

**Shannon Foynes Port Company/Joint Committee on Environment & Climate  
Action – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

I would like to thank the Committee for inviting me to present here today to discuss our plans on future capacity.

**Introduction**

Shannon Foynes Port Company is Ireland’s largest bulk port company and has statutory jurisdiction on the Shannon Estuary covering 500km<sup>2</sup>. With channel depths of up to 32m, we handle the largest vessels entering Irish waters and have capacity to handle over 11m tons per annum. Our activities have a trade value of circa €8.5 billion per annum supporting 3,900 jobs.

Both EU and national policies, including the National Development Plan, endorse the strategic importance of Shannon Foynes. We are a Tier 1 port of national strategic importance and a Core Corridor port in the EU’s Ten-t Regulations. To date, we have made several successful funding applications under the Ten-t budget, receiving grant aid supporting projects costing over €40m.

Importantly, there are several sites adjoining the Estuary, extending to 1,200 hectares that are zoned for maritime development, making Shannon Foynes ideally suited for future national port infrastructure of scale for this country. To fully realise these comparative advantages, expansion and development of the Port is led by its 30-year Masterplan, Vision 2041, which was updated in 2022, with the assistance of global engineering company Bechtel. The updated Vision 2041 Strategic Review was launched by Minister Eamonn Ryan last November.

**Future Plans**

Our Plans takes account of changes in policy, such as 2030 and 2050 climate action targets together with changed freight market dynamics since 2013.

Accordingly, future port expansion at Shannon Foynes is generally classified over four main themes as follows;

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- Deployment of Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) at scale. (Appendix 1 provides a schematic of the multi-functional multi-site approach to delivering FLOW at scale from the Shannon Estuary.)
- Green Hydrogen and Transition facilitating alternative fuels production. (Appendix 2 provides an overview of the development of a green hydrogen ecosystem in the Shannon Estuary.)
- Required port expansion to meet expanded, diversified and more sustainable logistics services. (Appendix 3 illustrates future deep water port developments at Foynes Port)
- Implementation of the Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy

With regard to the deployment of FLOW at scale, our Plans demonstrates that €100bn of offshore windfarm investment can locate in the Atlantic within 36 hours of the Estuary, and that in order to support that offshore investment, that €12bn in supply chain investment could locate to the Shannon Estuary by 2050. Our Plans also provide for the development of a gigawatt scale green hydrogen production facility powered by offshore wind. This facility also allows for production of derivative fuels such as green ammonia and or e-methanol.

In addition to becoming an integration port for FLOW, the Vision 2041 Review found that Foynes port, conditional on developing the proposed new deep water quay at Foynes island, could add substantial freight capacity to the national supply chain. Importantly, this capacity at Foynes will be situated at an uncongested point in the national road and rail network, assuming completion of the Vision 2041 transport objectives.

The €100m Limerick to Foynes rail connection and the €450m Limerick to Foynes Road Scheme are key requirements of Vision

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2041. These crucial hinterland connections together with the port infrastructure planned for Foynes, will transform the Foynes terminal into a major national freight and logistics hub. This connectivity together with its 180 hectare port estate, ensures SFPC can provide substantial capacity and resilience for the national freight sector.

Successful implementation of our Plans, by delivering on the identified ORE (Offshore Renewable Energy) and logistics opportunities, will be transformational for the Shannon Estuary and the country. The Atlantic's renewables resources could provide an infinite green energy supply, ensuring our country becomes energy independent for the first time in its history. Freight transport can be considerably decarbonized by reducing ton/km travelled by using the planned Foynes logistics hub and by the production of efuels.

Resulting economic impacts will be in the order of tens of thousands of jobs created and billions of euro invested in supply chain and route to market infrastructure and facilities over the entire western seaboard.

## **Conclusion**

The successful implementation of our Plans requires a collaborative and cooperative approach with all stakeholders. In that regard, the following areas should be addressed in the short term.

**ORE policy:** We welcome recent policy updates, such as the Policy Statement for Phase 2, calling for 2GW of Flow to be in development by 2030, and the National Industrial Strategy for offshore wind published by DETE. It is essential that the milestones for FLOW continue to be prioritised so that we can deliver the requisite port infrastructure on time. Ensure MARA is operational in Q3 2023 and that ABP has the human resources to meet prescribed timelines.

**Hinterland Connectivity:** Completion of the Limerick to Foynes (including Adare bypass) Road Scheme and reopening of the Foynes to Limerick Rail line, are mission critical.

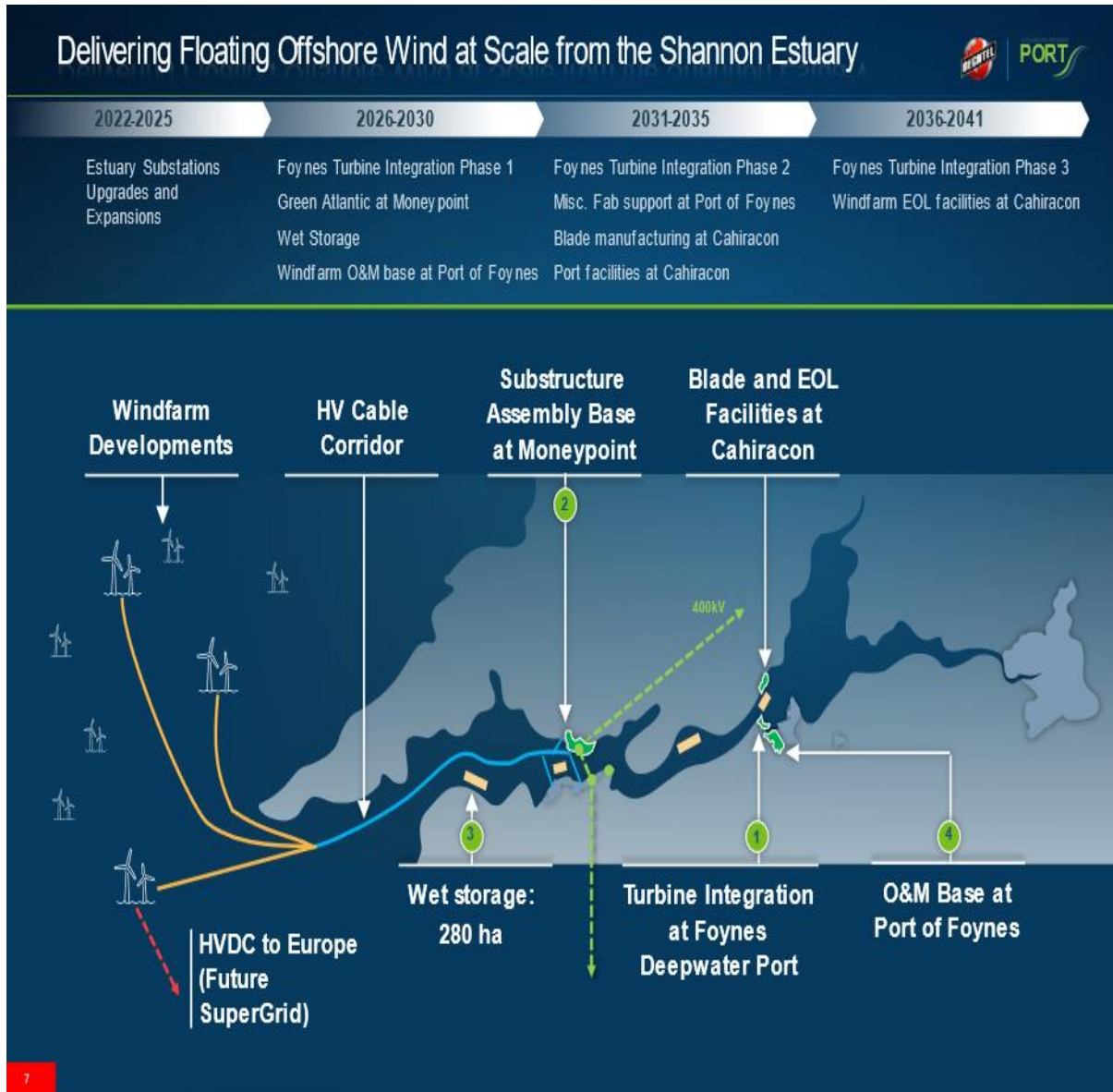
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**Enabling infrastructure:** New deepwater port infrastructure and updated offshore grid strategy are essential to enable the utilisation of our immense renewable resources in the Atlantic. Shannon Foynes is addressing the former and calls for the latter to be fast tracked.

**Funding:** New port infrastructure estimated to cost €500m will be required to facilitate our plans. However, this investment could mobilise over €100bn in private sector investment in offshore renewables and supply chain activities. We note that the Department of Transport is planning a new ports policy this year, and we respectfully request that new port funding mechanisms would be considered for port projects of national strategic significance.

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Appendix 1



Appendix 2



### Appendix 3



Appendix 4 – Summary of V2041 major developments

**Major Infrastructure Developments**

**1** Port of Foynes Expansions

**2** Foynes Deepwater Port

**3** Estuary Cable Corridor

**4** Green Hydrogen at Ballylongford

**5** Cahiracon Port Facilities

**6** Green Atlantic at Moneypoint

**7** Foynes -Limerick Road

**8** Foynes -Limerick Rail

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