

RE: Blarney Business Park Linkage

To whom it concerns,

Cork Chamber represents 1,200 members together employing 100,000 people throughout the city, metropolitan area and county. Our vision is to be a world-leading Chamber of Commerce, delivering on a progressive economic, social and sustainability agenda at the heart of a vibrant business community. Our direction is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals five of which have been identified by the Chambers Ireland network.

Cork Chamber welcomes this opportunity to contribute to this proposed scheme to improve public transportation accessibility at Blarney Business Park. The park itself accommodates approximately 1,000 employees at present and this number is set to grow in the coming years. Our members have expressed concerns about the lack of public transportation options within the park and the impact it is having on those who work in the area and the profile of the park itself.

Blarney Business Park is a strategic location for current and future investment located 6kms north of Cork City. In addition to its proximity to the N20 Cork-Limerick Road and access to the M8 Dublin Motorway from both Mallow and Cork, its location will be even more important with plans for nearby stations under the Cork commuter rail service. This proposal would further support this network of connectivity by providing a public transport offering to the park for both current and future employees. Based on feedback we have received, the current lack of connectivity to the park is affecting recruitment efforts for those based in the park, with some employers placing personal transport as part of their screening criteria. In order to enable future growth at the park and enhance its profile as a place to do business, it is essential that a frequent and reliable public transport offering exists in close (walking) proximity to the park.

In order for Blarney Business Park to remain attractive to both employers and employees it must be deemed an accessible and safe location. Employers within the park who have provided feedback to Cork Chamber for the purposes of this consultation have advised that their employees choose to use taxis or carpool as public transport and walking are not options due to safety concerns with the nearest bus stop located 1.1km on a route with a busy roundabout and no pathway or crossroad to Blarney Business Park. From a personal safety perspective, those based within the park say the safety of their employees is of paramount importance and for this reason they would welcome the introduction of a safe route when travelling to and from the park.

It is essential that members of the public can also access the park without a car. We have received feedback from one company in the park who say that because access is so difficult without a private vehicle, trade has been lost at times as customers have chosen their competitors who are more easily accessible.

From a sustainability perspective it is crucial that public transport is top of the agenda for the development of business parks that are home to thousands of employees. Cork city has been designated one of the EU's 100 Mission Cities tasked with achieving climate-neutrality by 2030. This target is less than seven years away and if we are to achieve this goal, we must enable those living and working in Cork to easily reduce their carbon footprint.

Cork Chamber welcomes this proposed scheme aimed at enhancing public transportation accessibility for Blarney Business Park. As a vital hub for both current and prospective investors, the park is poised for continued growth, and it is essential that the elements of this proposal come to fruition and are further enhanced as the park grows in the coming years.

Our members have voiced legitimate concerns regarding the existing limitations in public transportation options within the park, emphasising the significant impact on the workforce and the park's overall image. Recognising Blarney Business Park's strategic location, close proximity to major roadways, and future plans for nearby commuter rail stations, we view this proposed initiative as a crucial enhancement to the existing network of connectivity.

To foster the park's future growth and strengthen its appeal as a business destination, the establishment of a frequent and reliable public transport service in close proximity is imperative. This proposal is an important response to current challenges and also a forward-looking investment in the park's continued success, the well-being of its workforce, and the broader environmental sustainability goals of Cork city.

Cork Chamber remains at your disposal to share any additional insights from our member businesses to support this proposal.

Yours Sincerely,



Conor Healy
CEO