

Variation No. 2 Submissions,
Strategic Planning and Heritage,
Planning and Integrated Development Directorate,
Cork City Council,
City Hall
Anglesea Street,
Cork, T12 T997

RE: Proposed Variation no. 2 (Cork Docklands) to the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028
28th May, 2025

To whom it concerns,

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the Proposed Variation no. 2 to the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

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.

The strategic importance of Cork Docklands has been rightfully recognised in national planning policy via its inclusion in the previous version of the National Development Plan (NDP) and must continue to be prioritised in both planning and infrastructure delivery. In particular, support for the Docklands must be matched and enhanced in the reviewed NDP document to accelerate the delivery of enabling and supporting infrastructure. At 147 hectares, Cork Docklands is Ireland's largest brownfield regeneration project and has the capacity to provide 10,000 new homes and up to 25,000 jobs.

The transformation of the Docklands is not only a local imperative but a national opportunity to demonstrate best practice in compact, sustainable development that is well connected to public transport. The Docklands is already home to major investments such as Penrose Dock, Horgan's Quay, and Navigation Square, all of which have transformed the area and supported the creation of some 6,000 jobs. Planning approval has also already been granted for developments that provide capacity for a further 5,000 jobs and more than 3,000 residential units.

Cork Chamber strongly supports the vision for a 15-Minute City and believes that the Docklands is uniquely positioned to exemplify this model creating walkable, vibrant areas

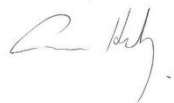
connected by green and blue infrastructure and integrated transport networks. The planned development of Luas Cork, which includes direct access through much of this area, as well as investment in the urban rail network and Bus Connects, will contribute to the sustainability of the region, with some 80% of the journeys set to be made by walking, cycling, or public transport. New streets and bridges are all planned as key components of this connectivity.

The regeneration of the area will strengthen Cork's position as Ireland's second city, support more balanced regional development, and enhance its competitiveness in attracting foreign direct investment on a European scale.

This submission outlines our key recommendations and observations on the Proposed Variation no. 2 to the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 to ensure that this transformative opportunity is delivered with ambition, urgency, and long-term strategic vision.

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this important consultation and remains committed to supporting the successful delivery of a thriving, sustainable, and well-connected Cork Docklands. We hope that our recommendations and observations will be given due consideration, and we look forward to ongoing engagement and collaboration to ensure that this transformative development is delivered with the ambition and urgency it needs, not only for the future of Cork, but for the benefit of the wider region and country.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Conor Healy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Conor Healy

CEO

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Support for Residential Capacity and Transit-Oriented Development

It is very positive to see the population targets of 25,000 people in the Docklands has been maintained despite the increased allocation of open space and public realm. The commitment to transit-oriented development will support sustainable growth and aligns with the aims of the National Sustainable Mobility policy.

This is an opportune moment to reiterate Cork Chamber's position on the importance of mixed tenure in future developments, as outlined in [Cork Chamber's submission to the Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028](#). It is essential that a blend of private, social and affordable housing be included in all new and regenerative communities, guaranteeing that all housing tenures are provided and integrated.

Recognition of Investment and Progress to Date

There is substantial private sector investment in the docklands and the early signs of its success are clear. Investment in Penrose Dock, Horgan's Quay, Navigation Square and Albert Quay have transformed the area and supported the creation of some 6,000 jobs. There is planning approval for developments that provide capacity for a further 5,000 jobs and more than 3,000 residential units.

In addition, Cork Chamber acknowledges the substantial public and private investment to date. It is critical that this momentum is maintained through a continued flow of public and private funding to ensure that the project progresses at pace.

Blue-Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Commitments

Cork Chamber strongly supports the focus on blue-green infrastructure and active travel that is evident throughout Variation No. 2 (Cork Docklands) to the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028. As an SDG Champion we also welcome the development of a linear biodiversity corridor along the River Lee. The extension of walkways, cycleways, and quayside amenities is a positive enhancement to public space and sustainable mobility.

Public Open Space and Community Amenities

The delivery of 9,500m² of community space will be an important placemaking feature of the Docklands and will also provide important amenities for a new community including a library, primary health care facilities, creches, youth facilities, and flexible community spaces.

The requirement for developments to allocate 10–15% of net developable area to public open space will also play an important role in creating a sustainable, liveable and

welcoming environment. The creation of new amenities off the bridge to the east of Water Street as well as the Shipyard Plaza and Polder Cut Park is welcome.

Additionally, it is important to maintain this focus on open spaces and community amenities and ensure they can be adapted where possible to cater for a wide range of users and sports. Infrastructure such as a lido could support swimming alongside facilities for already established sports such as rowing.

Built Heritage and Urban Design

It is essential that built heritage, and urban design is an area of focus in the Docklands regeneration. The emphasis on design quality and respecting Cork's historic fabric is evident and consultation with stakeholders in this arena should continue to ensure that this historic fabric is maintained and lives on for generations.

Mobility Infrastructure and Active Travel

It is crucial that mobility hubs are an aspect of the Cork city region as our population continues to grow. The Kent Station Transport Hub will enhance connectivity and prepare the city for future light rail integration and the rollout of Bus Connects.

We support the modal split target of 75:25 and encourage measures to be put in place to further increase the use of active and sustainable travel.

Sustainable Energy and Climate Adaptation

We support the exploration of a feasibility study for district heating and other climate-responsive infrastructure. However, it is essential that businesses are involved in the exploration of any such initiatives that would result in a change to their operations. Flooding has been a recurring theme in the city's history, including damaging floods in the city and many nearby towns in recent years. It is positive to see an emphasis on flood resilience measures and as an EU Mission City we would encourage the prioritisation of climate adaptation strategies as part of all phases of development.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

As a final point Cork Chamber would emphasise the importance of continued and meaningful consultation with all stakeholders, including landowners, businesses, and the wider community. In particular, where proposed rezoning directly affects existing landowners, we urge that meaningful and ongoing consultation be maintained to ensure transparency, fairness, and the opportunity for stakeholder input throughout the process.

Collaboration will be key to the successful, inclusive regeneration of the Docklands area.

In conclusion, Cork Chamber recognises the ambition and strategic direction set out in Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028. The regeneration of Cork Docklands represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver compact, sustainable, and inclusive urban growth that aligns with national policy and international best practice. Therefore, Cork Chamber commends the continued focus on housing delivery, transit-oriented development, public realm, blue-green infrastructure, and climate resilience. However, to fully realise the potential of this transformation, it is essential that planning is matched by timely infrastructure delivery, active stakeholder engagement, and sustained public and private investment.

In addition, Cork Chamber would like to take this opportunity to restate the areas of priority outlined in our original submission to the Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028 including;

- The provision of housing and a focus on compact growth
- The urgent delivery of CMATS
- The delivery of infrastructure that supports a modal shift from cars
- A focus on green/blue infrastructure
- The delivery of the Lower Lee Flood Relief Scheme and accelerated flood protection in areas where it is needed
- The championing of wind energy (Strong support for offshore wind and renewables)
- A focus on the economy and employment
- A focus on Heritage, Arts and Culture
- Support for the 15-minute city model
- Strong action on vacancy and dereliction

We urge Cork City Council and relevant stakeholders to proceed with ambition, urgency, and collaboration. Cork Docklands can and should serve as a national exemplar of integrated urban regeneration, benefiting the city, the wider region, and the country as a whole.

Cork Chamber remains committed to supporting this vision and looks forward to ongoing engagement to help shape a thriving, well-connected, and future-proofed Cork.