

Ireland 2040 - Our Plan

National Planning Framework Document

Submission from Senator Grace O'Sullivan, Green Party, WATERFORD

My submission to the National Planning Framework document is based around the principles of LOVE - Live, Organise, Value & Enjoy and around Ireland's pathway towards a Circular Economy - a move to a low-carbon, climate resilient, environmental and socially sustainable economy; one in which the State and Irish communities recognise and value all the citizens of the nation, within the global planet of nations, including those of future generations.

I set my submission within the context of WATERFORD and the South East.

Pathways to Growth

1. Balance Regional Development

Waterford is the regional city of the South East. There is evidence to show that Waterford and the South East are being squeezed out of state support due to a focus on the Greater Dublin Area and Cork. Waterford needs equal and urgent support by the State to rebalance our region economically, politically and socially.

Immediate investment by the State in the North Quays Special Development Zone is crucial to the development of Waterford and the South East. The SDZ is set on the banks of the river Suir, which itself is part of an EU Special Area of Conservation. This provides Waterford and the SE with a unique opportunity to enhance business and the environment when developed in an environmentally conscious way; with a regard to quality of life, a view to developing businesses, innovation and social enjoyment opportunities for all.

2. Pathways to Waterford & the South East

Transport connectivity is essential to mobility and growth for Waterford and the South East. The rail system needs to be at the core of our economic, environmental and social development in our move to decarbonise our transport systems. Our rail system into Waterford needs to be relocated immediately before the onset of climate related flooding at the current site. The development at the North Quays SDZ provides for this development. Rail and freight rail from the Port of Waterford needs state investment to provide the region with connectivity to move freight through to other regions of the country to support business and trade.

Rail for public transport need support to develop efficient and effective transport throughout the Island.

The Greenways and marine, river and lake Blueways in the South East should be developed, supporting and restoring this nature route for all aspects of travel, including the health and enjoyment aspects that will benefit residents and visitors alike.

3. Pathways to Education

A Technical University for the South East with its campus Headquartered in Waterford is crucial to supporting the growing population of c570,000 in the South East. Those who are

born and grow up in the region should have the possibility to develop a life-long learning opportunity in the region, and further to work and enjoy a quality of life outside of the Dublin area.

4. Pathways to Health: Waterford Regional Hospital UHW

Waterford and the South East need state investment and support to facilitate full quality health services at Waterford Regional Hospital in an effective and efficient way. Waterford should be the Primary Health Care Centre for the region.

5. Pathways to Ecology - Healthy Tourism - the Wild Irish Way

Waterford and the South East, running on an East-West trajectory, has superb natural, cultural and heritage assets to allow tourists a first class Irish experience. The Waterford Greenway is the pride of our county and region. We need community led Blueways and healthy eco styled offerings supported by the state and others to develop our urban and tourism offerings.

6. Pathways towards a Circular Economy

Waterford and the South East need state and EU support to develop renewable energy capacity and electricity transmission infrastructure to support our national needs and to link our energy networks to Europe via France. The South East will be geographically closest to the EU once Britain leaves the EU. This will offer Ireland and the South East opportunities to become a leader in supplying renewable energy nationally and internationally through offshore wind and onshore solar technologies; creating much-needed jobs and employment opportunities for the South East. The South East can spearhead the renewable energy revolution for Ireland and WATERFORD at its centre can once again stand economically and socially proud as the oldest city in Ireland.