



**The Chartered  
Institute of Logistics  
and Transport**

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Ireland

## **SUBMISSION: ALL-ISLAND STRATEGIC RAIL REVIEW PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

In our submission concerning the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, CILT has focused on the decarbonisation of all Irish rail systems, rail freight and passenger aspects. The primary emphasis of the review has been on how the island's rail network may help with the decarbonisation of the island's transportation systems, increase regional accessibility, encourage sustainable connection into and between key cities, and foster equitable regional development. Therefore, enabling decentralisation, balanced regional development, and a counterweight to Dublin by developing sustainable cities that serve a region and potentially reduce long distance travel. The time period for the plan is from current-2050 with net-zero carbon emissions as one of its major milestones.

### **Overview**

The recommendations and proposals in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review puts forth a convincing case of why the plans are necessary and substantiate it with financial analysis, environmental and strategic viability and clear roadmaps and packages for each of the proposed plans. The feasibility of these packages is also reviewed based on various constraints and likelihood to proceed is given only to plans which have the best benefit to cost ratios.

## **Issues Identified**

- The plan has to be accelerated since Ireland is falling behind on its objective for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which is 6–7% each year but was only 1.9% in 2022.
- The total costs related to this plan is estimated right now to be around 31.8bn Euros and additional annual operational costs are involved. This estimate will rise considering the prevailing economic conditions and inflation and the plan's success depends on the continued capital support.
- Considering the very long timeline, the capital required, and the several unique stakeholders involved, the complete success of the plan depends upon collective collaboration among these various stakeholders and continuing with the proposed timeline and constant funding for the developments.
- There has been a continued rise in population and in order to achieve complete decarbonisation, a modal shift is required.
- A long-term strategy has to be prepared for freight distribution in Ireland's ports and Airports.
- Public sentiments towards public transportation have to be changed as there is still a high dependency on private transportation. Similarly freight transport needs substantial support as road haulage tonne-kilometres is more than 90% of the island's total.
- Improving rail infrastructure access to major nodes including Dublin Port, Dublin Airport, and Shannon Airport is essential to initiating a move toward more environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

## **Rail transportation**

Iarnród Éireann's strategy is focused on achieving major goals in 2040 rail freight strategy and the Climate Action Plan, which together strive to build a sustainable, just, and liveable society. The All-Island Strategic Rail Review focuses on the existing rail network, looking at how it can be

enhanced to support the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland's sustainable transport needs for passenger and freight requirements in the coming years and CILT supports this stance. In terms of National and European policy, railway operators plan to achieve a 30% rail market share in the freight sector by 2030, with an expectation for this to increase to approximately 91% by 2050. Congestion in our cities will only worsen as the population rises and the need for passenger and freight services increases until we find new ways to move people, commodities, and materials. Freight transport by rail has the potential to reduce traffic and contribute to more environmentally friendly and secure transportation networks.

CILT believes that the multimodal transportation paradigm, which combines road and rail transportation, is key to providing a comprehensive solution. The length of the entire transit between intermodal hubs and/or seaports should be transported by rail to facilitate decarbonisation. Even though Ireland is a small island with relatively short distances, rail freight may nevertheless be economical and effective given the distances involved, particularly if additional support measures are implemented. Continued intention and involvement of stakeholders from both countries on the island is highly required in order to successfully implement the proposed plans. A central body consisting of all involved parties and stakeholders is essential to facilitate information sharing, align interests, and enhance problem-solving capabilities.

The Strategic Rail Review outlines and proposes various new lines connecting major ports and airports, alongside improving existing lines. It also proposes that new infrastructure would be developed along these lines, such as inland terminals and enhancements to existing ports to help with freight transportation. The review has considered options for improvements from the port of Belfast, Rosslare-Waterford line, and adding routes around Dublin to avoid intercity routes, therefore alleviating congestion. Dublin was a key focus of the Strategic Rail Review due to its limited rail access to the Dublin Port. Dublin Port being the main gateway for freight in and out of the Island and the potential to shift from Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs), therefore supporting the decarbonisation agenda.

CILT sees similar policy initiatives applied by various countries across the EU. These can be used in detailed plans as supportive cases, such as the GB's Traction Decarbonisation Network strategy and Denmark's Togfunden programme. Major cities in Europe have already implemented plans pertaining to decongestion and decarbonisation, and have seen success in their approaches.

## **Decarbonisation**

In the Strategic Rail Review reports, decarbonisation is one of the major topics discussed in the recommendations. Also, the plans are drafted with environment and sustainability as one of the main constraints, but it is not the decision-making factor. CILT notes and appreciates this reports' views on decarbonisation, but it does not include a detailed strategy for long term decarbonisation of the Island of Ireland's railways. CILT believes that this is highly imperative in order to achieve the modal shift from road to rail. Some of the solutions and strategic options considered are electrifying our railway network, battery electric trains and hydrogen powered trains. The issue is that battery powered is insufficient to operate long hauls and can't sustain higher speeds. There currently isn't the infrastructure and capital to introduce this technology, the only way forward is 100% electrification of the Island's railway networks.

CILT supports certain recommendations from the review such as procuring hybrid and electric rolling stock in medium term, but short-term plans are absolutely required to keep up with the decarbonisation goals and to make rail transport attractive. An All-Island Rail Decarbonisation Strategy with the support of Iarnród Éireann and Translink and all other stakeholders involved in the railway transport sector. Although in the report it is argued that electrification and investment will take time, it is imperative to accelerate it.

National goals to cut emissions by 30% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 underscore the urgency with which transportation systems must be improved to lessen their environmental effect. With existing services saving over 5 million kg of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, rail transit is demonstrably more environmentally friendly than other modes of transportation. CILT also believes that sustainable land use planning relies heavily on rail. It aids determine where construction should be prioritised for the greatest environmental results and to accommodate anticipated population growth. Therefore, if the island wants to accomplish its sustainability goals, it must take a comprehensive and integrated approach to managing its transportation and land use.

For the island of Ireland, the DART+ Tunnel significantly addresses urbanisation and passenger transport. Through a tunnel, it links the Belfast line to those that run to Heuston station. It facilitates the island's heavy rail connections and enables heavy-rail travel between Cork and Belfast. Dublin's central residents will benefit greatly from the city's new rail stations, which will make it

easier to travel to neighbouring communities and further afield. It will have frequent and faster service while increasing capacity in Dublin. It will also be a major development in sustainable transport, enabling a modal shift and a step change in decarbonisation.

The 25kV AC is a preferred method of decarbonisation, including long-distance haulage for the efficient movement of goods, as demonstrated across the EU and UK. Electrifying the lines between Dublin and regional cities, and Dublin to Belfast using 25kV AC is likely the optimal approach for decarbonising the routes in light of current best practice trends and their application to the Irish rail network.

### **Review on the proposed Lines**

- Significant backlog problems have been reported on the northern lines Cross-Dublin connections need to be examined. It is necessary to find a way to reroute commuter and intercity traffic in order to make room for connection from south to north.
- In regard to Shannon and particularly the airport, the Shannon-Limerick line seems initially logical; nevertheless, the geography plays a part since it is on a peninsula; thus, new infrastructure could be required to handle this challenge.
- There will undoubtedly be a reduction in travel time as a result of the Waterford line's connections to Westport and Wexford. The new line that has been suggested to go through Greystone's appears to be the optimal usage, considering the geographical restrictions.
- The most significant benefit of additional lines is that they will encourage the development of prospective infrastructure along them, such as residential buildings and industrial complexes, which will alleviate the existing housing shortage.

## **Summary**

The All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review gives an overall plan for the development of rail systems in Ireland and Northern Ireland with a focus on modal shift from road to rail, and referring to sustainability and decarbonisation. It will also enable decentralisation, balanced regional development. This would facilitate a counterweight to Dublin by developing sustainable cities that serve a region and reduce long distance travel.

However, a fully-fledged review further focusing on decarbonisation goals and strategies should be developed. Some of the recommendations given are fair and attainable, but the timeline needs to be shortened to keep up with the transportation trends and demands on the island. As the far majority of the population travel by private car, the rise in the sales of EV vehicles and forthcoming electric HGVs might prove to be a major factor in discouraging people from using the railway networks. An intermodal approach in the short-term will greatly assist in starting the reduction in road usage and increase traffic in rail transportation networks. The primary goal should be to introduce greener and faster options in intercity travel to decrease congestion in major cities such as Dublin and Belfast. Also, to connect major ports and improve infrastructure to support the transportation of freight in a faster and cost-effective way. This can only be achieved by involving all the stakeholders, aligning their goals and working together as one.

## **About CILT Ireland**

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Ireland (CILT) is the independent professional body for people engaged in the provision of transport services for both passengers and freight, the management of logistics and the supply chain, transport planning, government, and administration. CILT is a member of the wider CILT International family which has offices in over 30 countries and 33,000 members worldwide. CILT has a number of specialist forums, a nationwide structure of locally based groups and a Policy Committee which considers the broad canvass of transport policy. As a professional body, CILT does not lobby on behalf of any sectoral interest, but seeks to take an independent, objective and considered view on matters of public policy.

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## **About the Authors**

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Eoin is Associate Professor of Logistics and Supply Chain Management at Edinburgh Napier University. He previously led the National Institute for Transport and Logistics (NITL) at Technological University Dublin. He previously worked with a number of UK universities. Eoin has carried out research and published peer-reviewed journal articles on sustainable supply chains, collaboration, and urban logistics.

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Rachel is a Public Transport Analyst in the National Transport Authority. She previously worked in engineering consultancies in Ireland and the Netherlands. She gained her BSc. in Spatial Planning from DIT and MSc in Transport, Infrastructure and Logistics from Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands. She is also a committee member of the Irish branch of the Transport Planning Society.

### **Tim Hayes, Education and Training Committee Chair**

Tim is a member of the Institute's Council, Policy Committee, and is Chair of its Education and Training Committee. Former CEO of Bus Eireann and CILT in Ireland. Over forty-five years has held a range of senior management positions in transport and tourism and has lectured at third level. He holds BE, M.Eng.Sc. and MBA degrees and is a Fellow of the Institute.

### **Joe Kenny, CEO of CILT Ireland**

Joe has for the last three years been the CEO of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT). Additionally, Joe has vast experience of a variety of transport and logistics organisations in different sectors, including UITP (International Association of Public Transport) and the European Logistics Association.