

Key Priorities for the Southern Region from the perspective of Cllr. Ger Darcy

- Tipperary has a very strong urban network of Towns, which are important growth centres in their own right and drivers of their local economy. The NPF needs to recognise the importance of these Towns in accommodating future growth and ensure that investment is made in infrastructure to support development.
- Support and invest in Strategic Employment Land Banks, through investment in infrastructure and promotion by the IDA and EI of these sites for large scale employment uses in our towns.
- Recognise the potential of 'branding' to promote the unique characteristics and potential of key towns.
- Develop a framework for Town Centre Action Plans to enable and resource local authorities to assist businesses and communities in realising their potential. Ensure investment in civic improvement works, to showcase heritage assets and enhance town centre public realm and function.
- Revise guidelines for town centre living, taking account to of changing demographics and rural expectation, and seek to incentivise town centre buildings and sites for residential use.
- The NPF should deliver a spatial planning framework which identifies, supports and drives the economic and social development of the 'Mid-West Limerick City Region, both of which Tipperary is an integral part.

The Potential of Our Rural Areas

- Establish the 'Re-vitalisation of Rural Villages' as a core national objective, endorse actions contained in the Rural Development Action Plan and ensure that critical infrastructure is provided to facilitate growth and development.
- Stimulate residential development by provision of a 'Rural Settlement' investment scheme in waste water infrastructure, based on the County Settlement Hierarchies.
- Support the development of low-density cluster developments in villages.
- Increase support/funding for Town and Village Enhancement Schemes
- Recognise Tipperary's comparative advantages as a leader in driving a national renewable energy and bio-economy sector and support and incentivise development of these sectors in the county.
- Recognise the importance of the agricultural sector and its contribution to the agri-food economy.

Health and Well-Being

- Ensure the retention of and enhancement of services at Clonmel and Nenagh Hospitals and provision of Primary Care Centres in key settlements.
- Ensure the provision of services in rural areas to maintain and support the sustainability of communities.
- Prioritise investment in multi-purpose facilities, which enable a wide range of services to be provided (health, recreation, social, economic) to be accessible to our rural populations.
- Provide national planning guidelines which apply the concepts of "*lifetime neighbourhoods*", to include a variety of facilities including housing provision, resources for the young, community centres, health services etc.
- Support the provision of Third Level facilities in rural areas, to provide cost effective educational opportunities (through ICT etc.) to all sectors of the population.
- Provide supports for our ageing population.
- Stronger policy is support of people with disabilities.

Environment

- Develop new national planning policy on renewable energy development to reflect developments in new technologies for example solar, bio-energy while protecting of environmental assets.
- Prepare a National Landscape Character Assessment, to identify and market key landscape assets in the country, to support the development of planning policy for landscape management in general, and to assist in the delivery of a nationally consistent approach to planning policy for new development etc.
- Identify our bog lands as national strategic assets; invest in the protection and enhancement of their bio-diversity, and invest in their use for sustainable economic, tourism and educational facilities.

Economic Progress

- Support and invest in delivery of objectives set out in the Mid-West and South East Regional Action Plan for Jobs.
- Recognise Tipperary as a designated European Model Demonstrator for the bio-economy and support the development of the Lisheen site as a centre for research and development in the bio-economy.
- Support the identification of Strategy Energy Zones in Tipperary having regard to the county's advantages in natural renewable energy resources, infrastructure, knowledge base and human capital.
- Support the development of a National Food Centre of Excellence in Tipperary.
- Include a commitment on the development of planning policy that will support community investment in renewable energy development and also community led approach to better energy efficiency.
- Recognise Tipperary sustainable tourism assets and support the development and promotion of Irelands Ancient East.
- Identify the Lough Derg/Lakelands areas as internationally and nationally important locations and support investment in the successful delivery of these destination plans.

Investment in Infrastructure

- The National Broadband Plan should be delivered as a matter of priority ensuring effective broadband in all areas of the country.
- The provision of a new Motorway between Limerick and Waterford cities (up-grade of the N24) and Link to Cork City via Cahir (M8) is critical for Tipperary and the region.
- Provision of the Killaloe Bypass / Shannon Bridge and R494 improvement & up-grade of Nenagh to Thurles Regional Road (R498) and provision of Thurles and Tipperary Town by-passes is necessary.
- Retention and enhancement of services of the Nenagh to Limerick Commuter line, the Limerick-Waterford and the Nenagh-Ballybrophy Railway Lines.
- Increased investment in the Rural Road Network
- Increased investment in all national and regional roads in Tipperary.
- Increased investment in the rural bus network and retention and enhancement of inter-regional bus services.
- Prepare a National Heat Plan, with the purpose of establishing how Ireland can achieve sustainable heating in cities, towns and rural areas through natural resources and technologies such as District Heating.