

National Planning Framework

I support the analysis of the expert group that reviewed the NSS in 2014. However, I do not believe that the proposed NFP will sufficiently address these as much of what is proposed just perpetuates the current 'business-as-usual' model of growth and development: over-reliance on external/foreign investment, top down decision making, car dependence, and lack of prioritisation of the environment, biodiversity and climate change prevention. The following issues must be prioritised:

1. Investment to enable rural areas to improve their landscapes, soils, energy and water resources through investment in local mixed forestry & woodland development, biodiversity restoration in river systems, marine areas and degraded land (i.e. farmland and harvested bogs), and community electricity generation schemes. This would create thousands of local jobs in the tourism and energy sectors while hugely improving air, water and soil quality (the essence of life) and bringing the 'green persona' back from the brink of extinction.
2. Real and substantial investment in public transport and cycling, and not just in Dublin. All regional towns and cities need this. The growth in urban sprawl, car ownership and car dependency are the greatest threats and greatest challenges we face. The proposed plan offers little to really tackle this.
3. Finally, this targets in this plan must be linked with those in the relevant transport, agriculture, climate change and energy plans. Without this multi sectoral, cross referencing, the relevant government departments and local authority departments will continue pull in different directions, contradict each other, waste public money, and ultimately, fail to deliver any real change.