

Brian Flaherty,



Costal population.

The costal waters of Ireland "Contain some of the largest and most valuable fisheries resource in Europe" as stated in your document "Position-Paper-Issues-and-Choices-Ireland-2040-web.PDF".

When we joined the EU in 1973, Ireland as a country gave away most of our fishing rights. With Brexit now a reality and it looks like Britain are looking for exclusive rights of their territorial waters, it is time for us to stop behaving like lapdogs and claim back most if not all of our fishing rights from the EU. This is the only possible option for getting employment into the western coastal areas. You can forget about jam making or selling cups of coffee as a realistic employment possibility in these regions.

Regional Cities as a Counterbalance to Dublin.

Much as I would love to suggest that we invest in the town where I live, or where I was born, we really need to focus on the regional cities and these will have a knock on effect on the regional towns when they grow in strength. They will be the counterbalance for the monster that is Dublin. We can help build up our regional cities if we are smart about it. The out of town sprawl of business/shopping parks is a disaster that fuels motor car usage and has the effect of killing the city centres. This should be avoided at all costs. A better model is a planned vibrant city centre and business parks served by rail and road.

Galway has cornered the market for medical devices so we should promote that and the country should be a stakeholder in at least some of these industries. But that development in the medical devices industry has caused huge traffic congestion in the Parkmore area. We should be promoting Oranmore as this has rail and road access.

Cork has started to develop the north quays and this is served by a reasonable rail line though traffic congestion here is pretty bad a peak times. The development of city centre locations should be continued and more use of the rail lines promoted. Cork has a huge number of pharma companies and this again should be promoted.

Waterford has carried out a lot of development on the ring road and though this has brought jobs, the traffic congestion at peak morning and evening times is a disaster. The north quays have a load of potential for city centre office type work. At present, there is the vacant shopping centre and Ard Rí hotel sites which could be used. The area could be promoted for example, as a banking zone and with all the companies shaping up to leave the UK, this would make a lot more sense than an overpriced Dublin location. Remember, you the government own AIB so they could be the starter company. It's also served by rail lines from Carlow/Kilkenny/Dublin and Limerick Junction direction. The line to Wexford is still functional and could be used if the need was there.

Limerick has a load of potential in the eastern side of the city and could be built up again as a location for city based employment. The north and south of the city have good potential and again have working rail lines should the need arise.

Transport.

The minimum requirement here is to maintain all current rail lines and for God's sake, don't pull up anything dormant that might be required in the future. The particular lines are the remainder of the western rail corridor, Rosslare to Waterford (which is functional) and Midleton to Youghal to name but a few. Some of these may not be viable now but as population increases, they will be needed. Just as example, the Ennis to Galway line was reopened after circa 24 years (its an excellent service and I there was standing room only last time I travelled on it) and the Midleton to Cork line was reopened after 46 years (this gives a realistic alternative to the gridlock every other morning on the N25 into Cork). If we are serious about getting people in and out of the major cities, then rail is the only realistic possibility and it is there for all the regional cities if we take the long term approach. The over reliance on cars has to be curbed as even now, it tends to be gridlock in the mornings/evenings. Do we really want to build more motorways? Another consideration would be to put in a double rail line between Dublin and Galway, increase speeds on all intercity routes and some consideration should be give to metro north / dart underground though my feeling here is that this will have the effect of even more promotion of Dublin over the regions.

Energy.

Biogas should be promoted as one of the most effective power generation options. If you consider wind for example, it is only 30-33% efficient (IE, no power when the wind doesn't blow) and you also have to have an almost mirrored capacity in the event that they are not producing. We all know about fossil fuels and remember that we are mostly at the whim of other countries who can turn off the tap at a moments notice. Biogas generation from farm manure (chicken litter is particularly efficient) generates 24/7, can be located all over the country on suitable farms, would provide local jobs and will cut down on our reliance on imported fuels. There is another option with biogas where the gas is fed into the gas grid. Again, this option should be seriously considered.

