



To: Chief Executives, City and County Councils
Directors of Planning Services, City and County Councils
Senior Planners, City and County Councils
An Bord Pleanála

Circular letter FPS 01/2017

28th September 2017

Publication of Draft National Planning Framework (NPF)

Ireland 2040: Our Plan

Dear Sir/Madam

As you are aware, preparations for the putting in place of a new strategic spatial development framework to succeed the National Spatial Strategy of 2002 have been underway since 2014.

The Government places a high degree of importance on a modern up-to-date national planning framework to guide the planning and development functions of local authorities and An Bord Pleanála as well as co-ordinating relevant sectoral policies and the public capital investment programme.

Accordingly, the Government has published a draft National Planning Framework (NPF), titled Ireland 2040: Our Plan together with the associated environmental reports, for public consultation up to 12 noon on Friday 3rd November 2017, which is now available at www.Ireland2040.ie

Moreover, when finalised later this year, the Government intends to publish Ireland 2040 alongside a 10-year National Investment Plan, prepared by the Department of Public

Expenditure and Reform, to establish a clear national policy framework in terms of both spatial development and capital investment.

Ireland 2040 addresses a number of significant national policy matters to be both followed and complemented by the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies envisaged under the Local Government Act 2014 and which will be developed to replace the current Regional Planning Guidelines between now and the end of 2018.

A separate statutory request to the Regional Assemblies to commence their RSES processes has issued and will be followed up with additional technical guidance in relation to certain procedural and metric (population and housing etc forecasts) related elements.

Your authority will play a key role in shaping the RSES process and should take all necessary steps to provide such data and/or personnel and technical resources necessary to complete the process.

Key Elements of Ireland 2040:

National and Regional Development Strategy

- In terms of overall population and employment growth and new housing provision, the framework envisages a broad 50%/50% split of future population and associated growth between (a) the five cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford and (b) Ireland's range of large and smaller towns, villages and rural areas, all within a better national infrastructure grid in terms of mobility, communications, energy systems and essential public and community services and facilities.
- A more effective balance of growth between Ireland's three regions – the Northern and Western; Southern; and Eastern and Midlands (which includes Dublin), whereby the Northern and Western and Southern Regions combined should grow at broadly comparable rates to the Eastern and Midlands, as opposed to a continuation of the current long-term trend whereby the rest of country has lagged behind the increasing rate of population, jobs and housing provision rates in Dublin and the wider Eastern and Midlands area.
- There will be a major new policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing built-up areas rather than continual edge expansion of cities and towns out into the countryside, with a target of at least 40% of new housing to be delivered within the existing built-up areas of cities, towns and villages on infill and/or brownfield sites.

- To address rural decline, a significant proportion of national population and economic growth will be targeted at building up the fabric of our network of smaller towns, villages and rural areas with much of that happening by redeveloping derelict and under-utilised lands inside small towns and villages.

Legislative Backing

- Ireland 2040 will be given full legislative support within the planning system, including regular review and updating, reflecting changing circumstances and in line with city and county development plan review cycles and more streamlined approaches to zoning land for development in line with infrastructure provision.
- The planning legislation underpinning Ireland 2040 will also lead to the creation of a new independent Office for Planning Regulation (OPR) which will also be responsible for monitoring implementation of Ireland 2040.

Linkage to a new 10-year National Investment Plan

- When the Framework is finalised after public consultation, Ireland 2040 will be published alongside a 10-year National Investment Plan, meaning that implementation of the Framework will be fully supported by the Government's investment strategy for public capital investment and investment by the State sector in general.
- A National Smart Growth Initiative will be put in place under the National Investment Plan to drive and support the aims of Ireland 2040, for both urban and rural areas. This will be a competitive, bid-based fund to leverage both public and private investment.
- The Smart Growth initiative will support strategic investment in and the growth and renewal of under-utilised parts of our cities and towns and re-purposing of areas that have become run-down or poorly utilised in terms of accommodating new housing, employment and amenities. It will also support initiatives to facilitate growth in rural towns and communities, building on parallel initiatives in relation to rural development and housing policies.

Strengthened and more Environmentally Focused Planning at Local Level

- More strategic and co-ordinated planning of cities and large towns across local authority boundaries will be encouraged through statutorily backed metropolitan area strategic plans in the five cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford to be progressed as an integral part of the statutory RSES process.
- A new streamlined and integrated planning process will be introduced to more effectively manage our marine areas and land-sea interface and seek to value double the economic value we gain from our ocean wealth by 2030 and more beyond.
- The future planning and development of our communities at local level will be refocused to tackle Ireland's higher than average (45%) carbon-intensity per capita and enabling a national transition to a competitive low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the year 2050, in particular harnessing potential in renewable, driving more compact and high quality urban development and electrification of much of our mobility and energy systems.

Using State Lands for Strategic Purposes

- The State, through local authorities, Government Departments and agencies and State companies, owns key parts of our cities and towns. The development of these lands will play a vital role in re-imagining and reshaping those urban areas.
- A review of the overall management of the development potential of State lands to support implementation of Ireland 2040 will be undertaken, to consider the merits of developing new structures such as a national land development agency to work with local authorities, public bodies and the business community, harnessing public lands as catalysts to stimulate regeneration and wider investment.

As the draft NPF articulates the emerging Government view on national spatial development policy, notwithstanding its consultation draft status, the document will be of relevance to the statutory plan making processes of your authority, particularly core strategy formulation, as well as when making amendments to statutory plans.

The Department also intends to follow up the final NPF document with updated statutory guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended) on development plans and related matters including core strategies.

The draft Ireland 2040 document benefits from extensive public engagement so far, many workshops, stakeholder seminars and over 700 detailed NPF specific submissions, many from the local authority sector and An Bord Pleanála. The Department is very grateful for the expert input and effort that went into such submissions.

Notwithstanding the extent of input garnered so far, the Department would strongly urge each planning authority and the Board to examine the draft NPF document and to make a submission on its content from a broad national policy level perspective.

To make a submission, there are three options:

- **Going on line - www.Ireland2040.ie and follow the instructions provided; or**
- **By email to the following email address only npf@housing.gov.ie or**
- **Writing to: NPF Submissions, Forward Planning Section, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Custom House, Dublin 1 D01 W6X0.**

The Department looks forward to your organisations' participation in the consultation process.

Any queries on the foregoing can also be directed to the email address above.

Yours etc



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Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government