

Planning and Property Development Strategic Policy Committee February 2017

Ireland 2040 : National Planning Framework 2040

On 2nd February 2017 the Government launched an “Issues and Choices” public consultation paper in relation to the proposed new National Planning Framework 2040, which will be a 20+ year vision and implementation strategy to replace the National Spatial Strategy 2002.

The Issues and Choices document invites submissions which will inform the content of the draft National Planning Framework 2040.

The Paper is a 52 page document (copy attached) containing 6 main areas for consideration.

A. Ireland’s National Planning Challenges

- Circa 1 million extra population, quarter of which will be over 65.
- 500,000 extra workforce – many in high skilled jobs close to cities.
- 500,000 extra dwelling units needed by 2040, i.e., 25,000-30,000 approximately per annum.

B. Ireland’s Health and Wellbeing, including how spatial development can encourage healthier lifestyles (walking, cycling) and reduce carbon footprint.

C. A Place-Making Strategy, including a specific section on the role of Dublin as our capital, and other cities and towns. The hierarchy of cities in Ireland is contrasted with that in other small advanced countries. The key considerations in this section are:

Under the Business As Usual Scenario, the current lop-sided pattern of development of the State will continue, which in the longer term will be neither beneficial to Dublin nor the Country as a whole.

Any alternatives will need to consider the following:

- Protecting the importance of Dublin as a national driver of growth by prioritising measures to address barriers to its international competitiveness;
- Enabling a city centre outwards process of renewal and regeneration and continued investment in transport and local infrastructure and housing policies to deliver more compact cities;

- The potential for a nationally significant step-change in the promotion of one or more of the four regional cities through co-ordinated planning and investment that would be long term and transformational.

D. Ireland's Unique Environment – Sustainability, including key questions in the area of:

- Extra population and reducing carbon emissions.
- Climate change and energy reduction.
- Ireland's green image in food production and tourism.

E. Infrastructure

The Issues Paper states that the NPF will provide the spatial background against which investment projects can be prioritised, so that long-term projects can be aligned and sequenced. The key issues include:

- Alignment of strategic infrastructure (transport, water, energy, etc.) with settlement strategy.
- How to make best use of existing infrastructure.
- Ensuring new development is supported by timely provision of social infrastructure.

F. Implementing the NPF

There is recognition in the Issues Paper that the previous NSS was a “mixed bag” in terms of implementation. It is intended the new NPF will have:

- An NPF Management Team.
- Statutory backing.
- Capital investment programmes (bids for funding).
- Independent annual monitoring reports.

The Issues Paper also sets out what will happen if there is no NPF. ‘Business as usual’ will mean: Dublin will dominate more and potentially overheat; sprawl into Leinster will continue; Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford will grow only slowly; and housing-employment will spread further apart leading to rising costs and impacts in terms of commuting, services, health and the decline of small towns.

The closing date for submissions is 12 noon on 16th March 2017.

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