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RE: IAA Statement of Strategy 2026 - 2028

9th May, 2025

To whom it concerns,

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the IAA's Statement of Strategy (2026 – 2028).

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.

Cork is home to Ireland's fastest-growing airport which will serve 3.4 million passengers this year. In addition to its expanding passenger base, it contributes over €1 billion to the Irish economy, directly and indirectly employing over 12,000 people making it a key enabler of trade, commerce and tourism throughout the South of Ireland. Enhanced air connectivity is essential for attracting and retaining international business, enabling access to global markets, and supporting the continued growth of key sectors such as technology, life sciences, and the green economy.

The upcoming update to the IAA's current Statement of Strategy presents a timely opportunity to support Cork Airport in reaching its future goals and projected growth target of over 5 million passengers per annum. As the Cork region continues to grow, continued support for operations at Cork Airport will be critical to unlocking its full potential as a strategic economic asset for the region and the wider national economy. We therefore hope that our observations and comments will be given due consideration in the forthcoming strategy update.

Yours sincerely,



Conor Healy

CEO

Key considerations for IAA Statement of Strategy 2026 - 2028

Regional Growth Recognition

- Acknowledge Cork Airport's role as a key regional airport supporting the southern region's connectivity and economy.
- Given Cork airport's position as Ireland's fastest growing airport, efforts must be made to enhance the connectivity of Cork Airport to the wider public transport system to support improved accessibility for passengers. It is crucial that this is taken into consideration when developing this Statement of Strategy, particularly in any context pertaining to Cork Airport.

Air Traffic Management and Investment

- Ongoing support for enhanced air traffic services and investment in infrastructure at Cork Airport.
- As per consultation with Cork Chamber members Cork Airport:
 - Increased investment in detection capabilities will not always deliver a gain in Opex efficiencies. Despite this, best in class safety and security standards must be a non-negotiable deliverable for all parties.
 - The IAA should invest in developing technical and subject matter experts to ensure a deeper understanding of both security technologies and processes.
 - Safety and security requirements must be adequately included in the UAS rule making and regulatory provisions. These provisions must be sufficiently enforced to protect the interests of aviation in Ireland.
 - With regard to AIP updates, the IAA must drive continuous improvements on promulgation processes and frameworks to ensure accurate, timely information is shared with all end users as required.

Decentralised Aviation Development

- It is crucial that balanced aviation development outside of Dublin, including targets or incentives for airlines to grow regional traffic, is prioritised.
- Look to increase business destinations from Cork Airport including European capital cities and European Airport Hubs. Connectivity is a crucial factor to increasing trade between regions.

Sustainability Initiatives Tailored to Regional Airports

- It is essential that support is given to sustainability initiatives in regional airports like Cork. Cork has already shown leadership with recycling innovations¹ and most recently announced investment in airside equipment enhancements (including green energy airside ground power units) and a 1.7Mw solar farm over the existing Holiday Blue car park². The IAA could collaborate on testbeds for future decarbonisation efforts.
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel presents a critical opportunity for Ireland to decarbonise its aviation sector while stimulating green innovation and economic development. The production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel should be prioritised domestically, positioning Ireland as a leader in green aviation and enhancing energy security. Furthermore, regional airports have the potential to become strategic clusters of excellence for sustainable aviation, serving as innovation hubs for Sustainable Aviation Fuel research, testing, and deployment. Supporting these developments in the updated Statement of Strategy would demonstrate national leadership in climate action and reinforce Ireland's commitment to a low-carbon future in line with EU and global targets. With Cork's potential for offshore renewables, Cork could be targeted as a key European site for the development Sustainable Aviation Fuels from this potential energy source.

Enhanced Engagement with Regional Stakeholders

- Ongoing engagement with regional stakeholders including Cork Chamber is essential to ensure regional aviation opportunities are not missed.
- As per consultation with our members Cork Airport stakeholder workshops in respect of both regulatory developments and the rationale for the IAA's decisions are very positive. This Statement of Strategy should make provision for the sharing of best practice and guidance material to allow industry to conduct its business effectively and compliantly.

Aviation Talent and Training Pipeline

- Recognise the role Cork can play in building future air traffic controllers, pilots, and aviation technicians.

Consumer Protection

- As per consultation with our members Cork Airport it is positive to see the IAA work to involve consumers in regulatory decision making and to uphold consumers rights, however it is critical that a balance is struck between 'airport affordability' for airlines and delivering the needs of consumers.

¹ [Cork Airport becomes first transport hub in Ireland to introduce reverse vending machines as part of Deposit Return Scheme](#)

² [An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD launches ambitious €200 Million Cork Airport Capital Development Plan](#)