



**Cork
CHAMBER**
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

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Re: Cork Chamber submission to M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Project

To Whom It Concerns,

Cork Chamber is the leading business organisation in Cork proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic growth into the future. Cork Chamber represents an employer base of close to 1,200 businesses and over 100,000 employees across the region. In representing the voice of business, Cork Chamber adds its strong support to the development of the M28, Cork to Ringaskiddy project, and highlights the criticality of enabling infrastructure in meeting the economic growth potential of the Southern region.

The Cork region has a proven capacity as a key driver of the national economy, strongly positioned as the fulcrum for growth in the Southern region creating an effective counterweight to the Greater Dublin Area. However, in today's global trade environment the ability to effectively adapt to the changing market dynamics is essential. Global forces such as Brexit have the potential to present both opportunities and challenges. To meet this changing dynamic, we must be strategic in how we develop and how we promote our regions towards reaching our national potential. The breadth of connectivity, the maximised potential of our strategic international access points, the ability to develop sustainably to meet our growth potential, to increase our versatility and our resilience nationally and regionally must be at the forefront of how these unknowns are approached. It is vital that we enable our key economic engine locations, such as Ringaskiddy and in doing so continue to invest in the key infrastructure deficits to ensure competitiveness on the international stage into the future.

Ringaskiddy is a Strategic Employment Area hosting one of the greatest concentrations of employment within the region with almost one fifth of the nationally estimated 25,000 people working in the pharmaceutical / life sciences industry based in companies located in Ringaskiddy. It is home to this key industry cluster of multinational and indigenous firms, as well as IDA strategic sites, the Port of Cork, the National Maritime College Ireland and the Irish Maritime and Energy Research Cluster (IMERC) focused on developing our national potential and economic growth opportunities within the blue economy. With a skills shortage already being experienced by a

number of businesses based in Ringaskiddy, and with the emphasis on research and development within the area, it is essential that the planned upgrade go ahead to ensure the future viability of the area, safeguarding current and future employment, research and educational assets located therein. Cork Chamber strongly emphasises the necessity to complete the appropriate infrastructure connections reflecting Ringaskiddy's current significance and future potential as a location of national strategic importance.

Traffic congestion along this route is a daily occurrence, and as economic activity has intensified so has the extent of this problem and the consequent effects on operations within the area, affecting the flow of people (commuter and residential), goods and services to and from the area. These issues are identified by companies based in Ringaskiddy as limiting the potential for future jobs growth and FDI investment with the current national road carrying capacity greatly exceeded leading to traffic delays and tailbacks. The future completion of the M28 has in the past been a deciding factor for FDI in evaluating whether to locate in this area, with the upgrade now being proposed for approximately 15 years. To date, FDI companies in Ringaskiddy have accounted for over €2.4 billion investment over the last 20 years with the subsequent benefit to the region being instrumental in driving economic prosperity, and so it is essential that the long-term competitiveness in attracting investment and skills is enabled. This is increasingly critical in a global operational environment that is increasingly competitive.

Added to this, the Port of Cork facility based at Ringaskiddy is expanding its capacity and capability, with the Port activities based in Tivoli docklands also planned to relocate to the Ringaskiddy site in the future. The Ports' overall redevelopment plan will absolutely influence the future relevance and resilience of our strategic national asset portfolio located in Cork and indeed the Southern region as a whole, with the port designated as one of only three Tier 1 Ports of National Significance in Ireland. Consequently, the N28 is identified at European level as being part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and of critical importance to supporting our port at Ringaskiddy. However, as it stands the existing route linking Ringaskiddy to Cork doesn't meet the required standards of this network. We must be mindful that the Port of Cork plays a key strategic role in the movement of goods to and from the UK and Continental Europe, with it sometimes being overlooked that as an open economy with a dependence on international trade, we do over 90% of our trade by sea. The Port redevelopment, which as one of the main outcomes will facilitate larger vessels, will be of heightened global significance in the future and we must ensure that this opportunity for growth is unlocked.

The M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy is a strategic national asset for realising potential, and Cork Chamber has identified this infrastructural redevelopment as one of the key enablers of national and regional growth. Looking at the proposed upgrade there are a range of off-shoot benefits to be considered, such as:

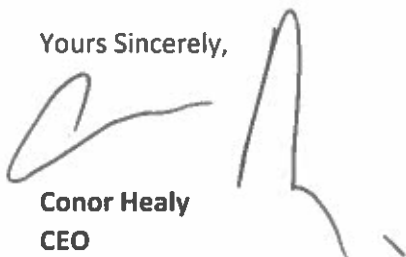
- reduced peak hour journey times and costs for road users;
- improvements in public/ sustainable transport options for commuters;
- use of a low noise surface along the entire route and installation of noise mitigation barriers at viable locations along the route, achieving a net decrease in the impact of road traffic noise on properties post construction;

- safer and easier access for the adjacent residential and business communities accessing the N40 South Link Road and national routes via the redeveloped M28;
- improved road safety to reduce future potential collisions along this route;
- enhanced capacity to serve the external trading and connectivity requirements of Munster's business community by facilitating the development of Port of Cork's operations at Ringaskiddy;
- improved capacity to serve and enhance the key industry cluster of multinational companies and indigenous firms operating in the Ringaskiddy/Carrigaline area and to support the development of the IDA strategic sites, and the Irish Maritime and Energy Research Cluster and;
- the wider regional development which it will enable, including the development of Cork docklands at Tivoli following the relocation of the Port functions, thereby growing Cork's housing and business capacity.

Furthermore, Cork Chamber in an economic assessment of the current Cork to Ringaskiddy route published in 2014 and undertaken by Indecon, noted that the non-completion of this scheme could result in an estimated future loss in value of trade coming through the Port of Cork to an amount over €22 billion, with knock-on impacts on jobs supported by Port activity (based on 2012 – 2033 estimations). It is crucial that we are mindful of these future impacts as we move forward in this process with the support of a thriving port having clear economic benefits and conversely a failure to do so having the potential to impact negatively.

In conclusion, Cork Chamber are strongly supportive of infrastructure developments that will increase the resilience and strength of the region on a national and international platform, and we believe that the development of the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy project will enable and facilitate future growth for a thriving region.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Conor Healy', written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Conor Healy
CEO