

March 2017

With a view to the goals of our organisation in protecting rural Ireland, improving connectivity, bettering quality of life and developing an Ireland for all, we submit the below:

1. M20 Motorway

- The motorway be commenced from a redesigned junction 5 Croom by the end of 2017, linking to the Cork Northern Ring Road project providing an economic and social corridor between the 2 cities and linking to the M18 soon to be complete between Limerick and Galway.
- The completion of this motorway will offer an immediate journey time saving, with average speeds of >100km/h for ordinary traffic, compared with current speeds of 80km/h> at times.
- The completion of this motorway further has the below expanded benefits
 - Socioeconomic regeneration of towns.
As experienced by Gort since the completion of the Ennis-Gort section of the M18, the town has become user friendly, with people living and working in the hinterlands now able to park up and use their town without the constant flow of traffic.
 - Counterbalance to the Dublin Commuter Belt
Towns such as Croom, Charleville, Buttevant, Doneraile, Kanturk and Mallow will become viable commutable distances for families who have members of their households working in both Cork and Limerick, such as Shannon currently has in relation to Limerick and Galway.
 - Housing activation
As referenced above in relation to commuting, many vacant properties in the hinterlands of the above towns on this corridor will become viable choices for families, whilst not an immediate solution to the urgent and escalating crisis in the provision of houses within 3.5 times the average household income price ratio, in the longer term, the immediate activation of motorway construction will reap benefits.
 - Scale for rural services
Growth in population in towns along the corridor will return rural services to sustainability as commuters living in these towns will spend earnings on leisure, subsistence and other products and services. With population growth of up to one million by 2040 it is important that we focus additional capacity in public services around existing infrastructure such as schools and hospitals which can be upgraded.
 - Economic activity
Allowing freight to move more quickly up and down the western corridor and towards Dublin and Cork ports will act as an investment trigger for large industry.

Furthermore, the IDA will be able to market its vacant properties in towns on and near the corridor more easily for investment when suitable.

- Safety

Whilst great efforts have been made in recent years to improve the surface of the existing N20, stretches of this road remain perilously dangerous in design, particularly immediately north and South of the town of Buttevant.

- Quality of life

Reductions in journey time, danger, stressful driving conditions and vehicle wear and tear will have enormous quality of life benefits to all road users who travel this motorway.

- Protecting rural Ireland

By enabling population growth in towns along the corridor, the future of villages in the hinterlands can be secured.

Limerick City Ógra Fianna Fáil notes discussion in the media and elsewhere which proposes to route Cork-Limerick traffic onto the M8, building a new motorway south of Mitchelstown to the N24. Not alone would this not be city-city motorway, it fails to address the chronic capacity limitations of the junction of the N25, M8, N8 and N40 at Dunkettle, and the planning complications of replacing the R513 with motorway. Even when upgraded we do not believe the Dunkettle junction will have the capacity to serve the traffic coming from a third city, in addition to that already entering Cork city from Waterford and Dublin via this route. The backup of traffic on the N7 as a result of failure to plan alternate routes out of Dublin for 3 cities as well as Kilkenny and commuter towns evidences this. For this reason we reject any route which uses the M8 as the gateway to Cork. Furthermore, it would be a dereliction of duty to rural Ireland if growth potential, yet again, revolves around roads to Dublin. The M20 must follow a similar route to the one already envisioned to enable future road capacity east-west rather than north-south, taking in routes across county Cork, bringing in parts of Limerick as far east as Ballylanders and as far west as Abbeyfeale.

2. M24 Motorway

- Following the completion of the M20, priority must be given to upgrading the Limerick-Waterford link to Motorway.
- We propose that a public consultation be launched in late 2017 or early 2018 with route possibilities.
- The completion of this motorway will offer an immediate journey time saving, with average speeds of >100km/h for ordinary traffic, compared with current speeds of 80km/h> at times.
- The completion of this motorway further has the below expanded benefits
 - Socioeconomic regeneration of towns.

As experienced by Gort since the completion of the Ennis-Gort section of the M18, the town has become user friendly, with people living and working in the hinterlands now able to park up and use their town without the constant flow of traffic.

- Counterbalance to the Dublin Commuter Belt

Should a route enable; towns such as Cahir, Cashel, Carrick-on Suir and Clonmel will become viable commutable distances for families who have members of their households working in both Waterford and Limerick, such as Shannon currently has in relation to Limerick and Galway.
- Housing activation

As referenced above in relation to commuting, many vacant properties in the hinterlands of the above towns on this corridor will become viable choices for families, whilst not an immediate solution to the urgent and escalating crisis in the provision of houses within 3.5 times the average household income price ratio, in the longer term, the immediate activation of motorway construction will reap benefits.
- Scale for rural services

Growth in population in towns along the corridor will return rural services to sustainability as commuters living in these towns will spend earnings on leisure, subsistence and other products and services. With population growth of up to one million by 2040 it is important that we focus additional capacity in public services around existing infrastructure such as schools and hospitals which can be upgraded.
- Economic activity

Allowing freight to move more quickly up and down the western corridor and towards Dublin and Cork ports will act as an investment trigger for large industry.

Furthermore, the IDA will be able to market its vacant properties in towns on and near the corridor more easily for investment when suitable.
- Safety

Whilst great efforts have been made in recent years to improve the surface of the existing N24, stretches of this road remain perilously dangerous in design, particularly immediately east and west town of Bansha.
- Quality of life

Reductions in journey time, danger, stressful driving conditions and vehicle wear and tear will have enormous quality of life benefits to all road users who travel this motorway.
- Protecting rural Ireland

By enabling population growth in towns along the corridor, the future of villages in the hinterlands can be secured.

Contrary to the traffic issues which make the M8 an unsuitable gateway to Cork for traffic from Limerick as well as Waterford, there is potential to create a synergy by using a route other than the current N24 which would require heavy engineering solutions due to terrain. Were it possible for TII engineers to plot a route to meet public approval which would see the Limerick-Waterford route merge with the N25, this would be a cataclysmic game changer in opening the south and

south east to development, taking motorway all the way from Rosslare Harbour to Galway, Cork, Limerick and Dublin.

3. Shannon Rail Spur

- For the sustainable development of the region that a rail spur to Shannon Airport be created, to serve Shannon town, Shannon International Airport and no less than 4 stations in the Shannon Free Zone for commuters.
- We propose a review of park and ride facilities at the relevant stations, including stations currently closed.

4. Castleconnell Commuter Rail

- For the sustainable development of the region that commuter rail services to the stations of Castleconnell, Lisnagry and Killonan be reactivated. Should it be necessary to build traveller confidence in the service, it should run, if necessary, at a loss for a period of no more than 5 years. As timetabling has been a failing of this line, the first inbound weekdays service scheduled to arrive in Limerick Colbert Station no earlier than 7:45am and no later than 8:15am to enable onward travel via bus or foot, the second inbound weekdays service scheduled to arrive no earlier than 8:40 and no later than 9:10, with an inbound service each 150 minutes thereafter. Outbound services should begin before the second inbound service reaches Colbert Station, outbound services should cater for school as well as commuter returns.
- We propose a review of park and ride facilities at the relevant stations to cater for commuters using the N7 and M7 and N24, including stations currently closed.

5. Housing

- We note that the provision of housing in all sectors, not limited to state, private rental and home purchaser sectors is in crisis at a level not seen since the foundation of the State.
- We believe State intervention in the housing market is required to enable developers to reduce the time to completion, including, but not limited to reviews of development levies, site costs, time required for planning and state construction as has served very well in the past.
- The above being said, we do not agree with plans on the reduction of minimum sizes of properties and the quality of properties as seen over the last number of years must be addressed.
- We believe demand and increasing purchase cost is the driver of supply in our private housing market, normal market rules of supply and demand do not apply. We therefore propose the State examine a pilot programme of home building with mixed developments for social housing and for sale, in a number of areas where the cost of purchasing a new build 3 bed terraced home is more than 5 times the gross average wage in that region.
- We believe apartment living must be encouraged in our cities to combat sprawl, however many of the apartments built over the past 30 years have been built to a size and cost rather than a use, giving apartment living a bad name. We therefore propose that no more than 20% of apartments in any one apartment building may contain less than 2 double bedrooms, further that at least 20% of apartments in any

one development must contain 3 or more bedrooms, not less than 2 to be double sized.

- We propose that apartments must include the provision of utilities such as would be expected in a terraced house, including but not prescribing or limiting to, separate kitchen, laundry area, clothes drying area, outdoor space suitable for play, storage space within each individual apartment equivalent to attic or shed.
- We propose planning customs and regulations be reviewed to enable the construction of buildings suitably tall as to make their construction profitable to the capital investor.
- We propose tax incentives be examined for developers who construct apartment buildings in which the largest apartment is not more than 5.25 times the average wage in the region where the apartment is constructed, provided that apartment contains no less than 4 bedrooms and is no less than 175m sq, to include no less than 35m sq outdoors specific to that apartment, and that each apartment in the development meets a minimum size of 75m sq to include no less than 15m sq outdoors specific to that apartment.
- Apartment living has huge potential to bring much needed regeneration to our city and town centres.

Queries can be addressed to

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