

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

CORK BRANCH
SOUTHERN REGION

16th March 2017

Our Ref: COC/BC/L.2

NPF Submissions
Forward Planning Section,
Dept. of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1
D01 W6X0

Via Email:- npf@housing.gov.ie

Re: Construction Industry Federation Cork Branch Submission to National Planning Framework

To Whom It May Concern:-

The Cork Branch of the Construction Industry Federation is the representative body for the construction sector in Cork.

We would like to make the following points in relation to the National Planning Framework.

POPULATION

The National Planning Framework should identify the Cork Region as a key strategic location for an accelerated growth pattern under the National Planning Framework. The population of Cork City & County grew by nearly 100,000 people between 2002 and 2016. This growth illustrates the region's ability to grow organically. A significant portion of this population growth took place during the recession following the global financial crisis which indicates the Region's capability, capacity and attractiveness as a location for economic growth and as a place and location to live and work in. The Region has a significant capacity for further growth and to act as a complimentary counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Region.

The current population of the City & County at 542,000 is far in excess of any other Region outside of Dublin, and within a 20 mile radius of the City Centre over 400,000 people reside.



INFRASTRUCTURE / ECONOMIC CLUSTERS AND DIVERSIFIED SKILLS BASE

There is significant infrastructure in place to allow the Region expand at an accelerated growth rate due to an International Airport, International Multimodal Port, commuter rail lines, educational institutions such as UCC and CIT and a varied cultural and leisure infrastructure. There are significant clusters of existing industries in the pharmaceutical, bio-pharma, tourism, med-tech, ICT, marine, energy, agri-food and financial services sectors.

These existing economic clusters are ready to expand further and this expansion can be supported by the airport, port, 3 commuter rail lines into the City and by the fact that there is a significant skills base across many sectors already in the Region. The Region is acting as the economic driver for a broad base in Munster.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

Some of the “soft factors” which also have helped to attract people to the Region include the significant cultural infrastructure, leisure infrastructure and lifestyle opportunities that are available due to its coastal location and diversified population structure.

The Region has a history and culture of international trading going back several centuries which has meant it has always been a diverse, inclusive and multi-cultural location of choice for migrants. This has meant that industries expanding in the Region have found it easier to attract the skills and talent needed for their expansion plans as there is already a significant cluster of peoples with a variety of skills from many different nationalities and Regions.

URBAN STRUCTURE

Some of the other characteristics of the Region, which are unique and will ensure any investment in infrastructure yields a greater return to the exchequer, include the fact that surrounding the City Region are many towns and existing urban locations which are ready for further growth with existing services and infrastructure in place. An accelerated expansion of population growth in the Region can therefore be more easily accommodated than many other Regions. The Region therefore provides for a unique opportunity for a more sustainable growth pattern. Towns and suburban locations surrounding the City, such as Carrigaline, Ballincollig, Glanmire, Little Island, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Middleton, Passage West and the Docklands Region in the City Centre already have schools, roads, commuter rail stations and other infrastructure which can be easily expanded.



IMPACT OF BREXIT

While there are infrastructural deficits such as the Dunkettle Interchange and the N28, these two projects in particular have become even more important as a result of Brexit. A significant portion of our exports from the pharmaceutical, bio-pharmaceutical and agri-food sector are currently exported to the UK for onward export to Continental Europe. These current transportation routes for export will simply not be an option post Brexit and therefore our closest multimodal port to Continental Europe (Port of Cork) will need to expand significantly to ensure our exports can reach their markets in Continental Europe in an efficient manner with reduced transportation costs.

This method of transporting our exports to continental Europe has the added benefit of being more environmentally friendly.

CONCLUSION

Members of the Cork Branch of the CIF believe that given our track record of attracting and retaining inward investment, our track record in relation to population growth not seen elsewhere in Ireland (outside of the Dublin Region) the unique urban characteristics of the Cork Metropolitan Region, National Policy issues post Brexit for our agri-food and pharma sectors, that investment in infrastructure in Cork will yield the greatest results in terms of aiding our national economic output and contributing to a significant population growth outlined in the consultation documents.

The Region should therefore be a priority for infrastructure provision under the National Planning Framework.

Yours sincerely,



Conor O'Connell
REGIONAL DIRECTOR – SOUTHERN REGION

Cc; Cormac Smith, Chairman Cork Branch
Brian Nolan, Vice-Chairman Cork Branch

