



Submission to: Ireland 2040, The National Planning Framework

Submitted by: Social Inclusion College, Sligo Public Participation Network

Date: 28th March 2017

The Social Inclusion College of the Sligo Public Participation Network (PPN) consists of 45 Community and Voluntary Organisations, representing the needs of hundreds of residents, working to improve the quality of life for people in Sligo. We welcome this opportunity to feed into the Ireland 2040 Plan.

It is our vision that by 2040 *Sligo will be an enterprising, inclusive, resilient and environmentally sustainable place, which values and celebrates its unique landscape and rich culture and heritage and where the wellbeing of future generations is central to everything we do (Local Community and Economic Plan 2016)*

To achieve this vision, **Sligo is ready to grow**, and should be determined as a specific area of investment as part of the 2040 National Spatial Strategy.

Sligo

Sligo has a population of approximately 65,000 people, as the gateway to the North West it is situated at a strategically important point. It is 2.5 hours from Dublin and 2 hours from both Galway and Derry. Rich in cultural, natural

heritage and coastal amenities, home to two third level colleges, a regional hospital, 22 major multi-national employers and a growing tourism industry – Sligo already has the foundations laid for future growth.

Like all areas, some people in Sligo have to deal with poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion – these experiences can be linked to unemployment, disability, ethnicity and caring responsibilities amongst other factors. A more inclusive future for Ireland will consider how growth can promote greater equality between all the diverse people who make up our community.

The following responses are provided to questions posed in the *Ireland 2040 Issues and Choices* document:

Effective Regional Development

Centrally located within the North West Regional Assembly Area and the Central Border Area Network, possessing all of the infrastructure and resources required to be a regional centre of growth, Sligo is a logical choice for future investment in sustainable regional development.

Sligo has the potential to grow. Investment to facilitate ‘place making’ in the City, could build the population of the wider hinterland, which has been in decline. Under-investment in the area to date means that we are not realising our potential, in terms of employment, industry or tourism.

Sligo also has the capacity to grow in a sustainable way – there is housing development potential within a short distance of the city. Good public transport, provision of high speed broadband, will allow us to build affordable, sustainable and connected communities. Fostering a favourable social and economic environment, in balance with protecting the natural environment - are already goals within this region (LECP 2016).

Healthier Places

A goal of the 2040 plan must be for ***greater equality in living standards*** – this includes people who are carers, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority backgrounds (amongst others). Investment in Sligo as a regional growth centre, will enable people in the North, West and Border Regions to improve their situation. Thoughtful implementation of investment programmes – to suit the needs of different groups of people, to ensure greater equality of outcome, will enable the vision for Ireland 2040 to be realised. Success must be measured in terms of equality of living standards amongst our people, rather than average living standards.

Sustainable Development

We recognise the need for sustainable growth and the environmental legacy we will leave to future generations. It is already a stated goal of the LECP to reduce waste, car dependency, increase the green economy and energy efficiency. As a community sector, we can support and lead this transition along with leadership from the State.

Maintaining Rural Populations

Rural populations can only be maintained by providing rural dwellers with a viable income and a good standard of living which is achieved by living near a growing urban centre. By focussing on Sligo as a regional centre, smaller communities living in rural Sligo, Mayo, Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Fermanagh and Roscommon will benefit.

Strengthening rural communities also depends on the provision of services to sustain rural centres. The provision of good shared transport options between towns, could enable strategic development within the region. There is great potential to grow food production, tourism, foster the potential of our rich heritage and develop strong IT based industries within rural areas in a sustainable way in Sligo and its hinterland.

Coordination with Northern Ireland

Sligo is extremely well positioned to further develop and expand its economic, social, cultural and environmental linkages with adjoining areas in Northern Ireland. Relationships have already been fostered through Sligo's participation in a range of cross border initiatives, and we are eager to continue this progress – in education, community development, heritage, research, health etc. We are ready to respond creatively to the changes that Brexit will create.

Measuring Success for Sligo and the region

Retaining a quality of life over the life course and making it possible for people to live and work in their own communities, a level of equality in living standards and sustaining and growing Sligo's population, all need to be set at key indicators. As community leaders, we want to be a central part of this development. For Ireland to attain real balanced regional development, and sustainable rural communities by 2040, then Sligo must be designated as a centre for sustainable growth and investment.

For further information contact the PPN team at ppn@sligococo.ie

Appendix

Members of the Sligo PPN Social Inclusion College

Abbeyquarter Men's Group
Ballinafad Active Retirement
Ballymote Family Resource Centre
Cairde Arts Festival Sligo
County Sligo Leader Partnership Company
Disability Federation of Ireland
Diversity Sligo
Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Sligo,
Leitrim & West Cavan
Down Syndrome Association
Gleann ICA
Gurteen Community Care
Gurteen Ladies Social and Wellbeing Group
Invisible Traffick
Irish Wheelchair Association
Junior Achievement Ireland
Kilmacshalgan C of E Select Vestry
MS North West Therapy Centre
National Learning Network
North West Parkinsons Association
North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force
Parents & Guardians of Cregg House Services
(PGCH)
Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre,
Sligo, Leitrim & West Cavan
Rehabcare
Rennafix Group
Sligo Active Retirement Association
Sligo Centre for Independent Living Ltd
Sligo CIL Leader Forum
Sligo County Childcare Committee
Sligo Family Resource Centre
Sligo GAA – Social Inclusion & Games for All
Sligo Intercultural Forum
Sligo Lend a Hand
Sligo Mental Health Association
Sligo Northside Community Partnership Limited
Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership
Sligo Traveller Support Group Ltd
Society St Vincent de Paul
South Sligo No Name Club
The Carers Association
Tireragh Community Support Ltd
Tubbercurry & District Active Retirement Assoc
Tubbercurry FRC
Tus Nua Sligeach
West Sligo FRC Ltd