Hi,

Firstly it's great to see a new initiative like this being pursued by the government and is hopefully a lessons learned from the lack of national planning over the pervious 20-30 years.

As mentioned this will need cross party co-operation, especially as the outcomes will not necessarily be to everyone's liking as some outdated 'planning techniques' that have become the norm in Ireland will need to be restricted.

Personally from previously living in rural Ireland but now temporarilly living in an urban area in Europe, the biggest issue to tackle is the level of one-off housing being constructed throughout rural Ireland. This is a totally unsustainable model that has a drain on resources and is actually counterproductive to rural communities. The majority of people living in these one-off housing use pristine vehicles for the majority of transport and therefore tend to shop and use other services and amenities in the large towns and cities, rather than their local village. Therefore it is also important that the framework set out in this plan also ties up with what ishe proposed in the National Rural Plan which has been developed.

The notion of being able to construct your own house has become the norm in rural Ireland and putting a complete stop to this would not be tolerated. Instead a counter balence would be to limit any new one off housing to a 500m radius of any existing service or amenity. This would ensure people will make use of the local amenities and will add to the existing communities.

Secondly the clear message of the npf is to combat development in Dublin and as such the three western cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway should be prioritised. This includes improving services around them and transport between both them and the surrounding towns and villages within a commuting distance to them.

Rail is underutilised outside of the Dublin metropolitan area and this should be improved so that it is frequent and reliable enough to be used by commuters. Limerick for example is connected to its surrounding towns of Ennis, Nenagh, Charliville and Tipp town by rail line, as well as several other smaller villages. These are all within a 30-45 minute commute by rail and would be utilised more if it was more reliable. It is known that rail is only feasible in heavily populated areas and as such developers could be given incentives to build higher density accommodation and offices within walking distances to rail stations. Also designated areas within the city centres could have a minimum height restriction to encourage higher density development. Furthermore roads are a finite resource and already people in Ireland are too dependant on private cars for transport. Other ideas should be pushed to encourage more people to commute via public transport.

Lastly another well publicised outcome of the npf will be a list of urban areas that will be prioritised for future investment. Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Galway have been mentioned, however a fifth urban area is under consideration. Geographically all of these areas are in the Southern half of the country. I belive it is no

coincidence then that the highest levels of immigration is from the north western counties of the country. To counter this I belive a new, pre planned town of 50-70k should be developed in this vicinity. A village such as Claremorris or Ballyhaunis is strategically located to cater for this level of population as it located along the western corridor from Cork to Sligo and are also connected to the Road and Rail network. Furthermore they are centrally located within the the north western counties and would therefore allow others who remian living within this area and to commute to this new urban area for work, thus steaming the outward flow of migration from this area of the country.

I would also like to be kept informed of future activities on this issue.

Thanks,

Stephen Cooney