



**Brady Shipman
Martin.**

**Celebrating.
50 Years.**

Forward Planning Unit,
Development Plan Review,
Louth County Council,
Town Hall,
Crowe Street,
Dundalk,
Co. Louth, A91 W20C

By email only: louthcdp@louthcoco.ie

Date: 18th December 2020

Re: Drogheda Port Company Draft Louth Development Plan 2021-2027 Submission

To whom it may concern,

This submission has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, on behalf of Drogheda Port Company in regard to the Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 which has been prepared by Louth County Council ('the Council').

Drogheda Port is a long established presence in Drogheda. As a source of primary employment and a key transport hub it has an important role in the local, regional and national economy.

Overall Drogheda Port Company welcomes the importance placed on the role of Ports, the Marine Sector and Drogheda Port itself by the Council within the Draft Development Plan. Drogheda Port is an important economic resource that welcomes the support from the Council in its ambition to upgrade and expand its facilities.

The Draft Development Plan reflects this role which has been determined by Regional and National Policies.

Summary

The key elements of this submission can be summarised as follows:

- The Draft Development Plan contains numerous direct references to Drogheda Port and its activities. We welcome the importance placed on the role of Ports, the Marine Sector and Drogheda Port itself by the Council.
- Drogheda Port is a key economic asset for the County and for Drogheda Town itself, as such it is suitably referenced as enabling infrastructure within the Core Strategy.
- In turn the Draft Plan recognises the significance placed on the Port by the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region, and the draft Marine Spatial Plan.



**Brady Shipman
Martin.**

**Built.
Environment.**

- The Draft Plan recognises the role of the Port within Drogheda as an important economic resource and aims to support any improvements or expansion to the Port facilities subject to the ongoing preparation of a Masterplan for the Port.
- We welcome the intention of Objective SS12 which aims to support the delivery of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) in order to release strategically located lands for economic development and employment related uses.
- The preparation of a statutory joint UAP / LAP to be prepared for Drogheda between Louth and Meath County Councils will improve Drogheda's strategic position in the Country. This should provide suitable reference to the Port and related infrastructure.
- The Council recognises the importance of the Marine Sector and Port facilities at Drogheda as an important economic resource and states support for improvements and/or expansion to these Port facilities, subject to appropriate environmental considerations.

1.0 Commentary on the Draft Plan

The Draft Development Plan summarises its approach to Drogheda Town in Section 1.2.1, we note Drogheda Port is referenced as a key piece of enabling infrastructure within the wider strategy for County Louth.

Section 1.2.1 states:

Enabling Infrastructure:** The goal of achieving compact growth will require improved accessibility, sustainable mobility and the requisite infrastructure to enable Drogheda to grow as a Regional Growth Centre (RGC). The town will benefit from the extension of the DART service and improvements will be required to McBride station relating to accessibility. The importance of protecting the national rail and road infrastructure in supporting economic growth and competitiveness is acknowledged, as is the need for improvements to greenways, walking and cycling routes. **The RSES supports the Drogheda Flood Relief Scheme, Drogheda Port and the proposed Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR).

2.0 The Core Strategy

Chapter 2 sets out the Louth Core Strategy, Section 2.13 (2-28) details the approach to the town of Drogheda which has direct relevance to Drogheda Port. The Port is a key piece of transport infrastructure and provides an important source of local employment to Drogheda Town.

We support the inclusion of Objective SS9 which aims:

To support and protect the role of Drogheda Port as a Port of regional significance and to facilitate any investment, upgrade, or maintenance works to the Port, subject to appropriate environmental considerations.

3.0 Joint Area Plan with Meath County Council

Section 2.13.1 sets out the Regional strategy requirement for Louth and Meath County Councils to jointly prepare an Urban Area Plan (UAP) / Local Area Plan (LAP). Drogheda Port spans the Meath and Louth county borders and collaboration between the counties in relation to Drogheda is welcome. Drogheda Port Company welcomes the preparation of a joint plan, which will significantly strengthen the growth and development of Drogheda, and secure opportunities for economic development and employment growth. Further, the Plan will include the Northern Environs of Drogheda, which are critical to the delivery of the PANCR, a vital piece of future transport



**Brady Shipman
Martin.**

**Built.
Environment.**

infrastructure for the Port, providing a direct link from the Motorway to the Port, and improving infrastructure between the Port and the wider region.

This is particularly important in achieving the stated Objective SS2:

To continue to support and promote the economic role of Drogheda as a regional centre of employment along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and to facilitate any infrastructural investment or employment generating sustainable development that will strengthen the role of the town and maintain its competitiveness

As a key generator of employment in Drogheda and an economic engine for the Region, Drogheda Port Company welcome this objective, and will seek to further enhance its competitive position to the benefit of Drogheda, Louth, and the Region.

4.0 Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR)

The Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) is widely referenced in the Draft Plan.

Drogheda Port supports the delivery of this road as soon as possible, as being a critical piece of infrastructure in assisting the relocation of port activities from the town centre of Drogheda, removing through traffic from the town, assisting in achieving overall town centre regeneration and growth objectives, and assisting in overall port development and expansion.

This is supported in the Draft Development Plan, *inter alia*, as follows:

Section 2.13.2 states:

*The development of the employment and residential lands in the Northern Environs and the **delivery of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) are also a fundamental element of the immediate and long-term growth strategy for the town. The delivery of the PANCR is critical to the removal of port related traffic from the town centre and the facilitation of the regeneration of town centre lands.***

Further Section 2.13.3 'Regeneration Areas' states:

*Port activities have ceased on the South Inner Quays with docking still taking place on the **North Inner Quays**. In the immediate term the South Inner Quays have therefore more potential for redevelopment, however **with proposals to consolidate Drogheda Port at the deep water facility at Tom Roe's Point the North Inner Quays may also become available in the future**. The regeneration of the Docklands area would act as a stimulus for further redevelopment in the town centre and support the creation of an attractive, compact, and vibrant living space in the centre of the town.*

Objective SS12 aims:

To recognise the importance of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) as a critical piece of enabling infrastructure in the strategic growth of Drogheda and to support the progression and delivery of this project during the life of the Plan.

We believe that the criticality of this road infrastructure is understood within Louth County Council, but that this needs to be prioritised in the Council's engagement with external funding parties, and therefore believe that this objective can be strengthened to reflect this criticality.



**Brady Shipman
Martin.**

**Built.
Environment.**

Proposed Amendment

We suggest the text be amended as follows:

To recognise the importance of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) as a critical piece of enabling infrastructure in the strategic growth of Drogheda and to seek to secure funding to progress the delivery of this project as a priority during the life of the Plan.

5.0 Chapter 5 Economy and Employment

Chapter 5 sets out the economic strategy for the County. Section 5.12 (5-20) discusses economic and employment profile of Drogheda and 5.12.3 discusses Drogheda Port specifically. We welcome the support of Louth County Council in this regard, and recognition of the importance of the Port to the Region's economy.

Policy Objectives EE 34, 35, 36 are relevant in this regard.

5.1 Drogheda Port Masterplan

As the Port is in the process of preparing its Masterplan, we welcome that the support of the County Development Plan is essential in supporting this aim.

We welcome the inclusion of Objective EE 34 which aims:

To recognise that the Port facility at Drogheda is an important economic resource and to support any improvements or expansion to the Port facilities subject to the preparation of a Master Plan and compliance with relevant planning and environmental criteria.

Proposed Amendment

However we submit that the above objective could be improved with the following amendment of the above objective, as per other objectives already in the Draft Plan : subject to appropriate environmental considerations.

Further, Policy Objective EE 35 recognises the importance of the land bank at Tom Roes Point and supports the development of employment lands at this location stating:

EE 35: To support the development of employment lands in the town including:

- i) The lands in the northern part of the town adjacent to the M1 Retail Park*
- ii) The lands opposite Tom Roes Point ferry terminal*

The development of these lands shall be for economic investment and employment generating uses. No development shall take place in the absence of a Master Plan being agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Proposed Amendment

It is proposed that the reference to Tom Roes Point should read, for clarity purposes:

“.....(ii) The lands and foreshore adjacent Tom Roes Point. “



**Brady Shipman
Martin.**

**Built.
Environment.**

Finally in this section, EE 36 seeks

“To support the delivery of the Port Access Northern Cross Route which will release strategically located lands for economic development and employment related uses.”

Proposed Amendment

It is proposed that this should be further refined to be specific to port operations in the vicinity of the Port and to facilitate port-centric employment as follows:

“To support the delivery of the Port Access Northern Cross Route which will release strategically located lands for economic development and employment related uses, particularly adjacent to Drogheda Port where the opportunity for port-centric employment will be facilitated.”

7.0 Chapter 7 Movement

Section 7.8.3 provides additional detail in relation to ‘The Drogheda Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR)’ stating:

The Drogheda PANCR is a critical piece of enabling infrastructure that would provide a direct link from the M1 Motorway to Drogheda Port, thus removing heavy port related traffic from the town centre. It would also release strategically located employment and residential lands in the northern part of the town. The provision of this link road is a fundamental part of the long term growth strategy of the town. Regional Policy Objective 4.12 in the RSES supports the development of this road.

Related to the above, Policy Objective MOV 43 aims:

To support the progression of the Drogheda Port Access Northern Cross Route and to continue to engage with stakeholders and local landowners in securing the funding to deliver the project.

It is suggested that the importance of the PANCR goes beyond dependency on local landowners to deliver this road, a strategy which has been unsuccessful for many years, and instead has a wider role in the delivery of an improved Drogheda Town Centre, and growth for the entire town. It is therefore suggested that a strategy of wider stakeholder funding, including Government funding, should be pursued instead.

Proposed Amendment

We suggest the above section be amended as follows: *To support the progression of the Drogheda Port Access Northern Cross Route and to continue to engage with stakeholders and Government and local landowners in securing the funding to deliver the project, within the life of the plan.*

This, we believe, would add urgency and weight to the intention to deliver the PANCR, which has been a development objective for many years, and stated as being critical to the growth and orderly development of Drogheda.



**Brady Shipman
Martin.**

**Built.
Environment.**

Conclusion

Drogheda Port plays an important role in the national, regional and local economy as a key piece of transport infrastructure and as a source of local employment. The Port will experience new challenges in the coming years such as adapting to new market conditions and increasingly larger vessels, the preparation of a Masterplan for the Port is underway to allow the Port to respond to this changing environment.

We welcome the significance and importance placed upon Drogheda Port within the Draft Development Plan, as strategic infrastructure which underpins the economic functioning of the regional and national economy, and support new opportunities for its further development.

Drogheda Port Company look forward to further engagement with Louth County Council in relation to the future role of the Port in the County.