

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Diarmuid Kennelly. I am a 24 year old male living originally from Co. Clare who is living and working in Galway City for a large medical device company. I am young, educated, Irish citizen and want to continue to live here for the foreseeable future. I wish to give my suggestion for what I think should be the important themes in the Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework.

1. Road and City Infrastructure.

We need to improve the road networks surrounding the other large urban areas particularly in the west of the country. The inadequate road system is hindering the growth of these urban areas. I cite the continued difficulties facing motorists commuting in and out to work in Galway City. An unreasonable amount of worker's days are spent crawling into work by car. It is difficult to attract investment to these places if you make commuting an ordeal for workers, I would continue to encourage the government and councils building appropriate cycle lanes within our cities as well maintaining public transport in urban areas. I frequently cycle into work and into the city centre on weekends.

2. Adequate Planning

Future housing developments must be a key consideration in the Ireland 2040 Plan. I have witnessed some very poor planning decisions in my native Co. Clare. One-off housing has blighted parts of the countryside in my opinion. It is expensive and inefficient. Housing developments have been lopsided in some villages in Clare where an inordinate number of holiday homes have left parts towns feeling vacant off holiday. Better planning decisions and rules must be adhered to. This is needed to provide a balanced approach to housing. A combination of commercial units mixed with residential and social housing. In the past property developers were given a choice to whether they designate a portion of their housing for social housing. Many took the alternative to simply pay the local councils the price of the social houses as opposed to physically building. Additionally the onus is on the councils for failing to build these afterwards but it doesn't escape the fact that many developers took the easy option. There should not be a pay-out option in future planning rules in Ireland.

3. Energy Needs.

I would like to mention that I am a firm supporter of continued investment in renewable energy sources by the state and the private sector. We need to mitigate our contribution to climate change, to improve the air quality in urban and rural areas and increase our energy security by not being dependent on fossil fuels from OPEC and other oil producing nations.

Back in Clare there is a recent development of a wind farm in Mount Callan near Miltown Malbay. Up in Galway City on the docks I see ships unloading the turbine blades for another wind farm in Moycullen. I empathise with some people's concerns about the proximity of some of these developments and the impact on the landscape, but it is much preferable to the alternatives we are left with. I grew up within sight of the coal power station in Moneypoint near Kilrush. A real eyesore spouting black smoke that is clearly visible from miles away on a clear day. One can only guess how much CO₂ is actually emitted annually from that plant and the effects on air quality in the surrounding environment. Coal scrubbers are hardly a reason to justify the continued coal burning.

I would certainly hope to see more renewable energy projects in the future. We have made great efforts to harness the wind blowing onto our shores from the Atlantic, I wish we could look to the waves surrounding our island. Therefore I think we should take a serious look at wave energy as a renewable energy source to supplement our needs by 2040.

4. Electric Vehicles and Charge Points.

If we are to uphold our Paris 2015 Climate agreement we must do more to curb our CO₂ emissions. Domestic Car usage is perhaps the greatest source of CO₂ emissions in Ireland after agriculture and power generation. Electric Vehicles are a great step towards minimising our carbon dioxide output provided we can link the energy used to renewable power generation. The government has failed in making electric cars an attractive option for consumers. It is possible we will face fines of 6 billion euro from the E.U if we do not accelerate the uptake of electric vehicles significantly in the coming years.

Although the cost of a new electric vehicle may be prohibitive, I do hope one day to afford one. In the meantime the lack of charge points outside some urban areas makes some people quite insecure about the purchase of electric vehicles. I propose that further investment in charge points and a continuation in the Electric Vehicle Grant Scheme will encourage further consumers to choose Electric vehicles in the future.

5. A viable plan.

Lastly, whatever plans are outlined for the National Planning Framework I sincerely hope that these are kept by successive governments or at the very least not rely on the whims of economic fortune. When an Ireland 2040 plan is finalised we must follow through on it and not look to cut it apart before it is implemented. We must not allow potential future economic difficulty to dictate our ability to follow through on this plan. What I am saying is that we must ring fence the investment required for this project for successive generations to come.

I would like to thank you for reading through my letter. I am simply expressing where I think an emphasis should be made in the Ireland 2040 Plan. I am sure that you will receive numerous submissions from different groups each highlighting their own concerns. I hope the majority of these concerns can be encapsulated in the Ireland 2040 Plan.

Regards,

Diarmuid