



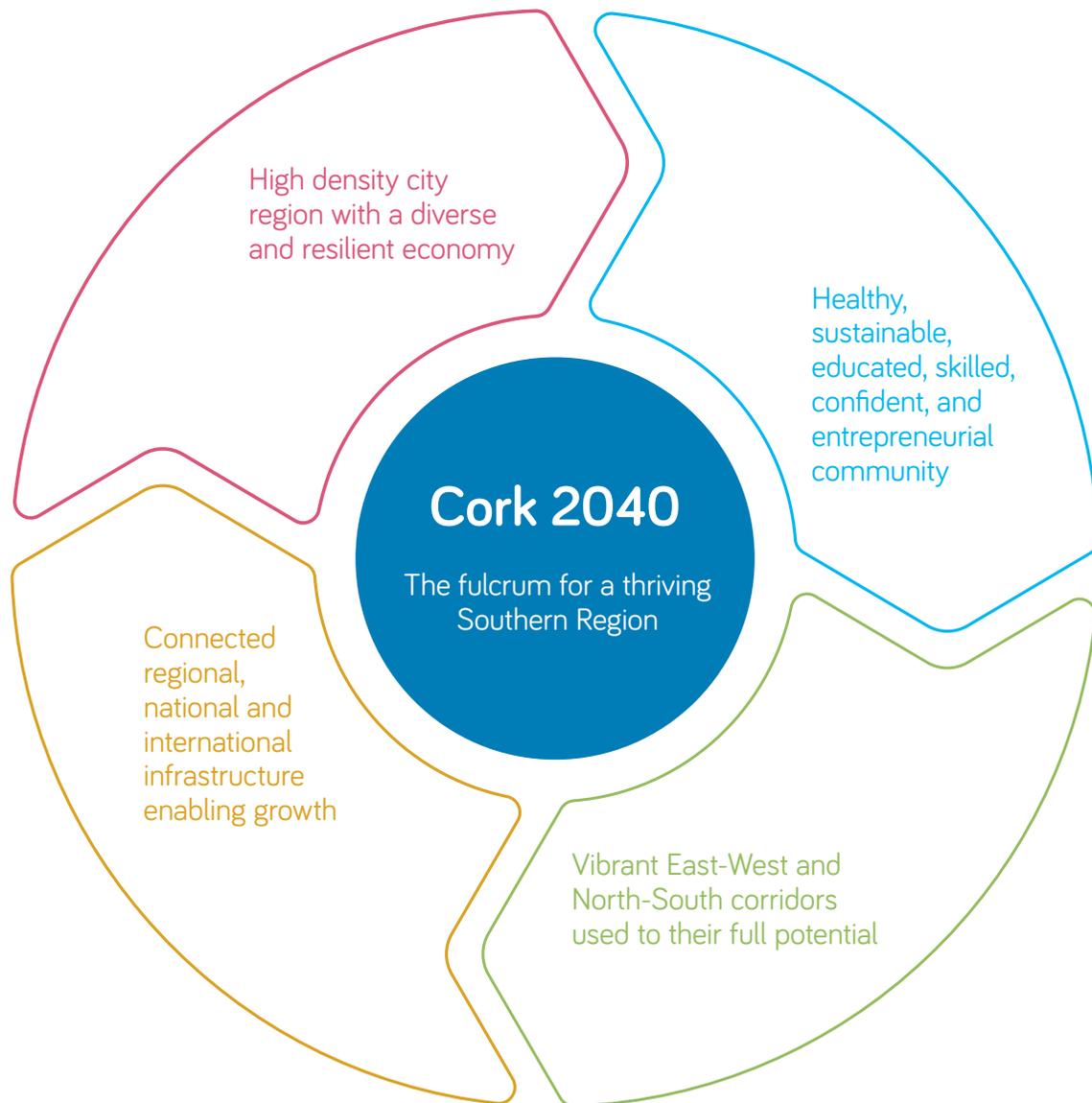
# Ireland's National Planning Framework

Submission by Cork Chamber  
March, 2017



**Cork  
CHAMBER**  
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

# Cork 2040: Our vision



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# Introduction

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the National Planning Framework (NPF).

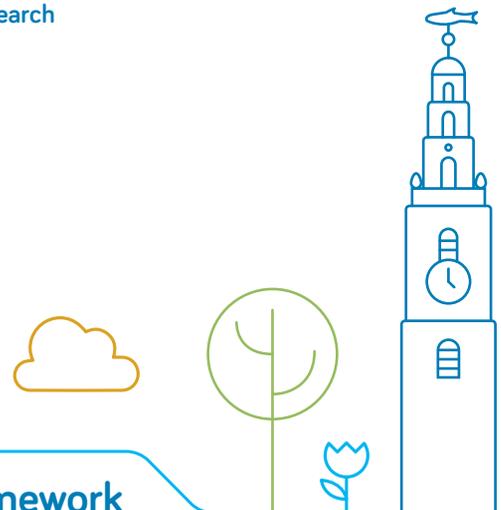
As the leading business organisation for the Cork City and County region, representing almost 1,200 businesses, that employ in excess of 100,000 people, Cork Chamber has a mandate to develop and promote policies that ensure Cork is a significant player in the Irish economy. **The Cork economy contributes 19% to GDP** and covers sectors such as agri-food, bio-pharma, healthcare, education, research, international financial and business services, information and communications technology, tourism and renewable energy. Cork Chamber works to consolidate the voice for business within the region and is focused on advocating for developments identified by business members and employers, as well as priorities to meet current, medium term and future economic growth needs.

In parallel with this submission Cork Chamber has actively engaged with both Cork Local Authorities in the preparation of the Cork 2050 submission to the NPF, and endorses it. As a result, Cork 2050 is referenced on several occasions in this submission. Cork is poised to become a worthy leader for the Southern Region a national, European and international level, for the benefit of Ireland as a whole. The collective influence of the businesses represented by Cork Chamber and other Chambers in the region will play a crucial and central role in the implementation of the NPF.

**Our submission sets out key parameters and deliverables that will sustain and expand the wider Southern Region, led by Cork, as the perfect complement to, and strategic support for, the Greater Dublin Area, without compromising the exceptional quality of life with which the region is synonymous.**

Our submission supports:

1. The **strategic approach** that the NPF offers
2. **Population growth and increased employment**
3. A **strong Metropolitan Cork area** supporting a thriving region
4. The importance of **strategic infrastructure** as an enabler
5. A high **quality of life and place** for the people of Cork with true emphasis on **sustainability and health**
6. An emphasis on enabling continued **leadership in education and research**



# 1. Strategic Approach

The NPF emphasises the importance of strengthening one or more of the four regional cities of Cork Limerick, Waterford and Galway...

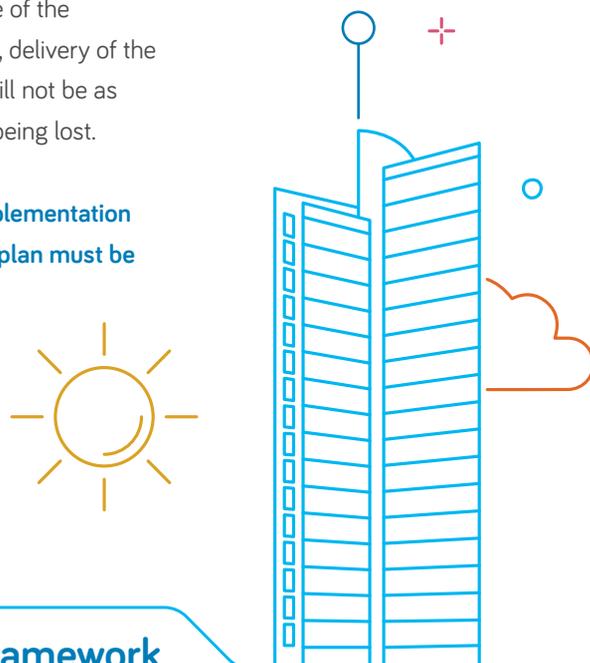
and the towns around them, to create strong growth poles for business and a critical mass for service and infrastructure delivery. There is an emphasis on collaboration.

Aligning with the key provisions of the NPF, our submission is focused on positioning the Metropolitan Cork area as an international driver of regional population growth and economic activity, interacting with other cities in the Southern Region, and mobilising rural towns and villages. The collaborative approach between regions advocated in the NPF is not new to Cork. Businesses in Cork regularly engage with regional and national counterparts in technology/ research/ fintech; ICT; tourism; financial and business services; culture and arts; agriculture and agri-tech; pharma/ biopharma/ healthcare; and energy/ maritime sectors.

The **Metropolitan Cork area is the most productive and efficient economy of scale in the Southern Region** and as such is well positioned to deliver significant value and growth for the entire region and indeed nationally. Cork has all the necessary credentials, including global economic clusters, international connectivity (port, airport and digital infrastructure), road infrastructure, health infrastructure, water infrastructure, energy infrastructure, population base, world leading higher education institutions, skills, culture and quality of life.

Given this unique opportunity to shape our future, it is important that the NPF carries sufficient weight once adopted. The NPF is a holistic document. Because of the complexity of stakeholders and institutional tiers and interdependencies, delivery of the NPF may pose a significant challenge. There is potential that planning will not be as effective as possible, and economies of scale and scope of investment being lost.

**To reach full potential, the administrative mechanisms that lead to implementation should be respectful to the NPF. The hierarchy and significance of the plan must be clearly established.**



## 2. Population Growth and Increased Employment

The focus in the Cork 2050 submission is on delivering an escalated growth scenario for Cork of at least 846,000 people...

...including an additional 53,000 people in the city, and 168,000 people in Metropolitan Cork. Cork Chamber endorses this objective. Metropolitan Cork has an existing population base of 305,000 (2016), and there is a demonstrable capacity to accelerate growth in a sustainable manner to 500,000 people, with 121,000 new jobs to 2050. This is supported not just by the population demographic but also by inward mobility of talent who are attracted by the varied employment possibilities across a range of sectors.

Key future population locations include Docklands and Tivoli as well as the South and West Environs of Cork City. At present, Cork City benefits from more than 180 hectare of waterfront sites suitable for dense urban development in sites immediately adjacent to the city centre, one of which is located on the existing rail network corridor. In order to unlock the development potential of locations such as Docklands and Tivoli, new planning frameworks are being advanced by Cork City and County to facilitate initiatives such as regional road and rail infrastructure at Marino Point. **Key infrastructural components will help to unlock Cork's potential.**

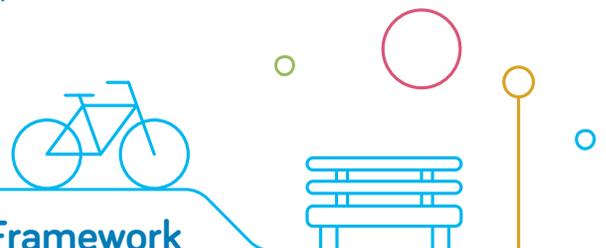
Cork County Council is also advancing proposals to zone additional landbanks for significant residential development in the South and West Environs of the City, in addition to the identified urban expansion areas to the north and east of the City.

An economic growth strategy is proposed in the Cork 2050 submission with emphasis on an

increase in jobs in target sectors including pharma/bio pharma/healthcare; energy & maritime; agriculture and food/agri-tech; financial and business services/fintech; leisure and tourism and technology and research enabled in collaboration with IDA & Enterprise Ireland. The strategy will build on existing clusters in the metropolitan Cork area, including healthcare, pharma/bio-pharma, IT, energy, and agriculture, while also facilitating growing clusters in maritime, international financial services, energy, engineering and cybersecurity. This will be a driver for the Southern Region.

The City and County Strategic Employment Areas, including the City Centre, the North Environs, Mahon, Little Island, Carrigtwohill, Ringaskiddy and Whitegate Energy Zone, will facilitate the proposed uplift in new jobs, with existing landbanks protected and new lands identified, maximising the preferential digital connectivity that is on offer. The Cork 2050 submission also proposes a model to promote the potential of towns, village and rural areas outside the Metropolitan Cork area to contribute to the successful development of the region.

Collectively, these will underpin the sustainable growth of Cork and will alleviate pressure on the Greater Dublin Area in line with the provisions of the NPF. **Critically, Cork Chamber requests that these economic growth strategies will receive policy support and commensurate infrastructural investment prioritisation in the NPF.**



### 3. A Strong Metropolitan Cork Area

Metropolitan Cork is uniquely positioned with a significant global asset base and of a scale to be a strong hub for business, commercial and human activity in line with the aspirations of the NPF.

**Cork Chamber fully supports the role of the Metropolitan Cork area as the engine of the local, regional and national economy.**

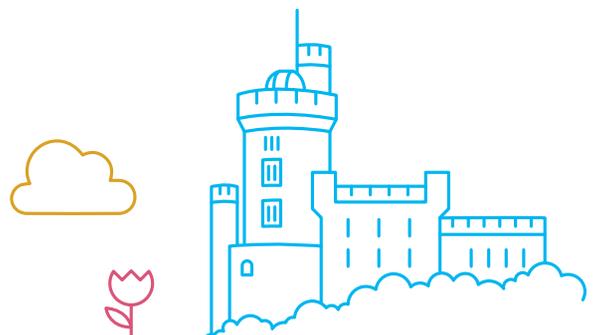
In seeking national level policy support for the escalation of growth in Metropolitan Cork, there will need to be a corresponding alignment of public sector investment decision-making, and in this regard, Cork Chamber is pleased to note that the NPF is promoted as a cross-sectoral overarching framework for public sector investment, providing a policy basis for key spatial priorities of regional and national importance.

With a population of over half a million, Cork is a strong performing area across a range of indicators which has enabled investment and growth over the past decades. It is ideally located as regards proximity to the Greater Dublin Area lending to the ability of the Metropolitan Cork area to absorb both natural population growth, and inward migration, acting as a complementary engine to the East Coast in driving and strengthening the Southern region, and catalysing growth in the regions.

Metropolitan Cork and the wider region has performed strongly in economic terms over the past decades, growing our contribution to the overall national output within this period, and being one of the regions to fare best and above the state average in terms of Gross Value Added per person. There is an ambitious, educated, young population and a

diversity to the growth that promotes economic resilience and lays the path for future investment. Still, Cork is nowhere near the peak in terms of reaching its potential as it is widely recognised that Cork, based on its natural advantages such as scale, availability of natural resources and critical mass, has the strongest and most immediate possibilities as a location with significant growth potential in the coming years.

**Cork Chamber believes that Cork can be an internationally competitive high-rise city. The Chamber believes that consolidation and increased efficiency in land use with between 3,500 and 4,500 people per square kilometre at centres and along transport corridors is the most effective way to generate a strong and vibrant business and community environment serviced by effective infrastructure.** Cork boasts an abundance of brown field land in the city environs that is ideal for regeneration and densified development such as 180ha of waterfront docklands. There is also considerable capacity along the existing transport corridors with towns such as Midleton and Carrigtwohill ideally positioned for considerable growth.



# 4. Strategic Infrastructure as an Enabler



## OVERVIEW

Cork has the connections both internationally and nationally ensuring its positioning as a key actor in the economic growth, strength and diversity of the island of Ireland. Offering an international airport, a large sheltered deep water and port facility, Cork enjoys direct access to European and Transatlantic destinations to principal hubs such as London, Boston, Amsterdam and Paris making it a strategic and convenient gateway for accessing and connecting with European and North American markets and locations.

Furthermore, national road and rail connections facilitate an intercity and county bus and train service, enabling travel between Dublin and Cork in little over two hours. The importance of connectivity and accessibility cannot be underestimated and is repeatedly highlighted across all sectors as critical to attracting and retaining investment to and within a region. It is clear that Cork is very much on the right path strategically as regards infrastructural development for a growing and progressive Southern Region, reinforced by strategic employment zones and residential planning, effectively focused on maximising each strategic infrastructural investment.

**Cork Chamber requests express commitment in the NPF and other public sector strategies and investment programmes to the provision of key infrastructure projects of national and regional importance**, as discussed here.

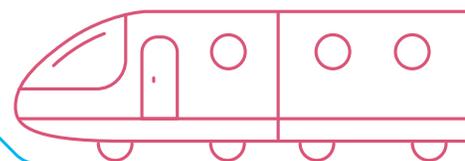
## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

One of the principal objectives of the Chamber is to put in place the essential infrastructure to achieve a step-change in the use of public transport, to secure a transition to a low-carbon economy and to ensure that our transport infrastructure continues to unlock the economic potential of Cork.

Building on the strength of the existing suburban rail network, and aligned with proposals for an increased population and employment density in Metropolitan Cork, **we endorse an integrated East-West and North-South public transport corridor that will link urban and rural communities with strategic employment areas and services.**

Complementary to this, the Chamber supports mechanisms to protect and enhance existing and proposed bus routes, and Greenway routes for walking and cycling. Cork Planning Authorities must reserve these corridors in all relevant development plans in order to ensure their implementation.

**Improved connectivity from Cork to Limerick, Waterford and the Southern Region will require investment in the Dunkettle Interchange, the M20, the N22, and the N25**, encouraging further collaboration and driving growth in the Southern Region. **The delivery of the M28 is critical to the continued success of the global cluster of economic activity that has been long established in Ringaskiddy.**



These major infrastructure proposals are not only of regional importance, but also critical at a national level, enabling the Southern Region to compete effectively and robustly complement the Greater Dublin Area and perform in an international context. The Cork 2050 submission demonstrates the excellent value for money for all of Ireland achieved by investing in these significant proposals for Cork.

The Chamber believes that Cork offers a unique opportunity to further complement the growth of Dublin and that improved connectivity between the two cities is of significant benefit to our increasingly mobile workforce. **Reducing the train journey time between the two cities is to the benefit of Ireland and we believe that the target time should be one hour.** In an international context, investment in new high speed rail is being championed and we believe that improvements to our existing rail infrastructure are an essential component for competing on an international stage.

In addition, **the appreciation and enhancement of the major asset of Cork Airport, which continues to increase its flight connections and passenger footfall, will be of immense benefit to the Southern Region.** As Ireland's second largest airport, it already supports 11,000 jobs and contributes €727 million to GDP. The capacity for increased usage remains a key opportunity for both business and leisure tourism.

## SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Cork is home to Ireland's Energy hub, located around Cork Harbour and comprising the country's most strategically important cluster of energy infrastructure, businesses and research facilities.

**Cork is a net exporter of electricity generation to the national grid and is at the forefront of renewable energy generation in the country.**

The Energy Hub supplies over 25% of Ireland's energy demands and is home to 20% of Ireland's electricity generating capacity. Many of the largest energy companies in Ireland are represented within the Energy Hub or in the wider Cork area. Cork boasts Ireland's only oil refinery at Whitegate. There is also a strong concentration of engineering service providers in support of these industries.

**Given Ireland's dependency on energy imports, it is critical that we increase diversity and resilience as regards energy supply.** We must increase the domestic supply to meet current and future expected demand. In tandem with this, it is critical that strategic developments are undertaken which increase Ireland's ability to generate renewable energy and decrease our carbon footprint as a nation.

**Cork already accounts for 13% of Ireland's wind energy generation.** Cork is also a hub for marine renewables (tidal and wave rider tech), and solar PV. Solar PV has the potential to generate a very significant portion of Ireland's target for renewable electricity.

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There are currently submitted grid connection applications totaling 5,500 MW of solar PV generation, the majority in the Southern Region of the country. This is a very significant opportunity, and challenge, for our electricity grid, which currently has 13,000 MW of generation connected.

With costs being actively driven down by innovation in solar, onshore and offshore wind, it is probable that the renewable industry will be commercially viable without subsidy in advance of 2040. **As such, we believe that the NPF should plan to facilitate renewable industries in the allocation and positioning of transmission and distribution infrastructure.** Moreover, centralised policies that demonstrate long term Government commitment and support for the commercial investment in the renewable energy industry, such as solar PV, need to be clarified without delay. This will maximise the potential of such sectors and our vast regional potential in increasing momentum in the adoption of sustainable energy technologies and increasing our national resilience and energy security.

As such, Cork Chamber wishes to highlight the potential of the Southern Region in driving forward the agenda for resilience, diversity and security of supply through building on the existing energy infrastructure and collaborations.

**Existing examples include:**

- The Kinsale Gas Head is currently being used for off-season gas storage and has significant potential for the storing of renewable energy into the future.

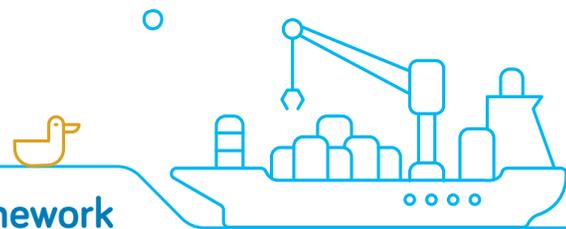
- The Energy Hub located in Ringaskiddy has a concentration of activity, employment, innovation and research which is unique in Ireland.

- Cork is also a Hub for marine renewables (tidal and wave rider tech), and Solar PV. Solar PV has the potential to generate up to half of Ireland's power needs (13,000MW) with 5,500MW grid connections already applied for in the Southern Region.

With an existing industry driven cluster in place for some time – Energy Cork – Cork is well-positioned to take the lead in this role.

## MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE

Cork Harbour is the second largest natural harbour in the world. **The Port of Cork is the key seaport in the South of Ireland and is one of the only two Irish ports which service the requirements of all six shipping modes** i.e. lift on, lift off, roll on, roll off, liquid bulk, dry bulk, break bulk and cruise. It is capable of taking post Panamax vessels and handling 19% of seaborne trade in the Ireland. The ongoing Port of Cork Redevelopment Project in the Lower Harbour will form an extension to the existing facilities that the Port currently operates in Ringaskiddy. It is enabling the Port to facilitate larger vessels and ensuring long term international competitiveness. The Port of Cork Ringaskiddy Redevelopment Project (new Container Terminal) is planned to be operational in Q1 2020.



Cork Chamber highlights the strength of the strategic port facility in the Cork region as regards international market access and the future ability to facilitate increased usage, especially in light of market uncertainties which have come to the fore with the planned UK Brexit.

Our port infrastructure is a hugely important strategic point of entry into Ireland and export location. It is sometimes overlooked that as an open economy with a dependence on international trade, we do over 90% of our trade by sea. The port is ideal for future investment. The development of a new container terminal will overcome the existing physical constraints in handling larger vessels and increasing the ability of the port to adapt activities to match current international requirements. Amongst other things, **the port redevelopment will enhance the ability of Cork to maximise the potential for increased sea freight direct to mainland Europe post Brexit.**

- it will facilitate the capacity to catalyse and influence wider regional development, including the development of the tourism sector and of the Cork Docklands at Tivoli, and the Marino Point redevelopment, and so growing Cork's recreational and housing capacity;

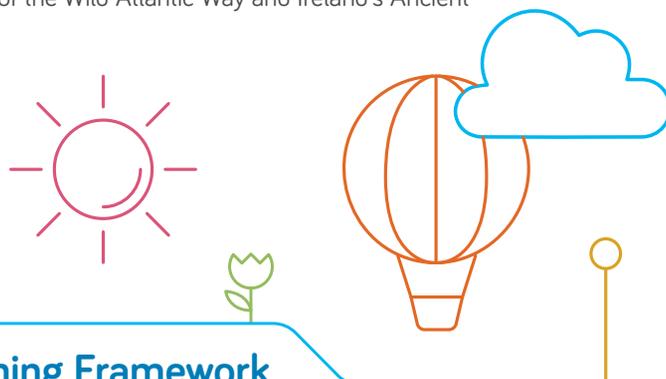
- it will work to consolidate the N28 as a strategic national primary route serving the EU TEN-T core transport network of which Port of Cork is part.

**The N28 upgrade is a critical component for unlocking the full potential of the Port of Cork, industry and IDA strategic land holdings, and should be recognised as a critical piece of national infrastructure.**

The Cork area is also home to the Irish Maritime and Energy Research Cluster (IMERC) in Ringaskiddy, which is a branded partnership between University College Cork (UCC), Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and the Irish Naval Service (INS). The partnership focuses on the co-located assets, services and supports of the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI, CIT), the Beaufort building housing the SFI Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy (MaREI, UCC) and the Irish Naval Service base at Haulbowline. The IMERC partnership focuses on education, research, innovation and clean technology, and supports the potential co-location of over 40 companies at this clustering location. **The vision of the IMERC partners is to promote Ireland as a world-renowned research and development location that unlocks Ireland's maritime and energy potential.** IMERC was established by the partners in 2010 with the focus on addressing global research and commercial opportunities in the maritime and marine energy sectors.

**Cork Chamber seeks recognition in the NPF of the need for continued support and investment in nurturing Ireland's blue economy through strategic, visionary clusters such as modelled by the IMERC partners.**

Cork Chamber also emphasises the opportunities that exist in Cork Harbour for an expanded marine tourism base to promote the area region at the cusp of the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.



## DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**From a digital connectivity perspective, Metropolitan Cork boasts vital high capacity Tier 1 Express fibre connectivity. This offers the lowest latency in the EU to the East Coast of the US, connecting Cork with vital digital and financial markets in the US and UK.** Our digital infrastructure thus further enables the Cork area, making it ready to attract, accommodate and grow Ireland's national capacity to benefit from future investment from next generation digital and financial companies.

In addition and scheduled for delivery in 2018, a submarine fibre-optic cable system will be the first and only direct subsea cable between Ireland and France. The IFC-1 system will be a state-of-the-art subsea cable providing ultra-high capacity transmission to telecommunication carriers, internet companies and large enterprises in Ireland looking for connectivity to continental Europe. The subsea cable has been designed to extend terrestrially from Cork into Dublin and Paris providing connectivity and enabling long digital line segments. As such Cork Chamber emphasises the readiness of Metropolitan Cork in absorbing growth in the digital sector, and specifically the ever growing data centre industry and reemphasises the region's characteristics as regards existing energy infrastructure.

**The enormity of the economic potential of this digital infrastructure for the Southern Region, and Ireland as a whole, cannot be underestimated, and it would be important for the NPF to recognise and support and invest in this significant infrastructure.**

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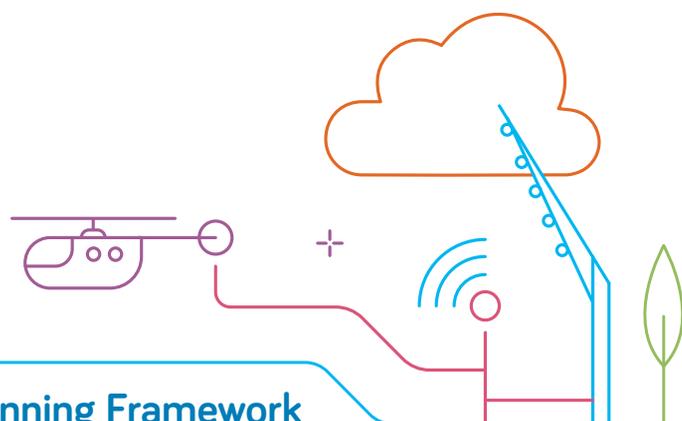
## POTABLE WATER

Cork City & Cork Metropolitan Area are served by Inniscarra Water Treatment Plant (WTP), Lee Road WTP and Glashaboy WTP with a current capacity of 146 million litres per day (MLD) and a future potential capacity of 296MLD. The future capacity is capable of providing for a 1.2m population and associated industry/commercial needs. As such, the **Cork's water network is already capable of providing for 2050 population targets with continued investment in maintenance and modernisation works.** We have the capacity for growth.

## WASTE WATER

Continued investment in our water and waste water infrastructure, including the Cork Harbour Drainage Scheme, will be necessary to underpin the population and economic strategies.

The Cork Main Drainage Scheme was completed to the benefit of the inner harbour and the Carrigrenan Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) can be expanded as necessary over the next 20 years. The Lower Harbour Main Drainage Scheme costing in the region of €97m is ongoing and represents another significant infrastructure asset in the Cork area



In conjunction with UCC and CIT significant research is being carried out in the area of bio-gas and the energy generation potential of waste water treatment plants. The Energy Hub located in Ringaskiddy, Cork facilitates the development of these new technologies.

significantly, it is of particular importance that such strategic waste infrastructure is provided for in order to allow the region and Cork to grow and expand in an environmentally sound and sustainable fashion, and to realise the additional 300,000 tonnes of thermal treatment capacity required in the next few years.

## GENERAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

In addition to the continued need for investment in waste water infrastructure, there is also a requirement to ensure that the general waste management infrastructure is fit for purpose and provided for in a strategic manner as outlined in the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021. This Waste Management Plan provides the framework for the prevention and management of waste in a safe and environmentally responsible manner and places a strong focus on the sustainable management of resources and a move towards a more circular economy at both regional and national level. As such, the plan highlights that significant investment will be required to develop higher quality waste treatment infrastructure including new biological treatment, thermal recovery such as waste to energy and pre-treatment recovery in the next number of years. Given that the region generated over 2.5 million tonnes of waste in 2012 and the population is expected to increase

The development of such infrastructure would also support the national dual objectives of achieving self-sufficiency in the recovery of residual waste and corresponding reduction on the reliance on export of this waste which is at odds with circular economy principles.



# 5. Quality of Life and Place

An important and defining feature of Cork is the quality of life that the area offers, be that sporting activities, the arts, culture, heritage and leisure pursuits.

This must be protected and enhanced. The Chamber also believes that the NPF has the potential to lead to more sustainable development patterns and ways of living which support a strong quality of life. As such, **the NPF should be developed in the context of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development which provide an overarching framework.**

Cork City and County are actively engaged in age friendly strategies and are working to increase the positive experience and social/ community participation of those across all ages across the region. We believe that through careful investment and appropriate spatial planning we can create a society that is truly inclusive and supportive to people at every stage of life. **We believe that the focus on spatial consolidation and development at key locations along established transport corridors will help to facilitate and promote this type of society.**

Cork is unique as the meeting place of both the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East. In terms of business and leisure tourism, the South West consistently performs as one of the top 3 visitor destinations on the island. Cork's diverse range of arts and cultural assets include Cork Schools of Art and Music, theatres, galleries, performance venues, and a wide range of festivals, catering for every interest from choral singing to French film and jazz. To date, Cork boasts an internationally renowned cultural and tourism offering and Cork Chamber asserts that with strategic investment in this area (combined with our international connectivity) there

is vast potential to grow our reputation as a cultural hub of international significance. A thriving Southern Region must have an appropriate events centre. This cultural and business infrastructure is essential to compete internationally and there is a strong demand to support it within the Cork Metropolitan area and the wider Southern Region. We cannot overlook the value in growing our domestic locations in appeal to the domestic market. Herein the opportunity once again exists to grow on the existing foundations and expand the offering.

To maximise the potential additional investment will be required in existing tourism infrastructure of national significance, such as Spike Island, the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East. In this context, improving quality of life through developments such as Páirc Ui Chaoimh and continued promotion of Cork as a vibrant location on an international platform is essential.



Global Sustainability Goals



## 6. Leadership in Education and Research

Cork possesses world renowned higher education institutions accommodating 35,000 students with UCC recognised as in the top 2% of research institutions in the world...

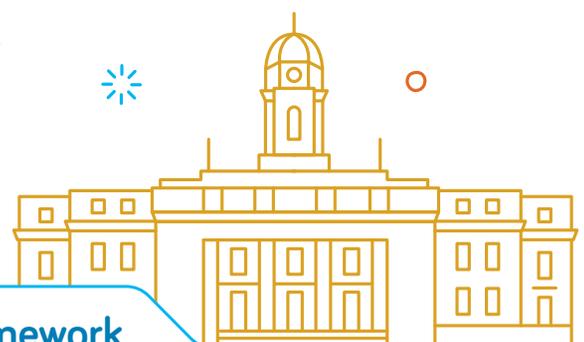
...and the world's first green campus, and with CIT generating 250 start-ups in the last 10 years and producing more accredited engineers than any higher education institution in Ireland. The steady stream of ICT, science and engineering graduates will be a draw for FDI and the support for emerging indigenous talent. A further flavour of the diversity fostered within Cork-based research and education providers can be demonstrated when elaborating on but a few of these strengths.

### For example:

- the Tyndall National Research Institute focusing on photonics, electronics, materials, nanotechnologies and ICT;
- the Alimentary Pharmabiotic Centre pioneering the disciplines of gastrointestinal health;
- Moorpark Dairy and Food Research Centre, one of the world's leading research centres specialising in pasture based systems of milk production;
- The IMERC partnership, integrating diverse research and industry expertise unlocking Ireland's maritime and energy potential;
- The NIMBUS Centre for Research in Networked Embedded Systems, based in Cork Institute of Technology is devoted to the field of embedded electronic systems;

- The Rubicon Centre, Ireland's premier on-campus Business Incubation Centre established to assist the formation and growth of early stage, knowledge intensive businesses;
- The European Space Agency Space Solutions Centre supporting Irish start-up companies developing space-age technology;
- The cooperation between UCC and CIT driving the delivery of joint programmes and awards, a consortium approach in technology transfer, a collaborative approach to student and graduate entrepreneurship and the provision of collaborative research across a number of research centres.

Cork is also a national leader in healthcare innovation which is of both social and economic significance and which offers great growth potential for indigenous industries into the future. For example, the National Health Innovation Hub Ireland led by UCC facilitates and accelerates the commercialisation of innovative healthcare solutions. Cork University Hospital (CUH) is the largest university teaching hospital in Ireland and is the only Level 1 Trauma centre in the country due to the presence of over 40 different medical and surgical specialties on the campus.



Looking ahead, Cork is well placed to support the nation's future healthcare needs while contributing to employment growth. **In order to maximise this opportunity, the NPF should actively support Cork's existing health infrastructure developing into a Health Centre of Excellence for all of Munster to benefit.**

The quality of education and research institutions in the region with their capability and track record of adapting to the current and emerging needs of industry is a differentiator. The future educational needs are likely to be significantly given the pace of technological change. For example, Cork is a mini-cluster for cyber-security activity and an industry which did not exist a few years ago.

Offering a 25% research and development credit, and positive research and development environment, it is clear that Cork is not content to sit back and wait for innovations to be developed, and there is no doubt that the technologies, services and systems developed through the work of these dedicated centres will be pivotal in shaping future progress in their respective sectors.

**The availability of a skilled and entrepreneurial workforce, in particular in science, technology and engineering, is crucial to the delivery of an additional 121,000 jobs.** In this regard, it is vital that the NPF addresses current funding obstacles to the delivery of such programmes at third-level.

Additional investment, including in infrastructure, will be required in all levels of education and research and innovation. The delivery of the Munster Technological University will have a further significant impact on Cork and the wider South West Region, augmenting Cork's already strong performance in producing STEM graduates and attracting talent.

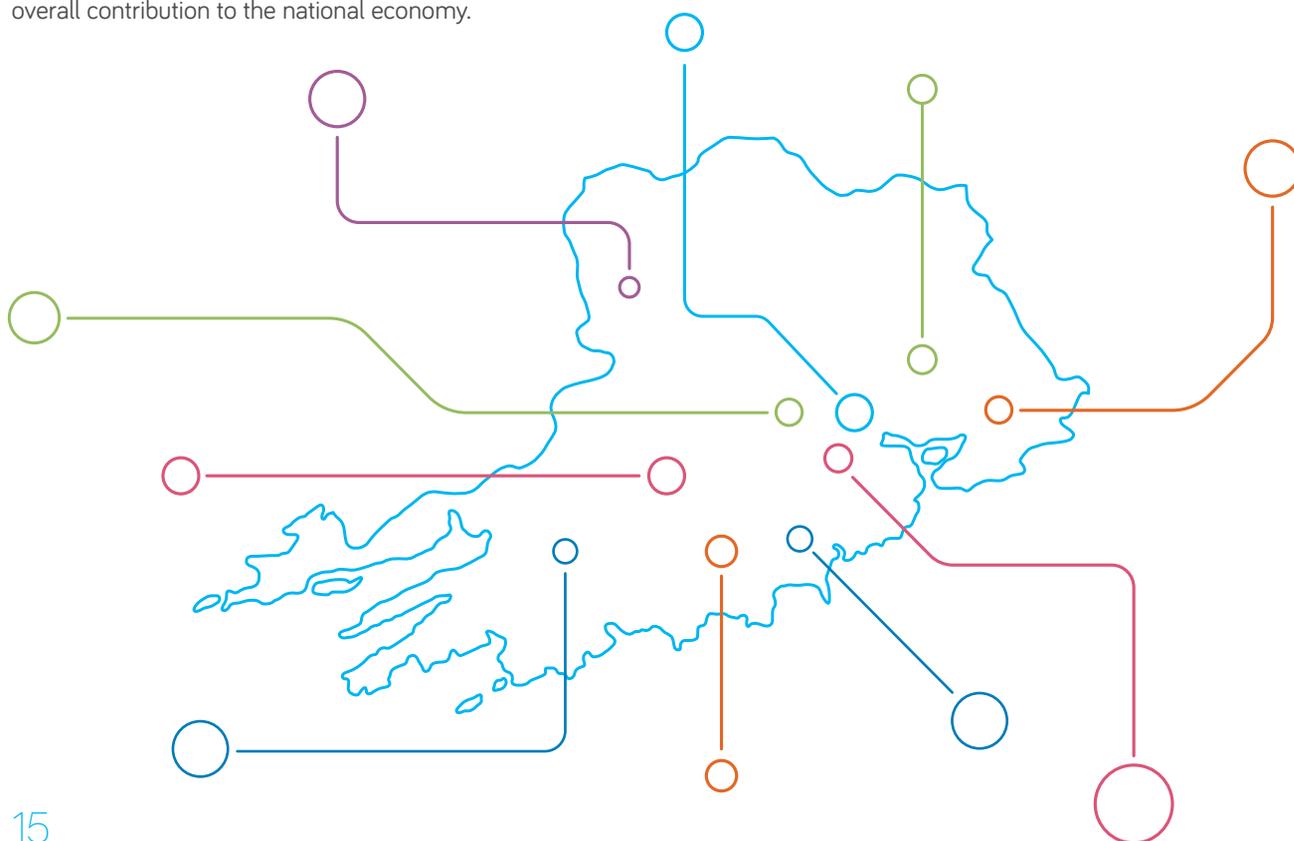


## 7. Conclusion

The Cork Chamber submission and that of Cork 2050, submitted jointly by Cork City and Cork County Council, clearly shows that Cork is ideally positioned for growth.

We have international connectivity via sea and air. We have national and regional connectivity via rail, air and road. We have an attractive and proven business and leisure tourism offer. We have a unique energy offer and ample water infrastructure. We have room to grow our population and provide vibrant communities along our existing transport corridors and within our existing metropolitan area. Investment in key infrastructural priorities identified in this submission will deliver value for money for the Exchequer and facilitate market led growth.

**It is therefore the assertion of Cork Chamber that the enablers of future sustainable economic development within Metropolitan Cork area are reinforced and advanced with Central Government support via future development and investment strategies, and acted upon accordingly.** It is critical that future investment decision-making is aligned with the spatial priorities of the NPF. In making this statement, Cork Chamber emphasises the strength of existing collaborations and networks which have the potential to drive constructive engagement and support locally, regionally and nationally Ireland's positive development to 2040. Our vision for Cork 2040 is a regional and international engine for economic growth linking effectively with other locations in the region to maximise the overall contribution to the national economy.





[www.corkchamber.ie](http://www.corkchamber.ie)

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