

Submission to Development Plan up to 2040

Let me state at the outset that I am not impressed with this plan. Under the pretext of improving our lot it seeks more and more centralised power.

Inherent in this plan is the idea or concept that we, or somebody in Government now possesses the ultimate, unlimited knowledge required to determine Ireland's entire future until 2040 and beyond.

Section 1.4 page 24 states that the provisions of the plan will be legislated in to law and local authorities will be further stripped of powers and discretions. This is in line with global moves for the centralisation of power and is to be deplored. Democracy will suffer.

Why cannot we have a plan that simply sets out key projects for delivery, such as housing, energy, Health service reform and administration reform at the top in Dublin. These would make massive improvements in citizens' lives. Please stop telling ordinary citizens that it is all about Climate Change and it is up to us to solve it. It is up to Government. I will explain.

This year all the major towns are reducing car parking spaces in the town centres. This is on foot the Urban Enhancement Plan where a small amount of EU money being spread around to make our town centres look like Mediterranean tourist towns. In the Irish context, the loss of car parking leads directly to the decline of these centres to the advantage of the multinationals on the outer edges of the towns

Climate Change.

This is the modern version of Satan that I learned so about in my childhood. It is evil, all pervasive and will destroy us all unless we make the proper offerings, i.e. covering the entire countryside with wind farms

What really is Climate Change?

It is the natural sequence of changes in the earth's surface conditions. Climate Change never stops, and is mainly driven by the radiated heat of the Sun. Other factors play a considerable part namely the cyclic changes in the earth's orbit around the sun and the mobility of our ocean waters and the atmosphere. Volcanic eruptions cause severe but temporary changes in climate.

For the past million years the earth has had about seven major Ice ages, these separated by warm interglacial periods. The ice ages lasted about 100,000 years and the interglacials lasted 10 to 15 thousand years. At the present time we are nearing the end of an interglacial. During the ice ages much of the northern continents were covered by kilometres of ice. Ireland had about 2 km of ice cover about 12,000 years ago. Due to all this ice the ocean levels were hundreds of feet lower than they are today. In the rapid thawing 10,000 years ago the ocean levels rose to their present level. approximately.

During our present interglacial we have well documented changes in climate. There was the Roman Warming, the Dark Ages cold period, The Medieval Warm Period ending about 1500 AD, then the Little Ice Age. The modern warming period started about 150 years ago and is continuing.

We have observed a large rise in CO₂ in our lifetime. This is now being cited as the prime, indeed the only cause of global temperature rise. This, in spite of the clear historical and archeological evidence to the contrary. Past global temperature rises always preceded rises in CO₂. A reputable Danish investigation of Greenland Ice Cores from the Eemian Interglacial, 120000 years ago shows that global temperature was 5deg C higher than today and ocean levels were about 18 feet higher. However, much of Greenland's ice still remained. This Investigation was led by the Neils Bohr Institute.

The Antropogenic or man-made Global warming campaign has been littered by scandals, false predictions, fierce arguments among scientists, and patently false propaganda. Examples are Michael Manns "hockey stick" graph that showed global temperatures were supposed to rise totally out of control by 2012 or thereabouts. Also, we got Al Gore's prediction that New York City would be partially drowned by rising seas by 2010. All this resulted in the campaign being rebranded from Global Warming to Climate Change.

I am attaching a copy of a report from the Sunday Times of 14 Feb 2106. It speaks for itself. Note the confident prediction that "sea levels would remain high, even after 10,000 years unless there is a reduction in Carbon emissions." Now that is some forecast. It gets better. When Greenland Ice melts, some kind of plateau, or high ridge of water will remain around Ireland, giving us a higher sea level rise than anywhere else.

Then they tell us that the science is settled!

What do we need to do?

Firstly get reliable data from reliable scientists. Then prepare for a possible outcome that means sea level rise, no matter what we do.

Wind Farms destroy our rural landscapes, despite the concern for landscape expressed in this Planning Document. There is a fallacy always put out that wind farms can be more or less hidden away in cut away bogs. The proof of this is the Mount Lucas Wind Farm. It can be seen for many miles around. Incidentally where does the European Landscape Convention fit into all this? This Convention has excellent provisions and procedures that are central to all planning procedures and decisions. The Government gave a solemn undertaking to implement this Convention.

We need to stop burning fossil fuels anyway. They cause enormous pollution, not including CO₂, as this is not a pollutant. Co₂ is an essential for life. And, unknown to most of Irelands population, there are projects on hand to solve our energy problems forever. Yes, forever.

There is a safe nuclear technology that could be made available in 10 years, perhaps less. This is using the material thorium, in a process known as the Liquid Flouride Thorium Reactor, LFTR for short. This process has been widely promoted by a man named Kirk Sorensen. This man, an American has spent years in promoting this system. Unfortunately Western Governments and the existing nuclear and coal lobbies were having none of it. It would severely disrupt the status quo.

The current nuclear technology, Solid Fuelled Uranium to Plutonium, is a disaster, producing a number of calamitous meltdowns and has destroyed any confidence that the lay person might have in Nuclear.

The LFTR is deemed to be many times safer as the problem of meltdown is eliminated. Also the system would be far more efficient and could eventually use up all of the present long-term stores of radioactive waste. China, India, the Czech Republic, Norway and Holland and some companies in the USA are actively working on this system. The Irish Government should be engaged in this process of fact finding and pressing for European involvement in this technology. The promoters of Thorium based power are convinced that this process would serve for centuries to come. One tonne of Thorium used in a fully operational commercial plant would displace the burning of 3 million tonnes of coal.

In Cadarache in the South-East of France an enormous project is well underway; it is called ITER. The aim is to achieve a controlled and sustained fusion of hydrogen into helium thus producing enormous amounts of energy. It requires that core temperature of 10 million degrees C. Many nations are involved, including Ireland, with the world's best scientists, technologists and engineers. The project is scheduled to reach fruition in or around 2025. If successful a prototype commercial plant will be built in Japan. This is named DEMO and is scheduled for completion in 2048.

By then humankind may well be entering the Fusion Era, in which all other sources of mainstream electric power can eventually be phased out. This is 21st century science and technology, with potential to produce unlimited, safe and non-polluting power. It is what mankind needs to solve our environmental problems.

So we have not just one but two competing processes for our future progress. We in Ireland should stop kidding ourselves, into thinking that we can use 19th century technologies that rely on the capture of little handfuls of the ambient energy. Are we really going to harness wave power? Are we going to fill the first km of the sea's edge from Malin Head west and south to Carnsore point filled with thousands of little machines bobbing up and down?

Getting back to other planning issues. For a good future that benefits all of the people we need to provide a good living environment throughout the land. It is futile to try to plan and construct a society where people do not have to travel a distance to work. It is far more important to make travel efficient and environmentally friendly. Every person has a right of birth to live in or near the place where he or she was born and reared. This means providing houses everywhere, and not be herded reluctantly into a town or city. The concept of choice should be paramount.

Similarly we need to provide employment where it is needed. It is not fair or proper to funnel all new industry into one big town. The surrounding towns are impoverished. Long commutes are now necessary. For a new factory the infrastructure needs are the same irrespective of where it is built.

The bigger the town or city the bigger the traffic problems. And the absence of an efficient public transport system means urban congestion at rush hour times.

Dublin.

It is hard to understand that no progress is being made in providing an underground or Metro system. I recall as a young man, living in a digs in Dublin, and in a round table discussion with similar young people on this very subject; we all agreed, "It is still not too late to start building a Dublin Underground!" That was in 1963.

Why cannot a basic design plan be put together with lines and stations that will be best located to suit movement of people in the Capital, now and the foreseeable future. Then prioritise one particular line and start its construction. Set out finances that will finish a viable section in a fixed time. Finish this and put it into operation. People elsewhere will grumble but we are not Shanghai, in China where 3 separate metros were built in a few years.

As finance become available, then build another section to completion and so on. It would be important to realise that you are never looking at a completion date. In other words, construction would go on for very many years, and we would have to live with this. But a Metro system would be slowly take shape and be in use at the same time.

For instance start with an Airport to Sandyford line. This would take a considerable time. Then a Leixlip to City Center line linking with Airport Sandyford. A Belgard road to City Centre line could follow. Large car parks would be a feature at the outer stations.

These are just off the cuff suggestions, but for heaven's sake why not get started.

Unfortunately, the political imperative kicks in and prevents any progress. This is not a project that a Minister can sponsor, and then be sure his name will appear on a plate commemorating his opening ceremony.

The question of Urban sprawl is a very urgent one and we have to examine our system of 2 storey Semi Detached as the norm. We have to think of high rise. But not very high. We need to have a design that will suit in large towns as well.

Take this for starters.

We are aiming at a successful couple that are moving from their small starter home to a 5/6 bed house about 250SqM or thereabouts. They are earning about 100K. We want to offer them an apartment that they may well buy after consideration. It would need to be suitable for a young growing family.

Specification:

A 20 apartment block four stories high.

Each apartment has a 2 story layout, that is covering 2 of the four stories in the building. This would allow the top houses to have their own private internal stairway.

A Common underground garage could apply if the terrain was suitable.

A private common green space would be available.

A security entrance would apply.

A very high standard of external appearance would be necessary.

A high quality of construction is essential e.g. sound proofing.

This means that four dwellings would have the same footprint as one private house of the same floor size.

It is doubtful that any builder would want to start a venture like this without guarantees.

The State could intervene by building one example so as to encourage people to consider this type of dwelling. It could be given wide publicity. As a business initiative it may eventually sell, at no loss to the State.

It would break new ground and at least test and see if people will make a change from tradition without any sacrifice.

Michael C Muldoon

██████████
██████████████████
██████████
██████████
██████████████████
██████████████████

After 4°C of warming
After 2°C of warming

Temperature increases would boost water levels, as imagined in this visualisation of London

Bad tidings — Rising seas put Ireland at risk

Climate change will force us to move away from coastal areas, writes Gabrielle Monaghan

IRELAND will be one of the countries most affected by rising sea levels in the future, according to scientists who have concluded that the Earth's climate will change over the next 10,000 years by the same magnitude as in the last Ice Age if carbon continues to be emitted into the atmosphere at the present rate. Even if governments cut emissions enough to limit the increase in global average temperatures to 2C, one in five of the world's population will ultimately have to move away from coasts.

That figure increases to between 25% and 50% for Ireland, according to a study published in the journal Nature Climate Change last week.

The proportion of the Irish population living in an area at risk of being submerged by rising sea levels is similar to countries such as Burma, Thailand, Japan, Sri Lanka and Australia over that time scale. This is because Ireland has a high coastal population relative to its size, according to Anders Levermann, one of the 22 researchers from Europe and North America who contributed to the paper.

A 2C increase in global temperatures would lead to the melting of ice sheets at Greenland and Antarctica, boosting sea levels by about 82ft over the next 2,000 years. These sea levels would remain high even after 10,000 years, longer than the history of human civilisation to date, unless there is a reduction in carbon emissions. Scientists say this is the most conservative scenario.

Peter Clark, a paleo-climatologist and professor at Oregon State University, said the estimate is a global average, but Ireland faces more regional risks because of its relative proximity to Greenland. "It's a ballpark figure," he said. "But think of the density of Ireland's population in coastal zones. You're talking Dublin, Sligo, and Derry underwater."

"The way to think about sea-level increase is that it's like a bathtub. The water doesn't rise evenly in the tub; in some places it rises more than the average. The main reason for the departure from the global average for Ireland is the loss of ice from Greenland. The mass of ice going into the ocean would cause the sea level to go up higher than expected."

The team of scientists analysed four different sea level-rise scenarios based on different rates of carbon emissions and warming over the next 10,000 years. The low end could only be reached with much greater efforts to eliminate fossil fuel in the short term, while the higher rate is based on the consumption of half the remaining fossil fuels over the next few centuries.

The researchers then compared these scenarios to data on climate and sea-level change over the course of the last Ice Age.

At its height, massive ice sheets covered the northern continents. Afterwards, global temperature rose by 5C and two thirds of the ice melted. Sea levels rose by about 390ft, an increase that only ended around 4,000 years ago. A third of the ice remains in Greenland and Antarctica.

The new research "is the most comprehensive look at global climate in the past, present and future", according to Jeremy Shakun, a paleo-climatologist at Boston College and a co-author of the report.

"What our analysis shows is that this era of global warming will be as big as the end of the Ice Age. What we are seeing is a massive departure from the environmental stability that civilisation has enjoyed during the last 10,000 years."

The researchers' key contention is that policy-makers have been considering climate change too narrowly by only focusing on sea-level projections for the 21st century. The latest United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report envisages a sea-level increase of just 3ft by the year 2100.

Clark said: "Our point is that the sea level rise by end of this century is just the [start] of how much more sea levels will rise in the future. We show the end-case of the scenario, but sea levels will be rising during this whole period."

"Looking at where they will go would be useful for planning purposes, because entire cities will have to be moved. But who thinks about coastal planning beyond 50 years?"



Low-lying beach areas, such as Mullaghmore in Co Sligo, face being submerged as Greenland's ice melts

Sunday Times 14 02 2016