



Submissions,
Forward Planning Section,
Department of Housing, Planning
Community and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1, DO1 W6XO

**Subject: Atlantic & Southern Economic Corridor:
Counterpole to the 'Dublinopolis'**

Dear Sir / Madam

The Ireland 2040 Report stated that 49% of all economic activity in the State is currently generated in the Dublin/Mid-East Region and the capital (or what could be termed, '*Dublinopolis*') now sprawls into 11 counties. The need to develop a counterpole to the Dublin sprawl is clear.

In July 2014 I wrote to the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, proposing the development of an Atlantic Economic Corridor as a spatial and economic counterweight to Dublinopolis (*copy enclosed*). The proposal envisaged infrastructural development and networking of the cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway, together with associated development of the county towns of Mallow, Tralee, Newcastlewest, Ennis, Tuam, Castlebar and Letterkenny. The development of the Corridor would also draw on the resources of the three universities of UCC, UL and NUIG, together with the associated colleges of CIT, ITT, LIT, GMIT and Letterkenny IT. The proposal further envisaged drawing on the resources of Cork, Shannon and Ireland West airports.

An expansion of the concept outlined in my earlier letter of July 2014 envisages the incorporation of a Southern branch of the Corridor to involve the linking and networking of Cork City onto Kilkenny and Waterford cities, with associated development of Tipperary Town and Dungarvan. The resources of LIT at its Tipperary campus and WIT would be incorporated as well.

As a signal of its commitment to developing a counterpole to the Dublinopolis it is essential that the government, in its Mid-Term Review of the National Infrastructural Plan, commit to the building of the M20 motorway between Cork and Limerick as opposed to diverting further significant infrastructural resources to the Dublinopolis. With the expected completion of the Gort to Tuam motorway in November, the development of the M20 motorway would see motorway infrastructure up the spine of the Atlantic Corridor virtually from Cork to Tuam. As finances allowed in further years motorway could be developed further from Tuam onto Sligo and onward to Derry. Further motorway development could occur from Cork to Kilkenny and Waterford and onto the Europort at Rosslare. There would then be a motorway spine stretching from Derry in the North-West down to Cork and then onto Rosslare.

The Lichtfield and Buchanan Plans of the 1960s, which envisaged the development at that time of counterpoles to the Dublinopolis of Limerick/Shannon/Ennis and Cork, were undermined by short-sighted, parish-pump politics. What is needed now is a government with the vision to plan for and create an Atlantic and Southern Economic Corridor that would lay the basis for sustained economic and spatial development for future generations.

Yours sincerely



Liam Mac Mathuna

cc. Mr. Micheál Martin, Leader of Fianna Fáil
Mr. Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin
Mr. Brendan Howlin, Leader of the Labour Party
Senator Kieran Ó Donnell



5 July 2014

Mr. Enda Kenny, T.D.,
Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Dublin 1

**Subject: Atlantic Economic Corridor:
West & South-West Counterpole to Dublin & Mid-East Regions**

Dear Mr. Kenny

Ireland is currently at risk of developing a dual-speed economy with a relatively prosperous economy in the Dublin and Mid-East regions and a less prosperous economy in many areas of the rest of the country, especially in provincial towns and villages.

The Lichtfield Plan, published in the 1960s, proposed the creation of an economic counterpole to Dublin located in the Mid-West and centred, as I recall, on an industrial and urban triangle involving Limerick, Shannon and Ennis . The Lichtfield Plan was never implemented either by the then government or any subsequent government. I believe the failure to develop an economic counterpole to the ever-expanding Dublin region in the west of the country was a serious mistake by successive Irish governments.

The Dublin and Mid-East regions are already too large and too crowded for the overall good of the country and, indeed, the quality of life of their own populations. Any further appreciable development of the Dublin and Mid-East regions would be unwise.

Instead, I would like to propose the creation of an economic, industrial, tourism and cultural counterpole to the Dublin and Mid-East regions along the West and South-West tourism regions stretching from county Donegal to county Cork.

This, essentially, economic corridor would have at its core the three cities of Galway, Limerick and Cork, with strong linkages to provincial towns such as, Letterkenny/Donnegal, Sligo, Castlebar, Ennis, Shannon, Nenagh and Tralee. It would feed into smaller towns and villages in the counties of Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Kerry and Cork.

A ten to twenty year government Strategic Investment Plan would pour significant state investment, combined with private investment through the vehicle of Public Private Partnerships, into the economic, industrial, tourism and cultural infrastructure of the West and South-West regions. Conversely, the level of investment in and growth of the Dublin and Mid-East regions would be appreciably restricted. Such a strategy would also end the need to divert large supplies of water from the Shannon Basin to the Dublin region in order to facilitate further significant growth and development of the Dublin and Mid-East regions, as currently planned by Irish Water.

Greater cooperation and coordination between the tourism authorities and actors in the West and South-West regions, centring on the tourism backbone of the 'Wild Atlantic Way', currently being promoted by Bord Fáilte, would also be envisaged. Linked to greater cohesion within the tourism sector would be appreciable investment in the cultural infrastructure of the West and South-West regions.

The Higher Education Authority is currently promoting a strategy of greater consolidation and coordination between the different third-level institutions in the country. A number of years ago the University of Limerick and NUIG developed a Strategic Alliance and this year UL developed a further Strategic Alliance with Limerick Institute of Technology and Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. I would propose further promotion of the concept of developing strategic alliances among the third-level institutions in the proposed Atlantic Economic Corridor. Currently there exists a partnership among universities in the West and South-West regions called, I believe, the Atlantic Universities Partnership involving UCC, UL and NUIG.

The HEA is currently encouraging the development of clusters of third-level institutions within both regions involving groupings of universities and Institutes of Technology. A structured Strategic Alliance linking these groupings and involving UCC, UL, NUIG, CIT, IT Tralee, LIT, Mary I College, GMIT, Sligo IT and Letterkenny IT could be considered for development. Such an overarching Strategic Alliance would serve to enhance greater cohesion among third-level institutions in both regions and also facilitate greater national and international investment in research among these institutions.

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I would urge you to give serious consideration to the creation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor, along the West and South-West regions as a counterpole to the Dublin and Mid-East regions.

Yours sincerely

Liam Mac Mathuna
Retired Research & Information Officer

cc. **Mr. Michael Noonan, Minister for Finance**
Ms. Jan O'Sullivan, Minister of State
Mr. Alan Kelly, Minister of State

President, University of Limerick
President, NUIG
President, UCC
President, LIT
President, Mary Immaculate College

Manager, Clare County Council
Manager, Cork City Council
Manager, Cork County Council
Manager, Donegal County Council
Manager, Galway City Council
Manager, Galway County Council
Manager, Kerry County Council
Manager, Limerick City and County Council
Manager, Mayo County Council
Manager, Tipperary County Council