



Forward Planning Department
Offaly County Council
Aras an Chontae
Charleville Road
Tullamore
Co. Offaly
06/10/20

Midlands Innovation Green Trade & Distribution Zone

SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2027
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Dear Sir / Madam,

In response to the Draft consultation on the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 we wish to make the following submission for your consideration.

Our company was established to pursue the economic development of the Midlands and maximise the potential that region has to offer in its central location in Ireland.

Midlands Airport Developments Ltd with its collaborating organisations proposes to develop a Carbon Neutral Trade Zone anchored by a new international airport in the centre of Ireland. The purpose of this development is to create a cross regional initiative to support indigenous and foreign direct investment. This development will act as a showcase for intelligent development, trade and new technologies. It will support regional development and job creation, delivering a higher quality of life for employees. It is projected that the proposed development will create 5200 jobs through direct, indirect and induced employment opportunities.

The proposal is to develop a self-sufficient, carbon neutral smart zone of clusters centred around the airport and the Intelligent Green (iG) infrastructure.

The 9 clusters include:-

- Aviation
- Education
- Intelligent Green Energy Infrastructure
- Logistics
- ICT

- Food & Lifesciences
- Advanced manufacturing
- Leisure & Conference
- Residential

Midlands Airport Developments collaborating organisations include the following

- InSite Bavaria , c/o TUM International GmbH
- Airbus DS GmbH
- Munich Airport International GmbH
- Züblin Ireland
- AXIS architecture
- D3D Ltd
- PPMD Ltd
- JS Group Ltd
- Spatial Innovations Ltd

We acknowledge the inclusion in the last County Development Plan of the Objective STAP-23 to support the location of an airport in Offaly. We would like this objective retained and protected in the new County Development Plan.

We wish to support the suggested wording for inclusion within the OCCDP 2021-2027

SMAP-26 It is Council policy to support the provision of an airport within the county or the midlands where it would contribute towards the proper planning and sustainable development of the county and comply with all environmental legislation and policies and objectives contained within this Plan and higher level planning documents, including the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

In support of this request we enclose a detailed summary of our proposal, its justification and benefits which outlines how the project is consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Framework and the Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Section 6.4 of the RSES in fact specifically calls for local authorities to anticipate and support emerging innovations and enterprises.

“Furthermore, there are place-specific needs from particular industries, such as proximity to high energy services infrastructure, water capacity, availability of a large pool of potential employees, proximity to public transport, access to international markets through airports and ports, and serviced lands. These issues should be considered by local authorities in their

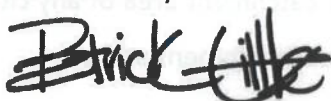
economic zoning objectives in development plans and objectives in LECPs to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing enterprise and realise sectoral opportunities, examples include retail, marine and energy production. The pervasiveness of digitisation across all sectors compounds the complexity of sector development, and it provides for constant and rapid evolution of emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics and virtual reality.

Under the heading of “Unexpected Opportunities for Enterprise Development” RPO 6.2 of the RSES has the objective to “Support local authorities to ensure their LECPs and city and county development plans are sufficiently agile to account for unexpected opportunities, to accommodate valid propositions for enterprise development that may emerge and for which there are strong locational drivers that do not apply to the same extent elsewhere”.

It is our opinion that the Local Authority have anticipated the potential of the region to attract our investment which will partner with the renewable energy sector to create a sustainable and innovative green energy power transport and trade hub.

We thank you for consideration of our submission and we would welcome the opportunity to present our proposal to the assembly in person.

Yours sincerely



DipArch BArchSc MSc MRIAI MRTPI

CEO

Midlands Airport Developments Ltd.

1.1 Executive Summary

The National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 represents an amazing opportunity to contribute to the collective Vision for the future of Ireland. This opportunity must be embraced and not underestimated or limited.

Ireland is at a crossroads in its development. It has moved from its largely rural and agricultural heritage to a more urbanized society. This move has been focused on the traditional urban centres and the established definitions of urban and rural stereotypes. This has resulted in an over dependency on Dublin as a driver for growth and employment. This growth has come at a cost such as availability of housing, affordability of lifestyle, quality of life, quantity of space, long commuting and congestion.

The traditional stereotypical definitions of what is a city and what is the rural area? and how people want to live? have not helped in delivering a solution. We believe that this was a significant contributor to the failure of the NSS.

Our proposal to contribute to the National Planning Framework is to challenge some of the preconceived notions of Urban and Rural Ireland. We propose the creation of a new “Super-Rural” Zone in the Midlands to compliment Dublin and offer an alternative form of economic development built on the strong relationship that exists between urban and rural areas and not built on an urban / rural divide.

This new zone complimenting Athlone’s City Status will be able to capitalise on the 2,400,000 people living within 90minutes drivetime. This is the single largest catchment area of any city in Ireland including Dublin which has only 2,100,000 within the same catchment area.

We propose to develop a catalyst for economic development. This will be a privately funded development located in the centre of the super-rural zone. It will strengthen the structure of the Super rural zone by providing a central urban area and further reduce the distance



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between existing urban centers. This in turn will develop the population required for sustainable transport systems. In the center of this privately funded International Trade and Distribution development zone is a new international airport to relieve pressure on Dublin Airport. It will be connected to the Dublin / Galway Rail line adding over 1,000,000 passengers to the network annually. Importantly it will add €500,000,000 to the regional economy annually and create 5200 jobs.

Under the requirements for Territorial Cohesion enshrined in the Lisbon treaty it is vital that the RSES recognises the potential of the Midlands and grants it a new “Super-rural” structure that maximises it’s potential. In addition, we urge the EMRA to support the privately funded development of International Trade & Distribution Zone centered around the Midlands Airport as a reliever of pressure on Dublin Airport recognising its potential to act as a catalyst for economic development of the Midlands City and also as a contributor to the Dublin Midlands regional economy.

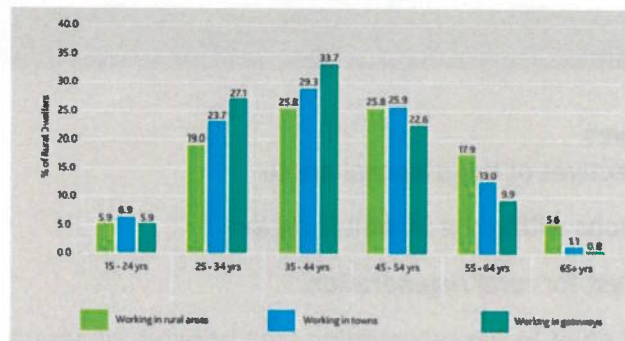
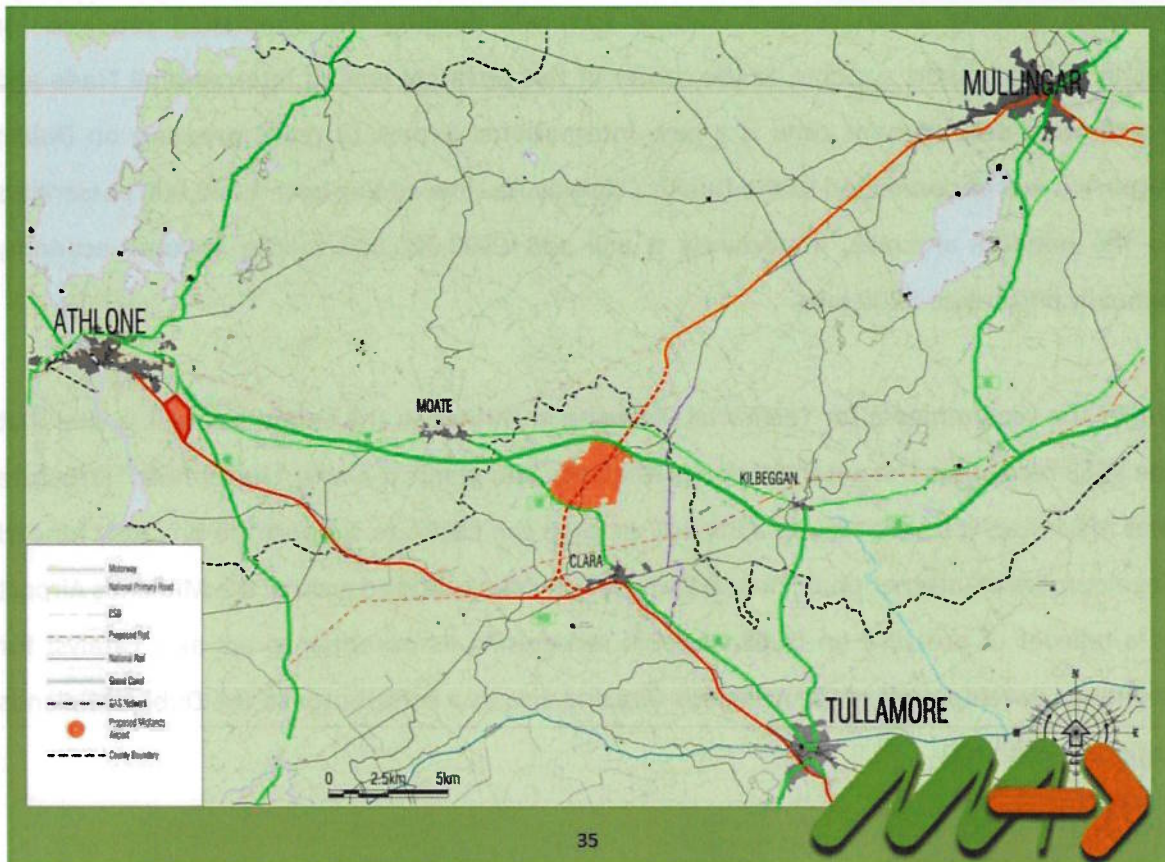


Figure 1 % rural workers in Urban Areas

Figure 2A Potential Spatial Map of Ireland 2040

Project area is Tubber, Co.Offaly . This is a rural area in the heart of the Midlands region. Its strategic advantage is its central location. It is almost equidistant from three of the main towns of Athlone Mullingar & Tullamore. It is also central to the smaller towns of Moate, Kilbeggan & Clara. Because of this strategic location it interacts with the administrative areas of both Offaly & Westmeath. As a catalyst for economic development and job creation this rural location will bring significant benefits to Athlone, Mullingar & Tullamore and all the towns and villages within that triangle.



Key Objectives

The key objectives of the proposal are to

Create 5200 jobs within the Midlands region

Act as a catalyst for rural regeneration

Act as a focal point to the surrounding area bringing villages and towns closer together

Attract inward investment to the region

To add €500m to the GVA of the region per annum

To relieve pressure on the greater Dublin Area

To relieve congestion in Dublin Airport and surrounding areas

To support the Objectives of the NPF

The Market Opportunity

The Irish airport market has 35million passengers per annum. The market is dominated by Dublin Airport which has 86% of Irish traffic. The province of Leinster is the most populous with 38% of the island's population. But Leinster has only 1 airport which is 8% of the national



total. Dublin Airport has a catchment population of 2.1m passengers. The airport has a runway capacity at 30m passengers per annum. Eurocontrol, the agency advising the EU on air traffic, project that Ireland does not have adequate airport capacity to meet its future demands. Ireland requires more efficient and sustainable access to international markets for indigenous and FDI companies. The new National Policy on Aviation published in August 2015 confirms that there will be a capacity issue by 2020 with a shortfall of 6 million passengers. In addition to this Brexit has called into question Irelands current methods to access international markets for trade and goods. 70% of everything we produce in Ireland uses the UK as a landbridge to Irelands international partners. We must reimagine how we connect to our international markets.

Our proposal is to develop a new international trade and distribution zone in the heart of Ireland. It will be centred on a new cargo airport and development campus which will relieve pressure on Dublin and act as a catalyst for economic development of the Midlands by creating jobs and value added to the local economy.

The Midlands region has an airport catchment population of 2.4m people which is larger than Dublin's catchment of 2.1m people. It already has the road and rail infrastructure ready to facilitate the development. The catchment will sustain an annual passenger total of 2.5m people.

The airport will have a 3.5km runway capable of connecting Ireland and the region to global economy. Around the airport we propose to create a Smart Campus with 9 distinct development clusters to which we have already identified anchor tenants to act as the hub of each cluster.

The **smart campus** is the development area around the airport that uses different types of electronic data collection sensors to supply information which is used to manage assets and resources efficiently. This includes data collected from citizens, devices, and assets that is processed and analysed to monitor and manage traffic and transportation systems, power

plants, water supply networks, waste management, law enforcement, information systems, schools, libraries, hospitals, and other community services.

The nine development clusters have been selected to complement the existing strengths of the Midlands and capitalise on the opportunity created by the airport. The nine clusters are

1. Aviation
2. Logistics & Distribution
3. Bio Med & Pharma
4. Conference & leisure
5. ICT
6. Advanced Manufacturing
7. Education
8. Green IFSC
9. Residential



The International Trade & Distribution Zone will promote market entry for foreign companies and enhance competitiveness of local companies as a one-stop-shop for providing infrastructure, knowledge and technology. Critical success factors cover the capability to – develop a consistent marketing strategy (visibility and credibility), – consolidate The International Trade & Distribution Zone as a cluster for competitiveness, innovation and technology, – define a unique business and investment case with best-in-class infrastructure, – offer advanced, all-encompassing and tailor-made business services, – become a market-entry facilitator hub for technology and service providers and – closely interact with aviation sites to attract satellite offices, R&D centres and leverage extensive knowledge transfer. The work of this proposal and the establishment of a Competence Centre Mobility 4.0 will make sure that these success criteria can be met in a realistic time frame and with a maximum impact on the future economic growth of the Midlands region.

Our proposal to contribute to the National Planning Framework is to challenge some of the preconceived notions of Urban and Rural Ireland. We propose the creation of a new “Super-Rural” zone in the Midlands to relieve pressure on the greater Dublin area and offer an



alternative form of economic development built on the strong relationship that exists between urban and rural areas and not built on an urban / rural divide.

This new campus will be able to capitalise on the 2,400,000 people living within 90minutes drivetime. This is the single largest catchment area of any city in Ireland including Dublin which has only 2,100,000 within the same catchment area.

With Athlone's City status we propose to develop a catalyst for economic development for the surrounding Midlands area. The development will be a privately funded development located in the centre of the Super Rural Zone. It will strengthen the structure of Athlone city and the Super Rural Zone by providing a central urban area and further reduce the distance between urban and rural centres. This in turn will develop the population required for sustainable transport systems. In the centre of this privately funded development is a new international airport to relieve pressure on Dublin Airport. It will be connected to the Dublin Galway Rail line adding over 1,000,000 passengers to the network annually. Importantly it will add €500,000,000 to the regional economy annually and create 5200 jobs.

Under the requirements for Territorial Cohesion enshrined in the Lisbon treaty it is vital that the NPF recognises the potential of the Midlands and supports the Super Rural status of the Midlands with a new "Super-rural" structure that maximises it's potential. In addition, we urge the EMRA RSES to support the privately funded development of the International Trade & Distribution Zone centred on the Midlands Airport as a reliever of pressure on Dublin Airport recognising its potential to act as a catalyst for economic development of the Midlands area and as a contributor to the Dublin - Midlands regional economy.

A full Viability Study has been completed and assessed by An Bord Pleanála under Strategic Infrastructure Development pre consultation application.

The project is included in the current Regional Planning Guidelines and the current Offaly County Development Plan. Reference is also made in the 2007 Indecon report on NSS for



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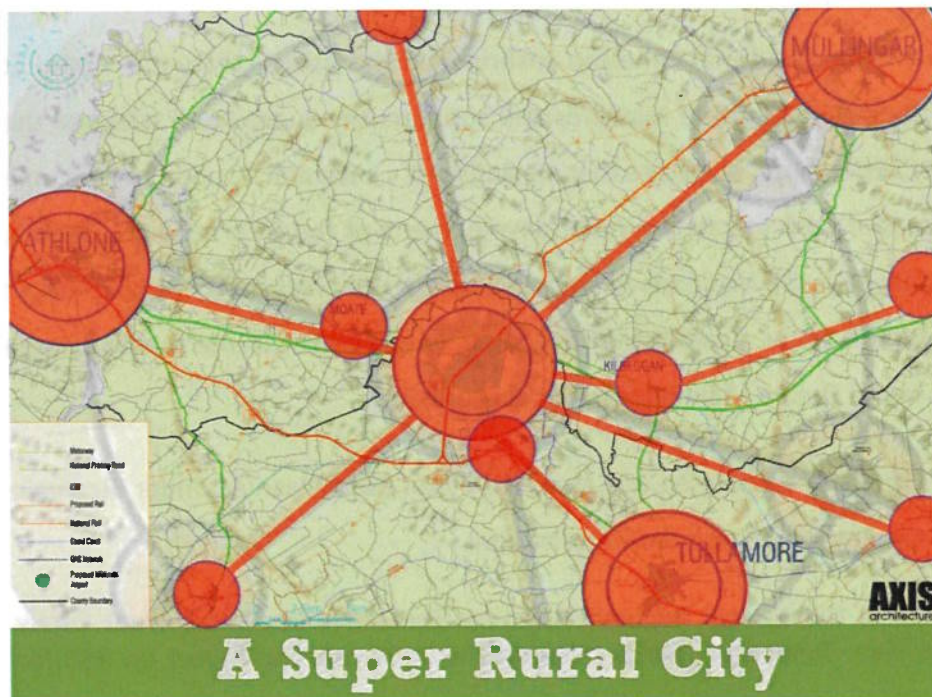
Midlands Gateway. There is also a specific recommendation to develop a new airport in the Leinster region to support Dublin in the Indecon report for Department of Transport 2016

Recentralisation

This project creates a catalyst for economic development that focuses cluster development around the airport. The site location is central to the midlands and will bring the towns and villages of the midlands closer together.

Super Rural City

The super rural city is an innovative concept of clustering and networking towns and villages together to operate as a larger city-like structure of networked neighbourhoods within a rural setting. This organisational structure can have the best of both worlds by being both Urban and Rural. Strategically the zone can support and service the rural area by supplying services to agricultural, recreational and tourism industries. The rural area can support the urban centres by supplying resources and work forces and offering a higher quality of life to all.



Smart City

The entire campus of Airport and commercial development will be planned as a smart city which is entirely networked and interconnected to ensure the sustainable management of resources and data to ensure the city is utilised in the most sustainable way possible. The entire city will be planned on a smart electrical grid. All facilities will be interconnected. Each facility will be constructed to generate and supply power to the smart grid saving power and reducing carbon emissions. The resulting carbon credits will be traded with the airlines creating an incentive to the tenants of the campus to support the sustainable operation of the scheme

Multi Modal Hub

The campus will act as a hub for road, rail and air transport. It will be the first such multimodal hub of its kind in Ireland. Matched with its central location the campus offers an excellent location for a Mobility 4.0 logistics and distribution centre connecting all of Ireland to the Globalised Markets internationally.

Green IFC

As an extension of the smart city concept where carbon credits are traded with the airlines and effectively reducing their impact on the environment. We propose to develop a Green Financial Services Centre where carbon credits from Irelands growing renewable energy and sustainable developments will be enabled to trade carbon credits nationally and internationally.

Job creation

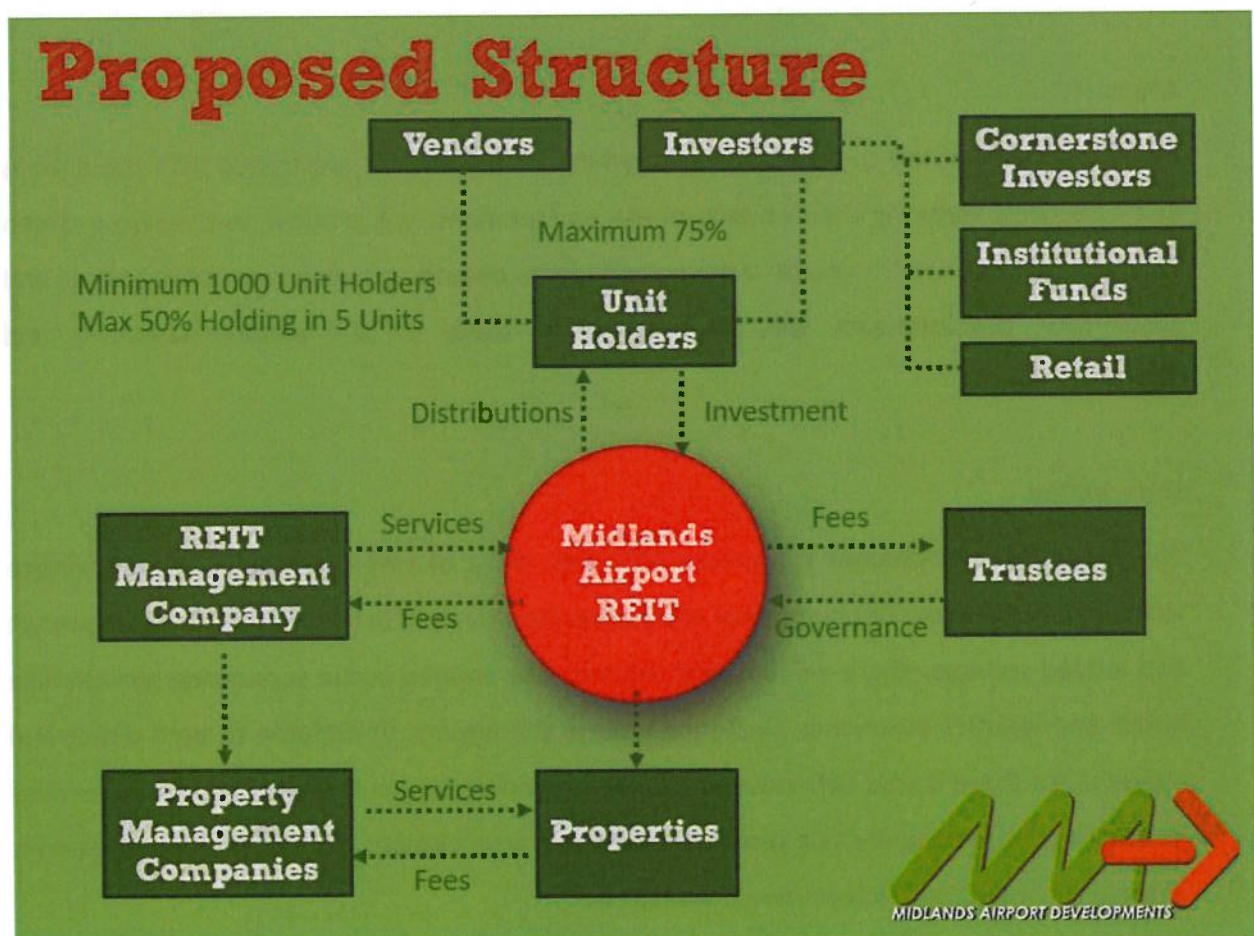
The proposed development will create 5200 Jobs most of which will be in the immediate vicinity of the campus. This consists of 2000 direct jobs involved in the operations of the airport and related services. There will be 2600 induced jobs created in the supporting services like hotels and logistics businesses clustering around the airport. In addition to both direct and indirect jobs there is also 600 induced jobs in the wider surrounding area supplying services to the broader community as a result of the airport development. This level of job creation is entirely consistent with international standards.

Housing supply

Within the campus masterplan there is space allotted for the development of up to 3000 dwellings. The entire site will be operated as a Real estate Investment Trust (REIT) lands will never be resold but offered on a ground rental basis. This reduces the effective cost of access to the housing market and removes land valuation from the property value making it more resilient to the negative impacts of property bubbles.

Real Estate Investment Trust

The project will be developed as a Real Estate Investment Trust outlined in the structure below. The land within the masterplanned campus will be retained in trust for the Unit Holders. This enables the trust to recoup the initial capital investment from the rising rental valuations from the surrounding land. It is this innovation that gives this proposal its unique sustainable investment model





This project has the potential to make significant and lasting changes to both Rural and Urban Ireland. The project can lead the way in sustainable regeneration of the rural area by supporting development that creates employment in the rural area and relieve congestion and development pressure on the greater Dublin region. As a privately backed venture there are significant risks to be overcome to successfully deliver the project. The contribution from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund will de risk the evaluation stage of the project. The requested funds will assist in the completion of the impact assessments identifying all the environmental, social, economic and governance impacts. The outcome of the studies will enable the design to mitigate the impacts and a final design can be submitted to An Bord Pleanàla for Strategic Infrastructure Development approval.

Subject to the approval of the planning permission this project will then be ready for private investment to develop the project and the surrounding campus. The support of the funding will also show a political wiliness to see the creation of 5200 jobs in the Midlands Region

Consultations have taken place with all the landowners within the development area and with the broader community over many years of developing this plan. The pre-application consultation for strategic Infrastructure development was made to an Bord Pleanàla which resulted in 18 months of consultations with the board as well as the Department of Transport and 20 other prescribed bodies.

The outcome has been the project has been welcomed by the local community and local business communities, local authorities and state agencies. We must now establish the exact impacts of the proposed development and outline the mitigation measured required to achieve a sustainable development in accordance with proper planning.

2.0 The Midlands “Super Rural” City

Most of the world’s population now live in cities. But there is not one definition of what a city is or what size it can be. The Birth place of President Bill Clinton is a City called Hope. It has a population of 10,000 people. Tokyo is a city with a population of 40 million people. They are very different places, each with their value and both called cities. The RSES needs to recognise that cities can have very different qualities and still provide essential assets to the economic development of the Country.

A study by the Western Development Commission carried out in May 2014 (Commuting to work: rural Dwellers, Urban Jobs) reports that 1 in 5 rural dwellers work in urban areas.

2.1 City Catchment Areas

It is important to understand the catchment areas of the key cities acting as economic gateways. From our research a 90-minute drivetime is a realistic functional area for the catchment areas of Irish cities. A study of these areas presents a very interesting perspective of the potential of Ireland. Our traditional urban centres were all connected to coastal transport nodes as transport is the key driver to economic development. But their catchment areas are limited by the sea.



Figure 4 Dublin 90min Catchment area



Figure 3 Waterford 90Min Catchment Area



Figure 6 Cork 90min catchment area



Figure 5 Kerry 90min catchment area



Figure 8 Limerick 90m catchment area



Figure 7 Galway 90min catchment area



Figure 10 Sligo 90 min catchment area



Figure 9 Midlands catchment area

Our proposal is to recognise the relationship between rural and urban areas as a collective and not mutually exclusive areas. From our research, we have seen populations of towns



Midlands Airport Developments

calculated on town boundary areas only. This fails to recognise when a boundary was set up and for what political reasons it was established. In many cases, significant areas of development exist on the outside edge of the town boundaries and they go uncounted. We need to move to a more spatially aware set of data to represent of reality country and not one limited by outdated statistical practices. Data driven evidence-based decisions will enable Ireland to realise its true potential.

Rank	City	90 min catchment population
1	Midlands Super Rural City	2,400,000
2	Dublin	2,100,000
3	Limerick	1,200,000
4	Cork	900,000
5	Galway	900,000
6	Kerry	900,000
7	Waterford	800,000
8	Sligo	600,000

Figure 11 Ireland city catchment populations

2.2 Urban Vs Super Rural



Midlands Airport Developments

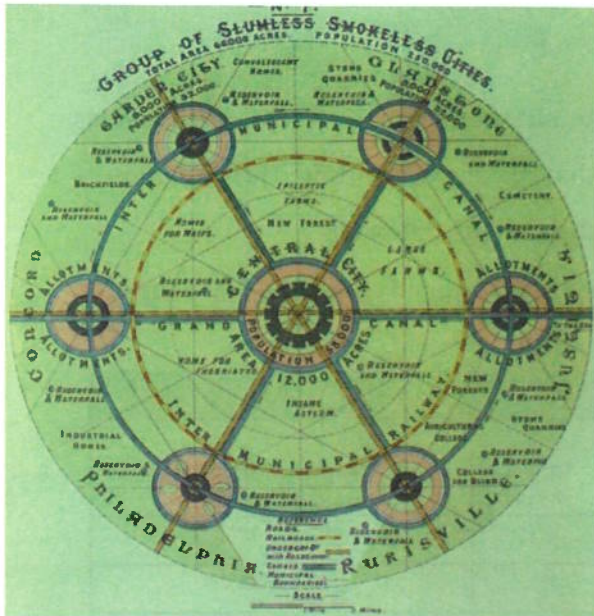


Figure 12 Ebenezer Howard's Garden city plan 1902

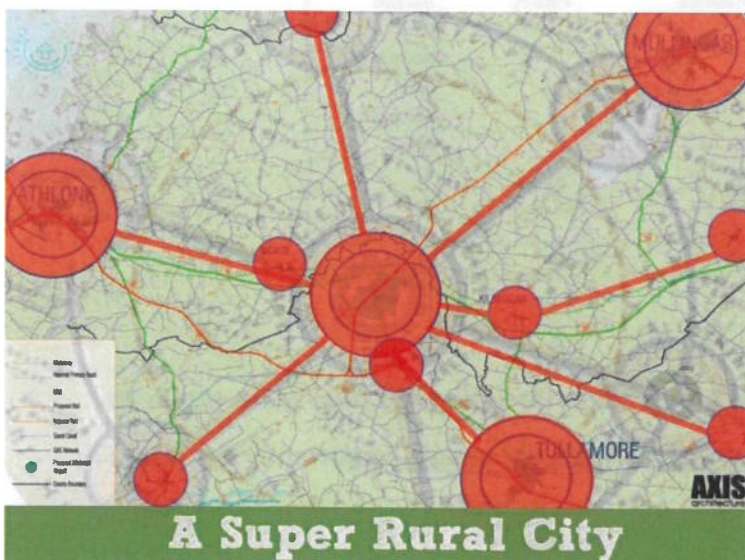
A Super Rural City is not a sprawling urban centre nor has it a mass of sub-urban neighbourhoods. Rather it is a collective of urban centres operating with a common goal to achieve a high quality of life through sustainable design.

It operates with more compact sustainable urban centres with an accessible rural catchment areas. This cuts down on congestion and facilitates a quicker access times to urban centres than you would experience in Dublin for example.

It is much like the Garden Cities proposed by Ebenezer Howard in the early 1900s as a counterbalance to the sprawling industrial cities in Britain.

The Garden cities were to be collectives of sustainable urban centres linked by quality transport systems within close proximity to the countryside offering a high quality of life for its citizens.

The Midlands Gateway plan of the NSS in 2002 consisted of 3 centres acting as an economic gateway. Our proposal is also a polycentric model but does not limit itself to just three centres. It is our contention that the definitions around these three towns and how the statistics were limited to their town boundaries have been a contributory factor to the perceived lack of



success of the NSS plan. A city is not a walled-in exclusive area. The accessibility of urban areas is a key factor to their success. So, it would be futile to ignore the accessible rural areas that surround our urban centres.

Figure 12 The Super Rural City superimposed on the Garden City Plan

We propose to consider the 20-minute drive time around these three key towns which defines the city area and includes the towns and villages within the accessible zone. This definition of space gives an entirely different picture of the Midlands and its potential.

At present the NSS definition of the Midlands gateway gives a population of 56,500 people.

Town	2016 Population	Total
Mullingar	21,100	
Athlone	20,700	
Tullamore	14,700	
Gateway		56,500

When viewed in conjunction with Table 4.1.2 of the NPF consultation document this places the Midlands in the fourth tier of city.

Table 4.1.2 The Hierarchy of Cities and Towns in Ireland in comparison to similar advanced small Countries

Country	Ireland (incl. Northern Ireland)	Denmark	New Zealand	Scotland	Finland
Cities →500,000	Dublin	Copenhagen	Auckland	Glasgow	Helsinki
Cities →200,000	[Belfast] Cork	Aarhus	Christchurch Wellington	Aberdeen Edinburgh	Tampere
Cities →100,000		Aalborg Odense	Dunedin Hamilton Tauranga	Dundee	Jyväskylä Kuopio Lahti Oulu Turku
Cities →50,000	[Derry] Limerick Galway [Lisburn [Newtownabbey] [Bangor] Waterford	Esbjerg Horsens Kolding Randers Roskilde Vejele	Hastings Napier Nelson New Plymouth Palmerston North Rotorua	Cumbernauld Dunfermline East Kilbride Hamilton Livingston Paisley	Hameentlinna Joensuu Kotka Kouvola Lappeenranta Mikkeli Pori Rovaniemi Salo Seinäjoki Vaasa
Total Number of Cities	5 (5)	10	12	10	18
Number of Towns →15,000	25 (16)	35	15	41	36
Overall Total	30 (21)	45	27	51	54

Source: citypopulation.de

Figure 13 Table 4.1.2 from NPF Consultation Paper Feb 2017

However, when we consider the functional area of both the urban and rural space within 20 minutes of the urban centres we get a **population of 165,202 people**. Importantly this places

the new Super rural zone of the Midlands into the missing third tier of city as represented in Table 4.1.2.

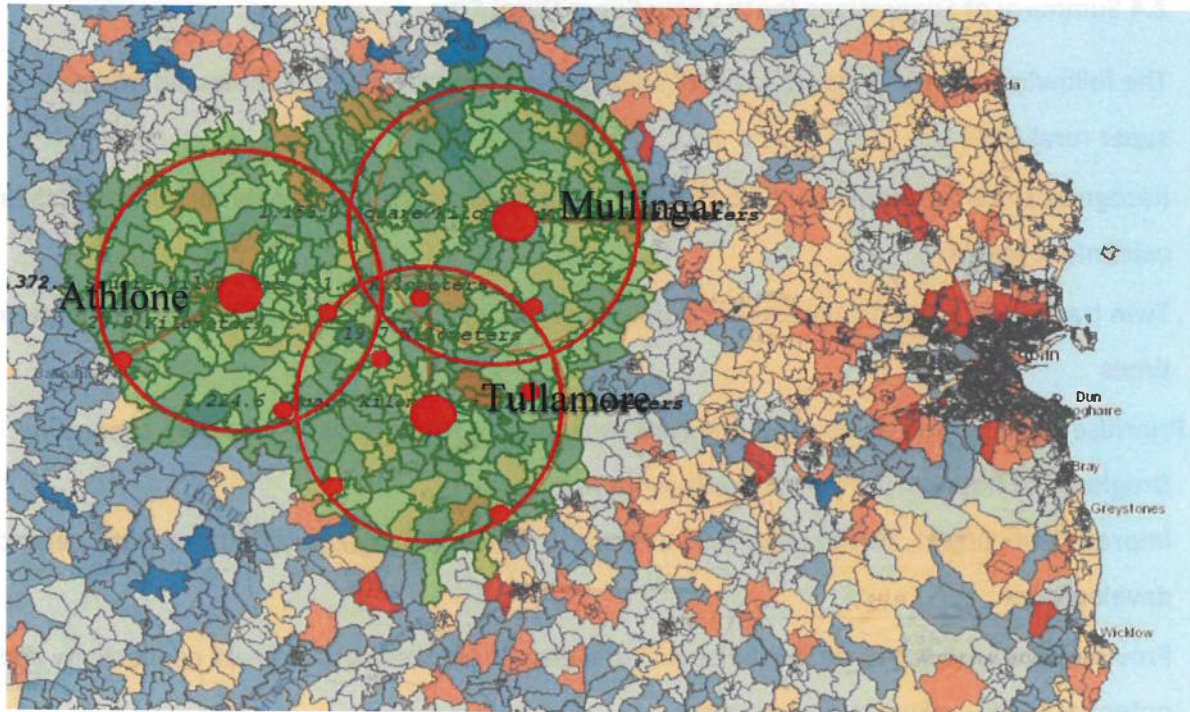


Figure 14 Midlands Super Rural City 2016 Population (Source AIRO)

It is vital for the sustainable future of the Dublin- Midlands Region that this new Super Rural Zone is established and allowed to realise its potential. Governance will be a key challenge. One of the failures of the NSS was the abstract concept of the Polycentric Gateway. Though the people of the Midlands knew what it was, it did not fit with the typical definitions of space. As a result, people reverted to a more insular and parochial attitude which fostered division and poor cooperation. Similarly the individual counties were charged with administering and funding the gateway which also created division and a lack of incentive. When the gateway innovation fund failed to appear it all but stalled the concept.

People can understand the term city even with its many variations. Dublin after all is not defined by its city boundary. It does not exclude Blackrock or Tallaght or Swords from its statistics. But it is understood as one entity and managed as such. We believe that the redesignation of the Midlands Gateway as the Midlands City lead by Athlone will create a significant difference to people understanding of the potential.

2.4 Summary of Suggestions for the new Super Rural City

The following is a non-exhaustive list of suggestions to help facilitate a successful Midlands super rural city.

Recognise the true population (165,000 people) and area served by the three towns and their catchment towns.

Twin track the rail connection on the Dublin Athlone line and provide half hour serves at peak times

Prioritise the upgrade of the N52 and N80 to create an outer orbital motorway connecting Drogheda to Rosslare via the midlands super rural zone

Improve the Eirgrid infrastructure connecting to the city to support future data centric development

Provide fibre broadband within the super rural area to create improved data connectivity and potential for e-working and commerce

Continue to fund the expansion of wastewater and water treatment services within the super rural area.

Make a focused effort to encourage new enterprise to locate to the Midlands to capitalise on the largest catchment population in the country.

Strategically designate sites along the transport corridors for new LAPs for housing and key services and prioritise these development over Dublin to change the mindset of commuters and developers alike.

Invest in Athlone Institute of Technology to assist in its role as the key educator of the innovative and specialised workforce required for the Industries in the Region.

Fund the required environmental protection developments to counteract the impacts of climate change

Support the investments of Bord na Mona, Coillte and the ESB as they reimagine their role within the region.

Designate the Midlands Super Rural Zone as the national centre for renewable energies and create the Green IFSC for the development of the green energy sector for the whole island

3.0 The International Trade & Distribution Zone

This proposal for an International Trade & distribution zone will act as an intermodal transportation hub including an airport in the Midlands which is borne out of the National Spatial Strategy 2002. The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020¹ created the polycentric Gateway of Athlone, Mullingar and Tullamore to act as the economic centre to the Midlands Region.

One of the key weaknesses in the Midlands is poor international connectivity and links to an airport.

This was confirmed in the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines 2004-2010. Subsequently it was further analysed in the Indecon Report which was commissioned on behalf of Offaly and Westmeath County Councils to create a Strategic Framework for the Midlands Gateway in 2007. In fact the Indecon report contains a survey of key issues for businesses in the Midlands and the majority expressed that the lack of an airport as a fundamental issue for them.

In addition to addressing one of the key weaknesses the development of an airport acts as an economic catalyst in both Job creation and wealth generation. It improves the quality of life for citizens of the region and attracts an increase in population as well as an increase in businesses and employers. It helps to build the critical mass required for the gateway and improves the infrastructure for the region adding a rail connection direct to the airport and increasing usage of that infrastructure. Therefore, not only is the airport an end in itself but it is also a means to achieving many of the other objectives for the region. In our opinion it is the single most important development in the region that has the potential to act as a catalyst for achieving the other goals of the region.

3.1 Supporting Private Development within the NPF

The purpose of this submission is to request the Department of Housing Planning community & Local Government (DHPCLG) to include the development of this proposed multimodal

¹The National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020 (Government Publications, 2002)

transportation hub as a specific objective in the National Planning Framework. The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines which is the next plan down within the planning hierarchy makes reference to the development of an airport in the Midlands. This is contained on page 74 and states ***“It is recognised that the Midlands Region would benefit by having enhanced air access and supports the development of an airport within the region.”***²

Whilst it is positive the Midlands Regional Planning Authority considers it to be of benefit to develop an airport in the Midlands this statement must be echoed in the new RSES. We recognise that it is not the role of the RSES to get down into the detail of private development. But it is vital that the EMRA recognises the importance of the scale of this development and its potential. We stress that it is important that this is not a state funded development as it must compete with already owned State businesses to truly benefit the economy. The RSES can recognise the importance of the proposal and support the infrastructural requirements and strategy that this proposal is a part of. We respectfully request that the EMRA include a specific objective to encourage the development of a privately funded International Trade & Distribution Zone centred on a multimodal transportation hub including an international airport and rail connection between Tubber and Horseleap.

3.2 Project Background

Midlands Airport Development Ltd has commissioned AXIS:architecture to develop their plans for a multimodal transportation hub based in the Midlands Gateway. AXIS:architecture has consulted with RDG Solutions and the Infrata Group who have undertaken an examination of the potential to develop a new airport for the Irish Midlands region³.

The proposal is twofold.

To create a catalyst for economic development of the Gateway

To create a cargo and passenger airport to effectively service the region and to act as a reliever airport to the greater Dublin area

² (Midlands Planning Authority, 2010)

³ (AXIS:architecture, 2008)

Midlands Airport Development- Proposal summary

The proposal to create a new international Trade & Distribution zone centred around an airport in the Midlands is a direct response to the aims of the National Spatial Strategy⁴.

This proposal is intended to act as a catalyst for economic development of the region.

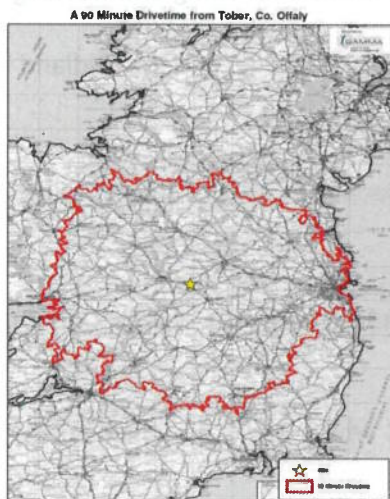
In 2002 the National Spatial Strategy designated the Midlands as one of nine Gateways in Ireland

These Gateways are to be the centres of economic development.

The Midlands Gateway is a polycentric alliance between Tullamore, Athlone and Mullingar.

Midlands Gateway has...

- 165,000 people within 20 minute drive time
- 350,000 people within 40 minute drive time
- 2,400,000 people within 90 minute drive time
- Second highest Growth Rate in the Country
- 3rd largest catchment population in the country which will soon overtake Cork as the 2nd highest.



50 miles west of Dublin with access to major road developments

The National Spatial Strategy 2002 -2020 (Government Publications, 2002)

The National Spatial Strategy states that every Gateway should be within at least one hour of an airport. The Midlands Gateway is not within one hour of an airport.

48% of businesses surveyed in Indecon state access to airport as a major weakness⁵.

The Midlands is the lowest performing region in the Country

Midlands GVA is half the next lowest region

Midlands has the highest percentage of people travelling more than 30+ miles to work.

An airport would act as a gateway to the region providing jobs and generating wealth⁶.

Diverse regional economy based on agriculture, pharmaceuticals and IT.

Midlands Airport will not be similar to other regional airports but will instead be an integrated element of an International Services campus which will be a significant national and regional economic contributor.

The International Trade & Distribution zone and airport will reflect a leading-edge design with particular emphasis on operational cost efficiency and the optimisation of the natural environment incorporating renewable energy sources.

The International Trade & Distribution zone will have the capacity to integrate foreign direct investment and indigenous innovation within an environment suitable for living and working.

The development is accommodated within Offaly's County Development Plan and the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines

An Bord Pleanála has formed the preliminary view that the project as Strategic Infrastructure Development under the 2006 Planning and Development Act.

This proposal is supported by the Indecon Report 2007 and also by the Offaly County Development Plan⁷.

There is also provision within the Indecon report for an SDZ which could be linked to the airport⁸.

⁵ Strategic Development Framework for the Midlands Gateway. Indecon 2006

⁶ (Capita Symond, 2007)

⁷ (EU Commission, 2007)

⁸ (Eurocontrol, 2008)

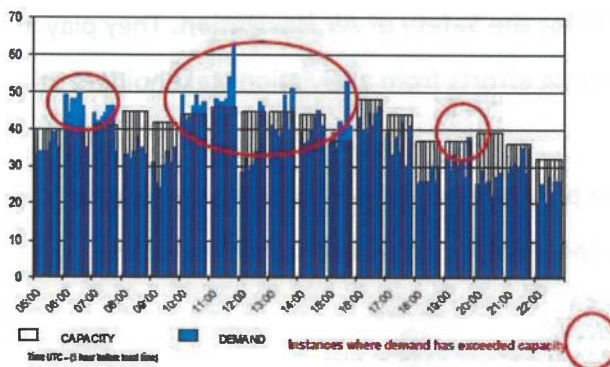
3.3 Planning Hierarchy

The planning hierarchy is critical to the delivery of the proposed development. One must understand the proposal from the European, National, Regional and Local perspectives.

3.4 European Context

EU policy⁹ on Airport capacity and ground handling: towards a more efficiency policy(2007/2092(INI)) and Eurocontrol report¹⁰ (Nov 08)states that by the year 2030, this would result in a growth in demand for flights in Ireland 2.3 - 2.8 times higher than that of 2007 ; i.e. between 53 -65 million passengers per annum in Dublin alone. Dublin has only the maximum potential of 50 million passengers if there is a third terminal built along with new parallel runway. ¹¹

Summer 2008 : Total Runway demand and capacity



Summer 2008 : Total Runway Demand and Capacity of Dublin Airport (Ref 6)

Dublin Airport is currently operating at capacity and will in fact be turning business away in 2017 /2018. Despite its plans to expand it will not be able to develop sufficient capacity to accommodate the future demand. Existing airports cannot expand as required, the only alternative way; therefore, to handle the mass of un-accommodated flights in 2025 would be the creation of relief airports in the vicinity of their congested counterparts;

⁹ (EU Commission, 2007)

¹⁰ (Eurocontrol, 2008)

¹¹ Dublin Airport Authority – Capital Investment programme 2009 – 2014, Proposals for Consultation DAA/CIP05



Midlands Airport Developments

The shortage of capacity and the increase in demand will necessarily create a market for new major airports (up to 10 according to a Eurocontrol study) and medium sized airports (up to 15 according to Eurocontrol);

This future evolution of air transport in Europe makes it urgent to anticipate the necessary steps that should be taken at EU level for the benefit of its citizens and of its economy as a whole.

The EU commission welcomes any airport regions initiative that would lead to Europe-wide dialogue on issues linked to the development of new capacity, particularly on environmental consequences for neighbouring populations, on land planning and on growth and employment¹².

Midlands Airport will act as a reliever airport to Dublin as well as creating economic development in the Midlands.

3.5 European Context

EUROCONTROL is the **European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation**. They play a unique role at the European level in coordinating efforts from all aviation stakeholders to achieve common goals.

They report directly to the EU Commission to provide decision-makers with up-to-date assessments of the challenges presented by the increasing demand for air transport.

Demand issues exist across Europe

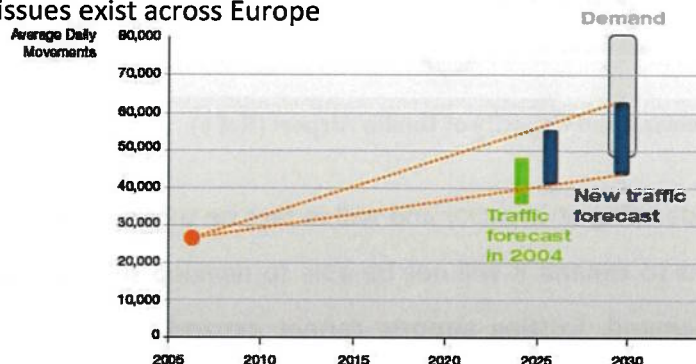


Figure 2.7 - Ref: 17 - EUROCONTROL Long-Term Forecast

From Irish perspective this means that Dublin will not have the capacity to deal with the demand.

¹² (EU Commission, 2007)

“We want to encourage growth at regional airports, and we have concluded that increased capacity is needed at a number of airports across the country, including some new runway capacity, more terminal capacity and support facilities.”¹³

“Airports are particularly important for the development of regional and local economies, and proposals for their development need to be incorporated within the relevant spatial and economic development strategies.”¹⁴

“Proposals to establish Centres of Excellence for aircraft maintenance and aviation-related business clusters at or around regional airports could also contribute to these aims.”¹⁵

3.6 EU Policy

Eurocontrols report “Challenges of Growth 2008” is supported by a report on EU policy on Airport capacity and ground handling: towards a more efficiency policy (2007/2092(INI)). By the year 2030, this would result in a growth in demand for flights in Ireland 2.3 - 2.8 times higher than that of 2007; i.e. between 53 -65 million passengers per annum in Dublin alone. Dublin has only the maximum potential of 50 million passengers if there is a third terminal built along with new parallel runway.

¹³ EUROCONTROL Long-Term Forecast. IFR Flight Movements 2006 – 2025 European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) December 2006. STATFOR, the EUROCONTROL Statistics and Forecast Service, statfor.info@eurocontrol.int <http://www.eurocontrol.int/statfor> (Eurocontrol, 2008)

¹⁴ Future of Air Transport White Paper (Department of Transport UK, 2003)

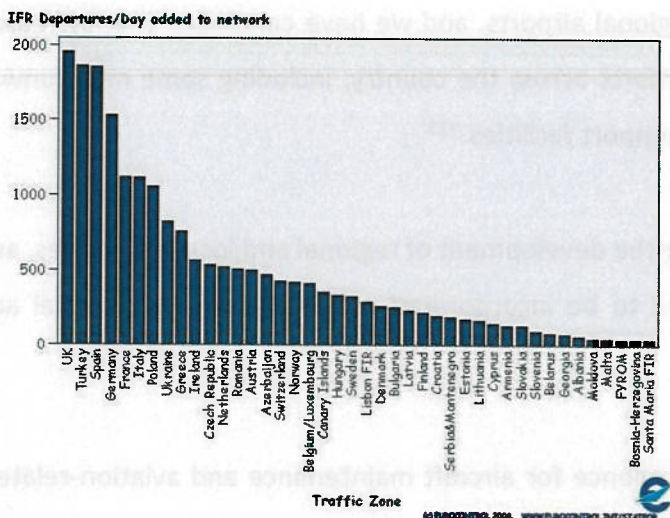


Figure 2.14 – Ref 17 Traffic added to the European Network 2025 v 2005, EUROCONTROL Long-Term Forecast

A report on EU policy on Airport capacity and ground handling: towards a more efficiency policy (2007/2092(INI))

- A. Globalisation and rapid economic growth will result, in the EU, in a growth in demand for flights (traffic without airport constraints) averaging at least 4.3% per annum and most probably as much as 5.2% per annum;
- B. By the year 2025, this would result in a growth in demand for flights 2.5 times higher than that of 2003 ;
- C. In 2025, with all new investments taken into account, more than 60 airports will be unable to handle the typical busy hourly demand without generating delays or un-accommodated demand (3.7 million flights a year would then be un-accommodated);
- D. Existing airports cannot expand as required, the only alternative way, therefore, to handle the mass of un-accommodated flights in 2025 would be the creation of relief airports in the vicinity of their congested counterparts;
- E. The shortage of capacity and the increase in demand will necessarily create a market for new major airports (up to 10 according to a Eurocontrol study) and medium sized airports (up to 15 according to Eurocontrol);

- F. This future evolution of air transport in Europe makes it urgent to anticipate the necessary steps that should be taken at EU level for the benefit of its citizens and of its economy as a whole;
- G. Calls on the Council to devise a framework and timetable in order to enhance cooperation between civil aviation authorities of neighbouring Member States so as to guarantee a significant step forward before 2010 as regards the building of functional airspace blocks;
- H. Urges the Commission, if no significant step has been taken by Member States by 2010, to launch a top-down approach to guarantee substantial improvements;

The report is of the opinion that the extension of airport capacity will not be possible without efficient and thorough collaboration between airports and regional and local authorities hosting them;

It also welcomes any airport regions initiative that would lead to Europe-wide dialogue on issues linked to the development of new capacity, particularly on environmental consequences for neighbouring populations, on land planning and on growth and employment;

The report calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate the exchange of best practice concerning the public management of those airport regions and to financially support pilot projects and research programmes connected with the issue of the impact that the building of new airport capacity would have on surrounding territories;

The long-term increase in traffic demand

Following a 2004 Eurocontrol study, globalisation and rapid economic growth will result in a flight demand growth (traffic without airport constraints) averaging 4.3% p.a.

By the year 2025, this scenario would result in a growth of 2.5 times the 2003 flight demand. The current actualisation of the study by Eurocontrol seems to demonstrate that the growth will be higher than expected in the most challenging 2004 scenario (a growth of 5,2 % p.a. in now the most credible figure).

In 2025, with all new investments taken into account, more than 60 airports will be unable to handle the typical busy hour demand without generating delays or un-accommodated demand. (3.7 million Flights a year would then be un-accommodated).

However, it would be possible to find capacity for up to 2.6 million of the 3.7 million un-accommodated flights by accepting less ideal times (push traffic of the peak hours) and places (push traffic to secondary airports).

If the air transport market requires demand distribution patterns to remain as they are, and considering that existing airports cannot expand as required, the only alternative way to handle the mass of un-accommodated flights in 2025 would be the creation of **reliever airports** in the vicinity of their congested counterparts.

The optimisation of existing capacities and traffic conditions is not enough to address the rise in demand.

The general opinion of stakeholders is that the shortage of capacity and the increase in demand will necessarily open a market for new major airports.

Addressing the traffic growth by building new capacity can be environmentally friendly

- It would save unnecessary emissions due to en route or ramp congestion.
- External costs will be smoothed by the improvement of the environmental performance of engines, by a regular renewal of the fleets and by the increase of use of the super-sized jumbo jets such as the A-380 (which already consumes 20% less kerosene than its competitors).
- But it would also need to be accompanied by suitable EU measures to limit the negative external effects of air traffic (GHG emissions, noises) such as ETS, taxation of kerosene, differentiation of airport charges according to environmental performance.

Existing airports cannot expand as required, the only alternative way; therefore, to handle the mass of un-accommodated flights in 2025 would be the creation of relief airports in the vicinity of their congested counterparts;



Midlands Airport Developments

This future evolution of air transport in Europe makes it urgent to anticipate the necessary steps that should be taken at EU level for the benefit of its citizens and of its economy as a whole;

The EU commission¹⁵ welcomes any airport regions initiative that would lead to Europe-wide dialogue on issues linked to the development of new capacity, particularly on environmental consequences for neighbouring populations, on land planning and on growth and employment;

“Four scenarios are used to capture four possible futures for aviation.

In 2003 and 2004, Eurocontrol had a number of discussions with the STATFOR User Group and the steering group for the Challenges to Growth study about scenarios for the future. The main conclusions of these discussions were:

- *A single scenario is not sufficient to capture the uncertainty in how the aviation industry will look in 2025;*
- *Instead, four scenarios drawing on the work of CONSAVE (Ref. 6), ACARE (Ref. 7) and the IPCC (Ref. 8) are more appropriate.*

These conclusions remain valid, so the structure of the four scenarios in the LTF will be maintained. Each of the four scenarios is a realistic, possible future for the air traffic industry. These futures are qualitatively and quantitatively quite different from each other, but do not represent the most extreme futures in a particular direction. There are two mid-growth scenarios, having different economic circumstances, a high-growth scenario that assumes that few of today’s apparent challenges have any real impact on future growth, and a low-growth scenario that explores a less stable World. The four scenarios are:”

¹⁵ European Parliament, *Committee on Transport and Tourism, draft report*, on Airport capacity and ground handling: towards a more efficiency policy (2007/2092(INI)), Committee on Transport and Tourism - Rapporteur: Anne E. Jensen

- **Scenario A: Global Growth:** Strong economic growth in an increasingly globalised economy, with technology used successfully to mitigate the effects of challenges such as the environment and security.
- **Scenario B: Business as Usual:** Moderate economic growth and little change from the status quo, that is, trends continue as currently observed.
- **Scenario C: Regulation & Growth:** Moderate economic growth, but with stronger regulation to address growing environmental challenges for aviation and for Europe more generally.
- **Scenario D: Fragmenting World:** A World with increasing tensions between regions, with knock-on effects of weaker economies, reduced trade and less long haul travel.

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2014 / 2008	2015	2020 / 2016	2025 / 2021	2030 / 2026	AAGR 2030/ 2007	Traffic Multiple 2030/ 2007
Ireland	ScA	.	.	.	.	6.9%	4.0%	4.4%	3.1%	2.9%	4.5%	2.8
	ScB	.	.	.	.	5.1%	3.0%	4.0%	2.9%	2.5%	3.7%	2.3
	ScC	2.8%	6.6%	5.4%	5.9%	5.1%	2.2%	2.8%	1.9%	1.6%	3.0%	2.0
	ScD	.	.	.	.	3.3%	2.1%	2.6%	2.2%	1.9%	2.6%	1.8

Figure 2.15 – Forecast Growth Rates – Ref 17 EUROCONTROL Long-Term Forecast¹⁶

Dublin airport is over capacity. Based on the Eurocontrol report it will not be able to meet demands even if it completes all the planned extensions. It will only have a capacity of 35 million by 2025, and a maximum potential for 50 million passengers. At present Dublin airport has almost 30 million passengers.

Midlands Airport will act as a reliever airport to Dublin as well as creating economic development in the Midlands. The proposed development is consistent with the objectives set out in the Eurocontrol and the EU Commission reports. It is also consistent with the Indecon report published by the Department of Transport in July 2016

¹⁶ EUROCONTROL Long-Term Forecast. IFR Flight Movements 2006 – 2025 European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) December 2006, STATFOR, the EUROCONTROL Statistics and Forecast Service, staffor.info@eurocontrol.int <http://www.eurocontrol.int/statfor> +32 2 729 4675 – Dr David Marsh



Midlands Airport Developments

In light of Brexit 70% of everything Ireland produces uses the UK as a land bridge to access our international partners. Ireland needs additional distribution capacity to reach our global markets.

3.5 The National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework

The National Strategic Outcomes in the National Planning Framework are support by the project under the following headings		
1.	Compact Growth	
2.	Enhanced Regional Accessibility	
3.	Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities	
4.	Sustainable Mobility	
5.	A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills	
6.	High-Quality International Connectivity	
7.	Enhanced Amenity and Heritage	
8.	Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society	
9.	Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources	
10.	Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services	

Compact Growth

This project aims to secure the sustainable growth of more compact urban and rural settlements supported by infrastructure, jobs, houses, services and amenities, rather than continued sprawl and unplanned, uneconomic growth. This proposal is a streamlined and co-ordinated investment in rural and regional infrastructure. This will give scope for greater densities that are centrally located, as well as bringing life and economic activity back into our communities and existing settlements. The project will become a catalyst for creating critical mass and scale with enabling infrastructure, in particular increased investment in public and sustainable transport and supporting amenities, can act as crucial growth drivers. This can play a crucial role in creating more attractive places for people to live and work in, facilitating economic growth and employment creation by increasing Ireland's attractiveness to foreign investment and strengthening opportunities for indigenous enterprise

Enhanced Regional Accessibility

A core priority under the NPF is the essential requirement to enhance and upgrade accessibility between urban centres of population and their regions, in parallel with the initiation of compact growth of urban centres. This has a crucial role to play in maximising the growth potential of the regional urban centres and the economy as a whole. This proposal utilises the already constructed M6 motorway. It is also investing in connecting the site to the national rail network through private investment which will add 1.5million passengers per annum to the national rail network. Irish rail have confirmed that they already have adequate rolling stock to increase services on the Dublin Galway line to half hour services at peak times as a result of servicing the airport. Uniquely this site will combine road, rail and air services in one location. This will significantly enhance the accessibility of the rural area around the midlands which is currently the only Nuts 3 region in Ireland not served by an airport within 1hr.

Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

The full participation of rural communities in the strategic development as envisaged under the NPF is imperative to achieving the full potential of a broad range of strategic outcomes detailed in the National Development Plan. This applies both in terms of the traditional pillars of the rural economy, the natural resource and food sector, as well as those emerging from such developments as improved connectivity, broadband and rural economic development opportunities. This proposal is aimed at realising our rural potential and focuses on supporting enterprise and employment in the rural area. The project improves infrastructure and connectivity, and supports sustainable rural communities;

The project also supports the Government's Tourism Policy, People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025 and subsequent Tourism Action Plan 2016-2018. The project recognises the important contribution of tourism to the economy, and the significant investment in the development of tourism projects and attractions through Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Development & Innovation. The project will accommodate up to 3million passengers per annum

The Investment will also support growth in the agri-food sector, including

in schemes operated through the Rural Development Programme and Forestry Programme, which will empower rural communities and underpin the sustainable growth of the agri-food sector as set out in Food Wise 2025: A 10-year Vision for the Irish Agri-Food Industry

Sustainable Mobility

The proposal will deliver a more environmentally sustainable public transport system that will enable growth and change in the Midlands area. The significant increase in travel demand and urban congestion needs relief. The proposal will contribute to our national policy vision of a low-carbon economy through the smart city concept. This is a step change putting in place environmentally sustainable public transport systems in order to secure Ireland's climate action goals. The innovative carbon trading scheme represents decisive shift away from polluting and offsetting carbon-intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and other alternatively fueled systems for public transport fleets. The expansion of attractive and sustainable public transport alternatives to private based car transport will reduce congestion and emissions and enable the transport sector to cater in an environmentally sustainable way for the demands associated with longer term population and employment growth envisaged under the NPF.

A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills

The proposed development will create 5200 Jobs most of which will be in the immediate vicinity of the campus. This consists of 2000 direct jobs involved in the operations of the airport and related services. There will be 2600 induced jobs created in the supporting services like hotels and logistics businesses clustering around the airport. In addition to both direct and indirect jobs there is also 600 induced jobs in the wider surrounding area supplying services to the broader community as a result of the airport development. This level of job creation is entirely consistent with international standards.

A competitive, innovative and resilient enterprise base is essential to provide the jobs and employment opportunities for people to live and prosper in all regions. Achieving the ambitious employment targets in the NPF in the context of increased global uncertainty, Brexit and technological disruption, underlines the importance of building competitive regional

clusters and generating an uplift in enterprise export competitiveness to secure sustainable jobs and growth. The vision for national enterprise policy as set out in Enterprise 2025: Innovative, Agile, Connected is for Ireland to be the best place to succeed in business, delivering higher standards of living for all. Specifically, the national policy goal is to: achieve sustainable full employment; bring unemployment rates down to within 1% of the national average in all regions; and, achieve regional productivity convergence so all regions are within 10% of the average outside Dublin and with international comparators.

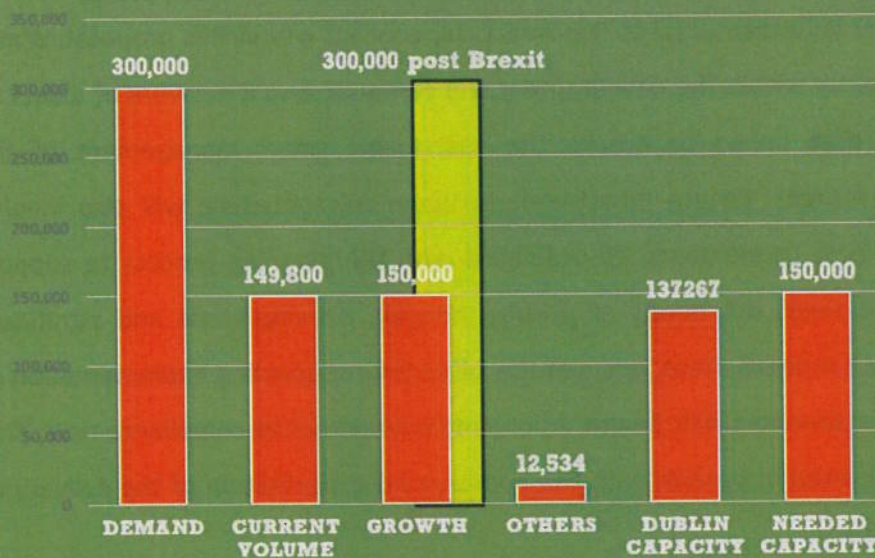
High-Quality International Connectivity

As an island, continued investment in our port and airport connections to the UK, the EU and the rest of the world, is integral to underpinning international competitiveness. It is also central to responding to the challenges as well as the opportunities arising from Brexit. Significant investment in Ireland's airports and ports will play a major role in safeguarding and enhancing Ireland's international connectivity which is fundamental to Ireland's international competitiveness, trading performance in both goods and services and enhancing its attractiveness to foreign direct investment. The importance of this objective cannot be understated in the context of the UK's exit from the EU in 2019. Currently over 150,000 of Irish product flies out of UK airports. This cannot be accommodated in Dublin airport due to capacity constraints. The proposed centrally located distribution and Mobility hub will be using Mobility 4.0 integrated distribution and logistics services to supply data driven distribution channels

Existing Air Freight Capacity



AIR FREIGHT DEMAND V CAPACITY





Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society

Highlighted in strategies such as the National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework: Planning for a Climate-Resilient Ireland. Ireland's ambition must go further than a focus on achieving compliance with international commitments. The NPF highlights the centrality of this NSO to all other elements of spatial policy. where we live, where we work, and how we travel all directly relevant to the pattern of energy use and in particular the current level of harmful greenhouse gas emissions to which Ireland is committed to achieving substantial reductions.

The proposed smart city campus will develop a detailed and coherent roadmap that will put in place an integrated set of actions with the destination of achieving a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy and society. The campus will operate in a carbon neutral environment. It will trade carbon credits from the renewable energy measures adopted by all buildings within the campus with the carbon debits created by the airlines operating in the airport.

Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources

Resource management is fundamental to the smart city concept within this proposal. Water and wastewater networks within the development will comprise a vast network of assets all interconnected, and data linked to ensure the sustainable smart management of the infrastructure and resources. Future investment in water infrastructure will also involve increased delivery of new connections, co-ordinated with the planning process to support economic growth and meet the needs of priority housing developments and significant development and urban renewal areas, while at the same time supporting implementation of national strategies in relation to public health, safety and environmental compliance risks. This investment will be delivered in parallel with the continued transformation of the delivery of water services to ensure:

- consistent application of maintenance standards;
- achievement of significant operational changes and operating cost savings; and



- embedding of water conservation and sustainable water resource management into water policy.

In line with the Water Services Act 2017, the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government will publish a Water Services Policy Statement during 2018 in respect of the policy objectives and priorities of the Government regarding the provision of water services in the State. Irish Water will also submit a strategic funding plan required by the new legislation later this year, setting out expected expenditure, income and funding requirements over a multi-annual period, while also meeting environmental requirements such as obligations under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Drinking Water Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive-mandated River Basin Management Plans.

The Midlands region has been historically less prosperous than most of Ireland, especially Dublin. However, it is undergoing a renaissance driven by high costs of living and investing in Dublin and its population is growing by 2% a year, as well as the new collaborative energies of the combined Gateway

The region has a healthy mix of high technology, medical services and agriculture but it underperforms in terms of tourism. There is an expectation of growth in all these sectors.

The historically poor road network had a major overhaul with investments into all the main arteries to Dublin and across the region. The M6 has been completed between Dublin and Athlone in 2008 and its extension to Galway in 2010. The N52 and N80 are also due for upgrade under the Transport 21 programme.

The key point for this development coming out of the NSS is that there is a need for 1hour or less access to airports from gateways-hubs. The Midlands gateway is the only gateway in the country not to be able to achieve this.



3.7 Indecon Report 2007 - The Strategic Framework for the Midlands Gateway¹⁷

Indecon were commissioned to prepare a framework plan for the operation of the new Midlands Gateway. This was published in 2007. It studied the strengths and weaknesses of the region and developed a vision for the Midlands Gateway.

Vision for the Midlands Gateway to 2020

“the development of a world-class, knowledge-based and competitive gateway, underpinned by a quality urban structure and environment, excellent infrastructure and a visionary leadership, which maximises quality of life for its citizens”

The Midlands region occupies a strategically important part of Ireland:

Conurbation of four main towns with a population of 46,000.

Population within 30 miles of 250,000

General increase in population over the last five years, of some 2% a year, continuing for next 15 years

50 miles west of Dublin with major road developments planned improvements to M50 and N4, N6, N7 and Leinster orbital route will improve accessibility.

Diverse regional economy based on agriculture, pharmaceuticals and IT.

Major requirement for regional strategy to address infrastructure and spatial development – strong emphasis on transport

Midlands Airport has the potential to provide one of the building blocks of economic development for the region.

The Indecon report repeatedly refers to the importance of access to an international airport is for the success of the Gateway. It lists this objective as one of the key infrastructural requirements for the region.

¹⁷ (Indecon, 2007)

3.8 Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020

Offaly County Council supports the objective to develop an airport within the Midlands region.

This is referred to in the latest publication of the County Development Plan 2014-2020. Chapter 13, Transport and accessibility includes the following objective 013-46¹⁸

Offaly County Council Development plan 2009-2015

013-46

“It is an objective of the council to support the location of an airport in the county and/or within the Midlands Region.”

4.1 Project Benefits

The viability study carried out highlights the economic and social benefits of this proposed development. To understand the importance of this development in the context of the Midlands region

4.2 Creating international connections

Creating international connections is vital part of operating in an open economy. We are no longer confined into a local regional economy but in fact operate in a global market place for trade of services and products. Already there are many businesses trading internationally from the region. Strengthening and improving these connections will only enhance the economic performance of the region.

The proposed airport will be constructed with a 3.5km runway 60m in width. At 3.5 km it is larger than the main runway in Dublin Airport. It is large enough to accommodate all aircraft types with full fuel and payload to reach all global destinations directly.

The business model starts with 25 highlighted longhaul and shorthaul destinations for a cargo and passengers perspective. These routes will grow over time connecting the Midlands to regions across the globe. This will also improve the regions ability to attract inward migration and tourism. It is vital to consider the impacts of Brexit in this assessment. 70% of all Irish produce uses the UK to access international markets. We need to reimagine how we connect to the global markets.

¹⁸ (Offaly County Council, 2009)

4.3 Creating jobs

A key element of the benefits of this development is its ability to create jobs. Apart from the jobs created in the design and construction of the proposed development which would create approximately 1000 jobs. There are three types of jobs that are generated by a development of this nature. These are

Direct – jobs created directly within the development by the Airport Authority, Airlines, baggage handlers, Security, Parking, etc

Indirect – Jobs created providing services directly to the development such as hotels, warehousing, distribution etc

Induced – jobs created to support those working and living around the region a result of the increased employment.

The creation of these three job types has been studied in depth in international reports on airport development. In Europe an average of 1,000 people are employed directly per million airport passengers. Based on the 10 year projection for the proposed development having 2.2million passengers that would result in 2000 Direct Jobs Created

Based on the supply chain calculations developed in the viability study and the international studies carried out on indirect employment it has been found that on average 1250 people are employed indirectly per million terminal passengers. Based on the viability study projections that results in 2500 indirect jobs created over the first 10 year period.

In addition to the direct and indirect jobs created there is a further element of jobs created or induced. Again the international studies report that on average 300 jobs per million passengers are created. This will result in an additional 600 jobs created over the initial 10 year period.

4.4 Attracting new businesses to the region

The development of the airport will attract new businesses to the region. Some of these will be businesses directly involved in supplying services to the airport such as a hotel, distribution facilities, warehousing and storage but in addition to these directly involved businesses there are businesses that are attracted to the area in proximity to the airport for export and import purposes.

4.5 Attracting people to live in the region

One of the social impacts of the proposed development is to improve the quality of life to those living in proximity to the airport by providing easy access to international flights. In addition to the significant levels of job creation and the movement of businesses to the region this will attract inward migration to the region assisting the regional population growth to achieve the targets set in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines.

4.6 Tourism

There are significant benefits to Tourism in the region with increased direct access to the region. This increased direct access will encourage an uplift of use of facilities already in the area and will also stimulate additional growth in the sector within the region. The presence of an international airport will also create a greater awareness of the region and attract visitors to explore the region further.

4.7 Branding

The proposed airport has a significant role to play in expanding the brand of the Midlands. Apart from the economic and social benefits generated by the development the airport will represent the region on an international level as it is marketed internationally. The brand of the Midlands Airport will be built around its sustainable and carbon neutral status. This brand will complement the aspiration of the Gateway and the region and will reinforce the principles of the Region at an international level.

5.1 Site Location

Site location is critical to the viability and success of the proposed development. It must be in close proximity to key elements of infrastructure to ensure that the costs of connecting to these infrastructures are minimised as they are often very costly.

These key elements are power, water, road, rail and broadband.

The proposed site location is in the middle of the Midlands Triangle between Tullamore, Mullingar and Athlone. More specifically it is located between the villages of Tubber and Horseleap.

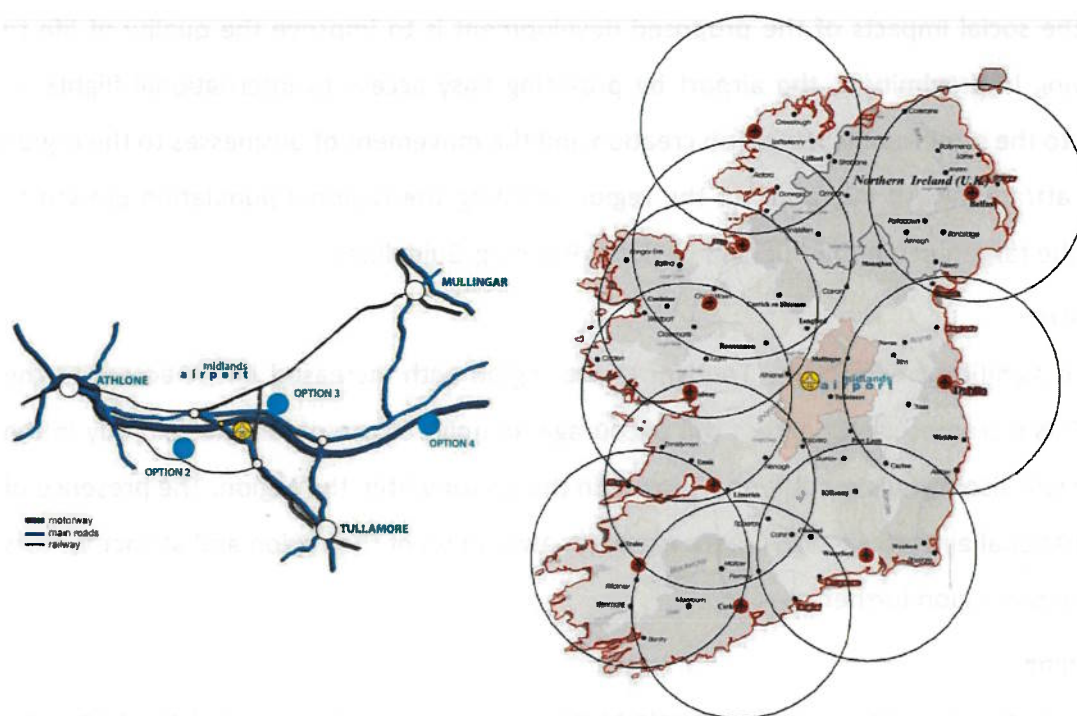


Figure 1.1- Site Location

Existing Airports with 100km catchment

If located too close to Dublin there will be no economic benefit to the region.

The proposed location is an ideal location equidistance from each of the three towns making it a truly “Midlands” proposal.

It will help unite the three traditionally competing towns.

The proposal will attract new population to grow the critical mass of the region

The development will benefit from the sizeable availability of skilled workforce in the Gateway

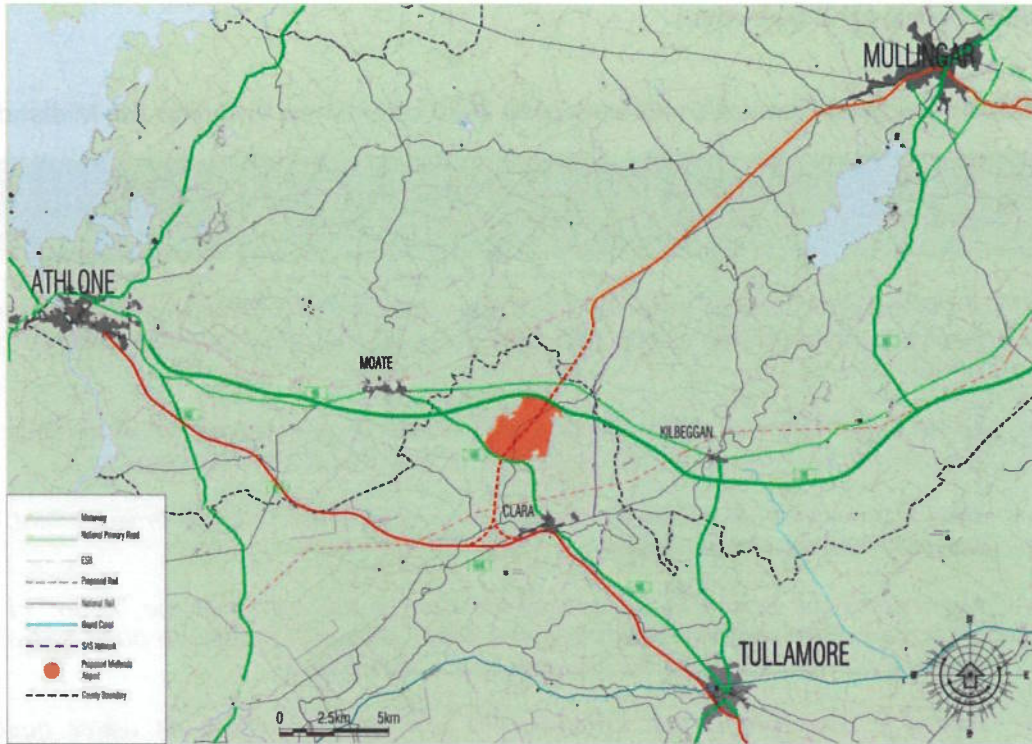
It will attract businesses wanting to locate in close proximity to the airport that can be serviced also by the three towns of the Gateway.

It is linked directly to the M6 and the N80 and N52 and Rail.

It will be connected directly to the national rail network at Clara by constructing a new 2.5km twin track connection direct to the terminal.



Midlands Airport Developments



Strategic Site location map



6.1 MRPG Policies and Objectives

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2020 offer a new Vision for the Midlands

By 2022, the midland region will be a successful, sustainable and equitable region full of opportunities for its expanded population achieved through:

- *Enhancing the critical mass of the region by combining the strengths of the linked gateway as envisaged in the NSS with those of the principal towns of Portlaoise and Longford;*
- *Developing the full potential of rural areas in the region in a manner that is compatible with the strengthening of the urban structure of the region;*
- *Offering a distinctive lifestyle rooted in a high quality living environment, rich in heritage and landscape value;*
- *Harnessing the central geographical location of the region at the "heart" of Ireland with more inter-regional links than any other region in Ireland to build a strategically focused network of transport and communications links;*
- *Ensuring that the natural environment of the region such as water quality and biodiversity is maintained and enhanced as a basis for future sustainable development in the region.*

This new vision is accompanied by 13 Goals.

Goal 1- To drive the implementation of the linked gateway.....

With the proposed airport development centred in the heart of the gateway it will enhance the regions ability to achieve this goal.

Goal 2 – To provide a comprehensive spatial policy framework, supported by the necessary implantation structures, to harness the strengths of the midlands region.

The designation of the proposed airport located between Tubber and Horseleap as a key objective of the region will add to this comprehensive spatial policy framework. Without the airport included as an objective it leaves a considerable weakness in the spatial plan.

Goal 3 – To achieve a regional population of the order of 317,100 by 2022.....

The development of the proposed airport will create the employment, economic benefit and the quality of life required to attract this level of population increase.

Goal 4 – To ensure that the strategic development of the region works to conserve and enhance the natural and environmental qualities of the region, its biodiversity and habitats.



The nature of the proposed development as a carbon neutral airport supported by green tech industries with carbon offsetting with the aviation industry will make this an exemplar development for the Midlands Region.

Goal 5 – To upgrade and augment strategic physical and social infrastructure in the region to attract the target population and sustain critical mass and regional competitiveness.

As discussed above the proposed airport is an essential part of the strategic infrastructure of the gateway that will assist in achieving the target population and critical mass for regional competitiveness.

Goal 6 – To promote the economic development of the region through the development of the social economic and physical infrastructure demanded by foreign and indigenous industry.

A key element of infrastructure demanded by foreign and indigenous industries is connections to an international airport.

Goal 7 – To expand the tourism sector by creating an integrated approach to facilitate the development of the Midlands region as a unique visitor destination promoting and developing all areas in a balanced and sustainable manner.

The development of an airport in the centre of the gateway will generate significant increases in tourism directly to the region. It can be used as a platform to promote and coordinate tourism across the region.

Goal 8 – To promote the development of the region in the delivery of renewable energy particularly recognising the regions existing energy infrastructure.

As discussed above part of the overall masterplan of development is the creation of an eco energy park to support green tech industries and supply renewable energy for the development and the region.

Goal 9 – To structure the region in a manner that integrates high quality built and physical environment with essential physical and social infrastructure such as transport and water services as well as schools, retail, community, healthcare and recreation/sporting facilities.

The proposed development not only creates an airport in the centre of the gateway. It also delivers a rail connection to the national rail network. This will provide half hourly service at peak times to all destinations along the route to Dublin and Galway benefiting the entire region.



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Goal 10 – to coordinate and target key transport and communications investment within the region in order to create effective communications links and to reduce travel times between the main towns to maximise the cohesion and critical mass of the region and improve intra and inter regional connectivity.

The proposed development is obviously a key investment in the region that will improve connectivity throughout the region and also inter regionally and internationally. It will add 1million passengers to the rail network annually. It will increase the rail service to every half hour at peak times. This will bring significant benefits to all towns on the rail network.

Goal 11 – To develop and market a distinctly unique image and identity for the region that will attract investment and economic activity to the region.

The development of an international airport and the associated clusters of industry will attract inward investment to the region and will significantly improve the image and identity of the region.

Goal 12- To strengthen and sustain rural communities in order to complement urban centres and contribute to the distinct identity of the region.

The development of the airport and the associated clusters of industry in the centre of the gateway will complement the existing structure of the gateway and strengthen the spatial framework of the gateway.

Goal 13 – To identify and expand on the opportunities and linkages that exist between the Midlands region and adjoining regions.

The development of the airport as a multimodal transportation hub serving both cargo and passengers will be available to adjoining regions also reducing their dependency on more remote centres and reducing their dependency on car transport. The rail connection links the midlands gateway to Galway and Dublin Gateways. It will increase the usage of the rail links and therefore make for more sustainable transport improving the linkages between gateways. The MRPGs there is a significant mention of the development of an airport in the region save for the reference on page 74 section 5.5.1 Ports and Airports where it states **“ It is recognised that the Midlands Region would benefit by having enhanced air access and supports the development of an airport with in the region .”**

Whilst this is a positive and most welcomed statement it is only a statement. Under the scrutiny of a planning application the planning hierarchy may not be sufficiently strong to support the application for an airport in the region.

The NPF lends itself to the development of an airport in the region but it does not specifically state that it is required. RSES plan also supports private investment in the region to create jobs enhance accessibility and trade as well as enterprise and innovation. It is our opinion that the Offaly County Council should include a specific objective within its plan to create a International Trade & Distribution zone centred on a multimodal transportation hub including the development of the airport in the centre of the Super Rural Zone between Tubber and Horseleap. This is the most sustainable location available with proximity to the national rail network, national motorway network, the national energy grid, gas supply line and broadband cable connectivity. We respectfully request that the Offaly County Council include the above specific objective within the Offaly County Development Pan 2021-2027

7.1 Conclusions

As discussed above the proposed development of an International Trade & Distribution zone centred on a multimodal transportation and logistics hub including an international airport, rail and motorway connection located in the centre of the Super rural zone will significantly increase the attractiveness of the region for inward investment and inward migration. Significant job creation will result with a nett outcome of increased revenue for the region. The overall outcome will be an improved economic performance and quality of life achieved in a sustainable and equitable manner for the entire region.

To ensure that this is achievable we would respectfully request that Offaly County Council would include an objective in support of the proposed privately funded development of an intermodal transportation hub located between Tubber and Horseleap in the centre of the Midlands Super Rural Zone.

We welcome the inclusion of objective SMAP-26 within the Offaly County Development Plan

Under Chapter 8 Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility we welcome the inclusion of the following wording

SMAP-26 It is Council policy to support the provision of an airport within the county or the midlands where it would contribute towards the proper planning and sustainable development of the county and comply with all environmental legislation and policies and objectives contained within this Plan and higher level planning documents, including the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

We thank you for your time considering this submission. We appreciate that it is lengthy, but it is important that the full extent of the research and investment is understood by those concerned by the proposal. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further in the development and exploration of our suggestions and proposals

Yours sincerely



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CEO

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