

07th February 2019.

To whom it concerns,

On behalf of the local authorities that hold an equity stake in Ireland West Airport Knock, we wish to make the following submission relating to the specific issue of the importance of the Airport and the Strategic Development Zone which is being developed to secure the long term development of the Airport as a driver of regional economic growth.

The strategic importance of Ireland West Airport Knock for the region as a whole, either in terms of its transport or economic (SDZ) functions is not given sufficient recognition or import as a driver of regional growth in the draft RSES.

The National Planning Framework outlines that Ireland West Airport Knock is an important contributor in the future development of the West and North-West Region. It is regarded as having a significant role in the development of tourism and enterprise as well as having the potential for further growth in light of its designation as a Strategic Development Zone. The NPF places great emphasis on the importance of high-quality international connectivity and as an Island economy, ports and airports have a crucial part to play. As one of the four main airports serving the country, Ireland West Airport Knock is regarded as a key piece of transport infrastructure for both national and regional development.

Ireland West Airport Knock has the third longest runway in the country, after Shannon and Dublin, and is the only airport in the BMW region capable of handling large jets, such as Boeing 737s, 747s and the Airbus 330, enabling it, to handle transatlantic traffic and European Low Cost traffic¹. It is not therefore just one of 2 airports in the region of similar size or functionality and this should be clearly distinguishable in the RSES. Flight destinations and frequencies in Knock reflect the growing international profile of Ireland West Airport Knock as reflected in the table below.

Knock Destination	Operator	Frequency	Donegal	Operat	Freque	Column
London Luton	Ryanair	All Year (7 Days)	Dublin	Aer Lingus f	All Year (7 Days)	
London Stansted	Ryanair	All Year (7 Days)	Glasgow	Logan Air	All Year (3 days)	
London Gatwick	Aer Lingus	All Year (7 Days)				
Birmingham	Flybe	All Year (6 Days)				
Liverpool	Ryanair	All Year (5 Days)				
Manchester	Flybe	All Year (6 Days)				
East Midlands	Ryanair	All Year (5 Days)				
Bristol	Ryanair	All Year (3 days)				
Edinburgh	Flybe	All Year (6 Days)				
Milan-Bergamo	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Faro	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Fatima	Joe Walsh Tours & Marian Pil	Seasonal				
Lourdes	Enter Air	Seasonal				
Lanzarote	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Dubrovnik (Medjugorje)	Joe Walsh Tours & Marian Pil	Seasonal				
Lapland	Sunway Holidays	Seasonal				
Lourdes	Joe Walsh Tours & Marian Pil	Seasonal				
Barcelona (Girona)	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Alicante	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Costa Dorado	TUI	Seasonal				
Tenerife	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Malaga	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Mallorca	Ryanair	Seasonal				
Cadiz	Paul Claffey Tours	Seasonal (May)				
Cologne	Ryanair	Seasonal				

¹ Source: Master Plan Report, 2009. Connaught Airport Development Company Ltd, prepared by Scott Wilson).

At a regional level, IWA Knock serves as an essential aviation and public transportation hub linking the West and Northwest to international destinations with the potential to act as major economic catalyst for generating vital direct and indirect employment and investment.

Enhanced regional accessibility is a co-priority of the National Planning Framework which places emphasis on cultivating the Atlantic Economic Corridor and enhanced connectivity to the North-West. The AEC initiative seeks to build on the potential of the West, supported by developments such as the emerging Connacht-Ulster Alliance Technological University (Galway-Mayo IT, IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT). Ireland West Airport Knock has a significant economic role in tourism and enterprise development, with potential for further growth given its status as a Strategic Development Zone.

The above should be reflected in the RSES.

The combined Local Authorities who hold an equity stake in Ireland West Airport Knock request that the full extent of the revised text, key priorities and objectives (shaded text) be inserted in full for IWAK.

People and Places

4.1 Ireland West Airport Knock and Ireland West Airport Knock SDZ

SDZ – Ireland West Airport Knock

The presence of an airport in the region acts as a magnet to draw people and investment to the region, driving economic activity in the form of business and investment as well as tourism and travel. The Airport acts as an international gateway to the West of Ireland as well as the North, North West and Midlands areas. The Northern and Western Region is home to many world leading multi-nationals, local companies with global success as well as yet untapped economic sectors. Together with the high quality of life offered in the West and North West, the region has much to offer with the ability to expand and grow based on its resources. In this regard the concept of the place-based approach which requires tapping into the inherent potential of the area is central to the future growth of the region. In terms of business and enterprise, investment in the creation of ‘place’ is important to realising regional potential and to position itself so as to attract skills/talent, to grow businesses and to embrace creative and innovative economic activity.

The National Planning Framework includes High-Quality International Connectivity as a National Strategic Outcome and recognises the crucial role that the provision of high-quality international connectivity has for overall international competitiveness and addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through investment in our ports & airports, in line with sectoral priorities already defined through National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy. The development of the EU Ten-T designation is desirable for international connectivity and integrated performance of road, rail and air.

The regional and international connectivity provided by an airport significantly broadens the transport network capacity of a region, providing catalytic as well as direct, in-direct and induced economic and social benefits. In this regard, Ireland West Airport Knock plays a significant role as an economic driver for the region and has a major impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the surrounding area.

It is considered that the best route to harness the potential of Ireland West Airport as an economic driver for the region is through the fast-track planning framework of a Strategic Development Zone

(SDZ). The SDZ offers a spatial planning approach to the future development and expansion of the airport and surrounding lands.

The Strategic Development Zone at Ireland West Airport represents a shared outlook for the future economic development of the West/North West region and represents a significant gamechanger for the region and the Atlantic Economic Corridor. As we are currently entering a period of renewed growth in Ireland, Ireland West Airport is well placed to expand its share of economic development.

The Planning Scheme and implementation framework of the SDZ will provide a clear blueprint for development offering certainty to potential applicants, developers or investors which is time-saving and in turn beneficial to economic development. The SDZ will also play an important role in the delivery and implementation of higher level infrastructure for the area.

Objective

To promote and support the strategic role of IWA Knock SDZ as a significant regional economic driver and to promote the SDZ location as regional economic business and enterprise hub.

SDZ Delivery & Infrastructure

The successful delivery and implementation of the SDZ rests on the provision and access to required supporting infrastructure, hence the need for supporting objectives in the RSES:

Objectives

- 1 To support and promote the implementation of the approved Planning Scheme for the designated SDZ at IWA Knock which provides the framework for the expansion of the Airport in terms of its transport and business operations; and as a new business & enterprise destination.**
- 2 To support the development of the SDZ in tandem with required infrastructure for both the expansion of the Airport and in the delivery of the regional business and enterprise hub.**
- 3 Support the development of the SDZ at IWAK to make it attractive for aviation related industries to be created and prosper. (REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVE 104)**

