



Opening Statement to Joint Committee on Transport and Communications Networks

Public Consultation Element of the National Development Plan.

**Tuesday 16 February 2021 at 13:00
Committee Room 4, LH2000, Leinster House.**

To: Clerk of the Joint Committee on Transport and Communications Networks.

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Introduction:

I am Eoin McGettigan, Chief Executive of the Port of Cork Company (PoCC) since October. I am accompanied by Henry Kingston, Port Engineering Manager.

Port of Cork:

Port of Cork is the second largest port in the State, handling all cargo types lift-on lift-off Containers, liquid and solid bulks, roll-on roll-off, project cargo, and cruise. It operates facilities in Cork City, Tivoli, Ringaskiddy and Cobh. The Port includes Whitegate Oil Refinery and Whiddy Oil storage facility in Bantry. The Marino Point site is currently being developed as a port facility and a new €80M container terminal is nearing completion in Ringaskiddy.

The Port of Cork is categorised as a 'Tier 1' Port of National Significance in the National Ports Policy (2013) and a 'Core Port' on the North Sea



Mediterranean Corridor and on the Atlantic Corridor of the EU Ten-T Network.

The National Development Plan:

The Port of Cork Company is undertaking several significant infrastructural projects which have the potential to transform Cork Harbour.

The move of the port activities into deeper water, closer to the shipping channels, will mean more efficient links to market, significantly less carbon footprint, and a reduced requirement for dredging. The urban regeneration potential left behind in the City and Tivoli Docks is fully aligned with the National Planning Framework objectives of compact living and sustainable transport.

These opportunities have been recognised and supported in the National Development Plan, the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the region, and local City and County plans.

Relying solely on individual Port Companies to invest in national Port infrastructure may not be sufficient to serve the needs of the national economy facing disruptors such as Brexit, climate change, offshore energy, hydrogen, and transition fuels such as LNG.

A number of obstacles remain to the orderly and planned relocation of our city centre operations:

1. The road connectivity to key lower Harbour facilities in Ringaskiddy (N28) and Marino Point (R624) is not up to the required EU standard for Core Port connectivity. Full throughput from these Terminals cannot be achieved with the current HGV access.
2. The relocation of a number of private companies operating 'Seveso' designated sites in Cork City Docks and Tivoli Docks to more compatible Port sites in the lower harbour.
3. Investment is needed to re-connect the freight rail link to Marino Point.



4. The ability of Commercial Semi-State Port Companies to self-fund major capital projects is limited by the financial capabilities of the individual Port Companies.

Freight connections to Port facilities in the lower Harbour;

Providing suitably upgraded freight connections from the national road network to Cork's new port facilities in Ringaskiddy (M28) and Marino Point (R624) will remove up to six hundred truck movements daily from Cork City centre.

This will allow for city centre growth, compact living, and will support sustainable transport modes in the city. (e.g. the positive impact that Dublin Port tunnel had on Dublin city centre traffic.)

Conclusion:

Despite the fact that our Port projects are already supported in the National Development Plan they face the same risks of planning challenges and legal delays as any other project, as well as funding uncertainty. Efforts to streamline these processes have not been fully successful.

The current investment required to deliver the transformational change for Cork City and the southern region goes beyond the incremental capital investment which can be supported by the Port itself.

The National Development Plan has already identified the opportunity for Cork City and the southern region in which the Port of Cork Company must play a central role. A broader perspective on how to clear the obstacles in order to realise this opportunity now needs to be applied and resourced by the various state agencies involved such as the Port of Cork, Cork City and County Councils, TII, the NTA, Irish Rail, and others.