



## Summary

This proposal from The Research & Education Foundation at Sligo University Hospital is about the provision of a Clinical Services Support Centre (CSSC) at Sligo University Hospital.

Essential educational and training requirements and related needs exist within the universal healthcare system with common / core requisites for all engaged across the healthcare services. The parties to and the components of such an initiative to meet these needs exist. Previous arrangements were disrupted and the need for such an initiative as the provision of a CSSC is now acute.

The CSSC will provide the North-West with a facility that:

- Delivers state of the art training to the health sector through education, innovation and research
- Links to a national network of dedicated CSSC units thereby ensuring best practice is developed across the entire healthcare service
- Provides flexible areas for the following, whilst freeing up badly needed space for patient needs:
  - a) Research Laboratories/Research hot-desks/Research support Office/Storage
  - b) Clinical Governance Functions such as: Risk Management; Clinical Audit; General Practice training support etc.
  - c) Lecture/Seminar/ Training Rooms
  - d) Skills Labs/Simulation Centre
  - e) Working Group Rooms
  - f) Reading Rooms/ ICT support
  - g) Offices
  - h) Circulation/ Social Space
- Enhances the services to the community

Based on existing models of CSSC units internationally a dedicated facility will be required to house the activities. A scoping exercise has provided the detail of the proposal for the intended centre.

The undertaking would generate savings as the region again becomes an attractive, satisfying and preferred place to work. Dependence on agency staff, which is very expensive, would wane. Gains to the local economy and community from the enhanced attractiveness of Sligo as a location setting for setting up other enterprises are real. Soft outputs such as reputational gain and higher quality, safer services are less easy to measure but nonetheless anticipated.



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The NPF could consider the project of establishing a CSSC at Sligo University Hospital as a model by which the public sector can contribute to:

- Delivering national and regional benefit to the health sector through accredited education for CPD, innovation and research by embracing this opportunity to provide support services for the health sector in the North - West of Ireland
- Promoting education on health and healthcare matters in the community
- Addressing the lag in regional development and places by reducing disparities amongst the regions

The REF is a party that has maintained the corporate memory and continuity of development during the recent disrupting times and hence has undertaken the response to the call for ideas for development in the regions and thereby contributing to the avoidance of concentration of enterprise activity in the large metropolitan areas.



## Introduction

The Research & Education Foundation is a voluntary organisation and a registered charity dedicated to the improvement of health and healthcare delivery by promoting the development of a culture of research and education and continuous quality improvement at Sligo University Hospital and in its catchment region. To this end the Foundation endeavours to develop the capacity of healthcare staff to undertake research, supports the funding of research, develops research partnerships and works with the community to promote education on health and healthcare matters. The Foundation and the Institute of Technology, Sligo have fruitful working relationships underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Foundation appreciates the shortfalls for local development of the National Spatial strategy (NSS) 2002, as described in the consultation document and we welcome the emerging National Planning Framework (NPF) “Ireland 2040 Our Plan” designed to guide and shape spatial development of Ireland into the future.

This plan will be government and Oireachtas policy and will facilitate regional plans to capitalise on the potential of place. The plan will manage growth, infrastructure and environment to support quality of life and sustainable economic development. Within the plan Sligo and its hinterland will be an area for regional development.

This submission from the Foundation, in the main, provides input from a Health and Wellbeing perspective. It recognises the planning challenges and the need to adjust the “Business as Usual” mode of planning in order to rise to the challenges ahead.

Sligo and its hinterlands of South Donegal, Leitrim, parts of Cavan, Roscommon and Mayo are in the Central Border Region and are unique in the Republic as it includes parts of both Connaught and Ulster. It is in the Northern and Western Region Assembly area that, as is evident from examining sub regional economic activity and growth, is outside the sphere of positive influence of the city of Galway.



## Sligo – the Place

In national planning terms Sligo is a town with interdependent urban and rural characteristics. It has not experienced increased growth and economic activity as has Dublin and the four second tier cities. However, neither has it experienced the many quality of life problems that have developed in the greater Dublin area. Sligo has a considerable potential to develop as suggested in the consultation document. Good planning can enable it to get it right first time.

If “Business as Usual” continues Sligo will experience demographic changes with more people living longer and an increase in absolute and proportional numbers of older people. Staff of the health services, primary, secondary and tertiary education, dispersed civil servants, transport, security services and local authorities live in the region with their families, retire in due course and continue to reside in the area. With forward planning these workers will be replaced and the community strengthened by fresh blood attracted to the quality of work / life balance and environment. The demographic change will then be towards a more balanced community.

It is seen, in the consultation document “Issues and Choices,” that the principle functions of the Regional Assemblies are to be supportive of strategic planning and sustainable development and to manage EU programmes of assistance. The Regional Assemblies are charged with providing Regional and Spatial Economic Strategies (RSEs). The cities, Dublin and the four second tier cities, are considered to be the key regional drivers of economic growth in knowledge and related business sector activities. However, other sectoral activity and indigenous enterprises are more broadly spread through the regions. The intention of the NPF is to examine effective regional development and embrace spatial development opportunities specific to each region and require such opportunities for a broader spread of activities to be reflected in the RSEs. In some cases building resilience is a priority simply to reverse adverse impacts experienced in recent years, with particular emphasis on building the long term economic resilience of areas along our border with NI. Investment in human capital and innovation is noted as a robust determinant of regional growth. Investment in physical infrastructure, while necessary, is not alone a sufficient condition for growth thus we need integrated human capital and infrastructure regional development policies and plans.



## **A Prototype of Sub – Regional Public Sector Development at Sligo**

Within Sligo the potential of the healthcare part of the public service to contribute to regional growth is focused on. The health service is dynamic in responding to demographic changes and has the potential for organic growth.

Sligo hospital has been a leader in evolving towards the integration of health services across primary, secondary and tertiary levels in: evolving systems for service audit and risk management; training programmes for managers, nursing, medical and other healthcare staff. Working with NI health services it led in the development of an IT system for renal dialysis units that is now used across the island of Ireland.

The Nursing School at Sligo has linked with NUIG and is developing more advanced training. There is a regional centre for providing CPD for nurses based in the community which would be incorporated into the CSSC. An attachment programme furnishing a yearlong attachment to 70 full time medical students is provided at Sligo University Hospital. These students and their associated tutorial staff are located in Sligo with much benefit to the local economy. In providing the attachments the hospital has now, through a sustainable arrangement, linked with the NUIG medical school. A postgraduate training programme for medical doctors wishing to train to become General Practitioners is also in place. This is a four year programme with 15 trainees in each of the 4 years. The training programme is linked to a national training programme in which Sligo was a prime leader. The developments described were brought about by the actions of the service staff aiming to enhance the quality of services. The existence of the Research & Education Foundation is another example of their efforts.

A particular challenge, yet to be fully overcome, is to achieve the potential of the local health service to provide formal post graduate training for its non consultant medical staff. The accreditation process by regulating bodies is rigorous. Plans for the infrastructure to enable accreditation of the site and its training posts by the regulatory Medical Council and its associated training bodies are available and capable of rapid implementation in the form of a CSSC.

Accredited CPD, further education and research facilities are requirements for the many professions involved in healthcare e.g. Physiotherapy, Medical Science, Radiography, Occupational Therapy, Nutrition, Management, Information Technology etc. These obligations could be met by using the facility of the CSSC infrastructure.

### **First Stage Consultation Submission to National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 for Regional and Sub Regional Development**



The NPF along with the associated capital development plan could support the delivery of this infrastructure. The nature of the development at SUH is for a multiuser facility to enable development of the education, training and research needs of the Healthcare Service in the Sligo region.

## Building on Past Experience

The serving staff of the public healthcare service, working through the previous area health board / Department of Health structures, with the REF researched the requirements for infrastructure and arrangements to meet the needs for education and continuing professional development. An Australian model of a local dedicated support centre for research, education and training centrally located within hospital sites and serving the needs of all categories of staff was identified as matching the needs of Sligo. The Australian name for such centres is Clinical Services Support Centre (CSSC). The needs of Sligo were successfully taken forward through the formal capital project management process and achieved local planning permission for a CSSC in 2005 but progress was then interrupted for various reasons not least of which was a change in hospital governance.

There are now opportunities, with the NPF, to reactivate the earlier plans for a multi-user support centre (CSSC). This is the Block G in the site Development Control Plan of SUH. From the perspective of the NPF strategy now being developed the infrastructure of an Australian style support centre is an enabling development of the type envisaged for effective regional development plans and the linked Capital development funding. The human capital oriented to innovation of integrated policies and the operation of such a centre is available.

## Harnessing Local Ideas for Regional Development

This section covers the contribution of the healthcare system to the spatial planning strategy envisaged in the NPF "Ireland 2040 Our Plan". The concept of a CSSC, described above for Sligo, has been adopted by the Mid Western Hospital Group and the infrastructure is now reaching completion on the main hospital site at Limerick. It provides a working example for efficient planning development in the



regions. It is to be noted that in the major cities the Dutch model of Academic Medical Centres is being proposed (same idea but greatly up scaled).

It is probable that, playing to their strengths, comparable regional developments and initiatives will emerge in other streams of the public service. At a regional place such as Sligo all such developments aggregate to achieving viable sustainable places through regional development. The public sector can drive and lead regional urban – rural development and help provide other regional benefits making places more attractive for private sector developments.

Among the benefits to a place are the human capital and skill sets, the resilience provided in achieving a younger population, wider support for cultural, social and recreational activities and support for housing and retail activity.

An enhanced general environment makes a place attractive for inward investment. One of the items on the checklist of an industry when vetting Sligo as a start-up site is the quality of healthcare and other public services available for its employees. Regional developments can help solve the ongoing crisis in recruitment and retention of staff for Irish public services. Sligo has had a good experience, unlike most other regional places and even cities, in regard to attracting highly trained staff to its services. Many of these spent some of their early training years in the local Sligo services, before going abroad to complete training and then opting to return and make their lives in Sligo. The NPF may consider supporting regional development, such as the establishment of a CSSC at SUH, an important contribution to reversing emigration and the brain drain from Ireland.

The staff of regional public services are a unique and distinctive asset that can play a role in driving desirable local development of places where they are based. They are a resource that could, with benefit, be identified and facilitated in the NPF.

Support of education and professional competence maintenance must, at the very least, sustain individual healthcare workers in meeting the relevant standards of the regulatory agencies. These agencies now regulate most aspects of the health system, maintain registers of practitioners and license them to practice. While individual employees are required to maintain and assure their own competencies, the health system is also required to support the process. The provision of a CSSC fits in with this requirement and if planned and scaled well, has the potential for a wider range of other benefits for the service and the region.



Activities that merit support are shared and common to all in the health service and planning of the facilities to provide the range of common activities is the best for a CSSC.

Common or general requirements are:

- Attaining an understanding of how an integrated service works and improves
- Developing an appreciation of and understanding of new forms of management
- Maintenance of core skills in clinical audit, clinical risk management, project work, innovation (action health research) and development
- Need for regional services to remain in contact with the wider world of national, European and international developments in healthcare and locally promote best practices through innovation and development methodology
- Obtaining and understanding the skills of team working and the role of self regulatory clinical Microsystems need support

A central arrangement designed and geared to allowing social integration is part of the requirements of a complex departmentalised hospital setting. The foregoing may be provided through a single facility for all.

In addition to the common needs, specific needs are associated with the education, training and competence maintenance required by the regulatory bodies. In reality this CSSC facility will provide third and fourth level education to regionally located healthcare staff.

There are 48 acute hospitals in Ireland and the hospital at Sligo is the most distant and most remote from the major medical academic centres, thus this is an acute need for the region.

The establishment of a CSSC will create a vibrant and competitive healthcare centre at Sligo for the greater Sligo region, provide an attractive preferred place to work and opportunities for families to live and work in this community in the North – West of Ireland towards the year 2040.