

Thank you for launching the National Planning Framework.

The purpose of this initiative appears to be aimed at revitalising /sustaining towns and villages throughout the country.

When the Planning and DEVELOPMENT act was initiated in 1964 the Department of Local Government prepared a model Development Plan for Galway to demonstrate the basis of plan making.

Initiatives like this often need a demonstration model to provide a real example of how the initiative is expected to work in practice, in order to make the principles concrete.

Respectfully I wish to nominate Tullamore, where I grew up, as a suitable Town to be used as a model of how the National Planning Framework may best be implemented.

Tullamore is a vibrant middle sized town that has suffered disproportionately in the last few decades. It could be readily turned around to show the benefit of preparing an integrated urban action area plan and making funding available to implement it.

Relatively little investment is required. The town urgently needs two short link roads to improve access to the town centre, and a re-organisation of traffic flows to recover the centre of the town and ease congestion.

This would have a twofold benefit

(1) It would allow a large currently underused back land site to be developed for town centre uses.

(2) It would allow the main focal space, O'Connor square, to return to being a central concourse with attendant activities. The square already has a public library, café, an American themed café and a very successful licensed premises that recently started serving food. The proposed community arts centre is located only a short walk away.

Tullamore has a distinct advantage in that it is a town planned in the late 1700's. It could be a very successful model for other middle sized towns. It is a compact town and the type of investment that is envisaged would have an immediate positive impact.