

Development Plan Submissions,
Strategic and Economic Development,
City Hall,
Anglesea Street,
Cork,
T12 T997

30th September 2021

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 – Public Consultation

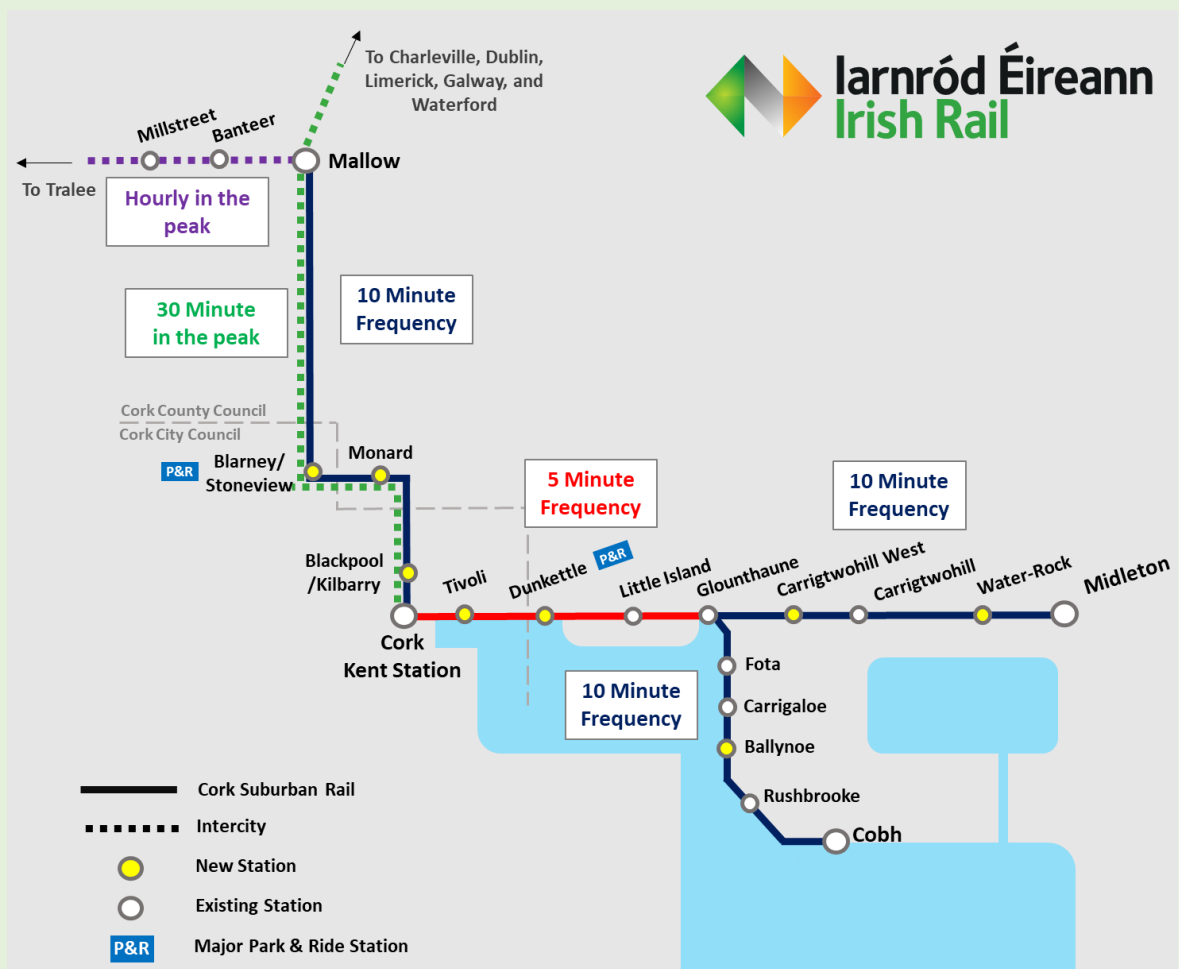
Iarnród Éireann welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission at the draft consultation phase of the new Cork City Development Plan [hereafter, “the Development Plan”] for the period 2022-2028. The draft Development Plan prepared by Cork City Council provides a comprehensive vision and plan for the City over the period 2022-2028 and beyond. This submission will take the shape of addressing what are the principal priorities and opportunities for Iarnród Éireann in Cork.

Submission Summary

- Iarnród Éireann welcomes and supports that the Council seeks to integrate land use and transport policies to achieve the delivery of a high quality, climate resilient and sustainable transport networks for Cork City, during the period of the Development Plan.
- Iarnród Éireann believe rail is fundamental to achieving the state’s aim to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- Iarnród Éireann believe there are significant opportunities for Cork to achieve a large number of its economic development, sustainable mobility, and climate change targets through sustained investment in its existing underutilised rail network.
- **A transformational enhancement of the Cork Area rail network could be completed by 2032**, with the land required to construct it largely in railway ownership. The possible network is seen in Figure 1.
- Rail can be the backbone of a transformative sustainable integrated transport network for Cork. To enable this, Iarnród Éireann can facilitate the following key deliverables:

- The delivery of the Cork Area Commuter Rail programme: a high-quality suburban rail system for the Cork Metropolitan Area, as envisaged in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, with:
 - A redeveloped Kent Station Integrated Transport Hub at its centre.
 - Full electrification¹, or alternative fuelling, of the suburban rail network
 - 8 New stations (3 of which are within the City Council Boundary)
 - Twin-tracking Glounthaune-Midleton
- Facilitating greatly enhanced Intercity connections to Dublin and other key regional cities supporting enhanced regional accessibility.
- Re-launching rail freight services in Cork to support the sustainable mobility of goods against a background of increasing emissions, road congestion, and HGV driver shortages. The re-connection of the railway to Marino Point and the creation of a new Strategic Freight Terminal.

Figure 1: Iarnród Éireann Rail Vision for Cork incl. CMATS deliverables



- Rail supports compact urban growth in Cork City including supporting the game-changing City Docklands and Tivoli Docklands developments, by facilitating sustainable rail mobility links at the outset and interlinking with active modes.

¹ Consideration of electrification options will include all forms including BEMU, third rail etc.

- Investment in the rail network in Cork significantly supports the Government's objective of achieving balanced regional growth and development.
- In summary, the benefits of these rail enhancements cannot be underestimated, with a significant number of positive long-term benefits flowing from the potential investment in rail.
- **Iarnród Éireann recommends that the final Development Plan includes more ambitious short-term timelines to deliver this essential investment in rail, which is a core element of the Development Plan's ambition for integrated sustainable mobility in Cork City.**

At the outset of this submission, Iarnród Éireann acknowledge the number of challenges to which the draft Development Plan is looking to address and mitigate the impacts of, including; the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, the national housing crisis, and Brexit, however, as the Council will be aware this Development Plan period is critical for the future long-term development of Cork, both in terms of the Metropolitan Area and the wider county, as both Cork City and Cork County Council's strive towards achieving the outcomes envisaged for Cork in the National Planning Framework (NPF) to 2040. Ireland is undoubtedly at a tipping point in terms of its approach to sustainable land-use and transport planning and tackling the environmental challenges of climate change. Investment in transport infrastructure is essential to fulfilling the Government's National Strategic Outcomes of Project Ireland 2040. Investment in the Cork Metropolitan Area rail network would represent a significant investment in transport infrastructure by the State. An upgrade of the rail network as part of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy would provide a network of low emissions, higher frequency, higher capacity rail services, giving a growing population better access to opportunities and services across the Cork Metropolitan Area and improve inter-regional connectivity.

The rail network, which is already a valuable, yet underutilised State asset, will be able to achieve its full mass transit potential through the implementation of the rail elements of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, offering more people a real attractive alternative to the private car. This is essential to avoid the urban sprawl and subsequent growth in emissions which will occur without attractive alternative mobility options. Rail investment will contribute to Cork's continued development and competitiveness as an attractive, thriving city and the engine of economic growth for the Southern Region.

The NPF sets a target of 50-60% population growth for Cork City and suburbs by 2040. This Development Plan's contribution to this growth to 2028, includes a targeted population growth of circa 50,000 versus the base of 2016. One of the key aspects of the Development Plan is that the existing and future populations of the City are supported by a high-quality public transport system. In general, it is very welcomed by Iarnród Éireann that the Council, throughout the draft Development Plan, sees the value public transport can bring to the City in terms of its ability to support compact commercial and residential growth and to efficiently move existing and future populations of Cork City's citizens sustainably, enabling a modal shift from the private car, which the City is heavily reliant on for its mobility needs. Objectives 4.1, 4.3, and 10.78 as examples, highlight the draft Development Plans support for sustainable rail services.

Iarnród Éireann has a number of established rail corridors that serve the Cork Metropolitan Area; Cobh, Midleton and Mallow, and these have the potential to create a high capacity and frequency service plan. With lower emissions, greater integration and enhanced accessibility rail services along these corridors will support policies of compact urban growth, creating the density required to achieve the Council's ambitious population growth targets. It is recognised that interventions in the transport sector must be based on a long-term strategic vision for the sustainable mobility of people and goods. This is driven by the principle that policies of a structural character take a considerable time to implement and must be the subject of detailed advanced planning. The draft Development Plan appears to recognise this thinking, as it presents an opportunity to develop the foundation, and begin the implementation, of a sustainable integrated transport system for Cork City. Rail can play a role in this integrated transport system and can support the sustainable growth and prosperity of Cork City, notably:

- It has a number of established corridors that converge on the City; Cobh, Midleton and Mallow, and these have the potential to create a high capacity and frequency service plan with relatively modest investment.
- Three of these corridors converge at Kent Station which is earmarked as the future transport hub for Cork City, forming a fully integrated sustainable transport network.
- Rail can transport large volumes of passengers, more than other modes of transport, enabling potential dense developments to be catered for by reliable frequent services.
- Rail is the only fully segregated transport system in Ireland, avoiding congestion and conflicts associated with road traffic, providing greater punctuality.
- The average rail passenger km creates approximately 28g of greenhouse gases (GHGs) vs. 102g for road vehicles, proving a step change in improving air quality levels.

The strategic vision for rail in Cork City is principally set out in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS). This includes:

- Development of the three existing railway corridors in the Cork area, which penetrate the city at Kent Station interchange, providing a high frequency north-east connection through the city.
- Full electrification of the suburban rail network in Cork.
- Other infrastructure improvements (trackwork enhancements, additional platforms, increasing signalling capacity etc.) required to accommodate a transformative 10-minute frequency for the suburban rail network in Cork.
- Additional rolling stock to be introduced to meet the potential of the existing and future demand.
- Multi-modal integrated transport hub for the city provided at Kent Station to promote modal shift from the private car and enhance attractiveness of the City Docklands regeneration and development.
- New stations at prime regeneration sites, Park & Ride interchange points, and new development areas.

Iarnród Éireann Key Priorities for the Cork Area

Iarnród Éireann will now outline its priorities for key expansion projects and enhancements to the rail network to 2027. Further detail on these plans and our wider company strategy can be found in our recently published [Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027](#) document. Also in the context of wider national rail policy and development, it is worth the Council noting that the Department of Transport (DoT) and the Department of Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) (DfI(NI)) are in the process of agreeing terms on an all-Ireland strategic rail study on faster intercity connectivity, improved regional connectivity and freight. Iarnród Éireann will prioritise the outcomes of this study as part of its future plans upon completion of the study. The Development Plan should consider and support the outcomes of that study.

Iarnród Éireann has a number of priorities for the Cork Area during the period of the Development Plan and beyond, which interlink with existing national, regional, and local policy. The existing rail network in Cork is a vitally important component of the local and regional transport infrastructure network, consisting of three lines originating from Cork's Kent Station, located to the east of the city centre. Kent Station is the main train station serving Cork City accommodating both Intercity services to Dublin and Tralee and suburban rail services to the Key Town of Mallow, along with Cobh and Midleton. The existing rail network map is included in Appendix A. Below is a brief outline of Iarnród Éireann's priorities to improve the existing rail network. While the draft Development Plan aligns with a number of these priorities, some are not included in the draft Plan and should be considered for inclusion in the final Development Plan.

1. Implementation of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

The National Transport Authority (NTA), in partnership with both Cork County and City Councils and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), finalised the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 (CMATS) in early 2020. The implementation of CMATS is a principal priority at national, regional, and local policy level. CMATS is the cornerstone of future rail and wider public transport development in Cork and its implementation is fully supported by Iarnród Éireann. It will provide a transformational step-change in the capacity of the rail network in Cork to 2040, helping to unlock the Council's vision under 12.8.3 of the draft Development Plan which focuses on achieving a significant modal shift to public transport through the expansion and enhancement of rail services offering a realistic alternative to use of the private car, and supports the Council's delivery of greater integrated land use framework plans under 12.8.6, which will maximise the potential for rail travel.

The rail elements of CMATS will be familiar to the Council, with the Suburban Rail Development Plan contained within CMATS putting the railway, and Kent Station in particular, at the very heart of the Transport Strategy. The main outputs of CMATS for the rail network were noted earlier in this letter. Iarnród Éireann believe that there is an opportunity in the Cork City Development Plan to deliver rail enhancements identified in CMATS in the short-term for passengers in the Cork Area. The existing rail corridors to and through the city can be developed to provide access from existing and proposed developments without significant construction impact.

The Development Plan should aim to meet the short-term capacity requirements for Cork. Firstly, by introducing additional rolling stock to the suburban rail network. This can be the starting point for change, followed progressively by improving the infrastructure to truly transform capacity and the sustainable benefits that the rail network brings, including; full electrification of the Cork suburban rail network, completion of the multi-modal

integrated transport hub at Kent Station, infrastructure upgrades (such as passing loops to improve operational flexibility and capacity, platform improvements/lengthening), and new stations across the suburban rail network. The Council should note that there is a priority requirement to locate and provide a new fleet depot to meet the requirements of the proposed new EMU fleet, however none of the rail locations under consideration are within the City boundary.

These improvements will maximise the existing rail assets in the Cork area and provide incremental improvements in connectivity for the city and its suburbs to match population and economic growth, while retaining the infrastructure capability to support the key regional and interurban connectivity provided today by rail. The Development Plan should prioritise these enhancements in rail services and infrastructure that can be achieved earlier than some of the implementation timelines envisaged in CMATS. These enhancements would:

- Support the recovery of economic and population growth impacted by COVID-19,
- Provide incremental provision of sustainable public transport for future new housing developments and regeneration sites earmarked along established railway corridors within Cork City Councils boundary,
- Encourage compact growth in existing population centres along Cork's rail corridors by offering an improved service to support the growth in demand,
- Complement the demand driven by the development at Corks City Docklands by providing enhanced rail services from the areas key transport hub at Kent Station,
- Improve accessibility to rail services for citizens to the north of Cork City, including Kilbarry/Blackpool and Blarney/Stoneview,
- Complement future Intercity growth, ensuring exceptional regional connectivity for Cork City in the long-term
- Enable and encourage modal shift to public transport in the short-to-medium term and,
- Tackle the challenges posed by climate change by promoting more climate resilient modes of travel, improving the quality of life for Corks citizens.

Objective 4.1 of the draft Development Plan supports the implementation of CMATS, and this is welcomed by Iarnród Éireann.

In terms of progress on the implementation of the rail elements of CMATS, Iarnród Éireann is pleased to provide the following updates. Iarnród Éireann, working alongside the National Transport Authority, provided a submission for funding for the Cork suburban rail system through Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), which was submitted by Government to the European Commission on the 28th May 2021. The NRRP, which involves projects with a value of almost €1 billion, will enable Ireland to access funding under the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility (EURRF). The EURRF is the centrepiece of the €750bn NextGenerationEU/Recovery Plan Package, the Union's response to the global pandemic, and was agreed by the European Council in July 2020. Ireland will receive approximately €915 million in grants from the Recovery and Resilience Facility. These grants will be used to support investments between now and mid-2026.

The overall objective of Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan is to contribute to a sustainable, equitable, green and digital recovery effort, in a manner that complements and supports the Government's broader recovery efforts. The Plan will do this through a set of 16 investments and 9 reform commitments.

Three elements form part of the Cork area rail EURRF proposal, as below:

- a) Kent Station Through Running Platform
- b) Glounthaune – Middleton Twin Tracking
- c) Cork Area Re-signalling

It should be noted that the three elements contained in the proposal form part of Iarnród Éireann's overall plan to implement the rail elements of CMATS, which is aligned with the overall principal rail outcomes of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. The programme is at Strategic Assessment Stage in terms of the Public Spending Code's Lifecycle and Decision Gate process, and a multidisciplinary consultant was appointed in May 2021.

The funding for the EURRF three rail elements, if secured, will accelerate the programme for delivery of those infrastructure elements but this will not impact the overall plan to implement the rail elements of CMATS, which will be progressed as planned in parallel.

If the rail elements of CMATS are implemented, this may have implications on some local infrastructure, such as bridges. Iarnród Éireann will be working closely with the Council to sustain its support for the key infrastructure elements involved, such as electrification of the suburban network. Sequencing will also form a key part of the implementation of the rail elements of CMATS, particularly for new developments such as the Tivoli Docks development.

Iarnród Éireann welcomes the support of Cork City Council for the railway and the integration of transport modes including walking and cycling. This will deliver a more sustainable public transport and integrated active mode network which will encourage people to switch from car to alternative greener modes with resultant decongestion and environmental benefits.

Iarnród Éireann is looking forward to working with the Council as the programme of works is progressed.

2. The development of Kent Station Transport Hub

Role of Kent Station Transport Hub

An improved multimodal public transport hub at Kent Station, located within the North Docks development of Cork City Docklands, is vital in the context of the NPF National Strategic Outcomes of Sustainable Mobility, Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society, and Compact Growth, along with supporting objectives in the draft Development Plan. The development of Kent Station is a key component to unlock the potential of rail and other public transport modes, not only in the City Docklands area, but also the wider Metropolitan Area. CMATS also provides clarity on the strategic role of Kent Station as a railway station and transport interchange hub.

North Docks Masterplan / Zoning

Iarnród Éireann supported the proposals included in the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) Application by Cork City Council for the development of the North Docks of Cork City Docklands. The City Docklands is an exemplar of the positive future vision for Cork City, with the transport-orientated development being one of the

biggest regeneration sites in Ireland. Following a €10m revamp to Kent Station, a new access and concourse was opened by Iarnród Éireann in November 2017 to the public, providing rail passengers with direct access to the City's Docklands area for the first time and the proposed Masterplan for the North Docks development will build on this improved access.

Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ are involved in the process of developing a detailed Masterplan for the North Docks of Cork Docklands. In May 2020, Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ agreed to the North Docks Masterplan Proposal with Cork City Council – a high-level document setting out the strategic fit, scope, and programme timelines for the Masterplan. Iarnród Éireann see the progression of the regeneration of the North Docks area of the City Docks as a key priority in the short-to-medium term. Iarnród Éireann welcomes the draft Development Plan objective 10.17 to build on this and progress the preparation Masterplan of the North Docks with CIÉ and Iarnród Éireann.

Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ are keen to maximise the opportunities for Transport Orientated Development (TOD) in proximity to the integrated sustainable transport hub at Kent Station, which is central to the mobility plans for Cork under the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS). A planning permission has already been secured by our development partner for a substantial first Phase of TOD comprising office, residential, hotel and retail uses at Horgan's Quay, with construction well advanced. We view that the proposed rezoning of CIÉ's remaining quayside lands to predominantly residential, as opposed to the mixed-use designation in the existing City Development Plan, would not give rise to an appropriate mix of uses proximate to a thriving transport hub. A mixed-use designation adjacent to such an important City Centre transport hub is in keeping with new and emerging examples of TOD across Europe - the common objectives being to reduce car dependency whilst encouraging sustainable and active mobility transport modes, to provide for appropriate densities of development so as to support aspirations for a "15 minute city" and to prescribe use mixes that ensure that new neighbourhoods and districts are not limited to a 9 to 5 existence.

We would view that the Kent Station lands broadly divide into 2 distinct areas, which can be described as:

- the Station Precinct area encompassing the existing Horgan's Quay development and the quayside car park area (all roughly equidistant from the new station entrance) and;
- the New Urban Neighbourhood further to the east.

We would view that the use mix for Station Precinct area should reflect the mix of uses already comprised within the extant Horgan's Quay planning permission (roughly – 10% Hotel / Retail, 30% Residential and 60% Office). By way of reference, our lands at Ceannt Station Galway, also in direct proximity to a transport hub, have a City Centre zoning designation wherein a 30% residential content is stipulated. However, it is recognised that whilst the Ceannt Station Galway lands are earmarked for a significant component of Retail development, the Kent Station Cork lands are not appropriate for a substantial quantum of retail as this could serve to undermine the existing core retail areas of Cork City; any retail at Kent Station would therefore be ancillary to the development within the site confines.

The New Urban Neighbourhood proposed to the east would be more suited to the Residential zoning designation, as comprised within the draft City Development Plan.

The Council should note that Iarnród Éireann have yet to establish the future rail operation requirements for the CIE lands and this will be assessed as part of the Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme. Therefore, the area ZO15

designated Public Infrastructure cannot be fixed to this size at this point and it will be subject to further assessment as part of the Commuter Rail Programme and the development of the Masterplan.

An updated masterplan of the Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ lands will be produced as a part of the North Docks Masterplan. This will set out the extent of lands required for operational transport purposes to deliver the CMATS proposals and should be used as an opportunity to provide further clarity on the use mixes to be established

The sustainable connectivity that an improved rail service to/from Kent Station provides to the new City Docklands district, will be important in securing sustainable trips to/from the district at the outset, as employment and residential development will be a key component of the district, generating significant trips. The phased redevelopment of Kent Station and transport interchange is essential for unlocking the full potential of rail trips in Cork City. Iarnród Éireann welcomes the acknowledgment of this in sections 10.87 and 10.88 of the Development Plan by the Council. By bringing together all modes of public transport and active modes into one location, alongside one of the biggest regeneration projects in Project Ireland 2040, sustainable population growth and modal shift can be achieved for Cork.

3. Intercity Service Expansion

Iarnród Éireann is delivering and planning for a number of initiatives to considerably improve rail journey times on key Intercity corridors, whilst affording regional access to urban centres. Measures include major track renewal, removal of level crossings, resignalling and platform enhancements, as well as park and ride initiatives. To build on this journey time improvement, as part of our recently published Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027 document, Iarnród Éireann is planning to significantly improve and upgrade our regional and Intercity offering by providing additional capacity, higher frequency of service times across our Intercity and regional services. For the Cork Area, this will see improvements to Cork-Dublin and Cork-Tralee service as below in Table 1.

Table 1: Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027 - Service enhancements for Intercity services in the Cork Area include

Route	Enhancement
Dublin – Cork	Additional services to achieve 30-minute intervals at peak times. Renewal of all track on the Dublin/Cork line and removal of level crossings towards improving journey times.
Dublin/Mallow - Tralee	Increase in services to two-hourly all-day with hourly peak services. Improved journey times resulting from renewed track on Cork mainline.

Iarnród Éireann will include the outcomes on Intercity and inter-regional connectivity from the all-island Strategic Rail Review by DoT/DfI(NI) as part of this priority once they are known. The final Development Plan should support improvements to Intercity and inter-regional services, as these provide a key function in improving the sustainable mobility of citizens of the City.

4. Electrification – Intercity and Suburban Services

The environmental consequences of the unsustainable quantum of private cars on Ireland's road network will require action, in particular the air pollutant emissions and greenhouse gas emissions produced. Ireland has set a target to develop a low/near zero carbon emission transport network by 2050. Rail has a pivotal role to play based on the unique ability of electrified rail services to move large numbers of people quickly and safely. Rail has reduced its overall emissions by 48% since 2006, significantly ahead of the EU 2020 target of 20%. There is an opportunity to continue this trajectory.

CMATS envisages an electrified suburban rail network for Cork and this is also an objective for Iarnród Éireann. Intercity electrification forms part of a long-term strategy for Iarnród Éireann to de-carbonise the rail network and provide the benefits of significant journey time savings, improved reliability, enhanced passenger quality and lower operating costs. The Cork to Dublin mainline is a high-potential line for this investment. The promotion and priority of electrified rail services in Intercity routes must be considered a key component of this and should be supported in the Development Plan to encourage and enable modal shift to greener modes of transport and reduce emissions. Iarnród Éireann will also include the outcomes on Intercity and inter-regional connectivity from the all-island Strategic Rail Review by DoT/DfI(NI) as part of this priority once they are known. This will further enhance the promotion and priority of electrified rail services which should be supported in the Development Plan to encourage and enable modal shift to greener modes of transport and reduce emissions.

5. Re-introduction of Rail Freight

The Rail Freight market is expected to grow across Europe, and globally, over the coming decades. In the European Union, rail freight trends are anticipated to align with EU strategic objectives around the sustainable movement of goods with several ports along Europe's western seaboard having recently invested in intermodal infrastructure. The current level of rail freight market share across Europe is approx. 18%, whereas the market share in Ireland is 1%. Iarnród Éireann believe the case for rail freight is increasing, given this context, along with the context of climate change and the environmental targets Ireland must achieve, both nationally and internationally. This is also set against a background of increasing road congestion and HGV driver shortages. Rail freight generates 76% less emissions (per tonne-km) than road haulage and as such there is an opportunity for rail to become a cornerstone of a sustainable freight network across Ireland. While the absolute future travel patterns post-COVID-19 are unknown, there will still be a necessity and demand for sustainable freight transportation across Ireland and rail can play an important role. Iarnród Éireann will therefore shortly publish its Rail Freight 2040 Strategy against the backdrop of the following:

- The Governments Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan, National Mitigation Plan, Climate Change Action Plan, Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021
- The Strategic Masterplans of Ireland's Port Authorities
- Increasing Road Congestion

- Pressure on road freight markets e.g. driver shortages, Brexit
- Policy, demand, and sectoral analysis being undertaken to establish demand and opportunities for rail freight

Iarnród Éireann will continue its commitment to develop rail freight between key hubs across the country, and our commitment to the rail freight sector can be seen through our recent investments and new service launched. In 2020, €1million was invested in upgrading facilities at our Ballina freight hub where current services operate to both Dublin and Waterford Port. In 2021, Iarnród Éireann and the major global logistics service provider XPO Logistics will begin a new twice weekly container service from Ballina to Waterford Port which will strengthen the role of rail freight between the west of Ireland and the South East. It will see the potential for over 5,000 truck movements a year to switch from road to rail, with a resulting reduction in road congestion, and 75% reduction in emissions per unit.

There is a possibility for the reintroduction of rail freight in the Cork area with the Goulding and Belvelly Marino Development Company (BMDC) redevelopment of Marino Point, between Fota Station and Carrigaloe Station. There is also the possibility of another freight terminal within Cork, with this and the recommissioning of rail connectivity at Marino Point included for potential development in our emerging Rail Freight 2040 Strategy. Rail freight would likely contribute to a reduction in the emissions and congestion caused by HGVs on Cork's road network. Iarnród Éireann believe the Development Plan should include an objective to support the development of rail freight in Cork.

6. Park and Ride Strategy

Iarnród Éireann wishes to grow the number of strategic Park and Ride sites across the Cork area. Iarnród Éireann has implemented Park and Ride's at sites such as M3 Parkway and believe it is a model that can attract car users, but the benefits of it are contingent on the level of demand. Iarnród Éireann is currently engaging with Councils and the National Transport Authority to develop a Park and Ride Strategy, which will be implemented in line with growing demand. The Development Plan should support the implementation of this Park and Ride Strategy when it is agreed by all parties. Iarnród Éireann supports the Council's Objective TM12.3 to secure the delivery of Park and Ride facilities where appropriate including at Carrigtwohill and Dunkettle/North Esk.

7. Customer Information Services

Iarnród Éireann is developing a Customer Information Services (CIS) Strategy Report to create a strategic implementation framework for the development of enhanced information systems and information flow to our customers, staff, and third parties. Key amongst these requirements is the ability to provide reliable real time passenger information that is accessible to all, co-ordinated across the network in stations and on trains, and that is consistent across all media.

The development of Customer Information Services (CIS), should be supported by the Development Plan when they are developed and finalised in 2021 as it is a vital customer experience capability required to both attract and retain customers using sustainable rail services and a wider integrated sustainable public transport network.

8. Development of Multimodal Facilities - Sustainable Interchange Programme

Iarnród Éireann aims to develop a Sustainable Interchange Programme which will enable more sustainable end-to-end journeys to be made by rail. The Sustainable Interchange Programme will include the provision of facilities within Iarnród Éireann's stations and local environs to provide for ease of interchange between rail and all other modes, prioritising those that are sustainable – cycling, electric charging, wayfinding and shared mobility. Iarnród Éireann's Sustainable Interchange Programme when implemented facilitates compact growth along railway corridors due to the improved sustainable mobility offering at each station. Commercial and residential developments can be supported through improved interchange with active mode parking infrastructure, and car park spaces (including electric vehicles), increasing the attractiveness of rail and increasing the rationale for the location of compact developments. By providing more sustainable interchange and electric charging, along with bicycle and vehicle parking facilities at stations, it enables and encourages journeys that would otherwise have to be taken by road-based transport onto the rail network. It enhances the appeal of zero emissions active modes onto low emissions rail services.

The Sustainable Interchange Programme has the potential to promote the concept of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) in the longer-term as digital platforms could be linked to sustainable mobility providers at either end of rail journeys as the interchange capability improves. If the railway does not enable better integration with other modes, passengers may lose out on benefits, and rail may lose prominence in the wider transport system as a result.

Iarnród Éireann believe that this programme supports the Development Plan's objective TM12.3 which aims to secure "enhanced rail station access and multi modal facilities to include secure, sheltered bicycle sharing facilities, bicycle maintenance stations, EV charging, park and pool facilities, car sharing facilities, where appropriate".

Other Development Plan Points

N/M20 / Other Proposed Major Road Schemes

The Development Plan notes that the "N/M20 project which will provide for improved connectivity between Cork City and Limerick". It is important to note the Phase 2 Option Selection assessment for the N/M20 is ongoing, with a number of rail options being considered for this scheme, as acknowledged in section 4.136 of the draft Development Plan. Iarnród Éireann has been engaged in this process. Iarnród Éireann also would like to note that the preferred option could be a combination of road and rail elements. Increasing rail capacity between Limerick and Limerick Junction, as envisaged in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, would complement any road improvements via a modal share that would attract car users to the improved rail option, consequently freeing up space on the road for goods. All rail options considered, one of which includes upgrading the existing Cork-Limerick line, achieve the overarching objective described as:

To enable national and regional planning policies, particularly those supporting the National Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework to promote balanced regional development, through enhanced population and economic growth.

This is to be achieved by improving connectivity between the cities of Cork and Limerick, and ultimately Galway, by:

- facilitating the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services on the transport network both now and in the future
- reduced land transport journey times
- improved journey time reliability

The rail options can, in summary, achieve the objectives by removing people and their cars from the N/M20 onto reliable and safe public transport, freeing up space on the N/M20 itself for goods traffic, reducing congestion and improving journey times for people and delivery of goods to market.

Iarnród Éireann would encourage any road options progressed to be integrated with the railway along the route where possible, especially at Mallow and at the Park & Ride at Blarney/Stoneview (located approximately at Station Road), which is proposed as part of the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. Future train frequencies at both locations over time will be based on a 10-minute timetable, this frequency improvement coupled with adequate parking capacity and a unified pricing plan (if the N/M20 is to be tolled) provides an excellent opportunity to attract people from their cars onto sustainable public transport, at both locations and any others identified during review. The outcomes on Intercity and inter-regional connectivity from the all-island Strategic Rail Review by DoT/DfI(NI) will provide further clarity on rail's role on this key inter-regional corridor.

In addition to the N/M20 scheme, Iarnród Éireann note that a number of other major road schemes are proposed for Cork City e.g. the Eastern Gateway Bridge and the North Ring Road. The sequencing and timing of the delivery of these major road schemes in advance of the delivery of the main public transport proposals contained within CMATS could potentially undermine the modal shift objectives desired in the new Development Plan.

Connectivity to Limerick directly by rail should be explored by the Council in the final Development Plan.

Property Issues

In line with normal planning procedure any future measure or proposal by the Council which may impact on the property of the CIÉ Group must be fully discussed and agreed with the CIÉ Group Property Division in advance.

Protected Structures

Iarnród Éireann has not received notice of any new structures to be added to the Register of Protected Structures and presume that there are no additions on railway property.

Conclusion

To conclude this submission, it is important to acknowledge that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused wide-ranging challenges and uncertainty throughout society on a global, European, and national level. It continues to alter some aspects of the way we live our lives and move about. It is likely to have an impact on the population and economic targets projected as part of the Project Ireland 2040 initiative, the levels of which, as of yet, are not fully clear. Although it is not yet possible to determine the full impact on the public transport sector, in the short term, COVID-19 impacts has seen a reduction in the number of people in employment, migration to remote and home working, and a switch towards more individual modes of transport. The immediate priority for Iarnród Éireann is to rebuild customer confidence in our services and develop flexibility in our longer-term rail development plans to allow us respond quickly to emerging threats and opportunities.

From the perspective of developing a sustainable integrated transport system, COVID-19 does present an opportunity to change habits, and the promotion and priority of sustainable transport as key driver for the recovery of growth appears to be a central theme in the Development Plan. Iarnród Éireann greatly support this. The development of a sustainable integrated transport network, as envisaged in CMATS, can be a springboard to economic recovery through the jobs it creates for Cork during its implementation, and it sustains post-completion. Iarnród Éireann welcomes that the Development Plan will be considering the changing circumstances that COVID-19 brings, and we will work closely with you on the challenges it brings to existing and future mobility and connectivity for Cork throughout the implementation phases.

It is clear to us, that rail travel is an essential pillar of any modern sustainable public transport network, and there is a significant opportunity in the Development Plan to increase rail capacity in Cork on an incremental basis with negligible construction impact, facilitating suburban and Intercity rail passenger growth to support Cork's recovery and resumption of projected growth impacted by COVID-19. This will allow rail travel to meet the potential it offers in facilitating the projected population growth in the NPF for Cork, and the growing demand for public transport, which can alleviate growing traffic congestion, as well as ensuring a cleaner environment for Cork. The overarching challenge of COVID-19, and how its impacts are addressed, will be essential to the Development Plan. Finally, I invite you to view Iarnród Éireann's Strategic Vision for Cork in Appendix B.

Iarnród Éireann looks forward to working with you to achieve the positive outcomes the Development Plan will bring for Cork.

Yours sincerely

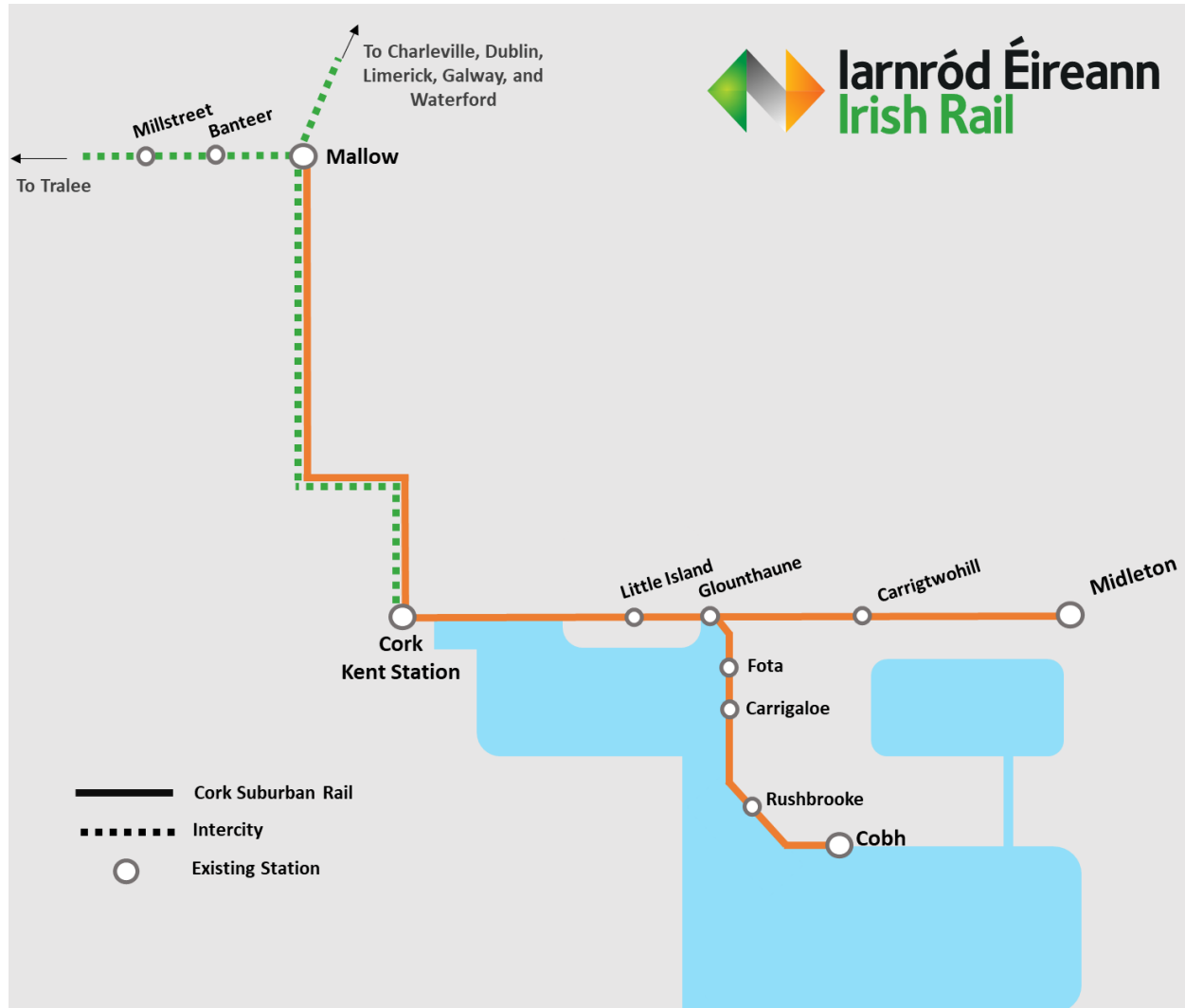


Jim Meade

Chief Executive

Appendix A

Existing IÉ Rail Network and Service Segments in the Cork Area



Appendix B

The IÉ Strategic Vision for Cork (including CMATS)

