

Submission

Looking at Ireland in 2040 is a great idea in that the timeframe is long enough to allow time for a vision to be achieved. It is an opportunity to re balance Ireland.

The problem statement

The population is moving to Leinster and the Greater Dublin Area in particular.

- a. Puts pressure on infrastructure
- b. Puts pressure on services
- c. Puts pressure on the availability and cost of housing and services

The population in the rest of Ireland with the exception of some of the cities is thinning out.

- d. Puts pressure on service providers
- e. Reduces the services available locally
- f. Increases demand for costly infrastructure solutions
- g. Marginalises parts of the population

Dublin is a 180 degree city, the sea confines its growth so the options are to its north, south and west. The existing national road and rail networks are connected radially out of a 180 degree hub. Commute distances grow, congestion increases and the pressure on services strains the quality of their delivery.

Long term solution proposal.

Move the administrative capital of the country west and plan a central modern capital city with enough space around it to facilitate world class centres of excellence in health, technology, education and culture. Plan it to grow out in all directions and up to a level that allows apartment and mixed single home options for the population. Structure the planning over a long timeframe with designated areas rolling out for development on a phased basis.

It is not a new idea:

New Delhi, was proposed and designed in 1911 and became the capital of India in 1931.

Canberra was selected for the location of the nation's capital in 1908 with the Parliament of Australia moving there in 1927.

Washington, founded on July 16, 1790, Washington, DC is unique among American cities because it was established by the Constitution of the United States to serve as the nation's capital.

Brasilia was founded on April 21, 1960, to serve as the new national capital of Brazil.

The site should be big enough and centrally located. There is a site west of Athlone on the M6 that is sparsely populated where much of the land is in state ownership.

Target the new Capital city to have a population of 500,000 before the end of 2070 but lay in a masterplan for 1 million before the end of the century. Moving the government out of Dublin, the economic capital, will have the effect of spreading the national wealth more evenly and make key resources more accessible to more of the population.

It also offers the prospect of having the most modern design thinking applied to the functions of government and having the government more centrally located will make its services more accessible.

Dublin will continue to see pressure from growth like the need for a new runway and possible a new terminal in the airport, the pressure on the port to expand northward will continue and the pressure will manifest itself in many ways.

Solution

Move the administrative capital to a purpose built location in the midlands.

Connect it to the economic capital with modern high speed links.

Make the new capital the hub of the national motorway network.

Put **national re-balance** into **all** future the key infrastructural decisions.

Think Big and Challenge Conventional Wisdom.

Hold a major global competition amongst the world's best architects for high level design proposals to see what might be possible.

Paul O'Brien



