

National Planning Framework Ireland 2040.

What will Ireland be like in 20 years time? What will Donegal and the Northwest be like in 20 years time?

This Framework document must provide a clear vision for the betterment of how and where we live going forward.

I believe the document as presented covers a multiple of strategies, policies, diversifications, actions, collaborations, etc. etc. but we have seen this type of language so many times before, with no revenue to back it up.

Given the population of about 400 thousand people within the Northwest, this proposed Framework must provide this region with:

- Completed A5 and N4 to allow proper access to and from the Northwest.
- Proper Broadband to bring us up to speed with our major cities.
- Healthcare facilities that allow patients to stay in the Northwest.
- Proper Investment within our Two Main Fishing ports Killybegs and Greencastle to cater for the Large Trawlers that are fishing in European Waters and need to land their catch within An EU Member State post Brexit. These same two ports will have a strategically important role to play on the importing and exporting of Coal, Fertilizers, Seed, Oils and Bulky goods etc.
- Recognition and Investment of our vibrant educational system .
- Continued investment and focus on our Tourism projects complimented by the Wild Atlantic Way,
- A strategic plan that links Derry Airport, Donegal Airport and Knock Airport with Dublin Airport.

All of these items must be included within the Framework Plan for the future development of the Northwest going forward.

In relation to Forward Planning within our Cities and Towns and the need to bring life back into these centres.

Town Centres are either dead or on their death bed, sequential assessment and town centre development imposed or forced upon people will not revive the town centre.

Why?

Town centres are becoming too difficult to access and too expensive to live and park in. A couple with a young family have no immediate play area for their children. Families that would like to keep a pet, find it very difficult not to create animosity with their neighbours due to their location. Raising a family within a town centre will guarantee no in- house birthday parties or visits from the in-laws due to parking and access restriction.

It's a known fact that our towns were built within a different era, that relied upon rivers to commute, historically known as market towns serving the farmlands and countryside around them along with hillside developments to alleviate flooding, A present day planner trying to develop a proper plan within any of our existing built town centres, will find it near to impossible, given that all of our towns will have bridges, and will be prone to flooding because of this legacy.

Presently we are putting in flood prevention methods within our town centres, we are erecting traffic lights on approach roads to bridges to prevent traffic congestion and we are bypassing certain towns that create bottlenecks.

When it comes to our Local Area Plans we are zoning the land to suit the built development as a retrofit rather than proper forward planning.

Our town centres are busy with people going from one shopping centre to another, not for the attraction of the town centre but merely as a convenience.

With an ever increasing population commuting within our large towns and cities, this Planning Framework document with a vision for the next 20 years must start thinking outside the box.

We must start planning a town or city from scratch. Find a suitable location, with easy access to a motorway, high above a floodplain, proper soil that can facilitate an effluent treatment system and good enough to build upon, with access to drinking water.

This town can be drafted up on paper showing the proper location for our schools, playgroups, health centres, leisure facilities, hairdressers, retail shops, car parks along with all the residential dwellings located in their proper places to ensure a vibrant community. The roads network should incorporate a footpath, a cycle path and a roadway to facilitate easy and safe access for all users.

On construction of the roads, a complete underground passageway should be constructed to allow easy access to underground pipe work and services.

All of the buildings should have photovoltaic panels installed to generate enough energy to meet the needs of the town.

A proper town centre should be designed and constructed with a social emphasis to the fore to serve the needs of our youth, our elderly and our disabled with easy and safe access for all.

These proposed towns with proper forward planning should be looked at, and even if one town with a population target of 20,000 gets rolled out as a pilot scheme within the next 20 years, at least we will have a prototype to base our future policies on.

The Service Stations off the M1 is proper forward planning with easy access and proper infrastructure, but within our regional and local planning policies, that same development would not receive planning on the outskirts of town if a town centre site was available.

The Planning Framework Document should be about how we are planning for the future and not about how we are trying to correct the mistakes of the past.

Yours Sincerely,



Mr. Paul Canning.