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**RE: Black Ash Park & Ride – Bus Interchange**

8<sup>th</sup> April, 2025

To whom it concerns,

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the Black Ash Park and Ride Bus Interchange.

Cork Chamber represents 1,200 members together employing 130,000 people throughout the city, metropolitan area and county. Our vision is to lead a transforming and ambitious Cork City and County, and our purpose is to unite, represent and support our members and community. Our direction is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Cork Chamber has also been designated an SDG Champion by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications for 2024 – 2025.

This development will enhance the city’s public transportation offering, which in turn will benefit the entire city. The planned improvements—such as four additional bus bays, new access and exit points onto Mick Barry Road, upgraded bus shelters, enhanced seating, landscaping, and sheltered cycle parking—are essential enhancements to the Black Ash park and ride facility. It is also important to note that Mick Barry Road serves as a vital link between two of the most significant southern exits from Cork City (the South Link and the Kinsale Road), and the interchange needs to be future-proofed to accommodate the anticipated increase in activity. It is therefore very positive to see the planned enhancements to this development. To truly reduce city centre traffic, cut emissions, and create a vibrant, free-flowing urban environment, we must continue expanding initiatives like this. In addition, these improvements align with the objectives outlined in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Study (CMATS) and the BusConnects Cork programme, both of which aim to promote sustainable transport solutions and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

We recognise the efforts to upgrade and enhance this vital infrastructure in our city. However, it is crucial that these improvements are accompanied by other essential developments, namely a dedicated bus-only lane to and from the city centre to reduce traffic congestion at peak times and encourage the reduction of private car use within the city. A dedicated bus-only lane to and from the city centre would also ensure seamless connectivity with other key public transport options. Therefore, it is a timely opportunity to

consider the facility's connection with the current and future public transportation network to facilitate efficient onward travel to major hubs such as Kent Station and Cork Airport.

It is also an opportune time to review the opening hours of the Black Ash Park and Ride facility, particularly given its role as a key airport interchange. As Cork is home to Ireland's second-largest airport, which is projected to reach five million passengers annually within the next decade, it is crucial that the facility supports travellers using the airport. With Cork Airport experiencing peak departure times between 04:00 and 06:00, and passengers checking in from 04:00 onwards, the absence of 24-hour public transport connectivity represents a missed opportunity. Given the projected growth in passenger numbers at Cork Airport, and the population growth projections for Cork in the coming decades, it is essential that the design of the Black Ash Park and Ride facility takes into account future capacity needs, ensuring the facility can scale to meet increased demand as the city grows.

Additionally, we fully support the inclusion of solar panels as part of the proposed redevelopment of the facility<sup>1</sup>. As a designated Mission City for climate neutrality by 2030, Cork has a strong commitment to sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint. Incorporating solar panels into the redevelopment of the Black Ash Park and Ride facility aligns with these goals by generating renewable energy and setting a best practice example for future redevelopment opportunities throughout the city. Cork Chamber would also encourage the consideration of other green initiatives in the development of this new interchange, such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, and energy-efficient lighting.

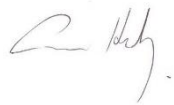
Finally, it is essential that this facility is fully accessible to all users, including those with mobility challenges. This could include ramps, clear signage, and the appropriate design of transport links for people with disabilities.

In conclusion, the proposed upgrades to the Black Ash Park and Ride facility present a significant opportunity to strengthen Cork's sustainable transport infrastructure and support the city's long-term growth. By enhancing connectivity, accessibility, and environmental performance, this development can play a key role in reducing congestion, lowering emissions, and improving quality of life for residents and visitors alike. To fully realise its potential, it is vital that the project is delivered in tandem with strategic investments such as dedicated bus lanes, extended operating hours, and integration with current and future transport networks. Cork Chamber fully supports this development, which will significantly help in meeting the needs of a growing city while advancing Cork's vision for a more connected and sustainable future.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> [Cork's Black Ash bus hub could feature large-scale solar farm under new plan](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Conor Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Conor Healy

CEO