

Submission to the National Planning Framework, Ireland 2040- Our Plan

The National Planning Framework will mean little if it is not backed up by co-ordinated capital investment and implementation across each tier of governance from local government upwards.

The NPF must take a balanced regional perspective on the future development of the country. This means developing economic counter weights to the increasing dominance of Dublin.

In short the aim of the NPF should be to enable growth across all regions while reducing regional disparities. In practice it means achieving growth in all areas, but attempting to reduce the share of national growth concentrated in high growth areas, such as the Greater Dublin Area.

I welcome this opportunity to address key areas in relation to my own constituency of Galway-East and the West of Ireland region.

Recently Athenry, within the Galway East constituency had a fantastic opportunity through the hard work and efforts of the IDA for the West of Ireland. The proposed development and investment at a cost of €850 million, which would have been a game changer for Galway FAILED due to the current national planning and development legislation which is in place. An IMMEDIATE national review and overhaul of the planning and development Act 2000 needs to happen so we do not discourage our potential Foreign Direct Investments both current and future.

University college hospital Galway/ Merlin Hospital

The hospital must be further developed/ expanded in order to cope with the growing population with the appropriate funding that delivers acute services to Galway City and County and neighbouring Western Counties.

A new Mental Health Unit that caters for Galway City and County and provides short stay beds, long stay beds and out patients support. Separate and sufficient accommodation for children and adolescents, adult males and adult females patients is also urgently required. The location of this new mental health unit should not be located in Galway city centre.

Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe.

The hospital must be further expanded to cope with the growing population that it currently caters for with the appropriate funding that addresses additional beds, theatres, and out patients services.

Roads, Transport & Connectivity

Make Galway City Centre the first city of its kind in Ireland private traffic free.

Develop a park and ride service from all our Agricultural Marts in Tuam, Athenry, Headford where of 60% of all traffic is coming in to work from the city.

Develop a cheap and efficient reward system for all workers who use the park and ride.

We need to provide and allow for the upgrade of the main N65 TII road which links Loughrea to Portumna with areas of special concern as it travels via Kilmeen Cross, Ballyduggan, Gurty Madden, Killimor. Traffic calming on St Brendans Road

Portumna (N65) is another ongoing health & safety concern at present.

A footpath from Craughwell National School into Craughwell village to provide connectivity and safety.

Athenry, Tuam & Milltown Greenway

Develop the Greenway and market it correctly to the locals of the area. To address obesity and well-being and market it both on a national and international level. Promote the Quiet Man Station in Ballyglunnin and the Tuam Train Station. The new freight to East Galway are going to come on their bikes, walking, camper vans, and we need to develop animations of interest along the way.

Tourism

The need to develop, market and fund the rich heritage of writing, poetry, art, craft and traditional music of Gort, Beagh, Kiltartan, Coole and Thor Ballylee,

Develop the Cycling trail of the Aughties Mountains which takes in all of south Galway and would be the link from the cycle route around Lough Derg to the Wild Atlantic Way.

Commission and Fund Portumna Workhouse to market East Galway Big Houses from Castles to Workhouses and assist in persons who wish to trace their roots back to and beyond the famine when they left Ireland in coffin ships.

MID SHANNON AND FISHING

Develop fishing stands from Portumna to Banagher in Co. Offaly and support this as part of the mid Shannon project to become the Irish Capital for Coarse Fishing to attract both national and international fishermen. Develop and market this area to attract fishermen from March to November. This is Brexit proofing this region for a long number of years the Europeans have come to fish but we have never marketed it to its full potential.

Need to support and market the kayaking trail of Lough Derg and support the newly formed kayaking club in Eyrecourt, Co. Galway

Dublin-Galway Greenway

Continue the Greenway to Galway but look at alternative ways that does not include going through productive farm lands. We should look at coming down in to Shannon Harbour, up to Derrybrien, Kiltartan, Gort, Kinvara and join the Wild Atlantic Way

OR

Come down the old M6 going through Kilrickle, Loughrea, Athenry, Craughwell, Oranmore and put in spurs of the M6 which would loop people through the country side so they have a choice of the scenic route or the quick route.

Tourism in South Galway, Kinvara & Gort

We need to develop a car and bus park and public toilets in Kinvara so as the tourists can stop, get out and visit the castle, the quays, the burren etc and most important eat and drink and perhaps stay overnight as it travels down the wild atlantic way.

With immediate effect a footpath to Coole Park from Gort Town centre is required.

Agriculture

There is an urgent need for a New Mart in Headford as this sits between two counties and covers a large rural area

Develop footpath between Gort Mart and Gort GAA pitch

Rural Health

The fact that Galway County is so vast and with both hospital stretched to maximum capacity and the merried of parking and traffic issues accessing Galway City an urgent need to develop two new Primary Medical Centres in both towns of Portumna and Headford.

Flooding

We need to have the legislation changed regarding the water levels on the Shannon from Meelick Weir to Limerick addressed as the legislation is there since 1934.

The implementation of the Flood Gates at Connaught Harbour Portumna are urgently needed to assist in preventing the N65 and Town being flooded.

The implementation of the design of South Galway Scheme from Derrybrien to Kinvara.

Design and implementation of a flood scheme from Ardrahan to the Atlantic.

The extension of the Dunkellin from Craughwell back to where the 5 rivers meet at kilconerrin. This will protect.

Tuam:

Development of Brownfield site (Old sugar beet factory in Tuam)

We should be looking at the change of use of this site to a Data Centre to show Europe and the rest of the World we are ready to do business and start Brexit proofing the west.

Sewage

Need develop and expand sewage treatment plants in: Woodford, Eyrecourt, and Gort.

Education

With growth in Population we need to be planning for the future and ensure we have adequate space in our schools for families who wish to relocate or continue living in our rural communities as these towns are also commuter towns to Limerick, Galway, Athlone and Dublin.

New Secondary schools for Portumna & Gort

Immediate New national school for Bullaun

and Gaelscoil for Athenry

Extention for New Inn national school

Recreational hall for Coláiste Creggan

School drop off are a serious health and safety concern and this must be addressed by changing the speed limits or providing parking in the following locations

Killeen N.S.

Gortanumera N.S.

New Inn N.S.

Kilcooley N.S.

Peterswell N.S.

Tynagh N.S.

Recreation and Sport

Develop all weather pitches in Athenry

Develop a footpath between Gort GAA pitch and Gort Mart.

Disability

All foot paths in Athenry are far too narrow and we need to upgrade and make them useable. We need more wheel chair parking spaces and drop kerbs.

Tuam town needs more street sitting down places for persons with disabilities or older persons.

There needs to be residential housing for young adults with disabilities ie brain injury in the grove residential care unit.

Portumna needs more pedestrian crossing on the N65.

An audit of all footpaths in Loughrea, Portumna, Gort, Athenry , Tuam and Kinvara needs to happen as our towns are not fit for purpose for persons with disabilities, older persons .

Kinvara needs more wheel chair parking spaces as only one in the entire town.

We need to develop town centre independent residential care units for persons with disabilities in Gort.

We need to provide accessibility for Wheelchair users to both Loughrea Lake & Portumna Swimming Area and Amenity Park.

Childcare.

We have a capacity issue for pre school spaces throughout our county of a shortage of 700 spaces so funding to develop and expand day care and afterschool

Rural

Our rural areas cannot be forgotten about and towns and villages throughout the county need investment in Broadband, revitalisation of town and village centres and increased emphasis on agriculture and tourism offering and initiatives. Emphasis has also to be placed on encouraging and repurposing our small and villages as places of residence, enterprise and community.

Libraries

Immediate New Library for Athenry

Immediate New Fire Station for Athenry

To ensure fully staffed libraries and disability access to all.

I would sincerely ask you to consider the future of East , South and North Galway our economic future, our regional future and include this investment in the National Planning Framework.

Yours Sincerely

Anne Rabbitte TD

Galway East