land uses which are permitted in principle include:

“Allotments, cemetery, club house associated with the primary Z9 objective, municipal golf course, open space, public service installation.” (page 540)

Land uses which are open for consideration include:

“Boarding kennel, café/ tearoom, caravan park/camp site (holiday), car park for recreational purposes, childcare facility, civic and amenity/recycling centre, community facility, craft centre/craft shop, crematorium, cultural/recreational building and uses, garden centre/ plant nursery, golf course and clubhouse, place of public worship, restaurant, shop (local), sports facility and recreational uses, water-based recreational activities.” (page 540)

- Z14 – Strategic Development and Regeneration Areas

Land with a blue outline  on Map F (shown in Figure 2.13) are related to the land uses zoning Z14 – Strategic Development and Regeneration Areas. The zoning objective for Z14 is “*To seek the social, economic and physical development and/or regeneration of an area with mixed-use, of which residential would be the predominant use.*” (page 543).

With respect to lands zoned Z9 – Strategic Development and Regeneration Areas, the Development Plan states:

“These are areas where proposals for substantial, comprehensive development or redevelopment have been, or are in the process of being, prepared. A number of the Z14 areas relate to important public housing regeneration areas and others relate to former brownfield lands with capacity for significant redevelopment. A number of sites that are zoned Z14 are also identified as Strategic Development Regeneration Areas...

Z14 areas are capable of accommodating significant mixed-use development, of which residential would be the predominant use. Therefore, developments must include proposals for additional physical and social infrastructure/facilities to support same.” (page 543)

Land uses which are permitted in principle include:

“Assisted living/retirement home, beauty/ grooming services, bed and breakfast, buildings for the health, safety and welfare of the public, Build To Rent residential, café/ tearoom, childcare facility, community facility, conference centre, craft centre/ craft shop, cultural/recreational building and uses, delicatessen, education, embassy office, embassy residential, enterprise centre, financial institution, guesthouse, halting site, home-based economic activity, hotel, industry (light), live-work units, media-associated uses, medical and related consultants, mobility hub, office, off-licence, off-licence (part), open space, park and ride facility, place of public

worship, primary health care centre, public house, public service installation, residential, restaurant, science and technology-based industry, shop (local), shop (neighbourhood), sports facility and recreational uses, student accommodation, take-away, training centre, veterinary surgery” (page 544)

Land uses which are open for consideration include:

“Advertisement and advertising structures, betting office, car park ancillary to main use, car trading, civic and amenity/recycling centre, cultural, creative and artistic enterprises and uses, funeral home, garage (motor repair/service), garden centre/ plant nursery, hostel (tourist), internet café/call centre, laundromat, nightclub, office-based industry, outdoor poster advertising, petrol station, pigeon lofts, postal hotel/motel, shop (district), shop (factory shop), warehousing (retail/non-food)/retail park, warehousing.” (page 544)



Figure 2.13 Dublin City Development Plan Map E and F Extract<sup>44</sup>

**Built Heritage**

The Development Plan highlights that there are several issues facing the city regarding built heritage, such as the need to balance competing demands between the needs of a modern city in terms of growth and the protection of the city’s character. Policy BHA33 of the Plan states:

“Dublin Port Heritage Quarter: To support the vision of the Dublin Port Company for the Flour Mill and surrounding heritage assets of the port to deliver a new cultural heritage quarter and maritime museum for the city, that documents Dublin’s rich maritime history and the social history of the Dock workers.” (page 376)

The Development Plan states that works to a protected structure must be of the highest standard and demolition of a Protected Structure, including structures within its curtilage is only permissible “in exceptional circumstances”.

Structures included on the Record of Protected Structures are identified on Map E and F of the Development as red asterisk. The Record of Protected Structures is included as Volume 4 of the Development Plan. Policies relevant to Protected Structures include:

“BHA2 Development of Protected Structures

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2022-12/MapsetF.pdf>

That development will conserve and enhance protected structures and their curtilage and will:

- (a) Ensure that any development proposals to protected structures, their curtilage and setting shall have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) published by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- (b) Protect structures included on the RPS from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- (c) Ensure that works are carried out in line with best conservation practice as advised by a suitably qualified person with expertise in architectural conservation.
- (d) Ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a protected structure and/or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout and materials.
- (c) Ensure that the form and structural integrity of the protected structure is retained in any redevelopment and ensure that new development does not adversely impact the curtilage or the special character of the protected structure.
- (d) Respect the historic fabric and the special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, structure and architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials. (e) Ensure that new and adapted uses are compatible with the architectural character and special interest(s) of the protected structure.
- (f) Protect and retain important elements of built heritage including historic gardens, stone walls, entrance gates and piers and any other associated curtilage features.
- (g) Ensure historic landscapes, gardens and trees (in good condition) associated with protected structures are protected from inappropriate development.
- (h) Have regard to ecological considerations for example, protection of species such as bats.

#### BHA3 Loss of Protected Structures

That the City Council will resist the total or substantial loss of protected structures in all but exceptional circumstances.” (page 349)

Those structures on the Record of Protected Structures within the application site or with close vicinity are detailed in Chapter 6 Project Description and Chapter 16, Volume 2 of the EIA.

Designated Conservation Areas include extensive groupings of buildings, streetscapes and associated open spaces and include (parts of) the medieval/walled city, the Georgian Core, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century city, and the city quays, rivers and canals. The special interest/value of Conservation Areas lies in the historic and architectural interest and the design and scale of these areas. Therefore, the Development Plan includes policy to encourage that all of these areas are afforded special care in terms of development proposals. The City Council encourages development which enhances the setting and character of Conservation Areas. These areas are indicated on Maps E and F with a red horizontal hatch. Policy BHA9 relating to Conservation Areas states:

“To protect the special interest and character of all Dublin’s Conservation Areas – identified under Z8 and Z2 zoning objectives and denoted by red line conservation hatching on the zoning maps. Development within or affecting a Conservation Area must contribute positively to its character and distinctiveness and take opportunities to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area and its setting, wherever possible. Enhancement opportunities may include:

1. Replacement or improvement of any building, feature or element which detracts from the character of the area or its setting.
2. Re-instatement of missing architectural detail or important features.
3. Improvement of open spaces and the wider public realm and reinstatement of historic routes and characteristic plot patterns.
4. Contemporary architecture of exceptional design quality, which is in harmony with the Conservation Area.
5. The repair and retention of shop and pub fronts of architectural interest.
6. Retention of buildings and features that contribute to the overall character and integrity of the Conservation Area.
7. The return of buildings to residential use. Changes of use will be acceptable where in compliance with the zoning objectives and where they make a positive contribution to the character, function and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting. The Council will consider the contribution of existing uses to the special interest of an area when assessing change of use applications, and will promote compatible uses which ensure future long-term viability.” (page 358)

Those Conservation Areas relevant to the 3FM Project are detailed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 16, Volume 2 of the EIA/.

The Development Plan supports industrial heritage through advocating for reuse in an appropriate fashion, such as for cultural purposes. Policy BHA16 states:

“To have regard to the city’s industrial heritage and Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record (DCIHR) in the preparation of Local Area Plans and the assessment of planning applications. To review the DCIHR in accordance with Ministerial Recommendations arising from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey of Dublin City.” (page 362)

The Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record (DCIHR) survey makes recommendations for sites to be added to the list of Protected Structures in the life of the Development Plan. A complete list of those assets on the DCIHR relevant to the 3FM Project is included Chapter 16, Volume 2 of the EIA/.

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as Established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 are indicated on Maps E and F as a dashed grey line and castle symbol. Policy BHA26 Archaeological Heritage states:

“1. To protect and preserve Monuments and Places listed on the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 which have been identified in the Record of Monuments and Places and the Historic Environment Viewer ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)) and all wrecks over 100 years old including those in the Shipwreck Inventory of Ireland.

2. To protect archaeological material in situ by ensuring that only minimal impact on archaeological layers is allowed, by way of re-use of standing buildings, the construction of light buildings, low impact foundation design, or the omission of basements (except in exceptional circumstances) in the Monuments and Places listed on the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.
3. To seek the preservation in situ (or where this is not possible or appropriate, as a minimum, preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places; all wrecks and associated objects over 100 years old and of previously unknown sites, features and objects of archaeological interest that become revealed through development activity. In respect of decision making on development proposals affecting sites listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, the council will have regard to the advice and/or recommendations of the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government.
4. Development proposals within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, notification of sites over 0.5 hectares size with potential underwater impacts and of sites listed in the Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record, will be subject to consultation with the City Archaeologist and archaeological assessment prior to a planning application being lodged.
5. To preserve known burial grounds and disused historic graveyards. Where disturbance of ancient or historic human remains is unavoidable, they will be excavated according to best archaeological practice and reburied or permanently curated.
6. Preserve the character, setting, and amenity of upstanding and below ground town wall defences.
7. Development proposals in marine, lacustrine and riverine environments and areas of reclaimed land, shall have regard to the Shipwreck Inventory maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and be subject to an appropriate level of archaeological assessment.
8. To have regard to national policy documents and guidelines relating to archaeology and to best practice guidance published by the Heritage Council, the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland and Transport Infrastructure Ireland” (page 372-373)

A complete list of those assets on the RMP relevant to the 3FM Project is included Chapter 16 Cultural Heritage of the EIA/IAI.

### ***SEVESO Directive Sites***

Map F of the Development Plan identifies the locations of ‘Seveso’ designated sites (see Figure 2.13). Appendix 8 of the Development Plan provides a list of Seveso sites in the city including their respective consultation zone. Activities are listed in an ‘Upper Tier’ and others in a ‘Lower Tier’. Those on the Poolbeg Peninsula include:

#### Upper Tier

National Oil Reserves Agency Ltd./ NORA, Shellybanks Road, Ringsend, Dublin 4 (300m from perimeter).

National Oil Reserves Agency Ltd., Poolbeg Tankfarm, Pigeon House Road, Dublin 4 (300m from perimeter).

#### Lower Tier

Synergen Ltd. t/a ESB Dublin Bay Power, Pigeon House Road, Ringsend, Dublin 4 (300m from perimeter).

Policy SI44 of Dublin City Council states:

“COMAH Establishments/SEVESO

To have regard to the provisions of the SEVESO III Directive (2012/18/EU) relating to the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and its objectives to prevent major accidents and limit the consequences of such accidents. Dublin City Council will have regard to the provisions of the Directive and recommendations of the HSA in the assessment of all planning applications located on, or impacted by, COMAH establishments in accordance with Guidance on Technical Land-use Planning Advice: for planning authorities and operators of COMAH establishments (2021).” (page 294)

### ***Development Management Standards***

The development management guidelines specific to Dublin Port outline a number of considerations with which the planning authority examine during the assessment of proposals within Dublin Port, and include:

- “Recognition of the important role of Dublin Port in the economic life of the city and the region and the consequent need in economic and employment terms to facilitate port development
- The periphery of the port area facing residential areas shall be designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of its industrial character
- The impact on nature conservation, recreation and amenity use, and other environmental considerations, including having regard to the designation of Dublin Bay as a UNESCO biosphere and other environmental designations such as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)
- The protection of the amenities of residential and commercial uses in adjoining areas
- Design criteria including appropriate landscaping, finishes, signage, boundary treatments and site layout where development adjoins residential and commercial uses” (page 650)

The Development Plan is relevant in terms of assessing whether the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to be located. The key strategic policies and objectives of Dublin City Council considered relevant to this proposed development relate to endorsing the improvement of port infrastructure in order to facilitate economic growth and policies relating to the protection of the natural and built environment.

### **2.3.5.2 The North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ Planning Scheme**

The North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ Planning Scheme was approved by An Bord Pleanála on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and includes lands adjacent to Dublin Port to the west. The proximity of Dublin Port to the Planning Scheme lands and the opportunity to maintain the maritime character of the area and integrate better with Dublin Port is recognised in the Planning Scheme.

There are limited policies and objectives within the Planning Scheme pertaining to Dublin Port, however a number of objectives support improved cruise liner and passenger facilities including:

“ER17 To engage with Dublin Port Company, Fáilte Ireland and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to facilitate the development of a new cruise tourism terminal at Alexandra Basin.” (page 44)

“PR12 To support the provision of a suitable terminal for cruise liners and other passenger vessels with Dublin Port”. (page 154)

### **2.3.5.3 Poolbeg West SDZ Planning Scheme**

The Poolbeg West SDZ Planning Scheme has been prepared on foot of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Designation of Strategic Development Zone: Poolbeg West, Dublin City) Order 2016.

The Order states the SDZ is designated a “mixed use development which may principally include residential development, commercial and employment activities including, office, hotel, leisure and retail facilities, port related activities and the provision of educational facilities, transport infrastructure, emergency services and the provision of community facilities as referred to in Part III of the First Schedule to the Act, including health and childcare services, as appropriate”.

Article 4 of the Order states development of this area shall take into consideration inter alia the Dublin Port Masterplan 2012-2040.

The Planning Scheme for the SDZ, including modifications was approved by An Bord Pleanála on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019 after appeal on the original adoption of the scheme.

The Poolbeg West Planning Scheme lands are south of the Liffey. Approximately half of the SDZ lands are owned by Dublin Port Company. The Planning Scheme is centred on key “Themes”, one of which is to “Protect”. In this regard the Planning Scheme states the following:

“Key principle: Ensure that the development of Poolbeg West and the ongoing operations of Dublin Port, municipal facilities and future transport schemes are mutually taken in account and integrated into the urban structure of the city.

The peninsula will have an ongoing industrial function related to port activities, waste water treatment and energy generation. To ensure that these essential regional services continue the SDZ Planning Scheme includes lands for ‘Port/ Industrial Compatible Uses’ to facilitate growth, consolidate activities, and promote alternatives for underutilised lands, together with ‘soft edges’ and ‘buffer zones’”. (page 8)

With specific regard to Dublin Port the Planning Scheme states in section 5.4.3:

“Dublin City Council fully supports and recognises the important national and regional role of Dublin Port in the economic life of the region and the consequent need in economic competitiveness and employment terms to facilitate port activities. Dublin Port will have a significant role to play in the future development and growth of the Poolbeg West area as well as the wider city. With this in mind, this planning scheme recognises the importance of retaining port uses and port related activities on site” (page 21)

Objective EC3 states:

“To protect the role of Dublin Port as a nationally important strategic asset of the State, and to provide for future sustainable growth of the port within the SDZ in line with economic recovery, and in tandem with investment in transport infrastructure as needed.”

“*Connect*” is another theme within the planning scheme, which highlights the role the SDZ will play in connecting the site to the rest of the city by means of attractive transport alternatives to private cars, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The Planning Scheme supports the Southern Port Access Route (SPAR) and Eastern Bypass:

“MV4 To protect the route of the proposed Southern Port Access Route and Eastern Bypass in accordance with the objectives of Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the National Transport Authority Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035. As an interim measure it is proposed to provide a separate road access to the south port area via a new link located north of the existing Seán Moore Roundabout” (page 28)

Public transport and active travel solutions such as MV5 seek “the upgrading of roads and junctions in the immediate vicinity of the SDZ to accommodate improved public transport priority and active modes”. (page 45). This is further supported by MV1, MV2, MV5, MV9 and MV10 which aim:

“To promote a high level of use of sustainable forms of transport including walking, cycling and public transport use having regard to the City Development Plan and national level policies.”

“To provide improved public transport services to the area including a core bus link to the city centre via the proposed Dodder Bridge, enhanced/extended bus services along existing routes, and in the longer term, to provide for delivery of Luas to Poolbeg as part of the planned Red Line extension under the National Transport Authority Strategy 2016–2035”

“To seek the upgrading of roads and junctions in the immediate vicinity of the SDZ to accommodate improved public transport priority and active modes. These works will include new signalised junctions at the Sean Moore Road/ South Bank Road Roundabout, at the Beach Road/ Sean Moore Road junction. A new pedestrian and cycle link across the River Liffey will also be prioritised, either by widening/enhancing the existing bridge or by providing a new parallel structure to accommodate walking and cycling.

“To provide the cycle routes (including Coastal Greenway) indicated in Figure 6.2.”

“To protect space for a future Luas line stop within the SDZ.” (page 45)

The role and function of Dublin Port is very clearly recognised, and its development facilitated, in the Planning Scheme. Lands owned by DPC are included within the boundary of the SDZ, largely within Blocks B1 and B2. The Planning Scheme outlines an indicative phasing of development for the infrastructural requirements to realise the scheme. This phasing includes acoustic protection at Pigeon House Road, replacement of Lo-Lo<sup>45</sup> operations with Ro-Ro in B1, and provision of the SPAR. These are supported by the objective LP5 which states:

“Future expansion and development of port/industrial/utility-type industry within Blocks B1 and B2 (Figure 2.14) shall be in compliance with Phasing Area B, to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure to serve the port and

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<sup>45</sup> Load-On Load-Off

related uses is delivered when needed, and that longer-term strategic infrastructure can be provided.” (page 69)



Figure 2.14 Extract of Fig 9.2 from Poolbeg West Planning Scheme April 2019<sup>46</sup>

The land use for the areas within the SDZ are stipulated by the planning scheme, and any development within the SDZ, including portions of the subject site, must comply with the land use designations, as illustrated in Figure 2.15 below.

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2021-01/poolbeg\\_west\\_sdz\\_planning\\_document.pdf](https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2021-01/poolbeg_west_sdz_planning_document.pdf)

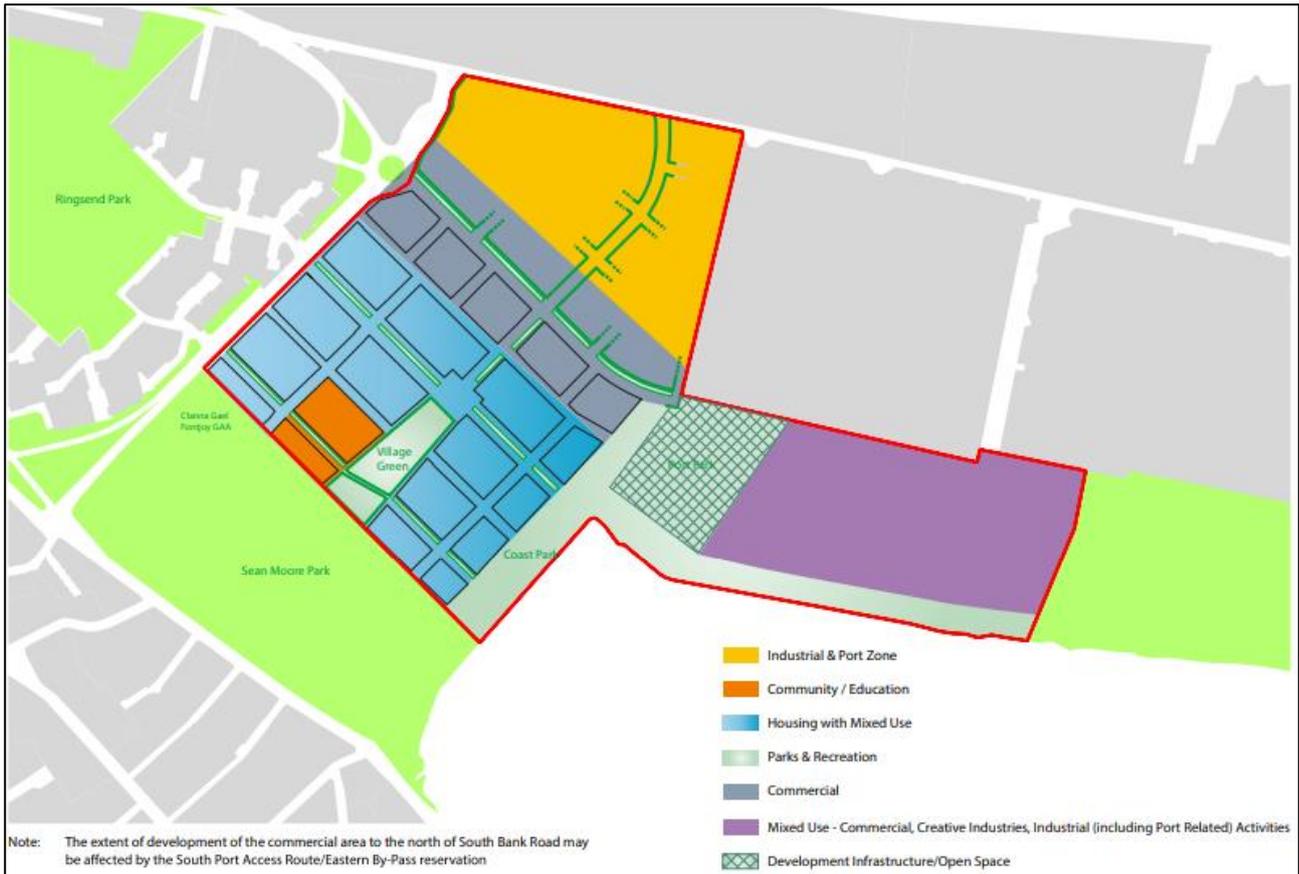


Figure 2.15 Extract of Fig 9.1 from the Poolbeg West Planning Scheme April 2019<sup>47</sup>

Objectives relevant to the 3FM Project include:

- IU8 To minimise the adverse impacts of noise to all sensitive receptors and promote a good quality of life for the existing and future residents of the plan area, through the effective management of noise in line with the Dublin Agglomerations Noise Action Plan. (page 52)*
- IU10 To investigate the feasibility of providing a district heating boiler station in the eastern/industrial portion of the SDZ area. (page 52)*
- IU14 To require that each significant planning application be accompanied by a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, which shall include information on construction traffic routes, hours of operation, control of noise, and environmental effects and associated, detailed mitigation, including that relating to the excavation of material and the storage, transport, treatment and disposal of wastes. Where landowners collaborated and prepared a co-ordinated environmental management plan, this could be submitted with each application for development as appropriate. (page 52)*
- G11 To develop a hierarchy of inter-connected open spaces, recreation areas and green landscaped areas, via walking and cycling routes, through the SDZ and ensure that ecosystem functions and existing amenity uses are not compromised and existing biodiversity and heritage is protected and enhanced. (page 61)*

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2021-01/poolbeg\\_west\\_sdz\\_planning\\_document.pdf](https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2021-01/poolbeg_west_sdz_planning_document.pdf)

- GI9 To seek the development of Coastal Park, Village Green and Port Park in the SDZ area offering new amenities and recreational activities and to support the upgrade of existing parks and amenity areas adjoining the SDZ. (page 61)*
- GI12 Any plan or project with the potential to give rise to significant direct, indirect or secondary impacts on a Natura 2000 site(s) shall be subject to an appropriate assessment in accordance with Article (3) of the Habitats Directive. (page 61)*
- LP7 Where possible, proposals for development within Block B1 of the SDZ (port lands) shall include proposals for the conservation/enhancement of the historic South Bull Wall. (page 69)*
- PR2 To integrate the Planning Scheme with surrounding areas through use of quality design and upgrades of the public realm, and by minimising abrupt changes in levels at site boundaries, to create attractive connections, to and through the Poolbeg West SDZ. (page 75)*
- US2 To create a legible, permeable and traffic-calmed street network that prioritises the movement of sustainable modes of transport and provides direct connections with the existing communities of Ringsend, Irishtown and Sandymount, and to Sean Moore Park and Dublin Bay. (page 87)*

#### **2.3.5.4 Dublin Port Masterplan 2040**

The Dublin Port Masterplan 2040 is a key document guiding future development within the port up to 2040. The Masterplan is a non-statutory plan which has been framed within the context of EU, national, regional and local development plan policies and is explicitly endorsed (or is expressly recognised) in the National Ports Policy, National Marine Planning Framework, National Development Plan, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region, Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Planning Scheme and Poolbeg West Planning Scheme.

The Masterplan presents a vision for future operations at the port and critically examines how the existing land use at Dublin Port can be optimised for merchandise trade and passengers (including cruise ships).

- The Masterplan was prepared by DPC in order to:
- “Plan for future sustainable growth and changes in seaborne trade in goods and passenger movements to and from Ireland and the Dublin Region in particular.
- Provide an overall context for future investment decisions.
- Reflect and provide for current National and Regional Guidelines and initiatives.
- Ensure there is harmony and synergy between the plans for the Port and those for Dublin City, the Dublin Docklands Area and neighbouring counties within the Dublin Region.
- Give some certainty to customers about how the Port will develop in the future to meet those requirements” (page 14)

Since the Masterplan was published in 2012 Dublin Port has experienced particularly high rates of trading growth and traffic growth with volumes of traffic increasing by 30.1% in the five years to 2017. In light of the high level of growth a review of the Masterplan took place in 2017-2018. The review concluded that:

- An eastern expansion of Dublin Port into Dublin Bay is no longer viable and is not being pursued as an option.
- To meet anticipated capacity requirements Dublin Port needs to be developed on the basis of an average annual volume growth of 3.3% over the 30 years from 2010 to 2040 rather than the 2.5% originally assumed in 2012.
- The Dublin Port Masterplan 2040, reviewed 2018, published in July 2018, sets out options for the development of Dublin Port which will meet these requirements and objectives. These options are shown in Figure 2.16<sup>48</sup>.

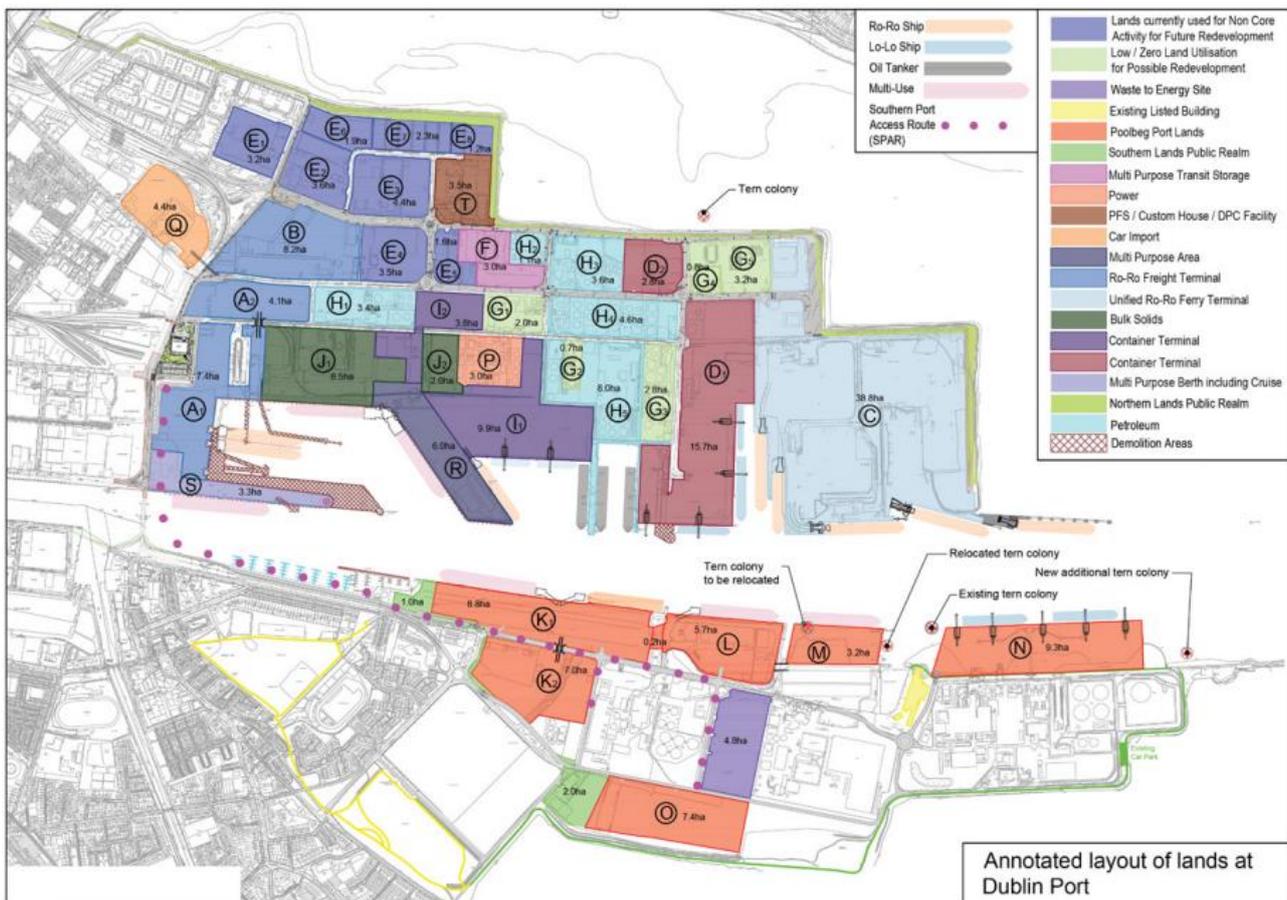


Figure 2.16 Dublin Port Masterplan 2040 Reviewed 2018 Map Extract

The 3FM Project subject site generally includes the Southern Port Access Route, a large part of Area K: Ro-Ro Terminal, a large part of Area L: Cargo Handling, Area N: Deepwater Lo-Lo Terminal, Area O: Cargo Handling, Southern Lands Public Realm and road connections between each Area.

### Area K: Ro-Ro Terminal

Currently the lands at Area K are used for Lo-Lo container operations. This sees unitized containers unloaded from vessels using cranes, and either loaded onto HGVs for onward travel, or moved to temporary storage.

<sup>48</sup> Source: *Dublin Port Masterplan 2040 Reviewed 2018*

The identified infrastructure development option for Area K: Ro-Ro Terminal is:

- “It is envisaged that the existing terminal will be redeveloped as a Ro-Ro freight terminal and the existing Lo-Lo container terminal will be relocated.” (page 50)

### ***Area L: Cargo Handling for Lo-Lo Terminal***

Currently the lands at Area L supports a range of bulk commodities including petroleum coke imports; cement and cement raw materials; and scrap metal exports.

The identified infrastructure development option for Area L is:

- “All are businesses with low growth potential and, in the case of petroleum coke, with a future life likely shorter than the duration of the Masterplan. Over the remaining period of the Masterplan, Dublin Port will consider any opportunities that may arise to redevelop these lands for more intensive cargo handling activities.” (page 50)

### ***Area N: Deepwater Lo-Lo Terminal***

Using Area K for Ro-Ro operations would result in a loss of Lo-Lo capacity in the port, which is an important aspect of port operations. Lo-Lo replacement capacity will therefore be required elsewhere in the port.

As a result, the identified infrastructure development option for Area N: Deepwater Lo-Lo Terminal states:

- “It is proposed, therefore, that a new deepwater Lo-Lo container terminal be developed by the creation of deepwater berths along the River Liffey in front of the ESB’s Poolbeg Power Station. In doing this, provision will be made to provide for the power station’s cooling water intake and outfall and also for NORA’s petroleum loading and offloading requirements. The removal of existing buildings on the terminal to provide additional transit storage capacity for containers” (page 50)

### ***Area O: Cargo Handling***

Area O has been identified as an area suitable to play a supporting role for other functions of the port. Currently the lands are used for miscellaneous yard functions.

The identified infrastructure development option for Area O: Cargo Handling states:

- “These lands will be redeveloped to support cargo handling activities at sites K, L, M and N. The primary planned use of these lands is to provide, in conjunction with Area N, sufficient land capacity for the throughput of the new 600 metre long container terminal quay wall in Area N.
- Provision may also have to be made in this area for infrastructure (pipes and a peak boiler) required as a part of DCC’s Dublin District Heating Scheme” (page 50)

It is also noted in the Master Plan that a portion of Area O may be used for infrastructure as required for the Dublin District Heating Scheme.

### ***Southern Lands Public Realm***

Additionally, some of the subject lands are zoned in the Masterplan as ‘Southern Lands Public Realm’, and there is provision of a route for the Southern Port Access Route (SPAR).

The 3FM Project is the vehicle by which a number of the elements envisaged for each of the areas set out in the Masterplan will be delivered.