

NPF Submissions,
Forward Planning Section,
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin D01 W6X0

8th March 2017

Re: Submission on Ireland 2040 - Our Plan, National Planning Framework

Dear Sir/Madam,

Engineers Ireland is the voice of the engineering profession in Ireland. It has in excess of 23,000 members drawn from across all disciplines in engineering and has represented the engineering profession since 1835, making it one of the oldest and largest professional bodies in Ireland. It is organised on a regional basis with a total of 10 regions on the island of Ireland. The West Region represents members in counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

Engineers Ireland West Region welcomes the publication of the Issues and Choices paper as a step in the important process of delivering a National Planning Framework (NPF). The paper successfully identifies the undesirability of ‘Business as Usual’ in Irish planning; however, we are concerned that the consultation for the NPF is being conducted ‘as usual’. **We believe that the NPF should firstly present an ambitious vision; a picture of the future, based on strong and well-founded principles of sustainability; a vision that taps into a people’s pride and sense of place which is the engine for extraordinary motivation and commitment sustained by creativity.**

Such an approach could build on the tremendous public participation last year in commemorating the Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the people of Ireland and the Rising of 1916. We suggest it is now appropriate and opportune to meaningfully engage with Irish citizens and communities throughout Ireland in developing a new proclamation to the people of Ireland, a vision for the kind of Ireland and Irish society in which we want to live, work and raise our families in 2040. Last year, schoolchildren across the country were asked to draft ‘Proclamations for a New Generation’, giving them an historic opportunity to express their vision for Ireland’s future. In all, 1,072 proclamations were uploaded to Scoilnet.ie and unveiled on Proclamation Day, 15th March. Interestingly, the most prominent themes related to planning, equality, environment, education, health, and homelessness.

One of the purposes of the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) is to “drive meaningful citizen and community engagement”. We submit that the LCDCs facilitate a more engaging approach to the development of a Vision for 2040, and subsequently a NPF to achieve the vision, involving civic society. By encouraging a wide and meaningful public debate, communities could take ownership of the vision for Ireland in 2040 and the NPF. We, the people, could then truly say of the NPF that it is “Ireland 2040 – Our Plan”.

Yours faithfully,

Engineers Ireland West Region Committee
Contact: eiwestevents@gmail.com