

Minister Eoghan Murphy TD
National Planning Framework Submissions
Forward Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01 W6X0

Re: Submission to Ireland 2040 - Draft National Planning Framework

10th November 2017

Dear Minister Murphy

Cork Development Forum welcomes the publication of the recent draft National Planning Framework and strongly supports the planned statutory basis under which this plan will be implemented. To ensure that the mistakes of the National Spatial Strategy are avoided, it is critical that a strong statutory footing is created to grow Ireland's potential.

We actively endorse the joint City and County submission dated 8th November and outline the below points to emphasise some key areas of focus.

Cork is already a strong and vibrant second city region for Ireland. We must continue to compete internationally and to support indigenous growth, to create a national offering that is appealing to all investment, one that shows clear direction and strategy. In acknowledgment of this, Cork Development Forum calls for the clear recognition of Cork as Ireland's second city and the driver of a thriving Southern region in the NPF.

We welcome the intention of accelerating population growth in Metropolitan Cork to twice the rate to 2040. However, we question the ambition of this growth and whether it is adequate. The current population of Metropolitan Cork stands at 305,406 people. Yet we note the draft Ireland 2040 document as defining Cork City and suburbs as having a population of 209,000 people with a growth target of 115,000 additional people to 2040. We question the basis by which the draft NPF defines Cork City and suburbs, and whether the target is ambitious enough. In the Cork 2050 submission made by Cork City and County Councils via a collaborative process and supported by stakeholders across the region, including the Cork Development Forum, the focus is on delivering an escalated growth scenario of at least 846,000 people including an additional 53,000 people in the city and 168,000 additional people in Metropolitan Cork by 2050. In the interest of the country and region, Cork can achieve this growth and needs the necessary recognition in the NPF to facilitate this ambition.

Cork City experienced a population growth in Cork City of 5.4% since 2011 and must be supported in its ambition to grow. To achieve this ambition, infrastructure to support growth must be committed. Cork has been greatly under resourced as regards public transport provision. Cork Development Forum propose that the final version of the NPF is amended to include significantly improved public transport and pedestrian/ cycling infrastructure as future enablers. Irish investment in public transport is notably behind other EU states. This must be changed for Ireland to successfully transfer into a low carbon economy, for our cities to become cleaner, and to reduce unproductive hours lost in traffic due to high congestion. Building regulations must evolve, most notably in relation to parking and height restrictions. We need to increase the efficiency of land use with between 3,500 and 4,500 people per square kilometre at centres and along transport corridors. If we are serious about enabling our regions, and developing sustainable cities and communities for the future, it is essential to commit the necessary resources to make this a reality.

Cork Development Forum highlights the opportunity in designating the Cork Docklands and Tivoli as strategic national asset in the final plan. Spanning over 220 hectares on prime waterfront locations in immediate vicinity to the city centre, Cork's Docklands possess a unique development potential not only in an Irish but an international context. The potential of these sites due to proximity to the City centre and scale is unprecedented in today's urban settings, and the associated potential is a national opportunity. The development of these sites is every bit as important to Ireland as the development of other hard infrastructure. Cork Development Forum recommends that the NPF include steps of implementation, of which Cork's City Docks should be listed among the priorities.

In reference to the key enablers as highlighted on page 55 of the draft document, Cork Development Forum highlight a striking omission. The Northern Ring road is an essential enabler complimenting the N28 Ringaskiddy to Cork road, Southern Ring Road, Dunkettle Interchange and the M20. Currently this road is not fit for purpose, bringing heavy traffic through housing estate areas, slowing the journey times, exacerbating an unsafe environment for the local communities and achieving a suboptimal city road infrastructure. Cork Development Forum calls for the Northern Ring Road to be included within the NPF.

Cork Development Forum highlights the need for all connecting infrastructure to be optimised. At a regional level, resilient and diverse dark fibre must be available at cost effective pricing for the city region and regional towns to attract businesses and investment. Ultimately, Cork should be further enabled in the data sector to increase the national capacity in this market. Based on the already significant infrastructure and the superior availability of power, Cork is an ideal location to grow data centres and an international switching centre. The digital connectivity in the Southern Region is crucial to growing and developing our thriving indigenous and multinational sectors and must be supported by Government policy.

The Cork region has vast potential in relation to diversifying the domestic energy supply, and sustainably harnessing our blue economy growth potential. Cork is home to the Port of Cork, the second biggest port in the world, which has plans underway to expand the capacity. As an island nation, we are heavily dependent on sea-based transport to link Ireland to world markets. Cork has become a centre for research and development through institutions such as the National Maritime College of Ireland and the MaREI centre for marine and renewable energy research, development and innovation. Cork Development Forum contend that Cork be supported in developing the

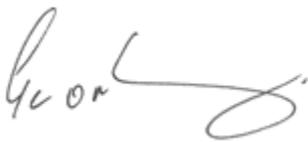
nationally significant blue economic sector, supporting research, education and the development of supporting infrastructure. Cork is strategically poised to harness potential.

The capacity of Cork International Airport into the future is essential to future-proofing the Southern region on an international platform. Cork Development Forum contends that it is in the national interest and timely to review the capacity of this strategic infrastructure to meet future needs.

Cork's existing college population (staff and students) exceeds 40,000 people and this will grow. For example, earlier this year, UCC unveiled its most ambitious strategic plan in history, under which the college will commit to a €350m investment programme to support a growing society and economy and attract more students from within Ireland and abroad. Cork Development Forum proposes that the need for additional investment in our third level institutes, including UCC, Tyndall and CIT, to meet the education needs of the future is encompassed in the Ireland 2040 strategy.

The stakeholders represented as part of the Cork Development Forum are strongly supportive of the strategic ambition of the National Planning Framework and emphasise the above, and our support for the Cork 2050 vision to ensure that Ireland makes the most of this unique opportunity.

Yours Sincerely



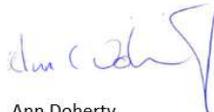
Ger O'Mahoney
Cork Development Forum Chair



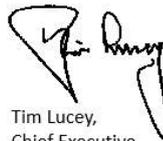
Bill O'Connell,
President,
Cork Chamber



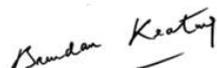
Conor Healy,
Chief Executive,
Cork Chamber



Ann Doherty,
Chief Executive,
Cork City Council



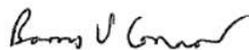
Tim Lucey,
Chief Executive,
Cork County Council



Brendan Keating
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Port of Cork



Conor O'Connell,
Southern Regional
Director,
Construction Industry
Federation



Dr Barry O'Connor,
President,
Cork Institute of Technology



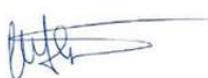
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