

NPF Submissions,
Forward Planning Section,
Department of Housing, Planning,
Community and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin D01 W6X0

30th March 2017

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Dear Sir /Madam,

I welcome the Issues Paper on the National Planning Framework.

I am a Town Planner working as a Local Authority Planner, however this is my own personal submission to the pre-draft stage of the National Planning Framework.

I welcome the National Planning Framework Issues Book, it has been long anticipated and it is great to see that this vital national planning strategy document is progressing. I have a number of points with regard to the National Planning Framework.

◀ I am of the opinion that the National Planning Framework should be for a longer period than up to 2040. This is a medium term view and should be a timeframe that the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies aim for with the National Plan looking for a longer term.

◀ In amending the legislation to facilitate the National Planning Framework, the legislation should be further amended to allow for the lifetime of a County Development Plan to be extended in order for the County Development Plan review to commence after the National Planning Framework is adopted. Any amendment should also ensure that County Development Plans can be extended following the publication of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. This will ensure efficiency of resources in Local Authority planning, and will ensure that the hierarchy of plans can be effectively implemented.

◀ I am disappointed in how negatively the National Planning Framework issues booklet portrays how town planning from the last 20 years has developed (eg urban sprawl). Local Authority Development Plans and Local Area Plans are so thoroughly articulated and assessed at Local Authority level and by the Department of Environment, along with all planning applications being thoroughly assessed at Local Authority and An Bord Pleanala levels, it is unfair to portray it as though the planning department/ the Local Authority planners have not been doing what they should be doing. It is important to reiterate how town planning is not a sole venture it is vital that sustainable planning is a comprehensive venture where social and physical infrastructure, Government funding, jobs, etc are provided alongside the town planning to ensure the venture is successful and sustainable.

◀ It would appear from the Issues Booklet and from the Department of Planning presentations, that the National Planning Framework will be a policy document that will lack strong direction and a strong vision for Ireland in 2040. Given that it has to pass through the Oireachtas, I would have serious concerns that the National Planning Framework will be articulated in a way that ensure all members of the Oireachtas feel like they are getting a cut or at least feel that they are not being left out. The National Planning Framework needs to be a strong direct strategy that clearly identified its vision for the further long term development of Ireland. Given the scale and population size of Ireland this should be a reasonable task however it important to ensure that individual politicians do not skew the vision but strengthen the vision of the National Planning Framework and back its implementation.

◀ It is noted that Dublin is our capital city and should be facilitated to grow as the focus area of the country however it is important to ensure that all other counties especially those most vulnerable like those in the greater Dublin area and the west of Ireland are facilitated to develop to their full potential.

◀ It is vital that other state bodies, especially the infrastructure providers back up the National Planning Framework with a strategy and funding to reflect the strategy of the National Planning Framework. The provision of public transport and roads is vital in this. It has to be acknowledged that today Ireland is a car based country and the necessary infrastructure needs to be provided to facilitate this. The long term vision for Ireland should seek to move away from the private car however in order to do this the settlements of Ireland need to be made more self sufficient along with the provision of an integrated local and national public transport system. This needs to be state supported and easily accessible to all.

◀ Other issues like climate change, tourism, recreation, employment, social infrastructure, town centres and retail, heritage, technology along with infrastructure and transport are all important matters that need to be incorporated into the National Planning Framework and the vision for Ireland. All these planning issues need to be included in the future vision for Ireland. In order for the National Planning Framework to be a success it is vital that it facilitates settlements to develop to be self sufficient sustainable places with all the necessary land-uses, services and facilities provided, that are appropriate to that settlement size.

◀ I am disappointed with the poor level of public consultation carried out for this stage of the national planning framework. The Local Authorities executive and elected members have been included in the process however I feel that this has not been as well publicised to include the general public.

There are so many issues that could be incorporated into a submission; these are a limited number of general issues I have gathered since the publication of the National Planning Framework Issues Booklet.

I look forward to the publication of the draft National Planning Framework and to see the level of content and the approach that the Government are taking to the future planning of Ireland.

Kind Regards

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