I hope that the Ireland of 2040 will turn away from suburbs, sprawl, and one-off housing, and turn towards compact cities, towns and villages. Away from the motorway, the bypass, and the motor-car, and towards cycle-paths, pedestrian routes, and public transport. I'd like to see Ireland take the lead in preserving that part of the biosphere in our care by setting aside more land as wild places, largely free of human interference. The biologist E.O. Wilson suggests that 50% should be set aside worldwide, and as an aspiration at the least, I think it's a pretty good target.

 I think it's been pretty well established how consumption, growth, and the use of greenhouse gases is moving the whole planet towards catastrophe. What we should be doing is planning for a country which has, if not completely nullified those factors, than at least is moving towards it. And, though it may be outside the scope of this submission, that means, I think, research for and implementation of alternative energy sources, alternative materials (for packaging, etc.), and alternative dietary practices (amongst other things). That may be solar, lignin, lab-grown meat, or something like it. I don't know, but I think it's the direction we need to be going in.

Perhaps a research facility or co-ordinating body aimed at just such future 'tech' could be set up by the government and heavily funded. Ireland could quickly become a world leader in this field. It would help the economy and raise the standard of living. Most importantly, it might ensure that succeeding generations will inherit something better than it was found, rather than worse.