

From: Peter - Tourism Development International [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 February 2017 15:59
To: Minister
Subject: National Planning Framework - Relocation of Ireland's Capital

FAO Minister Simon Coveney TD

Dear Minister,

I thought you would be interested in receiving a copy of a letter I have sent to the Irish Times today. This concerns the Government's recent announcement on the National Planning Framework and , more specifically, an idea aimed at addressing the East : West divide in the country.

I agree with the 23 year Framework timeframe to 2040. This allows for measured consideration and ordered implementation of the radical idea I am proposing for Ireland..

I would be happy to discuss this further.

Kind regards

Peter

PS I have also sent a copy to An Taoiseach.

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National Planning Framework

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the Government announcement of its plans to launch a public consultation on the National Planning Framework. In particular, I welcome the realistic planning timeframe to 2040 and agree that a long-term vision is called for.

One of the aims of the Framework is to balance growth throughout the country and stop rural decline. In addition to planning for future growth in the country's population, arresting the massive population shift from West to East has to be the primary consideration for the new strategy.

In the 100 year period from 1911 to 2011, the population of the Republic Ireland grew by 46% from 3.1 million to 4.6 million. Over the same timeframe, Leinster's population grew by 115% from just under 1.2 million to 2.5 million. As has been well documented, much of the growth has occurred in Dublin with the capital experiencing a 166% increase in population. Munster has recorded a more modest population growth of 20% (from 1 million to 1.2 million).

In contrast, over the last century, the population of Connacht has declined by 11% from 611,000 to 542,000. A similar level of population decline has been recorded in the three counties of Ulster in the Republic with a population reduction from 330,000 to 294,000.

Clearly, successive government policies aimed at addressing the related issues of population imbalance and rural decline have not been successful. As we approach the centenary of the foundation of the State, a more radical solution to spatial planning is called for.

In seeking to achieve more balanced growth, consideration should be given to moving the country's capital from Dublin to the West/Mid-West. The proposed timeframe for the new National Planning Framework to 2040 would allow for measured consideration of this proposal, and more importantly, an orderly implementation of the capital relocation plan over a 20 year timeframe.

The transfer of the seat of Government to Galway or Limerick for example would deliver a massive economic boost to the West. Dublin would retain its place as the country's 'commercial' capital. A number of other countries have moved their capitals for political, or administration purposes including Brazil, Nigeria, and Russia.

It goes without saying that such a proposal would require careful consideration of the economic and social costs and benefits. Politically, cross-party support would also be required.

Yours etc.

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