

**Application for Strategic Infrastructure Development
made to An Bord Pleanála**

On behalf of:
Shannon Foynes Port Company

April 2018



Supporting Planning Statement



HRA | PLANNING
chartered town planning consultants

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING | ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING | MASTERPLANNING

Limerick | Dublin | t: 061 435000 | f:061 405555 | e:info@hraplanning.ie | w:www.hraplanning.ie

Title:	Supporting Planning Statement	
Project:	16040 SFPC SID Application	
Prepared by:	 	
Signed:	Gary Rowan Director	Approved by: Mary Hughes (Director)
Date:	27.04.2018	
Issue:	Final	

© Copyright HRA | PLANNING. All rights reserved. This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by HRA | Planning, no other party may copy, reproduce, distribute, make use of, or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by HRA | PLANNING for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the bases of HRA | PLANNING using due skill, care and diligence in the preparation of the same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to HRA | PLANNING has been made.

TABLE of CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 4

2.0 PLANNING APPLICATION for STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT (SID)..... 4

3.0 THE APPLICANT 4

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT 5

5.0 SITE LOCATION 6

5.1 Development Areas..... 10

5.2 Jetty Extension..... 10

5.3 The Durnish Lands 11

5.4 Adjacent Land Uses..... 11

6.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT 12

6.1 Jetty Extension 12

6.2 Durnish Land Extension..... 14

6.3 Phasing Plan 14

6.4 ‘The Framework Plan’ 17

6.5 Sustainable Transport Measures 18

6.6 Infrastructure Design - Water Supply..... 18

6.7 Infrastructure Design - Waste Water Design 18

6.8 Storm Water 18

6.9 Landscaping 19

6.10 Fencing and Security 19

6.11 Construction Details..... 19

7.0 LANDUSE AND SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY 20

7.1 EU Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) 20

7.2 National Planning Framework..... 20

7.3 National Development Plan 2018 - 2027 21

7.4 National Ports Policy 2013..... 22

7.5 Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 23

7.6 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary..... 23

7.7 Mid West Area Strategic Plan 2012 - 2030..... 24

7.8 Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy – Issues Paper..... 24

7.9 Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016, As Amended 25

8.0 CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING MATTERS 27

8.1 Need for Development..... 27

8.2 Principle of Development..... 31

8.3 Development Arrangement..... 33

8.4 The “Do Nothing” Scenario 36

8.5 Consideration of Alternative Designs..... 36

8.6 Rail Connection 36

8.7 Environmental Impact Assessment..... 37

8.8 Potential for Effects on European Sites 37

9.0 CONSULTATION 38

10.0 SUMMARY 38

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by HRA PLANNING Ltd., to accompany a planning application made by the applicant Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) ('the applicant') directly to An Bord Pleanála seeking a 10 year planning permission to facilitate 'port capacity extension' at the Port of Foynes.

The requirement to extend port capacity is responsive to a historic and continued pattern of commercial growth experienced by the Port Company at its Port of Foynes facility and the requirement to provide for landside development and marine related industrial uses commensurate with current requirements and consistent with the projections envisaged in the Port Company's spatial and commercial masterplan – 'Vision 2041.

The purpose of the report is to provide clarity on the nature of the development project, and to demonstrate how the proposed development is consistent with the planning policy and landuse development objectives for the area.

2.0 PLANNING APPLICATION for STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT (SID)

Following consultation between the applicant and An Bord Pleanála in 2017 under the provisions of 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) ('the Planning Act') the subsequent notice by the Board dated 30th November 2016, confirmed that the proposed development would be 'Strategic Infrastructure' within the meaning of 37A of the Planning Act. On the basis of that determination (An Bord Pleanála ref: 13.PC0224), this planning application is made directly to An Bord Pleanála.

3.0 THE APPLICANT

Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) is Ireland's largest bulk port and its second largest port operation currently handling in excess of 11 million tonnes per annum.

SFPC facilitates an international gateway on the Shannon Estuary that is recognised at a national level as being fundamental to Ireland's economic prosperity and global trading links. SFPC operates general cargo ports at Foynes and Limerick Docks and holds commercial jurisdiction over marine activities on the Shannon Estuary which extends over a 500km² area between Limerick City and the Atlantic Ocean.

The Shannon Estuary is Ireland's premium deepwater resource with a channel depth of in excess of 18 metres and is connected to all major international shipping lanes. SFPC oversees trade with an annual value of €8.4bn. The existing facilities on the estuary are serviced by the largest vessels entering Irish waters routinely handling large vessels up to 200,000 deadweight tonnes (dwt). The Shannon Estuary has a number of substantial deepwater facilities under the authority of SFPC. In addition to the general cargo ports (The Port of Foynes and Limerick Docks), there are also single user jetties at Moneypoint, Tarbert Island, Aughinsh and Shannon Airport.

SFPC is recognised by the European Commission as one of the three core ports in Ireland under the Trans-European Transport Network (Ten-T). At National level, the 2013 National Ports Policy

recognises the Port as one of the three designated 'Tier 1' ports of national significance, responsible for providing future national port infrastructural capacity.

Port activities on the Estuary have evolved over time and have made a positive contribution to the historic and economic development of the region. Whilst SFPC seeks to maximise the potential of the Shannon Estuary and its port from a commercial and economic perspective, SFPC also seeks to ensure that port operations are responsive to its settlement location and the surrounding community. In this regard, SFPC contributes to wider community activities and already make significant contributions through hosting the following programmes and initiatives:

- School competitions program;
- School port tour program;
- School placement programme for transition year students;
- Sponsorship of local rugby and GAA club;
- Sponsorship of local community council;
- Sponsorship of the annual Foynes Air Show;
- Foynes National school laptop sponsorship;
- Sponsorship of Foynes Yacht Club; and
- A significant financial contribution to the Askeaton community swimming pool development.

SFPC commits to continued implementation of a programme designed to facilitate greater integration between the Port and the settlement of Foynes.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development, as described in the public notices seeks to provide for Port Capacity Extension that will consist of the following:

- (1) Modifications to the existing jetties and quays to include: connection of the existing West Quay to the existing East Jetty for the purpose of extending the length of the existing quay to facilitate the mooring of vessels and Port related operations. Development works consist of; (i) Construction of an open piled jetty structure with suspended 116.5 metre concrete deck connecting the West Quay to the East Jetty; (ii) quayside furniture including quay fenders, mooring bollards, safety ladders, toe rail, and lighting columns, (iii) construction and remedial works to the both existing West Quay and East Jetty ends to facilitate structural 'tie-in' of the proposed new jetty structure, (iv) removal of the existing small craft landing pontoon and walkway from its current position affixed to the shore between the West Quay and the East Jetty, and provision of a new small craft landing pontoon and walkway affixed to the western side of the West Quay wall, and, (v) all associated site development works; and
- (2) Phased Expansion of the Port Estate on 33.95 hectares of land immediately adjacent to the east of the existing port estate to provide serviced industrial land, and, to accommodate marine related industry, port centric logistics and associated infrastructure that will be provided in accordance with a development framework programme prepared for the overall 'expansion' area and which is lodged with the planning application. The development includes:

(l) site development and infrastructure works to the entire expansion lands on a phased basis including (a) raising of ground levels with fill material to a typical height of +4.44m OD Malin; (b) provision of all associated services including storm water infrastructure and, modification to the existing OPW drainage attenuation system; (c) provision of 2.4m high perimeter fencing, (d) landscaping berms and treatments, and (e) all associated site development works; all to be delivered on a phased basis; and

(ll) Implementation and use of 'Phase 1' of port expansion works including: (a) modification and realignment to part of the existing port estate access road including provision of new roundabout and junction arrangements on that road, and associated lighting, and storm water drainage; (b) provision of new internal Port access road (with associated footpath and combined cycle path) including the provision of bridge structures to facilitate access across existing drainage channels; (c) construction of three covered industrial type warehouse units (with typical maximum ridge height of 15.1m above raised ground level) with associated external storage, parking and circulation areas; (d) the provision of separate dedicated uncovered 'open' storage area/ container storage area and associated circulation and service area (with maximum container stacking height of 8m if/when container storage required); (e) provision of Klargest BE model (or similar) package foul water treatment system with polishing filter and discharge to ground to serve the Phase 1a expansion area; (f) modifications to existing 'Foynes Engineering' industrial building which involves the removal of the 'lean-to' structure affixed to the main building and remedial building and site development works; (g) provision of an ESB electrical substation; (h) provision of lighting columns within the 'Phase 1' expansion area; (i) provision of a new security kiosk and access control barrier on the existing Port access road; (j) provision of noise attenuation measures along parts of the southern and western boundary of 'Phase 1' expansion area; (k) fire water storage infrastructure; (l) provision of a 'bus-stop' on the existing Port access road; (m) landscaping; and (n) all associated site development works.

5.0 SITE LOCATION

The subject site is located within and adjacent to the settlement of Foynes, Co. Limerick and comprises the existing 'Port of Foynes' and undeveloped lands to the immediate east of the existing Port estate. The northern boundary of the subject site adjoins the Shannon Estuary. Foynes village is situated to the south (behind) the existing port estate and extends along the National Secondary (N69) Limerick – Tarbert Road. Limerick City is located circa 38km to the east, whilst the mouth of the Shannon Estuary where it meets the Atlantic Ocean (between Loop Head and Kerry Head) is located circa 56km to the west (downstream).

As stated, the Port of Foynes is a 'Tier 1 Pot' and is the principle general purpose terminal on the Estuary routinely catering for cargo vessels. Due to its favourable location on the west coast of Ireland and its modern deepwater facilities, Foynes Port is ideally positioned for additional European trading as well as for further increases in ocean energy resources.

The existing Port provides circa 657m length of quay wall catering for vessel sizes of up to 200+ metre in length and 10.5m draught. Figures 1, 2(a) and 2(b) show the location of Foynes Port and the extent of the project boundary and area of proposed development works.

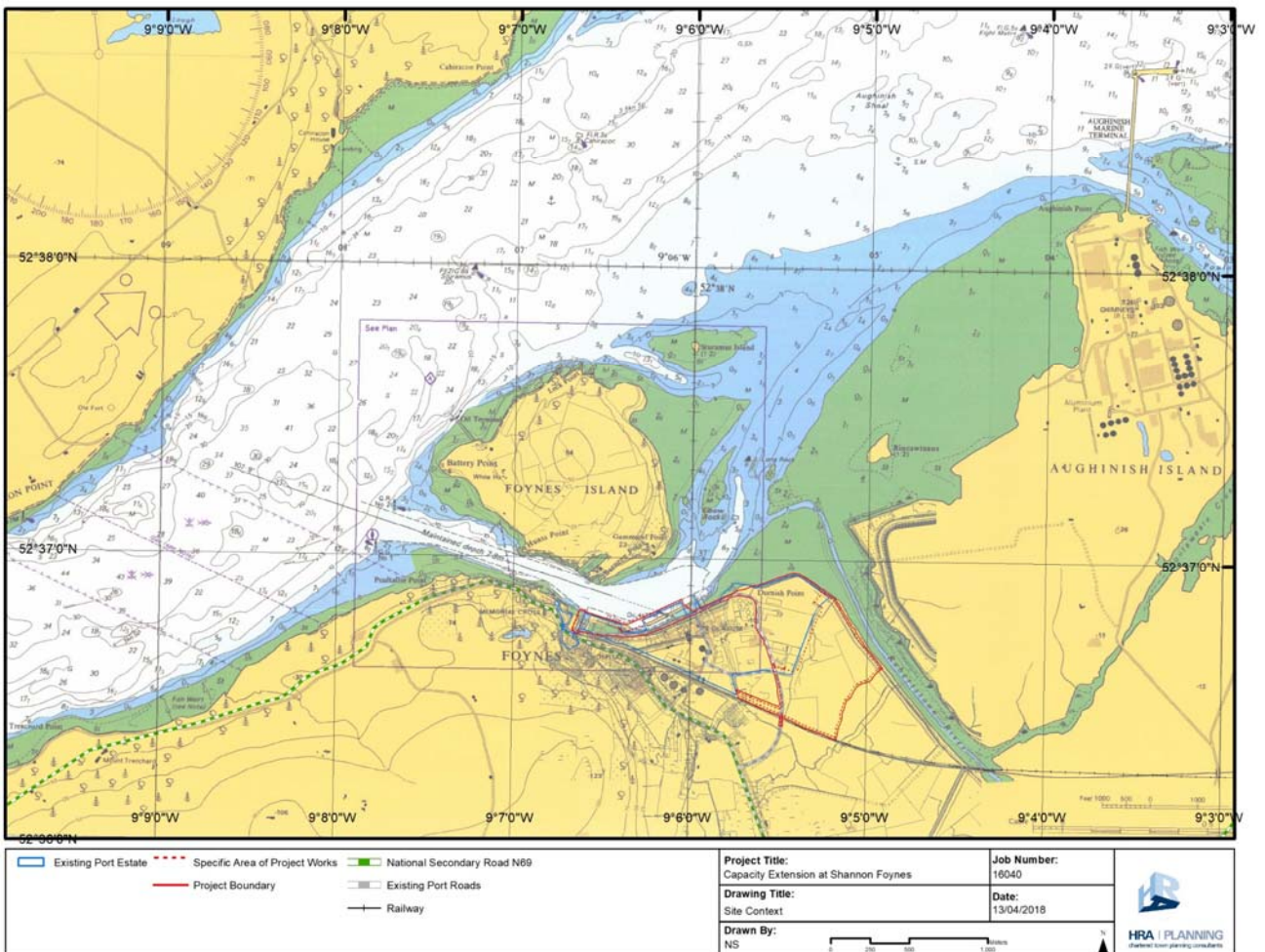
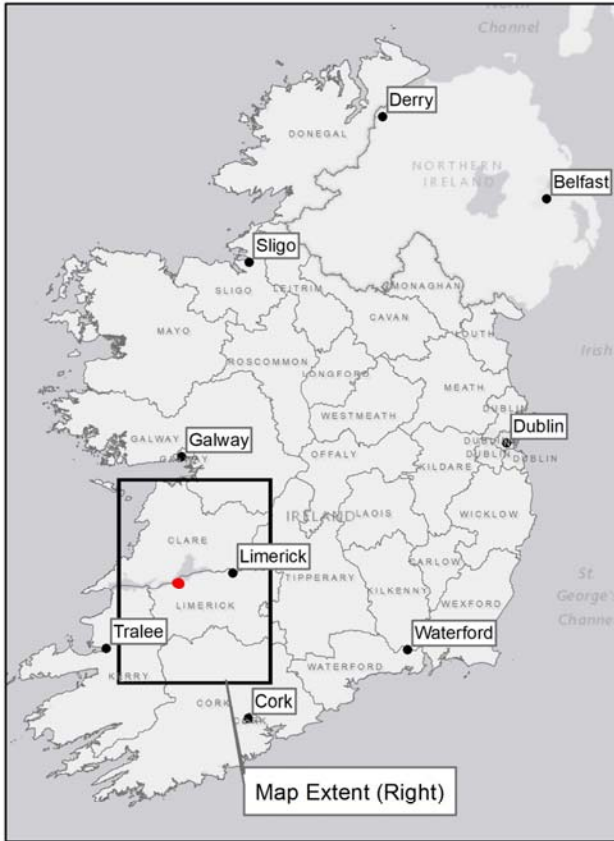
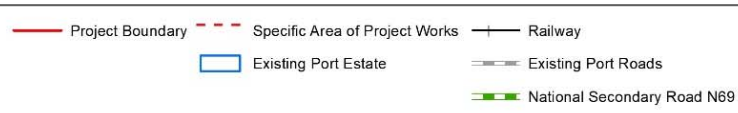
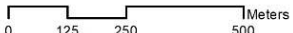


Figure 1 Project Location

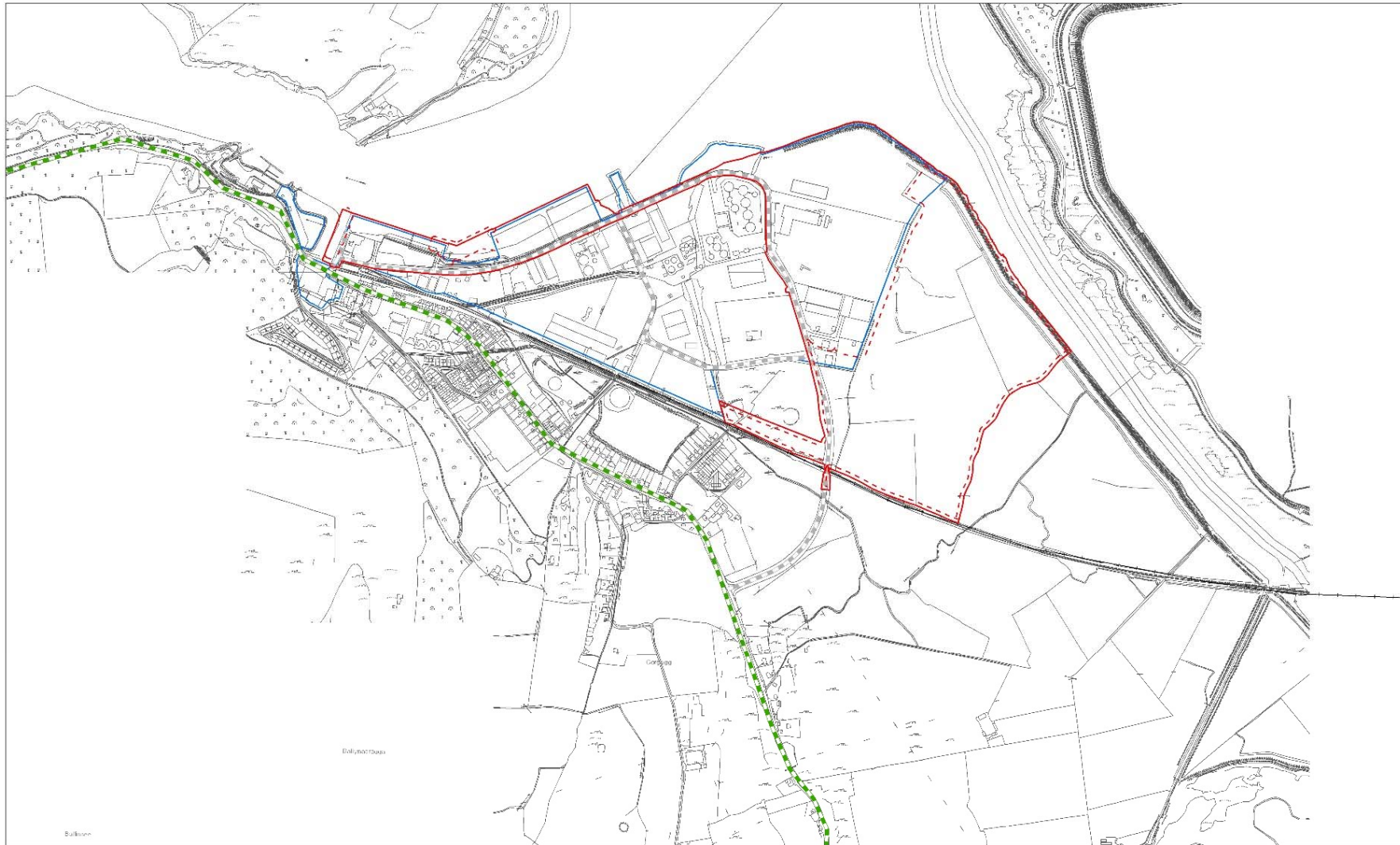


Project Title: SFPC SID Application	Job Number: 16040
Drawing Title: Site Location	Date: 13/04/2018
Drawn By: NS	 0 125 250 500 Meters



HRA | PLANNING
chartered town planning consultants

Figure 2a Project Location



- Project Boundary - - - Specific Area of Project Works — Railway
- Existing Port Estate - - - National Secondary Road N69
- - - Existing Port Roads

Figure 2b Project Location

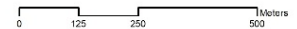
Project Title:
Capacity Extension at Shannon Foynes

Job Number:
16040

Drawing Title:
Site Location

Date:
13/04/2018

Drawn By:
NS



The harbour area is well sheltered and formed by a channel south of Foynes Island whilst the main navigation channel of the Estuary is located to the north of the island in deeper water. The channel is dredged to provide access to the estuary for shipping at the western end. A berth depth of 10.5 metres is maintained close to the existing quay walls.

5.1 Development Areas

The site area which measures 62.10 hectares (ha) extends to include specific areas in which the proposed development will occur within the existing Port estate and, on lands directly adjacent to it. The proposed development works are concentrated in two specific locations – (i) adjacent to the existing quay walls within the existing Port estate (measuring 0.51ha), and (ii) undeveloped lands adjacent to the east of the exiting port estate referred to for convenience (in this planning application and the accompanying EIAR) as ‘Durnish’ or the ‘Durnish lands’ which measuring 33.95ha. The general location of these areas are illustrated in Figure 3. Though physically separated, the proposed development works will, from an operations perspective, be interdependent on each other.

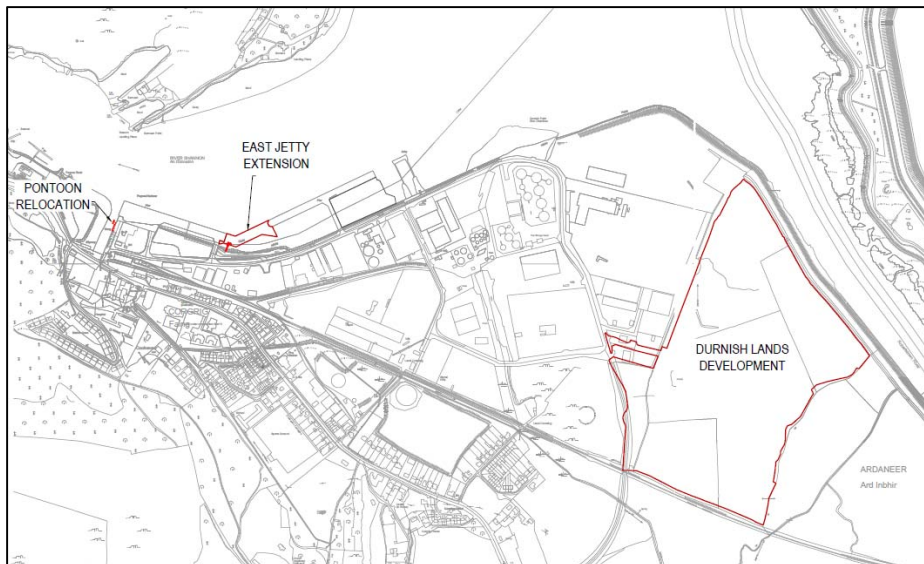


Figure 3 General Development locations (refer to planning application drawings for detail)

5.2 Jetty Extension

This ‘jetty extension’ is located between the two existing quay walls within the Port estate situated adjacent to the Shannon Estuary - ‘The West Quay’ and, ‘The East Jetty’. ‘The West Quay’ and ‘The East Jetty’ are the principle mooring berths for which all vessels berth for the purpose of loading/unloading of all shipment bulk goods through the port.

The area between is a residual undeveloped area situated between the two aforementioned quay walls and offers no operational port function or infrastructure. This area does contain a small craft landing pontoon provided by the Port company to facilitate private access to Foynes Island for a third party. Situated within the existing port estate, this area forms part of the established riverside industrial landscape character defined by existing port operations. The proposed development provides for the relocation of that pontoon.

5.3 The Durnish Lands

This area extends to 33.95ha hectares in area (as defined by dotted red line on the planning development drawings) and is situated to the east of the existing Port estate. The northern boundary of this area extends along the Roberstown River where it adjoins the estuary. This northern boundary is defined by existing raised earth embankments which include drainage ditches and streams. The southern boundary of the site adjoins the single-track rail line (Limerick-Foynes) which is currently disused. The south-western site boundary adjoins the existing port access road for a distance of circa 280m. That port access road extends for a distance of circa 730 metres between the public road - N69 National Secondary Route (Limerick – Tarbert Road) and the existing port estate.

Though situated within the defined settlement boundary and positioned immediately to the east of the existing port estate, the Durnish Lands are situated outside the existing urban and industrial footprint and are currently undeveloped and retain an agricultural ('greenfield') character.

The subject site comprises a number of irregular shaped fields separated and defined by hedgerow and pockets of scrub. The majority of the Durnish lands comprises of Improved Agricultural Grassland habitat - a highly modified habitat of low ecological value. There are also several natural and semi-natural habitats present which are considered to be locally important including wet grassland, scrub, marsh and a stream. No rare or protected plants were recorded on site and, none of the habitats recorded correspond to any habitats listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive. The landscape character of these lands is defined by the natural setting of the estuary and associated marine processes, and, industrial activities including the existing Port estate and the adjacent Aughinish Alumina plant on the opposing side of the Roberstown River.

Ground levels vary across the site ranging from +1.1m OD (Malin) to +3.9m OD. The land is not currently in use and does not benefit from any existing surface water, waste-water infrastructure.

The Durnish lands form part of lands acquired by SFPC by way of compulsorily acquisition in 2016 under the Harbours Act. The acquisition of these lands was based on a demonstrated need for Port expansion based on historical growth patterns, predicted trends, and the absence of any other available and suitable land to facilitate expansion of this Tier 1 Port. The 'Durnish lands' which are included in this application represent a substantial portion of the compulsory acquired land.

5.4 Adjacent Land Uses

Lands to the east of the Durnish lands are, similar to the Durnish lands in that they are undeveloped and retain a 'greenfield' agricultural character and are used for some agricultural activity. Aughinish Alumina industrial processing plant is situated on the opposite (north-eastern) side of the Roberstown River with access also to the Estuary.

The settlement of Foynes is situated to the south west and comprises of a relatively small village settlement and population with residential, and local retail commercial activities concentrated primarily along the main street, (The N69 Limerick – Tarbert Road).

An Irish Rail owned single rail line extends from Limerick and terminates at the Port. The rail line extends along the southern boundary of the existing port estate effectively separating the Port estate from the Foynes Village urban area. The line extends and traverses the Durnish lands and at that point, includes

at 'at grade' level crossing for which the southern port access road traverses in order to connect the existing Port estate with the N69 National Secondary Route. This rail line is not currently in use.

6.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

As stated, the proposed development seeks to provide for extension of Port capacity. This is provided for in two interrelated ways – increased capacity of the quay wall, and, increased capacity of supporting landside storage facilities and logistics. Consequently, the project includes two specific elements of development and operational activities as follows:

- Jetty Extension - The joining of the existing 'West Quay' and the 'East Jetty'; and;
- Durnish Land Development - To provide for increased port related storage and port-centric logistics

6.1 Jetty Extension

The proposed extension to the existing Port berths will facilitate opportunity for the docking of larger vessels (with increased loads) in response to the increasing international trend toward larger vessel sizes. However, the proposed berth extension will also allow the docking of increased smaller vessels at the same time. Under either scenario, tonnage throughput has been predicted in the Port Company's strategic masterplan 'Vision 2041'.

Connection of the existing West Quay to the existing East Jetty will involve the construction of an open piled jetty structure with suspended reinforced concrete deck tying into; the existing jetty and quay wall structures. A 25m wide suspended reinforced concrete deck will span between the West Quay and the East Jetty, though will be wider at its eastern end to facilitate transition of the proposed deck into the East Jetty. The proposed deck shall extend a distance of 116.5m between the West Quay and the East Wall.

The proposed development does not require dredging and does not involve the filling of the land behind (south) of the proposed jetty structure. The general arrangement of that area and inter-tidal mudflat shall be left open and exposed between the new jetty structure and the existing port side (save for removal of the small craft landing pontoon from this location and which shall be relocated to the western side of the West Quay). Given the different alignments of the existing West Quay and East Jetty, the proposed jetty extension shall extend eastward from the existing West Quay for a distance of circa 22.5m before turning approximately 31° to the northeast and continuing for a further distance of 94 metres where it will connect with the existing East Jetty.

Tubular steel piles will be installed to a depth determined by a combination of factors including; the local bedrock level, condition of the bedrock, the condition of the overlying material, the imposed quay loadings and the final geometry of the selected pile profile. Based on available geotechnical information it is anticipated that the tubular steel piles will be installed to depths ranging between -30mCD (Chart Datum) and -35mCD (i.e. Between circa -33mOD Malin and -38mOD Malin), with the final depths depending on the local ground conditions and proximity to the standard dredge depth. It is envisaged that piles will be driven to provide approximately 3m deep penetration into rock.

Drainage - No storm water runoff shall be permitted from the jetty connection structure but shall be collected in a dedicated storm water drainage system. A surface water drainage system will be designed to consist of heavy duty gullies cast into the reinforced concrete deck, with concrete pipes cast into the insitu concrete deck structure. These pipes will carry the storm water to an appropriate full retention interceptor, before being discharged into the harbour waters through a non-return flap valve.

A readily and safely accessible monitoring chamber will be provided on the storm water pipeline to allow for inspection and sampling of the storm water being discharged. Manholes and covers shall be designed to accommodate the proposed operational loads. The finished level of the deck structure shall accommodate drainage falls as required.

Quay Furniture - The proposed suspended deck will include berthing fenders and mooring bollards placed at regular intervals along the outside (northern) quay edge to accommodate mooring vessels for the purpose of loading and unloading of goods. Mooring bollards will also be placed at regular intervals along the inside (southern) quay edge. The suspended deck will facilitate port traffic and infrastructure which would typically expect to include; loading and unloading vehicles, mobile loading hoppers and craneage, and, associate port traffic and personnel. 100T staghorn bollards shall be provided at regular intervals along both faces of the jetty connection structure. Toe rails will be installed between and in-line with the proposed mooring bollards. Fenders will be installed along the seaward face of the new jetty structure. Fenders shall be as per the fenders currently used on East Jetty. All existing jetty structures will be retained during the works and will continue to be used for berthing. Fire hydrants will be provided at regular intervals along the jetty structure. Access ladders and safety chains shall be provided at regular intervals along both faces of the jetty connection structure.

Dredging - No capital dredging is required as part of the proposed works.

Proposed Operations - Port operations on the jetty extension will be as per the existing jetties, and will generally comprise the loading and unloading of vessels using Harbour Mobile Cranes consistent with existing quay operations. Materials handled will vary depending on trade requirements but the following is anticipated;

- Construction materials including timber, steel sections reinforcement etc.
- Project cargoes such as wind turbine components, steel pipes etc.
- All types of dry and liquid bulk cargoes

Shipping movements at the port of Foynes are conducted on a 24/7 basis 364 days a year. In addition, all liquid bulk operations are conducted on a 24/7/364 basis. General cargo operations are usually conducted between 0600 and 2400 7-days a week with the capacity to work 24/7 as required for operational or safety reasons. It is intended that hours of operation on the jetty extension will be the same as the existing.

6.2 Durnish Land Extension

The developed of the Durnish lands are proposed to facilitate marine related industrial uses ancillary to growth of the Port. Uses will include marine related industrial activities in the form of open storage and covered storage (warehousing) primarily for the handling and storage of general cargo. In addition, the lands will also be used for port-centric processing operations such as bulk raw material being graded, mixed or sorted before being bagged or put into tankers consistent with established uses within the existing Port estate.

The breakdown of uses across the Durnish lands has been calculated at approximately 5.2 ha for Covered storage, and approximately 15.5 ha for open storage. It is intended that hours of operation on the proposed developed lands will be 24/7, 364 days per year. Materials handled will vary depending on trade requirements but the following is anticipated;

- Construction materials including timber, steel sections reinforcement etc.
- Scrap metal
- Project cargoes such as wind turbine components, steel pipes etc.
- All types of dry and liquid bulk cargoes
- Storage of containers

In order to facilitate the operational use of the 'Durnish land' for the intended uses, the development proposal includes a proposal to raise the level of the Durnish lands to +4.44m (OD Malin) so to minimise flood risk to people, property, the economy and the environment. The design of ground levels adopts a precautionary approach to allow for uncertainties in data and risk assessment procedures taking account of climate change. This is discussed in further detail in section 8.3.2 of this report.

6.3 Phasing Plan

Based on mid line forecasts, tonnage throughput at the Port of Foynes is anticipated to reach 2,770,000 tonnes by 2025. This is in line with the medium growth scenario detailed in Vision 2041. The current throughput is 1,778,126 tonnes. Based on this tonnage projection (mid-line growth scenario set out in Vision 2041), it is projected that the tonnage growth at Foynes port over the next 10 years, and the life of this planning permission, will reach 3,280,000 tons by 2030.

Having regard to the lifespan of the intended planning permission and predicted tonnage throughput, it is proposed to implement the operational use of the Durnish land in three phases in line with economic growth and customer demand. The proposed phasing regime is illustrated on the appended drawing (also lodged with the planning application) titled: 'Proposed Phasing Plan for Operational Uses'. However, to ensure the effective and timely availability of the Durnish lands for operational use as the needs arise, the proposed Phasing plan is set out below.

Phase 1 – Proposed Development and Operational Uses (subject of this planning application)

- Jetty Extension (including relocation of pontoon);
- Filling of entire Durnish lands, provision of infrastructure and landscaping over the entire site (phased over a 10-year period);
- Development and operation use of 8.2 hectares of filled and serviced land for marine related industry to accommodate existing tonnage throughput through the Port of 1,778,126 tonnes.

Phase 1 – Activities

- ~ Covered storage 1.2ha
- ~ Open storage 7ha
- ~ Warehousing (up to 15m height)
- ~ Breakbulk and project cargo such as steel sections/reinforcement, timber, palletised fuel/fertiliser, wind turbine blades etc. (stored 10m high)
- ~ Loose cargoes such as woodchip biomass fuel (stored 6m high)
- ~ Storage of containers (up to 5nr high) approx. 13m high with handling equipment up to 24m height

Phase 1 – Implementation

The implementation of Phase 1 is envisaged in three sub-phases as follows:

Phase 1a

- ~ Stripping of Topsoil over entire Durnish Lands
- ~ Boundary treatment around entire site (South, East and Northern perimeters)
- ~ Access road improvements and roundabout construction
- ~ Relocation of port security kiosk
- ~ Filling of Phase 1 extent of lands
- ~ Provision of security fencing around raised lands
- ~ Provision of storm drainage infrastructure and attenuation pond extension
- ~ Construction of internal road network
- ~ Construction of warehousing and open storage areas
- ~ Provision of foul water infrastructure
- ~ Provision of lighting and services

Phase 1b

- ~ Filling of “Phase 2” extent of lands to make them ‘serviceable’
- ~ Provision of storm drainage system

Phase 1c

- ~ Filling of “Phase 3” extent of lands to make them ‘serviceable’
- ~ Provision of storm drainage system

The proposed phasing regime (Phase 1a–1c) is illustrated on the drawings also lodged with the planning application and illustrated in Figure 4 below. The proposed sub-phases seek to ensure the orderly and timely development of the expansion area. Having said that, the proposed phasing regime does not, nor cannot preclude the possibility of all Phase 1 works being carried out simultaneously if/where market conditions support that. The rationale for this Phasing regime is set out in section 8.3.3 of this report.

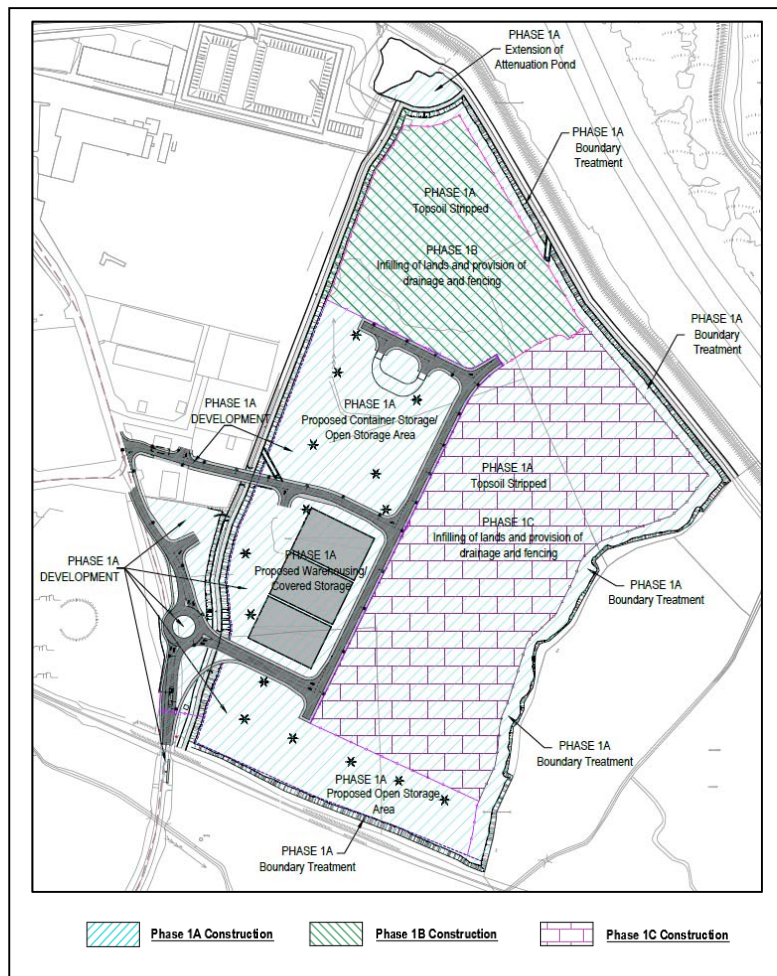


Figure 4 Implementation of proposed development works (Phase 1a, 1b and 1c)

Phases 2 and 3

The operational uses of Phase 2 and Phase 3 has been identified to provide for predicted tonnage throughputs consistent with the Port Company's economic plan. However, specific end user requirements in terms of open/cover storage for Phase 2 and 3 are unknown at this time and therefore the user design details in terms of storage areas and buildings do not form part of this permission.

This application does however, include the filling of the Phase 2 and 3 areas (refer to Phases '1b' and '1c' described above) to ensure the timely provision of serviced land is ready and commensurate with market and port user requirements. However, for the purpose of adopting a holistic and cumulative approach to development, the following assumptions can and have been made in respect to the use of Phase 2 and 3 areas as follows;

Phase 2 – Likely Operational Scenario (Subject to future planning consent)

- ~ Covered storage of circa 1.2ha
- ~ Open storage of circa 2.4ha

Accommodation of additional (predicted) 991,874 tonnes of cargo throughput to deliver total Port tonnage throughput of 2,770,000 tonnes by 2025.

Phase 3 – Likely Operational Scenario (Subject to future planning consent)

- ~ Covered storage 2.8ha
- ~ Open storage 6.1ha

Accommodation of additional (predicted) 510,000 tonnes of cargo throughput to deliver total Port tonnage throughput of 3,280,000 tonnes by 2030.

The anticipated operational areas for the Durnish lands are illustrated on Figure 5.

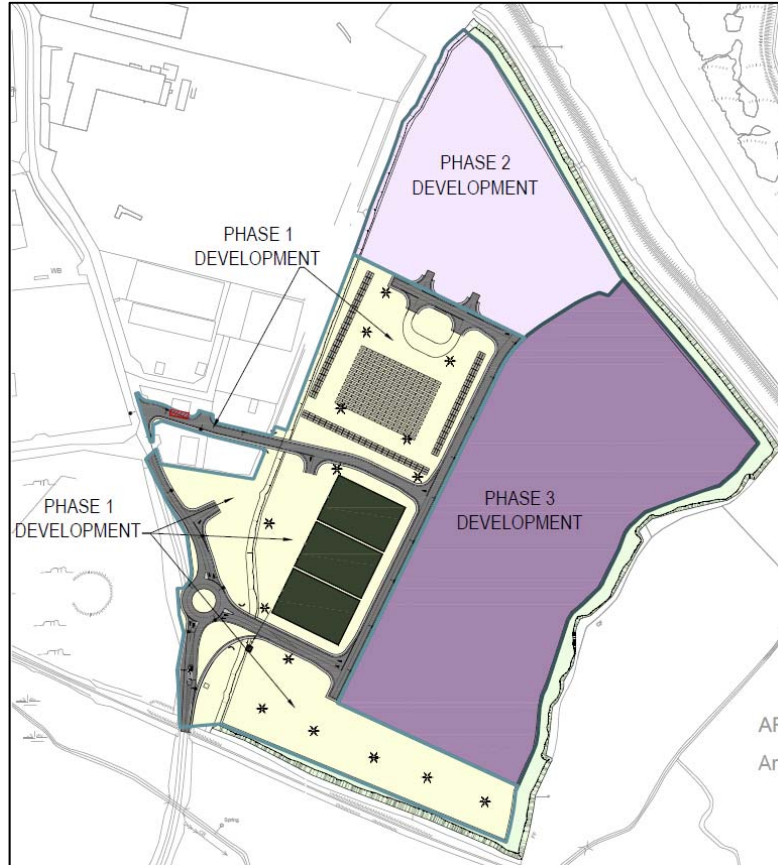


Figure 5 Operational Phases

6.4 'The Framework Plan'

The proposed development and subsequent future phases (Phase 2 and Phase 3) have been considered and designed for within the context of a 'framework Plan' for development within the Durnish Lands.

The Framework Plan (enclosed with the planning application) sets out a development concept arrangement for the entire Durnish lands (Phase 1, 2 and 3) in order to present a holistic and coordinated approach toward the orderly and sustainable development of the Durnish Lands. This will guide subsequent developments within subsequent Phase 2 and Phase 3 given that the specific details of uses are not known at this time and assists this assessment process. Specific detailed uses and infrastructure required for Phase 2 and Phase 3 and which are not included in the current planning application will be subject to planning consents as necessary.

The Framework Plan has given consideration to and presents a strategic arrangement of inter-alia; general layout arrangements; the design and implementation of infrastructure including water, energy

services, flood risk management, water services, lighting, and site security; the primary internal access roads, building heights and design across the entire site. The proposed first phase of development reflects the 'development framework' for that area given that the immediate requirements are known at this time.

The design of the Framework Plan has derived from an iterative process conducted in parallel to the formulation of the development proposal and from baseline evaluation undertaken for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (submitted with the planning application).

6.5 Sustainable Transport Measures

The proposed development makes provision for a bus stopping point on the southbound side of the eastern port road access road (from the N69) and just south of the rail crossing on that road. This option was considered preferential over a number of alternative solutions as it facilitates the extension of the existing 314 Bus Éireann (Limerick – Tralee) public bus route and has received approval in principle by Bus Éireann at pre-application stage. This option enables bus turning using the proposed roundabout to be located within the port estate and will be connected to the Port development area by the existing and modified road way, and provision of the proposed 3m wide pedestrian/cycle lane provided within the new internal port area.

6.6 Infrastructure Design - Water Supply

Water supply will be by connection to the local mains system within the existing port area.

6.7 Infrastructure Design - Waste Water Design

Foul water arrangements will be implemented on a phased basis consistent with each of the planned phases of development. For Phase 1, it is proposed to provide a package treatment system - Klargestor BioDisc BE (or similar), which provides both primary and secondary treatment of foul waters designed with the calculated 20 (PE). Construction of a collective holistic foul wastewater treatment system in Phase 1 to service all 3 phases would not be practical considering the level of flexibility SFPC wish to maintain for future development. Should land usage vary to any significant degree in future phases, any foul treatment system provided to service the entire site could be over/under-designed or possibly redundant. This preferred design solution, has derived from consideration of a number of waste-water design options explored as part of the environmental impact assessment process and is considered consistent with best practice having regard to the locational and site-specific circumstances.

6.8 Storm Water

The storm water drainage system for the Durnish Lands has been designed in accordance with the principles of SuDS in order to avoid putting any further pressure on the existing OPW drainage channels or attenuation pond. It is proposed to collect storm water and discharge at green field rates to an existing attenuation system.

6.9 Landscaping

The proposed development includes landscape design and planting measures. Instead, the intention of landscaping is to enable; visual assimilation of the development into the receiving visual environment; and, to augment existing boundaries that can contribute to enhance local amenity and biodiversity. These measures are considered responsive to the established landscape character and the visual amenity of the area which has been informed and influenced by its lowlying open estuarine location as well as adjacent industrial uses within the established port to the west, and the adjacent Aughinish Alumina plant to the east of Roberstown River.

Detailed proposals involve the stripping and profiling of topsoil to form a landscaping berm along the northern, eastern, southern boundaries and part of the western boundary of the Durnish Lands. The top level of this berm will be +4.44mOD (in keeping with the proposed fill levels across the site). Planting will be carried out along the slope of the berm, extending to the crest, with the width of proposed planting varying along berms dependent upon the width of the existing boundary planting which is to be retained and 'gapped up' where considered appropriate. Due to the exposed coastal nature of the Durnish Lands, tolerant hardy species with deeper planting depths will be planted, allowing for a careful profile of very hardy species at the front, and taller screening trees at the rear. First line of defence will include hardy salt tolerant native shrub species like Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Goat Willow, Gorse with low canopy trees Alder and Mountain Ash. This protects the second line of defence that will include native shrubs like Holly, Broom, Hazel and high canopy trees Oak, Ash, Scots Pine. The landscaping measures have been considered as part of environmental impact assessment process and the separate EIAR.

6.10 Fencing and Security

Secure fencing will be provided along the perimeter of the Durnish lands during the operational phase. Fencing shall be in keeping with the panel mounted fencing currently used around the Port lands, and shall be 2.4m high panel fencing with a close mesh profile (5mm dia. steel wire with a 200x25mm mesh aperture), mounted on RHS posts with a bracket fixing system.

6.11 Construction Details

Further construction details of the development have been presented and assessed in the separate EIAR that accompanies this planning application, and within Chapter 2 of same.

7.0 LANDUSE AND SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY

Spatial and landuse Planning Policy for Port development and to the proposed extension of port capacity at the Port of Foynes is set out at European, national, regional and local level.

7.1 EU Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)

The EU Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy has created the basis for Europe to build a modern integrated transport system that can address sustainable, smart and inclusive growth challenges and to strengthen Europe's global competitiveness. SFPC is recognised by the European Commission as one of the three core ports in Ireland under TEN-T. SFPC is a core port on the core network. For inclusion in the core network, ports must enjoy significant volumes of freight and have a high level of international connectivity. Ireland comprises part of the North Sea-Mediterranean (NS-M) Core Network Corridor, as illustrated in Figure 5.

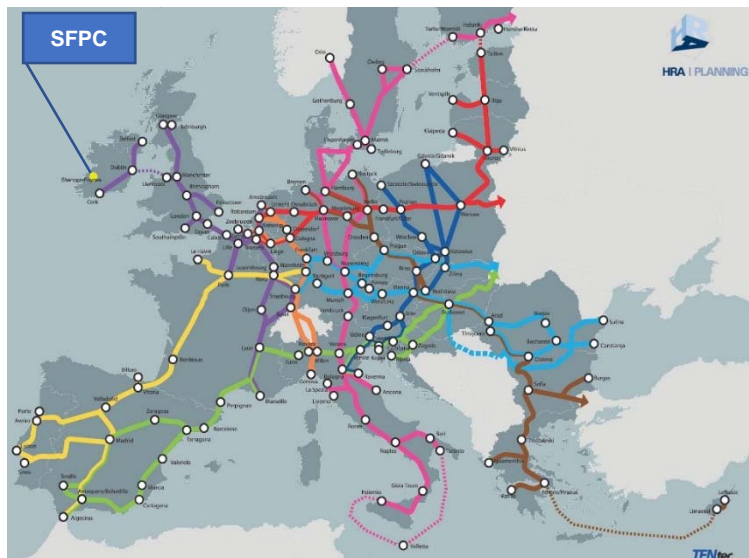


Figure 5

Position of Shannon Foynes Port Company in the context of the existing European Core Network Map Source: EU Commission TEN-T

The Department of Transport has recently advised that the European Commission Department for Mobility & Transport (DG Move) is agreeable to extending the core corridor to include SFPC and that Annex II of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Regulations will be amended to reflect this change. Designation of

SFPC as part of this transportation corridor unlocks additional advantages for future port development as well as supporting enhanced external connectivity with Ireland's European partners. Brexit will also place Ireland and SFPC in a unique position to support the further development of this corridor given the long-term withdrawal of the UK from the EU and thus the corridor.

At EU level there is extensive support for the development of Ireland's ports with the three core ports in Ireland, including SFPC, securing EU funding for significant development projects. Funding for the Port of Foynes has been secured under the EU's Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Specifically, SFPC secured funding in respect of three different but inter-related projects in recent times. It received €800,000 in funding to undertake a study of the potential for reinstating and expanding the rail line connecting the Port of Foynes to the Irish rail network. It also received €2.2 million in the 2014 Call and €4.5m in the 2017 Blended Call for jetty enhancement works, aimed at transforming the Shannon Estuary into a major national and international economic hub.

7.2 National Planning Framework

The recently published 'National Planning Framework' (NPF) includes objectives supporting investment in critical national infrastructure by both the public and private sectors in key areas including transport.

The NPF recognises that Ireland's port and shipping services play an important role as enablers of economic growth. They are recognised as critical infrastructure for international trade, with over 90% of Irish international trade moving by sea. Ports also serve as logistics and distribution hubs. The NPF recognises the long-term trend in the maritime shipping sector towards greater consolidation of resources and increases in vessel sizes. These trends are cited as necessitating further investment in hinterland transport connections, particularly at Ports with deep-water resources of which SFPC is included.

The NPF recognises that; "to maintain economic growth, we must be capable of delivering additional port capacity in a timely and predictable manner". The document acknowledges that there are major redevelopment projects taking place at Tier 1 ports (i.e. Dublin, Cork and Shannon-Foynes) at present and confirms that these developments will result in a greater concentration of traffic through these ports, with implications for shore-based and marine-based infrastructure.

The NPF further acknowledges the potential associated with naturally occurring deep water at ports in the south and south-west, which are capable of receiving the largest ocean going vessels and offer the potential for industrial development that depends currently, or will depend in the future, on deep water berths. National Policy Objective 40 seeks to;

"ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ports, ports of regional significance and smaller harbours are addressed as part of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, metropolitan area and city/county development plans, to ensure the effective growth and sustainable development of the city regions and regional and rural areas".

The NPF focuses on the strengths of the Mid West region. It acknowledges that the strengths of the Mid West region are:

"focused on Limerick City and key employment and infrastructure assets at Shannon and Foynes".

It acknowledges that future growth, amongst other things, will be based on leveraging national and international connectivity. Key future growth enablers for Limerick include,

"enhanced road connectivity to Shannon Foynes Port, including local by-passes".

Although Objective 40 of the NPF devolves the responsibility of addressing the strategic development requirements of ports to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, the NPF is clearly supportive of delivering additional port capacity at Tier 1 ports such as SFPC and acknowledges that this must be delivered in a timely and predictable manner.

7.3 National Development Plan 2018 - 2027

The National Development Plan 2018 – 2027 (NDP) confirms the Government's commitment to investment in public infrastructure as detailed in the National Planning Framework and guides national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades.

In implementing National Strategic Outcome 6 of the NPF, the NDP acknowledges that 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.

The NDP acknowledges the ‘capacity extension works’ at Foynes and recognises it as a major capital infrastructure programme. The NDP recognises that this work, along with other capital infrastructure programmes in Dublin and Cork Ports,

“will enhance national and international connectivity, provide for future increases in trade and national port capacity requirements by facilitating more vessels, larger sized vessels and increased tonnage and throughput”.

It further states that;

“strengthening access routes to Ireland’s ports through investment to upgrade and enhance the road transport network to improve journey times is and remains a Government priority”.

Examples of such investments include amongst others the N21/N69 Limerick to Adare to Foynes Road, to improve access to Shannon Foynes Port.

The Foynes – Limerick Road Improvement Scheme is advancing. A route selection report for the scheme, detailing the selection of the preferred route corridor was published in June 2016. Since then, a provisional 80m wide corridor and provisional junction layouts for the entire scheme were identified in June 2017. Public consultation is ongoing and it is anticipated that an application will be made to An Bord Pleanála this year (2018).

7.4 National Ports Policy 2013

The National Ports Policy was published by the Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport in 2013 and represents a detailed and descriptive policy document outlining the categorisation of Ireland’s ports in the context of the EU TEN-T transportation network as well as corporate governance and environmental issues.

The Ports Policy is not prescriptive regarding location for future port capacity and states that this should be set out in the existing planning and development hierarchy. The Policy seeks to set a framework for the continued development of the commercial port network and emphasises that provision of adequate and efficient capacity into the future is a critical Government strategic objective. This includes addressing new trends such as larger vessels and emerging markets. It states that Ports of National Significance, must be capable of the type of port capacity required to ensure continued access to both regional and global markets for our trading economy.

As Ireland’s second largest port in terms of total throughput/trade handled and its access to deep-water resources, SFPC was designated by the Government in the National Ports Policy as a Tier 1 Port of National Significance. This means that the port must continue to play a key role, both regionally and nationally, in meeting the external trading requirements of the Irish economy, and that the continued successful commercial development of the port represents a key policy objective in this regard.

As noted in the National Ports Policy, *“The continued commercial development of Shannon Foynes Port Company is a key strategic objective of National Ports Policy”* and

“It is the Government’s position that those ports considered to be of national significance must be capable of the type of port capacity required to ensure continued access to both regional

and global markets for our trading economy. Government expects the Ports of National Significance (Tier 1) to lead the response of the State commercial ports sector to future national port capacity requirements”.

7.5 Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022

The Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines (MWRPG) recognises the significance of the Shannon Estuary and its ports as providing a major goods transport link for the region. It states that the protection of the capacities of existing ports and improvement of access to them is a regional priority.

The MWRPG directs local authorities to include specific economic development objectives which seek to harness the economic potential of the estuary and capitalise on its deep-water characteristics for enhanced maritime activity. It states that economic growth must be promoted along the shore of the estuary in order to harness the true natural assets of the estuary and its potential economic benefits to the Region.

It is a stated regional objective to facilitate the carrying out of an inter jurisdictional Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. The purpose of the framework plan is to identify the nature of the development, economic growth and employment that can be sustainably accommodated within the Shannon Estuary and the location of sites that could accommodate specific types of development, while ensuring that designated European sites and other environmentally sensitive sites would not be reduced.

7.6 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary

The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (SIFP) is the inter-jurisdictional strategy that sets out a coherent spatial plan that recognises the significant economic potential of the Estuary. The SIFP was prepared and adopted by the four local authorities bounding the Estuary including Limerick City and County Councils, Clare County Council and Kerry County Council and has subsequently been adopted into the statutory Development Plans of each of those local authorities.

SIFP aims to support the multifunctional nature of the Shannon Estuary and facilitate diversification of the economy through the promotion of commercial/industrial employment and maritime energy over a thirty-year horizon. It seeks to transform the estuary into an international economic hub by taking advantage of what are among the deepest and sheltered harbours in Europe and the world.

In relation to maritime industry, the SIFP identifies specific sites which may be suitable to accommodate future growth in the Estuary and specifically concludes that *“all growth should seek to utilise where possible the existing industry connectivity and synergy, as well as the infrastructure to create a more sustainable and attractive network for further investment”*. More specifically the SIFP safeguards the role and function of the Port of Foynes;

“as a key strategic driver of economic growth and as the premier deepwater bulk port facility offering the greatest economies of scale in Ireland’s bulk freight supply chain at a key Gateway in the Mid-West Region” (SIFP MRI 1.2.5).

The SIFP identifies the application site and additional adjoining land to the east in Foynes, as necessary for future port development. Specifically, it designates most of this land as:

“Strategic Development Locations (SDL) for Maritime Development”.

SIFP MRI 1.2.7 seeks:

“to support and facilitate the sustainable growth and expansion of Foynes Port, to ensure greater capacity, more competitive trade potential and diversification of trade patterns to meet national and international market demands. Proposals for marine related industry and more specifically sustainable port related uses will be encouraged, along with alternative uses, which complement the existing proposed marine related uses within the site, and that demonstrates compatibility with the level of flood risk, including provision of estuarine buffer areas. Proposals will be subject to compliance with the criteria in Objective SIFP MRI 1.2”.

In the preamble to development objectives SIFP MRI 1.2.6 and 1.2.7, the SIFP notes under the heading ‘Assets’ that;

“this SDL derives significant benefit from the existing port facilities and access to deep water. SFPC have identified a number of key growth sectors involving new berthing facilities, onshore infrastructure and the ability to accommodate larger vessels to serve wider markets. To complement the growth in maritime infrastructure, a parallel growth in the hinterland available for storage, warehousing and other port related uses is also required. This is a vital opportunity for the Port of Foynes, and a key asset in the growth dynamic and sequential expansion of Port activity, to be safeguarded and maintained as a vital port asset...”.

7.7 Mid West Area Strategic Plan 2012 – 2030

Similar to the RPG’s the Mid West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) acknowledges the strength of port activity in the region and recognises that the opportunities presented by the Port of Foynes as an employment hub are substantial.

7.8 Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy – Issues Paper

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly is currently under preparation. The purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the NPF and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the regions.

An Issues Paper, highlighting key issues to be addressed in the RSES was published and placed on public consultation. The Issues Paper acknowledges that all principal ports in the Southern Region including SFPC, play vital economic roles for the region. It acknowledges that the proximity to continental Europe after Brexit will only increase the importance of the location of these ports for the State. It states that the;

“RSES gives the Southern Region an opportunity to develop the ports as regional and national assets and to develop a Regional Policy for multi-modal logistics so as to identify regional logistics hubs for freight transfer, in combination with identified improved freight routes to port with reference to the TEN-T Core Network through Ireland”.

The Issues Paper highlights that,

“for our national and regional economic competitiveness, investment in the sustainable development of our port and airport assets is essential. This is critical, so our State and region can adjust to the changing international economy, especially important for our region in the context of BREXIT”.

It recognises that key future growth enablers for metropolitan cities, include improved connectivity to ports and airports.

The Issues Paper confirms that the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive requires a coordinated, integrated and transboundary approach in order to promote the sustainable development and growth of the maritime and coastal economies and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. It quotes one example of how this might be achieved and cites the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan as a plan which sets out an innovative approach to sustainable development and environmental protection of the Shannon Estuary.

Although the RSES has not been completed for the Southern Region, the Issues Paper does recognise the importance of key infrastructural assets such as SFPC, the Port of Foynes and its sustainable development.

7.9 Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016, As Amended

The Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 ('the CDP') as extended, is the pertinent planning document that sets out the development objectives and the site-specific landuse zoning provisions applicable to the existing port and the site the subject of this application. The Plan was amended in May 2015 (Variation No.3) to incorporate the SIFP (refer to previous section 7.6) which was attached by way of Volume 7 to the Limerick County Development Plan.

7.9.1 Policy Objectives

The relevance and economic significance of the Port is referred to in 2 important chapters – Chapter 5 'Economic Development', and Chapter 9 'The Shannon Estuary'.

Chapter 5 in relation to Economic Development, recognizes the Port of Foynes and the Shannon Estuary as a significant core asset for economic development in the region stating:

“the Estuary provides a strategic transit gateway whilst the Port facilitates trade from many industrial sectors critical to the ongoing sustainability and competitiveness of the region. The existing deep water facility at the Port and existing logistical operations provide a transit hub for a diversity of industries in the region including traditional manufacturing, extractive industries, general cargo, and emerging renewable energies”

And

“it is likely that the role and function of the Port and Estuary as a transport hub will increase. The location of the Port, its existing rail connection to the national network and the naturally occurring deep water areas of the Shannon estuary directly adjacent to Foynes presents significant opportunity to provide for enhanced maritime activities”. (pp 5-3)

Chapter 9.0 of the CDP focusing specifically on the Shannon Estuary and ‘Marine Related Industrial Development’, states that,

“Foynes’ role as a port is likely to expand with additional facilities currently being constructed or proposed. There are strategic benefits to the development of transport links by sea and the Council will favourably consider proposals to develop the port facilities at Foynes”.

Specific Policy Objectives contained in both Chapters 5 and 9 of the CDP in relation to ‘Port development’ at Foynes and ‘Marine Related Industry’ include the following;

Objective ED 04: Safeguard Strategic Development locations along the estuary

It is the objective of the Council to safeguard the Strategic Development Locations at Foynes Port, Foynes Island and Aughinish Island for the sustainable growth and development of marine related industry and industrial development at Askeaton....

Objective ED 06: Marine Related Industry

Land zoned for Marine Related Industry, shall provide for marine related industry and large scale uses that create a synergy with the marine use. Marine related industry shall be taken to include the use of land for industry that, by its nature, requires a location adjacent to estuarine/deep water including a dependency on marine transport, transshipment, bulk cargo or where the industrial process benefit from a location adjacent to the marine area.

Objective ED 07: Appropriate marine related industrial development of Foynes and deep water facilities in the Shannon estuary

(a) It is the objective of the Council to ensure that the marine related industrial zoned land in Foynes is safeguarded for the accommodation of port related uses and other industrial activities (see map A2 in Appendix 1). The lands indicated in the Shannon Integrated Framework Plan are also included in this zoning. The application of appropriate mitigation measures for this zone as detailed in SIFP Vol 2 appendices C and D, the Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report of the variation to this plan to incorporate the SIFP will apply for proposed developments within this zone.

(b) Support the expansion of the Port at Foynes and promote the economic and industrial development of the Shannon Estuary as a strategic transport, energy and logistics Hub serving the County and wider region by utilising naturally occurring deep water characteristics and by identifying and safeguarding existing and future strategic transportation links, subject to fulfilling the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the conservation objectives of the Lower River Shannon SAC site.

(c) Support the consideration of new deep water berthage within the estuary to enhance the strategic economic function of the Port subject to compliance with the ecological objectives of the Lower

Objective SE 02: Promoting Development

The Council will seek to promote the economic and industrial development of the Shannon estuary in order to capitalise on its location in the Mid West industrial and business region. Sufficient land will be zoned or identified for industrial and business use through the medium of Local Area Plans or zoning within this Plan including zonings in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary.

Objective SE O3: Port Facilities

The Council will support efforts to expand and upgrade the port facilities available in the Foynes Harbour in line with the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary and the Vision 2041 Shannon Foynes Port Company Masterplan.

Objective SE O4: Rail Transport

It is an objective of the Council to safeguard the Limerick-Foynes rail line against encroachment by inappropriate uses that could compromise the long-term development of the rail facility.

7.9.2 Settlement Plan & Land Use Zoning

The CDP includes a settlement Plan for Foynes and landuse zoning objectives. The settlement plan reinforces the significance of the Port of Foynes, as set out in preceding chapters as;

"one of the most important ports in Ireland and its characteristics as a sheltered deepwater port ensures that it will play an important role in the future development of the County and the region as a whole".

The settlement boundary and the landuse zoning objectives for the Foynes settlement Plan extend to include the existing Port estate and the 'Durnish Lands'. The landuse zoning objectives applicable to both the existing Port estate and the 'Durnish Lands' is 'Marine Related Industry'. The intended function of that zoning objective is to provide for uses and activities consistent with that described in Policy Objective ED06 – that is - to provide for marine related industry and large scale uses that create a synergy with the marine use that, by its nature, requires a location adjacent to estuarine/deep water including a dependency on marine transport..

8.0 CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING MATTERS

The material planning matters that have informed the need for the proposed development, the suitability of this location and design are considered under the following headings.

8.1 Need for Development

There is an immediate economic need for the proposed development, to ensure that the Port of Foynes remains competitive and is capable of meeting current day needs and requirements. This requirement to extend port capacity is responsive to inter alia; international shipping trends and practices, economic competitiveness and, demonstrable need based upon a historic pattern of commercial growth through the Port of Foynes and forecasted requirements. These are considered briefly in turn and are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5 of the enclosed EIAR.

8.1.1 Port Trends and Changes

The commercial, technological, and regulatory environment in which Irish ports operate is changing rapidly, both domestically and globally. There are a number of key trends impacting on port operators

in Ireland and around the world and in order to maintain competitiveness, it is important that the ports sector and SFPC addresses these challenges, including:

- The continuing trend towards larger ships requiring deep-water ports, and the reduced availability of ships to serve smaller ports;
- Increasing integration of maritime transport into the door to door global logistics and supply chain, blurring the traditional division of tasks within the logistics chain¹;
- The emergence of the concept of port-centric logistics as a key driver for future port development²;
- Intensified inter-port competition due to improved landside hinterland connections, even among more distant seaports; and
- Growing importance of maintaining a high environmental, security and safety standards in order to comply with regulations and maintain community support for port developments.

Therefore, for the Port of Foynes to maintain its competitiveness, it must be sufficiently responsive to these international port trends and changes.

8.1.2 Growth in Vessel Size

The trend in international shipping is towards larger vessels to exploit economies of scale. Analysis of Central Statistics Office (CSO) data³ indicates a pattern of decline in smaller vessel sizes calling at Irish ports and an incline of larger vessel sizes. While the total number of vessels arriving in 2016 (12,880) is 20% lower than the 2007 level, the gross tonnage of all vessels has increased by 5%. This is consistent with international practice. Port records indicate that the number of vessels of over 30,000 dwt (deadweight tonnes) calling to the Port of Foynes has more than doubled in the last five years. The port infrastructure must be able to accommodate this growth in vessel size without negatively impacting on the efficiency of the port.

8.1.3 Growth in Port Activity

In 2017 the port handled over 11 million tonnes of goods, representing 21.6% of the overall volume of goods moving through Republic of Ireland seaports and placing it next to Dublin Port in terms of throughput. SFPC plays a particularly important role in the bulk trades market, through its handling of liquid, dry and break bulks and accounts for 38.3% of the overall volume of bulk trades handled at Republic of Ireland commercial seaports.

Tonnage throughput in the Port of Foynes has steadily increased since 2011, increasing from 1.3 million tonnes to almost 1.8 million tonnes in 2017. Bulk solid trade remains very strong in the Port of Foynes, growing by over 7% between 2016 and 2017. However, the greatest growth was experienced in break bulk trade, which experienced growth of almost 13% in the same period. This growth reflects the resurgence in the domestic and export economy where, for example, petroleum and construction products were particularly strong. In addition, agri related cargoes grew steadily reflecting expansion in that sector.

¹ InterTrade Ireland 'Freight Transport Report for the Island of Ireland' 2008

² Ibid

³ Central Statistics Office, Vessel arrivals by vessel size class

SFPC, with increasing tonnage and a record operating profit of €4.7m in 2016, is seeking to roll – out its investment programme in line with its Port Masterplan – Vision 2041, including development of the subject land and port infrastructure.

8.1.4 Forecasted Growth in Foynes

SFPC’s strategic planning reports identify and address the significant capacity issues facing the Port of Foynes. These documents include: SFPC Masterplan – ‘Vision 2041’ (published in 2011); Five year rolling Strategic Plan with Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport review, approved in May 2015; and Capital Investment Plan approved in May 2015.

Vision 2041 examined the likely trends in commodities handled by SFPC and considered various forecasted growth scenarios in relevant sectors over the next thirty years and the demand that these are likely to create for port facilities, principally in Foynes. The projected future trends and growth scenarios set out in Vision 2041 take account of relevant information in policy documents such as TEN-T Guidelines, National Ports Policy 2013; Food Harvest 2020; the Irish Ports Offshore Renewable Energy Services (ISPPORES) review undertaken by the Irish Maritime Development Office and the Shannon Estuary Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP). Table 5.2 represents the tonnage figures forecasted in Vision 2041⁴ for SFPC’s general cargo terminals at the Port of Foynes and Limerick Docks. (It should be noted that Limerick Docks absorbs approximately 500,000 tonnes per annum of these tonnage forecast figures).

	2011	2025	2041
Base Line	1,663,000	3,094,000	3,208,000
Mid Line	1,663,000	3,270,000	4,142,000
High Line	1,663,000	3,820,000	5,571,000

Figure 6 Anticipated Growth in Tonnage at General Cargo Ports (extracted from ‘VISION 2041’)

SFPC is already on track to achieving the specified growth projections detailed in Figure 6. Since 2011 tonnage at the Port of Foynes has increased by 30% to 1.778 million tonnes, which is consistent with Vision 2041’s mid to high average growth scenario. The average annual growth in tonnages projected in SFPC’s Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 is just over 7% for SFPC’s general cargo terminals, which is also consistent with the mid to high growth scenarios presented in Vision 2041.

SFPC has identified several new areas in which it forecasts future growth will be focused. These are focused on the energy and the unitised sectors.

8.1.5 Need for Enhanced Capacities

During the period 2015-2016 alone, over €45m was invested in the port estate in Foynes by SFPC and the private sector. Increasing port capacity is dependent on three main elements of water depths, berthage and storage capacity. All three elements are interlinked and a deficit in one area, such as a land shortage, will make it commercially impracticable to carry out jetty improvement works. Expansion

⁴ Vision 2041, Table 5.1 pp.41

of SFPC's storage facilities have already been accepted and recognised in the SIFP and by Limerick City & County Council in their rezoning of land⁵ for marine related industrial use.

The need for additional storage space was also acknowledged by the Inspector when adjudicating on the CPO application (ABP Ref: 13. CQ3001) and in this regard, reference is made to Section 7.25 of the Inspector's report which recorded the following,

"on the basis of the submissions made there appears to be a shortage of storage lands within the confines of the existing port lands to accommodate expansion of the ports storage and other related and ancillary uses. I also consider it reasonable to conclude on the basis of the information presented that an enhancement of physical infrastructure as described in the scheme of development as Phases 1 and 2 will necessitate the requirement for additional and related storage lands and port centric uses and without which the implementation of the scheme of development could prove impracticable".

8.1.6 Additional Berthage

The current configuration of quay allows the port to manage 4 no. 10,000 dwt vessels at any one time or 2 no. 50,000 dwt vessels and 1 no. 5,000 dwt vessel at any one time. This configuration has resulted in a berth occupancy percentage of 40% on an annualised average and 78% on a peak seasonal average. This level of berth occupancy is not sustainable in the medium to long term based on current tonnage growth rates as it will inevitably lead to longer wait times for ships leading to increased costs to the receiver and a loss of competitiveness for SFPC and the Mid West region.

This increased quay length capacity facilitates the trend towards a higher number of larger vessels calling to the Port of Foynes. The proposed quay length extension of 116.5m will allow the Port of Foynes to facilitate up to 5 no. ships of up to 10,000 dwt at any one time or 3 no. ships of 50,000 dwt at any one time thereby facilitating a reduction in berth occupancy percentage to more acceptable levels and to allow a growth in tonnages out to 2030, in line with Vision 2041.

8.1.7 Additional Storage

Unlike the other Tier 1 ports in Ireland, the Port of Foynes specialises in dry bulk, break bulk and liquid cargos. The storage demands for these types of cargo are typically greater than container and/or ferry ports because of the sizes of each shipment and the duration that these types of cargos are stored in port.

Historical SFPC data, as detailed in Table 5.3 shows that there is a very close relationship between new quay length, tonnage growth and supporting land requirements. While the tonnage growth between 1980 and 2000 effectively doubled at Foynes port (going from 622,114 tons per annum to 1,227,819 tonnes per annum), the land bank requirements at Foynes port increased by 2.3 times over the same time frame going from 25.5 hectares to 59.5 hectares. The Port of Foynes Estate land bank is being utilised (with only minor land available for short turnover cargos). All other sites are either developed, occupied or have been earmarked for a specific future use (with planning consent). To be in a position

⁵ Variation no.3 of the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 - 2016

to efficiently manage and achieve the projected growth figures as outlined in Vision 2041 document, the Port of Foynes requires additional land.

8.1.8 Economic Significance of SFPC

As a small open economy, Ireland is critically dependent on external trade and investment to support its successful development. This is evidenced by the fact that the overall combined value of merchandise/goods exports and imports represents over 69% of Irish economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016, while export sales represent over two-thirds of the overall value of sales within Ireland's manufacturing sector. Ireland's commercial seaports play a vital role in this context, with the volume of maritime trade handled by the ports equating to 84% of the overall volume of Ireland's merchandise trade.

An independent Economic Impact Assessment prepared by W2 Consulting⁶, examining the activities of SFPC and the wider impact of the commercial trading activity of the port, demonstrates the significance of SFPC to the national economy. Not only are port operations a significant contributor to the region's economy but they represent 1 per cent of Ireland's GDP. Ensuring that the Port of Foynes has appropriate capacity in place to support the future growth in its port trade volumes, will be critical to increasing these economic impacts in the future.

8.2 Principle of Development

8.2.1 Compliance with European and National Ports Policy Growth Objectives

SFPC is an established Port and, the only port of significance on the west coast of Ireland, designated as a core port under TEN-T, and a Tier 1 Port under the National Ports Policy 2013. Tier 1 Ports enjoy significant volumes of freight and have a high level of international connectivity. They have been identified at a European level as having the potential to reinforce a network of modern ports to support maritime freight operations. The other ports⁷ on the west coast of Ireland are not recognised as having the qualities or potential of a TEN-T Port, being neither recognised as a Core Port nor a Comprehensive Port. National Ports Policy 2013 is very clear in its central objective;

*“that those ports considered to be of national significance must be capable of the type of port capacity required to ensure continued access to both regional and global markets for our trading economy. Government expects the Ports of National Significance (Tier 1) to lead the response of the State commercial ports sector to future national port capacity requirements. There is also a role in this regard for the Ports of National Significance (Tier 2) to develop additional capacity to aid competitive conditions, within the unutilised sectors in particular”.*⁸

National Ports Policy effectively mandates SFPC along with the other two Tier 1 ports to expand and grow as demand requires and to ensure investment in ports meets port capacity requirements. Consequently, the proposed expansion of the Port of Foynes to provide for increased throughput is considered consistent with the designation of the Port as a 'Core Port' at European level, and as a 'Tier 1 Port' at national level as it is the only suitably identified location on the west coast of Ireland identified

⁶ W2 Consulting Economic Impact Assessment of SFPC 2016

⁷Galway Harbour, Fenit, Killybegs, Bantry Bay and Sligo

⁸ Ibid Section 4.1 pp.44

for significant growth. Furthermore, the proposed development which will facilitate increased economic activity to the region; greater capacity; more competitive trade and diversification of trade patterns responsive to national and international market demands as well as enhanced efficiency of port related operations is consistent with regional economic development objectives, and the spatial development objectives identified for the Shannon Estuary.

The operational phase will have a significant, positive, permanent impact on the economic activity of the region. The proposed development (Phase 1) is likely to result in an additional 48 no. people working in the Port, increasing to 120 no. employees when Phase 2 & 3 become operational.

8.2.2 Suitability of Location

The operation of an efficient and viable port is dependent on three integral elements, namely;

- Sufficient water depths to accommodate actual and projected ship size,
- Sufficient berthage/quay lengths and quay set down areas; and
- Sufficient land available in the vicinity of the port for covered and uncovered storage (to store cargoes being imported or exported through the port) and / or to promote port centric activities and services.

Land requirements for a bulk port are directly related to tonnage throughput. The Port of Foynes and the subject lands within the existing Port and on the adjacent 'Durnish' lands are considered the most appropriate location to accommodate the proposed development on the Shannon Estuary. The existing Port of Foynes is an established general cargo facility with associated landside infrastructure. The existing Port benefits from deep water to accommodate current and projected ship sizes. The proposed development provides for a practical opportunity to provide for enhanced berthage and quay wall to facilitate increased tonnage throughput and set-down at the quays. The location and physical relation of the 'Durnish' lands immediately adjacent to the existing Port estate is suitable to provide for covered and uncovered storage and to promote port centric activities and services and other port related activities. There is no economic or physical rationale to fragment operations to a different location removed from the existing Port.

Foynes is located on an identified Transport Corridor. The lands access onto the Port Access Road and the N69 National Road Corridor, which is critical for the efficient movement of freight to/from the Port. It straddles the corridor of the existing rail connection between the village of Foynes and Limerick City and provides future opportunities for improved efficiencies in freight movements, when commercially viable to do so. The proposed location is positioned adjacent to the national road network with easy access to other larger urban and commercial centres serving the wider region.

The proposal adopts a plan-led approach to development and facilitates the coordinated expansion of the existing Port estate on lands immediately adjacent to it enabling sufficient infrastructural tie-in and effective internal accessibility between the proposed new landside storage areas, and the quay walls.

The proposed development is in accordance with SFPC's Masterplan – Vision 2041 and which identified the need for increased berthage and additional land for storage.

8.2.3 Compliance with Planning Policy and Development Objectives

The subject site and specifically the proposed Port expansion at 'Durnish' has the benefit of specific land-use zoning objectives applied to it to provide for port development, port expansion, and 'Marine Related Industry' during the lifetime of the current Limerick County Development Plan.

The proposed development seeks to provide for 'port facilities', 'marine related industry', and expansion of, and upgrade to the port facilities available in the Foynes Harbour in line with the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary and the Vision 2041 Shannon Foynes Port Company Masterplan. The proposed development is therefore consistent with the local economic and spatial planning policy objectives contained in the Limerick County Development Plan and specifically Policy Objectives ED06 in relation to 'marine related industry', Policy Objective ED07 in relation to 'Appropriate marine related industrial development of Foynes and deep water facilities in the Shannon estuary as indicated in the 'Shannon Integrated Framework Plan'; and Policy Objectives SE02 and SE03 in relation to promoting development and, port facilities.

The proposed development, and specifically the provision of serviced land and related infrastructure, and, the provision of covered storage units and open storage areas for the purpose of port related activities and associated logistics, is consistent with the landuse zoning objectives of the land as set out in the Limerick County Development Plan.

8.3 Development Arrangement

8.3.1 An integrated approach

The development arrangement is consistent with best practice and is considered to reflect prospective end user requirements in terms of storage (covered and uncovered) and the associated supporting infrastructure necessary to facilitate a coherent development. Design is consistent with best engineering practice and appropriate consideration has been derived at following an iterative process including, consideration of baseline environmental circumstances, potential effects on the receiving environment and, compliance with planning requirements.

Future Port users of the Durnish lands are likely to operate internal and external storage areas and sites on a commercial lease from the Port Company for a defined period of time. Tenancy arrangements are as per existing Port operations, likely to comprise a mix of short and long-term arrangements. The anticipated commodities or goods stored externally by Port operators will in some instances, be as important and valuable to commodities or goods that will be stored internally. In this same manner, commodities stored externally might also be as vulnerable to flood risk, as commodities stored and secured internally.

In parallel, SFPC is mindful that the Durnish lands are situated within an area considered to be at flood risk and defined as 'Flood Zone A'.

Despite the presence of OPW embankments adjacent to the project site along the Shannon Estuary, it is the technical consideration of the project engineer (RPS) that for a number of reasons, those embankments cannot be relied upon to provide appropriate flood defence and full standard of protection for development activities within the 'Durnish' lands. Consequently, the design approach must be

responsive to; the long-term development use of the land for marine related uses and; that the sensitivity of those uses to flood risk (which are unknown at this time), are likely to differ between different Port users and the commodity of materials stored.

Therefore, whilst the engineering design solution for one area, or for one building, might be sufficiently responsive to accommodate the first use and first commodity, or offer the necessary level of protection and flood risk management for that use, that design approach might not necessarily provide the same level of protection for future uses or different commodities if/when the tenant occupier of the site changes between lease periods. Further to that, it is both reasonable and logical that Port users as tenants of the Port Company will expect Port land to be serviced and ready for development and/or operational use by them. They will not expect, nor would it be reasonable to expect Port users / tenants to incur the responsibility and time necessary to design and secure planning consent to bring the land (or individual parts thereof) to a 'shovel-ready' serviced and operational state. Moreover, the adoption of individual design schemes by individual Port users or for Port uses designed in isolation from the overall estate, is an undesirable arrangement for SFPC as it is unlikely to present a sustainable integrated, efficient and coherent solution for the overall land given the locational circumstances and user requirements. The resultant effect might be that ground levels, roads, foul, water and surface water infrastructure could be designed at differing, inconsistent and incompatible levels depending on differing individual uses, open/covered storage requirements and their differing sensitivity to flood risk.

In order to address these issues, the development proposal has taken a strategic approach to the development of the 'Durnish' lands taking account *inter alia*; the desire of the Port company to deliver serviced land to meet immediate and predicted requirements; to provide future Port users with certainty of infrastructure within a realistic and competitive timescale; provision of an appropriate and sustainable level of flood risk protection; and, to enable future adaptability of the Durnish lands for different uses and operations.

8.3.2 A Pre-cautionary approach to Flood Risk Management

Further to technical 'flood risk' analysis and assessment of the subject lands and surrounding hydrological regime (which is set out in the enclosed EIAR), it is the recommendation of the project engineer - RPS, that in order to mitigate against the potential impact of coastal flood risk and to provide for appropriate flood risk management for the development and the uses, the land should be raised above the design flood event level. In this instance, this equates to a minimum level of 4.44m OD Malin with finished floor levels (FFLs) on buildings within the Durnish lands be set at a minimum of 4.74m OD Malin. This approach is considered consistent with national Flood Risk Management Guidelines: "*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*" (DEHLG, 2009) and adopts the 'pre-cautionary approach' set out in those guidelines following consideration of other alternative flood risk design options which might not afford adequate protection against residual flood risk. This precautionary approach to flood risk management has influenced the overall project and has been taken into account during the project design and in the preparation of the EIAR and, it has evolved from consideration and assessment of all other alternative flood risk management options.

The proposed development seeks to raise all the Durnish lands to 4.44mOD Malin, and seeks the operational development and use of some of those lands as part of the initial phase of development. The remaining uses occurring on the raised and serviced lands (subsequent Phase 2 and Phase 3), which are unknown at this juncture, will be subject to separate planning consent at that time. However,

establishing and providing for ground levels now, across the entirety of the 'Durnish' land as part of this application presents a number of distinct planning advantages:

- It sets out a coherent fixed finished ground level for immediate and future operational uses and enables easy modification to layout arrangements;
- It enables coherency in terms of assimilation of infrastructure provision (roads, water, foul-water and storm water solutions) for each development phase / use;
- It enables coherency in terms of assimilation of port uses, buildings and storage areas thus making the most efficient use of development and zoned land;
- It provides a singular integrated flood risk management solution for the entire of the Durnish lands, responsive to this location that can be (and has been) assessed cumulatively;
- It changes the dynamic 'flood risk' character of the lands from 'Flood Zone A' to 'Flood Zone C' which will inform future 'Planning' considerations, and which will inform commercial risk and insurance liability for prospective Port users;
- It presents a serviced land supply to address current port and marine related industrial requirements; and
- It complies with the 'precautionary approach' to flood risk management as set out and advocated in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

8.3.3 Phasing Justification

The proposed phasing arrangement as set out in section 6.3 is necessary for the Port Company to ensure the timely and expedient delivery of immediate storage requirements and provision of serviced lands for the forecasted growth period envisaged, and being realised under the Port Company's 'Vision 2041' spatial and economic strategy.

The development strategy for this planning application is to phase the proposed expansion area in Durnish such that the raising of ground levels (filling of land) and the provision of service infrastructure would occur on a phased basis and implemented during the 10-year scope of the planning permission. Phase 1 (which forms the basis of this planning application) comprises the filling the land, raising the levels and provision of storage use of a part of the site (Operational Phase 1a). Phase 2 and Phase 3 would be delivered as serviced industrial land only, thereby affording adequate flexibility to accommodate the specific design needs of future operators. It is acknowledged that the delivery of specific uses and buildings within the serviced Phase 2 and Phase 3 land will need to be advanced separately through the planning consent process. However, it is intended that such designs will be consistent with the Development Framework Programme prepared for all of the 'Durnish' Land and which is lodged with this application.

This is considered the most practicable and commercial viable delivery model for the Port Company. The provision of serviced land first and the delivery of the necessary infrastructure and works required to bring the 33.94ha to a 'serviced state' prior to any operational use of the land, was dismissed by SFPC as being unviable and unimplementable as it would require significant upfront costs without return.

8.4 The “Do Nothing” Scenario

A failure to deliver capacity extension at the Port of Foynes would place the Port at an operational and competitive disadvantage relative to other large ports and ‘Tier 1’ Ports and will inevitably lead to further operational difficulties due to berth congestion. In such a situation, SFPC would start to lose trade and larger freight customers, and over capacity trade would have to be handled at other more distant ports. In this scenario additional socio-economic costs would arise across the Irish economy associated with the internal haulage costs of moving trade, the majority of which would otherwise have an origin / destination catchment that is focussed on the Limerick and Mid West area. These internal freight transport/connectivity costs would include additional journey times and vehicle costs, costs associated with increased traffic congestion along national primary routes and associated environmental/emissions costs.

A failure to expand the Port now would compromise future expansion plans within the Port as set out in Vision 2041 and would stymie medium and long term projected growth. Overall, if this and future projects do not proceed, the Indecon Report⁹ estimates that under a mid-growth scenario, a failure to develop the Port would result in an estimated loss of trade from the Port of Foynes of up to 1.3 million tonnes annually, or 37% relative to projected port traffic in 2041. This potential loss in future trade would be equivalent to €5.5 billion in present value terms when the annual losses are cumulated over a 20-year period.

The ‘do-nothing’ scenario is considered from an economic perspective, contrary to strategic ports policy and would hinder the economic performance of the Port inconsistent with its ‘Tier 1’ Port designation.

8.5 Consideration of Alternative Designs

The proposed development and design arrangement has been informed, influenced and modified as part of the iterative environmental impact assessment process. Consideration has been given to alternative ‘locations’, alternative ‘design’, and alternative ‘processes’ and further commentary on that is contained within Chapter 5 of the enclosed EIAR.

The proposed design seeks to make the most efficient and effective use of the lands identified for development and specifically for marine related development and which have been acquired by the Port Company for this specific purpose. At the same time, SFPC seeks to pursue a design arrangement that is consistent with the proper planning of the site and the surrounding area; that provides for the requisite level of supporting infrastructure; and, design and implementation measures that would not result in significant effects on the natural and receiving environment. Alternative arrangements were considered in terms of inter-alia; flood risk design, the filling of land and type of fill, the management of foul water. However, on balanced appraisal and consideration of the environmental assessment, the current proposal was considered the most appropriate.

8.6 Rail Connection

SFPC have been actively assessing the viability and feasibility of bringing the rail line back into operational use. The line was disconnected from the mainline at Limerick in 2004. Initial study has

⁹ Indecon International Economic Consultants, Assessment of Wider Economic Impacts of Foynes to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme, 2017 pp.28

confirmed that the renovation of 40km of rail line would cost in the region of €25m, with annual maintenance costs of circa €350,000 per annum excluding the capital cost estimates for rolling stock and train operating costs. Accordingly, it is SFPC's position that this line can only be reinstated if commercially viable to do so, arising from the needs of a particular operator and cargo type.

The proposed development does not facilitate or warrant such investment at the current time. However, the proposed development seeks to maintain a rail connection to the overall port operation and no part of the proposal would hinder the potential for the future use of rail freight carrying facilities when viability is determined. The maintenance of the rail connection and the safeguarding of the potential for future use of rail freight currently satisfies the requirements of the TEN-T Regulations and satisfies the local planning policy '*Objective IN O5: Protection of rail infrastructure*' contained in the Limerick County Development Plan 2010.

8.7 Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared and enclosed with the planning application. The EIAR has been prepared consistent with; best practice and best available techniques; the requirements set out in Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); and, the current and draft EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (August 2017).

All works proposed as part of the planning application for which planning permission is being sought, and described in the statutory notices, have been subject to environmental assessment which is presented in the EIAR. However, in addition, and in order to provide a cumulative consideration of the proposed uses and the potential future uses (subsequent development phases), the assessment of potential effects on the environment as part of that EIAR also examines where it has been possible; the potential environmental effects of the overall development scheme for the Durnish lands if all development phases were implemented.

The examination of the 'all phase' development scenario for Durnish was undertaken by way of best practice and to demonstrate a holistic consideration of the development lands and to inform the design approach. That assessment was therefore based on the likely effects of the proposed development and proposed uses proposed as part of this planning permission, and then, the anticipated landuses that will occur from subsequent operational use of Phase 2 and Phase 3 based on the information known and available at this time in respect to those subsequent Phases and the like hood that uses will be similar. Despite the consideration of those subsequent development phases as part of this environmental assessment, the future operational uses of Phase 2 and Phase 3 shall be subject to the necessary and separate planning consent and relevant assessment in due course. For clarification, the implementation of subsequent phases does not, and has not, prejudiced the environmental impact assessment of the proposed development carried out for the proposed development the subject this planning application and which is contained in the enclosed EIAR.

8.8 Potential for Effects on European Sites

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared and enclosed with the planning application. The NIS is appended as a volume to the EIAR in order to facilitate easy cross reference between it and the related Chapter 7 which deals with the same and/or associated baseline data used in assessment of

'Biodiversity'. Despite inclusion with the EIAR, the NIS is a standalone assessment fulfilling the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and Sections 177T(1)(b) and (4) of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) in relation to the implications of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites.

Having examined the implications of the proposed development on the Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA in view of their conservation objectives and in combination with any other relevant plans or projects, the appropriate assessment concluded that with the application of appropriate mitigation, adverse effects upon the integrity of these European sites was not predicted.

9.0 CONSULTATION

Considerable consultation has been undertaken as part of this planning application process by, and on behalf of SFPC in order to inform the development project specifically the detailed design, and for the preparation of the accompanying EIAR. In addition to consultation with the prescribed bodies as part of the EIA process, pre-planning consultation was undertaken with Limerick City and County Council and separate consultation with technical staff from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Two separate public consultation events were held in Foynes on the 22nd November 2017 and on the 14th March 2018 to outline the nature of the development project and to facilitate community feedback. Both consultation events consisted of open sessions from 14.00hrs to 16.00hrs and from 18.00hrs to 20.00hrs. The first event was held in the Community Hall and was well attended with 40 no. people. The second event was held in SFPC's Harbour Offices and had a smaller attendance with 12 no. people attending.

The generality of the issues raised during the public consultation sessions extended to include matters such as; siltation within Foynes Harbour; dust arising from on-loading and off-loading practices at the Port; flooding reassurances to clarify whether the Port works would offset the benefits from the recent flooding/drainage relieve scheme in Foynes Village or cause flooding to neighbouring lands; requests for improved access to the Port, and in particular the public slipway; impact on traffic and how new road layouts will link with the proposed new road from Limerick; and, employment opportunities arising from the proposed development.

All issues raised during all consultations have been taken into consideration in the finalisation of the development proposal and for the purpose of the environmental assessment set out in the EIAR. Further details in respect to the consultation process is contained in Chapter 4 of the enclosed EIAR.

10.0 SUMMARY

SFPC is seeking planning permission of extension to the Port capacity of Foynes Harbour Limerick to facilitate immediate and forecasted port growth and tonnage throughput. Accommodation of this growth manifests itself in two physical landuse and development requirements – extension of the existing jetty (to provide for increased tonnage throughput and enhanced operational efficiencies); and, provision of increased landside storage requirements given that the existing storage provision within the existing port area is exhausted.

The need for the development has been established on the basis of European and National Ports Policy and strategic and regional spatial objectives which recognises the designation of the Port as a 'Tier 1' Port; the requirement to respond to port trends; and the forecasted growth for the Port and the Port of Foynes as a general cargo handling facility identified in the Port Company's strategic economic and spatial masterplan.

To date, this has been recognised by An Bord Pleanála in their consideration of an application by the Port Company for the compulsory acquisition of the 'Durnish' lands.

The suitability of the location for the proposed extension of Port Capacity has been informed by its location within and adjacent to the existing and established Port, and by way of the landuse zoning objectives for 'marine related industry' that have been applied to the Port and to 'Durnish' lands by Limerick City and County Council and which are contained in their statutory planning policy objectives set out in the Limerick County Development Plan 2010-2016.

The design and development arrangement as proposed has been informed by, and derived from balanced consideration of a number of material matters that include principally; the Port Company's commercial mandate and function as a vital gateway into Ireland for commercial freight and their ability to implement a scheme of development; the objective to deliver a coherent integrated development framework responsive to development and landuse planning requirements, guidelines and policy instruments; environmental protection; and the proper planning of Port activities.

It is on the collective consideration of these issues that the Port Company is seeking favorable consideration of this development proposal.