

Submission to *Ireland 2040: Our Plan* - National Planning Framework

March 2017

Introduction

Tipperary Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the preparation of *Ireland 2040: Our Plan* and looks forward to actively playing a part in the delivery of a sustainable, prosperous and competitive County Tipperary over the next 20 years. This submission has been prepared on behalf of the members of the LCDC. The LCDC trusts that the submission will positively and proactively contribute to the preparation of the National Planning framework (NPF) to achieve the best opportunities for Tipperary, its people and visitors. The submission is structured broadly in accordance with the themes set out in the issue paper addressing some of the questions posed at the end of each chapter that the LCDC consider relevant to this county.

Tipperary, as a county, has a lot to offer the NPF in the context of it realising its ambitions. In particular, its unique central location in the Southern Region provides an exceptional opportunity to link the east with the west. This is further facilitated by the level of existing east-west rail connectivity and the road connectivity provided by 2 motorways – the M7 and the M8. County Tipperary can play a very important part in assisting Government meet its objectives as set out, being mindful of financial constraints and the requirement for additional developments and supports.

Tipperary LCDC Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for the people and communities of County Tipperary through sustainable development, efficiently delivered effective services, democratic civic leadership, and co-ordination with other public, community and private organisations to optimise available resources

People's Health and Well-Being

Are there key priorities the NPF can identify to ensure better or improved health and wellbeing of people and places in Ireland?

Are there facilities that the NPF needs to highlight for places in Ireland in order to enable greater participation in a healthy lifestyle?

- Access to hospitals and appropriate medical care is critical for any individual's health and well being. Regional hospitals, as tertiary treatment centres, need to be properly upgraded and extended. Waterford and Limerick Hospitals in particular need to be funded appropriately to deliver the tertiary services. Secondary hospitals should also be retained to support the work of the tertiary hospitals. If these are closed, it can lead to overcrowding of the tertiary hospitals and a subsequent decline in health service provision. International studies have shown that the optimum effective service for secondary hospital is one which accommodates approx 260 beds for a population of circa 150,000. Tipperary General Hospital in Clonmel currently accommodates 270 bed units and has a working health catchment area of 170,000 (also north Tipperary in addition to its original catchment area). The NPF should ensure that such facilities are a critical functioning requirement for any settlement strategy which is mindful of the importance of health and wellbeing and it should accordingly be noted as such.
- In addition, Primary Health Care services need to be prioritised and rolled out as per the original delivery programme.
- Appropriate Mental Health services and mental health facilities are crucial. Programmes such as the Jigsaw Model for youth mental health need to be progressed, supported and financed in each county. Need to enhance the current Community Based Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) across the country and where required, improve the facilities from which these services are delivered
- Safety and security is a key determinant of people's wellbeing. The NPF needs to outline what this will look like in practice for the different settlement types (urban and rural). For instance, in rural areas this could look like a Garda station being within a 15 – 20 minute radius of their rural settlement with active access to a member of An Garda Síochána if required, or perhaps a different approach to security provision for rural areas that may look at alternatives around the use of Garda reserves The issue of safety and security needs to be referenced and a specific provision in the context of rural areas where such issue differ to those in the urban areas
- Access to appropriate levels of Physical Activity, this needs to be streamlined within the context of settlement size and role but there should be a minimum stated for each settlement layer (what one should and should not expect as a minimum). Capital funding for sporting facilities and other active facilities to be aligned with the settlement size and/or the potential role that the facility might provide to an area to attract both tourist and people within a reasonable distance to use it. Funding should only be offered where it can be unequivocally demonstrated that the facility will be inclusive of all.
- Provision must be made for the development of integrated greenways and blueways for recreation and to promote activity across all age groups and demographics. The development of safe walking and cycling is also embed physical activity into their daily lifestyles. The provision of accessible rural transport is also important to reduce car dependency and increase physical activity.

- Housing layouts are critical, poorly designed housing whether of a high or low-density contribute to poor place-making outcomes and poor wellbeing. Open space which is well laid out, landscaped and distributed; appropriate recreational facilities/community facilities for children/teenagers/adults/older adults needs to be built in and a tool to ensure that at a minimum, no large scale housing development can occur unless they have met with stated minimum standards of the services expected to be in a location based on that settlements size and role. When providing clusters of housing or serviced sites, use must be made of fossil free district heating solutions”.
- Age Friendly Planning- provision of seating on roadways/in town – streets and shops. Older people commonly report that lack of same limits them socially. Other drawbacks include street surfaces – cobbles are inimical for people using sticks crutches rollators wheelchairs etc.
- Development of an Healthy Ireland plan for Co Tipperary and at each county level
- All public provided services to have smoke free campus as opposed to just smoke free buildings
- Ensuring the completion of Health Impact Assessment as a means of assessing the health impacts of future policies, plans and projects.
- Development of age friendly parking spots and provision o disability friendly walkways as well as access to blue and green walkways & outdoor gyms

A Place-Making Strategy -Our Capital, Cities and Towns

How might we develop one or more strong regional complements to Dublin that can address their whole city-region, including interactions between settlements?

How might we distinguish between the role of towns within the wider hinterland of the cities and those located outside the influence of the cities?

In the context of Tipperary, the following actions would assist in building up the profile of the cities and towns located in the Southern Region

- Recognition that County Tipperary is an effective link between east and west and sits in the heart of the Southern Region encapsulating basic infrastructure which is crucial to building greater and more effective connectivity between key cities.
- Tipperary considers that it has a real role to play in supporting the development of the functional regional city of Limerick. Nenagh in particular can play such a role as can Tipperary Town, Thurles & Roscrea, all of which are within one hour of Limerick. The NPF must ensure that it builds in safeguards to ensure that such settlements do not become mere commuting locations. The towns referenced above need to be provided also with infrastructure and economic supports to develop enterprise and economic investment opportunities in their own right so as to ensure appropriate sustainability of these settlements and ensure they are place makers in their own right. Investment in water, waste water and the identification of strategic employment land-banks in appropriate locations need to be facilitated. The delivery of the upgrading of the N24 however is critical if Limerick is to obtain value from these settlements.
- Clonmel in the south of the County is a very strong employment focussed and vibrant town of 22,000 (including hinterland) and it has much to contribute to a strong functional city region of Waterford. Waterford City differs to other regional cities in that not only is it perceived as weaker but it is also surrounded by strong urban centres in their right of Clonmel, Kilkenny, Wexford and Carlow. These centres need to work cohesively as one functional unit to not only build up their own ability to sustain and deliver employment but to support the development of Waterford to act as a regional city.

- There are over 3,500 FDI supported jobs in Clonmel alone (excluding indigenous) and Clonmel is acknowledged as a very strong life science hub in the South-East. The IDA currently own 50 acres of a strategic land-bank in Clonmel and the Council own another 250 acres adjacent to this. This is an exceptional site but to ensure its sustainable development, the water supply to the north of the town needs to be addressed. The NPF needs to recognise the important role that Clonmel can play in the context of delivering a functional city region for Waterford city and support same.
- In this context, the NPF needs to ensure that it prioritises investment into strategic employment land-banks if it wishes to address the current imbalances caused by the east coast and allow these to be appropriately developed and marketed. The NPF should direct RESS to identify strategic land-banks and these should focus on areas where there is currently strength or where there are potential strengths in terms of attracting additional growth.
- Planning policies to ensure that the rail is upgraded into Waterford City to accommodate potential commuters from the south of Tipperary (and other areas) and the timetable of the trains needs to be aligned with working times and student times.
- Revitalising our Town Centres: Revitalising our town centres is deemed a priority by the community in Tipperary. Tipperary has a number of key civic improvement plans for its key towns which will assist it with this role but financial support needs to be provided for the delivery of same. Projects include
 - The redevelopment of the 11 acre Kickham Barracks site in Clonmel into a creative civic, educational and cultural quarter of the town;
 - The pedestrianisation (part of) the main street in Clonmel;
 - The redevelopment of The Square in Thurles;
 - Civic improvement plans in Tipperary Town, Roscrea, Nenagh, Carrick-on-Suir and Cahir.
- Town centre living needs to be addressed in the NPF and it needs to be prioritised through incentives and through different planning policies if we want our town centres to be re-energised. Cars may be a necessity now and therefore need to accommodate this in planning policy and if town centre living is to be real. It has to provide for car parking for the residents in appropriate and usable locations. Steps must be taken to remove this car dependency by provision of better public transport along with bicycle schemes, car share schemes and smart taxis/minibuses. One of the pluses of town centre living should be walkable communities. Unlike larger towns and cities, planning policy needs to be mindful of noise and night active streets with residents in such locations so the careful selection of streets for town centre living also needs to be a key element in the decision making process. The NPF needs to consistently stress the need to support village enhancement initiatives and the provision of appropriate services in these areas; cross government support for funding to develop and improve the visual face of our towns and villages is a critical requirement for any future planning policy.
- Infrastructural Connectivity: The M7 and M8 run through the county on a broadly north south/south-west basis (focusing on Dublin-Cork & Dublin-Limerick) but they offer the opportunity to create a strong east-west link between the cities of Limerick and Cork, and Waterford. Given the constraints on resources and based on the need to deflect growth from the east to the west, it is suggested that the Cork to Limerick route could run up the M8 from Cork to Cahir and from there the N24 to Limerick could be upgraded to motorway standard. This is a far more sustainable option than building an entirely new motorway direct from Cork to Limerick through Mallow with no real loss of time between the two and a greater saving made (also far more sustainable from an environmental perspective).

- The second phase of this motorway connectivity could be then from Waterford to Cahir along the N24 and this could be improved significantly upgrading this section of the road to eventual motorway standard.
- the remainder of the N24 upgraded to motorway standard to Limerick (including in particular the by-pass of Tipperary Town)
- In order to address accessibility throughout Tipperary and to allow it to deliver within a regional and national context, the R498 (Nenagh to Thurles) and the N62 By-pass of Thurles are a critical infrastructural need.
- Rail: Tipperary is very well served by rail links and accommodates a really important hub link in Limerick Junction. With a potential high-speed rail link from Limerick to Dublin, very significant development opportunities exist for businesses, employers, employees, residents and students. In addition, opportunities for greater freight movement can be provided which would be more sustainable in the long term. Thurles station in particular offers an exceptional service and provides access to our main city on an hourly basis.
- Bus: Bus connectivity is critical to rural areas and any public transport service needs to build in this requirement to their capital and operational programme. It is imperative that realistic provision is made for public transport to enable people to access centralised services. In particular, there is a requirement to ensure that those in rural areas can access services in key cities (work, health and education) and provision needs to be provided for such a service. Recognition is needed by the NPF of the need to ensure that the more fragile communities in the country are facilitated with an appropriate public transport service. The Transport Co-ordination Unit (TCU), to support more local bus links, also needs to be highlighted and in particular the need to align these services with educational; health, working and services needs locally.
- Broadband: The digital revolution and the greater opportunities which will be afforded by broadband needs to be a significant consideration of any NPF. The NBP once rolled out is expected to initiate a very great change to rural areas in particular. The changes in how we do business in rural areas, and the lack of the need for “local” to be part of this process, has resulted in a very different economic dynamic which in turn has affected the traditional role and function of the rural town/village. Future infrastructure development must be mindful of emerging technologies and, through their design facilitate their rollout.
- Housing: One of the potential game changers to Ireland’s economic growth is the lack of available appropriate housing. Housing supply (social and private) is an issue in Dublin and right throughout the country. Given the current cost associated with house building, decisions need to be made to provide incentives or address the tax take on house building in order to stimulate this sector to address this chronic shortage in appropriate locations throughout the country. When providing clusters of housing or serviced sites, use must be made of fossil free district heating solutions”.

Opportunities for our Regions

What are the levers for effective regional development?

What regional ‘value proposition’ i.e. an innovation, service, or combination of measures and approaches can make the regions more successful and what are the means by which this can be achieved?

It is acknowledged that different regions offer different opportunities. County Tipperary lies within two sub-regions of the Southern Region. For the Mid-West and South-East to prosper, the following key regional priorities need to be considered by the NPF:

- Support for Shannon Airport and the recognition that it has the capacity to deliver up to an additional 2,500,000 passengers per annum - the maximisation of this capacity would benefit the mid west region and also economic development in Tipperary.
- The facilitation and upgrading of the airport in Waterford to a substantive regional airport facility including the provision of an appropriate runway for same.
- The upgrading of the N24 between Limerick and Waterford and it has been detailed above how this can be economically achieved through linking Limerick with Cork through the M8 etc.
- Recognising where the strength of some regions lies and where within the region this strength lies and supporting the appropriate development in these areas, e.g. Clonmel in the context of life sciences etc.
- In Tipperary, there is a very significant shortage of hotel accommodation and it is a constant key reason why the tourism product in Tipperary faces challenges to reach its full potential. It is vital that the NPF acknowledges that there are key areas in the country where tourism accommodation (hotels) is weak and that provision is made for same and indeed that appropriate targeted incentives are provided to assist in making it attractive for hoteliers to develop in these areas. Tipperary is one such county where this is a significant tourism infrastructural deficit.
- Development of Niche Tourist Products
- Maximisation of opportunities created through the Ancient east and Munster Vales

The Potential of Rural Ireland

How can the NPF capture (in a national, strategic policy context) the range and quality of resources that exist in rural areas that could be leveraged to support national economic growth, climate action objectives and the development of local communities?

What are the solutions to maintaining population in those rural areas where decline has been experienced?

What role should towns and villages in rural areas play in catering for Ireland's future growth?

How can the rural parts of Ireland close to urban areas be protected from development pressures that are likely to arise to accommodate further population growth?

What measures need to be in place to allow those who have a genuine need to live in the countryside to be accommodated?

- In the context of rural areas the NPF Issues Paper uses international best practice as a benchmark against which to assess how we have developed and how we might progress. Whilst this is important as a benchmark, it is important that it does not allow such "best practice" to minimise or undermine what is the "Unique Selling Point" of Irish settlement qualities. It's important to acknowledge what is unique about us and to ensure that we retain the best of this whilst also trying to accommodate the needs of the future.
- What is required is a "build in" of a "social cost" to the dynamic physical planning model with a value which ensures that fragile communities are not left behind, that a more productive and 21st century role for smaller rural towns and villages is identified and that this is achieved in a manner that recognises the new reality and the very significant potential provided to rural areas by the development in new emerging technologies. The

dependence of rural areas on their urban counterpart is no longer as critical as it had been in the past given the improvement in digital connectivity; digital services and supports etc.

- Rural areas should not be seen as “accommodation” corridors for urban areas or as the “recreational location” or “food basket” centre for urban areas. They are as entitled to change and adapt and alter as time, technology and circumstances require, just as urban areas are. The changing digital world and the new emerging technology areas provide lots of scope to facilitate sustainable working communities in rural areas in an appropriate manner but in a non traditional way. There is a need to make our rural areas attractive to young people, to halt the out migration of the most qualified, which is causing a brain drain and may hinder local innovation
- The NPF needs to be continually aware that it is not just about safeguarding towns & rural areas but providing them with the opportunity to grow and meet the needs of their community in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate scale, whilst also contributing positively to the needs of the larger cities.
- The NPF needs to make clear that the investment which will be following on will be directed at both urban and rural areas. That is not to state that all areas are a priority, but development must be equally prioritised in rural and urban areas. It is important that all areas feel that they will be supported to grow and be sustainable in a manner that is appropriate to their location, size and circumstances.

Some key rural issues to be addressed in the NPF include:

Rural Accommodation and place-making

- Rural settlements have a lot to offer in the context of appropriate and alternative accommodation choice and could be used as a unique selling point (USP) for any large scale investment proposed outside of the Dublin conurbation. It is therefore important that they are supported to grow appropriately - the critical infrastructural services need to be in place to support this and this in turn will support the retention of services in a village/rural town area.

It is acknowledged that this will require commuting in the short to medium-term but this should not be a reason not to allow investment outside of the key city areas. We need to identify those areas that could accommodate this growth and in a manner that should funding become available, be in a position to maximise and support public transport infrastructure provision to these areas. This needs to be balanced by appropriate provision of smaller scale enterprise facilities and supports to develop and sustain indigenous industries in these rural towns, so for example Nenagh does not become a dormitory town for the Limerick region, but are towns capable of supporting a proportion of the population in their own right.

An issue not referenced in the issues paper is that one off houses are also developed in the open countryside because a lot of the rural settlements cannot accommodate them due to the lack of appropriate waste water infrastructure. One off rural houses could be significantly reduced if rural settlement waste water facilities were upgraded or extended (and planning policy could more forcibly enforce this). A proportion of funds need to be set aside specifically to address this if we are serious about protecting our limited land resource from unnecessary one off houses. If there are severe limitations on funds, then options around innovative stand alone or other types of waste facilities need to be given serious consideration as an interim measure within these settlements.

Significant social imbalance exists in most rural settlements/provincial towns (outside of the strong urban centres). This has led to a movement out of rural towns of employment generators, private residential owners and leaders in a community. Therefore causing decline in service provision in some villages and rural towns resulting in a number of cases in the closure of key services. Left behind are a more marginalised and vulnerable group of citizens who have minimal access to services/supports or transport (elderly, frail; lone parent; unemployed etc). This needs to be counter balanced and private serviced sites need to be provided in those areas where there is not a heavy urban generated demand. The NPF needs to look at closing the gap between these fragile communities and those of the more affluent city regional areas.

Rural Community Services

Rural areas cannot expect the same level of services and service provision as those in large towns but there should be an indication of the basic level of services that such areas should expect (tiered basis based on their size scale and role) and the NPF has a role here. This could include:

- Measures to ensure security and safety of the population
- The level of basic health care service that can be expected - GP service accessible
- Education –ETB works very well at delivering community and other education programmes. 3rd levels colleges, especially LIT Tipperary should be resourced to carry out similar outreach facilities and perhaps look at shared services and shared facilities with other similar structures or community facilities (ETB/Secondary schools/Enterprise centres/community centres etc). The importance of a primary school to rural areas should not be underestimated in the context of the dynamic and cohesive elements they provide to an area, including greater community connectivity
- Basic services such as post offices; shops; childcare, eldercare etc

The NPF should clarify what an individual can expect to be provided with if they move to a rural settlement as a minimum. It is appreciated that the same level of services as provided in an urban area cannot be provided in these areas, but clarity is needed as to what is deemed to constitute a settlement in a rural area which would be deemed resilient and sustainable. Services do not need to be provided in a similar manner to the way they are provided in the larger urban areas. Basic retail facilities could be provided in a shared manner with other facilities. Alternative delivery mechanisms could also be considered (such as greater use of the internet or use of facilities such as the mobile libraries to address a demand that is widely dispersed etc).

A key tool to assist Government to look at other options in addressing service provision in rural areas comes in the form of “social enterprise” – if developed as a strong policy platform, social enterprise could assist in delivering a myriad of services in a way that would meet the requirements of rural areas and also address issues around resource constraints.

Greater usage of community facilities for provision of services e.g. youth cafe, shops, art spaces and health clinics could also be considered. An audit/survey of community facilities in County Tipperary carried out in 2016 showed an under usage of many community facilities.

Outside of the key cities and large towns, there are a number of rural towns which suffer significantly from a persistent long term unemployment challenge. It is imperative that these areas are identified within the NPF, provided with special status and appropriate supports and investment assigned to these areas to assist them to become more functional and effective for their hinterland areas. Within the context of Tipperary, such towns include Tipperary Town, Carrick-on-Suir, Thurles and Roscrea.

It is essential that any place making strategy is genuinely people centred - the USP of Irish rural areas is that they have a very strong community ethos and personal connectivity is what makes them work. This social commitment by the rural community needs to be given recognition in any NPF and built upon as a key stakeholder with government in terms of sustaining rural areas. The NPF should reference the need to provide incentives and funds to support creative ways of encouraging greater use of local services.

Rural Areas and Agriculture

Tipperary is a strong agricultural county with 7,738 farms with average farm size being 40.4 hectares. It has the 3rd highest number of dairy farms in the country. The value of agricultural output in the county is €604m with the value of forestry output at 6m

The sectors including the emerging agri-tech sector is identified as area where Tipperary has potential strengths or where potential opportunities may lie.

Food Wise 2025, the Report of the 2025 Agri Food Strategy Committee, sets out a cohesive, strategic plan for the development of agri-food sector over the next decade; the Committee recognises that the increased pressure on global agricultural resources and the environment will offer potential further growth opportunity for the Irish agri-food and fisheries sector.

Food Wise 2025 has harnessed the collective wisdom, foresight and knowledge of leading industry stakeholders and sets a course for the industry of smarter greener growth over the next decade. It foresees a sector that acts more strategically and achieves a competitive critical mass in the international marketplace while targeting more quality conscious consumers who will recognise and reward Ireland's food producers for their sustainable production and high quality produce.

The long-term vision as set out in the Report is of 'Local Roots Global Reach' based on the continued development of the sector where efficient and environmentally-friendly production delivers sustainable export growth on global markets. The Committee believes that achieving this vision will benefit primary producers, processors and the food manufacturing sector, as well as the wider economy.

On the basis of available data and by taking the actions identified in the Report, the Committee has set the following growth projections, which it believes are achievable by 2025:

- Increasing the value of agri-food exports by 85% to €19 billion.
- Increasing value added in the agri-food, fisheries and wood products sector by 70% to in excess of €13 billion.
- Increasing the value of Primary Production by 65% to almost €10 billion
- The creation of an additional 23,000 direct jobs in the agri-food sector all along the supply chain from primary production to high valued added product development.

To achieve the projections set out above, Food Wise 2025 identifies over 400 recommendations to achieve sustainable growth and these will require a concerted and coordinated approach by primary producers, industry, Departments and State agencies.

The Department has prepared a Food Wise Implementation Plan which forms the final part of the Food Wise strategy process. This implementation process will seek to enhance the regulatory and administrative environment in which the sector operates, and facilitate the achievement of the sustainable growth potential of the sector set out in Food Wise 2025, thus optimising the sector's contribution to the economy, the environment and the social wellbeing of the country.

Food Wise 2025 identifies significant growth opportunities across all subsectors of the Irish agri-food industry. Cumulatively, it projects export have the potential to grow to €19bn per annum in value by 2025, a figure that would represent an 85% increase from the current three-year average. This export growth will be driven chiefly by expansion in dairy, beef, seafood and consumer food and drinks exports. Within these sub-sectors the role of value added products in delivering innovative food solutions to consumers will be pivotal, and will be equally significant whether Irish companies are active in existing mature markets such as the UK or emerging markets such as China.

Ireland in an All-Island Context

What mechanisms are needed to ensure a joined-up approach to strategic infrastructure and investment decisions that have a cross-border dimension and are there examples of best practice?

Brexit is clearly an area that will have a very significant impact on every aspect of Irish life. In the context of Tipperary, the areas expected to be hit hardest are:

- a) Those industries who rely on a significant proportion of their export to Britain;
- b) Those industries that rely on a significant proportion of their imports from Britain.

In particular the food and agri-sector and most particularly those industries in the meat processing business and the tourism sector

It would be important that the areas most vulnerable to this would be assisted and supported and particular directional support given to these. For instance, over 50 % of the agricultural product in Ireland comes from the Southern Region – it is therefore likely that this area will be hit hardest and this may result in assistance being needed to be provided/targeted to these areas.

Ireland's Unique Environment – Sustainability

How can the NPF help to ensure we get a sustainable balance between catering for a growing population and avoiding or addressing environmental pressures?

'What strategic energy infrastructure is needed to support the economy and society and realise the transformation of Ireland's energy system to meet climate change and energy obligations and in what areas should it be located?

Are there any other national environmental issues that you think should be included within the NPF and that are within the remit of planning policy?

Innovative renewable energy options and sourcing new sustainable ways of doing business will be a key requirement of any NPF. In this regard, there needs to be recognition for areas/regions which have a comparative advantage in this area. In the context of County Tipperary:

- Lisheen Mines area (inclusive now of the Littleton Bog which is currently being deactivated as an active fuel reserve) has been designated as a European Model Demonstrator Region for the Bio-economy. Resulting from this a Bio-economy Association has been set up comprising of Lisheen Mines; UCD; TCD; LIT; Glanbia; CMP and Tipperary County Council. It

is important that this designation is recognised in any NPF and that it is facilitated, supported and enabled to develop accordingly.

In addition, given the push for alternative energy resources and to ensure that water resources are protected there needs to be recognition of the need to be inclusive of the communities and the NPF needs to be integrated with the EU Water Framework Directive.

A significant increase in food production cannot be considered in isolation from its environmental impact, in particular regarding concerns associated with the depletion of natural resources and the potential impact on climate change. To address this, future food production systems must be as focused on managing and sustaining our natural resources as they are on increasing production. Making the right choices now will ensure that Ireland is well positioned to deliver sustainable growth far into the future

Equipping Ireland for Future Development –Infrastructure

What are the nationally important infrastructure projects for Ireland that require delivery over the next twenty years?

How do we ensure that existing and new development can be supported by the timely provision of social infrastructure?

The NPF needs to support the acquisition of land-banks for employment uses by Local Authorities, who have now a more significant economic developmental role in specific rural town black spots, and to encourage the setting up of SMEs and indigenous industries in such areas with the sole purpose of supporting employment locally and engendering a more entrepreneurial culture. This should be supported by aligning up-skilling/mentoring /soft business supports along with Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) type supports to these communities.

In particular in Tipperary, given the inherent emerging strengths of a skilled student workforce in the creative multi-media/gaming sector (primarily through graduates of LIT), it is proposed that a creative multi/media corridor be developed along the Clonmel-Thurles route and particular support for the development of same would be important in the context of the NPF supporting emerging opportunities in rural areas.

Tipperary is also very strong in the artisan food and drink area, as well as others such as Bulmers; ABP; GlenPatrick; etc. Again, working on Tipperary's inherent strengths, it is intended to develop a Food Centre of Excellence in Tipperary and particular support for the development of same would be important in the context of the NPF supporting emerging opportunities in rural areas.

Enabling the Vision – Implementing the National Planning Framework

When it comes to implementation and monitoring of the NPF, are there common goals that can be identified and apply to every place?

- The NPF also needs to recognise that it alone cannot deliver what is required. It needs to ensure that an environment is created within which positive action can be taken by the various stakeholders in Irish society (including communities and cross-government departments) and this should be the focus rather than seeking to control development.

- The NPF must be an all-government document where all spending departments align their capital and support spends with its contents and work together to bring about a fairer and more equitable appropriate country for all by 2040.

Summary of Key Priorities for County Tipperary

Health & Well being Issues

- Retention of Clonmel Hospital a secondary hospital
- Roll out of Primary health care centres in the towns
- Development of the Jigsaw youth mental health programme
- Addressing mental health by creating safe secure accessible communities which proactively reduce isolation.
- Development of diverse housing stock to accommodate people at all stages of the lifecycle, with particular emphasis on accessible homes for older people and those with disabilities.
- General proviso that any new infrastructural developments take the needs of people with disabilities/older people into account, so that retrofitted is not a requirement.

Place-making Issues

- Nenagh to be a key functional urban centre within the Limerick Functional City Region (supported by Thurles, Tipperary Town & Roscrea)
- Clonmel to be a key functional urban centre within the Waterford Functional City Region
- The Northern Water Supply Reservoir in Clonmel to be prioritised in any investment programme of Irish Water given its role in supplying and facilitating the development of over 300 acres of employment lands (50 acres of which is IDA owned)
- Rail link between Limerick & Dublin to be retained
- Rail link between Limerick and Waterford to be retained, upgraded and timetabled appropriately
- Upgrading of the N24 to motorway standard – could be phased and act as the Cork to Limerick Link with a spur off the M8 and the remainder of the N24 upgraded to motorway standard to Limerick (including in particular the by-pass of Tipperary Town)
- Upgrade of the R498 Nenagh – Thurles
- Provision of a Thurles By-Pass on the N62
- Public Bus connectivity between key urban centres which are to act as a strong support to the functional city areas to retain connectivity with Dublin (Clonmel to Dublin service). Additional support to expand the local link bus services managed by the TCU
- Specific support measures to revitalise our town centres, including capital funds to improve civic space projects
- High quality reliable broadband to be provided to all rural areas
- Incentives to be introduced, particularly into the identified strong urban centres, to deliver housing accommodation

Opportunities for our Regions

- Support the take up of the additional capacity at Shannon Airport
- Upgrade airport in Waterford to an appropriate regional airport standard
- Upgrading of the N24 link, including up to motorway standard
- Supporting key economic clusters to continue developing such as the life science cluster in Clonmel and the broader South-East region
- Acknowledgement of the lack of appropriate hotel accommodation infrastructure in some parts of the country which is restricting tourism development growth and the introduction of incentives in these locations to support development of same

Rural Ireland

- Rural settlements provide an alternative accommodation choice for our citizens and should be supported to grow appropriately with the critical infrastructural services in place to support same

- This needs to be balanced also by appropriate provision of smaller scale enterprise facilities and supports to develop and sustain indigenous industries in these rural towns so that they do not become dormitory towns but are capable of supporting a proportion of the population in their own right
- The urban generated one off rural houses challenge could be significantly reduced if rural settlements waste water facilities were upgraded or extended. A proportion of funds need to be set aside specifically to address this if we are serious about protecting our limited land resource. If there are severe limitations on funds, then options around innovative stand alone or other type of waste facilities need to be given serious consideration as an interim measure within these settlements
- Rural settlements which are heavily imbalanced through the provision of social housing needs to be rebalanced with the provision of private house. Any NPF needs to look at closing the gap between these fragile communities and those of the more affluent city regional areas
- The NPF needs to provide clarity around what type of basic service provision can be expected to be provided at a minimum within rural settlements (acknowledging that these cannot be similar to or at the same level as urban areas). There is latitude to explore innovative ways of providing these services such as through shared service facilities; mobile services; internet services etc. The role of social enterprise as a tool to assist in the delivery of such services should be promoted and supported by government in the NPF

Ireland in an All Ireland Context

- Those industries who rely on a significant proportion of their export to Britain
- Those industries that rely on a significant proportion of their imports from Britain
- In particular the food and agri-sector and most particularly those industries in the meat processing business and the tourism sector

Climate Change & Sustainability

- Recognition of the European designation of Lisheen as a Bio-economy Model Demonstrator Region and policy statements to support its development in this area
- Policy statement of encouraging community ownership of renewable energy options

Economic Development

- Rural areas should be able to accommodate opportunities around ICT based industries; multi/media & creative industry sector; food based; renewable energy; agri-tech; tourism; transport etc. where it is appropriate and where the environment has the capacity to accommodate same
- As the food cradle of Ireland, recognised support for the development of a National Food Centre of Excellence in Tipperary
- The NPF should direct RESS to identify strategic land-banks and these should focus on areas where there is currently a strength or where there are potential strengths in terms of attracting additional growth – in Tipperary, the development and prioritisation of the Ballingarrane strategic employment land-bank in Clonmel is a priority
- Financial and policy support to develop a multi-media creative design hub corridor between Clonmel and Thurles which also involves the development of a creative educational civic & cultural quarter in Clonmel (involving stakeholders such as ETB; LIT; TCC and An Gardaí)
- Identification of a national distribution hub at Limerick Junction in the NPF
- A proportion of funds from Irish Wwater need to be set aside to address the needs of the rural towns/villages if they are to play their role in providing a sustainable quality space for our citizens - this needs to be specifically stated in the NPF

- Appropriate designation and support for rural towns that have a persistent unemployed issue - in particular Tipperary Town; Carrick-on-Suir, Thurles and Roscrea