

National Planning Framework

Infrastructural developments should include enhancements to the existing, rather restricted, railway network and consideration given to the re-opening of lines where the original trackbed remains extant.

This would lead to improvements in the following ways:

It would secure a low-carbon addition to the existing road network for both freight and passenger services

Freight:

Rail freight should be promoted as a way of reducing road congestion, reducing carbon emissions, and providing an alternative to a single transport system based exclusively on roads.

This would include focussing on the freight ports which are already served by rail, including Rosslare, Co. Wexford and Belview, Co. Kilkenny. Given the threat to freight movements posed by Brexit, these and other ports offer direct access to the EU, avoiding the land bridge via Great Britain. This would include the strengthening of both the Limerick/Rosslare route and the development of the Western Rail Corridor. This would facilitate both east/west and northwest/southeast freight movement avoiding the congested Dublin region.

Passenger:

It would open the possibilities of rapid transit between major urban commercial/industrial centres and neighbouring rural towns and villages thus encouraging the revival of rural Ireland. Associated development would include park&ride facilities which could tie in with shuttle rail services based, as appropriate, on train-sets ranging from single rail cars to multi-carriage sets. The establishment of additional halts along the lines at level crossing points and other road intersections would improve accessibility.