


**Submission on:**

## **Ireland 2040 Our Plan – National Planning Framework**

*Submission from:*

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Below are some suggestions relating to the headings presented in the discussion paper.

### **1. Health and Well-Being**

Some proposed Key priorities:

- Require (as part of planning regulations, by developers) the construction of footpaths (of a certain buggy bearing width) leading to and from all new housing and other developments linking with main urban/town/village footpath networks.
- Same as above with respect to cycle lanes or roads (/markings) facilitating cyclists.
- Incorporation of substantial green areas as part of all new developments (incorporate into planning process)
- Development of off road cycleway and walking pathways across our towns, cities and villages and across the countryside for commuting and recreational purposes.
- Introduce regulations to require passive housing standards for all new builds, including solar PV, insulation, etc.
- Actively develop and invest in public green spaces in our existing cities and towns, including public parks, public sports facilities, etc.
- Actively develop and invest in public amenities such as public libraries, art galleries, parks, recreational zones, etc.
- Develop covered cycle lanes/ways, particularly in busy urban commuter areas to a) facilitate a more pleasant commute for cyclists and encourage more cyclists to commute, especially in inclement weather and b) to help overcome the paradox that as more extreme weather events become more

common (torrential rains, storms, etc.), such events also encourage commuters, etc. to leave the bike at home and travel instead by car.

- Follow the lead of Paris, Athens, Madrid, Mexico city and ban diesel vehicles from our cities (State?) by 2025 to help with respect to air quality as well as carbon emissions. Ban petrol vehicles soon after (2030?) to further help and stimulate alternative transport options.

## **2. A Place-Making Strategy**

### ***2.1 Our Capital, Cities and Towns***

- Develop regional connectivity and rebalance regions away from east coast via a western corridor Cork to (L')Derry rail and road links.
- Protect and exploit green belt areas by rezoning as recreational facilities and parks (over agricultural land).
- Use existing cities and large towns as hubs for development e.g. Cork (SW), Waterford (SE), Athlone (Midlands), Limerick (Mid West), Galway & Sligo (West), (L')Derry (NW), etc.
- Develop Fast, effective, cheap and reliable Park & Ride facilities – e.g. in Cork, at Carrigaline, Ballincollig, Midleton/Carrigtwohill, Glanmire, etc. serving city and key work hubs (e.g. Little Island, Ringaskiddy), also connecting with local rail and cycle networks.
- Investment in fast, safe and affordable public transport as a public priority (and social good) within and between our cities and towns, as well as rurally served networks.

### ***2.2 Opportunities for our Regions***

- Enhanced, meaningful local government including regional assemblies.
- Regional assemblies with proportionate executive or decision making/planning powers (and as required, budgets), including 'Plan2040' implementation.
- Regional assemblies which relate to meaningful geo-political areas; a whole island approach which would include both parts of the island and pragmatically transcend political borders so as to avoid having a sprawling north west regional assembly which links disparate areas having little in common.

### ***2.3 The Potential of Rural Ireland***

- Support and invest in the presence of local facilities and amenities such as post offices, sporting and community facilities, around which communities and villages can be built so as to support local jobs, investment, SMEs in a localised sustainable manner.

- Develop an authentic green island which would incorporate
  - Rural walkways and cycleways
  - Move away from the agricultural intensified commodity model (which both exacerbates climate change issues and promotes industrialised models of farming over family farming) towards a green whole island model (in conjunction with NI) of high quality, high value, environmentally and socially friendly, artisan and organic agri-food production model

#### ***2.4 Ireland in an All-Island Context***

- As a priority, one needs to not just ‘talk the talk’, but in fact ‘walk the walk’ with respect to the rhetoric within this Plan: The plan (and its implementation) should thus be a genuine co-production between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, exhibiting pragmatic joined up thinking across the island, not an exclusively Dublin led or Dublin created/sponsored endeavour.
- Anything less than the integrated approach as outlined above will mean that boarder areas, in particular the key (L’)Derry-Donegal and Louth-Mourne regions, and hence the island as a whole, will continue to be disadvantaged by the incoherent approach to planning that has resulted from a fractured and discretized system of planning, exacerbated by two tribalist and inward looking political systems over most of the past century.

#### **Integrated Land and Marine Development**

### **3. Ireland’s Unique Environment – Sustainability**

*This is a key lens through which any (long term) planning initiative should be considered, and validated against: with emerging issues in climate change, water, food, energy admixed with broader societal and ethical dimensions.*

- Active promotion of microgeneration (including solar PV and wind turbines) among community groups, housing estate groups, private homes and farms, alongside appropriate regulatory and infrastructural supports, including incentivising tariffs.
- Apply joined up thinking (/planning) in devising this strategy in concert with other government initiatives and departments in energy, environment, health, education, etc.
- In energy: Promote (with policy and investment) electric microgeneration as a means of getting large scale public buy in toward renewables and in

developing a far less centralised and robust grid while this can also help reduce personal consumption.

- In transport: Invest in public transport infrastructure and operation (bus and rail) at least to European norms, to provide a fit for purpose and attractive to use system
- In agriculture: Review (and reverse) plans to further increase national herd on a play on commodities and quantity; instead focus on quality and local jobs through supporting artisan and organic producers and develop an all-island strategy (with NI colleagues) to this end. Similar to Belgian chocolate, German cars and Swiss watches, Irish agri-food produce could then be sold across the continent as a genuine premium product, based not just on a clement climate and a grass based system, but also on an authentically green approach.
- In planning: City and urban renewal, incorporating (through public investment and private developer investment, as part of planning requirements) green spaces and sporting/recreational facilities, including playgrounds, running tracks, basketball courts, skate parks, etc. High quality, high-density accommodation fit for purpose for 21<sup>st</sup> Century living.
- In health: Measures to dissuade car use and encourage walking, cycling in getting around. Promotion of unprocessed food (taxes on sugar and artificially synthesized sweeteners)

#### **4. Equipping Ireland for Future Development - Infrastructure**

- Invest in and develop a balanced fit for purpose all island national infrastructure (rail, road, energy, water, IT) to facilitate the flourishing communities and small, medium and large, national and multi-national businesses.

#### **5. Enabling the Vision – Implementing the National Planning Framework**

- Continually review and revise.
- Should be very context of government – transcending and informing all departments, across the island and in both jurisdictions.