

Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin,
D01 W6X0

27th March 2017

Re: Response to National Planning Framework Consultation

To Whom It Concerns,

Fingleton White welcomes the opportunity to comment on the National Planning Framework. Over the past 35 years we have grown to be the leading provider of engineers and project managers to the energy sector, in particular in relation to industrial-scale combined heat and power (CHP) plants. We have designed, built, operated, and maintained 70MW of CHP facilities and designed and built Biomass CHP projects. Using our knowledge and experience with industrial CHP systems we are now developing a Domestic CHP product for the home heating market.

It is our opinion that Sustainability and Climate Change Mitigation should be at the center of the National Planning Framework. The reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions associated with providing heat and electricity to individual dwellings is a significant challenge for Ireland. There are three existing technologies that can contribute to reducing GHGs associated with individual dwellings that currently face significant barriers to deployment. In addition to this, the use of pipelines as an alternative sustainable and environmentally friendly means of transport for Petroleum products should be considered in the National Planning Framework.

District Heating

Larger heat generating plant such as Biomass and Gas fired CHP plants, Biomass Heat only Boilers and Energy from Waste plants, can deliver sustainable, renewable heat to individual dwellings via district heating networks, reducing overall GHG emissions, such a scheme is planned for the Dublin Docklands.

However at present there is a legal barrier to the development of district heating which needs to be addressed. The legal opinion is that anyone, statutory body, non-statutory body, or a private individual carrying out works on the public road, where land is registered to the centre of the road, has to obtain a wayleave/permission for those works from the registered landowner. This in effect means that a developer who has planning permission and a road opening licence for a district heating system would also have to get permission to lay the pipes from all landowners whose title extends to the centre of the public road. This would mean a district heating project would have the unacceptable

risk of not being able to obtain the necessary landowner permissions and not having recourse to any powers of compulsory acquisition of land or right over land in respect of the construction or operation of the pipelines.

In order to facilitate development there are two options,

- New legislation
- Amendment to existing legislation which will give the Local Authority the full powers to determine what infrastructure can be installed in a road.

Solar PV and Domestic CHP

The rapid development in recent years in the fields of Solar PV and Domestic CHP systems have led to a significant reduction in the costs of these systems. These technologies when implemented in large volumes can reduce GHG emissions from individual dwellings and reduce our dependence on fossil fuel imports, which leads to a more competitive, sustainable nation.

In keeping with these developments the electricity network has accommodated these technologies by simplifying the grid connection process for Micro generators, implementing a type approved, inform and fit policy, which is a welcome development.

However, there is currently no mechanism for these Micro generators to be paid for export electricity, even though the electricity has a value today. The reason that this electricity is currently given away for free by those that invest in this technology, is that the market has not kept up with technological developments. This has had a real impact on the deployment of these GHG reducing technologies. Our energy markets need to develop to encourage people to implement these technologies. While the wholesale rate for electricity at today's prices would not be sufficient to make these technologies cost effective, access to this tariff in the long term to 2040 and beyond, would be a hugely significant signal to individual consumers and to the companies developing these products. The wider benefit to society and the value to be attributed to the reduction of GHG emissions and imported fossil fuels, and how this value should be passed on to the consumer is beyond the scope of this consultation, but is something which must be addressed in parallel.

As our country moves to a low carbon economy, the electricity market must keep up with technological developments and provide the mechanism for individual Micro Generators to receive a payment for electricity exported to the National Grid.

Sustainable Low Carbon Transport - Pipelines

Currently 16m tons of imports go through Dublin Port annually and are transported through Dublin City to various locations in Ireland. Over 20% of imports are petroleum products. This is a significant proportion of imports. Pipeline transportation is a viable option for these products and should form part of our plan for 2040.

Pipelines are widely used in the EU to support the efficient distribution of petroleum products. Ireland is a notable exception to the use of pipelines as a transport mode and are placed at a competitive disadvantage as a result of the lack of this key infrastructure. Pipelines have a long proven record as a safe, sustainable and efficient transport mode. Other benefits include reduced congestion and emissions when compared to HGV transport of petroleum products.

As an example, a pipeline from Dublin Port to Dublin Airport would replace current product deliveries by road of 0.5m tons by HGV vehicles. This new infrastructure will reduce current annual HGV trips by > 17,000 round trips (34,000 individual journeys). The forecast fuel demand at Dublin Airport is predicted to grow significantly leading to a growth in the number of HGV trips adding to traffic problems. An oil pipeline would reduce traffic, noise, emissions and congestion around the port, the airport and through the port tunnel. There are other strategic oil pipelines that could be developed which would reduce HGV journeys on the congested M50 by 200,000 journeys annually.

At present oil pipelines face the same legal barriers that have been discussed under the "District Heating" section above. Reform to legislation should cover all pipelines.

We trust the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government will consider the above, while developing a National Planning Framework and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you at your convenience.

Yours Faithfully,



Kevin Fortune