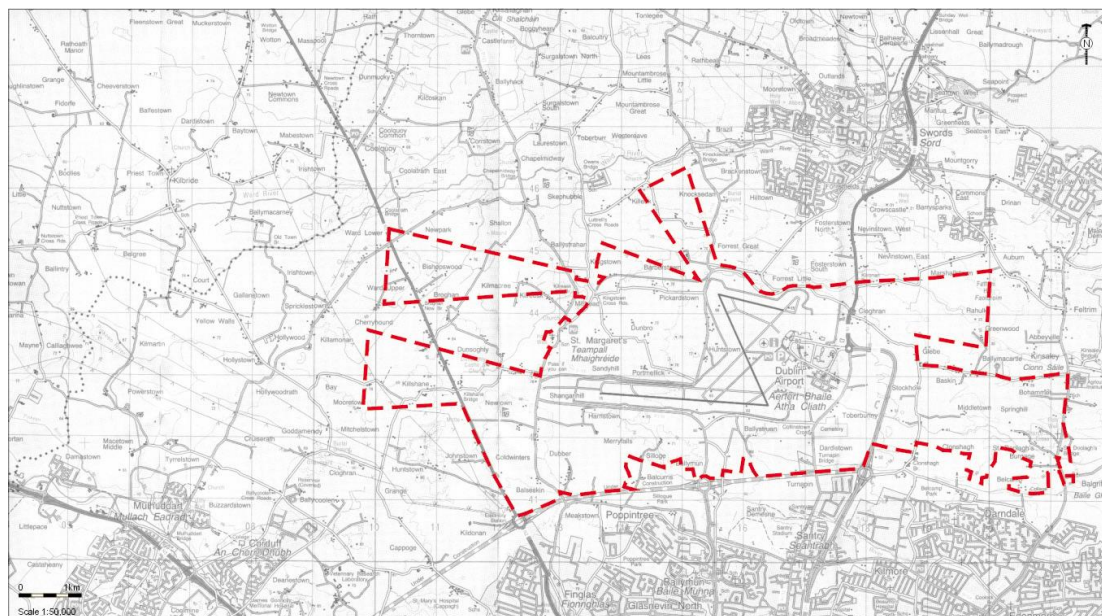


# South Fingal Planning Study – Executive Summary

## 1. The Study

- 1.1 An international team of consultants, appointed by Fingal County Council and led by the Llewelyn Davies planning practice, have undertaken a study of the South Fingal area, as part of the development planning process for the County.
- 1.2 This short paper outlines the principal proposals contained in the Study, and explains some of the reasoning behind key choices in the South Fingal area.
- 1.3 A map of the study area is shown below.



## 2. The Overall Vision for South Fingal

- 2.1 The principal objective of the study is to advise on a strategic “vision” and framework for South Fingal to 2011 - a rational and flexible strategy to manage the growing pressure for development north of the city - in a way which benefits the local population whilst meeting national and regional needs.
- 2.2 The vision is of that of a South Fingal which should be:
  - **a gateway to Dublin, Fingal and Ireland:** South Fingal is a focus of national transport infrastructure: with the Airport as its key, and the M50 and M1 as two of the nation’s most important road links.
  - **a hub of the sub-regional economy;** with the dynamic presence of the Airport, but also astride the Dublin-Belfast corridor, and with vital development land around Blanchardstown and Swords.

- a “**Green Lung**” for the whole of the north side – the Airport apart, South Fingal has a strong regional spatial and rural /greenspace role for the populations of the urban areas which bound it to the north and south.

2.3 The key proposals contained in the consultants’ report can be summarised under five headings:

- The Airport
- Land around the Airport
- Road Access
- Rail and Bus
- Housing, Communities and other zonings

### 3. The Airport

3.1 *Major expansion of the Airport to a 2-Runway 2-Terminal configuration, from its current form of 1 Terminal + 1 main/ 1 minor (cross-) Runway (see diagram below). Forecast growth must be catered for as a national priority, and the scale is great: in passenger traffic, from 14 million passengers / year to over 20 million in 2011 and over 30 million in 2020; airfreight, too, is growing at over 5% per annum.*



3.2 *Need for a second runway: the consultants reviewed and endorse the forecasts of long-run growth in air traffic, and concur that the volume and mix of air traffic at Dublin makes it inevitable that a second runway will be required and that the chosen east-west alignment north of the existing airport is the logical one.*

3.3 *The use of the existing cross-runway should be as limited as possible; and once the second parallel runway is open (target date by 2010, subject to approvals) movements should relate only to emergency situations or in accurately defined weather patterns. It imposes undue environmental nuisance on residents of the approach / exit path in North Dublin, it constrains the logical internal development of the airport itself, and it is arguable that its not essential in operational terms.*

3.4 *The Aer Rianta proposal for a cargo centre and new taxiway south of the existing runway is not supported. In the view of the consultant team, any short-term advantages of such a move are outweighed by the fact that it runs counter to the longer-term logic of expanded facilities/ a second Terminal between the two parallel runways; makes it impossible to maximise the use of the land between them; and tends to continue focussing all airport activity and traffic towards the increasingly busy and congested M1/N1 spine and its junction with the M50 at Turnapin - rather than moving towards the more*

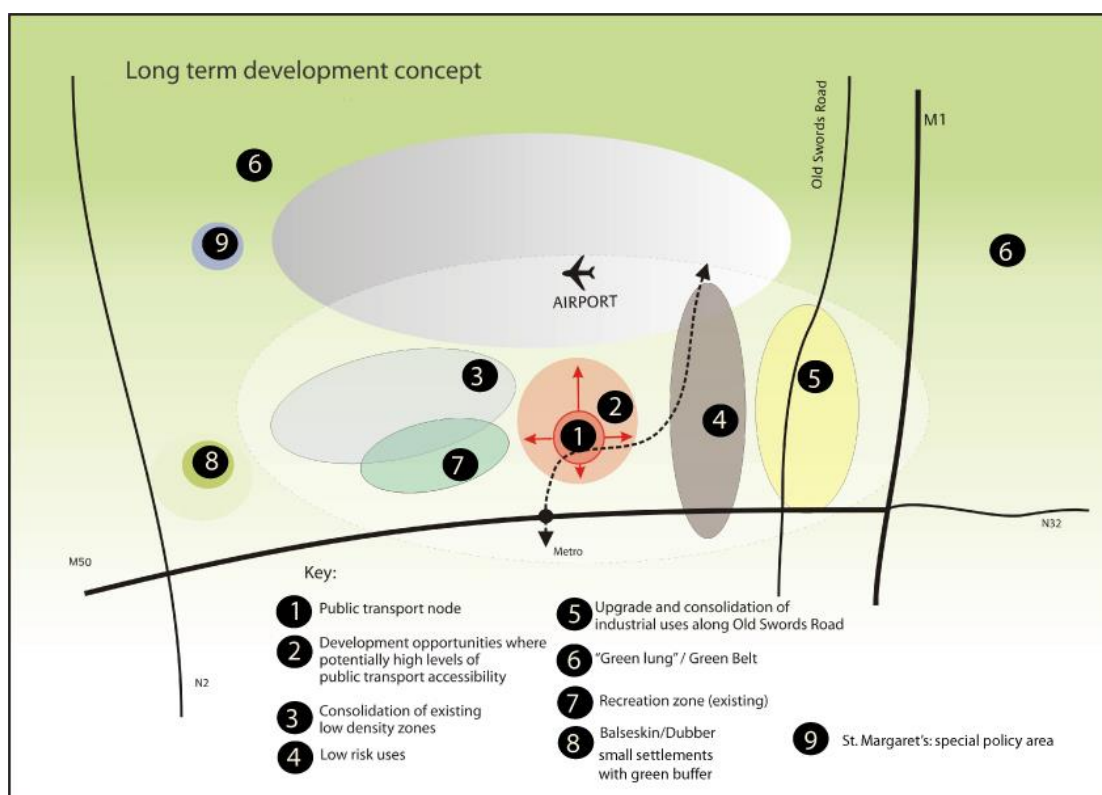
balanced configuration with 2 runways, 2 terminals and 2 motorway/trunk road accesses (M1 and N2).

- 3.5 A “*Designated Airport Area*” is proposed, where air-related uses would have priority, covering most of the area between the two runway alignments, west of the M1 and east of St. Margaret’s. The Airport’s detailed development should be planned via an agreed “Airport Action Plan” (master plan) for the land within the Designated Airport Area, which can both structure Aer Rianta’s investment decisions and be adopted as the formal basis for Fingal County Council’s planning control of change within that zone.
- 3.6 *Airport safety zones* and areas to avoid noise-sensitive uses are identified, and will be finalised and defined in detail in the new Development Plan, once current (separate) studies are completed and Government approval is forthcoming.

#### 4. Land around the Airport

- 4.1 *Outside the Designated Airport Area*, a predominantly rural and green-belt role is proposed for the majority of the area. This will ensure that it continues its role of separating urban areas, builds positively on its under-used potential for recreation, and avoids development which could create possible conflicts with airport activity in the future.
- 4.2 *The “M50 Belt”*: the study concludes that the eastern half of the land between the southern runway and the M50 has potential for development primarily as a high-density Metro–focused employment node; but that it cannot be released for further development until the capacity of the whole transport system in this locality has been substantially augmented. Existing road capacity is already a major concern along this section of the strategic network, and significant additional loading should be avoided unless there is a compelling need. **Maintaining access to the airport must be a top priority.**
- 4.3 *The policy background supports this stance unequivocally.* Policies in the Regional Planning Guidelines (Goals 2 & 5, and pp. 92, 105,131) and in the National Sustainable Development Strategy clearly link any new development locations to transport demand and capacity and they identify locations which currently meet the criteria for development - which seek “maximising patronage by clustering more people close to them” (the stations/stops). This location does not meet those criteria at present, and the RPGs particularly stress (p.170) the need for co-ordination in time between land use and infrastructure.
- 4.4 *Nor is there a “need” argument in the short or medium term.* Locations where airport-related development can be accommodated already exist. The consultants conclude that the locations identified in the SPGs and the County Development Plan (primarily Blanchardstown and Swords) are adequate for the foreseeable future in capacity terms, and suitable in terms of their relationship with the Airport, when compared with similar “off-airport” locations elsewhere in Europe. There is thus no strategic case or concern which demands the early release of land right next to the Airport – the economic needs will be served very well by the provision already made in plans and by existing sites in the sub-region.

- 4.5 *In the longer term, the potential is for development around a Metro/public transport node in this area, together with some consolidation of existing zonings for low-job-high density logistics use. The case should be reviewed once Metro implementation is confirmed, and a detailed local plan developed. The new balance of benefit and impact could then be reassessed within the tests laid down by strategic guidance, and in the light of the ability of the whole (rail / road) transport system to cope. An appropriate mix of new commercial zonings, development and remaining open space / recreation could then be defined. The concept diagram below shows how this might work.*



## 5. Road Access

- 5.1 *The road system will need significant strengthening, as well as the relief that will come from major new public transport capacity. A key proposal is the upgraded N2 in the west of the area, with a spur into the Airport area to serve the proposed second terminal in particular. Well before that, a principal concern about road capacity is that the M50 and the M1/N1 spine are already under stress for significant lengths of the working day. Over the period until the opening of the Port Access Road in particular, conditions will be very sensitive to major new traffic generation.*
- 5.2 *Other more local improvements are proposed, notably to the N32 east of Turnapin, and to the west and south of the Airport, to upgrade existing road alignments, and to create a local road network whose performance is*

reasonable independent of possible congestion on the strategic national routes.

- 5.3 *Development and the road system:* until new road capacity is available, and rail investment has started to shift the choice of mode of significant numbers of travellers to and through the area, the case for additional new development, beyond that already zoned or that within the Designated Airport Area itself, would have to be particularly strong to overcome concerns about the network's capacity. The overall priority must be to reserve capacity for the access needs of the Airport – which is not only an important national asset, but also a major source of employment growth potential in its own right.

## **6. Rail and Bus**

- 6.1 *A north-south Metro spine* connecting Dublin, the Airport and Swords is an integral part of the proposals, and is essential to efficient, sustainable access in anything but the short term. Without it, the road system cannot cope with forecast airport growth, and certainly not with additional commercial development. It is recommended that all possible efforts be made to support early implementation of Metro. In addition, Light Rail (Luas) and heavy rail access, from east or west, should not be ruled out.
- 6.2 *The Metro proposals* are currently being assessed by the Government in terms of the Business Case. The preferred alignment for the first phase links the Airport to the City Centre. Metro will greatly improve public transport access to the airport and relieve the capacity on the local road network. Possible heavy rail links from the Iarnród Éireann network (Maynooth line, DART) are not shown, as there are no firm proposals, but they could eventually form part of a package.
- 6.3 *In the short term*, continuing improvements to bus services, and controlled expansion of the parking provision, will be essential to cope with continued growth at the Airport.

## **7. Recreation, Housing and other Zonings**

- 7.1 *There is a continuing role of much of the study area as a landscape buffer and rural area*, publicly accessible with some recreational and environmental value, already containing a significant number of sports pitches and playing fields.
- 7.2 *Further housing development* in the study area is to be tightly restricted, in order to minimise the potential for future conflict between airport operation and environmental conditions for residents.
- 7.3 *Existing communities*, particularly St. Margaret's, should be consulted about the detailed resolution of their area's future, working together with residents and Aer Rianta to seek consensus about the nature of change.
- 7.4 *Certain existing zonings* are proposed to be confirmed or altered, with their development in some cases being contingent on adequate transport capacity.

7.5 *No further retail development* in the area should be permitted, other than that directly associated with air traveller/airport workforce needs.

## **8. Next Steps**

8.1 This study represents the conclusions of the consultant team to be taken forward for consideration by the Council. Continued development of policy and projects will of course continue via the process of finalisation of, and consultation on, the Draft Fingal Development Plan 2005-2011. It will be the vehicle for reconciling the complex and interwoven issues reviewed in this Study, which include Metro routing, Public Safety Zones, noise contours, commercial development potential, and – at its core – the layout and planning of the Airport itself.