

**From:** Michelle Mulherin <Michelle.Mulherin@Oireachtas.ie>  
**Sent:** 31 March 2017 11:09  
**To:** National Planning Framework  
**Subject:** Submission on NPF

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the draft National Planning Framework.

I believe we need to be more explicitly ambitious for Mayo. The suggestion that we will experience economic growth through trickle down from the cities of Galway and Sligo has not been borne out historically and to date.

We need to consolidate an axis for growth within Mayo itself building upon the three main towns. A new urban centre connecting Ballina, Castlebar and Westport creating a linked hub should be proposed and pursued with infrastructural investment including creating a connection to Ireland West Airport Knock similar to what the Minister Coveney flagged recently as an idea for the Midlands ie creating a new urban centre by connecting Athlone, Tullamore and Mullingar. The proposition to create a new urban centre comprising the towns of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport is even more feasible as all three already operate under the banner of one county, Mayo and local authority and there is considerable existing cohesion through our County identity.

We have a sizable population of approximately 131,000 which would justify this proposition. Compare this to Sligo which has a population of 65,000 for the whole County for example.

If we do not do something radical for Mayo in the NPF then it is my fear that Mayo and its main towns will just become a commuter belt for the cities of Sligo and Galway which two cities will continue to receive more public and private investment and that the Atlantic Economic Corridor and similar initiatives will simply provide a vehicle for exiting and by passing the County from an economic development point of view with the exception perhaps of tourism. This will result in further migration towards the cities in circumstances where Galway in any event does not have capacity.

This is a golden opportunity to get the right blueprint to bring balanced and sustainable regional development to Mayo and the West.

Yours sincerely,

Senator Michelle Mulherin

Senator Michelle Mulherin  
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