

Appendix 1: Public Consultation Questionnaire

New Regional Airports Programme 2020-2024

Question 1: What category of stakeholder do you represent?

Killarney Chamber of Tourism & Commerce (KC&TC) represents circa 250 businesses in the town and environs of Killarney, Co. Kerry. Our members range from large Multi-national companies, to indigenous manufacturing companies, local enterprises, Tourism interests including Hotels, Guesthouses, publicans, visitor attractions and service providers. We also represent the largest grouping of retailers in the area.

Killarney Chamber of Tourism & Commerce is affiliated to Chambers of Commerce Ireland.

Question 2: Having regard to the actions on regional airports in the National Aviation Policy, what are your views on the effectiveness of the current Regional Airports Programme?

For the most part KC&TC are happy with the actions and supports currently provided by the National Aviation Policy. The existing policies have allowed for major capital infrastructure at the Airport, in particular Health & safety and security. Without these supports the Airport would be at a serious disadvantage and possibly non-viable. Such investment allows the Airport management to focus its attention and manpower on developing new business and infrastructure to support new business opportunities. 2019 saw the introduction of a new Helicopter base to aid with Oil & Gas exploration off the South West coast. 2018 saw the development of a new Fixed base operator (FBO) service and route development is constantly being explored. Without the Regional supports and the PSO these services would be very much curtailed. Kerry Airport secured a new route to Berlin in 2017. The new Berlin service delivered circa 32,500 passengers for the airport in its first full year 2018 and for 2019 to date recorded a 3% increase in passenger numbers. Considering almost 80% of these visitors originated in Germany the economic value to the region is significant. If you use the Failte Ireland average spend based on an average stay of three days at €507 per person, the load factor at 79% in 2018 the spend in the local economy this one service equates to circa €6,600,000. (Source Failte Ireland) When you add in the spend from the Frankfurt-Hahn pax handled of 52,000 in 2018 and their spend of €13m – there is a total German spend of €19.6m to the region. We would also estimate that the UK spend of €295 per pax would bring another €25m+ to the region from the London Stansted and Luton flights in 2018.

Killarney is known as “The birthplace of Irish Tourism” and welcomes circa;

**1.1 million visitors per annum of which over 660,000 are overseas visitors. The annual visitor spend is in excess of €180 million, €91 million of which comes from overseas visitors. Tourism supports over 7,000 jobs with an annual economic impact of in excess of €410 million.*

Tourism is vital to the economy of Killarney and Kerry Airport is a major contributor to the visitor product in Killarney and Kerry for both domestic and international visitors. Kerry Airport has international services to the UK via London Stansted and London Luton and from Germany via Frankfurt Hahn & Berlin. These routes provide much needed access to support our tourism products. Kerry Airport allows for safe, secure and easy connectivity for overseas visitors to access the South West all year round. This has allowed businesses in the area to extend their season, prolong employment and attract much needed business into locations that in the past closed for long periods outside the high season. Public transport,

and in particular the PSO, supports tourism and commerce and is a vital link to our capital city. It provides access to Ireland's largest airport in Dublin which welcomes over 30 million visitors or 85 % of all the overseas visitors to the island. Kerry Airport also allows our member businesses and visitors to access our capital city in a regular and timely fashion and, through the support of the PSO, allows passengers to access the "oneworld codeshare alliance" via Aer Lingus which gives business and visitors access to a worldwide network. This, in particular, allows for ease of access for visitors from our main markets in the USA, and Canada. It also assists businesses in Kerry to develop and expand. This is dynamic in the context of Kerry's location on the peripherals of Europe. Connectivity is vital in an ever-changing world and particularly with issues like Brexit on the horizon.

Question 3: What, if any, changes would you like to see reflected in the new Programme and why?

We would like to see the PSO extended and increased beyond 2022. KC&TC believe this service is vital to the region and provides an economic return to the exchequer. It is also imperative in terms of growth for the region. In addition to the existing services we would like to see greater connectivity to Dublin, i.e. an additional service Monday to Friday, either later in the evening or earlier in the morning, is desirable. This would allow for even greater access in particular for business commuters. Our members constantly recall the access provided when Aer Arann operated the PSO a number of years ago. Aer Arann operated four services daily with earlier and later departures and the increased frequency allowed for greater flexibility. The early service allowed for ease of connection to mainland Europe and beyond and allowed some members to return to Kerry on the same day which curtailed business cost and being away from your business overnight. From a tourism viewpoint, much needed revenue and bed nights are being lost to the county and the region as long-haul overseas visitors opt to be near the airport of departure, most of which use Dublin as their point of access and egress. The new runway at Dublin Airport should allow for additional slots to accommodate additional services. An additional early PSO supported service would allow US and Canadian visitors to depart from Kerry early enough to connect with their onward services. This has the potential to have a major impact for the region. It would allow for additional bed nights in the region, it would assist with Government policy on regionality and seasonality. It would assist with job creation and would increase revenue in the regions. In Dublin, it would aid with the road traffic congestion in the Dublin metropolitan area both early morning and late evening as commuters go to and from work and visitors struggle to get to Dublin airport. It would also aid with the reduction of accommodation demands and capacity issues in Dublin. Currently Dublin city has an Occupancy % in the mid 90% conversely Kerry accommodation is in the mid 60% (CSO figures 2017). Any measures that may assist with reducing accommodation demands in Dublin will assist with pricing and availability and present a better value for money proposition for consumers. It would also greatly assist with the current regional imbalance.

Question 4: How do you think the new Programme can best support Ireland's transition to a low carbon economy, having regard to policy on climate action and sustainability?

At present our businesses and community have three options to commute to our capital city; road network, train and Air services. Minimising the use of single vehicle transport on roads has to be a priority. In Kerry we have reasonable access to trains and a good rail

network. We also have good bus services. However, commute times to Dublin ranges between 3 hours and 30 minutes by train or car and circa 5 hours by bus. Air transport is the smartest fastest option and the preferred option for business and leisure travellers. At a recent meeting with Kerry Airport, management outlined their plans for the development of the airport; these plans are subject to funding. Plans included renewable energy sources, solar and heat pump technology, more energy efficient lighting both indoor and outdoor (runway), harvesting rain water and better use of natural lights in the design, all in an effort to reduce their carbon footprint. Having a better Airport with better services will encourage more users to opt to fly rather than use road services. Other initiatives at the airport included planting wild flowers on the apron and housing a bee colony. On site here at Kerry Airport – there are 106 employed directly between Airport Car Hire, Security, Catering, Taxi and ancillary services etc. with approx. 24 employed indirectly in the supply chain. The total earnings generated as a result of 130 employees is close to €4.4m annually spent in the county. Most of these people are from the locality and have short distances to commute. Failure to renew the PSO would lead to job losses meaning that these individuals would have to travel further to secure employment.

Question 5: What are your views on the PSO Scheme, the air service routes currently being supported and the need for a continuation of the Scheme beyond 2022?

Living in a beautiful setting like Kerry has lifestyle advantages without doubt however when it comes to doing business it has disadvantages. Business that support the economy in Kerry need supports. The PSO is such a support.

Some general observations;

- Kerry has the least amount of Foreign direct jobs of the 13 counties on the Wild Atlantic Way and one of the lowest in the country.
 - On road access, Kerry does not have one mile of motorway in the whole county.
 - Industry and commerce are driven largely by the indigenous community in Kerry with a few exceptions. Liebherr Cranes are the longest FDI company in Ireland.
 - One in 5 jobs in Kerry are in Tourism or related employment.
 - 1.5 million visitors visit and stay in Kerry and access is vital to the sustainability of the business in Kerry.
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- Life is not always about commerce and business. It's about people. Kerry Airport, through the PSO, offers patients ease of access into our main medical centres of excellences in Dublin for much needed attention and treatments. Having a sick child or family member in rural Ireland with potentially up to 6 hours travel each way to Crumlin or James Street Hospitals in Dublin is a serious disadvantage to our community. This can be costly and can be inordinately stressful. The PSO has enabled those in need of medical attention to access services in a timely fashion.

Killarney Chamber of Tourism & Commerce September 2019.