

Meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government

Thursday 22nd March, 2018

The National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040: Our Plan

Consideration of [Project Ireland 2040](#)

Officials from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government: Niall Cussen-Principal Advisor; Paul Hogan- Senior Advisor; Alma Walsh- Planning Advisor.

Introduction and Background

Chair, Committee Members,

We thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today and discuss Project Ireland 2040, and in particular the National Planning Framework, for which the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has lead responsibility.

I am accompanied here today by Paul Hogan, NPF Project Manager and Alma Walsh Planning Adviser. Our introductory remarks focus on the National Planning Framework aspect of Project Ireland 2040, including the linkages between the NPF and the National Development Plan.

Purpose of the National Planning Framework

The NPF sets a long- term strategic planning context for Ireland over the next 20 years, including broad principles to better manage future population and economic growth, bearing in mind the need to plan for a population increase of 1 million extra people, an extra 660,000 at work and an additional 500,000 extra homes.

Integration of Planning with Future Capital Investment

Critically, the NPF planning strategy and the ten-year NDP investment strategy have been fully aligned through a €116billion capital investment programme founded upon ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) shared between both documents and designed to progress

- more balanced and sustainable regional development,
- timely enhancement of infrastructure required to meet the needs of our country, our regions and our communities and,
- to meet challenges like climate change and Brexit.

All of the planned capital investment under the National Development Plan will, directly or indirectly, support the achievement of the strategic outcomes.

Establishment of a National Regeneration and Development Agency and €3bn in urban and rural regeneration and development funds will, more directly, support implementation of the NPF aims around compact urban development and the continued development of rural communities. Progression of such initiatives are a key priority for implementation in the weeks and months ahead.

Implementation of the NPF

Subsequent to its publication on 16th February last by Government, our Department has now written to local authorities, regional assemblies and An Bord Pleanála notifying them that the NPF constitutes national planning policy in accordance with Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and all other related provisions of the Act.

Recognising that the NPF is the first part of a broader updating of Ireland's strategic planning policy frameworks to be followed by preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) by each of the Regional Assemblies and future reviews of statutory city and county development plans, our team has spent much of the time since the launch briefing regional assemblies, local authorities as well as other interested stakeholders on the NPF, addressing issues and seeking out views in relation to building a comprehensive implementation strategy.

As members of the Committee will also be aware, the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 is currently at Seanad stage and will, in line with the recommendations of the Mahon Tribunal, put in place a statutory process for the regular review and updating of the National Planning Framework, much as is the case for other tiers of Ireland's planning policy hierarchy.

Moreover, to ensure a swift and coherent translation of the content of the NPF and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies into the statutory local authority development plans, which can take several years to come up for review, depending on when their preparation was commenced, an amendment under this Bill proposes to recalibrate development plan review timings to ensure that imminent reviews are held over until such time as updated policies and metrics are available later this year

and that plans adopted in recent years are brought in for variations to update them accordingly.

The initial briefings and stakeholder engagement being almost complete, strategic priorities around implementation include:

- Working with the regional assemblies and wider local authorities in guiding the preparation and conclusion of RSES's by or shortly after the end of this year;
- Developing, with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, as part of the wider Project Ireland 2040 process, an effective governance and implementation framework for both the NPF and the NDP, including arrangements for cross departmental and stakeholder co-ordination, the gathering of key data and monitoring systems that will feed-back into the overall implementation process, creating an agile, responsive and outcome based implementation approach;
- Developing the options and putting in place arrangements for the establishment of the National Regeneration and Development Agency; and
- Finalising the operational and evaluation elements of the proposed regeneration and development funds, in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Community and Rural Development and taking on board views of relevant stakeholders such as the local authorities;

We are just over a month into the implementation of a strategy that looks out to over the next twenty years and that implementation process is gathering pace.

We welcome the views of this Committee on these and related matters, building on the very helpful and insightful inputs provided previously and I and my colleagues, Paul and Alma, look forward to your comments and questions.

Thank You