

From: Aaron O'Doherty [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 February 2017 11:18
To: National Planning Framework
Subject: Ireland 2040 Our Plan - South East region

NPF Submissions,
Planning Section,
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin, D01 W6X0.

Re: 'Ireland 2040 Our Plan' – South Eastern Region

Firstly, I would like to compliment the persons/organisations who researched and put together this plan, I believe the objectives of the plan are solid. It is clear from the text in the main document 'Issues and Choices', that Ireland is at a crossroads; do we recognise that we need strong regional growth to act a counter to Dublin's dominance in all areas or do we continue to continue the mistakes of the past, choke Dublin and its hinterland with more and more planning, development, traffic, infrastructure, environmental and associated issues.

With particular regards to the South East of the Country, I agree that Waterford, as the main/largest regional city in the region should be a focal point for growth. I have a few suggestions on how this can happen or what the people need for the region to grow, act as a counter, compete and develop in a sustainable manner:

1. Help Waterford grow as a normal city. By this, the boundary report should be implemented in full. The arguments against just don't add up, there is no discernible difference in culture or customs, the people in the area, go to school in Waterford, shop in Waterford and work in Waterford to a large extent. Planning decisions by Kilkenny Co.Co. in the area has gone directly against the spatial strategy and frankly looked like an attempt to undermine Waterford City retail (see numerous empty retail units which should never have been given go ahead). There is a strong sense that Kilkenny Co.Co underinvested in the area on numerous fronts, there is not even a public playground/park in the area administered by Kilkenny Co.Co. If the GAA colours argument is taken out of the equation, it makes sense, the people in the area, are naturally drawn to Waterford City for work and leisure as it is literally a stone's throw away.

Submissions on this issue inform us that expanding the city border to the north would help Waterford create its critical mass to act as a genuine counter balance and help as a strong city could drive the region, it would help the city expand in a more natural and balanced way and bring those people who are drawn to Waterford City into the area the area which affects them the most. Waterford City has taken major steps in recent years to better itself, works and opportunities on north Quays, South Quays, Viking Triangle and now significant urban renewal works not to mention some significant approved and in-train retail construction/developments.

2. The South East region is underperforming at the moment, it needs a strong city to drive this and the infrastructure to help it succeed: A good motorway network in the south east is half way there, there are already excellent links to north via the M9, the East has improved and improving links with the Waterford Bypass and ongoing works in New Ross and Enniscorthy. The routes West need improvement, links to the likes of Dungarvan (N25) and Carrick on Suir, Clonmel and onto Limerick (N24) need significant improvement.

3. The South East has an educational deficit, however all is not lost, there is an opportunity there on how this may be best addressed: establishing a University or Technical University to help attract more hi-tech employment and entrepreneurship. Waterford and South East has already been successful in building up significant Hi-Tech and Bio-pharma entrepreneurship (Red Hat, Eirgen, Eishtec) and employment (MSD, Genzyme etc) but it could do a lot more.
4. For too long, Waterford and the S.E. has received a poor number of IDA/FDI visits. A strong IDA office is needed for the S.E. The office should be able to fight for investment and jobs even without the need for having a strong minister based in the area.
5. Medical care, a recent report shows that University Hospital Waterford has the highest and near highest waiting lists in the country in a number of areas, it is a disproportionate amount of these red marks and it is due to understaffing and underinvestment. Investment in the HSE seems to be driven by political weight, not clinical/population need.

In conclusion, the plan is good but only so far as it is carried out, Waterford needs to expand to the north to provide critical mass and providing the tools so the region can grow and thrive is also essential.

Yours sincerely,

Aaron O 'Doherty,

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