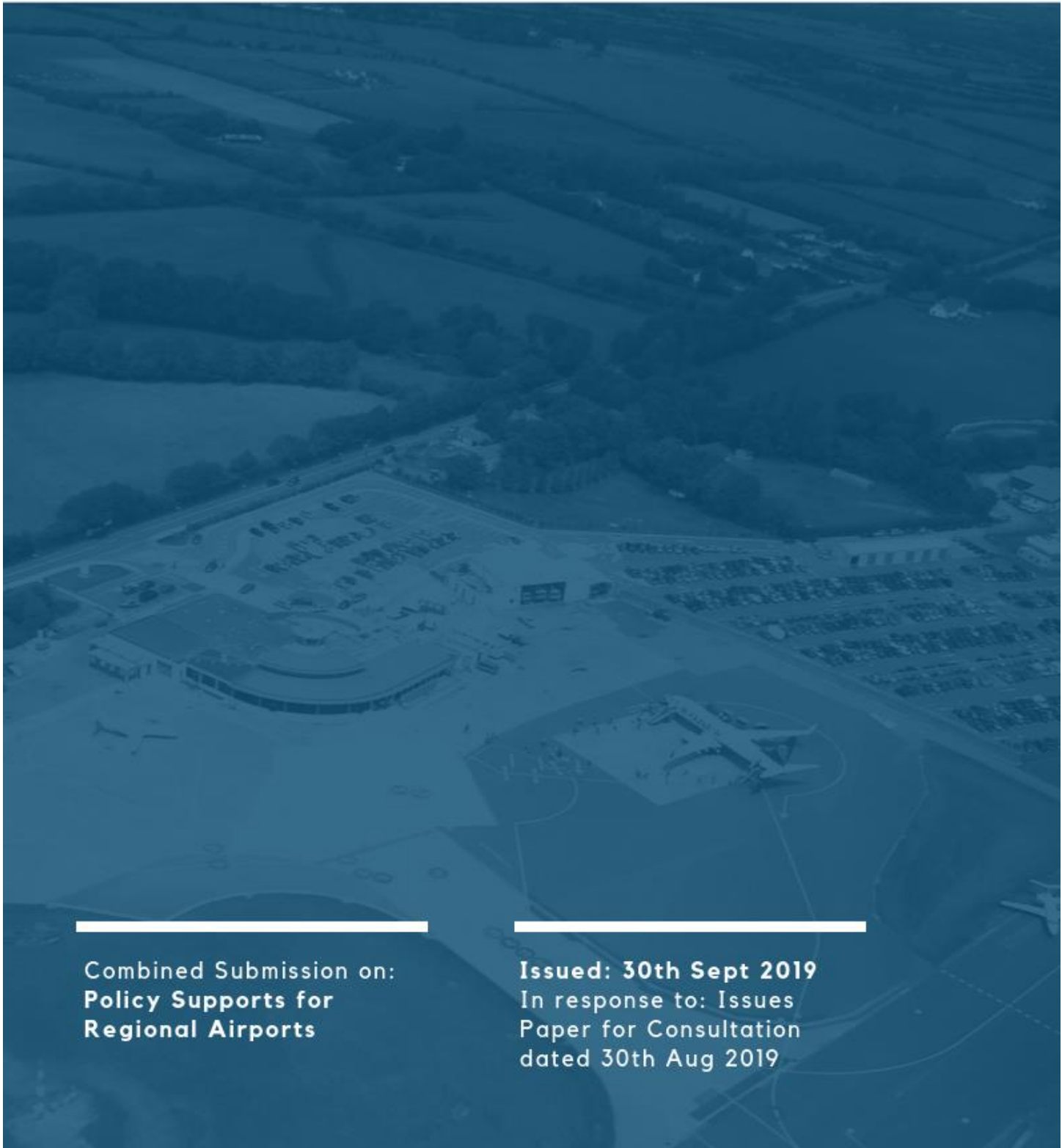




# KERRY AIRPORT

SUBMISSION



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Combined Submission on:  
**Policy Supports for  
Regional Airports**

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**Issued: 30th Sept 2019**  
In response to: Issues  
Paper for Consultation  
dated 30th Aug 2019

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QUESTION 1: WHAT CATEGORY OF STAKEHOLDER DO YOU REPRESENT?

This submission represents the collective vision and interests of the business community in Kerry, including the six Chambers of Commerce and key large employers in the county (hereafter referred to as the 'Business Representatives'). We are seeking an opportunity to meet directly with the Minister and his Executive team to express in further detail the fundamental necessities of expanding on the operations of Kerry Airport as a vital piece of infrastructure to the commercial sustainability and growth of this region.

The Business Representatives responsible for submitting this report reflect the opinions of a significant sector leading National, International and Global leading companies, a tourism industry of national and international importance, as well as the interests of hundreds of small and medium sized businesses in all sectors and industries.



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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?

As detailed in the Issues Paper for Consultation for the Policy Supports for Regional Airports, the "*Department is committed to inclusive and informed policy development*" – we attest that in order to be truly *inclusive* the expansion and development of Kerry Airport is of paramount importance to the people of this region. Merely sustaining the status quo when it comes to the support of this airport is not only a significant missed opportunity, but it precludes the natural development and expansion of commerce in the region.

It is essential to allow domestic and foreign companies to access existing and new markets, and to help deliver trade and investment, linking us to valuable international markets and ensuring that Kerry and the region is open for business. Kerry Airport facilitates trade in goods and services, enables the movement of workers and tourists, and drives business innovation and investment, and is of particular importance for many of the fastest growing sectors of the economy based in Kerry.

It is within this context of the natural development of the region, that the Business Representatives of Kerry wish to make our submission. It is our united conviction that the current support for Kerry Airport lacks ambition and ignores the obvious economic opportunities the airport and its location offers not only the county, but the entire southwest region of Ireland.

Furthermore, transportation policy on a wider brief must be reflective of the economic and sustainable needs of Kerry and its unique demographic spread as a county. Central to the National Planning Framework is the necessity to recognise the core principal of a '*place-based*' approach to development. Kerry, as a county which is comprised of strong

regional towns, rural towns and villages spread across a vast county, currently operates under the confines of secondary infrastructure links.

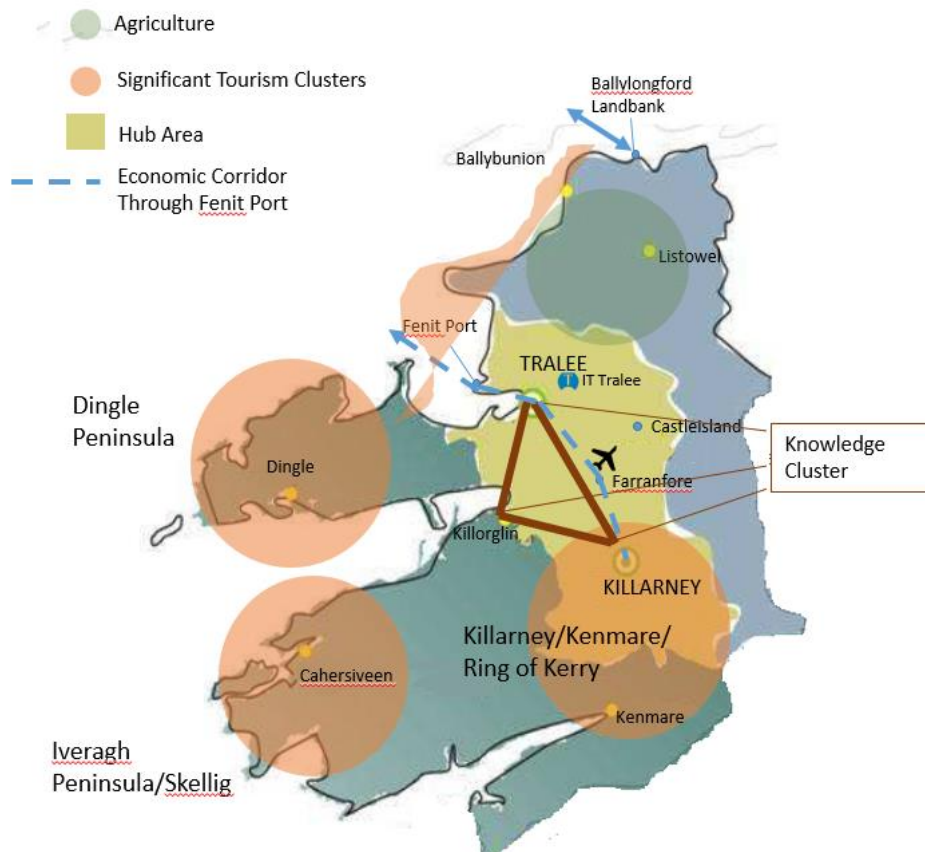
There is an onus on the Department of Transport, Sport and Tourism to plan for the future growth potential and development of regional areas.

Additionally, the NPF outlines for the Southwest Region *"While employment, infrastructure and strengthening small towns and rural communities are priorities throughout this regional area...there will also be a focus on more balanced and compact, connected growth. This means that housing development should be based on employment growth, higher densities, access to amenities and sustainable transport modes, in order to avoid long-distance commuting patterns and quality of life impacts."*

As per the NPF, there is a duty of care on the Department to co-ordinate investment and to unlock the potential of the regions for the betterment and protection of all the citizens of our country, not just those in large city areas.

County Kerry residents remain largely dependent on economic activity from the indigenous industries in all sectors, to generate employment. These industries in Kerry cover a vast array of sectors not limited to Tourism, Financial Services, Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical and Agri-Tech. All of these industries require consistent, reliable and regular connectivity to maintain their industry, but not only that, all present an opportunity for greater employment generation facilitated through improved connections and routes with Kerry Airport.

Collectively we are calling for greater ambition to unlock the potential of Kerry Airport.



QUESTIONS 3 TO 5:

The underlying request of the 'Issues Paper for Consultation' on the 'Policy Supports for Regional Airports' issued on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, is to give regard to "*policy objectives on regional development, connectivity, sustainability and climate impacts as well as the need to secure value for money*".

There is a significant disparity in terms of geography that merits re-evaluating the approach to Kerry Airport. It is not the intention of this submission to undermine the role any other county plays in the context of the region, nor is it the intention to minimise investment into any other part of the region, therefore this submission solely focuses on the elements required from Kerry Airport as a catalyst for the development of the county of Kerry.

It is the request of this submission that future policy must include the crucial strategic and infrastructure requirements this community requires in order to sustain and grow employment in the county. We ask the Department to appreciate the strategic objectives of the county to develop employment and economic sustainability, and that policy for Kerry Airport and its surrounding infrastructure and connectivity going forward aligns with the real needs and realistic ambitions of Kerry.

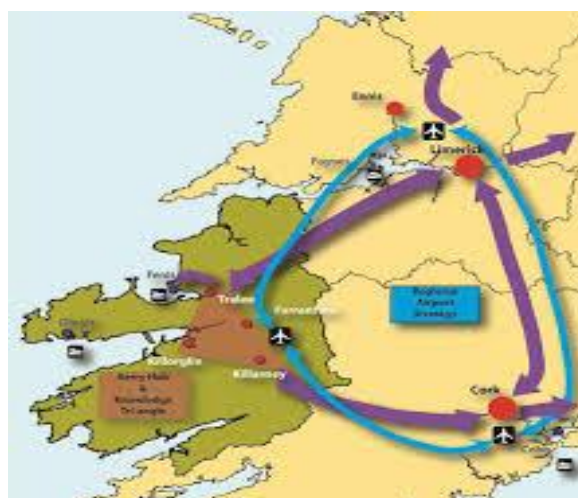
The key Recommendations required to support the growth of Kerry Airport, and position this critical piece of infrastructure to best serve the economic needs of the region are:

- CONTINUATION OF THE PSO SUPPORT FOR THE DUBLIN-KERRY FLIGHT
- ADJUSTMENT OF THE DUBLIN-KERRY FLIGHT SCHEDULE TO FOUR FLIGHTS DAILY, IN LINE WITH THE ECONOMIC NEEDS OF THE REGION INCLUDING:
  - RETENTION OF THE EARLY MORNING FLIGHT SCHEDULE FOR INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY
  - NEW 'WORKING DAY' FLIGHT TIMES (MORNING AND EARLY-EVENING FROM KERRY TO DUBLIN AND EARLY-EVENING & AFTER WORK RETURN FROM DUBLIN TO KERRY)
  - LATE EVENING RETURN FLIGHT SCHEDULE BETWEEN DUBLIN-KERRY FOR INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY
- STREAMLINE ONWARD-JOURNEY PASSENGERS IN DUBLIN AIRPORT TO AND FROM KERRY AIRPORT
- DEVELOP A PSO LEVY FOR YEAR-ROUND DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN KERRY AIRPORT AND AMSTERDAM-SCHIPHOL AIRPORT
- RECOGNISE KERRY AIRPORT AS BEING A NATIONAL TOURISM ASSET AND SUPPORT A CO-ORDINATED DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL ROUTES INTO KERRY AIRPORT IN TANDEM WITH TOURISM OBJECTIVES FOR THE COUNTRY
- SUPPORT THE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AT THE KERRY AIRPORT SITE AND HINTERLAND TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDING A TRANSPORTATION HUB
- INVEST IN AN INTEGRATED LANDSIDE TRANSPORTATION HUB AT KERRY AIRPORT

SUBMISSION BASED ON THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

NSO 1 - COMPACT GROWTH

The Kerry 'Inter-Urban Cluster' of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin (referenced by Kerry County Council as the *Knowledge-Triangle*) represents a critical mass in Kerry with a combined population of 77,554 (CSO 2016), and is a 'strategic area' set to support the economic and population growth of the county. The core principle of the NPF's Compact Growth NSO is to support carefully managed sustainable growth. This cluster fulfils a regional role that is unique in its place based context to Kerry.



(PICTURED: KERRY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTHERN REGION)

Notwithstanding the special designation of 'Regional Growth Centre' afforded to Athlone, Letterkenny and Sligo in the NPF, reference must be made to page 21 of the NPF, which clearly states:

*"it is emphasised that a settlement that is not specifically identified or for which specific targets are not set in this national Framework, is by no means precluded from future growth or investment. This must be considered at a regional and local scale, for which statutory planning processes exist, taking account of the general context set by the NPF. This allows for decision-making at regional and local level"*

This clearly established remit for 'decision-making at a regional and local level' enables a redress to recognise the strategic importance of the Kerry 'Inter-Urban Cluster' of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin. Due recognition must be made to the significant role the Knowledge Triangle of Tralee-Killarney-Killorglin plays in a regional context, as a Strategic Growth Centre with Kerry Airport strategically positioned in the middle of this triangle.

Let's not forget this has been a critical 'call to action' for over 17 years now. In 2002 the National Spatial Strategy indicated that the Tralee-Killarney linked hub 'will capitalise on the combined capacities of both towns, such as those in third-level education, developing links between industry and centres of learning, surface and air transport links and key natural resources such as scenic landscape.'

The Strategy also stated that, 'for the linked-hubs to function effectively, improved local linkages will be required through the road network and bus-based public transport options ...'

NSO 2 – ENHANCED REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

Kerry is a key partner in the development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC). The AEC have called on Government to have the AEC designated as a special Economic Zone. In order to facilitate the development of the 'High Value, Low Carbon Economy' underpinning the principles of the AEC, effective



communication and Transport Links are required along the full corridor including Kerry.

Kerry's growth potential in Agri-food, Tourism, Science, Technology and Manufacturing are reliant heavily on accessibility to larger population bases and onward connection to the international market. Current poor infrastructure links on infrastructure networks have already influenced potential new Foreign Direct Investment away from the county, as well as negatively impacted on the growth of indigenous industry within the county, leading directly to employment leaving the county in recent years.

If transport system improvements bring geographic areas closer together through accessibility enhancements, then the "effective density" of that area is raised. Thus, economic productivity gains can be realised through transport system improvements that raise effective density. County Kerry rated poorly in terms of access to employment. Access to employment for Dublin City zones is five times that of Kerry. A reason for the poor results is that one of the greatest difficulties faced by County Kerry is its perceived peripherality.

The provision of proper external infrastructural linkages from the County to national and international infrastructural networks greatly minimises the impact of peripherality. The provision of infrastructure makes the County more attractive as a location for industry and as a location in which to live, work and provide employment.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** STREAMLINE CONNECTIVITY OF PASSENGERS AND THEIR BAGGAGE ARRIVING INTO DUBLIN AIRPORT BOTH FROM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS AND TRAVELLING ONWARD TO KERRY, AND VICE-VERSA FROM KERRY AND ONTO TO INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SINGLE SECURITY CHECK-IN AT KERRY AIRPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS, BAGGAGE TRANSFER, DIRECT ACCESS TO AIRSIDE DEPARTURES IN DUBLIN AND COORDINATION OF FLIGHT SCHEDULING FROM KEY INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF KERRY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AS A KEY CONNECTOR BY DIRECTLY SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF KEY TRADE ROUTES INCLUDING AMSTERDAM-SCHIPHOL AND MIDLANDS UK

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NSO 3 – STRENGTHENED RURAL ECONOMIES & COMMUNITIES

We see the Limerick/Tralee and Cork/Killarney road-juncture in Castleisland and Farranfore as being a significant strategic location for the development of an industrial/distribution hub. Complimentary indigenous industry in the area would benefit from additional industry clustering along this key artery route. Castleisland in recent years has seen significant population decline (CSO 2016) due to a shortage of employment opportunities.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** ENABLE KEY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT IN INCOMING ROAD, RAIL AND 'LANDSIDE' FACILITIES AT KERRY AIRPORT AND FARRANFORE/CASTLEISLAND TO CATALYST THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCE MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION AND COMMERCIAL AIR-FREIGHT AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

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NSO 4 – SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

It is worth noting that the national, regional and inter-county road network in Kerry accommodates an influx of tourists to a ratio of 12:1 (3 to 4 times that of the national average) on the roads during the peak tourism seasons. The current road network is incapable of accommodating this influx on an ongoing basis without further investment. The tourism industry in Kerry accounts for in excess of 22% of all employment in the County.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATION STRATEGY FOR THE FARRANFORE TRAIN STATION, KERRY AIRPORT AND A PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (BUS TERMINAL) HUB TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATE MEANS OF ACCESSING THE REGION THROUGH INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** SIGNIFICANT CRITICAL NEW INVESTMENT INTO THE ROAD NETWORKS AND LAND-SIDE ONWARD TRAVEL FACILITIES AT KERRY AIRPORT TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY NETWORK

Critical to the urban growth of the towns of Killarney and Tralee is the development of modern urban transport services utilising ‘*key bus-based projects*’. The provision of well-functioning, integrated transport solutions in a sustainable manner that supports mobility throughout the urban areas is of paramount importance. Currently both towns are experiencing crisis-level traffic issues, in particular in the peak tourism season, which are undermining the commercial viability for both locations.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** UNDERTAKE A NETWORK REVIEW OF THE BUS TRANSPORT SERVICES WITHIN TRALEE AND KILLARNEY WITH A VIEW TO PROVIDING A MODERN ENHANCED AND SUSTAINABLE E-BUS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE, INTEGRATED WITH AN ACCESSIBLE BUS TERMINAL AT KERRY AIRPORT

Kerry Airport relies on private transportation, an un-integrated bus service and car-hire in order for visitors to access the remainder of the county. Meanwhile the train station is only 1.6Km up the N23 in Farranfore village, and the public bus service schedule is mis-aligned to provide ‘in-time’ access. A local area plan has been prepared to ensure that Farranfore develops its potential as a transport hub and as a sustainable location for logistics and distribution. Land is zoned for airport related uses, industry, light industry, warehouse/distribution and a commercial business park.

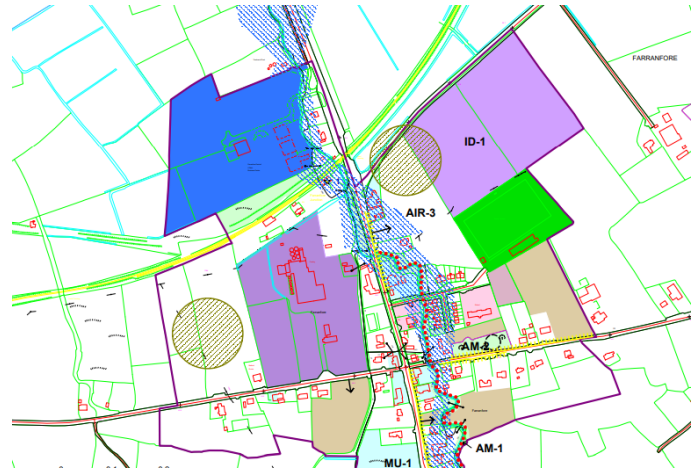
**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** REVIEW THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION HUB, WITH THE TRAIN STATION AND KERRY AIRPORT LINKED BY LIGHT BUS SERVICE TO COINCIDE WITH SCHEDULED FLIGHT AND RAIL TIMES. UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE INTER-CONNECTIVITY OF TRANSPORT SERVICES BETWEEN FARRANFORE AND KERRY AIRPORT TO BEST MEET THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF KERRY AIRPORT AND PROVIDE MORE ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE COUNTY OF KERRY UTILISING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES.

Farranfore has strong national and regional rail, road and air linkages with the capacity to promote inter-urban accessibility which is of critical importance to the successful development of both the Knowledge Triangle and the County as a whole. Given Kerry’s



peripheral location, Farranfore has a strategic and pivotal role in the efficient and effective operation and functioning of the Hub. The roads in Kerry are congested with large transport vehicles which in many cases are unsuitable for the infrastructure available. Teagasc in 2017 analysed the drive-time journeys from West to the South-west of Kerry as being the highest in the entire Southern Region, as well as the Tarbert (North Kerry) to Kenmare (South Kerry) being significantly higher than drive times in the south of the County. The current Kerry County Development plan for Farranfore identifies that

*'Farranfore develops its potential as a transport hub and as a sustainable location for logistics and distribution. Land is zoned for airport related uses, industry, light industry, warehouse/distribution and a commercial business park'.*



(PICTURED: KERRY CO. CO. LAND ZONING – FARRANFORE)

In the 2013-2019 Kerry County Council F.A.L.A.P on Farranfore:

*"Due to its strategic transport links, its international airport and its strategic location within the Hub, it is expected that there will be an increase in the logistic employment sectors (warehousing and distribution) and other sectors that would benefit from an airport and potentially enhanced railway operations in the future."*

*"The development of airport related uses, including a centre of logistics, distribution and warehousing and light industry would also enable Farranfore to provide both a specialist role that compliments the two Hub towns. With an increased range of destinations to fly to, there is a great need to plan for an efficient public transport connection that would link Farranfore with Tralee and Killarney."*

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** IMPLEMENT THE OBJECTIVE TO DEVELOP THE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS TO ENABLE FARRANFORE BECOME A SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS, WAREHOUSING & TRANSPORTATION HUB SERVICING THE REGION.

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NSO 5 – STRONG ECONOMY SUPPORTED BY ENTERPRISE, INNOVATION AND SKILLS

Current Enterprise policy in Ireland is led by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. The recently published Regional Enterprise Plan 2020 (REP2020) for the South West specifically states that in order to support jobs creation and enterprise growth in the region the focus is on *“diversifying the regional economy, building on place-specific strengths, regional brand development, business clustering and ecosystem strengthening initiatives”*.

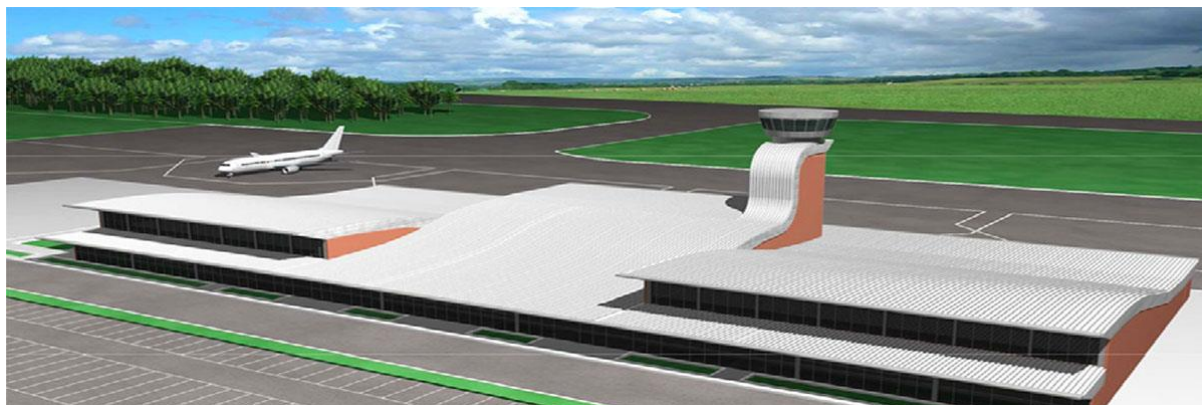
The Minister’s forward to the REP2020 specifically states a desire that *‘no region should lag behind their potential’*. Unlocking the potential for Kerry lies firmly in investing in key infrastructure such as Kerry Airport

We are calling on Public investment into Kerry Airport to recognise National Policy Objective No. 12 in the NPF in relation to Strategic sites such as the lands around Kerry Airport and to *“work with local authorities, other public bodies and capital spending departments and agencies to co-ordinate and secure the best use of public lands...and to drive the renewal of strategic areas not being utilised to their full potential...to ensure that the necessary transformation of the places most in need of regeneration can take place more swiftly and effectively.”*

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** RECOGNISE THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF KERRY AIRPORT AND ADJOINING LANDS IN CASTLEISLAND AND FARRANFORE AS STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ZONES (SDZ’S), THAT WILL SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENTIRE COUNTY. THESE STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SITES REQUIRE PARTICULAR FOCUS IN TERMS OF THEIR *“ACCESS TO UTILITIES, CONNECTIVITY, AND OTHER ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FACTORS”*.

NSO 6 – HIGH-QUALITY INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

As per this submission’s earlier points, Kerry Airport is a critical element of the international connectivity of Kerry to support the region’s industries. Of critical importance to the business sector, and the ability to attract and retain talent and FDI into the region is the improved routes serviced from Kerry International Airport. Kerry County Council in both the County Development Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plan recognises the strategic importance of Kerry International Airport as a key factor in promoting the economic development of the County. The airport is an important strategic asset to the County in strengthening transportation links both nationally and internationally.



(PICTURED: PROPOSED NEW TERMINAL BUILDING – KERRY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2007 STUDY)

It is envisaged that future upgrading of the airport facilities will increase the potential for the airport to attract increased passenger numbers thereby making the County more accessible to other national and international transport hubs.

The airport plays a significant economic role in creating opportunities by attracting investment and tourists to the region. In essence it acts as an economic driver for the region and has a major impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the surrounding area.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** SUPPORT INVESTMENT INTO THE TERMINAL FACILITIES IN A PLANNED APPROACH TO ENSURE THE USP OF ‘EASE OF ACCESS’ IS MAINTAINED IN KERRY AIRPORT

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH KERRY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN PROVIDING THE CRITICAL LAND AND AIR SIDE INFRASTRUCTURE TO FACILITATE ROUTE/FREQUENCY IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING GREATER CONNECTIVITY TO DUBLIN AND PROVISION OF FLIGHTS TO AMSTERDAM AND ADDITIONAL CONTINENTAL HUBS. IT IS THE OPINION OF THE BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED IN THIS SUBMISSION THAT A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE (SDZ) IN REGARD TO A PLANNING AND INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE APPLIED TO THE LANDS AROUND FARRANFORE AND KERRY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

NSO 7 – ENHANCED AMENITIES AND HERITAGE

The vision for Kerry is that it further develops its rich cultural heritage and amenities to sustain its critical tourism industry in these challenging times. Killarney is a regional anchor for the entire south-west region, and is a key gate-way town for the Wild Atlantic Way. Areas like the Dingle and the Beara Peninsula have an international reputation for outstanding scenery, and internationally renowned festivals such as the Rose of Tralee, Puck Fair and Listowel Writers Week support the reputation of Kerry internationally. Tourism, and the tourism products in Kerry are key economic influencers that support the entire county. Kerry is more dependent on tourism than any other region in Ireland.

Critical to the 1 in 5 jobs (est. 14,000 people) employed in the tourism sector in Kerry, is the development of infrastructure to support and sustain the region. The growth in Kerry’s tourism industry will influence the growth in tourism throughout the South-West region, but only through investment in improved infrastructure links, international connectivity and inner-urban transportation as identified in the Key Recommendations above.



The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southwest states with reference specifically to sustaining Tourism, of which Kerry is of National significance:

*“The promotion of enhanced transport networks including public transport services is essential to attract and enable ease of movement around the region by tourists and visitors. Improvements are needed at key arrival points”*

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL ROUTES INTO KERRY AIRPORT AND THE SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE KEY NATIONAL TOURISM AGENCIES AND TOURISM ENTITIES IN KERRY, IN A PLANNED AND STRATEGIC MANNER AS A KEY ECONOMIC DRIVER FOR THE REGION AND LEADER OF NATIONAL TOURISM TRENDS. RECOGNISING KERRY AIRPORT AS BEING MORE THAN A REGIONAL AIRPORT, BUT ACTUALLY AS A KEY ASSET FOR THE GROWTH OF TOURISM IN IRELAND

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NSO 8 – TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON & CLIMATE RESILIENT SOCIETY

Underpinning all our economic ambitions for the county of Kerry is a requirement to support a low carbon and climate resilient society. Our County has a world-class quality of life, a scenic environment unrivalled in international standards, and a reputation for environmental awareness reinforced by the need to protect our surroundings as it supports valuable tourism, agriculture and marine industries in the County.

With an emphasis on increased growth in the MASP urban areas in the region, there is an over-arching *balance* needed to develop a strong 'green-focused' economy in Kerry that supports the entire region. Climate change represents a significant challenge for Kerry in particular with the harmful effects of climate change on the coastal regions of the county.



(PICTURED: MAHAREES, CO. KERRY  
CLEAN COAST AWARD WINNER, COASTAL PROTECTION WORKS)

These reasons alone should justify the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to act in a focused and deliberate way to provide special recognition to the county of Kerry.

**KEY RECOMMENDATION:** INVEST IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF 'GREEN' TOURISM ACCESS INFRASTRUCTURE WITH AN INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORTATION LINKS AT KERRY AIRPORT AS NATIONAL STANDARD FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOW-CARBON, CLEAN ENERGY AND GREEN TRANSPORT

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CONTACT DETAILS

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