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Submission to stage 2 of the National Planning Framework

10-11-2017

A chara,

Further to my submission of March 3rd, I wish to make a number of observations in relation to the current draft of the National Planning Framework.

In that submission, I emphasised the need for more balanced regional development. There is a great deal of industrial growth and population growth is occurring in and around Dublin, and this growth is outstripping large parts of the Country. This has put huge pressure on house prices and land in the Greater Dublin area, and many of its suburban areas are at saturation point in terms of Housing. Not only this but this is contributing to the increasing drift in population from Rural Areas, smaller towns, and even the smaller cities to Dublin, creating unbalanced Industrial Development and population growth.

This is in neither Dublin's interest, nor the rest of the Country. Opening up alternative centres for Growth is essential for ensuring more balanced and sustainable population growth and industrial development.

Cork is the central to the need to rebalance.

The Need for Cork to grow, and its strength as an urban Centre Cork is the second largest City in the state, and the wider region has already seen considerable growth, particularly in the Metropolitan Area.

The areas has already seen very considerable growth in recent years, and with well over half a million people, it is a region in and of itself. At its heart is the City and Metropolitan Area, and this offers great capacity to meet some of the states need for balanced population growth. It is an area with a strong profile in terms of foreign direct investment, as well as having natural advantages such as an Internationally significant Port and Harbour and proximity to a strong agricultural and food producing area. The presence of the UCC and CIT campuses, as well as a world class network of Maritime Education Institutes in Ringaskiddy, means it is very much an educational Hub also. The Need for Infrastructure The key element of achieving this objective are ensuring good streams of inward investment, making the region attractive as a package to investors, and also offering enough Local Autonomy in order to be able to drive such a project.

Government policy could aid this objective through – prioritising key infrastructural projects such as;

- N20 Cork to Limerick
- N28 Cork to Ringaskiddy
- N22 Northern Ring Road
- Dunkettle Exchange Upgrade
- N25 Upgrade
- Redevelopment of Port of Cork
- Improving Public Transport Links, quicker and more frequent Trains and Buses.
- The possibility of Light Rail in Cork must be considered
- A focused approach to attracting new flights to Cork & Shannon
- Devolution of Powers to City/Metropolitan Councils, including Directly Elected Mayors
- Ensuring Speedy roll out of high quality Fibre, future proofed Broadband
- Maximising potential space for Urban Regeneration in Cork (Docklands, Tivoli) & Flood Relief Projects to ensure sustainability, including possibly a flood barrier.
- Focused development of Key Industries such as Pharmaceuticals, but also Agri Food, and ensuring projects like the Curraheen Science Park reach their full potentia

- A specific IDA approach focused on attracting Industry not only to the specific Cities and Towns, but to the Region, to a linked up Network, and on promoting indigenous startups in the Region
- Identification of specific nodes of Development along and near this network which could benefit from, and add to, this network,
- Potential new towns, or significantly expanded Towns along this network, to facilitate population growth (EG Monard, Cork)

The Need for Strong Local Government It my firm view, that even aside from the Regional situation – this plan requires strengthened Local Government. Not only strengthened as regards powers held by National Government vis a vis Local Government, but also as between Cllrs and the executive. We have an imbalanced, and weak form of Local Government.

Even a very strong NPF will struggle to be implemented, unless Local Government has the autonomy and strength to deliver upon elements of this. In Cork, it is my firm view, that Cork City, in order to develop, grow and thrive, requires Strong Local Government of its own, and that proposals for a merger are the wrong approach. Though measures for improved cooperation is worth considering.

Harnessing connections between Major Southern Cities

I feel this is a point that was not considered adequately by the first draft of the NPF

The fact that there are three major urban centres in Munster should also be considered and harnessed. A Network, centred on the three major Cities of Munster, but also taking in the key towns in those vicinities, could be a part of allowing Ireland to manage it's population growth in a more sustainable way, and allow the state to thrive in to the future. This is not just an issue of Urban Spatial Strategy. It also has enormous potential benefits for Rural Areas, Small towns and Villages near this network. Key towns Could be identified (Eg Charleville, Mallow, Adare, Dungarvan) as nodes along this network, easily accesible from the Network, and being part of the strategy for population growth Language Planning The NPF should have regard to the fact that geographic based planning, in relation to the Irish Language, is also taking place under the 2012 Gaeltacht act, with three different categorisations of planning areas (Limistéar Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta, Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta, Lónraí Gaeilge). These are within and without the traditional Gaeltachtaí. It would be perverse for a national Planning Framework not to include and have regard to these processes, and indeed, to build on them for future language planning, particularly in urban areas.

Population Targets

I believe there is a need for clarity here, as there may be some discrepancy or different metrics in relation to National Targets and City/County Council targets.

It's hard to discern exactly, as the City/County Joint submission to the first stage uses 2050 as it's target rather than 2040.

In any event these targets are for (County wide) 850k and 500k for the metro region. It gives the metro region a current population of 305k, so this is appears the bigger CASP region which is used at times rather than simply City and Suburbs.

The NPF talks about population of 324k. This is a difference of 176k from the CASP target the Cork submissions have. It may be possible that this can simply be accounted for by a) the difference in the area used for the target and b) additional ten years.

However, in percentage terms it is a 64% increase – therefore I believe that the, population targets should be refined and reflect a population target increase to 60-70%.

Key Growth Enablers

Below I include proposed alterations to the list of growth enablers in the document
On the right hand column, 2nd point, to edit

“The Development of a much enhanced Citywide public transport system to incorporate subject to further analysis, proposals for an east-west corridor from Mahon, through the City Centre to Ballincollig and a north-south corridor with a link to the Airport”

To say

“The Development of a much enhanced Citywide public transport system, including light and suburban Rail, to incorporate subject to further analysis, proposals for an east-west corridor from Mahon, through the City Centre to Ballincollig and a north-south corridor with a link to the Airport”

On the right hand column, 2nd point, to edit

“M8/N25/N40 Dunkettle Junction upgrade (approved) and improved Ringaskiddy Port access.”

To say

“M8/N25/N40 Dunkettle Junction upgrade (approved) and improved Ringaskiddy Port access including delivery of the M28”

It would be a mistake not to include a specific reference to the M28, which is central to this objective.

I also believe the following Additional bullet points should be added

“- N20 Cork to Limerick motorway upgrade crucial to linking second and third biggest City, as well as as n25 Cork to Waterford upgrade, crucial for industry in wider region”

“ - N22 Northern Ring Road upgrade, a key piece of infrastructure in addressing the economic imbalance between the Northside and Southside of Cork City

“Supporting the redevelopment of the facilities of the Port of Cork, and it’s ongoing growth”“- N25 Cork to Waterford Upgrade”

“ - Accelerate the development of the Science and Research Park at Curraheen”

“ - A coordinated plan to maximise the commercial, leisure, tourism, and industrial potential of Cork Harbour”

Light Rail

If I was to emphasise one key point in this document, it is the following – Cork needs Light Rail

I think in the context of an expanding city and the forthcoming development of the north and south docks, this has to be considered. Development of such a system will take many years so there is no sense in leaving it until the last minute. We must be forward planning and show some vision.

The huge volumes of traffic coming into the city from areas like Carrigaline, Douglas and Ballincollig, are scarcely manageable as is.

This will only escalate. While there are road projects that can alleviate this, public transport has to be a part of this. We need to take cars off the road. It would have enormous potential and could revitalise areas of the city, transforming Cork into a modern, significant, European city.

We urgently need a feasibility study into the revamp of Cork's public transport network.

Cork needs this kind of vision.

This will be central to delivering the growth needed- and delivering the full potential of the Docks. It is not possible to hold all the additional population growth in traffic alone. We need Rail

This project could take many years to plan and deliver – in order to actually deliver it, we need a commitment soon.

The length of the City and surrounding built up areas will soon be over 30km – clearly better public transport is urgently needed. This could service any number of routes. For example, Monard - Tower- Blarney - Blackpool –City, or Carrigaline- Douglas – City or Ballincollig – Bishopstown – City. This is to name but a few.

Cork needs this kind of vision.

This will be central to delivering the growth needed- and delivering the full potential of the Docks. It is not possible to hold all the additional population growth in traffic alone. We need Rail

I ask you to give a specific commitment to this in the NPF

Irish

I was disappointed that the observations in relation to the Irish language and language planning in my first submission were not taken on Board

I would propose the following amendment to policy objective 31 to the following

“Facilitate fostering and protecting the Irish language, particularly within Gaeltacht regions, based on the geographic based planning, in relation to the Irish Language, is also taking place under the 2012

Gaeltacht act, with three different categorisations of planning areas (Limistéar Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta, Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta, Líonraí Gaeilge), within and without Gaeltachtaí

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